

Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

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Report of the West North West Leeds Area Manager

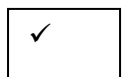
Report to Inner West Area Committee

Date: 9th April 2009

Subject: Town Centre Manager Update

Electoral Wards Affected:

Armley



Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

☐

Community Cohesion

☐

Narrowing the Gap

☐

Council
Function

☒

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

☐

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call in Details set out in the
report

☐

Executive Summary

This report provides Members with an update on the Town Centre Manager's progress, priorities and work programme and proposals for revitalising Armley town.

It asks Members to note and comment on the content of the report.

1.0 Purpose of This Report

This report is to update Members on progress to date, next steps and proposals for revitalising Armley town.

2.0 Background Information

A review of all local issues relating to and impacting on local businesses has been undertaken. This has included meeting with local partners and organisations operating in the area and businesses in order to understand the main issues. This has informed the development of an action plan to focus in on these key issues. This needs to be flexible to be able to take account of the changing environment associated with the current economic downturn.

3.0 Issues for consideration

As part of the review a number of factors have arisen that need further consideration:

1. Would specialisation of business draw more visitors?
2. Increasing footfall and marketing.
3. Number of empty units.
4. Number of charity shops, betting establishments and takeaways.
5. Developing an identity for the town.
6. A place to visit during the evening, with good eating and drinking establishments.
7. Building on and enhancing regular held events held in Armley.
8. Development and role of the Business Forum and Business Link.
9. Security, crime and the feel of Armley.
10. Shop Local campaign.
11. Armley clean up.
12. Fun Day and the Summer Bands.

3.1 Would specialisation of business draw more visitors to Armley?

Given the examples of other local towns that have been successful in turning their fortunes around, it is clear that they all have things in common.

- a. They have specialised in the food and drink arena rather than takeaway establishments.
- b. They have attracted investment from entrepreneurs who have taken advantage of what they see as an up and coming area.

3.2 Increasing footfall and marketing

In order to build an awareness of Armley and what it has to offer it is clear that a sustained campaign of marketing would be needed.

3.3 Number of empty units:

There are currently seven empty units, which will need to be looked at to make sure these are Let.

3.4 Number of charity shops, betting establishments and takeaways.

There are three charity shops, four betting establishments and fourteen fast food / sandwich shops.

3.5 Developing an identity for the town.

Further work and consultation is required with stakeholders such as residents, businesses, Members, partners and visitors to consider what they would like the identity of Armley town to be. Armley's identity could include more eating and drinking establishments, and/ or specialised shops, and be a place where there are regular events hosted on the greenspaces and at the Leisure Centre.

3.6 A place to visit during the evening, with good eating and drinking establishments.

There is one restaurant and three Public Houses, of which two offer outdoor facilities.

3.7 Building on and enhancing regular events held in Armley.

There is now the opportunity to enhance and further develop the events that are currently held in and around the town, and harness new opportunities for Armley town.

3.8 Business Forum

A Business Forum has now been established and has met on two occasions. The meetings are monthly. The forum is intended to bring together local businesses to discuss issues that they feel need addressing, it is also meant as a networking event. Mike Massen of Gartons Solicitors has agreed to Chair the meetings, the role of the Town Centre Manager will be to offer advice and provide updates on progress relating to local issues and programmes. The Townscape Heritage Initiative will be launched at the next Business Forum in March.

4.0 Recent Achievements

4.1 Shop Local campaign

The 'Shop Local' campaign is one initiative that is currently in development to help make local people aware of the need for them to support local businesses. The scheme will see the businesses and Armley take up a 'Shop Local' logo which will be used to brand all merchandise and promotional material. There will be an official launch of the campaign and logo in the press and we will be holding regular 'Shop Local' initiatives over the coming year. As part of the official launch we will be printing 'Shop Local' t-shirts for the local traders to wear. Other promotional material will include badges, fridge magnets, eco bags and car stickers all with the 'Shop Local' logo on them. This promotional material will be handed out over the launch weekend to members of the public. The campaign is all about brand awareness and creating this awareness so that when people not just in Armley see it they will automatically associate it with Armley.

4.2 Armley Clean Up

These are to be held bi-monthly so that there is no clash with Operation Champion operations to maximise resources. The idea behind this initiative is to create a sense of civic pride leading up to the Town and District Centre scheme going on site and the launch of the Townscape Heritage Initiative.

- 4.3 There has been one 'Clean Up Day' to date on the 12th February; those involved with the 'Clean Up Day' were Neighbourhood Wardens who on the day were supervising Community Pay Back individuals who were cleaning off graffiti. They were also advising people on subjects such as littering. Environmental Action Team officers were in attendance visiting businesses and advising on issues around their responsibilities regarding waste and other issues. The Fire Service were there to look at anything they saw as a potential hazard.

- 4.4 The day was seen as a great success with businesses very pleased with what was being done and members of the public happy to see a visible presence and action being taken. The next clean up day will be in April where there will be a focus on enforcement.

5.0 Next Steps

- 5.2 Business priorities for the next twelve months include:

- Development of the Business Forum, run by the businesses.
- Improved communications/ relationships between the Council and businesses.
- Helping to develop and enhance current events held in Armley and to look at new opportunities.
- Marketing and advertising initiatives
- Developing the 'Shop Local' campaign to encourage local residents to buy from local town stores.
- Filling empty shop units.
- Dealing with any issues such as parking, crime and other business related issues.
- Development of an Armley town identity.
- Increasing footfall.

- 5.3 Event Opportunities for Armley town

- 5.4 Armley Fun Day and Summer Bands - Businesses have been informed about these forthcoming events, and have been asked to see if they can offer their support.

- 5.6 The event on Sunday 21st June on Armley Moor will have the Knottingley Silver Band performing, fairground rides for small children, a healthy eating van selling jacket potatoes and healthy drinks, fruit juices etc. and a dog show.

- 5.7 There are a number of further possibilities including:

- A market day or days on Armley Moor.
- A Christmas ice rink in the town, a Christmas tree and more festive lights.
- A summer family teddy bears picnic in the park.

6.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 6.1 An amount of £5,000 has been allocated from the Inner West Well-Being funds for marketing and events. Further resources will be sought from partners and businesses; however future actions must take into account resources available.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The action plan will help to focus and provide a strategic steer for the Town Centre Manager in driving forward improvements to Armley that will form part of a number of schemes and work programme's aimed at revitalising Armley town. Feedback and comments from the Area Committee on the factors for consideration detailed in this report will therefore help to inform the strategic direction.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 Members are asked to note and comment upon this report.

Background Papers

None