

14. Area North 2009/10 Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 31st December 2009 (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the financial position of the Area North Committee for the period April - December 2009, to allow comment and discussion if required.

Public Interest

In February 2009 South Somerset District Council set the General Revenue Account Budgets for 2009/10 and delegated the monitoring of the budgets to the four Area Committees and District Executive. Area North now has delegated responsibility for the Area North Development revenue budgets, which include revenue grants and regeneration, the Area North Capital Programme and the Area North Reserve.

This report gives an update on the financial position of Area North Committee after nine months of the financial year 2009/10. This includes the financial commitments towards the staffing costs for the Area Development team, and the use of the discretionary budgets allocated the Area Committee, by South Somerset District Council.

In making its decisions to allocated funding, the Committees purpose is the 'make a difference where it counts' through use of local knowledge and high levels of direct support to local communities own priorities.

Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- (1) Review and comment on the current financial position on Area North Budgets.
- (2) Agree the revised Reserve Schemes and profiling of the Capital Programme for 2009/10 – 2013/14 (Appendix A)
- (3) Members to note the position of the Play & Youth capital investment programme in Area North (Appendix B)
- (4) Note the position of the Area North Community Grants budget, including details of grants authorised under the Scheme of Delegation by the Area Development Manager (North) in consultation with the ward member(s) (Appendix C)
- (5) Approve the allocation of £5000 as a partnership contribution towards feasibility costs associated with the Upper Parrett Waterway Plan, including the potential of capital investment into use of the River Parrett at Langport Navigation Project. (See Appendix D)

REVENUE BUDGETS

Financial Position – as at December 2009

The table below shows the position of the annual revenue budgets, delegated to Area North as at 31st December 2009. This includes transfers to or from the Area Reserves. It also includes the amounts committed but not paid (carry forwards) during 2008-09 as agreed by District Executive in June 2009:

	£
Approved base budget as at Feb 2009	364,190
Budget Carry forwards approved DX June 2009	30,170
Staff Turnover savings	(5,720)
Transfer of salary budget to Environmental Health	(20,870)
Reduction in salary budgets following pay award decision	(2,340)
Transfer from Reserves for additional regeneration work	4,350
Revised Budget as at 31st December 2009	369,780

A summary of the revenue position as at 31st December 2009 is as follows:

Element	Original Budget £	Revised Budget £	Y/E Forecast £	Favourable Variance £	Adverse Variance £	%
Area North Development	334,830	333,880	333,880	-	-	-
Area North Grants	29,360	35,900	35,900	-	-	-
Total	364,190	369,780	369,780	-	-	-

Budget Holders Comments (Area Development Manager - North)

Despite the withdrawal of support from SCC for Community Offices, the overall expenditure is forecast to remain within budget. A number of projects may be committed through the grants or service enhancement process, and will be requested as carry forwards.

a) Service Enhancements – 2009-10

The Area North Development budget in the above table includes £40,000 as the Area North service enhancement budget. This has been allocated to date to the following service areas, to help address local priorities:-

£10,000 - Streetscene services

£10,000 - access to financial and welfare services

Elsewhere in this agenda there is a proposal to allocate a further £10,000 to two priorities (community transport and the Turn Hill Parish Lengthsman.) It is anticipated that a request for the final allocation will be made at the March meeting, for a programme of enhanced services to young people, and to the various community groups which in turn provide activities and opportunities for young people.

Members will note that there is 'slippage' on the service enhancement programme - partly due to a similar occurrence from 2008-09. Actions have been taken to seek to make allocations earlier in the year, and the programme as a whole is under evaluation by the Assistant Director (Communities)

The sum of £15,000 allocated to Countryside Access in 2008/09 and carried forward from the last financial year has now been transferred to that service, and the programme is largely complete. A further update will be provide as part of the overall outturn report for Area North.

b) Grants

The Area North grants budget is largely used for grants made under the SSDC Community Grants programme and details of the current position are included in Appendix C.

c) Capital Programme

The Area North Capital Programme currently includes 14 schemes, which when allocated, were planned to be completed or partially completed during the current year. Of these eight scheme are investments into a larger project to community organisations or town / parish councils. All eight are completed, or are due to be completed in line with an agreed timescale. Of the other six, none are likely to be spent as planned within this financial year. However three schemes are completed and in use, although the residual budget remains for final agreements between SSDC and SCC. The other three schemes are: Bracey Road, Martock and Stanchester Way, Curry Rival (SSDC owned play areas) and the West Street, Somerton traffic & pedestrian survey. The relevant service managers have confirmed that completion will be early in the new financial year.

Budget Virements

Under the financial procedure rules the budget holder can authorise virements within each individual service of their responsibility (as defined by Appendix B of the Annual Budget Report) and up to a maximum of £25,000 between services within their responsibility providing that the Assistant Director (Finance) has been notified in advance. All virements exceeding these limits need the approval of District Executive. All virements between different Services, irrespective of value, need approving by District Executive.

Area Committees can approve virements between their reserves and budgets up to a maximum of £25,000 per virement and £50,000 in any one financial year, provided that all such approvals are reported to the District Executive for noting. (In accordance with the constitution)

The following virements have taken place since the last report:

Amount £	From	To	Details
2,340	Area North Budgets	Communities & Finance	Reduction in salary budgets by 1% to match 2009/10 pay award
4,350	Area North Reserve	Area North Regeneration	Additional regeneration work to include fees and consultancy costs

AREA RESERVE

The position on the Area North Reserve as at 31st December is as follows:

	£	£	Comments
Position as at 1 st April 2009		56,910	
Previous allocation vired to Regeneration Budget		(4,350)	Provided essential additional work in Langport, in order to ensure other Area priorities were worked on.
Reserve balance as at 31 December 2009		52,560	
<u>Less amounts allocated:</u>			
Small Business Development Grants	(7,640)		Fully allocated, and scheme evaluation in draft, further report to be submitted to consider benefits of a similar scheme continuing.
Completion of feasibility study for the Langport – Cartgate Cycleway	(1,500)		Good recent progress to complete feasibility. Support from new Countryside Manager secured. Additional hours to be provided in house, funded from this provision.
Professional fees and associated costs to progress priorities for the re-use of redundant buildings or workspace development	(2,500)		£750 spent to progress re-use of empty property; retain provision for further work as required
Promoting local access to services – Area North Community Offices	(2,000)		Provision for development budget to enhance local facilities for improving access to services (eg in community facilities)
Support towards progressing affordable rural housing schemes within the Area North	(15,000)		To provide any essential financial support to ensure progress of small scale rural housing schemes. Transfer at year-end as required for additional staffing, printing, and professional fees. £350 spent to date
Delivery of five community play day events in 2009	(1,500)		Report due, followed by transfer to play & youth services. New community play officer to be recruited by service manager.
		(30,140)	
Uncommitted balance remaining		22,420	

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The revised capital programme for this financial year and beyond is attached following this report together with a progress report on each scheme either Area or District Wide that are current within Area North.

The estimated spend on the North Capital main programme in 2009/10 is £232,419 and a further £95,000 for future years.

There is £16,618 in reserve schemes for 2009/10 and a further £170,000 for future years.

The details of the Reserve Schemes are as follows:

Schemes	Estimated Spend 2009/10 £	Future Spend £
Unallocated Capital Reserve	7,500	30,000
Martock town centre improvements	2,000	
Langport Vision, including boating access to parking and pathways		35,000
Feasibility costs of schemes	5,000	10,000
Local priority projects – enhancing facilities and services	2,118	95,000
TOTALS	16,618	170,000

If Members would like further details on any of the Area North budgets or services they should contact the relevant budget holder or responsible officer.

COMMUNITY GRANTS

The details of the Community Grants are included in Appendix C. At the end of December 2009, out of a total budget of £35,900, there was an uncommitted balance remaining of £17,107. Further grants amounting to £8,100 were allocated during January 2010, leaving an uncommitted balance of £9,007.

Evaluation of the success of each grant is completed on an ongoing basis. Evaluation of larger grants or programmes of capital investment may take place over a period of years on a theme, or a specific project.

Corporate Priority Implications

5.0 A successful council delivering services valued by residents.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

There are no implications currently in approving this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

When the Area North budget was set any savings made included an assessment of the impact on equalities as part of that exercise.

Background Papers – Financial Services Area North budget file