

Item 5

Market Square Information Update

To:

Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee

01/07/2021

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

Key Decision - None

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The following is an information report in response to a formal update request from Councillor Payne, Liberal Democrat Spokes for Communities, Climate Change, Environment, Waste and City Centre, on the process for trial, testing and consultation of the demountable stalls proposed as part of the Market Square Project public consultation draft vision and concept design.

2. Recommendation:

The Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee note the information update contained in this report

3. Background

- 3.1 On 25th March 2021, the Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee unanimously resolved to approve the proposed consultation draft project vision and concept design for a six-week public consultation starting in May 2021.
- 3.2 In accordance with this resolution, the Council commenced the approved public consultation on 19th May, with the publication of a six-week online questionnaire survey ending 7th July 2021. As part of the public consultation process, the Council has committed to undertake a range of targeted stakeholder engagement activities, including the trialling of demountable stalls on the market square, involving market traders and shoppers.
- 3.3 Although the proposed project concept design included two prototype demountable stall design options, officers took the decision to firstly re-assess whether there were any available suitable demountable stall designs already in production and use, before incurring the cost/ risk of commissioning a prototype design.
- 3.4 To date, officer research has identified at least one existing potentially suitable demountable stall supplier – City B Group – which it is now in the process of arranging a trial for.
- 3.5 The remaining content of this report addresses the specific requested updates from Councillor Payne, as follows. For ease of reference, Councillor Payne’s update request is shown below in italics, followed by the officer’s corresponding response.

Councillor Payne requested an update on the process for trial, testing and consultation of the demountable stalls proposed for the market square redevelopment project be brought to the 1st July scrutiny committee so that:

a) *“A definitive process for the consultation of the trial stalls can be subjected to scrutiny, which has previously not taken place. The success of these stalls is a critical component of the project's success and the experience of traders and shoppers so should be properly and publicly scrutinised.”*

3.6 Council officers, with the support of the Cambridge Market Traders Association (CMTA), are designing a two-stage trial process. The first stage, to commence late June/ early July 2021, will involve a minimum two-week initial trial of one or two demountable stall designs from each selected supplier. Suppliers will be selected against a demountable stall brief currently being finalised by officers with the CMTA. The selection process will include seeking views of market managers and, via the National Market Traders Federation (NMTF), traders, in locations where the demountable stall systems are already in use. For the initial trial stage, the selected demountable stalls will be erected on the taxi rank on Market Hill for market traders, shoppers and Council officers to carry out an initial assessment, using evaluation criteria currently being finalised by officers with the CMTA.

3.7 Subject to a positive initial assessment outcome, the second stage will involve the selection of a preferred supplier (or suppliers if more than one identified through the assessment process) for a full operational trial of the selected demountable stall system over the remaining summer/ autumn/ winter period on the market square. Subject to securing the agreement of participating traders (number to be defined), the full trial will involve removing participating trader's existing fixed market stalls and replacing them with the selected demountable stall system.

b) *“There is clarity about the consultation process being used for the demountable stalls, which has currently changed from the initial report and Executive Cllr's information at full council, which indicated two stalls would be tested and that at the time no prototypes existed. Substantive changes to the initial plans should be highlighted.”*

- 3.8 As stated in 3.3 above, officers have decided to defer the commissioning and testing of any prototype stall design options, while they re-assessed whether there were any potentially suitable demountable stall systems already in production and use elsewhere. This was felt to be prudent, given the anticipated cost/ risk of pursuing the development/ testing of any prototype design.
- 3.9 As stated in 3.6 above, officers are working with CMTA to develop a brief, against which demountable market stall suppliers will be assessed and, if considered a reasonable fit, selected to provide one or two demountable stalls for the initial trial stage.
- 3.10 Officers are also working with CMTA to develop an evaluation framework for market traders and shoppers to 'test' the stall designs against and provide structured feed-back on their resulting findings/ views.

c) "Members can understand the criteria by which the initial stall designs have been selected, including having sight of any technical specifications, information about prior evaluations and their certification for use in environments like the Cambridge market square, to be satisfied of their quality and suitability for the local context. and whether time taken to demount and reassemble is to be considered."

- 3.11 As stated in 3.6 above, officers are working with CMTA to finalise demountable stall brief and associated evaluation criteria for initial assessment of selected demountable stall systems. The brief and supporting evaluation criteria will cover the following key elements: 'quality' (eg. durable, fire/ tear proof, robust fittings/ components); 'practicality' (eg. ease of put up/ take down/ transport (time taken/ number of people required) and storage needs; adaptable internal trading system for different business need (ie. hot food v retail v produce), able to accommodate electrics/ lighting); 'weatherproof' (ie. wind loading with suitable anchor system; waterproof) and sustainability (ie. economic lifespan; environmental performance

standard). In determining which demountable stall suppliers to select for initial trial, officers will review product specification against the aforementioned brief and consult other users for their assessment of the product's performance.

d) "An indication of the cost of the different models of stalls can be shared with members for comparison."

3.12 Officers will seek to obtain a unit cost price for each demountable stall system selected for the initial trial stage. This figure will only be indicative and relate to the supply of a single stall frame and canopy and not include the associated fit out cost, including electrics, lighting, etc.

3.13 The results of the demountable stall trial, including related cost information, will be presented to the Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee, as part of the full project vision and concept design public consultation outcome and recommended next steps report, scheduled for October 2021.

e) "The plans for storing the market stalls during city centre events can be shared, along with an indicator of how and by whom the stalls will be taken down and reassembled"

3.14 As stated in 3.11 above, the initial trial assessment criteria include the number of people and time required to set up and take down a single stall; and associated storage need, including security and space requirements. At this stage, officers envisage that Council will be responsible for the operational management of the proposed demountable stalls, including set up, take down and storage. Officers are currently undertaking an initial assessment of potentially suitable storage options and will present the results as part of the afore-mentioned consultation outcome and next steps report scheduled for October 2021.