

Area West Committee – 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007

## 8. Arrangements for Future Community Forum Events (Executive Decision)

*Head of Service:* Andrew Gillespie, Head of Area Development (West)  
*Lead Officer:* Bob Chedzoy, Community Development Officer  
*Contact Details:* bob.chedzoy@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01460) 260359

### Purpose of the Report

To provide further information to members on proposals for holding community forum events within Area West.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that members:-

- (1) approve the holding of community forum events for Crewkerne, Ilminster and Chard Community Planning Areas in line with the timescales described in the report;
- (2) agree that the £75,000 already allocated from the Area West Reserve for Community Planning Projects be used as a budget to fund local improvement projects supported by the forums;
- (3) allocate a further £15,000 to the budget to fund local improvement projects from the Area West unallocated capital programme;
- (4) allocate the budget to fund local improvement projects as indicated in option 3 of this report (see table on page 22);
- (5) consider the use of member funds to supplement the forum budgets.

### Background

Following the successful community forum event held in Chard on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2007, members have asked for proposals for the holding of similar events in Area West.

### Report

At the last Area West Committee meeting members agreed on the principle of holding additional community forums across the three community planning partnership areas. This report gives details of the proposed forums including proposed dates and financial arrangements. Members will note that publicity for the first forum needs to commence in August and that this is why agreement is being sought now for the proposed actions.

These Forums have two purposes; firstly they seek to bring about more public engagement with community development in the three market towns and their surrounding areas and with elected members. Secondly they will enable local residents to support funding for the local improvement schemes they want to see happen in their area. It is also anticipated that the forums will stimulate debates and discussion about local issues and solutions to local problems.

Members will remember that at the Chard forum, the event was aimed specifically at the Chard town area and applications for grant were required to relate to the five Chard wards. Under the arrangements proposed in this report, forums will relate to the community planning partnership areas and therefore cover all the residents in Area West.

## Proposed Arrangements

It is proposed that the arrangements for the three forums take the same form as the Chard Forum that took place in February 2007. However, the Forums will not follow consideration of planning items at the Area West Committee meeting. They will take place on a different day. The proposed arrangements are as follows:

1. **Date & Time.** Each Forum will take place on a Wednesday evening and will commence at 7.00 p.m. For exact dates please see the table below.
2. **Chairing of Event.** The Mayor of the local Town Council will be invited to chair the event.
3. **The Role of Elected Members.** It is proposed that each forum is overseen by a panel made up of elected representatives for the relevant Community Planning Partnership Area (CPPA). For details of the CPPA boundaries please see the map attached at page 24. The panel will include the local Mayor, County Councillors and a Community Forum Sub Committee of Area West Members.

3a. **Spending Decisions** Following the community voting process (outlined below), the Community Forum Sub Committee, that is the District Councillors on the panel, will be asked to pass a simple resolution authorising the spending of money as indicated by the votes cast.

3b. **Soapbox** All members of the forum panel will assist in the question and answer ("soapbox") session.

Other members of Area West Committee will be welcome to attend the Forum but will not have a specific role.

4. **Attendance.** The events will be open to anyone who wishes to attend. However voting on projects which are to receive funding and involvement in the later question & answer sessions will be limited to people living in the appropriate Community Planning Partnership Area.
5. **Running Order.** The running order of the events will be as follows;
  - Welcome and introductions from the Chair
  - Explanation of running order and arrangements
  - Presentations of projects by each project proposer (or officer where appropriate)
  - Break for refreshments and voting
  - Approval of project list - (Sub Committee members only)
  - Selection of soapbox questions – Overseen by Panel members
  - Soapbox - questions and response section
  - Announcement of successful projects
  - Close
6. **Voting on Projects.** Those people proposing projects for funding will be asked to give a brief outline of their proposal. Where they are not able to do this, an officer will present on their behalf. After the presentations, details of all submitted projects will

be displayed around the walls of the meeting venue. All those voting will be given five small coloured stickers to stick against those projects, which they wish to support. They may then place as many stickers as they wish against each project. They will also have the opportunity to question the project proposer about their projects. This will be a good opportunity for members of the community to meet and network with each other. Refreshments will be provided for people during this process.

7. **Soapbox Slot.** After the voting has taken place, the meeting will move on to hold a “soapbox” slot, for residents to raise issues of concern. Questions must be submitted in advance in writing and participants will have a maximum of three minutes to express their views. Where possible, answers to the points raised will be given on the night, otherwise answers will be provided in writing after the event.
8. **Voting Results.** Finally the voting scores and the resulting successful projects will be announced.
9. **After the Forum.** After the Forum takes place, details of all projects, the voting process and scores and the questions and answers given will be published on the SSDC website. Those attending (who have provided contact details) will also be sent an update on events and be informed about the progress of projects.

### Timescales

The following timescales for the preparation and delivery of the forums are proposed;

Activity / Area	Ilminster	Crewkerne	Chard
Appointment of Community Forum Sub Committees	18.07.07	18.07.07	18.07.07
Publicity & promotion of Forum	27.08.07	29.10.07	09.12.07
Submission of funding bids - closing date	28.09.07	30.11.07	17.01.08
Officer evaluation of plans	12.10.07	14.12.07	31.01.08
Proposals to local Members for comment	19.10.07	21.12.07	04.02.08
Holding of Forum events	16.11.07	23.01.08	27.02.08
Report back on progress of projects	20.02.08	16.04.08	21.05.08

### Allocation of Resources

In response to the report on community forums at the last Area West Committee meeting, members asked for some options to support the allocation of budgets. Three options are indicated in the table below. The first option is based on the population of each community planning partnership area (£2.35 ‘per head’). The second is based on an allocation of £5,625 per ward member. The final option simply recommends awarding an equal amount of monies to all three forums.

All three options are based on a total budget allocation of £90,000 the source of which is detailed below.

	<b>Ilminster CPPA</b>	<b>Crewkerne CPPA</b>	<b>Chard CPPA</b>
<b>Option 1</b>			
Population	7771	12682	17743
% of Area West population	20.3%	33.2%	46.5%
Resulting financial allocations based on %s	<b>£18,311</b>	<b>£29,882</b>	<b>£41,807</b>
<b>Option 2</b>			
Split by Ward	3.4	5.2	7.4
	21%	33%	46%
Resulting financial allocations based on %s	<b>£18,900</b>	<b>£29,700</b>	<b>£41,400</b>
<b>Option 3</b>			
Equal Allocation	<b>£30,000</b>	<b>£30,000</b>	<b>£30,000</b>

## Financial Implications

In December 2004 members allocated £75,000 from the Area West reserve as provision towards the costs of local improvement projects it was anticipated would arise from the development of community planning activity in the Ilminster, Chard and Crewkerne CPP areas. The proposed forums will provide an effective mechanism to make this happen. It is therefore recommended that the £75,000 allocated from the Area West Reserve for Community Planning Projects be used as a budget to fund local improvement projects supported by the forums.

Members should note that the District Council has made a further £300,000 available to support community plan projects through the Market Towns Vision scheme and projects from community plans are being developed through the Market Towns Investment Group.

It is also recommended that a further £15,000 be added to the budget to fund local improvement projects from the Area West unallocated capital programme making a total budget of £90,000.

This would reduce the Area West unallocated capital programme from £50,766 to £35,766.

## Additional Funding

It is anticipated that the procedure for use of the Frontline Councillors Community Scheme (the Member's Fund) will be agreed by District Executive in July 2007. Members will have the opportunity to supplement the budget available to each Forum by pooling some or all of their £2,500 budgets, or by using their budgets to support specific project proposals made as part of the forum process.

## **Implications for Corporate Priorities**

The forum will address the corporate aim to “Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities” and in particular corporate objectives fifteen and sixteen namely:

- Increase to 65% by 2010 the people who feel engaged in and can influence decisions that affect their communities – (Objective 15).
- Maintain above 80% the people satisfied with their neighbourhoods as a place to live – (Objective 16).

**Background Papers:** *Reports to Area West Committee December 2004 Minute 97, March 2007 (Minute 134) and April 2007 (Minute 147)*

Chard

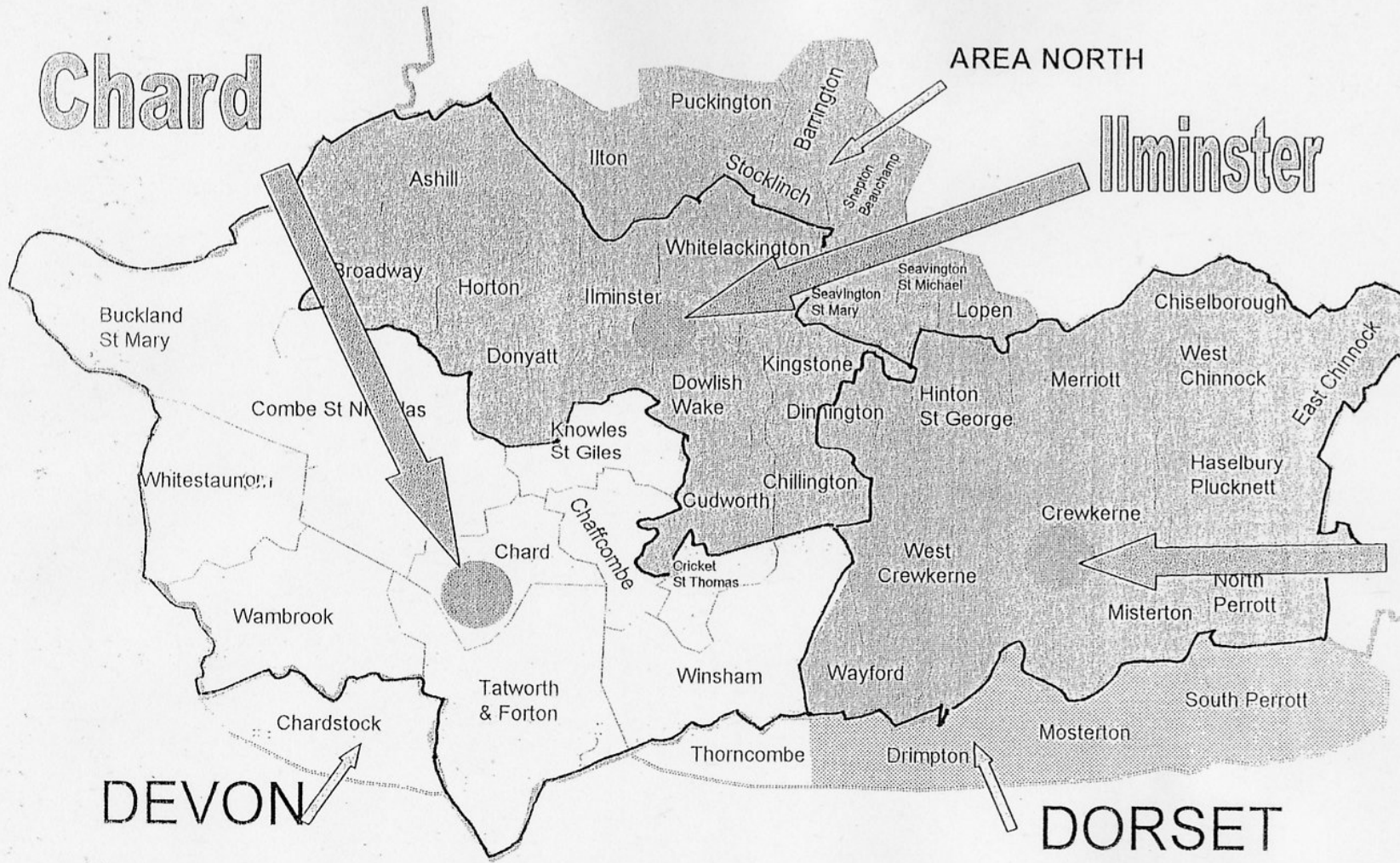
AREA NORTH

Ilminster

Crewkerne

DEVON

DORSET



# Community Planning Partnership Areas

