DC Admin

From:
Sent: 15 October 2025 22:57
To: DC Admin
Subject: Planning Application Objection - 2025/48/92443/W & 2025/65/92444/W Huddersfield Open Market, Brook Street, Huddersfield, HD1 1DY

Categories:

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I am writing to object to this planning application for the following reasons.

Huddersfield Open Market is unique in terms of markets as it offers two days of trading in new goods but more important personally there are two days of trading in Antiques, Collectibles and Second Hand Goods. I should say at this point all my comments refer to this side of the market as I don't sell new goods on the Monday or Thursday.

The fact there is this combination sets Huddersfield apart from other markets and makes it the best market in the North of England and possibly one of the most important Antique markets outside of the London markets at Portobello Road and Camden. Sellers travel from all over the North of England to stand from Lancashire, Lincolnshire, South Yorkshire, the North East and East Coast. We get buyers coming regularly from as far afield as London and Scotland and once someone visits the market they always come back again.

While the rest of the high street in Huddersfield is struggling with people preferring to travel to Leeds or Manchester for their shopping experience people actually travel into the town specifically to come to this market. As the Antiques and Second Hand side of the market is so unique it cannot be thought of in normal market terms so market research, the opinions of experts on markets and comparisons with other markets is a waste of time and money. It has to be thought of more like a large Antique Fair that appears out of nowhere twice a week and any plans for the future have to take that into consideration.

I stood regularly on the Antiques market for 15 years and now stand about 30 times a year and in that time I have got to know lots of the other traders and despite some misleading reports in the press that there is broad support for the plans I don't know a single trader who is in favour of the plans. In just 2 days last week over the Thursday and Saturday a petition opposing the plans received 146 signatures which is pretty much all of the traders standing on those days.

There are two main problems with the plans.

The first is that simply moving the market outside while it is redeveloped could cause lasting damage as once both buyers and sellers get used to not attending they might never come back. As the provision of temporary outside stalls is not suggested to match the number of stalls inside some people are not going to get a stall or have enough space to make standing worthwhile. Also many of the traders sell very high value items which they cannot risk being adversely affected by bad weather and we are unsure how much protection there will be from any temporary structure. Also in terms of a timeline reference the traders at Barnsley market were meant to have been moved outside for just over 6 months during their redevelopment but it actually took almost three years.

The second and much bigger problem is the number of stalls being planned for inside the market as being 70 once it is redeveloped. At the moment that would barely cover the number who stand regularly on a Tuesday however on a Saturday there are currently 120 stalls filled inside, 20 more outside and a waiting list of 40 people waiting to get a permanent stall. Even if you ignore the waiting list and the outside stalls the plans mean 50 fewer stalls inside and that can quite literally mean that the existing plans to redevelop the market might put 50 people out of business and cost them and their families their livelihoods. These are real people doing the job right now who might lose everything in the vague hope that new businesses doing events, food and traditional market stalls might take their place. Does the council really think that the way to get new businesses started on the market site is by shutting down 50 existing and surviving businesses? Where is the evidence and market research to say that these attractions are required or will be successful? How many years will it take for these 50 new businesses to take root and replace the ones that will be lost? If you somehow believe that you can mirror the Piece Hall in terms of events then I believe you are mistaken.

There is an argument that what is actually needed for Huddersfield market, specifically on a Saturday is more permanent stalls and not fewer which could see the market grow further. With fewer stalls you simply end up with the same faces selling the same items whereas an antiques market in particular thrives on new faces, casuals traders and different stock being available and this is what attracts the buyers. When the regeneration officer came to the market in November 2024 for the consultation I explained to her that the biggest concern was a reduction in the number of stalls. Her reply was that because of the disillusionment with the plans some stall holders had said they would quit the job or retire so she hoped that would mean there would be enough stalls. Who implements a £16.5 million market redevelopment in the hope it will work because it makes some people give up their jobs!

If anyone bothered talking to the market staff they will tell you what they actually need are new stalls and better electrics for them but we will be talking thousands of pounds and not millions for this. Obviously if there are any structural/engineering problems with the market hall then these would need to be remedied.

Can you imagine any other situation where people in this country are being offered £16.5 million pounds and are saying no thanks, please keep your money and leave our amazing market alone. I honestly believe that these plans will damage and possibly even destroy our market in the end and would therefore be a complete waste of a huge amount of money. If anybody from the Council, the Local MP or the Chancellor of the Exchequer herself who is trying to stop wasting money would actually come to the market on a Saturday morning around 11:00 AM they would see something they don't see in the rest of Huddersfield. Retail that is thriving, a buzzing atmosphere and a market that is full of life. The old adage rings very true here - if something is not broken then don't fix it. Especially when it is going to cost £16.5 million!!!