

# Outdoor Event & Market Strategy for The Square, Market Harborough

## 1. The Square, Market Harborough

The Square covers 0.23 acres (0.09 hectares) in the centre of Market Harborough.

The area has been utilised over recent years for a variety of events, including, late night Christmas Shopping/Christmas Fayre, Christmas lights switch on, Harborough by the Sea and various speciality markets including monthly Farmers Market.

The management of The Square is, currently, the responsibility of Leicestershire County Council as Highways Authority,

## 2. Vision

*“Market Harborough Town Centre will be known as a centre for outdoor events, attracting a diverse range of events, drawing a variety of audiences, and achieving a reputation of hosting unique and high quality events”*

## 3. Scope of Strategy

This strategy provides a framework to balance the needs of the various stakeholders and ensure the opportunity for public resort, recreation and other public purposes is enhanced within the town centre.

The strategy will outline why we are holding events in The Square, guidance on how we select them, and the approach taken to managing them.

The strategy will also provide appropriate guidance for responding to commercial approaches in the light of the need for all activity in The Square to be well managed balancing the need of its various users and constituencies.

## 4. Context

The Square regularly hosts a number of events, although currently focussed on market use supplemented with a small number of other events, such as Harborough by the Sea.

The process and cost for the need for Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs), to enable use of The Square to protect the Highways Authority, are a barrier to more diverse uses of The Square due to the costs involved.

There is, currently, a lack of cultural activities.

## 5. Issues for the new Strategy

- Ownership and Control of The Square without the need for TTROs
- Managing commercial interest in parallel with other commitments

- Local residents' and businesses concerns; impact on The Square, access, impact on the surrounding area, noise nuisance
- Ensuring any surplus and profile generated is proportionate to the resource attributed, i.e. staff resource, impact on the environment etc
- Aligning events program in The Square with other events in the town
- The impact of weather on events
- Evaluating events in The Square
- Look to make the space more user friendly
- Benchmarking against best practice in other similar settings regionally

## **6. Aims**

The aims are; increase visitor numbers, provide real economic benefits to the local economy; maintain a vibrant atmosphere in the town; enhance the current town centre offer and promote Market Harborough to a wider audience and demographic.

## **7. Objectives**

- Increasing the number of cultural, community and commercial events held in The Square with the aim of having some form of event or market every weekend throughout the summer months by 2020 and 4 major events throughout the year.
- Developing a detailed framework for managing, monitoring and evaluating increased events and in turn increased use of The Square for cultural and community activity
- Income from The Square, set at a target of a 40% increase by 2020.
- Being proactive in attracting reputable event organisers who are aligned with the vision
- Strengthen our communication channels to users of the town centre ensuring they are kept informed about all public events happening in The Square
- To increase footfall to the town centre by 10% at each event.
- To monitor the quality of events via social media with 75% rating it as good or better.
- To ensure there are 3 positive regional news stories on the events held.

## **8. Which Events get prioritised?**

- Events which deliver significant commercial benefit;
- Events which also demonstrate enhanced cultural or community benefit
- Events with a high profile which generate increased interest and have a wide appeal
- Events which are environmentally sustainable and the impact of which on The Square, businesses, neighbours, and events taking place elsewhere in the town is manageable
- Events which demonstrate community benefit and attract new users to the town
- Events which offer the prospect of building a productive long term relationship with the promoter
- Events which build on the heritage of the town

## 9. Achieving our Objectives

- 9.1 There are a number of detailed practical steps which need to be taken for events to take place in The Square. Detailed guidance on organizing events in The Square will be prepared once the strategic approach has been agreed, and will be based on the new events template which has been prepared. We have highlighted below areas of particular significance:
- 9.2 Environmental impact - All organisers will be required to have regard to the environmental impact of the event, and identifying methods for mitigation of impact.
- 9.3 Noise - Code of Practice on Environmental Noise control of events requiring PA announcements must be recognized and adhered to. The parameters for levels as outlined in the code will form part of the contractual obligations of hire.
- 9.4 Residential Impact (surrounding area) - Traffic management and crowd management will be requirements of applications by organisers. Each of these documents will form part of any Premises License operating schedule or Temporary Event Notice application and will be referred to in the contract. As a general principle event organisers should discourage car use and encourage use of public transport.
- 9.5 Frequency. Individually even large events may have manageable impact but collectively the impact may be more significant. We will need to consider cumulative as well as individual impact in assessing each event. An annual programme will help in managing the overall as well as the individual impact of events in The Square. However, it is not always possible to predict a year in advance what approaches may be made to us.
- 9.6 Management & Monitoring - A pre-assessment of the event area will be undertaken including, as necessary, Town Centre Co-ordinator, Market Management, Licencing Team, Environmental Health Team and event organisers technical team. During the event monitoring will be undertaken as necessary, dependent upon the event type.
- 9.7 Post Event Review – Following the event a review will be undertaken with all Council departments with an interest, any external partners and event organiser.
- 9.8 Licensing Considerations – Under the 2003 Licensing Act events which are held in The Square under a temporary events notice or a premises license will need to meet the four licensing objectives:
- The prevention of crime and disorder
  - Public safety
  - The prevention of public nuisance
  - The protection of children from harm

## 9.9 Income

- To achieve our income target, we will encourage event expressions of interest from the outdoor event industry to understand better the opportunities that the market has to offer. We will remain “open minded” as there is no set formula to outdoor events.
- We will investigate further the opportunity surrounding repeat events & activities i.e. Christmas markets, winter fairs, “big lunch”, summer garden parties, band concerts etc

## 9.10 Sustainable Events

The events industry has become increasingly proactive in ensuring events in particular outdoor events are sustainable. The following principles will be adopted;

- provide an accessible and inclusive setting for all;
- provide a safe and secure atmosphere;
- have minimal negative impacts on the environment;
- encourage healthy living;
- promote responsible sourcing;
- deliver excellent customer experience;
- encourage more sustainable behaviour; and
- leave a positive legacy.

## 10. Stakeholder Engagement

The strategy acknowledges that it is vital to ensure that all stakeholders that hold an interest in the activities within The Square are appropriately consulted pre, during and post events. However, it is also recognised that it is not practical to assume that every approach for use of The Square can be taken through a consultation process.

## 11. Communications

### 11.1 Commercial

Once the principle of the strategy has been adopted and, assuming the land is transferred to the District Council. The Council will implement a proactive sales and marketing plan showcasing The Square. The market will be approached via regular channels including industry trade magazines and websites. Industry forums i.e. National Outdoor Events Association (NOEA) and PSA (Production Services Association).

The sales and marketing plan aims to increase the profile of The Square, outline its options in regards to outdoor events and ensure that the industry is aware of the application process and its timelines.

## 11.2 Stakeholders

For the purposes of this document they are considered to include Leicestershire County Council, Police, businesses, local residents who are neighbours of The Square or are impacted on by events being held in The Square and local schools and educational facilities.

If an event requires a premises licence the statutory process under the Licensing Act 2003 will be enacted for further information on the Act and Harborough District Council Licensing Authority please visit [www.harborough.gov.uk](http://www.harborough.gov.uk).

After an event, Market Management will contact stakeholders for feedback.

## 11.3 Public Communication

To ensure the reach is maximised the following channels of communication will be used to inform the public of events that are due to take place.

- Listed on the Council website, social media channels and residents updates
- Advertised on the town centre notice boards
- Listed on the Schedule of Events
- Publicised in accordance with the organisers marketing and communication strategy
- Listed on the event section of the Explore Harborough tourism website

## 12.0 Implementation Plan

| Key Activity   | Milestones   | When             | By Whom                  |
|--|--|------------------|--------------------------|
| Review of the Strategy   | Provide the Draft Events Strategy for comment                | March/April 2017 | Mark Perris              |
| Seek formal approval for Strategy  | Present Draft Events Strategy to Executive for approval      | June 2017        | Mark Perris              |
| Recommendation to Council to approve process to “acquire” The Square                         | Present proposal to commence process to “acquire” The Square | September 2017   | Executive                |
| If approved  |  |                  |                          |
| Apply for Planning Permission for a Change of Use for The Square as identified in Appendix A | • Submit Planning Application                                | September 2017   | Mark Perris              |
|  | • Planning Decision  | December 2017    | Local Planning Authority |
| Apply for Stopping Up Order for The Square as identified in Appendix A                       | • Submit Stopping Up Application                             | September 2017   | Mark Perris              |
|  | • Stopping Up Order Decision                                 | December 2017    | Dept. of Transport       |
| Review responsibility for events on The  | Review Market Management                                     | September 2017   | Mark Perris              |

|  |  |                     |                   |
|--|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| Square and its inclusion within the Market Management contract or revised market management arrangements | arrangements.  |                     |                   |
| If both approved, commence land registration process through Leicestershire Act.                         | Commence land registration process.  | January 2018        | Mark Perris/Legal |
| Implement commercial communications plan   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess reaction from the “market”.</li> <li>Manage applications in line with process and procedure.</li> <li>Build a “picture” of the commercial landscape for 2013 and beyond</li> </ul> | February/March 2018 | Market Management |
| Stakeholder and Public Communication plan  | Consultation on proposed events  | Throughout the year | Market Management |
| Review of Strategy   | Review of data collected from post event surveys   | September 2019      | Lee Byrne         |

## Appendix A

[Plan as identified in Appendix A of the Executive Report]