

Area West Committee – 19th October 2011

## 8. Area West Street Markets (Executive Decision)

*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh (Place and Performance)  
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### Purpose of the Report

To update members on the progress of the Area West Markets Improvement Group and request £1,390 to enable the group to progress work.

### Public Interest

Since January 2011 a group of Councillors, Market Traders and Council Officers have been working to improve the council run street markets in Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster. This report provides an update on the work so far and is making a request for specific funding to help promote the markets and make it easier to manage Chard market.

### Recommendation

That Members allocate £1,390 from the £20,000 set aside in November 2010, for the improvement of Area West Markets.

### Background

In January 2011, in response to previous reports relating to SSDC street markets, a Markets Improvement Group was set up with the remit of regenerating the SSDC Street Markets in Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster.

An update report from that group was presented to Area West Committee in June 2011. That report identified four main themes for the group to focus on:

- Marketing and Promotion
- Local produce
- Crewkerne Market
- Market Management

Since June the Community Regeneration Officer with the support of the Markets Improvement Group has been carrying out work to address these four themes.

### Marketing and Promotion

#### *Signage*

Currently there is very little street signage used on market days to attract passing footfall and encourage shoppers to visit the markets. Crewkerne market has two very old looking A boards, whereas Ilminster Market has three old looking painted boards. There is no street signage at all in use in Chard on market day. It was clear from the survey carried

out earlier in the year that many people did not know about the markets, so the use of banners and new signage would help encourage new shoppers to visit the markets.

It is proposed that banners are placed in very visible locations including some of the busier shoppers car parks on market day, informing people that there is a market in town that day. In addition large sail banners can be placed strategically in the town centres letting people know that a market is in progress.

### *Christmas*

The survey carried out highlighted that people do not just visit the market when in town on market day, but will also visit shops, cafes and other businesses. With this in mind the Community Regeneration Officer is proposing that the advertising for the Christmas markets is carried out differently this year with advertorials being used instead of just a small plain advert.

The advertorial will run for 5 weeks and it is proposed that the text that accompanies the advert should include information about each town and the range of businesses people could also visit.

### *Internet and Social Media*

The Community Regeneration Officer is working with Area South to update the markets page on the SSDC website to include more information about the range of goods on sale at each of the markets. In addition work is currently taking place to set up a Facebook page giving details about the regular traders at the Area West markets and the different types of products on sale. Both these pieces of work will be completed in time for the Christmas market promotion.

### *Other promotion*

In addition to the above, Town Council representatives that sit on the Markets Improvement Group have agreed to use Town Council publications to help promote the market in their town.

## **Local Produce**

The survey carried out earlier in the year highlighted the desire amongst residents to see a greater variety of stalls with more local food and crafts available to buy in the markets. Information from the National Market Traders Federation shows that this reflects a trend nationally where markets in smaller towns are seeing a move towards produce markets.

All three markets have space for additional traders, either on a regular or casual basis. A letter has recently been sent to local food producers and crafts people to establish whether any are interested in attending any of the Area West markets on a casual basis. It is hoped that this will generate a number of new traders particularly in the run up to Christmas.

## **Crewkerne Market**

Work is continuing to relocate the market from its current position in South Street Car Park. Two potential sites have been identified and currently the Regeneration Officer is in negotiations with landowners over the feasibility of these locations.

## Market Management

The street market in Chard operates in Fore Street on a Saturday morning. On the northern side of Fore Street (the same side as the Phoenix), traders locate their stalls in the parking bays on the side of the road. Currently there is no sign adjacent to the parking bays to tell the public they should not park in those bays on Saturday morning. The consequence is that cars do park in the bays and this makes it difficult for the Market Supervisor to ask drivers to remove their cars so that traders can set up. No parking on market day signs already exist in Ilminster and Crewkerne, therefore one is needed in Chard.

## Details of Funding Request

As highlighted above the Markets Improvement Group wish to spend money on items that will help with the promotion and marketing of all three markets and the management of Chard market. The total amount requested at this stage is £1,390, which will be spent in the following way:

Item	Cost
Five weeks advertising for Christmas markets	£530
Two banners with fixtures	£180
Three sail banners and bases	£600
No parking sign for Fore Street, Chard	£80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,390</b>

It is envisaged that future funding will be required to help finance the relocation of Crewkerne market and also towards further promotion of the market towns and their markets.

## Financial Implications

In November 2010 Members agreed to allocate, in principle, £20,000 towards the cost of revitalising the markets in Area West. This allocation is made up of £5,660 from capital and £14,340 from the Area Reserve. The items listed above are of a revenue nature and they would therefore be funded from the Area Reserve. If Members approve this request for £1,390 that will leave £18,610 of the original allocation remaining.

## 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 within a short distance of where it is made, 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 a business.

**Background Papers:**     *Area West Committee June 2011 agenda and minutes*  
                                  *Area West Committee November 2010 agenda and minutes*  
                                  *Audit Committee August 2010*  
                                  *JAC West October 2009 – agenda and minutes*

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