

Area South Development Team – End of Year Report

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Director Place and Performance
Assistant Director: Helen Rutter/Kim Close, Assistant Director Communities
Service Manager: Helen Rutter, Acting Area Development Manager – South
Lead Officer: Helen Rutter, Acting Area Development Manager – South
Contact Details: helen.rutter@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01963 435012

Purpose of the Report

- To summarise the work undertaken by the Area Development Team during 2015/16 to address priorities agreed by the Area South Committee
- To note that a work programme for 2016/17 will be presented to ASC in May 2016. A discussion on Members priorities is being undertaken after the meeting.

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

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 over the year 2015/16. It is rolled forward annually.

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 actions contained within the Plan relate to those set out in the 4 areas of focus within the Council Plan 2012 – 2015. See Appendix 2 for an extract of actions that relate the work of Area Development and the role of the Area Committee.

Please note that a new Corporate Plan is due to be adopted this spring hence the need to consider this prior to adopting our Area Development Plan for 2016/17

Allocating Resources and Monitoring:

The Area South Development Plan acts as a working document with regular monitoring by the Area Development Team. It was prepared in April 2015 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.

A summary of the progress of Key Projects and Services managed by Area Development South in 2015/16

Yeovil Vision/Regeneration:

- Initial work has been done on options for the bus station. This is a complex issue and work is ongoing with other service teams
- Retail incubation work has been deferred and will be reconsidered by the Yeovil Vision Board
- Maintaining the Yeovil Vision within a cost effective structure. Ensuring that it continues to deliver projects for the benefit of Yeovil. Supporting Yeovil Vision meetings producing all related reports, agendas, minutes and newsletters. The advent of the Area Regeneration Boards will necessitate a major review of the role of Yeovil Vision
- Continued negotiations with Somerset County Council on resolution to complete outstanding works on Reckleford road scheme
- Fingerpointers updated in the town centre including new ones for Yeovil Country Park Café and Visitor Centre
- SSDC owned bus shelters repaired at Meadow Road, Stourton Way and Preston Road, Yeovil
- Commission design work for six gateway signs, a report was taken to Committee in March and further work is required. A further report will be taken to Committee in June
- Design work has been commissioned to update display boards within the Town Centre, a number of working drafts have been produced and a number of key officers are being consulted on the working draft prior to presenting a final draft to the Yeovil Town Centre Improvement Group. The final design will be brought to Area South Committee around June
- Continued support of the Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group, the key project of this group has been the Ranger Scheme; the first year has been successfully completed and funding is currently being sought for year two of the project
- A number of physical improvements are being carried out throughout the town centre in conjunction with the Streetscene team and include repairs to the paving in the town centre

Community Development:

- Increased community involvement and communication in Wyndham Park by planning and delivering three extremely well attended community days, producing five community newsletters and helping establish a new community association
- Worked closely with SCC to plan the two new primary schools needed in Yeovil. This has taken up a great deal of time due to the complexities around land ownership, design, local aspirations and necessary legal agreements
- Advice and support given to the Yeovil Youth Service Review Group, which is organised by Yeovil Town Council
- Area South Bulletins sent out quarterly to Parish Councils, Community Groups and other interested parties in the Area South area
- Chair and coordinate the Youth Opportunities Group that is held quarterly. This group aims to coordinate youth provision across the whole district and help avoid duplication
- Updated the Funding File on the website monthly. This is a list of current relevant grants that are available to local groups and charities
- Area South Ward Profiles completed and circulated for all Yeovil Wards
- Wasteland adjacent to the Co-op is being considered again following renewed interest

from the private landowners. It is hoped that a resolution can be found to regenerate it

- Helped communities and parish councils register 6 assets of community value. If these assets are subsequently put up for sale by the owners, the community will have an opportunity to bid to purchase them, so they remain local community assets
- Worked with Community Health & Leisure to organise the first Bike Fest event in the East of Yeovil. Work is underway to plan a further Bike Festival in August 2016
- Worked with partners to deliver the first play area at Wyndham Park
- Installation of the very popular Pump Track at Birchfield Park
- Developing and maintaining the Area South community web pages
- Arranged 3 multi-agency community forum events. The forum has been set up to discuss issues such as community safety, youth initiatives, local funding opportunities and community groups. The meetings are flexible to deal with emerging issues and there is plenty of time to network, share ideas and solve problems
- Offered advice to over 30 voluntary and charitable groups and offered support to all the local community associations in order to promote local action and improvements
- Worked closely with West Coker Parish Council on a Master Plan project for West Coker recreation ground including a proposed pavilion building and play park
- Supported West Coker Village Hall Committee with enhancements to the Village Hall including a new digital inclusion project
- Funding advice and project support to Area South Parish Councils and local sports and community groups based in our rural parishes
- Ongoing funding advice and support for the West Coker Heritage project at Dawes Twine-works

Economy:

- We provided support for the Yeovil Town Team that now runs a range of events including the annual Christmas Lights switch on and attracts significant funding from local businesses for the benefit of the town centre
- Supporting the relocation of the Yeovil Half Marathon to Yeovil town centre through a series of SSDC led initiatives including a family entertainment programme at the bandstand area
- Supported the Yeovil Super Saturday event in September 2015; the event was a great success and was also supported by Yeovil Town Council and other organisations eg: voluntary groups. The Yeovil Live voluntary group were responsible for the live music throughout the town centre. Plans have begun for the event to continue September 2016
- Carried out quarterly audits of empty premises in Yeovil town centre. This provides a strong database from which to promote and broker new users to available premises.

Markets:

- Support given to the Yeovil Market Improvement group. A consultation exercise was carried out during 2015 to look at moving the Tuesday and Friday to a new location; results show that this is not supported by traders or retailers. Officers are currently looking at a number of ways in which to make the markets more successful
- The Area South Development Team continue to manage the operational aspects of the market
- Yeovil's Vintage Market continues to grow and is set to continue into 2016

Addressing Health, Social and Economic Inequalities in Yeovil:

- Ongoing support to targeted communities in Yeovil including Milford, Reckleford, Birchfield and targeted engagement in the Westfield 'Our Neighbourhood' programme
- Work programmes and funding advice to support healthy lifestyles activities and projects in our communities including marketing & communication support as well as ongoing funding & support advice
- Officer involvement in targeting digital inclusion projects running across Yeovil
- Continued support to the community in developing and operating community-led growing projects, such as 'Milford Community Growing Spaces'
- Working with partners, such as Yeovil College, to establish community training courses

- helping to improve employability and enhance volunteering roles and opportunities
- Supporting organisations to run jobs and volunteer fairs to highlight how local residents can get more involved and be empowered to shape and support their community
- Ongoing development work with partners, agencies and the community to promote partnership work, stop duplication of work and provide a better offer to local residents

Grants and Funding:

- Allocated full grant budget £11,230 helping to secure £46,023 of external funding to be invested in our local communities
- Provided an increased funding advice service in response to the current financial climate

Petters House Front Office:

- Over 10,000 enquiries dealt with at the front desk including detailed advice provided to deal with over 5,800 benefits enquiries

Community Safety:

- Developed and supported the multi-agency Yeovil One Team who meet on a weekly basis to deal with operational issues in the Yeovil Central Ward. The one administrator is based at Petters House but Neighbourhood Police team remain at the Police Station for the time being
- Supported the Yeovil One Tactical Group with monthly meetings in setting direction and management overview of the operational team
- Secured £50k of PCC Partnership Funding to finance the Yeovil One Team allowing identification of dedicated administration support
- Identified additional priority geographical area, Yeovil East, in which to extend operations through 2016
- Reported crime, as monitored by Police.uk, identifies Area South having achieved a 2% reduction in crime between January and December 2015. Yeovil Central has shown a crime reduction of 9%
- A marked reduction in shop theft of 18% across the area given a multi-agency focus and proactive intervention by the Yeovil Crime Reduction Team
- Police and partners have been able to obtain from the Law Courts the first Somerset Civil Injunctions on 2 prolific offenders, placing restrictions on their activity and presence in the Town Centre
- Yeovil CCTV enhancement nearing completion, which will give 24hr monitored coverage of the underpasses at the Hospital roundabout
- Data Link to CCTV recordings from the Police station gives the Police instant access to recorded footage at any time rather than sending an officer to collect during office hours
- Continue to support and input to the Community Safety Strategic direction through active participation with the Safer Somerset Partnership

“Our Place” – Westfield, Yeovil:

- Completed ‘Our Place’ project phase and established new adapted ‘Our Neighbourhood’ neighbourhood action plan owned by Westfield Community Association and supported by local partners and agencies
- Partnership meeting to highlight progress and to establish further joined up working between partners held on Friday 11th March 2016
- Steering group in place to build a new community hall at St Peter’s Church in Westfield
- Support provided to Westfield Academy in enhancing School sports facilities with the aim of better local community access and use (this has included 3G sports pitch, refurbished sports hall and a new dance studio) to improve health and well-being
- Targeted road safety project to establish new bus bays at Westfield Academy to help with congestion, pedestrian safety and taking additional vehicles off the highway
- Brand Westfield project working with Yeovil College student. Aim is to improve

Westfield's image and reputation

- Recycling improvement project targeted in Westfield supported by Carymoor Environmental Trust, which could potentially bring in £8,000 of investment to the community
- New solar energy installation in Westfield from South Somerset Community Energy aims to tackle long-term fuel poverty for the neighbourhood and local residents
- New communication systems are being developed by Westfield Community Association supported by partners, to help inform local residents of news, local activities and clubs as well as services and support opportunities. These include newsletters, new notice boards, a proposed new web site (linked to brand Westfield) and the introduction of social media
- Established new speed watch from Westfield Community Association linked to the road safety programme
- Established Youth Club provision (supported by Yeovil Town Council and SRYP)
- Established healthy lifestyle activities running in the community including Community £ and Back to Netball. Future plans aim to develop an online directory of what is running and where on the Westfield estate

Community enquiries log:

- 69 support enquiries logged in Area South additional to the work included in the service plan
- Enquiries range from supporting local groups with funding advice, supporting the improvement and development of the town market, digital inclusion projects, village hall enhancement advice and support, play park and sports club equipment purchase and advice, Business support, engineering works, community communication support, youth provision and advice, volunteering opportunities and sign posting, signage and car parking to name a few

Appendices to consist of:

- Appendix 1: The Area South Development Plan 2015/16 overview
- Appendix 2: Table showing actions within Council's Plan 2012-2015 that relate to the work of Area Development and the role of the Area Committee
- Appendix 3: Map showing geographical spread of projects across Area South
- Appendix 4: Area South staff structure

Financial Implications

Within existing revenue budgets **Council Plan Implications**

See attached Appendix 2

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

The Council Plan 2012; The Economic Development Strategy