

Report to: Asset Management Forum



Date of Meeting 7 December 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Place & Prosperity Team – Projects Summary

Report summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the types of projects that the Place and Prosperity Team is involved in with these types of projects becoming a mainstream agenda item at future meetings.

Projects that are related to assets and place making can take some time to come to fruition and also be of a sensitive and confidential nature during that time as we are working with 3rd parties but nevertheless this report will provide a useful summary.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That Members note the content of this report.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that members are informed on the type of work that the team is undertaking and any work that is relevant to their ward.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

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

Equalities impact Low Impact

If choosing High or Medium level outline the equality considerations here, which should include any particular adverse impact on people with protected characteristics and actions to mitigate these. Link to an equalities impact assessment form using the [equalities form template](#).

Climate change Medium Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; With any asset based project, particularly where development is taking place, there are risks involved. The risks for individual projects will be reviewed when a project reaches the stage of detailed feasibility work and will be reported on accordingly.

Links to background information Click here to enter links to background information; appendices online; and previous reports. These must link to an electronic document. Do not include any confidential or exempt information.

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

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

Report in full

- 1.1 The current Service Plan for Place Assets and Commercialisation identifies the key functions of the Place and Prosperity Team as follows:
 - Develop and deliver place-making strategy and associated development projects.
 - Secure new funding sources to enable development projects and investment opportunities.
 - To work with the council's own resources to deliver better places eg Commercial Investment Fund, Enterprise Zone, covid economic recovery funding (business rate pool, discretionary grant scheme allocation, RHSSF and others) along with the corporate asset base itself.
 - Identify strategic and practical means of improving and strengthening the defining places of East Devon: its towns and town centres, commercial centres and other key locations.
- 1.2 These functions reflect the priorities for addressing the economic challenges of the district following covid and are aimed at supporting economic recovery.
- 1.3 Additionally, reflecting the priorities within the council's Climate Change Action Plan, we aim to ensure that our activities encourage and enable low carbon regeneration or development that results in energy efficient measures and reduces the impact on the environment.
- 1.4 The Team has established a workplan containing a number of projects that it is either working on currently or intends to commence work on in the future as resources allow. A summary of many of these projects are detailed below.

HAYNE LANE, HONITON

- 1.5 This site in Honiton lies to the south of the A30 to the west of the town. It is included in the Local Plan allocated for employment use. The council is progressing a joint project with Combe Estates to develop the site for commercial use. A Memorandum of Understanding has been entered into with Combe Estates to this effect. A masterplan exercise will be undertaken to identify options and feasibility of delivery. A steering group has been set up including local ward councillors and representatives from the Town Council and relevant Parish Councils.

DRILL HALL, SIDMOUTH

- 1.6 Following a marketing exercise in 2018, Rockfish were selected to lease and then refurbish this property. Due to the pandemic, progress has been delayed and Rockfish have now entered into an option agreement with the council. The option agreement should have been exercised by 31 October when Rockfish could then have commenced work on site. This has had to be extended by 12 months due to an unforeseen legal issue that has arisen.

CLOAKHAM LAWNS, AXMINSTER

- 1.7 The Cloakham lawns site is a small site of circa 0.75 acres allocated for employment use in Axminster. The site is owned by Bovis Homes and is the subject of a s.106 agreement allowing for this part of their housing development site to be transferred to EDDC for Employment purposes once 200 houses have been constructed. This trigger event has now occurred. Cabinet approval has been given and the costs associated with the transfer of the land and funding for a feasibility study to consider options for employment use has been recommended to Council.

AXE VALLEY FEASIBILITY WORK

- 1.8 The council has appointed external consultants to undertake feasibility work to identify potential place based projects that can be part of any future bid submissions. Often, when bids for capital funding are invited for submission there is little time to prepare and it is ideal to have “oven ready” projects that the council has had time to review and which can be a part of any future bids.

LEVELLING UP FUND

- 1.9 We await the Government White Paper on Levelling Up and the prospectus for Round 2 of this fund which will be open in spring 2022. If we have projects that are eligible and if the council and local MP support a bid, the council will prepare a business case and submit a bid. The Axe Valley projects for example, could be the subject of a submission.

DEVON PLACE BOARD

- 1.10 Devon County Council is working on a study relating to the future role and prosperity of market and coastal towns in Devon. In August, as part of their initial study, we hosted a workshop meeting and walkabout in Axminster for officers from DCC, external regeneration experts, representatives from the town and district councils, chamber of commerce and local businesses. We await further information from Devon on how their study will progress.

COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

- 1.11 The Team has made progress on the Community Asset Transfer policy which is being reported on separately.

SEATON MORIDUNUM

- 1.12 The council is considering how the Moridunum site (former toilet block) on Seaton Esplanade could be redeveloped to provide new attractive public realm space and possibly a new food and beverage offer.

WEBSTERS GARAGE SITE, AXMINSTER

- 1.13 The council is in discussion with the current owner of this site regarding its future use.

RHSSF & WELCOME BACK FUND

- 1.14 The Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) programme commenced on 1st June 2020, The Welcome Back Fund (WBF) is an extension of this programme and operates until the end of March 2022, East Devon's total allocation is £361,983 (European Regional Development Fund). This is an intensive programme for the team and others in the council/parish councils and collectively we have successfully delivered initiatives such as:
- A public-facing campaign to restore confidence in shopping on the High Street (Stay Local Shop Safe)
 - Temporary public realm adaptations - Beer Neighbourhood Shopping Area
 - Public facing communications -Celebrating East Devon including its businesses, town centres and high streets. A seasonal (Christmas) campaign (aimed predominantly at residents) , and an early 2022 campaign highlighting fresh perspectives on the visitor offer - East Devon beyond the day trip/ staycation... so much more to offer/ see
 - Improvements to public space and temporary adaptations (expenditure of up to £10,000 per town): Axminster, Budleigh Salterton, Exmouth, Honiton, Ottery St Mary, Seaton, Sidmouth
 - Footfall data project (for programme monitoring)
 - Research into the delivery of local strategic plans for Exmouth and Axe Valley.

BEER PILOT PROJECT

- 1.15 The Beer Pilot project is part of the CAT work where Beer has been used as a pilot to explore how this process can work. Currently Heads of Terms and a Service Level Agreement are being drawn up with Beer Parish Council in relation to the transfer of some assets in the village. Assets to be transferred will potentially include a couple of car parks, some woodland assets, a toilet block, Jubilee Gardens and Charlie's Yard.

SEATON JURASSIC

- 1.16 Following the surrender of their lease by DWT, the council is exploring new opportunities for the use of the centre. There are currently issues with the building that need to be resolved and a report will be provided to Cabinet early in the new year with further details.

BEACH HUTS

- 1.17 The Team has been working with colleagues in Streetscene and Property & Facilities Management to consider whether the refurbishment or replacement of some of our beach hut portfolio may be appropriate.

Financial implications:

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

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications requiring comment.