

Update on the Yeovil Town Centre Ranger Scheme

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Purpose of the Report

To update and inform members on progress of the Yeovil Town Centre Ranger Scheme

Public Interest

In April 2015 the Area South Development Team began a pilot of a Yeovil Town Centre Ranger Scheme. The 'Ranger' is similar to a parish Lengthsman. The Ranger has carried out a number of maintenance tasks not currently covered in any daily maintenance programmes run by South Somerset District Councils Street Scene team, Somerset County Highways team or any other official body. Funding was successfully sought and approved to pilot the first year of the scheme from South Somerset District Council, Yeovil Town Council and Yeovil Without Parish Council. This report gives an update on progress to date.

Recommendation

That the report be noted

Background

The Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group (formerly known as the Yeovil Town Centre Audit Group) commenced in 2011, following a request made by South Somerset District Council members to 'get back to basics'. Over the last five years Marie Ainsworth, Neighbourhood Officer for South Somerset District Council (SSDC) has been working on making a number of improvements in the town centre focussing on items of street furniture, paving, flower and shrub beds, the bus station, bus shelters and replacing poor street furniture. All of these items were previously dealt with on an ad hoc basis.

The Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group decided to continue this good work by piloting a Ranger scheme in the town centre based on their knowledge and experience of the Parish Lengthsman scheme.

In June 2015 a report was taken to Yeovil's Town Councils Building and Civic Matters committee where they agreed to contribute funding for the first year of the Yeovil Ranger scheme effectively match funding South Somerset District Councils contribution. Yeovil Without Parish Council were also approached kindly agreed to make a financial contribution.

Members will recall that a brief update was given on the scheme at Area South Committee in October 2015 under the Area South Development Update Report.

Update

The Ranger Scheme commenced in May 2015 in accordance with a work schedule agreed by SSDC's Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group, these tasks can be found on the attached appendix A.

All the work included in the schedule for year one has been completed with the exception of repainting the bandstand railing's, this will be done once the hanging baskets have been removed.

There has been a small amendment on the schedule, one of the year two tasks has been swapped with a year one task, the slats on many of the benches were considered to be in a reasonable condition so this has been moved into next year's schedule therefore the painting of the bollards was moved into this year's work programme as their condition had deteriorated. The Ranger stripped the bollards back down to the metal and applied undercoat and a very tough black metal paint, he also applied reflective strips.

It is worth noting that the Ranger is currently shared with other parishes similar to a job share.

In addition to the work outlined in the schedule a number of tasks fell outside the remit of the Ranger including:

- Bubblegum removal x2 per year
- Street Cleaning using specialist chemical, weekly April – Oct and monthly Nov – March
- Cleaning bus station area x 2 per year
- Cleaning bus shelters (SSDC owned shelters) annually.
- Re-oiling Tim Fortune benches

Much of this work has been successfully completed by SSDC's Street Scene Team with the exception of re-oiling the Tim Fortune Benches.

The only task that has proved to be problematic is the Street cleaning with the specialist chemical, there are areas of paving that the street cleaning machine cannot access due to the vehicles weight, so the Street Scene Team are having to clean some of these areas by hand.

Whilst the Ranger scheme has successfully contributed to the general cleanliness and appearance of the town centre there is still room for improvement, some of the paved areas have proved to be more time consuming with the removal of stubborn stains especially around litter bins. Once the first year is complete a more thorough review will take place to look at what has worked well and what may need adjusting and another report will be bought back to the Area South Committee in the spring of 2016 once this has been done.

Appendices

Appendix A outlining the Rangers schedule.

Financial Implications

Within existing revenue budgets

Council Plan Implications

This project contributes towards the council plan focus on the Environment and enhancing the appearance of local areas.

Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

Background Papers

None