

Retail Policy Group Minutes

Meeting held at John Lewis, 22 January 2009 at 3pm

In Attendance: Isabella Miller (Chair)
Michael Apter (Vice Chair)
John Beanson (House of Fraser)
Graham Birse (Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce)
Martin Clark (Romanes & Patterson)
Gordon Drummond (Harvey Nichols)
Kat Mulligan (St James Centre)
Keith Smith (Burt Greener)
Clara Suess (Burt Greener)
Robert Winter (Princes Mall)

Isabella Miller (IM) welcomed Tom Campbell (TC) to the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Open for Business Plan for 2009

Clara Suess (CS) and Keith Smith (KS) outlined Burt Greener's PR strategy for 2009. This included:

- Month of Sundays
- Bespoke packages of activity
- New feedback structure
- Additional marketing tactics
- Robust evaluation process
- Working closely with Essential Edinburgh

Additionally, major initiatives that would be driven by the OFB campaign would be:

- Radio Forth promotion – February
- Website – end February
- Magazine – March and September
- Monthly e-shots – every month from end January
- Kids In The City - April
- Spa In The City – May (in St Andrew Square Gardens)
- The Leith Festival - June
- Summer Fashion Focus – June/ July
- Month Of Sundays – September
- Dining Promotion – October
- Christmas campaign – October – December
- West End Markets - TBC (support and tie into West End Village campaign)

The new website (URL to be confirmed) would contain micro sites for businesses, which would also link through to business's own website. The micro site could include any promotions that businesses may be undertaking. It would also encourage users to register by running competitions. The group queried who would actually own the website and database, and what level of resources would be required to keep the site current. Burt Greener was in discussion with Inspiring Edinburgh to clarify

this. Burt Greener would manage content pre/post launch, for the duration of the OFB contract (finishes 2011).

The magazine's name would reflect that of the website and would be ad free. It would be distributed with the Evening News, and be available in bars, leisure centres, libraries etc. The magazine would be of the same quality as I-ON but would look very different. Gordon Drummond (GD) queried if it would be cheaper to add to I-ON rather than create a new magazine, however KS commented that there would be a charge for I-ON's distribution network and working within I-ON brand guidelines would pose problems.

Graham Birse (GB) commented that contact with retailers/businesses had been patchy, however relationships were now stronger so Burt Greener were in a better position to deliver.

Essential Edinburgh Plans for 2009

TC provided an update on Essential Edinburgh's work to date and stated that their main focus would be on delivering BID, with a subsidiary company dealing with marketing and events.

Essential Edinburgh was now ready to sign a contract with Mitie as Street Ambassadors, which would see 13 staff working in the BID area. Training for staff would be ongoing, linking in with Council, police, traffic wardens and businesses. The arrangement would be reviewed after 3 months to ensure it was fit for purpose and any changes to the contract would reflect the initial phase of operation. A baseline agreement had still to be reached with the Council. The targeted start date was 2 March 2009.

Lisa Drunsfield had been appointed as Head of Communication and 2 companies, One O'clock Gun and Jump, had been appointed to work on the BID project.

TC commented that St Andrew's Square was a key destination in the business district and more requests were coming in for use of the Square.

Funding remained a key issue and Essential Edinburgh would need to look at additional funding from voluntary contributions, but not necessarily of a monetary nature. Discussions would need to take place with the Council to ensure the BID money was not just bringing finances back to a neutral level after tram works.

TC stated that Essential Edinburgh was still managing the Exchange District although this was outwith the BID area and would consider how best to manage this in future.

Essential Edinburgh is considering a vehicle for delivering events in the city and this would include the Farmers Markets on Castle Terrace and Castle Street.

TC confirmed that he would consider the redevelopment of Charlotte Square in partnership with the consideration of capital developments in the West end of the city.

TOG Update

GD highlighted the closure of Princes Street to traffic from 21 February until November. All traffic would be diverted onto George Street and, if this proved problematic, onto Heriot Row.

GD asked group for comment regarding an embargo on works for the month of August. The majority of the group felt works should continue, but there was some reservation about levels of dust/noise. Michael Apter (MA) asked for a clearer view of what works would be involved and work processes. Robert Winter (RW) commented that TOG were looking into opening the street in sections, once completed.

GD advised that a decision would be taken on embargo by TOG at a later date, after further discussion. However, the embargo would go ahead unless businesses said otherwise.

John Beanson (JB) felt it would be appropriate to put information on local buses with new stopping locations and on airport buses regarding work taking place in the City.

Suggestions for speakers

Dave Anderson, City of Edinburgh Council

Steven Bell, Project Director TIE

Jenny Dawe or other Council member (MP or MSP)

AOB

GB distributed a letter sent to Tom Buchanan, City of Edinburgh Council, from Ron Hewitt to express concern over the Council's Economic Development budget for 2009-10. GB commented that the resilience plan Dave Anderson had produced was short on solutions. A £1.3 million investment in economic development was needed and, if not forthcoming, projects would fall and job losses become inevitable. GB would continue to engage with the Council on this matter.

Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 23 April, 3pm at John Lewis, level 5