

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 27 March 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Devon Place Board – Project Groups

Report summary:

This report provides an update on the work of the Regeneration Forums (Project Groups), established as part of the Devon Place Board project work for Seaton and Axminster. It covers the on-going requirements to monitor the projects set out within the respective Strategy documents and proposes that an officer led group is established for taking forward this monitoring and reporting via quarterly meetings.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

1. That Cabinet approves that the existing Axminster Renewal Forum and Seaton Project Group be replaced with one Officer led Project Monitoring Group in order to monitor outputs and outcomes of the projects listed within the Regeneration Strategies, previously completed for each town.

Reason for recommendation:

To enable the continued monitoring of the projects identified in the Axminster Renewal Strategy and Seaton Regeneration Strategy and to offer support and advice to stakeholders in delivering projects ensuring effective and efficient use of resources.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information n/a

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
 - A greener East Devon
 - A resilient economy
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Report in full

1. Background

- 1.1 In 2022, the council established forums for both Seaton and Axminster as part of the Devon Place Board work being undertaken by Devon County Council on the preparation of Regeneration Strategies for each town.
- 1.2 The two forums were set up and in-person meetings have been held on a quarterly basis in Seaton and Axminster, managed by the Place & Prosperity Team. The Forums comprised a membership of all 3 councils along with representatives from the local Chamber of Commerce, and businesses.
- 1.3 The Regeneration Strategies for each town were completed in early 2023 and were reported on to Cabinet on 1 March 2023 with a recommendation to note the conclusion of the DCC Urban Renewal Programme in Axminster and Seaton. As was reported then, each Strategy set out a list of potential projects that had been identified by the forums during the strategy development work led by consultants, Hardisty Jones on behalf of DCC.
- 1.4 For each project, a lead stakeholder is identified as the organisation to take forward that project, exploring the opportunity for its successful delivery. Where they are not the Lead Stakeholder, the councils can support the delivery of projects led by 3rd parties, by signposting and/or facilitating where feasible to do so. There is no commitment for the councils to deliver any of the projects identified or to provide any funding, but they are continuing to offer an “in-kind” contribution by providing support and advice.
- 1.5 The Quick win projects and Business Cases for projects for each town were identified. The Seaton Quick win project is underway and the Business Cases are completed. Axminster’s quick win project has stalled due to the e-bike operator going into administration in July 2023.
- 1.6 Following the conclusion of the Urban Renewal Programme, the Renewal Boards have continued to meet during 2023 to discuss progress with the individual projects and officers have provided guidance as appropriate to the stakeholders. As originally envisaged when the Devon Place Board project commenced, it is now an appropriate time to review the purpose of the Regeneration Forums to ensure that they can fulfil the functions now required for DCC’s Urban Renewal Programme.

2. Future Requirements.

- 2.1 As set out above, the Regeneration Strategy has identified a list of projects for each town.
- 2.2 The Council has provided clear guidance to the Lead Stakeholders where necessary and signposted them to relevant teams across the 3 councils for advice and support, or to sources of internal or external funding suitable for their projects.
- 2.3 There is a specific requirement from DCC to monitor the outputs and outcomes of the Regeneration Strategy projects. With this in mind, the purpose for holding these meetings in the future should be:
 - i. to monitor the projects for the Devon Place Board Programme. Lead stakeholders will be invited to report on project progress at the quarterly meetings.
 - ii. To continue to offer support, for instance by signposting Lead Stakeholders where appropriate.
- 2.4 These meetings will focus on operational matters to aid delivery of projects rather than be a forum for discussing strategic issues or other projects (not on the list) or other issues relevant to the town concerned.

3. Proposal.

- 3.1 In order to ensure that council resources are used efficiently and effectively, it is proposed that one Officer led group meets on a quarterly basis, on-line, in order to fulfil the above purpose. The meeting would include the council's Project Manager for Place and Prosperity, the Economic Development Manager for DCC, the Town Clerks for Seaton and Axminster and the Chair or Secretary for the Chambers of Commerce for each town. Other attendees may be invited if relevant to a particular project.
- 3.2 Reporting on project progress to councillors and the public will be via minutes circulated to relevant councillors, to the Town Council, County Councillor and published on the council's website.
- 3.3 If a project requires decisions (e.g. assets/resource input), a report would be brought to the council for decision via Cabinet in the usual way.

Financial implications:

There are no new direct financial implications from the recommendations in the report.

Legal implications:

There are no substantive legal issues to be added to the report.