



# Haverhill Area Working Party

## 9 June 2011

### Haverhill Shopper Survey Project

#### 1. Summary

- 1.1 On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2011, the working party approved the recommendation to accept the offer from Kent Business School of a student placement to undertake a professionally designed and conducted survey by a specially selected student directed by KBS in Haverhill Town Centre as detailed in section 3.13 of Report B527. A sum of £1,000 from the existing Town Centre Management Budget was approved to support expenses incurred by the student. In addition authorisation was given to the Town Centre Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of HAWP to establish a programme of actions resulting from the information emanating from the survey, such as, regular shopper consultation; training programmes; collective marketing initiatives etc.
- 1.2 It is now proposed to use students from Castle Manor Business and Enterprise College to conduct the survey which is still to be masterminded and devised by Kent Business School. This option is considered to be more cost effective as the KBS students would rapidly use £1000 in travelling costs and also the use of local students enables the project to be properly embedded in the community.
- 1.3 Since the last report the potential of this project has grown. The Association of Town Centre Managers (ATCM) has written to express its keen interest in the outcomes; the government has announced its intention to commission Mary Portas (Mary Queen of Shops) to undertake a review of the "High Street"; and most notably a number of shops in Haverhill High Street have announced their intention to close. Whilst this is part of a national trend for our High Streets it is not something that can be ignored.
- 1.4 The co-ordination and promotion of this project takes time and whilst the skills exist within the existing staff structure of the borough council, the time to dedicate to this project is lacking. The potential for this project to become nationally recognised suggests that what is needed is a dedicated project manager to ensure that the project really makes a difference to our town centre.
- 1.5 Kent Business School has also advised us that it has an "Innovation Fund" and has encouraged us to apply for match funding to help with the project management and expenses associated with this project. The Innovation Fund will match fund exactly the amount of funding raised through other channels. The deadline for an application to the fund is 20<sup>th</sup> June 2011.
- 1.6 Thus far, St Edmundsbury Borough Council has allocated £1,000 to this project. Suffolk County Council has been approached to see whether it would consider contributing to this project.

- 1.7 St Edmundsbury Borough Council has allocated funding towards the Haverhill Shopfront Grant that has not been widely accessed. If Members were in agreement, it would be possible to allocate some of the remaining funding from this grant to the Haverhill Shoppers Project.
- 1.8 An allocation from SEBC of £10,000 would be used to bid for £10,000 of match funding from Kent Business School enabling a budget of £20,000. This would fund phase 1 of this project which includes:
- 10-15 Castle Manor School students conducting street and shop surveys to understand the range of goods available; stock levels; customer service etc
  - Analysis of the data from Kent Business School
  - recommendations for training and intervention needs to form the next stage of the project
- 1.9 The main aim of this project is to translate the knowledge held by large national multiple retailers such as Tesco to the smaller independent trader. At the end of the project the outcomes will include:
- To help Haverhill identify a retail offer - distinctly different from its neighbours;
  - Utilising the street market to extend and grow the retail offer of the town;
  - Establishing regular listening forums between customers and town businesses;
  - The development of a loyalty programme offering targeted incentives for shoppers to shop more frequently;
  - opportunity to extend the learning from the ten pilot businesses to the remainder;
  - to look at innovative ways of reducing the number of vacant shops in the town;
  - Being held up nationally as a best practice project. Using Haverhill as a case study for other towns/cities to learn from.
- 1.9 Assuming funding is secured for this project, the opportunity to manage the project will be advertised externally.
- 1.10 The working party will be kept up to date with progress regarding this project.

## **1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, it is **RECOMMENDED** that:-
- (1) £10,000 be allocated from Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) previously allocated for the Haverhill Shopfront Grant scheme to be used for a bid to Kent Business School to lever in additional funding to support the project management and expenses associated with the Haverhill Shopper Project as detailed in report B527.
  - (2) the Economic Development Manager be authorised to recruit a project manager using funding from (1) above and to commission them to work with Kent Business School to progress this project.

For further information please contact:-

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