

Area West Committee – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012

## 8. Management of Chard Market (Executive Decision)

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### Purpose of the Report

To approve new arrangements for the management of Chard Market.

### Public Interest

As of Saturday 29th September 2012, Chard Town Council have agreed that they can take responsibility for the management of the Saturday Market in Chard.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that Chard Town Council be granted a licence to operate Chard Market from Saturday 29th September 2012.

### Background

In November 2010 Area West Committee supported the setting up of the Markets Improvement Group with the remit to reinvigorate the SSDC markets in Area West and help create a vibrant market town atmosphere.

Since then a number of recommendations have been agreed by Area West Committee that will help to fulfil this ambition. This report recommends a further improvement to the management of Chard Market.

### Chard Market

The Chard market is run under a Charter that was originally granted to the town in 1683. The Charter empowered the town to hold three annual fairs and three weekly markets (on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday). The Charter was passed from Chard Borough Council to South Somerset District Council when it was created in 1974.

The District Council currently operates markets in Yeovil and Area West; including Chard's general market in Fore Street on a Saturday. In May 2012, the Markets Supervisor expressed interest in reducing her working hours. This gave the opportunity to consider alternative arrangements for the operation of the market in Chard.

Work the Community Regeneration Officer has been carrying out to help revitalise the markets in Area West has shown that one factor in creating a successful market is local ownership. The Community Regeneration Officer approached Chard Town Council to start discussions to explore the possibility of the Saturday market being managed more locally.

At a Chard Town Council meeting on the 18th June 2012 it was agreed that a working group, including two market traders, should be set up to explore this proposal in more detail. That working group reported back to the Town Council on the 20th August 2012

with an interim proposal to ensure that the market continues to operate without any break in trading. The same report outlined proposals for ways in which Chard Market could possibly be expanded in the future.

As of Saturday 29th September 2012, Chard Town Council have agreed that they will be able to take over the management of the Saturday market. It is intended that the Market will operate with the support of one of the current market stallholders along with existing Chard Town Council staff.

The Area West team wish to support the formal and permanent transfer of the Market and believe that this will be the best way to achieve the ambition of both councils. It is recognised that there are still some issues to be resolved through further negotiation, consideration and formal agreement. However, to ensure that there is no break between the current market and the “new” market to be run by Chard Town Council, it is necessary to make the changes proposed in this report straightaway.

Once the Town Council has had time to assess the new management arrangements they propose to explore the possibility of developing the market by holding themed markets in the Guild Hall on a Saturday morning. A monthly Gift Fair already takes place in the Guild Hall which does attract extra footfall to the General Market outside and it is hoped that additional markets in the Guild Hall will increase the number of shoppers in the town on further Saturdays.

As part of the ongoing work to help revitalise the Area West markets the Community Regeneration Officer will continue dialogue with Chard Town Council in relation to any potential improvements that can be achieved.

As part of the future development of the market in Chard, the Town Council have indicated that they would like to see the Charter transferred from SSDC to their ownership. Officer discussions about this are already currently taking place to look at future arrangements for the Charter.

### **Legal Implications**

It is proposed that a temporary licence to operate Chard Market be granted to Chard Town Council pending completion of discussions regarding the formal transfer of the Market Charter.

### **Financial Implications**

The financial implications of this proposal for SSDC are broadly neutral. There will be some reduction in costs offset by a similar reduction in income.

In November 2010, £20,000 was allocated to the Area West Markets Improvement Group to support projects that were identified in the Action Plan, subject to specific committee approval. There are no financial implications within this report that would impact on that allocated fund. However, work does continue to improve the markets in Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster so any future requests relating to this fund will be the subject of a future committee report.

### **Corporate Priority Implications**

To ensure the continuation and future growth of Chard Market will give people the opportunity to start up new businesses or expand existing markets, this fits in with Focus

One of the Council Plan to have a strong economy which has low unemployment and thriving businesses.

### **Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)**

Markets provide the opportunity for local products and 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 a business.

**Background Papers:** *Area West Committee October 2011*  
*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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