

A Strategy for Tiverton 2017 to 2027 A vision for the next 10 years

A Strategy and Action Plan for the town and market.

INTRODUCTION TO TIVERTON TOWN CENTRE AND MARKET STRATEGY 2017/2027

Background

To enable the stake holders in the town centre and market in Tiverton it is necessary to enable all concerned to work towards a successful and sustainable town centre and market.

This can only be successful if a flexible strategy and action plan is in place to give leadership and direction for all the stake holders.

Mid Devon District Council is taking on the role of providing the initial leadership so as to co-ordinate all the different themes of the strategy and ensure the aim is to improve the economic performance of the town centre and market, thus making it a place where business can thrive and people will want to visit.

The decision was also made to combine town centre strategies with those of the market so that there is only one strategy document which is complementary both to the town and the market.

Executive summary

The strategy gives an overview of the national perspective as to the current situations in town centres and markets. They are at critical stage nationally in many places and there are many challenges to be met, especially for small market towns such as Tiverton. The same applies to the market scene nationally and the reasons for decline are complex and varied but there are still genuine economic and social benefits in maintaining and developing them. Town centres also need to reinforce and redefine their role and function in response to the economic change that has occurred over the last few years. The impact of creating local business is explained and shows how this is beneficial to the local economy, especially with the pressures on local authority budgets.

The next area covered is the local Tiverton perspective both for the town centre and the market. This includes the critical success factors for both. The good impressions and bad impressions are given, again for both the town and the market. The strategy will enable the town and market to become sustainable and having a robust and effective management in place.

It also supports many aspects of Council policy and these are listed. Most importantly the strategy will help to enhance the relationship between councils and small independent businesses to help secure the towns future and not fall into decline, resulting in loss of businesses and hence more unemployment.

A suggested vision is outlined and this would be supported by a number of key themes. These 12 themes will form the basis of the strategy and each theme will have an objective and key strategic outcome. This will be achieved through the key actions under each strategic theme. Many of the actions will in fact overlap other themes, but essentially they are positive ways forward. There are many additional actions that will present themselves during the life of the strategy and these should not be ignored or discounted. The strategy is a living document and should be reviewed regularly to ensure it is still 'fit for purpose' and appropriate to the economic climate at the time of review as this will certainly change.

The strategy also indicates the challenges, threats and risks to Tiverton as seen at present. Again these will change and will need review. An example would be the development of junction 27 and the impact upon the town which shows the need for a 'threats' strategy to ensure the right actions are taken to ensure that there is not a negative impact on the town.

A short summary is provided outlining why the strategy and action plan are necessary and finally there are 12 main recommendations from it. These briefly are:

1. The strategy is adopted.
2. An annual review is carried out and any modifications made.
3. Mid Devon D.C. retain management of market.
4. Monthly health checks carried out.

5. Up to date policies introduced which are legally compliant.
6. Consideration given as to amount of resource available.
7. Improved signage.
8. Embrace technology and review its best use.
9. Carry out annual customer survey.
10. Ensure council carries out regulatory requirements but take into account entrepreneurial enterprise.
11. Detailed survey of potential improvements and evaluation of them.
12. All decisions made involving the town follow consultation.

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National perspective

Market towns, such as Tiverton, have a very long history and have been focal points for as long as they have been in existence. As such they have always represented important public spaces. These towns and markets can offer possibilities, not only local economic growth, but also places for people to use a public space to mingle and become accustomed to each other and their differences. They therefore act as focal points for local communities, a site of public interaction and retail spaces....as noted many years ago by Professor Sophie Watson.

That said, Town centres and markets, like the whole retail arena, have been affected by the downturn in the economy. There are many challenges to be met and not only by towns and markets. Small market towns and their markets - such as Tiverton - play a vital role in the 'High street' revival. With the introduction of the 'Mary Portas' independent review and the subsequent pilots (of which Tiverton was one), all applications emphasised the considerable value of their town and market.

Pro-actively managed towns across the country seem to be the ones that are in the best position, are making improvements, and are developing trade by various initiatives: but there are challenges for markets managed by local authorities. These cover issues such as investment and budgets. There are also some restrictive market regulations that need modification since staid product choice and traditional opening hours simply diminish opportunity. The reasons for the current plight of many markets are varied and complex yet there are still genuine economic and social benefits in maintaining and developing them.

Town centres are a critical point, needing to reinforce and redefine their role and function in response to the economic changes that have occurred over the last few years as a result of the recession. Town centres are complex places and they need to perform as multifunctional centres offering a variety of retail, services, recreation and even more living accommodation.

Town centres need to respond to the continual changes in their demographics as that is where the customer comes from. At one level, small market towns may suffer from the lack of the major multiple stores since more and more are just concentrating on major centres. This is also influenced by 'shop on line' in the age of the computer, smartphone, and internet. That said, it follows that there are opportunities created for forward-thinking towns to embrace the change and to develop an entrepreneurial attitude.

Tiverton should emphasise the importance of being a market town which is supporting its local businesses and thereby strengthening the local economy.

Recently a survey was carried out by the National Association of British Markets Authorities (NABMA) resulted in the following facts:

- 1,225 retail markets.
- 33,000 market traders.
- 1,000 apprentices employed by market traders.
- 55,000 people employed directly on retail markets.
- Retail market turnover of around £2.5 billion a year.
- £36.6 million invested to improve retail markets.
- 65% of retail markets are run by local authorities.
- An estimated 30 billion shopping visits to retail markets per year.

Markets across the country are being invested in, resulting in regeneration of an area and trade. As a result of the economic changes in the last few years, the opportunities for small business development, through a market, have greatly supported the number of new start up entrepreneurial businesses. They are incubator spaces and allow development of exciting, innovative, businesses without the necessity for a large cash investment.

In surveys it was found that 42% of customers would not visit an area if the market was not present, which illustrates that many customers see the presence of markets as a key deciding factor in whether or not they will shop in a certain area.

The largest direct impact from market trade is the revenue generated by local retailers. Customer surveys show a highly positive attitude towards markets. In addition to the local benefits, tourists will often cite markets as a key reason for travelling to an area.

In many areas, the trader or business in a town centre is a local resident dealing with local customers which has a beneficial impact on the local economy. For every £1 spent by a local person with a local trader or business, that £1 will be worth about £1.70 to the

local economy. If that local trader or business then spends it with another local business, that £1 will then be worth around £2.20. Spend that £1 with a multi-national company then it has a value of about £0.22 to the local economy.

There are several reports over recent years of the value of town centres and markets. Most of these emphasise the importance to the community and the boosting of local small business and entrepreneurship.

With the growing pressures on local authority budgets, failing or loss-making local-authority-run markets are transferring to private control. Indeed, recent data seem to indicate that some private sector markets outperform those managed by the Council.

Trends in markets are changing. 'Street food' is certainly becoming very popular, especially with the lunch time trade from local businesses and offices. Crafts are another area where there is an increased demand. This shows there is a move from the 'cheap' goods sold out of a box to a better quality of goods. The latter market has been undercut as new items from China in stores such as PRIMARK are often cheaper than local "seconds" – once the staple of this sector. Markets will change in the future as the customer changes and the whole retail arena develops. This is complex and how things change is dependent upon the area's local demographic.

The Government have indicated support for town centres and markets and at the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) the Minister for Local Government is also Minister for town centres and markets. They have given financial support to national promotions such as 'The Great British High Street', 'Markets Fortnight' and 'Love Your Local Market', (which now has developed into an international event across the world). They see the importance of the town centre and market as a place for economic opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs (low cost and low risk) and have a role in helping creating community cohesion. They also recognise the support for environmental objectives, more efficient packaging methods and reduction of travel for food and customers.

Consideration has to be given into the formulating of a strategy to deal with the potential development at Junction 27. A positive way forward has to be mapped out and careful consideration given as to the way in which the town will embrace such a development and actually economically benefit from its presence.

The outlook for the future of town centres and markets is in general good, subject to the ability to invest, change and attract both traders and customers. As with multi-national companies, there is a need to be flexible to change and invest to ensure sustainability and a return on investment is achieved.

Tiverton perspective – an overview

Town Centre

The emphasis of the strategy will be on learning from the past but not living in it. Unless town centres and markets respond to the changing customer they will in time disappear or become dormitory towns. Change is happening and the industry has to react accordingly and there are opportunities to ensure the sustainability of the town centre and the market in the future.

Tiverton is well positioned in that in many ways it could be 'the capital of rural Devon'.

Vitally important to having a successful town centre and market are the 'critical success factors'. If these are missing, then maintaining a sustainable vibrant town centre and market becomes extremely difficult.

The factors are:

- Sense of place
- Critical mass
- Good management
- Accessibility and permeability
- Marketing and PR
- Safety and Security
- Integration with surrounding retail offer and community
- Partnership working

Outlined are the initial 'good' and 'bad' impressions around which the strategy was developed.

Good impressions:

- Abundance of notable historic buildings.
- Situated in centre of a rural hinterland.
- Unique small independent businesses
- Situated on 2 rivers and with a canal as tourist attraction.
- Fairly low unemployment with unique businesses within the area.
- A developing town with areas able to be used for development.
- Reasonable rents/rates in comparison to larger towns.
- Good sports facilities and a large further education college.
- Small number of vacant premises.
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Bad impressions:

- Some buildings looking drab and tired and in need of revitalising.
- Street scene poor. Pavements look poorly maintained and in need of repair and cleaning up.
- Lack of footfall.
- Lack of effective pedestrian signage around town.
- Poster box in Phoenix Way complete eyesore and unattractive.
- Lack of street name plates (or cannot be seen easily) therefore difficult for visitors to get around.
- Lack of cooperation between various business groups which leads to poor communication.
- Lack of vision as to where and what the town wants to be.
- Lack of attraction for young family groups who have disposable income. Town uninviting.
- Lack of younger generation using town for purchases etc.
- Poor quality of some of shop windows and displays.
- Large number of charity shops in prime locations.
- Lack of general marketing and promotion.
- Lack of links and information boards for town centre businesses at car parks and some perceived by the public as being a high price for the type of offer the town has.
- Whole town in need of smartening up 'its act' and being united for common cause. Even Town Hall has vegetation growing on the roof and looking run down.

The town does have to look forward and to grasp opportunities. There will be opportunities in the future but the town still needs to work in partnership, which is public and private to ensure there is a common vision and strong leadership is given to take the issues forward so eventually there will be a return on both the public and private investment.

Market

The first question to ask is 'Does Tiverton need a market?' Historically there has been a market in Tiverton ever since it was established as a place where people lived. The town has evolved around the market as traders turned their businesses from stalls to shops and new traders evolved, thus creating new businesses.

Tiverton market is an important part of the town's heritage and is also an essential part of the attraction for visitors.

Outlined are the initial 'good' and 'bad' impressions around which the strategy was developed

Good Impressions

- Historic building
- Positioned in a 'Market Town'
- To some extent a visitor attraction
- Some good traders with local produce (very good fruit and veg stalls)
- On the whole traders welcoming
- Very reasonable rents/tolls
- Room for expansion
- Good night-time markets at intervals throughout the year and well attended

Bad Impressions

- Hard to locate as a visitor to town
- Poor signage from town centre
- Building being all glass and thus cold during winter as a consequence of its design
- Looks 'tired' and bland
- Looks dirty and paintwork poor. Badly in need of cleaning
- Faulty doors and design in need of attention
- Lack of variety, especially in food
- Poor facilities for café area, makes it look unsuitable for business.
- Lock ups also not fully fit for purpose and small space for display etc.
- Whole area requires a 'face lift' to help regenerate this part of the town
- Lack of younger generation and young families using the market, i.e. mainly reliant on older generation
- Lack of promotion
- Review of written policies, regulations etc. to make the market compliant with market laws.
- Review of vision and strategy
- High car park charges for size of town restricting dwell time and spend with businesses
- Lack of footfall

There are problems with the current market - identified above - and there is a clear need for change and improvement. The strategy will consider the current layout of the market and the potential to make changes, thereby creating inviting areas for customers and tourists to dwell. Without such action, Tiverton market will inevitably become a burden to the Council and will result in the Council continually subsidising its existence. Evidence across the country has shown that, by investing resources into improving a market, sustainability becomes a reality.

A return on the investment will happen, the length of time of this depending upon the amount and type of resource provided.

The installation of effective management and changes in outdated policies can result in a return in investment within a short time. Improvements in appearance will also result in return on investment but over a slightly longer period.

With a successful market, then the expectations of a reasonable return are achievable. Traders will pay appropriate rents if trading is successful and there is a good footfall. This is the same as the retail property sector where higher rents are achievable in areas of greater footfall and trade.

As with any investment, there is a need to have a vision as to its outcomes and a strategy to follow. This is very apparent with the successful markets around the country of which there are plenty - and even more now taking action.

The vision for the market has been written to incorporate all aspects of the benefits of a market.

General Comment

The strategy takes into account all the aspects of the vision so as to enable the town and the market to be sustainable over a projected 10 year life. Actions are achievable on this time scale and can be quite easily attained if robust and effective management is set in place.

It is very difficult to evaluate the town and market thoroughly as there are no base lines to work from other than rental income. As the voids increase, then the profitability of the town and its sustainability will come under question and the market will remain a loss maker for the Council. Efficiently managed and with strong leadership from Council, the market can create a surplus in time and add value to the economy of the town.

Market Towns in this country do have a viable future, as can be shown from successes up and down the country. They do support many aspects of Council policy in relation to the dimensions listed below:

- Provision of a trading space for small independent businesses at an affordable rate.
- Creation of entrepreneurship and innovation. This is especially so with links with Colleges and the younger generation allowing them opportunities to develop business and ideas. It also improves the quality of independent businesses.
- Creation of employment within the town.
- An area which helps community cohesion and opportunities for the understanding of different cultures.

- An arena for promoting healthy living and affordable food.
- A major attraction for visitors to the town and encourage return visits.
- An area where the older generation enjoy visiting and socialising.

Most importantly, the strategy will help to enhance the relationship between the Council and small independent businesses and other stake holders in the town centre. These stake holders are many and include local authorities, retail (both national companies and small independents), banking, estate and property agents, solicitors and other service businesses, hotels and guest houses, property developers, manufacturers, voluntary and charity sector, churches etc. In addition there are hidden advantages such as the reduction of unemployment and benefits paid out, the success of the town in attracting additional business etc.

If the town and market progress into gradual decline, then there will be a loss of businesses and hence yet more unemployment. Tiverton will also become less attractive to developers and investors as well as suffering loss of community spirit.

The strategy themes are designed to be a comprehensive plan covering every aspect of current issues and also to be able to respond quickly to changes in the economic and social spheres which will happen over the next 10 years. It emphasises the need to promote the town and market and implies more working with the new generations that bring innovation and entrepreneurship to them and beyond.

The main recommendations for taking the strategy forward are:

- Establishment of a robust and effective management model which would include monitoring performance and creation of base lines.
- Build on the relationship with new businesses and the younger generation through links with educational establishments.
- Provision of business support to help create innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Consider the resource that could be allocated and establishing what the return on the investment would achieve.

Many things covered in the strategy are already under consideration and actions are being taken. The market is important to the town and its economy as well as - when running efficiently - creating an income stream for the Council.

Tiverton has a great potential.

It should aim to be one of the south west's leading market towns, which can only be good for the promotion of the town and its economy.

The town centre contributes to the Council's corporate priority of the Economy through:

- Business development and growth
- Improving and regenerating our town centres
- Growing the tourism sector

Vision and Strategy Key Themes

Vision

To develop and sustain an attractive, inviting and vibrant town and market which will:

- Add value to the economic, social, environmental and cultural fabric of Tiverton,
- Create a dynamic visitor experience that is diverse, vibrant and adds value,
- Enhance the existing market: helping to create local employment and development of business,
- Promote the future whilst remembering the historic background.

This will be achieved through working with businesses, retailers, market traders, the customer and effective leadership from Mid Devon District Council. It will be flexible, so as to embrace changes in business and within the community thereby affording the opportunity to adapt to and exploit changes in business as all the actions are reviewable on an annual basis to ensure that they are still appropriate.

Key Themes to Town Centre and Market Strategy

The strategy itself consists of various themes each of which has a set of actions to be undertaken. Below are the key themes and the strategic outcomes. The letter key is (B) for both town centre and market, (T) for the town centre and (M) for the market.

1. Town and Market Position – To monitor and determine the sustainability of the town and market.

Key strategic outcomes:

- (B) Creation of inviting, clean and safe atmosphere.
- (B) Better liaison with town centre businesses and other like business organisations and market traders.
- (B) Linked signage and wayfinding.
- (B) Establishment of strategy and policy to respond to future developments i.e. Junction 27.
- (T) Improvements to public domain.
- (T) Maximise use of empty property and reduce the number of void properties.
- (M) Sustainable rents and charges.
- (M) Balance of goods creates competition but not saturation.

2. Town and Market Management – To establish a proactive, effective and efficient management regime which contributes to the delivery of the themes of the strategy.

- (B) Review the level and the type of management and partnership required.
- (M) System of management to comply with DCLG best practice guidance.

3. Marketing and promotion - To maximise the marketing and promotion with a view to increasing visitor numbers.

- (B) Communications plan supported by an active website and social media presence.
- (B) Consider potential production of a quarterly town centre newsletter.
- (B) Annual programme of targeted customer promotions.
- (T) Examine feasibility and cost of introduction of Wi-fi across town centre.

- (M) Ensure liaison with County Council Trading Standards and MDDC Environmental Health.
 - (M) Develop a Tiverton Market brand.
4. Improvement potential, maintenance and cleanliness – To establish a maintenance regime and to explore and evaluate the various options for further improvement of the trading arena.
- (T) Baseline agreement on town centre cleansing and waste removal.
 - (T) Removal of street clutter following street audit.
 - (B) Improved signage around the town
 - (M) Review of the cleaning regime.
 - (M) Establishment of monthly inspection regime.
 - (M) Research into and financial implications of improvements of market layout both internally and externally.
 - (M) Traders are consulted on all potential changes and their input considered and acknowledged
5. Social and community – Engage with the community and seek to provide a town and market that people want to visit and that they enjoy visiting.
- (B) Link with the various voluntary groups in the area who assist in raising the image of Tiverton through community pride.
 - (B) Create an environment for the town's changing communities.
 - (B) Supporting town diversity through foods, crafts, performing arts and culture.
 - (B) Maximise opportunities for increasing the opportunity for disposable income to be spent in the town centre and on the market.
6. Consultation – To engage with both the customer and the businesses/traders so an understanding of the relationship can be achieved.
- (B) Establish 'what the customer wants' and what attract them to come to the town.
 - (B) Improvement in customer service.

- (B) Improved relationships and partnership working between the Council, businesses, market traders and other stake holders in the town.
 - (B) Membership of relevant organisations to enable continual review of best practice.
7. Economy and regeneration – To increase the diversity and vitality of the town in general to support Tiverton’s overall offer.
- (B) Enhancement and vitality of the town centre.
 - (B) Opportunities for small businesses and employment provided.
 - (B) An open regenerated town centre and market which attracts customers.
 - (B) Tiverton is attractive to local businesses thereby supporting economic development.
8. Innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise – to encourage the development of new business by building relationships with educational institutions, job centre plus and other initiatives which help provide assistance to business.
- (B) Working with Petroc on business initiatives.
 - (B) An active business ‘buddying’ scheme up and running help mentor/assist new businesses.
 - (B) Opportunity provided for creative industries sector to establish outlets.
 - (B) Opportunities provided for high quality goods and displays.
 - (B) Business start-up programme implemented.
 - (T) Expansion of the night time economy to cater for more diversity in the leisure provision.
 - (M) Introduction of ‘incubator’ units for ‘start up’ businesses on the market.
9. Culture and tourism – To be a major part of the town’s cultural heritage and provide support to events and creating the sense of place.
- (B) A sense of place and identity for the town and market is created.
 - (B) Through a Town Centre Partnership ensure a program of events in place.
 - (B) Town Centre and Market play a major part in the town’s showcase of cultural events.
 - (M) The market provides an opportunity for people to discover other cultures through food.

- (M) The market is seen as a traditional part of the town's heritage in its own right.

10. Ethical and environmental – provide a good and safe environment for visitors and increase the opportunities for reducing waste and increasing recycling.

- (B) A modern, clean environment for both businesses and customers is established.
- (T) Improvements in pavements throughout town.
- (T) Review of all street furniture
- (M) The aim of becoming a 'green market' is achieved.
- (M) The market is seen to deliver sustainability with a 'local' outlet for goods and encourage reduction in 'food miles'.
- (M) The market space is used by customers and visitors to dwell.

11. Educational liaison – to liaise with educational institutions and assist in providing produce and business awareness.

- (B) Ensuring that students are aware of the offer of the town centre and how it links with the local economy.
- (B) Awareness is raised of where and how produce is produced/grown and awareness of seasonal variations, food miles etc.
- (B) Relationships in place with educational establishments to support business and waste management studies.
- (M) Market is used by college students for "real life" learning about business management through the use of a market stall.

12. Food and health – to promote a healthy life style through good food knowledge

- (M) Fresh fruit and vegetables available at least five days a week.
- (M) Fresh fish and meat available.
- (M) Healthy options on all stalls and provision of specialist foods e.g. gluten free diets etc.
- (M) The market monitors and introduces some control on goods offered which are harmful to health.

Action Plan to support Strategy and outcomes

Timescale	Key Actions	Theme	(B) Both (T) Town Centre (M) Mkt	Progress/Review
November 2016	1. Attend the various different group meetings and ensure communication between them.	1	(B)	Some being attended since April 2106
	2. Support community groups in initiatives such as voluntary area clear ups.	1	(B)	
	3. Implement training programme to achieve an effective management team.	2	(M)	
	4. Design leaflets/publicity targeting specific customers and be widely available.	3	(B)	
	5. Introduce support and advice for traders on using digital marketing and social media.	3	(M)	
	6. Regular visits by MDDC Environmental Health to carry out random checks.	3	(M)	
	7. Introduce maintenance plan for monthly checks on condition of market structure, roads and equipment etc.	4	(M)	1st course 2nd Nov.

8. Provide opportunities for the community to engage in a welcoming atmosphere using performing arts etc. to show diversity of area.	5	(B)
9. Actively encourage new business into the town and market and thereby extend the 'offer'.	7	(B)
10. Encourage businesses to develop and expand their business plans and ensure they encompass quality, customer services and standards.	8	(B)
11. Promote business opportunities through use of vacant stalls.	8	(M)
12. Build on existing successful programme of town events/promotions to increase its vibrancy.	9	(B)
13. Promote the varied food offer available and highlight the quality and reasonable price comparisons.	9	(M)
14. Develop safe and clean environment through continual review and encourage businesses to improve their appearance.	10	(B)
15. Ensure compliance with the market regulations which require that a healthy offer is available 3 days a week.	12	(M)
16. Actively promote healthy food option.	12	(M)

December 2016	1. Establish a balance of goods policy to prevent saturation, allow competition and raise standards.	1	(M)
	2. Introduce KPI's and report on them monthly and monitor any trends or changes in performance.	2	(B)
	3. Introduce the establishment of Town Centre Partnership which includes all stake holders in the town.	2	(B)
	4. Introduce Town Centre Newsletter.	3	(B)
	5. Produce a business case and costings for the market improvements including inside and outside pannier building and improvements to the lock-ups.	4	(M)
	6. Develop potential for specialist markets and planning for future specialist markets.	5	(M)
January 2017	1. Carry out signage audit and prepare recommendations and strategy.	1	(B)
	2. Review options for market management and recommend model which supports regeneration and return on investment.	2	(M)

3. Develop and implement communications plan.	3	(B)	Craft mkt 4 th and 18 th Dec
4. Use Tiverton Market brand on all communications and publicity.	3	(M)	
5. Feasibility study of installation of Wi-fi across the town.	3	(T)	
6. Fully appreciate the demographics and how to use them for targeted promotion and use shopper lifestyle profiles to increase town and market use.	5	(B)	
7. Introduce a trader policy which also the provision of support for business and help create employment.	8	(M)	
8. Work with night time economy and examine ways of introducing more diverse offers, especially in leisure facilities such as cinema and theatre.	8	(T)	
9. Carry out feasibility study to examine potential of 'incubator units' within market area.	8	(M)	
10. Actively work with traders to instigate a 'green market' where waste is minimal and the waste management strategy is about recycling.	10	(M)	
11. Actively develop the current liaison with Petroc to support educational programmes involving the business and	11	(B)	

	community sector.		
	12. Encourage schools to carry out projects around the town centre and market and have presentation sessions with selective audience.	11	(B)
	13. Make stall available for use by educational institutions to develop business plans and enable practical experience.	11	(M)

March 2017	1. Introduce street scape manual to cover planning, conservation areas etc.	2	(T)
	2. Establish markets website, blogs and use of social media to promote market.	3	(M)
	3. Produce terms of reference and constitution for 'Friends of market' group and recruit suitable members.	6	(M)
	4. Create a business welcome pack with information on area and on business development for new businesses.	7	(B)
	5. Annual review of market regulations on the control of goods thought to be dangerous etc. and regulations up to date.	12	(M)

April 2017	1. Introduce annual survey to identify and improve customer satisfaction.	1	(B)
	2. Work with DCC to reach agreement over condition of footways		

and have an agreed standard of public realm.	1	(T)
3. Research and evaluate a form of Tiverton loyalty card available to local residents.	3	(B)
4. Work with MDDC and Tiverton Town Council to agree an acceptable level of cleansing in the town centre.	4	(T)
5. Implement cleaning regime on market to ensure it is clean and presentable and looks attractive.	4	(M)
6. Introduce an annual customer satisfaction survey including suggestions as to improvements and quality of offer etc.	6	(B)
7. Carry out 'secret shopper' exercise annually to measure customer service across the town.	6	(B)
8. Work with town centre business and community groups (through a town centre partnership), to explore ways of funding improvements and other initiatives throughout the town (i.e. BIP, HSIF etc.).	7	(B)
9. Working closely with Petroc, develop a relationship with business development, innovation and entrepreneurship that will help business and the local economy as well as retaining 'local talent'.	8	(B)
10. Promote and support opportunities for new business ventures through development and marketing.	8	(B)

May 2017	1. Explore opportunities to utilise void properties, especially upper floors, to be converted for other use or residential.	1	(T)
	2. Explore potential for more local produce on the market and encourage producer involvement.	10	(M)
	3. Actively develop the market's open areas as help in the creation of space where the customer will want to dwell and spend time around the market.	10	(M)
	4. Liaise and work with interested groups and educational institutions on the promotion of healthy foods and living.	12	(M)
	5. 5. Run 'Healthy Living' market annually.	12	(M)
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June 2017	1. Provide a town centre promotional pack for residential developers and estate agents for new residents.	3	(B)
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July 2017	1. Create an environment to attract and keep younger shoppers and visitors interested in the town centre.	5	(B)
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August 2017	1. Develop a 'Threats strategy'. This is designed to enable the town to react in a positive manner to influences such as developments nearby (junction 27), competition i.e. Exeter and Taunton and other changes that may happen which affect Tiverton.	1	(B)

Ongoing	2. Look at achieving the 'Real Deal' charter working in partnership with DCC Trading Standards.	3	(M)
	3. Ensure support for community groups and the various initiatives they carry out. Assist in ensuring they are recognised for the work they do.	5	(B)
	4. Introduce an annual 'business of the year' and 'trader of the year' competition to encourage service and innovation.	8	(B)
	5. Continual development of 'Electric Nights' market to ensure its sustainability and success.	9	(M)
	6. Look at feasibility of competition for educational institutions involving business innovation.	11	(B)
	7. Develop links with other educational centres where the 'market experience' will assist students.	11	(M)

	1. Continual investigation into best practice from around the country and applicable to Tiverton through various organisations such as NABMA, ATCM etc. and remaining members of these associations.	1	(B)
	2. Continual review of trading hours across the town centre and monitoring trading times.	1	(B)
	3. Actively strive to gain awards for the town and market through the various categories which help in promotion of the town and market.	9	(B)
	4. Regularly review the risk assessments of the town and market	10	(B)

to ensure safe and pleasant surroundings for all shoppers, visitors and people who work in the town centre.

This action plan is a live document and should be reviewed at regular intervals and certainly annually. It has only done the actions until the end of August (although most will be continually done each year after evaluation as to suitability, success and whether they are applicable) as the Town Centre Management role will be under review, the current contract only till September 2017.

Challenges, threats and risks to Tiverton

The following is an outline of the challenges, threats and risks to Tiverton. There is only ever a limited time and scope to explore new ideas, plans and opportunities as they arise when seeking to achieve economic sustainability. By learning from the past, not living in it, new initiatives can be developed. The following points in relation to challenges, threats and risks have to be taken into consideration and should be reviewed on a regular basis as they will change as society changes.

The potential for development of the market is an important part of the regeneration of Tiverton Town Centre and it is essential that the strategy and action plan link closely to the proposed master plan for the town centre and the strategy being prepared for the tourism aspect. Once strategies are in place then it is essential that they are reviewed regularly and are flexible enough to be able to respond to any changes in social behaviour (i.e. shopping, online etc.) and develop a plan to ensure the sustainability of the town and market.

Once the strategy, which would encompass a vision for the town and market, linked to an action plan around the various themes can be developed, the town and market will have a united focus and all stakeholders knowing what is intended and the ways it can be achieved.

Challenges	Threats	Risks
Changes in the economic climate.	Major developments e.g. new out of town centre shopping with retail and food but little connectivity to the market.	Unable to sustain the market due to lack of budget etc.
Changes in 'shopping habits' of the customer.	Development of new major outlets for food and eating and development of 'pop up' bars and eateries.	Changes in local authority policies.

Digital developments in relation to business and business transactions	Ease of travel to Exeter and Taunton and major shopping areas.	Failure to efficiently manage the running of the town and market.
Changes in the climatic conditions and effects on trade.	Lack of new traders and retirement of older traders leading to a lack of variation in offer.	Failure to have policy in relation to balance of goods that results in loss of traders and diminishes size of market thus reducing the attraction.
Changes in legislation or regulatory control.	Being able to respond to competition from other value retailers in the town, thus creating a market that can offer something the customer wants.	Changes in law.
Recruitment of new businesses to the town and market.	Being unable to attract new customers due to changes in age profile and societal trends.	Failure to recognise the different demographic profiles of the town and market and changes that occur over the week.
Creation of a comprehensive communications plan that encompasses all aspects of communicating with all stakeholders in the town and having the necessary consultation with them.	Being unable to recruit new traders and attain a good variation in goods offered for sale.	Failure to attract the local population to shop and support the town centre and market.
Establishing a fee structure that makes the markets sustainable but does not rise excessively.	Stalls and properties not being fully fit for purpose.	Failure to attract tourists: a very important part of the local economy.
Creating an attractive inviting town and market that people would want to visit regularly.	Stalls and premises unfit to provide suitable trading conditions.	Excessive charges on properties and traders.
Creating an entrepreneurial		Insufficient local authority

partnership between the Council and the businesses.

Establish loyal customers to Support and promote the town and market.

Having total 'buy in' from businesses over potential changes across the town and market and to develop a strong partnership

Establishing finance and resource for initiatives which will create new businesses.

Establishing finance for developments, improvements or alterations.

Investment to create sustainability and return

Failure to take any action and thus allow the market to simply carry on as at present and continue to decline.

Summary

This strategy has a very wide remit and covers the majority of issues and effects that a good market town has on a local economy. It has covered issues around the condition of the town centre and market design, about the offer, the retention of businesses and traders and the introduction of new ones, relationship with the customer and consultation plus many more covering the critical success factors.

The purpose of the strategy is to ensure the success of the town centre and the market returns to the central attraction for it. It should also ensure in the future, that they become sustainable, selling goods, food and produce that both the resident and visitor to the town would want to purchase.

The strategy is flexible but does require regular updating, monitoring and evaluation to ensure it is fit for purpose under the trading conditions at the time.

Many of the actions from the above themes will be ongoing from year to year and the strategy should also be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the town centre and market remain a viable asset to the town and are responsive to change, this being managed to ensure customer satisfaction. This should be treated as a 'living document' and therefore it should be flexible enough to react to any changes that may arise and which might threaten the sustainability of the town.

Many of the strategy themes and actions are overlapping. The actions can support more than one theme, so are included in each individual theme action plan.

Tiverton is signposted as an 'historic market town' and it is essential that the market provided is sustainable for the future and remain an important part of the town's economy.

The number of actions will vary on the length of time they take to achieve and many are ongoing so will need regular review.

The market is a great asset to the town and is a good example of where regeneration of the market can help the town's overall economy. In relation to the market there have been lessons learned through the development that was carried out some nearly 10 years ago and these will be taken into account.

With the adoption of the strategy then the vision can be achieved.

Main Recommendations from Strategy

1. That Mid Devon District Council adopts the vision and strategy for 2017 to 2027. It should make every effort to ensure the various action plans under the themes are allocated to the appropriate officer.

2. That an annual review of the strategy is carried out and any modifications or alterations, due to changes in wider economic conditions, be adopted.
3. The recommendation on the evidence of the research would tend to indicate that Mid Devon District Council actually retain the total management of the market.
4. Monthly health check is carried out and report submitted. (started April 2016)
5. Update of all current policies relevant to the market and introduction of new ones that are compliant with legal requirements and best practice.
6. Consideration being given to the amount of resource that will be available in order to ensure the sustainability of the market and to achieve a return on investment.
7. Improve signage around the town.
8. Embrace technology and review its best use on the town.
9. Carry out an annual customer satisfaction survey so improvements can be evaluated and areas that need attention identified.
10. Ensure that the Council does carry out regulatory requirements but, at the same time, make full consideration to entrepreneurial enterprise and support where appropriate.
11. In relation to potential improvements a detailed survey should provide a list of what could be done. Assessing the full financial implications of such improvements would involve taking into account potential changes in shoppers' behaviour and the results of survey(s). This should also evaluate the potential return on investment.

12. That all decisions are made following consultation and taking into account information provided by the annual customer survey.

Alan Ottey
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Mid Devon District Council
Oct 2016.