# Aberdeen council leader admits Resident X market was overly ambitious after £1.3m loss



Christian Allard, co-leader of Aberdeen City Council, recently reflected on the closure of Resident X, a street food venue that once promised to rejuvenate the heart of the city. After investing over £1.3 million in the venture, which opened in December 2022 within the council’s Marischal Square, Allard admitted that the ambition behind the project may have been misplaced. Initially presented as an "Instagrammers playground," the venue faced numerous challenges, which culminated in its closing down less than a year later.

The 10,000 sq ft market quickly encountered significant financial turbulence. Following a tumultuous operational history that involved two changes in management, it ultimately ended when its latest operators returned the keys to the council. They cited unviable financial conditions and declining footfall as the principal reasons for their departure. Notably, low attendance persisted despite attempts to ignite interest through events like DJ nights and pop-up festivities, hinting at deeper systemic issues within Aberdeen's market for such venues.

Allard's admissions shed light on the miscalculations in its conception. He acknowledged that perhaps Marischal Square’s specific positioning, while adjacent to tourist attractors like Marischal College, did not lend itself to sustainable crowd engagement. “Maybe, the Marischal Square location was too ambitious… maybe, it could have been done with a bigger public space and a smaller building,” he remarked. This introspection is crucial, especially as the council prepares to launch Flint, a new food and drink market on The Green, anticipated to harness the lessons learned from Resident X's fallout.

Critics of the Flint project have expressed concerns that it may repeat the pitfalls of its predecessor. Opposition leaders are wary of the similarity in ambition and the inherent risks associated with high financial investment in a potentially saturated market. However, Allard remains optimistic that Flint can carve a unique niche by focusing on local produce and offering a more spacious environment designed to foster community interaction. Scheduled to feature 11 vendors and an expansive events area, Flint promises a diverse culinary experience intended to distinguish it from the troubled legacy of Resident X.

Emphasising the need for public space in the city centre, Allard envisions that Flint will not solely serve commercial interests but also enhance the urban landscape. “The city centre should not be about buildings; it should be about space,” he stated, underscoring the potential of the new market to serve as a vibrant community hub rather than merely another commercial venture.

As Flint's construction progresses, its success will hinge not only on the distinctive offerings it presents but also on its ability to attract and maintain foot traffic in an area that has proven challenging for similar operations. Learning from its predecessor's missteps, the city council appears poised to navigate the complexities of urban development with caution and a renewed focus on integrating community needs into its vision for the future.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6761172/aberdeen-council-leader-resident-x-flint-market/), [[3]](https://www.aberdeenlive.news/news/aberdeens-resident-x-closes-down-9525562)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6571367/resident-x-closed-again/), [[5]](https://aberdeenbusinessnews.co.uk/million-pound-marischal-square-venue-closes-again/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6761172/aberdeen-council-leader-resident-x-flint-market/), [[7]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6579867/aberdeen-market-resident-x-council-update/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6761172/aberdeen-council-leader-resident-x-flint-market/), [[6]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6734512/resident-x-david-griffiths-michael-robertson-loan/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6761172/aberdeen-council-leader-resident-x-flint-market/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6571367/resident-x-closed-again/> - Resident X, a £1 million street food market in Aberdeen's Marischal Square, has closed for the second time in two years. The latest operators, Ryan Clark and Andy Eager, admitted it 'doesn't make financial sense to continue' and have handed back the keys to the council. The venue, which opened in January 2023, faced challenges including high business rates and low footfall, leading to its closure despite hosting events like DJ nights and football fan zones.
3. <https://www.aberdeenlive.news/news/aberdeens-resident-x-closes-down-9525562> - Aberdeen's Resident X has closed down again, with the keys returned to Aberdeen City Council. The street food market, which opened in Marischal Square in January 2023, changed ownership last year but has since been handed back once more. The council is now seeking a new leaseholder for the site. The venue had previously hosted various food and drink vendors and events but struggled with low footfall and financial challenges.
4. <https://www.aberdeenlive.news/news/aberdeen-venue-resident-x-under-8726949> - Resident X, the street food hall in Aberdeen's Marischal Square, is under new ownership less than a year after opening. The venue, which launched in December 2022, has seen changes in management and is now aiming to build on its potential with positive changes, including reduced bar prices. The new owners plan to revitalize the venue and attract more customers to the city centre.
5. <https://aberdeenbusinessnews.co.uk/million-pound-marischal-square-venue-closes-again/> - Resident X, the £1 million street food market in Aberdeen's Marischal Square, has closed again. The latest operators, Ryan Clark and Andy Eager, admitted it 'doesn't make financial sense to continue' and have handed back the keys to the council. The venue, which opened in January 2023, faced challenges including high business rates and low footfall, leading to its closure despite hosting events like DJ nights and football fan zones.
6. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6734512/resident-x-david-griffiths-michael-robertson-loan/> - Resident X, the street food market in Aberdeen's Marischal Square, was lent over £1 million by the council to open. However, the company behind the venue has been dissolved, raising concerns about the repayment of the loan. The venue, which opened in January 2023, faced financial difficulties and has now closed, leaving the council seeking answers about the outstanding debt.
7. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6579867/aberdeen-market-resident-x-council-update/> - Aberdeen City Council has vowed not to repeat the mistakes made with Resident X in the development of a new £40 million food hall on The Green. The council aims to learn from the challenges faced by Resident X, which struggled with low footfall and financial difficulties, and ensure the new market is successful by focusing on a distinctive offering and more open space.