

Newcastle Voice Mainstreet Program



August 2010

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Prepared for: Business Excellence service, City of Newcastle

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Executive Summary

The consultation was conducted on behalf of Business Excellence services to gather community opinion regarding opportunities for improvement and possible expansion of Newcastle's special benefit rates program to other existing commercial centres. Consultation was conducted with the small business community and property owners in Newcastle's mainstreets areas.

Conducted within the Newcastle local government area, this report summarises the public opinion gathered during the consultation with current special benefit ratepayers, future special benefit ratepayers, service providers and business tenants.

Two surveys were sent to 7000 business operators and property owners. The surveys were open from 27 July to 20 August 2010. A total of 79 responses were received. The consultation aimed to increase opportunities for involvement with five workshop sessions offered, run both during the day and evening. These received 38 unique participants.

On balance, survey respondents were not satisfied with the commercial centre/mainstreet improvements for the centre they had selected. Respondents were concerned with the merits and value of the current mainstreets program, expressing some dissatisfaction about its operations.

Of the six proposed initiatives, respondents agreed strongly or somewhat that "attracting more business representation with the group operating commercial centre programs" would stimulate commercial centres. There were more suggestions for opportunities to improve business in Newcastle – with discussion around the removal of the heavy rail and investment in the appearance of Hunter Street and other suburban streets.

Education about the special benefit rate, commercial rates and what property owners and business operators can expect from these funds is considered essential if a future system is to deliver results to customers and business operators. There are a few suggestions for locations that could be included in a future mainstreets program: including, interestingly, Newcastle West and Mayfield, which are both under current mainstreets programs.

In the immediate future, contracts with the service providers will expire on September 30 and interim arrangements may need to be made. This report will accompany a business paper for Council on 7 September 2010, providing information to support Council decision-making about the structure of the Mainstreet Committees.

Introduction

The Mainstreets Program was identified in the Sustainability Review Stage 1 (May 2009) as an area for improvement. As a consequence of that review, contracts with the service providers have been renewed for short terms (less than 12 months) on four successive occasions, from June 2009 to the present. This is now considered unsustainable.

The review considered how the service should be delivered in 2010/11, including identifying methods to strengthen outcomes.

Revenue is collected for six commercial centres throughout the LGA under Section 355 of the Local Government Act. This service delivers an important economic development benefit to Newcastle's commercial centres of Hunter Street, Darby Street, Hamilton, Wallsend, Mayfield and Adamstown.

An independent financial audit was conducted in parallel with this consultation.

The special benefit rate is a s355 levy in the Local Government Act, which was first levied in 1990. Since then, the committees have provided an opportunity for special benefit ratepayers, business owners/operators and community members to identify local issues and concerns and to deliver local events and improvements such as festival, fairs, landscaping and promotional material.

This consultation was carried out in the context of Council's significant infrastructure backlog and the allocation in 2010/11 of \$30m maintenance funding to all assets.

A draft proposal, to explore a different model to manage the special benefit rates, was put on public exhibition from 5 July to 16 August 2010. This was supplemented with a survey to current and potential future special benefit rate payers, service providers and business tenants and a series of workshops, to gather qualitative information. A closed workshop was held with Councillors, committee chairs and service providers to increase the direct communication.

Report Purpose

This report captures the results from the surveys and workshops conducted during August 2010. It aims to inform future developments to ensure that the special benefit rate achieves economic and community development goals for Newcastle's city and suburban commercial centres.

This consultation through Newcastle Voice occurred during the period of public exhibition. The submissions received were being collated and analysed by the Business Excellence unit.

This consultation seeks to:

- Gather information from the Special Benefit Ratepayers (SBR) about the future of commercial centres.
- Determine preferences to inform Council decision making
- Gather community opinion regarding opportunities for improvement to expand Newcastle's special benefit rates program to other commercial centres.

This report will form part of the business paper to council in September 2010 to determine the future, and possible extension, of the rate.

Scope of Consultation

A number of communication tools and engagement methods were implemented as part of this consultation program. Council aims to consult in a transparent, broad-based way. Refer to the Appendixes for all materials distributed, survey and promotional tools used throughout this consultation.

Information Distribution

As this was a business to business consultation, the primary method of information distribution targeted the identified stakeholder groups.

An invitation letter was mailed to 3000 business tenants, current special benefits ratepayers, and service providers. An invitation letter was also hand-delivered to 4000 landowners and traders in the areas who were identified as possible future commercial centres. The distribution list was extracted from Council's rates database, listing the organisation's name without individual names and position titles.

Media

Throughout the consultation program, local media was used to inform and promote ways to participate. A media release was prepared and distributed on 4 August 2010. Please refer to Appendix VI regarding the media coverage during the period.

Two advertisements were placed in the Herald on 6 and 7 of August 2010, targeted to business operators in the local government area.

Survey

Two surveys were created to gather information regarding opportunities for improvements to expand Newcastle's commercial centres. The surveys were despatched in several ways:

1. Survey 1: Current special benefit ratepayers, service providers, or business tenants – online via the Council website (27 July 2010)
2. Survey 1: Current special benefit ratepayers, service providers, or business tenants – print to a sample of 1200 people (11 August 2010)
3. Survey 2: Future/potential special benefit ratepayers - online via the Council website (27 July 2010)

Workshops

Five workshops were held during the survey period, to explore key themes in more detail. The workshops were held for different stakeholder groups: two for current special benefit ratepayers, one for potential future special benefit ratepayers and one for current Mainstreets Committee chairs and service providers. The meeting held with current Mainstreets Committee chairs and service providers was extended into a second session to discuss a model proposed by some of the Mainstreets committee chairs

Web

Information about the consultation was provided on the Mainstreets page located on Council's website. This included a paper on public exhibition and links to the two surveys.

Methodology

Data Collection

A survey, using a structured questionnaire with a total of ten questions was created for distribution to current special benefit ratepayers, service providers, and business tenants. The survey was developed using the following subject areas for exploration: satisfaction, importance, Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Program, and comparison between the current and future model. There were several opportunities for open-ended comments. To control order bias, the Sparq system automatically rotated the presentation of items with certain questions on a random basis. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix I.

An invitation letter asking individuals to attend one of the workshop sessions had the link to the survey on the council's website. This letter was sent on 27 July 2010 to 7000 current and future special benefit rate payers, service providers, and business tenants.

The survey designed for current special benefit ratepayers, service providers, and business tenants was duplicated, printed and sent in hard copy to a sample of 1200 commercial bodies (from 3822 current special benefit ratepayers and business tenants) on 11 August. A pre-paid envelope was included to encourage their return. The surveys closed on 20 August 2010.

The workshop sessions were conducted at different times of day on consecutive days – to allow access to as many interested participants as possible. Workshops were held in City Hall, during working hours and out of working hours. Workshop participants were provided with an agenda for the session on arrival and all reasonable steps were taken to assure them of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. No identifying data is collected or included in this report.

Consultants, Hollier and Hart, were engaged to design and facilitate the workshops. Invitations to the workshop sessions were mailed to the current special benefit ratepayers, service providers, business tenants and future special benefit ratepayers. Council's consultation staff transcribed and analysed the data from workshops and authored this report using workshop and survey data. A few Council officers attended the workshops at the following locations and times.

Attendance was recorded via attendance registers:

Workshop date	Location	Time	Participants
Monday, 9 August	Banquet Room, City Hall, Newcastle	7.30-9am	19 (current rate payers)
Monday 9 August	Banquet Room, City Hall, Newcastle	12.30-2pm	3 (potential future rate payers)
Monday 9 August	Newcastle Room, City Hall, Newcastle	5.30-7pm	10 (current committee chairs and service providers)
Tuesday 10 August	Banquet Room, City Hall, Newcastle	7.30-9am	6 (current rate payers)
Monday, 16 August (continuation from 9 August)	Newcastle Room, City Hall, Newcastle	5.30-7pm	10 (current committee chairs and service providers)

A copy of the workshop agenda is included in Appendix III.

Survey Area

Future special benefit ratepayers, current special benefit ratepayers, service providers and business tenants from the Newcastle local government area (LGA) were consulted. A few demographics are provided in Appendix II. As this survey was not sent to the usual Newcastle Voice panel, full demographics are not available.

Representation

The views collected in this report can not be said to be statistically valid of the 7000 current special benefit ratepayers, future special benefit ratepayers or business tenants of Newcastle. The surveys gathered 79 responses, and the workshops had 38 participants, providing information which can be used to determine likely trends.

Consistent themes presented in this report are derived from contributions and the reliability and validity of the interpretations can be assessed.

Participants

A few demographics were gathered and are provided in Appendix II for the survey respondents and workshop sessions. The results show that:

Survey 1: current special benefit ratepayers, service providers and business tenants:

- 27% of respondents own business property or run a business in the City Centre, with 10% from Hamilton and 7% from Wallsend, and others from Beresfield, Maryville, Honeysuckle, Wickham, Merewether, Newcastle West and Broadmeadow.
- 66% have owned a building or business in Newcastle for more than 10 years
- 62% of the businesses being run have been open in Newcastle for more than 10 years

Survey 2: future special benefit ratepayers

- 40% of respondents own business property or run a business in the City Centre
- 60% have owned a building or business in Newcastle for more than 10 years
- 60% of the businesses being run have been open in Newcastle for more than 10 years

Workshop participants

- Workshop participants have businesses or property in the following suburbs: Waratah, Islington, Merewether, Wallsend, Callaghan, Whitebridge, Newcastle, Newcastle West, Mayfield, Cooks Hill, Hamilton, Wickham, Beresfield, Adamstown
- The gender split was 60% male and 40% female

Data Handling and Analysis

The data handling and analysis was carried out by staff in the Customer Service, Communication and Consultation service unit. The approach used during the consultation is designed to increase inclusiveness and generate data for analysis into themes.

Trend analysis was conducted from the open-ended question responses. An iterative process developed themes from comments received. Where a respondent addresses a number of issues, comments are duplicated and coded with upto three codes to allow for a truer analysis of the strength of response – by subject. All responses are treated in confidence to ensure the anonymity of respondents, and edited only for grammar and spelling if inserted as comments into the body of the report. All comments are included whole, as they were received, in Appendix IV.

Workshops are transcribed in summary across all participants to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, and all recorded comments are included in Appendix IV. No identifying data is attached to comments made.

Response Rate

The survey to the current special benefit ratepayers, service providers, and business tenants was mentioned in an invitation letter along with a link to 3000 businesses; as well as mailed in hard copy to a sample of 1200 businesses to ensure a greater number of responses. The survey had a 2.5% response rate (74 out of 3000) and a 2.5% participation rate (76 out of 3000). That means that only two people chose not to complete this survey.

Only five responses were received for the future special benefit ratepayers. The survey had a 0.1% response rate (5 out of 4000) and a 0.5% participation rate (23 out of 4000). That means that 18 people chose not to complete this survey. Because this survey was not mailed out in hard copy to the 4000 landowners and traders in the areas who were identified as possible future commercial centres, this could explain a response rate of less than 1%.

The workshop sessions had 38 unique participants.

Findings

The results from the current special benefit ratepayers, service providers and business tenants (74 respondents) and the future special benefit ratepayers (5 respondents) were compared, but reported in combined form where the same question was asked of both parties. Combined results (79 responses) will allow the findings to be actioned more directly.

Current model

Awareness of current model

Future special benefit ratepayers were asked if they were aware of the commercial centre/mainstreet programs being run in Newcastle. Due to the very low number of respondents (5), the responses received are not representative. The low response rate from this group may be due to the limited knowledge of the special benefit rate and its purposes.

- 4 out of 5 respondents mentioned being aware of the programs running in Newcastle
- 3 out of 4 respondents were able to identify and describe initiatives developed: Wallsend Winter Carnivale, Wickham, rotunda cleanups, safety and signage activities.

Strengths of current model

The workshop sessions commenced with the intention of building on the current strengths of the mainstreet programs. Workshops were asked to highlight the strengths of the current program. The primary strength is considered to be the autonomous use of local knowledge for local business development, as the following comments illustrate:

- “We are connected to the business and community organisations.” **Workshop participant**
- “There is specific local knowledge: the town co-ordinators are town-centric; it’s the only way a volunteer organisation can function.” **Workshop participant**
- “We find communication between our committee and the council very good – we get very good access.” **Workshop participant**

Value is placed on the financial injection received by small business traders from the special benefit rate for their streets:

- “Marketing and advertising the street as a whole” **workshop participant**
- “The financial investment of the special benefit rate makes the street more sustainable.” **Workshop participant**
- “We can apply for funding from state governments and apply them to our projects.” **Workshop participant**

The extent to which the mainstreets program develops community as much as business is also valued by some respondents:

- “It’s a community improvement focus; go above the realm of the town committee responsibility.” **Workshop participant**
- “Everyone can come forward and volunteer ideas for how things can be improved.” **Workshop participant**
- “The shopfront is good, gives our volunteers good access (run by Switchpoint, a not-for-profit division of Infinitus, the service provider). That’s part of our admin costs, but it works.” **Workshop participant**

Weaknesses of current model

Workshop session participants and survey respondents were also asked to highlight the weaknesses of the current program, and therefore - opportunities for future improvements to the functioning of the mainstreets in Newcastle. The major weakness is identified as the lack of autonomy from Council, with the following illustrative comments:

- “No central control: we pay money and need to have more local control over it. How are the fees being invoiced?” **Workshop participant**
- “The maintenance of City West is a joke, a bad joke on us!! When we first came here 11 years ago, the City West Precinct did a good job. We were conned into changing it. We were conned when Angus Dawson and his Honeysuckle workshop gave us a waterfront parkland all the way to the beach. That’s why we are cynical.” **survey respondent**
- “We need increased autonomy and increased independence: let us make our own decisions!” **Workshop participant**
- “The structure was set up at the wish of the businesses, with only the funds raised through NCC. Don’t need council involved.” **Workshop participant**
- “Don’t want to continue to pay levy.” **Workshop participant**

A second identified weakness is the lacking widespread involvement from many business owners which is reflected in the following comments:

- “More involvement is required from local businesses – the more suggestions how to move streets forward, the better it will be for all traders.” **Workshop participant**
- “How to engage businesses in diverse industries in collective action for our street?” **Workshop participant**
- “Council should encourage as many improvements as possible McCloy, GPT etc should be welcomed. Existing business owners to have regular consultation with the new model association.” **Survey respondent**
- “A business plan for each street would get us closer to implementation of initiatives; would include all businesses on the street and would increase the opportunity for consultation if businesses are unable to attend meetings.” **Workshop participant**

- “Meetings are too irregular, so momentum does not build up.” “The self-nomination to the Committee is a weakness – not all wish to be involved. Need wider involvement.”
Workshop participant

A third weakness identified is the lacking responsiveness from Council, with examples provided from several of the mainstreets precincts:

- “More information about future projects to beautify street please.” **Workshop participant**
- “Newcastle LEP 2008 shows Newcastle West as Commercial B3. However, there does not seem to be any levy money returned to the area from Stewart Avenue to National park Street in Hunter Street for over 11 years. When we were members of Newcastle West Precinct we supplied to Council a review of problems in the area and these problems have still not been fixed.” **Survey respondent**
- “Start communication of governance issues; decrease Council’s branding of the committees as inefficient. Correspondence has not always been clear.” **Workshop participant**
- “Nothing happens. Need to increase the sense of urgency in Council about this!”
Workshop participant
- “We have money we can’t get spent. eg. footpaths in Wallsend which we offered to assist with, but no action; it took 2 years to put in three flagpoles! Why does it take 12-18 months to put in two speed humps? And flooding early warning system: it’s \$200,000, but what is it?” **Workshop participant**

Finally, the financial management of the current system is identified by some as a weakness:

- “The ratings have not been re-examined since inception, the maps of where the commercial properties are – are outdated. Eg the Salvo’s in Wallsend was sold 8 years ago; are church halls now rateable at the special benefit rate?” **Workshop participant**
- “The off loading of basic services is reprehensible as the council is trying to move cost from the council to the private sector. Why do we pay rates? How many more basic council services do we have to absorb into a project that already pays highly in rates for basic council services? Will there be a larger financial investment or recompense for taking this responsibility from the council into this new model?”
survey respondent
- “If residential properties increase in the mainstreets, our funds decrease.” **Workshop participant**
- “Economies of scale are needed. How will this work with only 70 traders in a street?”
Workshop participant
- “Service level agreements with Council please: none exist now between Council and Committees.” **Workshop participant**

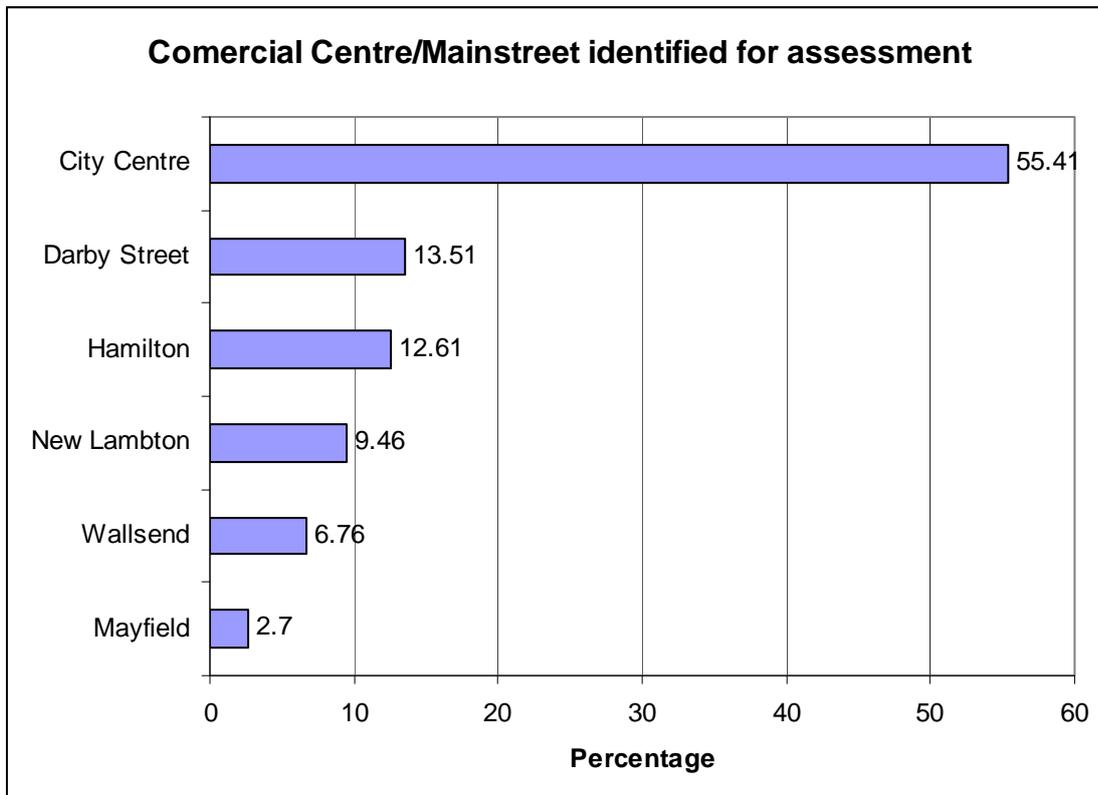
Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to nominate only one of the six centres to provide information about their satisfaction with the commercial centre/mainstreet improvements. They were identified by respondents as follows:

- City Centre (55.41%)
- Darby Street (13.51%)
- Hamilton (12.16%)
- New Lambton (9.46%)
- Wallsend (6.76%)
- Mayfield (2.70%)

The following chart illustrates the interest of the City Centre for most respondents, with more than half of the 74 respondents selecting the City Centre Commercial Centre/Mainstreet program.

Graph 1: Commercial Centre/Mainstreet identified for assessment



Upon selecting one commercial centre/mainstreet out of a possible six, survey respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the following aspects:

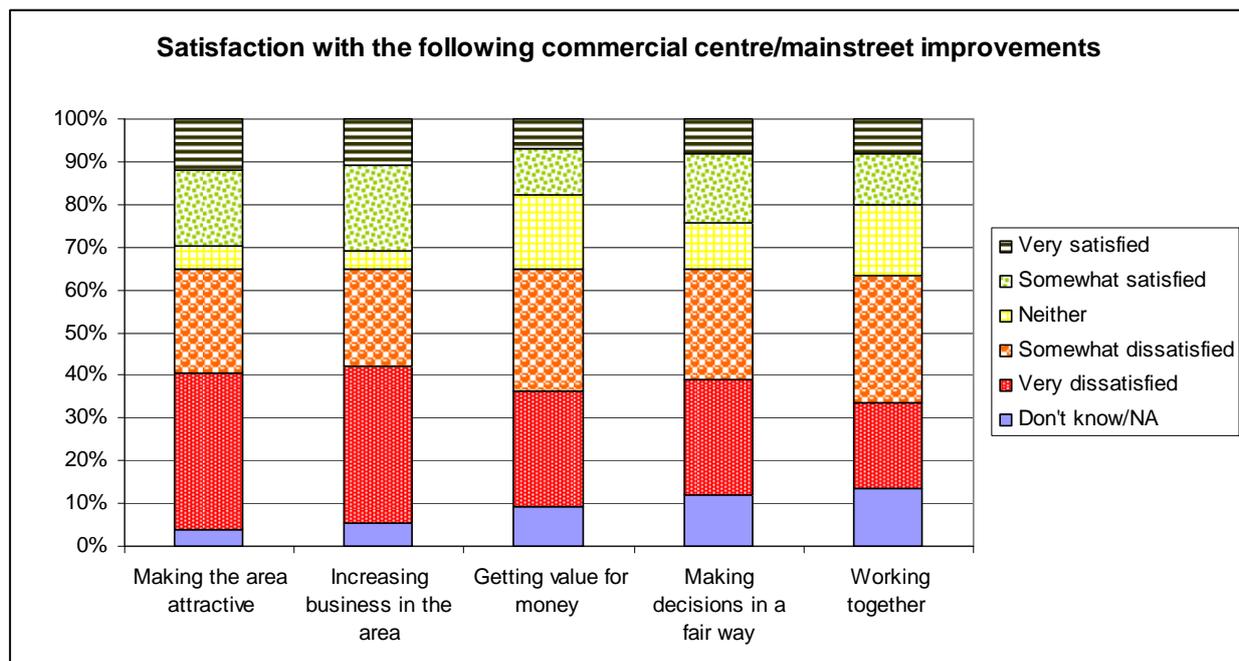
- Increasing business in the area; generating new customers, improving repeat business
- Making the area attractive, convenient, vibrant and differentiated with activities and events that highlight character
- Getting value for money with more money being spent on tangible outcomes; taking advantage of partnerships
- Working together for the same outcomes, sharing expertise and ideas
- Making decisions in a fair, open and consistent way, where all interests are heard

Due to the small number of respondents (74), separate graphs demonstrating the level of satisfaction with each of the above mentioned dimensions for the six commercial centres/mainstreets are not meaningful.

Note that the graph below is sorted by “very dissatisfied” followed by “somewhat dissatisfied”.

On balance, respondents were not satisfied with each of the commercial centre/mainstreet improvements for the centre they had selected. Over 60% of the 74 respondents indicated that they were most unsatisfied with the commercial centre/mainstreet improvement to “make the area attractive” and similarly, 60% indicated that they were most unsatisfied with the commercial centre/mainstreet improvement to “increase business in the area.”

Graph 2: Satisfaction with the following commercial centre/mainstreet improvements



Survey respondents added comments which shed more light on these satisfaction ratings, suggesting their priority actions, parking, removal of the rail and financial investment into Hunter Street:

- “You need to spend some serious investment dollars on the CBD of Newcastle it is an incredible embarrassment to the region and the community as a whole. If things don't change then we'll start selling and moving out area in the next few years.” **Survey respondent**
- “Remove old derelict buildings with no heritage value. Landscape and open up these areas till properly developed. Start to clean up and open up the city. Above done at owners expense not Council. Encourage people to live back in the city above shops, not slums.” **Survey respondent**
- “We need to cut the rail and eliminate paid parking. All this drives shoppers out of town to Garden City or Charlestown. Why should I pay to park at Newcastle foreshore on a Sunday???” **Survey respondent**

The satisfaction with improvements was investigated in the workshop sessions as part of a table exercise, and reflects the improvements suggested by survey respondents.

Table 1: Commercial centres consultation improvements table

Increasing business in each area	Making each area attractive, convenient, special	Getting value for money	All pulling in the same direction	Making decisions fairly and openly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community part of commercial centre program • Brand for each commercial centre based on its uniqueness and why people come • Retain businesses +residents • Very low vacancy rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service levels for keeping it attractive • Length of time for council decn-making is too long • Committee initiatives need to be prioritised • All above IN PLACE! • People feel comfortable coming to businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin costs are 1/3 of total levy, but about 1/6 of total budget • Roles not clear for committees • More explanation of council changes • More control over how money is spent. • Orchardtown Road businesses self-sufficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone in the same precinct/commercial centre • Community groups involved • All commercial centres working together every now and then to share expertise • Recognise significant contributions • Hamilton pulls together leading to value for money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people feel hard-done by from Council: it's a PR issue • Double-dipping with Council: 2007 floods in Wallsend – no early warning system. Council WAS funded for this to happen. • Make decisions relevant to local needs • How the levy is spent – annual report, all funds invoiced.

Increasing business in each area	Making each area attractive, convenient, special	Getting value for money	All pulling in the same direction	Making decisions fairly and openly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service focus in Hamilton • Hospitality training in Hamilton • Improve economic sustainability of Wallsend • New customers repeat business • How would it help Blackbutt? • Need to improve shops around parts of Hunter/King Streets: mix of businesses • Maintain current customer base – why support Darby Street. • Parking without meters • Benefit of fairs: improves futures business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement 5 year plan • More trees in Mitchell Street, Lambton. • Lights on Orchardtown Road. • Blackbutt Fair success. • Point of difference • Incubate new business • Alternative to big box retailers • Uniqueness and autonomy – eg Renew Newcastle • Establish village identity, research retail trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at commercial rateable area and number of rateable properties. • How to raise revenue from other funding sources? Saved admin costs can be recouped by income generated. • Voluntary contributions add to pool for projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep status quo but improve governance and transparency • More business co-op in Orchardtown Road. • Time for implementation needs improving • More autonomy in decision-making and spending of levy funds • Better response times • Council's allocation to infrastructure tripled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More open relationship • Importance of networking • Clarify processes and accountabilities • Communications efficiency all round: communities and committees get together and prioritise • Changes needed to empower communities, not more red tape!

Importance

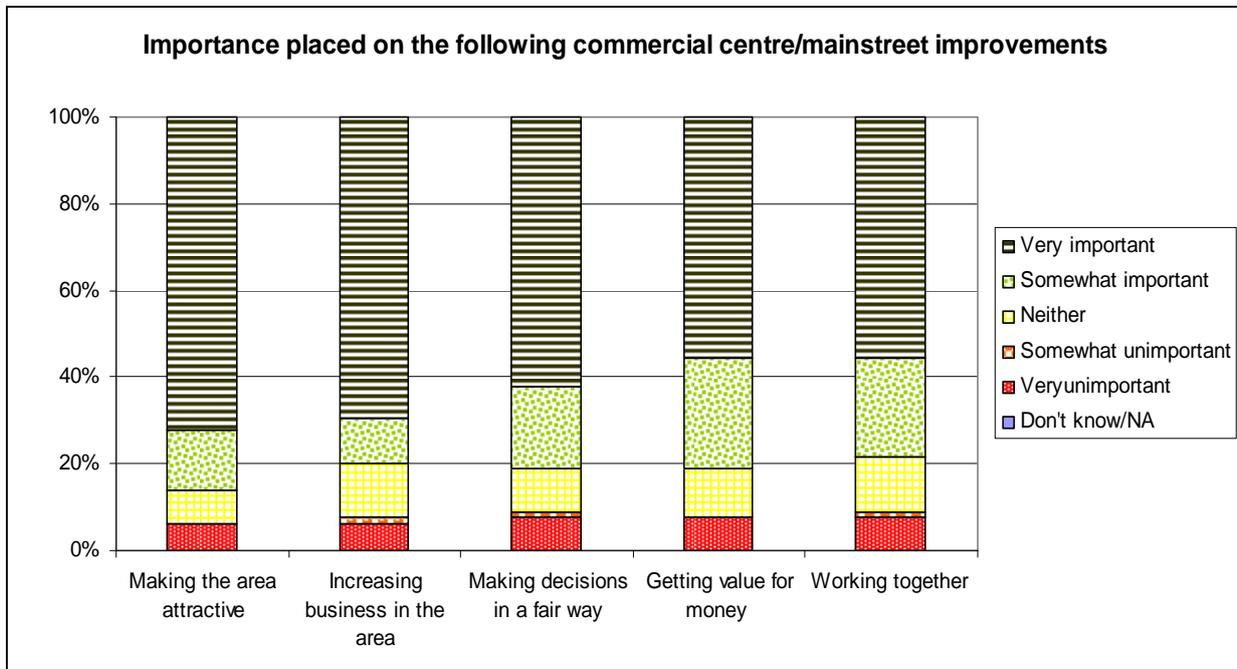
The respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance they place on the same commercial centre/mainstreet improvement dimensions as mentioned above:

- Increasing business in the area; generating new customers, improving repeat business
- Making the area attractive, convenient, vibrant and differentiated with activities and events that highlight character
- Getting value for money with more money being spent on tangible outcomes; taking advantage of partnerships
- Working together for the same outcomes, sharing expertise and ideas
- Making decisions in a fair, open and consistent way, where all interests are heard

All of the dimensions ranked as markedly important by the survey respondents, with 86% of the 79 respondents stating that “making the area attractive, vibrant and differentiated with activities and events that highlight character” as being “very important” or “somewhat important” – ranking it first among the five dimensions.

Note that a graph below is sorted by “very important” followed by “somewhat important.”

Graph 3: Importance placed on the following commercial centre/mainstreet improvements



Similarly, workshop session participants were also asked to rank the importance of the above mentioned dimensions. The chart below summarises the priority areas, demonstrating that improving relationships and working together for the same outcomes, sharing expertise and ideas is currently the highest priority, followed closely by the need to increase business and the appearance of the mainstreet areas.

Chart 1: Priorities for improvements – results from all workshop sessions



Source: Hollier and Hart, workshop facilitation

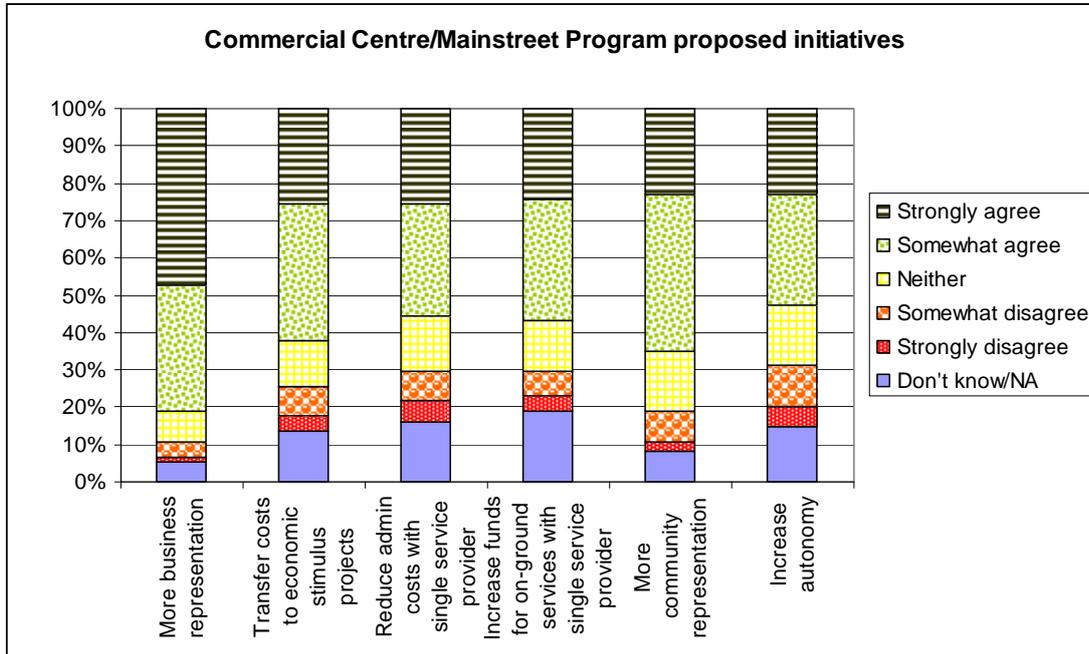
The Future: Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Program

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree that the commercial centre/mainstreet program should achieve the following in order to stimulate Newcastle's commercial centres:

- Increase the autonomy of the commercial centres from Council
- Attract more business representation with the group operating commercial centre programs
- Attract more community representation with the group operating commercial centre programs
- Transfer of some administration and contract costs to specific economic stimulus projects
- If it meant the reduction of administrative time and costs, support the transition from multiple commercial centre service providers to a single service provider
- If it meant increase in funds for practical on-ground services, support the transition from multiple commercial centre service providers to a single service provider

On balance, respondents agreed that all of the above mentioned initiatives would help to stimulate Newcastle's commercial centres. Of the six proposed initiatives, more than 81% of the 74 respondents agreed strongly or somewhat that "attracting more business representation with the group operating commercial centre programs" would stimulate commercial centres. This was followed with more than 64% of the 74 respondents agreeing strongly or somewhat that "attracting more community representation with the group operating commercial centre programs" would stimulate commercial centres. The third most popular initiative, to "support the transition from multiple commercial centre service providers to a single service provider, if it meant the reduction of administrative time and costs," garnered 62% agreement from respondents.

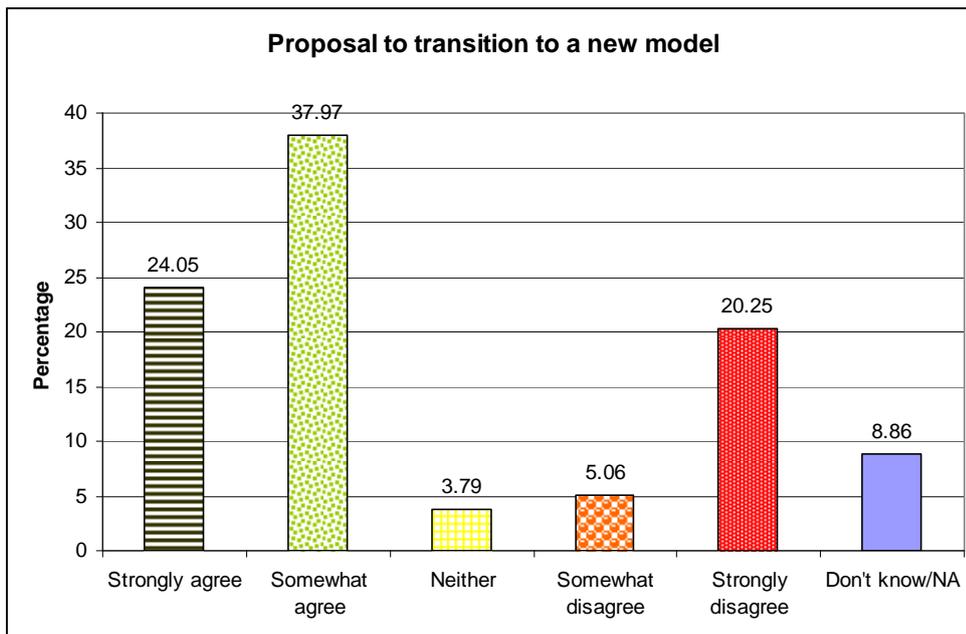
Graph 4: Commercial centre/mainstreet program proposed initiatives



Alternate model presented

Of the 79 respondents, 62.03% strongly or somewhat agree with the recommendation to transition Council's current mainstreet program to a new model, over a 2-year trial. Another 12.65% stated that they "neither agreed nor disagreed" or "don't know".

Graph 5: Proposal to transition to a new model



The workshop participants, with current Mainstreets Committee Chairs and service providers, were presented a letter which had been prepared by one of the Chairmen and had gained support from traders in Wallsend, Mayfield and Hamilton. This meeting was held over two evenings, to discuss a model which would be acceptable to the current Mainstreets Committee Chairs. At the conclusion of discussions over the two evening workshops, agreement was not reached.

The letter submitted is attached in Appendix V – Workshop Materials, Notes and Participant Feedback.

Future improvements

Respondents were asked to identify possible future improvements. The responses fall into three categories

1. improvements to the arrangements between committees and Council
2. improvements to the streets themselves
3. possible future locations for similar schemes.

Improvements to arrangements between committees and Council

There are two views on improvements to current arrangements: those seeking more responsiveness from Council and those seeking less involvement from Council. The following comments illustrate a range of improvements sought to operations:

- “Improved communication between council and all the stakeholder groups: Fix Our City, The Alliance, Precinct Committees. Clarify how all fit in, create a better focus, reduce duplication.” **Workshop participant**
- “Let's stream line what we have first before making another mess!!” **survey respondent**
- “I resigned from Main Street Committee due to indecision, procrastination and red tape from Council. Make decisions and run it like a business and stop wasting money.” **survey respondent**
- “Commercial expertise within Council to assist commercial centres grow.” **Workshop participant**
- “If you have one provider, where is their loyalty going to be, which street?” **Workshop participant**
- “Faster processing of Council approvals for projects put up by commercial centres, eg carpark construction, additional bins. Strategic overview – clear early response to indicate likely priority and outcome. Advocacy - for us in Council to assist getting through the process.” **Workshop participant**
- “Committee meeting restructured to be more constructive/positive.” **Workshop participant**
- “Business Mainstreet autonomous with the Committee and Council separate.” **Workshop participant**

Improvements to the streets

The most straightforward responses are those which identify the improvements sought on the streets themselves, with Hunter Street and Newcastle West gaining most attention with transport issues highest on the agenda: rail and parking:

- “Vibrant, busy places – the economic improvements are visible.” **Workshop participant**
- “1. Get rid of Parking Meters 2. Pressure clean footpaths (south of Civic in particular) 3. Get rid of Parking Meters 4. Reduce commercial land rates” **survey respondent**
- “The city’s mine subsidence constraints would be addressed.” **Workshop participant**
- “Every commercial building in the city should have not less than 50% residential occupancy. That and only that will lend to a proper revitalization of the city.” **Survey respondent**
- “Greater character definition for each centre, eg above awning signs = consistent or absent, into DA consideration.” **Workshop participant**
- “Places like James Street Mall should be made more family-friendly a play area for children and lunch area for office workers and mums and general new landscape would be nice.” **Survey respondent**
- “Improve parking and traffic flows – enforcement, interest of business and visitors.” **Workshop participant**
- “West end activation.” **Workshop participant**

Possible future locations

There is some hesitation to extend the scheme before current arrangements are improved, with some places identified by survey respondents which are in a current mainstreets scheme. The following is the list of possible future locations which were suggested during this consultation:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| ● Stockton | ● Broadmeadow |
| ● Beresfield | ● Hunter Street, to Stewart Avenue |
| ● The Junction | ● Gateshead |
| ● Merewether | ● Lambton |
| ● Georgetown | ● Kotara |
| ● Wickham | ● Adamstown |

The following comments from survey respondents illustrate:

- “Mayfield is on the fringe of Newcastle's CBD much like Wickham, Maryville and Islington. Wouldn't be great to see these area's encouraged and developed like Surry Hills in Sydney, Paddington and Darlinghurst.”
- “Georgetown Shopping Centre needs improvements Public Toilets, Liquor store supplies, public parking. Can Council help to upgrade carpark, needs resuracting. We also need a small supermarket.”

Other Subject Raised

The Consultation Itself

In each of the workshop sessions, there was a strong sense among some participants that the reasons for the current consultation were unclear. Participants mentioned the need for Council officers to sufficiently identify problems with the Mainstreet Program and better communicate the governance irregularities. More engagement with the currently affected business owners and traders may be needed.

Some responses to the Newcastle Mainstreet Program draft model document received in workshops are as follows:

- “Why is Council not happy? How has confidence been lost?”
- “Page 8: monitoring performance is not recorded for suburban committees, they say we are less accountable. These allegations of poor governance have not been made to us.”
- “Some services could be better delivered by the BID model.”
- “Why wasn’t there more than one option put?”
- “The unhappiness is coming from one quarter in Council, not from the coal face of Mainstreets operations.”

In discussion, it became clear that specific committees or individuals were not identified in the Newcastle Mainstreet Program draft model document. This document outlines a method to transition to a new model, allowing time for new providers to gain knowledge and reduce duplication in current activities.

Some of the survey respondents also queried the current process of consultation, voicing concerns with the survey tool:

- “If the motherhood statements and jargon contained in this form is any indication I expect very little from commercial centre programs.”
- “These questions are obvious, of course we agree with all of these, so why ask?”



Appendix I – Questionnaires

Survey - Future Special Benefits Ratepayers

Commercial Centres in Newcastle

The role of local government is to represent the views of the wider community about what they want their place to be and making sure the rates they pay are spent effectively. Council is committed to partnering with business and property owners, as well as stakeholders, in the local government area to work more efficiently and cost effectively, with the aim to make the city a safer, cleaner and more commercially vibrant place.

In 2009, Council commenced a Sustainability Review of the 69 services provided by the organisation, which included the Mainstreet Program. The purpose of the Commercial Centre/ Mainstreet Program is to stem the decline of, and to revitalise the economies of traditional shopping strip areas in Newcastle. There are currently six of these centres – City Centre, Darby Street, Hamilton, Mayfield, New Lambton and Wallsend.

Council is considering some interest which has been expressed from other commercial precincts in the city. As a potential future special benefit ratepayer, Council wants to hear your opinions and comments regarding opportunities for improvements to expand Newcastle’s commercial centres.

We encourage you to take 5-10 minutes to fill out this questionnaire. You can be assured that all answers will remain completely confidential. Only the anonymous survey data will be provided to Council officers and Councillors.

Q1. Where do you own business property or run a business in Newcastle?

Please select all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/>	City Centre
<input type="checkbox"/>	Darby Street
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hamilton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mayfield
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Lambton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wallsend
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable, don't own or run a business (skip to Q4)

Q2. How many years have you owned a building or business in Newcastle?

Please select one response only.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 1 year
<input type="checkbox"/>	1-3 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	4-10 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	11 - 25 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	25+ years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable, don't own a building or business

Q3. How many years has the business you run been open in Newcastle?

Please select one response only.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 1 year
<input type="checkbox"/>	1-3 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	4-10 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	11 - 25 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	25+ years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable, don't run a business

Importance

Q4. Please indicate the level of importance you place on the following commercial centre/mainstreet improvement dimensions. **Please select one response only.**

Improvement	Very unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Neither	Somewhat important	Very important	Don't know/ NA
Increasing business in the area; generating new customers, improving repeat business	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Making the area attractive, convenient, vibrant and differentiated with activities and events that highlight character	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Getting value for money with more money being spent on tangible outcomes; taking advantage of partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Working together for the same outcomes, sharing expertise and ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Making decisions in a fair, open and consistent way, where all interests are heard	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Program

Q5. Are you aware of the Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Programs running in Newcastle?

Please select all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, in the City Centre
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, along Darby Street
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, in Hamilton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, in Mayfield
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, in New Lambton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, in Wallsend
<input type="checkbox"/>	No (Go to Q8)

Q6. Are you able to identify initiatives developed by any of the Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Programs? **Please select one response.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No (Go to Q8)

Q7. Please describe the initiatives that you are aware of - developed by the Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Programs. **Please be as specific as possible.**

Comparison between the current and future model

Current Model (Mainstreet Program)

- Simple majority (51%) property owners and businesses support
- Council collects small levy and transfers to a Committee
- Committees use levy to revitalise business precinct
- Council oversees Committees with two Coordinators
- Precinct maintained by Council without service level agreement

New Model

- Conclusive majority (75%) property owners and businesses support
- Council collects small levy, and transfers to an incorporated member based non-profit association
- Association use levy to revitalise AND maintain business precinct
- Council provides specialist economic help for differentiation and integration
- Precinct maintained by an incorporated member based non-profit association. Additional services traditionally managed by Council can be transferred to the association.

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommendation to transition Council's current Mainstreet Program to a new model, as per above, over a 2-year period? **Please select one response only.**

<input type="checkbox"/> 1- Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> 2- Somewhat disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> 3- Neither	<input type="checkbox"/> 4- Somewhat agree	<input type="checkbox"/> 5- Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> 5- Don't know
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Q9. Please provide suggestions regarding any additional areas where you believe commercial centres/mainstreets could be established in Newcastle. **Please be as specific as possible.**

Q10. Please provide any additional comments or suggestions regarding your future expectations about the Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Program in Newcastle. **Please be as specific as possible.**



Survey - Current Special Benefits Ratepayers, Mainstreet providers & Business Tenants

Commercial Centres in Newcastle

The role of local government is to represent the views of the wider community about what they want their place to be and making sure the rates paid are spent effectively. The Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Program aims to revitalise and grow the economies of traditional shopping strip areas and other smaller commercial centres, establishing them as vibrant, active environments to be enjoyed by both the local community and visitors alike.

The City of Newcastle is committed to partnering with business and property owners, as well as stakeholders, in the local government area to work more efficiently and cost effectively, with the aim to make the city a safer, cleaner and more commercially vibrant place.

In 2009, Council commenced a Sustainability Review of the 69 services provided by the organisation, which included the Mainstreet Program.

As a current special benefit ratepayer, service provider, or business tenant, Council wants to hear your opinions and comments regarding opportunities for improvements to expand Newcastle's commercial centres.

We encourage you to take 5-10 minutes to fill out this questionnaire. You can be assured that all answers will remain completely confidential. Only the anonymous survey data will be provided to Council officers and Councillors.

Please send the completed survey back to Newcastle City Council in the postage-paid envelope provided (there is no need to put a stamp on the envelope) by **Friday 20 August**. We look forward to receiving your completed survey.

Q1. Where do you own business property or run a business in Newcastle?

Please select all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/>	City Centre
<input type="checkbox"/>	Darby Street
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hamilton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mayfield
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Lambton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wallsend
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable, don't own or run a business (skip to Q4)

Q2. How many years have you owned a building or business in Newcastle?

Please select one response only.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 1 year
<input type="checkbox"/>	1-3 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	4-10 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	11 - 25 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	25+ years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable, don't own a building or business

Q3. How many years has the business you run been open in Newcastle?

Please select one response only.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 1 year
<input type="checkbox"/>	1-3 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	4-10 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	11 - 25 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	25+ years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable, don't run a business

Satisfaction

Q4. Please choose just one of the six centres to give us more information about your satisfaction with the commercial centre/mainstreet improvements.

Please select one response only.

<input type="checkbox"/>	City Centre
<input type="checkbox"/>	Darby Street
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hamilton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mayfield
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Lambton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wallsend

Q5. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following commercial centre/mainstreet improvements for the centre you just selected - [%one_satisfaction%]. **Please drag each item to a category.**

Improvement	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know/ NA
Increasing business in the area; generating new customers, improving repeat business	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Making the area attractive, convenient, vibrant and differentiated with activities and events that highlight character	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Getting value for money with more money being spent on tangible outcomes; taking advantage of partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Working together for the same outcomes, sharing expertise and ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Making decisions in a fair, open and consistent way, where all interests are heard	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Importance

Q6. Please indicate the level of importance you place on the following commercial centre/mainstreet improvement dimensions. **Please select one response only.**

Improvement	Very unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Neither	Somewhat important	Very important	Don't know/ NA
Increasing business in the area; generating new customers, improving repeat business	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Making the area attractive, convenient, vibrant and differentiated with activities and events that highlight character	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Getting value for money with more money being spent on tangible outcomes; taking advantage of partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Working together for the same outcomes, sharing expertise and ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Making decisions in a fair, open and consistent way, where all interests are heard	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Program

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Program should achieve the following in order to stimulate Newcastle’s commercial centres? **Please select one response only.**

Dimension	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/ NA
Increase the autonomy of the commercial centres from Council	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Attract more business representation with the group operating commercial centre programs	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Attract more community representation with the group operating commercial centre programs	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Transfer of some administration and contract costs to specific economic stimulus projects	<input type="checkbox"/>					
If it meant the reduction of administrative time and costs, support the transition from multiple commercial centre service providers to a single service provider	<input type="checkbox"/>					
If it meant increase in funds for practical on-ground services, support the transition from multiple commercial centre service providers to a single service provider	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Comparison between the current and future model

Current Model (Mainstreet Program)

- Simple majority (51%) property owners and businesses support
- Council collects small levy and transfers to a Committee
- Committees use levy to revitalise business precinct
- Council oversees Committees with two Coordinators
- Precinct maintained by Council without service level agreement

New Model

- Conclusive majority (75%) property owners and businesses support
- Council collects small levy, and transfers to an incorporated member based non-profit association
- Association use levy to revitalise AND maintain business precinct
- Council provides specialist economic help for differentiation and integration
- Precinct maintained by an incorporated member based non-profit association. Additional services traditionally managed by Council can be transferred to the association.

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommendation to transition Council's current Mainstreet Program to a new model, as per above, over a 2-year period? **Please select one response only.**

<input type="checkbox"/> 1- Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> 2- Somewhat disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> 3- Neither	<input type="checkbox"/> 4- Somewhat agree	<input type="checkbox"/> 5- Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> 5- Don't know
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Q9. Please provide suggestions regarding any additional areas – street or suburb -you believe commercial centres could be established in Newcastle. **Please be as specific as possible.**

Q10. Please provide any additional comments or suggestions regarding your future expectations about the Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Program in Newcastle. **Please be as specific as possible.**



Appendix II – Demographics

General Characteristics of Future Special Benefit Ratepayers

Where own property or run business

Where_own_property_run_business: Where do you own business property or run a business in Newcastle?

QUESTION TOTAL: 5
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	City Centre	2	40.00 %
O2	Darby Street	1	20.00 %
O3	Hamilton	0	0.00 %
O4	Mayfield	0	0.00 %
O5	New Lambton	0	0.00 %
O6	Wallsend	1	20.00 %
O7	Other	2	40.00 %
O8	Not applicable, don't own or run a business	0	0.00 %

Years own building or business

years_own: How many years have you owned a building or business in Newcastle?

QUESTION TOTAL: 5
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Less than 1 year	0	0.00 %
O2	1-3 years	1	20.00 %
O3	4-10 years	1	20.00 %
O4	11-25 years	2	40.00 %
O5	25+ years	1	20.00 %
O6	Not applicable, don't own a building or business	0	0.00 %

Years run a business

years_run: How many years has the business you run been open in Newcastle?

QUESTION TOTAL: 5

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Less than 1 year	0	0.00 %
O2	1-3 years	0	0.00 %
O3	4-10 years	1	20.00 %
O4	11-25 years	2	40.00 %
O5	25+ years	1	20.00 %
O6	Not applicable, don't run a business	1	20.00 %

General Characteristics of Current Special Benefit Ratepayers, Mainstreet Providers & Business Tenants

Where own property or run business

Where_own_property_run_business: Where do you own business property or run a business in Newcastle?

QUESTION TOTAL: 74

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	City Centre	20	27.03 %
O2	Darby Street	4	5.41 %
O3	Hamilton	7	9.46 %
O4	Mayfield	3	4.05 %
O5	New Lambton	3	4.05 %
O6	Wallsend	5	6.76 %
O7	Other	35	47.30 %
O8	Not applicable, don't own or run a business	1	1.35 %

Years own building or business

years_own: How many years have you owned a building or business in Newcastle?

QUESTION TOTAL: 73

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Less than 1 year	2	2.74 %
O2	1-3 years	5	6.85 %
O3	4-10 years	18	24.66 %
O4	11-25 years	29	39.73 %
O5	25+ years	19	26.03 %
O6	Not applicable, don't own a building or business	0	0.00 %

Years run a business

years_run: How many years has the business you run been open in Newcastle?

QUESTION TOTAL: 73

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Less than 1 year	1	1.37 %
O2	1-3 years	2	2.74 %
O3	4-10 years	16	21.92 %
O4	11-25 years	25	34.25 %
O5	25+ years	20	27.40 %
O6	Not applicable, don't run a business	9	12.33 %



Appendix III – Quantitative Results – topline report

Topline - Future Special Benefit Ratepayers

Q4. Please indicate the level of importance you place on the following commercial centre/mainstreet improvement dimensions. **Please select one response only.**

importance_0: Increasing business in the area, generating new customers, improving repeat business

QUESTION TOTAL: 5
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very unimportant	0	0.00 %
O2	Somewhat unimportant	0	0.00 %
O3	Neither	1	20.00 %
O4	Somewhat important	1	20.00 %
O5	Very important	3	60.00 %
O6	Don't know/NA	0	0.00 %

importance_1: Making the area attractive, convenient, vibrant and differentiated with activities and events that highlight character

QUESTION TOTAL: 5
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very unimportant	0	0.00 %
O2	Somewhat unimportant	0	0.00 %
O3	Neither	0	0.00 %
O4	Somewhat important	0	0.00 %
O5	Very important	5	100.00 %
O6	Don't know/NA	0	0.00 %

importance_2: Getting value for money with more money being spent on tangible outcomes, taking advantage of partnerships

QUESTION TOTAL: 5

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very unimportant	0	0.00 %
O2	Somewhat unimportant	0	0.00 %
O3	Neither	0	0.00 %
O4	Somewhat important	2	40.00 %
O5	Very important	3	60.00 %
O6	Don't know/NA	0	0.00 %

importance_3: Working together for the same outcomes, sharing expertise and ideas

QUESTION TOTAL: 5

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very unimportant	0	0.00 %
O2	Somewhat unimportant	0	0.00 %
O3	Neither	1	20.00 %
O4	Somewhat important	1	20.00 %
O5	Very important	3	60.00 %
O6	Don't know/NA	0	0.00 %

importance_4: Making decisions in a fair, open and consistent way, where all interests are heard

QUESTION TOTAL: 5

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very unimportant	0	0.00 %
O2	Somewhat unimportant	0	0.00 %
O3	Neither	0	0.00 %
O4	Somewhat important	1	20.00 %
O5	Very important	4	80.00 %
O6	Don't know/NA	0	0.00 %

Q5. Are you aware of the Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Programs running in Newcastle?

Please select all that apply.

QUESTION TOTAL: 5

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Yes, in the City Centre	2	40.00 %
O2	Yes, along Darby Street	1	20.00 %
O3	Yes, in Hamilton	1	20.00 %
O4	Yes, in Mayfield	2	40.00 %
O5	Yes, in New Lambton	1	20.00 %
O6	Yes, in Wallsend	3	60.00 %
O7	No	1	20.00 %

Q6. Are you able to identify initiatives developed by any of the Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Programs? **Please select one response.**

QUESTION TOTAL: 4

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Yes	3	75.00 %
O2	No	1	25.00 %

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommendation to transition Council's current Mainstreet Program to a new model, as per above, over a 2-year period? **Please select one response only.**

QUESTION TOTAL: 5
 NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Strongly disagree	2	40.00 %
O2	Somewhat disagree	0	0.00 %
O3	Neither disagree or agree	0	0.00 %
O4	Somewhat agree	2	40.00 %
O5	Strongly agree	1	20.00 %
O6	Don't know	0	0.00 %

Topline - Current Special Benefit Ratepayers, Service Providers and Business Tenants

Q4. Please choose just one of the six centres to give us more information about your satisfaction with the commercial centre/mainstreet improvements.

one_satisfaction: SatisfactionPlease choose just one of the six centres to give us more information about your satisfaction with the commercial centre/mainstreet improvements.

QUESTION TOTAL: 74

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	City Centre	41	55.41 %
O2	Darby Street	10	13.51 %
O3	Hamilton	9	12.16 %
O4	Mayfield	2	2.70 %
O5	New Lambton	7	9.46 %
O6	Wallsend	5	6.76 %

Q5. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following commercial centre/mainstreet improvements for the centre you just selected - [%one_satisfaction%]. **Please drag each item to a category.**

satisfaction_level_0: Increasing business and employment in the area; generating new customers, improving repeat business

QUESTION TOTAL: 74

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very Dissatisfied	27	36.49 %
O2	Somewhat Dissatisfied	17	22.97 %
O3	Neither	3	4.05 %
O4	Somewhat Satisfied	15	20.27 %
O5	Very Satisfied	8	10.81 %
O6	Don't know/NA	4	5.41 %

satisfaction_level_1: Making commercial centres attractive, convenient, vibrant and differentiated, with activities and events that highlight character and investment opportunities

QUESTION TOTAL: 74

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very Dissatisfied	27	36.49 %
O2	Somewhat Dissatisfied	18	24.32 %
O3	Neither	4	5.41 %
O4	Somewhat Satisfied	13	17.57 %
O5	Very Satisfied	9	12.16 %
O6	Don't know/NA	3	4.05 %

satisfaction_level_2: Getting value for money with more money being spent on tangible outcomes, taking advantage of partnerships

QUESTION TOTAL: 74

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very Dissatisfied	20	27.03 %
O2	Somewhat Dissatisfied	21	28.38 %
O3	Neither	13	17.57 %
O4	Somewhat Satisfied	8	10.81 %
O5	Very Satisfied	5	6.76 %
O6	Don't know/NA	7	9.46 %

satisfaction_level_3: Working together for the same outcomes, sharing expertise and ideas

QUESTION TOTAL: 74

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very Dissatisfied	15	20.27 %
O2	Somewhat Dissatisfied	22	29.73 %
O3	Neither	12	16.22 %
O4	Somewhat Satisfied	9	12.16 %
O5	Very Satisfied	6	8.11 %
O6	Don't know/NA	10	13.51 %

satisfaction_level_4: Making decisions in a fair, open and consistent way, where all interests are heard

QUESTION TOTAL: 74

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very Dissatisfied	20	27.03 %
O2	Somewhat Dissatisfied	19	25.68 %
O3	Neither	8	10.81 %
O4	Somewhat Satisfied	12	16.22 %
O5	Very Satisfied	6	8.11 %
O6	Don't know/NA	9	12.16 %

Q6. Please indicate the level of importance you place on the following commercial centre/mainstreet improvement dimensions. **Please select one response only.**

importance_0: Increasing business in the area, generating new customers, improving repeat business

QUESTION TOTAL: 74
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very unimportant	5	6.76 %
O2	Somewhat unimportant	1	1.35 %
O3	Neither	9	12.16 %
O4	Somewhat important	7	9.46 %
O5	Very important	52	70.27 %

importance_1: Making the area attractive, convenient, vibrant and differentiated with activities and events that highlight character

QUESTION TOTAL: 74
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very unimportant	5	6.76 %
O2	Somewhat unimportant	0	0.00 %
O3	Neither	6	8.11 %
O4	Somewhat important	11	14.86 %
O5	Very important	52	70.27 %

importance_2: Getting value for money with more money being spent on tangible outcomes, taking advantage of partnerships

QUESTION TOTAL: 74
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very unimportant	6	8.11 %
O2	Somewhat unimportant	0	0.00 %
O3	Neither	9	12.16 %
O4	Somewhat important	18	24.32 %
O5	Very important	41	55.41 %

importance_3: Working together for the same outcomes, sharing expertise and ideas

QUESTION TOTAL: 74
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very unimportant	6	8.11 %
O2	Somewhat unimportant	1	1.35 %
O3	Neither	9	12.16 %
O4	Somewhat important	17	22.97 %
O5	Very important	41	55.41 %

importance_4: Making decisions in a fair, open and consistent way, where all interests are heard

QUESTION TOTAL: 74
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very unimportant	6	8.11 %
O2	Somewhat unimportant	1	1.35 %
O3	Neither	8	10.81 %
O4	Somewhat important	14	18.92 %
O5	Very important	45	60.81 %

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Commercial Centre/Mainstreet Program should achieve the following in order to stimulate Newcastle's commercial centres? **Please select one response only.**

commercial_centre_0: Increase the autonomy of the commercial centres from Council

QUESTION TOTAL: 74
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Strongly disagree	4	5.41 %
O2	Somewhat disagree	8	10.81 %
O3	Neither disagree or agree	12	16.22 %
O4	Somewhat agree	22	29.73 %
O5	Strongly agree	17	22.97 %
O6	Don't know/NA	11	14.86 %

commercial_centre_1: Attract more business representation with the group operating commercial centre programs

QUESTION TOTAL: 74
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Strongly disagree	1	1.35 %
O2	Somewhat disagree	3	4.05 %
O3	Neither disagree or agree	6	8.11 %
O4	Somewhat agree	25	33.78 %
O5	Strongly agree	35	47.30 %
O6	Don't know/NA	4	5.41 %

commercial_centre_2: Attract more community representation with the group operating commercial centre programs

QUESTION TOTAL: 74
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Strongly disagree	2	2.70 %
O2	Somewhat disagree	6	8.11 %
O3	Neither disagree or agree	12	16.22 %
O4	Somewhat agree	31	41.89 %
O5	Strongly agree	17	22.97 %
O6	Don't know/NA	6	8.11 %

commercial_centre_3: Transfer of some administration and contract costs to specific economic stimulus projects

QUESTION TOTAL: 74

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Strongly disagree	3	4.05 %
O2	Somewhat disagree	6	8.11 %
O3	Neither disagree or agree	9	12.16 %
O4	Somewhat agree	27	36.49 %
O5	Strongly agree	19	25.68 %
O6	Don't know/NA	10	13.51 %

commercial_centre_4: If it meant the reduction of administrative time and costs, support the transition from the multiple commercial centre service providers to a single service provider

QUESTION TOTAL: 74

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Strongly disagree	4	5.41 %
O2	Somewhat disagree	6	8.11 %
O3	Neither disagree or agree	11	14.86 %
O4	Somewhat agree	22	29.73 %
O5	Strongly agree	19	25.68 %
O6	Don't know/NA	12	16.22 %

commercial_centre_5: If it meant increase in funds for practical on-ground services, support the transition from multiple commercial centre service providers to a single service provider

QUESTION TOTAL: 74
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Strongly disagree	3	4.05 %
O2	Somewhat disagree	5	6.76 %
O3	Neither disagree or agree	10	13.51 %
O4	Somewhat agree	24	32.43 %
O5	Strongly agree	18	24.32 %
O6	Don't know/NA	14	18.92 %

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommendation to transition Council's current Mainstreet Program to a new model, as per above, over a 2-year period? **Please select one response only.**

agree_new_model: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommendation to transition Council's current Mainstreet Program to a new model, as per above, over a 2-year period?

QUESTION TOTAL: 74
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Strongly disagree	14	18.92 %
O2	Somewhat disagree	4	5.41 %
O3	Neither disagree or agree	3	4.05 %
O4	Somewhat agree	28	37.84 %
O5	Strongly agree	18	24.32 %
O6	Don't know	7	9.46 %



Appendix IV – Qualitative Results – survey questions, open-ended

Current special benefit rate payers

Where business property is owned - other

Where_own_property_run_business	Newcastle West
Beresfield	Newcastle West
Beresfield	Sangate
Beresfield	The Junction
Broadmeadow	the Junction, Honeysuckle
Broadmeadow	Tower Traders Precinet (King Street)
Carrington	Wesfield Kotara and Wickham
Fletcher	Wickham
Georgetown	Wickham
Honeysuckle	Wickham
Honeysuckle	Wickham, Adamstown, Beresfield
Jesmond	
Kooragang Island and Mayfield West	
Kotara	
Lambton	
Lambton	
Lambton - Elder Street	
Maryville	
Maryville	
Merewether	
Merewether	
Merewether	
Merewether	
Newcastle West	
Newcastle West	

Potential New Areas to extend mainstreets program

subject

new_areas

beresfield	Start in Beresfield - it is dead already
cbd	End to End Hunter Street is a disgrace. Council and Committee must be created to address streetscape traffic and mix of business. Change the " flavour" of different precincts along the street with landscaping and public areas.
cbd	Finish the rail line at Wickham and open up the foreshore area. low level businesses can then be established.
cbd	Hunter Street Fix it. Get rid of the train line. Light rail e.g. Tram. It works well in Melbourne.
cbd	Hunter Street it has ceased to be a commercial centre.
cbd	increase Newcastle Centre parking. Greater commercial development / Tourism allowed. Do away with parking meters.
cbd	more commercial parking space is needed in the Civic precinct.
cbd	Newcastle LEP 2008 shows Newcastle West as Commercial B3. However, there does not seem to be any levey money returned to the area from Stewart Avenue to National park Street in Hunter Street for over 11 years. When we were members of Newcastle West Precinct we supplied to Council a review of problems in the area and these problems have still not been fixed.
cbd	Newcastle West
cbd	Newcastle West/ Civic
cbd	One body overseeing Hunter and King Street.
cbd	Places like James Street Mall should be made more family friendly a play area for children and lunch area for office workers and mums and general new landscape would be nice.
cbd	Remove rail ine. Do everything to encourage business in the CBD.
cbd	The information I have supplied relates to Newcastle West not the City Centre. Newcastle West developments and demolition of burnt out building should be immediate priority. Ferals roam the streets day and night. Beer bottles abound on Mondays from the weekend. Old boarded up buildings a blight on Hunter Street.
gateshead	Expanding current commercial centres at Gateshead.
georgetown	Georgetown Shopping Centre needs improvements Public Toilets, Liquor store supplies, public parking. Can Council help to upgrade carpark, needs resuracing. We also need a small supermarket.
hamilton	At Hudson Street and Bennett Street in Hamilton need more development both mix

	development.
jhh	John Hunter Newcastle Private Hospital Precinct the largest single employer in Hunter not even meantioned!
junction	the Junction area
junction	TheJunction Newcastle West Adamstown
kotara	Kotara
kotara	Kotara
lambton	Lambton (Elder Street) needs to be upgraded with beautifying program and more open on Saturdays.
mayfield	Mayfield is on the fringe of Newcastle's CBD much like Wickham, Maryville and Islington. Wouldn't be great to see these area's encouraged and developed like Surry Hills in Sydney, Paddington and Darlinghurst.
merewether	The corner of Ridge and Mitchell Streets Merewether
none	Don't look to creating new centres when current areas if upgraded will service suburbs. If you divide resources you divide quality.
none	Let's stream line what we have first before making another mess!!
none	My experience with main street progress are useless. Cut the rail and put in a tram and save the city.
none	N/A We can't manage the areas we already have let alone new suburbs.
opportunity	1. Get rid of Parking Meters
opportunity	2. Pressure clean footpaths (south of Civic in particular)
opportunity	3. Get rid of Parking Meters
opportunity	4. Reduce commercial land rates
opportunity	Additional street lighting to reduce vandalism and increase safety and security
opportunity	Should close railines renew project and Mall is GREAT> It is ridiculus that Charlestown Square and Kotara shopping centres have been developed before Newcastle's CBD. Funds/attention should have been kept in the city where it is needed most.
stockton	Perhaps Stockton
wickham	Wickham

Final Comments

subject	additional_comment
future	Council should encourage as many improvements possible McCloy, G.P.T. ect should be welcomed. Existing business owners to have regular consultation with the New Model Association.
future	I believe that all businesses/owners who are contributing a levy to Council should receive an annual report/summary of the Mainstreet program's outcomes/achievements of their area. This would perhaps encourage more or new participation in the Mainstreet program.
future	I don't want the new model as it will cost more to administer and take responsibility away from Council. If you adopt the new model, then I would expect and demand a substantial reduction in Council rates for commercial property!!!
future	I what to see something better than just saying 75% of property owners support. I have made approaches to many Wallsend special levy rate payers and no one was ever asked for any input into this outlandish statement - Conclusive majority (75%) property owners and businesses support. I WANT TO SEE THAT INFORMATION ON PUBLIC DISPLAY.
future	Most important that we make a difference
future	Need to be more independent of Council and not so much red tape to get things done. I resigned from Main Street Committee due to indecision, procrastination, indecision and red tape from Council. Make decisions and run it like a business and stop wasting money (our Money).
future	Nil with present Council
future	The continual object fror NCC should be consultative with Business to achieve the best outcomes possible.
	The mainstreet program as set up now has a basic flaw and that is of council intervention.
	The points set out in this survey are leading as it sques towards the set up of a single management body that would be unable to provide the service required and already inefficient for the dream of the council.
	Why has one par of the survey two columns of agree and no part for strongly disagree?
	The off loading of basic services is reprehensible as the council is trying to move cost from the council to the private sector. Why do we pay rates?
	How many more basic council services do we have to absorb into a project that already pays highly in rates for basic council services?
future	Will there be a larger financial investment or recompense for taking this responsibility from the council into this new model? An inturnal review would be good to look at projects that have not proceded

productively and with expediency due to councils lack of a sense of urgency and service delivery that is below standards set by council themselves.

- importance Create off street parking and or address parking issues. Encourage small eclectic businesses from end to end.
- importance My main concern is improving the number of customers in the city centre precinct.
- importance Please bring life back to Hunter Street if it is the heart of the town and it is dying.
- importance We need to clean our city to attract more people and bring more investment so city can go forward.
- importance You need to spend some serious investment dollars on the CBD of Newcastle it is an incredible embarrassment to the region and the community as a whole. If things don't change then we'll start selling and moving out area in the next few years.
- importance After 33 years working in the City I continue to notice it is still very untidy and unattractive. There appears to be no interest in making our City look tidy.
- opportunity All the above
Get rid of Parking Meters
- opportunity As long as big shopping centres continue opening the strip shops will continue dying.
- opportunity Get rid of trainline from Hamilton to town. Trams / buses instead. Renew the Mall and Hunter Street even more it's a disgrace and the Council should be ashamed of it.
- opportunity Get State Government to help fund Law Uni in Honeysuckle. Not just give us land that the tax payers already own.
Fix Newcastle C.B.D. !!!
- opportunity I live in Cooks Hill and never shop in the Mall due to parking meters. I have been in Newcastle for 40 years and no car parks have been built only the pensioners ride the buses anyone with a car goes elsewhere. Get rid of planners who do nothing especially in City Council.
- opportunity If the motherhood statements and jargon contained in this form is any indication I expect very little from commercial centre programs. Every commercial building in the city should have not less than 50% residential occupancy. That and only that will lead to a proper revitalization of the city.
- opportunity Improve the Hunter Street street-scape cover derelict building shop fronts - in particular the Newcastle West area.
- opportunity Need bypass behind John Hunter to Shortland current access to Newcastle Private John Hunter Hospital unacceptable
- opportunity Need more infrastructure and high density development.
- opportunity Outside of the central area parking is one of the main draw backs especially Hamilton and Darby Street.
- opportunity Parking is always important. 85% of our customers come by car.

- Push for more and free parking
- Better public transport - 10 minute buses!
- opportunity Need to make as easy as possible for people to get to and around centres.
- opportunity Remove old derelict buildings with no heritage value. Landscape and open up these areas till properly developed. Start to clean up and open up the city. Above done at owners expense not Council. Encourage people to live back in the city above shops, not slums.
- opportunity Remove the railway line to allow G.P.T. to get on with fixing the mall. Stop planning and get the Law precinct up in the Civic and the rest will occur.
- opportunity Save the city cut the rail thats it simple.
- opportunity Stop heavy rail at Wickham develop the interchange there, then focus on, light rail corridor or this city is dead!
- opportunity Sufficient established trees.
- opportunity That the heavy rail line is removed allowing the Main Street to flow into and become one with the water front. Parking needs to be addressed with some convenient car park facilities for long term parking near the main strett of the city.
- opportunity The biggest problem with mainstreet business is parking, both in the main street and for the residential surrounding roads. They barely cope with the load of customers now: so all though we would like an increase of customers...Where are we going to put their cars???
- opportunity The installation of 2 hour parking meters is killing our business to a point where we are considering closing our business.
- opportunity The rail line must - end around Hamilton to go forward the city. Impracticable rail divider must go to get major main st, go forward development. San Francisco Harbour area.
- opportunity We need to cut the rail and eliminate paid parking. All this drives shoppers out of town to Garden City or Charlestown. Why should I pay to park at Newcastle forshore on a Sunday???
- satisfaction Because I am in Darby Street. I think it was disgusting Delany Hotel has more than doubled nearly tripled in size over the last 30 years. They provide NO parking whatsoever for anyone - 96% of people think they own the carpark which you enter and exit through their bottleshop of an evening. It is a nightmare to exit carpark as the "bottleO" people block EXIT. I hope they pay extra rates 100 fold for what they use and pretend they own for use of their patrons.
- satisfaction Bring back Tower Traders precinct committee who had an annual budget of \$100,000 and beautified the area, supported business and the King Street Fair as soon as the precinct was amalgamated into City East precinct virtually all support ceased and now most money is spent in administration.
- satisfaction Current model works very well, I am not involved in the committee.

satisfaction The maintenance of City West is a joke a bad joke on us!! When we first came here 11 years ago, the City West Precinct did a good job. We were conned into changing it. We were conned when Angus Dawson and his Honeysuckle workshop gave us a waterfront parkland all the way to the beach. That's why we are cynical.

satisfaction The program should be disbanded as it is a waste of money in its present form.

Future Special Benefit Ratepayers

r

Where own business?

Hunter St, Wickham

Lambton

Initiatives you are aware of?

Blue Gum Hills Support, Accommodation Audit, Butt bucket program., Car Park lights, Christmas in Wallsend fireworks, Christmas Security, Clean Street Program council service delivery audit, Coal Hopper Tourism Development, Dump sites (coming soon), Financial Assistance of flood Victims, Flags program, Flood Resurrection Program, Flood WEN Plan, Graffiti Eradication, Historic painting reclamation, Hygiene and cleaning audit and rectification of Main Street, Mainstreet Bud Lights, Mainstreet street Plantings, Parking Retention/Bus Stop Allocation, Police Station Rescue, Rebranding of Town image, Rotunda cleanup, Signage Grants, Security Lights, Strategic Town Plan and Mission Statement, street improvements at Mayfield & New Lambton, Telstra Murals, Wallsend Markets (Support of Rotary bid), wallsend winter fair

Wickham

Winter Carnivale

New areas

Hunter and King Streets - Newcastle West.

The least NCC has to do with it the better for the community.

Lambton CBD

Maitland Road, Tighes Hill

Other comments

Leave it where it is. We all know how the NCC stuffs up everything they touch

As a **current levy** payer of the Newcastle Mainstreet program, I refer to the draft Mainstreet Program model currently on exhibition. I offer my comments as follows. Firstly, I dispute the point on page two of the options paper currently on exhibition that states, "The purpose of developing a new Mainstreet Program Model is to focus on how Council can improve the management of their Mainstreet Program". I dispute this point on two facts. The Mainstreet program does not belong to Newcastle City Council, it belongs to the Businesses of Newcastle The point makes the assumption that the management of the Mainstreet program needs improving, yet at no time has councils asked my opinion whether the management needs improving or not. As far as I am concerned the program works well and is a credit to the various committees and communities. Secondly, from discussion with my peers and the members of the committee, I believe that if the program has to be changed it should follow a structure that; a. Supports measurable outcomes based on a strategic Business Plan: b. Adheres to good governance c.

Is supported by the business community. To this end I fully support the following structure; An incorporated Business Group runs each Main Street program; The relevant committees, in conjunction with their community, develops a strategic three-year business plan; An Annual management plan is developed through a community planning process; The annual budget is linked to the management plan and the relevant actions are costed and measurable. The committee presents an audited set of books to the council bi-annually. Upon receipt and subject to a governance investigation council issues payment to the committee for the amount of levy owed. (Ie: two payments of 50% of the levy) The above structure covers all aspects of good governance.

We need to establish a long term strategy to revitalise Newcastle West, including addressing the following issues: - parking (short-term and long-term) - this is a major deterrant to business in Newcastle West. The upgrading and repair of the streetscape should be done in conjunction with a program to get the property owners to improve the external appearance and state of repair of their properties.

We had a meeting here at Lambton organised by the Council & were advised the meeting co-ordinator would get back to us with more information the following day. The meeting was held 1/7/10 & I have not heard anything

I would expect that a successful commercial precinct is not just commercial but also considers, community and other facilities



Appendix V – Workshop Materials and Participant Feedback

Consultation Workshops



Commercial Centres Workshops 9, 10 August 2010

Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Steve Edmonds, Director City Assets

Purpose of the consultation workshops

Phillip Hart, Facilitator

The workshop process and agenda

Phillip Hart, Facilitator

Workshop discussions

1. What areas for improvements are there, in revitalising and growing Newcastle's commercial centres? What stronger outcomes could we aim for?
2. If you saw the Commercial Centres program working well, what would you see happening? What elements would you like to see?

Next Steps and wrap-up

Steve Edmonds, Director City Assets

Conclusion

Phillip Hart, Facilitator

Ground Rules

- Today is about gathering information about the future of our commercial centres, so every contribution is valued. A range of views, perhaps divergent from your own, may emerge today: that's fine.
- Please let people finish what they are saying
- We will try to ensure everyone has a chance to say everything they want to
- Thank you for your participation today.

Consultation Workshops



Feedback Form

Your feedback is important to us - thank you for taking the time to complete this sheet and provide us with your comments.

1. What did you particularly like about this workshop?

2. Please suggest any improvements that could be made.

3. Any other comments?

4. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the workshop.

<input type="checkbox"/> 1- Completely dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 2- Somewhat dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 3- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 4- Somewhat satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 5- Completely satisfied
---	---	--	--	--

5. Would you attend another group like this– on a different subject?

YES / NO

NAME: (optional) _____

Commercial Centres Consultation Sheet

Improvements:

Increasing business in each area	Making each area attractive, convenient, special	Getting value for money	All pulling in the same direction	Making decisions fairly and openly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating new customers • Improving repeat business • More economic activity in your area • Increased viability – people back in the suburbs / villages • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each area vibrant and differentiated • A nice place to be – beautification, trees, parking, seating • Activities and events that highlight character • Places people are proud to show off • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More money spent on tangible outcomes, less on administration • Take advantage of partnerships • Don't reinvent the wheel • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All working together for the same outcomes • Efficiency in the relationship • Sharing expertise and ideas • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All interests are heard • Transparent & consistent decision making • Safe – avoiding the risk of legal disasters • Clear expectations and accountabilities on all • • • •
<p><i>Prioritising...</i></p>				

Monday 16 August 2010

Chairpersons & Service Providers (continuation)

5:30 – 7:00pm

Newcastle Room, Ground Floor, City Hall

Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Steve Edmonds, Director City Assets

Purpose of the consultation workshops

Phillip Hart, Facilitator

Workshop discussions

1. Summary of key results and points of agreement from workshop on 9 August
2. Discussing the model proposed by Wallsend, Hamilton & Mayfield
3. Interim arrangements come 30 September

Next Steps and wrap-up

Steve Edmonds, Director City Assets

Conclusion

Phillip Hart, Facilitator

Guidelines

- Today is about gathering information about the future of our commercial centres, so every contribution is valued. A range of views, perhaps divergent from your own, may emerge today: that's fine.
- Please let people finish what they are saying
- We will try to ensure everyone has a chance to say everything they want to

Thank you for your participation today.

Workshop Notes, 9 and 10 August.

Strengths of current system

“We are connected to the business and community organisations.”

- “We’re in control of our money.”
- “We like the autonomy, and want it back: it’s important.
- “We use our local knowledge.”
- “There is specific local knowledge: the town co-ordinators are town-centric; it’s the only way a volunteer organisation can function.”
- “Everyone can come forward and volunteer ideas for how things can be improved”
- “Marketing and advertising the street as a whole”
- “We choose how the money is spent”
- “It’s our patch, our expertise.”
- “We have the care for our community, our hearts are in it.”
- “It’s a community improvement focus; go above the realm of the town committee responsibility.”
- “We find communication between our committee and the council very good – we get very good access.”
- “The financial investment of the special benefit rate makes the street more sustainable.”
- “The shopfront is good, gives our volunteers good access (run by Switchpoint, a not-for-profit division of Infinitus, the service provider). That’s part of our admin costs, but it works.”
- “We get autonomy in a small area, as for example with the cluster meetings (eg Crown Street, bridal cluster, East End).”
- “We believe we’ll have a say in future changes to zonings.”
- “We can apply for funding from state governments and apply them to our projects.”
- “Good results: festivals, street cleaners – businesses are supportive and involved.”
- “It’s good that Council decided to look at it.”
- There are unnecessary constraints in the current model. We’d like \$\$ programs.”

Weaknesses

- “Don’t want to continue to pay levy.”
- “We need increased autonomy and increased independence: let us make our own decisions!”
- “Council to help with current program, not hinder.”
- “The structure was set up at the wish of the businesses, with only the funds raised through NCC. Don’t need council involved.”

- “No central control: we pay money and need to have more local control over it. How are the fees being invoiced?”
- “More information about future projects to beautify street please.”
- “More momentum, more involvement from businesses.”
- “Meetings are too irregular, so momentum does not build up.”
- “Start communication of governance issues; decrease Council’s branding of the committees as inefficient. Correspondence has not always been clear.”
- “Increase Council responsiveness: is our paperwork going to the right place?”
- “More involvement is required from local businesses – the more suggestions how to move streets forward; the better it will be for all traders.”
- “A business plan for each street would get us closer to implementation of initiatives; would include all businesses on the street and would increase the opportunity for consultation if businesses are unable to attend meetings.”
- “How to engage businesses in diverse industries in collective action for our street?”
- The ratings have not been re-examined since inception, the maps of where the commercial properties are – are outdated. Eg the Salvo’s in Wallsend was sold 8 years ago; are church halls now rateable at the special benefit rate?
- “If residential properties increase in the mainstreets, our funds decrease.”
- “It’s not clear how much Council wants us to spend on administration, what’s too high? What about the state grants and event revenues which the service providers also generate? That supplements the council rate.”
- “Meetings of the Alliance confuse us – there are so many meetings to attend, traders don’t know what’s going on. What’s the role and objectives of the Alliance in relation to Mainstreets?”
- “Nothing happens. Need to increase the sense of urgency in Council about this!”
- “We have money we can’t get spent. Eg. footpaths in Wallsend which we offered to assist with, but no action; it took 2 years to put in three flagpoles! Why does it take 12-18 months to put in two speed humps? And flooding early warning system: it’s \$200,000, but what is it? ”
- “Need increased flexibility and accountability all round!”
- “Economies of scale are needed. How will this work with only 70 traders in a street?”
- “Local knowledge is important – risks if autonomy is not kept – need strong governance.”
- “Council to provide governance.”
- “Service level agreements with Council please: none exist now between Council and Committees.”
- “The self-nomination to the Committee is a weakness – not all wish to be involved. Need wider involvement.”

Future improvements

During workshops, participants were asked to identify the determinants of a successful model for delivering improved services to the city's and suburban commercial centres, with the following question: *"If it were working well, what would you see?"* The following comments were received:

- "Vibrant, busy places – the economic improvements are visible."
- "People in the street, conversations in the street about the mainstreets program."
- "The ABN Recharge would be open, costed and we could choose which of the activities we'd like delivered by council."
- "KPI's linked to our goals. Increased autonomy, independence and efficiency."
- "Autonomy from other suburban centres – involvement at our grass roots."
- "The City Centre Committee had a meeting and voted in favour of the BID model – we're keen to pursue it."
- "The city's mine subsidence constraints would be addressed."
- "Government departments decentralised."
- "Court precinct developed."
- "Develop a public transport system that services all needs."
- "We'd be operating in a favourable political environment."
- "Creating an iconic project."
- "Leadership from NCC – promote mainstreets to all tiers of government."
- "Improved communication between council and all the stakeholder groups: Fix Our City, The Alliance, Precinct Committees. Clarify how all fit in, create a better focus, and reduce duplication."
- "Prioritising expenditure of s94 (developer contributions) – identified projects, quicker outcomes."
- "Less involvement from NCC."
- "Achievement of outcomes in good timing."
- "Supplemented with NCC rates."
- "The funds are not to be pooled: if collected from one area, it needs to be spent there."
- "Increased uniqueness – street to street."
- "Needs a scale to ensure outcomes, not only admin costs."
- "If you have one provider, where is their loyalty going to be, which street?"
- "Less paperwork."
- "Learning occurs between streets – as it has been this morning. There are already DSRD learning opportunities, and Economic Development Committees."
- "Faster processing of Council approvals for projects put up by commercial centres, eg carpark construction, additional bins. Strategic overview – clear early response to

indicate likely priority and outcome. Advocacy - for us in Council to assist getting thru the process.”

- “Regular meetings with stakeholders to review programs and make sure its on track, in line with objectives.”
- “Commercial expertise within Council to assist commercial centres grow.”
- “Committees extend to access other community reps that have expertise – informal mechanisms to support sub-groups.”
- “Committee meeting restructured to be more constructive/positive.”
- “Greater volunteerism – reward and recognition to attract people (overarching system).”
- “Greater character definition for each centre, eg above awning signs = consistent or absent into DA consideration.”
- “Briefings on major planning of developments happening elsewhere that could impact on commercial centres.”
- “Agreed governance model and terms of reference.”
- “Activity and premises at full capacity - ac”
- “Revitalise the passion. Rebuild the social structure not just the built form.”
- “Actively support new initiatives, eg Renew Newcastle, NCC to take lead.”
- “NCC to encourage property owners to develop as well as NCC properties.”
- “Streamline DA’s – time imperatives!”
- “Co-ordinated, adequate schedule of events.”
- “Shift the railway and retain the corridor.”
- “Lot fragmentation.”
- “Improve parking and traffic flows – enforcement, interest of business and visitors.”
- “West end activation.”
- “A better relationship with Council.”
- “Improved response times in dealing with Council.”
- Council working WITH the Committee.”
- “What is the driver for change – needs to be explained.”
- “What can we do for you? Rather than being negative.”
- “Move forward faster.”
- “Community ownership. More autonomy for Town Centres, increase hours of Town Centre Co-ordinator – role will be fulltime as tourism increases.”
- “Council to put back money into the Committee.”
- “Business Mainstreet autonomous with the Committee and Council separate.”
- “Grants should continue.”
- “Council officers sit in meetings, say no problems, then we see a letter.”

- “Code of Conduct should be used by both Council and Committees.”
- “One point of contact in Council who is an advocate.”
- “Existing services should not be transferred to a new entity with those liabilities.”
- “Improved culverts, drainage.”
- “Clear expectations about responsibilities.”
- “What are the limits of such a program?”

Responses to the document: Newcastle Mainstreet Program draft model

- “We’ve gone from being awarded accolades to being a risk issue to Council. I do not know why this is.”
- “Defamatory, offensive, obnoxious and libellous remarks in the paper on public exhibition. Who wrote it?”
- “Page 8: monitoring performance is not recorded for suburban committees; they say we are less accountable. These allegations of poor governance have not been made to us.”
- “Very concerned at our reputation as this is a public document. What recourse do we have?”
- “What does ‘transition to allow develop and downscale’ mean?”
- “Some services could be better delivered by the BID model.”
- “Let’s cut to the chase and talk about the document: that’s what we need to do.”
- “We see the document on public exhibition, but it does not make Council’s wishes clear. The way Council would like to move forward?”
- “Why wasn’t there more than one option put?”
- “Why is Council not happy? How has confidence been lost?”
- “The unhappiness is coming from one quarter in Council, not from the coal face of Mainstreets operations.”
- “What about the Gosford model?”

Submissions Received

1. Newcastle Voice member, 30 July 2010

In the survey for mainstreet there is not the facility to “highly disagree” with the points in one area. The survey is biased to a change to a new model with out looking at the positives of the present program. Change should not be for change only. Baby with the bathwater syndrome. There are significant unanswered statements on issues presented and not fully explained to “make a fair, open and consistent way, where all interests are heard. *Who has decided that the present "management of main streets" need to be dramatically changed? *How was it decided that administration costs were too high. *How can the council reduce administration costs by using one service contractor and still supply "local autonomy and decision making" to each main street without a city centric attitude. *Why does the council think that businesses in a main street should pay more for services that are basic "services traditionally managed by council can be transferred to the new model system", when the council service agreements are not properly fulfilled due to economic constraints? *Who will be the "right mix of businesses" and how many boards are envisaged to run this new model or will there be one 'super board' of trustee's for the whole of the LGA? *Will there be a financial input into the CBD's involved to cover the removal of council basic services? *What is wrong with the present service providers in the main street areas today? *Please explain how ABN charges and \$210,000 is spent on support of Main Streets when no support is seen at the committee level presently? *How is it envisaged that council will control an Incorporated Association? *

2. Mainstreet Committee member, 3 August 2010

Questions for the Forum

- What is “the right mix of businesses, property owners and residents?”
- How has Main Street programs lost “community confidence”?
- How is the “reducing of administration costs going to help manage current individual Mainstreet Programs” when the model being considered in most cities are higher than presently being spent.
- What does it mean when “transition should allow for a greater capacity to develop and down scale from the current arrangement.”?
- How does council justify ABM recharges and where is it spent and on what.
- How and why is \$210,735 spent ‘in’ council, when main streets are autocratic and self reliant on the special rate levy and the raising of funds through state government grants?
- How can we align with “Councils Economic and Development Strategies” when these have never been clear or equable across the LGA.
- When businesses are expected to “maintain business precincts” does council return money, paid in rates, to the Association to maintain these “services traditionally managed by Council”?
- Who are the two coordinators from council, involved with Mainstreet Committees?
- Why has the service agreements in relation to the mainstreet maintenance never been fully supplied on a regular basis?
- Why are present projects hindered by council bureaucratic hindrances and lack of enthusiasm?
- Will the city centric financing of projects continue as is the present condition?
- What problems do we have with the present service providers of main street coordination?
- What problems do we have with present main street committee’s?
- Why are present strategic plans, generated by the community for the community, needed to be changed?
- How will the new model (BID)be able to affect delivery of service of:
 - Transportation
 - Public space regulation
 - Security
 - Social Services

- In the “Emerging Risks and Issues” there are none for the Committees, is this because council cannot manage their internal administration problems?
- What are the councils priorities and plans for the LGA in regards to main streets?
- With the new model moving to an Incorporated Association how does the council see their “controlling role” in the organisation as they move to a more private sector management position and autocratic decision making platform?
- ?

3. Alternate Model: from a Mainstreet Committee Chair, 9 August 2010. Submitted to Council with signatures 10 August 2010

General Manager
Newcastle City Council
PO Box 489
Newcastle NSW 2300

RE: Newcastle Mainstreet Program

Dear Madam,

As a current levy payer of the Newcastle Mainstreet program, I refer to the draft Mainstreet Program model currently on exhibition. I offer my comments as follows.

Firstly, I dispute the point on page two of the options paper currently on exhibition that states, "The purpose of developing a new Mainstreet Program Model is to focus on how Council can improve the management of their Mainstreet Program. I dispute this point on two facts.

1. The Mainstreet program does not belong to Newcastle City Council, it belongs to the Businesses of Newcastle
2. The point makes that assumption that the management of the Mainstreet program needs improving, yet at no time has councils asked my opinion whether the management needs improving or not. As far as I am concerned the program works well and is a credit to the various committees.

Secondly, in discussion with my peers and the members of the committee, we believe that if the program has to be changed it should follow a structure that

- Supports measurable outcomes based on a strategic Business Plan
- Adheres to good governance
- Is supported by the business community

To this end I fully support the following structure;

- a. An incorporated Business Group runs each Main Street program
- b. The committee, in conjunction with the community, develops a strategic three-year business plan
- c. An Annual management plan is developed through a community planning process
- d. The annual budget is linked to the management plan and the relevant actions are costed and measurable
- e. The committee presents an audited set of books to the council bi-annually. Upon receipt and subject to a governance investigation council issues payment to the committee for the amount of levy owed. (ie: two payments of 50% of the levy)

The above structure covers all aspects of good governance as the books are professionally audited, (there is precedence for this model so the state government would accept it), it covers good business planning as the strategic plan and 12 month management plan adheres to best practice and measurable actions, it ensures that the committees consult widely throughout the community through the community planning processes and importantly it save council the \$210735 that is currently invested into the program and this expense could be channelled into an economic development grant program that can be matched dollar of dollar with organisations such as Industry and Investment NSW. (This has been investigated and would be supported by Industry and investment).

I commend this model to council and I look forward to working with the committee to progress opportunities for growth and development within our Mainstreets

Name: _____

Business: _____

Address: _____

4. Returned in reply paid envelope, 17 August, 2010

THIS SURVEY IS AN ABSOLUTE WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY, I HOPE YOU DID NOT PAY AN OUTSOURCED COMPANY TO COMPILE THIS RUBBISH. PERHAPS YOU SHOULD HAVE ASKED QUESTIONS ALONG THESE LINES

Q1
WOULD YOU LIKE A
MILLION DOLLARS

NO	PERHAPS	MAYBE	YES

THESE QUESTIONS ARE OBVIOUS, OF COURSE, WE AGREE WITH ALL OF THESE SO WHY ASK? HANG ON, AS A BUSINESS OWNER I DON'T KNOW IF I WANT TO INCREASE BUSINESS IN MY AREA. ARE YOU SERIOUS??

WE HAVE NOW OWNED THE POST OFFICE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND WHAT HAS CHANGED! NOT A THING, NO-ONE HAS EVEN BOTHERED TO REMOVE THE TAGS, WHAT A JOKE. THE WIRE FENCE IS SO ATTRACTIVE PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER ARE SAYING HOW THEY WANT TO SEE IT.

I SUGGEST WE TURN THE CURRENT COUNCIL CHAMBERS INTO A VIEWING CIRCUS, WE WON'T HAVE TO HIRE CLOWNS, ANYONE FOR A RED NOSE? I AM STUCK ON THE PRICE OF ADMISSION DOES ANYONE KNOW WHAT ASHTONS CHARGES? DOES THE COUNCIL HAVE A PLUTO POP SUPPLIER? THIS MAYBE A GREAT BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY.

Participant Feedback

What did you particularly like about this workshop?

It was important that we were split into separate geographical areas

Good length of time – workshop duration and good framework for discussion

The opportunity to meet and liaise with other Mainstreet membership

Facilitation on table

Fair facilitation

Not much, not as per advertised

Timeframe 7.30am is good – good facilitator and a chance to have a say.

Open discussion

Have a say

Council listened to all issues – open discussion

Open opportunity to speak and raise issues

Open opportunity to view and ask questions.

Quiet time to have open discussion to understand a future model.

Comfortable environment. I felt able to speak my mind and share my opinions.

Small group of people able to discuss openly all the topics.

The fact that it was helpful and enlightening.

Good communication between group and individuals. Very interesting.

Please suggest any improvements that could be made.

Meetings focused on individual areas of Newcastle i.e CBD, Wallsend, Hamilton etc.

Limit the discussion re: frustrations going off on tangents therefore table facilitation role key

Consultation

A longer consultative period

Better location and time to take this major no public consultation as per draft

Local meetings – some businesses couldn't get to Newcastle. No consultation on draft consultation paper "draft Policy" for better notification – Didn't discuss what we thought we would.

Did not discuss option paper at all.

Separate meeting to be held in each area. After all business and property owners have been notified well in advance so they have the opportunity to be involved.

Tell the persons concerned about this meeting more with more time available

Another meeting called to discuss outcome prior to decision making final outcome.

Meeting to be held in local areas to ensure more local input.
 Further consultation before this is rolled out to new areas.
 More discussion with future rate payers to understand this idea.
 Maybe a little more time.
 Longer time to discuss all the topics.
 Being efficient in what is happening in our areas.
 More people need to attend, to get more points of view.

Any other comments?

Get representatives of GPT, save our city and other relevant groups.
 When will be public consultation on the draft paper? Newcastle Voice advertised questionnaire but none - web site for business faulty and reported?
 Thanks for a healthy breakfast It seems like decisions are already made (perhaps in future we could have greater input earlier) Always be aware that paid parking in town is an enormous disincentive for meeting attendees.
 Draft Policy not discussed as prior knowledge was lead to believe (P3 of 13) in Mainstreet Draft Model.
 Need to consult on draft mainstreet paper.
 Did not discuss the Council's proposals as the "Central Control".
 Did not discuss the draft policy I thought that was what this was about see as stated on page 3 of draft model.
 I have been able to raise issues that are of concern to me and that I believe are fundamental to the success of the mainstreet programs. However, when I have raised these issues at City Centre meetings my views have been rejected as irrelevant and a waste of time. Today they were accepted and supported by others at our table. I hope this is a positive sign for the future.
 Engage more with the property owners and businesses.
 Good to see people looking to develop Newcastle positively.

4. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the workshop.

<input type="checkbox"/> 1- Completely dissatisfied 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2- Somewhat dissatisfied 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 3- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4- Somewhat satisfied 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 5- Completely satisfied 3
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5. Would you attend another group like this – on a different subject?

Yes, 15 participants
 No, 1 participant



Appendix VI – Promotional Materials and Media Coverage

Letter of invitation: sent to 7000 commercial, current and future special benefit rate payers

27 July 2010

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN REVITALISING AND GROWING NEWCASTLE'S COMMERCIAL CENTRES

The City of Newcastle is currently in the process of developing a new business model that will encourage Council, business and property owners, as well as stakeholders to work more efficiently and effectively in making the city a safer, cleaner and more commercially vibrant place.



The key objectives are to;

- o Increase business and employment in commercial centres; generating new customers and improving repeat business
- o Make commercial centres attractive, convenient, vibrant and differentiated with activities and events that highlight character and investment opportunities
- o Transfer current administration and contract costs to specific economic stimulus projects
- o Work together for the same outcomes, sharing expertise and ideas
- o Make decisions in a fair, open and consistent way, where all interests are heard
- o Attract more business, property and community representation with the group operating commercial centre programs

PO Box 489, Newcastle
NSW 2300 Australia
Phone 02 4974 2000
Facsimile 02 4974 2222
Email mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au
www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au

Great Place, Great Lifestyle, Great Future

To support the public exhibition period, which runs from 5 July to 16 August 2010, a number of workshops have been scheduled. The purposes of the workshops are for Council to hear what outcomes and improvements you want from revitalising the Commercial Centres, and how we can achieve these outcomes and improvements.

You are invited to participate in **one** of the following workshops applicable:

- Special Benefit Ratepayers**
 - o 9 August 2010 (7.30am – 9.00am) Banquet Room, Ground Floor, City Hall
OR
 - o 10 August 2010 (7.30am - 9.00am) Hunter Room, 2nd Floor, City Hall
- Future Special Benefit Ratepayers**
 - o 9 August 2010 (12.30pm – 2.00pm) Newcastle Room, Ground Floor, City Hall
- Current Service Providers and Chairpersons**
 - o 9 August 2010 (5:30pm – 7:00pm) Newcastle Room, Ground Floor, City Hall

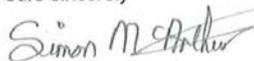
To assist you in preparing for the workshop we have enclosed an information sheet explaining the current model, evolving opportunities and challenges, and potential transitional approach.

If you are unable to attend the workshop we invite you to complete an on-line survey. The survey is an easy way to provide feedback and comment. Go to www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au and - for business, *Mainstreet Program*. Please telephone (02) 4974 2823 if you wish to receive a hard copy of the survey by mail.

Please **RSVP** to Dianne Baker on 4974 2821 by 4 August 2010 to confirm your attendance.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Yours sincerely



Simon McArthur
Manager Tourism & Economic Development

Information Sheet for Commercial Centre Workshops



Revitalising and Growing Newcastle's Commercial Centres

Introduction:

Newcastle City Council is currently in the process of developing a new business model aimed at; identifying new commercial centres, revitalising and growing the economies of traditional strip shopping areas and other commercial centres, engaging a diverse range of stakeholders in decision making, including the right mix of businesses, property owners, and residents, and reducing administration costs to manage current individual Mainstreets Programs.

Current Situation:

Currently, Council delegate's authority to manage Mainstreet programs to local committees constituted under Sections 355 and operational details under 377 of the Local Government Act 1993. Programs are funded by a special benefit rate levy that Council levies on commercial properties in Mayfield, Hamilton, Wallsend, Darby Street, and City Centre. New Lambton has no Mainstreet Committee as Council agreed to raise funds for streetscape works only, and all funds to be used for that purpose remain under Council's direct control.

Evolving Opportunity and Challenges

Council is investigating a new model that has the potential to expand beyond the current six commercial precincts, and is considered an appropriate form of service delivery that provides local autonomy and decision making aligned with Council's Economic and Development strategic directions.

The key objectives are to:

- Increase business and employment in commercial centres; generating new customers and improving repeat business
- Make commercial centres attractive, convenient, vibrant and differentiated with activities and events that highlight character and investment opportunities
- Transfer current administration and contract costs to specific economic stimulus projects
- Work together for the same outcomes, sharing expertise and ideas
- Make decisions in a fair, open and consistent way, where all interests are heard
- Create a different partnership between Council and commercial centres that takes advantage of Council's internal expertise in marketing, business, tourism, events, and economic development and revitalisation, that now exists under Council's new organisational structure

Information Sheet for Commercial Centre Workshops



Differences between the Current and Future Model

Current Model (Mainstreets)

- Simple majority (51%) property owners and business support
- Council collects small levy & transfers to a Committee
- Committees use levy to revitalise business precinct
- Council oversees Committees with two Coordinators
- Precinct maintained by Council without service level agreement

New Model

- Conclusive majority (75%) property owners and businesses support
- Council collects small levy, and transfer to an incorporated member based non-profit association
- Association use levy to revitalise AND maintain business precinct
- Council provides specialist economic help for differentiation and integration
- Precinct maintained by an incorporated member based non-profit association. Additional services traditionally managed by Council can be transferred to the association

How to prepare for Workshops

In preparing for the workshops, we ask that you consider what outcomes and improvements you would like to see from revitalising and growing commercial centres, and how we can achieve these outcomes and improvements. The workshops are aimed at achieving an agreed set of shared outcomes and a model to move towards.

Potential transitional approach

Council officers will work with interested people from commercial centres to establish a practical way for implementing improvements. A phased approach will be adopted that incorporates the following:

- Agree on shared outcomes
- Agree on an approach / model to move towards
- Maintain current Mainstreets model, and test market for a single business to oversee
- Create a transition period (2-3 years) to:
 - Build understanding and support
 - Consolidate governance (policies, procedures & reporting)
 - Build capacity ready for new approach
 - Invite commercial centres to participate
 - Gain Ministerial approval for more autonomous approach
- Progressively move commercial centres to new approach

Print Advertising, The Herald, 6 and 7 August



Help revitalise and grow Newcastle's commercial centres

Are you a current business owner/operator in Mayfield, Hamilton, New Lambton, Wallsend, Darby Street or the City Centre? Council wants to hear your ideas about opportunities for making commercial centres attractive, convenient and commercially vibrant in the future. **Come to a workshop:**

Monday 9 August 2010 (7.30am – 9am) Newcastle City Hall OR
Tuesday 10 August 2010 (7.30am – 9am) Newcastle City Hall

Do you operate a business in another commercial area and want to have a say? **Come to a workshop:**

Monday 9 August 2010 (12.30pm – 2pm) Newcastle City Hall OR
complete a survey online at www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au and search for Mainstreets.

No bookings required. We look forward to seeing you there.



Media coverage

Radio coverage received on 9 August 2HD, 2KO

The Herald, 10 August

HERALD NEWS



Concern suburbs' voices lost

SMALL-business owners fear bureaucrats will tell them how to spend their money under a new proposed Newcastle City Council policy.

They are also concerned that work to improve suburban commercial centres might not get done.

Areas such as Hamilton, Wallsend and Mayfield pay a special levy through the council, which goes to mainstreets committees based in the suburbs.

Levies for six committees range from \$12,000 to \$700,000 each a year, paying for committee co-ordinators and initiatives like festivals, street cleaning and landscaping.

Business-owners say they also contribute countless volunteer hours.

The council proposes a single association to manage money and projects for all suburban precincts.

Wallsend Town Committee vice-president Max McCorkell is worried. "What their proposing is something that's city centre being controlled from the council chambers," he said.

JACQUI JONES
CIVIC

Hamilton Business District Committee chairman George Yanis said loss of local autonomy would mean projects did not get done.

Representatives from Wallsend, Hamilton and Mayfield yesterday handed 150 protest letters to lord mayor John Tate, who is also questioning the proposal.

"It will be smothered in bureaucracy," he said.

The council said the new model would create collaborative partnerships between commercial centres and government.

This would help increase business, generate new customers and make the places more attractive, convenient and vibrant with activities and events that highlighted the areas' character.

Council workshops for property owners and business operators are scheduled for today and tomorrow.

Youth in tune with street parade

WINTER CARNIVALE

WHILE the Wallsend Winter Carnivale was celebrating 25 years, yesterday was all about the under 18s.

The carnivale, complete with market stalls, a street parade, live bands, trapeze and circus acts and fire twirling, attracted a record 60,000 people.

Forty Wallsend businesses got involved, along with a variety of community groups but organisers said the 25th Winter Carnivale was all about the younger generation.

"This year was absolutely huge. I don't think anyone stopped moving all day," event manager Kathie Heyman said.

"But best of all was seeing local kids getting involved - we had a youth stage and a whole youth precinct for them and it was just great to see all of them having fun and getting involved with an event like this."

- Tyrone Butson



800: The crowd at the Wallsend Winter Carnivale yesterday.

SOUNDS GOOD: The Hunter School of Performing Arts brass band.

- Pictures by Jonathan Carroll



CHILDREN: Luke Dean, 13, and Joshua James McPherson, 13, grab a bite.

Beached whale dies

A HUMPBACK whale, measuring nearly 10 metres, which beached itself on Western Australia's far north coast had died.

The 9.5-metre, 15-tonne whale was found beached near the 60 Mile Beach Caravan Park, 300 kilometres south of Broome, on Saturday morning.

AP

Robbie marries girlfriend



ROBBIE Williams, pictured, has married his girlfriend Ayda Field in his Beverly Hills mansion, reports said.

Celebrity website People.com said the pair exchanged vows in front of 75 family and friends.

AP

LECTURE SERIES 2010

Democracy and a Civil Society

hunter valley research foundation

Wednesday, 23 August 2010

RONNI KAHN

- Hunter Co-ordinator
- Australia's Local Hero 2010
- 2009 Victorian World of Difference Living Career

Harvesting the Legacy

BERNARD SALT

- Best selling author on demographic change
- Compelling speaker and regular columnist
- One of Australia's most quoted social commentators

Is Bigger Better? What Might Population Growth Mean for our Future in Australia and the Harbour?

Prof. PATRICK MCGORRY

- Australian of the Year 2010
- Professor of South Mental Health, University of Melbourne
- Executive Director, Orygen Youth Health Institute

Mental Health and Civil Society





6pm - 7pm NEWCASTLE CITY HALL King Street Newcastle

To book through Ticketek: www.ticketek.com.au (search on HVRF) | Ph 4529 1977

Civic Theatre Ticketek outlet at 375 Hunter St Newcastle

To book through HVRF: Ph 4999 4566 | info@hvrf.com.au | www.hvrf.com.au

Thank you to our Sponsors:






FREE ENTRY

Monday, August 9, 2010 NEWCASTLE HERALD 17 +

The Star, 9 August

Main street matters in Newcastle

BY KYLIE ADORANTI

11 Aug, 2010 12:00 AM

A MIXED reaction has come from Newcastle's business communities as Newcastle City Council looks at ways to revitalise the city's commercial districts.

Council has put forward a new model called the Business Improvement District Model to replace the current Mainstreet Committees.

Under this model, commercial centres will collaborate with council, not-for-profit organisations and the community.

Newcastle has five commercial centre programs or mainstreet programs - Darby Street, Mayfield, Hamilton, New Lambton, Wallsend and the city centre.

They are funded by a special benefit rate that is levied on commercial properties in these areas.

Darby Street precinct mainstreet co-ordinator Courtney Koning said the new model was a good way for committees to liaise with council.

"It will give the business community a bit more of a voice," Ms Koning said.

Ms Koning said the committee was happy with the consultation process.

"There are some things that we believe need to be developed but we trust council to talk with us about them."

However, not all mainstreet committees agree.

Hamilton, Mayfield and Wallsend mainstreets will present an alternate proposal.

Wallsend Town Committee vice president Max McCorkell said the main street program was well-supported by local businesses.

"It is important to note the main street program does not belong to council as they are inferring, it belongs to the businesses of Newcastle," Mr McCorkell said.

Council director city assets Steve Edmonds said the new model would benefit commercial centres because it would increase business and generate new customers.

Areas would become more attractive, convenient and vibrant, he said.

The draft model can be viewed at www.ncc.nsw.gov.au and is on exhibition until August 16.