

Update on the work carried out by the Area South Development Team

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Purpose of Report

That members note the project work undertaken by the Area South Development Team in the last 10 months.

Recommendation

That members note the report and the update on projects.

Public Interest

This report sets out the project work undertaken by the Area South Development Team to deliver the Area South Development Plan. This plan is informed by the 'Yeovil Vision Delivery Plan', the 'Yeovil Urban Development Framework', the 'Strategy for the Regeneration of the Eastern End of Yeovil Town Centre' and South Somerset District Council's Corporate aims.

Background

The main purpose of the Area Development Team and in particular the Neighbourhood Development Officer (NDO) Economy post is to pursue community and regeneration initiatives within Yeovil town centre and suburban and rural hinterlands. The work undertaken enables the achievement of priority initiatives which address local need's, working collaboratively with the Neighbourhood Officer (Community) and others assisting communities to fulfill their aspirations. To identify and include professional input at District and County level as it is required in the development and implementation of the Area South Development Plan.

Key Project Work Update;

Reckleford – Yeovil Vision Project

The Area South Development Team has continued to communicate with Somerset County Council regarding the outstanding remedial works over the last year, including completion of the street lighting and illuminated signs and the submission of a post completion report. One item on the remedial list has been completed, the replacement of dead plants on the landscaped areas, this was carried out by SSDC's grounds Maintenance team as the original contractor failed carry out the task. The Grounds Maintenance team have been paid from the retention budget.

Richard Needs from the County Highways team recently attended the Yeovil Vision Board Meeting on the 9th September where he presented an interim post completion report and he

informed the group that he would endeavour to complete the outstanding remedial works, this includes further work to improve the sequencing of the traffic lights.

The Traffic lights adjacent to the old Western Gazette building were bagged in early 2011, this was the final phase to the scheme and was carried out to enable traffic to flow more freely. These lights will now be removed and a number of footpath build-outs for pedestrian safety will be constructed. This will form part of the Middle Street and Sherborne Road Enhancement Scheme outlined below.

Middle Street and Sherborne Road Enhancement Scheme

A project group was formed during 2012 consisting of key officers, members and partners and this group was tasked with drafting some sketch plans and proposals for Middle Street and Sherborne Road to enhance the area. The last meeting of the group was held on January 22nd 2013, at this meeting members were presented with a number of sketch schemes produced by Somerset County Council. Members considered these carefully but concluded that until the funds become available for the Market Street Junction improvements, embarking on an enhancement project in the area may result in the limited resources available being spent unwisely.

At a recent meeting of the Vision Board, it was resolved that 'the Middle Street and Sherborne Road project group could continue to the design stage of the project, this would result in a generic design that would not impact on future plans for Market Street Junction or on future Eastern Corridor works'. Richard Needs from County Highways is a member of the project group and will therefore ensure design work adheres to the Vision Board resolution. A further meeting of the project group will be convened shortly.

South Western Terrace

South Western Terrace Pilot Scheme is almost complete, the outstanding replacement sign for 'Munchies' takeaway was successfully installed in August, once the final grant transaction has been processed this will bring the project to a close, a post completion report will follow.

Westfield Post Office

Following many unsuccessful years of negotiations with various potential partners to re-open a post office in Westfield, the Local Co-op store in Stiby Road stepped forward and agreed to host a Post Office counter within their store this year. This was the result of successful multi-agency working. The Post Office counter was officially up and running on Tuesday 6th May, David Laws MP and Cllr Ian Martin helped to officially open the Post Office on 28th May. The Co-op manager has reported that the service has been well received by the community.

Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group (Yeovil Town Centre Audit Group)

The focus of the Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group for 2014/15 has been to finalise the Pilot Maintenance Schedule for 2015/16. Obtaining costs for the schedule has been difficult over the summer period, this has now been resolved and these costs are expected to be received by the end of September. A project group meeting is being set up for October. A small amount of work will be carried out as part of the winter work's program including cleaning, painting and some anti-graffiti work in the subways at the end of Princes Street.

The finger pointer signs in Yeovil town centre will be upgraded to show times and distances this financial year.

Work has recommenced on redesigning the information signs found throughout Yeovil town centre. There are a small number signs containing a map and local information, these are out of date and require updating and modernisation. A number of additional locations will also be investigated for key gateways like Penmill Train Station and a compact version will be suggested for the town centre car parks to sit alongside the ticket machines.

Somerset County Highways Street lighting department have agreed to repaint a number of street lighting columns in Yeovil Town Centre following a request from the NDO around a year ago, work is expected to commence in October.

Yeovil Bus Station – reopening of the waiting room.

Yeovil bus station waiting room had been closed for many years due to anti-social behavior. The waiting room received some remodeling work in early 2014 to bring it back into use. A number of other improvements were carried out at the same time to give the whole bus station a deep clean. Improvement works included;

- Deep clean the carriageways, footpaths, signs, bus shelters and building fascia's
- New litter bins
- New planters
- Refurbished waiting room with CCTV coverage

Further floral features are being investigated for the railings

Bus shelter audit

Primesight advertising company have been contracted to oversee the maintenance of large number of shelters in the district since the 1st July 2000 and in return they have made use of the advertising space. The contract is due to come to an end in June 2015.

A second detailed bus shelter audit has been carried out in recent weeks to ascertain their current condition, enabling officers to benchmark against the previous audit.

The condition of the shelters maintained by Primesight has remained much the same, in some cases the shelters have deteriorated. Shelters owned by SSDC and local Parish Councils vary according to location, those in urban settings are generally in a poor state, those on the outskirts have fared better.

Engineering and Property Services hold the overall responsibility for the SSDC owned shelters, lack of budget has proved to be a problem in maintaining them.

A small officer working group met recently to look at the Primesight contract and what options SSDC might have once it ends. The group is currently looking at all the options available, especially with regards to ongoing maintenance issues. An update report will be brought forward to the Area South Committee once the full picture emerges.

Support for the Yeovil Town Team

The Area Development team continues to support the Yeovil Town Team to develop a range of initiatives to support the town centre. Please see the attached newsletters (Appendix A).

Working more closely with the Parishes

The Area Development Team continues to support the Parishes, this support is provided predominantly through the NDO (Community) role within the team. Parish newsletters are

regularly circulated updating the parishes on the work being undertaken by the team as well as highlighting opportunities and useful information. The team have also updated the parish Profiles for the outlying parishes.

Financial Implications

None

SSDC Corporate aims

- **Focus One – Jobs - We want a strong economy which has low unemployment and thriving businesses** - Enhance the vitality of town centre's
- **Focus Two – Environment - We want an attractive environment to live in with increased recycling and lower energy use** - Continue to deliver schemes with local communities that enhance the appearance of their local areas.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None specifically arising from this report

Equality and Diversity Implications

None specifically arising from this report

Background Papers

Area South Committee Nov 6th 2013 - Update on the work carried out by the Area South Development Team

A Strategy for the Regeneration of the Eastern End of Yeovil Town Centre
Urban Development Framework 2005
