

## **Yeovil Refresh Update Report**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

To give a brief update on progress with the Yeovil Refresh. A more detailed report will be brought back to this committee in October.

### **Public Interest**

The Yeovil Refresh is an important commitment by South Somerset District Council (SSDC) to invest in Yeovil town centre, working in close collaboration with local businesses, Somerset County Council and other stakeholders. Public consultation took place in March 2018 and both residents and local businesses provided feedback on the various priority projects identified in the document.

### **Recommendations**

1. To note and comment on the progress to date
2. To note that a more detailed report will be brought to the Committee in October 2018

### **Background**

The Yeovil Refresh was commissioned by SSDC and a draft report was produced by the consultant JLL in late 2017. The document provides a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of Yeovil and a commercial overview of the town. It sets the town within the context of changes within town centres nationally and regionally and in particular, the significant changes occurring in the retail sector.

The Yeovil Refresh details the necessary investigation and further strategy work required in the town centre through a programme of priority projects.

At the Area South Committee (ASC) meeting in January 2018 members approved the reallocation of various capital funds to assist with the delivery of the programme. The Refresh was then finalised in March 2018 and released for public consultation. The consultation event took place in the town centre on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> March and was well attended. This consultation has also enabled the final document to carry weight as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

In March ASC allocated £10,000 towards the cost of the Yeovil Car Parking Review which is due to be completed in 2018.

### **Project Update**

A report was taken to the District Executive and Full Council meetings in May to agree the delivery arrangements for Strategic Development and Regeneration in South Somerset. The arrangements for Yeovil Refresh included establishing a new Yeovil Refresh Programme Board to oversee the delivery

of the Refresh. At the same time, significant funding was ring-fenced for this and other Strategic Regeneration programmes contained in the Corporate Plan.

The ASC Chairman has contacted all Area South Councillors to seek expressions of interest in serving on the Board and will give a verbal update at the meeting. The Chairman will also be seeking expressions of interest in serving on the Stakeholder Group, as shown in the governance structure in appendix 1.

The Yeovil Vision Board held its last meeting in its current form in May and in future, partners and other commercial stakeholders will also participate in the Yeovil Refresh via this Stakeholder Group. The group will work with the Yeovil Refresh Programme Board to comment on detailed delivery plans and help to achieve effective coordination with other complementary town centre work. At the same meeting, it was also agreed that the remaining funding held by the Yeovil Vision Board would transfer to the new delivery mechanism.

The recruitment of the Regeneration Programme Manager has been completed and Natalie Fortt will take up this development post from 2 July 2018.

One of the priority projects identified in the Yeovil Refresh is the need for a Yeovil Car Parking Review. A detailed brief has been produced for this work and the tender process is due to start within the next month. The review is due to be completed by the end of 2018 and forms an important element of the delivery plan for Yeovil. Other priority projects include the Transport Access Assessment, Public Realm Design Guide and the improved pedestrianisation of parts of Middle Street. An officer working group has met to consider the recommendations regarding improving pedestrian access and more generally enhancing public open space in the town centre and work on these elements of the plan will also take place during the remainder of 2018.

#### *Appendices*

#### *Appendix 1 – Yeovil Refresh Governance Arrangements*

### **Financial Implications**

None directly from this report.

### **Council Plan Implications**

The development of Yeovil town centre assists the council in meeting several of its corporate objectives including:

- Lobbying for and support infrastructure improvements to enable growth.
- Capitalise on our high quality culture, leisure and tourism opportunities to bring people to South Somerset.
- Progress key infrastructure projects that unlock development
- Progress options to improve access/regeneration of Yeovil Town Centre.

### **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

None directly from this report. The quality of regeneration schemes within Yeovil will be designed have a positive impact on future carbon emissions.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

None directly from this report. However, Equality and Diversity will be fully explored in the implementation of the various projects within the Yeovil Refresh Document.

## **Background Papers**

Yeovil Refresh Document.