

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 8

meeting date: THURSDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2019
title: CLITHEROE MARKET IMPROVEMENTS
submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: HEATHER BARTON, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the potential options that the Council has in undertaking improvements to the existing Clitheroe Market.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
- Community Objectives – To encourage economic development throughout the borough with a specific focus on supporting business opportunity.
 - Corporate Priorities – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
 - Other Considerations – To develop with relevant partners, measures to support the visitor economy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In January 2019 the Members of Policy and Finance Committee agreed to terminate the original procurement exercise associated with the redevelopment of the market site and to work up an expression of interest for the Future High Streets Fund. In July 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government confirmed that Clitheroe had not been selected to progress to the next round of the Fund. Although the correspondence received does encourage the Authority to renew our Expression of Interest for the next round of the Fund which will be announced in the New Year.
- 2.2 The Council have also submitted a separate Expression of Interest to the £40 million Heritage Action Zone Fund. This fund relates to helping to restore historic high street properties through Historic England. Whilst the area of Clitheroe identified for this funding stream does not include the market site the aim is for any improvements within the Town Centre to be a catalyst for wider town centre improvements.
- 2.3 The market site has, to date, been purely maintained without identified investment to improve the market. Given that any development at the site is now a longer term plan the Director of Economic Development and Planning and the Head of Environmental Health Services have considered options in respect of revamping the existing market using the existing allocated capital fund of £175,000.
- 2.4 It has been proven that over the last 5 years, the market is important for the local community offering many benefits including fresh foods at affordable prices, encouraging entrepreneurship, civic pride and a sense of community. Research undertaken at a national level has identified that, if managed in a way that enables them to reach their full trading potential, markets can be economically, socially and politically an asset to town centres.
- 2.5 Clitheroe market as it currently stands is a small community market. Over the last 4 years various themed markets have been attempted on the Bullring area. These have been undertaken with no avail. The Christmas markets however, have been

successful in providing not only economic income for the Council but also stallholders alike.

3. ISSUES

3.1 A meeting was held with the market traders in June and it has been recognised that without change the market will continue to decline further. It is suggested that improvements in the infrastructure and the local markets may help it grow modestly. The market itself is in relatively good condition however the traders identified the following key improvements:

- Remove the stalls from the bullring
- Rents should reflect footfall
- Sandblast the toilet/ archway building
- 1 hour free parking in the town centre
- Better weather protection
- Create a covered market

3.2 Significant changes are required within the Bullring area. The current arrangement with outdoor fixed stalls, that are used for casual traders and 80% of the time are not used, gives the impression that the market is closed when viewed from through the archway via Station Road discouraging visitors into the market area. Through discussions with traders it has been highlighted that public realm improvements and clear signage to the market area would assist in attracting customers to the market. The site is spacious and improvements to the visual appearance of the area would increase the attractiveness of the area which would encourage greater footfall and create an area where people choose to linger which would improve the vibrancy of the area with the associated additional spending potential.

3.3 At this present moment in time the Bullring area surface is in a poor condition and presents a safety and accessibility issue. The layout of the current outside casual stalls are not attractive nor usable for visiting traders. Market stalls are currently on uneven surfaces and in a poor condition. Added to this, there is no uniformity to the existing canopies.

3.4 The existing cabins have no uniformity; signage is ad hoc and in some cases canopies are defective. This in itself creates a poor visual appearance which is not very welcoming to visitors/ customers/ traders. Additionally the lack of suitable canopies/ covered areas can result in a poor shopper experience when the weather is bad.

3.5 One of the other concerns raised by the traders was the washing facilities and toilets. The public toilets at this moment in time would require an investment to make them a more attractive proposition for shoppers in the Town.

3.6 In order to increase footfall and the vibrancy of the market area the following key issues need to be addressed:

Market Dynamics and Management

- Quality of the visual appearance of the market
- Market trader mix
- Stall number size / overall market size
- Market operation function
- Days and times of operation

Urban Design

- The character of the street and trading areas
- Pedestrian or cycle access and movement
- Quality of the public realm and streetscape
- Amenities for traders and general public

Traffic and Transport

- Pedestrian safety
- Accessibility
- Signage
- Parking
- Loading/unloading facilities
- Access for mobility impaired users

Economic Development

- Surrounding shops- linked trips/ visits
- Use of stall space and size
- Target audience of market
- Mix of traders/ produce

3.7 It is acknowledged however that there are constraints associated with enabling improvements to any outdoor market and in particular Clitheroe Market as follows:

3.7.1 Traders are aware of the attractiveness of out of town retail in respect of convenience and free parking for customers which impacts on the ability to attract stallholders to support the midweek markets.

3.7.2 Within today's society customers want the convenience of the one stop shop solution i.e. supermarkets. Over recent years small local retailers have seen an increase in competition from supermarkets, not only for food. With an increase in online shopping customers are choosing convenience over quality which has impacted on footfall within outdoor markets. This is particularly prevalent in the winter months where not as shoppers are prepared to put up with poor British weather and buy their groceries at uncovered outdoor market.

3.7.3 It must also be noted that whilst the cabins all remain occupied that there is a diminishing number of market traders as a whole.

3.7.4 The site is overlooked by domestic residential properties and this needs to be acknowledged in any form of development or renovation that is undertaken.

3.8 Notwithstanding the above constraints in the case of Clitheroe Market there is an existing established customer base with the majority of shoppers using the market for over 10 years (with the exception of the local Christmas Market). The personal, friendly service provided at the market is highly valued and the main reason why most shoppers choose to shop at the market. As such it is important to not only increase footfall at the market but to maintain this customer base.

4. WAY FORWARD

4.1 The following immediate options have been considered to improve the market area following the issues highlighted by the traders and to ensure that the wider Council aspirations are delivered:

4.1.1 Remove the existing stalls in the Bullring area.

4.1.2 Remove all the existing canopies and replace them with a new, retractable canopy system which is uniform, in respect of colour and design, throughout the permanent market cabins.

4.1.3 Re-instate all of the timber fascia signs on the cabins including painting the fascias and employing a hand-painting sign writer to paint all of the cabin holders business names into the fascias in the same style and design.

4.1.4 Due to the decrease in the use of the market area on a Friday for the flea market, cancel this event due to the lack of participation. The use of the Friday market was introduced to increase footfall however the cabins are not open on a Friday so this provided little economic investment for all parties.

4.1.5 Refurbish the market toilets.

4.1.6 Re-establish the market trader liaison on a quarterly basis to enable issues to be discussed and to secure commitment from the market traders to support events that are specifically tailored around the financial gain of the cabin holders.

Remove stalls within the Bullring Area

4.2 The existing stalls are much underused and create a poor impression of the town's outdoor market particularly when viewed from Station Road. Removal of these stalls will ensure that the market does not appear 'closed' when viewed by passers-by on Station Road and will enable further consideration of an appropriate temporary use of this space and/ or improvements to the public realm.

4.3 The stalls will remain in situ to accommodate the Christmas markets and will be removed in January 2020 which is a very quiet period of time for the market.

4.4 At a meeting with the market traders on 27th August concerns were raised about the impact the stalls removal would have on the traders who regularly use these stalls. There are approximately 5 regular casual stall holders a number of whom potentially have the option to bring their own stalls/selling equipment etc. Additionally after the stalls are removed the Council will still allow pitches to be let to current traders and to any current stallholders who bring their own stalls/equipment.

4.5 There is likely to be a drop in income, as some but not all current stallholders are likely to continue with pitches, and this should be reflected in the revenue budget estimates going forwards. At this stage, it is not possible to estimate with complete certainty what the drop in stalls income will be. However, working on the basis that 40% of current stallholders will continue to trade on the market using pitches, then the estimate of lost stalls income is £1,510 for January to March 2020 and is £6,040 for a full year.

4.6 Following their removal consideration can be given to an appropriate re-use of this area, such as pop-up markets, areas of seating etc., and any necessary

improvements to support the re-use. Additionally Members may consider that the Council purchasing a small stock of temporary cabins may be appropriate for the next stage of the market improvements to accommodate current/ potential stallholders. The options can be discussed with the affected casual traders in advance of the stalls being removed.

Replace the Canopies

- 4.7 The market traders have made it clear that they do not want an indoor market arrangement however they have sought a covered solution to weather proof the area. The stall holders have erected various retractable canopies all of different designs and colours, a number of which are in a poor state of repair.
- 4.8 The design of the cabins, in particular the roof layout, on a stepped arrangement makes the erection of one permanent roof solution very challenging. Additionally given that the cabins are closed for extended periods of time the creation of a covered area has the potential to attract anti-social behaviour. As such, with the aim to provide weather proofing, alternative solutions have been considered.
- 4.9 Following discussions with a canopy company it would not be possible to install a retractable canopy over the entire walkway section due to misalignment of the opposing retail units. However 43 individual retractable canopies (enabling the area to remain open when the market cabins are closed) could be installed which utilise acrylic fabric. The intention would be to secure the greatest projection possible to reduce the amount of walkway open to the elements. The same colour fabric for every unit would be utilised to provide uniformity and 'tie' all the cabins together as one market.
- 4.10 The cost of this system is dependent on the system chosen. The canopy company has suggested either (please see attached appendix 1):
- an Italian system which would be £850 + VAT each/ £36,550 + VAT in total;
 - A stronger German system which would be £995 + VAT each/ £42785 + VAT. A 3m projection for this system would cost £44428 + VAT
- 4.11 The German system (Topas: <https://www.weinor.com/topas/>) is stronger due to the arms being made of drop forged components and the manufacturer is regarded as the best awnings in the industry. This system is considered to be a more suitable solution for Clitheroe's outdoor market given the high likelihood of poor weather conditions. The Topas open awning is very wind resistant and can cope with winds up to force 4 on the Beaufort scale (which is a moderate breeze- 13–18 mph). Additionally extending the canopies to a 3m projection ensures that as much of the walkway is covered as possible.
- 4.12 The existing canopies are owned and maintained by the individual cabin tenants. The new canopies will be supplied and maintained by the Council and members need to be mindful of the potential need to bring in a revenue budget from 2021/22 onwards to support replacement and repairs of canopies each year. For example, four canopy replacements in a year would require a budget of £4,000.

Re-instate the Timber Fascia Signs

- 4.13 The majority (if not all) of the existing cabins have the original timber fascia signs which are partly obscured by the canopies and/ or have been covered by new signage. Whilst the market falls outside Clitheroe Conservation Area it is immediately

adjacent to it and it is considered that uniform signage throughout the market could significantly improve the visual appearance of the area and reflect the historic character and nature of the town.

- 4.14 A local sign writer has been approached to look at hand painting the signs to make sure the improvements are visually attractive and in keeping with the town's historical past. The fascias would need the removal of all hooks and ironmongery, replacement of defective timber, preparation and base paint which would cost approximately £5,500. The cost of hand sign writing directly to fascias would be approximately £220.00 per fascia. Approximately £9,460 in total (possible designs are attached at appendix 2).
- 4.15 It is noted that there are a number of the cabin holders who have erected their own signage which will need to be removed to facilitate the hand painted fascia signs.
- 4.16 Members need to be mindful of the need to bring in a revenue budget for new fascia signs and repainting of fascia signs each year. For example, four new fascia signs in a year would require a budget of £900.

Cancel the Flea Market

- 4.17 The flea market is not creating any benefit or ensuring the survival of the market, given that the level of activity is very low. There are no cost savings from cancelling the flea market. There would be lost income of approx. £530 per year, and this is already included in the estimated reduction in stalls income stated earlier.
- 4.18 Further options for pop-up/ temporary markets can be explored once the Bull-ring area has been cleared and the right type of interest is generated. This is a longer term project.

Refurbish the Toilets

- 4.19 The market traders consider that the toilets are not very well utilised. The toilets have been in situ for a number of years and one option would be to refurbish the facilities to increase the attractiveness of the facility.
- 4.20 The options for the toilets are as follows:
 - 4.20.1 Leave the toilets as they are currently
 - 4.20.2 Close the toilets as there are other toilet facilities within the vicinity of the site (such as Booths supermarket) which visitors may consider to be a more attractive options;
 - 4.20.3 Install new flooring, re-decorate the walls and address the urinal in the men's toilets at a cost of £25,000;
 - 4.20.4 Undertake a full refurbishment, with tiled walls, at a cost of £43,000.

Market Liaison Group

- 4.21 Re-establishing this group will enable co-ordination of the above suggested actions and enable discussions in respect of future possible options. This will also ensure the traders 'buy-in' to improvements undertaken and future events which benefit their businesses.
- 4.22 A meeting was held with the market traders on 27th August 2019 to explain the proposals set out above as it will involve removal of the traders' individual canopies and signage to be replaced by a uniform approach. The canopies will be constructed of a light coloured acrylic fabric which will allow light through so a 'tunnel' effect is not

created. The signage will reflect other similar traditional signage, such as D. Byrne & Co., within the town centre. Whilst the same colour signage will be used for all the cabins the colours have yet to be determined and the visualisations at appendix 2 are purely for an indication of how the signs will look.

- 4.23 The meeting was generally positive and following consideration of the proposals above the market traders' main concerns related to the effectiveness of the canopies. The traders raised the following points/ concerns:
- 4.23.1 Will the canopy system be manual or electric? *It appears that an electric version is available however the most suitable mechanism will be installed at the site.*
 - 4.23.2 With the German system and the 3m projection will the canopies within the part of the market with facing cabins nearly meet? *The 3m projection will ensure as much of the walkway as possible is covered.*
 - 4.23.3 Have such canopies been installed elsewhere (including other markets) and if so where? *Further information has been sought from the canopy company*
 - 4.23.4 Will it be possible to site the canopies so that overlap between the cabins so there is less can of the rain coming through the sides of the canopies? *This will relate to the design and positioning of the canopies- Further information has been sought from the canopy company*
 - 4.23.5 How effective will the canopies be for the cabins which face the bullring? *The purpose of the canopies is to protect the cabins and customers from the elements- this query has been raised with the canopy company.*
- 4.24 It is proposed to undertake the above changes within the next few months. This will enable quick improvement 'wins'. The success of these changes can then be assessed in line with further potential options which include:
- 4.24.1 The erection of temporary/mobile 'pop-up' stalls on the Bullring dependent on demand/ future events. This would be demand led and enable the area to be as area of public open space the majority of the time but available for temporary markets/ events;
 - 4.24.2 Close liaison with the Tourism and Events Officer to attract coach parties to visit the town on a market day. This would therefore encourage a high amount of footfall and it could be linked in to the continued use of the interchange area;
 - 4.24.3 Consider the creation of an area of public open space;
 - 4.24.4 Creation of a covered/ open seating area;
 - 4.24.5 Improve the surface of the Bull-ring area to enhance the visual appearance and facilitate future events;
 - 4.24.6 Undertake an assessment of the town centre signage to identify the most appropriate solution for directional signage to the market.
- 4.25 A further report will be brought to Committee in respect of any further proposed changes/ improvements to the market.
- 4.26 The market traders also made the following suggestions for the market which are not, at this stage, proposed as part of the package of improvements:
- **Rents should reflect footfall-** it is envisaged that the improvements proposed to the market set out above will increase the attractiveness of the market to customers and increase footfall. It is also important to note that the rents at Clitheroe market are already significantly lower than other markets (see comparison at Appendix 3)

- **1 hour free parking in the town centre**- any changes to parking charges would need to be reviewed and approved as part of the Council's annual budget setting. There is capital funding available for increasing the car parking capacity at Chester Avenue and a review of parking within the town centre as a whole would dictate the need for the level and type of parking necessary to support the town centre.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – a separate new revenue budget will be required in respect of replacement signs and canopies.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.
- Political – The Council is committed to investing in the market and its traders.
- Reputation – None.
- Equality & Diversity – None.

6. RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

6.1 Agree to the following improvements to the market:

- 6.1.1 Utilise up to £65,000 of the capital funding to erect new uniform canopies on all of the cabins and hand sign paint all of the fascia signs;
- 6.1.2 Cancel the flea market;
- 6.1.3 Re-establish the market liaison group with the Director of Economic Development and Planning and the Head of Environmental Health Services.

6.2 Determine how the toilets should be dealt with from the following options:

- 6.2.1 Leave the toilets as they are currently; or
- 6.2.2 Close the toilets; or
- 6.2.3 Install new flooring, re-decorate the walls and address the urinal in the men's toilets; or
- 6.2.4 Undertake a full refurbishment.

HEATHER BARTON
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BACKGROUND PAPERS

(If any)

For further information please ask for Heather Barton, extension 4466.

APPENDIX 1 CANOPY OPTIONS

Italian System



German System



APPENDIX 2

Signage options



D AND A BURNEY AND SONS

High Class Fruit & Vegetables

D AND A BURNEY AND SONS

Appendix 3

Rent comparison

Clitheroe	Rent per week	Skipton	Rent per week	Chorley	Rent per week
Cabin	£57.00	Stall (Casual)	£110	Large gazebo	£150
Stall	£19.50 (max)	Stall (regular)	£90	Small gazebo	£100