



Sunniside Business Forum
Argent Business & Conference Centre, Norfolk Street
Thursday 12th November at 3pm
Meeting Notes No. 7

Introduction by Chairman

Les Scott remarked on the good attendance and thanked all the new attendees, formal introductions were made around the table. Les Scott reminded members present that Vince Taylor, Head of Strategic Economic Development had presented at the last meeting and following on from that was keen to continue interaction and hear views from the business community.

Police Update

Sgt Paul Whittle from Northumbria Police said that crime statistics being presented were for Sunderland Central Sector and not just City Centre. All the figures had decreased. However Sgt Whittle did inform members that shoplifting incidents were up for the City Centre and numbers were causing concern. There was also a spike in commercial burglaries however offender has been caught and is on remand. Statistics reported at the forum were as follows:

All Crime - down 13.3% (460 offences)
Violent Crime - down 22.1% (176 offences)
Vehicle Crime - down 26.5% (117 offences)
Burglary dwelling - down 2.4% (2 offences)
Burglary other than dwelling - down 45.5% (95 offences)
Criminal damage - down 14.1% (78 offences)

Neil Sowerby, Account Manager, Business Link

Neil introduced himself to all the new attendees and informed members that business solution support for pre start and existing businesses was available. Pre-starts can qualify for 70% grant aid. Existing businesses depending on postcode can qualify for up to 75% or 50% if outside postcode area, the process has been streamlined to make easier and more accessible. For further details of what options are available contact Neil on 07712 397 805 or neil.sowerby@businesslinknortheast.co.uk. In addition Neil offered the option of holding a business surgery at thePlace if the demand was there.

Louise Hardy, City Centre Manager

Louise updated all members present on the latest Snapshot magazine, this had been delivered to every business in the City Centre. The magazine contained a lot of information about all of the activities going on between now and Christmas. It gave detail of the Quick Wins Project which is addressing, Marketing/Branding, Street Scene, Festivals/Events and investigating responses to the economic downturn for retailers.



Louise informed members of Sunderland's first Retail Awards, launched at the end of October. The Awards give retailers the opportunity to promote their business and celebrate their staff and produce. The public will be asked to vote on 5 awards. Any one wishing to participate should contact the City Centre Manager's office on 0191 565 3806.

Louise advised retailers present of an opportunity to seek advice/assistance from an Independent Business Specialist. The Project is being funded through Quick Wins and has qualifying criteria and limited spaces. If interested please contact City Centre Managers office on 0191 565 3806.

The Sunderland Christmas Festival will take place on 22nd November, last years event was a great success, retailers were encouraged to open to capture the increased visitor numbers in the City Centre. Forthcoming events include Peppa Pig in Sunderland on 31st January.

Jane Peverley, Marketing Manager, SCC

Jane updated members present on the Shop First Sunderland Campaign with the primary objective being to encourage people of Sunderland to shop here first. Campaign has been launched, television advert from 30 November -13 December. The campaign has a strong PR campaign behind it. Jane offered contact details and requested business participation. Jane Peverley, Marketing Manager, SCC, 0191 561 8460, jane.peverley@sunderland.gov.uk

Emily Taylor, Communication Manager, Sunderland arc

Emily updated all members present on recent activity including:

- The first Arts Fair on 28th November, in thePlace from 10am-4pm.
- Sunniside Maps have been put up in the Sunniside Multistorey car park.
- The launch of the Explore Sunniside Competition, which is aimed at boosting the economy and footfall by encouraging people to come into Sunniside by locating the 5 vinyl's hidden around the streets and enter details which will automatically put them into a draw to win £1000 shopping spree in Sunniside. Businesses have participated in this by offering prizes/vouchers to applicants that successfully locate the 5 vinyls. The competition closes on 7th December and has been supported by strong visual PR campaign.
- There had been various press coverage, in particular relating to the arts activity in the area including Dawn Lehrer's work with students from Hudson Road School and the exhibition in thePlace. In addition StudioQ on Nile Street opens with an exhibition tonight.

Ben Hall, Director, Sunniside Partnership

Ben updated members on the Public Realm Improvements. The work will be programmed to minimise disruption over the festive period. Properties on Hudson Road have now been demolished and further demolitions of empty properties are programmed to take place during 2010. It is anticipated that sites will be cleared, grassed over and secured with low level fencing in advance of redevelopment.