

Joint Area Committee North – 28 October 2009

## 11. Joint Area Committees – update

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### **Purpose of the Report**

To provide a briefing on the current position of Joint Area Committees, following notification from Somerset County Council of its intention to withdraw from the inter-authority agreement which established Joint Area Committees in January 2009.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- (1) That members note the report.

### **Background**

In 2008 Somerset County Council and South Somerset District Council agreed to form four Joint Area Committees based on the existing four areas (North, South, East and West) of South Somerset District Council's Area Committees. The Joint Area Committees (JACs) held their first meetings from January 2009, and have continued to meet monthly.

The project to form the Joint Area Committees was designed to be in three phases. Phase one was the period to start up and establish the Joint Area Committees, and phase two to develop the scope and nature of business conducted. Phase three would develop the involvement of the wider public sector services to create a framework for local community engagement and 'joined up' services at a district and sub-district level, across Somerset.

### **Update**

Following an internal review, Somerset County Council is proposing to withdraw from the Joint Area Committee agreement; with a formal decision to be made at its Full Council meeting on 11th November, to take effect from 10th December. SSDC (Full Council) also meets on 10<sup>th</sup> December, so a decision by SSDC to establish replacement arrangements can be made on the same date.

SCC may choose to withdraw from 11<sup>th</sup> November, which would require SSDC to take immediate action to amend the Constitution to ensure planning decisions can be made.

As agreed at the start of the JAC project, a review of phase one was carried out between July and August, with a report compiled for discussion by each Joint Area Committee. The intention being that the results fed into final decisions of each Council for consideration of phase two.

The review information (members survey, together with review of planned tasks against achievements) is ready to be published, and will still be submitted to each Joint Area Committee, from November (Area South, followed by East, West and North).

On the assumption that SCC will withdraw from the inter-authority agreement, district councillors will be asked (as part of the discussion of the report to the November Committees), to consider the future remit of re-constituted Area Committees, including the role of the parish council representative, and the involvement of divisional members, with the work of the Area Committee, albeit an informal one.

**Financial Implications**

None from this report

**Implications for Corporate Priorities**

None from this report

**Other Implications**

None from this report

**Background Papers:** *Proposal to Establish SCC/SSDC JAC SCC full Council on 12 November 2008, and SSDC 30<sup>th</sup> October 2008*

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