

1. Background to discussion of local Markets Regulations

- 1.1 On 7 June 2022, Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) agreed to add to the work programme a review of the Markets Rules and Regulations (Regs) which the Council uses to guide operations of the Town Centre indoor and outdoor markets. These have been in place with few updates since 1971, when the markets opened. Since then, the role of markets in the community has changed drastically, meriting a review of the Regs.
- 1.2 At the same meeting on 7 June 2022, IPSC endorsed several related recommendations which centred around thoughtful redesign and sustainment through stronger engagement with traders, young people, and national markets organisations. To help achieve these objectives, a meeting around the Markets Regs was held in a hybrid context in Rotherham Town Hall and on Microsoft Teams on 19 June 2022. Cllrs Wyatt, Atkin, Bennett-Sylvester, T. Collingham and Jones contributed suggestions directly to the service.
- 1.3 The consensus of Members was a desire to make the Regs clear, accessible, visually engaging, and digitally publishable, for example, as part of a future suite of online resource documents for market traders. It was agreed that, currently, the repetitive structure, outdated design, and wordy language and phrasing of the Regs present hurdles to prospective traders and current traders seeking information. Therefore, it was hoped that a redraft of the Regs be undertaken to make it easier for new traders to access the information they need whilst protecting the Council and traders against risk.
- 1.4 Specific feedback on areas that require improvement in the current Regs are described in section 2. Members' suggestions of possible mitigations are described at section 4. These suggestions, as opposed to formal recommendations, were presented directly to the Cabinet Member and service leads for consideration at their discretion. Members will receive an update for scrutiny at an appropriate time when further value can be added, as indicated in section 3.

2. Potential areas for improving the Markets Regulations

- 2.1 **Structure and Organisation:** The current structure is repetitive and does not seem to follow any organisational principle to make it easy for traders to find the information they need.
- 2.2 **Language and Phrasing:**
 - The language and phrasing of the document is wordy and vague, and use of jargon potentially alienates newcomers to the markets scene.
 - Stipulations throughout the Regs suggest rules are flexible and are derived from the Markets Manager rather than from clear, consistent expectations set out in the Regs.
 - Parts of the document do not employ inclusive language around gender.
- 2.3 **Design:** The Regs exhibit outdated branding and could be more visually engaging. Supporting documents could better illustrate the offer to traders and what new traders

can expect. The redesign process should consider which aspects of trading are better *shown* than merely told about.

3. Indicative timescales for associated actions

- 3.1 19 July 2022: Members discuss Regs with service leads and identify potential interventions.
- 3.2 August – November 2022: Drafting and consultation with stakeholders and experts and implementation of feedback on design of reworked draft.
- 3.3 Winter 2022/23 – Reworked draft added to Design Services Work Programme; Cabinet receives and responds to scrutiny review recommendations.
- 3.4 Autumn 2023: Update on Markets Redevelopment considered at IPSC.

4. Suggestions for the redraft

4.1 Structure and Organisation:

1. That consideration be given to what prospective and current traders come to the document needing to know and that the content be reordered to move from general to specific information as readers progress through the document.
2. Further, that consideration be given to beginning the document with a mission statement, followed by the revised general rules and that the document utilise hyperlinks for internal references for enhanced navigability of the resource.

4.2 Language and Phrasing:

3. That officers in the Markets team undertake a concise redraft of content that gives clarity whilst maintaining legal requirements.

4.3 Design:

4. Whereas a rebranding of the redeveloped markets may be forthcoming, that Members be given an opportunity to comment on the rebranding process and ensure the branding is reflected throughout the suite of relevant resource documents for traders, and that these resources be made available accessibly on the Council's website.
5. Whereas the Regs will form part of a suite of trader resource documents, that these resources be produced in collaboration with the Council's design team to ensure visually consistent, reader-friendly, accessible information design.

4.4 Feedback:

6. That consultation on the reworked draft be sought with the following groups:
 - Traders
 - Officers from Asset Management; Policy, Performance and Intelligence; and Legal Services
 - Representatives of NABMA and NFMT
 - IPSC Members