

BRIEFING REPORT - SWANLEY SUNDAY MARKET PILOT UPDATE

Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee - 18 October 2022

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer - Finance & Trading

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report updates members on the 6-month pilot for an additional Sunday street market in Swanley.

This report supports the Key Aim of: Building on the District's thriving economy through the regeneration of our market towns, and by enhancing both the visitor and rural economies.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Margot McArthur

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Recommendation to Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee: That the additional Sunday market pilot update report be noted and the officer recommendation be considered by the Committee, and its views be submitted for consideration by Cabinet.

Recommendation to Cabinet: That the additional Swanley Sunday market extension request along with any proposals submitted by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee be considered and approved.

Reason for recommendation: The pilot for an additional Sunday street market in Swanley, has been in the main successful and is slowly assisting in the generation of additional income for the Council and has helping to build on the District's thriving economy through the regeneration of our market towns.

Introduction

- 1 In its meeting on 5 January 2022 the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee resolved that it be recommended to Cabinet that the proposal for an additional Sunday market, be endorsed subject to the following comments made by the Advisory Committee:
 - a) the market should be tightly managed

- b) the public and Swanley Town Council should be rigorously consulted
 - c) Following completion of the pilot, a report should be brought to the Committee with an update.
- 2 On 13 January 2022 The Council's Cabinet resolved that taking into consideration of the views of the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee, the additional Sunday Street Market proposal be endorsed.
- 3 The Council's current street market contract is managed by a specialist markets contractor (Bray Associates) who deliver both the Wednesday and pilot Sunday street markets, which both operate from the Shopping Centre, Swanley.
- 4 The initial Sunday market pilot was to offer an additional Sunday street market at the same location as the existing Swanley market. This would initially be trialed as a 6-month pilot with the potential of either extending the pilot if successful or adding it to the street market tender from March 2023.

Location

- 5 eVolve Estates, based in London operate and own the Shopping Centre at Swanley. eVolve Estates have formally approved that the Council can use its shopping centre for the Sunday market at this location.
- 6 eVolve Estates and the Council have formally agreed a lease cost for the Sunday market at £50,000 per annum or £25,000 per 6 month period, depending on any extension to the pilot.
- 7 A new lease, as the previous lease expired on 31 March 2022 with the provisions for a Wednesday and Sunday street market has been agreed with eVolve estates in principle.

Sunday Market Pilot Update

- 8 Bray Associates commenced the proposed 6-month pilot on Sunday 3rd April 2022 missing any Sunday dates agreed with Swanley Town Council. They have been responsible for the total management of the Sunday market, including publicity, marketing, operations and litter management.
- 9 The ethos of the Sunday market pilot has been to set a mix of different types of market traders that would see traditional traders, along with a food market offering, local produce, and farmer's market like traders. Brays have encouraged through free start up rents to attract local traders, such as crafts and locally produced goods. They have also given opportunities to young entrepreneurial traders, such as start-up and are looking to bring on social enterprise businesses.

- 10 Given the short time the pilot market has been operating and the lengthy time it can take to attract established traders week in, week out the Sunday pilot has been successful.
- 11 From user research completed by Bray's and business user feedback completed by eVolve Estates it has been confirmed that market users and the local businesses in the area are very supportive, as currently Wednesday is their best trading day of the week, due in the main to the large footfall the market brings. Shops are now looking to open on a Sunday, given the growing Sunday market.

Management of the Market pilot

- 12 The Business Development Team with Direct Services have been monitoring the Sunday market pilot with planned meetings with the contractor, local businesses and the site owners, along with un-announced visits on a Sunday.
- 13 The Head of Direct Services has dealt with a small number of minor complaints about the market set up and operation, which have all been discussed with the contractor and resolved.

Community engagement

- 14 On-going engagement has taken place with Swanley Town Council constantly during the pilot and a grant of £25,000 has been paid to the town council, as agreed by Cabinet to be spent on any measures needed to mitigate any concerns raised from the Sunday market.
- 15 A public survey has been undertaken to engage with local people about the Sunday market pilot and to help evaluate the additional Sunday market and its operation under the pilot. The survey ran from 16 August to 16 September 2022.
- 16 The survey received 699 responses from members of the public with over 79% stating that they had visited the Sunday market. 85% of respondents were from a Swanley postal code. The results were generally split 50/50 on whether the market was a good idea, good value, good selection of goods to the opposite not needed or not good value and that it was just a copy of the Wednesday market.
- 17 40% of respondents thought the Sunday market had a positive effect, 39% thought it had a negative effect on the area. 21% said it had no effect at all.
- 18 On the question 'Would you like the Sunday market to continue at the end of the trial period in October 2022' all respondents that had visited the Sunday market 55% said yes and 45% said no.

Recommendation

- 19 Given the general split of opinion on whether the Sunday market is successful or needed, that the pilot for the additional Sunday street market is extended for a further 6-months from October 2022 to the end of March 2023 to allow more time to develop the market offering.
- 20 The market stall holder mix will improve shortly as the boot fair season has finished and with the lead-up to Christmas this extension will give the market pilot an opportunity to develop further.
- 21 A full procurement tender exercise is undertaken for the Swanley street markets to operate on Wednesday and Sunday's as the current Wednesday market contract ends on the 31 March 2023.

Key Implications

Financial

Since the start of the pilot in April 2022 £105,000 has been received by the Council in additional income.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

None identified.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Net Zero Implications

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030. The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact on this ambition. The impact has been reviewed and there will be a slight increase on carbon emissions produced in the district as a result of this decision.

An additional Sunday market in Swanley would see a potential increase to local traffic in the area, which could slightly increase carbon emissions. Additional waste would be produced, which would need to be removed and disposed of correctly.

Conclusions

Other than monitoring the management of the market, there is no resourcing issues for the Council to be concerned about. This additional income would significantly assist the Council in balancing the budget.

Appendices	None
Background Papers	None
Adrian Rowbotham Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading	