

# Markets Forum

A meeting of Markets Forum was held on Wednesday, 14th April, 2010.

**Present:** Cllr Robert Cook (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Bill Noble, C Higgins (Market Trader Representative) and M Pinkney (Market Trader Representative)

**Officers:** R Bradley, Mrs A Brayshaw, Mrs S Daniels, N Laws, C Watson (DNS); Mrs T Harrison (LD)

**Also in attendance:** Market Traders

**Apologies:** Cllr Ian Dalgarno

## **M       Declarations of Interest**

**1/10**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **M       Minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2010**

**2/10**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2010.

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2010 be agreed as a correct record.

## **M       Thornaby Market Update**

**3/10**

Members were advised that despite numerous attempts, no further meetings had taken place with Hammersons, current asset managers for Thornaby Town Centre.

Members were informed that Thornaby Town Centre was back on the market. Officers would inform the new owner of their obligations in relation to the market and emphasise the importance of the market and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's commitment to the market.

In preparation for discussions with the new owner, officers presented Markets Forum with four options in relation to proposed alternative layouts for the market in St Peters Square. Members were requested to consider the options and feed back to officers advising on their preferred option. Market Trader Representatives were requested to take the proposed site layout options to the remaining market traders and advise the Market Manager of the traders preferred options.

Officers confirmed that any changes to the layout in advance of the sale of the centre would not require the changing of stalls.

It was observed that many traders had ceased trading at Thornaby market; however the Regeneration Projects Manager suggested that Markets Manager could write out to those traders and invite them to trade again at Thornaby market.

Market traders raised the issue regarding lack of public toilets in Thornaby Town Centre and were advised that the new owners may decide to erect public toilets.

Members expressed their surprise that the Ward Councillors had not campaigned in relation to the Thornaby Market.

AGREED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. Market Trader Representatives will seek out remaining traders preferred options relating to the proposed site layouts for the market and will feed back to the Markets Manager.
3. Members will feed back to the Market Manager or the Regeneration Projects Manager to provide their preferred option for the proposed site layout for the market.
4. The Market Manager will write to the traders who had ceased trading at Thornaby market to invite them to return.

**M**  
**4/10**

### **Stockton Sparkles Christmas Festival Update**

Members were advised that the 2009 Stockton Sparkle event had not been as successful as the event in 2008. The actual reason had not been identified; however it was felt that the inclement weather and the timing of the event had played a significant part in the lack of its success.

Only three of the twenty-one traders who sold speciality crafts and food outside Castlegate Centre were willing to return to Stockton at Christmas-time.

Discussion was in progress regarding the timing of the event and the main attraction.

AGREED that the report be noted.

**M**  
**5/10**

### **Stockton International Riverside Festival Update**

Members were informed that following discussion at the previous Markets Forum, every market trader received a letter requesting their opinion as to whether they would be trading during the Stockton International Riverside Festival.

Officers advised that 35 traders had said that they still wished to trade during the festival and 25 stated that they did not wish to trade. The market trader's representative advised that of the 25 traders who had stated that they did not wish to stand, the overall opinion was that they would stand and trade anyway.

Discussion took place regarding the cafe with market traders advising that when the planning application had been approved it was stated that the cafe could be dismantled within 45 minutes.

It was observed that following problems from previous years the SIRF team had identified the maximum size of the area required, however the whole area might not be used on all the days of the festival but the largest required space was

identified early as Traders had asked that they had early notice of any displacement without changes during the festival.

The Chair advised that he would meet with the Chief Executive of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to ensure that the same problems as the previous year did not occur with sudden changes to the agreed space allocation for the festival. A member of the Markets Forum would also be in attendance at the meeting.

Members noted that the agreement made between the SIRF team and market traders was not to be altered at the last minute.

AGREED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. The Chair and a Member of Markets Forum will meet with the Chief Executive of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to ensure that the same problems as the previous year did not occur with sudden changes to the agreed space allocation for the festival by the Stockton International Riverside Festival Team.

**M  
6/10**

#### **2010 Markets/Events Update**

Members were advised that of the 23 traders within the Market Square Group which stood at Christmas 2009, only three traders would be willing to return to Stockton at Christmas. It was hoped that they could be encouraged to return and trade during the Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF) along with their Keen Green and Ethical market.

Officers had been approached by a leading national continental market who wished to trade in Stockton on an appointed Thursday, Friday and Saturday in a prime location. It was felt that the continental market could be invited to stand along the entire length of the Castlegate centre for three days from Thursday 7th October. No traders would be willing to relocate to accommodate this prestigious market.

Discussion took place on the importance of signage and advertising thus enabling the public to be aware of what was taking place and where in the Town Centre. It was felt that the big televisions in Castlegate would be a good source for advertisement.

Members were advised that the 700th Market Charter celebration would be held on May 12th along with a family fun day on Saturday May 15th. On the Wednesday a scroll would be presented to the Mayor and a brass plaque would be erected. It was hoped that the plaque would be placed on the Shambles. Member's approval was sought on the wording for the plaque.

Members were advised that the historic attraction company would provide the entertainment. The other activities would be a soap box for speaker's corner, fancy dress, silver singers from ARC and a town crier.

AGREED that the report be noted.

**M**  
**7/10**

### **EU Services Directive Update**

Members were advised that a review of the Council's market policy had commenced so as to assist the Council if challenged by any other provider's wishing to operate on a Monday, Thursday or Friday. The review was approved as legal opinion was that only Wednesday and Saturday markets in Stockton could be categorically viewed as being unaffected by the European Service Directive. The licensing arrangements for markets and car-boot sales needed to be reviewed as part of this process.

The National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) had raised further points of interest which needed to be addressed by Councils as part of their assessment of whether market rights were affected by the ESD. Recent discussions had identified a distinction between stalls where goods were offered for sale and stalls where a service was offered. Examples quoted were where shoe repairs were carried out or a key cutting service was provided. The distinction between sales and services was important because where as sales were outside the scope of the Directive it appeared that services were caught by the Directive. Further legal interpretation was sought on this issue.

Members observed that shoe repair customers left the stall having purchased a product.

Officers advised on another issue that had arisen related to family rights and whether a local authority had a policy in place that enabled market stalls to pass between family members. It was suggested that this may conflict with the Directive as it discriminated against potential new applicants for market stalls. NABMA were of the opinion that it would be necessary to ensure that any policies relating to family rights were transparent and easily accessible to anyone interested, again further legal opinion will be sought on this issue.

Members observed that shop owners were allowed to pass their shop down to their children so the same principle should also apply to market stalls.

Officers advised that the Government were starting to acknowledge the importance and need for markets and a Government working group for markets had been set up. The working group had already held a meeting at which it was agreed to develop a good practice guide for markets. It was acknowledged that this would drive improvements to markets, both in terms of appearance and quality of produce. Members were also advised that the working group even talked about NVQ's for market traders.

Members and Officers were pleased to see that the market profile was changing.

AGREED that the report be noted.

**M**  
**8/10**

### **Market Traders Promotion Fund**

Members were advised that the market trader's promotional fund stood at £21,781.79.

It was observed that the market traders would contribute £7,500.00 of the fund towards the 700th market charter celebrations.

AGREED that the report be noted.

**M**  
**9/10**

**Markets Forum Dates 2010/11**

Members considered the proposed dates for the Markets Forum meetings for the municipal year 2010 to 2011.

AGREED that the dates be approved.