



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Markets Update – St George’s Market Usage
Date:	10 August 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>This report comprises of the following item:</p> <p><u>Usage of St George’s Market</u> St George’s Market currently operates three very successful markets each week, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The three markets vary greatly from the traditional variety market on Friday and it is this assorted mix on Friday that attracts thousands of visitors each week. The fish section alone holds the reputation for being the leading retail fish market on the island of Ireland. The award winning Saturday Food and Garden market has a fusion of tempting speciality foods from around the world as well as handmade crafts, flowers, plants and local artwork. It came runner up in the 2010 BBC Radio 4 Best Food Market in the UK. The relatively new Sunday Market, which started in July 2010 has a special emphasis on local arts and crafts, offering more local craftspeople the opportunity to show off their talents.</p>
1.2	<p>The three market days support around 350 small business, 500 jobs each week and welcome an estimated 600,000 shoppers every year. St George’s has an estimated annual income from trader stallage to Council of £360,000. A survey carried out for Economic Initiatives Section - Markets Unit in 2010 estimated the economic benefit to Belfast City of over £15m (Appendix 1).</p>
1.3	<p>The markets are a base to promote local musicians, artists and crafts. They are also a regular meeting place for thousands of customers and visitors each week from various generations, cultures and backgrounds.</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	Since the renovation of St George's Market in 1999 it has also been used as a venue for a variety of events. These events have included the annual Development Department Opportunity Europe, motor car, motor bike and fashion shows, live concerts, exhibitions and cultural events. It recently held the highly successful World SEED congress, exhibition and trade show, with companies from all over the world being represented.
2.2	Currently no bookings have ever been taken for Thursday due to Market having to get set up, nor Friday and Saturday market days, with preference being given to those market days over any other event.
2.3	The Sunday market is relatively new, starting 4 July 2010, and as such any pre booked and confirmed event bookings for 2010/2011 were honoured.
2.4	Officers though are aware that requests for events to be held on St George's market days, especially a Sunday may increase; and there could be the potential for such requests to also include a Friday and/or Saturday market days. Therefore going forward it is felt there is a need for Council to articulate a clear policy on the usage of St George's Market.
2.5	Officers are conscious that offering any of the markets days out as hire are very contentious with both the traders and their representatives. Regular meetings take place with Traders representatives and they, along with the traders regularly voice their concerns. One of their main concerns is that the inconsistency of any market day may lead to loss of regular income and traders may then prefer to leave the Market, especially Sunday if there is not the consistency of the regular weekly market, as there currently is for Friday and Saturday. Weekly Sunday Market income is estimated at £90,000 per annum. Sunday has been one of the harder days to keep new traders
2.6	St George's Market currently has 350 traders over the three days and Sunday market currently has 110 traders and with employees this total is approx 150 people each week. 80% of the Sunday traders are new start businesses and started the Sunday as it was the only day they could attend due to other commitments.
2.7	Average weekly stallage income is just under £7000, below outlines stallage income for the Markets over a three week period from 17.06.11 to 01.07.11, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Friday: - 17.06.11 = £2875; 24.06.11 = £2846; 01.07.11 = £2803 total = £8524. - Saturday:- 17.06.11 = 32275; 24.06.11 = £2283; 01.07.11 = £2401 total = £6959 - Sunday: - 17.06.11 = £1704; 24.06.11 = £1697; 01.07.11 = £1909 total = £5310.
2.8	The traders and their representative's state the Friday and Saturday markets have built their reputation and customer base on the consistency of being regular weekly markets and not closing or changing for other events.
2.9	The survey carried out in 2010 also indicated that visitors to the Friday and Saturday markets were more likely to be weekly attendees, with inclines in weekly visits since 2008.

2.10	<p>The survey also indicated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 75% of Friday market visitors were from Greater Belfast, 22% were from rest of NI, while both rest of GB and out of state visitors made up 5%. - 61% of visitors to the Saturday market were from Greater Belfast, 31% were from rest of NI, while both rest of GB and out of state visitors made up 7%. - Sunday market visitors were more likely to visit the market on a monthly basis. 																																										
2.11	<p>The survey results indicate that consistency assists in the building of a regular customer base and increase in customer visits to the Market.</p>																																										
2.12	<p>There are four cultural organisations, which have used St George's in the past on a Sunday to host their events. These are, Chinese Welfare Association, ArtsEtk, Indian Community and POBAL. These organisations are keen to continue hosting their events in St George's on a Sunday. Income generated for these 4 Cultural events held in St George's on a Sunday has been 1 x 8 hour hire and 3 x 12 hour sessions and total income of around £3245. Income generated from the 3 cultural events held in St George's on a Sunday during April 10 to March 2011 was £2420.</p>																																										
2.13	<p>Only three cultural events took place during 2010/2011 due to one of the organisations double booking their agreed date and they used their alternative venue.</p>																																										
2.14	<p>Estimated visitor numbers attending the four cultural events is in the region of 18,000.</p>																																										
2.15	<p>Below is the current scale of hire charges for St George's Market which is set by council.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="335 1232 1404 1904"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th colspan="2"><u>Monday to Wednesday</u></th> <th colspan="2"><u>Saturday and Sunday</u></th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>Commercial Rates</th> <th>Public or Voluntary rates</th> <th>Commercial Rates</th> <th>Public or Voluntary rates</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Session 4hrs</td> <td>£1045.00</td> <td>£605.00</td> <td>£1265.00</td> <td>£660.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Consecutive Sessions (8 hrs)</td> <td>£1210.00</td> <td>£715.00</td> <td>£1430.00</td> <td>£770.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Consecutive Sessions (12 hrs)</td> <td>£1320.00</td> <td>£770.00</td> <td>£1595.00</td> <td>£825.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1 full day 24 hrs</td> <td>£1485.00</td> <td>£880.00</td> <td>£1870.00</td> <td>£935.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Late Session 7pm - 1am</td> <td>£1265.00</td> <td>£715.00</td> <td>£1485.00</td> <td>£770.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			<u>Monday to Wednesday</u>		<u>Saturday and Sunday</u>				Commercial Rates	Public or Voluntary rates	Commercial Rates	Public or Voluntary rates	1	Session 4hrs	£1045.00	£605.00	£1265.00	£660.00	2	Consecutive Sessions (8 hrs)	£1210.00	£715.00	£1430.00	£770.00	3	Consecutive Sessions (12 hrs)	£1320.00	£770.00	£1595.00	£825.00		1 full day 24 hrs	£1485.00	£880.00	£1870.00	£935.00		Late Session 7pm - 1am	£1265.00	£715.00	£1485.00	£770.00
		<u>Monday to Wednesday</u>		<u>Saturday and Sunday</u>																																							
		Commercial Rates	Public or Voluntary rates	Commercial Rates	Public or Voluntary rates																																						
1	Session 4hrs	£1045.00	£605.00	£1265.00	£660.00																																						
2	Consecutive Sessions (8 hrs)	£1210.00	£715.00	£1430.00	£770.00																																						
3	Consecutive Sessions (12 hrs)	£1320.00	£770.00	£1595.00	£825.00																																						
	1 full day 24 hrs	£1485.00	£880.00	£1870.00	£935.00																																						
	Late Session 7pm - 1am	£1265.00	£715.00	£1485.00	£770.00																																						
2.16	<p>The Council spends a large amount of money advertising the three market days,</p>																																										

	<p>promoting they are open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Concerns regularly raised from traders and their representatives are;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waste of time and money on double advertising 2. Changing from market day to event causes confusion with visitors and customers who come to the market. When these other events are on instead of market days extra money has to be spent to try and notify people that the market will be closed for that day due to an event. (It has been noted that people still arrive to the market even when another event is on and we have advertised as such, especially tourists).
2.17	<p>Below are three options that officers request Members to advise on;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accept bookings Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday only. 2. Accept bookings for the current four Sunday cultural events only. 3. Cease to take bookings for any day of the week.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	Loss of approx £12,650 in revenue if four current Sundays events continue instead of the four Sunday Markets, with possible loss of approx £90K income in trader fees to Council if Sunday Market fails.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is requested that Members decide on the best option for Council on the future hire of St George's Market.

6	Decision Tracking
Time-frame: September 2011 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay	

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – St George's Market Economic Impact	