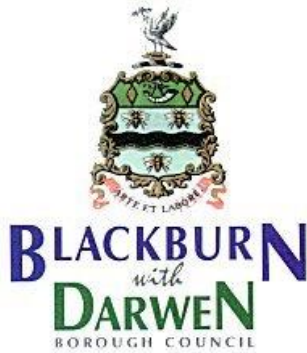


EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION



REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Growth and Development Executive Member for Finance and Governance
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director Place Director of Finance
DATE:	16/11/2021

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Growth and Development	Finance and Governance
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WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
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SUBJECT: Markets Support

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The long term sustainability of the markets is vital to the future of our changing town centres and their future development as we continue in a prolonged period of trading uncertainty brought about by the global pandemic and after effects and the acceleration of what was already significant structural change happening in the high street. This report sets out the current and ongoing trading conditions for the markets and requests short term financial support for the market traders.

As we move towards our long term objectives to reinvent the town centre and diversification of offer, retaining a diverse and attractive retail offer will still be an important part of the mix. Investment already secured through the Town Deal in Darwen and proposed delivery of the Thwaites/Brown Street Masterplan in Blackburn as part of delivering the government's levelling up agenda will require a retail and hospitality offer to support the increase in employment and amenity in both town centres.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member:

- Note the Markets Updates
- Approve support to existing Market Traders on Blackburn and Darwen Markets, via the Covid Support Grant.

3. BACKGROUND

The Council entered into a 35 year lease with The Mall in November 2011 to take the 68,000 sqft ground floor unit on the corner of Church Street and Ainsworth Street. This enabled the market to relocate from a failing 1960s concrete building into a new 'state of the art' market hall within the new

£66 million development. The greatly enhanced shopping offer in The Mall, with other new anchor tenants such as Primark, H & M, and many existing businesses locating into bigger premises, was very attractive to shoppers and visitors and the Mall and Market continued to perform well against other competing locations until early 2020 when the impact of the global pandemic accelerated significant structural change in the High Street and shopping patterns.

Following lockdown in March 2020, the market has operated through periods of differing national and local restrictions and resultant trading conditions until the full reopening of the markets in July 2021 at stage 4 of the government's roadmap.

As high levels of Covid infection continued in Blackburn during the summer of 2021, both government and local public health advice was to proceed with caution and to continue to work from home or stay at home if possible and footfall levels in Blackburn Town Centre in particular failed to recover in line with national figures. This situation is ongoing.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The long term sustainability of the markets is the key objective of this proposed support as we work towards the reinvention of the high street and diversification of offer. The emerging Masterplan for the Brown Street/Thwaites site with high value employment uses proposed is expected to bring more workers into town who will value the markets food offer as much as existing staff in the businesses and organisations around the centre.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The support to the market in the short term supports Blackburn with Darwen's Draft Local Plan 2018-2037, specifically Core Policy 4 (CP4) Town Centre's and Commercial Development – to promote the growth of commercial developments and other town centre uses such as leisure, entertainment, arts and cultural

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs of the market support will be covered by the Covid Recovery Grant.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Any conditions for the Covid Support Grant will need to be complied with. Legal resources will be required for any new leasing arrangements

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

Markets Service are in ongoing consultation with the Market Traders, The Mall and wider town centre businesses in order to understand the current trading conditions but also the specific concerns of market traders.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Clare Turner
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DATE:	16/11/2021
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	
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