

Town Centre Manager's Briefing for Summit 4: Current Stourbridge Town Centre Projects

1. Crown Centre / Bell Street car park redevelopment

- Modus currently hold two planning consents on this site, however development has stalled due to the slowdown in the economy.
- Meetings have recently been held with the developer which may result in a way forward. .

2. Stourbridge Bus Station

The Plans for Stourbridge Bus Station have been approved by Development Control Committee on 21st Sept 2009.

3. Rapid Transit Route

A consultation process is imminent regarding the Rapid Transit Route. The consultation process is likely to be led by Centro regarding the route that looks at linking Brierley Hill to Stourbridge on a Metro route.

4. Trefoil Gardens Traffic Signals

The traffic signals that were installed as part of the residential development on the 'old gas works' site have lead to many tailbacks on to the ring road. Following consultation with a number of stakeholders these signals are due to be removed to alleviate any congestion they currently cause.

5. Vacant Properties

Due to the current economic situation every Town Centre in the UK has an increased number of vacant properties with the current average UK rate for vacant properties equalling 12%. Stourbridge currently holds a vacancy rate of approx 9%

- **The Ryemarket Centre** management are currently in discussion with a number of businesses regarding the letting of a number of the currently vacant units
- **Yorkshire Bank** - Letting Agents Lex Allen & Gregson have confirmed that the lease has been taken with the intent for the leaseholder to open an Indian

restaurant in the property. An application for the selling of food and alcohol licence has been received and will be considered on 3rd November 2009.

- **Victoria Passage** Unit 15 (old shootique) has been leased and will be selling non animal tested products.
- **Market Street** Opening soon: Tanning & Beauty Salon
Castle & Crystal Credit Union
- Stourbridge Town Centre manager has facilitated the organisation of two art exhibitions in vacant units in Victoria passage over recent months
- Government funding of £52,000 has been awarded to Dudley Council to help boost town centres and transform empty shops. The town centre development team are currently looking into ways this can be used.

6. Ryemarket Centre rear entrance

- Stourbridge Township Council are due to initiate talks with Threadneedle (Ryemarket Centre Managing Agents) to discuss the possibility of creating an entrance to the centre on Victoria Street.
- This entrance would help improve connections with the Town Centre from the new Aldi store.

7. Stourbridge Area Action Plan

- This is a very lengthy process lead by the Planning Policy team at Dudley MBC. The AAP aims to provide a clear vision and planning framework for Stourbridge for the 10 years following adoption. The process is currently in the initial stages of gathering evidence and a brief outline timetable is listed below. An Options document will be produced and ready for stakeholder consultation during February 2010
- Draft AAP document produced November 2010, further consultation January - March 2011
- Approval of AAP document by DMBC Cabinet April 2011
- Examination of AAP Document by independent inspector August 2011
- Adoption of AAP April 2012

8. Northern Gateway Project

The pedestrian entrance to Stourbridge Town Centre from the North is through subways underneath the ring road converging on a central space and then through another subway onto Lower High Street. This route had fallen into much disrepair creating a vandalised area and feeling of insecurity.

- Following public consultation in March 2008, plans were approved to revitalise this gateway in three phases.
- Phase 1 – The Secret Garden is now very near completion and receiving very positive feedback.
- Phase 2 & 3 – It was intended that funding for these phases will be drawn from S106 monies from developments taking place in the Stourbridge area. Due to the current economic slowdown many of these developments have stalled meaning that the S106 money is not currently available.

9. Business Changes

Please find attached spreadsheet noting the business changes in Stourbridge Town Centre since December 2008.

The spreadsheet shows that Stourbridge has only lost the equivalent of 3 businesses during these tough times.

10. Town Centre Events

- Harvest Festival – 19th Sept 2009. A free fun day for all the family took place in the Town Centre with the aim to showcase what Stourbridge has offer to people who may not usually visit the Town Centre. A great day was had by all.
- Christmas Festival – 5th Dec 2009. A traditional Christmas event is planned to kick off the festive season in Stourbridge