

6. Markets Audit Action Plan – Update

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Purpose of the Report

The report details progress made with developing Markets further to completion of actions in the Markets Audit Action Plan.

Recommendations

- (1) That Members note the actions and progress made in respect of the Markets Audit Action Plan;
- (2) that Members discharge Markets from Audit.

Report Detail

The Area Development Manager (South) updated the Audit Committee in March 2011, however noting that all actions in the Audit Action Plan had been completed. Work to develop the markets would continue. This report provides an update on performance of Markets and highlights new work processes that are in place to help develop them.

Performance, Income and Efficiencies

The detail of markets budget figures, as at April to end November 2011, is set out in Appendix One, Figure 1. Although this shows Area South markets are underachieving against income targets, it is important to note that they are still profitable markets to operate. For the first 35 weeks of 2011/12, the expenditure totals £21,182, whereas the income totals £27,461 - a profit of £6,279. Area West markets are only slightly underachieving as a whole against income targets. However, Area West markets are not profitable markets to operate. This is further broken down in Appendix One, Figure 2.

Appendix Two highlights the income levels for each of the five markets across two years. The 2011/12 figures are shown up until the end of November 2011. These charts show that while some markets have experienced increased income during some months of 2011 against 2010, the overall trend has been a reduction in income levels across the board.

The Markets expenditure budget has been reviewed and two areas of efficiency savings identified. Rubbish container services provided for Yeovil markets have been reduced as of November this year, reducing the rental costs by half. Carrier bags promoting District Markets, which have previously been given to traders to use, have also been stopped.

In addition to the two weekly markets, Yeovil holds additional Christmas markets in the lead up to Christmas. Figures for the Christmas markets in 2010 showed that after expenditure the markets realised a profit of £2,100. Figures for the 2011 Christmas markets are currently being reconciled.

The Markets Supervisor is currently undertaking parking attendant duties for SSDC car parks on a Wednesday. Payment will be made and shown as income from this service on an hourly rate.

Arrangements have also been made on other days for the Markets Supervisor to provide support work to some Environmental Health services, at times where there may be spare capacity. These include visiting business premises to undertake smoking compliance checks, updating contact details for businesses registered for enforcement of Health & Safety requirements by SSDC. To date there has been limited opportunity to undertake this work however a process is now in place to provide this additional support as, and when, appropriate.

Area South will continue to work on ways to further support and develop the markets.

Area South Markets - Marketing And Communication Plan

As reported previously, a Marketing and Communications Plan was developed for Yeovil Markets 12 months ago following a review of Yeovil markets. This review identified a number of common factors affecting the daily operation of the markets, impacting footfall, trader, size and income as a whole. These factors include condition of weather, seasonal trading, economic downturn and changing shopper habits, shifts in key pedestrian movement in the town centre, and competition from other street trading.

The Yeovil Markets Marketing and Communication Plan has been adopted to ensure regular and timely PR activities to help increase traders take up, public footfall and awareness of the markets, and support for start up traders. This plan is co-ordinated by Area South Support Staff in concurrence with the Markets Supervisor.

Some examples of initiatives undertaken include improvements to the SSDC website to increase the Markets' presence online, along with creating links to new profiles on Facebook and Twitter. A letter campaign was also undertaken to try to promote casual trader licences to smaller local businesses, to help enhance the variety of stalls on the markets. Leaflets were produced with support of Economic Development around helping potential traders get the information and skills they need to run a market stall.

A couple of new traders came on to the Ilminster, Chard and Yeovil markets on a casual basis however these have not continued trading on the market.

Area West Markets Improvement Action Plan

Since January 2011 the Community Regeneration Officer in Area Development West has been working with a group of Councillors, Market Traders and Council Officers to improve the council run 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. A further report was taken to Area West Committee in October 2011 to update on progress so far and make a request for specific funding to help promote the markets and make it easier to manage Chard market.

One specific area of change has been a change in working practices for the Crewkerne Market, held on a Wednesday. This is due to low attendance of traders in Crewkerne. The Markets Supervisor no longer runs this market, and responsibility for this has been

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taken over by Area Development West. New procedures have been set up accordingly. Area Development South still holds all appropriate records and market ticket reconciliation.

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*
Area South Committee Report December 2010
Area West Committee Report January 2011
Area West Committee Report October 2011
