

Joint Area Committee - North - 25 November 2009

10. Area North Service Enhancement Programme 2008-09 and 2009-10 (Executive Decision) (Excepted Business)

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Purpose of the Report

The SSDC service enhancement programme is designed to allow tailoring of services around specific local need or distinctiveness, over and above standards of service provided across South Somerset. Each Area is developing a different model to make decisions, in order to develop a district wide approach in due course as part of the Council's Community Engagement Strategy as part of the Area Vision.

The Area priorities are used to guide the allocation of the Service Enhancement budget.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- 1) Note the attached updates (Appendix A and B) of previous allocations towards community safety, and access improvements.
- 2) Allocate up to £10,000 for a programme to raise awareness of, and access to, financial and welfare services in Area North from the 2009/10 service enhancement budget.

2008-09 Programme - update

- The 2008-09 service enhancement programme took longer to establish than expected, with the result that some parts are not yet fully completed. However the overall feedback has been very positive, with numerous small local improvements supported over the past 18 months or so.
- £15,000 was allocated to Streetscene services, with completed during the winter / spring months 2008-09.
- There is still £3261.50 in the original £10,000 allocation to the Area North Community Safety Action Panel, which is available in the form of small grants to communities or partners to support priorities for local crime and anti-social behaviour. (Service Manager – Charlotte Jones)
- The planned rights of way enhancements (£15,000) were delayed due to the review of the service, resulting in the cancellation of the delegation agreement with SCC. The service will be returned to SCC from 1st April 2010. Following requests submitted by local parish councils, the agreed programme is underway,

and will be completed in the next few weeks, with some funding available to support local volunteers. (Service Manager – Katy Munday)

- Appendix A & B summarises the allocations to date under the Rights of Way and Community Safety programmes.

2009-10 Programme

- In October 2009, £10,000 from the 2009-10 programme was allocated to towards additional streetscene services. (Service Manager – Chris Cooper), with the agreement that a costed programme will be compiled following consultation ward members & parish councils.
- Previously, in February 2008, the committee supported work to promote partnership working between service providers affecting a range of issues including the health and well-being and financial security of Area North residents. This resulted in a series of free information sessions that advertised and promoted the work of the relevant agencies (Age Concern, FAB etc). Following this, members recommended that further work be carried out which would also reach the more rural communities.
- Following discussion with the Housing and Welfare service team, it is suggested that up to £10,000 be allocated from the 2009/10 service enhancement budget to raise awareness of, and access to, financial and welfare services in Area North. This is felt to be particularly relevant during a time of recession, together with evidence of local need from the Somerset Health and Social Needs Analysis, and statistics drawn from the Office of National Statistics. Raising household income levels, and ensuring residents are able to access services which promote health and well-being are key corporate priorities.
- If approved, a small steering group would be formed to develop a programme of events and promotional activity across Area North, covering a range of topics including housing, financial, community safety and welfare, through close co-operation with relevant agencies and partners, including SCC, Age Concern, Citizens Advice Bureau, the Home Aid partnership, as well as local volunteers and community organisations. Funding would be allocated towards the cost of this programme and would include event costs, publicity and staff time for co-ordination and evaluation.
- A costed programme can be provided by January 2010, with an evaluation report by October 2010.
- If approved, £20,000 remains in the service enhancement programme for 2009-10, which can be applied to local priorities for improvement to local economic, social or environmental well-being.

Financial Implications

If approved £10,000 to be taken from Service Enhancement Budget towards additional housing and welfare services. £20,000 remains unallocated for 2009-10.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

Corporate aim 2: increase economic vitality and prosperity
Corporate aim 2: improve the health and well-being of our citizens

Implications for Area North Development Plan (2008/09)

Promote and enhance services for older people
Promote access to public/voluntary services

Background Papers: Enhanced services for older people - February 08 & September 08