

Audit Committee – 24th March 2011

## 5. Markets Audit Action Plan – Update

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### Purpose of the Report

The report details work undertaken on the markets action plan (Appendix A, pages 4-10).

### Recommendation

That members note the actions and progress made in respect of the Markets Audit Action Plan.

### Report Detail

When she attended the meeting of the Audit Committee held in August 2010 the Community Development Officer (South) summarised the agenda report, which provided members with an update on the work undertaken in respect of the Markets Audit Action Plan.

The Community Development Officer further referred to action point 2.3a regarding engaging with market traders and particularly to the survey, which was currently being undertaken in Yeovil, and reported that there had been 100% return. A survey of the market traders in Chard was to follow. In referring to action point 3.2a, the Community Development Officer reported that the market guidelines, which had been updated, were awaiting approval by the Legal Unit for which the deadline was 1st October 2010.

The Community Development Officer then responded to members' questions and comments. Points addressed included the following:-

- reference was made to action point 2.3a and it was noted that the outcome of the market traders survey was to be reported to the Area South Committee and Audit Committee. The Committee concurred with the comments of a member who asked that once the survey of the Area West markets had been completed, the outcome be also reported to the Area West Committee.

The following key observations from the Yeovil market traders survey were reported to Area South Committee on 1st December 2010;

In August 2010 a market trader survey was undertaken. The Markets Supervisor circulated a survey form by hand to 36 traders of the street market in Yeovil Town Centre. A total of 20 forms were returned, giving a response rate of 56%.

Key observations of the survey results are concluded below.

There were a higher proportion of replies from traders on the Friday market. The majority of traders had been trading between 1 – 5 years. Traders travel to other markets as far afield as Bristol, Barnstaple, Swanage and Exeter and can travel over 50 miles to trade at these markets.

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Generally, traders felt that the Yeovil market was competitively priced compared to others in the South West however several suggested that there should be rent reductions for the Tuesday market as it is a lot quieter.

60% of traders felt that the cleanliness/appearance of the town is good with several positive comments about this. Whilst 47% of respondents felt the street appearance had improved over the last 12 months, 18% felt it had deteriorated, with concern regarding the condition of the street paving, with some areas being cracked and uneven.

64% of traders had stated that they had not had any contact with Police Community Support Officers but they had seen them patrolling the area. Quite a few comments were made about safety with some mentioning drunken and rowdy behaviour in the town centre during the day and a general feeling of anti-social behaviour. In addition, comments were made regarding problems with cyclists travelling through the street.

76% stated that they did not notice a change to the trade when the French market visited, however 67% would not like to see specialist markets held on the same day as the street markets. Of the responses given, the majority of those who did not notice a change were traders of clothing and household goods. No-one responded to the option "trade increased when the market were here". One trader did say it was a "bit quiet".

Many of the traders felt that the specialist markets held at the weekends did not really affect their trade the following week and that the frequency of these markets were about right (4 times a year) according to 56% of traders.

Of the concerns raised about other markets, these mainly covered issues over the positioning, and also the amount of rent the specialist markets pay compared to the stallholders who attend Yeovil Markets every week in all weathers.

With respect to their turnover for the last financial year, 43% stated that turnover had decreased with 38% saying it had stayed the same.

There were mainly positive comments about the Christmas lights.

Traders were asked to give any additional comments and name their top 3 priorities for improving the markets and the main comments made in respect of these questions were:-

- Rent free days or reduced rents
- Reduce parking fees/free parking for traders
- Signage for the market – on the market, in the town and further afield on the road systems
- Advertising

The results of the market traders survey carried out in Area West are attached. (Appendix B, pages 11-17)

- a member commented that he could not find the new markets page on the Council's website (action point 2.1a) and the Community Development Officer agreed to check to ensure that it was available;

The Markets Entry on the Web site has been reviewed and markets can now be easily found under M for markets.

- reference was made to the Market Service Plan 2010/11, particularly to the item regarding ensuring compliance with Health and Safety legislation. It was noted

that one of the performance measures involved making an annual update report to the Area South and Area West Committees. The Committee concurred with the comments of the Chairman who felt that a similar report on that matter should also be made to the Audit Committee;

Risk assessments are held in relation to markets. Individual site specific risk assessments are held electronically and on file (Appendix C, pages 18-20). Corporate risk assessments are held on the Magique system only, these cover lone working, theft of market fees, income from market tolls does not meet income target and health and safety of staff and public is compromised.

- a member noted that one of the items in the Market Service Plan related to holding an annual meeting with Yeovil and Chard Town Councils. The Committee concurred with the comments of a member who felt that, bearing in mind that markets were also held in Crewkerne and Ilminster, an annual meeting should also be held with those town councils.

To clarify, rather than annual meetings the service plan should refer to ongoing liaison, which the Market inspector has with all relevant town councils. The service plan has now been amended.

### **Financial Implications**

None arising from this report.

### **Corporate Priority Implications**

Markets contribute to the economic vitality of our towns.

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

Markets provide opportunity for local produce to be sold and bought; reducing food miles.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

Markets often promote diversity. They enable all sections of the community, especially those on low incomes, to shop and to set up business.

**Background Papers:** *Markets Audit*

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