

Area West Development Plan Progress and Budget Report

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Purpose of the Report

To provide a summary of the work undertaken by the Area Development Team in West for the year 2016 – 2017.

Public Interest

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

Each Committee has the freedom to use its financial resources and its team of development staff to understand what matters within their Area and address problems and opportunities by offering support, encouragement and where appropriate direct financial & practical help.

This report provides an overview of the work of the Area West Development Team from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017.

Recommendation

To note and comment on the work of the Area West Development Team.

Background

Area West Committee ensures that its resources in the form of its budget and the Area Development Team are used to address local needs and to ensure quality of life across Area West. Those priorities, with the key projects and programmes are outlined in the Area Development Service Plan attached at Appendix A.

Delivering the work outlined in the 2016/17 Service Plan

A presentation will be given at the committee detailing progress of the work to date in relation to the current Service Plan.

In addition to the activities outlined in the Service Plan, the Area Development team takes an active role in the SSDC Market Towns Investment Group (MTIG) by providing support to the market town representatives enabling Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster to benefit from MTIG funding. Zoe Harris has devised and is leading on MTIG's current funding programme; Digital High Streets and Nicola Doble provides project and admin support for MTIG.

A member of staff attends the multi-agency Chard One Team which meets on a weekly basis at the fire station to deal with operational issues relating to community safety. Another member of staff sits on the Click into Activity Steering group.

During 2016-17 the Area West team supported 37 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. The Committee has received regular reports on specific work e.g. Chard Business Hub, Blackdown Hills AONB, A Better Crewkerne and District (ABCD) and various grant requests.

The Area West Team awarded grants of £66,455.60 to 13 projects, worth a total overall investment of £236,228.81. The team also worked with 3 separate community groups to draw down S106 funds totalling £29,882.92. A list of community grants and S106 funds awarded during the year is included at Appendix C.

In addition to supporting the above projects the team handled 108 enquiries for information, project support, guidance, printing or loan 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. Those queries are generally dealt with by the Neighbourhood Development Officers, some are relatively straightforward requiring on the spot advice and sign posting. Others have led to more work around issues such as registering an Asset of Community Value or giving funding advice and signposting to other funding opportunities.

There are three SSDC community offices in Area West based in Chard, Ilminster and Crewkerne. During 2016/17, 15,135 customers visited the offices for help; 7385 of those enquiries were for core services such as housing, benefits, waste and council tax. The total Area West footfall has reduced from previous year by 14% with Core Services reducing by 13%.

Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications arising directly from this report. A separate report on the use of resources for the 2017/18 period will be presented to Area west Committee in July 2017.

Council Plan Implications

The work of the Area Development Team contributes towards the following priorities on the SSDC Council Plan:

- Economy - Work with businesses and use our assets to grow our economy
- Environment – Support communities to develop local, parish and Neighbourhood Plans
- Homes – Tackling fuel poverty, and
 - enable people to live independently for as long as they are able
- 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 and activities.
 - Work with partners to tackle health issues such as diabetes and hypertension
 - Help keep our communities safe

Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications

None arising directly from this report

Equality and Diversity Implications

None arising directly from this report

Background Papers

- Update on the work of the Area West Development Team AW Committee December 2016
 - Area West Development Plan 2016 – 17 AW Committee June 2016
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