

# Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Commission Briefing

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013  
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## Gateway Retail Area Improvement Scheme – Progress Report

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress made across each area of the Gateway Retail Improvement Scheme.

### **2. Background**

The objective of the scheme is to improve the vitality and viability of independent retail shopping areas, primarily on 'gateway' routes to the city centre. £680,000 of City Council Capital Programme funding has been allocated over the period to 2015.

The scheme which forms part of the Economic Action Plan, aims to attract additional private sector investment and work with businesses and residents to support areas that were identified as being particularly under threat during difficult trading conditions.

### **3. Area based proposals and progress**

The scheme is being implemented through two approaches depending on the needs of the specific area delivered on a phased basis over the period to 2015.

The Golden Mile, Church Gate, Belgrave Gate and Narborough Road/ Braunstone Gate areas have involved consultation and engagement with local traders, ward councillors, residents and local organisations. Action plans are either agreed or in development. Typically the plans include a series of improvements covering marketing, improved signage, shop front improvements and environmental enhancements.

The second approach for the other priority areas of Granby Street, the Market area and Humberstone Gate East has been to focus on shop front improvement schemes only responding to the specific issues these areas.

The progress made to date for each area is outlined below

#### **3.1 Golden Mile - £225,000 allocated**

The programme is delivered through a group chaired by the City Mayor that meets every other month to consider the views of representatives from local businesses and residents.

### **Achievements to date:**

An Action Plan was developed highlighting the following six priorities:

- **Environmental Improvements:** To improve the cleanliness of the Golden Mile through improved street cleaning, graffiti removal and the maintenance of paving, benches, trees and bollards
- **Marketing:** - To brand and market the Golden Mile, including developing its web presence and producing marketing materials
- **Signage & Banners:** To improve the signage to direct traffic to the Golden Mile, promote awareness and install banners welcoming people to the Golden Mile
- **Access & Infrastructure:** To find ways to improve the Golden Mile by reducing the negative effects of traffic while maintaining accessibility and creating more parking for visitors
- **Business Support:** To offer support to those shop owners whose properties are in need of improvement through a Shop Front Grants Scheme



- **Area Development:** To reduce the number of boarded up shops and to assist in bringing forward the development of key sites

### **From the Action Plan the following have been implemented:**

- 71 'Golden Mile' banners installed, improving the identity and welcoming visitors to the area
- Signs erected directing traffic to the Golden Mile and its main car park from outer areas
- £100,000 Shop Front Grant Scheme commenced with 65% of spending allocated / in the 'pipeline'
- New 'bespoke' directional sign design submitted to the Department for Transport





- Successful “Clean Up” event held involving businesses, school children and the City Council that attracted positive media coverage for the area and the project.
- Environmental improvements made to bins, seating, signs, bollards and paving.
- Influencing Sainsbury’s development proposals including the removal of the Belgrave Road flyover and associated public realm highway and parking improvements.



**Next Stage:**

As part of the future plan we will be working on the following actions:

- Supporting businesses and the appearance of the area through shop front improvements including the ‘upper-floor’ painting improvements for blocks of properties.





- Providing regular updates on the Sainsbury's development on Melton Road/Belgrave Road
- Assessing the potential of the Golden Mile becoming a Business Improvement District
- Developing the Golden Mile Marketing Plan to include undertaking market research and developing a customer database
- Further improvements to the environment by replacing damaged bollards, signage, benches and maintain paving and trees. Also street lighting levels are being assessed to bring the Golden Mile in line with city-centre retail areas.
- Organising a 'Golden Mile Improvement Day' for 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013 involving schools, businesses, residents, local organisations and the City Council. There will be an emphasis of fund raising for a local charity, a clean-up of major problem areas. Discussions taking place with Sainsbury's representatives over their potential involvement.
- Increasing coverage of the project in the local media to ensure the local communities are kept informed of developments and have the opportunity to contribute towards initiatives.
- Supporting the project through appointing a young person via the 'Step-Up' project for six months.
- Successful bid to Leicester University for heritage project by the Arts & Museums Service which will include a focus on the industrial decline and reinvention of the Belgrave area.
- A study being undertaken to assess the potential for a 'shared-spaces' scheme to improve the pedestrian environment on Belgrave Road.
- Business support for retailers being considered through National Skills Agency, Leicester College and the Leicester Energy Agency.
- Meetings being held with owners of key properties regarding major development plans for the Belgrave Commercial Centre and the Balmoral Hotel.
- Initial ideas being worked on to improve the entrance / gateway to the Golden Mile

### 3.2 Belgrave Gate - £50,000 allocated

Following engagement with Castle ward Councillors and an initial discussion with local traders, the following areas have been included in an action plan which was agreed with traders in March 2013.

- Central reservation environmental improvements
- Potential event being explored for a public event in August 2013.
- Improvement of signage near to roundabouts
- Consider improvements linked to the Haymarket bus station proposal
- General maintenance upkeep
- Increased marketing, i.e. via trader website, articles in Link etc
- Improvement to street lighting to meet the standard of city-centre lighting in retail areas.

Discussions are taking place with De Montfort University over how they can provide business support, web design and marketing initiatives to generate more interest and 'footfall' for the area.

Visit to the area organised for 18<sup>th</sup> April with Councillors, traders and City Council Officers to assess potential for environmental and public realm improvements.

### 3.3 Market Area - £50,000 allocated

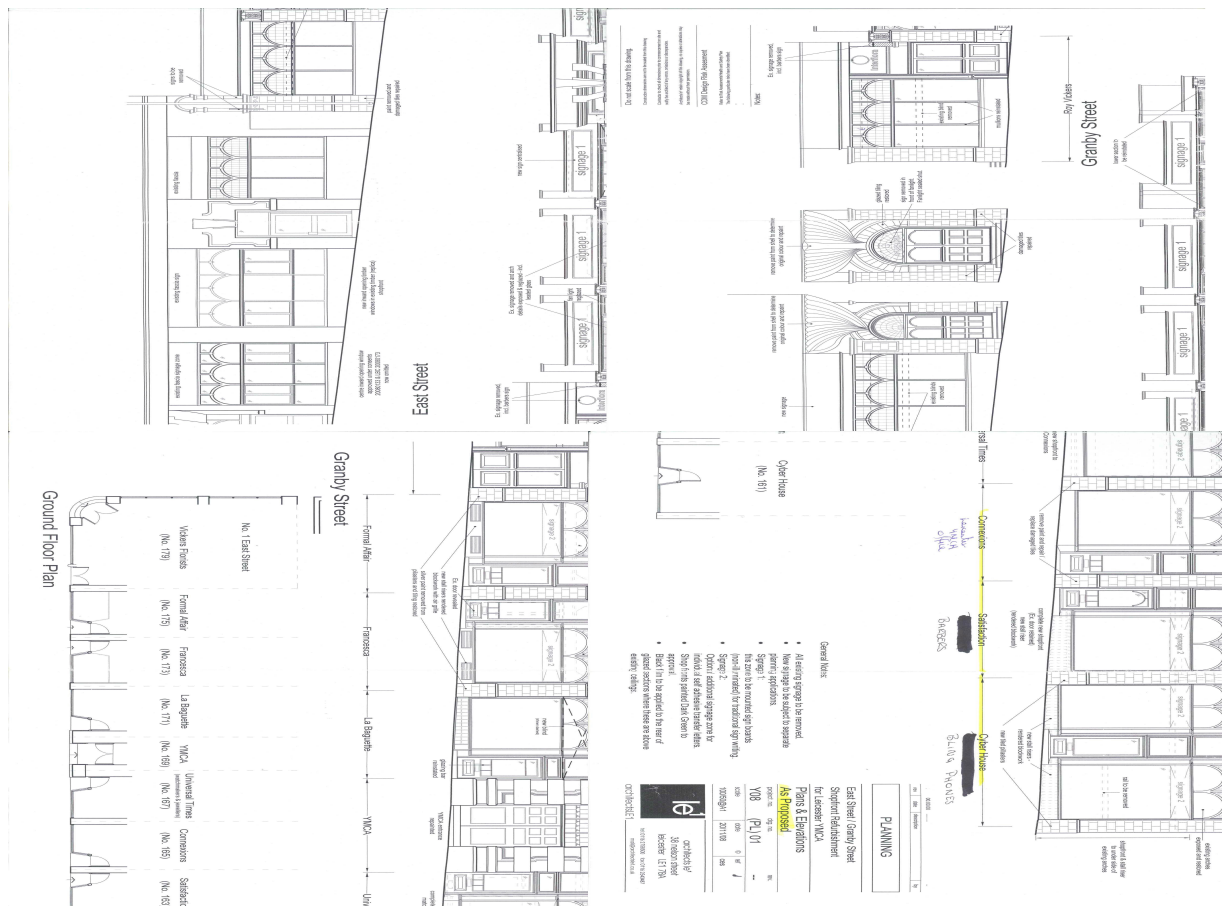
Action in this area is targeted at providing shop front improvement grants. At present the Market Area has one application, from Charnwood Bakery for the George Walker site on Cheapside. The property is currently undergoing internal alterations and has a completion date of late spring/early summer.



The Odeon Arcade frontage (32 – 38 Market Place) is opposite where the new Market Food Hall will be located. It is currently in poor condition. Consultations are taking place with the owners of the Odeon Arcade to see if it is possible to use the shop front improvement fund to assist with the acceleration of an improvement programme.

### 3.4 Granby Street - £50,000 allocated

Action in this area is targeted at providing shop front improvement grants. Two applications have been received and approved, with one of them being the YMCA which will be cover 7 business units. The YMCA was awarded £32,425 to return numbers 161 – 179 back to their original Victorian facades. A potential further business may also be applying which if supported would make a total of 9 business units improved.



Work will start on the YMCA development on 16<sup>th</sup> April and the work and is likely to take 6-8 weeks. The signage boards above the units will be hand painted.

### 3.5 Narborough Road / Braunstone Gate - £225,000

Two meetings have been undertaken with local businesses and residents from the areas to discuss how best to use the funds to improve the area. From these meetings and liaising with the local businesses, two patch walks have been undertaken involving ward councillors, officers and businesses. A list of priority actions have been identified as follows:

- **Business Improvements Grants** – including Shop Front Improvements, architectural feature lighting, business opportunities.

### Potential Architectural Lighting



- **Promotion Branding & Events** – Partner Network Rail for the branding of the Narborough Rail Bridge

### Potential Branding of Bridge



- **Cleaning & Maintenance** – Tackle grot spots, vacant buildings, reduce street clutter/signage, improve pavements
- **Parking/Traffic** – Liaised with Tesco to see if there is any possibility of extending hours of use for parking bays in evening.

### 3.6 Church Gate - £40,000 allocated

Action in this area is targeted at providing shop front improvement grants. Businesses and the Church Gate trader association have been contacted and a meeting arranged to explain the scheme.

To date we have received 2 applications have been received with a potential further 2 being considered.

Discussions were also held with the City Centre Director where investment has seen some environmental improvements to street furniture.



### 3.7 Humberstone Gate East - £40,000 allocated

Action in this area is targeted at providing shop front improvement grants. All businesses were contacted including landlords of empty properties to explain the scheme.

To date there has currently been no take-up this could be in part due to the roadworks being undertaken in this area at the time. We have recently issued further communications to the local businesses and have received limited interest from one business. A discussion is also being undertaken with Secular Hall and council conservation to look at the possibility of using the fund for improving the façade of the Grade II building.

#### 4. Funding Summary

A total of £680,000 was allocated in the Capital programme towards this initiative. This forms part of the Economic Action Plan priorities with phased delivery over the period to 2015. The table below provides a breakdown of the allocations to each areas and progress to date.

A total of £67k has been spent to date which has attracted private sector match funding of £15k. A further £67k is committed to projects, attracting a total of £69k private sector match funding.

Expenditure is profiled over the period to 2015 reflecting the phased implementation of projects, which involves an initial period of business/resident community engagement and project development. Full programme expenditure is expected to be achieved by 2015. At this stage it is estimated that a minimum of £220k private sector match funding will be achieved over the period. This does not include investment through specific development schemes such as that at Melton Road/Troon Way.

Area	Capital Allocation	Spend to date		Funding Committed		Grant Remaining
		Grant	Match	Grant	Match**	
Church Gate	40,000	4,080	8,468	3,500	3,500	32,420
Granby St	50,000	0	0	38,401	38,401	11,599
Market Area	50,000	0	0	5,000	6,664	45,000
Belgrave Gate	50,000	0	0	0	0	50,000
Humberstone Gate East	40,000	0	0	0	0	40,000
Narborough Rd / Braunstone Gate	225,000	0	0	0	0	225,000
Golden Mile	225,000	62,934	14,252	20,773	20,773	141,293
<b>Totals</b>	<b>680,000</b>	<b>67,014</b>	<b>15,098</b>	<b>67,674</b>	<b>69,338</b>	<b>545,312</b>

\* Committed funding refers to shop front improvement schemes that have been endorsed but are awaiting final information and/or works to be completed

\*\*Match relates to contribution from private sector for shop front improvement