

Agenda item 5

For information – Update on devolution of assets and services to FTC

Authors: Peter Wheelhouse, Economic Development & Regeneration Manager and Deputy Town Clerk; Nikki Cox, Partnership Lead ; Rob Holden, Environment Manager

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief update on progress in transferring assets and services to FTC as part of Frome's Devolution deal.

Open spaces & depot

On 1 April, Somerset Council (SC) Leader, Bill Revans made a key decision to proceed with the transfer of the agreed list of open spaces to FTC. Bristol based solicitors, VWV, have been appointed to undertake the necessary legal work. SC are aiming for the transfer to be completed by 1 June although if this date slips, we have signed a management agreement meaning that we will still become the practical managers of the site from 1 June.

We have undertaken a tender process to work with a contractor on green works for a limited geographical scope (primarily around Critchill) to take up some of the work load initially and to have a trusted partner on board as we learn about grass cutting at a much larger scale. We are reviewing costs for bin emptying on the new land. An initial plan has been prepared for mowing rounds (and hence an allocation of ranger capacity) to cover the new sites.

A lease is now in place for part of the Highways Depot and FTC has access. We are working with Easton Bevins to manage the works to make the depot operational. The aim is for the key contractor works, to make the site safe and secure, to be finished by 1 June to enable the depot to be operational when our management of the new spaces starts. The remaining contractor works will continue from 1 June whilst the site is being used. We expect to have access to office space and welfare facilities at the Depot around that date. We are holding fortnightly operational review meetings for moving into the depot with SC to confirm practical, insurance and safety aspects of operating in a shared space. The second ride-on mower (Grillo) is due to be delivered by 1 June so that we can be confident that we can manage the new open spaces properly.

Key Centre & interim management arrangements

The proposed date for the transfer of the Key Centre, cabin and community garden space is 6 May. Some existing groups continue to use the space in the meantime. Sarah Walton has been appointed as the Key Centre Coordinator with a proposed start date of 6 May. She will work 20 hours per week on a 1-year fixed term contract, line managed by Nikki Cox and working closely with Liz Stone who will lead the community engagement in the community. Nikki and Sarah Williams have had ongoing conversations with the school to keep them up to speed with progress and wider stakeholder communications will go out shortly.

FTC staff will soon be meeting with the Education Places Education Strategy Team at Somerset Council on site to discuss the process for commissioning a Community Nursery onsite. FTC's renewable energy coordinator, Linnea Hopkins will be reviewing the space from a retrofit perspective and investigating potential funding opportunities.

Paint has been gifted by Crown Paint to redecorate the space where required and a deep clean was planned for the 25 April. A grant application for £3,500 has been made to the Screwfix Foundation to make essential repairs to the cabin; this will be decided by 30 June.

Central toilet block and 'apron'

SC have agreed to lease the toilet block and adjoining 'apron' (the paved area between the toilet block and Library) on a 25-year lease. Detailed heads of terms are being negotiated.

Markets

See separate report at agenda item 4.