

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 September 2013	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Walworth Road Business Mix (Overview & Scrutiny Committee)	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Newington	
From:		Overview & Scrutiny Committee	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the cabinet notes the recommendations of the review of the Walworth Road Business Mix, and that the relevant cabinet members bring back a report to cabinet, in order to respond to the overview & scrutiny committee, within eight weeks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Attached is the final report of the overview & scrutiny committee arising from the scrutiny review of the Walworth Road Business Mix.
3. The Walworth Society asked the committee to carry out a scrutiny review of the trading environment on the Walworth Road. It suggested three possible dimensions to the review:
 - to assess the retail mix that exists on the street
 - to explore the powers available to the council to support this important high street
 - to consider the impact of the Elephant and Castle regeneration scheme on the Walworth Road retail environment.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

4. The committee's recommendations are listed below.
 1. Although recognising that the council's powers are limited, the committee recommends that the cabinet's general approach to preventing saturation by payday loan, pawn shops and betting shops on our high streets should be assertive and robust and as pro-active as the law allows. Specifically, the committee recommends that:
 - (i) Cabinet and planning committee explore the possibility of using Article 4 Direction powers for Walworth Road.
 - (ii) Cabinet asks officers to look at whether recent changes to national non domestic rates (NDR) allow the council more powers which could be of use in influencing the balance of retail use along a high street.

- (iii) Council uses the powers it has under Article 4 directions to ensure that properties in Class 2 business use have to go through the planning process in order to convert to payday loan, pawn and betting outlets.
 - (iv) Cabinet engage with Central London Forward and Westminster City Council in order to explore cross-London solutions to economic and planning problems affecting the high street, for example the use of London-only statutory powers.
 - 2. That cabinet seeks to actively encourage the creation of a credit union on the Walworth Road.
 - 3. That cabinet consider introducing a greater level of detail into the assessment of the existing retail mix as part of sustainability appraisals for new planning policy documents.
 - 4. That cabinet instructs officers to review the capacity of Walworth trade, cultural and business associations in order to ensure the maximisation of the local offer.
 - 5. That cabinet ensures that the council, in its capacity as landlord of a number of retail premises in the Walworth Road area, recognises the long term commercial advantages of a healthy retail environment and develops a lettings policy that positively promotes cultural, social and economic regeneration.
 - 6. That cabinet takes steps to identify opportunities for introducing new community facilities into the Walworth Road area, for example a health centre and facilities for youth provision.
 - 7. That cabinet considers commissioning external research into:
 - (i) The impact of payday loan, pawn and betting shops on the well-being of the locale.
 - (ii) The medium and longer term business development in the Walworth Road.
- The results to be available to the Walworth Town Team and the Economic Development Team, in order to develop a more comprehensive "view of the whole".
- 8. That the cabinet member for finance, resources and community safety monitors reports from local police and Southwark anti-social behaviour unit (SASBU) to see whether evidence of anti-social behaviour emerges in relation to betting shops, gambling arcades and fast food outlets on the Walworth Road.
 - 9. That a meeting be arranged between the chair and vice-chair of the overview & scrutiny committee, the chair of the Walworth Society, the chair of planning committee and the cabinet member for regeneration and corporate strategy in order to discuss ways in which the development of the Elephant & Castle can best enhance the retail offer on the Walworth Road and improve what needs improving without damaging what is currently good about the area.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Overview & Scrutiny Committee Agenda 8 July 2013	Scrutiny Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Peter Roberts 020 7525 4350

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Shelley Burke, Head of Overview & Scrutiny	
Report Author	Peter Roberts, Scrutiny Project Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	3 September 2013	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services	N/a	N/a
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	N/a	N/a
Chief Officers	N/a	N/a
Cabinet Member	N/a	N/a
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	3 September 2013	