

Agenda item 5

For decision – to adopt the draft Frome Devolution Prospectus

Authors: Peter Wheelhouse, Economic Development & Regeneration Manager & Deputy Town Clerk and Cllr Max Wide

[The draft Frome Devolution Prospectus can be seen at Appendix 5.1 on the website here.](#) It sets out a vision for the town's future and makes proposals for the transfer of certain assets and responsibilities from Somerset Council to FTC that, with local stewardship, will make a difference to the lives of people in Frome. The Prospectus also promotes a longer-term partnership with Somerset Council to realise the town's potential and address various challenges. The Prospectus represents a strategic intent. How quickly we choose to pursue it depends on the outcome of our negotiations with Somerset Council and further work around the business case for individual elements.

The vision is guided by four overarching themes:

- Protecting and improving assets and infrastructure
- Creating a thriving place
- Building sustainability and resilience
- Growing community wellbeing

The vision and proposals build on earlier engagement with our community including recent engagement, the outcomes of which are detailed in 'Building A Picture of Frome' which is covered elsewhere in this agenda.

The proposals are set out in four packages:

- **Open Spaces and Depot** – Stage 1 will be to take on an additional 54 open spaces including play parks and part of Somerset's Highways Depot to provide a larger maintenance base for our Ranger Team; subsequent stages will involve developing and implementing management plans for these spaces through engagement with the community
- **Town Centre & Economic Development** – Stage 1 proposals include the transfer of various assets and services around the Cattle Market Car Park (but not including the car park itself) to increase the vibrancy of 'Frome Riverside' and the wider town centre. It is also proposed that FTC takes on responsibility for economic development and tourism and that we work with the community to develop an economic development strategy to create a more thriving town centre.
- **Early Help and Community Support** – Stage 1 may involve the transfer of the freehold of the Key Centre and Mount Community Garden to provide space and support for a range of early help activities delivered by community groups.
- **Sustainability** – This package will involve the development and implementation of plans for a Re-use Centre and more recycling in the town and a Movement Strategy to create a safer network of routes that support active and sustainable travel

Councillors are asked to adopt the Prospectus as a basis for negotiation with Somerset Council. The full costs of these options are still being explored together with the funding arrangements. Once we have made progress with these negotiations and the business case for the various proposals, we will bring a report back to Council so that firm decisions can be made.

Recommendations

1. Adopt the draft Frome Devolution Prospectus as a basis for negotiation with Somerset Council
2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Town Clerk in consultation with Cllrs Tanner and Wide to coordinate negotiations with Somerset Council with a report to be brought back to Council when further progress has been made on negotiations