

Area North – Priorities for the Area Development Plan – 2015/16

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Purpose of the Report

To consider current priorities for SSDC – Area North in promoting local social, economic and environmental well-being in Area North.

Councillors are asked to contact the Area Development Manager (North) with requests for further information in advance of the meeting.

Public Interest

SSDC's four Area Committees (North, South, East and West) work to secure investment in local social, economic and environmental priorities for Yeovil, the market towns and rural areas of South Somerset.

This work is supported by four Area Development teams, together with a budget for community grants, and a capital programme for investment into schemes which contribute to the achievement of the area's local priorities.

Each committee is asked to refresh its priorities on an annual basis, publish and monitor an annual work programme – called the Area Development Plan.

Recommendations

- (1) Comment on the proposed priorities for Area North for 2015-16
- (2) Note that an informal workshop to further discuss local priorities will be arranged for early - mid October.
- (3) Note that a final set of priorities and a mid-year update on the Area Development Plan and budget position will be presented to the committee in November 2015.

Area North priorities and work programme for 2015-16

The current themes previously identified by Area North - **Jobs, Affordable Housing, Local Self-Help and Flood & Water Management** are still felt to be relevant and timely – providing the framework for work supported by the Area North Committee.

Reviewing the priorities for the Area Committee for the coming year has included consideration of:-

- The local achievements of 2014-15 (for further details see report to Area North in June 2015)
- Current enquiries from community groups, businesses and residents

- Agreed and ongoing support to projects already in hand from previous years
- Discussions with ward members, town and parish councils and internal service teams at SSDC
- The results of local consultations or other research (where available)

The following sections set out a revised set of priorities, under each theme with an indication of the actions likely to support progress.

Jobs – *we will promote local employment and small business development and promote extended stay and spend by visitors*

- In the coming year we will assist with -
 - Delivery of the 20 Year Flood Action Plan - business resilience workstream;
 - The Leader programme for the Levels and Moors - launch and promotion;
 - The delivery of the Connecting Devon and Somerset Superfast Broadband programme
 - South Somerset Market Towns Investment Group (MTIG) programmes;
 - Locally led marketing targeted at residents, business to business and visitors - working with local businesses in our rural areas and 'high streets';
 - Ongoing assessment of the current supply and demand for employment land in Area North;
 - Local access to services supporting skills and employment

Affordable Housing – *we will promote the delivery of affordable homes in Area North*

- In the coming year we will assist with –
 - Monitoring and practical support for the affordable housing programme for Area North in conjunction with the Strategic Housing and Development Management Services for example helping with housing need surveys and raising awareness of new models like Community Land Trusts.

Self-Help – *we will promote greater levels of self-help to promote the sustainability of local services and facilities for all ages and abilities.*

- In the coming year we will assist with –
 - Community led projects which promote this priority still to be completed from the 2014-15 programme;
 - Helping residents, businesses, and groups find the help and information they need;
 - Local opportunities for residents to find help using digital services
 - Improving accessibility to facilities and services

Flood and Water Management – *we will promote locally led solutions which prevent unacceptable flood events in our communities and support the long term vision for the Somerset levels and moors.*

- In the coming year we will assist with –
 - The 20 Year Flood Action Plan and Somerset Rivers Authority work programme

- Raising awareness of the different roles and responsibilities for flood risk management

Financial implications

None from this report.

In addition to the Area Development staffing budget and small support budgets, there is a revenue budget of around £10,000 for community grants and around £175,000 remaining in the Area North Capital Programme for the next 2-3 years. The Area North reserve stands at £26,600.

Council Plan Implications

The recommended priorities are in line with the Council Plan (2012-2015). The service team considers the implications for the Council Plan when negotiating support for local projects, handling enquiries and assessing grants.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None directly from this report. There are a number of local initiatives designed to promote carbon reduction for example promoting sustainable tourism. In particular where we are asked to support buildings projects, applicants are expected to assess the business case for energy efficiency and carbon reduction. Opportunities for sustainable transport and promoting local self-containment are encouraged.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None directly from this report. Projects and initiatives will be designed or assessed for support using the principles of equality analysis, and many will make a direct contribution to the Council's Single Equality Scheme. For example projects for community facilities will be expected to demonstrate accessibility and other considerations to promote equalities and diversity objectives.

Background papers: **None**
