

MPS JOIN BCSC IN CALL TO KICKSTART DEVELOPMENT

Regeneration will stall for many years unless councils are allowed new ways to raise money to encourage regeneration, according to a new report by the influential All Party Urban Development Group (APUDG), which received evidence from both public and private sector representatives.

BCSC welcomed the opportunity to respond to the APUDG's spring inquiry: *Regeneration and the Recession: Unlocking the Money*. The inquiry focused on the viability of existing regeneration financing models and the tests involved in introducing new financing arrangements.

In its response BCSC called on government to introduce a new funding method based on the successful tax increment financing model used across the USA, warning that without such intervention the recession could severely damage regeneration prospects for years to come. BCSC stressed the role of retail as key to town centre development, attracting the inward investment so vital to the fabric of town centres. Retail also plays a key role in countering the flow of investment away from communities in the search for short-term quality or convenience.

To maintain regeneration projects, positive intervention needs to be provided by both the public and private sector; we can no longer rely on the market alone to deliver. Public-private partnerships will be key to ensuring the delivery of sustainable, retail-led town centres at the heart of communities: a key focus of BCSC's annual Conference & Exhibition in Manchester, 9-11 November 2009.

www.bpsc.org.uk/conference

Full response: www.bpsc.org.uk/unlockingthemoney

BCSC maintains call for 'town centres first' focus

BCSC has called on the government to maintain a 'town centres first' approach to planning policy after the Department for Communities and Local Government published the new *Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Prosperous Economies (PPS4)*.

Key policies include promoting the vitality of town centres, consumer choice and retail diversity, an area derived from PPS6, as well as removing the 'needs' test which requires developers to show there is need for their proposal. The consultation paper seeks views on combining all national planning policy on economic development in urban and rural areas and town centres into one consolidated and streamlined Planning Policy Statement.

Brian Raggett, chair of BCSC's Government Affairs Committee, was joined by industry stakeholders to give evidence to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee on the planned changes to PPS6, voicing some concern that the focus on the 'town centres first' approach has been lost between PPS6 and PPS4. While there was not a strong case for a major change in planning policy, there was a demonstrable need for refinement. Although BCSC supports the removal of the 'needs test', there must be a sufficiently robust replacement, argues Raggett.

TASKFORCE ESTABLISHED TO ENSURE FOCUS ON SECONDARY RETAIL CENTRES

BCSC has established a working group to explore the impact of the recession on secondary retail centres, to focus on just how key organisations and relevant industry sectors can work together to stimulate the much-needed regeneration of smaller town and city centres.

The Secondary Centres Taskforce - a group that includes leading figures from the worlds of retail, retail property (including asset management and advisory) and finance - will examine how property owners, tenants, landlords, retailers, banks and local and central government can work together to prevent these often vulnerable town centres from falling into further decline as a result of increasing occupancy costs and a dramatic drop in capital investment.

One of the major issues affecting the retail property sector is the need to engage with key lending institutions. There is a crucial need to understand just how financial institutions are addressing the business planning issues related to their assets - assets which in many cases have had equity wiped out and debt come under stress. With the help of the new taskforce, BCSC will look to raise awareness of the implications of (and exposure to) empty rates, the need for capital investment in order to re-let units, and the issues surrounding the overall rejuvenation of assets. www.bpsc.org.uk/issues



BCSC in Westminster

BCSC is the organisation representing retailers, developers, landlords, architects, agents and local authorities - all sections of the industry with an interest in the managed retail environment. BCSC activity includes reviewing legislation, disseminating information and developing policy appropriate for this industry.

To make contact with the retail property industry in your locality, to discuss the impact of legislation on shopping centres large or small in your area, or to understand the retail economy and the people it serves in your constituency, please contact BCSC on 020 7222 1122.

For further information on BCSC and our activities, please visit our website: www.bpsc.org.uk

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Public sector organisations can take advantage of special reduced delegate rates and special reduced exhibiting rates within the main exhibition space or within a dedicated public sector hub.

The public sector has an essential role to play delivering the retail-led regeneration schemes that sustain town centres, acting as promoter, master planner, facilitator and part funder.

Partnerships that unite the public and private sectors, local authorities and private enterprise, central government and retail property developers, and landlords and tenants will be critical to carve out the creative solutions that ensure the success of local economies. www.bcsc.org.uk/conference

PUBLIC SECTOR REWARDED FOR DELIVERING THRIVING RETAIL CENTRES

Local authorities fighting back against the economic downturn to deliver revitalised retail environments were rewarded on 17 June at BCSC's newly relaunched Town Centre Environment Awards. Leicester, Liverpool and Merthyr Tydfil councils were all awarded the Gold Standard, and North East Lincolnshire Council was given a commendation for Grimsby.

The winners all delivered dramatic improvements to the public realm with improved pedestrian accessibility and links to local amenities, while ensuring that strong heritage links to the surrounding area were maintained. Crucially, they have all been successful in demonstrating that an attractive, well-designed urban space can significantly boost retail investment and footfall.

www.bcsc.org.uk/tce

QUICK LINKS

BCSC MP Portal: www.bcsc.org.uk/mpportal for research, statistics, industry news, pipeline developments in your constituency

BCSC Sustainability Portal: www.bcsc.org.uk/sustainability for updates on sustainability, community engagement and corporate social responsibility in the retail property sector

BCSC Charter: www.bcsc.org.uk/charter offering sustainability guidelines and good practice for the industry

BCSC website: www.bcsc.org.uk the voice of retail property, with 2600+ members - a forum for debate, networking and idea exchange

BCSC TO HOST FRINGE EVENTS AT AUTUMN PARTY CONFERENCES

The current climate has a serious impact on the high street and the retail development pipeline making it more crucial than ever to maximise public and private resources in an effort to ensure stability and growth across the board.

BCSC will continue its engagement with relevant parliamentary stakeholders across all three parties at this year's party conferences. Fringe meetings will be hosted in collaboration with the Local Government Association (LGA), leading the debate on the role of the public and private sectors in driving forward retail-led town centre regeneration.

Each fringe event will welcome a member of the LGA as well as a relevant MP as chair and key representatives from BCSC and the private sector. Stewart Jackson MP has kindly agreed to chair the event at the Conservative Party Conference and we very much look forward to him bringing his wealth of experience and expertise to this event.

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