

Joint Area North Committee – 22nd April 2009

10. Area North Capital Programme (Executive Decision) (Excepted Business)

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Purpose of the Report

To present recommendations for approval of revisions to the in principle allocations within the SSDC Area North Capital programme.

Recommendations

Members are **recommended** to:

- (1) Approve the proposed revisions to the Area North Capital Programme, as set out in Section 6 of this report.
- (2) Note that subject to recommendation (1), Financial Services will present the revised programme in the next quarterly monitoring report, profiled over 3 years.

Report

1. The Area North Capital Programme

1.1 The Area Capital Programme provides an important resource for the Joint Area Committee to invest in local priorities. Use of the capital programme enables Councillors to:

- Target SSDC resources at specific local needs
- Support innovative work – piloting new solutions to address local needs
- Work in partnership through the provision of match funding and grants

1.2 The current Area Capital Programme was last revised in 2007, with a 3-year programme of projects and allocations matched to local priorities; some schemes were carried forward from previous years.

- Whilst some allocations have been used, others remain; this revision provides an opportunity to direct resources to current and anticipated local projects, and to present the programme in a simpler form.
- Unlike the District Executive programme, the Area programmes include allocations 'in principle' under priority themes, which will always be subject to detailed approval at a later date in addition to projects approved in detail.

2. Progress since the 2007 revised programme

2.1 A number of community-led schemes have been successfully completed using funding from the capital programme. Some schemes are yet to be completed, due to funding being awarded relatively recently:

- Ilton Village Hall – car parking for new hall
- Norton sub Hamdon – new changing rooms for village hall
- Somerton Memorial Garden and play area
- Martock Recreation Ground – play area and tennis courts
- Somerton – bus shelter
- Somerton Parish Rooms – kitchen refurbishment
- South Petherton Tennis Courts
- South Petherton Police Post
- Play areas at Aller, Ash, Montacute and Langport
- Long Sutton Pavilion
- Lopen School Room improvement
- South Petherton Blake Hall stair lift
- Martock Market House refurbishment

3. Managing and monitoring the Area Capital Programme

- 3.1 The Committee receives a quarterly report from Financial Services, which shows the progress of each scheme's budget, according to the planned spending over time. The quarterly monitoring of the Area Development Plan provides another opportunity to monitor the progress of capital schemes.
- 3.2 Each project or programme has a named officer who is responsible for project management, reporting and evaluation. Delays, if they occur, are regularly monitored and support offered to community led projects if requested.

4. Evaluating the success of the programme.

- 4.1 A question often asked is “how do we know that our investment is making a difference where it counts?”. The SSDC capital appraisal process requires each completed to be evaluated. However, if this is done close to completion the long-term benefits may not be yet apparent.
- 4.2 For example, during 2008 the Community Development Officer (North) reviewed the benefits of capital investment into village halls and community buildings, and found many positive outcomes from investment over a ten year period. (See report to Area North Committee, December 2008).
- 4.3 The success of larger schemes will continue to be monitored by the Area Development team in the longer term.

5. Current commitments – schemes to be carried forward.

- 5.1 Members will note that the current programme also includes commitments against seven schemes, which will be carried forward (subject to formal approval) to 2009/10.
- Cocklemoor Bridge (completed, pending final sign off of land easements)
 - Balance of Langport and Somerton Town Centre schemes (may be released once schemes formally signed off for future allocation)
 - An allocation for a specific site for costs of planning enforcement.
 - Stoke-sub-Hamdon – changing rooms
 - Fivehead – Multi-Use Games Area
 - Somerton – equipment for the new community hall
 - David Hall, South Petherton – final payment from refurbishment project

- Bracey Road, Martock, and Stanchester Way, Curry Rivel – play areas.
- South Petherton Allotments

6. Proposals for a revised programme for allocations in principle

6.1 Whilst all individual schemes are approved on a project by project basis, using either the community grants or capital appraisal process, each area programme is built up from a series of in principle or thematic allocations to assist with planning and development activity.

6.2 Appendix A of this report includes a table, which sets out the previous programme, with comments on progress to date and indications of future demand.

6.3 The table below provides the basis for a revision of the Area North (SSDC) Capital Programme. Variations to previous allocations have been made in the light of:

- Review of past progress and current indications of likelihood of detailed bids
- Assessment of external funding opportunities
- Appropriateness of capital funding as a means to address priorities
- A desire to simplify the programme, to then use local / area priorities to assess and allocate funding towards new projects.

6.4 Members should also note the provision of just under £300,000 for Area North within the current corporate programme for play and youth facilities, much of which will be match funded by local communities – resulting in an even higher total value. There are also contributions from a number of major developments, which are expected.

Table 1 – Proposed revisions to the SSDC Area North Capital programme – allocations ‘in principle’.

NB: Approvals to each scheme in detail require separate bids, using either the community grants application process, or the SSDC project brief / capital appraisal.

| Name of scheme / allocation | Evidence of need | Proposed allocation |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| Highways Improvement at Field Road / Bartletts Elm, Huish Episcopi (roundabout) | A local priority, supported by SCC who have committed £250,000 to this scheme. High priority for the Town & Parish Councils who will also contribute. | £30,000 |
| Langport Vision – including boating access to the parking and pathways in Cockle Moor / Westover area. | Remains a strong local ambition, shared by a wide range of partners. A good base of feasibility work exists, and is now ready to bring forward a detailed bid, and secure additional external funding. May include work to some SSDC assets, but otherwise community led. External funding potential. | £35,000 |
| Martock town centre improvements | £2,000 remains of an original £25,000 commitment, which is requested to support feasibility and design for phase three of this project – enhancement of public open space (Martock Precinct). | £2,000 |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| West Street, Somerton – improving safety and access | A top priority in the Somerton Community Plan published 2005. Requires further feasibility and design work to agree local solutions. Likely to be led by Somerton Town Council, whilst requiring a strong partnership with SCC. | £10,000 (for feasibility & design fees) |
| Local priority projects – enhancing facilities and services | Numerous small to medium projects under development to enhance local quality of life, improve services and promote greater sustainability, most are likely to be community led, securing significant levels of match funding. | £150,000 (over 3 years) |
| Feasibility costs | Schemes can benefit from fees for feasibility work, which can in turn support external funding bids. Lack of funding for feasibility will delay schemes, losing momentum, or opportunities. Match funding feasibility work can help build local partnerships, or show evidence of support to future funders. | £15,000 |
| Approximate balance 'unallocated' | Can support additional levels of demand, not otherwise provided for, or for schemes outside the above, as decided upon. | £50,000 |

7. Next steps

7.1 If approved, the revised 'in principle' allocations will be effective from now, and will be incorporated into the Capital Programme by Financial Services.

7.2 Community led or partner led schemes will be supported as now through the existing systems of enquiries to the Area Development team (direct from the community, councillor or via another service team) leading to an application under the SSDC community grants policies. Local district / county councillors will almost always be directly involved with the development of schemes.

7.3 The Joint Area Committee will make final decisions on schemes and agree any special conditions or monitoring arrangements.

7.4 Generally, grant aided schemes are subject to a maximum grant of £12,500 or 50% of project costs, however higher sums can be awarded in exceptional circumstances, for example for local economic regeneration or to further assist high value projects. Under the rules for capital finance, schemes supported through a grant can be for a minimum of £1,000. An internal scheme must be for at least £10,000 in value.

7.5 An alternative to funding from the Area Programme, is for the lead service to submit a bid into the Corporate Capital Programme. Bids must be submitted by 31st August each year, for assessment and approval as part of the budget setting process by Full Council, in February the following year.

Implications to Corporate Priorities

Physical projects can enable change within communities, addressing local social, economic or environmental priorities. Some relevant corporate priorities, which could be addressed through local capital investment, include:

- 1.11 Support South Somerset Together to develop and support distinctive, balanced, local economies in South Somerset through a range of measures
- 2.9 Increase resident satisfaction on country parks, open spaces, street cleaning, car parks and public toilets
- 3.4 With partners, enable the development of four housing schemes in rural communities by 2012
- 3.19 Increase children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas and adult participation in sport and active recreation
- 3.27 Increase access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
- 3.3 Increase engagement in the arts
- 5.1 Enable the continued development of multi-service hubs ("one stop shops") across South Somerset.
- 5.11 Increase overall / general satisfaction with local area

Other Implications

Bids to the capital programme can also support priorities from within the following strategies and plans:

- Parish and community plans
- Tourism and Economic Development strategies (district / county / regional)
- Youth, Play, Sports and Cultural Strategies
- The Levels and Moors Local Action for Rural Communities programme.

Financial implications

The proposal allocations are from within the current available Capital Programme, which includes a further £50,000 over two years from 2009/10.

Background Papers: *Financial Services Area North budget file.*
