

**To: City Executive Board**

**Date: 11 June 2015**

**Report of: Scrutiny Committee**

**Title of Report: Covered Market Leasing Strategy Update**

## **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To present recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee on the Covered Market Leasing Strategy Update.

**Key decision?** No

**Scrutiny Lead Member:** Councillor Simmons

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Ed Turner, Executive Member for Finance, Corporate Asset Management and Public Health

**Policy Framework:** Vibrant and Sustainable Economy, Efficient & Effective Council

**Recommendations** of the Scrutiny Committee to the City Executive Board:

We recommend that the City Executive Board approve the updated Covered Market Leasing Strategy 2015 with the following amendments:

- a) The word 'discouraged' in paragraph 4.4 is strengthened to 'avoided'.
- b) The word 'typically' in the sixth bullet point of paragraph 4.9 is changed to 'usually'. It could also be stated that exceptions will be considered for larger independent retailers that originate from Oxford.

## **Introduction**

1. The Scrutiny Committee pre-scrutinised the Covered Market Leasing Strategy Update at its public meeting on 2 June 2015. The Committee would like to thank Elaine Philip for presenting this report and answering questions.

## **Summary of recommendations**

2. The Committee support the Covered Market Leasing Strategy.

3. The Committee note that the Covered Market has a distinctive composition of shops and agreed that uses that detract from the Market's special character should be avoided rather than discouraged. The wording in the guidelines (paragraph 4.4) should be strengthened to this effect.
4. The Committee questioned whether units were being left empty by leaseholders looking to benefit from higher rents and whether the City Council has any powers to address this. Members heard that the two units currently empty are both in the process of being refurbished.
5. The Committee reviewed the criteria that future tenants will need to satisfy (paragraph 4.9). Members questioned whether the threshold for independent retailers was too high and noted that the vicinity of other outlets is also important. The Committee agreed that the threshold of 'typically less than 10' should be changed to 'usually less than 10'. Exceptions could be considered for larger independent retailers originating from Oxford.

**Recommendation - We recommend that the City Executive Board approve the updated Covered Market Leasing Strategy 2015 with the following amendments:**

- a) The word 'discouraged' in paragraph 4.4 is strengthened to 'avoided',
- b) The word 'typically' in the sixth bullet point of paragraph 4.9 is changed to 'usually'. It could also be stated that exceptions will be considered for larger independent retailers that originate from Oxford.

### **Executive response**

*To follow*

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**List of background papers: None**  
**Version number: 1**