

Area West Committee – 18th July 2007

8. Progress Report on the Community Projects of 'A Better Crewkerne & District' (ABCD) Community Plan

Head of Service: Andrew Gillespie, Head of Area Development (West)
Lead Officer: Nicola Doble, Community Planning Support Officer
Contact Details: nicola.doble@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01460) 260410

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to inform members of the on-going progress of the priority projects in the ABCD Community Plan reported to previous Area West Committees.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members note the progress on the development of ABCD's community plan projects.

Background

The Crewkerne & District Community Plan was launched in July at an exhibition in Victoria Hall, Crewkerne and public presentation at the Area West Committee in July 2006. It identifies local issues in Crewkerne and the surrounding villages and suggests appropriate projects to address the concerns of the local community.

The area covered by the Community Plan includes Crewkerne town and the following parishes of Chiselborough, Dinnington, Drimpton, East Chinnock, West Chinnock, Haselbury Plucknett, Hinton St George, Lopen, Merriott, Misterton, Mosterton, North Perrott, South Perrott, Wayford and West Crewkerne.

'A Better Crewkerne & District' (ABCD) have scoped out a number of priority projects and are establishing working groups to drive these projects forward. It has been formally agreed with the Market & Coastal Towns Association (MCTA) that the remaining grant will be allocated to professional support and funding feasibility studies.

Report

The report aims to inform Area West members in detail of the on-going progress of A Better Crewkerne & District's priority schemes and of their first Annual General Meeting.

Since ABCD's report to members in March 2007 some further progress has been made in establishing working groups and holding their first Annual General Meeting.

The projects currently being researched and developed by ABCD are;

1. A Joint Community Facility for Youth, Arts & Sport

The Community Plan identified a need within the community for a facility in Crewkerne town to provide a venue for the arts, such as a cinema, exhibition space and a venue for musical and theatrical events.

ABCD identified key local and strategic partners who may have an impact on or could be interested in being involved in the development of this project.

The Town Council representative gave a brief update at the ABCD meeting on 18th June 2007 to say that discussions with Sport England are ongoing but that there were no firm developments to report back on at this stage.

2. Crewkerne Urban Development Framework (UDF)

At the Steering Group meeting in June, it was requested, as the next step in the progress of this project, that a project brief be developed. A working project group has been formed and ABCD have agreed in principle that some of the MCTA funding should be released to employ consultants to help develop a project brief. It is hoped that this project will be developed in discussion with SSDC Officers from September 2007.

3. Notice and Interpretation Boards

Crewkerne is represented on the Market Town Investment Group as part of the Market Towns Vision. A capital budget from SSDC has been allocated to creating improved interpretation boards and maps within South Somerset's market towns. It has been identified that there is a need for three boards and the MTIG representatives have been working with the Town Council, SSDC, ABCD and the Local Information Centre on the design, style and location of the notice boards for Crewkerne. It was hoped that this project would have been largely completed by April 2007. This proved too ambitious. However, it is now anticipated that the project will be completed by the end of October 2007.

4. Crewkerne Youth and Volunteer Fairs

Local organisations approached ABCD with a proposal of running a volunteer recruitment fair for all of the voluntary and community run organisations and groups in Crewkerne and surrounding area. Members of ABCD took on the role of co-ordinating the event and developing promotional material. The Fair was held on 24th March 2007 and was very successful in raising awareness of the volunteer scheme and recruiting new volunteers. ABCD have now been asked to hold a Youth Fair and it was agreed at the Steering Group meeting in June to hold the Youth Fair in October 2007 and to make the Volunteer Fair an annual event in March 2008.

5. Developing the marketing of Crewkerne and the locality as a business location

A number of opportunities were identified through the Community Planning process in Crewkerne recognising the economic benefits of future developments, such as the Waitrose supermarket, CLR development and the road that will link into the main industrial estate, opening up employment land and increased employment opportunities in the area.

The working group (CALIBRE – Crewkerne & Locality: Industry, Business & Rural Enterprise) has been established for this project and circulated a draft-marketing brief at the AGM in April for comments, which were subsequently reported to ABCD for endorsement with the aim of inviting expressions of interest from consultants. The brief covered a number of themes:

- How will business hear of Crewkerne?
- How will Crewkerne attract business to locate here?
- How will Crewkerne retain business?

At the ABCD Steering Group meeting in June the CALIBRE group reported that the website www.calibre-group.com is now live and the list of business links is growing. Quotations are being received for 'Brand Crewkerne' which will raise awareness of the commercial community and is supported by Crewkerne Chamber of Commerce. Consideration is also being given to having a 'Business Board' at the Local Information Centre to raise awareness and retain business.

6. Annual General Meeting

The first Annual General Meeting of ABCD was held on the 12th April at Crewkerne Day Centre. It was well attended and positive feedback was received at the event at what had been accomplished so far. The audience listened to presentations from the project working groups regarding what had been achieved and the next steps for the projects. Requests for new group members were made and nominations to re-elect the Chair and Vice-Chair of ABCD.

Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications as a direct result of this report.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

By promoting and supporting regeneration in our market towns such as the production of the Crewkerne & District Community Plan, SSDC will be addressing several of the Corporate Aims 2005 - 2012:

- Objective 8 " work in partnership with the public and private sector in developing and delivery of the Market Towns Vision"
- Objective 9 "Identify and address the particular issues affecting rural areas"
- Objective 15 " Increase to 65% by 2010 the people who feel engaged in and can influence decisions that affect their communities"

Background Papers: *Progress Report on 'A Better Crewkerne & District' and the Community Plan Projects 17th January 2007*
Progress of the Crewkerne & District Community Plan and associated projects 18th October 2006
The launch of Crewkerne & District Community Plan 19th July 2006
SSDC Corporate Plan 2005-2012
MCTi Work Programme 2006-2007
A Better Crewkerne & District "Critical Activities" 2006/07
