

For Council: 28 July 2020 APPENDIX 1

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Markets Working Group (MWG) held via 'Zoom' on Friday 17 July 2020 at 10:00am

PRESENT: Councillors J Checkland (Chairman) P McDermott, D Robertson, J Smith, C Spruce and M Warfield.

IN ATTENDANCE: J Appleyard (LCC Markets Officer), L Clarke (Civic Officer), S Thomas (Deputy Town Clerk), A Briggs (Town Clerk)

APOLOGIES: None

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: *The Minutes of the MWG meeting held on 17 December 2019 be confirmed as a correct record [Minutes adopted by Council on 27 January 2020]*

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None

4. PRODUCER'S MARKET REVIEW

The Working Group noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Producer's Market had only taken place on one occasion prior to the scheduled review date of June 2020. It had been suggested that a review take place after the November Market, but Cllr D Robertson suggested a review following the December Market would be more appropriate and this was agreed by the Working Group.

RESOLVED: *The Markets Working Group to review the partnership with CJ Events following the December 2020 Producer's Market and to make recommendations to Council regarding future arrangements as soon as possible thereafter.*

5. REVIEW OF MARKET RENT INCENTIVES

The Working Group reviewed the incentives as resolved at Council at its meeting on 11 June (Minute 24). Particular attention was paid to the 50% reduction in prevailing pitch hire rates - based on the Tuesday market model as currently adopted - having regard to the benefits of the incentive to Traders, the impact of the incentive on the public purse and the relative strength of each market.

Members also considered the notice period required for Traders to advise the Council of their non-attendance in order to avoid incurring arrears as resolved at Council; the 24 hour period as resolved made it difficult for the Markets Officer to arrange casual cover for the vacant stall, causing a potential loss of income to the Council and to casual traders who may have been able to stand if they had received more notice of pitch availability. It was agreed that this timescale should be amended.

It was agreed that an evidence base to evaluate the proposed changes would be useful, and also that measures should be incorporated to allow the MWG to vary the terms of its resolution if a detrimental effect on the market/s was observed.

The Town Clerk confirmed an item on the July Council agenda could lead to the amalgamation of the September and October meetings of the City Council. If this were to proceed, the delegated authority of the MWG would expire prior to the matter being discussed again at full council as had originally been planned. The MWG concluded that a request to extend the delegated authority as granted by council would therefore be appropriate. Moreover, the advantage of continued delegated authority, which would allow the council to respond to changing circumstances more quickly, was agreed by all members.

RESOLVED (under delegated authority):

a) a) The current 50% reduction in pitch fees as applied to the Saturday market cease and be replaced with a reduction of 25% to take effect from (and including) the market on Saturday 15 August until (and including) the Market of Saturday 12 September. This change to be reviewed by the MWG and, if deemed necessary by the MWG, varied as soon as practicable if a detrimental impact on the Saturday market is noted.

b) The current 50% reduction in pitch fees to remain in place for the Tuesday and Friday markets for the current period of delegated authority

c) With reference to the recommendation at Minute 24(d) of the Council meeting of 11 June 2020, the wording be amended with immediate effect to:

'No arrears to be charged to stall holders who are self-isolating, or those who confirm in good time that they will not attend. Arrears will be charged when a Trader does not attend on their usual or allocated trading day(s) and has not provided at least 72 hours' notice to the City Council (unless they are self-isolating or shielding). Any Trader who is self-isolating must advise the City Council at the earliest opportunity and will not be allowed to return to the Market for a period of time in line with prevailing Government guidelines for self-isolation (currently 14 days).'

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

That the delegated authority of the MWG as resolved at Council on 11 June 2020 be extended to allow decisions as to prevailing pitch fees etc to be made outside of the potentially restrictive timescales for full council meetings. Delegated authority to be in place until 31 March 2021 or upon resolution of the Council, whichever is the sooner. In the event that this recommendation is adopted, the resolutions at Minute 5 above to be extended to 12 October 2020 [that date being nine days after the next scheduled meeting of the MWG and would allow time for communication with Traders as to any changes in incentives agreed at that meeting]

6. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

10.00am on Friday 2 October 2020

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman highlighted a recent email from a Trader stating that some Traders are leaving the Square early. The Markets Officer confirmed that he undertakes spot checks on this longstanding matter and has not observed such behaviour recently.

Cllr C Spruce stated he had been very impressed with the Producer's Market and requested further information as to the advertising that is undertaken by LCC following his discussions with CJ Events representatives. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that considerable social media advertising is undertaken and that the City Council had also advertised the market in the July and August issues of the Lichfield Advertiser and its sister publications that are distributed in surrounding towns and villages. The Markets Officer confirmed that the Farmers' Market poster on the Square had also been removed.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 10.42am