

BCSC AT PARTY CONFERENCES

BCSC continued to be the leading voice for the retail property industry with a busy party conference season, actively engaging with CLG teams across the political spectrum. We championed calls for greater partnership between the public and private sector to reignite the regeneration pipeline.

Alongside meeting CLG teams and prospective parliamentary candidates with an interest in retail-led regeneration, we hosted fringe events: *Regeneration Through Partnership: Public Private Engagement* in partnership with the Local Government Association. The fringes were a great success, attracting MPs, Councillors and industry specialists allowing for fruitful discussion. Amongst the topics covered were:

- development finance
- regional planning
- occupancy costs and
- local government empowerment (resource and training/up-skilling).

BCSC strongly believes that many of the UK's towns and cities need inward investment to realise their aspirations and successfully spur renewal of their communities, reaping social and economic benefits on a wide scale. Due to the current recession it is widely acknowledged that the private sector will not be able to deliver the same levels of capital as in the past and therefore new public and private partnerships are critical to secure new investment for an urban renaissance.

For more information on this please contact Philippa Latimer on philippa.latimer@bcsc.org.uk or 0207 227 3455

BCSC urges action for businesses on transitional rate relief

BCSC has called on the Government to introduce a significantly lower upward cap on transitional rate relief in order to prevent further instability in the retail property industry. In response to CLG consultation titled *The Transitional Arrangement for the Non-domestic Rating Revaluation 2010 in England* BCSC advocated annual caps on both increases and reductions over a five year period.

The CLG is seeking views on the £2bn relief scheme to support the minority of businesses who could see their rates increase as result of a five yearly revaluation of business property. BCSC has repeatedly expressed concern that using April 2008 rental values as a basis for business rates changes from April 2010 does not reflect the current capital values in the retail property sector.

This revaluation will have a significant effect on retailers' costs, potentially increasing the volume of empty retail properties thereby affecting high streets and town centres. We would like to see the Government reflect on the planned revaluation and consider delaying the process until stability returns to the retail property market.

The Government claims that most businesses (60%) will see falls in their rate bills next year following revaluation but admits some will pay more. The £2bn transitional relief scheme is designed to limit and phase in increases to rate bills resulting from the revaluation. The relief scheme is self-financed by businesses by redistributing money collected across the country from business rates.

BCSC response: www.bcsc.org.uk/RatingRevaluation2010

BCSC Retail Property Statistics:

Key stats:

- There are currently a total of 819 shopping centres in the UK, with 21% located in the South East and 12% located in the North West.
- A total of 1,340 retail parks exist in the UK, with 20% located in the South East, 11% located in the North West and a further 10% located in the West Midlands.
- The total retail and leisure floorspace devoted to shopping centres within the UK equates to 12.4 million sqm.
- The retail property industry currently employs over seven million people across the UK, with 2.8 million people employed within retail functions and 4.5 million people employed in property services. (*Retail employment is inclusive of all those who work directly within UK shops or their associated head offices. Property services employment is inclusive of shopping centre management, customer services staff, surveyors, agents, investors, asset managers, architects etc.*)
- 80% (72.8 million sqm) of retail and leisure floorspace across the UK is classified as in-town, with the proportion of out-of-town schemes more prevalent within Yorkshire & Humberside, Wales and the East of England.

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.bcsc.org.uk



BCSC WELCOMES NEW PLANNING FLEXIBILITY

BCSC has welcomed proposals set out in the Government's latest planning consultation - *Greater Flexibility for Planning Permissions* - and emphasises the crucial role planning could play in reviving the retail property development pipeline.

In our response to the consultation, we assert that more flexibility in the planning system is particularly welcome at a time when many developers and retailers are experiencing problems promoting viable schemes. The proposed changes could remove the need for some plans to be re-submitted after the three-year time limit has lapsed - extending the life of many planning permissions, easing the financial burden, and ultimately bringing retail developments back into the pipeline.

BCSC's response highlighted the contribution of retail development to the UK economy: the industry contributes an estimated 8% GDP, and employs almost three million people. BCSC also notes the positive impact that retail-led development brings in terms of community benefits - delivering local jobs, improved transport links, and enhancing public realm.

We strongly support the potential reduction of the burden on developers, operators and key stakeholders involved in the planning decision and urge that local planning authorities should consider granting permissions with a longer duration on a case-by-case basis - taking into account schemes where there is the potential issue of viability.

BCSC response: www.bpsc.org.uk/GreaterFlexibilityForPlanning

BCSC reinforces sustainability commitment through Green Property Alliance

BCSC continues to play an active role in educating and promoting sustainability best practice to the retail property industry. Sustainability is a key issue for BCSC members, and despite the recession's severe impact on the industry, BCSC has remained committed in keeping sustainability at the forefront of its priorities.

With this commitment in mind BCSC has become actively involved in the Green Property Alliance which was established to promote cross industry communication on the increasingly significant and complex subject of sustainability. The group is made up of a wide range of industry representatives (comprising of the BPF, BRC, BCO, IPF, RICS, and others) from the property industry and is currently acting on several initiatives including;

- working with the Global Reporting Initiative to develop a sector supplement for the property industry
- the establishment of an industry-led measurement and metrics working group to establish common metrics for reporting sustainability factors including energy, waste and water
- responding to policy consultations on a range of issues including:
 - Carbon Reduction Commitment
 - EPBD II
 - revisions to Part L of Building Regulations and
 - the proposals for new commercial buildings to be zero carbon by 2019.

BCSC is represented on the committee by Public Affairs Manager Philippa Latimer on philippa.latimer@bpsc.org.uk or 0207 227 3455

BCSC also has a dedicated sustainability portal which can be accessed at: www.bpsc.org.uk/sustainability

Public sector to play lead role in BCSC's annual conference

The public sector will play an integral role in this year's BCSC Conference & Exhibition, as partnership work to unite local authorities with private enterprise tops the agenda. The event will take place in Manchester, at Bridgewater Hall and Manchester Central from 9-11 November 2009, and is set to explore some of the challenges and solutions needed to secure future viable, sustainable communities.

It is a unique forum for the public sector to meet and engage with developers, retailers and corporate partners, to help kick-start regeneration, maximise inward investment and promote towns, masterplans and major regeneration projects. Coventry City Council, Invest in Nottingham, National Retail Planning Forum and

Warwickshire City Council will all be exhibiting at the event, and representatives from Bath & North East Somerset Council, and Bournemouth Borough Council will also be attending.

The three-day Conference - led by speakers such as the Rt. Hon. Michael Portillo and former John Lewis Partnership Chairman Sir Stuart Hampson - will include a Local Authority session, chaired by Dermot Finch, Chief Executive of Centre for Cities. There will also be a Question Time session with Bob Neill MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government & Planning and Julia Goldsworthy MP, Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government.

QUICK LINKS

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

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

BCSC website: www.bpsc.org.uk the voice of retail property, with almost 3,000 members - a forum for debate, networking and idea exchange