

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

Northumberland Markets Strategy 2010 – 2015



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Introduction

An Open University Study 'Markets as sites for social interaction' (Watson & Studdert, 2007), funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, noted that markets positively contribute to social interaction and can play a beneficial role in community regeneration. The report gives a powerful endorsement of the relevance of markets and the need for local authorities to have a strategy and a vision in recognising the potential role of markets in delivering government agendas such as social cohesion and sustainable communities.

In support, the House of Commons Communities and Local Government (CLG) Committee report 'Market Failure? Can the traditional market survive?' (2009) outlines the economic; social; regeneration; health and environmental benefits of our traditional retail markets. Street markets are a vibrant part of community life and can play an important role in area regeneration by making a visible and powerful contribution to the economic and social life within our towns. Thriving markets offer cheap fresh food, attracting footfall into town centres, and encouraging shoppers to buy at neighbouring shops. They are an important mix that town centres need to attract shoppers and provide consumer choice, and should be seen as complementary to other forms of retail.

Well managed and supported street markets have the potential to encourage entrepreneurship and can be a nurturing ground for small businesses to start up and grow. They also provide employment opportunities for a wide range of local people. As an integral part of the vision for their town centres, local authorities should seek to retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones. Local authorities should ensure that their markets remain attractive and competitive by investing in their improvement (ODPM, 2005).

The Northumberland Market Strategy aims to identify and overcome many of the problems and limitations our markets have experienced in the past, and to maintain

and develop the existing markets.

Delivering this strategy will involve many individuals, organisations and areas within council either independently or in partnership. All areas of council have an important role to play in implementing this strategy.

The Vision

To create a dynamic market experience that is diverse and vibrant adding value to the economic, social and cultural fabric of Northumberland.

Realising the Vision

The retail offer in any village or town cannot be underestimated. The mix of retail opportunities within the County is varied, and markets contribute an affordable and healthy alternative to main stream shopping options. Northumberland is a large county and offers a wide range of experiences to residents and visitors.

Reinvigorating street markets will complement the Council's regeneration and revitalisation programmes enhancing the social and economic offer within Northumberland.

Over the past 15 years or so traditional street markets have experienced significant decline. A number of reasons have been attributed to this national decline such as increasing competition from other forms of retail, lack of investment or vision from local authorities and changing demographics in the areas of trading. The markets in Northumberland are no exception to this decline.

According to the National Market Traders Association (NMTA), any grouping of five or more stalls held on a regular basis constitutes a market. Northumberland has a number of weekly markets that add value to the retail experience in the County. The Council recognises the value of adopting central government's policy which encourages developers and local authorities to invest and revitalise markets and recognise the cultural and economic contribution they make to town centre retail success. Markets contribute to creating attractive, prosperous, vibrant, safe and strong communities where people want to live; work and do business. Community pitches and business start up opportunities can enhance the market experience for customers as well as benefiting voluntary groups, schools and fledgling

entrepreneurs.

Farmers markets are distinct from general traditional retail markets. They provide opportunities for farmers to sell their products direct; reduce food miles; and can play a key role in business development, offering low cost direct sales opportunities to market test new products. In addition, income generated stays within the local community. Farmers' markets add a further dimension to traditional markets by attracting new customers; and by bringing a new vibrancy and energy into town centres.

Whilst the Northumberland Markets Strategy provides the overarching direction for street markets within the County it recognises that each market has its own point of difference, attracts different shoppers and experiences different issues. The strategy also acknowledges the contribution that all markets, including those managed by independent operators, make to both the local economy and to place shaping across the county. The strategy does not aim to be a best fit nor a model to make all markets the same but it recognises the individuality of each one.

The Action Plan outlines how the council intends to develop its own markets.

The European, National and Regional Perspective

The Northumberland Market Strategy aligns with a number of policies at a European national, regional and local level.

The EU Services Directive requires local authorities to remove barriers that are burdensome for existing or new businesses. In line with this Directive, the Council has adopted simpler procedures and less paperwork for existing market traders, and prospective new traders. Market information packs are available which give all of the information needed to start a new stall, and this information is also available online.

Communities and Local Government has assumed strategic lead for retail markets for government departments in England, following acceptance of the recommendations directed at central government in the CLG Select Committee report (2009) on traditional retail markets. To ensure that the traditional market survives, the government is taking action to support retail markets in recognition of their significant economic and social benefits.

At a regional level, the Regional Economic Strategy (2006-2011) aims to foster the renaissance of key rural settlements as drivers of regional growth. The North East England Tourism Strategy (2005-2010) identifies regional objectives including increasing the number of UK and overseas visitors year round and increasing visitor spend. The strategy identifies market towns as key elements in the attraction of the North East for visitors and proposes that towns should develop plans to make improvements in facilities to meet the needs of increased visitors.

The strategy aligns with the Northumberland Sustainable Communities Strategy, which aims to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area.

At a local level, Masterplans are in place for the regeneration of priority areas including Ashington, Blyth and Berwick town centres. Market towns are recognised as a priority for development and investment. They are economic hubs, forming an

underpinning part of the visitor economy, and support services for local residents and businesses.

The Market Town Welcome (MTW) Programme was established in 2008 in collaboration with One NorthEast, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland Tourism and the Development Trusts of Alnwick, Amble, Berwick upon Tweed, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Seahouses and Wooler. The aim of the Programme is to help Northumberland's Market Towns exploit their tourism potential as well as raise their profile within the visitor economy.

The MTW Destination Plans drawn up for each town recognise the contribution that markets and market places can play in strengthening the visitor economy. Particular reference is made to giving visitors better access to local produce (food, crafts, artwork) through farmers markets and how enhanced market spaces can act as vibrant focus points for festivals and events. Town surveys carried out in 2009 asked visitors to 'rate' the towns' markets. Nearly half of all respondents rated presentation of stalls, quality of goods on sale, quality of services and range of stalls as good, and nearly a third rated them as average from a range of categories (very good; good; average; poor; very poor).

The Go Wansbeck LEGI Programme is a government backed initiative which was launched in Wansbeck in 2007. The programme is designed to create a more enterprising culture; support local business growth and attract new investment and employment opportunities for the benefit of local people.

Northumberland County Council is a member of North East England Farmers Markets (NEEFM). The objectives of NEEFM in developing farmers market aligns with the Council's objectives. The Council is also a member of the National Association of British Markets Authorities (NABMA). NABMA is the voice of local authority markets and offers a range of services to enhance market provision.

Our Markets

Alnwick Market

Local Living operates Alnwick markets in partnership with Alnwick Community Development Trust. 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 Saturday. Stalls include fruits & vegetables, plants, rugs & carpets, jewellery, cakes, sweets, cards & toys, scarves & bags, clothes, cut flowers, continental foods and pet food and treats.

From March to Christmas each year a Thursday market also operates. Stalls include sweets, flowers, plants, clothing, pet treats, continental foods, scarves & bags.

Alnwick Farmers Market is held on the last Friday of every month. Local specialties include hill lamb (August to March), cheese, home baked cakes & pies, bread, vegetables, fish, pork, beef, preserves and pickles, mussels (September to April), fudge, ginger wine, soft fruits, plants in season, and quality crafts including soaps, gifts and jewellery.

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.

An evaluation of Ashington weekly market found that the market is seen as an asset to the community and to the town centre, and with improvements can be a sustainable attraction to the town (New Market Solutions, 2007).

Regular weekly markets operate each Tuesday. It is a small but thriving market catering for anything up to 16 stalls selling a diverse range of goods. The Council is

currently looking at the possibility of relocating the market to Station Road with new and attractive stalls. The aim is to increase the size of the market, improve the offer to local people and visitors, and attract more people into the town centre to shop.

Bedlington Market

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.

An evaluation of Bedlington weekly market found that shoppers do enjoy the different retailing scene that a market brings to the town – the 'market atmosphere' with its banter and service style (New Market Solutions, 2007).

Regular weekly markets operate each Thursday. It is a currently small market and it is recognised that support is needed to help revitalise the market.

Bedlington Market Place has recently undertaken a major re-vamp providing new surfacing, and steps are underway to try and relocate the market to the Market Place, with new attractive stalls.

Berwick Charter Market

In 1604, within the terms of Royal Charter, which was issued by King John and James, a Charter Market was granted for Berwick upon Tweed. This Charter is still in operation today. The area this covers, it is said, was established by the distance an adult goose could walk in one day from the centre of town!

The Charter Market, which is set at the heart and soul of the town, 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.

The location of the Charter Market has benefited from recent 'general' tidy ups and Northumbria in Bloom awarding the surrounding area with a Silver Award in 2009.

Berwick Market is operated by Northumberland County Council, and has on average

14 stalls. 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 which trade second hand books, cards and jewellery.

Berwick Farmers Market is held on the last Sunday of each month and is managed and operated by a local community group.

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.

During 2007 work began on regenerating the market square. Works were completed in 2009 providing a newly surfaced market square complete with tree planting, seating, a water feature and lighting.

The market is operated by Northumberland County Council and is held on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. There are currently up to 40 traders regularly attending the market on a weekly basis selling a wide range of goods. There are also charity markets 3 times per year and extended markets in the lead up to Christmas.

During 2009 a successful markets partnership was set up between the market traders, Keel Row shopping centre management, NCC, police and local community groups.

Hadrian Wall Farmers Market

Hadrian Wall Farmers Market is held at Greenhead on the second Sunday of each month – 10am till 2pm. The market was founded in 2005 with a start up grant from the local authority, and is operated as a social enterprise by volunteers. There are between 14 and 24 stalls selling organic meats, cheeses, vegetables, free range

chickens and eggs, home baked breads, cakes and pies, honeys, jams and chutneys, beers, crafts and plants.

Haltwhistle Market

Haltwhistle Market is a small but thriving market and is operated by Northumberland County Council. The market is held at Market Place weekly each Thursday and provides space for up to six stalls. The offer includes local crafts, foodstuffs, gifts and general goods.

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 successful 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. Despite a downward trend for markets, Hexham Market has flourished and now boasts some 16 regular traders and a wide selection of goods on offer.

In recent years Hexham Market has enjoyed increased press attention since Country Life Magazine named Hexham England's favourite market town in 2005 and 2008. NABMA also presented a certificate highly commending Hexham Market as best street/outdoor market.

The Shambles Market trades 6 days per week selling fruit and vegetables, plants, greeting cards, and clothing. In addition, Hexham hosts an annual continental market with stall holders coming to sell a wide variety of wares ranging from Brittany biscuits to French soaps & cheeses, and German sausages.

The Christmas Market held in December is a huge event. This is run by Hexham Community Partnership and supported by Northumberland County Council.

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 Market Place. There is a wide variety of stalls including fruit and vegetables; fish and meat; cheese; herbs; breads and pies. The National Farmers Union voted Hexham farmers market as the best in the country.

Morpeth Market

Morpeth received its Market Charter from King John in 1199, and so celebrated the 800th anniversary of the market in 1999. 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. At the same time the Council invested in new stalls and equipment to re-launch the market in its new location. Northumberland County Council operates the market, which offers a variety of produce including hot foods; fish and organic meats; fruit & vegetables; eggs; fresh bread and home baking; fudge and chocolates; household items; clothing; and pet food & supplies.

In December 2009 the market was awarded Regional Winner and National Winner of 'How Green Is Your Market?'

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 has an average of 19 stalls. A 'market health check' survey, facilitated by NEEFM, was carried out in June 2010 and the survey found that the market attracted around 2,000 customers each week.

Ponteland Market

In May 2000, the Council launched a monthly farmers market in Ponteland; originally held on the fourth Saturday of each month. Following consultation with market traders, businesses and the local community, the market was relocated to Merton Way Shopping Precinct and is now held on the fourth Friday of each month. The market is now a traditional market which has opened up opportunities to producers and retail traders. This has resulted in an increase in traders and customers, and a more vibrant market.

Goods on offer include clothing; fish & seafood; game; pies; soups; home baking; bread and pastries; eggs; cheese; chocolates; wines; plants; flowers; shrubs; and bird seed.

Ponteland Market is run in partnership with Ponteland Town Council, market traders and local businesses.

Details of market operating times and costs for stalls can be found at the Northumberland County Council website www.northumberland.gov.uk

Please note: Speciality markets such as farmers markets, continental markets, and Christmas markets continue to be held in a number of locations across the County, so this should not be regarded as a comprehensive list of future market events.

The Future of Our Markets

Realising the Council's vision of a dynamic street trading and market experience that is diverse and vibrant will be challenging. This will require significant effort to ensure all areas of council are aware of the objectives and incorporate them into their own strategies.

The value of revitalising and keeping the markets alive, providing local jobs for local people, and promoting enterprise should be the stimulus for action. Northumberland needs to ensure that the decline in its markets is reversed and consumers and residents are provided with an attractive alternative to main street shopping options.

The strategy has identified the following key areas and opportunities for consideration which have been incorporated into an action plan:

- ❖ **Look and Feel of our Markets**

- ❖ **Running Viable Markets**

- ❖ **Promoting our Markets**

- ❖ **Markets within our Community**

- ❖ **Managing our Markets**

Action Plan

Look and Feel of our Markets - Identifying ways in which the streetscape of the County's markets implementing a plan that will deliver what consumers and businesses require.		
Opportunities	Proposed Actions	Implementation
In consultation with local communities, develop a new brand for our Northumberland markets.	To undertake consultation with local stakeholders to develop a new brand for Northumberland Markets.	April 2011
Where possible throughout Northumberland to harmonise local stall design, fascia, canopies and display.	To initiate a programme of design for market stalls considering issues of: consistency of approach to stall design; fascia; canopies and display; whilst still recognising local distinctiveness of markets.	April 2011
Identify opportunities for funding to purchase new stalls/canopies for market use where appropriate.	To explore all external funding opportunities with local partners such as retail businesses, town & parish councils and development agencies.	Ongoing
2. Running Viable Markets – Recognising the link between the Council's investment and the economy and the county.		
Opportunities	Proposed Actions	Implementation
Investigate the availability of support for start up businesses through concessions on stall fees; trial trading opportunities; start up grants; assistance with business planning; financial management; product development; presentation and	To produce a business support programme to be set up for all new traders throughout all countywide markets.	January 2011

marketing.		
Provide a sustainable approach to building relationships between local retailers/businesses and traders, and to maximise links to further local regeneration.	To set up further Market Partnerships at Berwick, Hexham, Ashington, Bedlington, in addition to those at Blyth and Morpeth to provide a forum for local organisations, traders and the council to share concerns and discuss proposals and issues relating to markets.	April 2012
	To set up a Northumberland Market Partnership made up of representatives from the various Market Partnerships, to share ideas and experiences, and allow for economies of scale.	April 2012
3. Promoting our Markets – Ensure markets are promoted effectively.		
Opportunities	Proposed Actions	Implementat
Encourage an elected member to champion and support street trading initiatives and the implementation of this strategy.	To ensure the portfolio holder for Neighbourhood Services is empowered to champion and support street trading initiatives and the implementation of this strategy.	Ongoing
Provide easy access to information required by prospective new market traders.	To develop an information pack for traders – market regulations; application forms; food hygiene guidance; stall costs etc...	January 2011
Develop a Market webpage promoting markets and street trading sites to consumers and tourists.	To explore, develop and implement a Market webpage promoting markets and street trading sites to consumers and tourists via the council's website and other key partners such as NABMA and the Market Times.	April 2011
	To work in partnership with independent	April 2011

	market operators to share media opportunities/ mutual web links etc.	
Ensure all market promotion is maximised throughout Northumberland at no cost to the council.	To identify all council and county wide free communication media to carry stories on markets and events.	December 20
4. Markets within our Community – Recognise the valuable role markets play in creating and har		
Opportunities	Proposed Actions	Implementat
Develop a schedule of community events at the markets to instil a sense of community pride, add vibrancy to our markets and increase footfall.	To develop an annual programme for community events that would include the local voluntary sector, community groups and schools.	April 2012
Identify opportunities to add to the market offer with animation events and activities.	To explore additional events and animation such as additional child’s play or rides, live music or additional public events alongside programmed markets to improve the local footfall.	Ongoing
Consider the creation of council funded community pitches and develop guidelines for eligibility.	To explore further the opportunities and framework for eligibility for community based traders that would include the local VCS, and schools.	April 2011
5. Managing Our Markets – Ensure that Northumberland markets are effectively managed and are trading legislation.		
Opportunities	Proposed Actions	Implementat
As seen elsewhere in Europe, recognise the advantages of working with private operators to outsource our market operation.	To explore opportunities to work in partnership with independent market operators to support and develop Northumberland markets.	Ongoing

To implement a programme to ensure a consistent approach is implemented to service delivery.	To ensure all local Market rules and regulations include some clear guidance to what is or not permissible within a standardised enforcement framework.	April 2011
Continue to work with all authorities and agencies to eliminate illegal street trading from the County.	To set up a formal mechanism with internal partners such as licensing, planning, legal services and external partners such as town and parish councils to eliminate such illegal practises occurring.	December 20
Loading and unloading options and parking restrictions during market opening times to promote safe access of traders, neighbouring businesses and shoppers.	To work with internal and external partners such as the council's in-house Strategic Transportation Service, Area Highways & Neighbourhood Team and Northumbria Police to find the best local solutions for safer logistical management.	Ongoing
Encourage quality control by traders – encouraging traders to develop business plans covering quality, presentation and customer service.	To develop further each local market rules and regulations as a sustainable framework for all traders throughout all countywide markets to develop business plans.	April 2011
Ensure the strategy is working and that our markets have improved.	To set up a system of evaluation and monitoring that will include establishing base line figures; footfall counts on market days; shopper perception surveys; number of new business starts up etc...	April 2011/12
	To set up a measurable mechanism within the councils service planning and performance management framework.	April 2011

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