

Area West Budget – Half Year Progress Report (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

To give an overview of the Area West Budgets including Reserves and Grants Programmes at the half way point of the 2016/17 year. To seek Committee approval to return stalled project money to balances to free up support for other priority projects.

Public Interest

The Area Development Service supports the Council's 4 Area Committees (North, South, East & West) to work closely with local communities to create better places in which to live and work. The report gives a half year position on the budgets and gives Members the opportunity to consider any adjustments they might wish to make at this point during the year. A further report detailing progress with implementing the Area Development Plan will be brought by the Area Development Team Lead in December.

Recommendations

- (1) To note the current position on community grants and other project budgets held by Area West
- (2) To note and comment on the current Area West Capital Programme and Reserve
- (3) To return the sum of £1,748 no longer required for Chaffcombe Village hall to capital balances
- (4) To un ring-fence £20,000 set aside for Ilminster Community Office and make this sum available for capital community projects

Background

Budgets are approved in February each year. Each of the 4 Area Committees has delegated responsibility for monitoring budgets within its control. Area West considers all decisions relating to community grant requests over £1,000, allocates its Capital Programme and the spending of its Reserve. The Executive continues to monitor all budgets on a quarterly basis. This report does not look at the fixed staffing and running costs of the Area Development Team based at the Lace Mill.

Funding Overview

Appendix 1 gives a summary of the project and grants budgets for 2016/17 including uncommitted balances. Appendix 2 gives an overview of all grant and SLA awards made from the Area West Committee budgets within the first 6 months of the 2016/17 year.

Area West Capital Programme

The Area West capital programme supports investment in new or existing, locally important assets. These may be SSDC owned, community owned or privately owned. In the last 2

categories support will normally be via a grant scheme. Fuller detail on the spending across the capital programme is attached at Appendix 3. It shows “live” projects, their funding allocation and the drawdown of funds that took place to 30 September 2016, with a progress report from the Lead Officer.

In summary, this shows that there is £10,001 of unallocated funds remaining to support projects and available for local priority schemes in 2016/17. It is further recommended that the sum of £1,748 no longer required for Chaffcombe Village Hall is returned to balances. If members approve this then a total of £11,749 is available. This relatively low sum reflects the 5 substantial community projects allocated £47,432 of grants during the first 6 months and the substantial capital allocation of £63,920 for the Chard Business Hub.

Community grant applications for capital projects are considered as required until available budgets are fully allocated. The Area Development Lead confirms that there are a number of community projects in the pipeline seeking funding. Members have 2 main options:-

- The longstanding allocation of £20,000 is set aside to secure an improved Ilminster Community Office. There is no project in the pipeline, so members could consider unring-fencing this sum to make it available for further community projects or
- Inform projects that limited funds are available this year and awards will reflect this. Further bids can be held over until April 2017, subject to a corporate top up of capital funds of £25,000 being approved in the budget process.

It is recommended that the ring-fence is removed.

Area West Reserve

There was £49,640 in the Area West Reserve at the start of the year. The whole of this sum was reallocated to the Chard Work Hub Project in June 2016. There are no unallocated balances.

This is an historical revenue fund that is not replenished. It can be used to support unplanned or urgent work, or schemes that cannot be supported through the main, annual budgets. It has the flexibility to be used for capital or non-capital work, including staff costs or commissioned work. It can also be spent up front for work that is subsequently reimbursed.

Area West Community Grants and Regeneration

An allocation is set aside each year to support community projects and award partnership funding or pump prime regeneration. There was £26,240 in this budget at the start of the year. Appendix 2 shows the awards to date. This includes a sum of £12,000 ring-fenced to fund service level agreements; the details are shown in the table. There is an unspent balance of £4,115 available and several applications for small grants are currently under evaluation.

Despite the very limited funds available and following consultation with all Committee members, funding will be found to enable free parking on the last Saturday before Christmas throughout Area West car parks. The precise sum required will not be known until January 2017 but is expected to be in the region of £2,300 based on recharges in previous years. This funding will be found from unspent balances. This bonus to the shopping public will be

promoted and the effectiveness and impact of this measure will be evaluated to inform support of this kind in future years.

Financial Implications

The level of Area West funding is shown in the body of this report, and in the Appendices. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

Council Plan Implications

Resources allocated by AWC are in compliance with the current Council Plan. The place specific, priority projects for 2016/17 relevant to the Area Committee are:

- Progress Work Hub in Chard
- Progress Chard Regeneration scheme
- Prepare a plan to develop and deliver leisure facilities in Chard

Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications

None arising directly from this report

Equality and Diversity Implications

None arising directly from this report

Background Papers

Area West Development Plan 2016-17;
Monthly budget monitoring and quarterly capital monitoring reports
