

Area West – Council Plan Priorities 2020/21

Service Manager: Jan Gamon, Lead Specialist Strategic Planning
Lead Officer: Jan Gamon, Lead Specialist Strategic Planning
Anna Maria Lenz, Specialist, Strategic Planning (East/South)/
Chereen Scott, Specialist, Strategic Planning (West/North)
Tim Cook, Locality Team Manager

Contact Details: anna-maria.lenz@southsomerset.gov.uk;
chereen.scott@southsomerset.gov.uk
tim.cook@southsomerset.gov.uk

Purpose of the Report

To present the priorities identified by Area West Committee for consideration in the Council Plan 2020/21, as agreed at a workshop in June 2019.

Public Interest

This report gives a summary of the priorities agreed by Members of the Committee at a recent workshop. These priorities will help to inform the development of the Council Plan 2020/21 including corporate strategic priorities and the priorities for the Area West chapter. This report details the next steps of this process.

Recommendation

1. That members agree the proposed corporate strategic priorities to be presented to District Executive for consideration for inclusion in the Council Plan.
2. That members agree that the other priorities raised at the workshop will be developed into the Area West Chapter in collaboration with the chair of the committee.

Background

One of the key objectives of the Council Plan is to ensure that the priorities of the Council align to the aspirations of Members and are supported by evidence, such as national policy and community need.

The development process begins with Area Workshops, which include all members, in order to base the development of Council priorities on local knowledge, insight and awareness of issues and challenges faced by our communities.

Draft priorities were identified by members of Area West at a workshop in June.

Draft Priorities for Area West

A number of challenges and issues were identified at the member workshop. Members were asked to give some weighting to identify emerging priorities for the 2020/21 period. The list below provides the outcome of this exercise:

There were four issues that were most highly ranked by members:

- Crime and community safety: The importance of supporting the multi-agency One Team approach in tackling community safety issues in the Area and District.
- To complete gateway highway improvement scheme (Chard Fore Street)

- Tourism: Attract tourists and increase spend in and visits to the Area and wider District
- “Protecting the Environment”: To develop an approach for protecting our environment and ensuring that the green agenda is at the forefront of what the Council does.

The following is a list of issues that had a moderate ranking:

- Community transport: Improving the provision and connectivity of community transport
- Rural isolation: Taking a strategic approach to identifying and tackling issues that relate to rural isolation
- Deliver (8) play days in towns and villages in Area West
- To improve pitch provision in Area West and in particularly in Chard
- Supporting rural diversification
- Develop Chard Reservoir as a destination

The following is a list of issues that had a lower level of ranking to those above:

- Maintaining pressure to deliver Stop Line Way
- Continue to support the Blackdown Hills AONB
- Parking strategy
- Increase the network of volunteer led health walks through promotion, training and support
- Continue to support individual businesses and Associations/Chambers of Trade/Town Teams
- Supporting our farming communities

Listed below are some of the priorities that were ranked with higher importance and could have a wider potential impact for the District. It is proposed that these are put forward for consideration as a corporate strategic priority in the Council Plan:

- Crime and community safety: The importance of supporting the multi-agency One Team approach in tackling community safety issues in the Area and District.
- Tourism: Attract tourists and increase spend in and visits to the Area and wider District
- Protecting the Environment: To develop an approach for protecting our environment and ensuring that the green agenda is at the forefront of what the Council does.
- Community transport: Improving the provision and connectivity of community transport
Priority 6: Rural isolation: Taking a strategic approach to identifying and tackling issues that relate to rural isolation

Next Steps

The process and timescale for the adoption of area priorities as council priorities are as follows:

Further work on developing these priorities will take place in collaboration with the chair of the committee with a view of bringing the draft Area West Chapter to committee later in the year for adoption.

There will be a period of time between August and November where priorities for consideration in the Council Plan are scoped and assessed against need and reviewed by members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and District Executive as part of priority

setting. The outcome of this will form the content of the Council Plan for 20/21 which will be brought to Full Council early in the New Year with a recommendation to agree and adopt.

The SLT sponsor for Area West is Alex Parmley who will be an advocate for the Area through the development process and maintain an overview of progress. The SLT sponsor will provide high-level input into the development of Area Chapters, making sure that they contribute towards the broader aims of the council and take account of relevant regional and national policy.

Resourcing Area Chapters

Identifying the resources needed to deliver the Area Chapters will be done as an integral part of the planning process.

Area+ teams

Resources will be drawn from across the whole authority to deliver against the agreed priorities. Each project / priority will have a named officer who is responsible for monitoring progress and in some cases delivering a project. The group of individuals linked to priorities in the chapter are referred to as Area+ teams. Communities of Practice have been established for each area of focus and are able to help set direction and support delivery of priorities by problem solving and dealing with blocks.

Budgets

Previous area budgets have been carried forward and will be used alongside other, service specific budgets to support the delivery of area chapters. Other resource (e.g. capital programme, S106) can also be used where appropriate. There needs to be recognition that resources are finite and will be allocated according to need. Any new work that is requested within year will be assessed in order to establish relative priorities.

Financial Implications

There are no new 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 & 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. All Area Plans will have an Equality Impact Assessment.

Background Papers: *Area+ proposal, Area + Implementation Plan*