

LOCALISM

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **15th April 2014**

From: **Corporate Director: Customer Service and Transformation**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To establish the County Council's position with regard to Localism.**

Recommendation: **To endorse the County Council's approach to Localism and the role of the Community Engagement team as set out in this position paper.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report focuses on the spirit of Localism – empowering communities to do more for themselves; this does not rely solely on the definition and initiatives contained in the Localism Act, rather on a shift in culture and grassroots community action.
- 1.2 The benefits that can be reaped by embracing Localism include:
 - Improved health and wellbeing
 - Communities which are more active and resilient
 - Long term savings (through preventative action).
- 1.3 Localism is central to the Members' role. Members are champions for their residents, amplifying their community's voice and managing expectations.
- 1.4 The Council has been developing its approach to localism over the last three years. An early paper 'Taking Localism Forward' (November 2011) set out a starting point.
- 1.5 The new Customer Services and Transformation Directorate structure, implemented last autumn, recognised the success of embedding localism and community engagement activity across the Council. The consultation led to the removal of a number of posts including the Service Director: Community Engagement (Fenland) and Head of Community Development. A new Head of Service post was created covering a wider remit – Communications, Community Engagement, Digital Engagement and Research and Performance Management.
- 1.6 A small Community Engagement Team was formed comprising two Community Engagement Programme Managers, supported by one Community Engagement Officer. The role of the Team is to co-ordinate activity across the authority, implementing and initiating good practice.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 In consultation with colleagues, including the Corporate Leadership Team on 3rd March 2014, the snapshot below has been developed of some of the key initiatives and approaches from across the Council that harness the energy of local communities to co-produce services and/or devolve decision-making and delivery to a more local level:

Children, Families and Adults	Economy, Transport and Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Navigators • Parent Partnership • Youth Advisory Boards • Recovery Champions • Children's Centre Parent Forums • Small Grants Scheme and Learning and Development Bursaries for CYP VCS • Learning Disability Services' Community Centres • Transforming Lives proposed strategic approach - Proactive, Preventative, Personalised • School Governors • Adult Social Care Partnership Boards: Carers, Older People, Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment, Learning Disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambridgeshire Future Transport • Local Highways Improvement Initiative • Winter Volunteer Scheme • Cycling Legacy Grants • Creative People and Places • Library Friends Groups, Community Management Boards and volunteers • Connecting Cambridgeshire Broadband Champions • Real Deal Markets • Community Learning Trust Fund • Community Access Points • Library Access Points • Local Access Forum
Corporate Services	Public Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timebanking & Time Credits • Listening Projects • Nature Reserves Friends Groups • ShapeYourPlace • Cambridgeshire.net • Cambridgeshire Insight • Armed Forces Community Covenant • Open Data Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Trainers • Health Walks

2.2 This snapshot indicates how staff are increasingly embedding Localism within their services.

2.3 Part of the role of the three staff within the Community Engagement team is to provide catalytic support; creating significant impact from a small resource and equipping our communities to do more for themselves. It is proposed that the team focus on three key areas. These are outlined below, with examples.

2.4 **Piloting new ways of working to inform and influence service delivery.**

2.4.1 Example: Timebanking, in which residents within a community exchange knowledge, help and skills. It is proving to be a great way of building community cohesion and enabling more vulnerable people to remain independent, preventing costly service interventions.

2.4.2 From September 2013, the Community Engagement team has been working with three Wisbech partners (a primary school, Children's Centre and homeless support charity) to trial a new form of Timebanking called Time Credits. Time Credits encourage people to give their time to organisations and receive one Time Credit as a 'thank you' for each hour they have given. The credits can be exchanged for a range of activities, from a swim at the local pool, to entry to the Tower of London, to an after school club.

2.4.3 After six months the pilot is demonstrating some impressive outcomes. Over 100 people have now signed up, giving more than 600 hours and engaging

many people considered 'hard to reach'. As a result Childrens, Families and Adults directorate are supporting a roll out of the programme.

2.5 To work in partnership with other organisations to deliver Localism

2.5.1 Example 1: The listening work in Huntingdon North Ward, locally called All Ears, has led to several successful community-led projects: a low-cost secondhand sale, a pop-up café in the park, bike recycling project, employment and environmental projects. This work, which uses an approach called Root Solution, Listening Matters, is being rolled out with partners in Eynesbury in St Neots and Waterlees in Wisbech. Both of these areas have been selected as Our Place areas, a Government-backed scheme, which seeks to reconfigure services and budgets around the needs of local people. Our Place Eynesbury aims to bring together public, private, voluntary and faith sectors to deliver services in a more co-ordinated, collaborative and community-led way, particularly for local children, young people and families, which will be based on the listening work.

2.5.2 Example 2: A Parish Conference was held in Huntingdonshire in December 2013, trialling a new form of conversation with our local councils. After presenting the potential impacts of the budget situation, examples were given of local community action and discussions facilitated about what communities and local councils could do for themselves.

2.5.3 The event was well attended (120 delegates), feedback was positive and a number of actions are planned including; meetings to explore potential for parish clusters and a Community Engagement workshop to equip Local Councils to become catalysts within their communities. Huntingdonshire District Council is considering offering financial support for the development of Parish Plans.

2.5.4 There is an appetite for similar events elsewhere in Cambridgeshire. The County Council aim to have a supporting role in these.

2.6 To work with colleagues across services to develop their Localism activity and embed new ways of working

2.6.1 Example: Over the last year, the Community Engagement team have started engaging with colleagues through a Community Engagement Practitioner network and Lunchtime Seminars. The former is a forum for staff who have an element of community engagement within their role to; share good practice, work together on challenges, and collaborate across teams. The Lunchtime Seminars are an opportunity for colleagues from across the council to develop their understanding of Community Engagement and Localism through a range of practical sessions, recent sessions have included; Stakeholder analysis, and Listening to Seldom Heard Voices.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

The report above sets out the implications for this priority, showing how individuals and communities can be empowered to take more responsibility for their own lives, as shown in the examples 2.3 – 2.5.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.4 Ways of working

The following bullet points set out implications identified by officers in terms of leadership and working more locally:

- The proposals meet our aims in terms of leadership as they will increase our work with partners and communities to achieve real change.
- Working more locally is integral to the proposals. Localism means devolving more decisions, more responsibility and more action to local communities, as the examples demonstrate.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource and Performance Implications

There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within this category.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within this category.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

It is recognised that inequalities will emerge as more active communities seize opportunities. The council recognises the importance of allowing things to be done differently in different places if that is what local people want.

The Community Engagement team will ensure that the support they are able to offer is focused primarily on our most disadvantaged communities.

4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within this category.

4.5 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within this category.

Source Documents	Location
Taking Localism Forward	Community Engagement Team SH1103 Shire Hall Cambridge CB3 0AP