



Market Sub-committee

Date: 5 August 2021

Title: Trader Representation at Market Sub-committee Meetings

Purpose of the Report: To consider proposed arrangements for a meeting-by-meeting approach to co-opting market traders onto the sub committee for all or part of a meeting, plus proposed arrangements for traders to request agenda items for a meeting.

Contact Officer: Vivien Cannon, Head of Cultural and Economic Services

Corporate Objective/s	No 23. To continue to manage, promote and develop the street market.	
Implications:		
Financial	No	
Human Resources	No	
Operational/Service delivery	No	
Procedural/Legal	Yes	Effective management of trader contribution in committee meetings
Risk/Health and Safety	No	
Environmental Aims	No	

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Should members be minded, the proposal are:

- 1.1 To endorse a meeting-by-meeting co-option approach to enabling traders to engage in Committee discussion outside of the Public Speaking agenda item.
- 1.2 To incorporate within co-option guidelines information on how traders may request an agenda item be accepted for discussion inclusive of timelines for doing so (See Appendix A).

2 COMMITTEE'S CONFIRMED TRADER REPRESENTATION APPROACH

2.1 At its meeting held 18 January 2021, (Ref. 22/MK), Committee received and considered a report proposing a recommendation be brought to the next meeting for traders to secure affiliation to the National Market Trader Federation (NMTF). The

trader group would remain self-governed yet would appoint a Liaison Officer who would have access to training and guidance from the NMTF. In turn it was considered that this would assist representation at Committee meetings. The Sub-Committee agreed this would be a positive move allowing the traders to have access to the NMTF for guidance.

2.2 On 27th February 2020, Committee received and considered a report (Ref. 29/MK) to ensure trader representation would be constructively undertaken and market traders would have a Liaison Officer formally recognised and affiliated to the National Market Trader Federation. The National Market Trader Federation could attend meetings as a voice for the traders if the Liaison Officer was unable to attend and offer advice when requested. Committee resolved:

- (a) to endorse Leighton Buzzard market traders have Liaison Officers formally recognised and affiliated to the National Market Trader Federation to facilitate trader representation at Committee meetings.**
- (b) to recommend the Liaison Officer be invited to the next appropriate Cultural and Economic Services Meeting for discussions on Market Matters.**

2.3 A NMTF Field Officer has visited the market on at least two occasions since Committee endorsed this approach to meet traders offering general support and encourage traders to take up the position of Liaison Officer. No trader has come forward to date.

2.4 Whilst disappointing, given the recent trading circumstances brought about by the Coronavirus, and the full support provided to traders throughout 2020 by the Council, it could be understood that representation has not been foremost on trader's minds.

3 TRADER ENGAGEMENT

3.1 As activity continues out of Coronavirus restrictions, Committee will wish to ensure traders continue having the opportunity to contribute to meeting discussion. The invitation to become formally recognised by Committee as the trader Liaison Officer position remains open.

3.2 Committee is reminded that outside of the meeting environment all traders are regularly engaged with. This takes place via the trader newsletter, face to face and through annual and adhoc surveys. In the 2020 annual market review, of those who answered a question on whether they found the trader newsletter useful, 88.89% said they did. All approaches provide officers with a regular and ongoing perspective of the many varying views of individual traders.

3.3 By way of examples of when traders contribute to Committee's decisions, when consideration is being given to review market activity that will affect them like opening hours and previously the adverse weather policy, officers seek out the opinion of each individual trader.

3.4 Following Committee's last meeting, whenever meeting agendas are published, all traders will now receive a link to the Council's website location so that they can read reports should they wish to. Likewise, they will continue to be provided with meeting dates and an invitation to attend.

3.6 Committee will be aware that a proportion of traders are represented by a small trader group and the representative has supported Committee discussion in the recent past. In addition, officers and Members have often received direct communication as and when an issue or question is raised outside of the Committee environment. Not all traders however recognise the group or wish to be represented by it, and this led to Committee's approach to collaborate with the NMTF.

4 PROPOSAL

4.1 The clear understanding is that Committee has endorsed its aim to secure a Liaison Office through collaboration with the NMTF. It is necessary that the clarity of Committee's position remains in place to avoid assumptions or confusion of the status of any trader receiving Committee's agreement of participation in a meeting outside of the agenda item for Public Speaking.

4.2 Until such time that a Liaison Officer/s is recruited Committee may wish to consider an interim approach to managing trader participation in keeping with Council protocol. Officers have drafted guidelines for co-option of traders for single agenda items or whole meetings, see Appendix A (**attached**).

4.3 In addition to guidelines on co-option, officers had offered proposals for helping traders navigate protocol for raising discussion items and the timelines for doing so.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 It may take some time to secure an NMTF Liaison Officer as desired. The delay in recruitment should not undermine the goal to have a Liaison Officer. The position brings with it the additional support, knowledge and if needed the representation of NMTF officers to assist a discussion. This benefits traders and Committee alike.

5.2 It is beneficial to all parties to maintain clarity regarding Committee's approach to avoid confusion and assumptions. Managing trader representation at meetings outside of this approach, therefore needs consideration and a temporary co-option approach on an agenda or meeting-by-meeting basis is proposed.

5.3 A temporary co-option approach recognises that traders may only wish to address committee on one agenda issue and not take a role of on-going representation beyond that or a single meeting. For those who wish to undertake regular engagement, the route of Liaison Officer is clearly set out.

END