



## Newcastle Town Centre Partnership Report to Scrutiny September 2015

### Business Improvement District

Within quarter 1 the TCP has been focussed on delivering the Business Improvement District which resulted in a successful ballot. This is fantastic news for the town centre and gives the local businesses the opportunity to plan and invest in projects to improve the town centre for the next 5 years.



The BID Steering Group with the support of the consultant has been working hard to create the new company and establish procedures to ensure that the company can become operational. This has included agreeing baseline documents for key services with the Borough Council and a Memorandum of Understanding with the County Council. Alongside these an Operating Agreement has been established to ensure that the Borough Council; as the authority responsible for collection of the BID levy operates within the terms agreed and that all businesses receive the correct invoice for the levy.

As part of the BID progression programme we have met up with Staffordshire Place Senior Management Team. The personnel introduced were Darryl Evers (Director for Place), Janene Cox (Commissioner for Tourism and County Cultural), Clive Thomson (Commissioner for Transport and the connected County), Mark Hewitt (District Commissioning Lead), Trish Caldwell (Business Support Manager), Jonathan Vining (Economic Growth Manager), James Bailey (Commissioner for Highways and the Built County), Ian Benson (Commissioner for the Sustainable County), Ian Turner (Head of Place Delivery), Ian Wykes (Commissioner for the Rural County), and Pam Rushton (Business Support Manager). The group showed a great deal of interest in the Newcastle BID enterprise. This I am sure will enable us to set up vital collaborative links in areas of interest that BID will want/need to get involved with to deliver relevant germane projects.

The group has stated its intention to maintain engagement with our BID and will seek to make its own representation on it and also to assist with ideas which could lead to the BID leveraging in external funding through European business funding and indeed any other suitable opportunities.

The TCP/BID are mindful of the Government's intention to implement some changes to Local Business Improvement Districts which briefly include the following:

- Provide the opportunity for BID groupings to run local authority services by adding them to the list of relevant bodies that can challenge to run local authority services under the right to challenge.
- Increase involvement of BIDs in planning, by encouraging a bespoke approach to consultation.
- Guidance to encourage local authorities to involve BIDs contribution at planning committees on relevant applications and ensure their views are heard.
- Set out in Community Infrastructure Levy Guidance the importance of Local Authorities working with BIDs when developing Community Infrastructure Levy Charges and identifying appropriate infrastructure.
- Ensure transparency for all BIDs to have strong accountability and quality, for example by requiring they publish annual report and accounts.
- Mandating the use of a Standard Service Level Agreement for BIDs and local authorities to use that could cover a number of issues in order to encourage closer working.
- Amending the guidance to local authorities to ensure they carefully consider exempting from the late night levy, and eligible BIDs that are already funding night time economy measures.
- Updating Compulsory Purchase Order Guidance to ensure that local authorities properly consider a request from a BID group to use Compulsory Purchase Order powers and provide a formal response.

Publishing guidance and best practice to cover the package of measures outlined above. The guidance could also: highlight examples of good partnership working between BID groups and local authorities; set out the benefits to local authorities of BIDs (including the increased investment they can deliver); suggest approaches to encourage closer working; and include an explanation of the regulations.

### **Key Performance Indicators for Quarter 1**

#### Vacancy rate

	Jul-15		
	Vacant	Total	%
Total	39	326	11.96

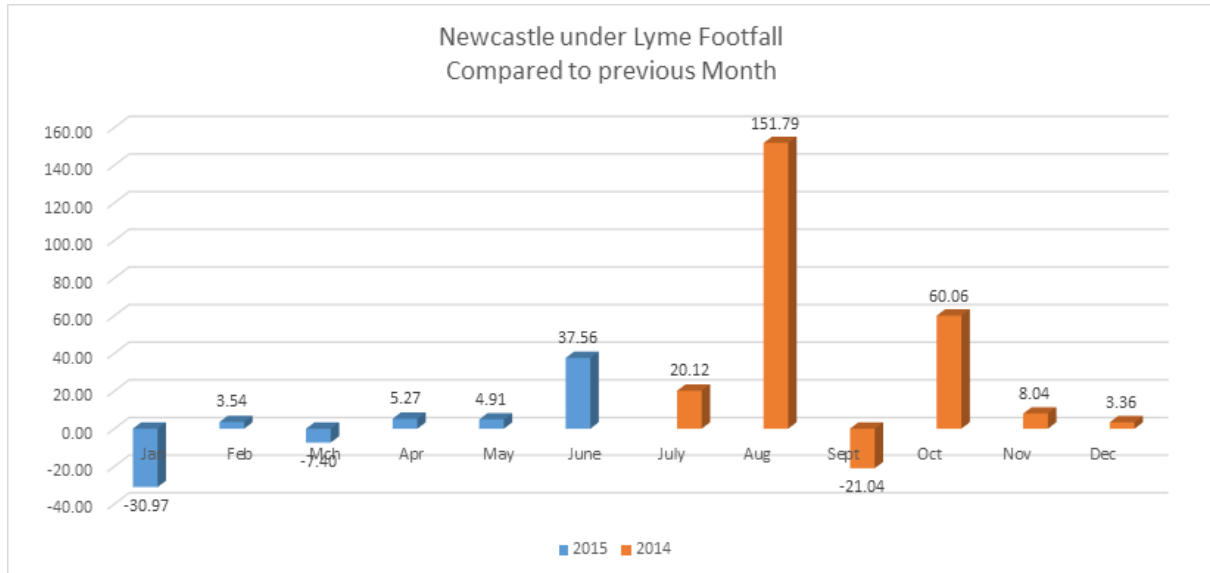
The vacancy rate continues to reduce with it down from 12.3% in Quarter 4. There has been an overall 4% drop in the vacancy rate since the inception of the TCP.

#### Retail Index Scheme

Data has not been collected in quarter 1 as the TCP was focussed on engaging with local businesses about the BID prior to the ballot.

## Footfall

There are approximately 30,000 people walking past the footfall counter in the Ironmarket each week. This varies across the year with particular high numbers of visitors during summer events totalling over 52,000 visitors.



These footfall figures are compared to the previous month. You will notice that month on month there has been an increase in footfall with June seeing an impressive increase of 37.56 % compared to May.

Lymelight Festival – Saw a total of 15,270 visitors over the 4 day period (a 2.22% decrease compared to the previous week this could partly be attributed to the week before being payday week and the poor weather during the event) .

Jazz & Blues Festival - Saw a total of 25,272 visitors during 22nd & 25th May (a 33.9% increase compared to the previous week).

Homecoming - Saw an increase of 103.85% compared to the last year's event.

## Web users

The website is attracting between 250 and 300 hits every day, with greater interest on event weekends.

Website Linkage:

We will be looking at improving website linkage between our website and the Council Website. We have nominated a person to attend the launch of the NBCs new website. We note the recent cancellation of the website launch event.

## Ryecroft Development

We consider this development as a game-changer that will revitalise the Town and attract further essential inward investment. We are assured that the business sector will be kept closely informed as to its continuing progress.

## **Events**

The Homecoming event was really successful and built on last year's event promoting the modern circus. This year has seen increased joint working with the New Vic and the Appetite programme, enabling the TCP to deliver a seamless and well promoted circus-performance-led event which is summed up very well by the video which can be accessed at <https://vimeo.com/133653579>

The Homecoming demonstrates our active growing successful involvement with the Arts Council.

Harvest Festival Event:

The TCP are in discussions with a company called Market Square Group in running a Harvest Moon Festival. This may run on 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> October in the Ironmarket, with a Harvest Supper and folk music, food making workshops, harvest giving of food to those less fortunate hopefully working in conjunction with the local food bank, food and craft stalls.

Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign:

The TCP provided strong support through our events group for the Breast Cancer Campaign "Pink Week". Newcastle have raised a staggering £46,000.00.

'Castle Uncovered History Hub opening:

We have provided light touch support for this event which invited locals to share their memories of using the Town Centre and market for work, shopping or leisure.

Britain in Bloom:

We will be looking at ways and means to provide collaborative ongoing support for this NBC showpiece.

Xmas lights:

We are exploring a number of options which will enable us to assist NBC with this project. Matt Taylor the TCP manger will be tasked to present a proposal for consideration very soon.

Planning for the associated Christmas event is well in hand.

## **Student Night Initiative**

The TCP has relaunched the joint working with the bars and food operators, including new energy from 2 recently opened bars. This group is being supported with some small seed funding from the

TCP to get started then there is an intention to operate on a self funding basis. This will be a great opportunity to attract new students into the town centre at the start of the new academic year.

### **Purple Flag Accreditation Scheme**

We will be seeking closer collaboration with the NBC Purple Flag Project Co-ordinator.

### **Liaison with Market Traders.**

Having due regard to the aspiration to become the County's Best Market Town, the Town Centre Manager has been tasked to encourage Market Traders to establish a resilient operational relationship with TCP/BID. We accept the complex difficulties this presents but that must not deter us from the declared aim to improve the "Market Offer". The current TCP Chairman and the Town Centre Manager have met up with a group of market traders and plans are afoot to form a credible operational/strategy grouping that will enable NBC Market Managers and TCP staff to work collectively for the benefit of each other, thus enabling us to project a positive modern image to all who visit and use the Market Stall services. We are under no illusions as to the enormity of the task that confronts us but we feel that the time is now absolutely right to set out on a declared dedicated course of action.

### **CCTV Monitoring Volunteer Project.**

In the BID business plan, mention is made of the desirability to assist the PABC (Newcastle Partnership against Business Crime) to achieve 5 day volunteer CCTV monitoring coverage on behalf of NBC, to assist with the expansion of the existing radio network and with a proposed improved input contribution to the County Criminal Intelligence Hub. We see this as a way of enhancing support to the Police, given the cutbacks we are currently experiencing. We will be inviting PABCIS (Partnerships against Business Crime in Staffordshire) to submit details of their proposals.

Newcastle PABC has recently commissioned PABCIS to undertake all day to day management duties on behalf of Newcastle PABC. The Chair of Newcastle PABC sits on the PABCIS Steering Group.

Newcastle is now also a member of PABCIM (Partnerships Against Business Crime in The Midlands).

This triple alliance will encourage all Town Partnerships against business Crime to play their part not only in identifying local criminal activity but also those people travelling to commit crime.