



Overview and Scrutiny Committee
11th December 2007

**Report from the Director of Policy
and Regeneration**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Update from the Town Centre Regeneration Task Group

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report sets out an update on the work of the Town Centre Regeneration Task Group

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to comment on the work of the task group.

3.0 Detail

3.1 On the 30th May 2007 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the scope for a Town Centre Regeneration Task Group. Membership of the task group is as follows:

- Cllr Peter Corcoran
- Cllr Lesley Jones, Chair
- Cllr Suresh Kansagra

3.2 The task group has taken evidence from the following witnesses:

- Town centre managers, LB Brent
- Director for Streetcare, LB Brent
- Director for Planning, LB Brent
- Assistant Director, Regeneration, LB Brent
- Senior Community Safety Officer, LB Brent

- West London Business Group

A questionnaire was also sent to members asking for their views on town centre regeneration.

4.0 Background issues on Town Centre Regeneration in Brent

- 4.1 Brent has total of 16 local centres of varying size and catchment. The larger centres in Willesden Harlesden, Kilburn shared with Camden and Barnet and Wembley as the flagship town centre. Smaller centres include Neasden and Queens Park.
- 4.2 Town centres in Brent have been in decline over many years for a variety of reasons including competition from neighbouring centres and lack of investment in infrastructure.
- 4.3 The demographics of many local areas have also changed. The area around Wembley used to be affluent this has now changed and many of the local people are migrant workers with less disposable income. There is now a greater proliferation of low quality retail outlets, as well as fried chicken and betting shops.
- 4.4 While there is the need to encourage local centres to cater for the needs of its residents, a vibrant sustainable town centre is one which has a variety of shops, the senior community safety officer also pointed out that some types of shops can encourage crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 4.5 The Council has sought to address the decline of our town centres through town centre management (TCM) in the larger centres of Wembley, Willesden and Harlesden. The role of TCM's is to develop strategic partnerships both with local businesses and across the council to promote the regeneration of our town centres. The West London Business Group highlighted that TCM's are a crucial contact for businesses who are considering setting up business in Brent. Also decline in town centres is caused by a range of problems and TCM's are able to take a strategic approach to address the issues.

5.0 Emerging Findings

- 5.1 We need better partnership working between streetcare, town centre managers and trading standards to manage the environmental issues on the high street.
- 5.2 We also need to promote small specialised town centres, to help to great a local identity and increase footfall on the high street.

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