

PE1497/F

Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment

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Date: 27 February 2014

If phoning or calling ask for Ms Cox

Mr Howlett
Public Petitions Commission
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Howlett

Consideration of Petition [PE1497](#) – Stop Unwanted Supermarkets in Local High Streets

Thank you for your letter of 4th February 2014 inviting South Ayrshire Council to comment on the above petition. I have been asked to comment on behalf of the Chief Executive.

It is a key priority of the Council to maximise the vitality and viability of our town centres and we seek to do that through a range of initiatives and policies. The questions that you ask are therefore of considerable interest to us.

We have a general recognition of the important role that independent retailers can bring to the vitality of town centres and the town centre management work that we undertake seek to support independent retailers where ever we can.

We also recognise that small supermarkets in town centres can help provide important business/customer footfall and that the potential of linked shopping trips to other shops and facilities can be of benefit to the wider town centre. We also recognise that smaller supermarkets can bring a valuable service to the local community by providing opportunities for walk-in and 'basket' shopping, potentially avoiding the need to make longer distance trips to edge of centre supermarkets.

You ask about the impact that small local supermarkets have had on town centres - this Council has not undertaken any survey or researched other evidence into this matter. I would, however, comment that where small supermarkets have opened in our town centres that we have a perception that there have been discernable increases in footfall in that part of the town centre and there also appears to have been a reciprocal benefit to the surrounding shops.

I hope that these comments are helpful to you.

Regards

Christina Cox
Planning Manager