

Scrutiny Committee – 17 May 2010
Newgate Market – Outline Business Plan

Following the Scrutiny Committee meeting of 24 March officers were asked to provide a briefing note outlining a vision and broad “balance sheet” for the future of the Newgate Market area.

Suggested proposals, which provide a broad vision for the Newgate area in making the market “fit for purpose” and meeting modern day trading expectations, can basically be condensed into six main categories:

1. Future uses of the Newgate area:

- Consideration of uses of the area for different times of the day and by different users
- A more flexible use in general - i.e. not necessarily just for retailing, consideration could be given for pavement cafes, art works, landscaping, performance area, “big screen”, cycle racks, exhibitions, busking area etc.

2. The Market itself:

- There are currently around 100 stalls, with the market open 7 days per week, all year round (see attached layout plan). Many stalls though are regularly not occupied though and certain areas are under-used.
- The existing stalls are ‘fixed’ in situ and have been since 1991 when the market was last refurbished. They are very solid and robust (resulting in only a handful of cancelled market days due to inclement weather). However this arrangement means the area can never be used for anything other than a market, and it can look dull and uninviting when stalls are not occupied (e.g. on quieter market days, plus every evening once the traders have gone).
- Consider reducing the overall size of the actual market / the ‘footprint’ onto which the stalls stand, with 50 or 60 quality stalls, with an agreement by traders to remain open for a minimum number of hours (e.g. 8.30am -5.00pm)
- Possible top of the range demountable stalls - such as mini-marquees or gazebos - that can be removed when not required (i.e. on non-market days, at night etc) or, traders to provide their own stalls, to a consistent design for uniformity
- Consider the number of operational market days, based on trends of supply and demand (Mondays for example is currently only running at about a third capacity – if it were to close on this day for example, it would offer up an opportunity to regularly maintain and clean the whole area – a luxury unavailable at present with the market being open every day).
- It is anticipated that all the stalls on a reduced sized market would regularly be occupied, virtually all year round. Furthermore, it would be an opportunity to reassess and improve the quality of what is being offered, raising standards generally to the customers’ benefit
- Conclusion – a regularly full, well-stocked, busy, attractive market with guaranteed ‘minimum’ opening times to reinstate customer confidence.

3. The Adjoining Area:

- Encourage neighbouring businesses in the Shambles to 'open up' the backs of their properties on to the (new) market place
- Encourage any Shambles food operators to consider a small 'pavement café' extension of their business onto the market area
- Similarly with M&S that dominates the majority of the west side of the Newgate area, encourage the store to open-up/engage more with the Newgate site

4. Raising Revenue:

- A "capital receipt" could be gained by enabling a small development (attractive, purpose-built, bespoke units) in either the area between the top of The Shambles and the current meat and fish stalls (Site A on attached plan - circa 1,800 sq.m) or, at the lower end in the area between M&S and Cox's leather shop (Site B – Circa 3,000 sq.m)
- Revenue raised could then be used to enhance the area (better lighting, better surface, the purchase of 'new' stalls, plus new "pop up" electrical supplies, redevelop the meat and fish stalls)
- Residual site values have been estimated at £150k and £125k respectively by officers in Consultancy. However, it should be noted both sites would be subject to tight planning controls and would be advertised to ensure best offers
- Alternatively, consider using the 'excess' income (from Newgate Market budget income over expenditure) which in 2009/10 was around £180k

5. Other Issues:

- Market cleansing – this is currently being reviewed by Neighbourhood Services, who are costing-up a draft, proposed SLA. However, such a refreshed and revitalised central location would require cleansing attention of the highest standards
- Overnight parking in Newgate - central area review currently being undertaken by Transport Planning Unit, but an evening city centre car park for Newgate is considered inappropriate by Network Management (there is a need therefore to consider the legal and highway position in stopping current informal parking practices)
- York to join NABMA (*National Association of British Market Authorities*) - currently being considered by officers, to quantify benefits of £600 annual membership fee
- Storage - currently being reviewed in conjunction with Consultancy and Neighbourhood Services; there is a possibility of a bespoke, purpose built storage compound at the lower / M&S area of the market; *nb there is an urgent need to remove the 2 unsightly containers currently in Silver Street which were provided to accommodate vital equipment displaced by the provision of the adjacent new public toilets.*
- Removal of Jubbergate Stalls to enable a clear, open, more inviting entrance to Newgate (*Option 1*)
- Partial clearance of Jubbergate, retaining a quality, attractive stall or two (e.g. flowers and/or seating or pavement café (*Option 2*))
- Silver Street could have potential for better usage (ad hoc stall units, landscaping with flower tubs or seating).

- It should be noted though that in using demountable stalls there would be cost implications in erection/dismantling if done by CYC staff. Also, demountable stalls would be rather more vulnerable to the weather (e.g. strong winds, heavy snow).

6. Outline Balance Sheet:

- The following are indicative costings based on a smaller overall market operation
- With a minimum 50 stalls, say, at an average rate of £30 per day (current average is circa £21 per day – including Jubbergate), and using *Option 1* above (i.e. with no Jubbergate stalls) this equates to about £400k per annum (compared to existing income of around £460k generated from the current 100 stall market)
- In addition, any units sited in Jubbergate (flower stand, café) as highlighted in *Option 2* above could attract at least a further £500 per week (£26k per annum). Likewise, Silver Street could be used during footstreet hours.
- Further income could be generated by the ad hoc 'letting' of land in Newgate on any non-market days (commercial promotions, exhibitions, pavement cafes etc).
- Initial funding would be needed for the demountable stalls (if CYC to provide them) of around £50k, plus funding for 'pop-up' electric units and their installation (a 'very' rough estimate of £60k has been put forward by Neighbourhood Services M&E section who suggest more time/detail would be needed for a more accurate figure)
- Funding also required for clearance of existing stalls, improved surfaces in places, better lighting and better signage (costs unknown at this stage). Improvements could be carried out on a rolling basis covering a number of financial years to an agreed plan – which would invest not only in the market but leisure and entertainment infrastructure.
- A separate exercise is currently ongoing with regard to a purpose built storage area/compound in the market area to accommodate all the markets/city centre operational equipment and spare parts etc, plus the demountable stalls when not in use. An estimate of £21k has been put forward by Consultancy in this respect and ways of funding this are currently being explored.

Conclusion:

For an initial outlay of approximately £100k, and given that there are 2 possible funding options (either 'capital receipt' as in 4 above, or 'top-slicing' of the current excess income over expenditure of the Newgate Market budget), York could have a modernised, new city centre focal point, available for a variety of uses – markets, leisure, exhibitions, performance space, outdoor cafes, seating, bike racks etc - thus meeting the needs, aspirations and expectations of the 21st century, with the potential to become a facility of renown. This thinking could be built into the *Renaissance Project*, and the *City Centre Area Action Plan* process. It should be noted, of course, there will be a need for extensive consultation with the traders and public on design matters before any final decisions are settled upon. However, the potential lies within the Newgate area to help reinvigate York's central area.