

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 8 March 2017 at 6.00 pm in Committee Room 4 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 6.00 pm
Concluded 8.05 pm

Present – Councillors

| CONSERVATIVE | LABOUR | INDEPENDENT |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Heseltine Whiteley | Farley Pullen Green Jamil | K Hussain |

Councillor Farley in the Chair

Apologies –

Councillor H Hussain and Mallinson

Observers –

Councillor Ross-Shaw, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport
Councillor Pennington

54. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interest of transparency Councillor Green disclosed a personal interest in City Centre Markets (minute 57) as he had a major involvement with the provision and traders.

Action: City Solicitor

55. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

56. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

57. CITY CENTRE MARKETS



The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “V”**) updated Members on Bradford’s City Centre Markets.

The Markets Manager was present at the meeting and gave a synopsis of the report. In addition, he provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation which detailed an in depth analysis of Oastler Centre (OC) and Kirkgate Market (KM):

A question and answer session ensued:

- Since the vacancy level of units was 10% above the national average, what kind of businesses had closed?
 - Mostly general business stores that had only been operating within a 2 year period had closed. The businesses that had been operating for many years were still in operation but the opening of the Broadway had resulted in the downward trend of footfall hence a further reason for businesses closing permanently;
- Was the average occupancy level rate of OC was 77%, was this considered as a high percentage?
 - This was unclear as it was not certain on the occupancy level rates of markets in other cities;
- Were markets continuously following the tradition of closing during Wednesday afternoons?
 - This was a thing of the past and the Bradford City Centre Markets were no longer following an old tradition;
- Was the Council still spending money on paper media advertisement campaigns as opposed to electronic means?
 - Customers had become socially media savvy over the course of past few years and therefore the Council had adopted the use of electronic media for existing customers in addition to attracting new customers;
- Had the markets been advertised in the Telegraph and Argus?
 - Yes but had little impact. As a consequence, advertising would have to entail a more tailored focused approach;
- In terms of demographics, who were the majority of customers shopping in both markets?
 - Majority were the over 55 year olds;
- Why were traders reluctant to operate on Sundays?
 - The Council was keen on Sunday trading but on the flip side, wholesalers were closed on Sundays. Nevertheless, the Council was keen to promote Sunday shopping; and,
- Were traders offered assistance on how to grow their businesses?
 - The offer of a national trading programme was available but it was important to focus on new businesses equally assisting old businesses to change with the times. The Council had access to business advisers and other network of support for traders.

During the discussion, the Committee, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration,



Planning & Transport and officers made the following comments:

- The old Morrisons (Westgate site) had to be addressed as a key to a future regeneration. Of course the footfall around Westgate had reduced and now needed to be addressed. It was about researching and then deliberating on how to achieve an increase number of customers in the coming years;
 - In response to comment, it was acknowledged that there was a decline of customers for both markets which was anticipated due to the inception of Broadway. The OC was linked with the old Morrisons but due to closure of the supermarket had resulted in the decreasing numbers of customers;
- Following discussions with traders, the general feedback was concerns expressed relating to the reduced numbers of shoppers;
- There were a number of businesses that were not opening and closing during specific trading hours;
 - In response to comment, Market centres were opened to shoppers on a timely basis but some traders were only arriving when they wished and therefore the service was contemplating on whether conditions be put into the leasing of units relating to opening and closing of market stalls. Nevertheless, in relation to daily trading, traders were independent and could not be expected to open 7 days a week;
- OC was very much different to KM therefore in terms of rationale assumption, every customer would have an individual preference therefore it was paramount that both markets were promoted in allowance to their unique identity in order to capture individual customers suited to respective markets; and,
- The city centre bus stop was in front of the OC but due to the anticipated discontinued bus service could easily be a contributing factor towards the reduce levels of footfall.

Resolved –

That Document “V” be noted and that once any regeneration proposals for the City Centre Markets are proposed, a report outlining the proposals be presented to the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

ACTION: Strategic Director, Place

58. CITY CENTRE REGENERATION

The report of the Strategic Director Place (**Document “W”**) updated the Committee on progress with city centre regeneration since its scrutiny hearing in September 2016.

The Economic Development Programmes Manager was in attendance and gave the Committee a synopsis of the report which followed a PowerPoint presentation.



The latter highlighted the half year regeneration activity, with the following key points. In detail, during mid February 2017 the Council had supported 215 businesses which led to the creation of 629 new and additional jobs within the City Centre hence bringing to fruition 77 empty units back into commercial use. The Council had supported majority of independent businesses including 42 new start businesses with a scheme creating environments in which to invest and grow. During this period the taking up of rate rebate had a slow downturn. The anticipated changes to business rates from April 2017 would affect further however this was a scheme under review by the Government to ensure the flexibility to meet the current needs of businesses and maximises the benefits from all investment. Darley Street and Westgate of the City Centre continued to receive priority attention. The Council had considered options to secure a sustainable future for the city as a leisure and independent retail and markets destination (the short and medium term interventions were detailed in Document "W"). In summary, there was on going exciting pipeline of project proposals, not huge volumes but quality schemes with a positive changing impact. Following success of the Creative Streets animation programme delivered in Autumn 2016, a new programme had been developed which was due to run from 11 April through to 30 April 2017 in and around the Westgate area of the city centre. With the support of the Council, a new Community Interest company had established to manage the market events with local traders involved and given the opportunity to showcase their products. A Heritage Lottery Fund application was submitted in August 2016 for a Townscape Heritage Initiative for the top of town. Funding had been approved to support bringing vacant and under-used historic buildings at the Top of Town back into appropriate and sustainable use with 72 properties identified as a need for prioritisation. The development phase would commence shortly, working with property owners to work up proposals. Improvements to pedestrian flow, traffic management and sight lines to help support footfall to the Westgate area had been instigated through a connectivity study and this resulted in proposals for improvements to a number of streets. It was paramount to make the area more attractive to investors by ensuring improvements to footpaths, including some areas of widening. In addition, improving pedestrian crossing points as well as improved lighting. However, businesses would be consulted with before any final proposals were to be agreed. This report further provided updates on other key developments, this including Sunbridge Wells (SW) which opened in December 2016. The footfall in first 10 weeks of SW was 300,000. SW operated three of the bars within and had reported healthy financial turnovers. A Phase 2 programme was also underway, the opening of Rose and Crown pub next before the end of March 2017. Renovation works of Clergy House and a new build, Jermyn Court, would provide 18 self contained flats for homeless families and individuals. This whole scheme would be leased to Horton Housing to deliver a Supported Housing Contract. In September 2016, the City Centre vacancy rate was reported as 19.4%, this had now reduced to 18.6%. The Council's year end target of 18% could be achieved. In comparison of previous and the current quarter, there had been a 6% increase across City Centre. It was equally important to note that the captured data was only footfall as not everyone was using the city centre. Also in the present, Broadway (street) saw a 15% increase of footfall. However there was a yearly decrease on Darley Street and Kirkgate. The City Park had increased slightly. The Council was to explore "Data Flock"



system to drill down further and capture more intelligent data on people's movement around the city centre.

The Committee requested clarification on what point were businesses consulted on the Council's regeneration themes. In response, it was mentioned that the Council took on board all feedback following the consultation period however there were several phases to the proposals before final implementation;

During the discussion, the Committee, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transport, an observing Councillor and the Assistant Director, Economy and Development made the following comments:

- Many businesses had no option but to close due to the inception of Broadway and growth of other new businesses;
 - In response to comment, it was not the case that the Council wished to jeopardise existing long running businesses but to regenerate Bradford City Centre as a whole.
- Businesses were unsure of plans for the next decade because many traders had lease breaks and wished for detailed insight into the future of trading;
 - In response to comment, SW had reduced the numbers of customers at other trading locations. Nevertheless it was equally important for the footfall of Westgate to be brought back to fruition due to many traders having trading for many years had invested heavily.
- Marketing was an equally important factor for businesses and customers. A healthy marketing campaign would prevent Bradford citizens making their way to shop in Waitrose (Leeds) or Manchester. On the flip side a wider publicity campaign should be part of the proposal to bring non residents of Bradford to our city centre for shopping;
- Waitrose gave customers the incentive of free parking which could be considered as a clever marketing strategy;
 - In response to comment, Bradford had to be promoted an all rounded destination as opposed to only free parking.
- Free parking was only one element and could never be considered as the corner stone of encouragement for shoppers;
- The long term plan, an overall district plan was required in order to entice shoppers from all over to Bradford;
- Bradford was unique in the sense of being complemented with an Asian culture and equally being a multi cultural city. It was about using this element in Bradford's favour during any future publicity campaigns; and,
- The Council had a significant land hold in the City Centre. Morrisons lease had also returned to the authority therefore sourcing the land to the private sector could be an option for discussions at a later stage;
 - In response to comment, Morrisons was still acting on the site and the Council could not retrieve the land at the present time due to confidential discussions being undertaken.

Recommended –



- (1) That the progress made on the City Centre regeneration be welcomed.
- (2) That officers arrange a workshop for the Members of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposals for the future of the City Centre Markets.

ACTION: Strategic Director, Place

59. REGENERATION AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016-17

Resolved –

That the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2016-17 continued to be reviewed during the year.

LEAD: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

THIS AGENDA AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

