

Agenda item 4

For information and discussion: Prosperity Work Plan 2016/17

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Summary

This report is a comprehensive update on the progress of implementing our Prosperity Work Plan in the first half of 2016/17 and how this work is likely to develop in the future. It covers work in the following areas: Neighbourhood Plan development, promotion of self-build/custom build housing, Saxonvale regeneration, town centre improvements, marketing Frome, support for town events, support for the business community.

It is intended to complement the report presented by Anna Francis, Resilience Officer on her area of work at the last Council Matters Committee.

At the meeting, a *summary of progress* will be presented together with a more *in depth introduction to some potential new areas of work* to be followed by a debate on the following:

How can FTC best support:

- a) the development of micro-enterprises in the town?
- b) young people into the world of work and self-employment?

Peter will also take questions on the Work Plan

Introduction

This report represents a comprehensive update on a very full Prosperity Work Plan. At the meeting, Peter Wheelhouse, Economic Development & Regeneration Manager will briefly summarise progress and will talk in more detail about a potential new area of work to support the development of micro-enterprises (employing less than 10 people) building on earlier research with the business community and initiatives such as the Frome Business Breakfast and Discuss & Do. His presentation will be followed by a presentation by Frome College representatives on the apprenticeship and work experience work part-funded by FTC. These presentations will prime a debate around how we

support micro-enterprise development and best prepare young people for the world of work and self-employment. The table below provides an assessment of progress and an introduction to potential new areas of work.

What	How	Progress	Future
Complete work on Neighbourhood Plan	Work with Mendip District Council (MDC) to get Plan through further consultation, Independent Examination and Referendum stages	86% voted 'Yes' at the Referendum! The Plan is due to be adopted by MDC in December - it will then become part of the Development Plan and become a material consideration when planning applications are determined	The 'Yes' vote gives further weight to the following projects that are already being pursued: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town centre remodelling • Saxonvale regeneration • River corridor improvements
Influence Part 2 of the Local Plan to ensure that employment, residential and other development is brought forward in appropriate locations and open spaces are protected to meet local needs	Work with MDC and local stakeholders to influence Part 2 in line with resolution at Dec 2015 Council meeting	Formal responses sent. Research completed on requirement for additional employment land & new business space (briefing to be provided at the meeting).	Continue to Influence policies around employment land and future residential development to meet identified local needs. Start work with MDC on a Green Infrastructure Plan that identifies and addresses gaps in parks, sports, leisure and open space provision
Lead the regeneration of Saxonvale	Work with Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, Homes & Communities Agency and landowners to bring forward new development proposals for Saxonvale	Steering Group involving SCC, MDC and FTC now established. Primary roles will be to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a coordinated approach to how publicly owned land on the site will be used • Identify technical solutions to site-specific challenges 	Continue to work with SCC, MDC and others to secure a viable and sustainable regeneration of the site. Pursue a strategic review of parking provision in the town centre as part of this project

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with the other landowners to bring forward a viable regeneration of the site 	
Remain committed to the improvement of the Market Place	Secure consent for improvements around Boyle Cross through the planning appeal process and accelerate progress to bring forward traffic calming, courtesy crossings and other measures to make the town centre more pedestrian friendly	Appeal lodged – awaiting outcome. Secured in principle approval from SCC to improvements to the highway (courtesy crossings & traffic calming). Surveys completed. Design work on options in progress	Bring forward the remodelling of the Market Place. The nature & scale of improvements will be subject to the outcome of the appeal
Extend town centre improvements with the implementation of a coherent design for street furniture and landscaping	Commission a specialist report setting out guidelines on future street furniture, signage, soft and hard landscaping, lighting and their maintenance in the town centre	Brief prepared but work on guidelines not yet completed	Complete work on guidelines
Improve the Cattle Market Car Park	Further develop the masterplan for the site and take advantage of external funding opportunities to secure improvements	Draft proposals for tree planting and other landscaping works prepared and are currently with MDC	Continue to pursue with MDC
Improve the image of and pride in the town making it attractive for visitors and investors	Consider marketing Frome as an exciting business base for ethical, green, socially-engaged businesses as part of a wide-ranging Marketing & Communications Strategy	These principles are already being applied through the 'Discover Frome' website which is gaining in popularity with approx. 6500 users per month (77% new visitors in October)	Recent re-brand provides an opportunity to further develop this approach. FTC's role in destination management to be reviewed.

As above	Continue to support a Christmas event in Frome Town Centre - lower key than in previous years. Provide Christmas lights (2016/17 represents last year of 3-year contract with Blachere Illuminations).	Faye Penfold engaged to deliver this year's event on Friday 2 December. 'Frome Christmas Light Switch On' event will include festive stalls, carol singing and a candle-lit parade from St. John's Church to the Christmas Tree	Review arrangements for Christmas 2017 – initial discussions already held with current contractor.
As above	Continue to support Frome Festival and other events.	Contributed £10k to Frome Festival which this year promoted 169 separate events generating footfall and trade for local businesses.	Cllrs to consider whether a further multi-year agreement should be entered into with the Festival (separate report on multi-year agreements to be presented to Council on 7 Dec). Support for other town events to be subject to participatory budgeting.
As above	Support Chamber of Commerce in their efforts to secure the delivery of new signage and the removal of ambiguous or obsolete signage	Some obsolete signage removed e.g. at Marston Trading Estate. Funding secured from GWR for new fingerpost signage between the station and town centre to be completed by the end of the financial year.	Further work to secure the removal and replacement of ambiguous/obsolete highway signs.
As above	Complete installation of new town centre maps	Completed	Install a further map board and dispenser at Badcox (already funded).

As above	Continue to participate in national Town Centre Benchmarking project	2016 exercise is underway and will be completed shortly. Results will be known in the New Year	Continue to participate as a way of assessing the performance of the town centre against others nationally
Invite businesses and other enterprises to play a role in the wider community & support each other	Frome Business Breakfast programme, a renewed 'Discuss & Do' programme and direct contact with individual businesses	Monthly events well attended and received by the business community	To be promoted to community enterprises as a way of supporting their development
As above	Develop Business Improvement District (BID) proposals through engagement with local business community	Initial feasibility work encouraging. BID Steering Group established comprising representatives from independent retail, national multiples and other business sectors as well as FTC. The possibility of a town-wide BID is being investigated.	Continue to facilitate the feasibility work.
Lead on campaigning and lobbying via the Planning Advisory Group, working with community groups wherever possible to ensure we get the right development in Frome	Engage the services of a professional lobbyist/campaigner	Pursued in-house. Recent successes include the decision by MDC to refuse consent for an application for planning consent for a residential development on the former Weston Vinyls site. The developer is now working with FTC to bring forward a	Continue to lobby for better development

		mixed-use scheme that better meets local needs.	
Build on the success of the redeveloped markets in Frome	Enable the continued development of The Frome Independent (TFI) and ensure that the town can cope with the influx of visitors using existing EMR. Support investigation of potential new markets and improvements to existing markets.	FTC has continued to contribute to the development of TFI through its representation on the market's Management Committee. FTC has also provided grant in kind by contracting with CH Contracting for the provision of event signage and cones and their installation on market days.	EMR has now been expended and future support will depend on the outcome of any applications for funding through the participatory budgeting process. Work with TFI and MDC to investigate potential for new markets.
Offer more opportunities to retrain and live and work in Frome	Continue to support apprenticeship project in partnership with Frome College using existing EMR	Services of Apprenticeship Project Coordinator funded by FTC. He has encouraged local employers to provide apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship work experience as part of the 'World of Work' programme. This is helping to support students who would otherwise not be in education, employment or training. Full details to be presented at meeting.	Continue to fund post to help deliver apprenticeships and work experience as part of our 'wellbeing' agenda

Support initiatives that enable self-build and co-housing as well as encouraging developers to build high quality housing	Enable self-build/custom-build scheme to come forward	Option to purchase 1.8 acres of land at Little Keyford Lane secured. Architects, Ash Sakula engaged to deliver feasibility study.	Pursue scheme subject to outcome of feasibility study. Complete survey work to identify interest from self-builders; establish self-build register that will support not only Little Keyford Lane but also other schemes in the town.
Support broader initiatives to reduce empty housing	Work with Mendip's Empty Homes Officer to promote MDC's Empty Property Grant & Loan Scheme and Government tax incentives and explore other potential measures	Working with Fair Frome Housing to secure investment in empty properties	Initiative to continue
New			
Micro-enterprise support Working with the business and community sectors develop and implement a micro-enterprise strategy that supports the development of enterprises employing less than 10 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a solution to the need for new workspace • Put in place a mentoring/coaching & training programme building on the success of 'Discuss & Do' and Frome Business Breakfast • Enable young people to explore the opportunities to start their own enterprise 		

For discussion

1. How can FTC best support:
 - a) the development of micro-enterprises in the town?
 - b) young people into the world of work and self-employment?

Further information

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