

Motion to Revitalise Ashford Town Centre with a Weekly 'Best of Kent' Market

This council notes that this motion proposes a weekly market in Ashford's town centre that showcases the best of Kent-produced food, drink, produce, services, and experiences. This market, called 'Best of Kent', will be a catalyst for economic growth, social vitality, and environmental sustainability, in our town.

This council further notes that a well-run weekly Ashford town centre market will:

- Attract more visitors and customers to our town centre, increasing footfall and trade for our local businesses.
- Create new jobs and opportunities for our residents, especially for our local farmers and producers who can sell their products directly to consumers.
- Promote healthy and sustainable choices among our community, and reduce food miles and waste.
- Celebrate the diversity and culture of Ashford and Kent, enhancing community pride and cohesion.

This council finally notes the success of other UK towns that have seen significant benefits from their markets, such as:

- Increased visitor numbers and spending.
- Improved town centre vitality and image.
- Boosted local production of food, drink, goods and services
- Enhanced environmental outcomes.

Therefore, this council resolves to:

1. Start a 'Best of Kent' market in Ashford in March 2024, showcasing the best of Kent-produced food, drink, produce, services, and experiences, and hold it every Saturday from 9am to 4.30pm on a designated area of the High Street.
2. Welcome all traders and stall holders who meet our quality and sustainability standards, with priority given to local businesses and organisations.
3. Appoint a market manager who will oversee the operation, promotion, and development of the market, someone who will play a vital role in driving its growth and success.
4. Evaluate the market regularly using indicators such as visitor satisfaction, trader feedback, economic impact, visitor numbers, and environmental impact.