

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 9 JUNE 2022
title: CLITHEROE MARKET IMPROVEMENTS
submitted by: NICOLA HOPKINS, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
principal author: NICOLA HOPKINS, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

1. PURPOSE

1.1 To further consider the potential options that the Council has in undertaking 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.

2.6 In March 2021 a further update report was considered by Members of this Committee where Members resolved the following:

- Officers investigating the options of replacing the existing stalls with modern market cabins and to report the findings back to a subsequent Committee
- Officers consider options for improving the visual appearance of the bin storage area

3. NEW MARKET CABINS

3.1 The intention of the first resolution above was for Officers to contact several companies, who supply cabins, to seek quotes and advise on the most suitable layout within our market. Several companies who manufacture module buildings were contacted for a price along with advice on appropriate layouts and design however the one company who responded confirmed that they could not assist with layout and design, they would purely provide module buildings to order.

3.2 Given the above feedback contact was made with Quarterbridge Market Development were approached as they specialise in market improvements and developments. Following an initial discussion around the proposals to replace the temporary stalls they have suggested that such a scheme better fit with their Market Curators market consultancy company who specialise in promoting and improving markets. They would consider the existing layout and market stalls to identify improvements for shopper attraction, flow and weather protection. They would identify the best conceptual layout and create concepts for market cabins which can be moved forward to production. This level of advice would be considered beneficial for Clitheroe Market given the unique nature of the current market set up and issues in respect of ensuring weather resilience and ensuring that any changes enhance the existing offer and appearance of the Market.

3.3 If Members were minded to seek external advice from such a company (quotes would need to be obtained) the company would:

- Engage with market management, traders and undertake public survey to build a picture of current use, needs and concerns.
- Undertake a site visit to talk to traders about the market layout and the stalls, identifying their needs and concerns
- Undertake a social media campaign to gather views from the public.
- Define key ambitions and goals for the market, translating these into tangible spatial requirements.
- Identify and illustrate strategic options for improvements to the market; this will include the preparation of sketch plans and corresponding area schedules.
- Refine the option selection, respond to stakeholder feedback and amplify distinctive features
- Prepare a masterplan of the wider area to demonstrate how the proposed market improvements work with the wider area of the town
- Define the public realm and landscape opportunity
- Comment on and illustrate seasonal change and an annual activity schedule to maximise the attractiveness of the market.

3.4 As Members are aware the Market Liaison Group has been re-established between officers and traders. The next meeting is 9th June. Following the previous meeting one of the traders has made some suggestions in terms of market improvements/ suggestions as follows:

- The idea of an area for pop-up stalls might be extremely successful, but it has not been tried, nor proven yet.
- Have concerns about the proposal to remove the stalls from the outer bullring. There are a number of traders who attend regularly on Tuesday and Saturday; unless some alternative arrangement is provided it is highly likely many of these traders will cease attending.
- One of the key concerns raised at the meeting was the impact weather has on both Traders and customers; specifically wind and rain.
- The current rubbish collection arrangements need to be altered so adequate bins, (of a suitable quality), are provided and they be emptied more regularly.
- Rather than dispose of the fixed stalls we would suggest they be relocated across the Market as is shown in appendix A; doing so should partially address this issue, and not reduce the number of stalls available to casual traders.
- At the same time the fixed stalls should be spruced up, to make them more weather resistant and visually more appealing: -
 - Board up the front and sides, below counter level. Doing so would reduce some of the wind gusts and provide casual stallholders with somewhere to safely store items during the day.
 - Replace the serving tops to match the fronts and side panels.
 - Fix some form of permanent canopy at the front and sides; doing will help reduce the impact of both wind and rain. (These would only be required if better overall cover for the Market is not installed.)
 - Provide detachable, clear heavy duty plastic sheeting for the stallholders to affix to the sides of these stalls during wet and windy conditions.
 - Clean and paint the roofs.
 - Replace the guttering with ones which are more durable.
 - Improve the quality and brightness of the lighting.
- The wind mainly comes from the direction of the Castle. Densely planting the area opposite the Quaker house with both trees and substantial bushes would provide a significant wind break.
- Erect a central Stall/fixed canopy around the centre lamppost. A central stall/canopy could fulfil several useful functions: -
 - It could be used to support market events and attractions, eg act as Santa Claus's grotto in December.
 - act as centre for music/venue performances during the various festivals the town features each year, especially the Mod Weekender, and The Jazz & Blues Festival. Doing so would ensure the Market is actively involved in town wide events, which would attract a lot of visitors onto The Market.
- Update and improve signage around the town.
- We believe there are a number of enhancements the Market would benefit from:-
 - The paving is a disgrace;
 - The cobbled areas are unsightly, difficult to walk on and seem to attract and retain lots of debris, especially the area around the central lamp post. We believe the cobbles should be removed and decent quality flagging fitted throughout; starting initially with the central area.
 - In between the rows of fixed stall provide a different type of flooring. Standing on cold, hard flagging during the winter months is unlikely to entice casual traders to brave the winter elements. A strip of such as the material made from shredded tyres, (now used widely on roads, walkways and sports surfaces), should be softer and warmer to stand on.

- Better CCTV coverage.
- Better and more prompt maintenance.
- Apply and enforce a rule that all dogs must be kept on short leads, and fines will be applied for dog mess and fouling of traders stock/fittings.

- Advertising and promotions.
- Market award(s)
- Sponsorship.
- Budgeting- commit to positively investing a significant proportion of the annual rents back into the Market - we would suggest this figure should be at least 30%.

4. WAY FORWARD

4.1 From the comments received from one of the traders it appears that a more strategic solution for market improvements would be preferred. Seeking advice from a company who specialise in market improvements could be the way forward in this regard and enable wider discussions with all relevant stakeholders.

4.2 The suggestions put forward would then be brought back to Members, along with the associated delivery costs, for approval.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

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

- Resources – quotes will need to be sought from companies who specialise in markets. It should be noted that this is a specialised area of expertise which may bring about challenges in respect of obtaining a suitable number of quotes.

There is £78,600 remaining within the market budget. Whilst the procurement of consultancy advice in respect of the market is not strictly a capital scheme the proposals put forward will likely result in further capital schemes which this budget is set aside to support.

- 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:

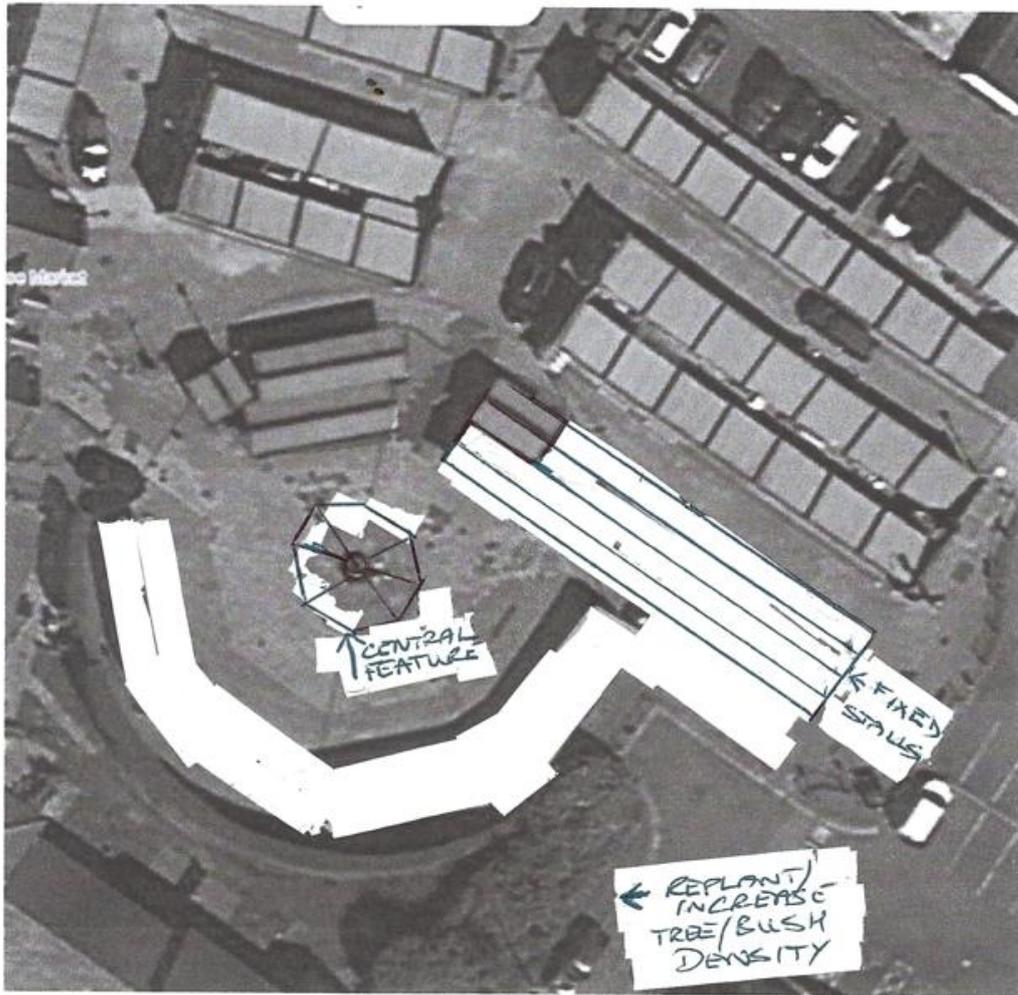
7.1.1 Officer's seeking quotes from companies who specialise in improving and developing markets to establish a strategic way forward for enhancing Clitheroe Market.

7.1.2 Authorise Officers to procure the services of the cheapest quote (or the one which is the most economically advantageous) up to a value of £20,000.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. Hopkins', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

NICOLA HOPKINS
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING

Appendix 2: Initial suggested changes





NOTE – Coverings should be in plain Perspex or similar durable, transparent material.

