

Report to:	Policy and Performance Advisory Committee
Date:	25 January 2024
Title:	Update on Lewes Farmers Market Petition
Report of:	Simon Russell, Head of Democratic Services
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of report:	To set out considerations and costs for survey work in relation to Lewes Farmers Market and any potential change to its location.
Officer recommendation(s):	1) That further work is required to seek more quotes to carry out the surveying work and access audit along with agreement from Cabinet to carry out this work and in order for a fully informed decision to be made as to the long-term location of Lewes Farmers Market.
Reasons for recommendations:	To seek best value for money for the further work required as above
Contact Officer(s):	Name: Julie Quanstrom Post title: Head of Neighbourhood First E-mail: julie.quanstrom@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

1 Introduction

- 1.1 On the 30th November 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 in line with the Council's 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 schemes outline the responsibilities of the Committee when considering a petition.

2 Background

- 2.1 In June 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.

3 Consideration of the Petition

3.1 In accordance with the Petition Scheme, the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee listened representations from both the Farmers Market and the representative from the Riverside. A number of discussions took place regarding the issues that had been identified around parking and the suggestion that some businesses in the Riverside were losing income, alongside the viability of the Farmers Market to either continue in the Car park, move back to the Precinct, or consider an alternative location, and concerning access issues in both the previous and current location.

It was decided that further work was required to fully understand the impact of the Farmers Market being in :-

- Friars Walk Car Park
- Cliffe High Street
- Another location within the vicinity of Cliffe High Street.

Officers were asked to consider further work that would be required in order to evaluate the viability of the above and to report back to PPAC with those suggestions and cost implications.

4 Financial appraisal

Officers considered that as well as the number of nearby available parking spaces on market days as well as non-market days, that it was important to consider the footfall into the area as well as the stated purpose of people's visit to the area. Access needs must also be considered, for both Cliffe High Street and the Friars Walk car park.

Colleagues at East Sussex County Council use 'Project Centre' to carry out all of their parking surveys and following discussions with Officers a quote was sought to carry out the parking availability, footfall count and indicative visitor survey and the subsequent analysis of the results. The costs for the parking availability and footfall count, together with analysis was in the region of £15,000 per Saturday. We also estimate it would cost a further £2,000 to have an access audit carried out of both locations.

We have sought professional advice on the surveying requirements, however, Officers have considered that these costs are excessive and therefore further work is required to seek quotes from other surveying companies before any recommendation for funding is put to Cabinet.

5 Legal implications

6.1 There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report.

6 Risk management implications

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

7 Equality analysis

8.1 There are no direct equality issues as a result of the report

8 Environmental sustainability implications

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