

Area North Committee – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2007

## 9. Somerset Levels & Moors LEADER+ Request for Financial Support (Executive Decision)

*Head of Service:* Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North)  
*Lead Officer:* Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North)  
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### Purpose of the Report

To confirm the final financial contribution towards the Somerset Levels & Moors LEADER+ programme for 2008/09.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that members agree to:

- 1) Authorise the payment of £5,317.88 from the Area North Grants budget in 2007/08 to Somerset County Council, towards the Levels and Moors LEADER + Programme as agreed in 2001.
- 2) Request a final report on the programme, including evaluation of the final / major projects supported during the life of the programme.
- 3) Endorse SSDC's support to the bid to the successor programme for the Levels and Moors, and request further information on required partnership contributions as soon as they are available.

### Background

South Somerset District made an initial agreement (in 2001) to provide £8,150 a year towards the Somerset Levels & Moors LEADER+ programme. As the current programme concludes at the end of December 2008, this final contribution is pro-rata. The total contribution sought from Area Committees is broken down on a per capita basis:

Area North (87%) - £5,317.88 (pro rata of £7,090.50 for 9 months)

Area East (13%) - £794.63 (pro rata of £1,059.50 for 9 months)

Each year South Somerset and Sedgemoor Districts are invoiced for £8,150. Taunton Deane Borough and Mendip District £4,075. Somerset County Council £14,450. These contributions will also be sought pro-rata as the current programme concludes at the end of December 2008.

### Report

All LEADER+ programmes require some local 'match funding' to support programme administration (demonstrating that there is local support for operation of a LEADER+ programme); in England this rate is fixed at 25%. The remaining 75% is covered by the European Union and UK Government (Defra).

The associated report in this agenda outlines the achievements of the LEADER+ programme, and the leverage of European funding as a result of local contributions.

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It is recommended that the final years payment is approved, and a final report of the programme including the evaluations of the major projects is requested.

Members may be aware that a bid to the subsequent programme for LEADER+, known as Rural Action, is being prepared by Somerset County Council, working in partnership with existing and potential partners. A reviewed governance structure for the partnership, if successful will be established, whilst the existing programme is wound up.

### **Corporate Implications**

The LEADER+ programme, covers the majority of parishes in Area North and provides investment and supports local capacity which contributes to the following corporate objectives:

- Work in partnership with the public and private sector in developing and delivery of the Market Town Vision.
- Identify and address the particular issues affecting rural areas.

### **Other Implications**

The LEADER+ programme also contribute to:

- Priorities in a number of Parish Plans and Market Town Community Plans.
- District and County Tourism and Economic Development Strategies.

### **Financial Implications**

The uncommitted Grants budget stands at £20,305. After awarding this amount of £5,317.88 there will be £14,987.12 remaining in the Area North Grants Budget.

**Background Papers:** *Area North Committee Report - March 2006 & January 2007*

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