

Agenda item 3

For information – Update on the work progress of the Communities Team

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Over the past six months, the Communities Team has made great progress on a wide range of objectives as outlined in our RAG rated update table on page 2.

We have expanded inclusive community infrastructure through the development of the Hub model, with the ongoing success of the Welcome Hub, FIND, and increased range of services available within the Town Hall. The integration of the Connect Somerset Champion role supports this work. Our place-based work has flourished, with focused neighbourhood engagement in two areas, alongside responsive work such as the development of Milk Street Green, support for other green spaces and projects like share box installations and local play events. This work builds community cohesion, strengthens local connections and creates opportunities for residents to influence decisions in their neighbourhoods.

We have strengthened partnerships and built capacity to support community organisations, through regular networking and training opportunities, and dedicated working groups focused on key priorities like volunteering. In response to calls for considering a more strategic approach to grant making in the town, we've initiated a funding needs analysis to better inform future decisions. Collaborative projects like the Let's Talk conflict resolution initiative and the revived Neighbourhood Network reflect our commitment to empowering communities to take the lead. Key developments in youth voice, inclusive play, and accessible design – such as the work at Welshmill, Egford Park, and the input into the accessibility of Henley Way – highlight a cross-team, resident-led approach to shaping public spaces.

Looking ahead, we are excited to be taking on the Key Centre, with a new Coordinator now in post and plans underway to co-design its future with the local community. The continuation of the Welcome Hub and Somerset Connect work has been secured. And the long-awaited lease for the piece of land behind the shops on Rodden Road serving the St Johns community is nearly completed that will enable us to focus development work here around a much needed shared community space. We've secured significant funding from the SALC Health and Wellbeing project to launch the 'Adventures in your Neighbourhood' initiative, and upcoming devolution of open spaces offers fresh opportunities to work collaboratively across teams to engage residents in designing greener, more inclusive, more playful and better-connected areas. Participatory grant-making pilots — with young people and in a local neighbourhood — will inform Frome Fund conversations as well as an approach to wider participatory decision-making in the town. We'll also be supporting colleagues to develop a new Climate Adaptation and Nature Recovery Plan that is built on diverse community input.

We're on track to deliver the objectives in the work programme and anticipate exciting progress in the next six months.

Area of work	Progress	Status
Continue to develop the Hub model (including FIND, Welcome Hub and Community Hub)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in Citizens Advice services at the Town Hall, complemented by services at the Fair Frome premises • Lunch Bunch sessions delivered by Terrestrial across the town to promote FIND • Continuation of the Welcome Hub at the Town Hall weekly on a Tuesday, as well as wellbeing art sessions, ESOL lessons, Women's weekly conversation class run by CCS, and cultural events and outings • Support with information for the Community Council for Somerset continuation bid for the Welcome Hub post June 2025 • Regular Safeguarding meetings with Fair Frome and the continuation of referrals to the Food Bank made by the Communities Team • Development of the Key Centre offer in partnership with Stakeholders and Christ Church School • Recruitment of the Key Centre Co-ordinator to start in May 2025 • Continuation of the Connect Somerset Champion role at Frome Town Council to connect service delivery at a Local Authority Level 	
Engage with residents at a street and neighbourhood level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In depth engagement work begun in two focused neighbourhood areas – the Mount and St Johns • Neighbourhood banner making pop ups carried out during Kindness Festival • Updates completed to Milk Street Green (in Trinity), designed by the community and positively received • Responsive work in smaller neighbourhoods to work with residents to either install or review share boxes – Rossiters Rd and Great Western St • Adaptive approach to supporting Broadway Community Garden as the group and garden evolve 	
Empower communities to identify gaps, strengths and assets and take action to resolve conflict themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's Talk group have run public workshops and events and are working directly with community groups around conflict resolution skills. • Frome Neighbourhood Network reignited and supported to deliver Future Streets initiative 	
Support and build capacity for community organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Community Organisation events ongoing and with good and broad representation from the VCFSE sector locally 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Space ideas sharing event planned for June • Regular Community Organisation updates sent out • Volunteer Advisory Group established • Link with SPARK and the recruitment of a Volunteer Co-ordinator based in Frome, who will be based at FTC for 3 days a week • Safeguarding Training for community groups offered • Support for the Community Cafe in Victoria Park to develop offers for play, volunteering and hosting for community organisations and projects 	
Support community organisations to access appropriate funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruth Knagg has been supporting community groups with infrastructure building and funding options • In the process of commissioning a Funding Needs Analysis and Scoping work to inform future plans for grant making in Frome/ • Plans for piloting Participatory Grant Making structures in two areas • Support and advice for organisations applying for the FTC Community Grant, the first round of which has just closed 	
Embed inclusive and accessible practises and processes, internally and with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henley Way - support from West Eglad Centre Integrated Living to assess access issues in the area • Work with Critchill School on the development of the play park at Egford Park • Re-establishment of the Sensory Trail at Welshmill 	
Increase opportunities for meaningful engagement and ways for all voices to be heard and for residents to influence local decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following on from the 'Adventure at the Town Hall' project, a successful SALC joint application with Terrestrial for £35k was submitted to continue the 'adventures@' in neighbourhoods including St Johns and the Mount • Development of the Milk Street Green area • Children's Voice project across school Council carried out by the Children and Young People's Officer to be displayed at the Town Hall • Link with Post 16 and apprenticeship offer across the town • Support for a YP-led mural project coordinated by Super Roots with participants in their campfire club and Shared Earth Learning Sessions • Research begun into digital platform to support participatory decision making • Participatory Grant Making pilots target underrepresented groups 	
Embed the inclusive play strategy across the town especially in our parks and open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Play Strategy by Children's Scrapstore presented to Oversight in May 2025 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments at Welshmill, Egford and Mary Baily Playing Field • Collaboration with the Frome Skatepark Project • Children and Young People's Projects commissioned and delivered across the town including: Super Roots, Purple Elephant, Open Story Tellers, Young Somerset, Speak Easy, Birth Talk and Baby Connections. • Co-design project as part of the Mary Baily/Victoria Park in the development stage 	
Work Collaboratively with other FTC teams to deliver collaborative and engagement processes to deliver their outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement on management plan updates for open spaces • Working alongside Climate Action and Resilience team to develop Adaptation and Nature Recovery Plan 	