

Executive Member Response To Indoor Market Scrutiny Review

Date Recommendations agreed by Environment & Economy Select Committee:

Environment & Economy Select Committee, Tuesday 16 January 2018
(circulated Friday 19 January 2018)

Date responses should be made by:

Executive responses on behalf of the Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources should be received by Monday 19 March 2018

Recommendations:

PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION - That officers be requested to engage an external company to carry out market research in order to find out what kind of market offer is required by the Town longer-term.

Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller

Executive Response:

The council understands the purpose of this recommendation and has retrieved a quote to undertake such works already. This quote was particularly expensive and efforts are currently being made to find a more cost effective option.

We are conscious that the timing needs to be right for this work to ensure it not only encompasses the impacts of the challenges within

	<p><i>the retail sector generally and the needs of existing residents, but also encapsulates the impacts and needs associated with new resident groups emerging in the town centre due to the current and future regeneration developments.</i></p> <p><i>The council will of course take the learnings from site visits undertaken during the course of this scrutiny process to help inform future decisions and direction.</i></p>
<p>SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATION 1 - That officers revisit this issue with the shops to see what incentives would be required to restore access to the multi-storey car park as this would significantly improve the potential footfall of the market and would also restore a much needed pedestrian route to and from the car park to the town centre.</p> <p>Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller</p>	<p><i>Conversations are ongoing with the retailers in question. To date there has been no appetite to reinstate these access routes. Officers will continue to pursue this option and review the incentives that are being offered to encourage agreement.</i></p>
<p>SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATION 2 - If the Market is not moving venue as part of the Town Centre Regeneration Plans, then the Council should look at improving the fabric of the building including upgrading the quality of the pitches by replacing the fascia and shutters (with a uniform replacement roller blind or more expensive metal shutters).</p> <p>Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller</p>	<p><i>Officers are currently appraising potential options to improve the market building and fabric of the building. This work will be incorporated into a business plan with actions in the individual annual action plans as appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>The council's regeneration plans include actions to enhance the external facades of the indoor market building.</i></p>
<p>SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATION 3 - That officers look at incentives for Market Traders to keep to the opening trading times and days. Members would recommend that the Garages and Market Manager discuss with the MTA altering the current rules of incentives and disincentives to Market Traders to see</p>	<p><i>The council will seek to ensure consistency in opening hours across all stalls within the market to maximise the attraction and offer to customers. The council will take appropriate and proportionate action where trading hours are not being observed and as such compromises efforts to attract footfall and custom.</i></p>

<p>if this issue can be improved.</p> <p>Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller</p>	
<p><u>SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATION 4</u> - That the Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources discusses with officers in Finance and the Car Parks Manager the options open to varying the parking charges. Members are aware that work is ongoing with the budget process regarding parking options, and would therefore recommend that all await the outcome of those proposals beyond the initial MSCP 30 minute trial that has been taking place this year, before making any further recommendations on this issue.</p> <p>Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller</p>	<p><i>The council will be facilitating nine free parking sessions in 2018/19 that align with indoor market or town centre events to encourage footfall. The council has also implemented the reduced price 30 minute parking pilot from 24 April 2017 to facilitate “pop-in” visits to the market</i></p> <p><i>Officers are currently working on a parking strategy for the Borough. This work will incorporate consideration of the relationship between parking tariffs and footfall within the indoor market and the town centre more generally.</i></p>
<p><u>SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATION 5</u> - That officers discuss with the Town Centre Manager ways to further enhance and incorporate the Indoor Market with Town Centre events that are organised by the Town Centre Manger.</p> <p>Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller</p>	<p><i>The Town Centre Manager is currently finalising the 2018 programme of events for the town centre. The programme and events are being connected to the Indoor Market wherever possible; it also includes specific market focussed events such as “Love your local market” and “Celebrating 45 years of Stevenage Indoor Market. Nine free parking sessions are proposed between April and December that align with town centre events.</i></p> <p><i>The council has purchased a marquee for the Market Traders Association to use in the Town Centre area to promote the Indoor Market. Officers have also facilitated free of charge pitch licences for this.</i></p>
<p><u>SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATION 6</u> - That officers discuss with the MTA ways to encourage a wider diversity of traders available in the Market.</p>	<p><i>Unfortunately the Market Traders Association has dissolved since the committee made this recommendation. Officers are currently drafting the 2018/19 business plan for the Indoor Market. An action within this</i></p>

Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller	<i>plan will be to draft a tenancy strategy that seeks to identify and target particular sectors of the business market to encourage new traders and enhance the existing offer.</i>
<u>SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATION 7</u> – That officers consider a staggered rent for new traders. Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller	<i>The business plan referenced at recommendation six will incorporate initiatives and incentives to encourage new traders. The council currently offers subsidised rents for the first six months for new traders to encourage take up. The business plan will consider further options such as shorter leases and staggered rents as suggested.</i>
<u>SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATION 8</u> – That officers approach other traders from different markets or other settings. Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller	<i>Officers continually review best practice and liaise with the industry bodies (National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) and also with the National Market Traders Federation (NMTF)) to ensure we keep appraised of new ideas and innovative solutions.</i>
<u>SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATION 9</u> – That officers further promote other uses of void spaces and to casual traders. Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller	<i>Officers are currently considering options for alternative uses of void spaces. Options will range from decorating the void space to improve the look and feel to promoting use for local arts projects etc. This work will be encapsulated within the annual business plan.</i>
<u>LONG TERM RECOMMENDATION 1</u> - That options for a future alternative location for the indoor market be included in the town centre regeneration plans. Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller	<i>Officers will continue to consider and review alternative options with regeneration colleagues.</i>
<u>LONG TERM RECOMMENDATION 2</u> – (i) That the Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources discuss with officers the possibility of a future acquisition of the freehold for a suitable town square retail building creating an arcade linking the town centre square with the Indoor Market entrance; (ii) If an arcade link to the Indoor Market is not viable either because of the building configurations or for financial reasons, then the	<i>Unfortunately, this is not considered a viable option at this time. The principle of creating access to the market via an arcade is understood, however there is concern that the introduction of further stalls in this area would introduce further external competition to the traders located within the market building.</i> <i>An alternative location for a smaller reconfigured indoor market has not</i>

<p>purchase of a smaller retail site with footfall from the town centre be considered for a smaller reconfigured market with a focus on business start-ups in conjunction with an outdoor market offer in the regenerated Town Centre.</p> <p>Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller</p>	<p><i>been identified or considered viable at this point.</i></p>
<p><u>LONG TERM RECOMMENDATION 3</u> – That officers consider approaching an independent company to administrate the market on a commercial basis for the Council</p> <p>Action: Garages & Markets Manager Carlo Perricone / AD Craig Miller</p>	<p><i>The council is committed to operating the Indoor Market and the efforts to maintain the viability of this operation. The council will keep an open mind to this option and will review its applicability in the future. It is however not considered an option at this point.</i></p>