

North Yorkshire Council

Skipton and Ripon Area Committee

21 November 2024

Receipt of Petition titled 'Save Ripon Market'.

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.
- 1.2 To ask the Area Committee to consider a response.

2.0 THE PETITION

- 2.1 A petition has been received by North Yorkshire Council which contains 2,865 signatures.
- 2.2 The title of the petition is 'Save Ripon Market'. The statement attached to the petition is below (see *italics*):

North Yorkshire Council is proposing to stop erecting stalls for market traders. 75% of traders have said they will no longer attend Ripon market, as they have neither the vehicle space nor time to erect their own stalls. Traders who bring their own stalls will also be affected by a smaller market.

The viability of the market is at stake and the wider economy will be affected – shops, restaurants, cafes and transport operators – the entire hospitality and tourist trade, as fewer people will come to Ripon.

The change will be implemented in November. We need to act now!

We strongly oppose any move that undermines the viability of Ripon Market, which has provided the beating heart of the city for over 700 years and believe that implementing self erect stalls, without a full economic and community impact assessment, could seriously damage both the market and the wider economic benefits it brings to the city.

- 2.3 The petition can be seen on the Council's website here: [Petitions received | North Yorkshire Council](#)

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 is 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 OFFICERS' 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).

4.6 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. It is proposed that 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 to their meeting on 06 December 2024.

5.0 COMMENTS ON THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS

5.1 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 Skipton and Ripon 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 Skipton and Ripon Area Committee can itself provide a comment to the decision maker, with recommendations to inform the decision.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 That the Committee notes the petition and provides a response as detailed in paragraph 3.1 d).

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Background Document: 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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