

For publication

Chesterfield Markets Fees and Charges 2021-22 (TV100)

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	15 th December 2020
Cabinet portfolio:	Town Centres and Visitor Economy
Directorate:	Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To set the fees and charges for the Chesterfield open markets and the Sunday Car Boot sale from 1 April 2021.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That there should be no increase on the fees and charges for the Chesterfield open markets and Sunday Car Boot sale for 2021/22.
- 2.2 That as part of the market reconfiguration project being undertaken in 2021 a review of the pricing structure be made, identifying the premium and secondary pitches, following best practice adopted nationally and ensuring a value for money approach is taken to realise the full income potential of the market.
- 2.3 That the Service Director for Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing, through delegated authority with the Portfolio Holder for Town Centre and Visitor Economy, apply appropriate fees and charges to new activities that are introduced during the period covered by this report. The Service Director may negotiate pitch fees to support individual traders by responding to external forces that may impact directly on trading as well as support new and start-up trader initiatives.

3.0 Reason for recommendations

- 3.1 The impact of COVID-19 has significantly reduced market income since March 2020 and continues to do so. Both visitors, shoppers and worker

numbers to the town centre are directly impacting on market occupancy, utilisation and income generation. Footfall in the town centre is significantly reduced, trading opportunities are therefore greatly weakened.

- 3.2 Trader numbers steadily improved since 15 June when non-essential retailers could return to the market, however the market is fragile and trader morale and confidence extremely low. The second national lockdown from 5 November to 2 December only further exacerbated the situation.
- 3.3 In line with delegated authority, and with both Portfolio holder and SLT approval, concessionary rates for Traders has been in place since 23 March, initially free rent until July, £5 until September and currently £10, all per stall, across all market days. This is under continuous review but is deemed necessary to support the market.
- 3.4 Whilst many of the Traders have been able to obtain financial assistance through the Discretionary Grant Scheme a significant number also do not qualify for any assistance, as they do not meet the criteria required to apply. The Council continues to support the traders through targeted marketing schemes and infrastructure investment, including shop local, Christmas lights and Christmas promotional activity, all aimed at driving footfall safely into the town centre.
- 3.5 Although income will not be achieved for 2020/21 to increase any fees for markets could further exacerbate market occupancy and damage the Council's reputation in relation to bringing footfall safely back to the town centre.

4.0 Report details

- 4.1 The on-going COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted life locally and nationally. Retailers across all segments of the industry have been amongst the most severely affected, market traders have suffered greatly as for many this was their only source of income and for many this has caused severe financial hardships.
- 4.2 A complete lockdown of the local economy from 23 March for 12 weeks immediately affected market income. Only essential traders could trade, in this case fruit and veg traders. All other market days were closed. The

return to town centre activity from 15 June has been both slow and cautious but has improved gradually.

4.3 Supporting the town centre economy is at the heart of what we do and continues to be a key priority for the Council. Encouraging people to return in a safe manner back into the town centre is crucial. The Economy Task and Finish Group recognises the importance of investing in town centre support and the need for a long-term recovery plan. It is felt that any increase in market fees would have an adverse effect on this strategy. The group supports a nil increase.

4.4 As part of the Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield project the open market is set to benefit from a £1.15 million intervention alongside a wider Northern Gateway and public realm scheme. It is anticipated that this will support, strengthen and re-invigorate the market area ensuring it bounces back from COVID-19 and is ready to meet the future demands of the town centre.

5.0 Alternative options

5.1 That an inflationary increase of 3% or less be applied. It is felt this could undermine any potential to re-stabilise the previous income levels, and that the direct financial impact on the traders would be unsustainable for many of them at this point in time. A review will be undertaken in 2022/23.

6.0 Implications for consideration – Council Plan

6.1 None. A nil increase in fees supports The Council Plan by assisting in the three key objectives, making Chesterfield a thriving Borough, Improving the quality of life for local people and providing value for money services.

7.0 Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money

7.1 The impact of COVID-19 is likely to be with us for some time. It is hoped that by April 2021 the occupancy at markets will return to close to pre pandemic levels. As such the anticipated income for 2021-22 reflects the original 2020-21 budgets across all sites.

8.0 Implications for consideration – Legal

8.1 None.

9.0 Implications for consideration – Human resources

9.1 None. The recommendations have no negative HR implications.

10.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Further drop in occupancy levels	H	H	No increase in fees and charges	M	M
No further investment in the market	H	H	Delivery of RHOC	M	M

11.0 Implications for consideration – community wellbeing

11.1 None. The proposals have no negative impacts on our community well-being strategy. It is felt that the Market supports the local community as a hub to meet and socialise alongside encouraging shopping local.

12.0 Implications for consideration – Economy and skills

12.1 None. The proposals have no negative impacts on our economy and skills strategy. The Market supports many local businesses both directly and indirectly and is often a building block to further expansion and growth of their business.

13.0 Implications for consideration – Climate Change

13.1 None. The proposals have no negative impacts on our Climate Change strategy. The Market actively supports and encourages shopping local, reducing the need to travel and encourages and facilitates sustainability and “green miles”.

14.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity

14.1 None. The proposals have no negative impacts on any of our equality and diversity groups. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not deemed necessary.

Decision information

Key decision number	981
Wards affected	All wards

Document information

Report author	
Andy Bond, Town Centre Operations Manager Ian Waller, Service Director, Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing	
Background documents	
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
<i>This must be made available to the public for up to 4 years.</i>	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix 1	Fees and Charges 2020-21 / Fees and Charges 2021 - 22