

8. ABCD (A Better Crewkerne & District)

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Purpose of the Report

To provide an update to Members on the work of ABCD.

Public Interest

ABCD is a not-for profit community regeneration group, which operates in Crewkerne. Since 2005 the group has developed a number of projects in their town that have helped improve the lives of residents. Those projects were identified through extensive consultation carried out for their community plan. Crewkerne now needs to update their community plan to establish what residents want for their town.

Recommendation

To note the content of the report.

Background

Community Plans are unlike spatial plans because they do not focus on entirely bricks and mortar but instead look at the town as a whole taking into account issues such as health, work, education, culture, getting about and activities. Community Plans set out a vision for how a town or parish wants to develop and identifies the actions needed to achieve that vision.

Community Led Plans are developed in conjunction with a town or parish council but are generally led by a group of people made up of representatives from various organisations / sectors in the area e.g. local government, schools, church, businesses and voluntary groups.

There are numerous benefits to community led planning both to the town as a whole and to the individuals concerned. Community led planning;

- Encourages participation in local democracy
- Helps with evidence for funders when you want to develop a new project
- Enables the whole community to contribute
- Identifies opportunities for new projects
- Gives people the opportunity to get involved with new activities and learn new skills
- Can be used to influence decision makers
- Identifies where new services are needed or existing services can be improved
- Gives policy makers a local perspective
- Highlights issues of concern.

ABCD and the Community Plan

ABCD is a registered charity made up of volunteers who live and work in the town. In 2004 ABCD was awarded a grant by the Market & Coastal Town Initiative to produce a community plan. ABCD carried out extensive consultation via public workshops, focus groups and a household survey. The consultation highlighted what issues residents felt were important and needed focusing on, in order to help make Crewkerne an even better place to live. The consultation results were written up into a Community Plan which was launched to the public in 2005. Since then ABCD have worked in partnership with other organisations and with the support of the SSDC Neighbourhood Development Officer has developed a number of projects that have had a social and or economic benefit to the town. Those projects include:

- Promoting Crewkerne – destination marketing of the town
- Declutter Crewkerne
- New pedestrian walkway linking Falkland Square with George Precinct
- Volunteer Fairs in 2007, 2008, 2011 and 2013.
- Traders board with map located near Waitrose
- George Reynolds Centre
- Crewkerne Business Showcase
- Visitors boards
- Walks leaflets
- Transport booklet

New Community Plan for Crewkerne

The evidence collected for the original community plan is now 9 years old. If ABCD want to continue influencing decision makers and use the evidence to convince funders to provide grants for new projects then they need to have updated and robust evidence. In addition ABCD has developed a large number of the projects identified in the original Community Plan and they need to know from the residents what projects they would like them to focus on in the future.

Work has recently started on activities to establish what issues are important to people in the town. Once the issues of concern are identified the information will be used to inform the design of a household survey. That survey will be delivered to every household in the town to complete. The results of that survey will be used to write the next community plan and establish an action plan of new projects for ABCD to work on in future years.

Corporate Priority implications

Supporting the development of a new community plan fits in with Focus Four of the Council Plan which is to ensure South Somerset has healthy and self-reliant communities where people are willing to help each other.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity Implications

A variety of methods are used to ensure that the views of as many people as possible are gained from the residents of Crewkerne. The evidence gathered will be used by a number of voluntary and public sector organisations to develop their projects and services which will benefit a wide range of people from all sectors of the community.

Background papers

AWC reports on the progress of the Crewkerne Community Plan – Area West Committee September 2010.

Progress Report on the priority projects of 'A Better Crewkerne & District' Community Plan - Area West Committee January 2008

Progress Report on A Better Crewkerne & District 17th October 2007.

Progress Report on the Community Projects of A Better Crewkerne & District 18th July 2007.

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
