

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee
DATE: 18th March 2010
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate & Policy
SUBJECT: Market – Stall Charges
WARDS: N/A

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider a proposal to increase Widnes Market stall rent charges for financial year 2010 – 2011.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

To agree an initial 7% increase for 2010 – 2011 with the proviso that the increase will be reduced to 2% if payments are made by Direct Debit/Standing Order.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Due to the economic climate the Council agreed for 2009/2010 to provide financial assistance to traders in the form of a discount which was in effect worth 12.5%

Trade was down and stallholders were finding it increasingly difficult to pay the stall rent. However, the decision proved to be worthwhile as the discount helped traders financially and stemmed the potential loss of many businesses from the market.

For the coming year the Council has some extremely difficult financial issues to manage, and in normal circumstances may have looked to recover a substantial amount of the discounted rent. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that trading conditions have not improved sufficiently to consider this option.

Instead the proposal to increase stall rent by 7% with a reduction to 2% for those agreeing to pay by Direct Debit or Standing Order ensures an increase in line with the predicted level of inflation, and is designed to encourage a safer and more efficient method of collection.

Traders have been provided with the above information, and if any feedback is received from them it will be reported and discussed at the meeting.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This would have been the final year of a three year agreement for an annual increase of 2.5%, which was originally made with the traders committee in 2008. This agreement was overridden by the decision in favour of a discount for 2009/2010.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

Based on full market occupancy & existing open market occupancy a 2% increase would result in an increase in income of £16500.00 pa.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The increase in income for 2010/2011 does not cover the reduction due to the discount in 2009/2010, but as a relatively low increase to traders it will continue to assist in ensuring healthy stall occupancy

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None