

Victorian Market Stakeholders Group Meeting

Unit 15, Victorian Market

Tuesday 13th August 2019 at 5.30pm

Present: Cllr Isabelle MacKenzie (**IM**), Cllr Bet McAllister (**BM**), Jo Murray (**JM**) (Victorian Market Manager), David Haas (**DH**) (Inverness City Area Manager – Highland Council), John Ewart (**JE**) (The Milk Bar, Victorian Market) Pat Bloczynski (**PB**) (Aeternum – Market Hall, Victorian Market), Jane Cuthbert (**JC**) (MCM Investments, Queensgate), Jackie Cuddy (**JCE**) (Eastgate Centre), David Richardson (**DR**) (Federation of Small Businesses) Hilary Tolmie (**HT**) (Business Support – Highland Council)

Apologies: Cllr Graham Ross, Mike Smith (Inverness BID), Clare Armstrong (Inverness Chamber), Colin Craig (Oil and Vinegar, Union Street),

Cllr Isabelle MacKenzie in the Chair

No.	Item	ACTIONS	Action
1.	Market Hall Development Update	<p>A lot happened since last meeting which was very much driven by the discussion that took place at the last Stakeholder meeting. Originally it was thought that consultation with the Market Hall businesses would not commence until after the City of Inverness Area Committee at the end of the month but following discussion it was agreed that consultation should start straight away.</p> <p>JM has since had a one to ones with every business within the Hall apart for two. One has since met with DH and one has still to be met with. Robust discussions were held with each business and they have been reassured that the Council is here to work with them to find the right solution for every business. JM felt the discussions were positive and that the retailers were quite open and honest about their future plans.</p> <p>The results of the consultations so far are as follows (this does not include Pro Fish who have handed in their notice and will leave at the end of the year):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 out of 18 are supportive of change 13 out of 18 want to stay in the Market 3 leaving – this is a mutual decision 1 David spoke to and they were supportive and would like to stay in the Market but will consider other options 1 business has still to be consulted 	

7 of 18 see an opportunity to expand or improve their business
1 would consider a reduction in space

JM has found the results quite encouraging and now has a start point for developing the plan. Following these discussions the Design Team have been asked to relook at the plans and to formulate a new plan which will incorporate the needs of the businesses who wish to stay. The Design Team have been asked to populate the Market Hall with the businesses who wish to stay and they have also been asked to look at rezoning the entire Market.

All the empty units have now been taken off the market for rent and there will be further units becoming empty towards the end of the year. With this in mind it is a good opportunity to relocate existing businesses into a better site more appropriate for their business and to rezone the entire Market. This would mean that the right businesses would be in the right position to drive footfall.

JE asked if there would be a possibility to put tables and chairs out on the pavement in Academy Street. **JM** thought there would be but it would be all connected to the Streetscape. **JE** advised that if this were the case he would be happy to relocate to the Academy Street Entrance but would also be happy to consider moving to the Market Hall if it were to be primarily food and beverages.

DH confirmed that at the last Stakeholder meeting a very clear message came across that they want to drive the Market forward with the existing businesses on board and to do this we need to use opportunity to make the best use of the available space within the Market but nothing will happen without discussions with the businesses.

The Design Team have also been asked to look at phasing the development.

There is an eclectic mix of businesses within the Market and a lot are 3rd generation family businesses. 30% are long standing tenants. **JE** expressed concern that new young businesses may not want to be around stagnant businesses so once established they move on or do not consider the Market in the first place. The challenge is to create an environment that will increase footfall and as units become available more vibrant businesses will come and this will have an effect on the existing businesses.

JM confirmed that at present nothing has changed in the lease and the intention will be to update the leases along with the development. If moved to a new unit a new lease will be

issued along with Management guidelines.

JCE explained that the ambiance of a food hall will bring customers in and the atmosphere of an area changes if there are a lot of people mingling about.

PB feels there are some business that can work anywhere e.g. hairdressers, wool shop as they have their customer base and they will follow them wherever they are located but some businesses need to be in an area where is plenty of footfall. **JM** confirmed that a lot of the businesses expressed a concern about temporary relocation as it is not always easy to get the message out to customers that they have moved so would probably lose customers in the process. **DH** confirmed that the Council will help with this by providing a publicity package. **IM** feels that social media will help with this and technology has changed and it will be all in how it is worded.

DH confirmed that a report will be going to the City of Inverness Area Committee on the 29th August which will advise Members that both the Stakeholder Group and the Market Hall businesses are supportive of the development. An application has also been submitted to the Town Centre Fund looking for a sizeable contribution. Members will be asked to agree that the project proceeds to detailed design stage and allocate a sum of money. One of the risks to the project is the cost of the businesses relocation and possible phasing of the project and **JM** is currently working on identifying these costs.

JE questioned the slight change of direction from the Action Plan in that the Market Hall was to be primarily food and beverage outlets but if 13 of the business wish to remain in the Market Hall will this compromise the Action Plan as the key element will be changed? **DH** confirmed that although the Action Plan did indicate that the Market Hall should be primarily food and drink, Kevin Murray did recommend that it is vital to support the businesses who want to remain within the market. The design will remain the same and this has led to considering the configuration of the whole Market not just the Market Hall. **JM** warned that if that if the majority of the businesses in the Market Hall are not food related the changes of being able to open late into the evening will be significantly reduced. If there was a mix of businesses in the Market Hall it is likely that only about a third would want to trade into the evening. Extended opening hours are an essential part of the Action Plan and it maybe that this will be considered for the whole Market and not just the Market Hall.

DH confirmed that the Market will need to produce an income for the Common Good Fund

	<p>and the direction that the CIAC has given that is that this needs to be driven forward taking as many with us as possible. It cannot be under estimated the significance of securing a really good anchor for the space. The right tenant in there will drive up footfall.</p> <p>JC commented that even if it's the 13 existing businesses that go back initially the change will take place over time. BM feels that a better environment needs to be created, this will increase footfall and attract new businesses. After 9 o'clock at night families have nowhere to go and are looking for entertainment. The Market being open later could fill and need for these holidaymakers. IM feels that the Market redevelopment will help other areas of the City Centre.</p> <p>PB mentioned that in Aberdeen all the Market Traders have been given notice that their leases are to be terminated and in Dundee traders are wishing something would be done with their Market.</p> <p>JE considers that part of the redevelopment should be to set proper standards for the Market.</p> <p>JM advised that the mix of businesses in the Market Hall after the development would be slightly different and has identified that there could be two tourist businesses (one expanding), three food businesses plus a gift and food business. At present there are four hairdressers in the Market Hall all with a completely different client base but they all compliment and support from each other.</p> <p>BM feels that more young people should be encouraged to come to the Market. JM advised that a survey has just been launched to 16-24 year olds asking they questions about the Market and will be distributed throughout the Highlands not just Inverness. JM will circulate the survey to Stakeholders.</p> <p>Families come into the Market during events but don't necessarily spend money while they are in. Regulars also come into the Market but they seem to go to specific shops. JC Suggested that pop up shops should be considered in the short term e.g. clothes recycling as this is huge at the moment.</p> <p>There was further discussion around the options of market mix being retained and the Market Manager confirmed that these would be discussed by the Design Team and reported back to the Stakeholder Group and Market Businesses.</p>	<p>JM</p>
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	Academy Street Entrance	<p>The stonework repairs will be commencing next week and will last for approximately eight weeks. A press statement will be released and the Retailers will be advised accordingly. Scotvapes and Anne Peach have been made fully aware.</p> <p>The Entrances have been painted and Malcolm Fraser is getting a quote for Queensgate.</p>	
5.	AOCB	Date of the next meeting Tuesday 17 September at 5.30pm	
		The meeting ended at around 7.10pm	