

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE BOARD CITY CENTRE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of meeting held on **20 NOVEMBER 2012** at

Loxley House from 6.33 pm to 7.45 pm

- ✓ Councillor McDonald (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Urquhart (Vice Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Chapman
- Councillor Collins
- ✓ Councillor Norris
- ✓ Councillor Trimble

✓ indicates present at meeting

10 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Collins (on other Council business).

11 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

12 NOTTINGHAM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) UPDATE

The Chair of the meeting was of the opinion that this item, although not included on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100(b) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972, in view of the special circumstances that the merge of the Leisure and Retail BIDs was due to happen in January 2013 before the next meeting of this Committee and it was important that members of the Committee were fully briefed ahead of this happening.

The Committee considered a presentation delivered by Mr Jeff Allen, Retail and Leisure BID Chair, on the proposal to merge the Leisure and Retail Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), the key points of which were:

- a Business Improvement District (BID) covered a defined geographic area, was for a set period of time (maximum five years) and was funded by a small levy applied to the rateable value of each commercial property within the defined area. This ensured that businesses which were subject to the levy directly benefited from the improvements that the BID delivered;
- Nottingham's current BIDS were:

- the Leisure BID. This had 265 levy payers with a levy rate 1.5% (minimum £150 per annum) with a threshold £5,000. The levy cap was £5,000. The levy income was £230,000. This BID was due to expire in December 2012;
- the Retail BID. This had 575 levy payers and Friends of the BID. The levy rate was 1.29 % with a threshold £15,000. The levy cap was £15,000. The levy income was £640,000 This BID was due to expire in December 2015;
- it was proposed to merge the Leisure BID and the Retail BID to form the Nottingham BID which would have 750 levy payers and Friends of the BID. The annual levy would be £850,000, with a levy rate 1.29%. The threshold was £15,000 and the levy cap £15,000. By merging the BIDS, there would be reduced overheads, economies of scale, and more money for front line services;
- the Nottingham BID would benefit from improved marketing with the aim that Nottingham would be safer, cleaner, ambitious and proud and the retail and leisure destination of choice;
- access and parking were key features of the Nottingham Bid with improvements/initiatives in the areas of Street Ambassadors, Taxi Marshalls, car parking, signage and maps;
- environment and safety were also important in the Nottingham BID. Examples were Street Pastors, cleaning, Best Bar None Awards, Floral Trail, NBAC Radio Scheme, Child Safe and business services;
- joint initiatives with Nottingham City Council included; the deep cleansing machine, a parking study, addressing evening economy issues, business services, traffic wardens and vacant units.

RESOLVED that Jeff Allen be thanked for his presentation and that the contents be noted.

13 ENGLISH HERITAGE URBAN PANEL

The Chair of the meeting was of the opinion that this item, although not included on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100(b)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, in view of the special circumstances that it related to a visit by members of the English Heritage Urban Panel which only took place in the second week of November and it was important that members of the Committee were updated on the Panels initial findings and the process going forward, before the formal report was published by the Panel.

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Development, copies of which were circulated at the meeting, updating the Committee on a recent visit to Nottingham by the English Urban Heritage Panel to the Broadmarsh/Southern gateway/Castle area of the City. The Panel had spent a day visiting Nottingham and analysing problems and potential, including the linkages between the developments, including the transport and road proposals;

- the English Heritage Urban Panel (the Panel) was made up of national urban design, architectural, development and heritage experts. It aimed to provide advice, examples of good practice and problem solving to authorities with development plans and/or issues to tackle. Its aim was to come to solutions that met the Panels priorities in terms

of a good townscape that respected the historic context, whilst meeting growth objectives;

- the Panel had last visited Nottingham eleven years ago to assess the Broadmarsh development plans. It was interested in the Broadmarsh/Southern gateway/Castle area of the City. The Panel had spent a day visiting Nottingham and analysing problems and potential, including the linkages between the developments, including the transport and road proposals;
- the Panel would produce a report concentrating their study around the master-planning for the 'Southern Gateway', with site appraisals of the Station area, the Broadmarsh Centre, 'People's College' and Nottingham Castle.

RESOLVED that the report be noted

14 NOTTINGHAM CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report of the Corporate Director of Development, copies of which had been circulated, outlining the proposed way forward in the development of an overarching plan for Nottingham City Centre.

RESOLVED

- (1) that an overarching City Centre Strategy be developed and that the composite strategies be launched in a cohesive way under that single City Centre Strategy;**
- (2) that the scope of the strategy, as set out in the Report, be agreed;**
- (3) that lead officers for the relevant Council strategies and individuals from lead organisations with responsibility for external policies and strategies relating to the City Centre, be commissioned to:**
 - **undertake a mapping exercise to ensure that all of the relevant City Centre strategies were co-ordinated;**
 - **suggest amendments to the relevant strategies to the extent that they were not co-ordinated;**
 - **report back to this Committee by the end of February 2013 with progress on the issue;**
- (4) that the City Centre Strategy be launched by the end of March 2013.**

Reasons for the decision:

- in order to maximise the potential role that Nottingham City Centre had to play in transforming Nottingham's future economy, there was a need to make sure that all of its component parts were working to a common vision and that plans and strategies that related to the City Centre were all aligned. This involved developing an overarching strategy which articulated the vision and mapped activity against common objectives;

- a number of pieces of work had been focusing on making improvements within the City Centre which included the production of a City Centre Retail Strategy, a City Centre Spatial Strategy, an events strategy and amendments to the on-street car parking regime. In addition, over the next few months, there would be a need to review the licensing policy and refresh the Local Area Planning Policy and enforcement strategy for the City Centre. This was recognised as being an ideal time to ensure that all strategies and plans were complimentary;
- it was proposed that all the work which had been, and that which was currently being undertaken be brought together in a document which created an overarching umbrella framework under which all the activities would sit.

Other options considered:

Doing nothing and allow individual strategies to develop in an un-coordinated way.

15 RETAIL STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chair of the meeting was of the opinion that this item, although not included on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100(b) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972, in view of the special circumstances that these recommendations had recently been significantly developed and there was a proposal to go out to consultation in December 2012. It was necessary to ensure that members of the Committee were familiarised with the content ahead of the consultation and had the opportunity to feedback any implications.

The report was introduced by Nicki Jenkins, Head of Economic Development, who highlighted the following matters:

- the vision was 'to create a dynamic and successful retail sector which re-positioned and kept Nottingham within the top five retail destinations nationally.'
- the key aim and priority was to increase the amount of shoppers visiting, and the level of spend within, the City Centre:
- the three 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, and in doing so, increase the number of visitors from the catchment area;
 - to improve the Nottingham visitor experience, offering variety, quality and a joined up approach to leisure and retail, and therefore increasing the level of spending within the City Centre;
 - 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.

RESOLVED that Nicki Jenkins be thanked for her presentation and that the contents be noted.

14 VACANT SHOPS ACTION PLAN

Consideration was given to a report of the Corporate Director of Development, copies of which had been circulated, giving the Committee an overview of the action plan in relation to vacant units in the City Centre and on the progress made to date.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the progress to date on activities to reduce the numbers of vacant retail units within the City centre be noted;**
- (2) that the target of reducing the number of vacant units in the City Centre by a third by September 2013 and reducing it by two thirds of its current rate by September 2014 be approved;**
- (3) that an interim report be brought back to this Committee every three months to report progress;**
- (4) that an annual report be delivered to this Committee in September 2013 and September 2014.**

Reasons for the decision:

- the recent survey conducted by the City Council had revealed a figure of 16.8% vacant properties. Two core objectives were being focused on; bringing individual units back into use by the use of individual unit action plans, small grant funds, social enterprise and environmental improvements; and stimulating demand by allowing changes of use, identifying and rectifying regulatory blockages, business support and mentoring, independent advice and guidance on legislation, discounted rents, short term licenses, retail incubation centre, pop up shops, and a PR campaign to the National retail sector.

Other options considered:

Doing nothing and risk the City's prosperity.