

## **Area South – Covid-19 Community response**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

To provide Members of the Area South Committee with an opportunity to discuss the current situation regarding the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to raise issues or concerns in their wards.

### **Public Interest**

The Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been swift and wide-ranging. Please see the information on our website at <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/life-events/coronavirus-support/>

### **Recommendation**

That members comment and feedback and raise any issues or concerns relating to the current situation in their ward.

### **Background**

At the April meeting of the Area South Committee, members requested a report on the support that is available to Town and Parish Councils and community organisations during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A great deal of information, advice and guidance is provided on the SSDC website. <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/life-events/coronavirus-support/coronavirus-self-help-hub/>

The situation continues to change rapidly. This report offers a brief overview which is subject to change. A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

### **Support to local communities**

Members will be aware of the work that has been done by individuals and groups in their own wards as a direct response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Work was undertaken with Parish and Town Councils to map the services that had become available to support the vulnerable people in communities. This identified that local solutions had been put in place in almost every parish. These solutions range from an individual parish contact to coordinate support to highly organised groups offering shopping, prescription collection, welfare calls, food boxes and in some cases accommodation for key workers or those at risk at home. This mapping work will not have captured the vast amount of informal help given by friends, neighbours and family members. The information gathered has enabled a flow of information and mutual referral between the groups and the SSDC wellbeing hub.

The above, alongside the support for the established community and voluntary sector has been co-ordinated and supported extremely effectively by Spark Somerset.

## **Funding for groups**

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) immediately established the Somerset Coronavirus Appeal which offers grants to new and existing groups that are providing support to vulnerable people. A fund of over £640,000 has been established for direct funding and donations. As of 15<sup>th</sup> May, £339,166 has been given out in grants. The map of grants awarded shows that approximately 10 awards have been made to groups in Area South. Further details are available on the SCF website. <https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/news/361/73/Somerset-Community-Foundation-s-response-to-COVID-19>

New funding streams are being announced all the time and we will continue to work with colleagues in other districts and the county to ensure that information is disseminated to local groups and town and parish councils.

## **Support for Business**

Information, advice and links to financial and other support is available on the SSDC website. <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/life-events/coronavirus-support/business-support/>

## **Local food and drink promotion**

Many local businesses have adapted their offer with many establishing takeaway and delivery services. Local food and drink producers and suppliers have also looked to support the local market. A directory of local food and drink producers and suppliers has been created and is available on the SSDC website. The aim is to develop the directory to help recovery through promoting food and drink businesses and encouraging a greater emphasis on buying local produce. <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/life-events/coronavirus-support/south-somerset-food-drink-directory-during-covid-19/>

Economic Development specialists continue to provide support to businesses and are focused on preparing for the recovery phase.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

## **Corporate Priority Implications**

The priorities have been developed taking into account the SSDC Corporate plan priorities.

## **Carbon Emissions and 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. Area working (Area+) helps to improve access to facilities, activities and services, reducing the need to travel.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

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

**Background Papers:** None