



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Markets Unit Update Report
Date:	16 September 2009
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern Director of Development ext. 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay Head of Economic Initiatives ext 3459

Relevant Background Information

This report covers the following issues:

1. Proposal for Sunday Market at St George's

St George's Market traders and representatives have raised the issue of a Sunday Market in St George's in addition to the current Friday Variety and Saturday City Food and Garden Market.

A copy of their letter is attached as appendix 1.

2. Entertainment licensing hours for St George's

The present Entertainment Licence for St George's Market allows music to be played until 1.00am, 7 days per week, and 3.00am for New Years Eve. Given the proximity of the Market to a residential area, an issue has been raised by BCC Environmental Protection Unit with regard to reviewing the permitted hours for entertainment.

3. Categorisation of goods for Saturday City Food & Garden Market.

St George's Friday Variety Market presently operates a categorisation system for traders. This system ensures a fair and equitable range of goods being sold and was introduced to the Friday Variety Market in 2001 as part of the Duplication of Goods Act enacted in 1999. Markets' Management and Traders' Representatives wish to introduce the same system to the Saturday Market. A copy of categories proposed is attached as appendix 2.

4. Retail Sector Support Plan – Continental Market

At the Committee of 12 August 2009 Members noted the Retail Sector Support Plan 2009/2010, an activity of which is New Market Opportunities for independent traders to showcase their products and services at prime City centre locations, including the Christmas Continental Market.

In order to develop this opportunity further, it is suggested that during the Christmas Continental Market, use could be made of the area immediately in front of the City Hall, as highlighted in Appendix 3. This area could provide a showcase for local and small independent retailers with a wider range of products.

Key Issues

1. Proposal for Sunday Market at St George's

During meetings between Markets' Management and Traders' Representatives, the traders' representatives have asked for consideration to be given to the addition of a weekly Sunday Market to be held in St George's. Whilst this would bring a positive addition to the Sunday offer within the City Centre, there are some issues that would need to be addressed.

1a. Cost

Traders' representatives have been made aware that no additional monies are available at present and any Sunday market would have to be self financing. Suggested opening times are 10.00am to 4.00pm with a 2 hour window either side for set up and clean up. This would necessitate staffing and operational costs. The Friday market currently has 240 stalls and the Saturday market has 140 stalls. To self finance a Sunday Market occupation of an average 130 stalls at the present rent of £12.00 per stall with no discount would be necessary to cover costs or 175 stalls with the 25% discount currently allowed to Saturday market pre-paying traders. As Markets staff working patterns do not include Sunday working, staff costs for a Sunday Market would have to be covered on overtime, this would amount to a weekly increase in the operational and staff costs for the market of £1550.00 per week which is not included in the current budget.

1b. Sunday Annual Events

St George's has a good reputation as a venue for the cultural and other events and they are all very well attended. St George's currently hosts 4 major annual events that are held on a Sunday, these are the Chinese New Year Celebrations, the Indian Holi, the Indian Festival of Colour and the Polish Festival. The Chinese New Year is in its fifth year, the Polish festival is in its second year and the two Indian festivals are new for 2009 but both have indicated they would like to have these as annual events. Another recent event, the Markets Community Boxing Festival (St George's Boxing Club) was recently held in St George's as part of the Markets Annual Community Festival. It was a huge success and the organisers have indicated they would like to hold this as an annual event. St George's also has 3 major events booked between 2010 and 2013 which include a Sunday as part of the required pre-build and set up. It would not be possible for both the events and the market to be held at the same time, although early indications are that traders would forgo Sunday Markets on the dates of any events

Resource Implications

Unless additional resources were made available, the Sunday market would need to be self financing and would incur costs of approx £1550.00 per week for staffing and operational costs that is not included in the current budget.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee agree to further investigation on financing options for the operation of a Sunday Market.

Decision Tracking

Following agreement that further investigation takes place to the feasibility of a Sunday Market

Time Frame: October 2009.

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

2. Entertainment Licensing hours for St George's

As St George's Market is not primarily a music venue, noise retention can cause problems, especially late at night. A planned monitoring visit by BCC Environmental Protection Unit was undertaken during a concert on 22 June at 22.20. The test confirmed loud music is audible at the nearest dwellings particularly when road traffic noise levels drop. The Environmental Protection Unit indicated that St George's Market is not suitable for concert type events after 11pm, as traffic levels are likely to be lighter in the evening thus the impact of loud music is likely to be greater in residents properties. The 'Electronic Music' events have the added problem of vibration.

Markets' Management, PSNI, Environmental Protection Unit and Building Control Licensing, have all received complaints regarding a late night event affecting residential property including windows and kitchenware vibrating and causing problems with families who have young children.

Most promoters are happy with the 11.00pm music curfew when discussing possible bookings, however a small number of promoters, aware that the present Entertainments License operates until 1.00am, drive for an extended curfew.

The Noise Council 'Code of Practice on Environmental Noise at Pop Concerts' (1995) emphasises the need for strict controls on noise from such events, setting out recommended noise control procedures. In particular the code details guideline noise levels for events. For events which continue after 11.00pm the code clearly states that noise "should not be audible within any noise sensitive premises (e.g. a nearby residents house) with windows open". At St George's Market this is not the case. It is recommended that a reduction of the Entertainments Licence hours from 1.00am to 11.00pm for weekly events and from 3.00am to 1.00am on New Year Eve license be introduced (subject to approval).

Recommendation

It is recommended that Committee approve an application for a reduction of Entertainments Licence hours from 1.00am to 11.00pm for weekly events and from 3.00am to 1.00am on New Year Eve license.

Decision Tracking

Following approval that Markets Development Officer write to Building Control Licensing, requesting reduction of entertain license hours.

Time Frame: October 2009.

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

3. Categorisation of goods for Saturday City Food & Garden Market

St George's Friday Variety Market operates a categorisation system for traders at the Friday Variety Market to ensure a fair and equitable range of goods are sold.

Categorisation of goods was introduced to the Friday Variety Market by Belfast City Council in 2001 and was partly due to the Duplication of Goods Act 1999, this Act protects traders and ensures a wide range of goods and services are available.

With the continued success of the Saturday Market and after lengthy discussions between Markets' Management, traders representatives and traders, the introduction of categories to the Saturday Market has been proposed. The adoption of this proposal would help sustain the vibrancy of the market and the traders' livelihoods.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Committee agree to the introduction of categorisation of goods for Saturday City Food & Garden Market Saturday market in line with the Duplication of Goods Act 1999

Decision Tracking

Following agreement that the introduction of categories be introduced to the Saturday Market.

Time frame: October 2009

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

4. Retail Sector Support Plan – Continental Market

Members will be aware as part of the Retail Sector Support Plan 2009/2010 adopted in August 2009, independent traders have been given the opportunity to showcase and sell their products and services in prime outlets, open spaces and on Council land, including the Christmas Continental Market. After discussion with the Council contractor, Market Place Europe Ltd, it is proposed to let stalls during the Christmas Continental Market on an area in front of the City Hall, see highlighted area in Appendix 3. The stalls would be let to small and local independent retailers at cost price.

This would contribute to the objective and give opportunities to local and small independent retailers to offer a wider range of products at the Continental Market. Access to the City Hall would still be maintained via the ramps and steps and every effort will be made to limit any obscuring of City Hall windows. The contractor, who has two years remaining on the current contract, has worked closely with BCC Officers and is proposing a significant reduction of the stallage fee for local traders. Continental traders currently pay approx £3000 for a small stall. This is a significant opportunity for new and local retailers to showcase their products and an additional economic opportunity offered by Council to the local and independent retail sector. This highlighted area will provide space for up to 10 stalls. The Council contractor will set the criteria for use of these stalls.

Resource Implications

There are no additional resource implications for the Council

Recommendation

It is recommended that Committee approve the letting of additional stalls by Market Place Europe Ltd for use by small local and independent retailers at the Christmas Continental Market in City Hall, as in line with the Retail Sector Support Plan (see area highlighted in appendix 3).

Decision Tracking

Following Committee approval to introduce the letting of additional stalls in City Hall grounds during the Christmas Continental Market, that BCC officers agree the criteria for letting and selection of traders with the contractor.

Time line: October 2009 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

Documents Attached

Appendix 1. Copy of Traders Letter

Appendix 2. Copy of Categories for Saturday Market

Appendix 3: Map of City Hall grounds

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