

Subject: Revitalising Rossendale Markets – Marketing Strategy **Status:** For Publication

Report to: Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee **Date:** 10th March 2009

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

Portfolio

Holder: Communities and Neighbourhoods

Key Decision: No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek the views of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on options for a marketing and promotion strategy of Rossendale Markets in line with the Cabinet's recommendations in the Revitalising Rossendale Markets report of 21st January 2009.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.

- Delivering Quality Services to Customers
- Delivering Regeneration across the Borough
- Keeping Our Borough Clean and Green
- Promoting Rossendale as a cracking place to live and visit
- Improving health and well being across the Borough
- Well Managed Council

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- Failure to implement a clear and targeted marketing strategy is likely to contribute to the continuing decline of the markets in Rossendale and they may become an unsustainable drain on council resources.
- Loss of traders and failure to replace those who leave will lead to a further loss of income if the traders cannot be replaced, potentially leading to the closure of one or more markets.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 There are 3 Markets in Rossendale:- Bacup, Haslingden & Rawtenstall. The Market in Bacup is situated on Union Street, in the town centre. It is a modern outdoor market comprising 26 cabins and 4 blocks of open stalls. Haslingden Market is of similar construction, but smaller, with 12 cabins and 2 blocks of open stalls. It is located on Blackburn Road, in the centre of Haslingden. This market was built with SRB (Single Regeneration Budget) funding. Rawtenstall Market can be found on Newchurch Road, at the edge of the town centre. It comprises an indoor market hall with in the region of 50 stalls and an outdoor area of 20 cabins and 14 open stalls.
- 4.2 Rossendale Markets are currently heavily reliant on council taxpayers' money to continue operating. When considering the deficit including cash and non cash expenditure, Haslingden currently runs at the highest deficit of £39,556; Bacup has a deficit of £29,180; Rawtenstall has a deficit of £33,765. A key consideration is that when only having regard to cash expenditure such as repairs, staff expenses and utilities, Rawtenstall market has a surplus of £289 whilst the other two markets remain in deficit (Haslingden £26,302 and Bacup £9,579).
- 4.3 The decision of Cabinet on 21st January 2009 was to develop a marketing strategy, appraise it over a period of 5/6 months and reported back the findings to Cabinet in September/October 2009.

5. Marketing approaches.

- 5.1 The Communities Team has striven to maximize the advertising and promotion of the Markets with minimal funds. This has included advertising in the local press in advance of events e.g. at Christmas; the Scallywag newsletter which is distributed to all primary school children; 2 borough-wide leaflet drops; car stickers for all traders, and leaflets and posters in all public buildings. No advertising has been specifically targeted at attracting new traders to the markets, to fill vacant stalls.
- 5.2 Rossendale markets nearest competitors are Bury, Burnley, Heywood, Rochdale and Accrington Markets. The most high profile of these is Bury, which describes itself as the 'World Famous Bury Market', and has been voted the Best British Market. Bury Market lists the following as the advertising it engages in on its' website

Local/regional press advertising, Radio advertising, PR and competitions, Presentations and courtesy visits, Newspaper, Magazines/Press: draws and editorial, Specialist Press: editorial Coach – driver's promotion, Leaflets, posters, banners, hoardings, Tourist Boards, Print; leaflets, posters, town centre fact pack and artwork, Internet activity on hundreds of sites, Mailing programmes, prize draws and data capture, Press briefings, and familiarisation visits, Editorial news items, radio programmes, TV and press coverage, Exhibitions, Market research, Radio, TV, posters, leaflets in Tourist Information

Centres Nationwide, Digital Video Discs , coach marketing, and email campaigns.'

- 5.3 Heywood Market operates a successful free prize draw whereby customers receive raffle tickets when they make a purchase on any stall on the market, and this enters them into the weekly prize draw.
- 5.4 Tameside Markets have recently broadcast TV advertising featuring famous local people.
- 5.5 Food festivals were held up as a good example of how to kickstart a market at the Third National Food Markets Conference 2008.

6. Successful Marketing

6.1 *'Firms who place customer service and innovation ahead of history and complacency will be those who succeed and survive'. ('How to Market Your Business', Dave Patten)*

6.2 Some key principles of marketing are:-

- Don't indulge in promotion unless you can measure a response – this will be key to being able to provide a review report to Cabinet in September
- Marketing should be concentrated on identifying a core of customers who may have a stronger need for your offering
- Advertising should make sure you are remembered – create a strong image
- Follow the 4 P's:
 - Product – products which customers want, fit for purpose etc...
 - Price – value for money
 - Place – how visible are the premises, what signs are there?
 - Promotion –strong marketing plan

7. Consultation with traders

Initial consultation with traders has been carried out about marketing and promotion. Questionnaires were issued to 60 traders and 19 were returned.

- 7.1 When asked how to attract more traders to each of the markets, 11 traders felt that advertising and promotion for both customers and traders was the key.
- 7.2 1 trader felt that advertising in newspapers in the local and wider area was important.
- 7.3 Next to this, 5 traders felt that the markets should be advertised in local magazines, and 5 traders felt that leaflets for the markets are a good idea.

8. OPTIONS

Listed below are a number of promotional ideas that could be considered as part of the emerging marketing strategy. Clearly there is a cost in delivering any of these promotional activities. These costs need to be balanced against the achievement of best outcomes and the best use of resources inline with the financial challenges set out at 4.2 above.

Large scale advertising

- 8.1 Bus Stop Advertising - Billboard advertising - Van advertising - Bus Advertising - Petrol Pump Advertising - Direct Advertising: leaflets - Adverts on side of refuse wagons Canvas / Cotton 'bags for life' with Rossendale Markets logo. Example:

Publications

- 8.2 Adverts in local (and not so local) newspapers to attract new customers. Newspapers are widely read in each area:- Rossendale Free Press - Accrington Observer - Rochdale Observer, Manchester Evening News.
- 8.3 Local magazines:- Rossendale Local Magazine, Haslingden Issue: Rawtenstall Issue: Northern Life Magazine: Scallywag magazine: distributed to all primary school children in Rossendale
- 8.4 National magazines:- E.g. BBC Good Food Magazine.
- 8.5 Trade Newspapers to advertise for new traders – advertising targeted towards responsive customers e.g. The Trader Magazine

Printed adverts

- 8.6 Leaflets and posters displayed in public buildings and train stations to raise the profile of the Markets.

Signage

- 8.7 Banners (freestanding or pole mounted) to make the markets visible and attractive to potential customers. Helps to present a strong image to customers. Utilised by Bury & Heywood Markets and potentially more cost effective than improvement works to buildings.

Sponsorship

- 8.8 Supporting a local sports team in return for publicity. Football Club e.g. Rossendale United (example attendance 121 at a recent match)
- Stand advertising Board
 - 20ft pitch side advertising board
 - 10ft pitch side advertising board
 - Half page advert in match programme

- 8.9 Cricket Club – sponsor ball
- sponsor player

Specialist Markets

- 8.10 Food Festival at one or all 3 markets – previously held at Rawtenstall Market as part of Rossendale Weekend which is no longer taking place. Costs dependant on whether event organised in-house or bought in e.g. continental market.
- 8.11 Collectors/second hand market at Haslingden Market – Haslingden market has 2 banks of 22 open stalls which are vacant. Operating a specialist market on one or two days may attract new customers as well as filling empty stalls, providing additional income for the markets and boosting the businesses of existing traders.

Group Travel

- 8.12 The markets could create a group travel offer in conjunction with other tourist facilities e.g. ‘Shop and Show’ – a visit to Bacup Market, lunch at the Rose & Bowl, followed by a show at the Horse & Bamboo Theatre Group. This would mean coach parties visiting the markets on a regular basis. The markets would need to be marketed to group travel operators in conjunction with other willing tourist attractions.

Food Trail

- 8.13 Rossendale Markets could lead the way with a Rossendale Food Trail similar to Ribble Valley Food Trail – leaflets and advertising promoting Rossendale food and drink businesses. Initial discussion has commenced around this and it is possible that external funding secured by Regeneration department can be used to fund this.

Promotions

- 8.14 For example free prize draws on leaflets in public buildings, competitions in the local press, or entry to a prize draw on making a purchase.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

9. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 9.1 The report notes that collectively there is a c. £100k trading loss per annum. Additional publicity is unlikely to have any significant financial benefit to Council in resolving this current deficit.
- 9.2 Members should also satisfy themselves that the actual product of the Markets and offer to customers is correct before being marketing to the public.

10. MONITORING OFFICER

10.1 No comments.

11. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

11.1 There are no HR implications.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The Cabinet recognise that the Rossendale Markets are in need of revitalizing and need to be sustainable in the long term. Central to this is to have in place a clear marketing strategy to attract new traders and customers to the markets, lead to the Markets becoming busy and vibrant.

12.2 Rossendale Markets will benefit greatly from a clear marketing strategy which provides for frequent, targeted, measurable advertising.

13 RECOMMENDATION(S)

13.1 That Overview and Scrutiny are asked to consider the options highlighted above and provide comments on their viability and to put forward any additional options that should be considered as part of the Marketing Strategy.

13.2 That the development of the Marketing Strategy be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities and the Deputy Chief Executive.

14. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

Trader consultation and the views of the Market Liaison Group are that more marketing and promotion of the Markets are essential for the Market to have a future.

Cabinet recommended that the Overview & Scrutiny Group have the ability to make recommendations for the marketing strategy.

Report to Cabinet on 21st January 2008

This marketing strategy is part of a number of measures aimed at reviewing and revitalizing Rossendale Markets. A Highlight Report has been to Executive Management Team who support this review.

15. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required Yes

Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached Yes

16. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required No

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached No

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