

Sandra White MSP
for Glasgow Kelvin
PUTTING KELVIN FIRST



PE1497/K

Public Petitions Committee
T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

28th May 2014

Dear Committee,

In responding to PE1497 it is worth noting that as the Member for Glasgow Kelvin, my constituency includes the West End of Glasgow within its boundaries and as such that I have first-hand knowledge of the situation the petitioners speak of.

I have on a number of occasions had direct contact with both members of the public and local retailers who have approached me to voice their concerns over the rapid expansion of small sized local supermarkets.

These concerns have centred on a number of issues: a loss of local businesses due to the expansion of the supermarket chains into the local area; a loss of character, vibrancy and diversity to the area; higher prices in 'local' supermarkets as opposed to larger outlets and a lack of choice as a result of the largely homogenised produce available from such outlets.

Without going into detail at this time I support the supplementary written evidence provided by the petitioners with regards to the details of businesses which have been impacted upon as a result of supermarket expansion into local areas.

Furthermore I would be more than happy to compile further evidence for the committee to consider with regards the above point should they wish it.

With regards concerns over a loss of character, vibrancy and diversity to the area I echo the sentiments contained within the submission to the Committee by Falkirk Council in that the Scottish Government's proposals are to ensure vibrancy in our local high streets; however that these seem to be at odds with current practice.

I note that in the Government's response they point to the role of SPP (2010) which states that an impact analysis may be necessary for smaller retail and leisure proposals which may have a significant impact on vitality and viability.

PUTTING KELVIN FIRST - SANDRA WHITE MSP

Sandra White MSP

Room 5.07, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5688 Fax: 0131 348 5945 email: sandra.white.msp@scottish.parliament.uk



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Sandra White MSP

for Glasgow Kelvin

PUTTING KELVIN FIRST

The Government's response goes on to state that as a result: 'the policy therefore provides flexibility for situations where small local supermarkets may have an impact, depending on the circumstances of the area.'

Whilst this is welcome it is unclear as to how such a mechanism would be triggered and what constitutes 'a significant impact on vitality and viability'

With the above in mind I believe it would be advantageous for the Committee to seek further clarification on this point from the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council in the hope that this allays the petitioners concerns.

The Scottish government also states that a review of the NPF and SPP is currently being undertaken and it may be worthwhile for the Committee to use this opportunity to ask the Scottish for further details of how they envisage including the stated aims of 'vibrant and diverse town centres'.

I also agree with The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) in its analysis that more studies need to be undertaken alongside its suggestion that 'the Scottish Government could task the group preparing a town centre master-planning toolkit¹⁰ to assess the issues the petition raises in more detail. It could then, if appropriate, include specific guidance within the draft Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)' and would also welcome the Scottish Government's view on this point.

Finally I note with some irony the submission of the Scottish Retail Consortium that:

'These stores also help customers to shop locally and benefit other retailers around them by increasing footfall in their area, often on struggling high streets. They also deliver a multitude of other communal services including a central meeting-place, somewhere for local groups and politicians to engage with people as they shop, an outlet for local products, cash points, notice boards and newspapers, information on nutrition, recycling facilities, etcetera.'

Above and beyond all this these retailers are also passionate about their wider social obligations, and about doing even more through their community programmes. This includes support to charities, schools, clubs and other groups by fundraising and financial support, through staff volunteering, through health, sport, environmental and educational projects.'

PUTTING KELVIN FIRST - SANDRA WHITE MSP

Sandra White MSP

Room 5.07, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5688 Fax: 0131 348 5945 email: sandra.white.msp@scottish.parliament.uk



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Sandra White MSP

for Glasgow Kelvin

PUTTING KELVIN FIRST



It appears to me that the centralisation of these services in one retail outlet is exactly what the petition seeks to avoid and contradicts the claim that it leads to increase footfall for other retailers.

Furthermore the description of a supermarket as a central meeting point, somewhere for local groups and politicians to engage with the community, etc. is at the very best somewhat exaggerated.

We all want to see diverse and dynamic local communities and the petitioner is right in highlighting what they see as a potential barrier to this and I would like to see the committee take further action with regards as outlined within my submission.

Yours faithfully,

Sandra White MSP

PUTTING KELVIN FIRST - SANDRA WHITE MSP

Sandra White MSP

Room 5.07, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5688 Fax: 0131 348 5945 email: sandra.white.msp@scottish.parliament.uk