

Charter Market Layout consultation summary of responses

Background

Cabinet (4th Oct 2011) considered a report with regard to Square Routes. The report considered the scheme that is currently underway.

Cabinet agreed that the rationale to agree to the works in Market Square was-

By a second phase of works to Market Square the council can look to complete a transformation for the public benefit, providing:

- An environment fitting to the Square's role as the civic centre of the city*
- A place more active, pleasant and safe to spend time in*
- An improved layout for the outdoor market*
- An environment fitting and complementary to the Old Town Hall and the council's ambitions for use of this building*
- An improved setting and staging for events and performance*

This should add to the attraction of the city to the benefit of business trading, much needed in difficult economic conditions

Cabinet agreed the following-

(1) *That Cabinet notes the progress in delivering the first phases of improvements as part of Lancaster Square Routes including in Market Square.*

(2) *That Cabinet notes that officers will in due course report to the appropriate portfolio holders on the future layout of the outdoor market, potentials for a street café(s) in Market Square and how the existing Traffic Regulation Order for the city centre pedestrian zone might best be revised and subsequently enforced.*

(3) *That Cabinet notes that officers will report to the portfolio holder on any need or potential to support the county council in works to remedy the surface condition of Penny Street and Horseshoe Corner in a way that is consistent with the Lancaster square routes design visions and that the anticipated balance of funds in the city centre investment after the first phase of works in Market Square fund for Lancaster Square Routes be reserved for this purpose pending further reporting.*

(4) *That in preparing its proposals for the 2012/13 General Fund Capital Programme as part of the budget process, Cabinet considers including an additional £300K contribution to the city centre investment fund for Lancaster Square Routes in order to provide for a second phase of works in Market Square.*

Progress

With regard to (2) extensive consultation has now taken place with stallholders, shoppers, shop based businesses directly the market and the Chamber/ BID.

As can be seen from the summation of the responses below the consultation has provoked a wide range of responses (although what is positive is that generally all parties think having

an outdoor market adds to the city centre offering). The fact there is a wide range of responses is not surprising has revealed a number of things-

- There are some tensions between shop based and market based businesses. Some caused by specific issues and some by more general ones. In some case shop based businesses claim the Council favours market traders and market traders claim the Council favours shop based businesses.
- Many of the more general tensions seem to be caused by perceptions as opposed to being based on hard facts.
- Shoppers who responded were nearly all in favour of the market staying very much as it is. We know that market traders were encouraging their shoppers to support the market by contacting the Council. However, there weren't any shoppers who took the opportunity to say they didn't like the market.
- Amongst all stakeholders there wasn't much argument that some of the market stalls would benefit from being tidied up. There are some subjective views put forward about the quality/ type of goods on offer but the general feeling is this would be less of an issue if the stalls looked more attractive.
- Some of the shop based community suggest that the market should be presented (as some Councils have) in a very uniform way- identical stalls, rules on provenance of goods etc. Shoppers don't seem to want this and neither do traders.
- Some of the shop based business community think Market Square should be left free of stalls to allow focus on developing a complementary entertainment offering in the city centre. Church St / New St could then be used for the market. Traders say that no amount of inducement would compensate for the loss of income they'd expect so they'd simply cease to trade.
- The decision with regard to the ETRO means that were the market to extend into Church St / New St there is a potential for conflict between the market and disabled drivers. This has been raised with County who are currently considering how it could be addressed (eg could disabled parking be suspended on market days- if needed).

Summation of Consultation Responses

NOTE- in reading the summary of responses there is a danger of seizing on specific comments as explained in the accompanying report the responses are provided to help provide context and this inform Cabinet's decision. To take them as isolated sound bites, or to use them to portray something in an oversimplified way, would as has been earlier stated be to miss the point.

69 respondents

Of those who gave a specific response to how the market should be laid out

30 said leave as it is

13 said plan A

10 said plan B

In addition to this a petition consisting of 930 responses was received. The responses were gathered from shoppers in support of 'traders wishes to be left alone to get on with running their businesses'.

Charter Mkt Responses

Market Traders -24

- Should have done consultation before works started
- Market provides an alternative attraction
- There won't be a market without traders
- There should be stalls in Market Square
- Some stalls need to improve their appearance
- Church St / New St doesn't have enough footfall to sustain a business and traders would rather stop trading than be located there.
- If it's not broke don't fix it
- Shop based businesses shouldn't be involved in this debate
- Market / café culture can easily co-exist
- Shoppers like variety
- What do we mean by food stalls in Market Square
- Market Square best for hot food stalls as most seating there
- Market Square should have mixture of stalls in it (not just food stalls)
- City Centre improvements look great
- Well done to council for keeping market going during works
- Elderly customers will only come to stalls in a central location
- Stalls should appear neat, clean and tidy but not all look the same
- New traders / casual traders should be located in New St/ Church St
- Hot food stalls should be in Market Sq
- Employer of local people
- Lost 70% of takings when temporarily relocated in New St
- When it was in Church St 15 years ago only 5 stalls
- Plan A will secure a thriving market
- Plan A is unacceptable, Plan B is totally and utterly unacceptable
- Market traders shouldn't be used as sacrificial lambs to improve footfall on Church ST for existing businesses
- The suggestion this is being done to improve access / safety is nonsense
- Council's first priority is to ensure there are enough pitches to locate traders in the locations they want them
- The Council should not be interfering
- Locating stalls in Church St will reduce number of visitors
- Having a food only area in Market square is discriminatory
- The Council should provide stalls to traders
- Rent free pitches in Church St wouldn't even be taken up
- Stalls are businesses and a livelihood
- Not practical to start from a blank sheet of paper

- BiD / Chamber have a vested interest
- Could be different fees for different locations
- Having events on plinth at the same time as the market really works
- Customers think the market is beautiful and has an authentic feel
- Lancaster is different from some other markets in that people don't come specifically for the market (eg Garstang, Kirkby Lonsdale)
- It takes at least 2 years to build a trade even in Cheapside, Market St
- The appearance of some stalls is a disgrace
- Markets works best when food stalls are mixed with other stalls
- Church St could be used for a themed market
- The sun causes a problem for some food stalls in Market Square
- Would be prepared to pay more to be located in Market Square
- Some shop based businesses don't respect traders
- Shouldn't be seeking views of shop based businesses, Chamber etc as they want to get rid of competition
- Market and events on the plinth at the same time don't mix
- Market and shop based businesses should support each other
- Market Square should just have 4 stalls in it
- Use Penny St for some of market
- Leave Market Sq for the big market stalls

Shoppers-26

- Council should charge market traders less as they are having to compete against huge corporations
- Leave as it is
- Looks great as it is
- Market is vibrant and mixed and has improved over the last few years
- The market and the non mainstream choice it offers is why people come to Lancaster
- Market shouldn't be moved out of Market Square
- Market sells items less well off can afford
- An exciting part of a vibrant growing city
- We should be concerned about the livelihood of traders
- Market is the lifeblood of the city
- Traders have already been affected by the ongoing public realm works
- Café culture and market can co-exist
- People shouldn't have to search for the market
- Shoppers wont go to stalls in Church St / New St
- Celebrate the local not the global!
- Should be doing more to increase size of market
- People move to Lancaster because of the market
- The colour and arrangement of the stalls makes the place interesting
- Let the market grow organically, with minimal interference
- Should include Cheapside and Sun Square
- The market is brilliant
- A thriving market is better than a café culture
- Relocate to Dalton Square

- Market Square should be used for what most benefits the City's citizens

Shop based businesses / Chamber / BID -21

- Revenues are higher on non market days
- Its located on key shopping streets which pushes footfall into a footprint that is too tight
- Council biased towards market traders
- It is a hotch-potch of badly laid out stalls that often impede pedestrian access
- Shops pay more rates so should have more say
- Cheapside should be kept clear for cafes
- Stalls impede view of shops
- Not logical to prioritise market stalls over shops when they contribute so much in business rates
- Tail wags the dog
- Let a private enterprise run the market
- Charter Market is an important part of the City centre
- Square Routes works make the City centre look really good. Impact is lost on market days
- Many market traders aren't locals
- Stallholders shouldn't have a right to a particular pitch
- Stalls shouldn't block shops
- Stalls selling the same products as shops shouldn't be located near each other
- Market Square should have mixed stalls
- Have to put up with stalls outside the shop
- Traders inconsiderate to shop based businesses
- Cheapside should be clear of stalls
- Poor quality of goods for sale on some of the stalls
- Traders leave a mess
- Stalls outside shops impact on shop trade
- Plan B best for city
- Get rid of A -boards
- Food stalls should all be located together
- Church St already has an anchor stall and benefits from footfall from car parks and bus station
- The city is improving its tourist offer yet it needs those tourists to shop in the city and for retail to be an attraction in its own right.
- Lancaster is a great city but having a second rate market makes it uncompetitive.
- Placed on secondary streets, such as New Street, Sun Square and Church Street with the specific aim of revitalising these streets and supporting bricks and mortar retailers their too.
- focus on a high quality offer that will be attractive to both locals and visitors alike and a removal of low quality stalls
- New St too narrow for market. Causes problems with loading/ unloading etc
- Cheapside is currently cluttered on market days
- Surely Lancaster City Council can do put forward a strategy with real purpose and vision that acts as an economic driver for the city rather than the superficial plan on offer?
- Market Square should be left clear so the plinth can be used for performances

- Safety concerns of stalls near fire exits
- Well thought out strategy and business plan is required
- Council should form a group to develop a City centre markets strategy. Once the key stakeholders involved have been able to provide meaningful input that would be the time to bring forward any layout proposals.
- Market needs to be managed to complement all city centre activities
- Some shop based businesses say that customers avoid city centre on market days as too congested.
- Footfall will follow location of stalls
- Questions about hygiene of some food stalls
- Improve appearance of some stalls
- Only have stalls on one side of streets
- Fees much too cheap
- Some traders are rude and aggressive to shop based businesses
- Leave Square free for performances
- Further consultation / action plan needed which BID would contribute to