

Item 22a – Email from Cllr Ken White

Email from Ken below plus some investigation I have made with John Walker Markets Manager CMBC (in red)

Apparently tenants have already made overtures already to Calderdale Councillors and rebuffed.

Kens email in black

Just to quickly recap our phone conversation this morning.

At the start of the pandemic lockdown and as part of the business support scheme regarding rent holiday's, Calderdale Council promised all stall holders in Tod Market a three month rent holiday.

Calderdale did not promise this. John Walker had proposed some measure of rent holiday but the award of £10k at the time of consideration meant Calderdale Cabinet did not support any assistance.

Unfortunately, the stall holders have now been informed by Calderdale that they've now gone back on the rent holiday commitment and now want stall holder rents in full for the whole period of the lockdown.

In practice they Rents were not charged at all for April so now only May and June due.

A small number of market stalls have been able to trade, (Food stalls), but these trading periods have been severely restricted when compared to normal trading, i.e. three days per week instead of six and 6 hours per day, including setting up and closing down time as opposed to nine hours trading time.

Apparently 5 or 6 of these do not trade anyway on a Monday and or a Tuesday albeit have option to do so. An all in annual rent paid whether they trade 1 or 6 days

The market provided extra delivery hours as well as extended closing time to allow later washdown.

The market also allowed extended trading on a Tuesday past midday

The indoor market traders have each received grants of up to £10,000 but this has been used to cover stock that's gone out of date/invoice commitments etc, as well as having to pay for social distancing measures required for each stall, screens and reconfiguring stall layout/trading areas.

All business are having to pay for additional social distancing measures. Stock levels normally kept onsite but regularly replenished and for food business quick turnover means less stock and more replenishment. Notable increase in deliveries for majority of those food business opening indicating stock levels maintained just enough for business.

Other invoices outstanding to be paid is just a regular business issue like any other business affected by the pandemic.

£10k award was to help with rent and rates (most if not all are under the threshold to pay any business rates anyway but still received the award) and to deal with other bills. For Food businesses able to open still wages as well but in practice less effected than non-food.

For many stall holders, the loss of the rent holiday will be the difference between staying in business or folding, John Walker has tried to assist with this, but this decision has come from higher up in Calderdale.

Johns initial proposals were before the £10k award was agreed by the Govt. Inevitably there will be casualties in the retail sector, but there is also a likelihood that Councils may be a little more lenient than commercial landlords re repossession and or agreeing extended repayment periods.

What the market traders are looking for is for TTC to lend its support in fighting this decision by Calderdale and also to support the indoor market in its fight to survive in a post Covid world.

Jean Hartley's email is [REDACTED]

Hope the TTC are able to lend its support on this item?

This issue is also affecting all of Calderdale Market traders is a much bigger issue than just Todmorden, and affecting all of the indoor market operation . Potentially this may lead to some legal action as it may be about legal terms of their lease agreements.

Recommendation

Whilst we would always wish generally to support the Market as a whole, this is one affecting all retailers and their relationship with their landlords. If we support the Market in their stance against Calderdale, do we do the same with all retailers, who could then see our support of the Market as discriminatory against their own interest.

Possibly the best way to respond is to say we cannot get involved in what really are legal matters between Calderdale and their Tenants and issues facing the wider retail sector as a whole but would consider working with Calderdale to help promote the market and or events to encourage footfall back into the centre of town