

Area South Development Team – Update Report (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

To summarise the work undertaken by the Area Development Team over the last 5 months to address priorities agreed by the Area South Committee.

Public Interest

This report provides an outline of the role and objectives of the Area South Development Team, which includes the provision of an advice and support service for members of the public from Petters House, Petters Way, Yeovil; the delivery of Yeovil Vision, Regeneration and Community Development projects.

Recommendation

1. That the report be considered and noted.
2. That members agree to allocate a sum of £25k from the Capital Reserve to be used for Community Capital Grants Projects.

Background

The Area South Development Plan

The Area South Development Plan identifies key issues and needs within the town of Yeovil and parishes of Area South and sets out the priorities for the Area South Development Team for the year 2016/17.

The service plan (see Appendix 1) is divided into 3 sections, which relate to the 3 key areas of work:

1.	Support for the vitality of the local economy, with a focus on Yeovil town centre and improving the physical environment
2.	Community development with a focus on addressing health, social and economic inequalities and the provision and development of community facilities
3.	To continue to provide a high quality accessible front line enquiry service

The Area South Development Plan acts as a working document with regular monitoring by the Area Development Team. It was prepared in May 2016 and was informed by the Area South Members. Monitoring reports are presented to Area South Committee and individual reports on specific projects and service areas are reported to the Committee regularly.

Project Updates

1. Support for the vitality of the local economy

Yeovil Vision:

- The new Yeovil Vision structure has been implemented and the board now has an increased representation from the business sector. The team support Yeovil Vision meetings producing all related reports, agendas, minutes and newsletters.
- The NDO (economy) continues to negotiate with Somerset County Council in order to complete outstanding works on the Reckleford Road scheme.
- The NDO leads the Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group and funding for year two of the Yeovil Town Centre Ranger project was sought and agreed earlier this year. Yeovil Town Council, Yeovil Without Parish Council and the Love Yeovil Marketing Group (Love Yeovil Town Team at the time of approval) have all agreed to contribute again. The project is now in quarter 3 and is going to focus on a deep clean of the bus station and a thorough clean of the pavements over the coming months.
- A number of repairs will be carried out on the paved areas in the town centre as part of the winter work programme, they will target to the main shopping streets and will cover defects not currently covered by County Highways repairs policy.
- The NDO assisted with the new bus shelter and signage contract, obtaining the use of the town centre signage boards, on one side, to promote community events for Yeovil. The Love Yeovil Marketing group has already began taking advantage of these with advertising Super Saturday and now the Lantern Parade and Christmas Light Switch On..
- Approval has been given to the design of six new signs to be positioned on the key gateway roads into the town centre. The signs will be produced and installed in the next few months.
- Design work has been commissioned to update the town centre maps housed in display boards within the Town Centre, final amendments are being made to the working draft. The style of graphic that has been adopted fits within the current Tourist Information publication 'Discover South Somerset' and will be future proofed for an interactive system. This draft will be presented to the Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group and Love Yeovil Marketing group for comment. The final design will then be bought to Area South Committee.

Regeneration and economy:

- The Neighbourhood Retail Enhancement Project is focussing on shops within Westfield, Birchfield and Glenthorne Avenue. The project seeks to improve the physical appearance of the shop front areas, predominantly the hardstanding areas. Work has taken place to establish ownership of these areas and to take a view on what could be achieved on each. A discussion has taken place with the Engineering department who have agreed to assist in drawing up some draft plans. The owners and the local ward councillors will be contacted once all the ownership information has been received with a view to discussing ideas and possible funding. It is hoped that plans will be drawn up and agreed in principle before the end of the financial year and will be subject to appropriate funding.
- The badly damaged but well used bus shelter on Mudford Road has been replaced.
- The Area South Development Officers are members of the Love Yeovil Marketing Group and are actively supporting a range of events including the annual Christmas Lights switch on and Lantern Parade. The Parade is in its third year and it is hoped that it will be even bigger and better than last year. A number of other activities are

planned to take place in the intervening period between switch on night (Saturday November 19th) and Christmas week.

- The Yeovil Half Marathon was relocated to Yeovil town centre this year and due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback from the event, it is planned to have the half marathon return to the town in March 2017. SSDC, alongside the Love Yeovil Group, will lead on a number of initiatives to include local businesses in the event.
- The NDO supported the Yeovil Super Saturday event in September 2016, the event was a great success and continues to grow in popularity. Paddington Bear was the star of the show this year and was working to raise money for Action Medical Research. The event is lead by Yeovil Town Council and supported by SSDC and other organisations and voluntary groups. The Yeovil Live voluntary group were responsible for the live music throughout the town centre bringing lots of fantastic local talent for everyone to enjoy. A review meeting will be held shortly to evaluate the event and look at forward planning the programme for 2017.
- The community support assistant has continued to carry out quarterly audits of empty premises in Yeovil town centre. This provides a strong database from which to promote available premises to new businesses. The information is also used by a number of internal teams such as planning policy and economic development.

Markets:

- Support has been given to the Yeovil Market Improvement group. A National Markets Organisation (NABMA) were commissioned to carry out a Health Check of the Yeovil markets. The Health check has, in part, supported the current thinking. At the most recent Market Improvement Group meeting a decision was made to work on a business plan that would increase the resource available to support and develop the markets and also make links with the Love Yeovil Marketing Group. It is anticipated that a Task and Finish Group will test the emerging business plan prior to taking it to the market Improvement Group. A full report will then be submitted to the Area South Committee.
- Yeovil's Vintage Market continues to grow and will be considered as part of the emerging market business plan.

2. Community Development

The Area South Committee received a full update on the Community Development work undertaken by the NDO's at the meeting in October. Therefore, this section of the report only contains updates since that meeting and details of the community development work undertaken by the community support assistants.

- Area South Bulletins are sent out quarterly to Parish Councils, Community Groups and other interested parties within Area South. These bulletins contain information on council services but also information from our partners that may be of interest to our residents.
- The Area South online funding file is updated monthly. This is a web based list of current relevant grants that are available to local groups and charities
- Area South Ward Profiles have been completed. The parish profiles will be reviewed over the next 6 months.
- The Area South community web pages have been developed further and the team have increased the presence of the Yeovil markets on social media.
- The Master Plan project for West Coker recreation ground is progressing; the interviews for architect / project manager were completed on Monday 10th & Tuesday 11th October 2016.
- St. Johns Church has been given funding advice for their Clock heritage project.

- The feasibility study has been completed for a new cycle route between Yeovil and Limington and is currently with the County Council Small Improvement Scheme team.
- The interviews for architects / project managers for new St. Peters Community Hall were held on Tuesday 18th October. The feasibility study and business plan are both progressing well.
- The Open Event for the Community Hub at 80 Great Mead, Wyndham Park will take place on Saturday 5th November 10am till midday.

3. Front line enquiry service

Universal Credit is due to be fully rolled out across South Somerset in 2017, although it is being rolled out in part of the district in October 2016. The Community Support Manager will be working closely with the Benefits team to ensure that the Community Support team has the appropriate training and access to information to support Universal Credit claimants.

The Community Support team has been updated on Business Rates and it is hoped that this will enable more information and support to be provided to local businesses. They have also received training to assist with the receipt of taxi licenses and DBS checks for drivers in the community offices.

In the coming months the team will be looking to increase awareness of the services provided at the Community Offices and ensure that the service provided best meets the needs of the customer. With an increase in digital access there is a continuing need to support customers to access services online and raise awareness of alternative methods of contact. The Customer Support Manager will continue to work with other SSDC services to ensure they are fully aware of any changes and that the Community Support Assistants have the knowledge and access to the correct systems to be able to provide the best possible front facing service.

Budget Update

Each Area Committee has delegated responsibility for monitoring budgets within its control. Area South considers all decisions relating to grant requests over £1,000, its Capital Programme and the allocation & spending of its Reserve. The Executive monitors all budgets on a quarterly basis.

Appendix 2 gives a summary of available, uncommitted budgets for the remainder of 2016/17. It also gives an overview of all funding awards made by the Committee within the year to date.

Although there is a budget for revenue grants, at present there is no capital allocated in 2016/17 for community capital grants. There is a number of large capital community projects currently planned within area south, so it is recommended that the committee sets aside £25,000 for 2016/17. This can be replenished when necessary. This would leave an unallocated balance in the Capital Reserve of £151,215.

Appendices to consist of:

- Appendix 1: The Area South Development Plan 2016/17 update
- Appendix 2: Update on allocation of project budgets

Financial Implications

None directly from this report.

Council Plan Implications

Health and Communities

To build healthy, self-reliant, active communities

Economy

To promote a strong economy with thriving urban and rural areas

Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

The town centre location of Petters House minimises travel and the carbon emissions associated with it. The quality of regeneration within Yeovil will have a significant impact on future carbon emissions.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Equality and Diversity will be fully explored in the implementation of the various projects within the Area Development Plan.

Background Papers

Neighbourhood Development Officers – Communities Update Report, October 2016.