

## Area South Development Team – Update Report

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### Purpose of the Report

To summarise the work undertaken by the Area Development Team over the last 6 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

That the report be considered and noted.

### Background

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 2017/18.

The service plan (see Appendix 1) is divided into 5 sections, which relate to the 5 key areas of work:

1.	Town centre & neighbourhood management
2.	Economic development, job creation & regeneration schemes
3.	Community-led planning & development
4.	Improving access to services & facilities to reduce inequality
5.	Community Safety

The Area South Development Plan acts as a working document with regular monitoring by the Area Development Team. It was prepared in May 2017 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

### Town centre & neighbourhood management

- 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 Neighbourhood Development Officer – economy (NDO) has not yet received a response from Somerset County Council on the outstanding licensing arrangements for ongoing maintenance at the Reckleford Gyratory, this needs to be done to conclude the scheme and to release the final retention sum.
- The NDO leads the Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group and associated funding for year three of the Yeovil Town Centre Ranger project. Funding was agreed earlier this year. Yeovil Town Council, Yeovil Without Parish Council have agreed to contribute again. The scheduled work has been taking place over the year and is in its final phase for the autumn/winter period. This project was intended to be run as a pilot for three years, so the NDO will be meeting with the Environmental Services Manager (under the new Transformation structure) to assess how the Ranger Scheme could continue into the future. A Town Centre Enhancement Group meeting will then be convened in the new year.
- The NDO has managed the advertising in the town centre signage boards; SSSC has use of one side to promote community events for Yeovil. The Love Yeovil Marketing group has advertised Super Saturday and now the Lantern Parade and Christmas Light Switch On.
- Town centre maps project was put on hold to await the outcome of the relocation of a key emergency service, in order to avoid unnecessary re printing costs. This is taking longer than anticipated, therefore it is hoped the maps can be used on the new Love Yeovil website. This would be beneficial as electronic maps are far easier to update than traditional printed versions.

### Economic development, job creation & regeneration schemes

- The Neighbourhood Retail Enhancement Project is focussing on shops within Birchfield, Westfield 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. The Engineering department agreed to draft plans for St Johns Rd shops at Birchfield. A couple of options have been drafted, the owners have been consulted along with Somerset County Highways, as there may be development control implications. Once a response has been received and assuming there are no insurmountable issues arising from those discussions, a meeting will be held with all the key stakeholders including the local councillors. It is hoped that plans will be agreed in principle before the end of the financial year and will be subject to appropriate funding being sought to deliver the scheme in 2018.
- 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 fourth year. The lantern making workshops will be held at two local schools, Oaklands Primary School, Birchfield Community Primary School and there will be a workshop for the public held at Milford Community Hall on Saturday 11th November.
- The Yeovil Half Marathon is planned to take place in March 2018. This town centre event has proved successful and it continues to grow in popularity.
- The NDO supported the Yeovil Super Saturday event in September 2017, the event was a great success, receiving extremely good reviews in the press and on social media platforms. An animatronic T-Rex was the star of the show this year thanks to funding support from the Love Yeovil Marketing Group, lots of people commented positively on the event as a whole and Quedam Shopping Centre noted that footfall was 27,885 which was up 31.7% on the previous week. The event is lead by Yeovil Town Council and supported by SSSC and other organisations and voluntary groups. The Yeovil Live voluntary group were responsible for the

live music throughout the town centre. A review meeting will be held shortly to evaluate the event and look at forward planning the programme for 2018.

- A digital audit has been carried out to assess the level to which local businesses are utilising web based sales and advertising. The audit has revealed a number of businesses who have no or little online presence. Therefore, subject to Transformation changes, the team plan to devote resource within the next ADP to projects that will assist businesses with his area of work.
- 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.
- Support has been given to the Yeovil Market Improvement group. Following the health check carried out by NABMA, the Task and Finish Group met to assess a way forward after being presented with a number of business cases. A decision was made to move forward with the option of outsourcing the market to an external operator/partner. An advertising campaign was carried out from the end of August throughout September to seek expressions of interest. The successful candidates will be interviewed week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> October.
- Yeovil's Vintage Market received an overhaul this year and has been re-named Yeovil's Independent Market, it has also relocated to the top of Middle Street. The Emporium continue to manage this market and a service level agreement has been put in place with them to use SSDC's market rights. These markets are held on the first Saturday of the month with additional markets held on Super Saturday and a Christmas market on the 9<sup>th</sup> December. Love Yeovil are funding Reindeer and a snow dog to help enhance the Market on the 9<sup>th</sup>. These will be located in the bandstand and will compliment Father Christmas who will be in his grotto in the Quedam.
- Promotional pitches in Yeovil town centre are now handled by the Area Development Team, an agreement has been reached with Licensing as an interim measure to try and control the presence of promotional stalls. Charges now apply to most promotional stalls and a more detailed policy will be drafted in the new year to set out a number of terms and conditions. Licensing and Area Development will continue to work together on this to reach the desired outcome.

#### Community-led planning & development

- 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 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 architect and project manager are engaged with the Parish Council and the project team have now completed phase 1 of the Play Park action plan.
- The NDO – community, is supporting East Coker Parish Council to enhance the Recreation Ground in the heart of the village. The project team have already obtained funding for new football goals and are now aiming to improve the playing pitches and changing rooms.
- NDO has supported both East Coker and West Coker Parish Councils in developing Housing needs surveys.

#### Improving access to services & facilities to reduce inequality

- The St. Peters Community Hall (Westfield, Yeovil) have successfully complete phase 1 of Big Lottery Reaching Communities and have submitted their Phase 2 application.
- Partnership working has begun with Spark and the Yeovil Well-Being Alliance to tackle health and social inequalities in the Yeovil area

- The NDO continues to assist Westfield Community Association and partners to deliver the 'Our Neighbourhood' regeneration plan
- Support has been provided to SASP and Westfield Academy to deliver an activity programme targeting inactive young people.
- Our Place funding has been given to support fuel poverty workshops for local residents in the Yeovil area.
- The community facility adjacent to the new Kingfisher Academy is currently under construction. The Area Team Leader has been working with Spark to develop a community association in the area. There are a number of very keen volunteers who have expressed an interest in starting a community association and possibly taking on running the community room in the future but it is still very early in the process. However, the group have already run a very successful community picnic which took place in the summer and have activities planned for Halloween and next spring, which is extremely positive for such a new community.
- The Wyndham Park Community Hub is now well used and has groups including the CAB, health visitors, parent and toddler group, coffee morning, arts and craft club, youth club, Dreamscheme, book club, family counselling sessions and training courses. The Primary School is also open to the community for groups that require more space such as dance classes and the community association meetings are now so well attended that they have also moved to the school. The current strength of the community association has prompted the Wyndham Park Partnership to decide to cease meeting. The group still exists, so will be brought together if an issue arises that needs a multi-agency approach but for now the community association are able to challenge issues without the need for a separate partnership. The challenge for SSDC now is to move forward with the transfer of land so that further play areas and open space can be developed for this estate.
- Universal Credit was fully rolled out across South Somerset in April 2017. The Community Office Support Manager continues to work closely with the Benefits and Housing/Welfare teams to ensure that the Community Support team receive the appropriate training and access to information to support Universal Credit claimants. In the coming months the Council's Transformation programme will focus on the needs and preferences of customers that use the network of community offices. In the meantime we will continue to work with other SSDC services to ensure that we are fully aware of any changes and that the Community Support Assistants have the knowledge and access to the systems to provide the most efficient and effective front facing service. With an increase in digital access there is a continuing need to support customers to access services online and raise awareness of alternative methods to access information and services to ensure that service provided best meets the needs of the customer.

#### Community Safety

- The departure of both the Community Safety Manager and Yeovil One Administrator has meant that a great deal more of the Area Development Team Lead's (ADTL) time has been spent on Community Safety than was originally planned. However, a member of the Environmental Health Team has been seconded one day a week to help look in to developing our use of community safety powers such as Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) and provide support to the Yeovil One Operational Team.
- The ADTL has continued to support the Yeovil One Tactical Group and is working with partners to identify what resource is needed to be effective in dealing with community safety issues moving forward. Whilst losing two members of staff has been difficult, it does provide an opportunity to review the structure of the team and look for opportunities for improvement.

#### **Appendices to consist of:**

Appendix 1: The Area South Development Plan 2017/18 update

**Financial Implications**

None.

**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**

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**

None