

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CITY CENTRE FORUM

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House on **2 SEPTEMBER 2013** from 3.36pm to 5.43pm

- ✓ Councillor Michael Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Jon Collins
- ✓ Councillor Georgina Culley
- ✓ Councillor Chris Gibson
- ✓ Councillor Brian Grocock
- ✓ Councillor John Hartshorne
Councillor Nicola Heaton
- ✓ Councillor Nick McDonald
- ✓ Councillor David Mellen
Councillor Dave Trimble
- ✓ Councillor Jane Urquhart
- ✓ Councillor Steph Williams

(✓ indicates present at meeting)

Business Sector / Other

- ✓ Jeff Allen (Vice Chair))
Steve Pashley) Retail/Leisure BID (Business Improvement District)
Tom Waldron-Lynch)
Sean Akins)
Jim Taylor) IIN (Invest in Nottingham) Retail Forum
- ✓ Jennifer Spencer - Experience Nottinghamshire
- ✓ Janine Bone - Intu Victoria Centre
- Andy Rooke - Nottinghamshire Police

(✓ indicates present at meeting)

Also in attendance

- Pete Morris - Nottingham BID
- Iain Simons - Game City
- John Connelly - Digital Infrastructure Manager)
- Steven Maxwell - Retail Strategy Coordinator) Nottingham
- Catherine Mayhew - City Centre Coordinator) City Council
- Zena West - Constitutional Services Officer)

9 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to appoint Mr Jeff Allen, Chair of the Nottingham BID, as Vice Chair for the 2013/14 municipal year.

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Sean Akins – IIN Retail Forum/Bildurn (Properties) Ltd.

11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12 MINUTES

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2013 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

**13a DIGITAL NOTTINGHAM – NEXT GENERATION WIRELESS IN NOTTINGHAM CITY CENTRE
(Presentation of the Digital Infrastructure Manager)**

John Connelly, Digital Infrastructure Manager, introduced the presentation to the Forum, which included the following key points:

- (a) There has been massive growth in the mobile sector in a very short time, both in the number of devices and improved technology such as more powerful processors and sharper screen resolution. The data explosion presents huge infrastructure challenges, especially in city centres, where buildings can create signal shadows. With improved GPS function, the potential for targeted services based on precise location is huge;
- (b) The vision for Nottingham City is for next generation wireless connectivity, with some free wifi access across the city centre. The service will need to complement existing commercial wireless zones, and be reliable and consistent for on-the-move connectivity;
- (c) The current wireless information system works with macro cells, provided through the cellular network. The macro cells deliver 3G and 4G from large rooftop devices, but face significant city centre challenges which the use of small cell technology can counter. Small cells are the size of a shoe box and can be connected to existing street furniture with power (such as streetlights). Around 30-50 small cells are needed to supplement and improve communications in a city centre. Small cells increase capacity, improve depth of coverage (especially inside buildings), improve average data rates, and deliver value added services through high-precision location information;
- (d) Other cities are already trialling small cell technology. Leeds has installed a number of small cell units and offer free city centre wifi hotspots. At a distance of 200 metres from a small cell, users can expect at least 50mbps per second. Wifi is available up to 100 metres away. The industry is very keen to expand to Nottingham, and we are going out to tender very soon for small cells to be installed on our electronic street furniture.

Arising from discussion, the following issues were raised:

- (e) Not many cities have trialled small cells and wifi zones, so there is not much evidence to show benefit. But those areas that have had trials now have established networks or have contracts in place to ensure ongoing provision. Both the Broadmarsh Centre and the Victoria Centre will have free wifi available by the end of September;
- (f) The contract will be with a single provider, with information security regulated by Ofcom. Nottingham City Council will have to work with the provider to establish how added commercial value can be delivered, i.e. by offering services targeted by location. There are questions around mobile and internet security which will need to be addressed;
- (g) The best locations for the free wifi hotspots will be agreed with the provider. This matter has potentially huge commercial impact, as some small business already offer free wifi in order to attract business. It could be beneficial to offer free wifi in areas that are in need of some extra footfall. Leeds has two hotspots, whereas the whole of Liverpool city centre has free wifi, at a considerable cost to the Council. There is a potential small revenue stream to Nottingham City Council based on the number of assets used by the provider;
- (h) The Forum is keen to ensure that the wifi service will be practical for those on the move, i.e. they won't have to keep re-registering every time they move between different wifi zones. Some concern was raised around capacity issues at large events with significantly increased user numbers;
- (i) The Forum expressed concern over current broadband speeds within the city and our particularly poor internet infrastructure. Mr Connelly confirmed that there is a good fibre network available (though not at a good price) and that Nottingham is currently the best connected city in the country, with 94% of citizens having access to fast services. Pressure could be placed on providers to increase network speeds, but there is no commercial interest in making fibre optic services available. It is envisaged that whoever wins the tender will experience increased demand for connectivity, which would lead to private investment and greater benefits. Nottingham City Council could not offer any service to any communications provider above the infrastructure to support small cells, as they are not legally allowed to subsidise any communications service;
- (j) The Forum requested clarity on the next steps, what the public sector stake in communications will look like, and what our focus on content will be.

RESOLVED to note the presentation and to receive further information from the Digital Infrastructure Manager on the development of Nottingham's communication offer at a meeting of the City Centre Forum in 2014.

**13b DIGITAL NOTTINGHAM – IT'S IN NOTTINGHAM MOBILE APP
(Presentation of Marketing Co-ordinator, Nottingham BID)**

Pete Morris, Marketing Co-ordinator of the Nottingham BID, introduced the presentation to the Forum, which included the following key points:

- (a) It's In Nottingham is the commercial brand of the Nottingham BID. The website contains a business directory of all 700-800 BID members, and includes information

on events, offers, treats, vouchers, news, and about/contact information. Businesses maintain their own information. There are over 12,000 subscribers, and the number is steadily growing, with an average of 5,629 unique visitors per month;

- (b) The mobile app is available on iPads and iPhones, and is coming soon to Android and Microsoft devices. Information is directly imported from the website, but it is not just a mobile version of the website. The app can be found by searching for “Nottingham” on the app store. You can browse businesses by keyword, and results are listed alphabetically;
- (c) Offers and special events are highlighted, and the device has social media integration, so details are very easy to share. The app is currently being advertised on posters and city centre maps and information leaflets. Local businesses are encouraged to sign up to increase the offer to consumers;
- (d) The target is to reach 4,000 downloads by the end of 2013. The app has not officially been launched yet, so there are currently only a couple of hundred subscribers.

Arising from discussion, the following issues were raised:

- (e) A similar scheme has been tried before, but this scheme is business-led and has much stronger links with local Nottingham business. There are active brand ambassadors in constant communication with developers and each other. Nottingham BID now has a strong structure and framework, with positive feedback from members, and is constantly evolving and developing. The Forum agreed that the app is a great demonstration of the positive effects of the Nottingham BID;
- (f) Ipswich has launched a similar app, but it is too early to have figures. The Forum felt that with the positive demonstration of the app, the target figure of 4,000 users is rather conservative, as the app seems to be very strong;
- (g) Some members of the forum commented that old offers were still showing on the app, and that listing retailers alphabetically means the same businesses are always listed first. The Forum suggested that search results should be randomised;
- (h) The Forum agreed that a good target audience for the app is students and their visiting families, keen to get a deal when they come to visit their children at University. They would then take away a positive image of Nottingham and its retail offer. The app will be promoted at Freshers’ events, along with the promotion of Nottingham as a safe “purple flag” city.

RESOLVED to note the presentation and to thank Peter Morris and the BID for their hard work on developing the app.

**13c DIGITAL NOTTINGHAM – GAME CITY
(Presentation of Director of GameCity)**

Iain Simons, Director of GameCity at Nottingham Trent University, introduced the presentation to the Forum, which included the following key points:

- (a) GameCity started eight years ago, with an aim to create conversation between the games industry and the rest of the world. GameCity helps to normalise technology, reinforces the message that computer games are designed by people, and inspires young people with information on careers in the computer game industry. Developers from America, Europe and Japan come to meet students and each other, and give talks about their profession;
- (b) A very small number of the thousands of attendees consider themselves to be gamers. GameCity appeals to many people, and specifically informs parents, families, women and children of what makes up the computer games industry. Nothing is for sale at GameCity; it is purely about providing information and inspiration;
- (c) This year GameCity will coincide with half term. It will take place over 8 days, with focused events, such as a business conference. GameCity was originally held in Market Square, but since 2008 it has been held in multiple venues across the city, which this year will include Waterstones, Angel Row, Nottingham Trent University, Antenna, various empty shops and some BID businesses. GameCity encourages any local business to get involved and run their own event. There is also integration with voucher offers and the hospitality industry for people visiting Nottingham;
- (d) There will be a mapped trail across Nottingham, marked into the pavement using pressure washers. Participation of young children in all GameCity events is strongly encouraged. There is also an education initiative called STEAM School (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mechanics), which runs workshops using Minecraft (a successful building blocks game), working in conjunction with City Council Planning colleagues and utilising 3D printing technology, for children who might like to join the industry. Nothing like this workshop has been done anywhere else;

In response to several questions and comments from Forum members, Iain Simons provided the following information:

- (e) The Forum expressed excitement and enthusiasm about the GameCity proposals, in particular the STEAM School workshops. The Forum agreed that GameCity should be very proud of holding such a prestigious video game festival, and that as a direct result of previous years' successful events, Nottingham now has a positive reputation for gaming and creative technology;
- (f) The Chair suggested that the STEAM School workshop around planning a virtual Nottingham using Minecraft could also incorporate some education about Nottingham's rich history, and that there is a great opportunity to advertise Nottingham's other visitor attractions to people in Nottingham for GameCity.

RESOLVED to thank Iain Simons for his informative presentation and note the contents.