

## **Iminster Forum**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

To update members on the work of Iminster Forum, the community regeneration group, which develops projects and initiatives that help make improvements in the town.

### **Public Interest**

This report provides a regular update on the activities and projects carried out by Iminster Forum.

### **Recommendation**

That members note the report and continue to support the work of Iminster Forum.

### **Background**

Iminster Forum is a not for profit organisation run with the aim of helping to make improvements in the town. In 2004 the group carried out extensive consultation with residents and organisations in and around Iminster. The results of that consultation were used to produce a Community Plan for the town which was published in 2005. Since then the Iminster Forum 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:

- Visit Iminster – tourism promotion for the town
- An improved library garden
- Iminster web – the community web site
- Visitors boards
- Walks leaflets
- Stop Line Way cycle path
- New permissive footpath
- Heritage trail booklet
- Swimming pool survey
- Community buildings survey

### **New Community Plan for Iminster**

Over the past year a significant amount of work has taken place to produce a new Iminster Community Plan. A household survey was delivered to all 2777 homes in the town to consult residents on issues relating to the town centre, green spaces, community life, safety and getting about. 853 surveys were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 31%. The survey data along with the 2011 Census is being used to draft a new Community Plan for Iminster which will span the next 10 years. Some of the emerging issues include:

- Request for dedicated sports facilities in the town, particularly a swimming pool
- Difficulty for those without a car to access the two health centres on Canal Way

- Poor lighting in Swann Precinct
- Need for better play facilities
- Desire for a community centre aimed at older residents

The Ilminster Forum is continuing to analyse the data to identify all issues of concern to residents. The Forum will then draw up a list of potential projects that could address those issues, and will hold a public consultation later in the year to feedback the results of the survey and gain residents comments on the proposed projects. The results of the household survey and public consultation will be used to write the new Ilminster Community Plan with accompanying Action Plan. The new Community Plan with its accompanying evidence will be used to influence decision makers and convince funders to support the projects identified in the Action Plan.

In addition to the Community Plan the over the past year the Ilminster Forum has:

- Continued to run a monthly Local Produce Market on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month.
- Continues to co-ordinate regular litter picks to ensure the town is kept clean and tidy. Recent activities included cleaning various road signs in the town as part of the 'Clean for the Queen' campaign.

### **Financial Implications**

Although there are no financial implications relating to this report it should be noted that the Area West Committee has supported Ilminster Forum projects that emerged from the first Community Plan. The new Community Plan will identify new projects to meet the needs of Ilminster's residents, so there may be requests for funding contributions towards those in the future.

### **Council Plan Implications**

Working in partnership with the Ilminster Forum helps address the Health and Communities Priority in the SSDC Council Plan.

### **Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications**

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 Ilminster. 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 Ilminster Community Plan – September 2013, October 2010, November 2007, April 2007, December 2006 & October 2006.
  - The Ilminster Community Plan – April 2005.
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