

REPORT TO ASSETS AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

MARKETS STRATEGY



Report Reference	A-21-21
Meeting Date	17 th January 2022
Agenda Item	7
Prepared by	Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

In 2017 the Town Council commissioned NABMA Market Place to undertake some consultancy work and advise on the management of the council's markets, particularly in regard to the options for redeveloping the market hall.

An output of this report was the decision that the council prepare a Market Strategy to set out how it intends to manage its market function. A draft strategy was prepared in early 2021 and was circulated to all members in February 2021 for informal comment following which it was updated. The presentation of the strategy to committee was deferred in recognition of the coronavirus pandemic. It is now presented for consideration.

The Markets Strategy covers both the markets under the jurisdiction of this committee and event markets under the jurisdiction of the Events and Town Centre Management Committee. The overall document will therefore not be formally adopted until both committees have given consideration to the content which falls under their remits.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF STRATEGY

Whilst the strategy covers the market licencing and event markets (the Christmas Market and the Makers Market) its focus is on the market hall and outdoor market.

The strategy sets out the council's commitment to improving the market hall and developing a costed business case for its redevelopment. It recognised the importance of increasing the digital presence of the market and ensuring the market continues to build an expanded customer base without alienating its existing customers.

Based on a recommendation in the 2017 consultancy report, the strategy proposes a new take on a regular outdoor market as a weekly speciality market with a rotating focus. Five themes have been chosen to complement the existing retail provision in Knutsford – home and garden; vintage and antique; children's goods; a youth market where traders are aged under 25 and hobby market (e.g. crafts, fishing, sports etc). The outdoor market would be subject to a supported trial period in 2023 to attempt to establish a sustainable market.

The strategy also outlines the council's intention to continue to support a general outdoor market on Fridays, to continue to hold the Makers Market and to continue to hold a Christmas Market.

The strategy contains an action plan which focuses on the non-business-as-usual aspects of the strategy. It should be noted that the council's existing policies and practices apply, for example a change to the delivery model of the Makers Market to deliver in house would be subject to a business

case and the trial of the new outdoor market subject to a financial risk assessment approved by this committee and reviewed by the Finance Committee in due course.

3.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should review the draft Markets Strategy and consider it for approval subject to any amendments which may be proposed at the meeting.

It is recommended that the committee authorises the Town Clerk to finalise the document in consultation with the relevant chairmen once the Events and Town Centre Management Committee has given its approval to the same; this will allow any modifications agreed by the ETCM committee to be reviewed by the chairman of this committee before the document is finalised.