



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 17TH OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT: 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET @ CHRISTMAS'

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides information on the 'Choose the High Street @ Christmas' campaign, which will be run in the County Borough's five principal town centres in the weeks leading up to Christmas 2014.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The next phase of the 'Choose the High Street' campaign will be directed towards encouraging more people to spend in their local town centres over the Christmas period. Retailers across the five managed town centres will have the opportunity to submit an offer, which will be included in a voucher booklet. The scheme supports local businesses as it offers them a chance to participate in a coordinated campaign under the 'Choose the High Street @ Christmas' banner. In addition, a new 'Pop Up Shop Guide' has been produced by Town Centre Management, which sets out the process of setting up a Pop Up shop and is particularly relevant in the run up to Christmas.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Council has agreed to a five-year regeneration programme entitled "People, Business and Places". The proposals within the strategy are based on a number of regeneration principles, one of which is "Strengthening Town Centres".
- 3.2 'A Prosperous Caerphilly' is identified as one of the key outcomes in the Council's 'Single Integrated Plan'. The Implementation of the Unique Places model of Town Centre Management in the County Borough's principal town centres is one of the actions identified to achieve this outcome.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 According to retail analysts, Christmas 2014 is expected to be a very difficult one for retailers, with only a modest sales growth expected. A number of factors are contributing to this, including: faltering consumer confidence and the continued growth in online sales. Over the last two years, in the lead up to Christmas the Council's Town Centre Management Team has run the 'Unique Places Discount Card' scheme, a tool for retailers to generate sales. After assessing the feedback provided by retailers in previous years, a slightly different approach will be taken for Christmas 2014.

- 4.2 Following the successful start of the 'Choose the High Street' campaign developed by the Council's Town Centre Management team over the summer months, the next phase of the scheme will be run over the Christmas period. 'Choose the High Street @ Christmas' will build further on the brand and in the weeks leading up to Christmas encourage people to spend locally in the five principal town centres. In doing so, the initiative is assisting local businesses as they try to capture consumer spend during this crucial trading period. The booklet has been developed to support local businesses but the onus remains on the retailers to participate and ensure that the booklet contains a large number of offers, which will incentivise customers to pick it up.
- 4.3 To market the campaign the 'Choose the High Street' branding will have a seasonal twist with the addition of '@ Christmas'. The adapted logo is included as an Appendix to the report.
- 4.4 This year's scheme centres on a printed voucher booklet and retailers in the five managed town centres will have the chance to submit an offer for inclusion in the booklet with the level of discount being set by retailer at their discretion. In order to allow time for design and printing, retailers will need to submit their offer by the 24th October on the form sent to them by Town Centre Management. Building on the successful distribution of the 'Choose the High Street' shopping bags through the Council's Libraries and Customer First Centres, the free voucher booklet will also be given out in these locations and at the Council's Christmas events. The use of a single voucher booklet covering all five towns as a promotional tool, rather than a discount card, means that people will have the offer physically in front of them as they plan their Christmas shopping.
- 4.5 An additional element to the Christmas initiative is the launch of a 'Pop-Up Shop Guide' produced by the Town Centre Management Team. The guide provides an explanation of what a Pop-Up shop is and explains the process of setting one up. It is hoped that by providing this guide in the months leading up to Christmas 2014, it will encourage people to explore opening a Pop-Up shop for Christmas. New Pop-Up shops will increase the shopping offer and also occupy an otherwise vacant unit. The guide will be branded as 'Choose the High Street' and further builds on the work already done to highlight the importance of the County Borough's town centres to the local economy.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report is for information purposes, so the council's Eqla process does not need to be applied.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The campaign is funded through the Town Centre Management core budget.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 This report is for information only.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

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Appendices:
Appendix 1 Choose the High Street @ Christmas logo