

Brighton & Hove City Council

For general release

Meeting: **Environment Committee**
 Licensing Committee

Date: **26th January 2006**
 2nd March 2006

Report of: **Director of Environment**

Subject: **Evaluation of George Street Farmers' Market**

Ward(s) affected: **All**

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To update members on the evaluation of George Street Farmers' Market following its six month trial period.
- 1.2 A report to Environment Committee on March 17th 2005 proposed that the Farmers' Market be reviewed after six months to ensure the Hove business community experienced positive impacts as a result of the market being held in George Street. Provided the business community was supportive, the report recommended the market become established as a regular monthly market.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report is noted and licensing policy allowing a regular farmers' market in George Street, Hove continues with stall holders exempted from the street trading waiting lists.

3. Information/background

- 3.1 The farmers' market has been running on the fourth Saturday of each month since July 2005. The market is coordinated by Common

Cause Co-operative Ltd, a not for profit company based in Lewes. The aims of the market are:

- To have a positive economic impact on George Street traders
- To enable local residents greater access to fresh, locally grown produce
- To support local farmers, growers and food producers by providing a retail outlet direct to public
- To reduce "food miles" from transport in the food system and to reduce packaging in food production / sales
- To help consumers become more aware of and interested in the origin of food and seasonality
- To connect the urban area with the rural economy
- To promote regional foods and improve awareness of traceability of local food

3.2 The council approved that the market could go ahead provided an evaluation was carried out to assess impacts on local traders. The market coordinators have undertaken an evaluation of the market with support from the Sustainability Team between November 2005 and January 2006. The overall findings of the evaluation are positive.

3.3 Consultations have been carried out with the business community through attendance at a meeting of the Hove Business Partnership. Discussions with a representative of Hove Business Association were also planned and it was sent a consultation questionnaire, but has decided not to comment. They had too many items on their meeting agenda in January to discuss the market.

3.4 55 questionnaires were completed by local businesses in George Street and surrounding Streets this month, and a questionnaire survey was also conducted with customers to the November farmers' market in George Street. Findings, analysis and conclusions of these consultations are set out below.

3.5 Environment Committee supported establishment of a regular monthly market after evaluation.

4. Evaluation of the George Street Farmers' Market

4.1 Farmers' Market Customer Survey November 26th 2005. The findings of this survey demonstrated that most market customers interviewed wished the market to continue, and that while

attending the market they were more likely to shop in George Street. The survey was carried out at the November market during which 73 customers to the market were interviewed. Interviewees were asked up to 10 questions. The following is a sample of results:

Do you want the market to continue?	96%
<i>said yes</i>	
Did you visit the local shops in George Street today?	78%
<i>said yes</i>	
Are you more likely to shop in George Street if the market is here?	84.5% said yes
Does the market improve the atmosphere of George Street?	100%
<i>said yes</i>	

See Appendix One for a more detailed breakdown of responses.

- 4.2 The organising committee of the Hove Business Partnership was consulted on December 13, 2005. The Partnership was impressed by the positive customer evaluation and felt it would like to see the market continue. Suggestions were made about the scope and wording of the trader questionnaire, and these were incorporated.
- 4.3 Questionnaires were delivered to George Street shops and other local traders after the Christmas break and analysed last week. This showed almost 60% of George Street traders responding support the market and want to see it continue. A further 25% don't mind if it continues or not and 15% are against it for a variety of reasons, which Common Cause would try to address. There is further support (and lack of opposition) to the market continuing from local traders nearby. About a quarter of all local traders say business increases on the day when the market is in George Street and 38% say shoppers are more likely to shop there on market days. For a full breakdown of the traders' questionnaire, see the last page of Appendix One.
- 4.4 Common Cause experience of running the market – summary:
 1. "The setting up and running the market has, on the whole, been a positive experience and we have only had help and understanding from the council employees. Customers have been very pleased to see a market there. Increasingly people are returning specifically to come to the market and have seen advertising for the market. The stallholders have largely done well, though this has varied between months and between stallholders, with a couple of months when some stallholders have been quite pessimistic, to some stallholders regularly selling out, and the Christmas Eve one when everyone did extremely well.

2. "Relations with local shopkeepers are largely good and we have been able to accommodate requests and deal with concerns amicably. There are one or two exceptions....."
3. "The publicity for the market is not yet fully effective. Newspaper advertising is too expensive for an on-going market and licensed lamp post banners sites are too far away. The 20 posters erected by Coastline Poster Services are affordable but we are not sure that they are sufficiently visible. Stallholders, shops and customers all have said that advertising needs to be increased despite the fact that we have spent £4,800 over 6 months on advertising."
4. "What we would like from the Council
 - To negotiate a cheaper annual license fee
 - Support with sorting out affordable publicity in and around George Street
 - Information on its web site or a web link."

4.5 Evaluation Conclusions

This has been a difficult pilot project and, perhaps inevitably with so many stakeholders, it has not been possible to please all the people all of the time. So while the reaction from shoppers has been overwhelmingly positive, traders have made a more mixed response. Even so, a large majority of traders responding (87%) are in favour of the market continuing or don't mind, though improvements could still be made, as everyone recognises.

- 4.6 The financial independence and long term viability of the market has not yet been fully established so Common Cause is seeking council help to promote the market, almost all of which could be done within current resources (see below). Common Cause would also reduce the number of letter drops to local shops, and reduce the market manager's hours, both of which would appear to be acceptable, now the market is more established. In addition it could get a discount per stall if it were able to apply for an annual licence.
- 4.7 The pilot has been hard work for the market organisers, but the surveys show very positive results, so it should now be established as a regular market, with the council still closely involved to help ensure further improvements are made.

5. Further information

Licensing Issues

- 5.1 George Street is a designated consent street for trading purposes. The farmers' market is currently run as a small street market paying a one off fee for each market. Common Cause may request to Licensing Committee to alter their current paying arrangements. This request would be to pay a fee for a 'regular street market' on an annual basis. This would be calculated based on the number of events (12 per year) and administration and enforcement costs to the authority. This proposal may be put to Licensing Committee along with an update report on March 2nd 2006.

5.2 Traffic and highways issues

A variation to the existing permanent traffic regulation order will now be required, extending the hours of closure back by two hours on the fourth Saturday of each month from 10.00am to 8.00am. This proposal will be advertised and open for public comment. If unresolved objections to the extended closure hours are received these objections will be reported back to Environment Committee for consideration. So an annual temporary traffic notice will cover all the markets for the year, which will help Common Cause notify all shopkeepers on George Street a week in advance of each market.

5.4 Financial implications

To date, the council has provided £5,000 from the Sustainability Team budget as seed funding for the market. Common Cause Co-operative anticipates that no further funding will be required from the council other than for signage and advertising the road closure: additional flap information signs will be required to advertise the earlier times of closure of the road a week prior to the market. These can be erected on existing street furniture at an approx. cost of £500 and could be used for any other markets held in George Street. It is proposed therefore that this be met from the Sustainability Team 2006/7 budget.

The cost of advertising the road closure traffic order will be about £1,000 (Two public notices in the Argus @ £500 each). The cost of this amendment would normally be recharged to the client, but the viability of the market would be helped if this could also be met by the council itself.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultations have been carried out with the business community and customers of the farmers' market. The findings are detailed under item 4 of this report, above.
- 6.2 Officers consulted for this report include Sustainability, Environmental Health & Licensing, Highway Management, Economic Development, and Leisure (Events).

7. Further Information

- 7.1 There are no imminent plans for the French Market to return to George Street. The Hove Business Partnership is currently unable to offer financial support for this market to take place.
- 7.2 A new report from the New Economics Foundation strongly supports the case for farmers' markets. The report says London's burgeoning farmers markets are increasingly important social hubs that bring wealth to a neighbourhood - and their vegetables are often cheaper than those in supermarkets.
- 7.3 Far from the popular myth that farmers markets are expensive preserves of the middle classes, the report finds that the street markets surveyed offer significantly cheaper fresh produce, and that the farmers markets surveyed are broadly price competitive with supermarkets even before the quality of the produce and its provenance is taken into account.
- 7.4 The findings are in NEF's new report for the London Development Agency, "Trading Places: The local economic impact of street produce and farmer's markets".

COMMITTEE REPORT APPENDIX



Meeting/Date	Environment Committee January 26 th 2006
Report of	Director of Environment
Subject	Evaluation of George Street Farmers' Market
Wards affected	All
Financial implications	<p>License applications fee income of £2,500 will be generated and paid by Common Cause Co-operative Ltd.</p> <p>Signage costing £1,000 will be paid for by the Sustainability team and has been included within their budget forecast.</p> <p>The advertising of Traffic Regulation Orders costing in the region of £1000 will also have to be funded from within the Sustainability team.</p> <p><i>Finance Officer consulted: Alasdair Ridley Date 16/01/06</i></p>
Legal implications	<p>It will be necessary for the relevant sections of the Council dealing with highway, traffic management & licensing to work together to be satisfied with the arrangements for continuing the Farmers' Markets. If the Committee is happy to continue to support the market proposals, any changes to traffic regulation provisions will need to be processed as appropriate, whilst any issues relating to licences will have to be considered by the Licensing section and, if necessary, the Licensing Committee</p> <p><i>Lawyer consulted: John Heys Date.19.12.2005</i></p>
Corporate/Citywide implications	Risk assessment
<p>Local Farmers Markets contribute to council objectives in the Draft Food Strategy.</p> <p>Reduction in food miles contributes to reducing carbon emissions, meeting targets of the draft Climate Change Action Plan.</p>	<p>There are risks attached to running a market which is still unpopular with a few local traders, though these are very much the minority and Common Cause would continue to work closely with traders.</p> <p>An annual licensing fee and publicity support would help reduce the risk of increased costs. Long-term viability is likely to depend on a steady increase in profile and in the number and range of stalls. The established Lewes farmers' market operated on a very tight margin for some time, so this is not unusual.</p>
Sustainability implications	Equalities implications
Meets objective of Sustainability	The market aims to improve

COMMITTEE REPORT APPENDIX



Strategy 1 st Objective: 'To increase everyone's access to the basic elements of life such as good quality local food'.	people's access to good quality fresh local produce.
Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder Street traders have to undergo a 28-day consultation process which involves copying the application to the Police and Fire Brigade. Access for emergency vehicles to pass through George Street is maintained at all times when the market is held.	
Background papers http://www.commoncause.org.uk/ http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/uploads/w2rrxbb4htuk3t55fbvmhh5514122005114341.pdf	
Contact Officer <i>Francesca Iliffe, Sustainability Officer x2246</i>	