

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

24

Report of Corporate Director for Place

to
Cabinet

on
18 June 2013

Report prepared by: Scott Dolling, Acting Head of Service
Economy, Tourism and Regeneration

Southend – General Market Proposal

Executive Councillor: Councillor John Lamb

A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

To provide an update to Cabinet on the work and recommendations of the Market Task and Finish Group

2. Recommendation

That Cabinet support the recommendations of the Market Task and Finish group and agree to the establishment of a weekly general market in Southend High Street.

3. Background

3.1 The Membership of the Task & Finish Group was: Cllr Lamb, Cllr Moring, Cllr D Garston, Cllr J Garston, Cllr Gilbert, Cllr Terry, Cllr Longley, Cllr Morgan, Cllr Betson.

3.2 During the initial task and finish group meeting, background research from consumers and businesses showed that a High Street weekly market would be positively received. Members were keen to progress the idea of such a market for the town. Officers were charged with bringing forward options for consideration and as such, four were presented. These options were

- 1) Procure a market operator
- 2) Operate the market directly
- 3) Extend the existing Farmers Market

4) Outsource the role to the new BID company.

Of the four options presented, Members favoured a direct Council operation, however it was presented by one Member that Rayleigh Town Council worked in partnership with a trader's assistance to good effect. Members agreed that a visit to Rayleigh Town Council and the market itself would be beneficial.

- 3.3 The visit to Rayleigh took place on 6th March, Members and Officers were appraised of the history and operational perspective of Rayleigh market. The Southend delegation visited the traders and were content with the standard and range of stalls on offer. The market stalls consisted of fresh produce, bread and cakes, household goods, seafood, clothing and floristry. Members were appraised of the on-going costs and resources.
- 3.4 The following draft plan for Southend has been therefore recommended by Members of the Task and Finish Group to take forward for consideration by Cabinet:
- a. A weekly general market be established to run each Thursday – this day was the consensus view of the Task and Finish Group as would provide consistency for a market in the town once the Roots Hall site is developed. Operators at Rayleigh were also positive about applying to come to Southend on Thursdays.
 - b. The initial operating period will be 08.00 – 14.00 – this timing has been selected initially as it aligns with the no requirement to require power / lighting during winter periods. It is also the trading time that works effectively in Rayleigh. The Task and Finish Group wanted to reference that as Southend's market grew successfully, the ability to extend this time may be a future option
 - c. Stalls will be allocated in 3m x 3m slots.
 - d. The market will be located between the northern side of the railway bridge and the unit currently occupied by Clinton Cards.
 - e. The Council will not provide any infrastructure, power or stalls.
 - f. The Council will provide space, appropriate licensing and permissions along with covering business rate fees.
 - g. Traders will be responsible for removing their own waste including waste water.
 - h. Pitch fees will need to be paid in advance.
 - i. Traders will need to apply to the Council's Town Centre Management team to trade as part of quality control management. Licensing and Regulation officers will be involved in this process.

- j. The Council's Town Centre management team will arrange a partnership with one lead trader to oversee early morning set up. This model has been working effectively in Rayleigh for the last year.
 - k. There are no new Council resources for the Market, however a visit each week will be undertaken by a Council Officer to ensure compliance with regulations and management issues.
 - l. Market traders will work to a set of regulations set out in Appendix 1 . These regulations are based on the National Markets association (NABMA) guidelines and have been successfully adapted by Rayleigh.
 - m. Fees will be paid in advance by traders, weekly cash collection by officers will not be offered as is too resource intensive.
- 3.5 Regulatory Services officers have been consulted and their recommendation would be to allow only prepared and/or pre-wrapped food items to be sold on the market. Therefore no food products which need to be cooked on a stall or van will be permitted. This will ensure power appliance or use of generators will be prohibitive thus reducing the risk of noise nuisance and food handling issues.
- 3.6 Research was undertaken with businesses in the High Street area however now that the new BID company has formed, its committee will also be consulted and their views sought for inclusion in the final Cabinet report.

4. Other Options

Officers put four options forward for members to consider - 1) Procure a market operator, 2) Operate the market directly 3) Extend the existing Farmers Market 4) Outsource the role to the new BID company. There was no appetite to leave the town centre market issue unresolved.

5. Reasons for Recommendations A range of options were investigated and presented, this option was unanimously preferred by Members of the all party Task and Finish Group.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities.

Excellent – A market will attract additional footfall to the High Street and add value to permanent traders.

Prosperous – New traders from the Southend community would be able to start business activities from a low cost base.

Clean – Additional cleansing may be required through the Cory contract.

6.2 Financial Implications

There is an impact on current role of Council's Town Centre Management team who will take responsibility for weekly site inspection.

Planning application, business rates and processing costs will apply.

Licensing colleagues will be required to make inspections

There may be an additional cost to cleansing through the Cory contract of approx. £210 per week.

Once the full financial liabilities are finalised, it is proposed to arrive at a pitch fee that covers all such costs to ensure the market is financially sustainable. It is envisaged that this would be in the region of £25 per 3 x 3 stall.

These rates are below the rates on the previous York Rd Market and in keeping with other local market locations.

6.3 Legal Implications

It will be necessary to secure a planning consent to implement the market proposal and all regulatory requirements are detailed in the draft regulations. The draft regulations have been assessed by the Council's legal team.

6.4 People Implications

Additional duties within the Council's Town Centre and licensing functions will be required but will be absorbed within existing resources.

6.5 Property Implications

N/A

6.6 Consultation

Research with town centre businesses and consumers in Southend was undertaken in 2012 showing strong support for a market. The Mary Portas' Report undertook consultation with key national retailers and identified markets as being a significant driver for town centres. Further research was undertaken by with the new BID committee in May 2013.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

The trade stand panel criteria will be produced with consideration given to the Council's Equality and Diversity policy and an appropriate assessment developed.

6.8 Risk Assessment

Relevant risk assessments will need to be in place for stall holders which will be developed as part of operational requirements.

This option was selected due to its lack of financial risk as there are no infrastructure costs and operational costs will be met by income.

6.9 Value for Money

The project needs to be cost neutral and identified costs for introducing a market will be set against pitch fee income. The Council will not be providing the stalls.

6.10 Community Safety Implications

N/A

6.11 Environmental Impact

Our waste contractor Cory are involved in the process, environmental considerations will be incorporated into the market trader panel

7. **Background Papers**

8. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Market rules and regulations

Appendix 2 Guidance on Trading Law Requirements for Mobile Units at Markets & Special Events