

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Monday, 2 October 2017

Time: 6.00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Michael Downing (Chair), Matthew Hurst (Vice-Chair), Doug Bainbridge, Jim Brown, Laurie Chester, James Fraser, John Lloyd and Andy McGuinness

Start / End Start Time: 6.00 pm

Time: End Time: 7.45 pm

8 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Broom and Harrington.

There were no declarations of interest

9 **MINUTES - 11 SEPTEMBER 2017**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Select Committee held on 11 September 2017, are approved as a correct record to be signed by the Chair subject to Councillor McGuinness being removed from the Members present and added to the list of apologies.

10 **INTERVIEWS FOR INDOOR MARKET REVIEW**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including Peter Turvey – NABMA (National Association of British Market Authorities) Consultant, Mandy and Barry Crouch from Mandy's Café, Demi Tasker – Demi's Cake Magic and Onyebuchi John Nwachukwu Marketing & Health Food Store - Oyoyo and Zap Intelligent Solutions.

The following observations regarding the Indoor Market were made by the representative of NABMA and the market traders:

- The Market was well managed, well operated and had good support from the Council officers;
- The market was clean and well lit;
- The Market was in the wrong location and lacked footfall as a result of it.
- Signage for the market was poor, particularly from the Bus Station
- Stronger links should be made with the Town Centre Manager in particular

when events were being held in the Town such as Armed Forces Day.

The NABMA representative suggested that the market could be improved by extending the opening days and hours or moving the market outdoors so that it could become a focal point for the Town. An evening outdoor market with an extensive street food offer had proved successful in other areas.

The market trader representatives agreed that the issue of location was significant and the prime factor for the future of the market but they were of the view that the outdoor market suggestion would not work for many of the current businesses. It was agreed that restoring the access to the market through one of the larger shops on Queensway such as Wilkinsons or Boots would go some way to help with footfall.

In relation to the opening times of the market, it was reported that there were mixed views with some traders happy to work additional days and longer hours but some not. Members suggested that the market model should be reviewed as it was clear not all traders wanted the same opening days and times.

Members advised that many potential customers for the market might be travelling by bus and asked whether advertising on buses could be considered.

Concern was expressed regarding the service road to the market, particularly in relation to crossing points and the speed which vehicles including delivery vehicles travelled at along the road.

In response to the comments by the traders and representatives, Members were advised that

- new way finding signs would be installed in the Town Centre highlighting the Market as part of a Regeneration Project;
- Officers and the Town Centre Manager were currently in communication with Wilkinsons and Boots regarding the possibility of opening up the rear entrances of their buildings although it was known that security was an issue for those shops;
- There would in the future be more joined up working with the Town Centre Manager particularly in connection with events that were going on in the Town;
- A major concern for traders was the opening times of the other stalls within the market. Opening and closing times were not consistent amongst all traders which could give a negative impression to those visiting the market;
- Although the issue of crossing points along the service road had previously been investigated, Officers agreed to look into whether safety measures including crossing points could be installed.
- The town centre shops previously used by BHS and Marks and Spencer were

both owned privately and currently not options for relocation of the market.

It was **RESOLVED** (i) that the comments from the Market trader representatives and the representative from NABMA (National Association of British Market Authorities) be noted;

(ii) that the comments from officers in response to the traders set out above be noted;

(ii) that the representatives from the Market trader representatives and the representative from NABMA (National Association of British Market Authorities) be thanked for their attendance;

11 **EMERGING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDOOR MARKET REVIEW**

The Scrutiny Officer presented draft recommendations for the Indoor Market Review. Following consideration and in the light of the discussion during the previous item the following draft recommendations were agreed:

RECOMMENDATION 1 - That options for a future alternative location for the indoor market be included in the town centre regeneration plans – this would include considering a review of the model of the market offer to the town.

RECOMMENDATION 2 – That the Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources discuss with officers the possibility of a future open market acquisition of the freehold for a suitable town square retail establishment creating an arcade linking the town centre square with the Indoor Market entrance – officers to identify costings for the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – 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.

RECOMMENDATION 4 – Removed – it was considered that improvements to the fabric of the building would not increase the footfall to the market

RECOMMENDATION 5 - That officers look at incentives for Market Traders to keep to the opening trading times and days. Members recommended that the Garages and Market Manager discuss with the MTA altering the current rules of ‘rewards and punishment’ to Market Traders to see if this issue can be improved.

RECOMMENDATION 6 - That the Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources discuss with officers in Finance and the Car Parks Manager the options open to varying the parking charge for Market shoppers, looking at free validation or free/discounted parking - Recommendation to be removed but officers to identify costings and data for the usage of the car park

RECOMMENDATION 7 - removed as food offer within the market could not be increased unless another location could be found to accommodate other street food traders

RECOMMENDATION 8 - That officers discuss with the Town Centre Manager further ways to incorporate the Indoor Market with Town Centre events that are organised by the Town Centre Manger.

RECOMMENDATION 9 - That officers discuss with the Market Traders Association ways to encourage a wider diversity of traders available in the Market.

RECOMMENDATION 10 – That officers be requested to look into carrying out market research in order to find out what kind of market offer is required by the Town

RECOMMENDATION 11 – That officers be requested to consider the safety concerns referred to regarding the physical access to the market including crossing points and speed limits.

12 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None

13 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That having considered the reasons for the following items being in Part II it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

14 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None

CHAIR