

# **Appendix B: Extract from Stakeholder Vision Workshops: Report of Findings June 2013**

## **Research of Findings**

This section will cover the data collected and show it in the form of tables and separated into themes. As there were no defined questions the responses from each workshop and the additional data collected were categorised into the themes below. Within each table there is an explanation of those categories that fall into each theme. A summary of themes follows with recommendations.

### **Data Themes**

**Accessibility**

**Appearance/Environment/Welcoming**

**Safety/Security**

**Business support/processes and systems**

**Communication/Marketing/Promotion**

**Finance/Funding**

**Food/Drink/Cafe Culture**

**Shops/Market**

**Entertainment/Leisure/Events/Nightlife**

**Beach/Riverfront**

**Whole community/Meeting the needs of different groups/Future proofing Grays**

### **Summary of all discussion points and groups by theme:**

#### **Accessibility**

- More trains would support the whole community, supported by investment in the train station site.
- Could public transport be subsidised for certain groups, i.e. students, or at peak times i.e. weekends, to encourage people in?
- Create natural walk-through's to encourage movement through the town.
- Access to the town is critical in supporting the other work taking place. The pricing of fares, options for free or cheaper transport, plus the availability of public transport are important and should be reviewed urgently.
- Parking urgently needs to be reviewed.
- Longer term the road network needs reviewing, particularly the 1-way system.

## **Appearance/Environment/Welcoming**

- Antisocial behaviour, drunks and 'yobs' in certain parts of the town are very unwelcome. Take a zero tolerance approach to anti social behaviour.
- All groups agreed the whole town could be improved through – better/unique standard shop frontage and better decor, plus improving empty buildings such as the State Cinema, Gym, WH Smiths; improved green spaces and parks.
- Through visiting other towns, best practice could be adopted.
- Better street lighting is a top priority for both the environment and safety
- Being recognised as a town which is built on its history and take advantage of this, maximise on key areas – market, river, the new college.
- Introduce new facilities to make the town better and support its future.
- Reducing antisocial behaviour and opening up the town, with bright colours, flower beds and no graffiti can be quickly implemented.
- Holding a community clean up/litter pick will support community development too.
- Longer term, the disused buildings need to be revamped or redeveloped.

## **Safety/Security**

- Increased levels of policing and/or security guards are needed across the town
- Community felt more accountability by individuals – parents, young people – would improve the environment. There is a need to regenerate community spirit.
- The perception of crime levels is worse than crime actually is – people fear things happening that are unlikely to happen and therefore avoid coming into town.
- Grays should feel safer, supported by a higher level of policing and more open areas to discourage anti social behaviour
- Improving the environment will improve the safety feel
- Encourage responsibility throughout the community
- Businesses felt the police could do more to manage perceptions and improve visibility, which was supported by the community. It was also agreed that more police patrols would help improve the environment and appearance issues.

## **Business support/processes and systems**

- Businesses are most interested in this theme, students hardly at all.
- The Council could do a number of things to improve support to businesses, specifically reduce rates, and offer incentives for new businesses.
- The Council needs to improve communication, accountability, visibility and performance.
- The Council should take more action to improve business development and put forward a single point of contact.
- The market has a strong role to play – for potential new businesses, and should be properly managed and controlled.
- Things to support business should be developed – i.e. child care facilities, a hotel.
- The new college could tailor its offerings to fill gaps in the town – create new vocations.

- More consultation between the community and council would improve the understanding, feeling of inclusion, ability to voice views.
- Develop a tourist office.
- Being seen as technologically enabling – free high street wifi
- Introduce community champions to take forward the work of council to improve Grays.
- Grays is Great campaign – short and long term actions to take this forward
- Developing businesses such as trades and training centres to fill the gaps
- Develop an events calendar – help to share what is happening and build involvement.

### **Communication/Marketing/Promotion**

- Re-launch of Grays was high on the priority list for businesses – supported by different activities for all groups.
- Students did not mention this theme at all.
- Business and community both felt more marketing and advertising was needed.
- Grays need to find ways to promote the town once it has put the changes/improvements in place.
- Using the town's history to promote the town and build its image
- Grays should be supportive of new businesses and provide cheap/free opportunities for them to promote their goods/services during start up
- Both businesses and community to promote and advertise – get everyone involved.
- Use the Grays is Great campaign as lever for this
- Identify key projects to be taken forward and promote them

### **Finance/Funding**

- All agreed that funding needs to be carefully considered and not just 'thrown' at Grays
- Events should be affordable for all – both business and community
- Students did not mention this theme at all.

### **Food/Drink/Cafe Culture**

- Students all wanted more choice of restaurants which were affordable for them i.e. McDonalds, Subway etc.
- All agreed that more restaurants were needed, choice, accessibility and location were all important.
- More places to eat and drink for all groups of people.
- Longer term this area needs work but in the short term holding community picnics or similar would support many areas of change. With the summer approaching a beach cafe would be worthwhile.
- Long term new food outlets need to be attracted and located in key positions, to support choice, nightlife, leisure and environment.

### **Shops/Market**

- All groups wanted to see a better choice of shops and more of them.

- All groups suggested specialist markets, improving the market choice and to support new business.
- Long term priorities – utilise the shops and market to support business development and improve the environment.
- A wider choice of retail is needed this needs to be attracted in.

### **Entertainment/Leisure/Events/Nightlife**

- More facilities are wanted – from restaurants to sports areas.
- Building on community spirit and engagement are key to supporting a better leisure/entertainment environment – get people to visit these places.
- More festivals/carnivals to encourage people into the town.
- Develop more choice and options for leisure and entertainment to appeal to all different groups and ages.
- Make Grays different – offer something unique to draw in tourists/visitors.
- Look at carnivals/festivals – seasonal activities that people know will take place and will encourage them to diarise and visit.
- Revamp the town, improve the image and accessibility.
- Use the heritage in developing leisure and entertainment.
- Keep affordable and free where possible. Encourage all groups to participate in quick events.

### **Beach and Riverfront**

- This area needs to be improved - by tidying up, more businesses and improved access.
- The riverfront could be used to much better effect, with new businesses and facilities to attract people and keep them there.
- This area could also be brought into the focus on heritage and used to promote the town.
- In the short term, parking and a cafe would help attract people, plus tidy it up. Longer term more businesses are needed there and improved access.

### **Whole community/Meeting the needs of different groups/Future proofing Grays**

- All agreed it is a whole system approach – if the environment, security, leisure industry and shops are all improved this will make the most difference and make Grays a place to be proud of.
- Improving things = more jobs, more people, more visitors, more money spent in the town.
- Changes needs to be affordable to ensure they have longevity.
- When the town is improved it needs to be promoted!
- All agreed what is needed is a cohesive approach.
- Create a community to be proud of.
- Engage everyone, get the whole community involved, involvement and opportunities are key.

Be unique and use this to promote and develop Grays