

REPORT TO ASSETS AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

MARKET HALL BENCHMARKING REPORT

Report Reference A-21-08
Meeting Date 27th September 2021
Agenda Item 7a
Prepared by Town Centre and Marketing Officer



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Town Centre and Marketing Officer has commenced a programme of regular benchmarking exercises to gather data on footfall and business confidence in the Market Hall.

The first benchmarking exercise was undertaken in early July. A business confidence survey was issued to traders alongside a market users survey being undertaken with customers over two days. Footfall counts were also taken. This was the first benchmarking survey undertaken since 2018 when a market trader business confidence survey was undertaken. The cost of this exercise was £124.

1.2 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The traders' survey was split into the following sections:

1. About their stall
2. Social History and Market Hall Promotion
3. Doing business in Knutsford Market Hall

The customers survey focused on:

1. Their market shopping habits
2. Their views on the market's physical appearance
3. Comparison to other markets they visit
4. Social media

2.0 SUMMARY OF DATA

2.1 MARKET TRADER SURVEY

Five (out of nine) traders completed a survey.

- One trader reported an increase in profitability over the preceding 12 months, one an decrease and one level. The other two were new traders.
- No traders reported to have suffered from crime over the previous 12 months
- No traders have plans to change their market stall in the next 12 months
- The advantages of doing business in the Market Hall were cited as footfall from other stalls,

- good location (Knutsford) and affordability.
- The disadvantages were cited as parking costs, that the market is hidden, being cold/uninviting in winter, lack of space for hospitality and appearing old and tatty.
- Desired improvements were improved signage, reduced parking charges, improved maintenance, filling of the vacant stall, heating during winter and redevelopment/larger market hall
- The primary obstacles for businesses were cited as lack of footfall/ensuring footfall, and issues arising from Brexit/COVID concerning prices/supply of products.

2.2 FOOTFALL COUNT

Footfall was measured for 10 minutes per hour over the trading day. This has been extrapolated to provide an average number of visitors per day:

- Tuesday – 168
- Saturday - 498

2.3 MARKET USER SURVEY

61 surveys were completed. 40 surveys were completed by women, 21 by men. The age breakdown was as follows:

Age Group	Number
16-25	0
26-35	4
36-45	7
46-55	7
56-65	11
65+	30

- 90% of visitors were returning customers
- The reason for the majority of visits was to visit Jonty's Fruit and Veg
- 58% of visitors shop weekly
- 74% of respondents have been a customer for over 5 years
- The majority of customers stay between 15-20 minutes
- 88% think the opening hours are 'just right'
- 100% feel the mix of traders is good
- 88% were aware of the fishmonger on a Friday
- 77% said that visiting the market was the reason for their visit to the town centre that day
- 59% used the market during lockdown
- 21% shop at other indoor markets with respondents stating Knutsford's is more welcoming albeit smaller
- Around half of customers recalled receiving a market flyer recently and just over half do not recall seeing it in the Knutsford Directory.
- Around half were aware the market has a website
- The most commonly used social media channels were Facebook and Twitter
- Only 45% felt the appearance of the market was "acceptable" or "good"

Main purpose of visit	
Jonty's Fruit & Veg	34%
Greeting Cards & Balloons of Knutsford	20%
Market Butcher	20%
Browsing	12%
Market Café	8%
Morgan Edwards	1%
Plastic Free Weigh	1%
Slipped Discs	1%
Deliverroot (nb: new stall)	0%
Style Loft Boutique	0%

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the responses to the survey questions, the following actions are recommended:

Actions to increase visibility:

1. Installation of additional signage on the Market Hall
2. Installation of additional signage in the town centre
3. Feature entrances to Silk Mill Street e.g. wrought iron sign across both the Princess Street and King Street entrances. Costs are being explored for this with the wording to be "Knutsford Market Hall" for the King Street and for Princess Street "Silk Mill Street Home to Knutsford Market Hall"
4. Commission an artist to paint the shutters with an eye-catching design to attract attention during out-of-hours

Actions to make the building more welcoming:

5. Once drainage issues are fully resolved to replace all the tiles at the front with a brighter colour in recognition that brighter colours are more dementia friendly.
6. Replace black mats with brighter blue and market hall logo (tag line welcome to the market hall). Again, this would also be more dementia friendly

Actions to attract new customers and increase footfall:

7. Continuation of the promotional plan for 2020/21
8. Increasing marketing budget for 2022/23 by £1000 to £3500. Additional spend would cover:
 - a. Increased number of boosted social media posts
 - b. Paid advertising
 - c. Market Hall 'map' similar to the Town Centre Shopping Map
 - d. Additional regular activities inside the market hall to drive footfall, for example face painting, cooking demonstrations, pop-up theatre (e.g. Madam Zuccini), Balloon modelling, Wine tasting and Singers on Saturday
9. Increased loyalty scheme promotion especially with other businesses (inc. b2b)
10. Exploration of a young market event/pop-ups to encourage younger people to visit
11. Trial a Hello Fresh style meal kit as this would encourage newer customers to the market.

Actions to gather further data:

12. The next benchmarking exercise is planned for November; non-market users will be surveyed to ascertain reasons they do not shop at the market, awareness and what could attract them to the market hall.