

## A. IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF RELOCATING AN OPEN MARKET

- a.1 Relocating an Open Market can achieve two clear benefits - improved operational efficiency and improving the footfall pattern to adjacent shops.
- a.2 Relocation to a secondary retail pitch is a common strategy often used to offset retail consolidation into edge-of-town Supermarket offers. It is also used to boost footfall in areas designated for improvement e.g. an 'independent quarter'. This can be part of a wider improvement strategy to improve the depth and variety of a town's retail offer by differentiating it from competition sharing the same catchment. A thriving Open Market is an excellent way to counter the 'clone town' effect of a multiple-dominated High Street.
- a.3 Common sense and anecdotal evidence confirms an Open Market greatly improves sales prospects for adjacent retailers on trading day. Footfall is generally c.250% higher and those shopkeepers who respond can expect an additional 30% or so on their sales turnover. This in turn reduces retail voids and encourages a switch from betting shops and financial services to A1 retail use. The overall effect for a Council is to improve the retail mix, encourage occupancy and lift business rates income.
- a.4 As a general rule of thumb Independent retailers respond to and benefit from relocations more than High Street multiples. They are quicker to recognise the effect on their tills and swifter to respond with 'Market day Specials' than their multiple competition. The latter tend to raise initial objections ('I don't want a stall blocking my shopfront' etc) but are equally vociferous when a relocation is reversed a couple of years later after they have adapted to it's benefits. In particular Betting shops are a common complainant as their rents increase and because they represent more of a 'destination' use rather than one which benefits from passing footfall. They cannot offer 'Market Day specials' so often assign to an A1 retail use which often supports Council retail policy.
- a.5 Prior to any relocation there needs to be a careful analysis of the site and to ascertain impact on footfall patterns and vehicle deliveries. The layout must respect the need for double sided retailing i.e. no shopfront should face the sheeted back of a stall and allow sufficient circulation space. Adjacent retailers with ATM's and 'standing-out' pavement licences may be affected but clever design can often build them into emergency vehicle access routes. The layout design needs to evaluate the constraints of roadway widths and stall sizes.
- a.6 The timing of any relocation is obviously crucial. Infrastructure works must be completed (and ideally trialled) in advance of any relocation so the move is possible with minimal disruption to continuity of trade.

#### **a.7 SUMMARY: DESIGN OBJECTIVES**

- Avoid single-side retailing on a narrow street e.g. shops facing the sheeted 'back' of a stall
- Provide purpose-designed facilities for 'difficult' uses e.g. Fishmongers
- Consolidate stall positions to rationalise refuse handling and cleansing
- Ease access for emergency vehicles and cleansing methods
- Reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflicts particularly when clearing-away
- Enable permanent electricity supply to encourage longer trading hours

#### **a.8 SUMMARY: PROMOTION OF TOWN PLANNING POLICY**

- Improve the *depth* and *variety* of the towns retail offer with a low-cost secondary offer
- Encourage footfall into a secondary street or the 'independent quarter'
- Encourage replacement of A2 and A5 uses with vibrant A1 uses
- Make social provision with a low-cost offer closer to disadvantaged communities
- Provide a multi-use focus for social interaction amongst user-groups
- Encourage start-up and independent businesses with low-cost stallage

#### **a.9 SUMMARY: IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC REALM**

- Introduce control over stall design appearance by providing purpose-designed stallage
- Improve weather protection for shoppers and improve attendance and footfall
- Improve sightlines and reduce pedestrian congestion on a narrow street
- Coordinate kerbs, bollards and lighting into an improved public realm
- Provide better welfare facilities for Traders to encourage attendance

#### **a.10 SUMMARY: DELIVERY OF FINANCIAL BENEFITS**

- Free up a site for new development
- Create dedicated space for additional 'specialist' Markets
- Create more pitches to encourage comparison-shopping and Shopper attendance
- Reduce voids and stimulate activity on a secondary retail pitch
- Provide easier Shopper access to Shopper carparking and public transport