

Somerset Levels and Moors Local Action Group – Appointment of a Member to the Executive Board (Executive Decision)

Strategic Director: Mark Williams, Chief Executive
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Purpose of the Report

To seek an appointment from SSDC to the Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC) Programme Executive Board.

Public Interest

LEADER is an investment programme funded by the European Union and DEFRA to assist with local economic development. Individual programmes are agreed by DEFRA and operate through a Local Action Group (LAG) made up of a range of organisations and individuals covering local business and community interests.

South Somerset District Council appoints a councillor to the Executive Board of the Local Action Group for the Levels and Moors, and this decision is made by the Area North Committee. The EB makes decisions on the investments made by the programme and monitors the results of previous grants. The EB members are expected to promote the programme and support community engagement.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to appoint one member to serve on the Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action Group Executive Board for the remainder of the municipal year 2014-15.

Background

Councillor Paul Thompson was appointed in June 2014 for a term of one year. At the meeting of Area North Committee in August 2014 he requested that, due to other commitments, a replacement appointment is made.

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The Levels and Moors scheme is currently in a transition year as the last programme has ended (December 2013). Funding from 2015 is based upon a competitive process managed by DEFRA, using a locally prepared Local Development Strategy (LDS). If successful the Executive Board's role will be to implement the LDS.

As a slight change from the previous programme, all of the parishes in Area North included within the scope of the Local Action Group area, making this of significant interest to the Area Committee.

Nominations and appointment process

Councillors may wish to note that Councillor Terry Mounter at the August meeting of Area North Committee expressed an interest in this appointment.

Any further nominations may be made at the start of this item. Councillors will be asked to vote for one candidate.

Financial Implications

None from this report. SSDC does not contribute financially to the programme other than officer time to support the work of the executive group for example in the assessment of applications to the programme. This is estimated at around 6 days per year.

Council Plan Implications

The opportunity to contribute to the success of the Levels and Moors Local Development Strategy can support a number of actions within the Council Plan 2012 – 15.

Focus One – Jobs

- Provide targeted support for start-ups and small businesses and those with the aspiration to expand.
- Enhance the vitality of town centres....
- Work with partners, to contribute to tackling youth unemployment.

Focus Two – Environment

- Deliver campaigns and projects that help ... cut energy use and adapt to climate change.

Focus Four – Health and Communities

- ...help communities to develop transport schemes and local solutions to reduce rural isolation and inequalities to meet existing needs of those communities.
- Maintain and enhance the South Somerset network of leisure and cultural facilities, optimising opportunities for external funding to promote healthy living.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None from this report – however a proposed activity of the Levels & Moors Local Development Strategy is support community-owned renewable energy schemes for the benefit of the local economy and environment.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Applications to the Levels and Moors programme are assessed for equality and diversity implications. The programme has supported a range of projects including those which targeted younger and older people and those facing rural exclusion / isolation.

Background Papers: *Minute 29, Area North Committee - 25 June 2014.*
Minute 53, Area North Committee – 27 August 2014
