

APPENDIX X

**JOINT AREA COMMITTEES: REVIEW OF PHASE 1 IMPLEMENTATION
A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT PROJECT UNDER PIONEER SOMERSET
REPORT TO THE JOINT AREA COMMITTEE (JAC) PROGRAMME BOARD – 1 OCTOBER 2009**

Overall Project Scope	
<p><i>The outcomes, agreed by both authorities in November 2008, to be delivered through these proposals can be summarised as: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Better community engagement leading to true community empowerment</i> • <i>More informed and better democratic decision making at a local level</i> • <i>More effective local delivery of public services</i> • <i>Better engagement with partners at a local level.</i> • <i>Greater demonstration of partnership working across the 3 tiers of local government</i> • <i>Greater linkage between local decision-making (JAC's) and local engagement and empowerment (Area Forums – as currently being piloted at SSDC)</i> • <i>Establishment of a sound basis to tackle requirements of the Sustainable Communities Act</i> 	
Phase 1 'deliverables' – <u>learning, understanding and development</u> summarised from the project PID agreed in December 2008	Phase 1 Review – Commentary on Progress with 'Deliverables'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Four JAC's formally established covering the areas previously covered by SSDC's area committees to become operational by January 2009.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Joint Area Committees (JAC's) became operational by 28 January 2009</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The establishment of the JAC's to be supported by sufficient constitutional detail to enable them to meet and fulfil the functions identified for phase 1 – see Appendix 1.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The County and District Council Constitutions were amended in accordance with the requirements of Phase 1 initially in January 2009 and then in February 2009 following further delegations from SSDC</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All relevant county councillors with electoral divisions within the area covered by that joint area committee to be members of the new JAC alongside all district members with wards in the area.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All county councillors briefed in advance of meetings, provided with training and allocated to relevant JAC's by 28 January 2009.</i>

<p>Phase 1 ‘deliverables’ – <u>learning, understanding and development summarised from the project PID agreed in December 2008</u></p>	<p>Phase 1 Review – Commentary on Progress with ‘Deliverables’</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County and District Councils to delegate the functions listed in Appendix 2 to the JAC’s as the basis of phase 1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant functions of both councils were delegated to the JAC’s under the constitutional changes referred to above.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inter-authority agreement to set out the working arrangements at officer level and providing clarity on cost sharing, administrative arrangements, responsibilities etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inter-authority agreement has been drafted and agreed by SCC.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One co-opted parish/town councillor to be selected to serve on each joint area committee (to be chosen by the relevant parishes). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council representatives have been appointed for all 4 JAC’s.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County and District Councils to seek ways to enable such parish/town representatives to become full committee members with full voting rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This desire requires a change in primary legislation to be achieved. However, this has not limited the interest from Parish Councillors in the JAC’s.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate support arrangements – both in terms of officer and systems support to be established. Officers to review the respective schemes of delegation to ensure consistency of approach and for proposals for the delegation of decision-making powers by the County Council to be formulated, consulted on and agreed in the light of decisions / requirements of the new County Administration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate officer level arrangements and a joint Programme Board have been put in place to support Phase 1. Joint Project Team established – meets regularly. The adequacy of these arrangements will need to be considered as Phase 2 is formulated. Further review of County Council decision-making powers and JAC’s to take place in June 2009 with the new County administration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of joint member training and development sessions for relevant members of both councils to support the learning and understanding to be arranged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of joint initial briefing / training sessions were held as part of the establishment of Phase 1 and following the June 2009 CC elections.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training / briefing sessions for officers of both councils in the role of the JAC’s and the implications for the inter-relationships between members and officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings have been held in both councils for key staff – to be repeated / expanded as necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint council review of the appropriateness of the current sub JAC arrangements in relation to community engagement / empowerment to inform proposals for improvement to be taken forward as part of phase 2 of this proposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One meeting has been held at officer level. The intention is to bring recommendations in due course to JAC Programme Board.

<p>Phase 1 ‘deliverables’ – <u>learning, understanding and development</u> summarised from the project PID agreed in December 2008</p>	<p>Phase 1 Review – Commentary on Progress with ‘Deliverables’</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If necessary, to request the Boundary Commission to undertake with urgency a review of the divisional / ward boundaries in the South Somerset area with the aim of achieving co-terminosity and/or</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No action taken.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If necessary, to request the district council to consider amendments to the area committee boundaries, during phase 2, to enable each county councillor being required to attend only one area committee arrangement.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No action taken.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>JAC’s to establish an identity to promote partnership working. Arrangements for promoting the establishment and work of the JAC’s to be agreed between the councils.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explanatory Leaflet produced and circulated. Improved public guidance notes included within all meeting agenda papers. Joint parish briefings held in 2 areas to promote JAC’s to parishes. Joint press releases / article in Your Somerset and improvements made to both councils’ websites.</i>
<p>Overall Commentary on Phase 1</p> <p><i>The key targets and outcomes for the JAC’s Phase 1 work have been met. The four JAC’s are established, meet regularly and joint business is completed. Officers and members from both authorities support the JAC’s and key constitutional changes have been completed.</i></p> <p>Summary: Phase 1 - Establishment of JAC’S</p> <p><i>Phase 1 has been largely a mechanical process during which the emphasis has been on getting the JAC’s established. The progress outlined above confirms the constitutional / legal / support arrangements successfully established. In terms of the detail:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>From the County Council’s perspective, contributing to the work of 4 separate committees – all of whom differ in a number of ways in terms of their processes and ways of working which has thrown up issues of consistency. In consultation with the County, the district council has moved some way to standardising processes and procedures across the 4 committees yet allowing each to retain their individual (local) identity. As the committees continue to meet and evolve, further improvements will be considered and agreed by the 2 councils as appropriate.</i> 	

- *Some practical issues have become apparent over the course of the early rounds of meetings including: the difficulty of finding room for County Council business on JAC agendas already full of district council business (including a significant level of local planning business); some confusion over the voting rights of County Members on district council 'excepted business'; and the restrictions of Codes of Conduct in relation to the declaration of elected member interests on JAC business. These have been addressed to some extent by improvements to the wording of agendas and careful agenda management. However, the member interests' issues can only be addressed through legislation / statutory guidance changes. Also, agenda management is likely to become increasingly difficult as the amount of County Council business referred to the JAC's grows under phase 2.*
- *The committee meetings themselves have seen generally a good level of attendance by the county councillors and county members have been well received at the meetings themselves and associated events. From the District Council's perspective, the scope of debate has been wider with County Councillor input*
- *Further training / briefing sessions will be held for members of both Councils as necessary to build on that carried out so far.*
- *From the District Council's perspective, it is important to see JAC's as one part of a wider package of community engagement mechanisms operating in South Somerset. There is a need to agree what 'better community engagement' means in ways that are measurable, and then set out what sorts of decisions and activities JAC's can make and do in order to attain this. JAC's may benefit from setting out an explicit statement of purpose*

Summary: Phase 1 - Delegation of County Functions

Good progress has been made as follows:

- *County Council service briefings have been made covering Children & Young People, Adult Social Care and Highways services. These have been well received and have helped to build a level of understanding amongst the district council members, officers, parish councils and local residents.*
- *The first non-strategic Regulation 3 County planning application has been successfully dealt with by a Joint Area Committee.*
- *Successful joint parish events have been held in two of the four district areas. Again these have been good in terms of building informal relationships with the parish councils and in terms of building knowledge of CC services at a local level. This was one of the ambitions of the CC when entering these arrangements. There is a need to learn from these events particularly in relation to ensuring a consistent approach is taken across the 4 areas and that the benefits of having these events are maximised.*

- *Good working relationships have been established between County and District officers although County officer capacity has been somewhat restricted.*

Less progress has been made in:

- *Beyond the specific County Council service briefings, the County Council's direct input into agendas and reports has been limited but this will grow now that we have the systems in place within the County Council to ensure the County Council inputs into joint reports as necessary and brings forward its own items where appropriate.*
- *Reviewing community engagement processes at sub-district level. One officer meeting has been held but proposals are not yet in a position to be progressed; The Phase 1 experience suggests that JAC's are a better vehicle for devolved decision-making and aspects of scrutiny than they are for community engagement.*
- *One of the four JAC areas has yet to have their annual parish event. This will take place during the Autumn.*
- *The amount of publicity given to the new arrangements has been limited to joint press releases and the leaflet. In addition both Councils have undertaken internal publicity within their respective organisations. Further promotion and potentially a greater delegation of functions will be necessary if public attendance at the JAC meetings is to be increased. Even then it is likely that real community engagement will happen at a more local level and there will be a need to ensure that necessary mechanisms are in place to enable the views of residents and communities to be fed consistently into the democratic processes of both councils.*

No progress has been made in:

- *At this stage the Boundary Commission has not been asked to undertake a review of the divisional / ward boundaries in the South Somerset area with the aim of achieving co-terminosity nor has the district council considered amendments to its committee boundaries in order to improve the situation where some county councillors are members of up to three JAC's.*

AREA CASE STUDIES

Four JAC case studies (one for each Area) have been produced by the relevant Heads of Area Development to demonstrate, in qualitative terms, the developing potential of JAC's. This demonstrates the potential strength of joint area working and what could be achieved by moving into Phase 2. (See Appendix 3 – Area Case Studies)

MEMBERS' VIEW

Both District and County members have been surveyed and their views are summarised at Appendix 5.

COSTS

If JAC's were to cease there would be minimal savings to both authorities an SSDC would continue to operate Area Committees and there is a continuing need for joint working in some form or another. See Appendix 6 for more detail.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is invited to consider this review of Phase 1 of the Joint Area Committees and the implementation of Phase 2 and to make recommendations back to the two authorities concerning developing these arrangements further.

Julian Gale, Group Manager (Community Governance) Resources Directorate), Lead Officer at SCC

Mark Pollock, Corporate Director (Economic Vitality) Lead Officer at SSDC

September 2009

APPENDIX 1

Joint Area Committees Constitutional Principles - Phase 1:

Proposal:

- *SCC and SSDC to jointly appoint 4 Joint Area Committees (JACs) covering the administrative area of South Somerset and based on the boundaries of SSDC's current area committees*

JAC Membership:

- *Each JAC to comprise all of the members of each Council elected for that area as appointed by their respective Council (including relevant executive members of both councils)*
- *Political balance rules to not apply to the membership of the JACs*
- *All members of each JAC to have one vote even where they are members of both councils, subject to the limitations on county councillor voting powers detailed in Appendix 2*
- *SCC members to have vote on relevant JAC even where only part of their electoral division falls within the area covered by the JAC*
- *Parish Council representatives to be co-opted onto each JAC (one parish representative per JAC) but as non-voting members pending a change in the legislation to permit them to have voting rights*
- *Quorum to be one third of the total voting membership*
- *SCC members may be elected / appointed to the position of chair or vice-chair of a JAC by members of the JAC itself but may not take up a place on the SSDC executive as an area portfolio-holder as current legislation prevents this.*
- *In the event of the above occurring then the district council members only (on the JAC) elect district council member to sit on the District Executive as their area representative*

Functions:

- *JACs to exercise a range of Executive and / or Council functions as delegated by both Councils in accord with a phased approach.*

Area Councils – Access to Information:

- *Relevant 'access to information' provisions will apply to the business of JACs*
- *Agendas and notices for JAC meetings which deal with both executive and non-executive functions will clearly state which items are which.*

APPENDIX 2

Phase 1 – Role of the JACs in relation to County Council business

In discharging delegated powers, JACs must act at all times within the approved policies, budgets and financial regulations of the Council delegating the functions and in accordance with the Constitution of each Council and JAC.

- *Discuss any matter of interest to the area*
- *Form working groups / panels*
- *Foster close working relationships with town and parish councils*
- *Bringing local views to bear on policy development /plans and strategic decision making and provide opportunities for public participation, working in collaboration with external agencies*
- *Monitor service delivery and performance of County Council /South Somerset District Council services in that area including monitoring local impact of services /budgets retained at the centre*
- *Submit to relevant executive ideas for improvements to services or innovative ways of working*
- *Formal consultee to the formulation of policies covering more than a single JAC area and relevant to that particular council*
- *Refer to the relevant executive matters impacting on more than one JAC*
- *Be responsible for local area aspects of the Sustainable Community Strategy*
- *To consider and make recommendations to the councils on how models of neighbourhood management and engagement can be developed to feed into JACs.*
- *To consider and make recommendations to the councils on the JAC's involvement in guiding / influencing officers when they are making delegated decisions.*

NB. These functions are as consistent as possible with a number of the functions which are the currently the responsibility of South Somerset's area committees.

SCC Executive requirements in relation to Joint Area Councils

SCC Executive in relation to JACs will:

- *Consider recommendations from JACs on policy development and change*
- *Consider referrals from JACs on matters which have major policy or resource implications*

APPENDIX 2**Phase 1 – Role of the JAC in relation to District Council business**

- *SSDC to delegate all Council and Executive functions currently delegated to Area Committees to the JACs*
- *On matters relating to development control, county councillors on the JAC will have observer status only, district councillors will have full status*
- *On all matters involving decisions concerning expenditure of district council funds, county councillors on the JAC will have observer status only, district councillors will have full status*
- *On matters of scrutiny, county councillors and district councillors on the JAC will have full status*
- *On all other matters, county councillors and district councillors on the JAC, will have full status*

APPENDIX 3**JOINT AREA COMMITTEES SOUTH – CASE STUDY**

There have been several examples of where the County Councillors and District Councillors discussing issues can lead to better debate, more informed decision-making and more likelihood of being able to make an impact on the issues faced at local level.

Parish Workshop

This was held in July. An informal networking session involved a range of county officers, as well as district officers who were able to speak to different officials from highways, rights of way planning, leisure and street scene. The presence of these officers gave members of parishes a rounded opportunity to comment on issues that affected their parish. The question and answer session involved presentations and replies from county and district officers and members - for instance, on safe routes to schools, recycling and village traffic calming measures.

This made the event all the more useful for the parishes and was another example of closer partnership working benefiting the locality. It would have been hard to see this having been so well supported without the JAC being in existence.

Planning

Other examples have been the overall discussion of Section 106 obligations in relation to a key site. The discussion at the JAC created an understanding of the strength local views over community provision. The outline planning permission was granted on the basis of the Local Plan to provide a school and open space. Other provisions including shops and a doctor's surgery could be brought forward as a full planning application, are now being expressed as important but could not be achieved at this stage because the S106 had not included them. An understanding of these needs improves the possibility of further discussions to gain the joint use of the school for community based uses, and this is now more likely to be supported politically.

Antisocial Behaviour

Another example was with a problem associated with a children's centre where there was a dispute with neighbours over repeated antisocial behaviour. Hearing the issues from the ward member perspective, discussed under an item relating to community safety, was useful to the county member and it was in turn useful to district members to be able to understand the county management structures that were in place for members to contact for assistance.

*Martin Woods
Head of Area Development South*

APPENDIX 3

**JOINT AREA COMMITTEES WEST – CASE STUDY
“Council chips in further sum for Merriott Pavillion”**

The following extract was printed in the Western Gazette 27/08/2009 under the above headline. It does not go into the reasons why the requests for financial contributions towards this project from SSDC and SCC had become so complex, but it does illustrate how all parties were able to discuss the issue at the Joint Area Committee and reach agreement that enabled the project to go ahead.

“MORE funds have been secured for a project to build a £400,000 sports pavilion in Merriott.

A South Somerset District Council committee last week agreed to give a £3,000 grant. It also offered a £3,250 loan but this was turned down by project leader Merriott Parish Council, which has already committed £20,000 of its own funds.

The district council has already given £12,500 to the scheme, and the parish authority sought an extra £6,250 grant.

Parish councillor Iain Hall said: "We are grateful for South Somerset District Council's support. We are now only £4,000 short and as soon as we get that we will be in a position to start building. We will not be taking advantage of the loan." He added that the county councillors for Merriott and Crewkerne, Anne Larpent and John Dyke, had agreed to donate £5,500 between them towards the total £12,500 shortfall.

Pavilion users will include Merriott Youth Football Club, which has nearly 300 members, senior team Merriott Rovers FC and Merriott Cricket Club. The facility at the recreation ground will have changing facilities and a room suitable for meetings, including those of the parish council. It will replace changing rooms condemned and demolished in 2006. The scheme will also provide a floodlit hardcourt for tennis and football training, which will be used by the village first school during the day.

The Football Foundation asked for more funds to come from local authorities before it hands over £300,000 to the scheme. Those behind the project are hoping a bid worth £50,000 to the Football Association Community Club Charter Standard scheme will also be successful.

District council portfolio holder for leisure, culture and wellbeing Sylvia Seal said: "It would be an absolutely tragedy if this project would fall for the small amount in percentage terms of the whole cost. Youngsters who attended the meeting would be "bitterly disappointed" if it did not go ahead" , she added.

Support also came from Cllr Ric Pallister, who suggested the grant and loan combination.”

*Andrew Gillespie
Head of Area Development West*

APPENDIX 3

JOINT AREA COMMITTEES EAST – CASE STUDY

BETTER DECISIONS WHERE HIGHWAYS ISSUES ARE A FACTOR

The availability of the relevant Highways expert at JAC meeting has improved understanding of highways considerations and enabled the Committee to take better-informed decisions as a result.

1. Planning Decision

In February an application was determined to establish an equestrian establishment in Charlton Adam. The Planning Case Officer, whilst recognising the merits of the application in economic and other planning terms, had made a recommendation for refusal based solely on objections on highways grounds. The presence of a Highways Officer and informed local representatives and residents enabled a quality examination of all the factors affecting the application including the access issues and the nature of roads and traffic in the locality. Permission was granted.

2. Parking Issues in Wincanton

At the April meeting there was further discussion about the concerns of a local business, about parking of lorries and overnight lorry containers in the roads adjacent to its premises. The presence of Highways Officers at the meeting enabled Councillors and a representative from the business concerned to better understand how decisions are taken about putting in place highway controls like Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). The Police were also in attendance and able to explain their enforcement role on illegally parked lorries and their assessment of the safety and traffic management issues created. As a result a further meeting was held with the Police, Highways Officers and SSDC's Major Applications Officer, to consider the likely impact of the approval of the key site in Wincanton, which is to be accessed through the Business Park and resulting in extra traffic generation and knock-on effects for local businesses.

The reserve matters for the key site application was determined in June and the attendance of an Officer, from Highways enabled Members to have full discussion about traffic generation to the site and how TROs would be monitored and, if necessary, strengthened in the light of this increased traffic. As a result of this discussion, an informative was added to the conditions for the approval spelling out the possible need for revised or new Traffic Regulation Orders as the development is built.

*Helen Rutter
Head of Area Development East*

APPENDIX 3**JOINT AREA COMMITTEES NORTH – CASE STUDY**

The Joint Area North Committee has met seven times, and there are several examples where a joint SCC / SSDC approach highlighted opportunities to identify future savings and improve resident satisfaction, through reduced duplication, increased focus on investment to make a local difference, and shared arrangements for listening to local communities. In particular, the Joint Committee can help provide greater knowledge and understanding by local councillors, in considering major planning decisions or service levels which meet local needs, within wider planning for Somerset. Some examples are included here.

The Annual Meeting with Town & Parish Councils was a joint event, and included attendance from a wide range of SCC & SSDC service teams. The question time panel also included an officer from the Somerset Waste Partnership and Neighbourhood Policing team. The meeting received very positive feedback, from parish councillors that have previously noticed a lack of joined up working by the two principle authorities.

The JAC monthly meetings included a quarterly session for community safety, attended by the Neighbourhood Policing Sergeant. The JAC provides a formal and public opportunity to monitor and review the work and the outcomes of the PACT and Local Action Group meetings across the 32 parishes, ten SSDC wards and (part of) six SCC divisions which make up Area North. At the last meeting, additional information was requested on detection rates, and response times to the rural areas, and these issues will come to the next meeting. Arrangements for reports and attendance, plus the follow up required is carried out by the SSDC Area Development / Democratic services function.

Since January, two key areas of local interest have been frequently debated by both sets of Councillors: - affordable homes for local people and addressing the health & care needs for older people. The new £20m scheme for South Petherton Hospital gained planning consent in July, and the joint approach ensured that the priority highways issues have been fully considered. SSDC councillors will value closer understanding of the Joint SCC / NHS work for Somerset's long term health, and likewise SCC councillors are influencing the actual provision of facilities including dementia care, GP facilities, day centres and the like. Likewise the future housing needs of local people, especially in a rural area, required joint solutions to this high priority. Making best use of limited resources is key, with close attention to the progress of local affordable housing schemes being provided at the JAC.

Meanwhile in Langport, Councillors debated local representations on the highways implications of a 100+ housing scheme. The role of the Joint Committee helped secure a greater level of engagement between the developer and SCC / SSDC officers, and a new proposed roundabout has been brought to fruition through SCC & SSDC officers and councillors working together, on this joint project, outside of the LTP, but of immense priority to local residents.

*Charlotte Jones
Head of Area Development North*

APPENDIX 5

MEMBERS' VIEWS

Joint Area Committees : Councillor Survey (July 2009) : Summary of Results

The survey was carried out via a short questionnaire circulated to all councillors of SSDC, SCC councillors elected within South Somerset and the four appointed parish council representatives. The survey took place after the SCC election in June. There was an overall response of 62% to the survey (42 responses), which included 37 (out of 60) district councillors, and 10 (out of 18) county councillors. Seven of these are "twin-hatters" ie elected to both SCC and SSDC. Two of four parish councillors responded. Of the total responses, 73% had attended 4 or 5 meetings, (5 being the maximum possible during the period). Responses were generally spread across all four joint committees.

The results below are for the SCC and SSDC councillor responses, shown separately. Each response includes 7 "twin hatters".

In summary:

Councillors generally supported the ambition which led to phase 1, and have a positive regard for the opportunity offered by phase 2. There are strong reservations about the success of phase 1, which seem due in part to the previous experience of SSDC in Area Committees, with the implication that phase 2 needs to hit the ground running.

Key messages, arising from the views expressed by Councillors

In general, SSDC and SCC/SSDC joint councillors had the most to say, SCC only and the parish councillors feeling it was 'too early to say'. However most comments were expressed by all councillors. The majority being in favour of the principle, but requiring improvements to the practice.

For officers: the development of the agenda and forward plan, quality of presentations and best efforts to develop joint involvement in the issues – offering some influence and some 'voice' alongside Councillors.

For Councillors: a willingness to make it work, and get involved.

For senior decision makers: to consider (a) delegations, (b) resources, (c) clarity of vision and 'appetite' to deliver savings, and increase resident satisfaction determined through local involvement and decision-making.

NB: Percentage (%) figures shown are of the total respondents to the survey

	District Councillor	%	Twin Hatters	%	County Councillor	%	Parish Rep	%
Status =	30	71%	7	17%	3	7%	2	5%
Made it easier for the public to have their say?								
No reply	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	
Yes	7	23%	4	57%	3	100%	0	0%
No	13	43%	2	29%	0	0%	0	0%
Unsure	9	30%	1	14%	0	0%	2	100%
Made it easier to engage with partners?								
Yes	19	63%	4	57%	3	100%	2	100%
No	5	17%	3	43%	0	0%	0	0%
Unsure	6	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Improved joint decision-making?								
Yes	12	40%	3	43%	2	67%	2	100%
No	9	30%	4	57%	0	0%	0	0%
Unsure	9	30%	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%

Summary of comments (full report available) drawn from answers to three further questions.

SSDC	Twin-Hatters	SCC	Parish Councillor
What went well, and should be continued or developed?			
<i>Good presentations from SCC services offered greater insight into to how both councils could improve efficiency and better outcomes for residents; greater knowledge of how to help constituents</i>	<i>Good to hear views of other county councillors, and to consider and vote on issues we represent together</i>	<i>Attendance of highways officers in particular helped improve consideration of planning items</i>	<i>"I have been made to feel very welcome"</i>
<i>SCC input into discussions useful; debate was of a higher standard; wider range of views considered; clearer viewpoint</i>	<i>Good to get service briefings relating to the local level.</i>	<i>Good local engagement by SCC – public see SCC taking part in important local decisions</i>	
<i>Both sets of councillors keeping a finger on the pulse – improved scrutiny</i>	<i>Improving the detail of roles and responsibilities of both councils</i>	<i>Too early to say</i>	
<i>Highways & Planning links</i>			
What did not go well, and should be stopped or altered			
<i>Length of meetings – longer agendas, too much talk – longer meetings;</i>	<i>Restrictions under phase 1 frustrating</i>	<i>Too early to say</i>	<i>Not sure of correct input into planning</i>
<i>Limited add value of SCC joining, at this stage; limited joint decisions, from limited delegation to JAC by SCC</i>	<i>Need greater time control, more councillors – longer meetings</i>		

SSDC	Twin-Hatters	SCC	Parish Councillor
<i>Limited involvement of public</i>	<i>Planning – duplication of effort</i>		
<i>Clash of SCC meetings preventing attendance of some;</i>			
<i>Long presentations on services not always useful</i>			
What would you change?			
<i>Clarify the vision and mission; Decide if this is for discussion and / or joint decisions.</i>	<i>Establish a joint project</i>	<i>Too early to say</i>	
<i>Bring some joint decisions to the table</i>	<i>Sort out clash of meetings</i>		
<i>Boundary review for divisions</i>	<i>Build the team</i>		
<i>Go back to area committees</i>	<i>Consider level of planning considered</i>		
<i>Increased input from SCC services and councillors</i>	<i>“looking forward to the review – not looking good”</i>		
<i>Agenda management for tighter control of meeting times</i>			
<i>Have working groups and less paperwork</i>			
<i>“I am sure it’s the right way but its slow at the moment”</i>			

APPENDIX 6

JAC COST

The Joint Area Committees have built on the existing infrastructure of the SSDC Area Committees. Pre agenda arrangements, venues, clerking and agenda distribution and all operational matters being undertaken through established SSDC staff, this work falls mainly to SSDC Democratic Services and Area Development.

There has been a long term arrangement with Highways Maintenance staff to both attend Area Committees to enable District Councillors to discuss local highways maintenance issues and discuss annual maintenance programmes and report performance. Most of these cost factors are already budgeted within normal service budgets

During the set up phase from October 2008 to March 2009 considerable investment has been made through the SCC Democratic Services team and Environmental Services Directorate teams dealing with SCC planning matters to agree operational arrangements, work up forward programmes and put in place Councillor training.

The additional resources required on an ongoing basis rest mainly with staff time and travel costs of SCC officers in co-ordinating input to agendas; this is mainly borne by the Democratic Services Team and within customer facing services preparing and delivering reports to Joint Area Committees tailored to the specific issues in the location. There will also be some minor additional costs associated with Councillor travel and allowances.

In return officers and councillors have access to all kinds of local information and networks through the Area Development arrangements and the multi agency offices hosted by SSDC. This allows them a stronger feel for the particular issues faced in different area locations and opportunities for more effective collaboration are starting to emerge.