

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

Strategic Director: Rina Singh/Vega Sturgess Interim Chief Executive
Assistant Director: Ian Clarke, Legal and Corporate Services
Service Manager: Angela Cox, Democratic Services Manager
Lead Officer: Becky Sanders, Democratic Services Officer
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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 (EB) 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 2015-16.

Background

Councillor Jo Roundell Greene was appointed in May 2015 for a term of one year. Due to other commitments she has requested that a replacement appointment is made.

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The Executive Board oversees the implementation of the Local Development Strategy that was developed through public consultation. Once the Levels & Moors Annual Delivery Plan has been agreed by DEFRA the programme will be open to outline applications; it is anticipated that this will be sometime in September.

Further information about the Somerset Levels and Moors Local Action Group is attached as Appendix A.

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 14, Area North Committee - 24 June 2015.*
