

REPORT TO EVENTS WORKING GROUP

HEAD OUT NOT HOME AL FRESCO DINING EVENINGS

Report Reference E-21-03
Meeting Date 17th May 2021
Agenda Item 8
Prepared by Town Centre and Marketing Officer



1.0 BACKGROUND

This report outlines a proposal to organise a series of al fresco dining evenings in the town centre to support the hospitality businesses which have been hardest hit by the lockdowns.

It is suggested that the middle section of King Street and a small section of Princess Street opposite the Lost and Found be closed during the evening (after the shops have closed) on a small number of dates during the summer to support Knutsford hospitality industry. Feedback from hospitality and the resident Covid-19 impact survey and focus groups shows support for such a scheme.

This will encourage people who have got used to socialising at home to 'Head Out not Home' and enjoy additional alfresco dining. The 'event' would also provide good PR for the town as a tourist destination as it emerges from the pandemic.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

The roads proposed to be included in the closure would be King Street (from the junction at Church Hill to Egerton Square) and the section of Princess Street outside the Lost and Found. The closure on King Street would allow access to and from the King Street car park.

The suggested dates are the first Friday/Saturday of July-September, namely:

- 2nd and 3rd July
- 7th and 8th August
- 3rd and 4th September

The road closure would be traffic managed with additional volunteers from local community groups to ensure the smooth running of the evening. The road closure would start at 5.30pm to minimise disruption to non-hospitality businesses which would have the full day of trading; businesses would also be able to extend their opening hours to capitalise on additional footfall. The Police and Cheshire East Council have been contacted and are supportive of the initiative which is in line with many other towns to aid post Covid economic recovery.

The Town Centre and Marketing Manager has spoken to the following establishments who are in support of the initiative: Evuna, D13, King Street Kitchen, The Tea Room, Copper 29, Dexter and Jones, Wine and Wallop and Piccolino's.

The TCMO is also contacting others who could benefit from the closure, namely: Shamoli, Eastern

Revive, Rose & Crown, Cross Keys and Margao.

Any establishment taking part will be given a specified area in which tables and chairs can be placed. Enough space would be allocated to allow the safe movement of pedestrians. All venues would be responsible for provision and removal of chairs, tables, and parasols alongside any rubbish to ensure the safe re-opening of the street for the next day's trading. They would also be responsible for organising their licencing permissions as necessary.

A full risk assessment will be undertaken considering any Covid-19 restrictions that may still be in force, although the dates are in line with the potential removal of social distancing if the government's road map out of restrictions on schedule. If the weather is extremely poor, then that evening's closure would be cancelled. The TCMO will also set up a small working group consisting of volunteers and representatives of the participating venues. All affected residents will be contacted, and some restaurants have indicated they may offer a small discount to affected residents if they show photo proof of address.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Cost	Per Weekend	Total
Road Closure Fee	£200	£600
Traffic Management	£532	£1,595
Signage		£75
TOTAL		£2,270

The benefitting businesses would incur costs in provision of the tables/chairs and, in recognition of the challenging year they have had it is not considered appropriate to seek a contribution from them for the operation costs. Al fresco dining provision should be covered under the government's *Welcome Back* fund and the TCMO is seeking to secure agreement from Cheshire East Council that they commit part of their funding allocation for this scheme; however, confirmation (from government) that it has been funded would not come until after the event.

4.0 DIRECTION REQUESTED

The views of the working group members are sought on the 'Head out Not Home' initiative as outlined.