

Area North – Area Chapter 2019/2020 Outturn Report

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Purpose of the Report

To provide Members with an overview of the first year of delivery of the Area Chapter for Area North.

Public Interest

The priorities for Area North have been used to influence the development of the Council Plan for 2019/20. Some priorities identified clearly have an area focus and are better placed in an Area Chapter. The Area Chapter presents key projects and areas of work planned for the coming year by teams from across the whole organisation.

This report provides members with an overview on the 2019/2020 Area Chapter.

Recommendation

That members note and comment on the report.

Background

Area Chapters focus on the priorities of the Area Committee. These priorities were identified by Members and SSDC Area + teams through member workshops, other service plans and data led information. The 2019/2020 Area North Chapter was presented for approval at Committee in February 2019 and formed part of the Council Plan.

Area + teams consist of officers across the council who are best placed to provide the resources necessary (people and financial) in order to delivery each priority set out in the chapter. Each action or project identified in the plan is allocated a lead officer who collaborates with other officers across the council and/or the local community to deliver the project. The overall approach to delivery is based on the principle that we will enable others to deliver where we can, partner where it makes sense and only deliver if absolutely necessary.

Lead Officers supply the quarterly updates, which are collated by the Locality Team Leaders. Members have received the quarterly updates via email and consideration is required on how we appropriately deal with transparency and scrutiny of the Area Chapters moving forward.

Delivery of the Area Chapter

This is the first year of delivery and the approach has slowly developed alongside other competing challenges of delivering transformation. Progress against priorities agreed by members has been

made over the year with successful completion of a variety of projects. Some projects identified will require longer than a year to complete.

Appendix A sets out this year's progress and overview of the area Chapter focus priorities for 2019/20.

This is also the first year that there have been new arrangements for budget allocation. The area committees continue to have an allocated budget for Community Grants and for project delivery and there is still some work to do to align the area budgets, service specific budget and any available external funding for future years. Officers will look to recommend notional allocation of area project funds (including revenue and capital reserves) to projects set out under the key areas of focus. This will be agreed by members at the beginning of the year so that spend can be monitored and reported quarterly.

As well as the main key areas of focus, members will note other projects within the Chapter relating to support provided by officers through SSDC's Community Grants programme and Section 106 projects. These S106 projects will have been identified either by SSDC or through the local community and both areas of work can often compete with other key priorities. The majority of S106 projects are community led and therefore can take time to develop and resource, which inevitable will take a number of years from inception to delivery.

Appendix B shows Community Grant awards for Area North. This relates to both revenue and capital community grants awarded (not necessarily paid) throughout 2019/2020. These were awarded through consultation either with Ward Members or through Area Committee decisions.

Area North awarded a total of 13 community grants amounting to **£71,650** in 2019/2020. The total estimated project costs were **£354,271**, indicating that for every **£1** invested by SSDC, **£4** of external funding is secured for the voluntary sector and community projects in South Somerset. Community grants are either for one-off grants or funding agreed under a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Lessons Learnt

This year has been the first full year of Chapter delivery and provides us with an opportunity to review, learn and improve.

It has been clear that some priorities within the Chapter are longer-term projects and cannot be delivered within the one year life span of the Chapter. Looking ahead, we should ensure all identified projects are locally led, have achievable and clear outcomes, milestones, key activities and resources to enable successful delivery. Those projects that are likely to run beyond the current year, will roll forward and be included automatically the following year.

Projects relating to S106 funding can be complicated, time consuming and often reliant on the capacity of the local community to delivery these projects and will often take a number of years of support and guidance.

There are often competing priorities with Chapter work, day to day service delivery, community support and officer workloads. A greater emphasis on monitoring and reporting will help us to actively track issues and keep members informed when other work impacts on project delivery.

There are measures that we can take to ensure better communication, understanding, and transparency of the Chapter work between officers, residents and Members. Members are asked to consider whether quarterly progress should be included on the agenda as an item for noting. A report

for discussion could also be included on the forward plan half way through the year to allow for consideration of the priorities agreed at the start of the year.

Successes

This is the first year of delivering area priorities in this new way. Communities have continued to receive guidance and practical support to deliver projects and progress has been achieved in a number of areas. Some of Area North highlights include:

- Successful play day events held in Somerton, Ilton, Kingsbury, South Petherton and Aller. Weather was good and the events were attended by approximately 5,000 children and young people.
- Annual Town/Parish Meeting – Well attended with good participation and engagement in Environment Strategy workshops.
- Engagement with 13 Area North businesses in one to one meetings, along with presentations to about 25 businesses at Langport Business Group forum.
- Successful round one National Heritage Lottery Funding bid for Ham Hill.
- S106 funding - Successful installation and use of new cricket nets at South Petherton Recreation Ground.
- S106 funding - Successful completion of Stoke Recreation ground play area improvements, floodlighting and pitch drainage improvements and pavilion extension.
- Health walks continue to prove popular with engagement sessions held with walk leaders and trainers. Currently 2,000 walkers take part in health walks throughout Area North.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Council Plan Implications

The priorities have been developed taking into account the SSDC Council 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. All Area Plans will have an Equality Impact Assessment.

Background Papers: *Area Chapter 2019/20*