Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
BRIEFING NOTE – No. 3/16

Date: 14 April 2016

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment
                     Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: Update on Medway's Markets

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1   Introduction

1.1 This briefing note provides an update to RCE Overview and Scrutiny
    Committee on the operation of council markets, as requested at previous
    meetings.

2   Gillingham Market (Monday and Saturday)

2.1 This is the largest of the three markets in Medway and the most successful
    due partly to its location in the High Street.

2.2 Gillingham Market continues to perform strongly and typically attracts 35
    traders on Monday and 25 traders on a Saturday. The market is therefore
    generally at capacity on a Monday and not at capacity on a Saturday.
    Monday trades better due there being no other local markets within the area
    and there is more choice of traders. Saturdays are always more challenging
    as there is more choice of markets for traders to attend.

2.3 The layout and visual appearance of the market could be improved, subject
    to available resources, via a review and relocation of the street furniture.
    Discussions with the emergency services confirm that regrouping of some of
    the street furniture would allow better access throughout the length of the
    High Street.

2.4 The visual look of the market could be improved by a single style of stalls as
    in the case of Canterbury City Council, subject to available resource.

3. Strood Market (Tuesday and Saturday)

3.1 Successful operation of Strood Market continues to be challenging, due to its
    location in Commercial Road Car Park, which continues to suffer from
    drainage problems.

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3.2 The market typically attracts 18 traders on Tuesday with 15 traders on a Saturday and is therefore generally not at capacity on a Tuesday or a Saturday.

3.3 Overall footfall to the market has significantly declined over the last eighteen months due to the recent openings of Aldi, Poundland and the Card Factory. There has been a decrease in traders attending as they cannot compete with low priced general market type goods that are available seven days a week.

3.4 A publicity and promotional campaign would help to attract new traders and shoppers, subject to available resource.

3.5 With Local Growth Fund funding already secured for Strood, plans have been developed to improve the car park and subsequent trading environment.

4. <u>Rochester Farmers Market (Third Sunday of each month, 9am to 1pm)</u>

4.1 Rochester Farmers Market moved from Corporation Street car park to the Blue Boar Lane Car Park in September 2015. This has been a very popular move with traders and customers, and the number of traders at the market has increased considerably.

4.2 Rochester Farmers Market was awarded best Kent Farmers Market by **Produced in Kent** in March 2016. The new location in Rochester works well for traders and customers.

4.3 In a recent Mystery Shoppers report (January 2016) key highlights for this market was the appealing visual look and layout (all gazebos), the variety of products available, and good customer service. The two negative comments were shoppers having to pay for parking to attend the market and the number of cars still parked within the layout during the market operation.

4.4 Inconsiderate parking by people leaving cars overnight within the market area or by local residents with parking permits does cause difficulties. This is in spite of clear signage and barriers that are put in place by the markets team the afternoon before to ask people to park in the area of the car park that is not occupied by the market. A change to the local traffic order for the Blue Boar Lane car park could allow penalty ticketing of cars parked within the market site.

4.5 Consideration should now be given to expanding this market if it is to remain sustainable and popular with the local community.

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