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DORCHESTER MARKETS INFORMAL JOINT PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY 2023

Present: Cllrs Fiona Kent-Ledger, Laura Beddow, Stella Jones, Janet Hewitt, Nick Ireland, Molly Rennie and Roland Tarr

Apologies: Cllrs Mary Penfold, Susie Hosford, Tony Lyall, Dave Bolwell, Simon Gibson, Jane Somper and John Worth

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Graham Duggan (Head of Community & Public Protection), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Joshua Kennedy (Apprentice Democratic Services Officer), Kevin Evans (Senior Accountant (Place)), Hannah Massey (Lawyer - Regulatory), Christopher Peck (Principal Planning Officer) and Steven Newman (Town Clerk)

2. Minutes

The Head of Community and Public Protection assured the Panel that the Daryl Chambers report would be circulated to members after the meeting.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 3 August 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report.

4. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

5. Improving Fairfield Road Travel Safety

The Principal Transport Planner delivered a report on the proposed works for improving the road safety of Fairfield Road.

Members were informed that Fairfield Road formed the signed pedestrian route between the railway stations, and was an important pedestrian link in the town, but no footways exist. This made it unfit for current use. The need for a safer road had arisen after a series of incidents along the road, including three pedestrian injuries, - two of them serious - in the last 5 years. This was due to the poor layout of the road and junction, with all three injuries a result of vehicles turning out of Fairfield Road. As a result, Dorset Council's Highways had recently received funding from

central Government's Active Travel Fund to help improve conditions for road and travel safety.

The Principal Transport Planner informed the committee of several possible options that were being considered to improve the safety of the road.

- The creation of a footpath next to the road.
- The potential addition of 'Keep Clear' markings at the Maumbury Road/Fairfield Road junction, to make it easier to turn at busy times.
- The pedestrianisation of the area, through the use of park benches, planters and cycle parking.
- The installation of removable bollards to control access to the road.

It was hoped that the timescale for completion of the intended works would be before the school summer holidays, however if this was not possible then works would be delayed until later in the year, to minimise disruption to the area.

In response to a question regarding the new route that drivers would have to take, the Principal Transport Planner explained that initially there would likely be some confusion for drivers, who were used to using Fairfield Road, however there was significant public interest in the scheme as it would benefit pedestrians and the additional traffic diverted onto Upper Fairfield Road would be negligible.

Members were supportive of the scheme and recognised the need for an improvement in the safety of the area, in particular they supported the additional amenities of benches and planters, as this would make the area more attractive for pedestrians and improve the shopper experience for market users.

The Panel unanimously supported the proposal of this work as a benefit to public safety and for the purpose of the improvement of the market. Members looked forward to the launching of the public consultation process.

A copy of the proposal would be made available to members after the meeting.

6. Market Activities and Progress

The Head of Community and Public Protection delivered a report, providing an update on the market activities and progress to date.

Following a site visit on 23 November 2022, issues with infrastructure on the site had been noted and the market operator had been made aware of the unauthorised storage on site.

Members acknowledged that the current market lease would end in 2026 and progress now needed to be made in respect of the procurement process and tender for the next market operator.

The Head of Community and Public Protection also informed the Panel of research being undertaken to look into other companies, who ran markets nationally, and offered members the possibility of presentations on how they operated markets. It was agreed that a task & finish group would be established,

proportional to the Panel's membership, to start procurement preparations. The Town Clerk and the Head of Community and Public Protection would prepare a set of terms of reference for the group.

The Conservation Officer and Area Planning Lead Officer had recently been contacted by the Panel's Lawyer and they had both expressed an interest in working on restoring the Linney's and improving the market site in general.

Members also received an update on the Cornhill market site, noting that a meeting had been arranged with the market co-ordinator to discuss the recent fall in business levels and how the councils could support the co-ordinator going forward.

Proposed by Cllr Kent-Ledger and seconded by Cllr Jones.

Decision: That a task & finish group be established to progress the procurement of a new market operator, with the membership of the group to be determined by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel.

7. Financial Out-turn Projection 2022/23 & Proposed Budget 2023/24

The Senior Accountant for Place delivered a report on the financial out-turn projection for 2022/23. He noted that in regard to expenditure, there was only a slight overspend compared to the expected figures, this was largely due to an increase in general utility costs.

In terms of income, the forecasted projections were lower than anticipated, however only the accounts for the first quarter had been received to date, so the rest of the year's accounts had been extrapolated from the data available. While the Cornhill accounts were showing a forecasted deficit of approximately £13,000, this was largely due to an agreed rental reduction with the operator. Other income sources, including from the café and car parking, were set to be as expected.

The Senior Accountant for Place also delivered a report on the proposed budget for 2023/24, noting a slight increase in the budget's expenditures compared to 2022/23, due to following Dorset Council's recommended action to freeze all budget lines other than utilities. In terms of income, there was also a slight increase, due to following Dorset Council's recommended 5% uplift on fees and charges. While there was a healthy repairs and maintenance reserve available.

Proposed by Cllr Kent-Ledger and seconded by Cllr Ireland.

Decision: That the current projected outturn position for 2022/23 be noted and the 2023/24 budget proposal be approved.

Post meeting note: The 2023/24 income budget in relation to the Cornhill Market was amended (The Head of Community and Public Protection confirmed that the reduced rent had been agreed and covered a period of 2 financial years). The amended budget setting document was attached as an appendix to these minutes.

8. Car Boot Sale Fund

The Dorchester Town Clerk delivered an update on the car boot sale fund, noting that there were 21 successful applicants to the fund and a total of £23,250 had been awarded in grants. Members were also informed that there was an 83% success rate out of the organisations, who applied for a grant.

In response to a concern raised by a member, the Dorchester Town Clerk assured the Panel that the reason for the rejected applications was largely due to those organisations being located outside of the funding area or not being an eligible charity, rather than for failing to complete the paperwork correctly.

9. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

10. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

2023/24 Budget Setting Document

Duration of meeting: 2.30 - 3.58 pm

Chairman

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Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel

Budget 2023/24

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
	Outturn 2021/22	Approved Budget 2022/23	Projected Outturn 2022/23	Proposed Budget 2023/24
	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
Premises				
Repairs and maintenance	19,600	19,600	19,600	19,600
Electricity	3,036	3,345	4,111	4,349
Water	221	250	250	265
Insurance	880	880	880	880
2/7 share of actual costs of toilets	2,822	2,200	2,200	2,200
	26,559	26,275	27,041	27,294
Supplies and Services				
Subscriptions	738	716	384	716
Other Expenditure	0	0	143	0
	738	716	527	716
Recharges				
Dorset Council	15,634	15,634	15,634	15,634
Dorchester Town Council	1,689	1,688	1,688	1,688
	17,323	17,322	17,322	17,322
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	44,620	44,313	44,889	45,332
<u>INCOME</u>				
Rents				
Market Operator's Contract	-49,637	-48,000	-35,382	-50,400
Car Boot	-14,616	-21,000	-14,455	-22,050
Cornhill Traders	4,824	-25,974	-12,987	-25,974
Rents- Corn Market and Cafe	-21,150	-21,150	-21,150	-22,100
Farmers Market	0	0	0	0
Rival Markets Fee	0	-500	0	-500
Recovered Costs	-902	0	0	0
Fairfield Car Park	-48,541	-49,755	-49,755	-52,243
TOTAL INCOME	-130,022	-166,379	-133,729	-173,267
SURPLUS	-85,402	-122,066	-88,840	-127,935
DISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS				
Sunday Market Reserve	13,154	18,900	13,010	19,845
Dorset Council	46,961	67,058	49,290	70,259
Dorchester Town Council	25,287	36,108	26,541	37,832
	85,402	122,066	88,840	127,935
<u>Market Maintenance Reserve</u>				
Balance b/f 01.04.2022	27,654			
Transactions 2021/22	15,274			
Balance @ 31.12.2022	42,928			
<u>Sunday Car Boot Earmarked Reserve</u>				
Balance b/f 01.04.2022	15,625			
Draw down in advance 2022/23	-20,200			
Top Up 2021/22	13,156			
Balance @ 31.12.2022	8,581			

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