



Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	28 April 2026
Subject:	South Holland District Council (SHDC) Markets Policy review
Purpose:	To present for members consideration an update to the SHDC's existing Markets Policy and the introduction of a new SHDC Markets Severe Weather Policy.
Key Decision:	No
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Nick Worth – Leader of the Council
Report Of:	Phil Perry – Service Director, Leisure & Local Services
Report Author:	David Smith – Markets Manager
Ward(s) Affected:	Spalding, Holbeach, Long Sutton, Crowland
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

This is a review of the current SHDC Markets Policy (**Appendix 1**) to support the implementation of an updated online bookings and payments system (GOSS) and the introduction of a new Severe Weather Policy.

This review is required as the service evolves, to ensure the market is operated efficiently, consistently and safely. This report details the draft of the new policies for the service.

The purpose of the new Market Policy (**Appendix 2**) and Severe Weather Policy (**Appendix 3**) is to set out the matters the Council will take into account, when considering and undertaking its duty to provide and manage its markets. It details the responsibilities of the council in official guidance of the policy for the Council to act in a particular way and the expectation set of the traders.

The policies within this report were initially considered by the Policy Development Panel (PDP) at its 3rd February 2026 meeting. The report was well received, with a few formal recommendations arising from this meeting, which have now been added to the Markets Policy. These changes are as follows:

- To add more details on how non-attendance days, can be used by regular traders (Added to section 21.2 of Appendix 2).
- To add more details on what would happen to a trader's paid fee's if they fell ill on the market (Added to section 21.11 of Appendix 2).
- To add more details as to what notice will be given to traders if a market is restricted or cancelled (Added to section 32.2 of Appendix 2).

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Review and approve the draft Market Policy (**Appendix 2**) and Severe Weather policy (**Appendix 3**) as provided in this report.
2. Agrees the delegation to the Assistant Director Leisure and Local Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make future minor policy revisions as might be needed to ensure the continued good running of the markets.

Reasons for Recommendations

To enable members to review, comment and challenge the information presented, and consider the new measures being proposed.

Other Options Considered

To not progress the reviewed draft Markets Policies. This has been discounted to ensure through a review, the commitments made by Cabinet are delivered against, to ensure the market is operated efficiently, consistently, and safely.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Markets Service last saw a full review of its Markets Policy in June 2022 and has since seen small amendments to the policy. The bookings and payments system that has been used for most of this period now also requires improvement to bring in line with most systems used across the Country, including the partner authorities at East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) and Boston Borough Council (BBC). As a result, the Markets Service has worked closely with Public Sector Partnership Services Ltd (PSPS) ICT colleagues and GOSS Interactive to create a bespoke, modern, online service which will result in a better service for traders as well as markets staff.
- 1.2 With the new GOSS booking and payment system nearing its implementation, the Markets Policy needs to be brought up to date to ensure the Councils and the trader's responsibilities are clear.

1.3 The policies within this report were initially considered by PDP at its 3rd February 2026 meeting. The report was well received, with a few formal recommendations arising from this meeting, which have now been added into the Markets Policy. These changes are as follows:

- To add more details on how non-attendance days, can be used by regular traders (Added to section 21.2 of Appendix 2).
- To add more details on what would happen to a trader's paid fee's if they fell ill on the market (Added to section 21.11 of Appendix 2).
- To add more details as to what notice will be given to traders if a market is restricted or cancelled (Added to section 32.2 of Appendix 2).

2. Report

2.1 The purpose of the Market Policy is to set out the matters the Council will take into account, when considering and undertaking its duty to provide and manage its markets. It details the responsibilities of the council in official guidance of the policy for the Council to act in a particular way and the expectation set of the traders. The Markets Policy has been reviewed for the 2026/27 financial year and is attached as **Appendix 2**.

2.2 Market Policies should be reviewed annually to update any change of fees and charges and minor changes, but due to the implementation of the new and more advanced booking and payments system it was determined that a wider review of the policy was also needed.

2.3 The current 2025/25 fees and charges will remain in place until the new booking and payment system is implemented, estimated to be Mid-June 2026.

2.4 The review of the Markets Policies was undertaken with some extensive research of other local authority markets policies and draws on best practice from them all.

2.5 Within the draft Market Policy, some of the principal changes to consider have been noted below and aim to make the policy clearer and as accessible as possible:

- Traders will now be classified as regular or casual traders upon application.
- The ability to introduce promotional fees to promote existing and new special markets such as Makers Markets.
- There is a new requirement for traders to provide risk assessments if using their own stalls/equipment upon request.
- Instructions on how to make a trader application on the new GOSS system.
- Instructions made clear that payment to stand must be made prior to standing.
- Instructions on the new process for traders to apply to change their line of goods to sell via the new GOSS system.
- A new initiative where charity stalls are now allowed to stand free, once a quarter across all markets.
- Casual traders are now able to book 28 days in advance rather than the current 14 days.
- Market days and fees made clearer.

- New incentives added for traders. Any trader that would like to return to SHDC markets who hasn't traded with the Council for over 12 months, will be eligible to return and receive the current incentives, such as receiving a free trial day at each market.
- Changes have been made to the disciplinary procedures, with the trader conduct section updated to bring in line with modern issues such as conduct online that could damage the Councils reputation or market traders.
- Information on selling second-hand goods on the market has been added.
- Information on the provision of generators being used on the market has been added.
- Health and safety inspection details added to provide guidance to traders on what the Markets officer inspection will consist of.
- Each year, regular traders will receive 8 non-attendance days per market they stand on. If a regular trader operates at more than one market, their allocated non-attendance days will be combined into a single total.
- Relevant legislation in line with Trading Standards and relevant law has been added to the policy to ensure traders are aware and to assist with any breaches of policy for market staff.
- Food hygiene regulations and guidance have been added to the policy.
- Severe Weather Policy created, taking guidance from the MET Office, the National Association of British Markets and the Councils own Liability insurance.
- If a restricted market is declared due to severe weather, traders will not have to use one of their non-attendance days.

2.6 The Markets Service has also experienced changing weather patterns that have led to increasing numbers of storms adversely affecting the markets, with higher windspeeds more often, that can be dangerous due to the nature of gusts of wind being unpredictable. A new Severe Weather Policy has therefore been drafted in collaboration with the health and PSPS Safety Manager, to mitigate against the changing weather throughout the year.

2.7 The aim of the Severe Weather Policy is to determine when and how the decision to restrict or close a market is taken, as it can cause a lot of disruption with the potential for financial and logistical impacts for all concerned and therefore is never taken lightly. Its key priority is to protect the public, traders, and staff safety in the event of any severe weather which would affect any open-air market or event operated by South Holland District Council. The policy may apply in the following circumstances:

- A severe weather warning is in force and has been issued by the Met Office or,
- in the opinion of the Markets Team there is a risk to safety due to adverse weather conditions.

2.8 The Markets Team will offer help sessions for traders, to assist with the transition to the new GOSS system. Traders will be offered to attend in-person demonstrations, Microsoft Teams online sessions, assistance over the phone and also assistance in person on the market for those unable to attend any other sessions.

2.9 The new system will also provide notifications to traders to remind them of key factors such as their insurance expiring and their payments becoming due.

- 2.10 The new policies will see South Holland District Council have some of the most comprehensive and high-quality policies in the Country, showcasing the professional standards that the Council upholds.
- 2.10 With the introduction of a custom-built booking and payment system, an increasingly popular markets Facebook page, new market banners, and competitive fees, the Markets Team has established a strong foundation to sustain its impressive progress. These improvements make SHDC Markets significantly more appealing to both new traders and visitors.
- 2.11 The changes implemented this financial year have already delivered results: pitch occupancy has risen by 15% in Q1, 19% in Q2 and remained level in Q3 across the District—an achievement that defies the national trend in today’s challenging climate. Q3 saw just under half a million views on our Markets Facebook page, a significant reach with no paid advertisement.
- 2.12 **The objectives of the Severe Weather Policy are:**
- To comply with the Council’s duties and obligations to its staff, traders, and members of the public under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
 - To comply with the Council’s common law duties under the Occupiers Liability Act 1984.
 - To comply with the Council’s insurers.
 - To ensure any decision to close or restrict a market is taken fairly, consistently, and transparently and is communicated to all parties as soon as a decision is made.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. The South Holland Market Policies have been developed to support accountability within the service to deliver strategically and operationally what is required from this important District Council asset.
- 3.2. In conclusion the draft South Holland Market Policies have been reviewed and updated in line with the evolving markets service and best practice and are presented to Cabinet for its consideration.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

The South Holland District Council Policies are an integral part of a Partnership approach to delivering a more sustainable markets service. The policies go towards recognising the contribution to the economy that each Market Town plays in the South and East Lincolnshire sub-region as a wider strategic economic hub and the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership from a place making perspective.

Corporate Priorities

The proposed Plan aligns to the following Sub-Regional South and East Lincolnshire Council Partnership priorities:

- Priority 1: Growth and Prosperity

- Priority 2: Healthy Lives
- Corporate Priority: Efficiency and Effectiveness

Staffing

SHDC Markets has one full time Markets Officer.

Workforce Capacity Implications

None.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

The Council's Markets are required to conform to the requirements of each charter.

Data Protection

There are no specific data protection implications to report as a consequence of the development of the report.

Financial

There are no direct financial implications to note regarding this report.

Risk Management

The policies aim to mitigate against risks within the Markets Service.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

The policies have been developed following engagement work with the Portfolio Holder, Lead Officers and Partners where possible. The policy will be required to be implemented at the same time as the new booking and payment system goes live.

Reputation

The policies support work to uphold the reputation of the Council by promoting an efficient and effective service that safeguards the appropriate use of each Market Town for members of the public.

Contracts

None.

Crime and Disorder

There are no key implications relating to crime and disorder as a consequence of this report.

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None.

Health and Wellbeing

The policy makes reference to several regulatory expectations placed on traders and the market operation to ensure the health and wellbeing of others. Examples include new Emergency procedures, a new Severe Weather Policy and expectation of compliance with relevant legislation in relation to food traders.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

None.

Acronyms

ELDC – East Lindsey District Council
BBC – Boston Borough Council
SHDC – South Holland District Council
PDP – Policy Development Panel

Appendices

Appendix 1	The current South Holland Markets Policy
Appendix 2	The draft South Holland Markets Policy 2026
Appendix 3	The draft South Holland Markets Severe Weather Policy 2026

Background Papers

None

Report Approval

Report author:	David Smith, Markets Manager, david.smith@boston.gov.uk
Signed off by:	Phil Perry, SD – Leisure & Culture, phil.perry@boston.gov.uk
Approved for publication:	Leader, Councillor Nick Worth – Portfolio Holder