

GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY 2026

Present: Cllrs Derek Beer (Chair), Les Fry, Jill Haynes, Jack Jeanes, Cathy Lugg, Craig Monks, Emma Parker, David Shortell, Jane Somper and Sarah Williams

Present remotely: Cllrs David Morgan and Claudia Webb

Apologies: Cllrs Louise Bown and Andrew Starr

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

Lara Altree (Senior Lawyer - Regulatory), Graham Duggan (Head of Community & Public Protection), John Miles (Democratic Services Officer) and John Newcombe (Service Manager for Licensing & Community Safety)

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

Megan Rochester (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer)

9. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 21st May 2025 were confirmed and signed.

10. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Les Fry declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 as he was a member of the Town Council and the Local Ward Member. It was agreed that Cllr Fry would participate in the meeting.

Cllr Jill Haynes declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 as she was a member of the Dorchester Market Advisory Panel. It was agreed that Cllr Haynes would participate in the meeting.

Cllr Sarah Williams declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 as she was a member of the Dorchester Market Advisory Panel. It was agreed that Cllr Williams would participate in the meeting.

11. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

12. Market Agreement for the provision of Fairfield and Cornhill Markets, Dorchester

Graham Duggan, Head of Regulatory Services, highlighted the history of the markets and how they had been managed and operated. He noted that the Dorchester Markets Panel comprised members of Dorset Council and Dorchester Town Council, with responsibility for overseeing the markets. He advised that the current market operators had been in place for the past 25 years and that the operating lease was due to expire later this year, prompting consideration of future options.

Members were informed that options included going out to competitive tender for a new operator, or progressing an expression of interest received from Dorchester Town Council. The Markets Panel had recommended the Town Council option, as this would help operational flexibility and maximise income. It was noted that this recommendation required amendments to the Panel's terms of reference which had been done.

Dorchester Town Council had considered the contents of the report and confirmed that it was content to proceed with a draft operating agreement. The purpose of the report presented was to secure agreement for the future operation of the markets. Members were reminded of the respective responsibilities of each authority, and it was noted that closer operational involvement was considered to be a beneficial arrangement.

Cllr Derek Beer noted that the report contained a substantial amount of background information and aligned with the strategic direction of Dorset Council.

Cllr Jill Haynes advised that she had already declared an interest, having been involved in the matter for some time. She noted that the recommended option had not previously been possible, but that the current proposal represented a suitable change which would benefit the town and encourage economic activity.

Referring to page 15 of the report, Cllr Haynes requested an amendment to the wording to ensure it reflected that the trustee responsibilities were aligned to the Council roles rather than the individuals named.

Graham Duggan, Head of Regulatory Services, advised that he liaise with legal colleagues and add the necessary clarity regarding the wording of the policy

Proposed by Cllr Emma Parker, seconded by Cllr Craig Monks.

Decision: The committee agreed to:

Approve the Council entering into a concession agreement, as set out in draft in Appendix 1, with Dorchester Town Council for the provision of Fairfield and Cornhill Markets.

13. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

14. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business

Duration of meeting: 11.22 - 11.32 am

Chairman

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