

BID

Coventry City Centre
Business Improvement District
Enriching our city



Business & Retail Networking Forum Minutes Tuesday 21st October 2008 2:00-3:30pm Rooms of Coventry

Chairman- Andy Talbot - Centre Manager, West Orchards and
Chair of the BID Sub-Committee

1. Introduction from Andy Talbot the BID Chairman.

Andy welcomed everyone and then ran through the meeting's Agenda.

2. Jerde master planning proposals presentation - Paul Beesley, Team Leader – Property Development, City Development Directorate.

Paul opened the presentation by saying that they were now four weeks into the 6 week public consultation period and that the Council were working towards the final approval of the Jerde proposals by January 2009. The plans had to include ten key principles distilled from the public consultation process undertaken in January 08 which were presented to Jerde by the partners providing them a basis to work from when designing the future development opportunities for the City Centre. They are as follows

1. Build on the existing strength and character of Coventry to ensure that future development reflects the pride of its people alongside its unique heritage and history
2. Define the 'Coventry experience', to encourage participation by all to develop a new City Centre that meets the true physical and emotional needs of the community
3. Be more than just a retail centre, telling the story of Coventry that speaks of its unique qualities and virtues
4. Make a true City Centre for the 21st century that can accommodate the radical changes demanded from its retail, employment and residential markets as the city adapts to a global web-based society
5. Provide a successful mixed-use development that provides something for everyone
6. Recreate Coventry as a unique destination, a hub for the whole sub region, and as a regional, national and international place of interest
7. Enhance both the natural and urban environment of Coventry and its surroundings, raising the quality of life for existing and future citizens. The urban plan should emphasize public parks and plazas, legibility and connectivity, quality, scale and character.

8. Develop and reinforce sustainable concepts that will ensure the commercial, social and environmental longevity of the city.
9. Provide a city centre that is focussed on the pedestrian to ensure a safer and invigorating urban environment
10. Design a flexible framework to adapt and accommodate future demands and to create a world class city for the 21st century

Research and views from the Coventry public had shown that visitors and shoppers were travelling from A to B within the City Centre but not staying to enjoy what was on offer. Paul said that a video recording had been produced documenting what shoppers are faced with on a typical day in Coventry City Centre, such as poor access, poor bin placement and having to walk through working service yards to get to shops and attractions.

The plans showed how the City Centre would have better connectivity and that Jerde would include height as a method of expansion. The ring road in its existing format would stay but could include a speed limit of 30mph or less, allowing visitors to not only understand how the road system worked but allow time for drivers to digest improved signage and exit accordingly.

A question was raised asking for some clarification about what a 'green parkway' was and how it would be achieved. Paul explained that it meant working with the Ring Road in its current form yet improving the environment around it, such as planting or art. Until the Jerde proposal was complete, the exact method was currently unknown. Paul said that it was Jerde's intention to keep as many buildings as possible, but to work with and improve them and that City Parks should flow into the City Centre and vice versa, rather than the Ring Road being a barrier. Jerde's master plan was also to include an iconic central library building, reviving existing squares with more green spaces allowing a better flow for pedestrians, and to restore the historic views of the City's three spires.

Paul then talked through the following bullet points about the regeneration:

- Broadgate and Upper Precinct buildings would be kept
- Buses would be removed from three sides of Broadgate
- A social area would be created in the Arena where the new library building would be sited
- The Arena would house an iconic building representing Coventry's future on which both designers and Coventry's people would have a say.
- The river walk would act as an orientation feature as well as bringing water back into the City Centre.
- The plans would include both a covered and open mall area
- Relocation of the Market to a purpose built site near to its present location allowing space for outside trading as well.
- The street patterns would not need to be changed greatly, as Jerde planned to work predominantly within the existing layout of the City

Questions were then raised about the future of Cathedral Lanes, proposed anchor stores, and car parking amenities for people working in the City Centre.

Paul confirmed that major tenants would be approached for the redevelopment by existing landlords and developers, although construction work was at least three years away from actually starting. Discussion would intensify nearer that time, but as the retail space would be doubling in size, there was certainly room for new ventures as well as housing current Coventry businesses. Cathedral Lanes' future was yet to be finalised but the intention would be to adapt the current status to increase links, vistas and access between the Cathedral quarter and the major shopping areas by opening up the layout. With the new build, the major stores would demand parking with their unit, so this alone would need to be met. Once the Barracks car park had been removed, there would be parking around the base of residential blocks. Quality multi storey car parks, situated on or by the ring road would be essential. The park and ride system would see a growth as well as the aspiration of a shuttle bus service running around the inner circulatory route within the City Centre.

A question was raised by a member who has a business in the Canal Basin concerned that the high rise buildings on the City wall perimeter would isolate the Canal Basin.. Paul believed that the new buildings would be an attractive feature, and although the height of the units would need to be considered, a development of Bishop Street was essential to bring people to that area of the City initially as Paul questioned the pull of canalside warehouses alone. The links needed to be stronger and more attractions in the area would be the best way of achieving this.

A question was asked whether, with the current economic downturn, the whole project was a non starter Paul explained that there had already been substantial investment allowing the plans to continue and this had always been seen as a long term development with key partners keen to continue. Andy Talbot, West Orchards Centre Manager then mentioned that recently he had been taking investors around Coventry, who saw the prospect of regenerating the 9th largest City in England as a great opportunity.

3. City Centre Police issues – update by Nigel Pagdin, City Centre Neighbourhood Sergeant

Nigel introduced us to the new City Centre Inspector Brian Hornsby a Coventry lad whose objective was simple, to make his City Centre safer.

Nigel said that in the past three months, crime figures had again been reduced to about nine incidents per day. The last few weeks however, had seen an increase in shoplifting and shops were now being targeted professionally for large amounts as opposed to spontaneous theft. In anticipation of an increase in purse dipping, especially in the Hertford Street area 2,000 purse bells were on order ready to distribute to the general public, especially the elderly, before Christmas. These bells were paid for out of the Policing budget and would be distributed in shops such as Marks & Spencers and Age Concern. It was also noted that the Carers Centre could distribute a further 3,000 with their winter mail out.

Nigel also addressed the following issues:

- Vehicle crime was down to a reported 48 incidents in the last 3 months.
- Operation Phonetic funded by Coventry City Council had focused on the Skydome/Spon Street area over a 3 month period and reduced crime by 35%.

113 people were arrested, all of whom were tested positively for alcohol and 20% of them were found to be on drugs.

- Head cameras would soon be implemented for security and door staff. CV One would action and monitor the training.

Nigel urged all City Centre businesses to contact him should Christmas temporary staff need any urgent training in the build up to Christmas.

In response to a question about the rough sleepers in the City, Nigel would be implementing an operation next week with the Cyrenians to engage with these individuals and suggest suitable accommodation that was available to them.

4. City Centre Development - Paul Beesley, Team Leader – Property Development, City Development Directorate.

- Paul informed the attendees that a lot of activity could be seen on the Severn Trent and Belgrade Plaza building sites, with the latter's Phase 2 ready to open in March 2009.
- The University had announced their master plan and the first stage would be the demolition of the Frank Whittle building and erection of a student services building.
- Negotiations were still continuing on the development of the Brown's Lane Jaguar site
- Coventry would be in a strong position when the economy returned from recession
- There would be late evening road closures during half term, week commencing 27 October, in the area surrounding Broadgate whilst the Cathedral Lanes canopy is removed.
- The Upper Well Street exit from the City Centre to Ring Road Junction 9 (Belgrade Plaza) would also be closed during that week and diversions would be put in place. Andy Talbot suggested using the inner ring road past IKEA and joining the Ring Road at Junction 5.

5. Christmas Marketing Campaign – Paul Phedon, S & X Media

Paul began by introducing himself and his company:

- Established 9 years
- Marketing. PR. Events
- Design (through partner agency Z3)
- Believe in original and creative thinking
- Results junkies, we measure our success by your success

...then highlighted the synopsis behind Coventry's Christmas campaign:

- Increase footfall – non-residents
- Change the perception of Coventry
- Pitch the broader 'experience'
- Flexibility - to target different consumer groups

- Illustrate how you can create your very own experience in Coventry – lifestyle approach
- Rises above the product
- Use of real people creates human interest and engagement
- ‘Personal’ communication as opposed to generic
- Introduce a “Coventry Family” (social group) - will represent a core target market
- Introduce new members at various stages throughout the campaign.
- Bring to life the character’s experiences. *What Coventry means to them. What they enjoy about the city. “this is their Coventry – how can you create yours?”*
- Real people are the heroes
- Visuals to deliver vibrancy and fun
- Images that stop and create an instant response
- Reinforces an experiential brand
- Allows tailored messages to specific audiences

He went on to explain how the ‘Feel Alive’ magazine winter edition would be the campaign’s launch pad, with the distribution increased from 100,000 copies to 150,000 and would also be distributed to Warwick, Leamington, Nuneaton, Kenilworth, Bedworth and Rugby. The campaign would also include advertising on billboards, the website www.createyourcoventry.com, taxi sides, car park & bus shelter posters, advertorials, bus rears, street broadcast cylinders and radio.

In conclusion, he summarised the following points:

- High impact campaign highlighting the Coventry experience this Christmas
- Adds sense of fun and vibrancy
- Integrated campaign theme across all media
- Strong call to action
- Format to be rolled-out featuring ‘real people’

Andy Talbot was then asked about the free car parking offer for late night Christmas Shopping on Wednesdays. In response, Andy said that the current offer from the City Council would include free parking but it would exclude the three most popular car parks as there was a perception that they were always full regardless of payment. The decision reflected a notional loss of £18,000 to the Council should these 3 parks participate in the offer. Coventry Council’s Gary Ridley would be approached to decide whether or not to accept Andy Talbot and Shirley Kent’s offer of accepting a BID contribution to cover some of the losses incurred by the major car parks should they participate in the free car parking offer. **This has now been agreed for full details see final page**

Andy confirmed that there would be a Christmas stage installed over the Precinct Fountain between 1st and 20th December 2008 to host entertainment, plus children’s walkabout characters on the Sunday’s leading up to Christmas all funded by the Business Improvement District.

6. Business Improvement District (BID) update by Shirley Kent – CV One

Shirley announced the news of a successful Britain in Bloom campaign in 2008 securing another Gold Award, and thanked the BID members, whose contributions had helped fund the campaign. There had been a new design for the BID logo and this would now be branded on all livery and communication. The Farmers Market would continue on the second Thursday of each month following the success of its new location in Market Way. Shirley confirmed that the Autumn BID newsletter had now been distributed to all of the members and that the popular Feel Alive publication was now on line and could be viewed on www.feelalivemagazine.co.uk

7. Any Other Business.

Pauline Dye from Coventry Carers asked how the BID payments were being used and why it hadn't been spent on improving the condition of the flooring in the City Arcade and could it be re-floored and made less dangerous for a low cost. Andy Talbot and Shirley Kent said that this is a landlord issue and reminded the floor BID money had gone towards supporting the Greyfriars Walk campaign which included City Arcade and that in 2008 this was the only group of retailers to receive a ring fenced allocation.

Finally, Paul Beesley was urged to improve the signage to direct customers from the former Hertford Street post office to its new location in WH Smith.

8. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 27 January 2007 venue to be confirmed, agenda to be sent out nearer the time.

Free Parking for Christmas Late Night Shopping!

From November 12th until December 17th 2008 inclusive, cars entering the City Centre car parks shown below, after 3pm on Wednesdays can park free to enjoy the city's late night shopping attractions

West Orchards Barracks Lower Precinct Bishop Street Cox Street New Union Street
Manor House Whitefriars Gosford Street Grove Street Cheylesmore White Street
Moat Street Far Gosford Street

Private car parks such as IKEA, Skydome, and Belgrade Plaza are excluded from this offer, as is the park in Salt Lane.

This promotion is jointly supported by Coventry City Council and Coventry City Centre Business Improvement District (BID)

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