



Northumberland
County Council

Northumberland Markets Strategy

2018 – 2022

FINAL DRAFT

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Appendix 1. Markets Strategy Action Plan: 2018 - 2023

Appendix 2. Literature Review Summary

Appendix 3. Review of Action Plan in 2010 - 2015 Strategy

1. Executive Summary

Northumberland County Council recognises the important role that markets play economically, socially and culturally and though nationally the industry is in decline we want to ensure that our markets play their part in making Northumberland a county which people regard as a great place to live, and in which people can access the things they enjoy, whilst having the opportunity to thrive.

The 'Northumberland Markets Strategy 2018-23' sets out the way forward to improve existing markets and identify opportunities for new ones that could make a positive contribution economically and socially to a local area and provide further space for entrepreneurial activity in the County.

It seeks through the adoption and delivery of the Action Plan, to improve Northumberland's Markets through working collaboratively with local stakeholders to ensure that markets are managed and promoted in a way that meets local needs and ensures that they remain financially viable.

2. Why are Markets Important?

Northumberland County Council recognises the importance that markets play in society and the contribution they can make to a town and the local economy, it is considered that:

- Markets provide valuable employment and business opportunities offering platforms to encourage innovation, creativity and confidence for new and developing enterprises.
- They can offer different and varied products and services that may not already be available on the High Street bringing more people into an area and increasing footfall.
- They provide opportunities for non-profit making / charitable / community organisations to engage with local communities.
- They can provide alternative street entertainment, host events and provide a focus in the celebration of festivals and special occasions which, also helps to increase passing trade for local retailers.

- People also value markets as a social space in which they interact with other people and our historic markets are part of the County's cultural heritage.

3. The Vision for Markets in Northumberland

The overarching vision for the market strategy for Northumberland is:

'To create a diverse, vibrant market experience that has a positive economic, social and cultural impact.'

4. Aims and Objectives

Northumberland County Council aims to ensure that market operations are professional, financially viable and add value to the community. The key objectives of this strategy are:

- To reverse the decline in trader numbers operating in Northumberland.
- To work with local stakeholders, especially town and parish councils, to ensure that each existing market reflects their local needs.
- To identify opportunities to improve the promotion of our markets.
- To clarify the legal powers under which markets are operated and improve how balance of trade principles are applied.
- To identify opportunities to improve the management of our markets.
- To identify opportunities for new markets where there is a local demand for this.

5. Developing the Strategy

A desktop study was undertaken to identify the key findings of academic and industry research in regards to the role that markets can and do play in the places

they are based. A summary of the key findings of the literature review are shown in Appendix 2.

Scoping sessions were held with internal stakeholders and representatives of the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) to identify how the strategy would be developed in a way that captured the national context and local considerations.

The Action Plan from the existing Market Strategy was reviewed and an assessment of progress against each action from the strategy was undertaken, a summary of this review is available at Appendix 3.

Site visits were undertaken to markets and there was direct engagement with customers and traders. However, the key engagement events during the review of this strategy were a series of Stakeholder Workshops in each Market Town. These workshops sought to engage local stakeholders in the review of this strategy, invitees included traders, town councils, chambers of trade, retailers, freemen and town teams.

The analysis of the feedback received during the stakeholder engagement activity has been pivotal in the development of this strategy. The key themes identified during all consultations were:

- The desire to increase trader numbers and/or the quality of stalls and products on offer to engender an increase in footfall.
- The desire to increase footfall in towns to support the wider economy.
- An acknowledgement of the decline in markets nationally.
- An acknowledgement that a combination of factors, including the rise of discount retailers, large supermarkets and on-line shopping, are resulting in

extremely challenging trading conditions for market traders.

- The need to more effectively promote markets to the public.
- That there are not enough young traders coming through to offset the number that are retiring.

6. The Legal Framework

The modern statutory framework for markets is contained in Part III of the Food Act 1984

Many markets have evolved as a result of Royal Charters or Letters Patent and others exist by virtue of long user, custom and practice and by prescription. In Northumberland the Morpeth, Hexham and Berwick Markets were established by way of Royal Charter in the 12th, 13th and 16th centuries.

Markets arising from franchise (e.g. charter markets) or statute (including those under the Food Act 1984) are afforded certain rights in law. Charter Markets for example have the right and power to control the establishment of 'rival' markets within a given distance of the franchise or statute market (6 & 2/3 miles).

There are many reasons why market rights are important. The ability to control other market events and the ability to use market rights enables many local authorities to organise markets on a more structured basis.

In addition to the various powers available under charter, letters patent, prescription, custom and practice and local legislation it is possible to utilise the provisions of Part 111 of the Food Act 1984 which provide Local Authorities with the power to:

- Establish or acquire a market (Section 50)

- Appoint the days and hours during which markets are to be held (Section 52)
- Demand in respect of the market such charges as they may from time to time determine (Section 53)

The European Services Directive (Directive 2006/123/EC) became part of United Kingdom legislation on December 28th 2009. The objective of the Services Directive is to realise the full potential of services markets in Europe by removing legal and administrative barriers to trade and it covers a range of licensing functions undertaken by local authorities. However, there is still a lack of clarification on how the directive operates in practice, specifically on the impact of the directive on pedlars and street trading. As far as market rights are concerned local authorities can continue to use them as there is a structured regulatory approach to their use.

Under the directive, it is argued by government that you can no longer refuse a new trader permission to stand at the market on the basis that the goods she/he wishes to sell are already represented at the market. This could remove some of the control currently available on individual markets that we currently rely on.

The National Association of British Market Authorities and the National Market Traders Federation feel strongly that such a requirement will work to the prejudice of many markets and are in dialogue with central government about the guidance that will be issued on this point. It could still be months if not years before this guidance is issued.

Whilst this dialogue continues the council will develop and implement a Balance of Trade Policy that takes a proactive approach to controlling the balance, quality and regularity of markets within Northumberland. A balance of trade policy will meet current legislative requirements until further guidance is issued.

7. Northumberland Markets

7.1 Alnwick Market

'Local Living' operates Alnwick markets from a charter held by the Duke of Northumberland. 'Local Living' is a social enterprise which aims to address poverty, both economic and aspirational, to achieve more vibrant rural communities. Together, they strive to make Alnwick Market Place a vibrant community space that results in social and economic benefits to the town and traders.

Regular weekly markets operate each Friday and Saturday. The Friday market was introduced in 2018. Stalls include a variety of different products which change on a regular basis and seasonally.

7.2 Alnwick Farmers Market

The market day for the Farmers market has varied in recent years and is currently held on the last Friday of every month. Local specialties can include hill lamb (August to March), cheese, home baked cakes & pies, bread, vegetables, fish, pork, beef, preserves and pickles, ginger wine, soft fruits, plants in season, and quality crafts including soaps, gifts and jewellery.

7.3 Amble Market

The market is operated by private market company Amble Quayside Market on behalf of the landowner Warkworth Harbour Commissioners and is held weekly on Saturdays and Sundays. The Saturday is more of a car boot market and usually operates seasonally (March to October). The Sunday market operates all year round. There are currently up to 50 traders regularly attending the market on a weekly basis selling a wide range of goods which often include seafood, meats, fruits & vegetables, plants and flowers, jewellery, cakes, sweets, cards & toys, scarves & bags, and clothes.

7.4 Ashington Market

Ashington Market was established in the mid 80's by a private market company Spook Erections. The operation of the market was taken over by Northumberland County Council in January 2010.

The market was refurbished as part of the Station Road improvements in 2016 and included a number of anchored stalls.

The Ashington market is the County Council's busiest market attracting a large number of local residents and holiday makers. The market operates each Tuesday and caters for up to 31 stalls and 3 vans selling a diverse range of goods including fruits & vegetables, pet supplies, toys and clothes.

The market is currently full with a waiting list of traders wanting to attend.

7.5 Bedlington

Bedlington Market was established in the mid 80's by a private market company Spook Erections. The operation of the market was taken over by Northumberland County Council in April 2010.

The market operates each Thursday. Footfall and trader numbers are the lowest of all the county council operated markets and only a handful of traders attend.

7.6 Berwick Charter Market

The Royal Charter for Berwick Market is held by the Guild of Freemen Of Berwick-upon-Tweed and leased to Northumberland County Council.

The Charter Market operates on a Wednesday and Saturday and during the May Fair. It is situated on Marygate, the main shopping street, within the historic town walls, with the 18th century Guildhall as a central focus point.

Berwick's CharterMarket is operated by Northumberland County Council, and usually attracts around 10-18 stalls during the Summer months. The stalls offer a variety of

produce including fresh fruit, fish and meat, farm raised fresh eggs, ice cream, toys, clothing, books, bedding, towels, jewellery, hats, gloves, socks plants and hot refreshments.

Located under the historic Town Hall built in the 18th Century with its 150 foot spire is located the original Butter Market. Today, this houses extra table top stalls selling various products including jewellery.

7.7 Blyth Market

There has been a market in the town of Blyth since the late 1700's. First located on Beaconsfield Street; then Cowpen Square; before moving to the present site on Waterloo Road during the 1850's. This area of land was donated to the people of Blyth as a market square by two local sisters.

The market is operated by Northumberland County Council and is held on Wednesdays (car boot/flea), Fridays and Saturdays. There are currently around 20-30 traders regularly attending the market each market day selling a wide range of goods.

In 2017 Blyth Town Council agreed to fund a traders incentive scheme for the Friday and Saturday markets which included financial incentives for new traders, funding for staff and funding for events and advertising in order to try and rejuvenate the market and bring in additional footfall to the town centre. A year on we have seen an average 30% increase in the number of traders attending the Friday and Saturday. The scheme remains available in 2018 to new traders.

7.8 Hexham Charter Market

Hexham Market, operated by Northumberland County Council, stands in the town's Market Place every Tuesday. It is surrounded by such landmarks as Hexham Abbey and the Moot Hall. Hexham was granted the right to hold a market each Monday by Henry III in 1239 and a market has been held in the town ever since. In 1673, during

the reign of King Charles II the Charter was amended to allow the market to stand each Tuesday.

The Shambles Market is also operated by the County Council and trades 6 days per week selling fruit and vegetables; plants, pet food and flowers; and clothing. In 2017 we allowed traders an optional 7 day trading week for the very occasional times they wished to trade on a Sunday.

Hexham Market currently averages 7-10 stalls on a Tuesday Market selling a range of goods including fruits & vegetables, fish and bread.

The 'Spook market' held at Halloween and the Christmas Market held in December are huge events and are run by Hexham Community Partnership.

7.9 Hexham Farmers Market

Hexham Farmers market is operated by Hexham Farmers Market Ltd and is held on the second and fourth Saturday of each month between 9am and 1.30pm, at the Market Place. There is a wide variety of stalls which can include fruit and vegetables; fish and meat; cheese; herbs; breads and pies.

7.10 Morpeth Market

Morpeth received its Market Charter from King John in 1199. Up until the 1950's, it was a major livestock market, and at one stage it was the largest livestock market in the North East.

In 2002-3, the Market Place in Morpeth was refurbished and in 2005, the weekly market was relocated onto the Market Place bringing it back into the heart of the town.

Northumberland County Council operates the market, which offers a variety of produce that can include plants; hot foods; fish, sausages; fruit & vegetables; eggs;

fresh bread; home baking; household items; vapes; clothing; and pet food & supplies.

In 2013 the Council agreed to work in partnership with Sanderson Arcade and Morpeth Town Council and there is now a regular partnership meeting with all parties and other stakeholders to agree priorities for the market, as part of the arrangement Sanderson Arcade undertake marketing and promotions for Morpeth Market.

7.11 Morpeth Farmers Market

In November 1999, the Council launched a monthly farmers market in Morpeth. This market operates on the first Saturday of each month and averages 22-25 traders.

8. Operating Rules

Different Council operated markets in Northumberland have traditionally been managed under different rules, usually amended versions from District Council's that existed prior to Local Government Reorganisation in 2009.

During early stakeholder engagement sessions whilst developing this strategy it became clear there was a need to address this so a new universal set of rules were developed for all local authority managed markets in Northumberland, these rules are set out in Appendix 4 of this document.

The universal rules do still allow for local markets to set additional rules if there is an agreed priority to do so locally, but ensures that the core operating principles are the same in each of our markets.

The action plan includes a further review of these rules and it is proposed to formalise the politically neutral stance that has been historically taken and not allow any political party to hire a pitch on any council run market.

9. Strategy Action Plan 2018 - 2023

The strategy action plan can be found in Appendix 1 of this document and is arranged thematically against four headings:

- i. Sustaining and growing income
- ii. Promoting markets more effectively
- iii. Policy developments
- iv. Improving the management of markets

Adopting this strategic approach and implementing the actions in this plan will ensure that market operations are professionally run, financially viable and continue to add social and cultural value to our communities.