

Appendix 1: Review of Retail Action Plan 2011-2012

1. Retail Therapy

- 30 Retailers have completed the Retail Therapy Programme in 2011-2012
- 150 retailers have completed the Retail Therapy Programme within the last five years
- For every £1 spent by BCC on the Retail Therapy Programme £10 has been generated for the participating businesses
- Successes from the recent programmes include:
 - Shankey's Male Grooming have opened a new concession in the House of Fraser, Victoria Square creating two new jobs.
 - Pluck and Devour have opened a concession in the House of Fraser.
 - Ground Coffee Shop are in the process of opening another coffee shop in Belfast creating 16 jobs.
 - Arcadia Deli - Regional Winner UK's Best Deli
 - Honey nominated for a UK Stars: Underlines' Award
- Mark Graham-Brown, Arcadia: "the programme gave us the opportunity to step back from the business and think about the 'bigger picture'. As a sole trader just getting the day to day tasks completed can be a challenge and time to think about branding, marketing, merchandising and customer service etc is generally non existent. The programme forced us to devote some time and effort on these and have resulted in improvements over the period of the programme".

2. Market Start-Up Programme

There has been high demand for places on this pilot programme. A total of 9 participants completed the programme with a waiting list of 20 people should the programme be run again.

Nine participants developed products and undertook test trading at St. George's Market on 18 and 25 March 2012.

First Name	Surname	Products
Andrew	Cornwell	Hot food - potatoes with cheese raclette
Barbara	Grugan	Buns/traybakes
Andrea	Juanpera	Handmade vintage style jewellery
Grace	Loughrey	Handmade teddies, badges etc
Lucy	Magee	Prepared fruit in containers
Claire	Magowan	Cupcakes, cakes etc
Grainne	McClellan	Knitted products and jams/chutneys
Norma	Smallwood	Jewellery and handmade vintage clothing
Lindsay	Welsh	Handcrafts, jewellery

3. Area Campaigns

5 constituted traders groups have been awarded funding to put in place a local action plan to promote retail.

1. Strandtown Traders Association held two events – Victorian Christmas Celebration and Spring Fair and noted increases in sales on the day and in the week following the event with some retailers noting up to a 30% increase in sales. The Association have

been very encouraged by the positive comments from customers in the weeks following the events.

2. Ballyhackamore Business Association held a Christmas event with approximately 700 people attending. Following this event the association produced a special Christmas booklet with offers which resulted in an increase in sales and publicity for the businesses involved. Additional businesses have now joined the association following the success of the Christmas event. The association also held a shopping promotion during Belfast Independent Retail Week and have launched a new Facebook page and branded e-zine.
3. Lisburn Road Business Association have compiled details of all businesses on the Lisburn Road to be included on their website whether they pay membership to the association or not. Two events have been held with footfall estimated to be 15% higher than usual on these days. Sales showed a corresponding increase with food retailers noting a 20% rise in sales. They have also invested in an advertising campaign.
4. Ormeau Business Association has been awarded seed funding to establish Ormeau Business Association including branding and website development.
5. Sandy Row Business Association has been awarded seed funding to run a shop local event.

4. Trader Group Development

We are working with the following groups to help establish traders groups and draw up action plans:

- Lower North Belfast Business Alliance
- Cliftonville Circus Traders
- Shankill Road
- Antrim Road Traders
- Holywood Arches
- West Belfast

5. Belfast Independent Retail Week

The first Belfast Independent Retail Week took place from 5-11 March. A total of 160 retailers signed up to be involved in the BIRW brochure with a further 20 retailers taking part in the council's flagship events: Celebrate Independent Fashion and the Mad Hatter's Tea Party. There were also visual merchandising and customer care competitions during the week. Feedback from the initiative has largely been positive although it has been suggested that individual area campaigns may be more beneficial and ensure more local buy-in from the neighbourhood hubs.

Feedback for BIRW (in general):

- Thanks for having us involved in your great week last week I really felt proud to be a part of it and hopefully going on from here it will grow and grow.
- Although in its first year, it is already a success. We have been talking to our customers non stop about it and have had a lot of support. As you know, The Wicker Man welcomes a lot of visitors. A lot of them, especially Americans, think we are very lucky to have so many independent retailers, as most of their shopping experience in the States is done in shopping malls.
- We really appreciate all the opportunities that Belfast City Council offer to retailers – it really is first class.

Customer Care Competition – 84 Businesses entered the customer care competition and received a mystery shop visit and mystery shop report with recommendations for business development.

Retail

Winner: Andrew Watson
Highly Commended: Bogart Menswear
Highly Commended: Co Couture
Highly Commended: Learning Space

Hospitality

Winner: Baked in Belfast
Highly Commended: Café Still

Service

Winner: K9 Grooming Studio
Highly Commended: EK Eyewear
Highly Commended: Jason Shankey Male Grooming

Visual Merchandising Competition – 67 businesses entered the window dressing competition.

Winner: Honey Essential Collection
Highly Commended: Arcadia Delicatessen
Highly Commended: Equinox

6. Retail Workshops

- **Customer Care for Retail – Wednesday 15 February**
 - 12 participants
- **Facebook for Retail – Monday 20 February**
 - 21 participants
- **Creating fantastic displays – Tuesday 28 February**
 - 21 participants

Feedback for workshops:

- Very informative and up to date information
- Opened up more awareness/strategies
- Good ideas, inspiring use of materials
- Got us thinking, useful insights and practical information
- Excellent got lots of ideas
- Useful tips that we will definitely use

Suggestions for future workshops/support:

- How to create a webpage covering all technical issues
- Using Twitter for retail
- A public site to promote small business locally with weekly PR promoting a different business from each area of the city
- Merchandising – one to one support
- Motivational workshops
- Retail networking
- Linking to tourism opportunities
- Market stall display techniques.