

Area East Committee – Achievements 2019-2023

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Purpose of the Report

To provide Members with an overview of the progress made on local priorities, achievements and investment made through grants during the term from May 2019 to present.

Public Interest

SSDC invests in projects and schemes that aim to improve the health and wellbeing of residents of South Somerset. This report gives a summary of work undertaken over the last four years in response to local priorities raised by local communities through ward members.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members note the report.

Background

Area Chapter

Members will recall that as part of the annual council plan cycle, local priorities identified by ward members were used to produce a programme of work with resource identified and committed from across the authority as a chapter of the council plan.

Community Grants

The Area Capital budget has carried forward with regular top-up for many years. Grants of between £1,000 and £12,500 up to a maximum of 50% of the total project cost could be applied for by community groups in Area East.

Each area committee has an annual budget allocation of revenue money to award as grants to local community organisations, subject to application and assessment against the SSDC Community Grants Scheme criteria.

Members will be aware that the scheme in its current form has come to an end.

Area Priorities

The process of agreeing the chapter was possible in the first year of the term. However, delivery of the programme was severely impacted by the Covid pandemic. Officers continued to work on many areas of the chapter throughout the pandemic and through recovery and progress has been made in several areas. This last year the priorities changed to focus activity on key areas and to prepare for the transition to a Unitary Council.

Key priorities identified include the following: -

- Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans & Active Travel
- Support Neighbourhood planning as a tool to deliver suitable and appropriate local housing.
- Pilot project to facilitate communities to give advice and improve energy efficiency measures in existing housing stock by identifying heat loss using tools such as thermal imaging
- Support a range of improvements to community facilities through S106 and Community grant
- Campaign and engage with Town and Parish Councils and residents around local enforcement related issues
- To support community groups and Environment Champions to deliver a range of ecological and environmental
- Work towards providing employment land and business units of appropriate sizes readily available for uptake by business
- To support the creation of business directories to support; the food and drink sector, tourism sector and environmental
- Maintain the network of volunteer led health walks through promotion, training and support
- Deliver a programme of Play Days in towns/villages in Area East.

Progress on these areas of work will be presented at the meeting.

Community Grants

Area East Committee has had a revenue budget each year of approximately £10,000 to support grant applications of up to £1000.

Decisions are delegated to officers with support of ward members.

Applications for grants over £1000 (usually capital projects) have been assessed by a Locality Officer and recommendations are considered by the Area Committee.

The Locality Officer will have dealt with the initial enquiry and worked with and supported the community group, giving guidance to ensure a smooth process throughout.

Meetings will have been held on site to get the full picture and discuss the project in full, this has given the groups confidence and answered any questions at the outset. A key part of the process is signposting to other funding sources to support the grant application.

Once the grant had been awarded, the project is monitored to ensure it stayed on track and funds spent as agreed.

A breakdown of all grants given over the past four years is provided in Appendix A.

Area East Committee has awarded a total of £145,074 over the last four years. This investment has attracted over £320,000 of funding from other sources. This is purely the financial investment and does not include the hours of unpaid work that individuals have committed to delivering for communities.

Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications as a direct result of this report.

Council Plan Implications

Healthy, self-reliant Communities – Priority 2

To enable healthy communities which are cohesive, sustainable and enjoy a high quality of life

- Work with partners to keep our residents safe and feel safe in their homes and communities
- Collaborate with local partners to reduce the impact of social isolation and create a feeling of community
- Work with local partners to support people in improving their physical and mental health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities
- Enable quality and inclusive cultural, leisure and sport activities
- Proactively support residents facing hardship and tackle the causes of economic & social exclusion, poverty and low social mobility

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

Providing and enabling local access to a range of activities and services reducing the need to travel which therefore reduces carbon emissions.



Equality and Diversity Implications

<i>An Equality Impact Relevance Check Form has been completed in respect of the Proposal?</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>The Impact Relevance Check indicated that a full EIA was required?</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>If an EIA was not required please attach the Impact Relevance Check Form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of its findings in the comments box below.</i>	
<i>If an EIA was required please attach the completed EIA form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of the result of your Equality Impact Assessment in the comment box below.</i>	
Additional Comments	
This item is for information only. Equality Impact was considered for all decisions related to updates in the report.	
