

4 April 2005

MANIFESTO FOR RETAIL

The Election Shopping list

As the three main parties attempt to win votes from the business community, the British Retail Consortium (BRC) has today launched the 'Manifesto for Retail'.

The manifesto outlines the real challenges faced by retailers and the need for Government to encourage enterprise and growth by reducing the burden of regulation. The BRC is calling for:

- **Full and rapid implementation of the Hampton Report to cut the burden of regulation on retailers**
- **No return of business rates to local authority control**
- **An end to above inflation national minimum wage increases**
- **Stronger penalties to deter retail crime**
- **Removal of disincentives to the wider use of renewable energy**

Kevin Hawkins, BRC Director General, said:

"Retail issues affect everyone - after all everyone is a customer. Legislation which fails to recognise that consumers are at the heart of what retailers do, is legislation that fails everyone.

"Anyone can make pledges and plans to ease the burden of business rates, taxes, regulation and red tape, but everything depends on whether promises are kept and plans implemented. They must not be left on the shelf to gather dust.

"Retail is the heartbeat of the economy, making a vital contribution to economic growth. But in 2005, with ever increasing costs and a slowdown in consumer spending, retailers face tougher trading conditions and some challenging times ahead.

"The sector carries a 2.8 million strong workforce and operates through 280,000 outlets across the UK - it is the fulcrum between the consumer and the wider world. There are few business sectors as important to community life as retailing but support from Government is crucial if we are to sustain this."