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## Meeting report - High Street Forum

Reception Room, Cutlers' Hall, Church Street

10.00am to 11.30am, Thursday, 13 July 2023

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**Call to action:** Forum members are asked to amplify the message, raise the profile of the forum within your own networks and be an ambassador for the group to help attract, recruit and retain participants.

We were delighted to welcome over 30 attendees to our July High Street Forum from businesses including M&S, Boots, Orchard Square, Sheffield Plate, The Botanist, The Furnace, Cubana, Atkinsons, Sheffield Cathedral, Subway, Birds Opticians, Taylor Taylor Hairdressing, Metrobank, New River, Sheffield Walking Tours, South Yorkshire Police and Sheffield City Council officers.

Managed by Sheffield BID and chaired by BID Director Lee Appleton (New River's Centre Manager for The Moor), these meet ups are held monthly.

## Discussion points covered in the meeting 13.07.23

### Actions from the previous meeting

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- An update of the progress of a Public Space Protection Order is scheduled on today's agenda.
- Leader of Sheffield City Council – Cllr Tom Hunt – has been invited to a forum meeting and will join a Q&A session with Forum members on Tuesday, 12 September (10am – venue TBC).

### Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) – Jim Dee, Sheffield City Council

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Jim is Service Manager in the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Safer Neighbourhoods Directorate at Sheffield City Council.

#### Overview

Jim's role and responsibilities and those of his team covers management and enforcement of legal orders around ASB, injunctions, Community Protection Order (CPO's) and closure orders. ASB officers manage cases within his department. He has oversight of Sustainable Community Officers (SCOs) who undertake patrols in key areas in Sheffield, including the city centre, building links and collaborating with partners. "Eyes and ears" to ASB in hotspot areas. Support to and linked in with City Centre Ambassadors.

#### PSPO Update

Currently undertaking evidence gathering around whether PSPO is needed in the City Centre.

Ongoing work covers key areas of begging/aggressive begging, street drinking, use of Nitrous Oxide (NOS), management and support to individuals with complex needs/challenges.

Monitoring impact on businesses.

Gave overview of PSPO – a legal order applied by the Council, not the courts – ultimately a political decision to implement.

A PSPO puts restrictions in a geographic area and covers things that are not already offences in their own right.

A PSPO is part of the solution and should be preventative. Breach of a PSPO creates the offence.

There is a reality check that will be required around the ability to enforce and the availability of resources to enforce a PSPO if granted. Simply issuing a fixed penalty notice may not be a solution and a blanket ban is not always the best approach. A PSPO is only part of the fix, it will not necessarily reduce ASB.

There is a need to know more about “new faces” arriving in the city centre, who and what are we dealing with – how can problematic individuals be targeted. There is a multi-agency partnership in place working on such cases.

The process for the PSPO is based around council officers making recommendations to council members around implementation.

Once the recommendation is made, council members must decide to formally consult on the implementation of a PSPO. This will include consulting with South Yorkshire Police and the Police & Crime Commissioner.

The actual stage of the process as it stands is one of evidence gathering, before taking to council members.

There has been previous discussion in the council in the past around use of a PSPO; the current state of this PSPO process is deemed a new process.

More evidence gathering is needed from businesses/feedback from staff and customers. Sheffield BID will be asked to send businesses a consultation survey which the council is currently preparing.

Jim is meeting Councillor Richard Williams, Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee) next week to give update on status of PSPO.

Jim was not able in his role to say the council would be committing to a PSPO and the level of evidence gathering to take to a submission had not been achieved yet.

It will also be necessary to ensure there are no unintended consequences of a PSPO that discriminate against vulnerable people.

A question was asked if other cities were being consulted on this to which Jim was able to say yes, such as Barnsley, Doncaster and others. This work had not yet been done.

Tracey Ford bought up the point that city centres with PSPOs still have begging and whether the PSPO would be a measure of success. An earlier Alcohol Restriction Zone worked well for the Night-time Economy as people drunk and disorderly (who wouldn't normally commit ASB) responded well to enforcement, but it didn't address the more problematic individuals with addiction issues. These individuals not concerned about fixed penalties.

Tracey also gave a briefing around the begging status in the city centre, ongoing work and achievements and updated the meeting on some recent findings on begging numbers via the Business Crime Reduction Partnership. Tracey also updated the meeting that that there had been an increase in visiting personalities to the city centre who were not from Sheffield. **Action:** data to be shared showing how begging dropped over a 5-year period.

A question was asked if external partners were being engaged and Jim gave reassurance this was the case and that the right people were actively involved throughout the process.

A question was asked as to why, it seems, that when Snooker was on, the homeless/begging activity seemed to disappear and was displaced outside the city centre and when Snooker was finished it appeared to return. There was no particular answer to this, and Jim was not aware of any specific plan that had been implemented to manage the presence in the city at that time. After the protest at the Snooker, there was an increased policing plan but whether this contributed to the reduction of homeless/begging activity is not known.

Jim outlined that the matter of displacement is a key issue in the research behind a PSPO.

Jim’s input concluded with an offer that any information from businesses could be passed to his department to support the body of evidence being collated. **Action:** Jim’s contact details will be shared with businesses. **Post meeting note:** Businesses can use [ASB@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:ASB@sheffield.gov.uk) for sharing evidence and experiences impacting their staff and customers. Specific questions can be raised directly with Jim - [James.De@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:James.De@sheffield.gov.uk).

Tracey Ford mentioned the Help Us Help campaign ([www.helpushelpsheffield.uk](http://www.helpushelpsheffield.uk)) also offered training for businesses to support employees and advice customers affected by ASB.

A copy of the newly launched guide to managing ASB for retailers and businesses can be [downloaded here](#).

## A changing city centre – Sheffield BID



Summary details of proposed developments were shared including plans for the former John Lewis building, Future High Streets Fund – work on Fargate, additional investment in Chapel Walk and Orchard Square, Heart of the City including the Cambridge Street Collective and Leah’s Yard (which will be 90% retail focused).

Major new public spaces include Pounds Park, West Bar Square and Soho Yard.

### Recent new openings in the city centre (Q2) include:

- Vocation & Co Sheffield – opened April. New pub/bar on Devonshire Street. Previously The Old House.
- The Old Shoe – opened July. New bar in Orchard Square. Previously home to Schuh.
- Hygge thirtytwo – opened a second city centre café on Eyre Street, complimenting their first site in Fitzalan Square.
- Builder’s Brew Café – opened July, a new LEGO® themed café on East Parade. Previously Edison & Co.
- La Bottega – opened July. Sister site to Grazie on Leopold Street.
- Proove Pizza – opening in August 2023 in Orchard Square. Previously Fat Face.
- St Luke’s – opening in August 2023 on The Moor. Previously Brighthouse.
- Game Show All Stars – new interactive gaming experience from the people behind Great Escape Sheffield. Opening date TBC.
- HSBC – taking premises previously occupied by GAP at the Moor (with speculation the bank will announce it is closing its Fargate branch).

### High Street Rental Auctions:

- In addition to all the regeneration ongoing, vacant units still remain an issue.
- As part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, introduced to Parliament on 11 May 2022, the government is introducing High Street Rental Auctions, a new power for local authorities to require landlords to rent out persistently vacant commercial properties to new tenants.
- It is also designed to help tackle Landlords that are not cooperative in regeneration efforts.
- The legislation will enable the Local Authority to force an auction for short term lets to local businesses and community groups, although there are lots of criteria and safeguarding measures for Landlords. Where a notice of intention to hold an auction is issued, a Landlord will have eight weeks to provide an alternative proposal and may also appeal the decision.
- It is not seen as a quick fix, resourcing will no doubt be a huge consideration, and this is likely to be a last resort action, but it is hoped that the introduction of such powers will incentivise landlords to be more proactive.
- Government consultation closed 7 July so further information is expected later this year.

### Roundtable feedback from Forum members:

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- There is a risk that the centre will move from an oversupply of retail to an oversupply of F&B.
- There is still a lot of under-developed space in the centre and undervalued assets. Pockets of space in between new developments have dead spots. The former/derelect Manpower Building at the bottom of The Moor was given as an example, although the Council is speaking to developers about this site.
- There are certain routes to avoid and deviations to walking routes are being made to avoid hot spots of ASB. In relation to corporate visitors, there is a need to think about where we take those visitors (and on which routes) to avoid problem areas.
- We’re being asked to sell the city whilst still dodging no-go zones.
- New developments will displace some of these issues – but where to.
- Accessibility for the elderly generation has always been an issue. The visitor demographic is getting younger, so it isn’t seen as a priority by decision makers.

- Retail and hospitality sectors have faced several perfect storms but are seeing a reasonable amount of custom, yet all this new competition may create a saturation point and more existing business closures.
- Mayor Oliver Coppard is always promoting Barnsley – considered to “have got the parking right” for visitors. Sheffield city centre does not have sufficient parking provision and existing provision is too expensive. Conversely, the more attractive the centre becomes, this is likely to bolster parking costs.
- The work on Fargate is having an impact on all those in the vicinity. Access walkways are not well designed (demographic is typically an older customer) and businesses have already been advised of delays. Communication from the contractor is not good. ASB is on the increase in this area. Further relocations from Fargate to The Moor would not be a surprise. The area is likely to continue attracting ASB until 2024. Is it possible to have a greater police presence on Fargate? Better branding and more visible / impactful signage are necessary. Also, why is Kelham Island being promoted on Fargate as part of the hoardings/branding? Retailers have taken to putting out their own A-Boards which is adding to the clutter.
  - Steve Cooper from SCC advised that branding has been raised as an issue alongside dead space attracting ASB and this is being looked at.
- A query was made about the former Debenhams unit. It is not known if the recent press announcement by the building owner (similar to the John Lewis proposal) is likely to go ahead – is the ambition genuine?
- **Actions:** an update on the Sheffield Connect Bus and a forum invitation for Oliver Coppard to join a future meeting are actions arising.

### Business health check

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- Despite the challenges, businesses remain positive about the current trading environment.

### Dates for the diary

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- There is no forum meeting in August, however a Freshers & Festive planning session is taking place on **Friday, 4 August** at Sheffield Plate in Orchard Square (10am – 12 noon). Details here: [Freshers & Festive planning - Sheffield BID](#). Please email [enquiries@sheffieldbid.com](mailto:enquiries@sheffieldbid.com) to join this session.
- The next High Street Forum is 10am on **Tuesday, 12 September** – confirmation of the venue and formal invitations will be issued shortly.