

Victorian Market Stakeholders Group Meeting
Unit 13A, Victorian Market

Tuesday 28th January 2020 at 5.30pm

Present: Cllr Isabelle MacKenzie (**IM**); Cllr Bet McAllister (**BM**), Cllr Janet Campbell (**JC**), Cllr Emma Roddick (**ER**), Jo Murray (**JM**), Victorian Market Manager; David Haas (**DH**) Inverness City Area Manager – Highland Council; Jason Kelman (**JK**), Principal Project Manager – Highland Council, John Ewart (**JE**) The Milk Bar, Victorian Market; Willie Morrison (**WM**) - William Morrison Jewellers, Market Arcade, Victorian Market; Juan Paulo Rodriguez (**JP**) Café de Paulo, Queensgate Arcade, Victorian Market, David Richardson (**DR**), Federation of Small Businesses; Mike Smith (**MS**), Inverness BID; Jackie Cuddy (**JCE**), Eastgate Centre; Colin Craig (**CC**), Oil and Vinegar, Union Street; Hilary Tolmie (**HT**), Business Support – Highland Council

Apologies: Cllr Graham Ross (**GR**); Clare Armstrong (**CA**), Inverness Chamber, Pat Bloczynski (**PB**), Aeternum – Market Hall, Victorian Market, Jane Cuthbert (**JC**), MCM Investments, Queensgate

Cllr Isabelle MacKenzie in the Chair

No.	Item	ACTIONS	Action
	Welcome	<p>The Chair welcomed Juan Paulo Rodriguez from Café de Paulo in the Queensgate Arcade who has replaced Malcolm Fraser on the Stakeholder Group.</p> <p>DH advised everyone that a lot had happened since the last meeting especially behind the screens and JM and JK will update during the meeting on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operation of the market as it stands now • The support being given to the businesses affected by the works and to the businesses that are not affected. • The different aspects of the project programme and the stage we are at now • Timelines for the next steps and stages. <p>He then went on to advise that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is very sensitive to the pressures on the businesses in the Market and how difficult a time it is • The Advice and Support Session held on the 3rd December was very supported and DH thanked the different agencies and colleagues who attended to give advice. 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each affected business received a detailed pack giving them information on the compensation and where to get advice and support if they need it. • A newsletter has been sent to them all recently providing details on the likely timelines on when the Notice to Quit will be served. • They will get a three-month notice period. 	
1.	Actions from Previous Minutes	None	
2.	Victorian Market Managers Update	<p><u>FootFall</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing footfall figures since April so don't have like for like figures yet. • Highest footfall months are July and August, peaks in the summer then declines in the autumn • November and December were terrible, the announcement of works on 21st November and a lot of negative publicity affected footfall over that period. • Every business is suffering because of this. • Less customers are coming into the Hall now than there were earlier in the year. • There is only 8% footfall now coming through Church Street Entrance now which has dropped from 12% • The public thought the whole market closing and it was hard to get the message out the Arcade will remain open • The Social Media aspect following the announcement was also incredibly damaging for business although this has died down now. • Following the announcement some of the affected businesses changed their trading habits. • PB circulated an email to the group prior to the meeting telling how worried she is about trade and how the timing of the announcement affected business quite badly • DR asked how the rest of Inverness was over the Christmas period as this would be a good benchmark to base the decline on. • JCE confirmed that Eastgate had a good November but December not so good but picked up nearer Christmas. DR advised that he had heard from a lot of retailers that trading was not good over the Christmas period. • There were disruptive days when the Entrances were compromised due to scaffolding or operational issues or problems in the Church Street Lane. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events didn't increase footfall - Elf on the Shelf more people registered but footfall was lower, and the vegan market didn't do so well • The 2020 Calendar competition was challenging and not successful. • The Carol Singing lifted the spirits of the retailers and the Market was busy at these times. • There was huge activity over the Christmas period • WM feels nothing will work until the work is completed. • The plans will be made public, but they are still being developed and not ready to go public yet. • DR suggested than when the plans are ready to email them to DR, the Chamber of Commerce etc. to retweet. • There have been several good articles in the Courier recently • The negative press has had a ripple effect on the surrounding businesses, but DH confirmed that the Council would be doing their best to practically support the Arcade and Queensgate businesses through this difficult time. • JE feels that if the plans were ready to be made public at the same time as the announcement they would have got lost in all the negative press. <p>Meeting with Arcade Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting has been arranged with the Arcade Businesses for Thursday to discuss the way forward and support that can be given • JM has several ideas she will share. 	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Market Hall/Fish Hall Businesses Update</p>	<p>JM gave an update on the Market Hall/Fish Hall Businesses after the announcement and the Support Session held in December.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 Businesses are affected • One left straight away • 8 businesses were represented at the protest • A lot of support was received from the City Centre Police • A very robust plan was put in hand beforehand which meant that disruption on the day was minimal. • Unfortunately, the protesters decided to have their protest at the Academy Street Entrance meaning the press reported that the whole market was closing. • 8 attended the support session in the Town House • That evening they were given a pack containing: 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ specific letters detailing their compensation ○ a list of the properties currently available for rent in the City Centre ○ an application pack for Unit 3 in the Arcade with a closing date of 17th January. ○ Marketing Package worth about £1,000 which includes press advertising, social media and relocation advertising. ○ Contributions from Graham & Sibbald, Chamber of Commerce, HC Estates Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All packs had to be signed for were delivered within two days of the Support Session. ● Within the pack there was also a request form inviting the business to come back for further support on a one to one basis. One took up this offer. ● 2 businesses applied for the vacant unit in the Arcade ● 3 have given notice to leave ● 11 still to confirm their intentions. ● JM feels that the realisation of the cost of running a business outwith the Victorian Market is worrying for the Retailers ● BM asked if there was a possibility that premises could be shared? DH confirmed that this is being looked at but there are some building regulations that will make this challenging. ● A table is being produced with all the available premises on it along with associated costs which will be circulated to each business. ● The Council has agreed to support individual advice from Graham and Sibbald but as of now no business has taken up the offer. ● One to ones will be arranged with each affected tenant within the coming weeks ● Another Advice and Support Session will be arranged in April. ● It is unlikely Upper Bridge Street can be used as there is a problem with the change of use as at the moment these units are classed as office space. There is also a problem with Disabled Access. ● Working with Estates to try and make the space usable but this is not a long-term solution. ● All the units within the City Centre are too big – could several of the businesses be housed together to make a temporary Market Hall. DH confirmed that this is being considered and approaches will be made to the Businesses. 	
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<p>4.</p>	<p>Market Hall/Fish Hall Development Project Update</p>	<p>JK gave an update on the development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still working to concept design • A full design team in place consisting of 360 Architecture and CDMM as the Building Engineers, Neil Ross Structural Engineers. KLM Quantity Surveyor • The brief given was to get the contract awarded by the end of March • The drawings are just about complete, and the contract document is being pulled together by the Quantity Surveyor and should go out to tender mid-February. • Part of the brief was to look at phasing the project, but this is not a feasible option as the work will involve a complete strip out of the area and it would be impossible for units to remain open. • To keep the electricity on in the Arcade may involve some overnight working. • There will be a four-week tender period the contract is for £1.5m. Once the tenders are received back JK will have two weeks to go through the returned submissions and award the contract. • There has been significant interest in the project from contractors throughout the Highlands. • Being a City Centre project, it will be a difficult job to undertake. During the four-week period the tender is out JK will be looking at ways how to safely undertake the project. • The Church Street Entrance will be the main way in or out of the site and normally materials etc would be brought in at night, but the main entrance is also a pub, so 	

		<p>this will cause a problem. Using the Arcade as a main entrance will also cause a problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the day the Church Street Entrance will be the main entrance but at night it will be Academy Street. • It will be a complicated project, but the actual construction should be straightforward as there is a full strip out. • There will be disturbance – it will be a building site • Can't do a lot of the tests until the building is empty • As there are no foundations these will need to be put in as a footing for the steel work. • There is asbestos but as far as we know at the moment it is minimal but until the building is striped out we will not know how much. • Working to a 12-month contract. • The winner contractor will have their own programme of works • Bad press can also affect the contractor's price. • £1.5m is the approved budget for the project and if the tenders come in too high further Committee approval would be required. • There is £250k approved from the Town Centre Fund to the project. • Will work with the new tenants on the fit out of each individual unit. • Programme start date is aimed at being on site on the 1st July. • The contractor should be appointed end of March beginning of April • The building Warrant has not been submitted yet and this takes a minimum of 12 weeks. • In time in between the contract being awarded and the start date all statutory permissions will need to be in place. • One of the biggest problems is dealing with statutory authorities – gas, electricity and Scottish Water. • JE asked what would the downside be if the start date was later as July and August are busy tourist months? • DH confirmed that in order for us to take advantage of the additional funding from the Town Centre Fund this has to be spent by 1 October. There is no opportunity to extend the deadline for this funding. If it is not used by the October it will be given to other projects. 	
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5.	AOCB	Date of next meeting Tuesday 31st March 2020 at 5.30pm.	
		The meeting ended at around 7pm	