



CULTURE AND PROSPERITY COMMISSION 26 September 2005

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

Best Value Review of Markets 2001 - Update

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Commission is asked to consider if it would wish to carry out a review on a specific aspect of Derby's Markets or pursue another topic as part of its 2005/06 work plan.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting on 28 June 2005 the Commission resolved to consider how a review of Markets might be incorporated into its 2005/06 work plan. A Best Value Review of Markets was published in 2001 and a copy of the Executive Summary is attached at Appendix 2. This report has been written to provide the Commission with an update on progress made against the 11 recommendations set out in the 2001 Best Value Review.

2.2 Waste Management

Trials in the Eagle Centre Market have been extended to the Market Hall and the Wholesale Market. At present some 85% of all cardboard waste from the three markets is sent for recycling.

Other materials which are being separated are those that are compostible - for example, flower waste, fruit and vegetables. These are collected separately at the Wholesale Market and then sent for composting at Raynesway.

This work is being carried out as part of the new Markets Cleaning/Refuse Removal Contract negotiated with Commercial Services in 2003.

All fish, meat and bone waste is being sent to a destructor as per waste regulations and a close watch is being kept on developments with the waste to energy plant under discussion at present.

2.3 Markets Cleaning

This was looked at following the report when the contract was reviewed in 2003. It was decided that the contract stayed with Commercial Services, but gave the Markets Section more flexibility with regards to supervision of labour and the rescheduling of work.

Generally, savings have been made on parts of the contract and standards have improved where fulltime cleaning staff are on site. Areas for concern are still the number of temporary staff being employed by Commercial Services. This is currently being discussed and the situation being rectified by the employment of fulltime staff.

2.4 Maintenance

Since the Best Value report, Property Services have been brought under one umbrella. This has resulted in regular meetings taking place to look at capital and revenue spending on buildings which are managed and maintained by the Council.

The maintenance of markets needs to fit into the Council's approved strategy and therefore, whilst there are some areas of maintenance giving cause for concern, general day to day repairs are being carried out in a much more proficient manner.

Members should be aware that the general market premises, with the exception of the Eagle Centre Market, are over 40 years old. This has put a strain on maintenance financing resources resulting in large jobs, such as painting, re-wiring and roadway repairs, having to join a long list of other works until finances has been made available.

More recently, however, there have been some major works carried out, such as those to the Market Hall roof and replacement lifts are proposed for the Eagle Centre Market.

2.5 Staffing

Markets Section staffing levels have been reviewed and are currently six including manager and assistant. This has given more flexibility and holiday/sickness cover to ensure the retail markets are staffed all the time.

There are now the following members of staff in the Markets Section...

Markets Officer, Assistant Markets Officer, Senior Retail Markets Supervisor and three Market Supervisors.

2.6 Toilets Provision

Following the Best Value report a sum of money was released to refurbish the toilets in the Eagle Centre Market. This has been met favourably with the market tenants and generally in the past few years there has been only minor repairs required.

Allenton Market toilets were and are still prone to vandalism, and in an effort to ensure they were available for use on market days they are now closed when the market is closed. Whilst not fully resolving the problem of vandalism, it has at least ensured the facilities are clean and available at the start of the day the market is held and discussions are continuing regarding alternative facilities in the area of Allenton.

The Market Hall toilets are limited to users of the balcony cafeteria, with disabled toilet facilities available the whole of the time the market is open.

Signs have been erected at all entrances to the Market Hall to indicate to members of the public where the nearest facilities are.

2.7 Rent and Service Charge Levels

Since the Best Value report, stall rentals have been increased following negotiation with representatives of both sets of traders in 2004. Service charges have, for the last three years, been kept to inflation levels, with the renegotiation of the cleaning contract and utilities contracts.

Stall lettings have been consistent - around 94% for the Eagle Centre Market and 97% in the Market Hall. This contrasts favourably with a national survey carried out on markets which recognises that generally lettings are around 75-80%.

Regular meetings are held between Markets, Estates, Legal and Finance to ensure that arrears are controlled, with a resulting 15% reduction in short term debt over the last 18 months. It should be noted that the major works being carried out in the city centre may place this figure under threat.

The direct involvement of Markets staff and increased advertising has lifted the lettings to the current levels, from around 90% in both markets at the time of the review.

2.8 Cattle Market

Since the time of the review, the Cattle Market has re-opened and animals are being sold again. Due to the sheer scale of the Foot and Mouth epidemic, the usage is only slowly increasing.

General usage of the site has ensured a steady income stream for the Council through parking, car boot sales and short term licences.

2.9 Enforcement of Lease Terms

Enforcement of Lease terms has been a difficult issue given the staffing resources of the section. However, with the assistance of Finance and Legal we have been successful in taking action for breach of Lease.

Continued monitoring of opening/closing hours, encroachment and non-Lease sales is taking place and in most cases the threat of action or the removal of goods has ensured Lease compliance.

2.10 Opening Hours

The question of opening hours has been addressed and the Wednesday opening has been widely accepted now by traders as being essential for their survival under a difficult trading period.

2.11 Signage

Generally, internal signage is accepted as being appropriate. However, external signage is proving more difficult to achieve as the placing of signs is a corporate issue not in direct control of the Markets Section.

2.12 Public Parking

The provision of public parking for the markets in the city, until the works for new Westfield development, was considered to be adequate. Restraints on access to and from the car parks on the western side of the city has seen the public parking provision fall. It is felt that this is only a temporary fall and the completion of the scheme will increase the number of parking spaces available.

At Allenton Market the fall in numbers of traders at the market has increased parking availability and the Council's regeneration of the shopping area has improved the situation.

2.13 Age Profile of Users

To encourage younger users of the markets, cash machines have been introduced and more traders have now started taking credit cards.

Both the Eagle Centre Market and Market Hall have had road shows, with the University showing the type of goods available and offer discounts on goods.

The Students Union has been encouraged through minor sponsorship to promote the markets.

New stalls have been attracted to the markets, in particular the Market Hall. Individual signage in the Eagle Centre Market has been encouraged when new traders take leases. This has helped to lift the image and has kept trade steady.

For more information contact:	Dennis Wardle 01332 255653 e-mail dennis.wardle@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	Best Value Review of Markets February 2001
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Best Value Review of Markets Executive Summary

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None arising from this report.

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. None arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. Effective scrutiny is of benefit to all Derby people.

Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities

5. **Objectives**

A prosperous, vibrant and successful economy.

A diverse, attractive and healthy environment.

A shared commitment to regenerating our communities.

Priorities for 2005-06

Improving customer service, in the city centre and locally.