

Area North Development – Review of 2017-18

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Purpose of the Report

To report on the work undertaken by the Area North Development Team during 2017-18.

Councillors are asked to contact the Area Development Lead (North) or other named Officers in advance of the meeting with requests for further information about specific projects.

Public Interest

The Area Development Service supports the Council's 4 Area Committees (North, South, East and West) to work closely with local communities to create better places in which to live and work.

This report details the work undertaken by the Area North Development Team for the 2017-18 financial year.

Recommendation

That members note and comment on the report.

Background

The Area Development Plan 2017-18 contains a set of local priorities, agreed by the committee and a service action plan with targets to carry these forward throughout the year.

Progress against projects in the service action plan is attached at Appendix A. A brief presentation will be given at Committee highlighting some of the work undertaken during the last 12 months.

In addition to the work detailed in the service action plan, the team also deals with a wide range of queries and funding requests from Parishes, businesses and community groups throughout the year. Some of these are relatively straightforward enquiries that can be dealt with straight away whilst others lead to more involved work around issues such as registering an Asset of Community Value, designing a project to address a problem, funding advice, support to set up a new group etc.

The team also works with other SSDC services to help deliver the Council Plan and other relevant strategies and can assist with (or find other sources of help for) community led project planning, consultation, securing resources, delivery and evaluation.

Work undertaken during 2017-18

During 2017-18 the Area North team supported 45 community based projects / programmes, (illustrated on the map at Appendix B). This includes work led by a community group or partnership, or directly by SSDC.

In addition to supporting the above projects the team handled over 100 enquiries for information, project support, guidance, printing or hire of equipment. These enquiries are received from ward members, volunteers, local charities and trusts, town and parish councils, residents, local businesses, internal SSDC services and other public sector services.

The Area North Team awarded grants of £16136.50 to 20 projects, worth a total overall investment of £176,649. This is an average grant of 9% of project costs and means that for every £1 of grant from SSDC a further £8 will be raised by the community from local fundraising or by other external investment. A list of community grants awarded during the year is included at Appendix C.

Area North supports four Local Information Centres in Somerton, Langport, Martock and South Petherton through an annual service level agreement worth £500 each (£2,000 in total).

The Community Office which was based at the Langport Information Centre was closed at the end of December 2017 due to low footfall numbers. Following a three month lead up to the closure customers were assisted and encouraged to move, where possible, over to digital services. 24 customers were seen during this period. 14 customers moved to digital, phone or post access. Other customers were either returning equipment, could go to another office or were one off visits. Customers are still able to access our services on an appointment based system where further assistance is required. There have been no enquiries for this service to date.

Area Reserves This is a one-off fund held as a special reserve by the Area Committee. There is £13,894 to allocate for future years. In addition there is £10,000 allocated to support the progress (in exceptional circumstances) of schemes for affordable housing and £2,706 allocated towards the Langport Cycle Path as part of the Area Committee's priorities.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Service Action Plan 2017/18
- Appendix B – Area North Development 2017/18 – map of projects supported
- Appendix C – Community Grants awarded 2017/18

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Corporate Priority Implications

The work of the ADT contributes towards the following priorities:

High quality cost effective services

- Actively managing assets and resources to ensure the best financial or community return.

Economy

- Work with businesses and use our assets to grow our economy.
- Advise and support initiatives that ensure worker skills meet the employers needs

Environment

- Continue to address the impact of flooding
- Support communities to develop local, parish and neighbourhood plans.

Health & Communities

- Support communities so that they can identify their needs and develop local solutions.
- Target support to areas of need.
- Help people to live well by enabling quality cultural, leisure, play, sport & healthy lifestyle facilities & activities.
- Work with partners to tackle health issues such as diabetes and hypertension.
- Help keep our communities safe.

Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications

This is considered on an individual project and programme basis as appropriate. The overall priority is to seek to create more balanced communities where people can live, work and get access to the services and facilities they need on a daily basis

Equality and Diversity Implications

This is considered on an individual project and programme basis as appropriate.

Background Papers: None
