

Area West Committee – 17th November 2010

7. Street Markets in Area West (Executive Decision)

Strategic Director: Rina Singh (Place and Performance)
Assistant Director: Helen Rutter (Communities)
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Purpose of the Report

To propose a way forward to reinvigorate the markets in Area West and help create a vibrant market town atmosphere.

Public Interest

Over the past few years there has been a decline in the number of market pitches being taken up by traders and a reduction in income from the markets in Area West. This report proposes the formation of a Markets Improvement Group, which will draw up an action plan, make proposals and steer the SSDC Officers.

Recommendations

- (1) To agree to the formation of an Area West Markets Improvement Group;
- (2) to allocate £14,340 from the Area Reserve budget and £5,660 from unallocated capital to the Area West Markets Improvement Group to use over the next 18 months.

Background

Last year two reports looked at street markets in South Somerset with one focusing on Area West markets in particular. Both reports highlighted the need for better promotion, improved working with traders in relation to marketing and promotions and the need for a more strategic approach in relation to the future development of Area West Markets.

Area West Markets Workshop

In August 2010 a workshop took place with representatives from the three town councils along with District Councillors from Chard and Crewkerne to explore their aspirations for Area West street markets.

All at the meeting agreed that the markets in Area West are important and have a crucial role to play in the vibrancy and vitality of the market towns.

The workshop highlighted a number of common issues as well as some issues that are specific to particular markets (see pages 10-12). Common issues include improved promotion and publicity, increase the range of market stalls and improve the overall look of the markets. In addition, there were some issues that were specific to individual markets e.g. the location of Crewkerne market.

The workshop highlighted a desire for the three towns to work together with the common aim of improving and reinvigorating the three markets. As the workshop worked well and

highlighted the benefits of partnership working it is recommended that an Area West Markets Improvement Group is set up.

Area West Markets Improvement Group (AWMIG)

The group will be set up, organised and administered by the Area West Community Regeneration Officer. The group should be made up of people who have a strong desire to bring about change and reinvigorate the Area West Markets. Representatives to the group can come from Town Councils, the business community, tourism or local regeneration groups. The SSDC Market Supervisor will also attend these meetings. Ideally the group should also involve representatives from the Area West market traders, although it is recognised that it is not always easy for them to attend meetings. However, endeavours will be made to arrange meetings at times that are suitable for market trader representatives.

The purpose of the Group will be:

- To look at the issues of promotion, publicity, range of stalls, the overall look and location in more detail and decide exactly how they will be addressed.
- Draw up an 18 month Action Plan (to be agreed jointly by the Area Development Managers for West and South). It is felt that it may be difficult to address some of the issues within a year, but as a task and finish group there needs to be focus and it is hoped that all actions can be achieved within 18 months.
- Agree initial baseline figures that can be used to measure progress and establish the success of the work of the AWMIG.
- Oversee the implementation of the Action Plan and provide support to relevant officers where appropriate.

Investment in Area West Markets

It is recognised that there has been a lack of investment in the markets in recent years and to address the issues already mentioned funding is needed. To enable this group to move forward with this proposal and carry out the actions identified up to £20,000 should be allocated to the project. This money can be used to finance specific actions and could also be used as match funding to draw down external grants from other relevant funding streams.

Financial Implications

It is recommended that a budget of up to £20,000 be made available to support the work of the proposed AWMIG.

The budget can be funded from the Area Reserve and the Area West unallocated capital budget.

The Area Development Manager will approve all spending decisions.

Corporate Priority implications

- SSDC Corporate Theme 1 is about increasing economic vitality and prosperity, this project relates to Key Target Area:
- 1.11 a vibrant and sustainable Yeovil, market towns and rural economy

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

Markets provide the opportunity for local produce to be sold and bought, thus reducing food miles.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Markets have the potential to promote diversity, they enable all sections of the community, especially those on a low income to shop and set up business.

Background Papers: *Audit Committee August 2010 - Markets Audit Action Plan Update*
JAC West October 2009 – Management of Street Markets in Area West
SW Audit Partnership draft discussion document 2009

Notes from the Area West Markets Workshop

Comments raised at workshop reflect the views of the individuals in attendance and are not necessarily the views of the organisations they represent.

Chard Market

- Operates on a Saturday morning.
- Used to be located in Boden St Car Park. At this time it was large successful market with wide variety of stalls. It has since been moved a couple of times and now located on Fore Street.
- The location is unsatisfactory. Shoppers often forced to step over stream. Street is sloped. When stalls are located on east side of street they are spread out quite widely and cars park in-between stalls making it difficult for shoppers to see stalls.
- There are a reasonable variety of stalls and some do very well, especially the regulars.
- There is not a standard look to the stalls.
- There was originally a farmers market in the Guildhall, which moved out during the refurbishment of the Hall and has never returned.
- Guildhall now runs a monthly craft & food market.

Crewkerne Market

- Operates on a Wednesday morning
- Was located in South Street Car Park until Waitrose development started. At this time it was a decent size and had a variety of stalls.
- Has since been located in a couple of different places and now takes place on edge of South Street Car Park. None of the more recent locations have been satisfactory.
- Would like to relocate to Market Square in front of Town Hall. Highways will not agree to the side road being closed.
- A monthly Farmers Market takes place in Falkland Square
- A Country Market takes place every Friday morning in Henhayes Centre.

Ilminster Market

- Operates on a Thursday morning, as the local Chamber wanted it to be on half day closing.
- Used to be located in car park where Tesco now is, has since been moved to Market House and East Street.
- Has a reasonable variety of stalls, some are regulars others are very casual so the nature of goods does change.
- Traders are locating their stalls in disabled parking spaces. Sometimes an issue with traders spreading wares out too much over the pavement, which causes an obstruction.
- A monthly market is now held in the Meeting House and Ilminster Forum now runs a monthly produce market in the Market House on first Saturday of each month.

What is the role & purpose of the market in your town?

- Increase footfall & provide goods that are not already available in the town
- Create a healthy upbeat atmosphere 'buzz' – sense of community
- Attract people into town and make them want to return
- Provide value for money

- Provide a good mix of goods with friendly service
- Historical, tourism community event
- Provide goods not normally available
- Encourage entrepreneurs

What are the good things about the market in your town?

- Some stalls do provide goods that aren't currently available in the town
- Awareness of Saturday being market day
- Good visibility
- Ability to attract new stalls
- Good location – very central & visible
- Easy to buy from it as it is not out of the way
- Adds value to the existing shopping experience & compliments the individual shops
- It's sticking with the town

What things are not so good about the market in your town?

- Some stalls block pavements & straddle the stream
- Danger for stallholders with their backs to the traffic
- Stalls sometimes poorly placed: either side of A30 / positioned outside like selling shops
- Some stalls are tatty and in bad weather look bad, as there are no canopies
- Not much room for growth
- Parking issues – narrows the street and cause problems with visibility
- Sometimes pavements are obstructed
- Publicity seems limited or non-existent
- Location
- Quality
- Size
- Atmosphere
- Support from shoppers – lack of
- Lack of appearance of a proper market
- No Advertising

How would you like your market to look in 5 years time?

- Busy, attractive destination market with its own unique site
- Must have its own identity i.e. canopies
- Proper looking market stalls with consistent look to awnings
- Greater diversity of goods more stalls
- A thriving market where people look forward to market day including local shopkeepers
- Increased footfall in whole town
- Co-ordinated – uniformity of colour, style etc
- New location that captures the maximum footfall
- Colourful
- Well organised with no large lorries blocking pedestrian access, but say refrigerated stalls in one area
- Bigger range & variety of stalls
- Tri-partite scheme organised and run in Area West.
- Have a market with a reputation for quality known throughout the South West

If you had money what 3 things would you spend it on to improve your market?

- Move market administration to the 3 councils with shared infrastructure
- Advertising, awareness of market and an advertising mast in town centre
- Free car parking on market day
- Supply awnings and stall so the overall look of the market is improved
- Promotion of the market – radio, newspapers, TV, tourism websites. Places where it reaches people beyond Somerset as so close to border with Dorset & Devon
- Market research – establish what works well in other towns and what shoppers want from a market
- Buying uniform market stalls, umbrellas etc
- Good advertising and marketing
- Spend time visiting other markets & areas to learn what they do to make a successful market
- Create an image, logo, brand, style or atmosphere that's instantly recognisable to local people and visitors alike