
MARKETS REVIEW GROUP – FINAL REPORT

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Nick Wallis,
Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Paul Wildsmith,
Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To report the final findings of the Markets Review Group undertaken by Place Scrutiny Committee to ensure promotion of Darlington as a vibrant market town.

Summary

2. At a meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee held on 6 September 2012 it was agreed to establish a Markets Review Group. Terms of Reference were developed and approved by Place Scrutiny Committee and all Members of that Committee were invited to participate in the Review.
3. The Review Group has met on five occasions and a wide number of issues have been discussed and considered at those meetings.
4. At its meeting held on 3 September 2014 Place Scrutiny Committee approved the following recommendations for submission to Cabinet.
5. The report recommends support for the markets from within existing budgets and defers any decision on allocating capital funds for the market to the Medium Term Financial Plan review in November 2014.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Cabinet :-
 - (a) Receive the recommendations of Place Scrutiny Committee and request officers to continue to action the recommendations deliverable within existing resources.

- (b) Consider the allocation of funds to refurbish and support the Market Hall as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan in November 2014.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported :-
- (a) To enable Cabinet to consider Place Scrutiny recommendations.
 - (b) To enable consideration of allocating funding for the market against other Council priorities.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Karen Graves : Extension 2364

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific implications for Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	There are no specific implications for the health and well-being of residents.
Carbon Impact	There are no carbon impact implications in this report
Diversity	There are no specific diversity issues in this report.
Wards Affected	There are no specific Wards which are affected by this report.
Groups Affected	All groups
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This report does not constitute a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not considered an Urgent Decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Markets do have an impact on the place of Darlington contributing to the overall economy, environment and Perfectly Placed priority.
Efficiency	The outcome of this report does not impact on the Council efficiency agenda.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. The Markets Review Group was established to ensure promotion of Darlington as a vibrant market town.
9. 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.
10. Markets Stallholders representing the Indoor Market Traders, Outdoor Market Traders and Darlington Sunday People's Market were also given the opportunity to put forward their views.

Financial Implications

11. There are currently no financial resources identified within the Medium Term Financial Plan for the Indoor Market. As future options are further explored the financial implications will need to be considered by Cabinet.

Equalities Considerations

12. There is no impact on any groups with protected characteristics as a result of the recommendations in this report.

Director's Comments

13. The recommendations from Place Scrutiny reflect fully the direction of travel being undertaken by officers in consultation with Cabinet Members, however Members will appreciate the single largest hurdle is funding.
14. As highlighted in the report, external funding could be available for work on the Old Town Hall and the Clock Tower but this is not straight forward and could potentially involve ongoing increased revenue commitments and/or significant private sector match funding. It is likely that these two elements may have to be looked at separately to the main works relating to the Covered Market itself.
15. Moving on to the Market Hall there are maintenance and repair works required and these are substantial, currently there is no funding identified for such works. In addition there is a desire to upgrade the Market Hall to improve its attractiveness and position within the overall Town Centre Strategy. Clearly it would make sense to do both the maintenance and improvement works at the same time should funding be available; therefore we are looking a different packages of work to understand estimated costs to feed into the MTFP process for 2015/6 and beyond.
16. The challenge for Council in terms of funding the work is competition from other projects such as school places, Head of Steam Museum, refurbishment of the Crematorium and various potential economic development initiatives including the multi storey car park as well as the actual source of funding. Due to the significant

cuts in government grants and the ongoing need to reduce revenue expenditure by up to £25m there is little scope to fund such expenditure from revenue via prudential borrowing therefore only one source exists, capital receipts. The only potential capital receipts are from land disposal mainly for residential development which is currently subject to planning and therefore it is not possible at this stage to be certain about the levels that might be achieved.

17. Despite the challenge of funding, officers will continue to develop options and should funding become available then an appropriate engagement and consultation process will take place with existing traders, potential traders, other traders in the town and the public to ensure what is delivered best meets the needs of the town.
18. Any refurbishment will take time before it is delivered however much will still be done to assist both the covered and open market such as :-
 - (a) Utilising the arrival of 400 new DfE jobs to increase footfall into the town.
 - (b) The opening of the new Cinema complex again increasing footfall.
 - (c) Work with traders to increase the profile of the markets.
 - (d) Utilise events budgets and potentially other funds to bring the Town Centre to life giving the programme an economic growth focus to increase town centre footfall.