



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Markets Unit Update
Date:	9 December 2009
Reporting Officer:	Shirley McCay Acting Director of Development ext 3459
Contact Officer:	Ian Carmichael Markets Development Officer ext 3522

Relevant Background Information

The Markets Unit is reporting on four issues:

1. A proposal for a Sunday Market in St George's
2. Request for a privately operated Sunday market
3. Unit lettings at Smithfield
4. Rent free period request.

Key Issues

1. Proposal for Sunday Market in St George's.

Members will be aware that at the September Development Committee Members were made aware of a request by St George's Market traders for a Sunday Market in St George's Market. Members requested the Markets Development Officer (MDO) to come back with further information, including possible funding to assist in the operation of this market.

The MDO has investigated this request and has been informed by the Tourism, Culture & Arts Manager that there could be funding available from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) from their Tourism Innovation Fund for 2010 - 2011, this is a competitive process where funding is requested but not guaranteed.

As previously mentioned in September, a Sunday Market in St George's would have to be covered by overtime at an approximate cost of £1550 per week. The MDO has met with the Market's staff regarding the possibility of working a regular Sunday. Only two out of the seven markets staff have indicated they would be willing to work on a Sunday. This limited number of staff would cause long term operational issues.

The MDO met with the NMTF (National Market Traders Federation) and requested that the NMTF Committee, or one of their members, gather a written list of traders who would definitely be interested in the Sunday market. This list would enable the MDO to calculate what the Sunday Market might cost and if it could be fully 'self sufficient', as previously stated by NMTF Committee. To date no written list of traders has been received, although there have been 70 verbal indications of interest.

Resource Implications:

Approximate staffing costs of £1550 per week. Some funding may be available through a NITB funding application.

Recommendation:

That Committee agree that the MDO investigate further the costs involved for staffing the proposed Sunday Market and confirm the number of interested traders.

Decision Tracking:

Further to agreement that investigation that the MDO undertakes a further feasibility study with regard to the Sunday Market and reports back to Committee with the results.

Time Frame: February 2010. Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

2. Request for Privately Operated Sunday Market.

A request has been made by a local business man, Mr Bob Kearney, for permission to operate a Sunday Market as a private concern in the old Balmoral Fruit Market, South Belfast (see appendix 1).

His intention is to operate a traditional style market with the addition of a mini car boot sale. At present this site is vacant and would require permission from Council to operate a market. Mr Kearney has no background in operating markets but feels his business background would be sufficient in making this enterprise a success. Mr Kearney has agreed that while the debate for a Sunday Market in St George's is ongoing he would not pursue his proposal. Under the Markets Charter, Belfast City Council own the rights to any markets within Belfast and would have to give permission for anyone wanting to operate any market.

Recommendation:

That Committee note the information provided.

Decision Tracker:

None

3. Unit Lettings at Smithfield Market

The Development Committee at its meeting on 22 September 1999 granted authority for the Director of Development, in consultation with the Chairman of the Development Committee, to approve the terms of future lettings, subject to those terms being reported retrospectively, to the Development Committee.

Unit 20 – Smithfield Market – Travel Agency for Holiday Homes

Tenant: Mr Steve Gorman,
21 Walnut Road
Larne
BT 40 2WE

Unit Size: 150 Sq Ft Ground Floor

Terms: £190.00 per Month

Resources:

Income to Council of £190.00 per month

Recommendation:

That Committee note the terms of the letting in Smithfield, set out above.

Decision Tracking:

There is no decision tracking associated with this item.

4. Request for Rent Free period.

Mr Adam Fullarton-Healey who leases Unit 6 St George's Market has requested a one quarter rent free period for his unit, (Appendix 2). Mr Fullarton-Healey benefited from a previous rent reduction, which was applied to all St George's units due to difficulty in letting the units after the refurbishment works. A considerable amount of new office developments have been occupied since this reduction. Presently BCC receives approx £5.5.M from Estates in rental income, if this request is granted it would have a 'knock on' effect on all the BCC property portfolio, as any tenant could request a similar reduction. Mr Fullarton-Healey considers that the Council could offer all tenants a one month rent free period at the end of five years tenancy. Mr Fullarton-Healey is concerned that the Market only opens on Friday and Saturday, when he commenced trading he believed that the number of trading days would increase, however, Mr Fullarton-Healey does not open his shop unit on Saturdays.

Resource Implications:

If agreed a loss to the Council of £3187.59, with the potential for much higher loss.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Committee agree to no changes to Mr Fullarton-Healey's rent and that no rent-free period be granted.

Decision Tracking:

Following agreement not to pursue the request for a rent free period that a letter be sent informing Mr Fullarton-Healey of the decision.

Key Abbreviations

NMTF - National Market Traders Federation

BCC - Belfast City Council

NITB - Northern Ireland Tourist Board

MDO - Markets Development Officer

Documents Attached

Appendix 1. Copy of Mr Kearney's letters
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Appendix 2. Copy of Mr Fullarton-Healy's request
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