

# **NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD CITY CENTRE COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES**

of meeting held on **18 SEPTEMBER 2012** at

Loxley House from 6.30 pm to 7.50 pm

- ✓ Councillor McDonald (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Norris
- ✓ Councillor Trimble
- ✓ Councillor Urquhart
  
- ✓ indicates present at meeting

#### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

#### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were made.

#### **3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

Councillor Urquhart was appointed Vice Chair.

#### **4 INTRODUCTION AND SCENE SETTING**

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the initial meeting of the Committee. The Chair explained that throughout the year, a retail steering group had been working on producing a business led strategy for retail growth in the City Centre and the development of a spatial plan. It had become clear that in order to maximise the City's potential to support job creation, more wide ranging and effective engagement of stakeholders was required with the additional need for a clearer executive lead with improved joint decision making and stronger co-ordination of internal resources. At its meeting on 10 September, Full Council had appointed this Committee to oversee the development and implementation of a City Centre Strategy with delegated powers to take decisions which impacted on the City Centre. The Committee would also have a role in ensuring that executive decisions and development of policy in respect of the City Centre were co-ordinated in terms of both internal and external stakeholder interest.

In addition, a new body, the City Centre Forum which would comprise both Councillors and representatives from the retail/leisure/tourism sectors would link closely with the Committee, performing both an advisory and consultative role at strategic level to support and inform more coordinated executive leadership on City Centre issues.

The Committee would meet six weekly, with two meetings taking between each City Centre Forum meeting to allow for reporting forwards and backwards.

The Corporate Director of Development advised the meeting that changes to the structure of the Economic Development Department were taking place to reflect the emerging arrangements. Recruitment to two new posts was in hand and it was hoped that appointees would be in post by the end of the year. It was recognised that there would need to be engagement with the relevant Neighbourhood Development Officers.

## **5 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Consideration was given to a report of The Corporate Director of Development, copies of which had been circulated informing the meeting of the remit of the Committee and its terms of reference as well as those of the City Centre Forum.

**RESOLVED that the terms of reference of the Committee and those of the City Centre Forum be noted.**

## **6 NOTTINGHAM CITY CENTRE STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a report of The Corporate Director of Development, copies of which had been circulated updating members on the various pieces of work being developed, focusing on making improvements within the City Centre, including the Retail Strategy, the City Centre Spatial Strategy, the Events Strategy and car parking.

The Chair requested that a headline strategy, pointing the way to the various strategies, i.e. a summary document, be available by January 2013.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that the progress to date of existing activity aimed at driving growth within the City Centre be noted;**
- (2) that the Corporate Director of Development be tasked with producing a summary document of the various City Centre strategies for distribution by January 2013.**

## **7 CITY CENTRE RETAIL STRATEGY**

John Yarham, Director of Economic Innovation and Employment gave a presentation on the City Centre Retail Strategy, the essential points of which were:

- a vibrant city centre was viewed as the key to transforming the City's economy;
- there were key challenges to be addressed in terms of the economic climate, high vacancy levels, the growth of internet shopping and changing consumer behaviour;
- Nottingham's ranking as a shopping centre was currently sixth outside London and had been declining steadily since 2003. There was a direct correlation in ranking with the increase in opening of new shopping centres;
- a steering group had been established in February 2012 to develop a new vision and strategy for the future growth of the retail and leisure sectors. It included the Council,

Nottingham Retail and Leisure Business Improvement Districts and the Invest in Nottingham retail Forum. A stakeholder workshop had been held in early August;

- the vision of the steering group was to ‘create a dynamic and successful retail and leisure sector which positions Nottingham within the top five retail destinations nationally’. It was proposed to do this by increasing the amount of shoppers visiting the City Centre and the level of spend within the City Centre.
- the proposed priorities were:
  - strengthening Nottingham’s retail and leisure offer in the City Centre, by growing the size and variety of both the comparison goods and independent sectors. The key actions in this respect were:
    - to work with partners to deliver improvements to both the Broadmarsh and Victoria Shopping Centres;
    - to develop a targeted investment campaign to attract absent brands;
    - to work with local partners to develop a package of business support for new and existing retailers;
    - to develop Derby Rd, Hockley as key independent retail locations;
    - to develop an annual marketing campaign raising awareness of the independent offer in the City;
    - to raise consumer awareness of brands on offer within the City.
  - to improve the Nottingham visitor experience, offering variety, quality and a joined up approach to leisure and retail by:
    - developing an overarching markets strategy for the City, creating opportunities for new and niche markets in alternative locations;
    - developing an events strategy for the Old Market Square and wider City Centre;
    - working with the retail and leisure sectors to develop targeted special offers/marketing packages;
    - developing a dedicated app. for shopping in Nottingham.
  - to improve the physical environment and infrastructure within the City Centre, so that it met the future needs of retailers and provided an attractive and welcoming place to visit by:
    - developing a City Centre Spatial Strategy which supported the growth of the retail offer;
    - reviewing and amending car parking pricing structure within the City Centre;
    - implementing further recommendations from the car parking review;

- undertaking a survey vacant properties, to identify priority hotspots;
  - rolling out an area based approach to addressing vacant property hotspots;
  - developing and delivering a strategy to bring vacant shops back into use;
  - ensuring that the City Centre had wide wi-fi coverage.
- actions already underway included:
    - amendments to the car parking pricing structure;
    - an events strategy working group had been established;
    - working proactively with CSC to bring forward Broadmarsh and Victoria Centre developments;
    - the Derby Rd pilot – an area based regeneration approach to reduce number of vacant shops;
    - a survey of vacant shops in City Centre was underway;
    - the City Centre spatial plan was being developed.

Arising from the presentation, a number of issues were raised:

- the high level of vacant shops in the City Centre was regarded as one of the most important issues which needed addressing;
- the quality of the retail offer was as important as the quantity. It was important to attract good quality, independent shops;
- in some aspects, the Council only had a role as an enabler, for example in the redevelopment of Broadmarsh Centre;
- the development of the Castle project was supported by Councillors and regarded as an important element in the rejuvenation of the City Centre;
- it was acknowledged that the digital offer needed to be improved;
- more consistent effort was required to sustain the niche market offer.

**RESOLVED that Mr Yarham be thanked for his presentation and that the contents be noted.**

## **8 CITY CENTRE SPATIAL STRATEGY**

Sue Flack, Director for Planning and Transportation, gave a presentation on the draft City Centre Place Plan, the essential points of which were:

- the key elements of the Plan were that it was a non-statutory plan that demonstrated a spatial view of the City Centre. It informed the statutory Local Plan, proposed a

framework of Quarters and Links, enabled different policies for different areas and set the Southern Gateway in context;

- the current situation highlighted a number of concerns including; the falling position of Nottingham in the National retail rankings, the number of vacant shops, the lack of a modern shopping mall, the lack of an appropriate tourism offer, the Broadmarsh 'blight', the demand for student accommodation, the on-street parking policy and evening economy issues;
- the proposed retail core, Creative Quarter, Castle Quarter, Royal Quarter, and Canal Quarter were shown to the Committee;
- the next steps involved:
  - the production of a full draft of the City Centre Place Plan for consultation and approval in the New Year;
  - the main concepts and sites were to be put on the Local Plan;
  - the production of the City Centre Place Action Plan with responsibilities, timescales and funding;

This with Retail Strategy, formed the overarching City Centre Strategy

**RESOLVED that Ms Flack be thanked for her presentation and that the contents be noted.**

## **9 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED that Constitutional Services arrange the next meeting to take place after 15 November and thereafter on a six weekly basis. Dates and times of meetings to be notified to Councillors and Officers.**