

DORCHESTER MARKETS JOINT INFORMAL PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2019

Present: Cllrs M Penfold MBE (Chairman), M Rennie MBE (Vice-Chairman), N Bundy, M Hall, M Lawrence, D Rickard, J Hewitt, T Jones OBE, R Potter and D Taylor

Apologies: Cllrs R Freeman and Chisholm

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

Kathleen Boston-Mammah (Community Development Team Lead), David Brown (Head of Assets & Infrastructure), Roger Greene (Senior Corporate & Regulatory Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer), Stephen Hill (Strategic Director), Dave Martin (Senior Accountant), Greg Northcote (Estates Manager), Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Adrian Stuart (Town Clerk DTC)

1. Code of Conduct

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Notes of the Last Meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 20 June 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Budget 2019-20

The committee received a report of the Senior Accountant which presented the budget for 2019/20. The report noted that the budget had been prepared in the same way as previous years, and assumed that the management of the market would transfer to Dorset Council from 1 April 2019.

It was proposed by N Bundy seconded by D Taylor

Decision

That the budget for 2019/20, as set out in paragraph 5 and appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

4. Market Management Report

Members received and considered the Dorchester Market Operators report, which covered the period 1 June to 31 December 2018. The report also covered maintenance issues at the Dorchester Market, informed of progress with the Cornhill Market and informed members of matters regarding the Dorset Farmers Market.

Within the Dorchester Market Operators Report, reference was made to work that had been undertaken by Ensors and Sons Ltd on plans for proposed improvements to the market. The report detailed spending that had been undertaken by Ensors and a request for a contribution of £10,000 to be made by the council. A point was made that the panel had encouraged Ensors to undertake work to explore possible improvements to the market. However, as a decision had been taken by the district council not to move forward with the proposed improvements, details of the work undertaken and expenditure made should be reviewed by the panel. The viewpoint was supported by some other members of the panel. The importance of maintaining a good working relationship with Ensors was expressed.

In response to a question as to why the work had not been undertaken jointly with the district council, it was noted that Ensors had asked for the opportunity to consider proposals to improve the performance of the market. Support had been expressed by the council but no contractual arrangement had been made.

It was noted that no commitment would be made at this stage, but that information should be requested and reviewed with a report back to the panel. A point was made that it was important to maintain good partnership working with Ensors. In order to recognise this, an additional recommendation was considered in addition to the recommendations set out in the report.

It was proposed by J Hewitt seconded by D Taylor

Decision

- a) That members note the reports in respect of the Dorchester Market, Dorchester Cornhill Market Limited, Corn Market and the Dorset Farmers Market
- b) That officers grant a new three year license to Dorchester Cornhill Market Limited
- c) In response to a request from Messrs Ensors to provide a contribution to costs incurred in relation to planning and other professional fees, officers will review and report back after receiving the documents and invoices.

5. Assessment of a new market facility, Charles Street, Dorchester

The panel received and considered a report of the Head of Assets and Infrastructure with regard to work being undertaken on the assessment of a new market facility on the Charles Street site in Dorchester.

Members considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion the following points were raised:

- A point was raised with regard to archaeology associated with the Charles Street site and how this feature could be used for the benefit of the town
- A question was raised as to where the funding for these options would come from? A view was expressed that any investment should be for the current market site at Fairfield
- The Head of Assets and Infrastructure provided an overview of the work that was being carried out
- A number of panel members expressed the view that the market should be retained and that investment should be made in respect of the Fairfield site
- In addition, a point was noted that the area on Charles Street where the community church had been, needed improving
- In response to points raised, the Head of Assets and Infrastructure confirmed that the existing market operator would remain on the Fairfield site for the next eight years. The work being undertaken was looking to the future and assessing whether there was an alternative site for a market in Dorchester
- Reference was made to work required on the Linnies, which it was felt should be considered as soon as possible
- The Head of Assets and Infrastructure confirmed that this was an assessment of the location of the market in Dorchester which would include consideration of alternative locations. A complete range of options would be looked at by a specialist markets organisation in order to identify key issues and impacts and this would include a visit to the town. Once the information had been received, further consideration could take place. It was noted that this was not a time constrained process. The cost of the investigation was within existing budget
- Reference was made to different groups that were meeting to consider issues related to Dorchester and a concern raised that work was not joined up

Members noted that the recommendations contained within the report were to note work that had already been decided and was being undertaken by the district council. In addition to these recommendations it was proposed by T Jones seconded by R Potter that an additional recommendation d) be added as follows, "That in the meantime, an action plan be drawn up by officers for improvements to the Fairfield site, to include timescales within the course of 2019."

Decision

That the Panel:

- a. Note the work being undertaken and the appointment of Quarterbridge Project Management Ltd to establish the potential impact on the primary shopping area of developing a new covered market space on the Charles Street site, including preparations of design and detailed costs and business case

- b. Note that market traders and others may well be approached by this firm and agree to give support to their investigations
- c. Agree that there will be a report back on the various options and findings to the Joints Markets Panel for their consideration in due course
- d. That in the meantime, an action plan be drawn up by officers for improvements to the Fairfield site, to include timescales within the course of 2019.

6. **Distribution of grants from the Dorchester Market Car Boot**

The panel received and considered a report of the Community Development Team Lead which provided members with an overview of the distribution of the Dorchester Market Car Boot Fund for the financial year 2017-18. The Chairman noted that this was a worthwhile scheme for community and voluntary organisations and demonstrated good partnership working.

Members considered the report and the following points were made:

- An annual celebration event was held which provided a useful opportunity for networking
- Signposting for alternative sources of funding was also undertaken. This information was included in the letters sent to those who were not successful with a funding application
- The important link with Rotary clubs was recognised
- Members of the panel wished to record their thanks to the Community Development Team and members of the panel that met to consider the awarding of grants. The importance of the grant scheme was recognised
- In response to a question, it was noted that all grant applicants were asked to complete a feedback form and this would include the opportunity to note if funding had been achieved from an alternative source
- The Community Development Team Lead noted that the grant scheme was currently being managed on a transitional basis

7. **Future Arrangements for the support of the Panel**

The panel received and considered a report of the Dorchester Town Clerk with regard to future arrangements for the support of the Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel. The report noted that Dorchester Town Council had proposed that, without fundamentally altering the 1984 agreement between the town council and district council in respect of the work of the panel, a minor amendment could be made to transfer discrete pieces of officer support for the panel to the town council, all of which were consistent with the town council's capabilities. This covered Governance Administration, Financial Administration, Car Boot Fund Administration and Liaison with Market Operators. If the panel supported the proposal, the recommendation would be for consideration by the district council and Dorchester Town Council.

The Strategic Director reported that he was drafting a report on various matters for consideration by West Dorset Full Council on 26 February 2019. The report, which would be for noting, would include reference to the report presented to the Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel and would also include detail of the recommendation of the panel on this matter. In addition he noted that a meeting of the Strategy Committee was available if it was required to meet.

A question was raised as to whether these recommendations should include reference to the sharing of profits between the two parties. In response, the Town Clerk stated that the current proposal was only with regard to the transfer of arrangements and not profits. The Senior Corporate and Regulatory Lawyer noted that the proposals were a light touch exercise at this stage due to the current timescale with local government reorganisation. Further work would be required in the future. The 1984 agreement set out the ratios for the split of profits, and those arrangements would not change as a result of the proposal currently being considered. As such, any wording added to the recommendations would be a duplication of the wording in the 1984 agreement.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Strategic Director reiterated that reference to the recommendations would be included within the report to be presented to West Dorset Full Council on 26 February 2019. He also confirmed that a decision would be taken as to whether a report on this issue would be considered by the district council's Strategy Committee.

It was proposed by M Rennie seconded by J Hewitt

Recommendation

That, in order to safeguard the future management of the Markets Panel, the Dorchester Markets Informal Joint Panel supports the transfer of the following management functions to Dorchester Town Council

- Governance Administration
- Financial Administration
- Car Boot Fund Administration
- Liaison with Market Operators

8. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

9. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman of the committee noted that this was the last meeting of the panel and thanked members and officers for their commitment to the work of

the panel over the years. The panel had worked well together and had made a difference in this area.

Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 11.45 am

Chairman

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