



Dorchester Markets Informal Joint Panel

Date: Wednesday, 30 July 2025
Time: 5.30 pm
Venue: Dorchester Town Council Chamber, Corn Exchange, Dorchester

Members (Quorum 3)

Laura Beddow, Dave Bolwell, Simon Christopher, Jed Germodo, Jill Haynes, Janet Hewitt, Sally Holland, Rob Hughes, Stella Jones, Fiona Kent-Ledger, Kate Reid, Molly Rennie, Roland Tarr and Sarah Williams

Interim Chief Executive: Sam Crowe, 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. If you would like to attend this meeting and have any specific requirements please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.

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Agenda

Item		Pages
1.	ELECTION OF CHAIR To elect a Chair for the remainder of the municipal year 2025/26.	
2.	ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR To elect a Vice-chair for the remainder of the municipal year 2025/26.	
3.	APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
4.	MINUTES To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2025.	5 - 8

5. 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.

6. 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 Friday 25 July 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.

7. 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.

8. FUTURE OPERATION OF FAIRFIELD & CORNHILL MARKETS 9 - 10

To receive a verbal update from the Head of Community and Public Protection on the future operation of Fairfield and Cornhill markets.

9. FAIRFIELD MARKET OPERATOR REPORT

To receive a verbal update from the Fairfield Market operator.

10. CORNHILL MARKET OPERATOR REPORT

To receive a verbal update from the Cornhill Market operator.

11. FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT 2024/25 11 - 16

To receive a report from the Senior Accountant.

12. FAIRFIELD ROAD WORKS UPDATE

To receive a verbal update from the Principal Transport Planner.

13. 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 29 JANUARY 2025

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

Apologies: Cllrs Dave Bolwell, Sally Holland, Fiona Kent-Ledger and Craig Monks

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) and Steve Newman (Town Clerk)

41. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 10 July 2024 were confirmed and signed.

42. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

43. Public Participation

There were no public questions.

44. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

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

The Senior Accountant presented the budget report, providing a summary of the details that were set out in the report. He explained that the report did not contain the most up-to-date figures for income from Fairfield Market, however these figures had since been sent over and the actual figures were slightly less than the estimated figures within the report. There had been no recent drawdowns to the Market Maintenance Reserve, which stood at £78,035.

The Head of Community and Public Protection explained that an update had been received from Ensors, who stated that there had been a 9% decline in market income from Fairfield Market.

In response to a question from one member the Head of Community and Public Protection stated that the footfall index showed the picture of markets nationally,

however no benchmarking had been done to compare Dorchester markets with other markets in Dorset.

The panel noted the current projected outturn position for 2024/25 and approved the 2025/26 budget proposals.

46. Fairfield and Cornhill Market Report

The Head of Community and Public Protection delivered a verbal update on Fairfield and Cornhill Markets. No information had been received for Cornhill market, however an update had been provided for Fairfield market. Trading income was down by 9% for Fairfield market, when compared to the previous year and the market operator stated that they were committed to work with the panel to ensure a smooth transition as their contract would come to an end in 2026.

The Chair assured the committee that the traders would be informed of any changes as the transition in the market operator took place over the next year.

47. FUTURE OPERATION OF FAIRFIELD & CORNHILL MARKETS

The Head of Community and Public Protection provided a verbal update on the future operation of the markets. It was explained that the sub-group, that had been established at the last Panel meeting had explored the option of Dorchester Town Council taking over as the operator of the market, following the end of the current contract in 2026. Legal Services at Dorset Council had also provided advice on the legal agreement that would need to be drawn up. The general Heads of Terms were shown to members and it was explained that any details could be outlined within the sub-group meetings. The Town Clerk provided an initial timeline of events, which covered the transition in the market operator over the next 14 months.

The following responses were provided to members questions by the Head of Community and Public Protection and the Lawyer:

- A lease of 7 years or more would require notification of the Land Registry, which is why an alternative legal agreement was being considered.
- Financial arrangements between the two councils hadn't been explored yet, but it was thought that they would follow a similar approach to the current financial split.
- The contract would give the Town Council permission to run the market for a specified period of time and clauses could be included to allow the early closure of the agreement if both parties wished to do so.
- A length of time for the contract hadn't been decided upon yet.
- The infrastructure liability of Dorset Council referred to the structures of the market, such as the walls, rather than the existing buildings on site.

One member raised a concern about the current condition of the buildings on site and whether Dorset Council and Dorchester Town Council would be taking on potential liabilities in older buildings, that required refurbishment or removal.

Proposed by Cllr Brown and seconded by Cllr Tarr.

Decision: That the panel recommend that a survey is commissioned of the operator's structures on the site for consideration by the panel.

48. **Dorchester Artisan Market Update**

The Town Clerk delivered a verbal update to members on the monthly artisan market and he noted that the operator had provided positive feedback on the level of visitors to the artisan market in Dorchester.

The panel noted the update.

49. **Car Boot Fund Update**

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update on the Car Boot Fund, which had been distributed by the Car Boot Panel in December 2024. The panel distributed awards totalling £12,000 and 44% of the applicants received the full grant that they applied for.

50. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 3.17 pm

Chairman

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DORCHESTER MARKETS INFORMAL JOINT PANEL

30 JULY 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 markets after the contact with Ensors finishes, met on 10 December 2024 and 29 April 2025. The sub-group discussed a range of issues associated with the task and officers took away a number of actions to progress. Additionally, progress was discussed at the Market Panel meeting on 29 January 2025.

2. Dorset Council Legal Services is producing a second draft of the concession agreement proposed to govern the operation of the markets, an update on this will be given at the meeting. As a reminder, the agreement is built around the following principles;

Dorchester Town Council

- 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.

Dorset Council

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

Market Panel

- 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 terms of reference for the Market Panel will require amendment and work on this will commence when the draft concession agreement is complete. Both councils have indicated a willingness to reduce the size of membership of the Panel from its current 14 members. A proposal of 6 members, 3 from each council has been suggested. Views on this are welcomed and will then be considered further at the next meeting of the sub-group. Changes to democratic and financial support arrangements will also be included. Proposed changes to the terms of reference will need to be ratified by both councils in time for the new market arrangements commencing on 2 April 2026.

4. In relation to the structures at Fairfield Market. Legal Services at Dorset Council has indicated that there are no obligations on Ensors in relation to the buildings other than to remove any

signage and make good. Following discussion at the last Panel meeting, external surveys of the enclosed market building and the covered market structure have taken place and minor issues noted for repair. Internal and electrical surveys for the enclosed market building will take place shortly. Any urgent matters from these will be actioned directly and if there is proposed significant expenditure, the matter will be discussed with the chair and vice-chair of the Panel. The damage caused to the South Linneys by the fire in 2024 is due for repair this calendar year.

5. The Town Council has appointed a part time Markets Officer so as to ensure a smooth transition of the market operation once the Ensors contract ends and the Town Council's concession commences. The person appointed has significant experience in operating markets for a Town Council and is due to take up post on a date to be agreed in late September / early October 2025.
6. The future of the enclosed market building can be discussed further at the Panel meeting and with the new Markets Officer once he has taken up his post.
7. Other outstanding matters have been identified where clarity is required. These include the following and are being followed up by officers;
 - Principles and process for managing investment proposals and requests
 - Review of parking income arrangement for Fairfield Market
 - Clarify rental income arrangements including annual uplifts for businesses within the Fairfield Market site
 - Wednesday Market and Car Boot site cleaning arrangements

These matters will be reported upon to the sub-group at their next meeting.

8. A meeting has taken place with the current operators of Cornhill Market. They are in agreement for the current arrangement to finish on 31 March 2026 when the new Markets Officer will take up operational control.

Graham Duggan
Head of Community Protection
Dorset Council

Steve Newman
Town Clerk
Dorchester Town Council

Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel

30 July 2025

Financial Outturn Report 2024/25

For Decision

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

Director: Rachel Partridge, Director of Public Health & Prevention

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 approve the income and expenditure statement for 2024/25.

Reason for Recommendation:

To enable Members of the panel to consider and approve the Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2025.

1. Budget 2024/25

- 1.1 The Panel agreed a budget for 2024/25 at a meeting on the 31st January 2024. The expenditure budget was set at £46,958, with the gross income budget set at £166,515, leaving a budgeted surplus for distribution of £119,557.

2. Outturn 2024/25

- 2.1 Actual expenditure incurred during 2024/25 totalled £48,633 against a budget of £46,958, resulting in an overspend of £1,675. This is primarily due to increased costs (both utility and cleaning charges) related to the Public Toilets at the Market site, and higher than budgeted Water costs as a result of lower meter estimates in prior years. There is a small saving on the Electricity budget that helps to partially offset the Water overspends. The miscellaneous cost of £160 was in relation to catering charges for the Panel meeting in January 2025.
- 2.2 Included in the £48,633 total expenditure budget was a line for Repairs & Maintenance (R&M) with a budget of £19,600. This budget line had a nil variance in 2024/25. Actual R&M expenditure incurred during the year was only £3,951, with the balance of £15,649 being transferred into the Market Maintenance Earmarked Reserve. This treatment is consistent with prior financial years.
- 2.3 The total income accounted for during 2024/25 was £135,081 against a budget of £166,515, leaving an income deficit of £31,434. The main underlying reason for this shortfall is the lower than budgeted returns from the main Market Operator contract (Ensors).
- 2.4 Income generated from the Market Operator contract with Ensors totalled £45,194. This was an overall decrease from the total generated in 2023/24 of £47,594 – representing a decrease of just over 5% from the prior year. In addition, the income generated was still significantly below what was budgeted for. The operation of the Market returned the panel £31,047 against a budget of £52,920, while the Car Boot returned the panel £14,147 against a budget of £23,153.
- 2.5 Income from the Cornhill site, as well as the Café and Corn Market, was received as per the budgeted income levels.
- 2.6 Other income budget lines were either on budget or had minor variances.

2.7 The final net surplus for distribution in 2024/25 was £86,448, against a net budget of £119,557, a shortfall of £33,109. The distribution of this is as follows....

- £12,732 to the Sunday Car Boot Reserve (against a budget of £20,838).
- £47,915 to Dorset Council (against a budget of £64,168).
- £25,801 to Dorchester Town Council (against a budget of £34,552).

3. Current Reserves Summary

3.1 The balance carried forward on the Market Maintenance Earmarked Reserve, as at 31/03/2025, is £93,684. This is comprised of an opening balance of £78,035, plus the unspent R&M 2024/25 budget of £15,649. There were no drawdowns made on this reserve during 2024/25.

3.2 The balance carried forward on the Sunday Car Boot Earmarked Reserve, as at 31/03/2025, is £14,668. This is comprised of an opening balance of £13,914, plus the 2024/25 top up of £12,732 from the Sunday Car Boot proceeds. There was an in year draw down on the reserve of £11,978 to fund the Community Grants awards.

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 – Financial Outturn 2024/25

11 Background Papers

Ensors Management Accounts for the period 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025

	(A) Budget 2024/25 (£)	(B) Outturn 2024/25 (£)	(C) Variance (£)
EXPENDITURE			
Premises			
Repairs and maintenance	19,600	19,600	0
Electricity	5,600	4,311	1,289
Water	972	2,104	-1,132
Insurance	880	880	0
2/7 share of actual costs of toilets	2,200	3,873	-1,673
	29,252	30,767	-1,515
Supplies and Services			
Subscriptions	384	384	0
Miscellaneous Costs	0	160	-160
	384	544	-160
Recharges			
Dorset Council	15,634	15,634	0
Dorchester Town Council	1,688	1,688	0
	17,322	17,322	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	46,958	48,633	-1,675
INCOME			
Rents			
Market Operator Contract	-52,920	-31,047	-21,873
Car Boot	-23,153	-14,147	-9,006
Cornhill Traders	-12,987	-12,987	0
Rents - Corn Market and Cafe	-22,100	-22,100	0
Farmers Market	0	0	0
Rival Market Fee	-500	0	-500
Recovered Costs	0	0	0
Fairfield Car Park	-54,855	-54,800	-55
TOTAL INCOME	-166,515	-135,081	-31,434
SURPLUS	-119,557	-86,448	-33,109
DISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS			
Sunday Car Boot Reserve	20,838	12,732	-8,105
Dorset Council	64,168	47,915	-16,252
Dorchester Town Council	34,552	25,801	-8,751
	119,557	86,448	-33,109
Market Maintenance Earmarked Reserve			
Balance b/f 01.04.2024	78,035		
Transactions 2024/25	15,649		
Balance c/f 31.03.2025	93,684		

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