

Western Area Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	9 June 2022
Report Title	Western Area Committee Work Plan proposal for 2022/23
EMT Lead	David Clifford, Head of Policy, Governance & Customer Service
Chair of Area Committee	Councillor Corrie Woodford
Lead Officer	Janet Dart, Interim Area Committees Coordinator
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Western Area Committee to discuss and agree their priorities and ambitions for 2022/23. 2. The Western Area Committee to discuss and agree the criteria which any bids for funding will need to meet. 3. The Western Area Committee to discuss and agree what publicity should take place to promote the funding scheme.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Western Area Committee (AC) have worked with officers to put a proposal together for the Western AC to consider which will set the work plan and criteria for funding bids for the year 2022/23. Once a final list of priorities and criteria have been agreed, the funding application form and guidance notes will be updated ready to launch the bid application process on Friday 1 July 2022. The deadline for bids will be Monday 1 August 2022 after which a thorough assessment process will take place by officers before being taken to the September 2022 round of AC meetings for consideration.

2 Background

- 2.1 In June 2021 the AC Review Working Group and Committee Chairs agreed a process for operating ACs and part of that was for each AC to agree a Work Plan at the June meeting each year. This would set out each Committee's priorities and ambitions for that year and would link in with how the funding should be allocated. Once the priorities/ambitions have been agreed, the Committee will need to set criteria which any bids for funding would need to meet.
- 2.2 The Committee can decide to use the funding exclusively for a proactive theme/ambition or open the scheme up for external organisations to make bids or a combination of the two.

3 Proposals

3.1 **Priorities/ambitions for 2022/23** - the AC Review Working Group met in April 2022 to reflect on how the AC's processes worked during the year 2021/22 and to consider what changes would be beneficial going forward.

3.2 One of their recommendations was that Heads of Service be consulted to see if there are any existing projects that each AC could use part of their funding to accelerate without requiring much more than minimal officer involvement. This would help to achieve completion of projects earlier as well as benefit the area. Below is a list briefly outlining some potential projects that Committee Members may wish to consider prioritising for 2022/23.

- Active Travel – consultation events (necessary to support the development and adoption of the borough-wide and area-based Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans);
- Active Travel – infrastructure improvements. This could be for example new or improved cycle storage on SBC land, or following engagement with partners such as Network Rail;
- public toilet refurbishments;
- tree planting above the current plans;
- support for interventions around the Cost of Living Crisis – Food banks and VCS support such as debt advice etc.

3.3 **Criteria for funding applications** - The Chair and Vice-Chair propose that the criteria set by Western Area Committee for the year 2021/22 should be carried forward to 2022/23 as they are still relevant for the area. Therefore, bids for funding submitted to the September 2022 meeting should demonstrate they will have a positive impact on the appearance, environment and facilities in the Western Area and benefit residents across the area.

3.4 Bids will also be considered that can demonstrate how the initiative or project will contribute to Swale's strategic priorities 2 and 3 as set out in the Corporate Plan as listed below:

3.5 **Priority 2: Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges;**

2.1 Develop a coherent strategy to address the climate and ecological emergencies, aiming for carbon neutrality in the council's own operations by 2025 and in the whole borough by 2030, and pursue all opportunities to enhance biodiversity across the borough.

2.2 Encourage active travel and reduced car use, including through the permeability of new developments, and work with partners to address air quality issues.

2.3 Establish a special projects fund to provide much-needed investment in the borough's public realm and open spaces.

2.4 Recognise and support our local heritage to give people pride in the place they live and boost the local tourism industry.

2.5 Work towards a cleaner borough where recycling remains a focus, and ensure that the council acts as an exemplar environmental steward, making space for nature wherever possible.

Priority 3: Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone:

3.1 Undertake targeted interventions to identify our most disadvantaged families and communities, improve our understanding of the issues they face, and develop new ways of working to reduce social exclusion and enhance opportunities and quality of life.

3.2 Reduce health inequality by developing more productive relationships with local health partners and making health and wellbeing a central consideration in all relevant council decision-making, recognising especially the link between housing and health.

3.3 Develop a communitarian approach to partnership working based on shared objectives with like-minded agencies in the voluntary and community sectors.

3.4 Ensure that the council plays a proactive role in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, including through the modernisation of CCTV provision.

3.5 Promote wellbeing and enjoyment of life by signposting and encouraging a wide range of sporting, cultural and other leisure activities appropriate and accessible to each age group.

3.6 **Publicity of funding scheme** – The AC Review Working Group recommended that each AC agree how widely their funding scheme should be publicised. This decision will directly relate to the Work Plan and priorities that are agreed at the June 2022 meeting. The options for the AC to consider are:

- Publicise widely, putting out press releases, social media posts and email local organisations including parish/town councils;
- Limited publicity, email the parish/town councils within the area and any local organisations that may have schemes which Members believe would assist with achieving the AC's ambitions; or

- No publicity, AC Members to advise organisations/parish/town councils themselves if they feel they may have a scheme that would assist with achieving the AC's ambitions.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Western Area Committee Members could agree not to have a Work Plan with set priorities and criteria for funding. However, officers would advise against this as it will be difficult to adhere to the three-step process recommended by the AC Review Working Group and the AC may find themselves in a position where members will need to vote on individual bids, and any member with an interest which could give them an apparent bias, would have to recuse themselves from all such votes. In addition to unnecessarily disenfranchising members, this also runs the risk that meetings becoming inquorate for these agenda items.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair have been consulted to gain a steer on what they recommend the Work Plan and criteria should be for 2022/23. Officers have also been consulted to seek advice on potential projects Area Committees may wish to prioritise in their Work Plan and to ensure there are no resource implications. No external consultation has been undertaken or is proposed. However, Western AC will be consulted at the June 2022 meeting when a final proposal will be agreed and voted on.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The proposals report provides senior officers the opportunity to check the Work Plan does not conflict with the Corporate Plan priorities.
Financial, Resource and Property	The proposals report provides senior officers the opportunity to check the Work Plan has no Swale Borough Council financial /officer resource implications.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	No specific implications identified at this stage.
Crime and Disorder	No specific implications identified at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	No specific implications identified at this stage.

Health and Wellbeing	No specific implications identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No specific implications identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No specific implications identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	No specific implications identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	No specific implications identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 There are no appendices.

8 Background Papers

8.1 There are no background papers.