

## Progress Update Yeovil Refresh

Strategic Director:	Jan Gamon, Director of Place and Recovery
Service Manager:	Natalie Fortt, Regeneration Programme Manager
Lead Officer:	Ian Timms, Yeovil Refresh Project Manager
Contact Details:	ian.timms@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462 462

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## Purpose of the Report

To give a brief update on progress with the Yeovil Refresh projects.

## Public Interest

Yeovil is South Somerset's principal town and the Yeovil Refresh is an important commitment by South Somerset District Council (SSDC) to invest in Yeovil town centre, working in close collaboration with local businesses, Somerset County Council and other stakeholders. Public consultation took place in March 2018 and both residents and local businesses provided feedback on the various priority projects identified in the document.

## Recommendations

Area South Committee note progress in delivery of the Yeovil Refresh Programme.

## Background

The Yeovil Refresh programme is an holistic programme of work designed to regenerate Yeovil town centre. The Refresh has three key infrastructure based themes supported by an underpinning animation theme. The Refresh was adopted in 2018 with work beginning on the three theme areas in late 2018. The projects focus on Transport, Major Development Sites and Public Realm.

The Refresh aims to make Yeovil town centre a vibrant place to live, work, learn and visit. It seeks to provide an improved transport network, revitalised public spaces and supports major developments to help regenerate the town centre.

The current Covid -19 pandemic has accelerated changes in the way town centres are used which are very much in line with the broad thrust of the Refresh projects. This has really highlighted the need to reduce the dominance of retail space, providing alternatives through leisure, commercial and residential uses. This change in the way we use space will require more diversity in the use of existing brownfield sites and buildings within the town.



## **Transport**

The Refresh proposed a series of ideas to improve connectivity issues in the town centre area. This led to the creation of an access strategy which creates a transport package for the town centre. This is broken into sections which cover: highways, bus network, walking and cycling routes and links to wider areas such as the railway stations.

## **Public Realm**

This theme aims to create and transform public spaces through the town centre. This supports the place making aims within the Refresh. It will create streets which are shared spaces from Westminster Street through Middle Street to Wyndham Street area. The Borough will be improved as a civic space and an events space incorporating a big screen and fountain will be created in the Triangle area. Key principles are to declutter these areas making them more accessible, greener spaces with more planting and reduced levels of through traffic. The pandemic has illustrated that this type of space will be of real value in future providing strong support for the town centre.

## **Major Development Sites**

A number of large sites were identified which included Old Cattle Market, Glovers Walk and car park sites in SSDC ownership. The Old Cattle Market and Glovers Walk are in private ownership, therefore any potential development on these sites will be led by the private sector.

## **Update**

The previous update to this committee was just prior to the suspension of face to face meetings due to the pandemic. Progress in each themed area is outlined below:

## **Transport**

As stated in the background section of the report the Access Strategy work has been completed and this now forms the basis for action. Work is currently underway to deliver improvements to the Town Centre Cycling and Walking network. This also includes the proposals in the Refresh to reverse traffic flow in Stars lane which is intended to support the public realm works in the main streets.

The cycling and walking work is broken into three phases with the aim of commencing construction in early 2022. The first phase examined the options in detail and gave preliminary costings for construction. This has led to one of the schemes through Addlewell land being set aside for cost and practicality reasons. So schemes are now being worked on in Hendford, Stars lane/ South Street and a connection via the country park to Pen Mill station.



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The highway network connections to Reckleford are also being explored but these are at an earlier feasibility stage. This work is intended to improve the network in this area to minimise congestion and positively impact air pollution levels.

### **Public Realm Work**

The work to complete the designs for improved public realm has been completed and a timetable for delivery agreed by the Refresh board. We expect to complete all works from Westminster Street to the Middle Street junction with South Western Terrace by the end of 22/23.

The first section in Westminster Street will commence on site 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and all being well will be complete by October 2021. Works on the Triangle and Wine Street are currently out to tender with contracting to be completed in late June/early July. We would expect this work, which will transform that space, to start in the autumn.

Tenders are also being prepared for Middle Street West, Middle street East and the Borough/High Street. These will be tendered over the coming year to enable us to complete the works in a relatively quick time frame.

A number of the sections benefit from Future High Streets funding which is matched by SSDC co-funding contributions.

A six month extension to the trial Traffic Regulation Order in Upper Middle Street will be completed in July. This was extended as the original trial had been overlaid by Covid restrictions. On completion of that work evaluation of feedback will inform the final designs.

### **Development sites**

The Old Cattle Market site and Glovers Walk form a substantial part of the town centre area. Therefore, whilst they are not within SSSC control, officers are actively engaging with the owners/developers of both sites to investigate whether viable schemes can be brought forward.

### **Financial Implications**

None directly arising from this report.

### **Council Plan Implications**

Delivery of the Yeovil Refresh is part of Priority 2 in the Council Plan so focus will remain on the projects which are outlined within the document and on linked initiatives.

### **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

None arising from this report. However, all of the plans and projects are being developed with this theme in mind. As an example, public realm proposals include



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planting and greening of the area which was strongly supported by consultation in 2019. Also transport proposals seek to create a mixed network which promotes active travel, in practical terms this will promote walking and cycling as modes of transport.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

None arising directly from this report. However, when delivering each project impacts are identified and an Equality Impact Assessment carried out. We will continue to engage with groups and individuals to address issues and make reasonable adjustments where needed. Further consultations are also planned on traffic regulation orders in the next few months.

### **Background Papers**

None attached