

Area West Committee – 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013

## **7. Crewkerne Street Market (Executive Decision)**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

To update Members on work to launch a new market in a central location in Crewkerne.

### **Public Interest**

Crewkerne market is to be re-launched in a more prominent location and managed by Crewkerne Town Council. The market will return to its former position in Market Square where it will attract more traders and be more appealing to shoppers, which will increase footfall into the town centre.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Members:

- (1) Express their support for a new weekly market to be run by Crewkerne Town Council;
- (2) Agree to a grant of up to £6,000 to Crewkerne Town Council towards the cost of funding new stalls, awnings, promotional materials and advertising costs.

### **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. At the November 2010 Committee meeting it was also agreed to allocate up to £20,000 towards the revitalisation of Area West markets on condition that a future report was brought to Committee detailing how the funds would be spent.

At the time it was envisaged that a joint approach between the three towns would bring about improvements. The detailed work that followed uncovered a variety of issues that differed with each town, highlighting the need for a more local approach to ownership and management be taken with each individual market. Since that date the Neighbourhood Development Officer has been working closely with the Town Councils in Crewkerne and Chard to facilitate a change in the future management of the markets, giving the Town Councils the power to operate them instead.

### **Crewkerne Market**

Crewkerne market is one of the oldest Charter markets in England with a mention in the Domesday Book. Although SSDC has been managing the Wednesday market in Crewkerne for many years, the Market Charter is held by the New Rotary Club and SSDC pays them a licence fee to operate the market.

As part of the redevelopment that brought the Waitrose Store to Crewkerne, the Wednesday market was moved from a central position to the edge of South Street Car park, where it received little footfall and dwindled to just one stall. By July 2012 it was decided that the support of the SSDC Markets Supervisor could no longer be justified. Since that date the one remaining market trader has been supported by staff from the Crewkerne Community Office.

Market traders have told the District Council they would like to attend a market in Crewkerne, if it was held in a location where they could take enough money to make it worth their while. After many months of negotiation, in meetings brokered by the Neighbourhood Development Officer, there is now agreement on a more suitable central location.

It has now been established that the market can be relocated to Market Square, where it last used to operate in the late 1990s. Negotiation with Somerset County Highways and the bus companies are well advanced and a temporary closure of the road to the western side of Market Square will take place on market day. This will create a good size car free space for approximately 15-20 market stalls and shoppers will be able to browse and buy goods in safety, away from parked cars or passing traffic.

The road closure in Market Square will mean buses will not be able to use the bus stop located outside the Kings Arms pub. That bus stop will be temporarily relocated every Wednesday morning. Bus operators have agreed the following arrangements:

- First Bus 47 to Yeovil will stop at the Market Street end of the square. A temporary Bus Stop sign will be positioned at this location every Wednesday morning by the Town Council;
- Stagecoach 99/99A to Yeovil will now stop outside Sassies clothes shop in Church Street. Somerset County Highways will erect a bus stop sign here.

The work to find a new home for Crewkerne Market has been carried out in partnership with Crewkerne Town Council on the understanding that they will be responsible for the operation of the market in future. Crewkerne Town Hall is located in Market Square and the Town Council have the staff in place to manage a market. A similar arrangement is already in place in Chard, where the Town Council have been successfully running the market since September 2012.

Work is currently underway to set up and launch the new market in Crewkerne this autumn. As this is in effect a new market it is essential that a good range of traders are attracted that complement the existing retail offer in the town. In addition it is important to ensure that the market looks attractive and encourages people to visit Crewkerne, to not only shop in the market but also with the other retailers in the town centre.

To help create an attractive market in Crewkerne, the Town Council wish to buy some new stalls and canopies that will be made available to producers, traders and local charities to use. This will ensure that the market not only looks appealing but it gives potential new businesses and charities the opportunity to try out a pitch without having to go to the expense of providing their own trade stall. Offering the chance for different charities and new businesses to trade also adds variety to the weekly market, as some of these stalls will be used by different traders each week. People in and around Crewkerne will also need to be made aware that a new weekly market is being launched, so as well as the stalls and awnings there is a need for some money to be spent on advertising and promotion. This will be used to purchase some banners that can be placed in strategic locations in the town on market day, letting people know that the market is on. In addition some funds are needed to place adverts in the local press to

inform people of the new market. Research by the Area West Neighbourhood Development Officer confirms that the total cost of purchasing suitable awnings, stalls, advertising and promotional materials will not exceed £6,000. It is therefore recommended that a grant of up to £6,000 is made available for this purpose, to be paid in arrears as and when necessary items are purchased. In some respects, this could be seen as similar to a spend to save project.

### **Financial implications**

In November 2010 the Area West Committee agreed to allocate £20,000 to the AW Markets Improvement Group on condition that a report was brought to Area West detailing exactly how the funds would be spent. Since that date £1,390 was allocated to advertising and promotion of the Area West street markets in October 2011. This leaves a surplus of £18,610 remaining for work to improve the markets in Area West. If members approve the £6,000 budget proposed to support the launch of the new market in Crewkerne, £12,610 will remain for use towards the redevelopment of markets in Area West.

### **Legal implications**

As the market Charter for Crewkerne is held by an external organisation there are no legal implications in relation to Crewkerne market for South Somerset District Council.

Crewkerne Town Council has granted itself powers under the 1984 Food Act to run a street market on a Wednesday.

### **Corporate Priority implications**

Ensuring the continuation and future growth of a Crewkerne Market will give people the opportunity to start up new businesses or expand into 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 September 2012*  
*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*