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BENEFITS OF FOOD MARKETS: RESEARCH EVIDENCE

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Introduction

Food Exeter is a multi-agency partnership working for sustainable, healthy food in Exeter. Exeter City Council is a partnership member and sits on the Steering Group of the partnership.

Food Exeter has a goal of making it easier for local food producers to find local consumers. A key aspect of this is finding ways to make it easier – for everyone – to have markets and street trading playing the fullest role possible. Food Exeter also has a specific goal –to work with others, including the City Council, to create a bespoke new market space within the city centre.

Following a recent meeting, Food Exeter were asked to provide a report to council officers on evidence that shows the benefits of markets to any city as a whole, and to city centres.

Section A: Evidence on the benefits of markets

A1) Example of recent council policy change on markets

In a [policy published 2nd October](#) - East Devon District Council designated most of its administrative area as a consent street for street trading purposes, which will encourage street trading and make it much easier for street trading to take place. This means that in the consent streets, anyone wanting to street trade must obtain consent from the Council first:

'East Devon wants to encourage new local business activity and add to the vitality and footfall of its coastal and market towns... Traders that meet our high standards and requirements will have new opportunities and locations around the district from which to do business.'¹

This decision was taken partly based on analysis of evidence from a study on the impacts of markets on cities and towns (see below).

Sources: - East Devon District Council - [Study by the Institute of Place Management, April 2015](#)

¹ EDDC, News - Changes to Street Trading in East Devon come into force on 2 October 2017 <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/news/2017/09/changes-to-street-trading-in-east-devon-come-into-force-on-2-october-2017/>

A2) Study of impacts of markets and street trading on city centres

<http://www.placemanagement.org/media/19883/markets-matter-final.pdf>

The conclusions of this national study were that local markets and street trading complement and support existing businesses by increasing the amount of people that come to the area by 25%. They also found markets are crucial to the identity of a town. Some of their findings were that:

- Markets have a positive effect on town centres. Markets encourage more people into towns and 55% to 71% of market visitors spend money in other shops.
- Markets make towns more able to respond and adapt to change. A market offers more flexible retail space that can meet the needs of changing trends.

- Markets attract tourists and improve the experience tourists have of visiting an area. They allow visitors to take part in the everyday life of the place they are visiting.
- Markets provide jobs and self employment opportunities that are open to all.
- Markets help sole traders and small businesses set up and grow.
- In the sale of local products markets promote sustainability and are places of innovation, experiment and education.
- People can mix and meet each other at markets or street trading, it helps build communities.

Source: “Markets Matter” Reviewing the evidence & detecting the market effect -An ESRC funded research project, 2015

A3) Friend’s of the Earth Report on the economic benefits of farmers’ markets

“In 1999, three days of farmers’ markets in Winchester, Hampshire generated total sales for farmers between £70,000 and £85,000. An average of 10,000 visitors attended each market. Visitor and farmer numbers increased by 50% each time. 97% of people attending wanted to go to more farmer’s markets, and all local stores reported major increases in takings.”

“The 26th September 1999 farmers’ market in Winchester, Hampshire had sales of £30-35,000. The Stour Valley farmers’ market injected between £60,000 and £100,000 into the rural economy in 1999”

- Farmer’s Markets have a high multiplier effect: “money circulates more times in the local area before leaving - money stays locally if it is spent on wages for local people or buying local produce...Keeping money within an area is an important aspect of regeneration.”
- Farmer’s Markets provide low cost opportunities for the development of new businesses. By acting as a seed-bed, farmer’s Markets can lead to the development of larger commercial enterprises.
- Farmers’ markets increase the diversity of the local economy, making it more resilient.
- Farmers’ markets make a local area or region more attractive for tourism.

- Farmers' markets help small farmers stay in business. The National Farmers Union says, "With the crash in farm incomes it is no surprise that 97% of respondents to the survey said that the main reason producers attend farmers' markets is to secure vital extra income."
- Farmer's Markets can sell high quality produce at affordable prices...They put people in touch with where their food comes from, who grows it, and how it is grown. They strengthen the links between rural areas and town and cities.
- Farmer's Markets supply sustainable, local food with low food miles.

Source: Friend's of the Earth, The economic benefits of farmers' markets,2000

A4) FARMA Evidence to Government Select Committee on Benefits of Markets

"The resurgence of interest in food in UK society is epitomised by the growth of the farmers' market movement ... These trends are seen by some as not just indicative of a renewed interest in the provenance and quality of food but representative of an alternative food system that co-exists with `conventional' systems of farming, food manufacture and retail." *Cabinet Office, Food Matters, Towards a Strategy for the 21st Century (July 2008)*

The combined value of sales at farmers' markets we estimate to be £250million annually. Some 10,000 farmers and producers take part in farmers' markets, where some 250,000 "stallholder-days" have been created in the last decade.

Other Benefits of Farmer's Markets:

- Farmers' markets have been a welcome addition to community life and important to UK tourism.
- Direct communication with consumers ensures that stallholders at farmers' markets are operating to high animal welfare and environmental standards.
- A spirit of community is fostered through contacts made at the farmers' market.
- Shorter food chains mean fresher food, potentially more variety/choices, arguably better quality food.
- Seasonality means that people buy a greater variety of different foods; and it can be cheaper than the supermarkets.
- Diet can be improved through this, and through the requirement to cook fresh foods.
- The dialogue between customer and producer is a powerful mechanism to

encourage producers to develop/maintain high environmental and animal welfare standards.

- Reduced food miles arguably produce an environmental benefit.
- There is little or no packaging which reduces waste and the environmental impact of disposal.
- Farmers' markets are part of the tourism offer and catalytic to other food events e.g. food festivals.

Source: [Memorandum by Farma to Parliament -Communities and Local Government Committee](#)2008

A5) Research from The University of Exeter on Devon's Food economy

A summary of results from an online survey of food producers and processors in Devon:

- Farmers markets are seen as a very good way for producers to test the market with their products and get to know what consumers want.
- 70% [of respondents] sold direct to end consumers via their own shop, farmers markets or fairs and this was also reported to be the most important channel in terms of value for 37% of respondents
- Local direct sales can result in lower prices for consumers for quality food produce.
- Local Food producers can become adverts for the whole county and boost tourism.
- Agriculture is responsible for about twice as much employment in Devon as it is generally in Great Britain

Source: Lobley, Trail-Thomson and Barr (2012) A Review of Devon's Food Economy, CRPR

A6) Defra Funded report on Community Food Enterprises in Exeter

“Although you can see the beautiful rolling, highly productive green hills of Devon from nearly everywhere within Exeter, there are virtually no outlets for local food within the city, only a council run weekly farmers market, with a limited number of stall holders, and a few small independent shops selling small amounts of local foodstuffs”

Source: Beglin, N., Duff, C. and Parkin, E. 2010 Exeter Community Food Enterprises (CFE's): An area based study of CFE's in the south west of England –A Defra funded report

A7) The Sustainable Food Trust: Affordability of Farmer's Markets Produce

“The Kent Farmers' Market Association does regular 'shopping basket' comparisons between the supermarkets and their markets. A recent survey, based on a Sunday dinner for six, found the produce bought at the Shipbourne Farmers' Market up to 50% cheaper than that found at local supermarkets”.

Source: [The Sustainable Food Trust](#) (2014) –Affordability of Farmer's Markets Produce for Consumers

Section B: Examples Of Successful Markets

B1) Brighton Open Market:



Brighton Open Market -With Permanent Traders and Stall holders

In April 2006, the council and the Open Market Traders Association produced a business case for a new market. This resulted in the redevelopment of the market. The redevelopment has been achieved through a partnership approach involving the Open Market Traders, Hyde Housing Association and the City Council. The new market offers:

- 45 larger permanent market stalls offering a diverse range of goods that promote

fresh, healthy food and local producers

- A new covered market square for visiting markets, temporary stalls, community activities, street art and entertainment
- 12 small workshops for arts and crafts people and producer/retailers
- 87 affordable housing units.
- The market runs everyday but also hosts themed markets, such as [The Healthy Living Fair](#), Children's Fun Days, Craft-making sessions, and Cultural events

The new market is owned by the Brighton Open Market Community Interest Company (CIC), as a social enterprise for the benefit of the local community.

B2) Bristol Farmers' and Producers' Market

This market was relaunched in June 2017 in collaboration with Bristol City Council. Its priority is to recruit traders selling tasty, quality products with a consideration of provenance and sustainability. It runs weekly on Wednesdays from 8am-2.30pm with local producers selling breakfast pastries for commuters on their way to work, freshly made pasta and sauces and other locally made nutritious convenience foods, catering for busy lives. It also hosts local musicians and well-know local chefs for food demonstrations. The market works well with the nearby permanent St. Nicolas market food traders, show casing the vibrant and tasty food of Bristol.

[Bristol City Council manage pitch bookings](#)

B3) Moseley Farmer's Markets

Moseley Farmers' Market runs on the last Saturday of every month (except December when it is always before Christmas). It has 55-65 stalls in the centre of Moseley, a suburb of Birmingham. It is a not-for-profit organisation run by the community so they have now put more than £50,000 back into the community - It has won FARMA's "Best Farmers' Market in the UK" in 2009, 2012 and 2016. The judge said that: "*The market is fantastically lively and a real destination on a Saturday morning*" (Rita Exner, one of the judges in 2012). This market focuses on local and fresh produce made by farmers/producers connected to the local area.



Bristol St. Nicholas Farmers Market and Indoor Permanent Market

Food Exeter

A partnership working for sustainable and healthy food for all in Exeter

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