

## Agenda item 6

For information: 2017-18 Work Programme – mid-year review

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### Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Council Matters on progress to deliver the 2017-18 Work Programme.

The report summarises progress which has been made in the first seven months of this year against the three pillars of the Work Programme (Environment, Prosperity, Health and Wellbeing), as well as against Finance and Marketing and Communications priorities. It highlights where there are challenges in terms of delivery (for example because of dependence on others to deliver, budget constraint or staff capacity), as well as a brief summary of the many areas where there has been positive progress.

### Introduction

The Work Programme is now reviewed regularly at fortnightly Management Group meetings.

Managers have devised a system of RAG rating (Red / Amber / Green) the priorities within the work programme. Green indicates an action is on track for delivery or completed, Amber means an action is on track for delivery but there are potential issues that could affect this and Red means an action is not on track for delivery.

The Management Group now discuss areas of work where progress is challenging and collectively consider potential solutions to this.

The report highlights progress against each of the following areas:

- Environment
- Prosperity
- Health and Wellbeing
- Marketing and Communications
- Finance

## ENVIRONMENT

The focus for the Parks team over the last six months has been to consolidate the excellent work of the Rangers over the last two years.

Against a backdrop of changes in *how we work* in our parks and green spaces, not to mention taking on additional responsibilities and interests across the town, this has been a necessary shift in focus. The Rangers and the Project Officers have managed to successfully deliver a huge amount of work over the last two years, but we've deliberately sought to find a balance between the day to day work and the project work to ensure that what we're doing is sustainable, well-planned and well-managed.

Going forward, this means we'll be taking on and delivering projects in a more strategic and structured way; this might mean delaying the start of 'the next project' until the current one has been completed – but this will enable us to continue to complete the significant (and growing) amount of day to day work, repairs and upkeep.

Naturally, there'll always be enthusiasm and excitement about new opportunities and we'll always try to create the capacity to take up (or take on) such opportunities as they arise. But it's essential that we do the fundamentals well – and this is what we've strived to deliver since the turn of the year.

Happily, this shift in focus hasn't been to the detriment of the Work Programme.

Highlights over the last six months include:

- Updated and implementing Management & Improvement Plans for Rodden Meadow, Welshmill, The Roundhouse & The Dippy
- Adopted new Management & Improvement Plans for North Parade and New Road
- Completed a follow-up consultation on how we look after Rodden Meadow
- Working with the Frome Lions a new Picnic & Play space for younger children has been established in Victoria Park
- Critchill Rangers sessions are ongoing
- Improvements to the play area at the Old Showfield
- New bins and benches have been installed across the FTC estate
- Prize winning seasonal floral displays in the town centre
- Participatory Budgeting vote over the future of toilet facilities in Victoria Park

Upcoming projects and work (between now and March 2018):

- Skatepark repairs in Mary Baily
- The industrial garden at Foundry Barton
- Participatory Budgeting votes at Tower View & Packsaddle (subject to transfer from Mendip)
- Supporting the residents of the Trinity area in their 'clean' campaign
- Ranger sessions with the Steiner Academy

Projects and work with concerns at present:

- Potential improvements to Château-Gontier Walk (limited capacity and budget at present)
- Conservation volunteering in partnership with Somerset Wildlife Trust (limited progress)
- The College Rangers sessions (these were led by Ranger Mike and since his departure are currently under review)
- A significant amount of time is spent monitoring and working with Mendip to improve the overall cleanliness of the town (this remains subject to effective working with MDC)

## PROSPERITY

The Prosperity area of work has been delivered successfully against priorities over the first six months of 2017/18. The following highlights key achievements over 2017/18 and identifies projects where the start date will be carried forward to 2018/19:

### Planning & Development

- The Employment Land Study has been completed and a Self/Community Build Register has been set up. The findings and data from these has been shared with MDC to feed into the Local Plan Part 2. The register has also influenced other developers to bring forward proposals that include self-build.
- The Self-Build Register continues to grow in numbers and is actively promoted to interested parties and potential developers.
- Work on the Green Infrastructure Strategy will start in 2018/19.
- The feasibility study for the self-build housing scheme at Little Keyford Lane is in the final stages.
- Work continues to support initiatives around empty homes and the lack of affordable housing in Frome, through working with and supporting Fair Housing for Frome.
- Developers and land owners are responding to the policies and objectives within the Neighbourhood Plan; more pre-application discussions and enquires are being received.
- A specialist report on setting out guidelines on future street furniture, signage, soft and hard landscaping, lighting and their maintenance in the town centre, will not be commissioned in 2017/18. The Local Listings and a survey of the Cockey Lamps are being carried out as a first phase instead.

### Saxonvale regeneration

- The Saxonvale Steering Group has been established, including representatives from MDC and SCC.
- Jones Lange LaSalle (JLL) have been appointed to act as agents for FTC. Prospective investors/developers of FTC's land are being approached as part of project brief.

## Remodelling of the Market Place and town centre improvements

- Consent was secured on appeal for the Boyle Cross scheme. Project agreement was concluded with MDC on 04/08/17. Phase 1 construction at Boyle Cross is underway and the 20 mph zone is being progressed by SCC. Implementation of Phase 2 is expected in 2018; discussions with SCC Highways are ongoing.

## Support for Business & Enterprise

- The annual Benchmarking project for the Town Centre Benchmarking has been completed.
- Monthly Business Breakfast and Discuss & Do events held; the average attendance has increased from 25 to 35 per event.
- Early consultation has been completed on a possible Business Improvement District. This project is unlikely to proceed in the short term but final decision to be made in consultation with Steering Group which is being led by the business community.
- Micro-enterprise support: a number of initiatives have come forward including monthly 'Soul Traders' meetings that provide training and peer-to-peer support. MDC are pursuing a Boxworks initiative to provide small incubator spaces on the back of research into demand undertaken by FTC.
- Project Coordinator has coordinated the delivery of apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships through the Frome College World of Work programme – a detailed report will come to Town Matters Committee next time.
- New market development: FTC have entered into an agreement with MDC to explore how the new Boyle Cross events area will be promoted in the future

## Transport

- Frome Community Cars now support over 140 people each month and secured £4800 external funding to expand.
- Transport policy, action plan and strategy drafted and strategic aims agreed at Town Matters
- E-bikes available for hire via Cycology
- 5 electric charge points now available for electric vehicles in Frome

## Energy

- Series of talks around climate change hosted at Town Hall
- Energy awareness training being provided for front-line workers
- Energy and travel challenge being planned for local schools
- Solar opportunities being explored at Commerce Park

## Waste

- Community Fridge now diverts over 6000 items per month and has external funding until Sept 2018. Model has been replicated by 15 groups around the country.
- SHARE has 800 members and is being supported by new team of students from Edventure – crowd-funder to launch soon. Regular repair sessions being held.

## Other

- Good business visits conducted monthly – impacts include more companies adopting Living Wage and taking on an apprentice.
- Resilience work shared with councils nationally at NALC and SLCC conferences.

## Areas to look out for over the next six months include:

- Promoting and monitoring usage of the First 267 evening bus service to ensure it's sustainable by April 2018.
- Ensuring that Frome's two car clubs (Co-Wheels and E-Cars) can sustain themselves.
- Promoting vote based funding opportunities such as YMCA solar and SHARE Aviva bid to ensure they are successful.
- Develop SHARE and the Fridge to enable them to be financially sustainable by autumn 2018.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Health and Wellbeing area of work has been delivered successfully against priorities over the first six months of 2017/18. The following highlights key achievements over that time:

### Strategy

- Appointment of Health and Wellbeing Manager.
- Stakeholder engagement event planned for November 2017.
- Strategy being drafted; to be finalised November 2017 following stakeholder event.
- Review of data / evidence relating to health and wellbeing in Frome being undertaken.

### Partnership Working

- New Practice Manager in post at Frome Medical Practice with conversation happening about how the Practice and FTC can work together and support each other.
- Mendip Health Connections Multi-Year Agreement in place.
- New 4 weekly radio feature started on Frome FM as part of a weekly Health and Wellbeing Show with guests invited from various community organisations.
- Attendance at Mendip Health and Wellbeing Board, Somerset VCSE Forum and other appropriate meetings, as well as connections being established with relevant colleagues at Somerset County Council and Mendip District Council.

## Communities

- Delivery of Youth Conference, March 2017, attended by all Year 8 pupils at school in Frome.
- A vibrant and successful Children's Festival took place in July 2017.

## Support for Organisations

- Multi-year agreements in place with ten organisations.
- Training programme established – 12 courses taking place during 2017/18, with new ones being added as appropriate.
- Support for Mayor's Grant - 50% of the budget allocated to projects to date so far in 2017/18.
- Implementation of 'Crowdfunder' initiative.
- Agreement to reintroduce Grant Support from October 2018, for grants of £300 - £2000 and work underway to implement this scheme again.
- Rebecca Morland appointed as external fundraiser to deliver the external fundraising contract, including an additional seven fundraising specific training courses.
- Participatory budgeting events - budget successfully distributed with all of the 2017/18 events planned or taken place.
- Approximately 20 organisations supported with responsive work this year to date.

## Fairer Life Chances for All

- Young people's mental health forum established; regular meetings of local providers, schools, police and other interested agencies to discuss service provision, need and to make connections between each other.
- Focus on World Mental Health Day – social media, promotion of new web page created regarding support for young people needing support on mental health and radio show focused on broad issue of mental health in Frome.
- Literacy work – implementation of aspects of the Frome Reads Action Plan through a presence of Frome Reads at various public events in Frome.
- Play work – initial meeting of play providers with plans to undertake an audit.
- Work with Frome for All group to support their work to ensure Frome becomes an inclusive town. FTC has agreed to a series of practical actions to help work towards this ambition, which are currently being undertaken.

## Volunteering

- Volunteer Frome established – with positive engagement being seen from local organisations seeking volunteers, as well as number of volunteers registering on the website. Working closely with Spark to ensure the first year of VF continues successfully.

- Annual VolunTea in the Park took place in June 2017, to celebrate the contribution volunteers make to our town.

### Physical Activity and Sport

- Sport and leisure forum has not been held so far in 2017/18 but planned to take place in December 2017.
- See council TM report re sports update for what we have done this year.
- Volunteer Frome making contacts with Sports Clubs to encourage them to use this platform to engage volunteers.

### Priorities for the next six months will include:

- Health and Wellbeing Strategy finalised.
- The State of Frome Report.
- Health and Wellbeing Forum and Sports Forum taking place.
- Play audit undertaken.
- Exploration of how support is provided to carers.
- Community development delivery plan.

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The marketing & communication area of work is on track and delivering against all areas of the newly created work plan:

### Improving the image of the town

- Successful recruitment of Claire Worrall, our Marketing & Tourism Intern to support the development of the Performing Arts sector through the further development of Discover Frome Website. This has gone from strength to strength as we now move on to promoting Walking & Cycling
- Continue to market Frome as a destination following a grant of £12,000 from Mendip Tourism. This has allowed us to set up Discover Frome information Point at Black Swan Arts and a partnership with The List to put together an improved The Annual, focusing on accommodation listings.

### Increasing the information output of the Council for the purposes of well-being and civic pride

- This has been channeled through the significant increase in Social Media output, through a clear and developed digital strategy including our website
- Campaigns to increase the profile of the Town Council work programme include Market Place Remodeling, Cheap Street, Volunteer Frome, Crowdfunder, Electric Bikes, Discover Frome, Information point, to name a few. This is across all channels

## Working to improve public participation and engagement through meetings

- Room layouts of meetings continue to be interesting and varied. We are working hard to increase active participation through use of posters trailing meetings, actively inviting members of the public who we feel may have a vested interest in the subject matter and attempting to get live streaming reliably online. We are working to overcome glitches in this area but are also posting, tweeting and issuing an easily accessible news release about the contents of the meeting the next day.
- The three tier meetings continue to be active and move forward although there has been little engagement or feedback from the parishes. We continue to push out our information through these channels to maintain a dialogue.

## Town Hall Marketing

- A strategy has been written, sectors have been identified and beautiful collateral is being created. We are awaiting permissions before we push ahead.

## Areas of action in the next six months

- Continuing to support events that have arisen from Participatory Budgeting (PB) and looking forward to the next round.
- Looking forward to scoping out new ways of improving the image of the town through a Discover Frome App, Connectivity in Frome, and walking tours.
- Delivery of the newly formulated Discover Frome Website & The Annual
- Application to Mendip Tourism to continue to support Discover Frome Information Point and looking at ways to move that service forward.
- The conference!
- A Performing Arts Mentorship scheme
- Full steam ahead on marketing the Town Hall

## FINANCE

The finances of the Town Council for the first six months of the 2017/2018 financial year are on track and the majority of expenditure is within budget. Highlights over the last six months include:

### Budgets

- Precept from the District Council received in two tranches
- Budgets agreed in January 2017 to deliver the work plan on target
- Funding supplementing budgets received from:
  - Mendip Tourism funding the Discover Frome Information Point
  - Partnership funding from Mendip for the Boyle Cross improvements
  - Donation from Frome Rotarians for the Victoria Park Picnic and Play area
  - EU grant funding reimbursing the Quadripartite Thematic Twinning

## Audit

- External Auditors, Grant Thornton signed off the 2016/2017 accounts September
- Internal Auditors, Fair Account completed first quarter of 2017/2018 and report noted at Council Matters September

## Financial Regulations and Financial Risk Assessment

- Financial Regulations and Risk Assessments reviewed and adopted April

## VAT

- Quarter One submitted for repayment and received, Quarter two submitted September

## Investments

- Short term investments in seven accounts generating interest 40% over budgeted income

## Town Hall

- Broadband, Wi-Fi, new telephone system and photocopier on three-year leases installed April
- Meeting room booking software, linked to accounting software installed April
- Long term tenants secured on five-year leases April

## HR

- Staff Handbook updated and adopted September
- Staff contracts updated and accepted July
- Ellis Whittam contracted for three years for certain HR duties September
- Recruitment procedure documents formalised October
- Six monthly staff reviews booked October

## Areas to be closely monitored over the next six months include:

- Income and expenditure remain within budget
- Town Hall meeting room bookings to increase
- Develop and expand HR procedure documents