



WARDS AFFECTED
Castle and Citywide

Cabinet

25 June 2001

Leicester Market Enhancement Scheme

**Report of the Director of Environment, Development and Commercial Services
Departments**

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to give a summary of the recommendations for improvements to the Outdoor Market.

2. Summary

2.1 In April 2000, Leicester Market was awarded £650,000 from the revenue budget for much needed re-investment into the business. Health and Safety priorities determined that £120,000 should be spent on lifts and travellators and £30,000 of the total sum was awarded to Beaumont Leys Market for new signage and promotions. The remaining £500,000 was budgeted for investment in the City Centre Outdoor Market. The reasons for concentrating expenditure on the Outdoor Market are as follows:

- It is a high profile area within the city centre
- It generates the largest amount of profit for Leicester City Markets
- It employs a large number of local people
- It has a declining income base
- Reduced trader numbers have in turn led to an increase in stall vacancies
- There is a perceived reduction in number of shoppers resulting in the Market now being too big for the trader/shopper demand.

2.2 To ensure that the appropriate issues were addressed and to propose improvements that would work effectively in the current retailing climate, it was agreed by the Markets' Forum to appoint retail consultants who have an extensive knowledge of designing markets, shopping centres and retail stores.

2.3 At the meeting a presentation will be given that will include the following aspects of the Market Redevelopment Scheme:

- The details of the proposed new plan illustrating the principles of customer circulation within the Market and the retail make up of the Market
- The principles of the new stall design including the improvements in trading space and security
- The proposals for lighting and signage
- Details of the redevelopment works that can be achieved within the budget available
- Details of additional works that would further enhance the Market but would require additional funding in the future
- The programme of works for the redevelopment

2.4 The key principles of the redevelopment plan are identified in the Supporting Papers together with the associated key issues. This investment must be seen as phase 1 of a continuous investment programme that needs to be implemented in order for Leicester Markets to continue to trade and to add to the viability and vitality of the City Centre. The fact that Leicester City Council is investing in its markets sends a clear message that the Council is committed to the City Centre, which will help attract external investment in other areas of the city.

3. Financial And Legal Implications

3.1 The Markets service was awarded £650,000 in April 2000 to spend on enhancing the Market facility. These proposals ensure that all monies regarding the redevelopment will be spent following completion of work, which is due start in January 2002.

4. Recommendations

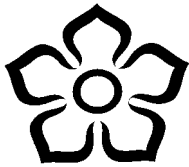
4.1 To approve expenditure of £500,000 for the Market redevelopment, which includes the creation of a cafeteria, new self contained units and new lighting and signage.

4.2 To approve the programme of works for the Market redevelopment, due to commence in July 2001 and to complete in May 2002.

4.3 To support the principle of future Market redevelopment when funds become available.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Report

1.1 Over the last four months the Head of Markets, City Consultants and a selected number of stallholders have been holding Bi-weekly meetings with the selected retail consultants to establish a strategy for improvements for the Market. The main recognised issues that have come out of the consultation are as follows:-

- Shopping patterns within the City Centre have changed over time
- The perimeter clothing stalls block views into the Market
- The Market is operated six days a week and has traders occupying different stalls throughout the week. This is perceived to be confusing for the customers
- Fixed stalls are restrictive in the way traders can display different commodities
- There are too many stalls within too many potential routes through the Market
- There are no investment opportunities or security of tenure for the trader(s)
- The fruit and vegetable section works reasonably well without needing too much alteration

1.2 The agreed aims and objectives of the improvement strategy were:

- To halt current decline in numbers of traders and shoppers and ensure the retention of current income levels
- To improve the Market's environment through wider aisles, better customer facilities, better trading facilities, better lighting and better signage
- To increase customer stay time in the Market by introducing public seating and a café kiosk area
- To retain as many stalls as possible
- To increase public interest in the Market by arranging further special events e.g. farmers markets and craft markets
- To maintain and improve on customer footfall through the Market

- To raise customer awareness of the improved quality of the Market
- To bear in mind that longer term alterations will have an impact on the viability of the Market and the city centre generally

1.3 The key principles of the proposals are as follows:

- To make minor alternations to the stall layout in areas A, B and D (see Appendix 1).
- To create a cafeteria and associated seating area on the eastern edge of area B.
- To create a number of self contained units in areas A and C.
- To open up the Gallowtree Gate entrance to the Market.
- To prohibit the use of scaffolding on clothing stalls.
- To restrict clothing stalls to the interior of the Market, with other goods on the perimeter.
- To revise stall rentals in order to eliminate any historical anomalies and to ensure that basic rentals are complementary to location and demand, and to maintain existing income levels to the Council.
- To reallocate stalls using a rigorous and objective procedure agreed with Councillors and Market Traders at the Markets Forum.
- To implement a Traffic Restriction Order to prohibit all traffic from the Market perimeter road between 11.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. Monday to Saturday (effective on an experimental basis from 27 May 2001).

1.4 The key issues concerning the redevelopment are as follows:

1.4.1 Trader Consultation

The Market Traders have been extensively consulted during the course of the development of the proposals and feedback received has been accommodated at every feasible opportunity. Four Market Traders have been members of the Market Redevelopment Working Party and the views of other traders have been proactively sought over the last four months. It is believed that the majority of traders are supportive of the proposals now being put forward. Trader representatives will be available for comment at the meeting.

1.4.2 Public Consultation

At each stage of the development of the proposals revised plans have been placed in the Market's Customer Care Centre and views and feedback sought from members of the public.

1.4.3 Retention of Income

Although a number of stalls will be lost, the proposals ensure that, at a minimum, the income to the Council is maintained at existing levels. This is possible because stall occupancy rates never reach 100% and, therefore, spare capacity exists throughout the week. Furthermore, anomalies exist in the charging structure as a result of historical trading patterns and these will be rationalized as part of the implementation of the proposals.

1.4.4 Creation of Café

The concept of creating a new café, with associated seating, has arisen directly from consultation with shoppers and traders. Although there are a range of competing outlets in the City Centre, research indicates that the presence of a café, with its associated seating, would draw people into the Market area and increase the duration of their visit.

1.4.5 New Self Contained Units

The new units are completely self-contained with integral shutters and roofs. Traders will be able to leave their stock securely within the unit, which will enable the trader to create attractive and permanent displays of their goods. One new block of units will take the place of four conventional stalls. Each block could either be let as a maximum of eight individual units or a minimum of one whole unit. The preference is to let each block as four individual units. They will be let on a 3 year lease in a similar way to the Indoor Market stalls.

1.5 The redevelopment programme is as follows:

- July 2001 - Final consultation in conjunction with Leicester Mercury
- July-September 2001 - Detail design, providing brief for Tender
- August-December 2001 - Allocation of Retail Units and fixed stalls
- October-November 2001 - Tenders invited
- November-December 2001 - Tender selected, detailed discussions with contractor
- January 2002 - Works begin on site
- May 2002 - Works complete/official opening

1.6 A sum of £30,000 has been allocated to the Beaumont Leys Market for new signage and promotions. Specifically, the following actions will be taken over the timescale indicated:

- £15,000 spent in November 2000, in partnership with the Beaumont Shopping Centre, on an extensive marketing campaign to relaunch the redeveloped Centre.
- £15,000 to be spent on new market signage in keeping with the Centre's new image.

2. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	YES	2.1
Policy	NO	
Sustainable and Environmental	YES	2.2
Crime and Disorder	NO	
Human Rights Act	NO	

2.1 Equal Opportunities

The implementation of the experimental Traffic Restriction Order outlined in paragraph 1.3 above may have some equal opportunities implications because part of the effect of the order is to prevent access to some disabled parking bays during the period of the order (11am to 4pm Monday to Saturday inclusive). The public are being made aware of the alternative disabled parking bays adjacent to the market and all objections are being considered as part of the normal procedures for implementing this type of experimental order.

2.2 Sustainable and Environmental

Investment in the City Centre Retail Market supports the concept of sustainable development by investing in existing facilities and infrastructure as opposed to new build on other sites. The environment of the City Centre will be enhanced by this redevelopment and its aim is to facilitate enhanced business opportunities for existing and new market traders.

3. AUTHOR

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