

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, PROPERTY & RETAIL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 13TH JANUARY 2025 AT ONE CROWN HOUSE**

Present: Tariq Phillips Chris Lacey Richard Newsam Franco Orlando
Tom Simpson Tariq Phillips John-Paul Jackson Frank Perri
Will Park Clare Charrett

Apologies: Steve Hall Nigel Dickason Richard Taylor
Tim Wells Stefania Ginex

ITEM	DETAIL	ACTION
1.	APOLOGIES: The meeting was opened, and apologies noted.	
2.	INTRODUCTIONS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions were not necessary. • Tariq opened the meeting as new Chair of this sub-committee 	
3.	COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2024 was stable, confidence has improved, and prices are up between 3% and 4%: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pipelines are healthy. ▪ Completion times are slow (Tariq did provide a detailed explanation of issues that are causing this mainly down to regulation and lack of staff – see below). ▪ Stock of properties is up. ▪ The hardest sales are flats. • Construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No further news. ○ New fire regulations to add to cost of builds. • Architects/planners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The number of residential enquiries is steady but not where they were a couple of years ago. ▪ Development seems to have gone quiet. ▪ Just as for other local authorities, time taken to decide on planning applications contributes to delays. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strong take up previous quarter for office space this has now dwindled. Lack of available commercial units continues, with Kingsway and Woking Business parks full to occupancy. ○ 6 Church Street West has exchanged, office building to be converted to residential units under PD rights. ○ Blackfords solicitors and Hart Brown solicitors have moved but staying within the town. ○ Sheerwater: reasonable level of enquiries, phases of units Red and then Yellow. Anchor tenant to be a Pharmacy. 	

4.	<p>RETAIL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas period summary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wolsley Place/Victoria Place: Still gathering data for Xmas trade. Initial information suggests some businesses did very well and some not so well. Some concerns about the confidence of businesses in local and national economy. ○ The grotto specifically where the visitor numbers did not meet our target, but the take-up of photography was good ○ Peacocks: No data available. Primark continues to be the anchor tenant. ○ Positive footfall – a 4% increase in footfall compared to previous December bucked the UK trend. ○ Shoppers' car parking is slightly down year on year. • Challenges to attracting shoppers include the closure of Victoria Way. Expected to reopen on 17th January subject to weather conditions. 	
5.	<p>PARKING & NEIGHBOURHOOD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing visitor data report, including December 24, shows the current position of the Town Centre Car Parks. • Growth throughout the year of 2024, which is positive, but only mildly so in Dec 2024 against Dec 2023 and a fair bit down from Dec 2022. • The key thing to note for the car parks however is the growth in daily worker and commuter usage in our car parks with the return to the office means that whilst shopper numbers do increase in December, those working in the town and commuting to London reduces, and so the peaks of Decembers past is less apparent. • The overall picture for the year however is an increase in visitor numbers across all car parks, albeit behaviours of which car parks people use is developing. 	
6.	<p>PLANNING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on general Council matters include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ James Rodger appointed as new Head of Planning ○ The former head (Bev Kuchar) is the Strategic Director of Place. • Short update on major schemes coming forward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ British Heart Foundation (BHF): approved for a 26-storey building. ○ BHF moving into former Wilco's unit. ○ Work has commenced at Cleary Court – plan is to demolish and look for funders/investors to complete the project. 	
7.	<p>MISCELLANEOUS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Will Forster has confirmed he would be willing to attend one of the meetings this year. • Woking Football Club is under new ownership and a new manager has been appointed. May be worth inviting a Club representative along to a meeting to see what plans the new owners have to invest in the grounds if any. • The Light Box will be exhibiting Warhol and Matisse this year which should attract international exposure to the gallery. Currently exhibiting Woking Story. • Allica Bank representative interested in attracting Woking new business for lending and commercial bank accounts. 	
8.	<p>NEXT MEETING: To be advised as soon as possible.</p>	