



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITY**

to
**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
21 NOVEMBER 2017**

MARKETS UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the viability of the Maldon Town Markets (Thursday and Saturday) and seek the Committee's views on future market operations in Maldon.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- (i) That the Committee agrees Option 2 below that, the existing market contract could be extended for a period of six months to allow Members and Officers to fully investigate alternative options for retaining a market offer, potentially elsewhere in the town.
- (ii) In support of above, a Member / Officer Task and Finish Working Group is set up to explore options before reporting back at the next meeting.

3. AREA FOR DECISION / ACTION

- 3.1.1 At its meeting on 29 August 2017 (Minute No. 343 refers) this Committee resolved to seek tenders for a new market at the Butt Lane Car Park, Maldon based on the following :-

On a Thursday with a maximum allocation of 27 parking spaces and
On a Saturday Market for up to three stalls with no loss of car parking spaces.

- 3.1.2 Tenders / Quotations would need to provide greater income than the potential revenue generated from the parking spaces utilised by the market (i.e. a minimum of £15,000 per annum). The contract would be for a period of two years.
- 3.1.3 Officers extended the existing market for a three month period, while the procurement process was carried out. This process has now been completed and the Council did not receive any quotations that met income levels set by this Committee. One variant bid was received that provided a lower level of income on a smaller space but this still fell short of the *pro rata* income target. If the detail of this bid is discussed Members will be required to enter into private session as it will likely be necessary to disclose confidential information.

3.1.4 On the assumption that Members wish to continue to provide and support a regular market within the town, the Council has a number of options for consideration. It is suggested that a Member Task and Finish group is established to quickly investigate options and report back to this Committee with its findings. Further information on this is provided later in the report.

3.2 Option 1

3.2.1 Summary - The Butt Lane market is ended at the expiration of the current agreement and that the space previously reserved for the market on market days is given back to car parking.

3.2.2 This option would generate additional car parking income but will mean that the overall economic value of the market will be lost. The latter is difficult to quantify but could potentially mean less shoppers on Thursdays, the main market day.

3.2.3 Members and Officers could then work to develop an economically viable replacement market within the town.

3.3 Option 2

3.3.1 Summary - The existing market contract could be extended for a period of six months to allow Members and Officers to fully investigate alternative options for retaining a market offer, potentially elsewhere in the town.

3.3.2 Feedback from one operator suggests that there is interest in providing a market, however a longer lead time would be required to organise the stall holders. The same operator also fed back that in their view the current income figure was challenging.

3.4 Member Task and Finish Group

3.4.1 As suggested in 3.1.4 above, a Member working group could be established with the aim of quickly investigating options for the future delivery of a market within Maldon. It has been a challenge to overcome the practical difficulties of providing a market other than in a car park location. However, it is thought that there are still opportunities to explore that might be viable.

3.4.2 A task and finish group could include 4 representatives from this Committee and it is suggested that it meets to explore potential options before reporting back at the next meeting.

4. IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS

4.1 This report links to the corporate goals of “Delivering good quality, cost effective and valued services” and “Creating opportunities for Growth and Economic Prosperity”.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – If the Council decides to end the existing market arrangements there would be no regular market in Maldon.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – It is possible that halting a market could have a negative impact on individuals and families on lower incomes that might traditionally shop at markets. However for this to be the case the range of goods on offer would need to be quite diverse.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – No corporate risks have been identified.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – If the Butt Lane market did not continue in any form, the Council would be likely to see an increase in car parking income of around £10,000 however this figure would be based on the assumption that all spaces utilised by the market would be occupied which may not be the case.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 It would be disappointing if Maldon lost its town market and whilst the increase in car parking income would be welcomed it could have a wider economic impact that is difficult to measure. The Committee has a number of options to consider with the aim of creating a sustainable market within Maldon, but Officers recommend that the Committee agrees Option 2 that, the existing market contract could be extended for a period of six months to allow Members and Officers to fully investigate alternative options for retaining a market offer, potentially elsewhere in the town. Officers further recommend that a Member / Officer Task and Finish Working Group is set up to explore options before reporting back at the next meeting.

Background Papers: None.

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