

SUBJECT:	CHRISTMAS MARKET OUTTURN REPORT 2022
DIRECTORATE:	COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	SIMON COLBURN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee on the performance of the 2022 Lincoln Christmas Market.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The 2022 Lincoln Christmas Market was held from Thursday 1st December to Sunday 4th December 2022 and was visited by around 320,000 people over the 4 days making it the busiest Lincoln Christmas Market in history.
- 2.2 Park and ride numbers were significantly up on previous years at 11,700 and coach parking numbers were slightly up on 2021.
- 2.3 155 stalls were delivered by the events team which is below the budgeted target of around 185 stalls.
- 2.4 The projected outturn for the 2022 market is a deficit of £97,010 which is a variance of £53,680 over the budgeted cost of £43,330.

	Budget 2022-23	Projected Outturn	Variance
	£	£	£
Expenditure	726,540	759,730	33,190
Income	(683,210)	(662,720)	20,490
Total	43,330	97,010	53,680

The most significant reason for the deficit is a £40k shortfall on stallholder income. There are still a couple of queries on contractor invoices so final outturn may vary slightly.

3. The 2022 Christmas Market

- 3.1 The 2022 Lincoln Christmas Market was held from Thursday 1st December to Sunday 4th December 2022 and was visited by nearly a third of a million visitors over the 4 days making it the busiest Lincoln Christmas Market ever.

3.2 The 2022 market celebrated the 40th anniversary of the first Christmas Market which started in 1982 with 12 stalls and has grown to become one of the biggest Christmas Markets of its type in the country.

3.3 2022 saw a refresh of the branding and the introduction of a new mascot – Bailey the Bear. Other new features included –

- A public opening ceremony at midday on the Thursday.
- A covered stage to provide a performance area in the area at the site of St Paul in the Bail.
- A partnership with BBC Radio Lincolnshire which delivered fresh pre-recorded public address messages, a new playlist for the public address system, a dedicated BBC stall with a Dalek and a Strictly Come Dancing winner's dress.
- A charity partnership with St Barnabas (also celebrating 40years since their first hospice opened) which provided them with a free stall and the opportunity to raise funds and awareness.

3.4 We do not have a direct estimate of the economic impact of the 2022 market but according to the economic assessment and visitor surveys previously carried out by the University of Lincoln on our behalf –

- Total visitor spend from the event has been previously estimated in the region of £13 million with the direct estimated economic value to the city of around £2 million.
- 42% of the audience are from the local area, compared to 58% being visitors
- It is roughly an equal split between those that have attended the Market before and those attending for the first time.
- Our market attracts visitors across a wide range of ages and income levels.

3.5 The 2022 Christmas Market in numbers:

- Over 320,000 unique visitors attended
- Over 11,700 cars at the Park and Ride
- 577,000 people passed through Castle Square
- Over 100 stewards
- Over 200 stalls (across council and partner sites)
- 82 medical incidents dealt with by 50 St John ambulance staff
- 19 different contractors to make the event happen
- Almost £760,000 in cost to erect, operate and take down the market infrastructure
- Approx 60 city council staff involved in the market
- Approx. 120 police officer days were deployed across the 4 days.

4. Stalls

4.1 There were 155 official Christmas Market stalls this year. The average number of stalls in a normal year would be around 185 and the budget is set on this figure. There was therefore a significant impact on the actual income against the budget.

Visitors however see many more stalls that aren't delivered by the council as they visit the market including stalls outside Stokes, Charlotte House, Victoria PH on Union Road, Lion and Snake on the Bail, Makers Market on St Martins Square and stalls on the north side of Westgate.

4.2 There continue to be challenges post-covid pandemic in securing the number and variety of stalls required for the event. A result of this saw the Big Wheel marquee removed this year and those stalls absorbed into the Westgate Craft marquee. Additional fairground rides and stalls were trialled in the vacant space for 2022.

4.3 In addition to the individual stalls we also provided

- Fairgrounds;
- Food Court adjacent to the Strugglers public house;
- Bar area in the Lawn.

These are all contracted out on an area basis and therefore don't count as individual stalls in the figure above.

4.4 Stalls can apply for a discount if they meet certain criteria. The discounts applied in 2022 were –

Lincoln	23
Lincolnshire	29
Charity	5
Craft	27
Fairtrade	2

Note: stalls can only get one discount type as there may be some stalls that fall into more than one category.

Additionally of those 155 stalls –

Stalls Selling Alcohol	17
Stalls Selling gift/cold food products such as confectionary, cheese, plum bread, Christmas pudding, nuts etc.	30
Stalls Selling Hot food/ hot drinks	15

4.5 In 2022 over a third of the stall traders came from Lincoln or Lincolnshire.

5. Park and Ride

5.1 The park and ride for the event provides grass parking for cars and mini-buses at the Showground with regular (approximately every 7 minutes) buses to the Museum of Lincolnshire Life. The whole operation is set up just for the event.

5.2 In 2021 following very heavy rain over a number of days the park and ride became very muddy and difficult to drive on and was eventually shut early on the Sunday afternoon.

As a result of this additional physical and management measures were trialled for the 2022 market, these included –

- A dedicated specialist parking contractor to manage the site (rather than the stewarding company).
- Rotation of areas of the site by day.
- Additional traffic management controls including on the A1500.
- Additional tracking for vehicles to drive on and off the grassed areas.
- Additional tracking and management of the queuing for pedestrians.

Some of these measures came at an additional unbudgeted cost. The tracking costs around £15k.

The park and ride at the Showground operated very smoothly this year (noting the queuing issues mentioned later).

5.3 For 2022 a new park and ride ticketing system was introduced. The previous system of queuing at the showground to purchase a ticket at a booth and then presenting that ticket on the bus was replaced with the ability to purchase e-tickets online in advance (or on the day) and have these scanned prior to entry to the bus. This reduced queuing times and provided a better customer experience.

5.4 Costs for the park and ride are per vehicle irrespective of number of occupants and were frozen again at 2019's prices.

Park and Ride costs	
Advanced Sales – any day	£12
Thursday	£13
Friday	£14
Saturday	£15
Sunday	£14

5.5 Park and ride ticket sales for 2022 (and a comparison with previous years) -

Park and Ride figures	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022
Advanced Sales	799	901	1055	1532	2382
Thursday	1025	958	992	948	1128
Friday	1603	1427	1421	1588	2147
Saturday	2567	2546	2801	2658	3785
Sunday	0	1896	1692	1033	1774
Total	5,994	7,728	7,961	7,759	11,216

Notes:

1. 2017 – The Sunday of event was cancelled and also first year of Lincoln Central Car park being opened.
2. 2021 – the park and ride shut before midday to new visitors.
3. 2022 figures are for actual tickets sales.

Using the specialist park and ride contractor we have been able to accurately count the numbers of vehicles actually using the park and ride. This was 11,712. This difference includes residents and hotel guests who are offered free parking, staff and contractors and probably a small element who avoided paying for tickets.

- 5.6 The increase in numbers are reflective of the overall significant increase in visitors across the event.

6. Coaches

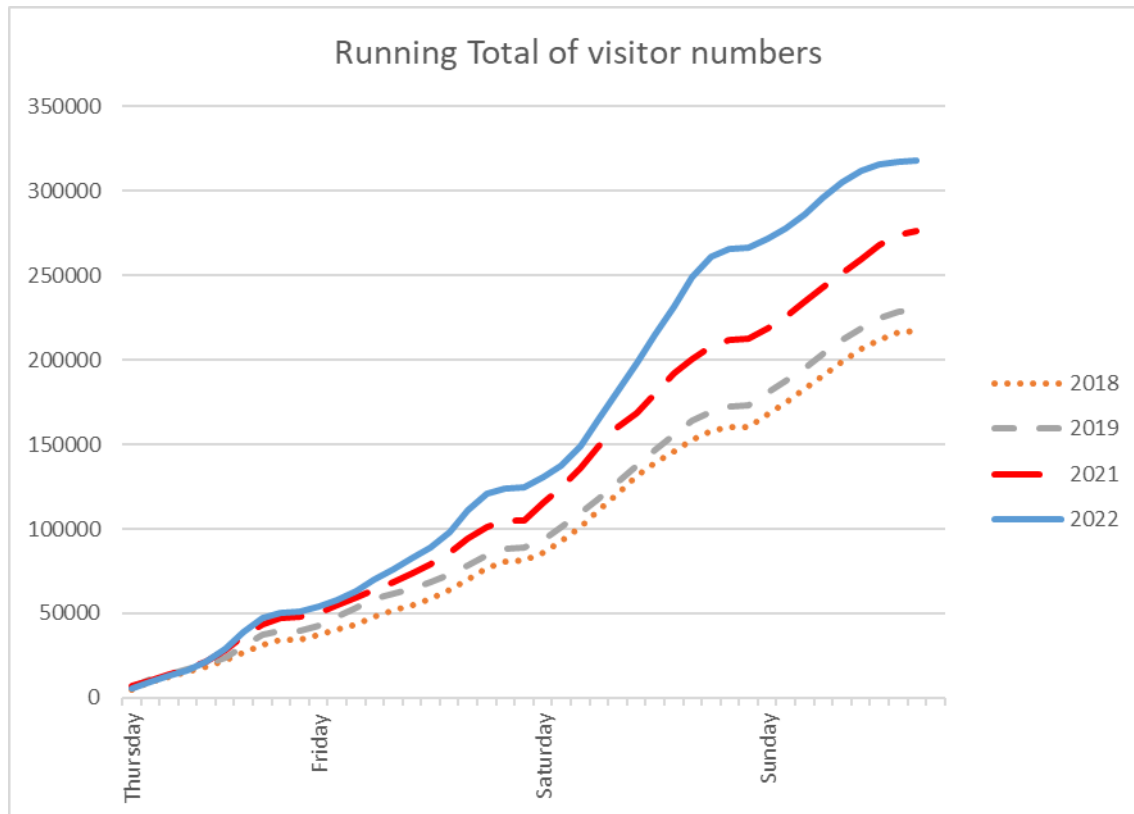
- 6.1 The number of coaches attending the market has been in decline for several years both at the market and more generally across the travel industry.
- 6.2 170 coaches used the Christmas Market coach parking at the Showground in 2022, a small increase on 2021.

Year	Coach numbers
2017	227
2018	201
2019	193
2021	150
2022	170

7. Visitor Numbers

- 7.1 Numbers of visitors have been increasing year on year with the last few years seeing significant jumps. In 2022 the market attracted 320,000 unique visitors and 577,000 people movements through Castle Square (calculated using the Council's CCTV system).

7.2



Graph: Visitors to Lincoln Christmas Market

- 7.3 As can be seen from the graph the increase in numbers is significant. A large jump was predicted in 2021 due to the first Market since the pandemic but numbers increased significantly in 2022. It is anticipated that this trend will continue into future years.
- 7.4 Excessive visitor numbers can and do detract from the visitor experience meaning that visitors struggle to get to stalls due to the density and flow of the crowd. Additionally, when it is very busy crowd thinning/management measures (e.g., one-way systems) are introduced at various key points around the market to safely manage crowds. This does mean that visitors are not always free to travel in any direction they choose but must follow the crowd management measures at key points (e.g., entry only into the Castle through the Eastgate, exit only through the Westgate).
- 7.5 In previous years it has only been necessary to introduce such crowd thinning measures for a brief period on a Saturday afternoon, if at all. However, in 2022 crowd thinning was used across the weekend and unprecedented visitor numbers on Saturday afternoon meant that a whole range of measures (including some that were planned for but have never been used before) were used continuously for several hours on Saturday afternoon.
- 7.6 Some of these measures slowed and managed crowds while some diverted the crowds away from key areas of the market for periods of time. Additionally, very large volumes of visitors using the park and ride on the Saturday experienced very lengthy queues in the market to catch the buses back to the Showground.

These inevitably led to a considerable reduction in the customer experience and several hundred negative comments were posted across social media platforms. These are considered further below.

- 7.7** It should be noted however that the 2022 Christmas market was well planned and executed. The planning process is held up nationally as an example of best practice and we consult with a special independent Christmas Market Safety Advisory Group throughout the year to ensure our plans will deliver a safe market.

The market itself is delivered by a team of experienced staff supported by a multi-agency control room and a variety of specialist contractors.

8. Engagement and Feedback

- 8.1** One of measures we use for evaluating the performance of the market in customer terms is evaluating customer feedback. These days this is predominantly delivered via social media.

- 8.2** We have over 42,000 followers on our Lincoln Christmas Market Facebook page and over the course of the Christmas Market social media campaign we reached over 1.8 million people (over 971,000 during the actual 4 days). This is down from 2.5million in 2021. However, in 2021 we had the now famous drone photo which went viral (with a reach alone of over 400,000) and utilised some Public Health funds to promote covid awareness messaging using additional channels.

- 8.3** During the campaign we received nearly 10,000 likes on our posts (down from 13,800 in 2021) and over 162,000 active engagements (up from 134,000 in 2021).

- 8.4** During the Thursday, Friday and Saturday morning of the event the comments and engagements were positive. However, those comments changed to overwhelming negative across all media and channels on Saturday afternoon and evening due to crowding and related customer satisfaction issues. Comments on Sunday were positive from those attending on Sunday but negative comments regarding the Saturday were still present in significant numbers. These negative comments continued well after the event had ended.

- 8.5** Some example quotes from visitors (via social media feedback) included:

- “Nightmare, 2-3 hour queue for park and ride – we walked.....”
- “Too packed to see any stalls or move”
- “Shuffled around one way system, couldn’t wait to leave”
- “What a disaster – worst place I have ever visited, moved like cattle”
- “Gave up after 3 hours seeing nothing other than the head of the person in front”
- “Not impressed and wont be going again”
- “Stuck like sardines in crowds”

The council have also received complaints directly from visitors who were concerned by the crowding on Saturday afternoon.

8.6 Officers have also asked for initial feedback from local businesses via Bailgate Guild, Lincoln BIG and Visit Lincoln.

Initial feedback so far is:

- Format and layout need to change.
- Needs to be over a longer period.
- Keep roads and schools open/impact on the local area.
- Keep car parks open.
- Keep it in pedestrianised areas only.
- Remove fairground rides – out of step with the historic location/nature of a craft market.
- Extend into city centre to spread the impact.
- Can we encourage more people to come to the city centre/Cornhill and retain them for longer.
- Can we run a market over two weekends rather than one.
- Can we spread the market out further.
- More attractions in city centre esp. Cornhill.

Feedback from traders themselves at the market was broadly positive with many traders responding having the strongest trading year yet – due undoubtedly to the sheer volume of passing trade.

9. Medical Performance

9.1 Overall, there were 82 reported and treated medical incidents at the Christmas Market. These are broken down as follows:

2022	Total	Hospital	
Thursday	8	1	Fractures, Minor cuts and Grazes, Head Injury (cut to head)
Friday	20	2	Fractures, Dislocation, Minor cuts and Grazes, Blisters, Diabetic, Faints, Seizure, Vomiting, Nosebleed
Saturday	38	6	Fractures, seizure, chest pain, fall (at home), dizzy / vomiting, Minor cuts and Grazes, Blisters, Diabetic, Faints, Abdominal Pain, Diabetic, Sprain, Panic attack
Sunday	16	3	seizure, back pain, chest pain, Minor cuts and Grazes, Blisters, Faint

The figures represent a reported incident rate of 0.00026% of attendees which is low. The type of incidents are the sort of thing expected at an event and often include treatment for visitors with pre-existing medical conditions.

We had previously reported 88 medical incidents as an initial figure but this has been corrected to 82 following the debrief.

- 9.2 We take initial primacy for all medical incidents within the hard closure area of the market, so these incidents include people who had left the market, passing around the market, staff and contractors and some residents within the market footprint but not attending the market. Unfortunately, we cannot get a breakdown any further of this.

10. Financials

10.1 Expenditure

The budget and projected outturn are:

	Budget 2022-23	Projected Outturn	Variance
Staffing	9,260	25,260	16,000
Total Premises	65,990	70,630	4,640
Total Transport	1,320	1,250	(70)
Total Supplies & Services	24,910	33,300	8,390
Total Contractors	625,060	629,290	4,230
Total Expenditure	726,540	759,730	33,190

The projected expenditure outturn is therefore around £33k over budget.

- 10.2 Staffing costs are increased to provide additional resilience over the event and add additional monitoring and management of areas such as the Showground.

- 10.3 Supplies and services and contractor costs are both over budget. These include costs for:

- Stage in St Pauls.
- Opening events and street entertainment.
- Additional flooring at the showground and parking contractor.
- Merchandising and promotions.
- Increased energy costs
- An accredited hostile vehicle mitigation system.

10.4 Income

The market has 4 main streams of income –

- Stallholder fees.
- Dry hire zones (fairground, bar, food court).
- Park and ride ticket sales and
- Coach bookings.

10.5 The income targets and projected outturn are:

	Budget 2022-23	Projected Outturn	Variance
Park & Ride	(128,190)	(142,310)	(14,120)
Coach Parking	0	(15,820)	(15,820)
Stall Holder Income	(469,920)	(428,090)	41,830
Lawn Bar	(11,000)	(15,000)	(4,000)
Catering (Express Catering)	(29,780)	(28,500)	1,280
Fairground	(26,900)	(30,500)	(3,600)
Sponsorship	(4,400)	(2,500)	1,900
Other fees (market rights etc)	(13,020)	0	13,020
Total Income	(683,210)	(662,720)	20,490

10.6 Park and ride exceeded income targets due to the considerable increase in the use of the service.

Historically coach parking has been included in the overall park and ride income target but has been split out this year and given a zero budget therefore the over achievement of income across both park and ride and coach parking is around £30k.

10.7 Stall fees were down considerably which is a direct result of letting 155 stalls while the budget is based on letting approximately 185 stalls. As mentioned above the number of stalls we have been able to let while maintaining stall quality has not returned to pre-covid/ budgeted levels.

10.8 We have been unable to claim market rights on any of the other 'non-council' stalls around the market due to Central Market being closed which has temporarily suspended our market rights. This has led to a shortfall of income of £13k. It should be noted that we haven't achieved budget on this for some years due to a number of associated markets closing or downsizing (e.g., Westgate School).

10.9 Overall, the projected outturn is:

	Budget £	Projected £	Variance £
Expenditure	726,540	759,730	33,190
Income	(683,210)	(662,720)	20,490
Total	43,330	97,010	53,680

A total anticipated deficit of £97,010, of which £43,330 is budgeted for, therefore an expected increased cost to the council of £53,680.

This deficit is higher than our quarter 3 estimate due additional invoices received.

11. Strategic Priorities

11.1 Let's drive inclusive economic growth

As discussed above, the Lincoln Christmas Market continues to generate considerable economic activity in the local economy.

11.2 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

The event is free to enter, with no paywall or barriers preventing access. Visitors can spend as much or as little as they wish. The atmosphere, lighting and entertainment mean that the experience is not solely passed on purchasing gifts.

11.3 Let's enhance our remarkable place

Let's deliver a rich and varied cultural experience is one of the aspirations within the Let's enhance our remarkable place priority.

11.4 Let's address the challenge of climate change

The Christmas Market has a specific Environmental Policy sitting beneath the corporate Environmental Policy.

While the delivery of the Christmas Market will have environmental implications which must be balanced against the other benefits of delivering the event, we aim to reduce the environmental footprint of the event, including single use plastics and energy usage.

12. Organisational Impacts [

12.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

Financial implications are discussed in the section above.

12.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no direct legal or procurement implications arising from this report. However, members may wish to note that all of the corporate event's contracts (19 in number) were re-procured in 2022.

12.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

There are no direct E&D impacts from this report. It is worth noting that the Christmas Market provides a number of things to support equality of access in and around the market including –

- A Mobiloo -a mobile accessible toilet with adult-sized changing bench, hoist and attendant, in the middle of the market.
- Ramps up kerbs at key points.
- Specific disabled parking at the park and ride.
- Disabled and taxi drop off point close to the market.
- The event is a free to access event open and welcome to all.

12.4 Human Resources

The event utilises around 60 city council staff for several days including most directors and assistant directors. This inevitably has a knock-on effect on delivery across the organisation for the week of the market.

12.5 Significant Community Impact &/or Environmental Impact

There is a significant impact on the local residential and business community from the delivery of the market. It is recognised that without the support of the local community particularly local residents and businesses both in the immediate 'inner' area but also the 'outer' area that the market would not be the success that it is.

12.6 Corporate Health and Safety Implications

The Lincoln Christmas Market is a significant undertaking and requires an input from a number of H&S professionals across a range of areas and during the operation of the market there is always a dedicated H&S advisor on duty. It has an event safety and delivery plan around 550 pages long that is presented to and evaluated by an independent Safety Advisory Group. However, there are no direct implications from this report.

Each year the event is fully reviewed from a safety perspective and learning taken forward into the following year.

13. Risk Implications

13.1 There are no direct risks arising from this report.

14. Recommendation

14.1 Members of Performance Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the contents of this report.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? None

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Simon Colburn, Assistant Director
Telephone (01522) 873241
Simon.colburn@lincoln.gov.uk