

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 4th January 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment and Economy.

SUBJECT: Runcorn Indoor Market Petitions

WARDS: Mersey

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To advise Members that two petitions in respect of Runcorn market have been received.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board

- (1) Notes that the petition has been received
- (2) Notes that the Executive Board has approved the closure of Runcorn Market Hall with effect from 31st January 2011
- (3) Notes the ongoing work that is taking place to relocate Runcorn market traders

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Executive Board approved the closure of the Runcorn Indoor Market on 4th November 2011.

3.2 The Council has received two petitions in respect of the Indoor Market. The first asks for the decision to close the market to be reconsidered. 484 signatures were received. The second specifically refers to the café. 730 signatures were received. The petitions have been logged and a response has been sent to the individuals who submitted them.

3.3 As previously reported, unfortunately the Indoor Market is not commercially viable. For this reason, the Executive Board agreed to the closure.

3.4 A number of meetings and discussions have taken place with those traders that wish to continue. A number of options have been considered including taking space on the street market, relocating to Widnes Market and possibly moving to shop units either in Runcorn Town Centre or Halton Lea. Traders have been advised that for those properties in Council ownership, consideration would be given to a stepped introduction to rates and rents

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Corporate Plan ‘Directing and Developing Resources’ chapter makes it clear that the council must be increasingly efficient. It says ‘the emphasis is very much on shifting to using resources “smartly” and to use efficiency savings to fund investments in front-line services.’ The provision of the markets is very much a front line service but the degree on which it makes a loss has ultimately impacted on its long term viability.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no other implications

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton N/A

None identified at this time

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The market is an area of employment for small businesses

6.3 A Healthy Halton N/A

None identified at this time

6.4 A Safer Halton

None identified at this time

6.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal

The Community Strategy Urban Renewal key objective d is ‘to revitalise the town centres into dynamic, well-designed high quality commercial areas that can continue to meet the needs of local people, investors, businesses and visitors.’ The market was developed as part of previous regeneration of the town centre and does provide a facility in Runcorn Town Centre. Consideration is being given to how the Market Hall can be utilised in the future.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no associated risks in respect of the petitions received. .

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Council officers are working hard to ensure that the impact on traders and customers alike is kept to a minimum. Indeed, it is hoped that the relocation of some of the traders within the Town Centre will support an increased footfall, so that the services and merchandise provided by traders continue to be accessible.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act. However the petitions are held on Floor 5 of the Municipal Building

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