AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

TITLE: ELY CITY CENTRE WORKSHOP SUMMARY AND ACTION PLAN

Committee: Town Centres Working Party

Date: 26th March 2014

Author: Doug Perkins, Economic Development Officer

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 Consideration of the Ely City Centre Workshop summary and action plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Members are requested to endorse the contents of the Ely City Centre Action Plan.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Ely City Centre Workshop on Feb 3rd 2014 was set up to bring together retailers, businesses and organisations involved within the city centre to build on the work already undertaken with over 50 retail visits and engagement activities undertaken to improve communication and generate ideas to safeguard and strengthen Ely City Centre.

3.2 The City Centre Workshop organised in partnership with the City Centre Forum and Ely Traders Association included over 60 representatives from traders, businesses, landlords and councillors to develop and prioritise ideas to ensure the centre of Ely can continue to thrive.

3.3 The workshop looked at promotion & communication and ideas on improvements for the town centre environment that could be delivered over the next 12 months. Please see attached summary for event feedback.

4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The priorities that were identified through the workshop have been developed into a draft action plan for Ely that East Cambs District Council, the City Centre Forum, Ely Perspective, town centre organisations and traders can work together to deliver over the next 12 months. Actions include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Key Tasks</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Indicative Costs</th>
<th>Potential Funding</th>
<th>Potential Lead Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retailers Welcome Pack</td>
<td>-Draft and test welcome pack</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>Existing resources</td>
<td>ECDC/City Centre Forum (Design/Delivery)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Deliver to all</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Quarter(s)</th>
<th>Cost/Provider</th>
<th>Responsible Bodies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Centre Passage Signage</td>
<td>- Identify passage sign locations&lt;br&gt;- Consultation with City of Ely/centre forum, traders and highways&lt;br&gt;- Installation</td>
<td>Q1-Q2</td>
<td>£6,000 Sainsburys S106</td>
<td>ECDC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independents retailers promotions</td>
<td>- Develop independents shopper guide&lt;br&gt;- Visit Ely website improvements&lt;br&gt;- PR opportunities&lt;br&gt;- Ely Ace</td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>City of Ely Council Perspective Retailers ECDC</td>
<td>ECDC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reboot shop local campaign</td>
<td>- Develop key messages&lt;br&gt;- Link with local newspapers&lt;br&gt;- Links with Visit Ely website</td>
<td>Q2-Q3</td>
<td></td>
<td>City Centre Forum/Ely Traders Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop marketing plan/ channels within a 20 mile radius</td>
<td>- Target new estates&lt;br&gt;- US Airbase events&lt;br&gt;- Social media/website&lt;br&gt;- Direct mail&lt;br&gt;- Key referrers/pick up points database&lt;br&gt;- Local publications</td>
<td>Q1-Q4</td>
<td>Existing resources</td>
<td>ECDC/City Centre Forum/Ely Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link major events into City Centre</td>
<td>- Identify key events&lt;br&gt;- Implement</td>
<td>Q1-Q4</td>
<td>Volunteer time</td>
<td>City Centre Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local support of national independent</td>
<td>- Identify key events and campaigns&lt;br&gt;- Implement</td>
<td>Q1-Q4</td>
<td>Trader time Trader Support</td>
<td>City Centre Forum/Ely Traders Association/Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>retailer campaigns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional coach drop off point in City Centre</td>
<td>- Investigate and consult on potential locations</td>
<td>Q3-Q4</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Centre Healthcheck</td>
<td>- Update key stats from health check - Footfall survey</td>
<td>Q2-Q3</td>
<td>Volunteer time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Centre Workshop Progress Review</td>
<td>- Review Action Plan progress - Plan next steps</td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>Existing resource</td>
</tr>
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5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 Actions can be delivered through existing budgets and partnership resources.

5.2 Equality impact assessment not required.

6.0 **APPENDICES- Workshop summary**

**Promotions & Communication**

1- “Develop new events and better link opportunities within existing events for town centre retailers to share the benefits”

**Discussion Ideas**

- Identify wide range of packages/themes for new/existing events (e.g. children, heritage)
- Link events with city centre by face to face communication with visitors (Mayor, bags/ambassadors, leaflets games makers, town crier)
- Market events within a 20 mile radius (including new developments, airbases)
- Extended opening hours during events/Sunday showcases
- Utilise social media/development of apps
- More use of visuals to promote/link events to city centre (maps, temporary signs, pictures)
- Use database of businesses to regularly update on events schedule

**Comments**

- Traders need to know event schedule way in advance
- Organise partnership work well in advance but tailor to type/individual event
- Sole-traders struggle to staff shop and showcase stall
- Make better use of existing events before adding new ones
- Need improved participation in events
- Opportunity to attract Cambridge residents?
- Information should be easier to find

2- “Develop and support a new independent shops brand for Ely”

Discussion Ideas
- Reboot shop local campaign
- Use the independents as Ely’s USP in promotions
- Develop hitlist of external successful independent traders to promote city to and proactively approach with empty shops

Comments
- Need a better variety of shops
- Push daily and weekly shoppers to spend longer in Ely
- High rents are an issue for independents both existing and when trying to attract new entrants to Ely
- Destination shops are key to attracting people into the city

3- “Develop a welcome pack for new and existing retailers”

Discussion Ideas
- Pack should be for new and existing retailers
- Online for existing retailers

Comments
- Would be a useful tool for those who are first entering the city and existing retailers who want a quick answer to a city centre question or contact

4- “Support for traders to develop online presence”

Discussion Ideas
- Investigate online support (Click and collect, national campaigns such as AMEX for independents traders) and build package

Comments
- Would need critical mass in terms of sign ups for any click and collect or similar scheme
- Traders would need a lot of support for set up of any scheme
- Importance of linking city into big national technology campaigns

5- “Bring together the town centre groups into one”
Discussion Ideas
- Communicate key points, and actions from each city centre forum meeting to traders

Comments
- City Centre Forum has already brought groups together

Town Centre Environment
1- “Improve city centre signage for attractions, streets and traders”

Discussion Ideas
- Develop new clearer bolder signs
- ‘You are here’ uprights – these would be useful with map of town possibly interactive – Top of High Street / Market Place / Bottom of Forehill / Riverside
- Install clear direction sign in each of the car parks highlighting layout of town and where shops are located
- Interpretation signage – make more of/explain the history of Ely
- Would be useful where car parks are signed (directional for cars) that is shows walking distance and time to town centre
- Erect more temporary event signage e.g. banners across High Street, Forehill, market place
- Bunting
- Arches

Comments
- Current signage is not obvious to see and therefore does not fulfil its function.
- Not really keen on idea of ‘shop signs’ at passages – like to be able to explore areas and come across things yourself, if you give too much direction it takes some of the fun out of shopping experience

2- “Create a new coach drop off point in City Centre”

Discussion Ideas
- Potential to have drop off only and still pick up at Cathedral
- Bus drop off – Newnham Street
- Tourist bus drop off point on Market Place – to encourage tourists to walk through City Centre.

Comments
- Improve appearance of bus shelters on Market Street – these are looking very tired

3- “Improve the appearance of the Market Place”

Discussion Ideas
- Improve building on Market Place
  - Market Place as a showroom – needs to be in use 4-5 days a week. Install kiosks as pop up shops.
    - Outdoor seating on Market Place – encourage tables and chairs to be set out on Market Place in association with local food shops, to encourage people to sit out.
  - Former Millets store:
    o use as indoor market
    o pop-up shops venue
    o bring market in here when it rains
  - Market Place:
    o Allow parking on non-market days
    o More markets
  - Refresh market stalls – new brighter canopies
  - It should be a meeting space – needs interest/variety
  - Ely should aspire to be a destination 7 days a week, not just when markets are on – targeting that 20 mile/min radius – square should be the centre of the town
  - Potential to open up Dolphin’s Lane
  - Include a feature e.g. fountain, or clock tower

Comments
- Not an interactive space – the types of businesses there don’t encourage social interaction
- Building being owned by a local landlord helps – critical to improvements
- Market place cannot function as interactive space and car park (two incompatible uses)

4- “Update shop exteriors”

Discussion Ideas
- Empty shops – make use of them whilst they are empty
- Improve appearance of vacant shops - window dressing, refreshing paintwork etc.
- Stronger controls on shop front fascia boards and signage – too many of the national logos are not appropriate for the historic centre, in terms of colour, size, style etc

Comments
- There is a mix of quality – some very good / some very poor – areas like Market Place are poor

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- Noticed more A boards – people looking at different ways to attract customers
- Need to aim for excellence – tap into a character – what makes Ely special – this could be very high quality street scene

5- “Improve linkages from Market Place – Forehill – Riverside”

**Discussion Ideas**
- *More signage to the riverside and also promoting what is down there*
- Market place to riverside – double yellow lines stop people going down there because they can’t park
- Pedestrianise Fore Hill
- Make more use of Fore Hill e.g. spread the market down here (once a month)
- Semi permanent kiosks down Riverside for retail (as per kiosk)

**Comments**
- main issue is people not knowing where the riverside is (asking shop keepers)

6- *Gaps in ideas/projects*

**Discussion Ideas**
- *Voluntary scheme for litter picking outside shops to supplement the service provided by the council*
- Improve wider city centre appearance (Bus shelters, street furniture etc)
- Promote free parking

**General:**
- Accepted that lots of people love the town
- People like quirky and different – need to capitalise on this
- There is money in this area – need to have the right types of shops to tap into this
- Potential to link different types of shops together – ie. Trails – butchers/bakers/deli (although we don’t have this – would like!) ; crafts with tea house, etc
- Comment that rents are double the national average – know of one retailer that went to Cambridge as it was cheaper than Ely – feel this is an issue if you are trying to entice independents and build on quirky/unique themes
- Tap into character
- There have been improvements to Ely over last few years e.g Micro Pub, Poets House, Standard PH
- Forehill car park – very busy – mistake to change parking times here – being used for all day/workers – would have been better to limit times to make it a car park for shoppers/visitors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Background Documents</strong></th>
<th><strong>Location</strong></th>
<th><strong>Contact Officer</strong></th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Room 002, The Grange, Ely | **Doug Perkins**  
Economic Development Officer  
(01353) 616458  
E-mail: doug.perkins @eastcambs.gov.uk |