



## Report of West North West Area Manager

## Report to Outer West Area Committee

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010

## Subject: Town Centre Manager Update

### Electoral Wards Affected:

Pudsey

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 an update on the work of the Town Centre Manager for Pudsey, a post funded partly by the Outer West Area Committee.

It asks Members to note the contents and comment on any issues contained within it.

#### 1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report updates Members on progress to date and proposals for future work of the Town Centre Manager to revitalise Pudsey town centre.

#### 2.0 Background Information

2.1 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 issues facing Pudsey town centre. 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 economic environment in the current downturn.

2.2 The Town Centre Manager (TCM) post has now been in place for a year and an evaluation has taken place. Appendix 1 demonstrates the evaluation of the TCM

project. Funding was approved by the Outer West Area Committee for a year and a further year in principle subject to Area Committee budgets being confirmed. A further request for funding will be submitted to the Area Committee in January to look at extending the post for a further 12 months or 2 years.

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

- Business engagement
- Increasing footfall and marketing
- Reducing the number of vacant units
- Reducing the number of charity shops, betting establishments and take aways
- Developing an identity for the town
- Enhancing the existing events and delivering new ones
- Dealing with security and crime issues
- Promoting the Shop Local campaign
- Environmental clean-ups

### **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 Business engagement – The Business Forum continues to be held regularly, hosted by a town centre business. Attendance has increased to around 10 businesses and it is chaired by a local trader. The TCM will continue to support and advise the forum and seek to ensure greater attendance e.g. by inviting guest speakers who may be of interest to local traders. The forum provides a mechanism for keeping businesses informed about the development of for example the new bus station.
- 3.2 Through Leeds Ahead we have offered a number of businesses the opportunity of having a business mentor. This mentor is someone who has been successful in the market sector such as retail and is willing to offer free mentoring as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility. The TCM is also exploring the potential for Business Link to help with training and retail advice such as visual merchandising.
- 3.3 The TCM has established good working relationships with the town centre traders and they receive a visit at least weekly. A positive relationship has also been built with the contractor's site manager for the bus station development. This ensures that the businesses are kept up to date with the scheme's progress.
- 3.4 It is important that the TCM helps sustain the businesses currently in the town and to also attract new enterprises. This will partly be achieved through offering more training through organisations such as Business Link, daily support and marketing. Some additions to the Town & District Centre scheme are also being considered such as heritage lighting, street banners on lighting columns to promote the Shop Local campaign and events and additional hanging baskets or display troughs for Pudsey in Bloom.
- 3.5 Increasing footfall and marketing – in order to promote Pudsey and what it has to offer, it is clear that a sustained marketing campaign is needed. This will include marketing the events that are run by the TCM and other partners. It is likely that the TCM / Area Management will have an increasing input and influence over the market, along with Yeadon Market in Outer North West. The details of these arrangements are yet to be finalised, but discussions are taking place to ensure effective management arrangements.

- 3.6 Reducing the number of vacant units – there are currently four vacant unit. These numbers are encouragingly low, but the TCM will be exploring ways of ensuring these are let or utilised.
- 3.7 Reducing the number of charity shops, betting establishments and take-aways – there are significant number of these type of establishments and increased numbers of them detract from the retail offer in the town centre. The TCM will work with Planning to ensure that further changes of use are resisted and work with potential new retailers to encourage a range of uses within the town centre.
- 3.8 Developing an identity for the town / events – Further work and consultation is required with stakeholders such as Members, residents, businesses, partners and visitors to consider what they would like the identity of Pudsey town centre to be. Pudsey's identity could include a thriving regular market, farmers market and specialist markets, family events within the town centre, including the Pudsey Park and Leisure Centre. Six Artsmix Market dates have been provisionally agreed for 2010 and the TCM will ensure that these co-incide with other events to generate a critical mass. It is also planned to move these from a Sunday to a Saturday to be held alongside the regular market to ensure stalls are full and a range of products available. The TCM will also build on the Christmas events to ensure this continues to be a positive community event. Other events which have proved successful will take place in 2010 such as Easter Extravaganza and Teddy Bear's picnic.
- 3.9 Dealing with security and crime issues – the TCM will continue to liaise with the Police, businesses and partners to tackle local issues. The TCM is hoping to extend the Alert Box scheme, which currently operates successfully in Armley, to Pudsey. This is subject to Area Committee funding. If approved, once in place, the scheme could encourage the establishment of a Business Watch campaign.
- 3.10 Promoting the Shop Local campaign – The Shop Local campaign is an initiative that is currently being developed to help make local people aware of the need for them to support local businesses. The scheme includes a Shop Local logo which will be used to brand all merchandise and promotional material. The campaign was officially launched at Easter, with merchandise including Shop Local T-shirts for local traders to wear, badges, fridge magnets, re-useable bags and car stickers. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the Pudsey brand in the surrounding area and further afield.
- 3.11 Within the Shop Local campaign is a Reward Card scheme which has been approved by Evershed's Solicitors. This work was done *pro bono* as part of their partnership with Leeds Ahead. The TCM developed Terms and Conditions for the scheme and these have been worked up by Eversheds into a legal Terms and Conditions document. The next stage is to get the shops to sign up to the scheme. At the November Business Forum, it was agreed that the Reward Card would be launched in January to coincide with the sales period. A press launch through various media is planned and this would be a considerable boost to Pudsey, providing much needed positive publicity.
- 3.12 Environmental clean-ups – The first Pudsey Day of Action was run in partnership with Environmental Action Team, wardens and Police. This ran from 30<sup>th</sup> November until 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009 and focused mainly on littering and combating anti-social behaviour at lunch times. During early 2010, the TCM will also be running a Keep Pudsey Tidy Campaign. This campaign will be run in conjunction with local schools. The aim is to get young people involved in taking responsibility for their environment.

#### **4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance**

- 4.1 The TCM project supports the Leeds Strategic Plan (LSP) priority of Enterprise and Economy. The TCM project facilitates a number of important actions that are contained within the Outer West Area Delivery Plan. These address the LSP Enterprise and Economy priority.

##### Member Consultation

- 4.2 The TCM regularly reports back to Area Committee keeping Outer West Members informed of progress with the scheme. In addition, a Steering Group meets bi-monthly to help shape the TCM project. This consists of Members from Pudsey and Armley, business representatives from each area, Police, TCM and Area Management.

#### **5.0 Legal and Resource Implications**

- 5.1 The Outer West and Inner West Area Committees have funded the salary and on-costs for the TCM post until October 2010 and also provided a £5,000 marketing / events budget for 2009/10. A further report will be submitted to January 2010 Area Committee to request additional funding during 2010/11 (and in principle 2011/12) to meet salary costs and also an events / marketing budget.
- 5.2 Part of the TCM's role is to continuously seeking additional external funding. Possible models for Town Centre Management across Leeds are currently being explored and these will have significant funding implications. Any proposals will be brought to a future Area Committee meeting.

#### **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The TCM project has met a number of objectives during its first 12 months. Progress to date and plans for the year ahead are outlined in section 3 above. The Steering Group helps inform and shape the TCM work programme but the Area Committee are also encouraged to make suggestions for issues that could be included within the programme, particularly in relation to ensuring long term sustainability of the project.

#### **7.0 Recommendations**

- 7.1 That the Area Committee notes the contents of the report.

**Background Papers - none**