

Executive Board City Centre Committee – 18th September 2012

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| Title of paper: | Nottingham City Centre Strategy | |
| Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s): | David Bishop | Wards affected: Arboretum , Bridge, Radford and Park and St Anns |
| Portfolio Holder(s): | Cllr McDonald | Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s): 24th August 2012 |
| Report author and contact details: | Nicki Jenkins Head of Economic Development nicki.jenkins@nottinghamcity.gov.uk | |
| Other colleagues who have provided input: | | |
| Key Decision: | No | |
| Reasons for Key Decision: | | |
| Expenditure, income or savings of £1,000,000 or more taking account of the overall impact of the decision: | | |
| • Revenue expenditure | | |
| • Revenue income | | |
| • Savings | | |
| • Capital expenditure | | |
| • Capital income | | |
| To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area consisting two or more wards in the City | | |
| Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority: | | |
| World Class Nottingham | | x |
| Work in Nottingham | | x |
| Safer Nottingham | | |
| Neighbourhood Nottingham | | |
| Family Nottingham | | |
| Healthy Nottingham | | |
| Leading Nottingham | | |
| Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users): | | |
| <p>The Nottingham Growth Plan launched July 2012, identifies that a vibrant City Centre is a crucial element in transforming the city's economy. Thriving retail and leisure sectors generate both jobs and prosperity for city residents and play an important role in attracting and retaining talent in the area.</p> <p>While there are a number of activities underway there is no overarching vision or strategy for the City Centre, this report aims to provide an update on programmes of work relating to the city centre and inform discussion on proposals for an overarching City Centre strategy.</p> | | |
| Recommendation(s): | | |
| 1 | To note the progress to date of existing activity aimed at driving growth within the city centre. | |
| 2 | To consider proposals for the development of a new City Centre strategy. | |

1 **BACKGROUND**

The Nottingham Growth Plan launched July 2012, identifies that a vibrant City Centre is a crucial element in transforming the city's economy. Thriving retail and leisure sectors generate both jobs and prosperity for city residents and play an important role in attracting and retaining talent in the area.

The city centre acts as the 'shop window' to the city for investors, visitors and new residents, therefore its continued strong economic performance is fundamental to the future economic growth of the city.

Creating an environment in which our retail and leisure sectors are able to flourish and grow will therefore be vital to the future prosperity of the Nottingham economy.

Over the past few months a number of pieces of work have been developed focusing on making improvements within the City Centre.

Retail Strategy

In January this year a Steering Group was formed comprising of Nottingham City Council, the Retail and Leisure BIDS and Invest in Nottingham Retail Forum, with the aim to develop a strategy to drive retail growth in the city centre and to better co-ordinate development activity.

There are two main objectives that we need to deliver: i) to increase the number of shoppers from our catchment coming to the city on a regular basis and ii) increase the amount they spend.

Experian were commissioned to undertake a data and trends analysis of key macro and micro level data sets to provide a performance context for Nottingham's retail offer, this is with a specific focus on the city centre, set within the context of other Core Cities and local competitors as a benchmark. This analysis also includes catchment size, spend profile, demographics / shopping trends, market share and leakage, unit size and retail mix, car parking provision, retail yields etc.

This data analysis, alongside consultation with local stakeholders has been used to steer the development of a new strategy (which is due to be completed in September) to drive retail and leisure growth in the city and to reposition Nottingham back into the top 5 retail destinations outside of London.

To do this, four key priorities have been identified and an action plan for each is in development.

Key Priorities

1. To strengthen Nottingham's retail and leisure offer in the City Centre, by growing the size and variety of both the comparison goods and independent sectors.
2. To improve the Nottingham visitor experience, offering variety, quality and a joined up approach to leisure and retail through revised approaches to events, markets and joining up the day to evening economy.
3. To increase the percentage of regular visitors to Nottingham from the full catchment area through more targeted marketing.

4. To improve the physical environment and infrastructure within the City Centre, so that it meets the future needs of retailers and provides an attractive and welcoming place to visit. This includes, regenerating areas in decline, bringing vacant shops back into use, amending car parking charges and developing the City Centre Spatial Plan as detailed below.

City Centre Spatial Strategy

Recognising that the physical make up of the City Centre is an important factor in creating growth, Nottingham City Council has been working to develop a new City Centre place plan. This is intended to set the scene for new development and other initiatives to make the City Centre once again a primary shopping, leisure and tourism. The plan due to be completed in September sets out a framework of key structural and connectivity elements and quarters, which are the distinctive areas within the City Centre within a spatial framework for the City Centre. While non-statutory itself, this plan will form part of the statutory Nottingham Local Plan.

Events Strategy

To attract more people into the city centre and to encourage them to stay longer we have to strengthen the links between retail and leisure activities. Events within the City play an important part of this and while Nottingham City Council have a busy events calendar a review needs to be undertaken to see if the quality and variety can be improved to attract a larger percentage of the shopping catchment.

It is also recognised that with increasing public sector cuts resources for this type of activity are scarce, therefore working with partners to pool resources will maximise the potential opportunities.

With this in mind a steering group of key stakeholders has been formed and a strategy will be developed over the coming months.

Car Parking

Car parking charges have been identified by retailers as a major contributor to falling footfall within the City Centre. In May this year the Retail BID published a review of city centre parking, which made a number of recommendations for improvements.

The review identified that while the cost of parking was competitive when compared to other cities, the maximum length of stay was a major issue. Nottingham City Council has therefore agreed to remove the maximum length of stay for on street parking and to simplify the pricing structure. These changes will come into effect in October this year.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

As outlined above there are a number of positive initiatives already underway which are aimed at ensuring that the City Centre remains successful and drives growth for the future.

While they are all interrelated and have been developed in consultation with each other, there is still no overarching vision for the City Centre and there are still some gaps that need to be addressed such as crime, licensing, cleansing, and others.

With this in mind it is proposed that an overarching strategy for the City Centre be developed with partners, which identifies a vision for how the City Centre looks and operates, encompasses those areas outlined above that work has already started on and identifies the remaining elements that will contribute towards maximising the growth of the City Centre, while making it a fun, inclusive and safe place to visit.

Discussion needs to take place on the proposed content of the strategy and timescales for delivery.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

One option would be to have no overarching strategy, however not doing so could mean that future decisions and the delivery of services within the City Centre may not be contributing to a common goal or vision, and could potentially duplicate or conflict going forward.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

An application has been made to Transformation Board for funds to establish a City Centre Co-ordinator to be based within the Economic Development team. It is envisaged that this individual would be responsible for the development of the City Centre strategy, supported by resources within the Economic Development budgets.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

None

6 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

Has the equality impact been assessed?

- (a) not needed (report does not contain proposals for new or changing policies, services or functions, financial decisions or decisions about implementation of policies development outside the Council)

EIA will be completed however on the final strategy.

- (b) No
- (c) Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

7 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

None

8 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

The Nottingham Growth Plan