

**Minute of The Gravesend Borough Market Member Working Group**

**Meeting held on** Tuesday, 21 January 2020

**Present** Councillors: Shane Mochrie-Cox (Chair), Helen Ashenden, Ejaz Aslam, Harold Craske, Baljit Hayre and Tony Rana.

Officers: Anita Tysoe – Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) and Lauren Wallis – Committee Services Officer (Minutes).

No.		Item	Action by
<b>1.</b>		<b>Gravesend Borough Market</b>	
	1.1	<p>The Chair welcomed Councillors to the first meeting of the Gravesend Borough Market Member Working Group. He advised that the report contained the Borough Market research exercise report, the terms of reference for the Working Group, the Market consultation report and the draft Market Strategy. He stated that he intended the first meeting to be a brain-storming session and asked for ideas to support the long term and sustainable future for the Market. There would be three meetings of the Working Group in all and the second meeting would be for final consideration of the ideas put forward by Members and officers and the third to agree what was to be put before the Committee. The Chair intended that a report be ready to be submitted to the meeting of the Community &amp; Leisure Cabinet Committee on 3 March 2020.</p> <p>The Working Group agreed the Terms of Reference for the Gravesend Borough Market Member Working Group.</p> <p>The Service Manager (Customer &amp; Theatre Services) advised that research had been undertaken to understand customer attitudes towards the market, what people wanted from the market, how far and how often they were willing to travel, opinions on pop-ups and themed events, views on the food court and views of the market traders. The survey had been undertaken online and face to face and 414 responses had been received. Customer Focus Groups had also taken place.</p> <p>The following ideas and opinions were expressed during discussion on this item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expansion of the food court would assist in making the market sustainable for the future.</li><li>• The market currently closes at 4.30pm and this needed to be reconsidered to attract other customer groups to the food court. For example, school children and families in the early evening and accessing the night time economy of the area. It was also suggested that early evening live music might attract customers.</li><li>• The need for a consistent offering, a golden thread, so customers know that a foundation offer would always be available.</li><li>• It was noted that currently the first impression on entering</li></ul>	

		<p>the market was disappointing as it never looked like there were many stalls open for business very few customers in the building. There was one stall that dominated the entrance to the building which did not give the best impression.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was suggested that the food court be expanded to run down one side of the entire building to include permanent food stalls at which food could be cooked which could reflect the diversity of Gravesham.</li><li>• The expansion of the food offering would make the market the place to have food. This would assist with the branding of the market.</li><li>• It was suggested that the other side of the building be turned over to permanent and ad hoc traders to ensure that the building looked full. It was also suggested that other businesses in the town could be approached who might be interested in having a presence in the market.</li><li>• The officer suggested that the building's central space could be versatile and could be used for pop-ups, additional seating, and events.</li><li>• It was noted that the lighting in the entrance to the market building was very poor. The Chair asked that Kent County Council be instructed to rectify this situation as soon as possible. If work was not completed before the publication of the report to Committee then this issue should be included in the report.</li><li>• The lack of heating was mentioned. The officer explained that the heating was designed to only take the chill out of the air.</li><li>• It was noted that some of the food traders wanted a more restaurant type approach. However, consultation responses had shown that customers liked the low pressure, casual ambience of the food court in comparison to visiting a restaurant where you were obliged to order.</li><li>• The food offering idea was expanded by the possible inclusion of a greengrocer, butcher, cheesemonger etc.</li><li>• The Chair noted that the traders had a responsibility to have an attractive offer and should not always rely on the Council to improve matters.</li><li>• The Service Manager (Customer &amp; Theatre Services) agreed to provide the Working Group with the unit rental costs for the Market. The officer explained that the rent for the food court included counter space, an extraction unit, metered electricity paid for by the trader and waste removal. Other units get a secure unit and metered electricity. Those traders renting on a day basis got a 6 foot by 3 foot stall with a canopy.</li><li>• It was suggested that the whole market could be changed into a food offering that varied depending on the demographic of customers relating to the time of the day and day of the week. It was noted that Blake's Nightclub was nearby as well as a number of public houses which might provide late night customers to the market. It was noted that people felt safe visiting the Market.</li></ul>	<p><b>SMCTS</b></p> <p><b>SMCTS</b></p>
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- Members noted that the Reef development would provide a new source of people who might visit the market and its environs. However, it was noted that the construction of the Reef development would cause disruption to the market and nearby parking.
- The advantage of the historic building should be used in the marketing and branding.
- The lack of obvious signposting was raised and importance of its location in the town centre including near carpark pedestrian exits/entrances, the railway station and the Riverside etc.
- The officer was reminded not to rely on social media for advertising the Market and its events but to use “Your Borough” and other community information sources, posters etc.
- It was suggested that the Council did not need to tie itself to the market building and that start-ups could be located elsewhere in the town centre but be advertised under the umbrella of the market brand. In addition, events could be held in the old High Street.
- A suggestion was made to move the Parrock Street Boot Fair to a car park near the Market.
- Another suggestion was to work with The Gr@nd.
- It was considered that the trend towards Climate Change and the use of less packaging and might make a fresh local produce offering more attractive to people.
- A subsidy in parking charges near the market was mentioned. However, it was noted that the parking charges were already very reasonable.

The Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) advised that Sealeys had just been engaged by the Council to promote permanent spaces and she would give the choice of applicants more thought in the light of the ideas put forward by the Working Group. Members were advised that some stalls were offered at low rent and short term contracts to encourage their use by start-up businesses. She considered a consistent food offer was an excellent idea and also advised that the Tourist Information Centre was now open 6 days a week. A Saturday Food Market was also being introduced commencing 1 February 2020, there had been a Vegan Market last Sunday and a regular collector’s fair was starting on Fridays.

The Chair suggested finding a way to celebrate and display the Market Charter to show that it was rooted in history. The Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) undertook to try and find the original Charter for the market.

The Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) asked Members to consider the draft Gravesend Borough Market Strategy 2020 – 2023, and advised this draft was based on the consultation findings, but also extensive research and visits to other markets. She went through the details of the Strategy and explained the results of the SWOT analysis.

The Chair concluded that the Market should be an experience and

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		<p>this would depend on how it was developed by the Council. He thanked everyone for their input and interest.</p> <p>The Service Manager (Customer &amp; Theatre Services) was asked to update the draft strategy to reflect the discussions and this would be reviewed again at the next meeting.</p>	<b>SMCTS</b>
<b>2.</b>		<b>Date of the next Meeting</b>	
	2.1	Tuesday, 11 February 2020 at 4.30pm in Civic Suite 1.	