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, aswell 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