

Report to: Asset Management Forum



Date of Meeting 4 December 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.

Links to background information none

[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. DEPOTS REVIEW

1.1 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)

1.2 Following a successful procurement process, a team of consultants led by Sweco, have been appointed to undertake this review. Site visits and the data gathering exercise has been concluded and work is underway on considering options for delivery and future site requirements.

2. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

2.1 We have previously reported to Asset Management Forum on an Expression of Interest (first stage of an application) for a Community Asset Transfer that had been received from Ottery St Mary Town Council for the Land at Canaan and land within Millcroft, Ottery St Mary. The purpose of the report was to consult AMF as required within the Community Asset Transfer procedures.

2.2 The application and its implications were considered by officers and consultation took place with the relevant parties, as set out in the CAT procedure. The Council welcomed the Expression of Interest from the Ottery St Mary Town Council and would like to work with the Town Council to explore their ideas in further detail and consider how their aspirations might be achieved. However, the council also noted that there were a number of challenges for this council that the application presented, such as loss of car park income; retention of expensive assets to maintain; and the future investment in the play area and car park which needed to be explored and understood further.

2.3 The report to the Portfolio Holder, included four recommendations:

- a) to note the positive activities that the Town Council wishes to incorporate within the land concerned;
- b) to note the challenges that this council would face if a transfer of just the assets identified were to take place
- c) to invite the Town Council to meet with the council to discuss their aspirations for the land concerned and what options are available for achieving these with or without a transfer of ownership

- d) that reflecting the above recommendations, that the Town Council is therefore not invited at this stage to submit a Business Case for the transfer of these assets but that the discussions can shape how this opportunity might progress in the future.

2.4 These recommendations were approved and this has been communicated to Ottery St Mary Town Council. Following an internal meeting with a new colleague in the relevant service area next month, a meeting will be arranged with the Town Council for early in 2024.

3. SEATON JURASSIC

3.1 The council has now entered into Heads of Terms for the sale of the freehold of the Seaton Jurassic site to Seaton Tramway. The disposal was approved at the Full Council meeting on 18 October. Full Council has approved that the capital receipt will be reinvested in Seaton in projects relating to the natural environment and links between Jurassic Discovery and those other sites ensuring that the town benefits. The legal documents are being finalised for a target completion date prior to Christmas and the Tramway hopes to open the new facility ready for the 2024 visitor season. For further information, please see the press release issued: [13 October 2023 - Future of Seaton Jurassic Centre to be considered - East Devon](#)

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

4.1 See June AMF report for further background on this project.

4.2 The Council has entered into Heads of Terms with Rockfish to acquire this site. The legal agreements are currently being finalised. Rockfish submitted a planning application in August for both the Drill Hall site and the toilets site. There is a recommendation for approval with conditions, and this application will be determined on 21 November.

4.3 The timescales for delivery, subject to the lease being entered into would see the new toilets open in the summer 2024. The new restaurant would open in spring 2025.

5. SEATON AND AXMINSTER EMPLOYMENT SITES

5.1 We are currently reviewing the options for delivery of the employment sites in Colyford Road and Harepath Road in Seaton with a view to bringing forward a report to Cabinet in early 2024 for a decision on delivery. For the Cloakham Lawns site in Axminster, Urban Dynamics were appointed in early October and we hope to have a draft assessment on site options before Christmas with a report to Cabinet to follow in the new year.

6. SEATON MORIDUNUM

6.1 The marketing exercise for this site has now concluded. The council set out the assessment criteria for the bids that would secure a placemaking solution for the site, for example, by securing the walkway over any new development, similar to that which currently exists. The assessment criteria for bids included evaluating both a financial and a quality offer, this being: price; site proposals; and ability to deliver, with different weighting given to each. It was considered that the proposed use and ability to deliver was of greater priority than to secure the highest capital receipt. This would enable a wide range of organisations, including community organisations with the relevant skills, to come forward.

- 6.2 Following a 5 month marketing period, over the summer months, the 17 individuals/organisations that had directly expressed an interest in the site with the agent, were invited to bid on the basis of the assessment criteria. Unfortunately, the council did not receive any offers for the site by the closing date of 10 November.
- 6.3 Officers are now reviewing the potential options for the way forward with our marketing agents and will engage with the local ward members and Portfolio Holder before determining the next steps.
- 6.4 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. The licence agreement to enable their site safety barriers to be in place, along with a staircase access licence are in the process of being renewed.

7. DEVON PLACE URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT

- 7.1 The Renewal Boards for Axminster and Seaton have continued to meet on a quarterly basis throughout the year and progress on the list of projects identified within the Regeneration Strategies is discussed.
- 7.2 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.

Financial implications:

This is an update report with no new financial implications to highlight.

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