

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 1 March 2023

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



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## Devon County Council's Urban Renewal Programme

### Report summary:

Devon County Council, working with the District and Town Councils and Hardisty Jones Associates (HJA) have been delivering an Urban Renewal Programme for Devon's towns.

The Urban Renewal Programme was developed to address the long-term and immediate decline in some of Devon's underperforming towns. East Devon towns, Axminster and Seaton, were selected to take part in this pilot project.

Stakeholder groups, Axminster Renewal Forum and Seaton Project Group (Renewal Boards), were established for each town and have developed and agreed an Axminster Urban Renewal Strategy and Seaton Regeneration Strategy respectively (Renewal Strategies). Copies of the renewal strategies are attached to this report.

Each strategy identifies a list of projects that are considered to be either strategic economic projects or locally significant projects together with approximate delivery timescale (Short, medium or long-term) as well as identifying a lead stakeholder. The lead stakeholder can take forward feasibility work for their particular projects. There may be a role for the council in the future with some projects, such as signposting or enabling, but in accordance with the previous report to cabinet on the Urban Renewal Programme, there is no commitment for the council to deliver the projects within the Strategy.

One project per town has been identified as a potential 'quick win' and will receive seed funding from Devon County Council to enable the project to develop. The quick win project for Seaton is the offer of funding of £10,000 towards the costs of refurbishment works at Marshlands, the Town Council offices and tourist information centre. The capital funding will support the creation of office and community space helping more local SMEs base themselves in Seaton and better facilities for local community groups. The Quick win project for Axminster is to support the delivery of an E-bike hub, working with the Town Council and utilising land offered by Network Rail. The contribution is £5,000.

One project for each town has been selected for the development of a business plan and the consultants, HJA are currently finalising this work. The Business Plan for Axminster is to review the Websters Garage site. This was a project considered in this council's Axe Valley Study completed in spring 2022. It was not included in the Axe Valley LUF bid.

The Business Case project for Seaton is to consider the opportunity for an E-bike hub to be located in the town centre, that can serve the town and wider area.

Meetings of the Renewal Boards will be taking place in February 2023 to discuss and decide how they want to take forward the work now that the Urban Renewal Programme is drawing to a close. This will include, if appropriate, future purpose, meeting frequency and co-ordination of meetings. The council will need to be mindful of its current commitments within the Service Plan for the

coming year when considering the resources it has to support future meetings and would encourage Town Councils to lead any continuation of any Renewal Boards but with the District Council being an active contributor.

**Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

**Recommendation:**

**That Cabinet:**

1. Notes the conclusion of Devon County Council's Urban Renewal Programme in Axminster and Seaton

**Reason for recommendation:**

To note the Renewal Strategies that have been prepared for and with the renewal boards for Axminster and Seaton and to note the conclusion of the Urban Renewal Programme.

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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

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

**Links to background information**

2 March 2022 Cabinet report (Item 18) [Cabinet report](#)

8 June 2022 Cabinet report (Item 14) [Cabinet report](#)

Appendix 1 - Axminster Urban Renewal Strategy

Appendix 2 - Seaton Regeneration Strategy

**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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**Financial implications:**

The financial details are contained within the report.

**Legal implications:**

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this report, each and any individual issue will need to be considered as it arises.