

A Visit to Birmingham Markets

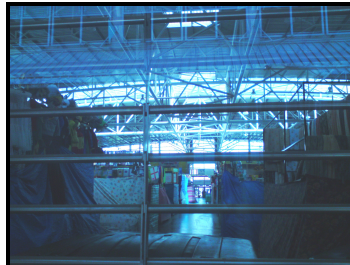
Cllr Paul Newcombe and Cllr Wayne Naylor made a visit to Birmingham's Markets on 29/4/09 to look at general layout, ambiance, general offer and anything that could provide additionality to Leicester's Market offer.

St Martin's Rag Market

Our first stop was at the world famous St Martin's Rag Market. The external area has lots of stalls with the surrounding area being well laid out with lots of trees and modern street furniture.



The area has a very modern feel. The market has excellent travel links; busses stop very close to the perimeter and have good access for cars. When we visited, the rag market was closed, but was clear from what we could see that this market was mainly dry goods – mobile phones, clothing, fabric, etc.



These buildings are very new, being built in the past 7-8 years. Some of the stalls have been moved around since it was originally built. The layout is outstanding and very eye-catching. The ability to walk around the market freely makes a big difference makes the area feel very spacious. The way that external and internal fixed stalls integrate makes a marked difference.



Around the back of the rag market we noticed how accessible the market was by bus for all the market areas, providing good access for the elderly or parents with children. We also noticed collapsible bollards (similar to those outside the town hall) and a service entrance, at the end of the day the service area is cleared of rubbish via van delivery, which seems better than Leicester's market, that has a bin wagon regularly parked in a public area.

Bull Ring Indoor Market



We then entered the indoor market, which was a very modern building. The thing that really strikes you when you wander around this market is the layout and the quality of the visual presentation. The stands are modern, displaying everything from babyware to food to fruit and vegetables, lots of different dry goods and snack foods. The area is very well presented and has a good ambiance as you walk around, feels very open, spacious and welcoming.



The attraction of the indoor market is that it is all on one level making it very accessible, the variety on offer how different types of items were mixed up and not in areas as you walk around there is fish stalls, wool, mobile phone unit, specialist stores from halal meat to babyware. The offer is very good, a lot of people were in there and also with having a mixture of stalls you attract passing trade. The market has a car park above it, which again impacts on accessibility.

The adjoining area to the different markets



Whilst walking around the main market area is the position of the markets in conjunction with some of the larger shops. Borders, Wagamama, Ladbroke's Savers, Sports Direct, Debenhams and New Look. The walkways make a very big difference, being able to walk straight into the open area where the market is without having to cross roads or overcome other barriers to gain access, the openness makes the area feel very welcoming. Considering we visited mid week, there were a lot of people milling about. We were told that this was one of the quieter days so to see that they still have a high level of attraction means that this market is well thought of, in the right place and very accessible.



The stalls in the open area integrate the stalls from both the rag market and the Bull Ring Indoor Market creating a seamless feel to the area.

Priory Square



We then visited Priory Square, which is another market area further away from the main markets. The layout is less well set out than the main markets but is still a popular shopping area. This market is in a square surrounded by shops which it integrates well with; this has the feel of Leicester's market, yet still has a better visual appeal.

Waste Management



We spoke to several traders and they informed us of the way that they disposed of their waste. This was via a compactor which was placed near to the market but was screened off via a fence.
