

Area North Committee – 22 June 2011

## 10. Area North Development Plan 2010-11 – Outturn Report

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### Purpose of the Report

To provide a end of year report of work undertaken by, or in conjunction with the Area Development Service in support of the Area North Committee priorities for the year 2010-11.

### Public Interest

This report provides information on work supported (through influence or direct investment) by the Area Development Service and Area North Committee, completed or taking place from April 2010 to March 2011.

### Recommendation

Note and comment on the report.

### Background

In a rural area such as Area North in South Somerset, economies of scale can be harder to achieve for public services. Building on existing partnerships, or promoting voluntary action can assist to make real improvements for local people.

South Somerset District Council aims to address this challenge, and build upon the local skills and knowledge found in local communities, through its nationally acclaimed arrangements for Area Working, the Council's 'enable-partner-deliver' ethos, and its mission to be 'an organisation consistently improving local quality of life for all'.

The area priorities, together with a range of powers and functions delegated to the Area Committee by SSDC form the SSDC Area Portfolio, held by the Chairman of the Area Committee. The Area Chairman is a member of the District Executive for SSDC, and also represents SSDC as a member of the Local Strategic Partnership board (South Somerset Together.)

The Area Development Service aims to **enable**:

- The delivery of community-led projects and initiatives that promote local economic, social and environmental well-being.
- Local involvement in decision making.
- Local partnerships and investments between communities and public services.
- 'Face to face' public access to services through community offices / Local Information Centres.

## Area North Priorities 2010-11

The Area Committee adopted the following six priorities in May 2010, and has used these throughout the year to inform decisions for allocating resources under its control, implementing local scrutiny and service performance monitoring, promoting local partnership working and supporting community engagement activities.

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1	Ensure delivery of current Area North programme and continue to develop further <b>affordable housing</b> .
All Equal	
2	Increase <b>access to services</b> to improve quality of life, through local and outreach services, transport and ICT.
3	Promote resilience and growth for <b>local services and businesses</b> .
4	Promote <b>community safety</b> - reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour – where it occurs.
5	Increase local action towards carbon descent and enhance the <b>local environment</b> .
6	Increase and improve voluntary run <b>community facilities and activities</b> for all ages.

**Appendix A** provides further information to the current six Area North priorities and links to the SSDC corporate plan.

### Key points to note from 2010-11

- The overall work programme supported by the Area Development Service contains over 100 projects and issues and included:-
  - Support to 21 community facilities – village halls, play areas, recreation grounds, helping to improve facilities and develop new activities.
  - 3 post offices – including relocated services in Ash and Stoke sub Hamdon. Ilton Post Office also closed during the year and we will continue to help identify alternative premises.
  - ‘Clean up and tidy’ (section 215) Notice served on Downside, North Street, Langport, with the required work completed by the owner.
  - Support to carry out community consultation to establish local needs and priorities in Somerton, Martock and Tintinhull.
  - Roundabout completed in Huish Episcopi in partnership with SCC and Yarlington Housing Group
  - Support to the ongoing development of four Local Information Centres / community offices in Martock, South Petherton, Somerton and Langport.
  - Public consultation events for the draft Core Strategy and the Annual Meeting with Parish and Town Councils.
  - Improvements to local visitor facilities completed with funding from the Market Towns Investment Group (MTIG), in the four member towns / villages (Langport, Somerton, Martock and South Petherton) - together with new signage and facilities at the Langport Visitor Centre.
  - Support for voluntary led young people’s clubs and community partnerships, including the Martock Youth Project and the new parish network seeking to increase support for young people’s activities in Area North.

- Continued partnership with SSVCA (South Somerset Voluntary and Community Action) to provide the Somerton and Langport Links Transport Service.
- 21 projects within the year's programme, were helped with £49,529 of grants from Area North, with a total project value of £317,167.
- In addition the Area Development team dealt with 117 enquiries from community groups and parish councils, including help with procedures or locating contacts, funding advice, loans of display boards and help with printing.
- During the year 3819 customers chose to access SSDC services 'face to face' from one of three locations for our community office services – Somerton, Martock and Langport. An average of 26% of all enquiries were for help with welfare benefits, housing and homelessness.
- The Somerton community office hours were reviewed and reduced, maintaining a valuable local service at a reduced cost. The Langport community office service relocated into the town centre, sharing premises leased by the town council – again at a reduced cost to SSDC.
- The Area Development team, and other service staff working from Area North relocated from Old Kelways, Langport to Bridge Barns, Long Sutton on a short term lease, pending the review of Area Working. The move contributed to a 6.5% efficiency saving on the Area North budget.
- Under the European / nationally funded Local Action for Rural Communities programme (LARC) – for the Somerset Levels and Moors, 13 projects are running either in or covering South Somerset. The programme was suspended by DEFRA earlier this year as part of a national review of the Rural Development Programme. A further six South Somerset based projects are awaiting a final decision - expected June 2012. These projects are for grants of £414,000 with a combined value of £1.3million.
- Work in parishes to promote new affordable homes in small scale schemes included Norton sub Hamdon, Long Sutton, Long Load, and Ash. (A detailed report on Affordable Housing will be submitted to the Area Committee at the July meeting.)

The presentation of this report will include further highlights of recent positive achievements and indicate issues that require further attention.

Further information on the content of this report is available from Area North Development.

### **Financial implications**

None from this report. The current financial position of the Area North budget is included in the next report.

## Corporate Priority Implications

The set of six area priorities has been fully informed by the SSDC Corporate Plan (2009-12), including priority outcomes and key targets. The Area Development team's work programme is developed with direct reference to 'Our Targets' for 2010-11.

In the main the programme supported is drawn from local priorities raised by community groups, residents, local businesses and Town & Parish Councils. In consultation with ward members, a greater proportion of time may be spent on certain projects than on others, where this can also be directly linked to corporate priorities. Examples include where there may be budget savings for SSDC through reduced demand on services, local income generation or community asset transfer.

## Carbon Emissions and Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None directly from this report. There are a number of local initiatives designed to promote carbon reduction including support to 'Transition' volunteers. In particular where we are asked to support buildings projects, applicants are expected to assess the business case for energy efficiency and carbon reduction. Opportunities for sustainable transport and promoting local self-containment are priorities.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

None directly from this report. The Area Development plan includes a number of projects and initiatives, which actively promote equalities through removing barriers to discrimination and promoting diversity.

**Background Papers:** *Community Priorities for SSDC Services and investment in Area North – May '10.*  
*Reports of surveys and consultation activity are available, in addition to published town and parish plans.*

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