

Title of meeting: Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 2 December 2014

Subject: Post evaluation report for pilot Shopping Festival 2014

Report by: City Development Manager

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

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## **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport on the success of the shopping festival and put forward recommendations for the future. It was committed in the PRED briefing of Thursday 27 March to bring back a report to a future, post event, portfolio decision meeting. The paper includes an analysis of the event and improvements and plans for next year.

## **2. Recommendations:**

### **2.1 That the event is repeated in 2015 but with the proposed changes of:**

- **That the festival run for a shorter duration of 4 days from 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015**
- **That the timing of the festival should be linked to a partner event in the Guildhall square**
- **That the city centre managers support and promote the festival in their district shopping centres and run individual events**
- **That the festival is expanded to cover certain shopping areas including the North of the city**

## **3. Background**

### **3.1 Concept**

- 3.1.1 The original concept of the shopping festival is a celebration of shopping (and Portsmouth) to include discounts, events and entertainment across the city.

- 3.1.2 The principal purpose was a marketing initiative, encouraging and promoting usual events happening in the city and bringing them together with some additional activities. The reason for the festival idea was to strengthen associations to culture as research (YouGov Place Brand) shows that the top ranked cities are rated top for culture, atmosphere and being easy to get around.
- 3.1.3 The shopping festival was timed from 12 to 28 September, outside of the peak summer season and to incorporate Freshers week and the return of the University students. It ran over 2 weeks and 3 weekends showcasing the variety of shopping that the city has to offer for residents and visitors.

### **3.2. Target Audiences**

- The festival was timed to welcome the new intake of students and their parents.
- The target audience to bring income into the city is visitors from within an hour's drive.
- The festival was also hoping to attract local residents and a number of free activities were scheduled to appeal to a cross section of the community.

### **3.3 Partners**

- 3.3.1 Various partner organisations supported the event by displaying posters, giving out flyers and stickers on the trail and via marketing and social media. The Kings Theatre, Central and Southsea Libraries, Portsmouth Museum, Aspex Gallery, Spinnaker Tower, Hawkins Bazaar, Cascades, The Guildhall, Spinnaker Tower, and Portsmouth University participated as well as a number of shops, restaurants and cafes.

### **3.4 Location**

- 3.4.1 As this was the pilot year, the festival was selected to be in a walkable area which is easily connected. The festival took place in the south of the city as the shopping areas are in walkable distance of each other, close to the seafront and visitor attractions and at the heart of the university campus.

### **3.5 Events**

#### **3.5.1 The Sherlock Trail**

- 3.5.1.1 As part of the cultural offering, (top cities are ranked top for culture) a Sherlock Holmes detective trail was planned, promoting the city's Conan Doyle collection, structured to encourage residents and visitors to move around the city between the shopping centres and through cultural venues.
- 3.5.1.2 The Sherlock Trail was used at the final exhibition for the Heritage lottery funded Sharing Sherlock project, and was the largest ever exhibition of the Conan Doyle

Collection in Portsmouth, with unseen gems from the collection enlarged and displayed in cultural venues across the city.

3.5.1.3 The trail brought over 100 people to the venues, feedback was very positive from participants, many of them, despite having lived in the area for years, had not known/visited some of the venues; Aspex, Bush House and the Portsmouth Museum in particular.

*"Just thought I'd send a quick email to say we did the Sherlock Trail on Thursday with 5 pupils and they all really enjoyed themselves. We also found a few things around Portsmouth that some of us didn't know existed so if that was the aim then it worked!" Ellen Keefe, Harbour School*

*"The Sherlock Trail was good fun, and just what we needed on a school inset day!"  
Mother of participant*

3.5.1.4 Aspex Gallery, said they had enjoyed taking part and had seen a noticeable increase in footfall.

*"It's a good idea and helps to encourage people to explore" Aspex Gallery*

3.5.1.5 The Portsmouth Museum also had positive feedback

*"Really popular with families... certainly added to visitor numbers during the time of the festival". Portsmouth Museum*

3.5.1.6 Hawkins Bazaar, the only retail outlet included in the trail said they had appreciated the business saying that people had been in to make purchases and also photographing items for future purchase.

*"I thought the event was a good idea and helped to promote the CASCADES SHOPPING MALL in the city. Great idea to help increase footfall in the centre also  
Hawkins Bazaar*

3.5.1.7 In addition to the people that participated, many other people collected flyers or saw the large images /posters across the city and read the information (including staff at the venues), so the trail promoted the existence of the collection outside those that completed it.

3.5.1.8 Feedback from the Learning and Education officer for the Conan Doyle collection was extremely positive saying that the Sherlock Trail achieved the following objectives:

- Raised the profile of the collection in the city to new (students & families) and existing residents
- Highlighted the City Museum, Central Library and Elm Grove as significant locations linked to the ACDC
- Raised the profile of the collection through the general advertising across the city & beyond

*"The Sherlock Trail also enabled us to keep in contact with community groups and schools who designed the exhibitions originally, giving an additional marketing and kudos to their original exhibitions and their groups. This will then allow the connection to the collection continue once the Mobile App and online exhibition go live, building good local knowledge and involvement." Laura Weston*

3.5.1.9 In addition to raising awareness of Conan Doyle and the cultural venues around The city, the trail also helped to develop the volunteers. One said the project had given him the confidence to go out and speak to people when handing them trail flyers, as he was so comfortable with the project. He had never been able to do this before.

3.5.1.10 In order to increase future engagement, a mobile app is planned to be developed In conjunction with the University, meaning the trail could be conducted at any time, particularly over school holidays

### **3.5.2 Guildhall Square**

3.5.2.1 The main entertainment was in Guildhall Square to draw people from one area to another encouraging movement between shopping areas (demonstrating 'easy to get around') and after closing to encourage evening stays (and spend).

3.5.2.2 During the first two weekends International food markets with a bar and entertainment were planned in Guildhall square. The Funky Town Festival, incorporating the 'prize draw' by the Lord Mayor took place during the last weekend. of the festival. Some people had heard about the entertainment in Guildhall Square and had come along specifically, others had turned up spontaneously. Feedback was that the concept was a good one

3.5.2.3 Feedback was also received about the numbers of people attending; footfall was lower than expected. Despite the large amount of social media and press coverage, people were still unaware of the festival.

### **3.5.3 Other locations**

- There were buskers in Commercial Road.
- There were various other events running at this time, planned to fit with the shopping festival. The Hampshire farmers market ran in Southsea during the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend, the Making Waves Film Festival during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week (where they ran diary of a shopaholic on the big screen to link in with the theme)

### **3.6 Business Promotions**

3.6.1 Retail outlets, cafes and restaurants provided prizes for the draw and discounts throughout the period to encourage secondary spend. Discounts and offers at over 20 cafes, restaurants and shops

- 3.6.2 A number of prizes were donated from restaurants and shops from a Southsea deckchair, various attraction/theatre tickets, picture, t-shirts, toy cars to a burrito a week for a year. The main 3 winners were drawn by the Lord Mayor at the Funky Town Festival as part of the closing ceremony.
- 3.6.3 Al Burrito, who provided prizes, said that they had the busiest week ever when their prize was first promoted by us via social media and the web.
- 3.6.4 Tango Tea Collectables in Albert Road thought it was a good idea and saw an increase in business, especially during the first weekend

*"Keep going and let things evolve" Tango Tea*

- 3.6.5 Packages were put together to encourage evening dining and overnight stays to encourage secondary spend and to encourage and build on the shopping experience. A methodology of how to evaluate and evidence this should be explored for 2015
- 3.6.6 The shopping festival has a strategic fit and works well with businesses and the city centre managers and can continue promoting Portsmouth as a shopping destination and supporting small businesses by involvement and support to events such as Independence Day and small business day.

#### **4. Marketing activity**

##### **4.1 Website**

- 4.1.1 The shopping festival page on the Visit Portsmouth website attracted 6365 page views (from inception in July. 5418 were unique, 942 were repeat visitors). During the festival it peaked at 500 in a day compared to the other main attraction pages Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Gunwharf Quays and the Spinnaker Tower that attracted under 100 hits a day during the same period.

90% of website visitors were from the UK. Of these, a third came from Portsmouth, 15% London, 10% Southampton, 5% surrounding Portsmouth areas and 3% Brighton.

- 4.1.2 Internationally, website visitors were mainly from France, USA, Germany, Spain, Italy and Canada respectively

##### **4.2 Reach**

It was clear that we had reached an international audience. The event featured in articles in The Middle East/Africa and USA and from the internet we were contacted about the festival by performers from Italy wanting to take part next year.

##### **4.3 Social Media**

A dedicated Facebook page (92 likes), Twitter account (377 followers and still growing) and email address was set up for the festival.

#### **4.4 Advertising**

4.4.1 In addition the Internal PCC (free) advertising included Flagship, various promotional activities to databases such as to the leisure card database as well as the individual PCC shopping centre sites, PCC website and various Facebook pages and twitter accounts.

4.4.2 During the festival, events and activities were advertised on the big screen in Guildhall Square, on major road signs in the city and other communication screens in the libraries and museums around the city.

4.4.3 In addition to our own advertising, key partners, shops, restaurants and other entertainment venues across the city promoted the event.

#### **4.5 Press Coverage**

Over £15k VAE press coverage was achieved as well as coverage on the radio, internet and social media.

#### **4.6 Resources and budget**

4.6.1 The event was as planned, budget neutral, the main resource was officer time for Destination Brand Manager and support for the rest of the Economic development team and visitor services and Conan Doyle team

4.6.2 The Sherlock Trail was used as the final exhibition for the Heritage lottery funded Sharing Sherlock project, so relevant costs were covered by the funding.

4.6.3 The total marketing cost for the festival was £500.00 for a flyer to be designed and printed. This was offset by Income generated from renting of Guildhall Square to market traders for £500. There was also over £15,000 value added equivalent created by the festival

#### **4.7 Challenges**

4.7.1 Resources - the project team was not fully resourced this year and the limit resources available did impact on the depth and quality of the offer. Improvements would be to develop a fuller PCC project team with representatives from various areas of the council with dedicated responsibilities to include, Visitor services, City centre management, Conan Doyle, business support, event team

4.7.2 Reputation - the project has been planned to ensure the risk to reputation was limited, however there were concerns about quality of the Guildhall Square markets.

To provide a high quality event as desired, this would need funding directly, by a partner or via sponsorship

- 4.7.3 Security - It was planned that the markets would be fenced overnight for security purposes; However having stalls fenced in at night was an issue in terms of access to the square and presentation and we would not want to repeat this so options to have pop up/moveable stalls is more suitable

#### **4.8 Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.8.1 The Shopping Festival linked to a number of objectives in the seafront strategy and regeneration strategy:

- Increase awareness of Portsmouth as a shopping destination and a place to visit (enhance Portsmouth's image)

This was achieved in terms of media coverage in The News, Hampshire, the wider UK, US, Mid East and led to contacts from cancer research, UK, New Forest bus company and an Italian Circus Company about performing in 2015.

- Demonstrate the convenience and diversity of the city's shopping offer from boutique, antique, high street and to designer brand all within a mile of the city centre

This was achieved in terms of the Sherlock trail helped with this taking people from one shopping area to another.

- Attract new and repeat visitors

Whilst we do not have a direct measure for this, we know that over 6000 people viewed this on the website and whilst participants on the trail mainly came from Portsmouth, some completers came from as further away including Clanfield, Portchester and Farnborough.

- Encourage over nights stays

Whilst we do not have a direct measure for this, we know that of the 6000 people viewed this on the website, 10% were from overseas and half of the UK residents were outside the 90 minute drive time. We should consider a measure for this for next year

- Generate income for local businesses through retail and secondary spend

This was achieved: positive feedback from Tango Tea, Hawkins Bazaar, Aspex Gallery and The Portsmouth Museum all support this

4.8.2 Therefore it is felt that the shopping festival is a strategic fit in terms of brand and visitor economy strategy and should be repeated next year, but to reshape the delivery from the lessons we have learnt.

#### **4.9 Options for the future**

The event should be repeated as to achieve the original concept of a marketing initiative to strengthen external perceptions of shopping. The festival was to strengthen cultural associations and again this element would be lost if there was no festival.

#### **4.10 Repeat but with a properly funded or sponsored event in Guildhall Square**

4.10.1 The markets in Guildhall Square were organised at short notice and did not offer as many stalls as we would have liked. In addition they did not draw a family entertainment that was required to gain the desired footfall.

4.10.2 The Guildhall Square is a central point, linking the shopping centres. A future event should be professionally managed and be funded directly, via sponsorship or through working in partnership as the costs to such an event is approximately £8K

#### **4.11 Repeat without the Guildhall Square element**

The Guildhall Square took the most time and effort to organise, if this was left out then the city centre managers would be able to manage events in the centre directly and then there would only be a need for umbrella marketing.

### **5 Duration**

There are benefits of both extending and shortening the length of time the festival :

- Reducing the length of the shopping festival to offer a more focussed experience into in one day/weekend is recommended. It would help us to develop the quality of the offer and to improved offers and discounts; shorter shopping trails could be developed, with alternative cultural or shopping themes. This was preferred option for town centre management
- However reducing the shopping festival length will impact on the ability to link up more of the existing events and may not give us the opportunities to maximise media coverage

### **6. Timings**

6.1 The feedback was that the timing of the event should remain outside peak summer season, to coincide with Freshers week and incorporate various events such as the farmers market in Southsea, love Southsea markets and the film festival.



**7. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

7.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics described in the Equality Act 2010.

**8. Legal comments**

8.1 As the Festival involves the use of highways and non Council property appropriate permissions and insurances will need to be in place to cover any liability that may arise from the festival. All other legal matters are dealt with in the body of the report.

**9. Head of Finance comments**

9.1 The Shopping Festival was funded from internal resources. Options for the future development of the Shopping Festival can now be explored based on the success of the 2014 event.

9.2 Following the approval of the recommendation contained in this report, a financial appraisal will be prepared in order to analyse the costs of the proposed 2015 event.

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Signed by:  
**Claire Upton-Brown**  
**City Development Manager**

Appendices: None

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/  
rejected by Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development on  
2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014

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Signed by:

Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development