



Dorchester Markets Informal Joint Panel

Date: Wednesday, 29 January 2025
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Dorchester Town Council Chamber, Corn Exchange, Dorchester

Members (Quorum 3)

Dave Bolwell, Piers Brown, Simon Christopher, Jed Germodo, Janet Hewitt, Sally Holland, Rob Hughes, Stella Jones, Fiona Kent-Ledger, Craig Monks, Kate Reid, Molly Rennie, Roland Tarr and Sarah Williams

Chief Executive: Matt Prosser, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services Meeting Contact joshua.kennedy@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, apart from any items listed in the exempt part of this agenda.

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Agenda

Item		Pages
1.	APOLOGIES	
	To receive any apologies for absence.	
2.	MINUTES	5 - 8
	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2024.	
3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or personal interest as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their decision councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.	
	If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer	

in advance of the meeting.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work, or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit either 1 question or 1 statement for each meeting. You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for the committee this will be circulated to all members of the committee in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes for the formal record but will not be read out at the meeting. **The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each meeting will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline set out below.**

Further information read [Public Participation - Dorset Council](#)

All submissions must be emailed in full to
Joshua.kennedy@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 08:00am on Friday 24
January 2025.

When submitting your question(s) and/or statement(s) please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement.
- A question may include a short pre-amble to set the context.
- It must be a single question and any sub-divided questions will not be permitted.
- Each question will consist of no more than 450 words, and you will be given up to 3 minutes to present your question.
- When submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g., the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder).
- Include your name, address, and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
- Questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda.
- All questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

5. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes.

6. FINANCIAL OUTTURN PROJECTION 2024/25 & PROPOSED BUDGET 2025/26 9 - 14

To receive a report from the Senior Accountant.

7. FAIRFIELD AND CORNHILL MARKET REPORT

To receive a verbal report from the Head of Community and Public Protection.

8. FUTURE OPERATION OF FAIRFIELD & CORNHILL MARKETS 15 - 16

To receive an update on the future operation of Fairfield and Cornhill Markets from the Head of Community and Public Protection.

9. DORCHESTER ARTISAN MARKET UPDATE

To receive a verbal update from the Dorchester Town Council Town Clerk.

10. CAR BOOT FUND UPDATE

To receive a verbal update from the Dorchester Town Council Town Clerk.

11. EXEMPT BUSINESS

To move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph x of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered.

There are no exempt items scheduled for this meeting.

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DORCHESTER MARKETS INFORMAL JOINT PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 JULY 2024

Present: Cllrs Piers Brown, Simon Christopher, Jed Germodo, Janet Hewitt, Sally Holland, Rob Hughes, Stella Jones, Kate Reid, Molly Rennie and Sarah Williams

Apologies: Cllrs Dave Bolwell

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

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

28. **Election of Chair**

Proposed by Cllr Sarah Williams and seconded by Cllr Janet Hewitt.

Decision: That Cllr Molly Rennie be elected as Chair.

29. **Election of Vice-Chair**

Proposed by Cllr Janet Hewitt and seconded by Cllr Stella Jones.

Decision: That Cllr Sarah Williams be elected as Vice-Chair.

30. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence was received from Cllr Dave Bolwell.

31. **Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 31 January 2024 were confirmed and signed.

32. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

33. **Public Participation**

There were no public questions or statements.

34. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items raised at the meeting.

35. Fairfield Road Project Update

A verbal update on the progress of the Fairfield Road project was provided by the Principal Transport Planner. A summary of the works that had been completed to date was provided and the Principal Transport Planner discussed the aims of the improvement works, which were hoping to be started once full funding had been secured for the works.

In response to questions from members, the Principal Transport Planner assured the panel that the planting would be low maintenance and that archaeological surveys would be completed, if digging was required for the works.

36. Dorchester Artisan Market Report

The Dorchester Town Council Town Clerk provided a brief verbal update on the status of the Dorchester Artisan Market, that had taken place on a monthly basis since April and had been successful. There was a plan in place to gradually increase the number of traders at the market due to its success.

37. Appointments to the Car Boot Grants Panel

Proposals were made by Cllrs Stella Jones and Sarah Williams to nominate Cllr Janet Hewitt from Dorchester Town Council and Cllr Sally Holland from Dorset Council to the Car Boot Grants Panel.

Decision: That Cllrs Molly Rennie, Sarah Williams, Janet Hewitt and Sally Holland make up the Car Boot Grants Panel.

38. Update On Future Fairfield Market Operator

The Head of Community and Public Protection provided a verbal update on the status of the panel regarding the future operator of the Fairfield Market. The current contract with Ensors was set to run out in 2026 and the process was underway for establishing a new operator of the market to take over after the contract ends. Members were informed of the two options available to them, the first being Dorchester Town Council taking over operation of the market and the other being to seek open market procurement for a third party to operate the market.

Following previous meetings of the Panel where this issue had been discussed and members had expressed a preference for Dorchester Town Council operating the market, officers had been exploring the necessary route for this option.

The panel established a working group made up of the Chair, Vice-Chair and one member from each respective Council, to be decided following the meeting, to work with officers during this process.

39. Budget Outturn Report 2023-24

The Senior Accountant presented the report for the budget outturn figures for 2023-24. It was explained that there was an overspend against the expenditure budget, due to higher than expected utility costs. There was also lower than expected income, due to shortfalls from the market and Sunday car boot. Income from Ensors was higher than the previous year, but still came in under budget. Members were informed that the reserve sums remained at a healthy level.

The panel approved of the budget outturn figures for 2023-24.

40. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 5.30 - 6.43 pm

Chairman

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Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel

29 January 2025

Financial Outturn Projection 2024/25 & Proposed Budget 2025/26

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio: Cllr G Taylor, Public Health, Environmental Health, Housing, Community Safety and Regulatory Service

Executive Director: Jan Britton, Executive Lead for Place

Report Author: Kevin Evans
Job Title: Senior Accountant
Tel: 01305 225188
Email: kevin.evans@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

Markets in Dorchester have operated since Anglo Saxon times and are prescriptive. Under an agreement dated 1984 the markets are managed by Dorset Council for the benefit of Dorset Council and Dorchester Town Council with operational oversight carried out by the Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel. The Markets income and expenditure is held within the accounts of Dorset Council. The Panel receives a report on the annual budget and the annual outturn.

Recommendation:

That Members of the panel note the current projected outturn position for 2024/25 and approve the 2025/26 budget proposals.

Reason for Recommendation:

The panel need to monitor the financial performance of the markets and agree a budget for 2025/26.

1. **Projected Outturn 2024/25 (Appendix 1, Column C)**
 - 1.1 The total projected expenditure is forecast to be slightly under budget, currently looking at a potential cost of £46,586 against a budget of £46,958, giving a forecast underspend of £372. The main reason behind the underspend is a potential saving on the electricity budget due to current year costs coming in lower than last year. Partially offsetting this is a projected minor overspend on the Water budget. Water costs increased during the 2023/24 year due to prior readings being based on estimates taken during the Pandemic period. The increased costs have been reflected in the proposed base budget for 2025/26 and going forward. The projected outturn assumes that the full £19,600 R&M (Repairs & Maintenance) budget will be spent. Although current R&M actuals are minimal, it is assumed the unspent R&M budget will be transferred into the earmarked R&M reserve at year end (as per 2023/24, and prior, outturns).
 - 1.2 There is projected to be a significant deficit on the gross income budget. Current projections indicate potential income of £139,916, against a budget of £166,515, a projected shortfall of £26,599. At the time of writing, the Council has not received any Management Accounts data from the Market Operator Ensors for any period within the 2024/25 financial year. On this basis, it is difficult to forecast the level of net income relating to the Ensors contract. For the purposes of this report, the total net income relating to the Market Operator contract for 2023/24 has been used as a base for the 2024/25 projection, with an uplift provision of 5% to account for inflation. This means an estimated income to the panel of £35,603 in relation to the Market, and £14,370 in relation to the Sunday Car Boot. In total, this would be a budget deficit of £26,100, which is consistent with the level of deficit seen in the 2023/24 outturn.
 - 1.3 The Cornhill Market income is currently anticipated to come in on budget, following a reduction to the income budget in 2023/24 to reflect the revised rental premium with the operator.
 - 1.4 The other sources of income are mostly expected to come in or around on budget during 2024/25, including the rents for the Corn Market & Café, and the full budget of £54,855 is anticipated in respect of the allowance for Fairfield parking income.
 - 1.5 Overall, this means the sum available for distribution to the panel is forecast to be £93,330, against a net budget of £119,557, a shortfall of £26,227. The relevant shares would be split as follows: Dorset Council -

£52,258 (against a budget of £64,168), Dorchester Town Council - £28,139 (against a budget of £34,552) and transfer to the Car Boot Reserve of £12,933 (against a budget of £20,838).

2. Budget 2025/26 (Appendix 1, Column D)

2.1 The proposed expenditure budget is £47,386. This represents a minor increase on the approved expenditure budget for 2024/25, set at £46,958. The increase is due to inflationary increases on the Water budget. It is proposed to keep the Electricity budget at the same level as the current year, due to the forecast current year underspend and lower actual costs compared to the 2023/24 year.

2.2 The proposed income budget is £169,788, an increase from the £166,515 agreed for 2024/25. The Dorset Council income budget guidance for 2025/26 is to assume increases of 2.5% on all Fees & Charges income budgets. This principle has been applied to the Market Operators (Ensors) and Fairfield Car Park income lines. However, for the Cornhill Traders, Corn Market & Café, the proposed income budgets have remained static, based on the current fixed rental premium being charged.

2.3 This results in the budgeted surplus for distribution as £122,402, with Dorset Council due £65,678 and Dorchester Town Council £35,365. The budgeted top up to the Car Boot reserve would be £21,359.

3. Current Reserves Summary

3.1 The current balance on the Market Maintenance reserve is £78,035. This reserve has been topped up over the past few years from the unspent R&M budget, while there have been no recent drawdowns from this reserve.

3.2 The current un-committed balance on the Sunday Car Boot reserve is £937. In December 2024, £12,977 was agreed as the total value of the Community Grants to be funded from the reserve in 2024/25. There will be a further top up of this reserve upon closedown of the 2024/25 accounts, when the Sunday Car Boot figures for the current year will be known from Ensors. Based on the current year forecast, this top-up is estimated to be £12,933.

4 Financial Implications

As detailed in the report.

5 Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

No impact.

6 Well-being and Health Implications

None.

7 Other Implications

None.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: MEDIUM as the Market Operator income is variable.

Residual Risk: MEDIUM as there could be a further loss of income.

9 Equalities Impact Assessment

None.

10 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Budget 2025/26

11 Background Papers

Ensors Management Accounts for the period 01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024.

Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel
Budget 2025/26

Appendix 1

	(A) Outturn 2023/24 (£)	(B) Approved Budget 2024/25 (£)	(C) Projected Outturn 2024/25 (£)	(D) Proposed Budget 2025/26 (£)
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
Premises				
Repairs and Maintenance	19,600	19,600	19,600	19,600
Electricity	5,592	5,600	5,000	5,600
Water	1,672	972	1,200	1,400
Insurance	880	880	880	880
2/7 share of actual costs of toilets	1,031	2,200	2,200	2,200
	28,775	29,252	28,880	29,680
Supplies and Services				
Subscriptions	384	384	384	384
Other Expenditure	73	0	0	0
	457	384	384	384
Recharges				
Dorset Council	15,634	15,634	15,634	15,634
Dorchester Town Council	1,688	1,688	1,688	1,688
	17,322	17,322	17,322	17,322
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	46,554	46,958	46,586	47,386
<u>INCOME</u>				
Rents				
Market Operator's Contract	-33,908	-52,920	-35,603	-54,243
Car Boot	-13,686	-23,153	-14,370	-23,732
Cornhill Traders	-12,987	-12,987	-12,987	-12,987
Rents - Corn Market and Cafe	-18,550	-22,100	-22,100	-22,100
Farmers Market	0	0	0	0
Rival Markets Fee	0	-500	0	-500
Recovered Costs	-920	0	0	0
Fairfield Car Park	-52,243	-54,855	-54,855	-56,226
TOTAL INCOME	-132,294	-166,515	-139,916	-169,788
SURPLUS	-85,740	-119,557	-93,330	-122,402
DISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS				
Sunday Market Reserve	12,317	20,838	12,933	21,359
Dorset Council	47,725	64,168	52,258	65,678
Dorchester Town Council	25,698	34,552	28,139	35,365
	85,740	119,557	93,330	122,402
Market Maintenance Earmarked Reserve				
Balance b/f 01.04.2024	78,035			
Transactions 2024/25	0			
Balance as @ 29.01.2025	78,035			
Sunday Car Boot Earmarked Reserve				
Balance b/f 01.04.2024	13,914			
Draw down for Community Grants 2024/25	-12,977			
*Top Up 2024/25	0			
Balance as @ 29.01.2025	937			
*Forecast Car Boot Top Up 2024/25	12,933			

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DORCHESTER MARKETS INFORMAL JOINT PANEL

29 JANUARY 2025

BRIEFING NOTE - FUTURE OPERATION OF FAIRFIELD & CORNHILL MARKETS

1. The Market Panel sub-group established to support the Panel in ensuring the operation of the market after the contact with Ensors finishes, met on 10 December 2024. The sub-group discussed a range of issues associated with task and officers took away a number of actions to progress before the next meeting (date to be arranged).
2. The intention is for Dorchester Town Council to directly manage the market and Dorset Council Legal Services has offered to prepare the draft lease/concession for consideration by the Panel and both Councils. The principle functions to be exercised by each party are proposed to be as follows;

It is envisaged that the Town Council will...

- Have day to day control and management of the Fairfield Market and tolls at the sites and locations on which the same are existing or entitled at the 1 October 1978.
- Have day to day control and management of Cornhill Market (or oversee an agent appointed for the purpose).
- Determine hours of opening.
- Provide for the nature and arrangement of stalls.
- Provide agreements and licences for market tenants.
- Arrange necessary insurance pertaining to Market days.
- Provide financial operating accounts for the market(s), production of annual accounts and trading surplus distribution.
- Provide democratic support services to the Market Panel.

It is envisaged that Dorset Council will...

- Maintain the infrastructure of the market sites.
- Arrange for the undertaking of any infrastructure development on the sites subject to necessary permissions and funding.

It is envisaged that the Market Panel will...

- Make policy in respect of financial matters including review of rents, fees, tolls and charges relating to market operations and other arrangements referred to in the 1984 Agreement relating to Dorchester Market.
- Exercise any other powers resulting from the Market Charter including the levying of fees for markets within the prescribed distance of the Charter Market.
- Provide oversight on the performance of the markets and arrangements with both Councils.

3. The above is not exclusive and more detailed iterations will be referred to the Market Panel sub-group for comment as work progresses.
4. Officers are meeting on 10 February 2025 to identify financial matters in relation to the direct operation of the market(s) and where necessary, issues will be brought to the attention of the sub-group for consideration and guidance.
5. A draft timeline for this work will be available at the Market Panel meeting for comment.

Graham Duggan
Head of Community Protection
Dorset Council