

MAIN REPORT  
MARKETS REVIEW GROUP

FINAL REPORT

**Introduction**

1. This is the final report of the Markets Review Group, established by the Place Scrutiny Committee to ensure promotion of Darlington as a vibrant Market Town.

**Background Information**

2. At a meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee held on 6 September 2012 it was agreed to establish a Markets Review Group although the initial meeting of that Group did not take place until 24 May 2013.
3. A wide number of issues have been considered and discussed at the meetings and these are referred to in the notes attached (**Appendix 1**). This report describes the outcome of the Review Group, it summarises the work undertaken, the findings from the processes and the subsequent recommendations.
4. A draft Terms of Reference (**Appendix 2**) in relation to this piece of work was developed and approved by Place Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the Place Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the Review.
5. A wide number of issues were discussed and considered at the meetings and several Councillors spoke to Indoor Market Stallholders individually in order to gain their views.
6. Markets Stallholders were represented at a meeting held on 23 April by Robin Blair, representing the Indoor Market Traders, Angela Smedley, representing the Outdoor Market Traders and Samantha and Alex Blackham representing Darlington Sunday People's Market.

**Membership of the Review Group**

7. All Members of Place Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the Review and the following Members attended meetings :-

Councillor Carson;  
Councillor Cossins;  
Councillor Donoghue;  
Councillor Harman;  
Councillor Lawton;  
Councillor Long;  
Councillor E.A. Richmond;

Councillor Wright

The Group was led by Councillor Long.

### **Acknowledgements**

8. The Review Group acknowledges the support and assistance provided in the course of their investigations and would like to place on record its thanks to the following :-

Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services;  
Mike Crawshaw, Head of Culture;  
Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning;  
Robin Blair, Indoor Market Traders;  
Angela Smedley, Outdoor Market Traders;  
Samantha and Alex Blackham, Darlington Sunday People's Market; and  
Karen Graves, Democratic Officer

### **Methods of Investigation**

9. The Review Group met on five occasions between May 2013 and July 2014, and the notes containing the discussions held at those meetings are attached (**Appendix 1**). Two Members of the Group also spoke to individual stall holders within the Indoor Market Hall.

### **Findings**

10. The initial findings of the Review Group indicate that :
- (a) The Market Hall is important to the Heritage of Darlington and its residents and must not be allowed to decline;
  - (b) The fabric of all the buildings must be protected and maintained and, if possible, renovated;
  - (c) The Covered Market must be radically and bravely re-examined; imaginative solutions must be assessed professionally; and a proposed stage investment programme is a priority as funds allow;
  - (d) Partnerships, not least those with the traders, must be encouraged;
  - (e) Short-term actions must be carried out as evidence of the Council's commitment to the future of the Markets; and
  - (f) The Clock Tower and the Old Town Hall ('The Book Ends') are important to the Heritage of Darlington and its residents and must not be allowed to decline.

## Recommendations

That it be recommended to the Place Scrutiny Committee that Cabinet be requested to note the following :-

- (i) that a Statement of Commitment to the retention and maintenance of the buildings be developed and approved;
- (ii) that Cabinet be requested to prioritise the capital bid for the refurbishment of the Covered Market and that the funding be released when available to enable the essential works to be undertaken within the near future;
- (iii) that Members await the options appraisal for the future design of the building, however, its continued use as a food hall is a key anchor and that any future use should also be linked with the current economic vision for Darlington, including integration into the night-time economy;
- (iv) that the position in relation to the current location of the outdoor market be noted and monitored as Town Centre developments progress;
- (v) that the Officers develop and continue to explore the use of social media to promote the market and encourage shoppers;
- (vi) that the Officers be requested to work with the existing traders to look into and publicise signage to identify local car parks and collection points for the ease of shoppers; and
- (vii) That the Officers continue to work with the Heritage Lottery Fund to identify any possible grant options for the restoration of the Old Town Hall and the Clock Tower.

## Markets Review Group

**MARKETS REVIEW GROUP****24th May, 2013****PRESENT** – Councillors Cossins, Harman, Long (in the Chair) Richmond and Wright.**APOLOGIES** –**OFFICERS** – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Tim Crawshaw, Principal Officer, Mike Crawshaw, Cultural Services Manager and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.**Purpose of the Meeting** – To draft the Terms of Reference for the newly established Markets Review Group**Points Discussed and Considered -**

- It was suggested that the Group needed to decide if it was to look at the Covered market or a broader market across the town. It was suggested that the key focus was the indoor market and that the outdoor market would benefit from any indoor market works.
- The Group were of the opinion that it should focus any work on both the outdoor and indoor market as the markets were an important part of the social and economic aspect of Darlington and a policy was needed to promote both.
- Particular reference was made to the need to investigate the functions of the whole of the markets on offer, how to make the best use of the space and present the markets as the historical heritage of the town.
- The Group were also keen to have the content of the markets, the need to raise awareness and sense of ownership as key elements of the Review.
- The Chair suggested that it would be nice to promote local tourism and persuade residents to learn of their own area;
- The Group were advised that part of the brief for Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was to expand and meet a new customer focus and customer base. It was also stated that a consultation and engagement exercise would be undertaken to ascertain what residents of Darlington would like as the end product of the markets following restoration of the Indoor Market building.
- With regard to the Indoor Market the Group were informed that there was a lot known about the building but there was a need to know what people wanted from it, and the Old Town Hall, and how to attract them to it. The Council needed to know what people wanted from the Market, i.e. the range of products available (food, craft), the layout of the market (bought/sold products in the middle and food outlets around the edge), and the relationship of the clock to the Indoor Market Building;

- With regard to the Outdoor Markets there was a need to know who required the space; was the area used/filled enough; and would community involvement encourage new traders/customers;
- The consultation exercise would commence mid-June following the 150th Celebrations with a feedback session to be held during August 2013;
- It was proposed to have a market stall showing the past and present of the market and requesting the public's views on what they would want from a market in the future. It was also suggested that Trader Champions be appointed to gather 'your views' on 'your market'. The Group were advised that a web page containing a questionnaire would be provided as well as advertising posters;
- Following a question the Group were advised that very few traders advertise on the internet although the Covered Market and Sunday People's Market did have a Facebook page;
- It was suggested that if people, including school children, were invited to the market they would potentially become a regular user;
- It was stated that prior to the consultation exercise the Traders would be invited to a pre-consultation session to make them aware of the Council's plans;
- A member stated that Covent Garden was a good model to follow as it had buskers, food and retail however if the focus was on conversation and the history of the market HLF funding could be available;
- Group were advised that there were many emerging concepts including the need to animate the market experience, have opportunities for people to eat, drink and be entertained rather than be just a traders market;
- Traders would be regulated through a Letting Policy and units would be uniform to alleviate a mish-mash of units;
- Group were advised that some traders could feel vulnerable and no longer required in the market and it was stressed that every effort would be made to relocate any trader in alternative premises;
- It was stated that traders closed too early and missed valuable trade however it was explained that traders need to cover their costs and if there was no business available they would close for the day;
- It was suggested that fold-away stalls could be used by traders during the day and the space used for entertainment purposes on an evening although it was recognised that fixed assets such as water would need to be taken into consideration for some stallholders;
- Group were also keen to have 'zones' of traders i.e. flower stalls in one area and meat products in another;

- It was stated that Darlington had many markets and they would all need advertising, Sunday Market, Flea Market, Outdoor Markets and Indoor Market to name a few;
- It was suggested that the use of the Market Square for holding of markets would needed to be tackled as part of this process as there were mixed views on its use;
- The Indoor Markets used to be an open building and it was indicated that both sides could be glazed so that the public could see right through and connect the outdoor and indoor markets;
- Following a question the Group were advised that the Old Town Hall was currently used as office space;
- It was stated that Officers proposed to apply for HLF at the end of the year in collaboration with the application for the Civic Theatre. At this moment future timescales were uncertain although it was highlighted that all traders have licences, tenancies and rights.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the next meeting of this Review Group be held once the engagement/consultation exercise has been completed.

(b) The Quad of Aims be amended to include the suggestions made at this meeting.

## MARKETS REVIEW GROUP

21 November, 2013

**PRESENT** – Councillors Carson, Cossins, Harman, Lawton, Long (in the Chair) and EA Richmond.

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Lewis.

**OFFICERS** – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

**Purpose of the Meeting** – To advise the Review Group of the current position in relation to the Markets and Indoor Market Building.

### Points Discussed and Considered -

- The Assistant Director advised the Group that whilst Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was keen on the Civic Theatre proposal there was less enthusiasm for the Markets. It was however stated that there was some interest in the Town Clock and the Old Town Hall and there could possibly be an opportunity for regional funding from HLF.
- It was stated that the HLF bid for the Civic Theatre had now been submitted and that the priority for Officers was now the Arts Council bid for the Ambulance Station.
- With regard to the Indoor Market the Group were advised that work on a phased approach would be investigated in January.
- The consultation had been stopped for the time being as Officers wanted to focus on what was on offer in the market with regard to the types of stalls and requirements of the public.
- Leeds Market, a large Victorian Market building, was quoted as an example of a good market layout for Darlington to consider for the future. Group were also advised that Leeds had £12m to spend to regenerate the Market.
- It was suggested that the regional HLF could be approached to gain funding for the Clock Tower and then again for the Old Town Hall. With regard to the Old Town Hall it was proposed that a good tenant be sought who would work with the Council to develop and enhance the building.
- Following a question the Group were advised that a trust model had been investigated two years ago but that would incur a financial cost due to VAT obligations. With regard to private sector management/purchase, the view of the Council's Estates Department was that this would be difficult in the current economic climate.
- The priority was to preserve the Market and Members were keen to take a proactive role in finding a solution. Although there is not a Friends of the Market

Group a member suggested that the Historical Society may be interested.

- Comment was passed that in these economic times the market should flourish and with the relocation of Mowden Hall staff to the town centre it was hoped that with the mix of right stalls the market would flourish.
- It was suggested that Darlington College could be approached to involve students in the market revival. Another suggestion was the launch of 'pop up' markets to generate trade. Officers also suggested that there was a need to understand what a modern market was and referred to Covent Garden as an excellent example.
- A Member volunteered to do some research on markets and report back to the Group.
- It was reported that Officers were currently undertaking a retail study and could possibly look at the role of markets.
- The Chair referred to the Markets Charter which stated that Darlington has the legal right to control other markets (which include table top sales, car boot sales and fairs) to a distance of 6 and 2/3 miles from its markets.
- Members requested that to fully understand the situation a tour of the Town Clock, Old Town Hall and basement area could be undertaken.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the next meeting of this Review Group be held in February on a date to be agreed in consultation with the Chair and Officers.

(b) That ideas be formalised and reported back to a future meeting of this Review Group.

(c) That a tour of the Old Town Hall, Town Clock and basement area of the Markets be arranged in the New Year.



**Markets Task and Finish Review Group.**  
**4 February 2014**

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Site Visit to Old Town Hall, Covered Market and Clock Tower

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**PRESENT** - Councillors Long, Cossins, Carson, L. Hughes, Harman and Grundy.

**Officers** - Mike Crawshaw, Head of Culture, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning and Albert Nowicki, Senior Markets Officer.

**Aims** - To gain an understanding of the heritage, architecture, layout, use and potential of the premises. To appreciate Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) analysis - as covered market with the 'bookends' of two important 'heritage' buildings. (the clock tower is listed)

1. A brief look at the outside, market place elevation, the canopy, architectural detail.
2. Noted the owl as pigeon deterrent. External sign indicating WC – may need amendment now that there is no public convenience. (Fire Station once in the basement of the building with tracks to help the appliance in and out. Fruiterers once under the canopy. The canopy was not a feature of the original building.)
3. Imposing entrance up the steps into the Old Town Hall, immediate change of impression given by the partition into two separate doors, one into the Market Hall via 'The Diner' and one into the staircase leading to offices (not open to the public). Room at the bottom of the stairs once used by Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) later by Streetscene staff.
4. Generously proportioned staircase leading to first floor, 'balcony room' with arch detail, frieze, coving, picture rail, ceiling roses etc. as original (?). Adjoining office also with similar features, pleasantly lit with big windows.
5. Issues raised – these are very attractive rooms – possible commercial use, but preferably public use – necessity to have access to the balcony, however rarely, for civic and other events - may be an issue. Suitable for hire as meeting rooms, conference facility potential arts/cultural use? Community restoration programme?
6. Staircase to second floor behind a partition which closes off an archway, leading to the attic floor. Though with plenty of headroom, divided into several spaces used mainly for storage. Obvious need for fire escape etc.; and difficult access.
7. Issues raised - very expensive to convert, lift impractical? Perhaps more useful if completely stripped out and used as one large space, with one use/user making supervision and safety easier. Dance studio?
8. Basement area. Toilets for market traders' use. Also a staff room, attractive vaulted brick ceiling (as the entire basement) but windowless, (style 'like

stepping back into 40's). Appreciated and used by market trader staff.

9. Market Manager's office, small but functional, used on two days a week for about three hours. A cash window for receiving rents. Electrical equipment base.
10. Issues raised, why cash? Rent paid by direct debit or cheque not so favoured as cash payment – either by traders or by Darlington Borough Council. Improved collection rates by cash payment, any problems in paying immediately obvious and our staff can speak directly and promptly to traders in difficulty and come to some arrangement i.e. mutual benefit.
11. 'Age debt' still an issue but being resolved and arrears being paid. Different ethos in recent past paying dividends.
12. Basement cellar storage. System explained. Each stall has attendant storage space rented at £6 per square foot per annum. Trader responsible for use of the space. Some rooms used as preparation rooms e.g. by butchers. Comment: passage ways etc. well managed and tidy – safety issue. Noted: the electricity substation for the Town Centre is incorporated into the market basement. Noted also the base of the clock tower with corbelled footings. Two lifts to market floor, one specifically for meat.
13. Main market floor. Refuse and recycling immediately off to the side near the café. Could this be re-sited? General appearance of the market discussed.
14. Issues raised. Sight lines along the aisles - could be improved by control of displays, including those above eye level. Most valued features of the market hall (and its 'unique selling point') are the glazed roof, the lanterns, the pillared structure and the original flagstones and all could be more emphasised. Some of the stalls have elaborate chalet style designs which detract from this.
15. General issues. There are 70 stalls - some could be grouped differently, more consistently by type (or do people relish a mismatch approach?) Catering perhaps needs to be re-thought. Possible introduction of foods of different cultures? Specialist foods? Improvements could be made in the short term by a combination of management initiatives and small scale investment but external grant aid essential if anything radical.
16. We were able to talk to Mr Blair briefly who stated he would welcome any improvements.
17. We also noted the attractive 'knocked through design' of the florists' shop and the Waterhouse Café which enables a view from High Row into the interior of the Market.
18. A visit to the clock tower was undertaken.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Officers for a very interesting and informative visit of the Market and Clock Tower.

Councillor D. Long,  
Markets Task and Finish Review Group (4 February 2014)

## MARKETS REVIEW GROUP

13 March 2014

**PRESENT** – Councillors Carson, Cossins, Long (in the Chair) and EA Richmond.

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Grundy, Harman and Lawton.

**OFFICERS** – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Mike Crawshaw, Head of Culture and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

**Purpose of the Meeting** – To advise the Review Group of the findings of the site visit held on 4 February and to consider views of the Traders gathered by Councillors Long and Cossins.

### **Points Discussed and Considered -**

- The Chair advised that she had, with Councillor Cossins, addressed the stallholders and listened to their views and concerns surrounding the Indoor Market. The Head of Culture advised the Group that the Traders had since made positive comments and valued the visit;
- The aims of the site visit were to gain an understanding of the heritage, architecture, layout, use and potential of the premises. To appreciate Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) analysis, as covered market with the 'bookends' of two important 'heritage' buildings – the clock tower is listed;
- Several comments had been made from traders regarding removal of the external WC sign as there were no longer any public conveniences;
- Councillors had been impressed with the detail of the building including tracks to assist the fire appliance out of the basement when used as the fire station, the imposing entrance steps to the Old Town Hall, generously proportioned staircase leading to the 'balcony room' with arch detail, frieze, coving, picture rail and ceiling roses;
- The issues raised included the immediate change of impression at the top of the entrance steps where a partition presented two entrances, one to the Market Hall and one to offices, possible commercial use of the upper rooms with access to the balcony area for civic events, hiring of the rooms as meeting rooms or a conference facility with potential arts and cultural use. It was stated that there was restricted space which could be opened up and utilised, however access was difficult and there was no fire escape route. A suggestion was that the room could be adapted as one large area and a possible use could be a dance studio;
- There were access issues, via the clock tower, with the rooms above Timpsons which were currently utilised by Timpsons as a Training Room. Members agreed that the Clock Tower was an underused fabulous asset with access issues Group were advised that there was a possibility of HLF funding for the two 'book ends' of the Market Hall but not the Hall itself;

- The clock tower was very interesting, a 'hidden gem' although it was very dirty, dusty and currently locked. Members were advised that investment was needed prior to any further usage, DDA involvement was required in relation to access issues and HLF funding could possibly aid any renovation;
- Members noted that the Basement are contained toilet facilities and a windowless staff room area which was appreciated and used by market staff;
- With regard to the Basement Cellar Storage Group were advised that each stall holder rents storage space for which they were responsible. Some of the area was used for food preparation and it was accepted that this was not ideal. There were two lifts to the market floor one of which was specifically used for meat transportation. The passageways were well managed and tidy and it was also noted that the electricity substation for the Town Centre was incorporated into the basement;
- Discussion ensued around ventilation of the Market Hall and surrounding areas to alleviate any unpleasant cooking or food smells circulating and lingering. It was again stressed that nothing could be done in the interim until future plans were known for the Market Hall although it was suggested that fresh bread and coffee smells would be welcoming and encourage foot fall in the Hall;
- The Group were keen to relocate the refuse and recycling area away from the café as it was felt this was not the correct location for waste;
- Following a question by a Member the Group were advised that the cast-iron columns were last inspected several years ago and that the last structural survey of the Hall had taken place in 2008. Another inspection of the columns would be organised;
- In relation to the Stalls themselves Members considered that sight lines along the aisles could be improved by the control of displays including those above eye level and were advised that a sub-contractor has recently looked at the potential to replacing existing stalls with smaller de-mountable stalls with a view to reducing sight lines and controlling displays; and
- Traders currently rent the space and infrastructure but have the flexibility to do what they want within that pitch, it was an aspiration to have boundaries and unity within the Hall although it was accepted that displays would differ due to the goods on sale.

The Review Group then discussed the following issues highlighted by the traders when visited by Councillors Long and Cossins.

- Lack of parking was an issue for many traders especially as goods purchased could be heavy i.e. meat, fruit and vegetables. Some traders have an appointment time with customers who telephone their order and collect at a given time at the back stairs. Half an hour parking was not considered enough time to do market shopping and it was felt that the parking enforcement staff were a little too 'enthusiastic';

- The suggestion of 10 minutes free parking for market customers would be raised with relevant staff. Concerns were expressed that market traders themselves were taking up too many car parking spaces and it was suggested that the Parking Enforcement Co-ordinator be contacted for clarification on the use of the spaces available;
- One suggestion from a Stallholder was the provision of a 'Save Our Market' donation box either on each individual stall or at the exits to the Market Hall but it was felt that, as the Traders give to BID, they should liaise with them once the aspirations for the Market were known. Some traders pointed out that the recent BID Television Advert made no reference to the market or independent traders;
- Other suggestions included teaching this history of the Market to local school children, busking in the Market Hall, advertising of the Market on roundabouts in the Town, provision of more stalls, healthy competition between traders, provision of lightweight stalls, provision of a pavement café and the need to place the Outdoor Market outside the Market Hall as the Markets complemented one another.
- Some traders thought that the Market Hall would benefit from re-painting but understood that finance was a major factor;
- Reference was made to the eight week National Market Campaign starting 2 April to promote local Markets and the use of social media to support and endorse markets and the goods offered;
- Particulars were provided of the Have Your Say on Darlington Town Centre event scheduled for 27 March from 5pm to 8pm organised to seek the views of businesses and residents on the future of Darlington's Town Centre; and
- Members were keen to invite Traders to the next meeting of the Group in order to seek their views on the regeneration and development of the Market.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That steps be taken to remove the wc sign outside the Market Hall.

(b) That any future refurbishment includes the provision of a recreation room for Traders.

(c) That arrangements be made for an inspection of the cast-iron columns in the Market Hall.

(d) That the parking issues raised be passed to the Parking Enforcement Co-ordinator.

(e) That consideration be given to placing the Outdoor Market Stalls outside the Market Hall.

(f) That the Market Traders be invited to the next meeting of this Review Group on a date to be agreed in consultation with the Chair and Officers.

## MARKETS REVIEW GROUP

23 April 2014

**PRESENT** – Councillors Cossins, Harman, Lawton, Long (in the Chair) and EA Richmond.

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Carson and L Hughes

**OFFICERS** – Steve Petch, Place Strategy Manager, Mike Crawshaw, Head of Culture, Albert Nowicki, Senior Markets Officer and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

**Also in attendance** – Robin Blair, representing the Indoor Market Traders, Angela Smedley, representing the Outdoor Market Traders and Samantha and Alex Blackham representing Darlington Sunday People's Market.

**Purpose of the Meeting** – The meeting has been arranged for Members of the Group to hear and consider the views of Indoor, Outdoor and Sunday Market Traders

### **Points Discussed and Considered -**

- The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and, following introductions and an explanation of the role of Place Scrutiny Committee, stated that the meeting had been convened in order for Members and Traders to have a full and frank exchange of views in relation to Darlington's Markets. She further advised that it was hoped that the discussions would put forward suggestions on how best to proceed with the Markets on a partnership basis and the role of Councillors and staff within that process.
- The Cultural Manager began by highlighting that the general consensus was that a refurbishment of the Darlington Covered Market was essential to take the retail offer forward. The Council (DBC) was aware of the conditions for both Indoor and Outdoor traders, and the effects of on-line shopping and retail parks to Markets Traders.
- It was stated that the Indoor Markets was last refurbished in 1979 and was now considered out of date, with mechanical, electrical and structural refurbishments being required. Cosmetically, the Indoor Market was also in poor condition. It was important to work with Partners to develop the Markets in order to regenerate Darlington Town Centre.
- The Retail offer in most Town Centre's is similar, however, Darlington Markets are what makes our Town Centre distinct. Our 150 year old Covered Market is special and should be the cornerstone of Darlington's retail offer making the Town a destination for day visitors from across the Tees Valley, North Yorkshire, South Durham and beyond. The Cultural Manager advised that a business case was required to be developed but in the current economic climate it was not straight forward.
- It was stressed that although the Markets Heritage had not been coveted and celebrated there is now a growing realisation that the Covered Market can play a pivotal role in the on-going regeneration of Darlington Town centre. All Outdoor

Markets were in different stages, the Sunday Markets were a different type of trader, and it was a niche market which animated the Town Centre. It was accepted that the Saturday and Monday Markets had been under-valued by DBC and Darlington although the key was to look forward; a thriving Market Town needed a thriving Market. The Cultural Manager was convinced that this could happen with a joint effort.

- Mr Blackham supported the Cultural Manager and in doing so stated that Darlington's Pedestrian Heart could have been extended to utilise the area in front of Waterstones which would have been ideal for Traders.
- Following a question by a Member the Outdoor Traders advised that they preferred the current location of the Market as opposed to outside the Indoor Market Hall, although they stressed that it was confusing for customers when the Market was moved around the Town Centre. It was also highlighted that it should be amongst the pedestrian heart to get the best footfall from circulating customers with Northgate being the preferred location.
- Traders were concerned that High Row was not the best place for Stalls as it was high and during windy conditions was not safe.
- The Senior Markets Officer advised that the Market Square was not the best location as there was less footfall in that area, people no longer came to the Town Hall building to pay rent or Council Tax and business would be lost. The Indoor Market was hidden from view of customers when the Outdoor Market was on West Row hence its move to High Row and Northgate/Prospect Place. There was a much larger footfall and the Traders were a lot happier. It was also suggested that on Market Days, Road Closures could be put in place to buses at Priestgate and Tubwell Row as this increased footfall and helped Traders
- Following a question regarding the Markets complementing each other, Mr Blair, representing the Indoor Market Traders advised the Group that the Indoor Market Hall was not welcoming and had no visual impact or attraction to encourage people into the Market Hall. He stated that if the Market Hall was refurbished footfall would increase as people would be curious to see the changes and be encouraged to shop in the Market. The DfE were coming to the Town Centre and they need to be attracted to the Indoor Market shopping experience. Concerns were expressed that people did not shop in the Indoor Market as it was unattractive and had poor visual displays. It needed to be more open, cleaner and more modern stalls provided with no roofs on them. The Plinths the stalls stood on also needed to be removed and a level playing field provided for all. Surmountable stalls could be removed but the existing plinths restricted how the space could be utilised, it was not conducive for entertainment or café use.
- The Cultural Manager responded that he agreed with most of these principles and felt strongly that the wonderful heritage features both externally and internally were not currently exploited. This must be addressed during any restoration programme. The Group were informed that Leeds 1904 Covered Market was an excellent example of a Heritage Market.

- The Outdoor Traders and the Peoples Sunday Market Traders advised that some customers were not aware that some Traders were on West Row and some on Northgate, it gave the impression of a split market, however the Group were advised that all Traders were happy to move to Prospect Place whilst the Freedom of the Borough Parade took place on Saturday, 26 May. Feedback from the Traders on the relocation was encouraged by the Senior Markets Officer.
- Mr Blair commented that the pedestrianised ramped area from High Row to West Row was facing the wrong way and footfall naturally carried on away from the Market Hall. He also commented that the bus needed to be away from Tubwell Row, however, was advised that during consultations the public had stressed that the buses remained in the Town Centre.
- A Member of the Group suggested that more adequate signage and visuals was required to encourage shoppers to the Market Hall, further comments were that the signage should be on all access roads to Darlington and not just in the Town Centre and stress that Darlington had a vibrant Victorian Market.
- The Group were all unanimous in the view that customers needed to see across the Indoor Market Hall, not have views obscured by stalls with canopies and all stalls should be colourful, vibrant and welcoming. It was further suggested that an el-fresco bar with a liquor licence would be a pleasing addition.
- Mr Blair commented that he could not do justice to his stall's display – the stalls needed to be ultra-modern and user-friendly, he also stated that he had 1,000's of photographs of Darlington Market Hall both old and new.
- Mrs Blackham proposed banners advertising the Darlington Markets with slogans such as 'shop local' and 'support your market' be placed on the vacant banner posts normally utilised for Christmas marketing, however, the Cultural Manager advised that this was already in hand and the banners would be in position shortly. It was stressed that Saturday and Monday Markets should also be advertised.
- Further proposals included moving the existing doors to the front of the building and replacing with a lighter material thereby lighting up the whole of the Market Hall and making it more welcoming; entering the Indoor Market through the shops on West Row and opening the back up so that customers got the impact of the Markets colours, vibrancy and smells immediately.
- It was commented that £750k had recently been spent on the new Customer Services Centre at the Town Hall to give 'a better experience to customers' and 'a better experience' was what Traders wanted for their customers however the Group were reminded that capital investment of several million pounds would be needed to refurbish the Indoor Market Hall.
- The Group were also informed that the Indoor Market had been self-ruling, self-governing and self-supporting but it now needed help, traders could go out of business; canopies needed to be removed, they attracted dust, couldn't be kept clean and there was no maintenance budget for the Market Hall. Current leases state that the Hall would be painted every five years – it was last done 25 years



ago, the traders would like to see the doors moved for a better visual attraction for customers. When money ran out the Markets suffered.

- The Town Clock, Market Hall and Old Town Hall were all listed buildings.
- With regard to surmountable stalls, Group were advised that stalls come in modules, basic stalls were provided and customised by individual traders; any new stall would be welcomed by Traders as this would generate trade. Butchers would need to replace all refrigeration which could be very costly.
- The Senior Markets Officer stressed that the infrastructure of the building required investment prior to any changes to the layout of the Market Hall; the roof needed to be looked at as it currently leaked and could ruin any new stalls and displays.
- Regulation of temperature in the Market Hall was also vital, it could be 100 degrees in the Summer and -10 degrees in the Winter, it was suggested that louvers could be installed on warmer days to alleviate excessive high temperatures.
- The group all agreed that the Market Hall was in need of significant investment, the Street Scene offices within the Old Town Hall Building have dirty windows and curtains which gave a bad impression of a building selling food stuffs.
- Mr Blackham stressed that pride needed to be taken in the building, clean it up, remove litter and kill weeds, show that DBC cares – make it welcoming and inviting.
- The Cultural Manager advised that a vision, coupled with a route map detailing what was needed and how it could be achieved, needed to be developed; this could be done by DBC in consultation with Traders and residents.
- Mr Blair recognised that there were pressures on DBC with staff redundancies and the economic climate but suggested that a Working Group be established to keep the Market Hall looking nice and tidy, public involvement should be encouraged and an artist's impression provided of the vision. He also suggested that the Consultants' report prepared in 2006 be utilised as it had cost £35k and had many valid suggestions.
- The Senior Markets Officer highlighted the importance of involving the Darlington Retail Stallholders Association in any future meetings and negotiations as they had many ideas for the Market Hall.
- Mr Blair also suggested that companies that produced stalls be requested to do the vision for Darlington, they would possibly be willing to produce the vision for nothing in the hope of gaining a contract for provision of stalls. The Market Hall had to be modernised with the Victorian image being protected. All markets complemented, and were important to, each other
- The Chair concluded by saying that the meeting had been excellent with plenty of debate and discussion; a meeting will be held with relevant Officers to discuss long, medium and short-term progress, with the challenge being to fight and

make the case to Cabinet and relevant funding being made available.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the next meeting of this Review Group be held on a date to be agreed in consultation with the Chair and Officers.

(b) That Darlington's Markets are fundamental to the on-going regeneration of the Town Centre and should be central to the Town's retail offer.

(c) The Review Group recognises the need for a major capital investment/restoration programme for Darlington's Covered Market, acknowledging the building's central role within the Town Centre economy.

(d) The views of the Traders and Members of this Group be taken into consideration when formulating a vision for Darlington's Markets.

(e) That the provision of advertising banners be welcomed by the Traders.

(f) That steps be undertaken to clean up the Market Hall steps and Street Scene Offices to encourage customers.

## MARKETS REVIEW GROUP

14<sup>th</sup> July, 2014

**PRESENT** – Councillor Long (in the Chair); Councillors Carson, Cossins, Donoghue, Lawton and Wright.

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Baldwin, Harman and L. Hughes

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillor Wallis

**OFFICERS** – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Mike Crawshaw, Head of Culture and Steve Petch, Place Strategy Manager.

**Purpose of Meeting** – The Group met to consider the findings of the work undertaken by the Markets Review Group and to draw together the recommendations arising from that work.

### **FUTURE OF THE BUILDING**

**1. Key Point – The Market Hall is important to the Heritage of Darlington and its residents and must not be allowed to decline.**

The Group highlighted the need to maintain the buildings as they were fundamental to the on-going regeneration of the Town Centre and were central to the Town's retail offer.

**RECOMMENDATION** – That a Statement of Commitment to the retention and maintenance of the buildings be developed and approved.

### **FABRIC**

**2. key Point – The fabric of all the buildings in the complex must be protected and maintained and, if possible, renovated.**

Discussion ensued on the importance of the Covered Market to the heritage of Darlington and its residents, and that investment was essential. The Officers reported that to undertake the necessary repairs to the roof, together with the electrical and mechanical works, an investment of approximately £2 million would be required. Members felt that this investment should be a priority as a capital bid.

The Assistant Director, Community Services reported that a programme of works would be drawn up for Members to prioritise. There would be works which were essential and needed to be undertaken, however, some would be desirable and it would be up to Members to prioritise any works according to the funding available.

**RECOMMENDATION** – That Cabinet be requested to prioritise the capital bid for the refurbishment of the Covered Market and that the funding be released to enable the essential works to be undertaken within the near future.

## **FUTURE USE**

**3. Key Point – The Covered Market must be radically and bravely re-examined; imaginative solutions must be assessed professionally; and a proposed stage investment programme is a priority.**

Discussion ensued on the use of the Covered Market and on the need to have a radical re-think and an open-minded approach. It was, however, felt that its continued use as a food hall was a key anchor to any future use.

It was reported that the continued use as a trading area was fundamental however, it was essential that the use of the building was diversified, possibly to include its use into the night-time economy to get best value out of the use of the building and the need to look at its opening hours so its use could be multi-functional and collaborative.

Reference was also made to the Town Centre developments which were currently taking place and the importance of the Markets and the use of the building as part of the Town Centre regeneration.

**RECOMMENDATION** – That Members await the options and design appraisal for the future use of the building, however, its continued use as a food hall is a key anchor and that any future use should also be linked with the current economic vision for Darlington, including integration into the night-time economy.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

**4. Key Point – Partnerships, not least those with the traders, must be encouraged.**

Discussion ensued on the relationships between the Council and the existing traders and it was reported that Officers were building stronger relations with the traders and were working together with them to give them the correct conditions to increase trade and opportunities. The changes in the Town Centre provide an excellent opportunity for the continued and future use of the building.

Reference was also made to the meeting the Group had with the traders on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2014 and to the points which were raised and discussed at that meeting.

It was reported that, in relation to the outdoor market traders, they were currently happy with the location of the outdoor markets however, as Town Centre developments begin to take place, it was felt that they may wish to review their location.

**RECOMMENDATION** – (a) That the work being undertaken to improve relations with existing traders be noted and that future partnership opportunities, including those with Arts Organisations and licensed traders, be explored and encouraged.

(b) That the position in relation to the current location of the outdoor market be noted and monitored as Town Centre developments progress.

## **SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS**

### **5. Key Point – Short-term actions must be carried out as evidence of the Council’s commitment to the future of the Markets.**

The Group was keen to demonstrate the Council’s commitment to the future of the building and discussed some short-term actions which could possibly be implemented which included the possible relocation of the Street Scene mess room facility from the old Town Hall building in the medium-term; short-term improvements which could be made to improve the appearance of that facility to improve the impression from High Row; the use of social media and twitter to promote the Markets and what was available; and the introduction of signage to highlight nearby parking and loading and collection points.

Officers reported that the current use of the room by Street Scene Services was not the correct use for that building and alternative locations for that service would be looked at, however, major investment would be required to bring that room up to an acceptable standard and that any future investment in the building should be programmed and planned as long-term and not piecemeal.

It was also reported that Officers were currently in the process of developing a work programme of promotional work to encourage shoppers to use the indoor market and that there would, in future, be a greater use of social media. It was envisaged that the opening of a new deli in the West Row part of the building would demonstrate the Council’s future commitment to the building. It was reported that there had been lots of interest in the space however, as part of the future vision, it was felt that this use was the most appropriate.

**RECOMMENDATION** – (a) That the Officers develop and continue to explore the use of social media to promote the market and encourage shoppers.

(b) That the Officers be requested to work with the existing traders to look into and publicise signage to identify local car parks and collection points for the ease of shoppers.

(c) That, having listened to the views of the existing traders, the work undertaken, to date, and planned by Officers to improve the appearance of the building be noted and applauded.

### **6. Key Point – The Clock Tower and the Old Town Hall (‘The Book Ends’) are important to the Heritage of Darlington and its residents and must not be allowed to decline.**

Discussion ensued on the historic significance of the Clock Tower and the 'Book Ends', both of which were in a state of disrepair and were, at present, inaccessible to the public. It was reported that major investment and refurbishment would be required to make them of interest to any future potential commercial clients.

**RECOMMENDATION** – That the Officers work with the Heritage Lottery Fund to identify possible grant funding options for the restoration of both buildings.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Title:** Markets Review Group  
**Scrutiny:** PLACE

**Start Date:**

**End Date:**

<b>PURPOSE/AIM</b>	<b>RESOURCE</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To assess the potential of all spaces and places suitable for market activity. .</li> <li>2. To consider the promotion/marketing Strategy for the future of the Markets</li> <li>3. To consider the content and raises public awareness of the available markets.</li> </ol>	Assistant Director – Community Services Principal Officer Urban Design Democratic Services Market Traders and Others with a Commercial Interest Darlington Residents Project Team
<b>PROCESS</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To question Officers/Portfolio Holder on the future operation of the Town's markets</li> <li>2. To receive the Darlington Covered Market Conservation Statement</li> <li>3. To consider planning issues and all relevant data</li> </ol>	<p>To contribute to new Policy and initiatives under discussion for the promotion of Darlington as a vibrant market town.</p> <p>To contribute to evidence informing the Heritage Lottery Fund Board.</p>

**COUNCILLOR** .....

(TO BE SIGNED BY MEMBER OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REQUESTING TOPIC)

**CHAIR** .....

(TO BE SIGNED BY CHAIR OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)