

Deputy S Luce  
Chairman; Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel  
Scrutiny Office  
Morier House  
Halkett Place  
St Helier  
JE1 1DD



Dear Deputy Luce,

Retail Policy Review

There are many figures, facts and reviews about the retail sector that we could all review and have an opinion on, and I am sure your teams have studied them all in great depth. However if we were to step back, look at the town, digest and view it as one would a private business, how would you run it?

There would be many obvious changes that would need addressing such as:

1. Getting to town. Driving into town and the momentous one-way system makes people groan and puts you off heading into town...and that's before you've even started your shopping experience.
2. Transport issues. Issues such as parking and bus options need addressing. The distance from Liberation station to Social Security or the Tax office has not been thought through. For certain people such as the elderly, disabled and young children, this distance is too far to walk. More parking options should be available for shoppers.
3. Commercial vehicles. Commercial vehicles should not be allowed in town between 10am and 6pm (as is the case in many busy cities). This would not only free up spaces in town, but also create a more shopper-oriented atmosphere.
4. The town shopping experience is far too spread out and needs consolidating or linking together. The distance from Colomberie to the Parade and Castle Quay to West Centre is a huge foot print. Closer shops or a more fluid town structure would encourage cross selling and bring more footfall to these shopping areas. Other successful towns work in a very much smaller footprint and successfully manage to create a welcoming, more intimate shopping experience.
5. The town needs a central flagship, to draw people in; you wouldn't build a shopping mall without a flagship. I would suggest the Central Market, should be used as the heartbeat of the community, colourful and full of character. Yes a new floor needs to be laid and the area uplifted, but it will work...you see this over and over again in other countries, where the town market is a bustling hub of activity and colour.
6. Town must become a social hub, with events and interactive communication. It needs to reclaim its sense of community and vibrancy so that it becomes a place to be seen, a place you want to visit and (for the younger generations) a place hang out in where there are vibrant, unusual cafes and eating places.
7. The town needs to embrace the changes in how we communicate and network, especially the retail sectors in the view to communicating their messages through websites and social media sites.

8. Signage around town is dreadful and uninformative. The town signage needs to create a vibrant and inviting feel, with interactive communication for children as well as being informative.
9. Planning need to move much faster with better communication in the view to work together for the same goals. A shopkeeper wants to get open as soon as possible which will generate jobs and taxes. As it currently stands, planning are coming across as an obstacle and not understanding business needs ... this sector should be fast tracked.
10. Sunday shopping should be the choice of each individual retailer. Other sectors such as hospitality and trade can work as and when they feel fit, so why should retail be any different.
11. The Town Manager and the team need to be the driving force, a colourful dynamic team that inspires the feel of the town.

Town as it stands today, is grey and boring (with the exception of a few unique businesses that bravely stand out from the crowd). If rents were lower, there would be more colourful and vibrant businesses filling the (currently) empty buildings.


Jersey is home to some incredibly creative and innovative entrepreneurs whose creativity, passion and enthusiasm could be just the energy needed to renew and unite the town centre as a community. Sadly, as it stands, the costs involved in setting up such businesses are too high and the risks too offputting for many.

For the few bold businesses that shine out from the crowd, their views need to be heard and their energy channelled into pulling together a colourful and dynamic vision for town. It is the small, individually owned businesses that bring a sense of personality to a town...hidden treasures amongst the larger, more mainstream retail outlets that often lack personal spirit and passion. If we are to reignite Jersey's town centre, then personality, passion and community spirit is what we need to create.

I am one of many shoppers that just want to get in and out of town as quickly as possible, and this has a knock on effect on all businesses from retail, to hospitality and, ultimately employment.

There needs to be a clear, forward thinking strategy (that incorporates all generations and future generations) driving the town forward to become a vibrant and appealing centre, a place we are proud of and want to be seen in.

Yours sincerely,

  
Sean Guegan  
Director  
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