

Agenda Item 4

For information – Update on Climate & Ecological Emergency work programme

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Summary

RAG rating provided below for the Resilience work programme. More detailed updates have been provided below this for the Green & Healthy Frome, Safer School Streets and LCWIP projects.

Progress review for programme to Address the Climate and Ecological Emergency:

Strategy sub- heading

Support the independent development of climate and biodiversity community groups and initiatives.

Promote resilience & reduction of carbon across all FTC activities

Understand the impacts of climate and ecological breakdown on Frome, review strategy to mitigate these at a town level, and consider adaptations we can make.

Communicate the work we are doing to respond to the climate and ecological emergency and build resilience as a town, and encourage residents to participate in and contribute to climate action.

Campaign for sustainable future developments, and support and encourage Housing Associations to access funding for retrofitting projects.

Support FRECO (Frome's energy company) to acquire land and build community-owned wind turbines in and for Frome alongside exploring new opportunities for solar, microgrids and other renewable generation.

Explore opportunities to develop the Good Business framework to increase impact, including energy savings and carbon reduction

Summary

Regular links in with Sustainable Frome, Frome Food Network, Future Shed. Continued support for The Wild Bunch, and officers made a significant contribution to the Neighbourhood Networks Transition Streets manual.

Decarbonisation of TH in progress. Reviewing FTC carbon footprint & creating an action plan for our own emissions. Need to look at scope 3 and buildings we lease- Cheese & Grain, Football Club

Adaptation workshop planned for early next year, to inform strategy

Main feedback at event in July was lack of visibility of climate as an issue across town. FTC comms is project/ event focused rather than issue focused.

All HAs with housing stock in Frome contacted to find out how many properties they have which are EPC D or below, and what their plans are to meet new legal requirements by 2030. Planning follow- up meetings with those who have responded

FRECO wind turbine project put on hold due to lack of grid capacity. Participating in stakeholder group for Somerset's energy investment plan, to address this and other issues. Meetings held with developers at Saxonvale site, to discuss FRECO's microgrid study.

Exploring how this might be re-launched, linking with Edventure given their focus on business

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| <p>Review provision for food growing in Frome, including allotments, and encourage community growing projects.</p> | <p>Broadway Community Gardens. Need to look at overall provision for town</p> |
| <p>Promote and campaign for better public transport infrastructure and greater use of it in Frome</p> | <p>FTC campaigning for electric buses in Frome. Supported comms for £2 bus fares</p> |
| <p>Apply for funding and promote agreements with developers that support Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) infrastructure improvements</p> | <p>LCWIP being used to engage with developers. Lack of clarity from SC about LCWIP delivery- FTC not eligible to apply for active travel funding through DfT.</p> |
| <p>Promote and support circular economy initiatives developed through Loop de loop, Edventure, and other organisations.</p> | <p>Keep It Frome page on FTC website- directory of orgs supporting circular economy. No progress on finding location for reuse centre (Edventure initiative supported by FTC).</p> |
| <p>Lobby for divestment (SCC Pension Fund)</p> | <p>Brunel have a firm policy in favour of engagement over divestment. They have surpassed their targets for reducing carbon intensity of their portfolios so far. Thanks to pressure from Cllr Anne Hills, Sarah Williams and Somerset officers, Somerset pensions committee has moved 25% of investments in to a Paris aligned portfolio.</p> |
| <p>Develop signposted network of walking and cycling routes (subject to external funding)</p> | <p>Linked to LCWIP delivery- no clear funding pathway yet</p> |
| <p>Provide (subject to funding) through the Green & Healthy Frome Partnership, Healthy Homes, Evaluation, Cycle Together & Fair Frome projects</p> | <p>As below</p> |
| <p>Develop the ability for residents and communities to save on energy bills and retrofit their homes through the Healthy Homes programme, and creating a street level retrofit project (subject to CAF funding)</p> | <p>Sally Richards recruited and trained as Retrofit Assessor. Will be able to offer assessments September/ October for 3 years.</p> <p>Healthy Homes drop ins have less people in summer months but are still going well. 85 people have had energy advice at a drop-in session in 2022-23, with 53 being referred for grant funding or more in-depth support. people have received home visits from energy advice team in 2022-23. 18 people have received a home visit since they began last winter.</p> |
| <p>Cycle Together</p> | <p>FTC has entered agreement with Frome Community Bike Project for delivery of next phase. 8 new e-bikes being purchased.</p> |

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| Evaluation | Evaluator on GHF project now 4 days/week. Working on calculating Social Return on Investment for project- could be applied more widely to Council activities |
| GHF partnership | Succeeded in securing £1.7m for next 3 years to deliver Green & Healthy Frome project. Expanded team includes 4 days evaluation role and a Community Retrofit Lead at FTC. |
| Support the Wildlife Mapping Project in partnership with SERC and look at ways of further encouraging engagement, through schools in particular. | Almost 3,000 observations on iNaturalist |
| Promote and support food resilience initiatives developed through the Frome Food Network and other organisations. | FTC has taken on lease of Loop de Loop building and undertaking cleaning and electrical work to allow Edventure to use the building for the Community Fridge and other activities. |
| Retain Plastic Free Champions Awards | Award retained for 2022/3 |
| As part of our conversation with the new Somerset Council, make the case for a town-wide transport strategy for Frome that prioritises active and sustainable travel and includes metrics that measure success. | Initial positive discussions and promise of £20k funding, but no funding or commitment yet from Somerset Council |
| Work in partnership with residents, local schools, and stakeholders to influence behaviour change to more sustainable and playful modes of transport | Had successful Big Walk and Wheel event in March, including walking buses led by Mojo Moves, Dr. Bikes and free school breakfasts for active travellers. Difficulty getting schools signed up to ModeShift Stars |
| Monitor and evaluate the 18 months trial of School Streets and continue engagement with residents and schools. | Start of Safer School Streets trial delayed until Spring 2024. Infrastructure works to commence October 2023. Traffic counts, surveys and AQ monitoring in place |

Green & Healthy Frome Programme

The Green & Healthy Frome partnership was awarded £1.7m to deliver a 3 year project which began in April 2023. The first 6 months have been spent planning for scaled up delivery including recruiting a full time Project Manager, Becky Lovegrove, and 4-day comms manager, Cami Todd, both at Edventure.

The funding has enabled the scale- up of the Healthy Homes project, with a new element introduced to support retrofit of Frome's housing stock (making buildings more energy efficient). FTC has employed Sally Richards as a full-time Retrofit Assessor. After completing her training, Sally has begun assessing households in the community and already has a waiting list despite the service not being advertised yet.

Promotion of the retrofit offering is being planned for September/October. Sally is also working with Future Shed at Edventure to test a "Retrofit Hub"- a peer to peer space for learning and sharing projects, as well as inviting in speakers, suppliers, architects, etc.

The GHF funding has also enabled scale- up of the Cycle Together E-Bike loan scheme. FTC has entered into an agreement with the Frome Community Bike Project for delivery of the next phase, which sees 8 e-bikes added making a total of 14 available for community use. Participants have a bike for 4 weeks, with access to free cycle confidence classes and maintenance classes, plus social rides.

Safer School Streets

FTC is in the final stages of agreeing a Section 278 agreement to deliver the infrastructure for the School Streets zone and Quiet Way on Oakfield/ Somerset/ Nunney Roads. The project has been delayed by over 18 months as we have tried to find a route to delivery with Somerset Council. Sustrans, the designers of the scheme, have brought in £350k extra funding to support the scheme including permanent improvements to junctions and crossings in the area. Construction is expected to take place in October/ November 2023, with the trial of the vehicle restrictions now delayed until after the Easter break in 2024.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Frome Town Council led on the creating of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Frome, in partnership with Somerset Council. We used data from the Walk Ride Frome survey of 500+ residents to inform the design, as well as creating a working group with community representatives. The LCWIP is to be adopted by Somerset, however, at the moment, there is no clear plan for delivery. FTC needs to work with Somerset Councillors and Officers to create a plan for delivering the schemes set out in the LCWIP including ensuring Frome schemes are included in the annual rounds of funding put out through Active Travel England, which Somerset can bid for as the Highways Authority. More transparency is needed on which schemes are being included in these bids and the decision making process around this.

Personnel changes

Emma Parker has been seconded to the Frome Community Bike Project for 3 days/week for a 12 month term to progress the Cycle Together project. She remains employed by FTC and will work on wider FTC work 0.5 days/ week. Katie Fraser has joined the team to backfill Emma's 3 days on active travel work at FCT for a 12 month period.

Nikki Brain, Resilience Manager, will be leaving FTC at the end of November for a role at BANES. Paul Wynne is exploring options for recruitment.