

Agenda item 4

For information – 2019/20 Work Programme – end of year review

Authors: The Management Group

Anna Francis, Resilience Manager

Chris Stringer, Environment Manager

Jane Llewellyn, Planning and Development Manager

Rachel Griffin, Marketing & Communications Manager

Peter Wheelhouse, Econ Dev and Regen Manager and dep Town Clerk

Sarah Williams, Business Manager

Kate Hellard, Community Development Manager

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the Council on the delivery of the 2019-20 Work Programme.

The report summarises work that was undertaken in 2019-20. It highlights where there were 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 was positive progress.

Introduction

The Work Programme is reviewed at monthly 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. [This can be read here](#).

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:

1. Open Spaces, Keep Frome Clean and Frome Town Hall Prosperity
2. Health, wellbeing and Community Development
3. Resilience
4. Marketing and Communications
5. Finance and HR
6. Prosperity

1. Open Spaces, Keep Frome Clean and Frome Town Hall Prosperity

It's been another busy and productive year; and yet again the Rangers and the Project Officers have been brilliant in everything that they do.

And because of that, all the essential work needed to keep our parks and our places looking and feeling like they do – and that's a lot of work – well that just happens; and with a minimum of fuss.

Highlights: What we've done...

A quick review of the work programme. In no particular order, but picking out some important things - and some things you might have missed:

- We recruited a new Town Ranger – Phil – who started work with us just days before the lockdown came into effect.
- So, a strange and challenging start to life at FTC, but Phil's clicked straight into place on the team - and he's just finished upcycling three new Share Stops that will be appearing in Victoria Park, Welshmill and the Showfield soon
- We've appointed Ranger Dave in the new role of Lead Ranger
- We've maintained high standards in the town's parks and green spaces; and the increased number of comments and anecdotes that have come in during lockdown suggest that – for the most part – we're getting things right
- Importantly, we've continued to review our management plans in public at our Council Matters meetings
- We planted over 1,300 trees in Frome...
- ... and we've appointed Helen as our Wild about Trees Project Officer to carry on this work
- We're talking about the next steps in the project looking at a bridge from Edmund Park development after work from the Friends of the River Frome and Roundfield was presented and discussed at the Town Matters committee
- The Rangers have overseen another year of the Critchill Rangers' and the Discovery Rangers' volunteering sessions; working across our parks and green spaces on things like painting play areas; stripping ivy; litter picking and bulb planting
- The Litter Warriors are helping to keep our parks and our streets clean and tidy
- We've progressed conversations with MDC about re-wilding more of Frome
- The Rangers have ensured the safe running of the town centre fountain
- We've worked closely with the Frome Allotments Association to jointly look after the town's allotment sites

Just underway. Or nearly there...

Some work that would have happened a bit sooner; but that's been delayed by the pandemic. But also, some work that's come from how people in the town have responded to the pandemic:

- The Rangers will be starting work on some much-needed TLC for Chateau-Gontier Walk soon
- We're working with Froglife – a national wildlife charity – on volunteering opportunities in places like Rodden Meadow and the Showfield

- We're working with interested residents on the management and upkeep of North Parade
- And we're supporting a group of residents in a community gardening project off Hillside Drive
- Bosky Trees are completing a set of tree surveys for us, including surveys of Rodden Meadow and Weylands

2. Health, wellbeing and Community Development

Community

During this year we have supported Community Organisations, Neighbourhood Groups and residents through a wide range of projects and services.

Underpinning all of this work has been our ethos of facilitation and support to enable communities, individuals and practitioners to create and sustain projects which have a positive impact to the lives of Frome residents.

By working in this way, we have sought to, where appropriate, provide a coordination role, bring residents and other professionals together to identify gaps and issues and look for solutions which best meet the needs of local people.

Our participative approach has continued to build positive relationships with residents and organisations increasing the number of people involved in the democratic decision making in the town.

Support for Community Organisations

We have continued to provide bespoke one to one support for local voluntary and statutory organisations, particularly in areas of strategic planning for trustees' boards, fundraising support and advice.

Grants

In 2019 – 20 we provided:

- 13 Mayor's grants which totalled £3750
- 10 Multi-Year agreement grants to the value of £80,500
- 19 Community Project grants which totalled £20k
- And 3 (would have been 4 if fireworks had been able to go ahead) PB Events were funded which totalled £13,016

Shed Full of Resources

We have continued to build the resources available for community organisations and other groups to borrow to support events and projects delivered in the town, with resources such as table, chairs, gazebos, smoothie bike, arts, crafts and other useful items.

Training Programme

Working with local organisations to identify training needs we have continued to support and deliver a wide range of training opportunities including a series of training in partnership with Edventure Frome.

Children and Young People

This new area of work in 2019 was part funded by Somerset County Council and Mendip District Council aiming to better understand the services available to Children, Young People and their Families in Frome. Two part time projects officers were recruited in the summer to map existing provision and consider how best to work with partner organisations to fill the gaps.

In the initial months we found lots of opportunities to talk to residents and practitioners and supported and attended a number of events across the town providing activities for children and young people. We took the opportunity to talk to them and their parents and carers to better understand their experiences. The events included The Children's Festival, Mayhem in The Meadow, Santa's Grotto at the Christmas Light Switch on and late night shopping events, holiday play activities hosted by Purple Elephant and Halloween litter picks.

0-5 year olds

We have identified that voluntary organisations provide a wide range of opportunities for families to participate in early years activities, many of these are accessible and affordable. There is however an emerging gap in early identification of families who might benefit from 'assistance before crisis' support.

Over the coming year we will continue to monitor the impact of the withdrawal of the level 2 Get Set Service, develop a training programme to support practitioners in early identification and signposting skills, develop a local signposting and information service.

5- 12 year olds

Whilst there are some holiday childcare providers which operate across the town particularly over the summer holiday period, we have identified a lack of opportunity for young people in this age group to participate in positive activity supported by trained practitioners outside of school. There is a particular gap for disabled children and young people. We have worked with SCC Short Breaks service, Critchill School and the POD youth group to ensure sustainable holiday provision is created for disabled children and young people. We have worked with Nova Sports and Purple Elephant to support the development and delivery of affordable inclusive holiday opportunities and scoped the potential for additional holiday play provision in our parks and open spaces.

12 – 18 year olds

There has been particular concern about supporting young people aged 12 – 14yrs in Frome in recent years. Practitioners, community groups and other organisations have also identified this cohort as a key area of focus. We held a consultation event at the skate park in the Mary Bailly playing field aided by a fire pit, slack line, amp and music and we talked with young people in this age group who told us more about their desire for increased activity.

We have trialled a detached youth project, where youth workers engage with young people on streets and in open spaces in the town, initially funded by FTC and subsequently by Live West Housing association.

VRU project

During this period FTC were successful in securing £10k funding from the Violence Reduction Fund, building on our pilot of detached youth work, a police fund aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour in young people. It was used to deliver a series of activity focused opportunities for targeted young people considered at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour with a particular emphasis on engaging young people aged 10 – 14 years. The sessions were coordinated by FTC and delivered and supported by a range of partner organisations including Frome Learning Partnership, the YMCA Mendip, Wiltshire Outdoor Learning, Kiwi Parkour, Young Somerset and Speakeasy.

Make It Happen

This year FTC ran the 5th annual youth conference for all year 8 pupils in the town. In a change from previous years FTC did not contract out the coordination and delivery of the event. Building on the lessons learnt from previous conferences we delivered the event over two days providing practical workshops and facilitated sessions aimed at engaging young people in practical action and planning for future projects in the town.

Information provision

Over the six months of our work with Children, Young People and their Families we have learnt that there are significant gaps for parents, carers and practitioners in the information and signposting to services available in Frome.

Whilst mapping the available services we have worked towards building a more comprehensive and accessible set of data which will be shared through our website and information service for families over the coming year.

Community Development

Our Community Development Manager has continued to work with Trinity Community Group over the year to develop and deliver local projects and events in their neighbourhood. This work has been supported by the delivery of an Action Research Project which has enabled us to better understand the conditions for change in a neighbourhood, the qualities of a Community development practitioner and the impact of the involvement of a town council on neighbourhood development. It will inform our future work in supporting neighbourhoods to come together to affect immediate and wider change in their communities.

We have learnt that action based, street level activity enables residents to connect with each other in order that they can build strong and supportive networks of support and positive action. These networks also provide the opportunity to build participative relationships between statutory and voluntary organisations including the town and other councils to address and resolve issues important to the residents in that neighbourhood.

Towards the end of the year we started to deliver a series of peer support sessions for neighbourhood networks, the first with a focus on closing streets for playing out and street parties.

Covid-19

In March 2020 we built upon our existing work with community organisations and neighbourhood networks to provide a range of emergency support services for residents in Frome. Over the course of a week we redeployed our staff team to set up and deliver 'Fruber Eats' an emergency food delivery scheme, 'Shop for Me' a volunteer supported bespoke shopping scheme, a telephone information and signposting service and support for local organisations to increase their capacity and meet new demand for their services as part of a town wide approach to supporting each other. All underpinned by our campaign to Check in with your nearest 5 neighbours.

During this time, we have also built on our work to support neighbourhood networks with a regular newsletter for existing and new networks and increased the opportunity for peer to peer support through regular zoom meetings.

3. Resilience

Transport

- School Active Travel Challenge was another great success; over 2000 students took part. Active travel increased by 20%.
- Electric bikes were used 120 times and are covering all their costs
- Secured £10,000 for Frome Community Drivers (FCD) which is now managed by Sustainable Frome. Frome Community Drivers did over 800 lifts and helped 300 people to attend NHS appointments. FCD also rebranded and has new website.
- Linked with Book My Charge to enable community to share domestic and public electric car charging points.

Energy

- Solar Streets: enabled local community to install discounted solar on over 70 homes. Funded free solar panels for YMCA. Programme has now been replicated by at least 15 other areas.
- Secured £40,000 from the Rural Community Energy Fund in partnership with FRECo to conduct a feasibility study to set up a community owned microgrid and net zero carbon heat network at Saxonvale.
- Warm and Well: held 'Improve Don't Move' event at the Town Hall in June to showcase ways to refurb homes and reduce carbon, including a green directory.
- Developed free solar energy proposals for two local schools
- Energy Sparks: supported local schools to reduce their energy usage. Trinity First School won best school in South West and reduced electricity use by 20%. Whole school had pedal power generator day as a prize and featured on News Round.

Waste

- Community Fridge: won Innovation in Politics Best Community Project award, selected from 400 projects across 40 countries. Fridge replicated by more than 90 other towns in the UK. Fridge also appeared on Country File.
- Secured £10,000 Awards for All funding to increase inventory at SHARE. Also secured £13,000 development funding from Bright Ideas to enable SHARE to develop sustainable business model and spin out as an independent social enterprise.

- Plastic-free: met the Surfers Against Sewage Plastic Free Town criteria.
- Held monthly repair cafes and two swap events in partnership with SHARE / Edventure. Repaired 200 items, saved 400kg of waste and saved over £9000.

Climate change

- Held climate change workshops with community and schools with over 450 people
- Drafted Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan

4. Marketing and Communications

The Marketing & Communication area of work has a prolific output delivering our own projects within the strategic objectives of FTC and supporting the rest of the team to deliver high quality communications and events. Our work is broadly structured into three aspects: Communicating FTC's work through media channels, events and engagement and through supportive materials such as press, posters, digital content and brand awareness; Highlighting Frome as a visitor destination through the Discover Frome Brand and the Information Point; and managing & marketing the Town Hall and ensuring that it is fit for purpose, that best use is made of it, and that everyone has a positive experience. We work to provide high quality communications to support the strategic aims of the council to include:

Improving the image of the town through the visitor experience

- Our volunteers at the Discover Frome Information Point are excellent ambassadors to the town - visitor numbers were up last up last year on previous years and the focus has been to promote walking cycling and events. We have two volunteer coordinators who we employ 5 hours a week to support the volunteers and this combination is working really well.
- Discover Frome website has gone from strength to strength with over 125,000 visits this year, and up to date event listings – this has switched to online offer during this period.
- Particular attention has been paid to developing the Walkers are Welcome section of the website to include a number of local walks, cycling routes (and buses) through a series of maps and guides.
- Building on work from the previous years' our newly branded and printed maps were launched this year at the Walking Festival this year and have proved to be very popular.
- We continue to develop professional training and delivered the new Guide Walks programme. Last year Frome had guided walks every Wednesday and Sunday throughout the summer and their following continues to build
- We started a new group Friends of Frome Station who are working on their constitution now and who have plans to improve the station including use of historic images of the station, planting, noticeboards etc.
- JW Singer's 200th birthday celebrations continued as we worked with the team to promote their amazing exhibition. The information boards were commissioned and sited in four locations around the market yard.
- The 'You're welcome' loo campaign has been refreshed and is ready to launch once the loos are reopened!
- Sadly, we took the pragmatic decision not to publish The Annual this year as we went into Lockdown as it was unclear whether we would be able to distribute the book.

However, all the work that went into ensuring that the listings were up to date will not be wasted as the information can all be found online on Discover Frome.

- We continue to be committed to the performing arts in Frome by acknowledging the important part that is played by the venues and Arts in the town by continuing to promote all the amazing events that Frome has to offer throughout the town.

Participation and engagement

- Participatory budgeting events – Last year’s event winners were Fireworks, the Children’s Festival, Active and In Touch’s Thanksgiving dinner and The Big Red Housing Bus. All completed successful events with the exception of fireworks, scuppered by the weather.
- People’s Budget events vote is complete for 2020/21 – sadly, lockdown happened in the middle of the vote and so we didn’t get as wide engagement as in previous years. A paper will come to the Council Matters meeting in July to discuss this more fully.
- We worked with Public Square to generate the ideas for a town in a three stage process this year in our commitment to meaningful engagement. We asked for ideas, we had a working group taken from the community to sift those ideas and five went forward to a public Vote. 426 people voted and the £10,000 will be spent on youth work. This is currently going out to tender through the CYP officers.
- The Make it Happen Conference was delivered inhouse this year– engaging 350 year 8’s in the democratic process enabling them to learn new skills, empower them to get involved in community action through a series of workshops, with outcomes delivered from these workshops, and once again enabling them to vote for PB Events.

Increasing the information output of the Council for the purposes of well-being and civic pride – this small sentence represents a vast majority of our work as we work to ensure a solid professional output to support all projects across the entire team.

- All channels continue to be used to support all the projects that the Town Council are undertaking from print to online digital content.
- The work to provide website accessibility continues to bring us in line with new standards of excellence.
- This has included the significant increase in Social Media output, through a clear and developed digital strategy including both websites, a series of online newsletters and ticket sales. The strategy is due to be reviewed shortly.
- Noticeboards have not been neglected including an extensive network of 25 noticeboards and volunteer Noticeboard ambassador network has gone from strength to strength.
- Campaigns such as litter warriors, solar streets etc. These campaigns work across channels and throughout the town as well as in small locales. The same is true of other areas of work such as events.
- Accessibility and participation in meetings remain a priority - using posters, trailing meetings, actively inviting members of the public.

Town Hall

- Year 2019-2020, year 2 since the opening of the Town Hall saw the Town Hall reach its targets for the first time. This was achieved with a combination of consolidation of the

tenants, adding an extra room for FLP and by regular hirers such as Drug and Alcohol Service and the Probation Service.

- We finally received our wedding license, at the end of February, and were preparing to market a registry offer and had our first wedding booked in. Sadly, that had to be cancelled but are working with the Registration service to ensure that we do have our first wedding this year.
- We have programmed a number of tours of the council work put together across the work programme, Made Differently, which serve to support external enquiries regarding the Council's work. Visitors this year included hosting visitors from Sweden & Belgium.
- The support stewards go from strength to strength to support Town Hall and also events.
- The in house Cleaning Staff have proved to be a valuable asset to the everyday working of the Town Hall, not only making the Town Hall sparkle but have increased capacity to much better support the facility.
- Our pop up bar has been popular at events and is in profit - we have expanded our support staff to incorporate this function and look forward to using it fully when we are able to come back together for events.

Events

- Events were identified as an important of our Communication and Marketing strategy allowing us to engage both with the community in a different way but also as an outreach tool for increased participation.
- Our Christmas lantern parade was extremely popular this year with lanterns stretching all the way through the Market Place to Scott Lane. We also experimented with varying degrees of success with a series of Christmas late's and a semi-permanent grotto made from recycled plastic.
- Our team also took on the organisation of the fireworks event. Booked twice and on both occasions we were scuppered by the weather and so we look forward to delivering that event in November.
- Lots of events across the town and in our parks and open spaces were facilitated and promoted by the FTC Team including Rocktypus in the Park, the Walking Festival, Fiver Fest and the now popular Apple day – as events go from strength to strength we have recruited a new post, Events Administrator.
- We also attend town events to support them and market our offer – for example, this year the Cheese show, the Children's Festival and Meadow Fest.
- The Town Hall has seen a number of special events and conferences from across the workplan and externally. This year we hosted the Critchill Prom, the SLCC conference, the new series of Working Lunches and Climate Emergency Panels. We look forward to a return to the building and the launch of our Everyday Special campaign.

Covid 19

- Covid 19 saw our work stop in its tracks as we worked out with the rest of the team how to close the Town Hall and redeploy our efforts to best support our community. The 'Check in on your five nearest neighbours' campaign was conceived very quickly, alongside a takeover of the home page of our website to the Covid response information, and the Discover Frome - Business as unusual, sections of the website and implemented across channels.

- All staff across all teams at have worked tirelessly and efficiently to maximum the best possible level of communication and information exchange in very uncertain times – ensuring that Frome residents know that they have a place to call, where they will speak to a really helpful person, who will be able to signpost them to access help and support.
- Frome Town Council's work during this time has been really well received as evidence by feedback from the FruberEats and ShopforMe recipients and more generally by the What Next for Frome? household survey.

5. Finance and HR

Budget, Precept, Audit & Finances for 2019-20

The financial year ending March 2020 was reported separately at the 22 May 2020 meeting under the Annual Return. Overall, the year ended underspent to budget with new Ear Marked Reserves approved by Council on 22 May, leaving us with a slightly increased surplus over critical reserve. Given the current circumstances this is likely to be needed to contribute to the shortfall in income and increase in expenses, resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Internal Auditors were entirely satisfied with their investigations during the year and the Annual Governance Statement & Return was submitted to the External Auditors on 27 May. Their response is not expected until early September.

IT

During 2019 we were informed that Microsoft would be ceasing to support Windows 7 and that all our computers would need upgrading to Windows 10. The majority of our older devices would not comfortably support Windows 10 so we had to renew 9 laptops in the 2019-20 year and will be replacing a further 9 in the current financial year 2020-21. We are looking at options for the redundant hardware but as we must ensure the data on the hard drives is securely destroyed, we are limited in the options to give to community organisations or charities.

We proceeded with the agreed purchase of a new onsite server paid for outright with the allocated EMR and the installation completed just prior to lockdown, in March 2020. The rationale for the cash purchase is that it cost less than two years quoted cloud-based subscriptions and we are not tied to one provider for the five years of a lease purchase. We can therefore review the suitability and cost of cloud-based services again from 2022 should we wish to.

The upgrade to a SonicWall router at the same time as the server renewal, has enabled all Town Hall staff to login to the server while working remotely from home during lockdown. This, along with the Horizon VOIP computer and mobile apps which manage all telephone calls to the Town Hall & staff, enabled a smooth transition to homeworking and strong networking being maintained for all staff teams during the pandemic. The use of MS Teams is now being trialled to enhance collaborative remote working as it is already included in our Office 365 subscriptions.

Accounting software – our trial of QuickBooks online accounting software showed that there would be disadvantages to its use that equalled or outweighed the advantages. An upgrade to the Rialtas Suite accounting software in August 2019 has proven helpful and until we have an

advanced replacement that can link with the Town Hall Bookings software and CRM database, we will stay with Rialtas.

The main IT project for 2020-21 will be the development of the CRM database which will improve Communications and overall administration of the Council's work.

HR

Ellis Whittam (solicitors) and SW Councils (HR advisors) have continued to be helpful for HR/HR legal advice over the past year. Annual appraisals were completed in May 2020 and there are no areas of concern. Laura Flaherty, Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk has begun her Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) qualification and is planning to achieve Diploma level in 2021. Hannah Paniccia and Dave Krzyzosiak have been promoted to Officer level in their respective departments (Finance & Town Rangers) and the process of appointing of a Business Apprentice was in progress just prior to lockdown. This will be resumed as soon as we are able to return to work as a staff team at the Town Hall.

Tenants

Fair Frome's lease on the Elliot Building was redrafted and signatures obtained. Other Town Hall tenants are Frome Learning Partnership (FLP), FromeFM, Active & In Touch and We Hear You (WHY). The Town Hall was at capacity prior to lockdown and the Council Chamber was due to begin hosting weddings this Summer. We are hopeful that 2021 will be a return to event hires for the Town Hall generally but in particular that SCC Registry will be able to make good use of the Chamber and Room A for regular Saturdays next year.

General Enquiries, telephone call and email volumes

Over the year the Town Hall reception team (both on the front desk and others handling the public calls) answered an average of 129 calls and 123 emails a week to the main number 01373 465757 or email [info@](mailto:info@frometowncouncil.gov.uk).

In addition, staff handle a further 247 calls weekly to their individual 'landlines', not including calls direct to their work mobiles.

Email volumes in the past 180 days (to 12/06/2020) total 151k across the 50 [@frometowncouncil](mailto:info@frometowncouncil.gov.uk) email address holders, 39k sent and 112k received. The average for the highest ten users is 285 emails sent & received a week (ranging between 157 and 458).

We are looking at ways of reducing email traffic and avoiding unnecessary ones where at all possible.

6. Prosperity

Planning & Development

Since April 2019, the Planning Advisory Group (PAG) has been consulted on and responded to 320 planning applications ranging from works to trees and householder extensions. We have also considered some significant applications, including the redevelopment of Saxonvale and the former Butler Tanner and Dennis print works, together with applications for housing developments at the Mount and Sandys Hill lane. Those significant applications alone have

included approximately 950 new houses but only 8450 square meters of employment/commercial space, despite our best efforts to increase that amount.

There continues to be good attendance at the planning meetings with lots of lively debate. We have also had a number of pre-application discussions with developers and householders. The pre-application discussions for the three applications at The Mount included discussions with the resident's associations and the developers bringing all parties together. Members of PAG and the Planning Manager have also attended and spoken at the Mendip Council Planning Board meetings and the Local Plan Part 2 hearing.

We have seen the first public consultation on the proposals for Selwood Garden Village and have made a formal response to this. It was planned to carry out a public engagement exercise to help inform our response to the proposals, however it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to do this during the current crisis, this will be revisited at the appropriate time. We have been part of the Design Review Panel for Selwood Garden Village, which aims to enhance the quality of the design and ensure that the development is sustainable. The panel is run by a group of design and environment professionals who offer independent consultation on significant development proposals. We are also pushing for the three applications at The Mount to be reviewed by the panel.

General enquiries for help and advice on planning and other related matters also continue to increase from residents and businesses.

An on-street car parking review for Frome has been carried out with the help of Cllrs reviewing their wards and included numerous requests from residents for parking restrictions. This information has been submitted to Somerset County Council and we are awaiting a response on this.

As of May 2020, The Planning Advisory Group is now a formal committee, it was felt that in light of the amount of major planning applications coming forward and the increase in pre-application engagement, the status of the group would benefit from being a committee.

Saxonvale regeneration

In September 2019, we completed on the sale of the Town Council's land to Mendip District Council enabling Acorn Property Group to bring forward a comprehensive scheme for the Saxonvale site. Utilising £50k from the proceeds of the sale, we enabled our former tenant, SS&L to successfully relocate from temporary accommodation to a more permanent home in Palmer Street. The balance of the receipt, in the region of £500k is now available to support other capital projects in the town.

Throughout the year we have taken every opportunity to influence the Saxonvale scheme and in February 2020, submitted our response to the outline planning application. In that response we acknowledged some welcome amendments to the plans including: a more pedestrian friendly approach to delivery of the proposed main thoroughfare – Garsdale Avenue; the use of 'bartons' as a local character feature; the introduction of more tree planting on parts of the site and the proposed area for relocated bat roosts; proposed improvements to the Gorehedge junction. But we lodged our objection to the residential/commercial mix and the lack of

affordable housing and since then we have continued to lobby for some improvement in the provision of non-residential space and affordable housing within the scheme.

Work started on a microgrid and heat network feasibility project following the receipt of £40k of Government funding. We also secured the backing of Mendip District Council as landowner to explore how the former Western Warehouse can be brought forward as a cultural destination. Feasibility work started but was temporarily halted by COVID-19.

Market Place improvements

Earlier in the year, we secured planning consent for a second phase of Market Place improvements including new paving and courtesy crossings to make the Market Place more pedestrian friendly, realigning the bus laybys to reduce congestion, new bus shelters to improve the experience for bus users, new on-street parking facilities in Cork Street for disabled drivers and a new loading bay in the Market Place. Since then steady progress has been made towards securing the necessary technical approval by Somerset County Council and legal agreement to enable a start to be made.

Vocational Training

In September 2019, FTC brought together key organisations in and around Frome to discuss how we could improve vocational training opportunities. This included representatives from Frome College, FE Colleges, SS&L, SkillUp Somerset, Edventure, Frome Community Education, Jobcentre Plus, MDC and business representation from FCC and the Cheese & Grain.

The steering group developed a Statement of Intent, pledging its commitment to vocation training for people of all ages including young people, people returning to work, and people needing retraining. An event to showcase training opportunities in and around Frome, and to capture additional training skills and needs of residents, was set to be held in 25 March 2020 at SS&L - this will be rescheduled for a later date.

Town Centre Business Engagement

A Totally Locally campaign was launched in the town centre in 2019 to promote what people could buy for £5 from local shops. FTC provided marketing resources to promote the campaign and promoted through social media. The take up from shops was very positive and future similar events are being planned for 2020.

Christmas Lates were launched, where shops were encouraged to stay open late on Thursday evenings in December. A Christmas Grotto was set up on Boyle Cross to attract shoppers out with live musicians.

The Town Centre Benchmarking project took place in July 2019. Students from Frome College were involved in gathering information from town centre businesses and visitors about what they felt the positive and negatives aspects of the town were. The findings of the research were presented back to Councillors.

Business Communications

Regular Business Bulletins are distributed to local businesses who have signed up to receive notifications. These promote business training and networking events, as well as any business-related initiatives taking place in the town. Over 600 businesses are signed up.

In July 2019, FTC set up a meeting area at Commerce Park and Marston Trading Estate to meet with businesses who wouldn't often come to town centre events.

Business Training and Networking Events

FTC continues to work with FCC to run their monthly Discuss & Do event. This includes discussions around business-related topics such as social media, taking on your first employee, financial and budgeting advice, and business planning. Following a review of events, it was decided to replace the Business Breakfast with quarterly Working Lunches as the timing of day was more accessible for people in the town. Take up for the Working Lunches has been good with both events sold out. Business Training events have also been held in the Town Hall over the year, including a Google Training events.

Twinning

In September 2019, Frome hosted the Twinning Quadripartite. This enabled the Mayors' from each of the twinned towns to meet together to discuss initiatives to support twinning opportunities between the towns, including work exchange programmes and youth activities.

Marketing and Communications

Objective	Actions	Measure of success	RAG
Strategy	Review the Comms and Marketing Strategy Jan 2020	Strategy reviewed	
	Implement Comms and Marketing Strategy	Implementation started and marketing is effective in promoting the work of the council	
	NEW Common Cause Project (to be considered by Town Matters Committee on 6 February)	Emphasis of communication changed in line with conclusions of the project	
Market the Town Hall	Implement TH marketing Strategy	Income budgets met	
	Ensure that the Town Hall is fit for purpose and can deliver events. Open, accessible, good quality.	Employ cleaners. Ensure that support stewards are recruited. Feedback from hirers and tenants is positive.	
	Deliver Visitor conference to support Town Hall marketing and to increase the profile of the Council to the visitor sector	Event relevant to the audience with good feedback	
	Purchase room booking software	New room booking software up and running	
Support and increase the range of information available to residents about community based projects, activities and services available to them for the purposes of both well being and civic pride	FTC Website	Improved Website traffic (target tbc). All web content kept up to date	
	Use all communication channels (digital, print, and face to face) to provide clear and timely information. Wherever possible, all comms to include 'why' FTC is doing something.	Progress measured by comparing snapshot of comms at end of March 2019 with snapshot 12 months later	
	Continue to support all projects including: community development work, Market Place remodeling, People's Budget, Radioactive, Plastic Free, Electric Bikes, Co Wheels, Discover Frome Information Point, Community Toilet, You're Welcome, guided walks, Singers Trail, Saturday Morning Music club	Project outputs achieved	
	Keep profile of noticeboard as a high priority using noticeboard ambassadors. Increase number of noticeboards as necessary.	Noticeboards full and up to date and located where need be.	
Improve the image of and pride in the town making it attractive for visitors and investors	Continue to develop the content of the Discover Frome website and social media	Improved Website traffic (target tbc). All web content up to date	
	Discover Frome Information Point	Increased visitor numbers with improved access to town information (target tbc)	
	The Annual	Delivered to every household and visitor business in the town	
	Discover Frome App	Developed and delivered	
	Develop interactive screen for the information point	Working and installed	
	Support new third party events on Discover Frome	Provide comms support to funded events where needed.	
Implement a programme of activity that enables people living and working in Frome to participate and engage in decision making	People's Budget events	Use an on line vote that results in a varied and interesting group of events	
	People's Budget Town vote	A project chosen by the people of Frome - communicated and delivered.	
	Hold annual Make It Happen (Yr8) conference for young people in Frome	To engage young people in decision making processes and activities that would benefit the community	
	Projects arising from priorities identified by young people at the conference	To support young people to identify priorities and deliver suitable outcomes.	
Engagement	Continue to bring together Frome councillors from three tiers of local government to explore joint priorities.	Meetings considered successful by Cllrs.	
	Bring together local parish councils to share priorities and issues as and when required.	Meetings considered successful by Cllrs.	
	Continue to experiment with meetings to improve public participation and engagement using different room layouts, amplification, live streaming, improved promotion and reporting back.	Consistent attendance and participation from residents in person and online. Particularly ensuring the live streaming is effective.	
Events: Planned and unplanned	Deliver a town Christmas event	Successful event, well attended with positive feedback	
	Frome Busks	Successful event, well attended with positive feedback	
	Apple day	Successful event, well attended with positive feedback	
	Mayhem in the meadow	Successful event, well attended with positive feedback	
	NEW A View from Here (to be considered by Town Matters Committee on 6 February)	Successful series of events, well attended with positive feedback	
	Recruit an event support team	Reduction in Comms Team TOIL	
Internal Communications- together supporting GDPR	Source and install CRM software	All staff trained to use the CRM software and high quality information maintained	
	Work on website back end to talk to website (carried forward from 2018-19)	To support the scrutiny of the software online	

Open Spaces, Keep Frome Clean and Frome Town Hall

Objective	Actions	Measure of success	RAG
Maintain and improve Frome's parks and green spaces (including delivering the next steps identified in the approved management plans for Frome's parks and green spaces)	Continue to maintain high standards in the town's parks and green spaces, working safely and efficiently to deliver everyday and reactive work	Anecdotal evidence to the Rangers; letters, emails and phone calls about the parks; Comments at Council meetings; Scheduled public consultations (including at events)	CS
	Deliver next steps identified in the approved management plans for Frome's parks and green spaces	Next steps reviewed at Council Matters meetings	CS
	Including: Delivering the outcome of the PB vote in Victoria Park: a better café and better toilets	Agreed design; planning permission sought or obtained; and work completed (or a timescale and schedule agreed for work to start)	CS
	Including: Following-up on the feasibility study looking at the culvert that runs through the Dippy	Review of the feasibility study; and eploring options for funding	CS
	Including: A variety of works to better join Rodden Meadow and Millennium Green	Anecdotal evidence to the Rangers; letters, emails and phone calls about Rodden Meadow and Millenniym Green; Comments at Council meetings; Scheduled public consultations (including at events)	CS
	Cyclical reviews of FTC's management plans at Council Matters meetings	Reports presented for discussion and approval	CS
	Cotinue delivering identified projects funded by the S106 agreement that came from the Garston development (Trinity Park)	Project(s) delivered in line with timescales as approved at Council Matters on 31 October 2018	CS
	Start work on S106 bridge from Edmund Park development	Support; commission or prepare feasibility study; and confirm details of and meet with interested and involved parties (including landowners)	CS & JL
	Continue to oversee the Critchill Rangers volunteering; working in more parks and green spaces	Sessions safely completed in more of the town's parks and green spaces. Comments from pupils and teachers involved in the sessions	CS
	Continue to oversee the Discovery volunteering sessions; working across FTC's parks and green spaces	Sessions safely completed in more of the town's parks and green spaces. Comments from those involved in the sessions	CS
	Proffer one-off volunteer oportunties to schools and to Frome College (including Duke of Edinburgh students) as they arise	Numbers at sessions proffered. Comments from people attending sessions	CS
	Via Volunteer Frome, proffer one-off volunteer opportunities to the town as they arise e.g. bulb planting	Numbers at sessions proffered. Comments from people attending sessions	CS
Help to keep Frome clean, tidy and welcoming; and help to build resilient, engaged & involved communities	Rangers to lead on floral planting in the town centre, including the Market Place	Positive comments on the town centre displays	CS
	Litter picks as part of the Critchill Rangers and Discoveryvolunteer sessions	Sessions planned to include litter picks	CS
	Support individual communities to deliver local campaigns	Working with Community Project Officer continue to support and develop TCG and possibly another community	CS
	Work in partnership with MDC across the town to ensure the town is clean and tidy	Number of complaints reducing year on year	CS
	Provide practical support (including resources) so groups and individuals can easily organise volunteer litter picks in Frome	Up to date web pages; regular publicity; FTC-organised events; FTC attendance at events	CS
	Safe operational management of the Market Place; in partnership with MDC	Number of events taking place; work completed safely and efficiently	CS
	Safe operational management of the town centre fountain	Fountain works	CS
Improved links between Frome's public spaces, including the town's parks and green spaces. And encouraging better and more universal design in public spaces	Support the local communities in developing and delivering plans and improvements for Chapmans Close, Packsaddle & Tower View	Clear community engagement; community to lead in drawing up management plans and adopted by Council Matters Committee	CS
	Build on Walkers Are Welcome status for the town	Programme of walks delivered over summer period; and an annual event established	EP
	Explore taking on responsibility for Egford play area; supporting residents and the local community	Clear community engagement; Council Matters Committee kept up to date with progress	CS
	Combine work on the bridge from Edmund Park with support and views on the riverside paths set to be part of the development of the former Butler, Tanner & Dennis site	Timely contributions to requests for information or views	JL & CS
	Continue to support the Missing Links project	Provide reactive support when possible	CS
Conserve and manage Frome Town Hall for the town and its future generations	Consolidate the day to day management and upkeep of the Town Hall, including scheduled repairs	Timely repairs; works identified and scheduled for each financial year	CS
	Ensure the building is clean, tidy and well-presented at all times	Month on month declining negative feedback and increasing positive feedback	RG
	Continue to implement a programme of building maintenance requirements for the next 5 years	Planned works completed	CS
Allotments	Regular meetings with FAA to discuss and agree works and to consider future projects	Quarterly meetings in the calendar; progress reports discussed at quarterly meetings; and works completed to general satisfaction of FAA (including Site Wardens and plot holders)	CS
	Provide practical support to the FAA; including completing agreed works in a timely fashion	Quarterly meetings in the calendar; progress reports discussed at quarterly meetings; and works completed to general satisfaction of FAA (including Site Wardens and plot holders)	CS

Resilience

Objective	Actions	Measure of success	RAG
General			
Continue to market Frome as an exciting business base for ethical, green, socially engaged businesses	Conduct and promote Good Business visits	Monthly visits conducted. Sponsorship for community projects secured.	
	Implement a 'Good Business' award	Awarded yearly	
	Energy, transport, waste themed business breakfasts	3 green themed breakfasts and/or business meetings per year.	
	Green businesses promoted on social media and local press	Regular promotions - at least one per month	
	Resilience summer placements	Resilience work supported, placements develop skills and experience	
Transport			
Implement sustainable transport policy	Various, see action plan	Transport emissions reduce	
Improve bus services and take up	Explore options for additional services	Additional services introduced	
	Promote bus use	Bus info included in residents packs, tourist info and promoted through media channels	
	Lobby for continued services and support where needed	Key services sustained	
Improve access to rail services	Use Section 106 and FGW funding to improve layout and signage	Signage installed	
	Promote rail use	Rail info included in residents packs, tourist info and promoted through media channels, local railcard explored	
	Continue to lobby rail operators for improved frequency and capacity of rail services	Meet with rail operators and key decision makers regularly. Respond to consultations	
Support smart transport solutions	Continue to support & promote volunteer driver scheme	Financial sustainability	
	Promote lift share e.g. through Liftshare Somerset and / or Facebook	Increased usage of lift-share, promote Frome scheme	
	Promote e-bike hire	Two bikes booked weekly and signposted by Medical Practice. Project covers all its costs	
	Promote car club	Increased membership and fleet aiming for 20% utilisation rate	
Encourage electric car use	Install more charge points	8 charge points available	
Reduce fossil fuel based transport in business / local organisations	Promote sustainable transport solutions to businesses, schools and other organisations. Organise School Travel Challenge	Increased business membership of bike to work, car club, lift share and active travel	
		Cyclists are welcome set up and promoted, Cycle September promoted	
Energy			
Reduce fossil fuels	Clean and Healthy Future - develop action plan and solar streets programme	Timeline developed, plan replicated in other areas, political and financial support secured	
	Develop Climate Change Risk and Mitigation plan - NEW	Plan developed, community and agencies engaged with	
	Continue to encourage reduction in use of energy in schools.	Staff and students engaged and energy / carbon saved	
	Continue to pursue projects that change behaviour e.g. Improve Don't Move and use of Welcome Packs for new residents	At least one event per year	
	Lobby and support for divestment especially via Somerset Pension Fund	Pension fund no longer invests in fossil fuels	
Increase renewable energy production	Explore a range of local solar opportunities, wind and hydro. Promote community solar to roof owners	New renewable energy projects installed each year	
	Promote green energy tariffs	Number of people signed up	
Reduce fuel poverty	Explore opportunities for retrofit	Number of homes insulated / retrofitted	
	Assist fuel poor households	Number of people trained in energy awareness, number of events held	
	Lend thermal imaging camera to help people find out where their homes are leaking heat.	Camera used regularly throughout colder months to identify and rectify heat loss	
Waste			
Reduce waste	Share Shop: develop sustainable model	Project becomes self-financing	
	Support Community Fridge: recruit more businesses and volunteers in partnership with Edventure	Business sponsorship secured, project self-financing	
	Support local groups: e.g. support and promote Edventure's repair programme, Toy Library, explore opportunities for re-use centre	Three groups assisted per year	
	Reduce plastic waste in Frome	Surfers Against Sewage accreditation secured	

Prosperity

Objective	Actions	Measure of success	RAG
Continue to influence Part 2 of the Mendip Local Plan to ensure that local needs are met	Continue to feed in information on self build and other local housing needs. Work with agents and landowners looking to allocate land to ensure that any future developments meet the needs of the community and are sustainable	Employment & self build policies that reflect the Neighbourhood Plan are included in Part 2 of Local Plan. Appropriate sites are allocated	
Support initiatives that enable self-build and co-housing as well as encouraging developers to build high quality housing	Work with developers to bring forward self-build sites	Self-build, co - housing and social housing in allocated in Part 2 Mendip Local Plan. Ultimately consents in place	
	Continue to promote the self-build housing register for Frome	People signed up and developers encouraged to bring forward self-build sites	
Support Fair Housing for Frome with their identified opportunities. Initiatives to reduce empty housing, provide shared living, Tenants & Landlords, homelessness, creating more homes, Tiny Homes	Continue to work with Fair Housing for Frome to support initiatives. Potentially new elements will come forward from Fair Housing for Frome	TBC	
Influence a strategic review of the highway infrastructure and parking across the town, taking into account future development	Work with MDC and SCC to plan for impacts of future development and carry out an assessment of future demand for parking	A future plan for highway improvements and acceptable amounts of parking to serve residents and visitors for both residential and public parking (car parks)	
Provide planning advice to residents and businesses	Help with pre-application enquires where appropriate and signpost to the relevant authorities. Assist with planning objections and support for application. Provide a FAQ section on the website for a variety of planning topics	Comprehensive information available on website and feedback from residents and businesses	
Lead on campaigning and lobbying to ensure we get the right development in Frome	PAG to respond to consultations and preapplication enquires. Work with MDC & SCC and residents groups	New developments aligned to Neighbourhood Plan and Town Design Statement	
Continue to lead the regeneration of Saxonvale	Continue to work with MDC, SCC and others to secure a viable and sustainable regeneration of the site.	Regeneration in line with agreed position statement	
Bring forward remodelling of Market Place	Work with MDC to put in place new arrangements for the management and promotion of Boyle Cross as a Market/Event space	New management plan for Boyle Cross agreed	
	Phase 2 implementation	Phase 2 completed	
Invite businesses and other enterprises to play a role in the wider community & support each other	Continued support for and development of 'Frome Business Breakfast' and 'Discuss & Do' and 'Soul Traders' programmes and other initiatives	Further development of programmes and increased participation by businesses (target tbc) Evaluate the degree to which businesses and other enterprises support each other and the wider community	
Business support, to work with businesses providing advice and support	Hold events to increase footfall and awareness. Signposting to funding opportunities and other external support organisations. Keep an up to date register of businesses looking for premises and vacant properties. Develop web based resources for business	Evaluate success at year end	
To increase the profile of the Wednesday & Saturday market. To create Frome as THE Market town in the South West	Work with MDC and others to increase the profile of existing markets and encourage more market activity	Success criteria to be confirmed	
Build on the success of the redeveloped markets in Frome	FTC to continue to support development of The Frome Independent through the provision of advice to the TFI Management Committee.	Continued development of Frome Independent	
Implement the International work experience project	To provide international work experience opportunities for 18+ year olds. To help businesses develop links. Source participants, businesses and host families	Bursaries awarded to participants and work placements in place. Benefits to both parties established from feedback. Success of the scheme is rolled out to all Twin Towns (5 young people for Frome)	
Apprentice skills for work and employability	Bring apprenticeship project in house	Success criteria tbc	
	Build relationships with businesses and establish their recruitment needs and provide advice		
	Work closely with Frome College providing a pathway for students looking for apprentices		
	Support Frome Community Education and others who provide training in basic skills		
	Link up services between Frome Library, Job Centre Plus, SSL & CAB. Identifying gaps and solutions		

Health, wellbeing and community development

Objective	Actions	Measure of success	PA G
Community Development in Neighbourhoods	Work with neighbourhood groups to run a series of activity days in identified communities in Frome	Number of litter picks, street parties, community action days	KH
	Support the delivery of facilitated community meetings which bring together services, organisations and community members to address community need / issues	Number of facilitated meetings	
	Funding for specific projects that have been identified by communities (with a view to attracting match funding.)	For example, Community gardening, detached youth work	KH
	Provision of practical resources to support work in communities	Supply and use of practical resources such as gazebos, chairs, banners; and downloads of web based resource pack for community events, street parties etc	KH
	Work with Housing Associations and other partners to explore funding options and agree new priority areas		KH
	Establish a peer to peer support group and means of communication for neighbourhood groups in Frome	More groups established, increase in street based projects being delivered.	KH
Financial support for organisations	Administration and support for Mayors Grant (grants up to £300) and Community Grant Scheme (£300 - £2000).	Grants awarded	KH
	Monitor compliance of Multi Year Agreements with community groups (yr 3 of 3)	These are set out in the Multi Year Agreements for each organisation	KH
Support for organisations (to enable them to increase capacity and become more resilient / sustainable)	Provide triage and one to one, responsive, support for community organisations; to include facilitation for trustees and management groups, buisness planning and coordination	Number of organisations supported	KH
	Bespoke support and advice for MYA and grant recipients to ensure sustainable long term funding solutions.	Number of organisations supported, organisations less dependent on FTC funding	KH
	Manage second year of contract fundraiser post - to support external organisations with fundraising advice and support	Number of sessions held / organisations supported / fundraising supported (target tbc)	KH
	Coordination of training programme and bespoke support for community organisations	Number of courses held; number of organisations and participants attending; evaluation of individual courses (target tbc)	KH
Children and young people's project work	Map existing provision of services	Creation of a new framework for collating all information regarding CYP services created and coordinated	KH
	Populate database / information sharing platforms	Information from above used to populate new FTC CRM	KH
	Identify gaps in current and future provision	Gaps recorded and agreed in partnership with existing groups and forums (YPMH, FLP and others)	KH
	Identify models of best practice from elsewhere		KH
	Work with partner organisations to agree how to fill gaps	Aspirations and next steps agreed with stakeholders, partners and community members	KH
	Identify funding streams	Action plans and funding streams identified to match proposed projects	KH
	Establish new projects and support the sustainability of existing ones		KH

Finance and HR

Objective	Actions	Measure of success	RAG
Budgets	Annual budget built to deliver the work programme for the year ahead	Council approved budget and Precept set January	
	Manage budget to ensure work programme delivered without significant under/overspend	Year end budget is balanced	
Internal control and managing risk	Risk Strategy and Register updated.	Approval by Council Matters Committee and no matters arising from internal audits	
	Insurance policy renewed	Approval by Council Matters Committee and no matters arising from internal audits	
Precept	Precept agreed at the January Council meeting. Precept built as part of budget for the year ahead	Councillors approve the Precept.	
	Request Frome's Tax Base figures from MDC	Tax Base impact on Council Tax bills for the forthcoming financial year.	
Audit	All FTC's financial transactions to be audited by Internal Auditors on a quarterly basis.	Approval of in-year accounts at bi-monthly meeting of Council Matters Committee and no matters arising from internal audits	
	Annual Return submitted to appointed External Auditors.	No matters arising from external auditors	
Sound Financial Management	Always adhere to Financial Regulations and Standing Orders	Internal Auditors and Finance Sponsors report no matters arising.	
VAT	All expenditure which incurs VAT has a vatable invoice or associated paperwork allowing for VAT to be reclaimed.	All expenditure is completed to include the paperwork enabling full VAT to be recovered, which allows for the maximum budget to be expendable. Inline with Financial Regs no personal credit cards to be used (cannot reclaim VAT).	
	Employ VAT consultants for complex issues	Advice on complex VAT issues is concise and decisions in the best interest of the Council are taken following professional advice.	
Investments	Short term investments made inline with the Investment Strategy	Ethical investments gain maximum interest	
Invoicing	Pay invoices by due dates	No complaints from suppliers	
Banking	Establish a good working relationship with Barclays Bank and the local branch	Good communication/link maintaining with FTC account manager.	
	Ensure and encourage FTC staff to be aware of Barclay's local charity work and partner with them when appropriate	Contact made between FTC staff and branch/account manager to maximise local funding opportunities.	
	FTC's financial transactions completed on line	Online account	
Ensure IT is adequate for FTC's needs	Purchase new server, buy relevant software and other hardware	No major IT problems through the year, smooth transition	
Contracts	All procurement over £5,000 to abide by the Ethical Decision Matrix and supplier form.		
Staff Handbook	At least annually review and update.Staff Handbook and policies	No issues arising	
Staff Contracts	Issue all new staff a contract and keep all staff contracts up to date	Contracts are reviewed by Ellis Whittam (HR consultants)	
Superannuation	P60's submitted to HMRC with in timescale	Submission deadline met. No penalties received.	
Recruitment	Formalise recruitment process to be used and followed by all the Management Team	Fair and transparent recruitment process.	
Bookings	Ensure comprehensive booking software is easy to use	All bookings are secured and paid for accordingly.	
	Bookings are clear and client's requirements are organised and in place.	Smooth and organised arrangements in place ensuring a pleasant experience for the organisation making the booking and the offshoot being recurring bookings.	
Tenants	All tenants leases signed and legal	Tenants secured	
	Tenants integrated into the Town Hall and working with FTC.	Tenants settled and working as a team with FTC in the Town Hall.	
Sales	Transactions for all payments either by BACS or Barclaycard terminal	No large amounts of cash held in Town Hall	
All projects	Work with Management Team ensuring all budgets are fully costed and managed.	No significant under/overspend	