

Report to: Asset Management Forum



Date of Meeting 13 March 2023

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release n/a

Place & Prosperity Team Update

Report summary:

The report provides a summary of the various projects that the Place and Prosperity Team are currently involved in.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That the Asset Management Forum note the report.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that members of the Asset Management Forum are informed about project progress.

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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: Medium Risk; Projects which involve considering the future uses of council owned assets involves a level of risk be it financial or reputational. These would be reported to cabinet at the relevant time when recommendations are being made to take a project forward for delivery.

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. SEATON JURASSIC

- 1.1 The marketing of the site has now been concluded and Seaton Tramway has been identified as the preferred tenant for the site. Negotiations continue to take place in relation to lease terms.

2. PUBLIC TOILETS, ESPLANADE, & DRILL HALL, SIDMOUTH

- 2.1 The opportunity has arisen for Rockfish to acquire the toilet block adjacent to the Drill Hall on the Esplanade in Sidmouth.
- 2.2 Following the review of the council owned public toilet facilities across East Devon, the Esplanade toilets in Sidmouth were earmarked as category B toilets. The toilets are therefore considered suitable for disposal to a third party on the basis that the purchaser continues to provide some toilet provision within any refurbished or redeveloped facility at the site.
- 2.3 Given the location of these toilets, adjacent to the Drill Hall, it was considered appropriate to discuss their disposal to Rockfish who have recently acquired the Drill Hall site, before considering taking the site to the market. The acquisition by Rockfish would give the opportunity for the toilet block to be incorporated into the refurbishment works at the Drill Hall, enhancing the appearance and offer of the restaurant facility.
- 2.4 Rockfish are able to be considered as a special purchaser and the council is able to negotiate with them directly rather than take the site to the market. With this in mind, the council has obtained a market valuation of the site for a long leasehold interest of 125 years, taking into account the requirement to provide 2 accessible toilet cubicles within the site. The market value was assessed at £65,000.
- 2.5 The council has now received an offer from Rockfish of £70,000 for a 125 year lease and there is a recommendation that this offer be accepted and Heads of Terms be entered into.
- 2.6 Rockfish will need to review their design works for the site and the planning permission prior to commencing works on site. This will result in a delay to their programme, however the opportunity to include the toilet block in their refurbishment programme will result in a much enhanced restaurant offer on this site.
- 2.7 Following a report to cabinet on 1 March, recommending acceptance of the offer from Rockfish, cabinet has agreed that Officers now progress with this disposal to Rockfish.

3. AXE VALLEY LEVELLING UP FUNDING BID.

- 3.1 Disappointingly, the council was unsuccessful in its bid to the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) for projects in the Axe Valley. The council had submitted a bid for £11m to support the £15m programme of projects within the Axe Valley. The Government received over 500 bids, totalling around £8.6 billion and of these, 111 bids were successful with a value of just over £2 billion.
- 3.2 The council has recently received constructive feedback from the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) which will be helpful to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the bid and therefore opportunities to bid in future rounds.
- 3.3 In the meantime, the council wants to make progress where it can but being very mindful that without DLUHC funding many of these projects are undeliverable in their proposed form.
- 3.4 We will be reviewing the viability of the **3 employment sites located in Colyford Road and Harepath Road in Seaton and Cloakham Lawns in Axminster** with the information that we have from the initial Axe Valley Study and will report to Cabinet in the summer.
- 3.5 We have an existing cabinet approval to market the **Seaton Moridunum** site. This was put on hold whilst we awaited the outcome of the LUF bid which had included this site within the Seaton Seafront Enhancement project. We are currently in the process of selecting a marketing agent.
- 3.6 The council recognises the significance of the **Seaton Seafront Enhancement project** for the town and it was especially disappointing that the funding was not forthcoming to enable delivery of phase 1 of this project. The council will be revisiting this project in the future to consider how it might be further reduced in scope to reduce the total project costs for phase 1, which were estimated at almost £7million. Whilst council resources are unable to undertake this review in the coming year, this review will be considered in future Service Plan objectives.

4. SEATON MORIDUNUM

- 4.1 As reported above, the site will be marketed in the spring. We are currently in the process of selecting a marketing agent for this site. The Team continues to work with the developer of Fosseyway Court to facilitate their development and to ensure that the council's own land is safely maintained.

5. DEVON PLACE URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT

- 5.1 The Regeneration Strategies for Axminster and Seaton have now been concluded following the work undertaken by DCC, their consultants Hardisty Jones, and the stakeholder groups, Axminster Renewal Forum and Seaton Project Group. Copies of the renewal strategies are attached to this report.
- 5.2 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.

- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 Meetings of the Renewal Boards will continue on a quarterly basis. In order to ensure that the council is able to meet its current commitments within the Service Plan, officers hope to work in partnership with the Town Councils in terms of administering the delivery of these meetings in the future.

6. DEPOTS REVIEW

- 6.1 The Place, Assets and Commercialisation Team are supporting the Streetscene and Recycling and Waste Teams to commission a project to review the Council's operational depot properties at the following sites:
- Sidmouth Manstone Depot
 - Exmouth Camperdown Depot
 - Woodbury Salterton Greendale Depot (Waste and Recycling)
- 6.2 This is to ensure that they are fit for purpose, able to support service, operations and fleet decarbonisation and in locations that optimise service delivery, resilience and business continuity.
- 6.3 We will be asking consultants to review existing depot site provision, constraints and opportunities in light of changing service demand, delivery environment and service aspirations and make recommendations for future depot operational site requirements.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications from the recommendation in the report.

Legal implications:

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