

Press Release
15 July 2015

WEYMOUTH to benefit from high street regeneration programme

- **WEYMOUTH** announced as one of the latest towns across the UK to receive support from some of the UK's biggest brands
- *EE, Exterion Media and Greggs join founding partners Boots UK, the Co-operative Group, Marks & Spencer and Santander to support the transformation of UK High Streets*

Business in the Community's Healthy High Streets programme aims to increase footfall by 10%, reduce the number of vacant properties by 20% and stimulate the creation of new jobs in 100 towns over three years. The programme launched in June 2014 and is backed by some of the UK's biggest high street brands - founding partners Boots UK, the Co-operative Group, Marks & Spencer and Santander and new partners EE, Exterion Media and Greggs.

WEYMOUTH is one of 34 new High Streets selected for the programme across the UK today, bringing the total number of participating High Streets to 67. It will receive a bespoke package of support, including access to skills and expertise, and dedicated High Street Champions from supporting businesses who will work together with the local partnership team, local authority and relevant local partners to devise an action plan to address the specific challenges facing the town. The final 33 towns will be announced next year. In one year, the programme has brought support and resources worth £9 million**from its corporate partners into 33 UK high streets.

The announcement follows a successful application to the programme by **Weymouth BID**, whose leaders have described the news as a 'fantastic opportunity' to tackle the seasonality of the town's trade and increase visitor numbers to the town centre.

The project is backed by some of the UK's biggest high street brands and Weymouth BID manager Nigel Reed said it is hoped support for the town is now brought in from the 'external retail trade'.

Mr Reed added: "I saw the programme application and thought 'this could really work for us and ticks all the boxes'. "It's great news for us here at the BID and the programme will hopefully be part of a partnership with Weymouth and Portland Borough Council, the police and the local community.

"The programme will supply us with access to a wider community of agents and landlords for the empty premises – while also helping work on the retail side of the Weymouth BID.

Mr Reed went on to say “We will get some extra help at no cost to us and it’s great for the town.”

Weymouth will receive ‘a bespoke package of support’ as part of the programme, including access to skills and expertise and dedicated ‘high street champions’ from supporting businesses.

These champions will work together with Weymouth BID, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council and other local partners to devise an action plan addressing the specific challenges facing the town.

Commenting on the programme’s expansion, Robin Foale, Managing Director, Santander Business Banking, and chair of the Healthy High Streets programme said “Congratulations to Weymouth on being chosen to be part of the Healthy High Streets programme. This is a great opportunity to work with the business partners and the local High Street Champions to transform the town and create a thriving, vibrant centre for the local community.”

Business in the Community’s Peter Donohoe said: “One of the most powerful ways for business to make an impact in communities is by creating high streets that are vibrant places to live, work and do business. It has been heartening to see first-hand the practical difference that collaborative, business-led action can make on UK high streets in just one year. While there is much to be proud of about our High Streets Programme we also know that there is more work to be done. We warmly welcome Greggs, EE and Exterion Media as programme partners and look forward to working with Weymouth to create lasting change.”

To find out more about Business in the Community’s high streets work visit

www.bitc.org.uk/healthyhighstreets



www.weymouthbid.co.uk www.weareweymouth.co.uk



ENDS

*The 34 new towns to be supported by Business in the Community are: Ammanford, Derby, Kirkwall, Preston, Ballymena, Dover, Kilmarnock, Sunderland, Bedford, Durham, Liverpool, Sutton, Belfast, Eastbourne, Luton, Truro, Blackburn, Galashiels, Neath, Wakefield, Blackpool, Hamilton, Newport Gwent, Weymouth, Brighton, Hastings, Newry, Wolverhampton, Camden, Ipswich, Northampton, Worthing, Crawley, Portsmouth

** The value of investment into year 1 towns is £9 million, made up of investment in property upgrades in Healthy High Street towns, the cost of High Street Champions time across the 33 towns and senior management support from across the partner businesses.

For more information about the Healthy High Streets Programme or to speak to one of our partners from a Healthy High Street town team, please contact: Ochuko Adekoya, Head of Media, Business in the Community T: 020 7566 8758 M: 07921 941536 E:ochuko.adekoya@bitc.org.uk

Notes to Editors

Healthy High Streets

Business in the Community's Healthy High Streets programme is designed to enable businesses to collaborate and bring their combined skills and expertise together to support high streets in need, over a minimum of three years. The programme seeks to create 3,000 jobs, increase footfall by 10% and reduced empty property units by 20% over the three year period in the 100 selected towns. The Healthy High Streets programme is being delivered by Business in the Community in partnership with Founding Partners Boots UK, the Co-operative Group, Marks & Spencer and Santander and new partners EE, Exterion and Greggs – who have each committed to implement lessons from the programme across their 10,000 branch locations across the UK. Other partners include the British Council of Shopping Centres (BCSC) and British BIDS.

Business in the Community

Business in the Community is the Prince's Responsible Business Network. Our members work together to tackle a wide range of issues that are essential to building a fairer society and a more sustainable future. Responsible business is about how a business makes its money not just how it spends its profit. It is about managing growth responsibly while reducing dependency on natural resources. It is about how the business operates as an employer, supplier and customer and how as a neighbour it helps to create vibrant communities where people can flourish. We are a business-led, issue focused charity with more than 30 years' experience of mobilising business. We engage thousands of businesses through our programmes driven by our core membership of over 800 organisations from small enterprises to global corporations.

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