



Report For:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Cabinet 11 November 2019
Part:	Part 1 - Open

SUMMARY

Title of Report:	CABINET RESPONSE TO THE REFERRAL FROM HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE – HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN MARKET
Chairman of High Wycombe Town Committee: Cabinet Member: Officer Contact: Direct Dial: Email:	Councillor Tony Green Councillor Steve Broadbent Peter Wright 01494421841 Peter.wright@wycombe.gov.uk
Wards affected:	High Wycombe Town Unparished Areas
Reason for the Decision:	To respond to the referral from the High Wycombe Town Committee in relation to proposals for the High Wycombe Town Market.
Proposed Decision:	That: (i) the suggestions from the High Wycombe Town Committee be noted; (ii) the Council continue to welcome discussions with the operator to maximise future opportunities; and (iii) the Council remain open to exploring international food market opportunities.
Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications	Risk: n/a Equalities: n/a Health & Safety: n/a
Monitoring Officer/ S.151 Officer Comments	Monitoring Officer: High Wycombe Town Committee holds no executive powers and any motions put forward must be to the executive, being Cabinet. The two motions put forward were put forward in accordance with procedure and can now be considered by Cabinet taking into account any officer recommendations. S.151 Officer: There are no direct immediate financial implications of the recommendations. Any decision made will need to be factored into the budget setting for the new Buckinghamshire Council.
Consultees:	High Wycombe Town Committee considered its proposed recommendations at its meeting on 10 September 2019.

Options:	Cabinet can accept or reject the recommendations of the High Wycombe Town Committee.
Next Steps:	Cabinet provide a response to the High Wycombe Town Committee Chairman.
Background Papers:	Info Sheet: 3 June - HWTC 02-2019 High Wycombe Town Committee Agenda: 10 September 2019 High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes: 10 September 2019
Abbreviations:	HWTC – High Wycombe Town Committee

1. The High Wycombe Town Committee at its meeting on 10 September 2019 received responses to a number of questions and concerns regarding the High Wycombe town market. Following discussions and comments two motions were put forward by members at the meeting. The suggested recommendations were as follows:
 - i) the market does not open for one more day for further hot food sales and;
 - ii) the option for an international food market be investigated.
2. The first motion was agreed by a majority of the Committee in that the market did not extend sales for an additional day specifically regarding hot food sales. The second motion was also agreed by a majority of the Committee in that an international food market option should be investigated. The Chairman of the Committee agreed that these proposals would be referred to Cabinet for discussion and consideration.

Officer Comments

3. The importance of the market is recognised as being a central and historical feature of the town. It animates the town centre, providing an attraction which drives footfall, supporting surrounding businesses. The market also caters to High Wycombe's diverse community.
4. In recent years the market has shrunk in size due to competition from online and discount retailers. This is not an uncommon position for a town market and the Council are looking at ways to improve matters. However, as responsibility will transfer to the new Buckinghamshire Council at the end of March 2020 options are limited. It is proposed that an additional day is trialled, aiming at higher value stalls, to see whether or not there is sufficient demand. Having an additional day separate from the existing market would prevent there being a conflict with the new traders.
5. The market is particularly important as part of the Council's Future High Street Fund bid, which could potentially attract as much as £25m of central government funding. The bid is currently being developed but there is potential to ask for an element of funding to increase the vibrancy of the High Street, building on and improving the current market offering.
6. In terms of the exact mix of uses that an additional day may have, it has not currently been worked out with the operator, and it would not be sensible to restrict those uses before understanding what the wider appetite is among potential traders.
7. It has been suggested that street food is not appropriate or desirable. This would appear to be contrary to the direction that markets are moving in generally: the more successful traders currently operating in High Wycombe are selling food and these sorts of businesses are part of the 'experiential' offering the town must provide if it is to continue to thrive.