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To Members of Frome Town Council:

Al O'Kane, Alison Barclay, Cath Puddick, Colin Cobb, Gary Collinson, Heather Wride, Jean Boulton, Kate Bielby, Mel Usher, Nick White, Peter Macfadyen, Pippa Goldfinger, Richard Ackroyd, Sheila Gore, Tim O'Connor, Toby Eliot, Tricia Golinski

FROME TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

7pm Wednesday 28 October 2015

Selwood School Hall Berkley Rd, Frome, Somerset BA11 2EF

Please contact Rebecca Krzyzosiak (<u>admin@frometowncouncil.gov.uk</u>) in advance of the meeting if you are unable to attend

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence, declaration of members' interests and minutes from the last meeting on 23 September 2015
- 2. Questions and comments from the public
- 3. Questions and comments from Cllrs
- 4. Short talks by: Apprenticeship Project Coordinator, Terry Bishop about the 'Next Steps' partnership between Frome Town Council and Frome College and Julie Carey-Downes Health Connections Coordinator
- 5. For information: Report on workspace study presented by Seamus Cleary
- 6. For information: Outstanding actions and update on current projects
- 7. A proposal for Frome Town Council: Road Safety Concerns along Stonebridge Drive
- 8. For information: Frome Town Council's response to 14th Onshore Oil & Gas Licensing Round Habitats Regulations Assessment
- 9. For decision: Internal Auditor
- 10. Brief financial update and payments over £500 since the last meeting
- 11. For information: Frome Town Hall Summary
- 12. For information: Mendip District Council Local Plan Part II
- 13. The next meeting will be at 7pm 25 November Venue to be arranged.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wynne, Town Clerk

Paulwyme

Frome Town Council, 5 Palmer

Street, Frome BA11 1DS

21 October 2015

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AGENDA

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- 2. Questions and comments from the public
- 3. Questions and comments from Cllrs
- 4. Short talks by: Apprenticeship Project Coordinator, Terry Bishop about the 'Next Steps' partnership between Frome Town Council and Frome College and Julie Carey-Downes Health Connections Coordinator
- 5. For information: Report on workspace study presented by Seamus Cleary Author: Economic Development & Regeneration Manager

Summary and introduction

This report provides an update on a study being undertaken by consultants TEAM Consulting. The study is primarily concerned with the demand for workspace from businesses in Frome to help the Council consider what interventions are necessary to support local business development. The study is also intended to provide some baseline information on the local economy to assist the Council in its work on economic development. Seamus Cleary, the lead consultant from TEAM Consulting will deliver a brief presentation at the meeting on the findings and some ideas for the Council to consider. At this stage the information being presented is high level. A more detailed report will be published shortly.

Data gathering methodology

Economic profiling – TEAM Consulting have used a variety of sources to provide an up-to-date profile of the economy of Frome. The economic profile (summary below) includes data gained from Office of National Statistics (ONS), Inter-departmental Business Registration (IDBR) and Freedom of Information requests in relation to New Business Start-ups and Non-Domestic Premises.

Field research / surveys / consultation – TEAM Consulting have used a variety of methods to gather primary information from a range of stakeholders including: two surveys (targeted and general); one to one consultation with property agents; a validation workshop – TEAM Consulting have consulted with the local Chamber of Commerce and local businesses at a recent 'Business Breakfast' at which they gathered some additional perspectives for the study.

Profiling Frome businesses – TEAM Consulting have used a variety of sources to identify the number, type and location of businesses within the study area. This profiling has included:

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gathering and analysing commercial business databases; review of ONS data; comparing and contrasting the profiles to gain insight into the business base of Frome.

Findings - High Level Economic Profile

- Of 18,908 people within 16 74 age range, 14,030 are economically active
- 53% of economically active are in full time employment (52% Somerset, 55% England & Wales)
- 735 unemployed, representing 5.2% which compares with 4.2% (Somerset) and 6.3% (England & Wales)

Employment Profile – largest sectors – all employment not just businesses:

	Sector of employment	Number of employees	%
1	Wholesale + retail trade; repair of motor vehicles + motorcycles	2,145	16.3%
2	Education	1,534	11.6%
3	Human health and social work	1,521	11.5%

Source: Census 2011

Business Profile

- Commercial database and ONS / IDBR indicate approximately 950 1050 businesses in Frome
- But Census 2011 indicates that 2,083 people are 'self-employed' this may suggest a much higher level of business activity than the ONS/IDBRS data reveals
- wholesale & retail; professional, scientific & technical, construction and information and communication are the largest *business* sectors by number of businesses
- 75% of businesses have less than 10 employees

Results of field research

The field research / survey of local businesses was undertaken in 2 phases, one targeted at known growth sectors (primarily creative and professional services) and the other at the broad population of businesses. 121 responses were received, 56 on the targeted survey and 65 on the second one aimed at the business community generally.

Frome as a business location – responses

- pro: quality of life, community, sense of place
- con: accessibility, quality of appropriate accommodation

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- businesses keen to start up and grow but there are challenges
- businesses ready to move to new / upgrade of premises...but lack of availability is frustrating some
- 21% of the total number of respondents anticipated that they would be seeking to relocate / upgrade / reconfigure premises within the next three years

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- the targeted survey (creative, professional services etc.) found that 16 businesses (28%) proposed to upgrade / relocate within three years
- of the 65 responses to the second survey, 41 (63%) indicated that they would prefer to remain in Frome.
- accommodation in greatest demand is small office / studio provision i.e. 100 500 sq. ft.
- the availability of small offices / studio is limited; so there is 'pent-up' demand in this solo / micro business cluster.

Next Steps

Some further work is required to complete individual business case studies. Findings are to be reviewed before a final report with recommendations is published. However, early thoughts include:

- talking to landlords to see what space we can uncover or if some larger businesses have spare space that they can sub-let
- the idea of 'pop up' offices

6. For information: Outstanding actions, and update on current projects – at Appendix 2

Summary of Resolution	Minute number	Meeting date	Responsibility	Progress Report	Target Date
Garston Road play area	2014/38	25/06/2014	Chris Stringer	Staff are currently discussing the s106 funding attached to this development with MDC. The funding is expected to improve existing play areas and opportunities in the town. As such Staff will be identifying projects and proposals for MDC to consider.	
Freehold transfer of the Tower View Open Space along with an appropriate dowry	2014/70	17/12/2014	Chris Stringer	Due to be discussed by CAMG at MDC in November.	
Freehold transfer Packsaddle Way/Pedlars Grove and Chapman's Close open spaces with dowry	2014/71	17/12/2014	Chris Stringer	Due to be discussed by CAMG at MDC in November.	

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7. A Proposal for Frome Town Council Road Safety Concerns along Stonebridge Drive

Author: Richard Ackroyd, College Ward

Outline

There have been documented and ongoing concerns regarding the speed cushions near to the college/sports centre and Rowan Court area of Stonebridge over the last five years. These concerns are chiefly that the current speed cushions along this stretch of road do not meet current regulations and in fact allow cars to pass between them, unhindered at speeds in excess of 50 miles per hour. These concerns have been championed primarily by former local resident, Mr Douglas Insall and District Councillor, Adam Boyden.

Stonebridge Drive

The section of Stonebridge Drive in question is less than half a kilometre in length, is narrow with parked cars one side, has three bends and six side roads. The stretch of road in question fronts Frome Community College (1,300 students) and Frome Leisure Centre (number of users unknown). At peak times it is a very busy road.

History

Stonebridge Drive used to have continuous round top humps in five locations because of safety concerns. After complaints from residents and bus companies, they were replaced in those five locations by pairs of speed cushions.

Unfortunately, the layout of those cushions does not conform to the current design requirements of the Somerset County Council or the Department for Transport with respect to Traffic Calming. The cushions have an enormous two metre gap between them and parked vehicles usually cover one. Somerset County Traffic Engineers have visited the site and claim that all is working well.

There has been only one recorded accident along this part of Stonebridge Drive since 2009, although local residents have reported near misses and witnessed minor collisions, none of which have required medical treatment. Residents of Rowan Court complained of daily dangers in driving on to Stonebridge Drive due to bad lines of sight around a bend, parked cars and some vehicles on Stonebridge Drive travelling over 50 mph. According to Mr Insall, the response from the Traffic Engineers to solve the problem was to trim a hedge.

In November (between 21st & 28th) 2012 & October (between 9th & 16th) 2013, seven day automatic speed monitoring surveys were taken due to speeding complaints by residents. Those surveys showed:

- Over 24,000 vehicles each week surveyed.
- 23,000 of those drove below 30 mph, but many cut-in through the two metre gaps risking head-on collisions (over 60%) in an easterly direction i.e. college to Tescos.
- Average speeds were low, but over 1,000 each week drove above 30 mph and up to 56 mph. Of those 1,000 plus vehicles between 30 & 56 mph – 75% of them were travelling west i.e. Tescos to the college.
- Following many complaints of speeding from Mr Insall, a traffic engineer recently

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claimed that "there may be an isolated high end speeder."

The concerns of local residents have featured prominently in the local papers on several occasions. Councillor Adam Boyden has done some excellent work in bringing the problem to the attention of all concerned. There is support from the principal of Frome College.

I have recently contacted the relevant County Council officers and engineers, as well as County Councillor Linda Oliver, who met recently with Mr. Insall and with the relevant engineers. Their view on the current cushion arrangement is that "These were constructed to a certain specification of the day. However, as with most things specifications change but it does not mean the current ones have to be replaced because of that. They are still considered appropriate but would not be installed today to the same specification."

Conclusions

The current speed cushions along this stretch of road do not meet current guidelines. Cars can just simply drive in between them, making them all but useless as speed reducers. Mr Insall has personally had at least seven near head-on collisions when driving along Stonebridge Drive and his big worry is that there will one day be a fatal accident because of the ineffective speed cushions. Having looked at his documentation I too share his concerns, especially as at certain times of day there will be lots of pedestrian traffic from school students, students being driven and increased car traffic from the newly enlarged Tesco and soon to be improved sports centre.

There is genuine local resident concern about this, particularly among residents of Rowan Court. Mr Insall has given me copious amounts of well-documented drawings, news articles and local resident statements to support his views. He has been trying to get something done about this since 2010 and opinions do differ about the relative merits of his concerns. Not all residents along Stonebridge Drive agree that there is a problem. I spoke with a few residents who thought that speeding was not an issue and another who wanted the speed cushions removed completely. Mr Insall has not tried to hide any of this from me. I am actually impressed by his level of understanding of the issues and also his ability to present seemingly very workable solutions in such a competent way.

The general view of County Traffic Engineers appears to be that there is no speeding issue.

I am also aware as a town councilor, that F.T.C. are not legally responsible for the road network, but that we could, if agreed, support any application for improved road safety.

Recommendations

My thanks to SCC Highways and Linda Oliver who have provided the following: "It maybe that there are some measures that could be taken to deal with the offending parking of vehicles on corners of junctions, which should be dealt with and if the hedges are still causing a problem to deal with them. Lining could also be placed in the centre of the road to direct travel. At the same time SCC Highways have agreed to do two traffic surveys this year to monitor the speed and volume in the same area tested before on Stonebridge Drive and the other survey in Brunel Way.

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We agreed that once we have got that data a meeting should be arranged with Frome Town Council and other Councillors to go through the findings.

Hopefully, once we have some more up to date information to consider we can have a constructive meeting that will deal with the concerns of Mr.Insall once and for all. At the same time it is a great opportunity to consider the Brunel Way speed and volume issues with the essential data to support discussions and possible solutions."

Proposal

In the light of all the above I am proposing that:

- Frome Town Council supports a further traffic survey at Stonebridge Drive and Brunel Way, to be carried out by Somerset County Council as suggested by Councillor Linda Oliver
- Following the survey, there should be a meeting with relevant FTC and other Councillors to go through the findings
- The costs of a Small Improvement Scheme (S.I.S.) to change the current speed cushion layout should be investigated and be made available at the above meeting
- Further phased plans for speed reduction measures along Stonebridge Drive should be given due consideration by Somerset County Council, with an eventual aim of a twenty mile an hour speed limit.

8. For information: Frome Town Council's response to 14th Onshore Oil & Gas Licensing Round Habitats Regulations Assessment

Author: Energy and Recycling Officer

Frome Town Council submitted a response to the government's Onshore Oil & Gas Licensing Round Habitats Regulations Assessment. The response outlined the council's serious concerns about the impact this will have on wildlife, our town, businesses and community. The key messages included that the council believes the Precautionary Principle should be applied:

- To reduce risk in situations where scientific certainty does not (yet) exist
- To protect future generations and
- When considering potentially damaging operations, to apply the principle that consent cannot be given unless it is ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.

Wales and Scotland have moratoria on hydraulic fracturing for shale gas based on perceived risks to the environment and people. In England, the parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee called for a moratorium for the same reasons. International evidence, notably from Australia and the USA, demonstrates that unconventional gas operations presents potentially serious risks to the environment and human health. Frome Town Council believes that all current licenses should be withdrawn.

Recommendation

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The Council endorses the submission made to the Department for Energy and Climate Change on 29 September 2015.

9. For decision: Internal Auditor

Author: Responsible Finance Officer

Purpose of the report

To consider the reappointment of the Internal Auditor for 2015/2016. The council has agreed to appoint or reappoint an Internal Auditor annually. It is not a legal requirement to change Internal Auditors annually but it is common practise to retain their services for a number of years to provide continuity.

Background

Regulation 4(1) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 requires local councils to ensure that financial management of the council is adequate and effective. The Regulation also require councils to have a sound system of internal control.

The purpose of an internal audit is to review the effectiveness of the financial systems and other controls of the council's activities and operating procedures. This function must be independent of the other financial controls and procedures of the council which are the subject of review. The Internal Auditor must be competent to carry out the role in a way that will meet the business needs of the council. This review is an integral part of continually improving governance and accountability.

The council's internal controls are reviewed and tested to provide a level of assurance for the council when asked to sign off statements 2 and 6 in the annual governance statement of the Annual Return. The Internal Auditor will have carried out planned work necessary to give these assurances, and if they are satisfied with their findings they will complete section 4 of the Annual Return.

Discussion

During 2014/15 an Audit Plan with additional testing and reporting was agreed;

Main area of review	Specific point of review
Finance and Administration	Financial Regulations, Income and Expenditure, bank reconciliation, Year End Accounts, Year End procedures, Annual Return, Payroll and Payroll procedures, Investments, Charity accounts, grant awards, spending powers
Policies, Risk Management, Health and Safety, Minutes	General review for effectiveness, adherence to legislation, Risk Register, Standing Orders, Internal Controls and council procedures, password, back up and security checks. Effective and efficient

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management of the council's resources,
fraud and corruption risk.

Fair Account has competently audited the Town Council's accounts for the previous four financial years, producing a comprehensive report following their quarterly visits which is taken to council. They have provided support for successful Annual Return submission for external audit. I enjoy a good working relationship with Fair Account, benefiting from their extensive Local Government experience and advice on keeping abreast of current legislation. They are very thorough auditing FTC's accounts, and provide advice on any accounting related topics, and I have no hesitation in recommending the continuation of working with them as the council's Internal Auditor.

Recommendation

Reappoint Fair Account as the Internal Auditor for Frome Town Council for 2015/16.

10. Brief financial update and payments over £500 since the last meeting

Author: Responsible Finance Officer

The Income and Expenditure Statement presented at Appendix 3 represents the first six months of the financial year and compares expenditure and income to the agreed budget set at the start of the year.

This format of the budget codes and cost centres is generated by software specifically designed for a council of our size is hopefully now a familiar document, as this will be the layout when it comes to consider setting the 2016/17 budget in the next two months. One suggestion is to simplify the statement by amalgamating similar codes and I am more than happy to look into this.

The forecast remains unchanged from September, and the likelihood is the year-end budget will result in savings of approximately £20k and the need to use £10k from General Reserves to balance expenditure rather than £30k.

We are incurring expenditure on Frome Town Hall in the form of utilities, rates and minor repairs, and income is being received from the Elliott building hire which has attracted interest and bookings from a number of community groups and Council's panel meetings are also making use of the building.

Significant income to note during August and September

- £517k second and final Precept payment received from Mendip District Council
- £10k VAT repayment received from HMRC, reclaimed for the first quarter of the financial year
- £2.5k solar panel surplus electricity sold back to the grid for quarter 2, July to September
- £1.9k Mendip Tourism grant to fund the Cityscape Mapboards £9k from the sale of Cheese Show tickets at the Information Centre was held in the council's account and returned to the Agricultural Society less 10% commission.

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Significant expenditure to note during August and September

- £125k Chubb Bulleid, the council's solicitors handling the purchase of the Old Showfield
- £12k Community grants approved at the September Council meeting
- £3.6k D Hooton reimbursement for air fares purchased relating to the Twinning Thematic Network Grant
- £2k Four local business signed up for the Toilet Scheme

Details of all payments over £500 reported since the last meeting can be seen at Appendix 4 Councillors are invited to come into the office to 'spot check' and sign BACS payments retrospectively.

Reserves/Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shown at Appendix 5 details deposits in the bank and investments as at 30 September 2015 and 31 March 2015. Total reserves stand at £1.9m, a combination of General and Earmarked Reserves. The General Reserves £1m include the precept payments, balance of the PWLB loan for Frome Town Hall renovations and the Council Support Tax Grant for 2015/16. The Earmarked Reserves £836k are identified for specific spending.

Section 106 agreements

Work is progressing on suitable projects in order to claim the S106 monies held by MDC, these projects will be brought to council for approval they include;

- Latona Leisure, former Mendip Lodge Hotel (£38k) to support improvements to the Market Yard and information to tourists.
- Open Spaces enhancement (£44k) from the Medical Practice development. Consultation is underway now the Old Showfield is in Council ownership.
- Two S106 agreements, Former Cuprinol Works (£19k) and Bennetts Gardens (£26k) for public open space enhancement.

Investments

Two short term investments of £200k matured at the end of September and reinvested for three months in line with the Investment Strategy.

If you require any further financial information please do contact me in advance of the meeting.

11. For information: Frome Town Hall Summary

Author: Councillor Colin Cobb, Berkley Down Ward

Introduction

I have been working closely with the Town Clerk and NVB the architects for this scheme. I am reporting in the absence of the Town Clerk.

Progress

Design work on the Frome Town Hall refurbishment has been proceeding over the last few

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months, with the original objective of bringing a costed scheme proposal to Council in October.

Finalising the design has taken longer than originally anticipated. The overall project brief was prepared following wide consultation, and it was not anticipated that all of the identified requirements would be provided in the first phase of refurbishment. Nevertheless, we have been attempting to include as much as possible from the project brief and provide as wide a community benefit as possible.

Finalising the design has been exacerbated by a number of issues with the existing building which need to be resolved to bring it up to a modern standard, and make it safe for public use namely:

- Accessibility provision including a new lift, new entrance ramps, hearing aid loops, handrails etc.
- Fire escape: the current escape from the council chamber is inadequate for public functions, so an additional fire escape stair must be provided
- Work to building heating and electrical services. Refurbishment of the boiler and heating system is required, and substantial replacement of power and data sockets is needed to make the rooms fit for purpose
- Damp-proofing and repairs. This is an historic building that has not been substantially refurbished for many years. There are therefore many areas of the building where essential repairs must be carried out to protect the building fabric and prevent further deterioration

Each one of these has meant subtle changes in the brief.

Conclusion

We are currently in the process of identifying a realistic extent of works, and reviewing project funding. We will then consult again with community stakeholders and involved organisations to discuss how the project can meet their needs and those of the Council, and will bring a further report to the November Council meeting. Councillors are requested to note this report.

12. For information: Mendip District Council Local Plan Part II - Sites and Policies

Author: Planning & Development Officer

Summary

This report summarises for information the work the Town Council will be doing in response to the Local Plan Part 11 public consultation.

Background

In July 2014 Mendip District Council put out a call for sites, inviting landowners to put forward their land for development. The sites have now had an initial assessment and all of those sites are being consulted on as part of the Part II process.

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What is the Local Plan Part II?

The Local Plan Part II follows on closely from the Local Plan Part I which came into force last year which set out:

- The overall minimum numbers of additional housing and employment needed in the District; and
- The broad locations where it should go, including identifying some large development sites.

Part II will now need to show in more detail where development will go in Mendip's towns and villages. It will consider individual sites for housing, employment as well as community facilities.

It will also review:

- which open spaces should be protected
- whether other general policies are needed e.g. Green Belt, local housing standards

The current consultation is the first step in the process, the proposed timetable and next steps are below

Stage	Comment	Public Consultation?	Expected Date	
Issues & Options	Scoping out ideas and identifying options for the plan.	✓	Sep/Oct/Nov 2015	
Publication	Council publishes the final draft Plan followed by a six week period for formal public comment.	✓	Autumn 2016	
Submission	Plan is formally sent to the Government for examination (see below).	×	Early 2017	
Examination	Plan independently scrutinised by Government Inspector. This will involve public hearings.	×	Spring 2017	
Adoption	Plan formally brought into effect.	*	Autumn 2017	

Following the Public Consultation event at the Cheese & Grain on 14 October, the Planning Advisory Group will be looking at all the sites, development sites and open spaces in detail at the PAG meeting on 12 November. There will be a further public consultation event on Monday 2 November at Selwood School – 5pm – 8pm.

All Councillors are invited to send comments on any of the sites to the Planning & Development Officer in advance of the PAG meeting, or to come to the meeting and join in the discussions.

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The recommendations of the Planning Advisory Group will be reported to council on 25 November, and subject to any amendments requested by Council, will be submitted to Mendip District Council. The deadline for consultation responses is 16 December 2015.

For information the maps of all the sites put forward, the constraints and open spaces are below. More detailed information, including Mendip's initial assessment of the sites can be viewed at www.mendip.gov.uk/article/4314/Consultation-Documents click on the "Frome Section" PDF, the site assessment's for Frome start on page 12 of that document.

More detailed information on the Review of Open spaces can be viewed at www.mendip.gov.uk/article/4316/Review-of-Open-Areas-of-Local-SignificanceLocal-Green-Spaces

The maps below show all the sites that have been put forward for allocation by the landowners, the key sets out whether those sites are potentially suitable for housing development or not, as indicated by HELAA $\,A-D$

The main area of concern at this stage is that all of the sites that have been put forward are specifically for housing, no sites have been put forward for Employment Land.

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Boundaries of existing Development Limits, Open Areas of Local Significance and Development Site Options - Key



Notes: Compiled by on 24 August 2015

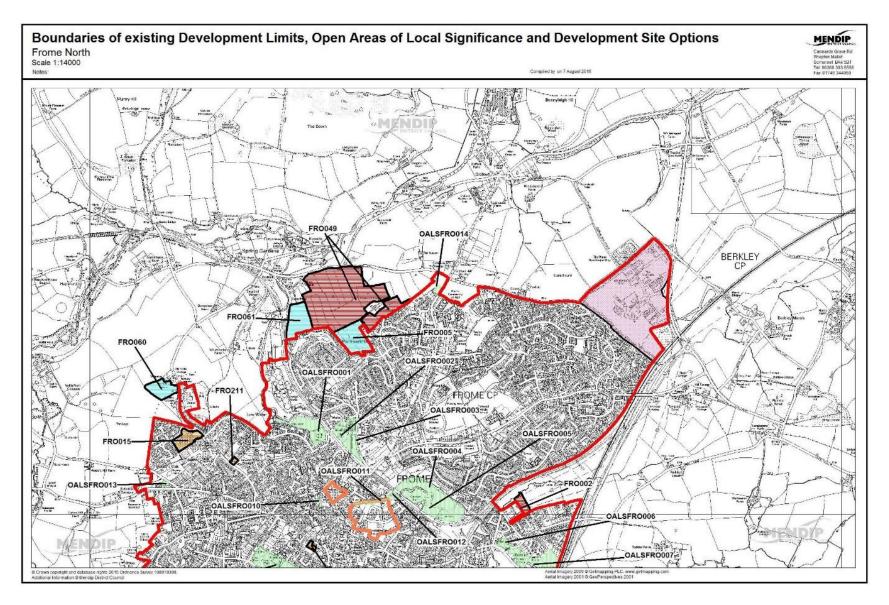
Shepton Mallet Somerset BA4 5BT Tel: 0300 303 8588 Fax: 01749 344050



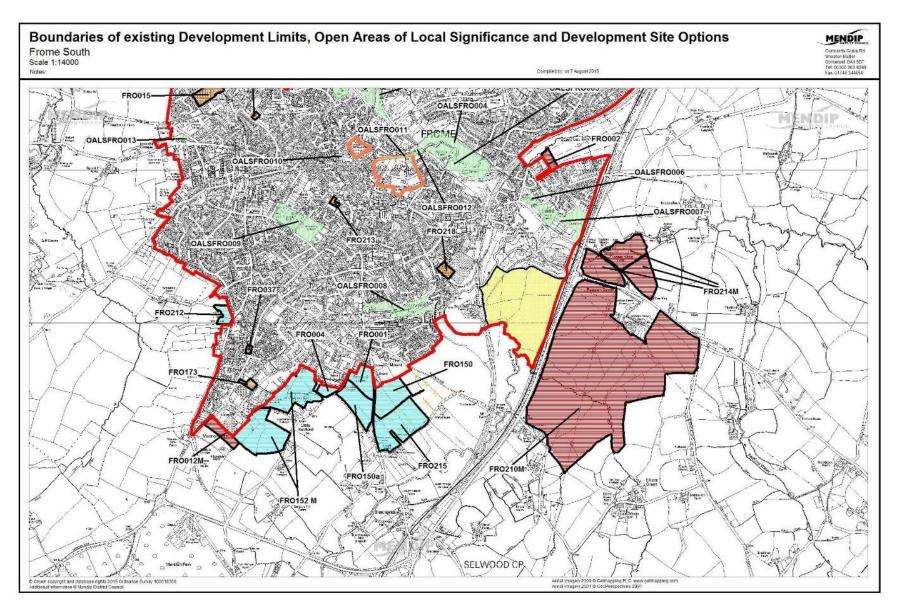
Additional Information © Mendip District Council

Aerial Imagery 2001 © GeoPerspectives 2001

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13. The next meeting will be at 7pm 25 November – Venue to be arranged.