

Scrutiny Committee – 13th November 2007

8. Yeovil Vision Progress Report

Executive Portfolio Holder: Councillor Tony Fife (Portfolio Holder for Yeovil Vision)
Corporate Director: Mark Pollock, Corporate Director - Economic Vitality
Head of Service: Martin Woods, Head of Area Development (South)
Lead Officer: Alan Brown, Yeovil Vision Projects Director
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Purpose of the Report

To report progress with delivering the Yeovil Vision (YV).

Action Required

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to note and comment on progress.

Background

Yeovil Vision is an ambitious agenda for positive change commissioned by the Local Strategic Partnership (L.S.P) in 2003, which sets out an agreed vision for the future development of Yeovil.

Early work in 2003, was undertaken by regeneration consultants, who brought together public organisations, the private sector and community groups in a series of discussion groups/workshops. The aim of these meetings was to identify the key elements of a future vision and this work led to the adoption of the current Vision strap line.

“Yeovil: the heart of the country and the mind of the city”.

Completion of this work saw the formation of the Galaxy Group, who were instrumental in helping to develop the Vision and establishing the current portfolio of projects.

The Galaxy Group comprises representatives from a number of local businesses and other key organisations, such as Yeovil College and Yeovil Hospital, as well as all three tiers of local government and the Regional Development Agency (SWRDA). This wider perspective and network added dynamism to the formation and early delivery of the Vision.

The Yeovil Urban Development Framework (UDF) was published and agreed by South Somerset District Council in 2005 and built on the earlier Yeovil Town Centre (Draft Consultation) Report – July 2004.

The propose of the UDF is to:

- Provide a broad framework for delivering the Vision.
- Establish Design Principles.
- Find workable solutions.

The UDF was developed with close liaison between SSDC and its partners in the LSP. The framework was closely scrutinised through four consultation rounds with the general public, key stakeholders, public officer groups and elected members.

In September 2006 Yeovil Vision was established as a “Local Delivery Vehicle” funded and managed by SSDC, Somerset County Council, Yeovil Town Council and SWRDA. The relationship of these bodies to each other and YV was agreed in a Memorandum of Understanding.

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding governance of YV is undertaken by a Project Management Board (PMB), which comprises two representatives each from SSDC, SCC, Yeovil Town Council and SWRDA, plus a SSDC representative (who does not vote) but represents SSDC as the managing and accountable body.

SSDC performs the role of accountable body for all legal processes and provides appropriate banking and accounting arrangements and services required for the monitoring and application of Project Funds.

In April 2007, Alan Brown was employed as the first Yeovil Vision Projects Director and the Vision opened an office at 80 South Street. Alan Brown reports to the Project Management Board.

In September 2007, the Yeovil Vision Project Management Board agreed a revised Project Delivery Plan for the Yeovil Vision for the period of September 2007 – April 2009.

Please see the separately attached Yeovil Vision Delivery Plan.

Delivery Plan

The Yeovil Vision Project Management Board have agreed that the key priority of the Projects Director and Yeovil Vision is to move projects from the “drawing board” to actual delivery.

Appendix E of the Delivery Plan – sets out the current list of Priority Projects (with project managers identified) and comprises circa 20 projects including:

- Reckleford Option 5
- Foundry House / Mill Lane
- The Sports Zone
- Market Street (Cattle Market)
- Princess Street – improvements

In addition to taking the lead in some projects, the Yeovil Vision Project Director takes an overview of the Vision as a whole and chairs the Yeovil Vision Co-ordination Group, which is an officer group with representatives from SSDC, Yeovil Town Council, the County and SWRDA.

Current Priorities for Yeovil Vision are to:

- Start Project Delivery
- Establish a unified and team approach to Project Delivery (Team Yeovil)
- Build the profile of Yeovil Vision and the Town
- Find improved ways of engaging with stakeholders / community groups
- Take advantage of current funding opportunities
- Develop a long term sustainable business plan
- Agree and define the future role of the Galaxy Group

The appointment of the Project Director has allowed fresh impetus to be given to the delivery of Yeovil Vision. However, for Yeovil Vision to have credibility it is necessary to demonstrate that it can “add value / make a difference” to the future development of Yeovil. In the short term this can best be achieved by moving from talking about projects to actually delivering them on the ground.

With the commencement of Reckleford Option 5, the receipt of tenders for Foundry House, completion of the Market Street, Planning Brief and Quedam Planning Application there are encouraging signs that the Vision has started to be delivered. Detailed progress on each project is reported through established project management arrangements, including the use of highlighted reports as illustrated by the agreed Delivery Plan.

Financial Implications

The financial implications of the Yeovil Vision are detailed by the Delivery Plan and by the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan (M.T.F.P).

Implications for Corporate Priorities

Yeovil Vision is Objective 7 within the Corporate Plan 2005-2012.
