



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee.
Subject:	St George's Market – Casual Traders
Date:	10 October 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development Department, ext 3470
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<u>Casual Traders/New Trader Business Venture</u> Currently St George's Friday and Saturday Markets are full with permanent traders, Sunday, as a new market continues to grow. When a vacant stall becomes available it is allocated to the next person/s on the waiting list as per the trader's category. Some traders on waiting lists for a permanent stall, in the interim, trade as casual traders. This means a casual trader arriving to use a stall that is not required by the permanent trader on that particular day.
1.2	The Economic Development Unit, in partnership with the Markets Unit and the National Market Traders Federation have been investigating how to entice new potential business entrepreneurs into considering and trying market trading as their first step into business.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<u>Casual Trading/New Trading/Business Venture</u> The Economic Initiatives, Markets and Economic Development Units have been in discussions with the National Market Traders Federation (NMTF) to see how new traders could be attracted to market trading. NMTF, in partnership with Belfast City Council, wish to launch their NMTF First Pitch programme in Northern Ireland.

	<p>This programme has already been launched in mainland UK and has informed and successfully attracted new traders to market trading.</p>
2.2	<p>The Economic Development Unit (EDU) currently operate a number of schemes and programmes to assist people who are considering entering into new business. The EDU are currently investigating the possibility of potential clients considering market trading as their new business venture. The EDU reported to Committee on 15 June and 23 August 2011 outlining a range of activities and one of those was the opportunity for a Market Start up Programme, as part of their Economic Development Plan.</p>
2.3	<p>There is also a programme called NMTF First Pitch, operated by the National Market Traders Federation. This is a programme where new traders are offered the opportunity to trial trade at selected markets and has been very successful in Mainland UK. NMTF, in partnership with Belfast City Council wish to launch the programme in Northern Ireland.</p>
2.4	<p>Officers investigated what opportunities there are for new businesses in market trading and it was agreed that the Sunday Market would give the best opportunity as it was a new market, continuing to grow and give new businesses the opportunity to promote their products.</p>
2.5	<p>Whilst the Sunday Market continues to grow, there is an area where new traders and casuals do not wish to be located. The area concerned is at the May Street/Oxford Street end of the Market, near the fish stalls. Stalls in this area proved very difficult to fill as new traders tended not to like this area, some even refusing to take the stall. Those who did take the allocated stall immediately submitted a letter requesting a move. Most casual traders, rather than take a stall in this area, prefer to wait and see if any other vacant stalls become available. They feel the need to be closer to the centre of the market or in bays with the other traders.</p>
2.6	<p>Only a small number of traders use this bay. Following discussions with the traders concerned, a decision was taken to temporarily remove the small number of stalls from this area and put in an extra seating area, (appendix 1). This has worked well, and to date Market staff have not had to turn away any casuals who have turned up on a Sunday wanting a stall. Nor has it hindered us in writing out to those casuals on the list offering them permanent stalls.</p>
2.7	<p>As part of the joint Economic Development/NMTF First pitch scheme for new traders we wish to introduce, as a pilot, six new traders to test trade at St George's Sunday Market. In the allocated space we can set out the required number of stalls to accommodate the new traders, and add a small amount more if required and this may then give this area a chance to build.</p>
2.8	<p>It is not envisaged that this programme will inhibit any casuals becoming new traders at the Sunday Market and we will continue to write out to those on the waiting list and offer them a stall when available.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> EDU will cover the fees of trader costs from a budget of £13,500 agreed by Committee in August.

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

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to agree this programme for new start businesses starting in St George's Sunday Market trading.

6	Decision Tracking
There is no Decision Tracking attached to this report.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
NMTF – National Market Traders Federation EDU – Economic Development Unit	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 - St George's Floor Plan	