

REPORT TITLE: FINDINGS AND FUTURE PLANS FOLLOWING THE STREET
MARKETS REVIEW

6 OCTOBER 2022

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Lucille Thompson

Contact Officer: Andrew Gostelow Tel No: 07980732149 Email
agostelow@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This paper introduces for consideration The Winchester District Street Markets Review 2022 (see Appendix 1). It summarises the findings and recommendations of the review along with a plan to action these. The actions make particular reference to the street market in the city and how the recommendations will influence the future operation of this street market including the procurement process to secure an ongoing market management contractor.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Policy Committee are asked to:

- 1) Review and comment on The Winchester District Street Markets Review 2022.
- 2) Note the findings and recommendations outlined in the review.
- 3) Support the approach to action the recommendations outlined in the review.

These include:

- a) development of branding, promotional materials and marketing activity,
- b) improvements to market appearance derived from investment in signage and street dressing, branded gazebos, pitch layout/customer flow,
- c) number of market stalls and additional themed markets

1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 A budget allocation of £8,000 was made to carry out a review from a combination of a contribution of £2.5k from the Winchester Business Improvement District and the remainder from the general fund and the Return to the High Street Safely/Welcome Back Covid recovery funding programme.
- 1.2 The staffing resources required to implement the recommendations outlined in The Winchester District Street Markets Review will come primarily from the Economy & Community Service teams, with staff resources specifically deployed from the Economy & Tourism teams with support from Officers in the Estates team who are responsible for the management of the City Street Markets contract.
- 1.3 The delivery of a number of the recommendations outlined in the Review will be made possible subject to funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) bid, the success of which is likely to be confirmed by October 2022.
- If UKSPF funding does not become available then alternative funding for a number of the recommendations would need to be secured, as outlined in 2.12.
- 1.4 Market operators across the district will be required to support and help implement the approach outlined to action the recommendations made in the Review.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

2.1 Purpose of the Review

- 2.2 The purpose of The Winchester District Street Markets Review was to provide the council with a better understanding of the current markets offer and what development opportunities might be available. The scope required the study to cover markets in Winchester City Centre and the market towns of Alresford, Bishop's Waltham and Wickham.
- 2.3 A procurement exercise was undertaken which resulted in The Retail Group being commissioned to undertake the review with a budget of £8,000. This work took place between October 2021 and March 2022 and the final review received in March 2022, see Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The Retail Group have been at the forefront of evolving and changing markets in city and town centres for over 25 years. The consultancy has been providing markets advice, developing future strategies, improving current performance, developing new markets and identifying new market models, changing market management and trader operations and providing training and business support to market traders.

- 2.5 The brief required The Retail Group to undertake:
- a) Audit of current markets offer including overall experience,
 - b) Feedback from businesses, traders and consumers,
 - c) Assessment of opportunities to increase the choice and range of markets as well as the additive nature of markets,
 - d) Economic Impact,
 - e) Review of locations, frequency and type of markets,
 - f) Benchmarking against similar destinations/exemplar markets,
 - g) GAP analysis and recommendations for improvement.

- 2.6 The findings of the final report were required to provide valuable insight and information to the council and the operators of the street markets across the district to:

- a) Support their street markets,
- b) Enhance the visitor experience after the COVID-19 pandemic,
- c) Ensure the district's High Streets remain vibrant.

2.7 Findings Highlights

The findings and recommendations for each street market reviewed can be found in Appendix 1. The review found overall:

- a) the offering across the district is well established, creating a positive impact including increasing the sense of appeal in terms of the overall place with local residents considering street markets on a par with permanent retail (shops) as a reason to visit the place,
- b) there is a mixed offering in terms of product quality and range of traders at the markets across the district and this is reflected in feedback where visitors rated the offer as "quite good" or "neither good or bad",
- c) that no one location would be appropriate for the development of a "destination market", similar to, for example, Portobello Road, London, but there is opportunity for some markets to increase the number of market traders taking a pitch,
- d) that the location of the street markets were appropriate with potential for improvement in some locations,

- e) there was little churn in market traders and new traders taking pitches were limited with most having traded in excess of five years,
- f) the typical visitor profile was local at an age demographic of 45+, with limited engagement with younger audiences.

2.8 There are some common areas for improvement across all markets and these include:

- a) development of branding, promotional materials and marketing activity,
- b) Improvements to market appearance, delivering a stronger sense of place, arrival and customer experience derived from investment in signage and street dressing, branded gazebos, pitch layout/customer flow,
- c) number of market stalls and additional themed markets offering a wider product range and pricing point to meet the needs of all customers with an emphasis on locally sourced.

2.9 Communications and Consultation

The Winchester Street Markets Review has been shared and discussed with the market operator in Alresford, Alresford Parish Council and Bishop's Waltham Parish Council, Wickham Parish Council, the Winchester Business Improvement District and Cabinet Members Cllr Tod, Cllr Thompson and Cllr Kelsey.

2.10 Next Steps

In order to action the findings and recommendations in the review it is proposed that a funding allocation will be made from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The city council will hear the outcome of its investment plan to access £1m of funding over the next three years in September.

2.11 The investment plan included an indicative project with an allocation of £30,000 to take place in the first year (22/23) of the three year programme. The project would:

- a) focus primarily on points a) and b) of 2.8 above,
- b) fund activities to drive footfall, raise awareness, create a recognisable brand, improve arrival and overall visitor experience delivered through a range of marketing and place making interventions.

- 2.12 In the event that UKSPF funding does not become available alternative funding streams would need to be secured in order to deliver activities which would underpin improvements to the markets appearance and delivering a stronger sense of place, such as street dressing and branded gazebos. Some marketing activity, work around developing the number of market stalls and additional themed markets along with adopting the recommendations within the procurement of a City Street Market contract can still be delivered from within existing work programmes and budgets.
- 2.13 As a consequence of this investment it is anticipated that the reputation and footfall to the markets would be improved. This would better enable market operators to tackle point c) of 2.8 above.
- 2.14 The council is reviewing the operating policies and will be re-tendering the city centre street markets contract in the coming months with the aim that this street market becomes an exemplar of the findings and recommendations outlined in the Review.
- 2.15 The council will work with the district's market operators and traders to influence the development of their offer with particular emphasis on achieving the council's priority of a carbon neutral district by 2030. This may include supporting initiatives and campaigns that reduce waste, use sustainably-made and packaged materials and products etc. Activity will also need to support the priorities of Living Well and Vibrant Local Economy.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3.1 Alternative options considered:

- a) No action is taken in respect of the recommendations outlined in the Winchester District Street Markets Review: this option was rejected as the importance of quality street markets to the overall economic health of high streets, the reputation of and ability to attract footfall to the city and market towns, as well as a platform for fledgling businesses to test their products in a relatively low risk environment, is well recognised and supported in the Winchester District High Streets' Priority Plan,
- b) Expect the market operators to take the lead and action the findings and recommendations: this option was rejected as market operators lack the resource required in order to action the findings and recommendations independently.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

None

Other Background Documents:-

CAB3356 UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Investment Plan Proposal

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Winchester District Street Markets Review 2022: Executive Summary