

# REPORT TO EVENTS AND TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHRISTMAS MARKET CANCELLATION



**Report Reference** E-20-01  
**Meeting Date** 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
**Agenda Item** 5  
**Prepared by** Events Officer

---

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

Knutsford Christmas Market is the main feature of the Christmas programme of events, scheduled this year to take place on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November. The market has been downsized to smaller than half its usual size due to Covid-19 and the market was due to run at amended timings of 11am – 4pm each day. The rest of the festive programme including the parade and Christmas Light Switch On had been cancelled due to the pandemic and potential crowding issues.

On 31<sup>st</sup> October the government announced that there would be a second nationwide lockdown period beginning on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November lasting until at least Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December. The Christmas Market was scheduled to fall within this period.

## 2.0 OPTIONS

### 2.1 POSTPONEMENT

The Christmas Market could be postponed by one or two weeks to either 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> December or 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> December. All market traders who are currently booked onto the market would be given the opportunity to transfer to the new dates or if unavailable they would receive a refund and their slots would be filled by traders on the reserve list. If necessary further spaces would be advertised on the council's website, although this is considered unlikely due to the number of traders on the current reserve list.

Postponing the market would allow trading opportunities for local traders who have been hard hit by the pandemic and encourage local footfall to the town centre after the lockdown period. The town centre businesses will need an injection of footfall following the lockdown period and in the lead up to Christmas to help regenerate lost income and the market will help to do this, therefore supporting a combination of both local market traders and town centre bricks and mortar businesses.

A postponement date could be set with the caveat that if the national lockdown is extended, or if Cheshire East is placed within tier three the market would be cancelled. Cancellation can take place at relatively short notice. The financial implications of postponing the market are included in the next section of this report.

### 2.2 CANCELLATION

If the committee does not wish to postpone the event, it will be cancelled. All traders will receive a

refund of fees paid and the cancellation will be communicated across the local press and council's website/social media.

The financial implications of the cancellation are detailed in the next section of this report.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

#### **3.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF POSTPONEMENT**

The current projected financial position is for income of £10,045 and expenditure of £7,385 with a net surplus of £2,660.

Whilst the programmes have been printed and would contain an incorrect date if the market is postponed, the other information contained within is not affected by a change of date such as shop listings and directional information. Re-printing the programmes would not be advisable due to the associated cost and limited distribution channels due the lockdown. Large promotional posters have been printed with the original date and would need to be re-printed (£30) and this would be the only additional costs due to postponement.

#### **3.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF CANCELLATION**

To date £941 has been spent on the event, comprising insurance<sup>1</sup> and marketing costs. The council will not incur costs from booked contractors. All trader fees would be refunded.

There would be a net loss of £3,600 against the committee's current projected financial position.

### **4.0 DECISION REQUIRED**

The committee should determine whether the Christmas Market be postponed or cancelled.

---

<sup>1</sup> Insurance covered cancellation due to weather, cover was not available for cancellation due to the pandemic.