



SANDBACH MARKET DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010

Aims

To ensure the Indoor and Outdoor Markets remain a viable and valuable part of the shopping experience in Sandbach.

To establish a platform for ongoing dialogue between the market traders, Sandbach Town Council and Cheshire East Council in order to deliver measurable economic and social benefits to the town and to the community.

To identify and confirm the operational and financial responsibility for delivering any proposed change to the way in which Sandbach Market is managed.

History

Sandbach has been a market town since the 16th Century. Markets were held on Thursdays and annual fairs were held at Easter time and in September.

Background

In 2004 the Countryside Agency produced a report on research they had conducted between February and May that year to assess the extent to which traditional markets contribute to the revitalising of market towns. Their report was based on fifty interviews conducted on market days in each of six towns; Sandbach, Clitheroe, Cockermouth, Padiham, Penrith and Ulverston. The case study report summary identified Sandbach Market "as a large and successful market which does not appear to contribute to tourism in the town".

Over the last 5 years the responsibility for management of the market has changed. In 2004 Congleton Borough Council outsourced the management of its markets to Town & Country Markets. They relinquished this contract in July 2009, whereupon the management became the responsibility of the newly created of Cheshire East Unitary Council.

In August 2009 the Sandbach Partnership defined its responsibility as a community led initiative to identify and support solutions to the needs of Sandbach and its surrounding rural parishes. The vision statement of the Partnership is to create a vibrant and inclusive market town and the projects they outlined included the promotion of Sandbach as a shopping destination and tourist attraction.

In October 2009 Sandbach Town Council commissioned a survey based on their vision that "the weekly market will be managed and promoted to maximise benefits to the town, giving consideration to aspects including quality, size, location and how to accommodate visitors". A survey of market traders was carried out by members of Sandbach Town Council on two Thursday Market Days and one Saturday Market Day during October 2009 and a subsequent report was produced in November 2009.

Currently, a market is held every Thursday and Saturday, both indoors within the Market Hall and outdoors on an area known as The Commons. On non-market days this area reverts to being used as a car park. The busiest market day is Thursday.

1. Action Plan – Short Term (by 31st March 2010)

Public Conveniences

1. Install signage to establish the opening and closing times of the public conveniences
2. Ensure the effectiveness of the cleaning operation is reviewed

Indoor Market Hall

3. Review the status of the recently refurbished toilet and washroom area.
4. Identify the reasons for changing the two separate female WCs into a combined ladies/disabled toilet facility.
5. Re-instate the security keypad to restrict usage of the facilities to market traders
6. Communicate in writing with the market traders about the creation of a Sandbach Market Traders Committee.
7. Communicate with the Indoor Market traders to manage their views that the alterations to the "Traders Only" toilets were seen as a downgrade of the facilities
8. Issue Cheshire East market contracts to replace Town & Country contracts
9. Provide instructions on how to use the new wheelchair access into the café area
10. Install a yellow/black warning strip on the access route into the café area.
11. Ensure the width of the access routes into the café and toilet areas is adequate.
12. Consider opening the Indoor Market Hall on one additional day per week.
13. Consider the introduction of a 50p per market day traders advertising levy
14. Confirm the process for reporting building maintenance and repair requirements
15. Consider opening the Market Hall on Sunday 18th April during the Sandbach Transport Festival with the Cheshire East Market Supervisor to have operational management for the Market Hall and for the recruitment of traders.

Outdoor Market

16. Consider the option to position stalls on The Common alongside Congleton Road and away from the Library in order to provide more car parking spaces
17. Consider the introduction of a 50p traders advertising levy

2. Action Plan – Medium Term (by 30th June 2010)

Indoor Market Hall

18. Consider the option to cover the table top stalls within the Indoor Market Hall
19. Consider the implementation of different market closing times in winter (15:00) and in summer (16:00) and enforce through the Cheshire East market contract.
20. Obtain an estimate from Cheshire East Cleaning Services for a deep clean of the Market Hall, including the stall covers where in place

Outdoor Market

21. Consider the implementation of different market closing times in winter (15:00) and in summer (16:00) and enforce through the Cheshire East market contract.
22. Review the rents paid by regular and casual traders and consider the introduction of a more standardised approach.
23. Consider the introduction of "special events" on Thursdays to increase footfall.
24. Consider the introduction of a monthly Saturday Farmers Market on The Cobbles.
25. Discuss and identify potential opportunities to improve the link between the Market, the local community and visitors to Sandbach with David McGifford, the Acting Chief Executive of South East Cheshire Enterprises – Sustainable Towns Strategy
26. Discuss and identify potential opportunities to increase the use of The Cobbles Market Square with Bob Hardiker, Project Co-ordinator South East Cheshire Enterprises - Market Square Post Implementation Review
27. Advertise the market to the local community and to visitors to Sandbach.

3. Action Plan – Long Term (by 31st December 2010)

Indoor Market Hall and Outdoor Market

28. Instigate a “Shoppers Survey” by a local school to ascertain the level of demand for Sandbach Market and identify any opportunities for change.
29. Analyse data researched by the Government and by Members of Parliament related to “the role of a market as part of regeneration initiatives” and identify any opportunities for change.
30. Consider use of the Cobbles Market Square, containing the Saxon crosses, as additional space for the Thursday Market.