

North Yorkshire Council

Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Committee

12 September 2024

Receipt of Petition “to Reconsider the Plans to Require Knaresborough Market Traders to Self-Erect their Stalls, and Preserve a Beloved Local Landmark”

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic Services

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To advise of a petition containing more than 500 signatures which has been received by North Yorkshire Council.
- 1.2 To ask the Area Committee to consider a response.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A petition has been received by North Yorkshire Council. This is a paper-based petition with over 500 signatures from people who live, work, or study in the county.
- 2.2 The signatories urge North Yorkshire Council to reconsider the plans to require Knaresborough Market traders to self-erect their stalls. The explanation for their request is set out as follows:

The North Yorkshire Council (NYC) has recently opted for a policy change that has grave implications for the Knaresborough market, an iconic and historically significant feature in our town. This decision to require market traders to self-erect their stalls is not just causing considerable logistical difficulties for traders, but also threatens the sustainability of the market itself.

Knaresborough has a proud legacy as a historical market town, and we cannot afford to lose a part of our heritage that holds such import. Join us to oppose this policy change and stand up for the preservation of a beloved local landmark.

Let's support our traders and keep alive the rich heritage that is intrinsic to our local identity. We urge you to sign this petition to make a stand and help keep the Knaresborough market the vibrant, historical heartbeat of our town.

3.0 COUNCIL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR RESPONDING TO PETITIONS

- 3.1 The key features of the Council's arrangements for receiving and debating petitions, as published on the Council's website, are as follows:
 - a) Receipt of the petition is published on the Council's website (which has been done in the case of this petition).
 - b) If a petition contains 500 or more signatures (but less than 30,130 signatories), it will be scheduled for debate at the next meeting of the appropriate Area Committee.

- c) The petition organiser is offered the opportunity to speak for five minutes at the Area Committee meeting to present their petition. Subsequently, at the meeting, the petition will be discussed by Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes, and a decision will be made on how to respond to the petition.
- d) Possible responses by the Council to petitions, as shown on the website, are:
 - i. **Option 1:** to take the action requested by the petition,
 - ii. **Option 2:** not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate,
 - iii. **Option 3:** to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee; or,
 - iv. **Option 4:** where the issue is one on which the Council executive are required to make the final decision, the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.
- e) The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on the website.
- f) In accordance with the arrangements described above, the petition organisers have been invited to join today's meeting to present their petition.

4.0 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

- 4.1 As a unitary authority, North Yorkshire operates seven outdoor markets across the county with five of these operating as 'self-set' where traders bring and set up their own stalls each week.
- 4.2 At the Knaresborough and Ripon markets the permanent traders have the option of a stall being supplied and erected by the Council for a surcharge of £5.30 per stall on their pitch rentals. However, this operation is currently run at a significant subsidy which unfortunately is not sustainable. Further immediate investment is also required in the Council's trailer equipment over and above our current costs to continue safe operations of stall set up.
- 4.3 The Council is therefore proposing to harmonise the operating model across the county and cease setting up market stalls for traders at Knaresborough and Ripon markets, bringing operations in line with how the other five outdoor markets run, to deliver a long term, efficient and sustainable solution. If implemented, the proposals would address the current annual subsidy for stall set up which is in the region of £25,000 - £35,000.
- 4.4 The majority of traders have their own stalls. These fall into two groups; those that are already self-set at Knaresborough and Ripon markets; and those that have a stall that is used elsewhere, including at other North Yorkshire Council outdoor markets, but opt to pay the surcharge for the Council to erect stalls in Knaresborough and Ripon.
- 4.5 However, for a minority who may not have their own stall it is recognised the proposed change may affect those traders more. In these limited cases the Council will explore how we can assist by making our stalls available free of charge to be used by traders (using their own storage and set up).
- 4.5 The Council has written to traders to advise them of these proposals and has requested they feedback their comments to enable us to understand their support or any issues this proposal may cause. In addition, Officers have attended the market places to engage

directly with traders to answer any questions and hear first-hand their feedback. Responses will be evaluated and options presented with a recommendation to the Corporate Director for Environment in consultation with the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation, later this year.

5.0 COMMENTS ON THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS

5.1 The wording of the petition does not specifically request a course of action from the Council, but is interpreted to be a request not to proceed with the proposed reforms to Knaresborough Market. As set out at 3.1 d), there are four options available to Members. A comment on each is listed below:

- a) **Options 1 and 2:** It is not possible to select Options 1 or 2, as the decision is not within the competence of the Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Committee.
- b) **Option 3:** The matter could be referred to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further investigation, if the Area Committee feels there is additional information it could use to prepare a report to the decision maker, with recommendations to inform the decision.
- c) **Option 4:** The Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Committee can itself prepare a report to the decision maker, with recommendations to inform the decision.

5.2 The Committee also has the option to note the report and take no further action.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None identified.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None identified.

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None identified.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Neutral implications.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That the Committee notes the petition and considers a response as listed at 5.1.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

North Yorkshire Council's petitions information and advice, a copy of which is on the Council's website [Petitions | North Yorkshire Council](#)

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