



**Report of Director, Neighbourhoods and Housing Department**

**South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee**

**Date: Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

**Subject: Town Centre Management – An update**

**Electoral Wards Affected:**  
 Ardsley & Robin Hood  
 Morley North  
 Morley South  
 Rothwell

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 a summary of the work of the Town Centre Management Project in Morley and Rothwell since September 2007. It details recent progress and provides Members with the opportunity to explore the work of the project and request further information.

**1.0 Background**

The Town Centre Management Project was agreed by Area Committee and included a £10,000 contribution from Morley Town Council. The Town Centre Manager (TCM) was appointed in September 2006 with the remit of driving the revitalisation of Morley and Rothwell town centres. The TCM post is managed through South Leeds Area Management Team and the work is monitored by the Town Centre Management Board and an Action Plan for each town which is updated monthly.

**2.0 Developing and Delivering the Strategy**

The following headings have been taken from the Action Plans. (Please refer to **Appendix 1** for the independent action plans for Rothwell and Morley.)

**2.1 Town Centre Management Board (TCMB):**

Minutes of board meetings are attached at **Appendix 2**. The Board is responsible for developing a strategic overview on behalf of the Area Committee. Membership of the board comprises Councillors Stewart Golton (Chair) and Judith Elliott, (Outer South Area Committee) Frank Britton, (Rothwell traders representative) Joy Goodman, (Morley traders' representative) Councillor Joyce Sanders, (Morley Town Council) Tom O'Donovan, (Area Management Team) and Peter Mudge. (Town Centre

Manager) The Board meets on a monthly basis to review the Action Plans, et al and prepares submissions for the Town Centre Partnerships.

**Recent Developments:**

- Ongoing consideration of TCM work programme.
- Implementation of street markets.
- Revitalisation of liaison with businesses and events organisers.
- Supporting town centre manager on ongoing improvements to operation and appearance of town centres.

**2.2 Town Centre Partnerships (TCPs):**

The TCPs are playing an increasingly key role in creating a shared vision for the towns' identities, functions and improved management of the public realm.

Morley TCP is chaired by Councillor Judith Elliott and Rothwell TCP is chaired by Councillor Steve Smith. As well as Councillors, all businesses and interested groups are invited to the quarterly meetings.

**Recent Developments:**

- Ongoing consideration of TCM work programme and Summit Big Ideas.
- Reports and presentations on issues of potential benefit to the town: Morley TCP of 10<sup>th</sup> December: Parking limits on Queensway Car Park, Christmas market report, presentation by Morley Chamber of Trade President, increasing community support for public events (Lights Switch On, Outdoor Market, Mayor's Concert, Remembrance Day, Lantern Festival etc)
- Reports and presentations on issues of potential benefit to the town: Rothwell TCP of 15<sup>th</sup> November: Shortage of available business units, extended doordrop of promotional material, Preparation for the Christmas market, and lights switch on, Rothwell 600, street furniture improvements, liaison with Morrison's re police facilities in town centre and regarding upgrading the appearance for the rerouted river.

**2.3 Morley & Rothwell Summits: "What's the Big Idea?"**

The annual Summits provide a valuable opportunity for local contributions to help create a vision for each town. The next Summits are to be held on February 29<sup>th</sup> in Rothwell and on March 6<sup>th</sup> in Morley.

**2.4 The Big Ideas: Morley**

- 2.4.1 Extended Opening:** "The aim is to promote Morley as open for business from 9am – 9pm (encouraging extended opening for the eateries in 2007 and extending this to general businesses in 2008.) Support wide scale development of a social capacity to the town centre with events and entertainments whenever the chance arises. "

**Recent Developments:**

- Chamber of Trade members and Morley Market extended their opening throughout December.
- Implementation processes agreed between café owners / Chamber of Trade and TCM to find ways to expand the café culture in 2008.
- Chamber of Trade liaising with TCM over realising the potential of evening opening.
- Town & Country Markets liaising with TCM over possibilities for investigating evening opening beyond the Christmas period.
- Ongoing press coverage.
- Consider using Morley Literature Festival as a vehicle to develop evening economy.

2.4.2 **Outdoor markets:** “Quarterly specialist markets with strong take-up from local traders and themes not repeating in the same year. On a weekly basis, capacity given for indoor market traders to use the area in front of the market entrance. “

**Recent Developments:**

- Outdoor market held on December 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. The stalls were run by local businesses except where the produce did not compete with that available in local shops.
- Agreeing with Chamber as to when and how future outdoor markets should operate.
- Discussions on going with overseers of on-street trading (Kirkgate Markets and Highways) to confirm their continued support for on street trading in front of indoor market – with support from the Indoor Market Manager.

2.4.3 **Town Centre environment, loading / unloading:** “Key stores will be encouraged to move into Morley Bottoms and Fountain Street to ensure an upturn in the general wellbeing of the neighbourhoods. Consideration will be given to possible Highway improvements to encourage the retail revival. “

**Recent Developments:**

- Procedures agreed to introduce limited waiting at Queensway Car Park, Morley.
- General improvements progressing at North Queen Street including renovation of main eyesore in readiness for March occupation.

2.4.4 **Linked promotions:** “Projects will be undertaken to ensure successful contact is made with new and existing residents, businesses and events. “

**Recent Developments:**

- Please refer to 2.7 and 2.8 below.

2.4.5 **Heritage:** “Increase awareness of the town’s history, key to this being a heritage trail, improved signage and investigation of gateways.”

### **Recent Developments:**

- As part of the Morley Literature Festival programme of events the inaugural Heritage Trail walk brought nearly 100 people to join a guided tour of the trail led by Town Councillor Joe Tetley.
- Town Hall Heritage Storage facility proposal now ready for final consideration.
- Libraries have agreed to work in partnership over displaying items from the heritage store.

## **2.5 The Big Ideas: Rothwell**

- 2.5.1 Developing a wider mix of shops:** “Coupled with better promoted links between Marsh Street and Commercial Street, and general marketing of the town centre, there will be improved awareness of the Rothwell offer.”

### **Recent developments:**

- New shop units completed as Phase 1 of the Wm Morrison redevelopment
- Progressing with private sector proposals to increase shop range in town centre.

- 2.5.2 Outdoor markets:** “Sited in the heart of the town, weekly markets could become a major attraction for Rothwell. The preferred option will be for a farmer’s market featuring local produce.”

### **Recent Developments:**

- Inaugural market held in conjunction with Rothwell lights switch-on.
- Four more markets required for 2008 to be run in partnership with Rothwell Entertainments Committee.

- 2.5.3 Improved connections between shopping areas:** “Place clear signage in Marsh Street Car Park showing the extent of the town centre. Develop ways to increase awareness of the two shopping areas. Encourage junction of Marsh Street / Commercial Street to be better utilised – tables for café, signage pointing to other areas of town centre. Investigate possibility of working men’s club café area being open to the general public.”

### **Recent Developments:**

- Wm Morrison support required to make available spare benches for Marsh St Car Park. These would assist link between Marsh St and Commercial St.
- Bringing children fair rides to assist with promotion of new row of shops.

- 2.5.4 Developing an evening economy:** “TCM will investigate the viability of developing a strong evening economy utilising after-work shoppers from South Leeds. This idea can be developed as required through TCMB and RTCP. “

### **Recent Developments:**

- In 2007 traders felt the economy was too fragile to expand opening at that point. However, the November 07 evening stalls linked to the lights switch on proved highly successful and TCM is using this to encourage development of the evening economy.
- TCM liaising with Coach & Horses owner and interested parties to see if an attractive wine bar could be introduced on Main Street.

2.5.5 **Support for an events management structure:** "Town Centre Manager to promote a quarterly events programme. Increase partnerships with Rothwell Events Team to ensure numbers increase and a firm structure is in place to provide ongoing support. Use Rothwell 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a major selling point for Rothwell."

### **Recent Developments:**

- Rothwell 600 Festival is now operating as an excellent support mechanism for events in the town centre and across the Rothwell area.
- Rothwell Entertainments Committee and TCM are confirming arrangements for booking and overseeing 2008 events for the town centre.

### 2.6 **Calendar of Events:**

In both towns an annual calendar of events was drawn up for 2007 and a 2008 calendar is now being finalised. In both cases there is a greater range of events being prepared for the coming year.

2.6.1 Morley's Entertainment's Committee is overseeing events for the town centre with TCM meeting with the committee and organisers. Added attractions include an Easter Bonnet Parade, reintroduction of the Morley Feast and Fair, and a two day St George's event with the Saturday organised by the Chamber of Trade and based in town centre events and an ever expanding Literature Festival liaising ever more closely with the business community.

2.6.2 In Rothwell the TCM is keeping in touch with Rothwell 600 and the Events Team. All the events will be staged under the auspice of the Rothwell 600. Town centre based events include an art exhibition, half-term fair, street banners, street entertainment and an expanded May Day and Carnival with links to Commercial Street.

### **Recent Developments:**

- Partnership work with both Entertainment Committees. Committees to devise events programme with TCM providing co-ordination and supplementary support. (Publicity, problem solving, extra volunteers etc)
- Publication of calendar of events to March 2008.
- TCM commissioned a Morley sculptress to produce a stone Nativity set and encouraged schools to assist with the decoration. Every Primary school in the Morley area sent pupils to join in with the painting of the set and those involved were thanked on stage at the Lights Switch (The pupils also helped the Chamber of Trade paint a 5' Christmas promotional display.)

## 2.7 **Promotional Strategy:**

A framework has been developed for both towns. The focus is on increasing footfall in the towns by encouraging greater local usage and investigating unique selling points to broaden the appeal to people from surrounding areas.

### **Recent Developments:**

- Street banners process agreed and TCM has met with approved contractor. Contractors currently selling 14 sites for Rothwell 600 banners – including 4 in the City Centre and developing ideas for a similar number in Morley.
- Christmas promotional doordrop undertaken to 25,000 homes in Morley and Ardsley area.
- Leaflet doordrop underway to 16,000 homes in Rothwell and Robin Hood area.
- Ongoing liaison with regional and local media. (Includes Evening Post, Yorkshire Life and events inclusion on websites.
- It is hoped that residents of Ardsley and Robin Hood will develop an increasingly strong partnership with Morley and Rothwell and, in addition to ongoing promotions; TCM intends utilising Morley Literature Festival and Rothwell 600 as mechanisms to develop partnership approaches with these areas.
- TCM has had a series of meetings with Morley Chamber of Trade's lead member on designing a website for the town centre. The site will feature events, items of general interest, business news, Chamber membership details etc. The advantage of ownership through the Chamber is that on-going updating of the site can be assured.
- Meeting was held with The White Rose Centre to explore projects of mutual benefit.

## 2.8 **Social, Cultural & Economic:**

The creation of a more vibrant town centre, the promotion of the town centres as family and community friendly places and increased usage as a social venue by residents and visitors. This includes identifying ways to improve the towns' aspect through making it a cleaner, more social and a more pleasant location.

### **Recent Developments:**

- TCM has led on and funded installation of a power supply from the town hall to the Chessboard to assist public events.
- In Morley there has been strong support for strengthening the offer through development of a café culture and entertainments – supported by public and private sectors and media.
- A positive partnership is developing in Rothwell with major stakeholders in the town including Market Square owners, Town & Country Markets and Property owners. A meeting is being held between these parties and Kirkgate Market representatives to agree developing market opportunities for the town.
- For the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year, Land Securities on behalf of White Rose has provided grant aid to projects in Morley and ideas are progressing for Rothwell.

- In Rothwell there is a queue of potential new retailers. TCM is leading on assessing the opportunities for more retail and office premises within the town centre.
- In both towns pavement cafes and increased use of pedestrian priority areas – outside tables and street displays are assisting promotion and increased use. A series of discussions have and are being held with Kirkgate Markets to ensure this positive development can continue through management at a local level.
- Investigation is underway to consider an improved performance area at the bottom of Morley Precinct.

## 2.9 **Liaison with Private Sector:**

The private sector is being encouraged to take an ever more active role in the economic wellbeing of Morley and Rothwell.

### **Recent Developments:**

- TCM keeps in close contact with Wm Morrison and other developers including the former Coach & Horses site and potential redevelopment of Rothwell Windows into retail units and accommodation.
- Interest is being shown in all available retail units on Queen Street, Albion Street and Morley Market Square. The market has seen a significant rise in the number of occupied units.
- TCM is supporting Morley Chamber of Trade's work to raise membership and complete projects of importance to the town's business economy.

## 2.10 **Liaison with Public Sector**

The TCM has developed an ongoing reporting mechanism as well as developing new ideas for public sector work within the towns.

### **Recent Developments:**

- In Rothwell, restoration of the main street is progressing and all unkempt units on the street have been renovated. TCMB is investigating the needs of the town centre beyond the private sector redevelopment.
- TCM playing a conciliatory role in resiting of bus stops in Rothwell to ensure town centre economy is protected.
- Discussions and / or meetings are underway with numerous agencies and council offices including Parks, Leisure, Planning, Highways, Asset Management and Transport providers to consider various aspects of town operation.
- Site visit undertaken with contractor regarding painting uniform street furniture in Morley.
- Quotation received for painting uniform street furniture in Rothwell. Wm Morrison has agreed to fund the repainting cost.
- Discussions and meetings held with Streetscene and enforcement concerning litter problems in town centre. Dumping at rear of Albion Street and 32 Queen Street has been resolved. Approaching Streetscene over placement of bins on north Queen Street.

## 2.11 **Crime & Fear of Crime:**

The role of TCM is to provide support as required to existing and new security systems. It can play a meaningful role in reducing the fear of crime in town centres and, through providing entertainments and attractions, and encouraging extended opening, make the town centres a friendlier place to visit.

### **Recent Developments:**

- TCM attends Pubwatch meetings in both towns.
- Over Christmas two groups of dubious street sellers appeared in Morley. TCM was supported by the Police in making these people cease their operation and be officially told they were not to return.
- Ongoing partnership approach with Neighbourhood Policing Team & PCSOs operating in both towns.
- TCM liaising with the Police and Wm Morrison in progressing a town centre facility as part of the new build in Rothwell.

## 3.0 **Research: Information and Monitoring**

This will provide an evidence base to determine actions and inform future plans.

### **Recent Developments:**

- The health check for Morley and Rothwell are progressing but not yet complete.

## 4.0 **Town and District Projects:**

### 4.1 **Morley Bottoms:**

Work progressing led by Project Team, TCM inputs as required and on adjoining areas. TCM has recently liaised with developers interested in developing sites at the top of Chapel Hill.

### 4.2 **Marsh Street Car Park:**

TCM is supporting completion of final works to the Town & District relaying of the car park.

## 5.0 **Wm Morrison - Rothwell:**

- 5.1 TCM meets with Wm Morrison's and interested parties on bi monthly basis to discuss and resolve current and anticipated issues. TCM discovered Wm Morrison had plans to upgrade some street furniture with inappropriate designs. Following discussion with community groups the original street furniture is now set for restoration. Site visits undertaken with Wm Morrison's and Parks & Countryside to confirm best possible restoration of River Dolphin as part of Phase 2. TCM liaising with Planning and Wm Morrison over inclusion of appropriate shop shuttering in the Meynell Ave car park



**6.0 Future**

6.1 Reports will be brought to the Area Committee on a six monthly basis.

**7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 Members of the Outer South Area Committee are requested to:

(a). Note the contents of this report and consider any actions