

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Policy and Performance Advisory Committee</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>30 November 2023</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Consideration of a petition 'To Return Lewes Farmers Market Back to Cliffe Precinct'.</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Simon Russell, Head of Democratic Services</b>
<b>Ward(s):</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	<b>To consider the petition asking for the return of Lewes Farmers Market to Cliff High Street</b>
<b>Officer recommendation(s):</b>	<b>That the Scrutiny Committee considers the petition and decides if there are any areas where further scrutiny is required.</b>
<b>Reasons for recommendations:</b>	<b>To meet the requirements of the Council's petition scheme in accordance with paragraphs 6.1 and 7.1.</b>
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b>	<b>Name: Nick Peeters Post title: Committee Officer, Democratic Services E-mail: <a href="mailto:nick.peeters@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk">nick.peeters@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk</a> Telephone number:</b>

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 On the 25 September 2023, Lewes District Full Council was presented with a petition requesting that Lewes Farmers Market be returned to its previous site at the Cliffe Precinct, allowing its current location, Friars Walk Car Park, to be used as a car park. The petition had 924 signatories and is attached at appendix 1 to this report. In line with the petitions scheme, the petition was referred to the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee for consideration.
- 1.2 Paragraph 7.1 of the Council's petition scheme states that any petition that receives more than 750 signatories (and under 1500) will be considered by the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee. Paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of the scheme outline the responsibilities of the Committee when considering a petition

## **2 Background**

Lewes Farmers Market is run by Common Cause a not for profit community development organisation based in Lewes. There are two markets a month with 36 stalls and has operated in Lewes since 1998. A report produced by the farmers market in 2020 is attached as appendix 2.

- 2.1 In 2020 Lewes Farmers Market was moved to its current location at Friars Walk Car Park. The decision was in response to concerns around social distancing and limiting the spread of COVID-19. The Market has remained at the Friars Walk location. In August 2023 a petition was received by the Council requesting that the Market be returned to its previous location at Cliffe Precinct. The concern raised by the Petition was that the lack of parking space at Friars Walk, as a result of the Market moving there, was impacting on businesses in the Town.

Also around the same time some of the establishments in Cliff High Street were also granted pavement licenses allowing them put tables and chairs outside of their premises for their customers to sit outside, these licences are still in place and those premises are now also required to pay a charge for this licence. Part of the granting of these licences is to ensure that the precinct is still accessible as a result.

- 2.2 Around the same time, some of the establishments in Cliff High Street were also granted pavement licenses, allowing them to put tables and chairs outside of their premises for allow customers to sit outside. These licences are still in place and those premises are now also required to pay a charge for this licence. Part of the granting of these licences is to ensure that the precinct is still accessible as a result.

- 2.3 In 2023 Lewes District Council received complaints that there was insufficient parking at Friars Walk when the market was operating and this was impacting on the customers visiting and shopping at their premises. As mentioned in the Common Cause report the market takes up some of the car parking spaces but not all of them.

- 2.4 The Farmers Market was putting up signage on the Friday evenings preceding the market advising that part of the car park would be closed and these signs have been amended to advise of the spaces being taken by the market and also directing people to alternative parking at Phoenix car park on the other side of Cliff High Street.

Common Cause have also carried out a very small visitor/parking on market and non-market days and the information for this is shown in Appendix 3.

### **3 Consideration of the Petition**

- 3.1 As stated in the Petition Scheme, the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee will have an opportunity to ask questions of the relevant Council officer and the lead petitioner will have been able to suggest questions to the Chair ahead of the meeting.

### **4 Financial appraisal**

- 5.1 Although there would be increased car parking charges for the spaces released, there would be a loss of market trader payments for the spaces they use. The direct financial implications are therefore, small.

## **5 Legal implications**

- 6.1 Street Trading Policy for Lewes Pedestrian Precinct 2021 which includes Tables and Chairs Permits in Pedestrian Precinct. The policy was subject to a consultation process however was implemented post Covid, this limits the number of pitches on the pedestrian precinct and is accommodating of pavement licenses and street furniture. Pavement licences for Lewes Pedestrian Precinct during Covid was not a chargeable licence, however the period of consent for pavement licences has been extended for another year and now has a cost implication to businesses / Business rates. One of the factors considered when reviewing the street trading policy was to limit the number of pitches available on the pedestrian precinct.

## **6 Risk management implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct risk management implications directly as a result of the report.

## **7 Equality analysis**

- 8.1 There are no direct equality issues as a result of the report, however, the Lewes Area Access Group have been engaged with and invited to attend the meeting.

## **8 Environmental sustainability implications**

- 9.1 There are no direct environmental sustainability implications as a result of this report.

## **9 Appendices**

**Appendix 1 – Petition 'To Return Lewes Farmers Market Back to Cliffe Precinct' – redacted.**

**Appendix 2 - Common Cause Report on Lewes Farmers Market**

**Appendix 3 – Commons Cause Parking Survey**

## **10 Background papers**

[Lewes District Council Full Council - Monday, 25th September, 2023 6.00 pm](#)

[Lewes District Council Constitution Part 6 – Petition Scheme](#)