Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Tuesday 8 September 2026	

Subject: Gainsborough Market Performance Improvement Plan – Progress Report

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Executive Summary:

This report provides Members with an update on the progress of the Gainsborough Market Performance Improvement Plan and highlights positive performance improvements achieved during 2026.

The market continues to show encouraging growth, with significant increases in trader numbers and stall occupancy compared to the same period in 2025. A strong programme of events and community engagement activities has contributed to increased footfall, positive trader feedback, and improved perceptions of the Market Place.

Several initiatives are being introduced to further support weekly trading activity, including live music and family-friendly activities. A substantial programme of themed markets and events is planned for the remainder of the year to maintain momentum and encourage repeat visits.

The report demonstrates that actions taken through the Improvement Plan are delivering positive outcomes and contributing to the vitality of Gainsborough town centre.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

(a) That Members note the progress made in implementing the Markets Performance Improvement Plan.

(b) That Members acknowledge the positive growth in trader numbers, market occupancy and community engagement.

(c) That Members support the continuation of the current programme of events and trader development initiatives.

1. Introduction

1.1 Gainsborough Market plays a significant role in supporting local businesses, attracting visitors to the town centre and contributing to the local economy.

1.2 The Markets Performance Improvement Plan was established to increase trader participation, improve customer experience, strengthen market sustainability and enhance the profile of the Market Place.

1.3 This report provides an update on progress made during 2026 and outlines planned activities for the remainder of the year.

2 Progress Against the Improvement Plan

2.1 Trader Growth and Market Occupancy
Performance data shows significant growth in trader interest and participation during 2026.
A total of **23 new traders** have applied to trade at Gainsborough Market during 2026.

2.2 **Tuesday Market**

The Tuesday market currently has:

- 23 traders
- Potential occupancy of 43 stalls/pitches.
- 13 registered traders.
- 10 casual traders.

For comparison, during the equivalent period in 2025:

- 13 traders

- Potential occupancy was 27 stalls/pitches.
- 10 registered traders.
- 3 casual traders.

This represents a substantial increase in both trader and stall numbers.

2.3 **Saturday Market**

The Saturday market currently has:

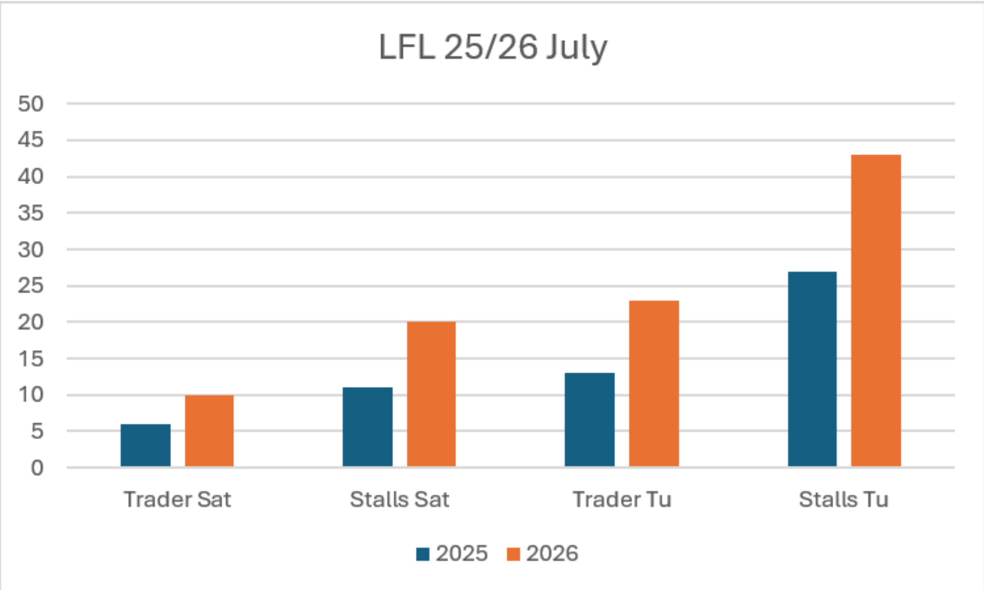
- 10 traders.
- Potential occupancy of 20 stalls/pitches.

During the equivalent period in 2025:

- 5 traders
- Potential occupancy was 12 stalls/pitches.

This demonstrates growing confidence in the market offer and reflects ongoing efforts to recruit and retain traders.

2.3 The table below demonstrates the increases as a like for like comparisons from 2025 to 2026.



2.4 The market team continues to work closely with traders to build confidence and encourage regular attendance. Two additional registered traders have joined the market during the current reporting period.

3 Annual Events and Community Engagement

3.1 Events delivered as part of the wider market delivery with the Cultural Team.

1. Heritage Skills Fair
2. GO Festival
3. The Zone
4. Word Fest
5. Remembrance Day
6. Christmas Lights Festival
7. Christmas Market

The programme of events makes a significant contribution to the reputation and appeal of the Market Place, creating opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages to engage with culture, leisure, and community activities. By attracting families, tourists, collectors, and heritage enthusiasts, these events strengthen the town centre's identity and increase its visibility as a destination of choice.

3.2 Positive feedback has been received through visitor conversations and social media channels.

These comments demonstrate the value of event programming in increasing footfall, supporting traders and improving perceptions of the town centre.

Feedback received includes:

"Dave and I had an enjoyable day. People are interested in our food history and how many of the old ways are disappearing. Thank you to everyone involved in making it a well organised and successful day."
Jan and Dave, Forgotten Fair

"I hope you are encouraged to organise more events like this given the fantastic atmosphere experienced on Saturday. I had many comments from the public about how lovely it was to have the market so full and with so many interesting stalls and displays. I had some wonderful conversations and several firm orders arising from them."
Laurance White

3.3 Future Events planned for 2026

The Farmers' and Crafts Market programme continues to develop and will be delivered monthly alongside family-friendly activities including:

- Craft stations.
- Photo booth activities.
- Children's doodle boards.
- Seasonal themes.

September 2026 - WordFest themed market activity in partnership with wider cultural programming.
October 2026 - "Dragon Protects the Harvest" event, which proved particularly popular with visitors in previous years.
November 2026 - Remembrance themed market event, brought forward to 7 November following discussions with Marshalls Yard.
December 2026 - "Singing Around the Tree" event. Following the success of previous years, this event will be expanded and will include choirs, a brass band and seasonal market activities.

4. Improvements to the Place

4.1 As part of the Townscape Heritage Fund, the Levelling Up Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Gainsborough Market Place benefitted significantly from improvements to the shop fronts, seating, lighting and market stalls refurbishments.

4.2 The Market Place has welcomed new tenants and introduced attractive new offers, making the town centre a more appealing destination for traders, businesses, residents, and visitors.

4.3 Officers will continue to work alongside the Economic Growth, Communications and Cultural Team to continue to drive positive change and further investment into the town.

5. Marketing and Advertising

5.1 Social Media platforms (WLDC):

- Cross-sharing with community pages
- On the day photos and content shared through social stories for real-time engagement.
- Events advertised by comms with detailed description and professionally designed pictures
- Regular ‘call for traders’ posts

5.2 Lincolnshire Life Magazine 2-3 times a year (last issue featured our market in May, next in November 2026)

5.3 Other online platforms include the West Lindsey website, Discover Gainsborough website and Discover Gainsborough social platforms

5.4 New traders are actively sought through visiting existing markets and events – postcard style handouts are left with traders for consideration and followed up by email or phone call.

5.5 The Communications Team produces regular press releases that are shared across all platforms, highlighting new traders and celebrating positive developments within the market.

6. Market Stall/Pitch Pricing

6.1 The market stall prices have remained frozen for several years to ensure pricing is competitive, this is reviewed on an annual basis with the Finance Business Partner.

6.2 The reduction in fees for van traders introduced in April 2026 was very well received and has helped to encourage business growth among existing traders. As a result, two regular market traders expanded their operations by introducing catering vans.

6.3 Incentives are offered to traders.

1. Young Market Traders (aged from 16 to 30 years old) will get a 50% discount when trading for 12 continuous weeks.
2. New traders will get a 50% discount when trading for 12 continuous weeks.
3. Specialist market organisers bringing between 8 and 25 stalls will be offered a fee of £10 per stall.
4. Specialist market organisers bringing more than 25 stalls to Gainsborough market on either a Tuesday or Saturday will be offered a fee of £7.50 per stall or pitch.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The Gainsborough Market Performance Improvement Plan is delivering positive results, with clear growth in trader numbers and stall occupancy compared with 2025.

7.2 A stronger events programme has helped improve public perception of the Market Place while generating positive feedback from traders and visitors.

7.3 Continued focus on trader recruitment, market animation and family-oriented events will be important in sustaining growth and supporting the long-term success of the market.

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Financial:

The activities outlined in this report are being delivered through approved budgets and specific event funding where available.

Staffing:

The delivery of events and market operations continues to be managed within existing staffing resources.

LGR implications:

There are no immediate Local Government Reorganisation implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

The market and associated events are open and accessible to all members of the community and support inclusive participation.

Data Protection Implications:

There are no data protection implications associated with this report.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

A thriving local market supports local supply chains, encourages local shopping and can contribute positively to sustainability objectives.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

No significant crime and disorder implications have been identified.

Health Implications:

The market supports community wellbeing by providing opportunities for social interaction and access to local goods and services.

Risk Assessment:
Key risks include: • Failure to maintain trader growth. • Reduced visitor attendance. • Adverse weather affecting trading activity. • Economic pressures affecting trader viability. These risks are mitigated through continuous market development, promotion and trader engagement.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)	**Yes**		**No**	**x**

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications	**Yes**		**No**	**x**