

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)**  
**held at 10.00 am on Friday, 27 November 2015**

Present:

Members: Councillor R Lakha (Chair)  
Councillor L Bigham  
Councillor G Crookes  
Councillor K Mulhall  
Councillor M Mutton

Other Members: Councillor R Brown (Deputy Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment)  
Councillor K Maton (Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment)

Employees (by Directorate):

Place D Cockroft, T Evans, Nuttall

People T Evans

Resources G Holmes, M Salmon

Apologies: Councillor J Birdi and H Sweet

## **Public Business**

### **15. Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared.

### **16. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

(Note: Further to the request relating to Minute 12/15, headed 'Jobs and Growth Strategy Annual Report', information on the ethnicity of people using the Job Shop had been circulated to Members of the Board.)

### **17. Footfall in the City Centre**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a briefing note of the Executive Director of People that gave an overview of city centre footfall patterns and the impact of events to support the increase in visitor numbers.

Footfall measured the number of people (traffic not visitor numbers) passing multiple sites in the city centre. The City Council managed footfall camera collecting devices across six locations in the city centre, located in Upper Precinct, Hertford Street, City Arcade, Market Way, Smithford Way and Priory Place. In addition Lower Precinct and West Orchards figures were added to collate a combined footfall figure for the centre. Footfall was impacted by both changes in the number of visitors to the city centre and changes in visitor patterns. Footfall figures indicated:

- Year-on-year Footfall - the long-term trend showed that Coventry had performed slightly better than national figures with city centre footfall 13% below that of 2005, compared to 15% nationally.
- 2015 Weekly Footfall - was better than national figures. Since week 37 and the opening of a number of restaurants in Cathedral Lanes, footfall in Upper Precinct had been up 4.2% against the previous year.
- Evening footfall - was up compared to last year and had substantially increased in recent weeks with evening footfall up 55% against the same period last year, suggesting the new restaurant developments were impacting footfall.
- Event impacts - footfall patterns during specific city centre events had shown that during core hours of the 2014 Christmas Lights Switch-on footfall was 21% higher than the previous year's event; this year's student shopping night saw footfall increase 71% against the previous week and Motofest, Skyride and Oktoberfest had helped to increased footfall.
- Student impact - this year's Fresher's week saw an increase of 8.5% against the previous week and by a further 5.1% the following week when students returned.

Over the last year the city centre had seen a substantial increase in its retail ranking, moving up 13th places to 47th place.

The Board questioned officers and discussed the following issues:

- Maximising on the attractions that increase footfall during Student Freshers Week
- Learning from the data collected in areas of the City Centre that had higher footfall to improve footfall in other areas
- The importance of the visual effect of gateways to the City and the central area in attracting visitors/returning visitors
- Identifying the attractions that resulted in strong peaks of footfall during the year
- Consideration of barriers, to maximise views of what's available in the City Centre – viewing distances showcase shops and facilities
- Recognising changing shopping habits i.e. online shopping and retail park shopping
- Promotion and marketing of the City and the events being held
- Developing more event spaces in the Centre

- The provision of covered areas to attract shoppers all year round even in inclement weather conditions
- The aspiration of that greater footfall would be achieved in the City following the implementation of major projects currently underway i.e. Friargate, City Centre South and City Centre Destination Facility

The Board agreed that obtaining comparative statistics on city centre footfall from other similar authorities in the region may be useful and asked officers to request this information.

**RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the footfall patterns in Coventry City Centre and the impact of events to support the increase in footfall.**

## 18. City Centre Developments

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a briefing note of the Executive Director of Place that provided an update on City Centre South, Friargate and the new City Centre Leisure destination.

Coventry City Council had embarked on an ambitious 15 year programme of City Centre regeneration, the object of which was to create high quality employment opportunities and to make the city centre a first class retail and leisure destination offering a range of quality shops, cafes restaurants and other leisure facilities.

Friargate – The Friargate Business District would regenerate the City, transform the Council and deliver savings by the construction of a new Council owned office building at Friargate, the construction of a new bridge deck, the rationalisation of its operational property estate and the subsequent disposal of property assets vacated through such rationalisation. The following milestones had been achieved:

- Construction of City Council building 1 had commenced with an estimated completion date of mid-2017
- Highway works to junction 6 completed
- The boulevard linking the station to city centre completed by end 2015
- Heatline connection to Friargate underway
- Demolition/clearance of site largely completed with Station Tower demolition to be completed early 2017
- Discussion with RICS around pre-let of building 2, on-going
- Further discussion with further office occupiers [and hotel operators] underway
- [Securing £50m of commitment from Combined Authority to allow development of buildings 2/3
- Sale of Civic Centre 1-4, Elm Bank and vacation of West Orchards House.

City Centre South - The regeneration scheme would assist in improving the city's image as a whole, attract investment, cope with future demands and compete with rival cities in its aspiration to be in the top ten of UK cities. The Authority had commenced securing an appropriate development partner who could access funding to deliver the scheme, with the preferred partner identified by April 2016.

City Centre Destination Facility - the development of the Facility on the existing Christchurch House and Spire House site, was to provide high quality, sustainable sports and leisure facilities in the city centre and create a destination facility that would complement other developments in the south side of the city centre including Friargate and the City Centre South development. The facility would place sport and active recreation in the heart of city centre regeneration, promoting active leisure as an accessible, social, family activity, in line with Marmot principles, and the City of Coventry as a visitor destination and centre for sport and culture, in line with Coventry's UK City of Culture 2021 aspirations and Council Plan objectives. Project work on the Facility had progressed with the confirmed appointment of the full professional design team who would present initial designs to Cabinet Members and the Project Board in early 2016, to be followed by public consultation. Work was expected to commence on site in mid-2017 following the vacation of Spire and Christchurch House, with the facility open to the public by mid-2019.

The Board questioned officers and discussed the following issues:

- Low Carbon Footprint of new developments – encouraging links to Heatline which has the security to deliver should all new tenants take-up this provision
- Current traders in the City Arcade – provision of information/updates on progress of City Centre South Scheme, short and/or alternative tenancies
- The £150m commitment from Combined Authorities - £100m for the City Centre and £50m for Friargate. Resources had been identified for Friargate without Combined Authority, ensuring its delivery.
- A centralised store for online click and collect
- Emphasis on leisure and social provision in City – restaurants, bars, music venues
- Promotion and marketing of the City and its facilities
- Shopping attractions – destination stores, passing trade stores, markets
- Public Realm – progressing barrier issues in City Centre within its remit
- Destination Facility links – need to be well connected, visible and accessible

The Board requested that a letter be sent to the current tenants of City Arcade advising them that City Centre South Scheme shop front drop in sessions would be put in place to provide them with information on the progress of the project, in due course.

**RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the progress being made in respect of the City Centre Developments and endorses the work undertaken by the Assistant Director for City Centre & Development Services.**

#### 19. **Outstanding Issues**

Outstanding issues were picked up in the Board's Work Programme.

20. **Work Programme 2015/2016**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered the Work Programme 2015/2016 and noted a number of updates.

**RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes that the Work Programme 2015/2016 be updated with the following items of business considered at the meetings indicated:**

**16<sup>th</sup> December 2015 (Additional Meeting)**

- Environment and Sustainability
- Delivering the Jobs and Growth Strategy - Half Year Progress Report (April 2015- September 2015)

**27<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

- Local Enterprise Partnership – Update from the Cabinet Member Business, Enterprise and Employment
- Task and Finish Group Recommendations - Private Rented Sector Housing
- Sports Strategy

**16<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

- Local Plan Representations
- Fuel Poverty

21. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.40 pm)