

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 4 OCTOBER 2016
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (FINANCE AND OPERATIONS)

THE HATFIELD MARKET

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Members will recall that Hatfield Market was moved into the section of Town Centre previously known as the Old St Albans Road in an attempt to revitalise it. The move was originally intended as a trial. That trial period has now expired and the purpose of this report is to consider the success of the trial and to recommend that this now becomes the Market's home location.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree that the trial relocation of the market has been a success and that, accordingly, its Town Centre location on what was the Old St Albans Road is made permanent.
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes and agrees to the operators wish to trial a further market day in Hatfield by running a market in the town on a Friday in the run up to Christmas with a view to continuing this from 2017 onwards should the new day prove a success.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 The Market was previously located on the Market Place where it had been struggling for some time. This struggle was evidenced by the fact that, on some Wednesdays, stall numbers had dwindled down to a low of 3. This decline was despite the efforts of Bray, the Market Operator and was attributed to a number of factors including the heavy tree growth and the off pitch location.
- 3.2 Amongst the factors pressing for a change were:
- 3.2.1 The need to renew the electricity supplies to the stalls, a capital allocation of £16,000 is contained within the budget for 2016/17 and a need to ensure that this money is spent in the most efficient way, and
- 3.2.2 The Council's on-going efforts to regenerate Hatfield Town Centre generally that have seen an additional investment of some £4.65M into the town with:
- a) A large number of shops refurbished,
 - b) A new canopy being installed over The Arcade,
 - c) The refurbishment of White Lion House starting,
 - d) The lettings to Peacocks and now Poundworld,
 - e) The imminent introduction of a new coffee shop,

- f) The refurbishment of the flats above the shops in White Lion Square for private lettings, and
- g) The soon to be redevelopment of 1 and 3-9 Town Centre,
- h) Associated public realm improvements in the Square and from Simmons to Wellfield Road,
- i) The possible development of a new multi-storey car park on The Common in conjunction with the LEP

3.3 Accordingly, in January 2016, with the agreement of the relevant bodies and after the required publicity had been carried out, the market was moved to Town Centre onto what was known as the Old St Albans Road, running down the stretch of public realm recently refurbished by St Modwen as part of their, now aborted, programme of improvements.

3.4 The move has been a success with the Council's revenue increasing by around a factor of 3 times and the market now growing to be a large and vital part of the Hatfield Town Centre.

3.5 In addition, the operator is keen to trial a third market day in the town. They advise that there are no markets in the local area that trade on a Friday. They have asked if this could take the form of a trial in the run up to Christmas with a view to adding this day to their operation should this prove to be a success.

3.6 Whilst it is fair to say that there have been a small number of verbal complaints from a few residents, none of these have been put into writing. Accordingly, there has been no follow up consultation on this change which appears to be almost universally popular.

3.7 In addition, there have been a few complaints from a few local businesses about the impact of the increase in visitors to the town on the current parking provision. On Wednesdays and Saturdays, they have claimed that parking has become more difficult. The general response has been to point out that increased footfall in the town is exactly what they have been asking for as retailers for the last 16 plus years. Generally the complainants have gone away, accepting if not mollified. Again, these complaints have not progressed beyond the verbal stage.

3.8 Attached in appendix 1 are a number of photographs showing the new market.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

4.1 The market has been moved. No new implications have arisen.

5 Financial Implication(s)

The revenue the market has generated for the Council has tripled as a result of the move.

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 The risks related to this proposal are:

6.2 No formal review or canvassing of opinion has been carried out for this proposal. This is based on the lack of anything beyond minor verbal complaint since the move. There is a risk that this report could trigger that complaint, likelihood medium, impact low.

7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

7.1 None

8 Procurement Implication(s)

8.1 None

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

9.1 None

10 Link to Corporate Priorities

10.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority, Our Places, and specifically to the achievement of working with partners to promote the borough as an attractive place in which to invest.

11 Equality and Diversity

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out in connection with the proposals that are set out in this report as this was reviewed as part of the original move.

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Date	<i>(31st August 2016)</i>

Background papers to be listed (if applicable)

Appendices to be listed

Appendix 1 – Market photographs.

