

ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 9 JANUARY 2025

DARLINGTON MARKET UPDATE

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Ian Williams, Chief Executive**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Scrutiny on the position with respect to the redevelopment of Darlington Indoor Market.

Summary

2. In 2017 the Council entered a lease/partnership agreement with Market Asset Management Ltd (MAM) for the management, refurbishment of the Victorian Indoor Market and the management and improvement of Darlington's outdoor market. It is important to note that this is NOT a management agreement but is based on a long-term lease with MAM and the Council.
3. Following a period of tenancy negotiations with various traders within the indoor market and the impact of Covid 19 restrictions the refurbishment of the market commenced in 2021. The first phase of development included the construction of six street food stalls, new toilets, enhanced entrance areas, a new bar facility, full mechanical and electrical improvements, the installation of a bio-mass boiler and repairs to the market roof. Phase two of the redevelopment commenced in August 2022 and includes additional new toilets improvements to the entrance area to the traditional trading area, general enhancement of the market and a new bar facility in the vaults area of the market.
4. Phase three of improvements commenced in 2023 and was completed in July 2024. The objective of this element of the improvement programme was to establish a long-term sustainable tenant mix to achieve a range of desired outcomes. The focus has been on a new tenant mix strategy, which seeks to achieve a consistent service and quality offer throughout the market, to develop 'customer hot spots', which specialises in promotions, introduces new offers, including speciality food, quality fashion accessories, art and crafts and modern services into the market to ensure that the public perceives change, to promote an environment of self-improvement and diversification of the existing and new traders and to create opportunities to promote the market via specialist offers and events.

Recommendation

- It is recommended that Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee acknowledges the report.

Reason

- The recommendation is to note the details of the improvements to Darlington Indoor Market.

Ian Williams
Chief Executive

Background Papers

No background papers were used in producing this report.

Mark Ladyman: Extension 6306

Council Plan	A clear Council Plan deliverable is to work with Market Asset Management to deliver improvements to the historic indoor market.
Addressing inequalities	There is no impact upon addressing inequalities
Tackling Climate Change	The Council has recognised the need to consider the carbon impact of the decisions it makes. The new bio-mass boiler reduces carbon impact.
Efficient and effective use of resources	Phase 1 of the redevelopment funded through loan facility with DBC. Phases 2 and 3 funded through IGF Grant.
Health and Wellbeing	There is no impact upon health and well-being.
S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no expected impact on Crime and Disorder in Darlington.
Wards Affected	Park East
Groups Affected	There will be no impact on any particular group of people.
Budget and Policy Framework	No impact
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

- Darlington's Victorian Indoor Market plays an important anchor for the town centre going forward. In terms of a unique proposition the market acts as an attractor for many people to come to the town and the street food hall, installed in 2021, has proven a popular venue for many residents and visitors. The first phase of development included the construction of six street food stalls, new toilets, enhanced entrance areas, a new bar facility, full mechanical and electrical improvements, the installation of a bio-mass boiler and repairs to the market roof. Phase two of the redevelopment commenced in August 2022 and includes

additional new toilets improvements to the entrance area to the traditional trading area, general enhancement of the market and a new bar facility in the vaults area of the market. These investments have resulted in 19 new posts being created within the catering and hospitality sector

8. The traditional trading element of the market building was addressed from 2023 to 2024 and transformed the traditional trading area with new stalls with the aim of re-positioning the retail offer within Darlington Market to attract a younger and wider demographic.
9. To complement the well-established butchers and fruit and vegetable trader the new stalls include:
 - (a) Natural
 - (b) Beaded Treasures
 - (c) Haus Of Moss
 - (d) Bodega Delizia
 - (e) Gina's Gems
 - (f) Marketplace Fish & Chips
 - (g) Out The Box (a retail outlet for local producers)
 - (h) The Alley - Pop up units and that have been used by 6 different businesses so far who are returning weekly to trade
 - (i) The Urban Deli
 - (j) Viking Coffee
10. In addition to the above the Indoor Market building has transformed itself a real community hub, used as by various groups from running clubs to private sector organisations using the market as a venue for corporate meetings. Furthermore, MAM have been responsible for the organisation and management of various events which includes several very successful Food Festival and Christmas markets.
11. It should be noted MAM operate the outside market which has witnessed significant growth as a result of various developments, with its income up by 116% on last year, often at capacity on Mondays & Saturdays (traditional market days), but still room for growth on Fridays.