

Notes of Kirkgate Markets Forum held on Thursday 10 February 2011

Present: Cllrs G Harper (Chair), S Golton, A Blackburn, B Anderson, T Leadley,
K Groves.

Officers: C Follin, S Burgess

Notes: S Burgess

Item 1 **WELCOME**

Cllr Harper welcomed all to the Forum and outlined its purpose as a forum for traders and members to discuss and make recommendations on the strategic direction of Kirkgate markets.

Item 2 **APOLOGIES**

L Loughton, M Hocken, C Hocken, D Gibbons, J Orsborn

Item 3 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference were approved subject to endorsement by trader representatives.

Action: Circulate TOR again to trader and NMTF representatives.

Item 4 **WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

The Chair expressed his hope that the Forum would go some way to overcoming issues of mistrust and lack of communication raised by traders in the past and more recently at the ongoing Scrutiny enquiry. He also recorded his disappointment that trader representatives had given their apologies for the meeting. Those present agreed it was time to move forward with the new manager and a new Forum and not to dwell on past difficulties.

There was a discussion about the effective representation of such a large number of traders' views. Experience showed that large open meetings tended to become 'single issue' focussed. It was agreed that in order to support trader representatives on the Forum, markets management would undertake as many one to one interviews with Kirkgate traders as possible, on a rolling annual basis, to ensure all views were being adequately represented. SB reminded the Forum that minutes would also be available to all traders for information.

Action: Markets management.

Item 5 **WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?**

Agreed on the need to find a sustainable way forward which is *right for Leeds*, and this would inevitably require further change from all parties. Clearly, investment is a key issue; noted that even if the surplus income were to be ringfenced for the market this would impact on other key council services such as social care so there is no easy solution.

Item 6 **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

The following points were made during a general discussion:-

- Elected members felt traders need to get involved and accept that

customer needs have changed and that we need to be selling things customers wish to buy, when they want them, to attract more footfall. Research from the University of Leeds underlines this;

- Students and city centre dwellers must be our new target market;
- New offers discussed included a 'Penny Bazaar' (M&S); vintage clothing; working with Universities and colleges create a 'micro-business' area where their students could market test ideas.
- There was a long discussion about the potential merits of the Eastgate development, including the potential business from contractors during the build; the reconnection between the markets area and prime retail streets; the opportunity to access a different customer base enabling different types of businesses to grow and succeed in the market; the market becoming an attractive location for those businesses.
- It was agreed that there is a need to reduce voids whilst improving, not reducing, the offer.

Item 7

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Harper wishes to meet with Sara Gonzalez of the Friends of Kirkgate market, before next Scrutiny to discuss working better together. SB to arrange.

Item 8

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday 24 February 2011 from 6-7pm in Room 2, Civic Hall.