

1. Access For All

Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr Carol Goodall, Equalities and Diversity
Directors: Rina Singh, Deputy Chief Executive
Martin Woods, Service Delivery
Assistant Directors: Helen Rutter Communities
Lead Officer: David Crisfield, Third Sector and Equalities Coordinator
Contact Details: david.crisfield@southsomerset.gov.uk (01935 462240)

Purpose of the Report

This report seeks the approval of District Executive on the the future funding of Access for All for the 2017-2018 financial year.

Background

Councillors approved a one year Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Access For All of £9,000 for the 2016-17 financial year. Monitoring of the grant has been undertaken through quarterly review meetings.

Access for All Aims:

Access for All works to improve access for all members of the community. Their aim is to increase the social inclusion of disabled people with limited mobility and other impairments, so as to enjoy equality of opportunity.

In pursuit of their charitable objectives, Access for All seeks to meet the needs of the community by:

- Improving access to public buildings, public services, education, shops, leisure facilities and the countryside
- Working for accessible public transport, dropped kerbs, improved road crossings, appropriate parking spaces and ShopMobility services
- Checking planning applications to ensure buildings are designed for inclusive living
- Providing Disability Awareness and Equalities training
- Acting as a consultee on issues of disability and access to District and Town Councils, NHS, Police, retail sector, businesses and other publicly funded charities
- Providing support, advice, guidance and a signposting service to individuals, groups and partner organisations in relation to welfare reform, disability and issues of access

Following an organisational restructuring, and with the continued involvement of new Trustees, volunteers and management, Access for All have focused their efforts on expanding their service provision and creating new funding opportunities. They have extended their bespoke Disability Awareness training, providing a service to taxi drivers. They were invited by the Somerset Library service to set up a digital inclusion support initiative for 2016-2017.

Achievements for SSSDC 2016-2017

The activities undertaken and delivered under the terms of the 2016-17 SLA include

- Supporting SSDC Officers in achieving compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and Part M Building Regulations
- Providing regular reviews of Planning and Building Control applications for public compliance with BS3800
- Sale of parking vouchers for Blue Badge holders on behalf of SSDC
- Completion of 30 Access Reviews on community facilities, plus a further 10 visits to discuss proposed schemes as they develop. Access Reviews are a key component of the process that results in the implementation of access improvements to a range of community buildings and resources
- Providing follow-up reviews and support to village and community hall committees. For example, Access for All has assisted Chilthorne Domer Recreation Club with the management of their building project so as to achieve compliance with Building Regulations Part M
- Providing bespoke access advice to SSDC teams and services, including acting as consultees on projects and planned service improvements that assist the Council meet its statutory requirements under the Equality Act 2010
- Working with the Council's Leisure service, undertaking Access Reviews of Health Walks and giving assistance with route mapping and carried out consultation with people with disabilities on the production of accessible guides
- Delivering specialist Disability Awareness training sessions for the Octagon Foyer Club volunteers
- Attending the South Somerset Equality Steering Group and other related meetings
- Reporting to SSDC on the impact of Welfare Benefit reforms on people with disabilities
- Delivery of the second annual Aspirations and Challenges event , held on the 19th January 2017, on the themes of unpaid caring and accessing sport and leisure facilities. This was attended by people with disabilities, service providers and representatives of disability campaigning groups

Additional commissioned work in 2016 - 2017

'Easy Access Guide for People with Disabilities – Places to visit in South Somerset'

A guide for visitors with disabilities in South Somerset was originally produced over ten years ago. This included access information that was self-assessed by businesses and attractions themselves on completion of a questionnaire provided by SSDC Tourism. Although this information has since been updated, it has continued to be on a self-assessment basis. As a result some details and information have been inaccurate and not met access requirements.

Consultation with Access for All and a number of south Somerset carers' groups demonstrated that to be of value, any access guide for people with disabilities should be independently reviewed by users and/or their carers, not by the businesses concerned. Independently validated information is far more effective in enabling people with varying forms of disabilities, their friends, companions and relatives to make informed choices.

Initially commissioned from Access for All in 2015/16, additional work has been carried out 2016/17 following a widening of the project scope. The revised information is now awaiting SSDC agreement on layout.

Looking Forward 2017 – 2018

If funding is approved for 2017-18 work to be covered by the SLA will include:

- Completion of project work with Tourism, Leisure and Culture Teams
- Attendance at the Equalities Steering Group
- Review of Planning and Building Control applications
- Consultation
- Disability Awareness training

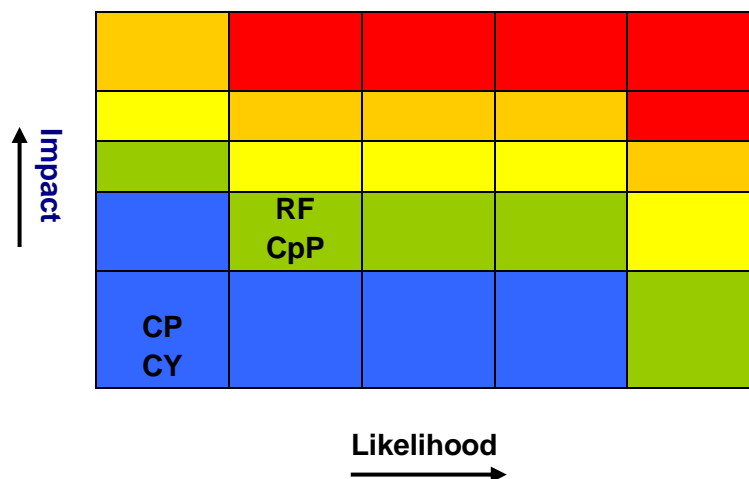
- Sale of parking vouchers for Blue Badge holders
- Access reviews and follow up of recreation spaces and community buildings
- Work with the Economic Development team to put on workshops for businesses in the tourism industry
- In association with partners, promote the new Safe Place scheme in Yeovil when it becomes available
- Begin compilation of a list of free wi-fi sites in South Somerset market towns
- Supporting the digital inclusion of disabled people through the Council's business transformation programme by ensuring that disabled people are not disadvantaged by the increased use of digital (eg: increased use of online forms, requirement to bank online). This will require consultation and engagement with disability communities and the testing of proposed digital business solutions
- Supporting disabled clients through the implementation of Universal Credit and other welfare reforms by providing an initial assessment of clients' needs including basic money/debt advice and form filling and, where required, referral to specialist advice agencies such as CASS and SSDC's Welfare Advice service. Suitable training for Access for All's Manager and other volunteers (as appropriate) will be secured through partner agencies.

Financial Implications

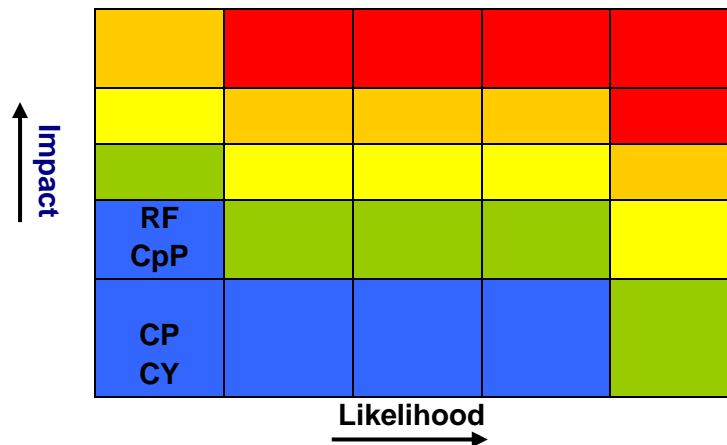
Provision for this SLA is in the 2017/18 budget for Equalities (subject to approval). If the recommended sum of £9,000 is approved, a balance of £1,000 will remain for other project work during the year.

Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



KeyCategories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Council Plan Implications

Funding Access for All assists the council to deliver on the following priorities in the 2016-21 Council Plan.

- High quality cost effective services - Work with partners to achieve economies, resilience and influence.
- Economy - Capitalise on our high quality culture, leisure and tourism opportunities to bring people to South Somerset.
- Health and 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; Help keep our communities safe.

Carbon Emissions And Climate Change Implications

None

Equality And Diversity Implications

Working with the voluntary sector is one of the Council's means of providing services to hard to reach groups and engaging with communities who otherwise find it hard to access public services. Supporting Access for All helps to increase community engagement and participation and ensure compliance with our Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

Access for All provide these specific services, as SSDC is unable to do so.