



## Progress Update Yeovil Refresh

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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.

## Recommendation

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

## Background

The Yeovil Refresh programme is a 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 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 to the June 2021 meeting. 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.

As reported to the July meeting the cycling and walking work is broken into three phases with the aim of commencing construction in early 2022. We are working on the second phase design work, which is progressing well having now reached a stage where it is available for public consultation. Consultation should commence in September prior to this meeting. The plans are hosted on the SCC Small Improvement Schemes website with links from the Refresh Microsite.

The sections now ready for consultation are:

- Hendford
- Reversal of traffic flow Stars Lane and South Street

The following section requires further work, which includes ecological studies and liaison with the country park team

- Pen Mill Station link

This consultation includes residents and businesses along the route, statutory stakeholders and specified local consultees.

The following three sections are simple improvements to existing junctions so we plan to progress to tender as one package via the SSDC Public Realm Framework.

- Stars lane/ old Station Way
- Old Station Road Crossing
- Middle Street Junction with South Western Terrace

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 was due to start on 28<sup>th</sup> June but late changes to a sewer diversion has meant a change to this date. We will confirm dates when this is available, duration remains at three months. Works on the Triangle and Wine Street are projected to start on site with Wine Street in October. The Triangle works are expected to start in November and will be completed early summer 2022.

Tenders are also being prepared for Middle Street West, Middle street East and the Borough/High Street. The tender process commenced in September to allow us to have contracts in place by the end of the calendar year. This will 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.



## **South Somerset District Council**

A six month extension to the trial Traffic Regulation Order in Upper Middle Street was completed in July. This was extended as the original trial had been overlaid by Covid restrictions. We are now evaluating feedback to 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 SSDC control, officers are actively engaging with the owners/developers of both sites to investigate whether viable schemes can be brought forward.

There is also a project seeking to establish a co- working space that is ongoing which is part funded from Future High Streets Fund allocations.

### **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 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