

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny

Scrutiny Panel 2 – Retail Experience

5th December 2012

Briefing Note: Desktop Research

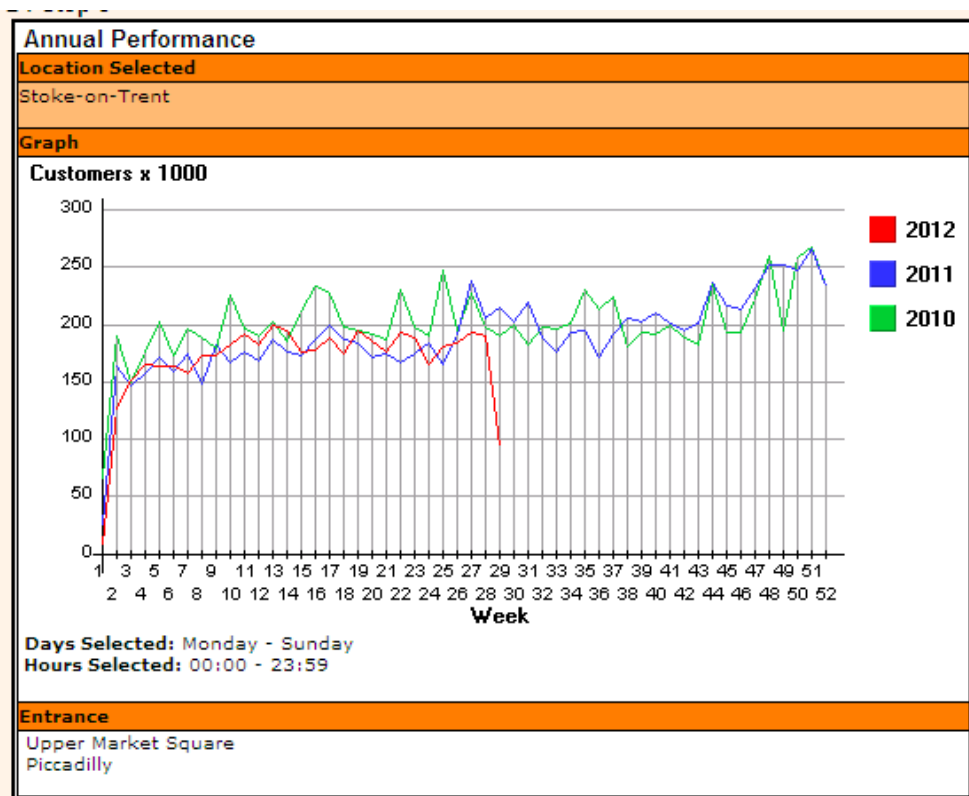
1 Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 27th June 2012 the Scrutiny Panel agreed that as part of its evidence gathering process that desktop research would be undertaken regarding the offer, profile, image and catchment of Stoke and Walsall.

2 Information

2.1 Stoke City Council

Footfall figures, month by month, 2010 - 2012



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2.2 Population figures

Population figures for Stoke on Trent are approximately 250,000.

2.3 Range of shops in Stoke City Centre - Independent / larger retailers

Stoke on Trent is made up of six towns Hanley, Stoke, Burslem, Longton, Fenton and Tunstall. Hanley is classed as the City Centre of Stoke on Trent which is what this information is based on.

All large retailers are located within the shopping centre. Outside the shopping centre, there are about 50% independent 50% large retailers. For example:

Inside the shopping centre:

Next Superdrug
W H Smith
 Clintons
Miss Selfridge
Beaverbrooks
Orange

Examples of large retailers outside the shopping centre:

M & S
Boots
BHS
Goldsmiths
Argos

2.4 The offer, profile, image and catchment of the City Centre

2.4.1 City Centre offer:

2.4.2 Cultural Quarter

The Cultural Quarter is reported as a hub of creative and entertainment venues in the City Centre. There are two main theatres: The Regent Theatre and Victoria Hall, which hosts opera, dance, drama and musicals, direct from Broadway and the West End, as well as comedians including Sean Lock, Jimmy Carr and Roy Chubby Brown.

The Cultural Quarter is noted as having a more relaxed atmosphere than a typical high street, with a number of cafes and a variety of restaurants

Further visitor attractions in Stoke on Trent include the Potteries Museum and the Art Gallery which is reported to host the world's best collection of Staffordshire ceramics and host to the Staffordshire Hoard. Emma

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Bridgewater Limited, a pottery manufacturer, with visitor attractions including a pottery factory shop, pottery café and factory tours.

Other attractions include Dudson Museum, the Regent Theatre and the Victoria Hall and the Mitchell Arts Centre.

2.4.3 Retail

The offer of shopping comprises a number of well-known high street names including:

Boots
Marks and Spencer
Monsoon
Panasonic
Sainsbury's
Waterstones
Thorntons

There are also a number of independent retailers such as:

Revolte – Alternative clothing and accessories
Infinities – Men's designer clothing
Gemini Menswear – British and continental menswear
Acapella – Men's designer wear
Wyndsors World of shoes
Weberley's Bookshop – Independent book shop
Edward's China
Wedgewood and Royal Doulton Outlet Store

The city centre also has an indoor market consisting of around 130 stalls.

A Sunday market and car boot sale takes place attracting around 40 stalls.

2.5 Catchment Area

The catchment area to the shopping centre is reported as a one hour's drive time.

2.6 Business Improvement Development (BID)

There is not currently a BID for Stoke on Trent.

The Stoke on Trent City Centre Partnership is in existence and is made up of 40 businesses from the city centre. This Partnership has been in place in one form or another for the past 15 years. The Partnership made an application, along with 370 other towns, for the Portas Pilot fund.

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2.7 Additional information

Like a lot of cities, Stoke on Trent has a lot of vacant shops and businesses have suffered. Regeneration of the city centre is underway. The city has a brand new bus station that is due to open early 2013, a new shopping centre – “City Sentral” due for completion 2015, Central Business District and re-development at the Potteries Shopping Centre that will include six new restaurants and a cinema.

Public Realm works of the main pedestrian area are under way.

Central Business District will see the Civic Centre in Stoke relocate to the City Centre bringing 2,000 staff. The first phase will be developed on the site of the Council's former base at Unity House, is set to include 140,000 square feet of office accommodation plus ground floor accommodation for a customer hub and a new central library. The Central Business District is reported to be key to attracting new business into the city, which in turn will create jobs, our number one priority.

Appended are photographs of the City Centre for the Panel's information.

2.8 Metropolitan Borough of Walsall

2.9 Population figures

The population of the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall is approximately 178,853.

2.10 Footfall statistics

Footfall statistics gathered from the shopping centres are confidential. Walsall Council is currently investigating funding streams so that it can gather footfall figures for the town centre.

2.11 The Town Centre offer

2.11.1 An Art Gallery is located within the town centre, within close proximity to the Park Place shopping center and the railway station, also nearby is the Walsall Canal Basin.

2.11.2 Range of shops in Walsall Town Centre

Walsall Town Centre boasts over 300 retail stores with a broad range of shops from independents to national retailers. It also has a wide selection of pubs and restaurants.

It is reported that the centre has been a focal point in Walsall for over forty

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years and well known retailers include high street names such as:

Boots
Wilkinson's
Greggs the bakers
Poundworld
Max Spielman
New Look

2.11.3 Old Square Shopping Centre

Located within the town centre is the Old Square Shopping Centre. It is reported that the Old Square Shopping Centre is home to a diverse range of stores, from some of the biggest names on the high street including Debenhams to independent retailers and specialist stores. Examples of the stores located in the Old Square Shopping Centre:

99p store
Jessops
Debenhams
The Sweet Shop
Walsall mini Grocery
Savers
Bright House

An £11 million retail-led regeneration project at Walsall's Old Square Shopping Centre is set to revitalise the town, attracting further investment, and creating hundreds of jobs.

Plans to redevelop part of the Old Square Shopping Centre and create a new heart for Walsall's retail core were given the backing of Walsall Council's Planning Committee. The plans include the demolition of the empty Tesco Metro store and other units to make way for a new scheme that are aimed to transform the town centre, setting the bar for future development.

Three new retail units will be created, including a new 30,000sq ft two-storey Primark on Digbeth that will recruit around 100 people. A four-storey building will be occupied by Mid Counties Co-op, creating around 60 jobs, and this will also include commercial space above. A third retail unit inside Old Square Shopping Centre will also be delivered.

There has been an increase in enquiries from independent retailers regarding retail space at the Old Square Shopping Centre.

2.11.4 Walsall Market

A market takes place five days a week close to the Old Square Shopping

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Centre. The market operates every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday and trades between 8.30am and 5.00pm.

Walsall Council regards its Walsall Market as the traditional heart of the town. It has been in existence since 1219. It is reported that the market has a fantastic reputation throughout the West Midlands and has an excellent choice of stalls.

The market comprises 100 stalls, which measure 3m (10ft) x 2.5m (8ft), with counter boards provided for traders.

2.11.5 Park Place Shopping Centre

Park Place Shopping Centre is well served by local public transport routes with the bus and train station situated close to Park Place and various car parks are also with easy walking distance.

Park Place Shopping Centre is situated in the centre of Walsall, close to the Art Gallery and Crown Wharf. The centre fronts Park Street which is the main shopping street in Walsall, West Midlands.

Some independent retailers are located in Park Place Shopping Centre such as:

- Children's formal and event clothing
- Clive Marks Schoolwear
- Gorgeous fashions
- Park Place Meats
- Park Place Shoe Repairs

Free face painting and balloon modeling is offered every second Saturday of the month.

2.11.6 Walsall Town Centre

There are a number of retailers located around the town centre including:

- Supercare 2 – Car accessories and parts
- Sports Direct
- Burton
- Echo Island – Men's clothing
- Little Oasis – Men's clothing
- Connexions Fashion – Women's clothing
- Diva Clothing – Women's clothing
- Dorothy Perkins
- Wallis
- Leatherworld
- River Island
- Republic
- Royal Sweets

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Superdrug
Rockbottom Discount
Choices – Household Store
Hogar – Greeting card shop

Attached at Appendix B are photographs of the Walsall town centre Shopping and at Appendix C is a copy of the Walsall town centre Shopping and Business Guide 2012 for the Panel's information. Within this document, discount offers for use at various retailers, take away venues and restaurants are provided.

There is also an out of town retail development within the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall, but due to the fact that it is located out of town details are not provided within this briefing note.

2.12 BID

There is no BID for Walsall. There a Town Team has been in operation for the past 21 months, which comprises the Council and a number of local business. Town Team has produced an Action Plan and each champion has its own theme such as events, business support, crime and disorder.

2.13 Catchment Area

Walsall town centre is reported as being well served by local public transport routes with access to a large number of local bus services as well as national coach and rail networks.

3 Conclusions

- 3.1 That details of this desktop research exercise informs the evidence base of this Review.

Brief Author: Tracy Tiff, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Matt Lynch, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 2, Retail Experience

13th September 2012

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