

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 20 October 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property

PORTFOLIO: Deputy Leader

SUBJECT: Widnes Market

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an updated Business Plan and Market Protocols for Widnes Market. Both these documents will highlight the changes required to Widnes Market to bring it in line with Halton Borough Council's financial procedures.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Business Plan and the updated Market Protocols are noted and accepted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Widnes Market Protocols and Charging Policy were previously approved by Executive Board at the meeting on 11th April 2019, minute number EXB121.

3.2 In the intervening years a number of issues have been raised around the operation of Widnes Market which has necessitated some amendments to the market regulations. The main points being:-

- i. All new and existing traders will be required to pay their monthly rent via Direct Debit.
- ii. Opening times for the market are 9am to 4.30pm. All indoor traders will be required to be open for business at 9am each market trading day, and to remain open for business with goods on sale for display until 4.30pm each market trading day.
- iii. The Wednesday Flea and Collectors Market to change the opening time to 7.00am, with traders required to remain open for business until 1.00pm.
- iv. In order to protect the existing traders Christmas sales, no new traders or commodity requests will be accepted between 1st November and 31st December each year.
- v. Traders must not place any goods, display cabinets, tables, fridges/freezers outside the boundary of their stall.

- vi. Traders must not bring in waste from home and place in the market trade waste bins.
 - vii. All traders are responsible for ensuring all electrical items within their stall boundaries are switched off at the end of each market trading day (with the exception of fridges and freezers).
 - viii. Traders can access the car park behind the outdoor market with a barrier fob, purchased from the market office.
 - ix. The number of warnings traders receive for contravention of market regulations has been amended to 3 warnings in a 24 month period. On receipt of 3 warnings the trader's tenancy will be terminated.
- 3.3 The Widnes Market Business Plan has been updated to take into account the priorities and actions required to be undertaken to ensure the market continues to be at the heart of Widnes Town Centre.
- 3.4 The main focus of the business plan is to set out the vision and strategy for the market over the next 3 years which will hopefully help to improve footfall, increase trader retention and ensure visitors can receive a unique experience and memory alongside the great retail offer which is Widnes Market. Some of the points of the plan are as follows:-
- i. To use the social media platforms to improve the market's online and digital brand.
 - ii. To offer more public interest events at the market will continue, as they can attract new visitors to the market. These events will remain free to the customer and be entertaining for all the family.
 - iii. New traders selling new and unique commodities which are competitively priced will be actively sought and encouraged to trade at Widnes Market.
 - iv. A new survey will be conducted in 2022 which will ask the public their views on what they want from Widnes Market.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The market is run in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures, in particular the Market Protocols, which consist of:-
- Section 1 - Market Regulations
 - Section 2 - Contravention of the Regulations Procedures
 - Section 3 - Market Charging Policy

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The above is being done to ensure the income generation for Widnes Market is maximised and officers' time for dealing with outstanding invoices is reduced. By ensuring all traders now pay via Direct Debit will assist Halton Borough Council with ensuring all income is now received in a timely manner.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Encourage new traders to set up small businesses within Widnes Market, which will employ people.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

A thriving market can contribute to urban renewal.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no significant risks associated with the above course of action.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The updated Market Protocols will ensure that the Traders will continue to be treated fairly and consistently. There are no negative equality and diversity issues as a result of the updated policies

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

Document

Place of Inspection

Contact Officer

None under the meaning of the act
