

Area East Development Plan and Budget-Half Year Progress Report (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on the progress of projects taking place in Area East, including those resourced through the Area Corporate Capital Programme. To give an overview of the Area East Reserve and Grants Programmes at the half way point of the 2014/15 year.

Public Interest

The Area Development Service supports the Council's four Area Committees (North, South, East & West) to work closely with local communities to create better places in which to live and work.

Each Committee has the freedom to use its resources, both financial and through its team of Development staff, to understand what matters to local people and address this by offering support, encouragement and direct financial & practical help.

The report gives a half year position on progress with implementing the Area Development Plan and gives Members the opportunity to consider any adjustments they might wish to make at this point during the year.

Recommendations

- (1) To note and comment on the current Area East Capital Programme and Reserve
- (2) To note completion statement for work recently completed
- (3) To transfer a sum of £10,000 from the Capital Reserve to the Community Grants Budget
- (4) To note the current position on community grants and other project budgets held by Area East

Background

Budgets are approved in February each year. Each of the four Area Committees has delegated responsibility for monitoring budgets within its control. Area East considers all decisions relating to grant requests over £1,000, its Capital Programme and the allocation & spending of its Reserve. The Executive continues to monitor all budgets on a quarterly basis.

The Area East Committee focuses its resources to address local needs in order to promote improved quality of life in Area East. The Area Development Plan 2014/15 contains a set of local priorities, agreed by the Committee and a work programme with targets, to carry these forward throughout the year. A half year progress report is brought to the Area Committee.

Area Development Programme

Area East priorities for 2014-15 and progress against projects in the Area East Development Plan are attached in Appendix 1.

In addition to the half time ADM, the Area Development Team consists of 3 Neighbourhood Development Officers who divide their time across patches and lead on particular themes as shown below:-

Project type	Pam Williams Neighbourhood Development Officer (Economy) (Half time)	Tim Cook Neighbourhood Development Officer (Communities) (Full time)	James Dival Neighbourhood Development Officer (Communities) (Half time)
Place leads	Castle Cary	Wincanton	Bruton; Milborne Port; Ilchester
	Wincanton High Street	Rural areas (shared)	Rural areas (shared)
Theme leads	Economic & business development	Community research and Plans	Health and wellbeing
	Infrastructure projects	Community grants programme	LEADER Local Action Group
	Wincanton Town Team & Retail Support Initiatives	Community buildings	Local Information Centres
		Rural services	

Area East Capital Programme

The area capital programme supports investment in new or existing locally important assets. These may be SSDC owned, community owned or privately owned. In the last two categories support will normally be via a grant scheme. The current capital programme is attached at appendix 2. It shows live projects, their funding allocation and spend to 1 October 2014, along with a progress report from the lead officer. In summary this shows that there is currently a total of £26,100 unallocated and available for local priority schemes.

Community grant applications for capital projects are considered twice a year in June and December. The Committee supported several large community projects in June 2014 and a number of smaller awards have been made under delegated powers with ward member support. At present there is only £2,716 remaining for community capital grants. In view of likely demand it is suggested that the community grant allocation should be topped up with a further £10,000. This will leave an unallocated balance in the Capital Reserve of £16,100

The 3 projects that have been completed during 2014 are shown separately in Appendix 3 These show the original budget against final scheme costs and a short explanation of variance.

Area East Reserve

There is currently £3,460.00 unallocated in the Area East Reserve. This is an historical revenue fund that is not replenished. It can be used to support unplanned or urgent work or schemes that cannot be supported through the main, annual budgets. It has the flexibility to

be used for capital or non-capital work, including staff costs or commissioned work. It can also be spent up front for work that is subsequently reimbursed.

Allocation of Reserve	Approved	£	£ Balance Remaining 14/15	£
Balance B/fwd 13/14				60,190
Community Planning-Project Spend	Apr 05	50,000	26,930	
Derelict sites, Castle Cary	Jun 05	4,000	4,000	
Rural Business Units	Nov 05	17,050	5,800	
Wincanton Retail Support Initiative top up	July 14	10,000	10,000	
Retail Support Initiative	May 09	10,000	10,000	
Unallocated Balance				3,460

The *Community Planning project budget* is only available to communities with endorsed parish/ community plans but can be used for assisting the delivery of a range of priority projects where community grant budget is not available. Proposals can come forward in any month from this allocation.

The *derelict site* funding is available for essential works on a number of sites in Castle Cary with at risk historic buildings. A report which may involve drawing down some of this funding is expected early in New Year.

The *Wincanton Retail Support top up scheme* is being marketed in the town centre with funding of up to £2,500 available. Full details are available from the Neighbourhood Development Officer (Economy) This sits alongside the RSI covering enhancements to shop frontages, which is available across the Area including village and farm shops.

Area East Community Grants

This is now a very small, annually renewed fund. We started 2014/15 with £14,120; £10,000 of this is ring-fenced for Healthy Living projects. In August, AEC Members agreed to award the £10,000 towards a programme of work at the Balsam Centre. Of the balance £3450 has been awarded to seven community projects leaving £670 unallocated in this budget.

The Area Development Team is able to provide advice on other funding opportunities for projects that do not meet the criteria for the Community Planning or Parish Infra-structure schemes.

Area East Discretionary Fund

This is a small annually renewed, budget that is used, at the discretion of Members, to support partnership work, attract external funding and other regeneration work.

A sum of £8,082 remains unallocated for 2014/15. This year £2,000 has been allocated to the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership. A carried forward sum of £3,000 has been used to support a high quality bid for LEADER funding through the Heart of Wessex Local Action Group which hopes to get £2m over 5 years to support rural economic development in the LAG area

Financial Implications

The level of Area East funding is shown in the body of this report, and in the Appendices along with some suggested transfer of funds between budgets. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

Council Plan Implications

In compliance with the Council Plan

Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications

None arising directly from this report

Equality and Diversity Implications

None arising directly from this report

Background Papers

Area East Development Plan 2014-15;
Monthly budget monitoring and quarterly capital monitoring reports
