

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

meeting date: THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 2022
title: CLITHEROE MARKET IMPROVEMENTS
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1. PURPOSE

1.1 To consider the potential options that the Council has in undertaking further 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 September 2019 the Members of Health and Housing Committee considered options in respect of revamping the existing market using the existing allocated capital fund of £175,000.

2.2 The following options were considered:

- 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

2.3 Members agreed to the following improvements all of which were actioned prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic:

- 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.
- Cancel the flea market.
- Re-establish the market liaison group with the Director of Economic Development and Planning and the Head of Environmental Health Services.
- Full refurbishment of the toilets

2.4 Members also agreed to remove the stalls from the bullring (the stalls were proposed to be removed in January 2020) and purchase a small number of pop-up stalls however this action was put on hold during the pandemic.

2.5 The works which have been undertaken were seen a 'quick' wins with the intention for further suggested improvements to be brought back to Members of this Committee. This has been delayed during the pandemic however consideration of such matters can now be resumed. There is £78,600 remaining in the budget for improvements to the market.

3. ISSUES

3.1 Members will note that when the suggested improvements were reported to Committee in September 2019 the following constraints were associated with outdoor markets and in particular Clitheroe Market:

3.1.1 The attractiveness of out-of-town retail in respect of convenience and free parking.

3.1.2 The convenience of the one stop shop solution i.e., supermarkets.

3.1.3 The diminishing number of market traders.

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

3.2 The pandemic has seen a change in customer choices with outdoor markets, in particular Clitheroe market, seeing an increase in footfall and customer spend during the pandemic. Whilst prior to the pandemic most of the stalls within the bullring were not used the reverse occurred during the pandemic with many of the stalls utilised by both the cabin holders extending their products onto this space and casual traders regularly attending the market. It is now an opportune time to respond to this change in customer behaviours.

3.3 Whilst regular face to face meetings with the traders were set up in 2019 during the pandemic these could not occur due to an inability to meet safely. The last meeting prior pandemic was held on 21st January 2020. As lock down measures eased the market trader's meetings were resumed with a meeting on 9th November 2021. This meeting was attended by 10 traders, although none of the casual traders attended, and the following matters were discussed:

- Proposals for Christmas
- Free Parking during the run up to Christmas
- Social media
- General maintenance works including the poor state of the surface materials and the bull ring
- Boarding for the bull ring stalls
- Lighting issues
- Signage

3.4 Following the meeting a Christmas Tree and lights were purchased for the market. A formal event was arranged in which the both the Borough Mayor and Town Mayor switched on the lights. This was funded by the Welcome Back Fund. Temporary boarding has been erected at the rear of some of the bull ring stalls to assist with weather proofing.

3.5 The intention was to set the meeting dates for the traders, including the casual traders, in the diary for the next year however the Omicron variant delayed arranging these meetings until it was safer for numerous traders to meet in person again.

3.6 Following the easing of all measures a meeting was held with the traders on Tuesday 1st March. The minutes of the meeting including the actions which have occurred subsequently are contained at Appendix 1.

4. WAY FORWARD

4.1 The Bullring area is seen as a key area for future improvements as this is the only action not completed following the resolution of Members in September 2019. The following suggestions are proposed:

Bullring Area

- 4.2 Whilst the existing stalls saw an increased amount of usage during the height of the pandemic, they still create a poor impression of the town's outdoor market particularly when viewed from Station Road and on non-market days.
- 4.3 Members agreed to remove all the bullring stalls in September 2019 however this approach has been reconsidered to accommodate traders who have regularly attended the market over the past two years. Rather than a blanket removal of all the stalls Members are asked to consider whether improving the visual appearance of several of the existing stalls is acceptable. The initial thought was to improve the appearance of several of the stalls parallel to the cabins and around part of the curve of the bullring (Appendix 2- edged blue) and remove the remaining (Appendix 2- highlighted red).
- 4.4 However, after the discussion with the traders it was identified that the middle stalls are the ones mainly used and act as a wind defence for the cabins. As such it is proposed to improve the appearance of the parallel stalls (Appendix 3- edged green), the central stalls (Appendix 3- edged blue) and removed the stalls on the bull ring curve (Appendix 3- highlighted red).
- 4.5 The initial option was to improve the stalls by utilising the existing metal framework and cladding it with timber boarding and replacement roofing to create an improved permanent visual appearance with weather proofed stalls (see attached picture- Appendix 4). However, on reflection the estimated cost of undertaking this work (the estimate in 2020 was £8000 for the triple stall (Appendix 3- edged green)) along with the necessary removal of stalls (approximately £4,500) and electrical installation (approximately £4350) considering the central stalls will need to be reconfigured to enable them to be clad in timber and steel fabricators will need to alter the existing structures to enable doors to be inserted results in a costly exercise.
- 4.6 The other option would be to take down all the existing stalls, sell them for scrap metal and purchase new timber market cabins to be configured in the central part of the bull ring and the area parallel to the cabins (as this also acts as a wind break). Basically, replacing the identified stalls to be improved at para 4.4 with new cabins. If Members would like Officers to explore this idea several companies, who supply such cabins (examples detailed at Appendix 5), can be contacted to seek quotes and advise on the most suitable layout within our market. This would be reported to a subsequent Committee along with details of the costs of the electrical install requirements.
- 4.7 The casual traders who have regularly attended the market and the existing cabin holders would be approached to establish whether they would be interested in renting one of the improved/ new stalls on a more permanent basis (enter a more formal market tenancy arrangement) for a weekly fee. The current fees are attached at Appendix 6 and it is suggested that the fee for these improved stalls would be £40 a week.
- 4.8 Members should note that none of the stalls will be removed until after the food festival as these stalls will be used during the food festival so there is some time to consider the best option for these market improvements.
- 4.9 Opening up space within the bullring will provide space for more temporary events/ provide space for casual traders to bring their own stalls and utilise the space. This will enable full consideration of a suitable surface for the areas of the bullring, which has been identified as being in a poor state and open the space for seating areas to support the existing and future traders.

Welcome Back Fund

- 4.10 As set out above part of this fund was used to support the Christmas Tree Light switch on event in the market. As we move out of Covid restrictions at the recent market traders meeting a promotional event utilising some of this funding was discussed. Four temporary market stalls have been purchased (like those shown in Appendix 7) and LCC have been contacted to establish whether these could be erected on Castle Street on Saturday 26th March for one day to promote Clitheroe Market. They would be erected on areas of wide pavement where they would not completely block the footpaths and be available for traders to promote what is sold at the market. Several traders have expressed an interest in participating in this event (a similar event would be run in Longridge on Thursday 24th March) and subject to LCC raising no issues with the stalls being erected on their highway this will enable a promotional event for the market. The retailers whose premises the stalls will be erected in front of/ adjacent to will be informed of this one-off event however the location should not block any access to shops.

Bins

- 4.11 Noting the comments on the poor state of the bin storage area it is suggested that Officers investigate the creation of a secure bin store which will screen the bins and ensure they are retained for use by stall holders only. This will be subject to a suitable design be secured and provision for the bins to be collected. If Members are minded to support this suggestion this will be reported back to a future Committee.

Market Liaison Group

- 4.12 When this group was re-established it facilitated a forum for discussing ideas and issues and working together to move the market forward along with assisting in the traders 'buying-in' to improvements undertaken and future events which benefit their businesses. As noted, a meeting was held on 1st March with the cabin stall holders and the casual traders were also invited. The above suggestions reflect discussions held during the meeting. Future meetings have been diarised.

5. FUTURE PLANS

- 5.1 Following the further improvements works set out above future areas of improvement will be considered and brought back to Members for a decision. At this stage this would be along the lines of:
- 5.1.1 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. It is noted however that traders who visit temporary/ one off market events typically bring their own stalls/ facilities as they travel between venues;
 - 5.1.2 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 into the continued use of the interchange area;
 - 5.1.3 Consider the creation of an area of public open space;
 - 5.1.4 Creation of a covered/ open seating area;
 - 5.1.5 Improve the surface of the Bull-ring area to enhance the visual appearance and facilitate future events;
 - 5.1.6 Undertake an assessment of the town centre signage to identify the most appropriate solution for directional signage to the market.

5.1.7 Consider any suggestions for a cover to the market;

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

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

- Resources – quotes will need to be sought for the works suggested. These will be reported by to Members noting the remaining budget for this work
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.
- Political – The Council is committed to investing in the market and its traders.
- Reputation – None.
- Equality & Diversity – None.

7. RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

7.1 Members are asked to confirm whether they agree to:

7.1.1 Officers investigating the options of replacing the existing stalls with modern market cabins and to report the findings back to a subsequent Committee

7.1.2 Officers consider options for improving the visual appearance of the bin storage area



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BACKGROUND PAPERS

(If any)

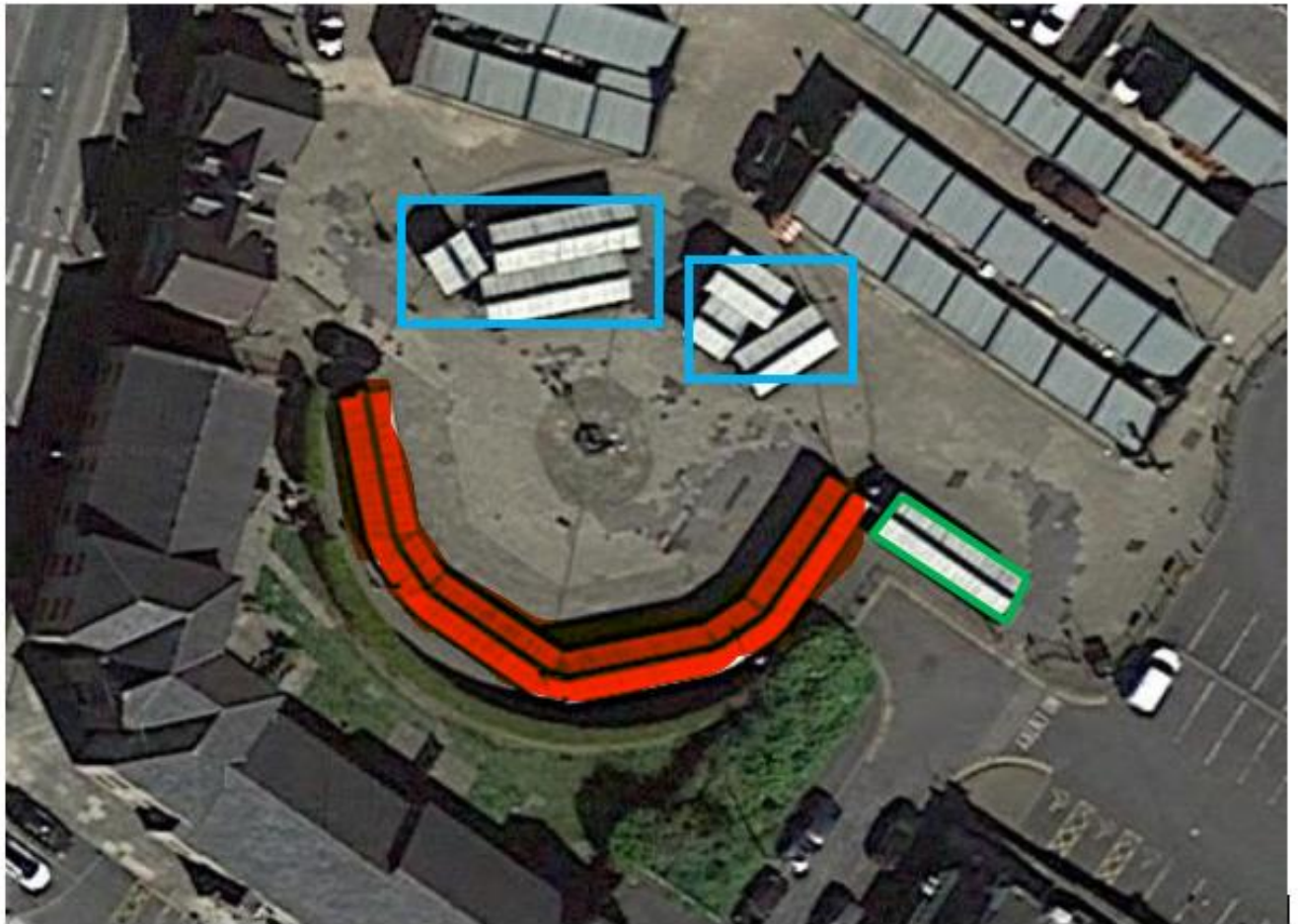
Appendix 1: Minutes of Market Traders Meeting 1st March 2022

- If any improvements to the temporary stalls is undertaken this should be concentrated on the middle stalls which are currently utilised and act as a wind defence for the cabins
- There is interest from some of the traders to be involved in a pop-up market promotional event in March
- Signage is still an issue- need to discuss with highways as the signage is on their assets
- Concern over the existing canopies fixtures- passed over to the surveyors for the operational staff to check
- The desire is still to have a cover over the market but not be an indoor market- one trader has a suggestion for a scheme he saw in Spain which will be forwarded for consideration
- Concerns over some traders packing up early. The market regulations include the following stipulations:
 - Every stall must be open as a minimum between the hours of 9am – 4pm and no vehicles shall be allowed to enter the trading area between those hours
 - The trader shall be the person licensed by the agreement with the Council and shall be required to attend the market personally to trade on each market day. In the event of illness or holidays and provided the agreement of the Market Superintendent is obtained, the trader may nominate a substitute. Absence of more than three weeks by the trader may result in termination of that licence.
- Concerns were raised about the state of the road near the police station which is an access to the market- this is unadopted however appears to need to some repair works
- The state of the bin storage area was raised along with concerns over bins not being emptied. The Council's Waste Management Officer has confirmed:
 - The bin situation has improved over the last few months
 - Our refuse collectors occasionally empty the paper bins on a Monday when they are close to capacity, however Rishton Wastepaper Ltd empty the paper bins on a Wednesday.
 - Rishton empty 9 bins on a Wednesday and our collectors empty 7 general bins three times a week. This equates to 21 collections per week @ £20.10/bin = £23,041.20 per year would be the charge if this was a trade business. The income from market revenue for refuse collection is significantly lower than this amount.
- The toilets have not been cleaned recently. This was due to staff shortages however the new cleaner has been cleaning the toilets. A concern over a slippy surface in the toilets has been passed to the surveyors.
- A question was raised as to whether the market car park could be closed slightly later the Thursday before the food festival. Last entry into the car park has to be 1pm on this day to enable the remaining vehicles to leave and for the marquee company to come in at approximately 3pm to start setting up the stalls. Any later would not allow enough time for the marquees to be set up.

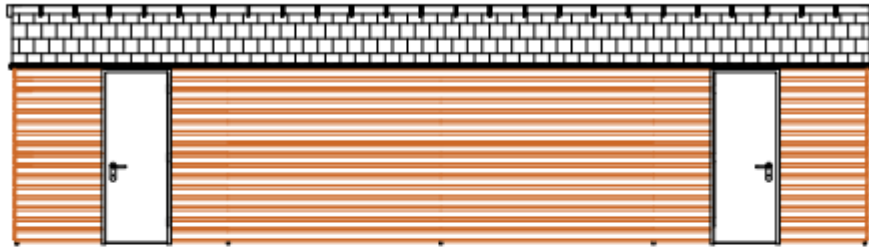
Appendix 2: Initial suggested changes



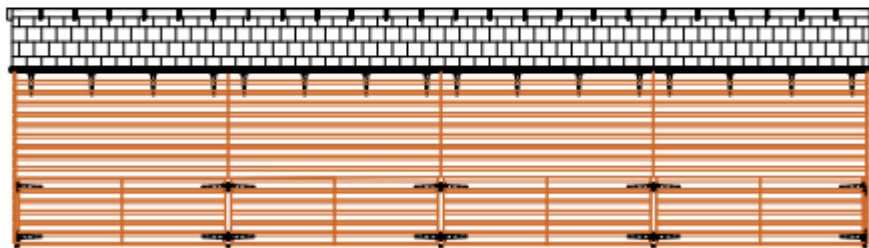
Appendix 3: Revised Suggested Changes



Appendix 4: Example Visual Appearance



Rear Elevation



Front Elevation

Appendix 5: example modern market cabins



Appendix 6: Rent comparison

Clitheroe	Rent per week	Skipton	Rent per week	Chorley	Rent per week
Cabin	£59.40	Stall (Casual)	£110	Large gazebo	£150
Stall	£19.90 (max)	Stall (regular)	£90	Small gazebo	£100

Appendix 7: Temporary Pop Up Market Stalls

