

## **NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO EDE SCRUTINY**

<b>Date</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> March 2013
<b>Heading</b>	Update on the Town Centre Partnership and their emerging Business Plan
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<b>Portfolio</b>	Regeneration, Planning & Town Centres
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	Primarily the Town Centre

#### **Purpose of the Report**

The report provides an update on the business of the Newcastle Town Centre Partnership (TCP) including the draft priorities for the developing business plan.

#### **Recommendations**

- (a) That progress is noted.
- (b) That Scrutiny Committee directs any comments for the Town Centre Partnership via the Council's Executive Board representative; the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Town Centres.

#### **Reasons**

It is appropriate that the Scrutiny Committee reviews the progress of this key Council priority and this report provides an update in terms of the TCP developing a Business Plan.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The establishment of the Newcastle Town Centre Partnership (TCP) was a clear objective of the Council in the expectation that it would help to improve the economic fortunes of the centre. In March 2012, Cabinet agreed to the Council becoming a director of the Newcastle town centre partnership company and authorised officers to take the necessary steps to facilitate this. In July 2012 Cabinet agreed to the preferred model and formalisation of the TCP as a Community Interest Group (CIC). The TCP is now legally established and operating as a CIC, with a separate bank account and independent payroll for the Town Centres Manager.
- 1.2 TCP membership comprises representatives from the Newcastle Chamber of Trade & Enterprise, Partnership Against Business Crime, Newcastle under Lyme BC, the New Vic Theatre, the Roebuck Shopping Centre, Keele University, Newcastle College, North Staffs Chamber of Commerce, independent retailers and others from the commercial sector.
- 1.3 The Town Centres Manager commenced employment with the TCP in January and reports directly to the Chair of the TCP.

## 2. **Issues**

2.1 Over the past two months the TCP has been considering their priorities and has agreed the necessity of preparing a Business Plan. The TCP Board is timetabled to consider the draft Business Plan between the time of writing this report and the Scrutiny meeting. This report therefore outlines the key draft priorities and officers will be able to provide a verbal update at the meeting (this information is provided in good faith but may be liable to change).

2.2 The TCP's draft priorities and actions include:

- Marketing and events – the TCP aims to raise the profile of the town centre and to promote a year round programme of professional and community led events. A key element of this is the launch of a TCP website in April, which will promote events and individual businesses. The TCP made a significant start in demonstrating their leadership of town centre events with the 2012 Christmas Lights Switch on. They have also made significant progress in developing an annual events programme; in March there are events for Fairtrade Fortnight, Student RAG parade, TCP launch event, Britain in Bloom launch event and an Easter Egg hunt for families during the Easter holidays.
- Business and Enterprise – the TCP aims to support the growth of existing businesses and encourage the development of new businesses in the town centre. There will be a range of actions to support businesses including business mentoring, retail coaching and encouraging young entrepreneurs through to business promotion through a town centre map and introduction of a shop loyalty card.
- Environment and infrastructure – the TCP is seeking to enhance the built environment through supporting a range of projects, from promoting better use of upper floors of business premises through to chewing gum removal.
- Night time economy – the TCP is aiming to increase footfall between 5pm and 2am improving both the evening leisure and catering offer in the town. This month the TCP launches the entirely new Thursday student night with student transport from Keele University to the town centre. Further plans include cross trade promotions between food and entertainment businesses and longer term plans for further themed evenings.
- Safety and security – the TCP has a clear priority of developing the Purple Flag scheme and supporting the delivery of projects in conjunction with the Partnership Against Business Crime (PABC).
- Outdoor markets – the delivery of the town centre public realm work is a key project this year and the outdoor markets group is working together to support the market traders. The partnership then aims to attract new high quality traders and specialist markets, as well as encouraging new market traders through schemes such as 'First Pitch' and 'Love your Local Market'.

### **3. Scrutiny Views**

- 3.1 This report outlines progress. Members of the Scrutiny Committee are therefore asked to note progress and to direct any comments for the TCP via the Council's Executive Board representative; the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Town Centres Development.

### **4. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 Outcomes from these actions will significantly affect the 'Borough of Opportunity' corporate priority, and will have implications for the quality of life, regeneration, and sustainability of the town centre, the borough as a whole and ultimately North Staffordshire.

### **5. Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 5.1 There is no statutory requirement to carry out these recommendations.

### **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out but the actions identified will help to make the town centre more able to meet the needs of both residents and the business community, in particular those interested in the possibility of starting their own business.

### **7. Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 The Council has allocated £30,000 to the TCP to recognise that the new partnership and the delivery model need to be supported to establish itself and that it would be appropriate to allocate funding for at least a further two years with a review by the end of 24 months. As the TCP was formalising itself in December 2012 a Service Level Agreement was signed between the TCP and the Council to cover set up costs and three months salary contribution, website development and the government funded Town Team £10,000.
- 7.2 As mentioned above it is recognised for the Partnership to have long term sustainability it is intended that officers work with the partnership with a view to optimising external funding options (including the M&S S.106 funding, the potential for a Business Improvement District and support from Kidsgrove Town Council).

### **8. Major Risks**

- 8.1 Whilst the TCP shares many of the Council's aims and objectives in terms of economic development of the centres the Partnership is a separate company and as such the Council needs to be clear that whilst it can utilise the Member involvement at the TCP Board it cannot prescribe actions. There is a possible reputational risk if the TCP fails but potential benefits outweigh the risk.

## **9. Earlier Cabinet Resolutions**

- 9.1 Mar 2012 - Cabinet agree to Newcastle under Lyme B.C. becoming a director of the Newcastle town centre partnership company and authorises officers to take the necessary steps to facilitate the same.
- 9.2 Mar 2012 - Cabinet agrees to officers working under the auspices of the Newcastle town centre partnership to prepare and submit a bid to become a "Portas pilot", in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning and for the Council to act as the accountable body for administering any grant.
- 9.3 July 2012 – Cabinet agreed to the formalisation of the Town Centre Partnership and financial support for the TCP to appoint a Town Centres Manager
- 9.4 Dec 2012 – Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered progress in formalising the Town Centre Partnership and the recruitment of the Town Centre Manager.

## **10. Background Papers**

- 10.1 None.