

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 1st November 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director Economy, Enterprise and Property

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Widnes Market - Business Plan

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members that Widnes Market Management will provide a presentation on the proposed Market Business Plan to outline its contents and to seek a recommendation for approval.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That Members consider the Market Business Plan and recommend it for approval at Executive Board.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Over recent years the retail sector has seen a significant shift from in person to online shopping as people's habits change. It's estimated that circa 20% of all sales will be made online in 2022, thus putting further pressure on retail environments. The pandemic had a significant impact on the Market but irrespective of that footfall has dropped by circa 25% over pre-pandemic levels thus highlighting the trend to more online shopping.

3.2 The Business Plan identifies the priorities and actions to be undertaken by the Market Management team over the period April 2022- April 2025 to ensure the Market remains a successful trading environment into the future. The overarching vision for the Market is to ensure that it remains a shopping destination at the heart of the town centre, where people want to shop and where there is a wide variety of quality products at competitive prices, and where traders are able to thrive and grow their businesses.

3.3 There are a number of main themes in the business plan that the Market team intend to focus on moving forward, these can be summarised as follows:-

- Improve the online and social media presence for the Market in general, and in particular to help and support Traders to improve their online presence
- To actively encourage a more diverse and unique range of products and services on offer by attracting new Traders to the Market
- Continue to offer free public interest events to help promote the Market to the public and to potential new traders alike.
- To proactively promote the Market as a shopping destination via a variety of media.
- To ensure the Market remains economically viable as a business model.

3.4 In order to achieve the above the business plan has a number of key priorities and actions that will be the focus of the Market Managements team's work. These include ensuring we have high quality traders, ensuring there is a good mix of products for sale, ensuring a successful promotions and marketing strategy and ensuring the Market remains economically viable by focussing on the financial aspects around income and expenditure.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no significant policy implications arising from the above

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no other or financial implications arising from the report.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

None

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Having a healthy vibrant Market can provide employment opportunities for residents.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

None

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are no risks identified.

8.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Market Business Plan	See document attached	Catherine Haworth