

MARKETS 4 PEOPLE

Bury market: shopping destination and community hub

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Easter at Bury Market. (Bury Council)

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Executive summary

This report provides a wide range of new evidence to show how Bury Market successfully fulfils an important role in providing affordable and high quality food and a range of other goods, as well as serving as a supportive and welcoming community asset, in particular for the elderly and lower-income residents of Bury.

It is one of three reports documenting evidence from the Markets4People research project¹ about the wide-ranging economic, social and cultural benefits produced by three of the UK's largest and strongest traditional retail markets. Building on previous research, the reports bring a new focus on the importance of markets from the perspective of their existing customers. In each of the three case study markets, the research involved a survey of 500 market users (capturing a representative sample in terms of age, gender and ethnicity), two focus groups with selected user groups and around 10 interviews with key local actors, to contextualise the findings.

Bury Market was selected for this research as one of three exemplary case studies well-placed to demonstrate the wide-ranging economic, social and cultural benefits of traditional markets in the UK. Bury Market is one of the best known markets in the North of England. A very large market with approximately 365 stalls, it has frequently won awards, including most recently being voted Britain's Favourite Market in 2019. It is one of the very few markets in the country that forms the principal attraction of its town or city centre.

At the same time, however, the Market faces pressures to modernise as part of wider plans for Bury's town centre. In 2019 Bury Council established a Task Group to review the Market with the aim of providing improvements involving some new facilities. The Market's connectivity with other key sites in the town centre is also being examined, with a view to improving its accessibility from transport hubs. In this context, our research has focused on understanding the *existing* customers' experience of the Market, including economic, social and cultural aspects, as well as wider governance issues.

The key findings from the research include:

- Bury Market is a *highly valued shopping destination*. It is a much-loved resource for residents of Bury, and in particular for older people, women and lower-income groups. Market users really appreciate the quality and value for money of the food and other products they buy at the Market.
- Bury Market is of *great importance and value to the community*. Bury Market users are loyal customers, visiting regularly and often over a period of many years. The Market forms a vital social hub for an overwhelming majority of its users, who feel safe and welcome there. Indeed, for very many market users the Market forms the irreplaceable heart of Bury. Most users of Bury Market are local Bury residents.
- Bury Market is a *central attraction and highly appreciated feature of the town centre*. The Market is seen by all as a vital part of Bury's local identity. Indeed, the research shows that the Market sets Bury out as a highly distinctive town in Greater Manchester.

Despite its success as a community asset, Bury Market faces a number of pressures and challenges. *External* challenges include the growing uncertainty around the high street in the face of e-commerce and other forces, compounded by the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the same time the Market faces a number of *internal* challenges. These include:

- A tendency to undervalue the current strengths of the Market.
- A history of underinvestment in the market environment.
- A tendency to be swept up in a discourse of change.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated some of these pressures, with the UK markets sector as a whole struggling. However, our view is that markets such as Bury Market can play a vital role in a community-led and more environmentally sustainable recovery of retail and the high street.

To that effect, our research has distilled several *recommendations* for Bury Council, in particular, as the market owner and operator:

- Embed our research across the Council, ensuring that all relevant teams have access to this report and relate their work to the Market.
- Celebrate the Market's current customer base, placing this at the heart of any future strategy for the Market.
- Identify and mitigate the potential impact of any future policy options on different user groups, in particular disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.
- Expand the Market Task Group set up in 2019 to include more traders, user representatives and community groups with an interest in the continued success of the town centre and the well-being of Bury residents, especially those drawn from disadvantaged sections of society.
- Increase the portion of the surplus reinvested in the Market to fund incremental improvements to market infrastructure.
- Stabilise the Market's management and organisational structure.
- Support the further development of Bury Market traders and the traders' association.
- Put Bury Market at the centre of Bury's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Beyond the local authority, our findings across the Markets4People research also provide a strong rationale to recommend that the national government implement a package of support for market traders and operators, as proposed by the markets' sector lead organisations NABMA and NMTF. This would enable markets to continue to deliver wide-ranging economic, social and cultural benefits to marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable communities as they emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The reports also suggest that the role of traditional retail markets in serving older people, lower-income communities, migrants and ethnic minority groups is something to be celebrated and supported by the sector. The reports challenge the idea that the only future for traditional markets must be to attract new, younger and more affluent customers. Thus, we recommend a joined-up approach by local and national government which recognises markets' contributions to wide-ranging policy goals relating to economic development, public health and social inclusion. This new community approach can unlock new much needed investment to reposition markets as community hubs for more sustainable high streets.

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This report about Bury Market is one of three documenting evidence from the Markets4People research project² about the wide-ranging economic, social and cultural benefits produced by three of the UK's largest and strongest traditional retail markets (TRMs). TRMs are 'indoor and outdoor markets selling food, household goods, clothing and the like', their broad, diverse and affordable offering distinguishing them from more narrowly-focused and often more expensive farmers' and specialist markets.³ TRMs provide affordable and quality produce, they are inclusive and generally accessible places, sustain employment and livelihoods for traders and generate economic value through customers' purchases, rental income for market operators⁴ and increased footfall in towns and cities through the 'anchor' role they play.⁵ As our research confirms, TRMs are particularly important to low-income communities, older people, migrants and black and minority ethnic groups.



A stall selling discounted household goods in Bury Market. (Bury Council)

Despite their wide-ranging importance, UK TRMs have been marginalised and neglected in recent decades. Compared to supermarkets and the wider retail sector, they have been framed as declining and in need of modernisation. This has contributed in many cases to an under-investment in market infrastructure, maintenance and repairs over decades, particularly as local authorities, who tend to manage and own them, suffer from austerity cuts in their budgets. In this context, the national market operators' and traders' organisations, NABMA and NMTF, have supported the professional development of the sector, including adapting to changing consumer habits and expectations. They have also produced evidence and tools to demonstrate the importance and contribution of markets.⁶

Historic underinvestment, coupled with pressures shared by retail and the high street in general, have led to market redevelopment schemes often designed to appeal to new, younger and more affluent customers.⁷ In the process, pre-existing traders and customers can be marginalised as rents become higher and markets change their atmosphere and offer.⁸ This is a particular problem because the customer base of TRMs generally includes groups of people already suffering from isolation or multiple vulnerabilities, who rely on markets for affordable provisioning and opportunities for social interaction. The impact of changing the market offer on these user groups is rarely taken into account, partly because there is a lack of evidence and research about them. While the importance of markets as spaces of social and cultural interaction was firmly-established by Professor Sophie Watson's work in the 2000s,⁹ there has been no large-scale consumer research which has included markets' social and cultural functions as well as their economic functions.

It is in this context that the Markets4People research project brings a focus on the combined economic, social and cultural benefits of TRMs, which we call "community value". Through a rigorous selection process,¹⁰ we identified Queen's Market in Newham, east London, Newcastle upon Tyne's Grainger Market and Bury Market in Greater Manchester. We surveyed a representative sample of 500 customers in each market, to explore how different groups (in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and income, for example) use and value markets as spaces for shopping, eating and socialising and as local community assets. We also undertook two focus groups with selected customers and approximately 10 interviews with key local actors in each case. This case study research was preceded by around 30 interviews and several workshops with key actors within the markets industry nationally, as well as analysis of documents and participation in key sector events.¹¹



A focus group with Bury Market users. (Rosie Wilkinson)

Our community focus on markets makes an important contribution to the current debate about the future of the UK high street. Research from the Institute of Place Management has already established markets' positive impact on footfall in high streets and town centres.¹² This evidence contributed to markets being identified by the High Streets Task Force as one of its 25 'vital and viable' priorities.¹³ In addition, Grimsey's influential report has called to rethink the high street as a 'community hub' away from the more traditional retail uses, highlighting how markets can play a role.¹⁴ Markets can also be at the heart of increasingly-influential inclusive growth and community wealth building policy agendas.¹⁵ The Greater London Authority, for example, has funded a number of market improvement schemes as part of its 'Good Growth' regeneration programme, and developed a toolkit through which operators and others can demonstrate the 'social value' of markets.¹⁶

The community role of TRMs as inclusive spaces has been sharply exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Their role in providing access to affordable food has been particularly important at a time when many household budgets have come under pressure, especially because, as our research shows, market users are less likely to shop online. The possibilities markets afford for social interaction between traders and customers have also been particularly precious at a time when other opportunities have been severely restricted. Recognising the importance of markets, over 90% of operators did not charge rents or other payments from traders during the first lockdown of 2020.¹⁷ However, the sector is presently in crisis, with 85% of market operators considering their markets to be at risk as a result of Covid-19 and a number of markets already being forced to close.¹⁸ To ensure the survival of the markets industry, NABMA and NMTF have urged the UK government to put in place a dedicated package of support for market operators and traders.¹⁹

Traditional retail markets are therefore not a lingering feature of a nostalgic high street but very much a key aspect of a future strategy for inclusive, community-focused and sustainable towns and cities.²⁰ However, this future should not be one of standardised and gentrified markets. When markets serve older people, low-income communities, migrants and black and minority ethnic groups, this should be celebrated and strategically supported to bring benefits to economic development, public health and social inclusion. In this context, the evidence contained in these three reports about the wide-ranging economic, social and cultural benefits of TRMs can help not only to make the case for a dedicated support package for markets but also to reposition markets as community hubs for more inclusive economies.

Who is this report for?

This report will be of particular interest to Bury Council, as the owner and operator of Bury Market. We believe that the findings will be relevant not only for the Council staff or elected members directly linked with the operation of the Market but more widely for officers and councillors with responsibilities across the Department of Children and Young People, Public Health, Economic regeneration, or Social Care and Safeguarding.

More widely, the report is for everyone who cares about Bury Market: market users, traders, local community groups, local councillors and local business groups, as well as wider regional and national decision makers with an interest in retail, the high street, local economic development and community inclusion.



Markets are a key aspect of community-focused towns and cities. (Bury Council)

2. Introducing Bury Market

Key facts

- A charter market, whose history dates back to 1440.
- Market Hall and Fish and Meat Hall open every day except Sundays, Open Market open Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
- Approximately 365 stalls, nearly all occupied.
- Employs around 800 people.
- Generates a surplus for the Council of around £1m a year.
- Awarded Britain's favourite market in 2019 by NABMA as a result of a national vote.

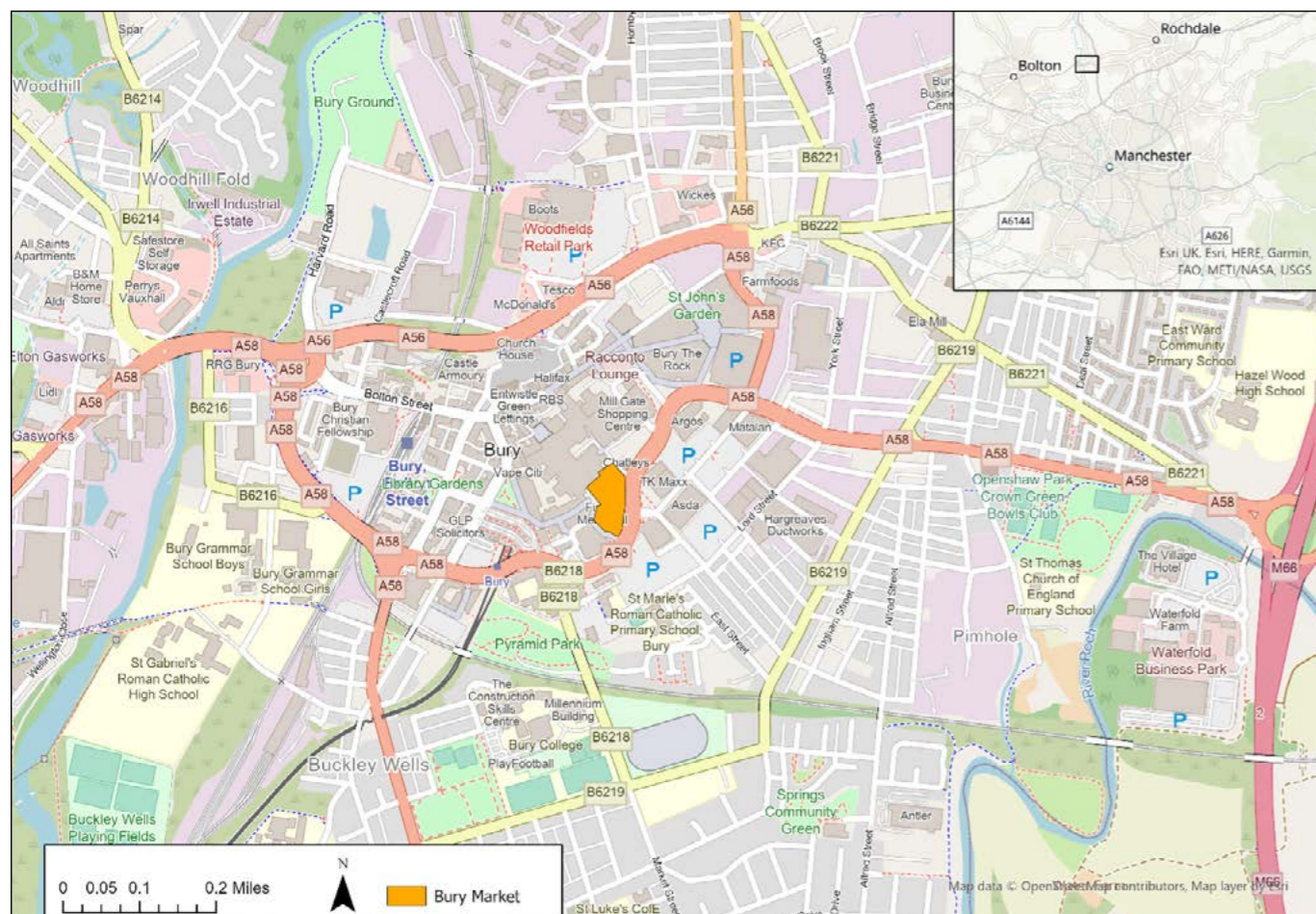


Figure 1: Location of Bury Market in Bury town centre. © OpenStreetMap contributors

Bury Market (Figure 1) is one of the best known markets in the North of England. A very large market with approximately 365 stalls, it has frequently won awards, including most recently being voted Britain's Favourite Market in 2019. It is one of the very few markets in the country that forms the principal attraction of its town or city centre.

Bury Market is owned and managed by Bury Council, to which it has contributed revenues of over £1m between 2015 and 2019 even though market infrastructure appears under-funded. The management team works hard to enhance the Market's community value. It commissioned regular biennial surveys of market users between 2001 and 2014²¹ and used the information it gained to lobby the Council for improvements.

Bury Market is one of the town's largest providers of employment, with about 800 people working at the Market at the time the survey was undertaken. This represents a significant contribution to the town's economy. The Market has received a modest annual maintenance budget from the Council of around £100,000, but this has only partially met the Market's infrastructure needs. It is widely acknowledged that the Market requires further significant infrastructural investment. In this context it is important to note that the Market has provided the Council with a surplus of around one million pounds in each of the four years from 2015 to 2019. This contribution tends to be neglected or underplayed in discussions about the future of the Market.

Bury Market has benefitted from sound management from the market office. In recent years, it has successfully employed an officer to improve its online presence. The Council appreciates the importance of the Market to the town. This is evidenced by the creation, in

autumn 2019, of a Task Group that brought together Council officers, councillors and market stallholder representatives to discuss the state of the Market and articulate some recommendations for the Market's future in a report completed in March 2020.²²

Bury Council's Task Group and its report, which was picked up in the local and regional press, are evidence of the Council's level of attention to the Market.²³ The report sets out a number of possible changes to the Market that would attract a wider customer base among Bury's younger and more affluent population while "maintain[ing] the organic feel of the existing Market" (slide 17). One of its principal recommendations is for the construction of a multi-purpose hall for, among other things, pop-up trading and community events. Following on from this, it recommends that "the Market should be subject to a remodelling" (slide 23) and that "regeneration of existing site and surrounding area [be] included in town centre master plan" (slide 24).

The Market is very large and its offering varied. At the time of our survey, it had about 365 stalls, nearly all of which were occupied. About 160 stalls were leasehold units (including all 60 in the Market Hall) and about 200 were held on day licenses. The six-year leases for stalls in the Market Hall were due to expire in January 2023, creating a potential problem in terms of non-renewal. Stallholders who pay rent are currently enjoying a three-year rent freeze.

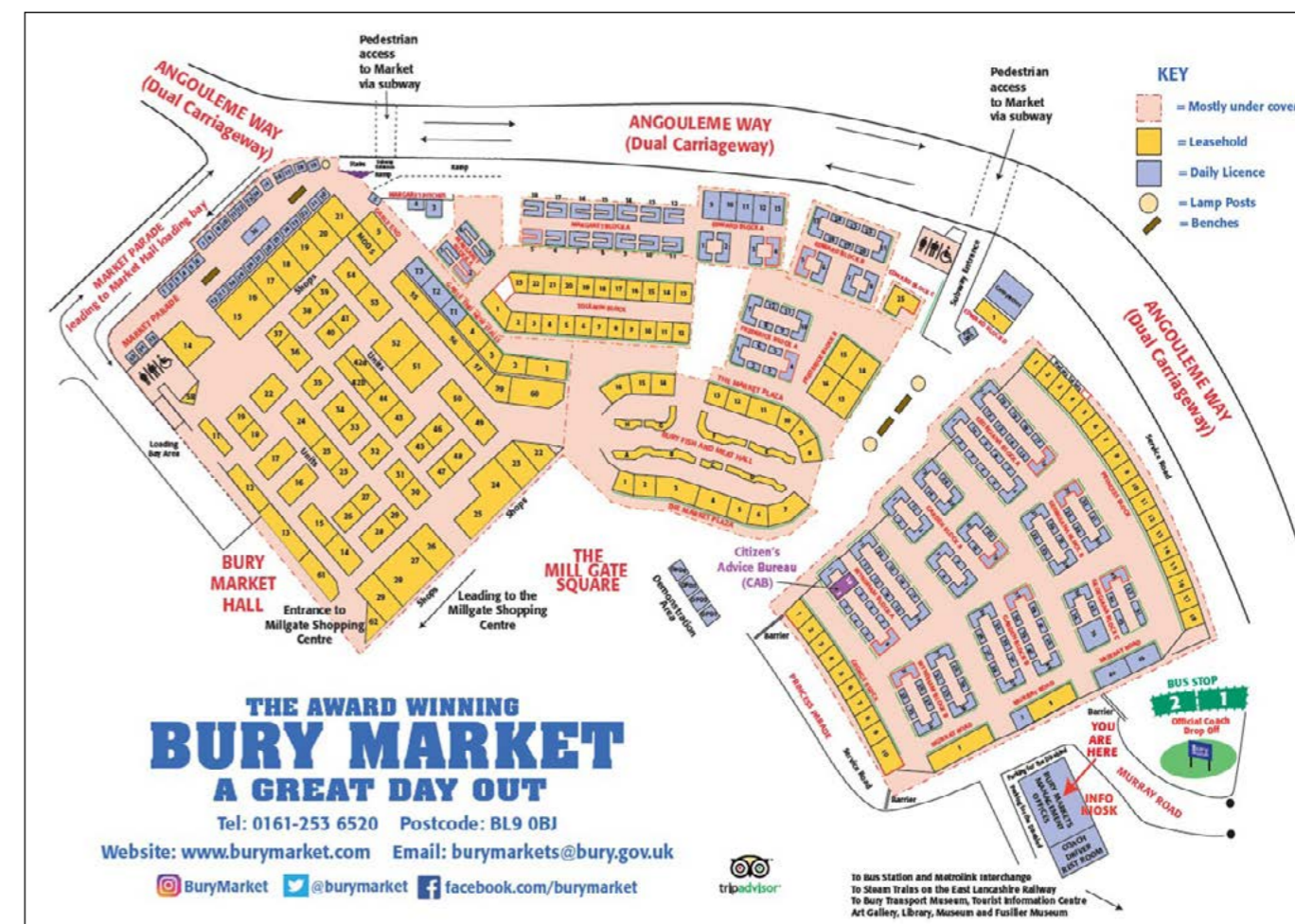


Figure 2: The layout of Bury Market. (Bury Council)

Bury Market is approximately fan-shaped (Figure 2). In a more or less central position stands the Fish and Meat Hall. To its left is the Market's taller and older indoor hall. Behind it and on its right run rows of covered but otherwise open stalls, grouped together in 'blocks' with names such as Margaret Block A and Wyndham Block B. The layout appears irregular, eliciting in the visitor an occasional but not unpleasant sense of loss of direction. This is enhanced by the Market's lack of proper entrance, with most approaches being through its neighbour, the Mill Gate Shopping Centre. An open space in front of the Fish and Meat Hall serves as an unofficial plaza, although in fact it belongs to Mill Gate. There is only a very limited degree of clustering of stalls by product: several fruit and veg stalls stand immediately behind the Fish and Meat Hall; the Market's limited number of cafés tend to be located in the indoor hall; and a number of plant stalls are located in the so-called Garden Blocks. The Market is hemmed in between the Mill Gate Shopping Centre and Bury's dual carriageway inner ring road (Figure 1). The Market looks and feels informal and friendly.

Like other traditional retail markets, Bury Market has been badly hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. For much of 2020 and the first part of 2021, only a few stalls remained open, selling food and other essentials. Some traders set up click-and-collect or delivery services.²⁴ Bury Council waived rents during the first lockdown of 2020,²⁵ in keeping with the wider approach of the markets sector (93% of market traders were offered zero, reduced or deferred rents during the first lockdown of 2020).²⁶ The Council reports that the differentiated tenure system (see Section 6.2) left leaseholders in the market hall and daily license traders in different positions in terms of accessing support schemes, however.²⁷ Daily license traders were unable to claim business rates relief, for example.²⁸ The Market also suffered as a result of the absence of coach visitors for many months in 2020 and 2021.

3. A loyal customer base of predominantly older and vulnerable users

Key facts

- Market users come mainly from the sub-region, while some come from the wider region and further afield.
- Most travel to the Market by car and bus; only 4% come by coach.²⁹
- Bury Market has a loyal customer base, who have been visiting for many years and who visit very regularly.
- The Market is particularly well-used by women and older people, people from lower-income groups living in deprived neighbourhoods and elderly pensioners living alone.
- The vast majority of market users are white British, white Irish or white other.

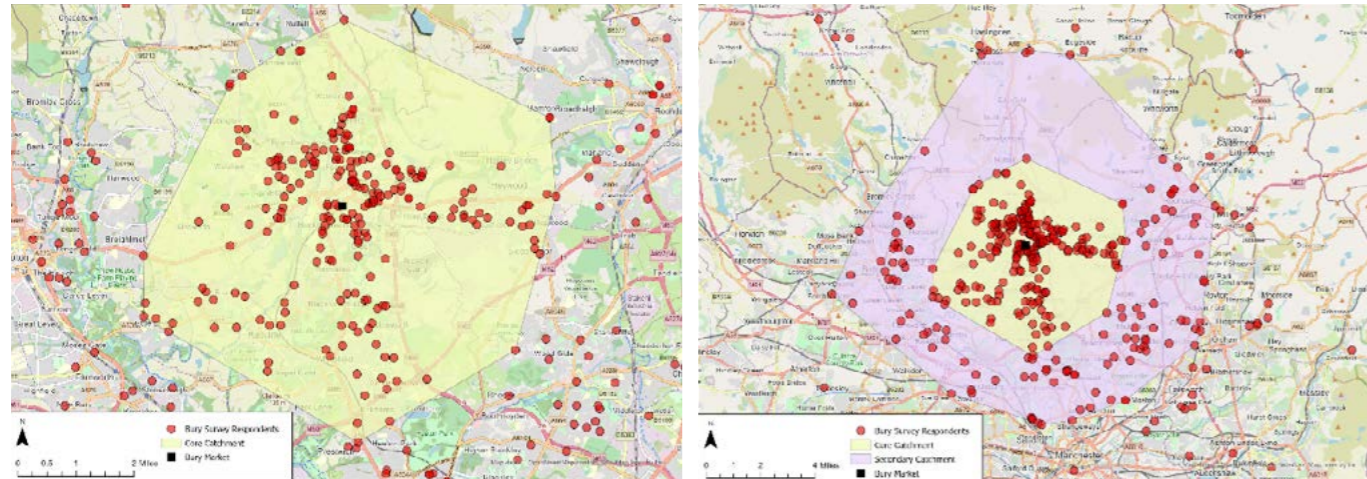


Figure 3: Bury Market's core catchment area (the area within which 50% of customers live), extending approximately 7 km from the Market, and its secondary catchment area (including the next 25% of users), extending almost 12 km from the Market. © OpenStreetMap contributors

3.1 Serving the local community, and beyond

While, like many markets, Bury Market primarily serves the local community, it also attracts customers from further afield. By using neighbourhood level data at the Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) level, a small-area geography used for policy making, it is possible to compare market users with all households living in the area. This enables us to create core and secondary catchment areas, within which, respectively, 50% and 75% of market users live. As shown in Figure 3, half of Bury Market users live within 7 kilometres of the Market (the core catchment area) while 75% live within 12 kilometres (the secondary catchment area). Bury Council's figures indicate that the Market attracts people from throughout the north of Greater Manchester even though, as Figure 3 makes clear, the bulk of customers live relatively close to the Market.

3.2 More than a coach trip

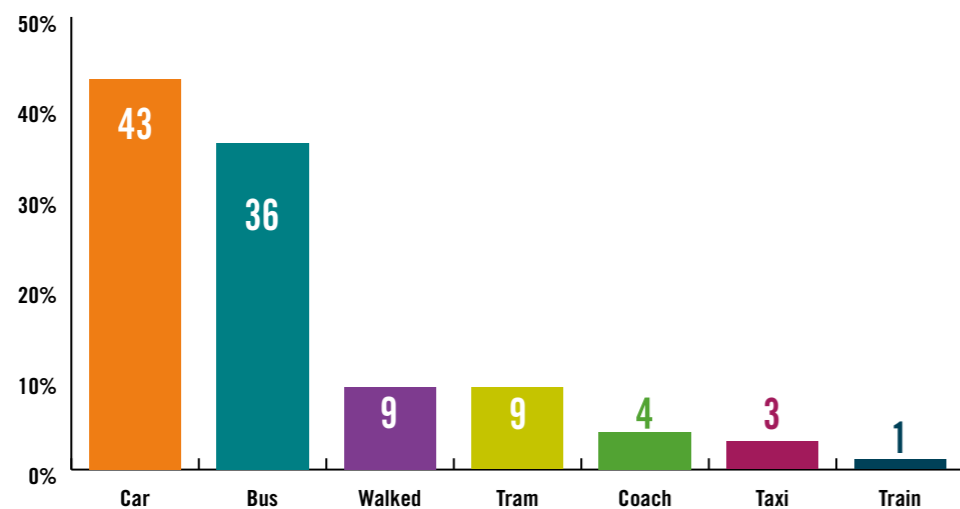


Figure 4: How Bury Market users travel to the Market.

While it is widely discussed that Bury Market attracts many coach parties, in fact only 4% of visitors arrive by coach (Figure 4). This is broadly in line with a figure of 5% of arrivals by coach from the customer survey undertaken by North West Research for Bury Council in 2014, down from 7% in 2011.³⁰ Some 43% of market users travel by car to the Market, but 42% do not have access to a car at all. Thirty-six percent come by bus, 9% by tram and 9% on foot. Market users are far more likely than people living in the catchment area as a whole to not have access to a car; this is a further indication of the greater relative deprivation of market users compared to the catchment area as a whole, and the important role that the Market has as an accessible destination.

3.3 Serving women and older people, especially those living alone

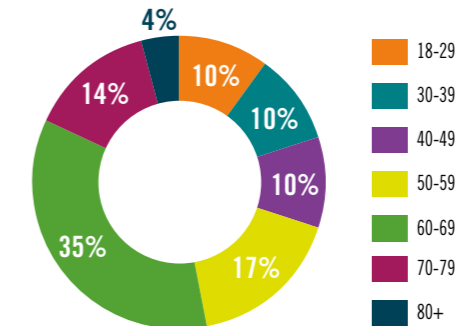


Figure 5: Age of Bury Market users.

Among market users, women outnumber men by a factor of about two to one (69% to 31%), a proportion that has fallen from 81% in 2011, according to the survey undertaken that year. Market users are also drawn predominantly from older age groups (Figure 5). Over half (53%) are aged 60 or over. If we break this down a little further, we see that 17% are aged between 50 and 59; 35% are between 60 and 69; and 18% are over 70. Very nearly half of all users (49%) are retired, while students account for only 4% and those in paid full-time work for 20%. As one would expect from these figures, market users typically live in small households – 71% live on their own or with a partner. On the other hand, 22% of market users live either alone with children or with a partner and children. Compared to the catchment area as a whole, Bury Market users are more likely to be elderly pensioners living alone.

While markets which serve older customers are often seen as declining, Bury Market's appeal to older people was viewed positively by members of the focus groups:

The Rock is for the young and trendy, whereas the Market is for the wise and savvy (M1, FG2).³¹

But the proximity of a varied retail offer is also appreciated:

If you are going to Katsouris... then you'll go into the Mill Gate... That is quite a good little link for the younger people to go there... And then they might go to The Rock. So I think having those amenities is a chance of getting younger people [to the Market] (M2, FG1)

3.4 Serving lower-income communities

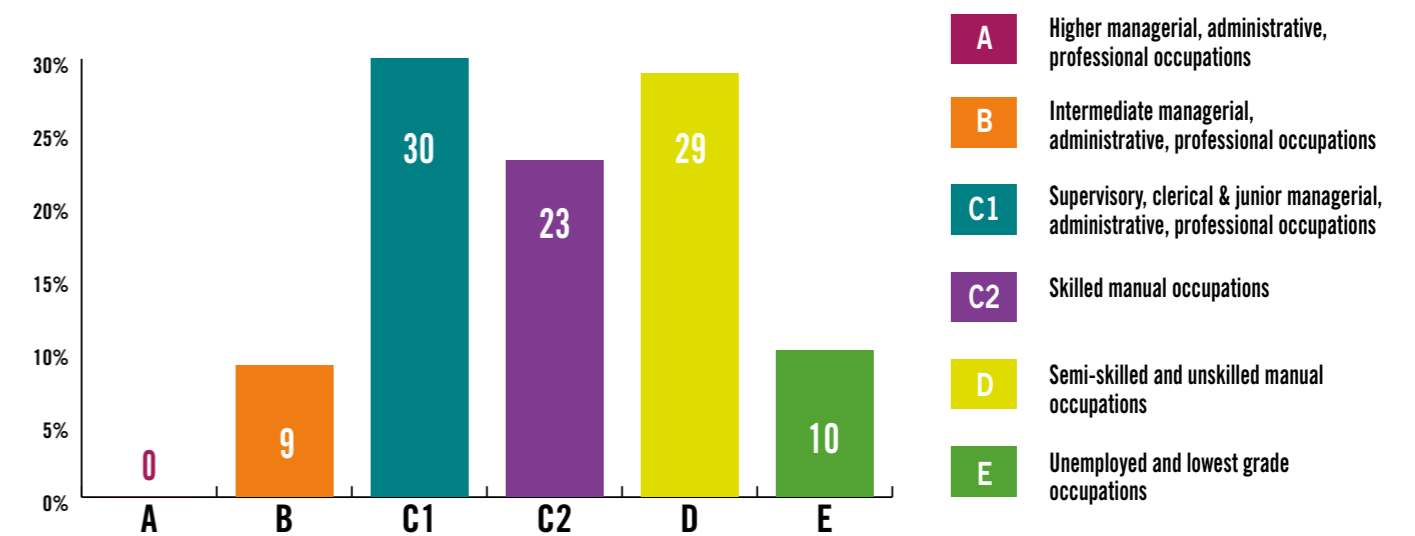


Figure 6: The socio-economic group of the main salary earner in market users' households.

Markets throughout the UK are particularly important to lower-income communities since they provide affordable food and other goods when compared to the prices in supermarkets and other local stores. In the case of Bury Market, 55% of market users live in the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in England, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Just 9% of market users are drawn from households in the most affluent 'social grades'³² A (higher managerial, administrative, professional occupations) and B (intermediate managerial, administrative, professional occupations) (Figure 6), although it is worth noting that this is a higher proportion than shown in the North West Research surveys for 2014 (4%) and 2011 (7%).³³ When compared with the overall population of the core catchment area, market users are far more likely to come from socio-economic groups D and E relative to the typical characteristics of households residing in that catchment area. Compared to the general population of the wider, secondary catchment area, they are slightly more likely to come from socio-economic groups C2, D and E.

These findings suggest that Bury Market may play a particularly important role for market users from lower socio-economic groups, particularly within the core catchment area. In the core catchment area, market users are also *more likely* to live in the most and *less likely* to live in the least deprived neighbourhoods. This pattern is reversed in the secondary catchment, where market users are slightly *less likely* to live in the most deprived neighbourhoods. In other words, Bury Market seems to attract more customers than expected from less affluent socio-economic groups and more deprived neighbourhoods within the core catchment area. In the wider secondary catchment area, Bury Market appears to be less important to less affluent consumers. While Bury Market has a reputation as a tourist destination, it also plays an important but perhaps less-well acknowledged role in serving local lower-income communities.

3.5 Market users are loyal

NABMA has actively encouraged people to support their local markets with a campaign to get shoppers throughout the UK to 'Love Your Local Market' in order to rebuild the importance of markets as local sources of fresh food and other goods, employment, community space and networks. This has been particularly important for those markets that have gone into decline. To the envy of many markets, however, Bury Market already has a longstanding and active customer base, in particular among users who are older, from less affluent socio-economic groups and other vulnerable groups.³⁴ Just over half (52%) of market users have been coming to the Market for over 20 years – North West Research found that 75% of market users had been visiting for over 10 years in 2014.³⁵ Older market users are more likely than younger market users to have been visiting the Market for over 20 years (73% of people aged 70+). More surprisingly perhaps, we found that 65% of those aged from 18 to 29 had been visiting the Market for at least five years, suggesting that many of the Market's younger customers have also been visiting for a long time.

3.6 An active customer base

We see a very similar pattern when it comes to frequency of visits. Thus market users from socio-economic groups D and E are more likely to visit at least once a week than those from socio-economic groups A and B – 68% compared to 42% and 52% for users from groups A and B respectively. Older market users are more likely to visit at least once a week than 30 to 49 year olds, but so too are younger ones – 69% of those aged 70 and over and 65% of those aged 18 to 29 compared with 35% of those aged 30 to 49. This longstanding and active customer base is one indication of the importance of Bury Market in the lives of market users.

3.7 Relatively little-used by diverse ethnic and migrant communities

While some markets attract and serve an ethnically diverse customer base,³⁶ this is not the case for Bury Market. The vast majority of Bury Market users are from white ethnic groups (94%) and born in the UK (95%). Compared to the catchment area as a whole, Bury Market users are more likely to be from white ethnic groups and in general less likely to be from non-white ethnic groups. Asian and Asian British (Pakistani/Bangladeshi) ethnic groups are particularly under-represented within market users: they make up just 2% of market users but 10% of the secondary catchment area. Market users are also less likely to be born outside the UK than people living in the catchment area more generally. These differences are, in general, more marked within the secondary catchment area than the core catchment area. This suggests Bury Market is currently appealing predominately to white and non-migrant communities, and may have more to do to attract diverse ethnic and migrant communities in the locality into the Market. There is a need for further research into the reasons why the Market is not currently well used by the local South Asian community, and to explore how it might appeal to and engage with these communities in future.

4. Users value highly the Market and its produce

Key facts

- Bury Market draws customers for a variety of reasons, for eating and leisure as well as shopping.
- Both food and drink and the range of other items on sale are highly valued for their quality by market users.
- Bury Market has a particularly wide range of goods on offer.
- Many market users are bypassing local supermarkets to shop at Bury Market.
- The Market is the primary reason why market users visit Bury town centre.

4.1 A place for shopping, eating and leisure

People come to Bury Market to shop, but also often to eat at its well-established and good value independent cafés. Ninety percent of market users say that shopping is the main reason for their visit to Bury Market, and 97% give it as one of their top three reasons. Seventy-one percent give eating as the second main reason for their visit, with 80% giving it as one of the top three reasons. The third reason given for visiting the Market is leisure, with half answering 'for leisure' as their third reason for a market visit. In a context where many UK traditional retail markets are being urged to develop their food and leisure offering in order to attract more customers, Bury Market appears to be in a strong position with an already wide-ranging appeal.

4.2 A wide-ranging offer

Almost all users spend money on food and drink, and 51% do at least half of their food and drink shopping at the Market, which is a remarkable amount given that in Great Britain supermarkets have 94% of the grocery market share.³⁷ Average spend on food and drink per customer per visit is £19. This is particularly significant at a time when much of the media and the consequent wider public discussion contribute to a sense that supermarket food is cheaper and fresher. White ethnic groups are significantly more likely to do at least half of their food and drink shopping at the Market (53%) than other ethnic groups (22%), indicating the specific appeal of the Market's food offering to white communities.



Cakes and pastries for sale. (Bury Council)

Market users tend to buy fish and meat – 72% do so – and fruit and vegetables – 60%. But they also buy bread and cakes (53%), prepared food and drinks from cafés (51%), delicatessen (44%) and sweets (33%). Market users buy a full range of other products at the Market, top purchases being: clothing (56% of users), footwear (37%), bags and accessories (26%), books and magazines (22%), general household goods (21%) and flowers and plants (21%). Ninety-nine percent of market users spend money on other goods and services at Bury Market, with average spend being £23.

4.3 Bury Market bargains

A high proportion of market users (89%) value highly the quality and price of food and drinks on sale at the Market, and 98% state that the Market provides access to affordable quality food. This provides further evidence of the high regard that customers have for produce sold at the Market. Non-food and drinks goods and services are equally appreciated, with 90% valuing highly their quality and price.

Participants in the focus groups expressed genuine appreciation:

My wife swears by the fish market here, she swears by the meat market (M2, FG1)

I just love it. You get bargains and everything like that (M5, FG2).

4.4 A shopping destination of choice

Asda (54%) and Aldi (40%) are the alternative outlets at which market users most frequently shop for food and drink. But while there are a total of 130 grocery stores available within the core and secondary catchment areas, operated by 13 different retailers, market users travel a mean distance of 13.4 km to reach the Market but just 7.4 km to their nominated other shopping stores. Market users therefore are typically willing to travel further in order to shop at Bury Market, bypassing more easily accessible alternatives. We can conclude that market users are shopping for food at Bury Market out of choice, not because it is the only, the closest or the most easily accessible food outlet. These findings suggest Bury Market has a unique and specific appeal for customers.

4.5 The market draws people to Bury town centre

How much money will you be spending outside the Market today?	Percentage of respondents
Nothing	33%
£10 or less	19%
£10.01 to £40	44%
More than £40	5%

Figure 7: Spending in Bury town centre by market users per visit.

Markets are promoted by many city and town authorities as a means of reviving or regenerating town centres.³⁸ They can generate an increase in footfall in town centres by between 15% and 27% on market days.³⁹ While the Markets4People user survey did not explore footfall, it suggests that Bury Market plays an important role in driving footfall and spending in Bury town centre. Almost three quarters of market users (74%) stated that the Market was the main reason for their visit to Bury town centre. At the same time, 66% of market users said they were also visiting other shops, cafés or amenities in the city centre, and 67% said they would be spending money outside the Market (Figure 7). Given that average spend by market users outside the Market is £16 and that 61% of market users visit at least once a week, the Market clearly has a significant impact on the wider town centre.

This was a point recognised and emphasised by several of our interviewees. One Bury councillor told us:

People in the town are rightly proud. The Market makes us rightly proud. [...] Bury punches well above its weight in terms of cultural offering. The Market is that background, ever present thing. If it was ever even in danger – the Market – we're endangering the town.

This message was reinforced by focus group members, who declared, for example, that:

[Bury would] be lost without the Market. We'd be nothing (F3, FG2).

4.6 Limited competition from online retailing

Many traditional retail markets in the UK – like high streets and town centres more generally – have suffered adversely from increasing competition from online retailing in recent years, prompting significant efforts from the sector to support markets and market traders to develop multi-channel retailing. There is little evidence that Bury Market has been subject to these particular pressures so far. Market users do not tend to engage much with online shopping, in particular for food and drink. Just 10% of respondents shop online for food and drink, while 39% shop online for other goods and services. Fifty-three percent of market users live in neighbourhoods classified as 'passive and uncommitted users' of e-commerce or 'e-withdrawn' groups in the 2018 Internet User Classification, a small area classification of internet engagement.⁴⁰ However, younger market users, students, those in paid work and black and minority ethnic groups are more likely to shop online for food and drink than other groups. These findings highlight the Market's particular importance to older, less affluent and white ethnic groups who rely on the Market for grocery and other shopping. However, the restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic have changed some of these habits; according to a National YouGov survey more older consumers are doing their grocery shopping online.⁴¹ The click-and-collect and delivery services operated by some Bury Market traders during the pandemic could therefore be further developed to enable more older customers to join in.

5. A welcoming social space

Key facts

- Bury Market is highly valued as a place of social interaction, especially for older people and those from vulnerable groups.
- Market users use and appreciate market facilities.
- Market users overwhelmingly feel safe and welcome and a sense of belonging in the Market.
- The vast majority of market users see the Market as important to them and to the town as a whole.
- Bury Market is irreplaceable for most of its users.

5.1 A convivial space

Bury Market is a convivial space which facilitates long term relationships as well as social interaction between people who don't know each other. Older people and people from less affluent socio-economic and vulnerable groups in particular rely on the Market for social encounters. Market users were asked a series of questions to establish how they used the Market for social purposes. Sixty-eight percent agreed or strongly agreed when asked whether they share news or information with traders, and 61% agreed or strongly agreed that they have received help or assistance from traders, for example storing bags or accepting late payment. Reflecting probably the diversity of the traders (but not the customers), 81% of market users agreed or strongly agreed when asked whether they have interacted with traders from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds to their own.



Many customers say they receive help or assistance from traders. (Bury Council)



Bury Market is an important space for social interaction. (Bury Council)

These findings echo wider evidence that markets are important spaces for social interaction, especially for older people, lower-income groups, migrants, women and single parents with children.⁴² Markets' role in facilitating social interaction has a positive impact on individuals' well-being as well as broader policy goals relating to social inclusion and community cohesion. This is particularly true for older people whose only interaction on a daily or weekly basis might be with the traders at a market. It is also one of the main reasons people shop at markets.⁴³

5.2 A vital social hub for market users

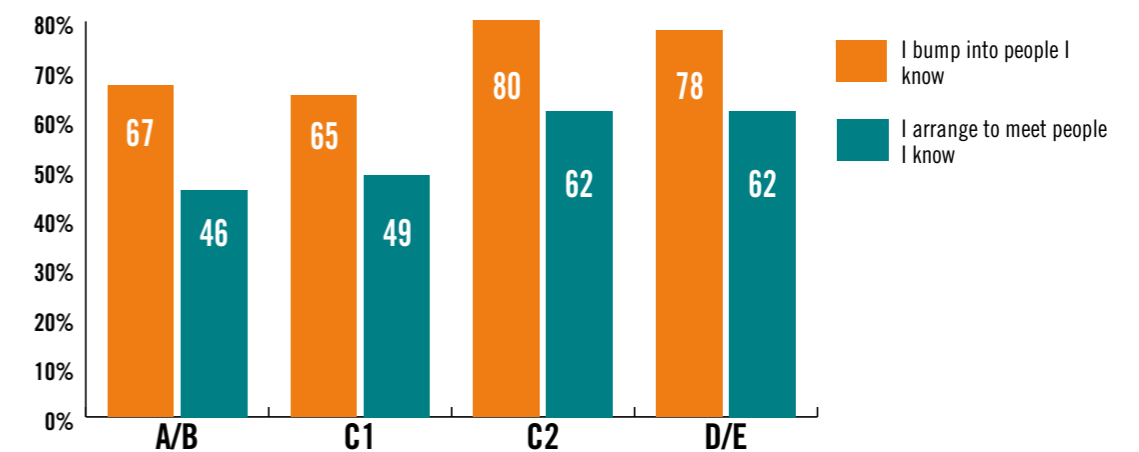


Figure 8: Percentage of market users strongly agreeing or agreeing with statements about social interaction in Bury Market by socio-economic group.

The majority of market users – in particular older people, women and people from lower socio-economic groups and white ethnic groups – interact socially with other customers at the Market.⁴⁴ Seventy-four percent agreed or strongly agreed that they bump into people they know at the Market; 57% that they arrange to meet people they know at the Market; 82% that they talk to people they don't know at the Market; 63% that they have given or received help or advice to/ from other customers; and 71% that they have interacted with customers from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds to their own. On some of these indicators, social interaction amongst market users is significantly greater amongst lower than higher socio-economic groups (Figure 8). Interestingly, those in the younger age group of 18-29 years are the most likely (57%) to visit with friends. The social and convivial nature of the Market is reflected in a number of comments from focus group participants:

In the Market there's about four stalls that I always visit because I get on really well with the people. And I also meet mates on a couple of them (M2, FG2).

I do come across old friends walking around that I've not seen for a long time (M1, FG1).

You can go on Bury Market and you can say to someone, 'Have you seen such a body?' 'Oh, they've just gone up there,' because they know everybody" (F3, FG2).

5.3 Facilities and events

The market toilets and benches are well used and much appreciated by market users. Toilets are used by 78% of market users. Benches and public seating are used by 76% of market users, and particularly those from socio-economic groups D and E. These facilities are particularly valued as spaces for social encounter:

Benches, yeah. You can meet everybody in the world there can't you? (M1, FG2).



Benches and public seating are used by the majority of market users. (Myfanwy Taylor)

Of interest too is the number of people who attend events and visit charity stalls: 12% of market users have attended events or activities at the Market. Vulnerable market users are more likely to attend events/activities at the Market than non-vulnerable market users.

5.4 Feeling safe and welcome at Bury Market

The overwhelming majority of market users feel safe (99%) and welcome (98%) and feel as if they belong (92%) at Bury Market. What's more, 99% strongly agree or agree that Bury Market is an open and welcoming space for all. These feelings are more or less uniform across socio-economic groups, but it is notable that there is a higher proportion of people from socio-economic groups D and E (83%) who say they feel less lonely in the Market than the average of people from the other groups (73%). These findings suggest that Bury Market may be playing a particularly important role in reducing loneliness and social isolation for market users from more vulnerable groups. However, black and minority ethnic market users are significantly less likely than white market users to feel welcome at Bury Market. While many markets have been found to foster social inclusion, community cohesion and increased tolerance and understanding amongst different ethnic groups, these findings suggest this may not be occurring at Bury Market at present.⁴⁵ More could be done to ensure Bury Market is a space where all ethnic groups feel welcome.

5.5 Part of the local identity and a community hub

The vast majority of market users (99%) strongly agree or agree that Bury Market is an important part of local identity; 95% of market users strongly agree or agree that Bury Market is a community hub; and 94% say the Market is either important or very important to them. Bury Market is more important to market users than other community facilities such as the library or park, and somewhat more important than other retail and food outlets. Focus group participants affirmed that:

It's a focal point (F2, FG2).

It brings people together... That's the important part (M2, FG1)

These findings also echo wider evidence for the emblematic role of some markets in the distinct identity of a place.⁴⁶ Such local community assets can play an important role in community economic development, including through community ownership and management.

5.6 Irreplaceable Bury Market

Seventy percent of market users say they wouldn't use another market if Bury Market wasn't here any more; 10% said they would use Bolton Market instead. The strength of feeling towards the Market can be gauged from focus group participants' comments:

If anything happened to [the Market], I'd be lost. It's part of life... I'd do everything I could to stop it shutting (F3, FG2).

Among things that would be missed if the Market closed, survey participants singled out specific stalls (14%), variety (13%), community (13%), atmosphere (12%), and meeting and socialising (10%); 23% said they would miss everything. Few market users (16%) said they wanted to see changes, and of these, the only factor that received a significant response was lack of cleanliness or availability of the toilets (mentioned by 14% of this group). This leads us to draw attention to the dangers of getting trapped in a 'discourse of change', a point we discuss in the next section.

6. Strengths and challenges

6.1 A highly successful market

Bury Market is widely regarded as a successful example of how a market should be, what makes a market a special place. As such, it has won a succession of national awards. It is very large and diverse, with most retail sectors represented. It more than fulfils all the criteria for successful traditional retail markets, offering comparable goods to supermarkets but with a wider range and at affordable prices. As one trader put it:

So I think cheap and cheerful, it's always what good markets have, a bit of cheap and cheerful about them and it needs to keep some of that... We don't see it as a wholly Altrincham type operation where it's full of baristas stroking beards, we still want it to have [it so] that it appeals to a particular demographic of people from the north of England.

As this comment suggests, the Market is held in affection by customers and traders. The strength of feeling is based on the Market's appeal to its "particular demographic", which our research shows is comprised predominantly of lower-income and older residents of Bury.

Bury Market has a loyal customer base, and one that is largely local and sub-regional; many people bypass supermarkets closer to their homes in order to shop at the Market. While only a small fraction of visitors (4%) come by coach, they help enhance the Market's wider reputation as a 'world famous' market. A significant proportion of market users do most of their shopping at the Market. Market users in general show a very high level of appreciation for the quality of the products on sale at the Market. The Market is a hub of sociability, a real focal point for the social life of its users, especially for the elderly, those from vulnerable groups and those from less affluent socio-economic groups. Focus group members were especially vocal on the place the Market holds for them as a social hub:

Each day I come, I meet different family. Because they can only get on certain days to come and see me. Because they're a long, long way away (M2, FG1).

I do come across old friends walking around that I've not seen for a long time (M1, FG1).

Bury has a thriving town centre with a varied range of offerings. The Market is recognised by many as the leading attraction among several others in the town centre. In the words of one focus group participant:

People will ask me, 'Do you know this place in Bury?' 'Yeah, it's down by...' 'Is it anywhere near Bury Market?' That's the first thing they say. 'Is it near Bury Market?' and that's always where they want to start from (M1, FG1).

It is seen by market users as providing an attractive complement to other shopping centres in the centre of the town. Besides the Market, and in addition to the Rock and the Mill Gate shopping centres, the town centre also includes an arts centre, an art gallery and two museums. Generally seen as Manchester's most thriving suburban centre, Bury has good transport connections, being linked to Manchester city centre by tram.

A councillor interviewed for the research was one of several interviewees who emphasised the Market's importance for the town centre:

Bury Market has sustained Bury in hard times and it's helped us in good times.

This message was reinforced by focus group members, who declared, for example, that:

The Market is important to the heritage [a reference to black pudding], to communities" (M2, FG1).

And it was echoed by a market trader:

The Market makes us different [as a town centre]... I think [the Market]'s one of the main draws for the town. It's known as a market town, we've got the best market. I think it's massive. I think it differentiates us from any other town centre.

The key role of the Market for the whole town is also demonstrated by the recent discussions by Bury Council about the future of the Market, the convening of a Task Force and plans for a new multi-purpose hall mentioned in the introductory section of this report. As we discuss below, this key moment in the Market's recent history should be utilised to strengthen the community value it provides.

6.2. External and internal challenges

There are many external challenges that have an impact on Bury Market just as they have on other markets across the UK, challenges that have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

These external challenges include:

- The dominance of international and corporate retailers;
- Pressure on local authorities to raise income due to very significant cuts in their budgets;
- Changing consumption patterns, in particular younger people's choice to shop online;
- A legacy of disinvestment at national level on traditional retail markets; and
- An ageing population of traders.

Bury Market also faces a number of internal challenges, identified through our multi-methods research, that could impinge significantly on its success as a hub for the community, putting at risk the community value that this report shows it provides. These challenges are discussed below.

A tendency to undervalue the current strengths of the Market

There is an abundant enthusiasm for the Market among councillors and council officials and an appreciation of its importance to Bury town centre. This is allied to a sense of the importance to the Market of coach visitors. However, there is a danger that this comes at the expense of an appreciation of the strengths of the Market as it is today, as a space with high community value, a space of welcome for members of society who otherwise risk being marginalised. These include older people, lower-income groups, migrants, women and single parents with children, for all of whom wider research has shown that markets provide a valuable space for social interaction.⁴⁷

The paradox of Bury Market is that it both has a glowing reputation ('world famous market') and is tucked away between a shopping centre and a dual carriageway. When combined with the frequently noted need to improve the bus station, this has led to a succession of suggestions for the redrawing of Bury's town centre, with the future of the Market and its role as a community hub becoming subsumed and potentially overlooked within wider considerations.

A history of underinvestment in the market environment



Market signpost. (Bury Council)

The Market is hard to locate, especially for visitors arriving at the tram terminus and bus station. Signage is not immediately evident – “Some of the signage is really, really tired”, according to the markets manager, while a councillor told us that, “One of the things we need to do longer term is make the whole area look better, because it is very much something that, from the outside ring road, looks shabby”. This situation is not helped by the fact that the Market lacks a proper ‘entrance’, and is accessed primarily through Mill Gate Shopping Centre. In the Market itself, signs direct visitors to specific blocks, but this is of little help to anyone unfamiliar with the Market. New toilets have recently been installed, but in general the infrastructure for market users is little more than adequate. A lack of internet connectivity has been a longstanding issue. This reflects a longstanding lack of commitment to invest back into the Market the revenues that the market generates for the local council; equally, it reflects a neglect of the Market’s potential as an incubator of new businesses, and of traders as potential recipients of support in acquiring business skills. The Council’s Task Group Report emphasised the need for new investment, both in physical infrastructure and in internet connectivity.⁴⁸

A tendency to be swept up in a discourse of change

The Task Group Report starts from the premise that the Market needs to attract a wider customer base. For example, it states that, ‘We need to reconnect the market to our affluent residents’.⁴⁹ A councillor interviewee expressed a similar sentiment:

I think it would be really good to look at ways of bringing in new [users]. I’m talking about younger people, more ethnic minorities, more posh women from Tottington who want to come in to drink prosecco, you know, lunch deals or whatever.

The Task Group Report argues that: ‘The current generally older age profile of market-users will cause the market vulnerability if not replaced by a younger generation’.⁵⁰ While we recognise that markets should be accessible to all, we question the need to significantly alter the offer and purpose of the Market. The logic of attracting younger generations also suggests that new generations of older people will necessarily have different tastes, but there is no evidence to support this contention. This is a particularly significant point given the healthy state of the Market prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, not least in regard to the very small number of vacant stalls. The risk is that an approach focusing on attracting younger and wealthier customers will lead to decisions on tenant mix, re-design of the space and increased rents that will do irreversible damage to the community value that the Market currently engenders.

Focus group participants made the point forcibly:

You’re not messing with another bloody market! (F1, FG1)

while a trader found different words to make the same overall point:

You can’t move atmosphere and you can’t buy atmosphere. A market is a market... it’s supposed to be a market and gritty.

Frequent changes in the Market’s management structure

There have been an unusual number of organisational and personnel changes among council officers in recent years, creating a sense of instability and insecurity. At the time this research was undertaken, administration of the Market was being divided between two departments. For strategic issues, the Market was placed within the Business Skills and Innovation Directorate while for day-to-day issues it was in the Operations Directorate. This leads to significant concerns around coherence of management and attention to core questions of everyday importance. It also raises concerns about possible tendencies to see the Market first and foremost as a property asset, a part of business operations rather than as a community hub and a valuable economic resource.

Discontent among stallholders

Stallholders in the Fish and Meat Hall and the larger Market Hall are leaseholders, paying rates, as are some other outdoor stallholders, while daily license traders pay rent. This situation leads to invidious comparisons and disquiet. It is clear, however, that standardisation is unlikely to occur.

Complaints from some traders about rents and car parking charges and neglect by the Council were picked up in local media and created unfavourable publicity.⁵¹ This ran the risk of spreading a mood of uncertainty and apprehension among traders. A larger membership of the traders’ association might have helped to resolve some of this dissatisfaction. It was partly in response to some of these issues that the Council formed its Task Group to bring about dialogue and make recommendations for the future of the Market.

Presence of Mill Gate Shopping Centre

Mill Gate Shopping Centre extends over a considerable amount of ground that wraps around much of the Market and obscures the entrance to the Market. Although the shopping centre manager and council officials speak in terms of facing challenges together, difficulties have arisen from time to time. The fact that a number of Mill Gate shops have a similar offer to what is available in the Market, under what are seen as more favourable business conditions, has been a source of concern to the market manager and traders. Here, too, it is possible that the relatively poor visibility and accessibility of the Market is exacerbating these problems.

7. Recommendations

The following recommendations are addressed primarily to Bury Council, as the owner and operator of Bury Market, and draw on findings from the Markets4People research project.

7.1 Embed the research across the Council

We recommend that the Council ensures all relevant teams have access to this report and embed it in their work relating to the Market. As the first large-scale, representative study that focuses specifically on the community value of Bury Market, the research offers a new understanding of the Market from the perspective of market users. This understanding will be of benefit to various teams within Bury Council with responsibilities over the Market. Given the benefits that we have evidenced in terms of well-being, combating loneliness, feelings of belonging and care, other teams across the Council that have statutory duty to promote community and individual well-being would also benefit from our research. We therefore recommend that the Council ensure all relevant teams have access to this report, and embed it in their work relating to the Market. We would be happy to offer further workshops and briefings to Council representatives and officers, as well as any other interested parties.

7.2 Celebrate and incorporate the current customer base into any future strategies for the Market



The majority of Bury Market's users are women and are aged over 60. (Bury Council)

We recommend that the Council celebrates the Market's current customer base, placing this at the heart of any future strategy for the Market. A majority of Bury Market's users are women and are aged over 60, many of them retired and many living on their own. They come predominantly from more disadvantaged sections of the population. The fear of a decline in visitor numbers resulting from a reliance on older customers is unfounded. There is nothing to suggest that coming generations of older people will not feel equally drawn to the Market. Indeed, our survey shows that 52% visit the Market with family members and 45% of those in the 18 to 29 age bracket do so. This strongly suggests that younger people are being socialised to the Market by their parents. It also underlines the importance of looking beyond the urge to appeal to younger customers but to retain a sense of the importance of the community value the Market provides for its older and more disadvantaged users. Although market improvement and redevelopment schemes tend to focus on attracting younger and more affluent customers, our research provides firm evidence to suggest that the current customer base in Bury Market is central to the Market's success. A future strategy for the Market should therefore aim to attract more of these types of customers. We recommend that Bury Council avoid transforming the Market in ways that fail to benefit its current customer base.

7.3 Identify and mitigate negative impacts of policies on different user groups

We recommend that Bury Council identifies and mitigates the potential impact of any future policy options on different user groups, in particular disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. This should include any proposals to raise rents or significantly alter the mix of traditional/new stalls, as well as any broader thinking about the future of the Market. In particular, it is important that outside planning consultants working for the Council in the future receive clear guidance in any briefs or tenders on the need for the Market to remain attractive to its current customer base. Care should be taken to understand and mitigate any negative impacts and/or to explore other options. As indicated in this report and as evidenced in further literature, strategies to shift the customer base of markets towards a wealthier clientele risk displacing and pricing out some traders and leaving less affluent and vulnerable customers without a place to go for affordable goods and company. As the Council progresses their future strategy for the Market, the demographic information provided by the Markets4People survey about the existing customer base should be used to assess – and minimise or mitigate – the impact of its policies on key user groups, including women, older people and disadvantaged groups. Information about how different user groups are using the Market will be particularly relevant to an equalities impact assessment.

7.4 Expand the existing Market Task Group to include a wider range of stakeholders

We recommend that Bury Council expand the Market Task Group set up in 2019 to include more traders, user representatives and community groups with an interest in the continued success of the town centre and the well-being of Bury residents, especially those drawn from disadvantaged sections of society. Such groups could include organisations representing local ethnic minority populations and mental health charities, as well as representatives from town centre institutions such as Bury Art Museum and Bury College. Expanding the Task Group would help to ensure that any plan for change to the Market incorporate specific commitments to retain those elements that older and lower-income market users cherish most. An expanded Market Task Group, perhaps repositioned as a Market Forum, would also allow the Council, traders, market users and the wider community to pursue a more collaborative approach to the operation of the Market and to its future, as well as identifying new opportunities. For example, it could lead to making Bury Market a focus for projects which directly tackle well-being and inequalities. Involving community groups would provide the Council with further insight into the Market's value and function for users and the impact of any potential changes on them.

7.5 Increase the surplus reinvested in the Market to fund incremental improvements

We recommend that Bury Council increase the portion of the surplus reinvested in the Market to fund incremental improvements to market infrastructure. In common with many other traditional retail markets owned and managed by local authorities, Bury Market has made regular surpluses and these have gone into overall Council revenues. As a consequence, necessary building repairs have tended to happen late and reactively. While the Market needs urgent improvements to its infrastructure, we recommend that these be of an incremental nature rather than a full-scale and radical transformation. To put it differently, while the Market today might be considered somewhat shabby but nevertheless charming, incremental improvements should retain the charm while removing the shabbiness. Needed changes include a more prominent entrance to the Market. The possibility that a multi-purpose hall will be built in the Market is to be welcomed so long as it works for the current customer base. It should not become the precursor to a re-calibration of the Market that prioritises artisanal enterprise and performance-based activities that are likely to lead to rent rises and feelings of disempowerment among market users.

7.6 Bring stability to the Market's management and organisational structure

We recommend that the Market's management and organisational structure is stabilised. While the Council's continued interest in and concern for the Market is welcome, the Market's management and organisational structure needs to be left to consolidate, develop and mature. Whatever department or directorate the Market is placed into, whether one or several, it is important that the Market be viewed and treated as a community hub supporting the lives of older, poorer and more vulnerable residents of Bury rather than primarily as a property asset.

7.7 Support the development of traders and the traders' association



Markets can serve as a training station in business skills for young people. (Bury Council)

We recommend that the Council supports the further development of Bury Market traders and the traders' association. Markets can serve as a training station in business skills for young people and as a start-off point for recent migrants and members of other vulnerable groups. The Council should introduce appropriate schemes to help support the development of traders. Alongside this, the Council should work with traders to find ways of reinvigorating the market traders' association. This would help traders contribute more actively to discussions about the Market's future.

7.8 Put Bury Market at the centre of Bury's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic

We recommend that Bury Market should become a strategic site for thinking about and progressing Bury's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our research findings demonstrate the crucial role of Bury Market – and other local markets⁵² – during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and its strategic potential to contribute to the Council's work to support residents and businesses to recover from the pandemic. As household budgets come under continued pressure, Bury Market's role as an access point for affordable and quality fresh food and a range of other produce is as important as ever. The community role of Bury Market in facilitating social interaction and as a space where users feel safe, less lonely, welcome and like they belong is even more relevant now that traditional retail uses are struggling in city centres.⁵³ Markets are also accessible places for people who have lost jobs to start new businesses.⁵⁴ The importance of Bury Market to elderly and lower-income groups makes it well placed to contribute to the Council's efforts to support communities particularly affected by Covid-19. For example, the Council could explore the potential to develop at Bury Market a more wide-ranging version of the five community hubs it set up to support some of Bury's most clinically vulnerable residents during the pandemic,⁵⁵ drawing on and further developing the Market's already strong role as a welcoming and supportive community asset.

Our findings also support NABMA and NMTF's proposal that markets should be given parity with supermarkets to allow them to remain fully open during national lockdowns.⁵⁶ The community value of Bury Market evidenced in this report also provides a strong rationale for further government support for market traders and operators, as proposed by NABMA and NMTF, to enable markets to continue to deliver wide-ranging economic, social and cultural benefits to marginalised communities as they emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic.



The market provides access to affordable and quality fresh food. (Bury Council)

Annex 1 – Research Methods

This report on Bury Market is part of a wider research project called Markets4People,⁵⁷ funded by the Economic and Social Research Council since 2018, which has progressed in several phases.

The first phase of the Markets4People research project sought to identify key actors shaping the debate in the markets industry and to explore their perspectives on the economic, social and cultural value of markets, including how +markets are changing, how their value or performance can be measured and how it can be enhanced. This phase involved 30 interviews with key national, regional and local stakeholders in the markets sector⁵⁸ as well as workshops with market operators, traders and market community groups.⁵⁹ As a result, we published a report with the New Economics Foundation⁶⁰ which was launched at the All Party Parliamentary Group on Markets.⁶¹

The second phase of the project – the focus of this report – has explored the views and experiences of markets users themselves, in order to gain an understanding of community value from their perspective. This is an understudied area with little pre-existing data. The research team firstly developed a set of criteria through which to select three case study markets. These criteria included that these three markets should be large enough to support a 500-customer survey, have strong economic, social and cultural roles and serve a diversity of customers. In light of the project's aims to influence policy and practice, the team also selected markets in which both the operator and traders were interested in and broadly supportive of the research. Following a rigorous selection process, involving informal interviews with market operators and trader/community representatives, as well as visits,⁶² the research team selected Bury Market, Newcastle upon Tyne's Grainger Market and Queen's Market in Newham, East London. This report is one of three reports summarising research findings from each case study market for key stakeholders.

Bury Market was selected as a case study because of its reputation within the markets industry as a well-managed and supported market, evidenced by numerous awards, its appeal to local people as well as visitors from further afield, and its long history and importance within the town centre. There was also the possibility for the research to inform Bury Council's emerging thinking about the future of the Market.

The Markets4People team designed a 10-15 minute survey to explore the economic, social and cultural value of each case study market from a user perspective. The survey covers key demographic information, shopping and eating at the market, socialising at the market, and feelings and views about the market.⁶³ It was carried out in early 2019, with 500 customers at each of the three case study markets being interviewed on our behalf by a fieldwork company expert in conducting research in markets, Fieldwork Assistance. At Bury Market, the survey was conducted over four weeks in March 2019. Survey data were analysed by Dr Lisa Buckner and Dr Andy Newing. Two 90-minute focus groups were also organised at each case study market, with survey respondents from selected typically marginalised or vulnerable user groups, which wider academic research tells us benefit most from the community value of markets. At Bury Market, we ran one focus group with market users over 50 years old and a second focus group with market users living in relatively more deprived areas on the 24th of July 2019 at Bury Market Office.⁶⁴

The research team also interviewed key local figures at each case study market in order to contextualise the survey data. At Bury Market, interviews, including repeat interviews, were undertaken with the following key actors during 2019 and 2020. From Bury Council: councillor and Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR (and Council lead for Bury's markets), councillor and Chair of the Planning Control Committee, the Director of Regeneration from the Business Growth and Infrastructure Directorate and the Markets Manager. In terms of traders, we interviewed the Chair and Deputy Chair of Bury Market Traders Association. Focus groups and interviews were recorded and transcribed (with participants' permission) and analysed by Dr Paul Waley.

This primary research has been complemented by further analysis of policy, media and academic documents and papers that relate to Bury Market and its geographic, social and economic context.

On the 12th of February 2020 the team presented a draft of this report to a meeting of the Bury Market Task Group, including councillors, relevant council officers and trader representatives. Feedback from participants at this meeting, as well as from additional discussions on further drafts, has been taken into account and incorporated as much as possible. The report has also been reviewed by members of our research team and Steering Group, who also provided very useful feedback.

We would like to thank to all survey respondents, focus group participants, interviewees and administrative staff at the Council and the Market for participating in the research. Ultimately, the authors of this report are solely responsible for its comments.

Annex 2 – Research Team

This report is written by members of the Markets4People project, led from the University of Leeds;⁶⁵ an interdisciplinary team of internationally renowned academics with expertise on retail markets, cities and retail change.

As well as the authors of this report, whose short biographies can be read on the inner cover, the team also includes other academic experts with complementary expertise:

- **Professor Graham Clarke** at the School of Geography, University of Leeds with expertise on the geography of retail change and retail location models and urban service analysis.
- **Professor Sophie Watson**, Head of Sociology, Open University, internationally renowned sociologist with expertise on urban life. She has researched and published on street markets and, in 2009, was an adviser to the Communities and Local Government Committee inquiry on Markets.

The research team is also made up of two non-academic co-investigators:

- **NMTF**, the only national trade association for market and street traders. Founded in 1899, it has around 20,000 members. It supports market traders and the markets sector in general. At NMTF, Chris Savage was co-investigator in the Markets4People project until November 2020 when he left the organisation, later replaced by Shanaaz Carroll.
- **New Economics Foundation**, a think tank that promotes a people-oriented economy with research expertise on markets. At NEF, Frances Northrop is co-investigator in the Markets4People project. She has expertise on communities and place-based stakeholders, and regularly works with community economic practitioners and local and regional policy makers.

This team is supported by a Steering Group made up of academics, experts and key actors in the markets sector and related areas:

Dr Suzanne Hall (London School of Economics and Political Science) is an urban ethnographer and has practised as an architect in South Africa. She is Co-director of the Cities Programme and Associate Professor in Sociology at the LSE.

Professor Alan Hallsworth (University of Portsmouth) has a 30-year research record in retailing. His studies have frequently helped to underpin aspects of planning policy guidance and inform UK policy makers.

Sasha Laurel Jagroo (Friends of Queen's Market). The Friends of Queen's Market is a dynamic, grassroots community group which formed in 2009 to campaign successfully against the proposed demolition of Queen's Market and continues to meet regularly to campaign to protect and promote it.

Richard Lee, Just Space. Just Space is an informal alliance of community groups, campaigns and concerned independent organisations. Its aim is to improve public participation in planning, to ensure that policy is fairer towards communities.

Ailbhe McNabola, Power to Change. Power to Change is an independent charitable trust that supports and develops community businesses in England and also works with community businesses to revive local assets, protect the services people rely on, and address local needs.

Jonathan Pauling, Alexandra Rose Charity. The Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg Project, set up by Alexandra Rose Charity, helps families on low incomes to buy fresh fruit and vegetables at local markets. The project also benefits markets, fostering economic vibrancy through regular trade.

David Preston, NABMA. The National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) promotes markets on the national stage and also provides a wide portfolio of services for market operators.

Gary Warnaby, Institute of Place Management. IPM is the international professional body that supports people committed to developing, managing and making places better. The Institute works with policy makers, practitioners and providers to identify the core skills required for the effective management, development and marketing of places.

Endnotes

1. The full name of the research project is 'Understanding and Enhancing the Community Value of Traditional Retail Markets in UK Cities' (ESRC grant number ES/P010547/1, Principal Investigator Dr Sara González, University of Leeds). See Annex 1 and Annex 2 for more details on our research team and research methodology, and our website and blog for further information and updates: <https://trmcommunityvalue.leeds.ac.uk/>; <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=ES%2FP010547%2F1#/tabOverview>
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11. More details of the methodology and research design of the Markets4People project are available in Annex 1. Our blog also provides information and updates about our research activities: <https://trmcommunityvalue.leeds.ac.uk/blog/>.
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The Rock outdoor shopping area is a 10 minute walk from Bury Market and was developed in 2010 to serve as a new retail and leisure destination for Lancashire. Katsouris is a Greek delicatessen and market restaurant.
 32. As respondents were unwilling to provide information about their approximate incomes during the pilot survey, the survey was revised to collect information about the main salary earner in the household as a proxy for income levels. This information was then coded into the widely used "social grade" classification (A, B, C1, C2, D) based on occupation. In the report, we refer to these "social grades" as "socio-economic groups". The postcode information provided by survey respondents was used to identify the deprivation level of the neighbourhoods market users live in.
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 58. See the following blog post for more information: <https://trmcommunityvalue.leeds.ac.uk/debating-the-value-of-traditional-retail-markets/>
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 63. Available online at: <https://trmcommunityvalue.leeds.ac.uk/surveytemplate/>.
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 65. More information about our research team, with links to their CVs and publications, can be found here: https://trmcommunityvalue.leeds.ac.uk/profile_type/researchteam/



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