



Report of the Director of Development

Scrutiny Board Development

Date: 20th March 2007

Subject: Facilities for the growing City Centre Population

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Board (Development) in setting its work programme for 2006/07 identified the night time and evening economy as an area for possible scrutiny.
- 1.2 The Board requested a paper for consideration at today's meeting specifically on the facilities being provided for the growing city centre population.
- 1.3 The following information sets out the current position in this regard.

2.0 Current Population and Future Estimates

- 2.1 Officers believe there were approximately 13,700 residents in the city centre at the beginning of 2006 and that if all the residential schemes which had planning permission or which had applied for planning permission at the end of 2005 were built there would be 27,000 city centre residents (including some students). These figures are based on an estimated occupancy level of 1.5-1.6 people per flat with approximately 29% of all flats unoccupied. When we have more up to date Council Tax information in 2007/8 we will be able to update this figure.

3.0 Facilities for residents in the City Centre

- 3.1 In 2005 The University of Leeds did a study on City Centre Living in Leeds, funded by K W Linfoot plc, a residential property developer. This study included a survey of residents which asked them what were the factors that might lead people to leave the city centre. In order of the most important, these factors were:
 - (i) Lack of green spaces
 - (ii) Having children

- (iii) Inadequate living space
- (iv) Lack of convenient shops
- (v) Expensive property
- (vi) Prefer a house
- (vii) Desire for quieter life (the main problem was noise from other flats inside the development rather than noise from outside)
- (viii) Too expensive to park
- (ix) Getting Married
- (x) Crime/fear of crime
- (xi) Inadequate cultural and leisure facilities

3.2 Factors i – v were far more significant than the remaining factors. In addition residents were asked what factors would encourage them to stay. Here the majority of households (82%) cited better /more food shops, with better provision of green spaces coming second (73% of households); 70% of households considered better access to a GP and dentist was important.

3.3 Since 2005 facilities in the city centre have changed:

- Green spaces in the city centre have been improved with Yorkshire Forward funding, other green spaces will be created – notably on the former Yorkshire Chemicals site.
- A number of developers (including Linfoot's) are building more three bedroom apartments which may help to address issues (ii) and (iii) although there is no guarantee these larger apartments will encourage more families into the city centre as they may be bought by investors who will sub-let.
- In 2005 the food stores in the city centre were the M&S store on Briggate, the Morrisons supermarket and a number of Market stalls. Survey respondents cited numbers, location and opening hours of food stores as the issues for concern. Since then a small M&S has opened at the train station with extended opening hours, the Briggate M&S has started opening till 8pm on Thursdays, a new Co-op with extended hours has opened on Wellington Street and an improved Oriental mini supermarket has opened on Vicar Lane. It is rumoured that Sainsbury's were bidding for a store on the Headrow but were out bid by PC World. Hopefully there will be additional food retail at another location on the Headrow in the next year or so.
- A walk-in Health Centre with GP surgery has opened at The Light and it is hoped that this will incorporate an NHS dental practice too later this year.
- The cultural and leisure facilities have been extended by the opening of The Carriageworks theatre and the BBC screen, these will be joined by the Museum in 2008.

4.0 Future Research

4.1 The University of Leeds are going to undertake another residents' survey in 2007 which will be funded by K W Linfoot, Jonathan Morgan, (a city centre estate and letting agent) and City Centre Leeds. This will help to inform us whether residents feel facilities have

improved. In addition City Centre Leeds is trying to establish a residents' forum to enable us to be better informed of residents' views in the future.

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 The Scrutiny Board (Development) is asked to comment upon and note this report.