



Haverhill Area Working Party 23 July 2009

Town Centre Management Planned Activities to March 2010

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to consider the planned activities for Haverhill Town Centre management to March 2010.**

2. Background

- 2.1 As part of the Cabinet commitment to Haverhill, St Edmundsbury Borough Council appointed a successor Town Centre Manager, who, a year after the previous incumbent departed, took up the post (28 hours per week on a 36 month contract) in June 2008.
- 2.2 Town Centre Management (TCM) is universally about working with partners to help shape a better, more vibrant place, which is cleaner, safer, more easily accessed and promoted, one which attracts a good mix of shops and services for residents, the people who work locally, and for visitors from near and far.
- 2.3 A £15,000 budget to support TCM activities is available for economic and business development. Project related promotional costs would be drawn from projects such as the Queen Street Enhancement Scheme, if funding is available. There is a need to increase the private sector's financial contributions to the provision of Town Centre Management over time.
- 2.4 The budget allocation is not aimed at delivering major events, rather these are successfully delivered by Haverhill Town Council's Arts and Events programme. The intention is to add value to the Town Council's work and provide funding for focused initiatives to be developed around business outreach, partners' programmes and helping businesses to improve their offer, to help attract more visitors and a good retail mix, for a more vibrant town centre.
- 2.5 Due to the need to be able to capitalise on unexpected opportunities, some of the budget is held back as a contingency.

3. Partnership working outcomes

3.1 Working with partners, the activities to date include communication, outreach, support and promotion:-

- (a) helping to promote consultation and public engagement for example, which helped to drive up an above average (370 responses) to the Queen Street enhancement works;
- (b) compiling and keeping up to date a comprehensive, named, database of more than 160 town centre retail and service businesses and organisations. This after an average of three follow ups to each business (in many cases five) visits and or telephone calls;
- (c) establishing a Town Centre Traders Group, in accordance with the recommendations of the Working Party in September 2008;
- (d) providing a regular and well attended programme of meetings with businesses;
- (e) including briefings on and feedback from:-
 - (i) presentations by keynote speakers such as Tesco, Abbeycroft Leisure; Safer neighbourhood Team Inspector, Haverhill Chamber of Commerce, Cineworld Cinema;
 - (ii) 35 one-to-one meetings with traders and the Principal Planning Policy Officer to discuss how the impact of the Queen Street works are to be managed.
- (f) obtaining food and beverage sponsorship from Lloyds Bank for a business meeting and from Cineworld, discounted charges for hire of a screen and refreshments for two meetings with the businesses;
- (g) liaising/working with Haverhill Chamber of Commerce, briefing and supporting the Chairman at her request, prior to media interviews;
- (h) partnering with Bury St Edmunds' TCM, producing and distributing 16,000 copies of the first Winter in West Suffolk promotional brochure;
- (i) liaising with Clarkes, W H Smith, Holland and Barrett, Iceland, Cineworld, Tesco, Indulgence, Aldi and other expanding and new businesses, signposting them to Job Centre Plus and other relevant agencies, as well as suggesting promotional initiatives and useful contacts in order to bring them into the Haverhill business network;
- (j) acting as co-ordinator, supporting major projects by relaying traffic management issues and complaints for action by Suffolk County Council;
- (k) producing and hand delivering to businesses, Queen Street news bulletins, distributing 'In the Picture' newsletters, expanding the email database;
- (l) promoting the benefits of Shop Watch and Town Link to businesses ranging from Jocks Locks and Ipswich Building Society to Fredys Hairdressing;

- (m) persuading 16 businesses to join a Wellbeing Week promotion;
 - (n) persuading seven small businesses to take up one to one business advice sessions with the Mid Anglian Enterprise Agency (MENTA);
 - (o) addressing community groups on five occasions;
 - (p) working in a trouble-shooting capacity for day-to-day issues arising in Queen Street; and
 - (q) becoming a member of the Queen Street Officer Project Team managing the delivery of the enhancement works and the Shop Fronts Grant Scheme.
- 3.2 The Wellbeing Week was not well supported as it unfortunately coincided with the worst weather of the winter. The participants do however, wish to partner again, possibly in May 2010.
- 3.3 Distribution of the paper based directory planned for early 2009, has been postponed until the re-launch of Queen Street/opening of Tesco in autumn 2009. Due to the ongoing road works into town, coupled with the Bus Station and Queen Street Enhancement Scheme works, it is considered counter productive if the directory enticed visitors to Haverhill for the first time, and all the works being undertaken, leaves the visitors with a negative experience.

4. 2009/2010: Promotional Activities with Cost Estimates, if Applicable, and if Known

- 4.1 As indicated in Section 2, for certain activities, contributions from the private sector and other partners will be sought.
- 4.2 **Business Directory:** this first issue is intended to be solely funded from the TCM budget.
- 4.2.1 **Aim:** the aim is to compile and maintain an up to date database of all shops and services in town for a more targeted and effective communication with the businesses and to use this listing as a marketing tool to entice residents from town and outlying villages. 'Prize draws' will be encouraged in order to establish the reach of the directory.
- 4.2.2 It is well documented that many (possibly too many) residents around Haverhill do not yet patronise the town centre. It is desirable that any promotional initiatives are designed to first encourage and entice more and more 'local people' into town. Little by little, wider distribution of the message to a radius of 20 miles or so would be considered and costed.
- 4.2.3 The directory will be 210 mm x 99 mm with the cover produced in full colour, with the contents in black and white only. An updated town centre map will also be included. 16,000 copies will be produced, which will include a distribution to outlying villages. The approximate cost is £3,700.

4.3 Haverhill in Bloom

4.3.1 **Aim:** the aim is to support the volunteer committee by promoting this initiative to businesses, in order to improve the appearance of the town. The prize giving is an opportunity to promote the winners and donors and to help raise the profile of Haverhill. It was reported that in 2008 there was one participant. In 2009, three businesses have decided to enter, which are Clarks, Tony Strowger Jewellers and the Queens Head Public House. The first two entrants are new participants.

4.3.2 **1st Prize:** £40 voucher to Prezzo which equates to 10% discount from Prezzo;
Runners up: Family (4) Cinema tickets, kindly donated by Cineworld and a gift box of one kilogram of fine chocolates, kindly donated by Indulgence.

4.4 Empty Shop Displays and Window Dressing Initiatives

4.4.1 **Aim:** the aim is to dress empty shop windows with art/posters, in order to add colour to the streets, and to help re-let the units and obscure the detritus often left behind. There is no fee payable to the landlord or shop keeper. Obtaining permission from landlords has been a lengthy process. To date, (six months on) consent has only been granted to use the former Lloyds Bank unit in the High Street and the former computer shop in Queen Street.

4.4.2 The plan is to use laminated heavy duty PVC posters measuring 4' x 3' with suckers fixed so as not to damage the glass or fade if left in situ for a while. A call to action to the town centre management office would help ensure any interest in the topic or the shop unit, is captured and followed up.

4.4.3 Bury St Edmunds and some other towns have designed special posters. This route would enable design of a specific set of 3 or 4 themed posters; a batch order of up to 100 would cost something more than £3,000.

4.4.4 Alternatively, given the investment and development activity in Haverhill, the expanse of glazing in the shops could be used to more heavily promote newsworthy events, new venues and investments in Haverhill. This is a more challenging option since it needs to rely on partners' willingness to allow their messages to be used in this manner and the poster needs some alterations to an existing piece of artwork. The costs would be in the region of between £60 - £80 per poster, depending on the work involved and numbers ordered at any one time. This could well end up being a more flexible and less costly option, allowing one or two posters to be produced at a time. It may be worth testing over six months or so to assess the effectiveness.

4.4.5 Discussions are also taking place with the Extended Schools Officer for the Haverhill Cluster about the possibility of the Tesco art project teams being willing for some of the panels to be exhibited in shops. She will ensure that in the new term in the autumn, during her absence, this is discussed in order to resolve issues around the easels/stands for the displays, the removal and storage of the stands and the source of funding for this element.

4.4.6 The owners of the empty former computer shop are the only people to have so given their consent.

4.5 **Winter in West Suffolk 2009**

4.5.1 **Aim:** the aim is to promote the retail, leisure amenities and events in and around Haverhill (and in Bury St Edmunds). 16,000 copies will be distributed in and around the towns and outlying Villages, as in winter 2008. Advertising is being sought and prize draws by retailers will be encouraged, to assess the reach of the distribution. With the updated Haverhill map, and some advertising revenue, the estimated charge for the Haverhill element of the brochure is approximately £600. Distribution in mid October 2009 is planned.

4.6 **Iconic Postcards Campaign: Getting Haverhill Known with Images of the Best of Haverhill**

4.6.1 **Aim:** the aim is to use a variety of images of Haverhill to help promote 'what is good'. These are part of a marketing approach to get Haverhill better known as a place to live, visit and in which to do business. These are not meant to be for sale but are to be distributed as far and as wide as possible by businesses, Council officials and officers when writing to external contacts, by being available at all Council offices and at events, for example, at the 'Business-to-business' exhibition.

4.6.2 The Communications Team will select suitable new views including, importantly, the fully refurbished Haverhill Leisure Centre and provide ten or so images for the Haverhill Partnership to select half a dozen. The post cards could be posted as picture post cards. There would be a call to action to help drive up responses. The production of 1,800 cards will cost approximately £600.

4.6.3 Subject to shooting and selecting the images, the cards could be available by November 2009. Perhaps during November and early December 2009 these cards could be sent and could make a positive impact.

4.6.4 The post card initiative was recommended in the Haverhill Branding and Marketing Plan, adopted by the Borough Council in 2006. The exercise could be conducted annually for a while. There would be ample new 'images/views' to help promote the growing town.

4.7 **Business to Business (B2B) Exhibition**

4.7.1 **Aim:** the aim is to partner and add value to the B2B exhibition being organised by Haverhill Enterprise and the Chamber of Commerce and to work with colleagues in the Economic Development Section, to invite potential investors to Haverhill. Subject to a presentation and tours of the town being organised, refreshments, a buffet lunch and invitations would be the cost. If available at the time, one of the postcards would be used for the invitation.

4.7.2 With sponsorship being targeted, the cost to undertake this project would be approximately £700.

4.8 **Fact Pack: Commercial**

4.8.1 **Aim:** the aim is to provide and keep up to date potential investors, developers and end users with a collection of data, essential in their decision making process, as suggested by the major players in Haverhill. This exists in a variety of websites and from different organisations and the purpose is to collate and deliver it in a

glossy, 'CB9' branded cover, with the insert leaflets being produced from the computer printer. Updates will be emailed.

- 4.8.2 Supplies are being sourced for 250 brochure covers and overprinting the logo at a cost of approximately £500.

4.9 **Welcome Pack: Residential**

- 4.9.1 **Aim:** the aim is to provide a pack, containing the type of information, data, contacts, which an incoming resident to Haverhill may appreciate. A copy of an updated map of the town would also be enclosed. Material/data would be collated from all sources and the packs would be given to the estate agents, Council offices and libraries. In-house computer generated A4 sheets would form the bulk of the data forms. A feedback form with a call to action would also be included.

- 4.9.2 The aim is to target sponsorship from town centre businesses, including agents, to help offset the cost of the volume printing of maps and sourcing reasonable quality 'wallets/folders'. It may be possible to use the same cover as in the Commercial packs.

- 4.9.3 Supplies and cost details are being obtained. The quantities initially, would be in the region of 1,000. Feedback would help to determine how to proceed thereafter. It may be that once the volume housing developers begin construction, there could be some joint work undertaken, with shared costs, in respect of the residential Welcome Pack.

4.10 **Footfall count**

- 4.10.1 **Aim:** the aim is to capture an up to date count of visitors to town in order to have a benchmark, against future increases or decreases in visitor activity, following major new or different investments, can be judged. As economist, Peter Drucker said, *'what gets measured gets managed'*.

- 4.10.2 After considering engaging youth, older community groups and others including specialist firms to carry out this exercise, a new approach is being explored. It may be possible to do more than just pay for a firm to count footfall but make this part of a much wider exercise to obtain more analysis around 'retail in Haverhill'. In addition, this could be an opportunity for traders to learn more about people, their spending habits and how they could raise their game to profit from the knowledge, which is part of the idea of a Master Class in retail.

- 4.10.3 Discussions have begun and once details are available for an informed discussion, a report will be brought for consideration by the Working Party.

4.11 **Re-Launch of Queen Street**

- 4.11.1 **Aim:** the aim is to promote the enhanced Queen Street and the attractive approaches to and from Tesco. This would include an on-street event, possibly an Italian market. Extensive advertising, marketing and promotion with press notices, flyers, and mailings are being discussed. A current estimated cost at this stage is £3,500 for an event held in mid November 2009.

4.12 Re-launch of refurbished Bus Station

4.12.1 **Aim:** the aim is to highlight completion of the main works to the bus station at the end of August 2009, in order to encourage more people to use buses to access the town centre and the shops. The Communications Section and Suffolk County Council (SCC) will be developing and implementing a communications programme which will include the installation and the management of the messages, together with the timetable, on the Real Time Passenger Information Display Screens in November 2009.

4.12.2 TCM relays concerns and complaints from residents and passengers to the Project Team during the works and returns the responses, unless direct communication is undertaken with the passenger/resident. Once completed, TCM would work with the Communications Section and SCC, to assist with distribution of timetables or other promotional initiatives, which are yet to be advised.

4.13 Launch and progress of the Queen Street Shop Front Grant Scheme

4.13.1 **Aim:** the aim is to support colleagues and liaise with businesses to ensure that the scheme details are hand delivered to each business in Queen Street. Once they have had an opportunity to identify their questions, to collate and forward these questions from businesses to the Principal Planning Policy Officer and to organise one/two workshops. At these meetings, businesses, and officers will be able to discuss and iron out questions regarding the scheme.

4.14 Referring businesses to Business Link and to MENTA

4.14.1 **Aim:** the aim is to continue to encourage businesses, together with visitors who drop into the Council offices seeking help in setting up in business, to access the support being provided by MENTA and Business Link.

4.15 Other Initiatives being Explored in Partnership Include:-

- (a) a film competition;
- (b) an event with the Prince's Trust: this is proving to be complex due to their human resource issues;
- (c) Master Classes for retailers;
- (d) Loyalty Scheme;
- (e) 'Haverhill's Star' Excellent Customer Service Competition;
- (f) a 'Community Market'; and
- (g) Wellbeing Week 2010.

4.16 Other Meetings Previously/Currently Attended and Planned Include:-

- (a) Haverhill Partnership;
- (b) Haverhill Executive;
- (c) SNT;
- (d) Leisure Quarter SNT sub group, as and when;
- (e) Homelessness;
- (f) Chamber of Commerce: Meetings, events;
- (g) Business Networking Events;
- (h) MENTA Events;

- (i) regular planned and ad hoc as needed, with the Clerk to the Town Council and the Arts and Leisure Manager; and
- (j) in September 2009, the first meeting on Shop Watch with businesses and the SNT.

5. Methodology Used for Cost Effective Business Outreach

- 5.1 First develop a named contact database and continue to keep it up to date, and include notes about key outcomes of liaison with businesses. Use this to write in the first instance to the businesses with any new information or notice about a meeting, a new initiative or any works. Depending on the topic or initiative, or desired outcome and anticipated participation by the business, visit, telephone or email, in order to continue to follow up. A profile of the businesses can then be built up for effective engagement in the future.
- 5.2 **Queen Street Enhancement Works:** for example, more than 50 calls were made in order to confirm 35 one-to-one meetings which were offered with the Principal Planning Policy Officer, or, to set up telephone interviews, with absent landlords/their agents. Letters were then sent confirming the agreement.
 - 5.2.1 In order to ensure that the appointments were kept, **all the businesses were visited twice each**, two or three days before. **ALL** were telephoned the day before. The outcome was that only one business failed to turn up and, did not send an apology, due to being called away.
- 5.3 **Haverhill in Bloom:** from knowledge of the businesses, after the initial letters were posted, a dozen were targeted for follow up visits. Thereafter, telephone calls were made.
 - 5.3.1 Three businesses decided to participate in 2009: Clarks, Tony Strowger Jewellers and the Queens Head Public House. The first two are new entrants to the competition. STP, the winner in 2008 declined to participate in 2009, due to a heavy workload.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that:-
 - (1) the content of Report A134 and the work that has been undertaken since the Town Centre Manager has been in post, be noted;
 - (2) the suggested programme for 2009/2010 be considered and feedback provided to the Town Centre Manager on priorities in order that these can be worked up into a finalised programme for the next year.

For further information, please contact:-

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