



PRCC.11 14/15
Prosperous Communities Committee
Date 15 th July 2014

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Subject: Localism Review

Report by:	Joanna Riddell Head of Localism
Contact Officer:	Ruth Farningham Team Manager Community Action Ruth.farningham@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	Challenge and Improve Committee, through a member Officer working group reviewed the activities of the Localism Service. The aims were to ascertain what the service had achieved, where the service is effective, where there are gaps in provision, and to find out what can be done to improve the service to West Lindsey. This report details the findings and recommendations

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Members approve the following;

- 1. The Action plan highlighted on page 17 – 18 in Appendix 1**
- 2. The Communications Delivery Plan in Appendix 3**
- 3. The current Area Manager arrangement is cancelled and that engagement with elected members is carried out by the Community Action Team.**
- 4. That the constitution is amended as required to reflect the changes to the Area Manager arrangements.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None

Financial : FIN/30/15 None

Staffing :None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :
*NB: A full impact assessment **HAS TO BE** attached if the report relates to any new or revised policy or revision to service delivery/introduction of new services.*

Risk Assessment :

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes

No

Key Decision:

Yes

No

1. Introduction

The Localism service was agreed to be included into a West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) programme in March 2011 through Full Council. In terms of a staff team, this commenced implementation in July 2012. A significant investment including has been made by WLDC into the Localism programme and it is important that this investment yields positive and effective results for both WLDC and its residents. The aim is that the financial investment in terms of staff and grant funds to the Voluntary Sector will in the long term assist WLDC to deliver its services in a more cost effective way by developing confident, vibrant and sustainable communities whose reliance of the Council will reduce.

A review of the Localism service has been undertaken, with a working group set up through Challenge and Improve Committee. This started in summer 2013, and the aims were to ascertain what the service has achieved, where the service is effective, where there are gaps in provision, and to find out what can be done to improve the service to West Lindsey.

2. Summary of findings

Although there are many areas where the service has performed and delivered effectively over the past 18 months, there are a number of areas identified that require improvements to be made. In the main, these are around communication, particularly with elected members, delivery of a consistent service across West Lindsey, and development of monitoring and reviewing systems through a service delivery plan, balanced score cards for the various functions within the Localism, and individually agreed effective and realistic performance management measures. The full report can be found at Appendix 1 and this includes an action plan for improvement. A further challenge has been faced by the Localism service not being fully staffed due to a high turnover of officers. This has led to an inconsistent and challenging position for the team members, who have tried to fill the gaps where needed. This is the main reason that an inconsistent service has been delivered across the District.

3. Area Manager Arrangements

One area that has been patchy in delivery is with the Area Manager role. As the Heads of Service roles are currently under review through a re-organisation, it is likely that their areas of responsibility will increase and so they will have less capacity to commit to the current arrangements. It is suggested that this role is undertaken by the Community Action Team. The recent survey with elected members and discussions with Challenge and Improve working group indicate that members are not keen to continue with the current arrangements and would welcome increased engagement with the Community Action team.

4. Conclusion

The Action Plan contained in Appendix 1 (page 19) and the Communications Delivery Plan in Appendix 3 (page 24) are currently being implemented or are

being developed for delivery, and progress and effectiveness will be monitored and reviewed through Challenge and Improve Committee, including an annual review of the service.

APPENDIX 1



Review of Localism within West Lindsey

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1. Introduction

Following the establishment of a Localism service within West Lindsey District Council (WLDC), the aim of this report is to provide a summary of where WLDC are now in relation to service delivery. It is worth mentioning that “Localism” is a principal rather than a delivery model and is about a more community focused approach to service delivery and participation in decision making and influence at a local level through community involvement and participation. The Localism programme within West Lindsey is an extensive and radical approach by the Council to reconnect with its communities and is by its very nature, a long term ambition. The progression of Area working, the realignment of staffing resources and the procurement of the necessary funds all support this process. The introduction and implementation of the Localism service to WLDC was agreed through full Council on 7 March 2011 and a progress report was presented to Challenge and Improve Committee on 11 June 2013.

2. Vision

By working in partnership and responding to Community need, to help create strong, dynamic, resilient and sustainable communities, where people want to live, work, invest and visit

3. National Context

The Localism Act 2011 contains a number of measures that seeks to shift power away from Central Government to local people. It aims to provide significant new rights direct to communities and individuals, making it easier for them to get things done and achieve their ambitions for the place where they live. The provisions within this legislation are being brought into effect in stages but the following are the main rights and powers that have so far been brought into effect and currently form part of the Localism agenda. are described in greater detail in Section 6 of this report

The Plain English Guide to The Localism Act 2011 can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/localism-act-2011-overview> .

It should be noted that this act has a number of measures that will come into force over the coming months (including new powers of enforcement) and these will be implemented into the Localism service when appropriate.

The intention of the Act is that it makes it easier for local people to take over the amenities they value and keep them part of local life. It also aims to ensure that local social enterprises, volunteers and community groups with an idea for improving local services get an opportunity to change how things are done.

4. Local Context

The Localism programme within WLDC was approved in March 2011 and the service was first established in June 2012. The service has continued to develop in terms of team members up to and beyond March 2013. The final elements of the team are currently in the process of formal approval and this process should be completed by March 2014. The Localism Programme is an extensive and radical approach by the council to reconnect with its communities and is a long term programme. The progression of Area Working, the realignment of staffing resources and the procurement of the necessary Funds has supported the development of the service. WLDC has made considerable investment in the Localism team and service to ensure that communities are better able to help themselves and become more vibrant and sustainable in the future. It is crucial that the team deliver outcomes that are measurable and contribute towards the Corporate Plan key themes and objectives and a Service Delivery Plan is in the final stages of development through the Communities Board. Although much good work has already taken place it is crucial that this good work serves as a platform, particularly in terms of securing additional funding in the District, increasing the number of active volunteers, and working effectively in the priority areas.

The main objectives of the Localism programme are as follows:

- Increase number of volunteers and opportunities for volunteering
- Increase external funding into communities
- Improve deprivation and other quality of life measures in the deprived communities.
 - To focus resources and support for priority neighbourhoods
 - To contribute to the Corporate priorities and themes including the following:
 - Priority 1.1 – Communities are able to meet their local needs sustainably
 - Priority 1.2 – The needs of people in West Lindsey are met appropriately, effectively and sustainably
 - Priority 1.3 – That all communities in West Lindsey achieve their full potential and provide the services and infrastructure local people need
 - Priority 4.3 – Safe and secure communities

It must also be noted that many initiatives and projects that the Localism service support will contribute towards other corporate priorities

The Programme overall consists of seven work streams which together deliver the new approach:

- I. Supporting Community Action
- II. Focus on Priority Areas
- III. Area Working
- IV. Supporting Democracy
- V. Utilising Technology/Social Media
- VI. Community Funds

VII. Voluntary sector and volunteering

In essence, the Localism service aims to improve our understanding of communities, to help and support local people influence their areas, to use Council resources in a more efficient and targeted way, and to enhance community activity

3a. Areas

The district has been split into 6 areas. These areas are a pragmatic response to the vast size of West Lindsey and the high number of parishes that exist within its borders. Each area shares common characteristics or themes to attempt to create areas which have a rationale however the boundaries are flexible in that they need to reflect life on the ground. The following are the 6 geographical areas:

1. Market Rasen area, including the priority neighbourhood of Newtoft
2. Caistor area, including the priority area of Brookenby
3. Gainsborough, including the priority areas of South West Ward and Park Springs
4. Fosdyke area, including the priority area of Scampton
5. Trent area including the priority area of Hemswell Cliff
6. Witham area

Most of the areas have a Community Action Officer dedicated to it and their primary role is as follows:

- Provide advice / support
- Work on a 'priority' neighbourhood
- Help to organise and promote local events
- Contribute towards leverage of external funds and ensure uptake on internal funds
- Contribute towards increased and active volunteering

3b. Area Manager Arrangements

The role of the Area Manager, allocated to each area, is to act as a Positive Inspiring Champion, to provide a strategic overview through an understanding of their area, and to support Ward Councillors in Community Leadership. A number of elements are intended to be covered through this collective arrangement including discussion and decision making on the following:

- Key projects/issues
- Complaints
- Performance
- Common outcomes
- Communication

This arrangement has been mixed in its implementation, with some areas holding regular meetings and others holding none. These arrangements are currently on hold until the current internal re-structure at Head of Service level and above is complete. As it is unknown at this time if the new structure will provide capacity for Heads of Service to fulfil this function, it is suggested that alternative avenues for Councillor engagement are explored through consultation with Councillors on options for future and more effective engagement with them. Challenge and Improve working group will be provided with a draft questionnaire for consideration and other methods of engagement are contained within the draft Communications Strategy and Delivery Plan

4. Community Funds

Alongside the arrangements for Area Working, funds have been made available to support the Localism Programme and are now being utilised by communities. One of the objectives is to encourage communities to use these funds to lever in additional resources for the benefit of projects and initiatives in their local neighbourhood. The following gives a brief summary of the funds available through WLDC

Councillor Initiative Fund £4,000 per Councillor over 2 years

Community Assets Fund £1.2 Million

Community Chest (formerly Community Action and Volunteering Fund) - £250,000

5. Community Rights

Community Rights are integral to the Localism Act 2011 and already many communities are progressing some of the options available under this new legislation. The Localism service promotes, monitors, advises and reviews the procedures and protocols associated with these rights, which include:

1. Community Right to Challenge
2. Community Right to Bid (Assets of Community Value)
3. Neighbourhood Plans
4. Community Right to Build

Comprehensive information can be found on these rights, what they mean and how communities can benefit from them on WLDC's website at <http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/searchResults.aspx?qsearch=1&keywords=community+rights&x=15&y=25>

6. Localism functions

The Localism service comprises a number of functions and an overview of each of these is detailed below. The Localism service is supported by a Team Manager and the strategic direction and overall responsibility for service delivery lies with the Head of Service for Localism. The current structure of the service is shown in Appendix 4

6a. Gainsborough Markets

The operation of Gainsborough markets was transferred to the Localism service in January 2013. The markets currently operate at an overall annual operating loss of £2000 (2012/13) but measures are being taken to address this and to develop a vibrant and sustainable market within Gainsborough. As this is a complex function with a variety of issues that require addressing, a number of reports and recommendations are currently being progressed through Council Committees and further information can be provided if required from Ruth Farningham, Team Manager, at Ruth.Farningham@west-lindsey.gov.uk

6b. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

The ASB team comprises 2 Community Officers and is managed by a Community Action Officer with an ASB specialism. This service provides advice and support to residents suffering ASB and deals with reported incidents including taking appropriate action to remedy the situation. The reported incidents range from low risk environmental incidents to high risk neighbour disputes and other incidents with a risk of personal injury. The team have over the past 6 months made considerable improvements in recording, monitoring, and reviewing incidents which has released more capacity to work in a more proactive manner. This has included a number of high visibility patrols in a number of neighbourhoods in West Lindsey, specific projects involving local schools related to environmental crime, and participated in a number of initiatives within West Lindsey. It is recognised that one of the weaknesses of this service is the lack of feedback provided to residents who report incidents, and little provision of information to Councillors to keep them informed of the actions taken within their areas. A frustration of this function is the lack of powers in certain incidents that makes resolving some issues challenging. Once the new powers are introduced in 2014 through new legislation, it is anticipated that this will improve the ability to act to resolve specific ASB incidents.

Since 1st October 2013, additional enforcement responsibilities have been undertaken by a Community Action Officer on a part time basis, initially for a 12 month period. This is to deal with lengthy and time consuming prosecution cases, to co-ordinate enforcement within WLDC, and to provide strategic direction in the South West Ward of Gainsborough. Limited resources within the ASB team prevented these responsibilities from being fully implemented and the indications over the past few months are that this will result in a positive addition to the ASB function. This role has resulted in 11 incidents investigated, 6 of which are in relation to fly tipping and 5 are trade waste, 1

prosecution file has been passed to legal services, a £300 Fixed Penalty Notice issued (and paid) for trade waste infringements, and 2 x £50 Fixed Penalty Notices issued for litter. Community Wardens in Saxilby, Nettleton and Caistor have been introduced through the Town Councils which compliments the work of the ASB team at a local level

6c. CCTV

Currently there is one CCTV operator employed by WLDC who provides CCTV coverage Monday to Friday during working hours. Out of hours coverage (from 17:30 to 07:00) is contracted to and provided by Marshalls Yard. These arrangements are operating effectively including joint work with Marshalls Yard and the police in relation to gathering of CCTV evidence for a recent major incident. Joint work is currently taking place across Lincolnshire through the Community Safety Partnership, including specific research being undertaken by West Lindsey, to look at the feasibility of closer partnership working. The feasibility of new systems implemented in other areas is also being researched for the purpose of looking at longer term cost efficiencies, however it is worth pointing out that West Lindsey's operation is one of the most cost effective in Lincolnshire. Regular meetings are held with Marshall's Yard to ensure any issues are dealt with quickly and effectively

6d. Town Centre Warden

There is one Town Centre Warden and this role is carried out for 25 hours per week. It involves a range of flexible duties, but the primary objective is the responsibility of monitoring the condition and cleanliness of the public areas of the town centre and reporting to the appropriate person any remedial action which needs to be undertaken. This role has included a number of pro-active initiatives throughout Gainsborough and in particular the South West Ward. This role assists the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team, particularly in terms of environmental ASB. It also plays a part in assisting Waste Management services with identification of issues that are highlighted to them

6e. Community Action

The areas and the primary roles of the Community Action Officers are described in more detail in 3a above. There are currently 4 Community Action officers who cover the majority of West Lindsey. Their primary role is to "support communities to help themselves". There is also a Senior Community Action Officer who is currently undertaking the more strategic work around the ex-MOD villages, and managing the Community Assets Fund

6f. Enterprising Communities

A key element of the Localism service is to provide communities with the help and support to enable them to help themselves through the development of local services and the management of local assets.

The Enterprising Communities Officer post includes a range of operational and strategic responsibilities including being the lead officer on Community Rights, monitoring and reviewing WLDC's grant funds, voluntary sector monitoring and review including partnership working. This post has recently been recruited to and is due to start imminently, to replace the outgoing officer.

7. Achievements so far

7a. Review of progress of proposals within 7 March 2011 report

Proposal	Achieved	Comments
Increase the Councillor Initiative Fund for each Councillor to £4000 over 2 years	Yes	Councillors have been able to support communities directly and quickly
A District Wide Community Asset Fund of around £1.2 million be made available for larger projects	Yes	Launched in April 2012 73 expressions of interest registered 5 feasibility grants awarded 2 grants / loans awarded Defined strands developed to support community halls, social enterprises, community businesses and community sports clubs
A District wide Community Chest of around £250,000 be made available for smaller projects of local interest	Yes	Launched January 2012 187 community grants awarded £66,023 of grants awarded £85,708 match funding secured Re-launched in April 2013 with increased maximum grant of £500 and £1,000 for activity related to a community-led plan.
To work with the local community, the police and others to develop the role of Neighbourhood Watch in the District	Partially	Although there has not been a specific emphasis on developing Neighbourhood Watch schemes, there has been considerable support provided to a range of community groups throughout the District, including those with specific interest in community safety. Work has been undertaken by the ASB team to address prevention and detection of ASB in neighbourhoods, working in partnership with the Police and other agencies

Proposal	Achieved	Comments
The approach to “Parish Plans” in the District be formalised through the development of a protocol which will set out what is expected from communities and WLDC	Partially	A procedure is in place for communities that wish to develop a Parish Plan including provision of support from WLDC and Community Lincs. 23 Parish Plans have so far been produced. WLDC are currently working in partnership with Community Lincs to develop Community Reviews (a light touch Parish Plan) and 5 are currently being progressed
That the Area Forum approach is strengthened by expanding their number to six and the role and capacity of the Forums is increased so that they are better able to solve local problems and shape places	No	Area arrangements, namely 6 geographical areas, have been put implemented to replace the Area Forums. Area Manager arrangements were developed to provide Councillor and partner engagement
Work is undertaken with the existing Area Forums and key stakeholders in the area to shape the new Area Forums so that they are able to address local needs as efficiently as possible	No	As stated above, 6 geographic areas have been established with a Community Action Officer having responsibility for each area. These officers have supported community action in conjunction with the communities they cover

7b. Further achievements of the Localism service through area working

Market Rasen area
Newtoft Community Centre – Lottery bid through to third round
Market Rasen hub developments for improved community use
Market Rasen Vision supported and developed, including implementation of the Mary Portas pilot
Legsby Church School development support provided
Trent area
Hemswell Cliff Ball Park – asset in the process of being transferred to the community and improvement of the facility taking place. Funding is being applied for to regenerate the facility
Progression of adoption of Capper Road, Hemswell Cliff
Support provided to develop Hemswell Village Hall
Caistor area
Brookenby feasibility study for skate park, community café and / or community shop
Legal support for Brookenby Parish Council to solve issues around power

generation to the community centre
Legal support to Brookenby Parish Council to resolve governance issues around the community centre
Training and development support for Brookenby Parish Council via the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) as part of their Service Level Agreement with WLDC
Support to Caistor Town Council with their community consultation on their Neighbourhood Plan
Funding advice provided for Caistor skate park group
Gainsborough area
In the South West Ward, a new community group made up of local community activists, elected members and officers has been set up and is currently managing a community budget for local groups
South West Ward environmental improvement plan developed and being implemented
South West Ward Steering Group being set up – to look at the wider issues affecting the community including health, employment etc.
GAIN (Gainsborough Area Improvement Network), which is a network of businesses and other organisations, has developed Youth 100, which offers traineeships for young people through local employers
Newly established “Friends of Lea Road station” supported
Feasibility study being developed for the future use of Lea Road School
Fosdyke area
Community review development in the communities of Kexby and Upton
Sports activator to be appointed through funding from the Community Covenant for the Scampton and the ex-MOD sites
Support to the ROSE committee at Scampton (Regeneration Of Scampton Estate)
Working with Torksey Action Group to deliver the actions within their Community Led Plan including securing funding for a new play area
Witham area
Community review development in Langworth
Support to Nettleham Parish Council with a Community library
District wide
8 Community Insight workshops held to consult on WLDC budget for 2014/15
Launch of the Community Asset Fund to support the development of local community enterprises
Digital Access Project rolled out throughout West Lindsey which is and will provide superfast broadband to village Halls and other community venues
Joint Steering Group and Action Plan in place and being implemented to support the ex-MOD communities
Funding secured for 2 years from the Lloyds TSB Foundation (in partnership with Community Lincs) for a dedicated Community Development Worker to work with the ex-MOD communities
National representation including organising and attending a high level round table session with Ministers, MP’s and senior officials on the issues surrounding the MOD disposal policy
“Shaping our future” summit bringing together the ex-MOD communities
Environmental Crime campaign organised and run

Pro-active environmental ASB patrols taken place
Organised a number of wide ranging environmental improvements by Community Payback undertaken within West Lindsey
Offer of support to Parish and Town Councils on a quarterly basis

The Localism team have also contributed toward achievement of the following:

- From April 2013 to November 2013 inclusive, 31,382 volunteer hours provided within West Lindsey
- From April 2013 to October 2013 inclusive £935,807 of external funding secured in West Lindsey
- From April 2012 to October 2013 inclusive £202,757 of internal funding awarded
- From April 2013 to October 2013 inclusive at least 184 Community Groups supported
- From April 2012 to October 2013 £60,250 of Community Chest grants awarded. This resulted directly in £78,338 of additional match funding being levered into West Lindsey

8. Weaknesses so far

There are a number of weaknesses that have been identified and these are being addressed through the working group of the Challenge and Improve Committee. The main areas that have been identified so far are shown in the SWOT analysis detailed in 9 below but a primary identified weakness is the lack of communication by the Localism team to internal and external partners on their achievements, initiatives and activities. This is the reason that the Communications Strategy and Delivery Plan have been developed. Another identified weakness is the inconsistency of the implementation of the Area Manager Arrangements, and this has been addressed through the supporting document highlighting recommendations on the way forward. It is likely that more will be identified through the consultation proposed to take place with Councillors and internal and external partners and these will be analysed and appropriate initiatives introduced to address these, if they are not already covered by the actions highlighted in this report in the Action Plan shown in Section 10 and the accompanying documents

9. SWOT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enthusiastic and passionate team 2. Professional and expert partners 3. Wealth of expertise and knowledge within WLDC 4. Commitment to effectively engage with the communities in West Lindsey 5. Significant and effective collaborative working in some communities 6. Understanding of the needs and wants of many communities in West Lindsey 7. Area working arrangements including agile working 8. Good relationships built up with many communities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Small Localism team with a big agenda 2. Reduced resources in Localism team 3. Expertise in some roles still being developed 4. Area Manager arrangements intermittent 5. Lack of clarity (internally and externally) on the role and purpose of the Localism team 6. Difficult to engage effectively in some communities 7. Lack of follow up to the Community Summits 8. Inconsistency in Community Action support across the 6 areas
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen Area Manager arrangements through re-structure of Heads of Service 2. Community Asset Fund has the power to lever in significant national funding support 3. Re-launch of the Localism agenda and team 4. Develop and implement a communications strategy and Delivery Plan 5. Specific project development and implementation 6. Develop and implement an innovative and creative work programme that contributes towards the Corporate Plan 7. Training and Development opportunities 8. Development of a service Delivery Plan 9. Opportunities for improved partnership working, both internal and external 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internal re-structure leads to uncertainty and anxiety 2. Lack of resources 3. Less external funding available 4. Experienced and invaluable staff member of the Localism team retiring 5. Unrealistic expectations of the Localism team from internal and external partners

10. Next steps – Action Plan

A number of steps need to be taken to ensure that an efficient and effective service is delivered and many of these are being progressed through a working group set up through the Challenge and Improve Committee. The key priorities of the service over the next year are shown in the Action Plan in Appendix 4

More specific details of the actions to be taken by the service will be available through the Service Delivery Plan, Localism Strategy, Communications Strategy and Delivery Plan and other proposals currently under consideration by the Challenge and Improve Committee and the Communities Board

Action	Outcomes	Measures	By when
Develop and implement a Service Delivery Plan	Clear vision, targets and measures for the service	Service Delivery Plan developed and Implemented	July 2014 Being developed
Work with the Challenge and Improve Committee on a number of steps including improved communication on, and engagement with local members	More informed and engaged local members Better understanding of Localism service	Communications Strategy approved Communications Delivery plan approved and implemented	July 2014 Ongoing
Undertake a survey with Councillors to ascertain their views and opinions, analyse the results, and implement appropriate initiatives to rectify any other identified weaknesses	Clear methods of communications and of sharing information agreed Local members needs better understood	Regular and appropriate information sharing provided	Survey Feb – March 2014 Communication – ongoing Survey complete – see Appendix 5
Consolidate good practice within the District and improve the service to ensure all communities can benefit from the Localism service	More consistent support provided throughout the district	Support monitored by area and measured through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of volunteers • Funding secured • No. of groups supported 	Ongoing Review on an annual basis

Actions	Outcomes	Measures	By when
Develop improved partnership working with internal and external partners	More joined up working, less duplication, best use made of available resources	Number of partnership projects, activities and events supported	On-going
Continue to lever in external funding to West Lindsey	To increase resilience and activity in communities	Amount of external funding levered into West Lindsey	On-going
Continue to contribute to increased active volunteering within West Lindsey	To increase activity, resilience and sustainability of communities	Number of volunteer hours within West Lindsey	On-going
Continue to develop effective working in priority areas, and continue to develop effective partnership working in these areas	Improved use of resources by collaborative working Reducing deprivation and increasing opportunities	Number of partnership initiatives developed and implemented	On-going
Development of a Localism Strategy	Creating a clear vision and strategy for the way forward	Strategy developed and adopted	Draft - July 14 Approved – December 14
Provide monitoring and review reports on progress made on key objectives a quarterly basis	Informed and engaged partners	Number of reports produced	Quarterly Localism updates Taking place Annual review report
Implement the Communications Delivery Plan	Improved communication, both internally and externally	Number of initiatives within the Communications Delivery plan implemented	On-going
Progress potential of a further WLDC Voluntary Sector Grant scheme – to fill the gap in current WLDC voluntary sector grants	Sustained voluntary and community organisations	Number of organisations supported Number of residents supported through the organisations	Currently progressing through Committees Final outcome - Autumn 2014

APPENDIX 2

West Lindsey District Council Localism Communications Strategy

1. Introduction

Communication will be key to the success and effectiveness of the Localism function within West Lindsey District Council. It is vital that the first and lasting impressions of anyone (individual, group or service) participating with any of the services within Localism is positive, supportive, professional, informed, and of course beneficial and effective. This will help to create a reputation of trust and professionalism that will be integral to the success of the Localism function throughout West Lindsey. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both the team and its individuals need to be urgently discussed and agreed to ensure that clarity of purpose is achieved and marketed.

Some areas of this strategy relate to areas and aspects of engagement, solely because communication and engagement are intrinsically linked. Communication between partner organisations, both internal and external, will be crucial to delivery of a successful service and to ensure maximum promotion and information sharing, a number of different methods and approaches will need to be adopted. This will need to be monitored and reviewed for effectiveness on a regular basis. This report highlights some of the main areas that should be considered to ensure an effective communications strategy. A separate Communications Delivery Plan is attached to this document (see **Appendix 3**)

2. Aims

- a) To clearly communicate the vision, aims, objectives and desired outcomes to all stakeholders
- b) To ensure that both internal and external partners are informed on and understand the role of the localism programme and initiatives taking place within the service
- c) To ensure that internal and external partners have the opportunity to participate and influence service delivery

- d) To develop effective and mutually beneficial joint working with internal and external partners, including a shared vision
- e) To ensure that all users of the Localism service can access the appropriate team member in the way that they want to, when they need to, and receive the correct information in a timely manner
- f) To ensure that the Localism service is promoted not only throughout West Lindsey, but also on a regional and national level
- g) To ensure that the elected members, internal and external stakeholders, and the communities of West Lindsey know what Localism means in West Lindsey and what it can provide for supporting them to assist in moving towards vibrant and sustainable communities
- h) To ensure that all parties know where and when they can participate and contribute towards the Localism service and what effect that contribution will have
- i) To monitor and review arrangements on a regular basis, including the Communications Delivery Plan (**Appendix 3**) to ensure effective communication is taking place
- j) To ensure that robust, effective and transparent partnership arrangements are agreed
- k) To ensure that, where necessary, robust protocols and policies are in place with other stakeholders

3. Methods

A range of methods of communication (set out in the Delivery Plan in **Appendix 3**) will need to be employed to ensure that all available tools are utilised to ensure maximum impact with as wide a range of people as possible. West Lindsey District Council already have tried and tested methods of communication that many people are familiar with and have confidence in, and these would form part of the approach to actively and aggressively promote the Localism service

4. Internal Communication

This will be key to ensuring that correct and efficient use is made of the service and its staff. There appears to be a lack of clarity within both the Localism team and the wider West Lindsey District Council in relation to the aims, objectives and outcomes of the service, and it is crucial that this is

commonly understood as soon as possible. Understanding throughout the District Council will assist in effective and efficient partnership working and improved use of resources. There are a multitude of opportunities for promotion and publicity within both the Council and West Lindsey as a district. The Localism team will provide an intensive round of engagement with, either formally or informally, as many of the services as possible to advertise and promote Localism and the team to them

5. Communication with the local media

This would be primarily the function of the Communications team and it is vital that good working relationships are built up with this team to make sure that all opportunities are seized. This will increase promotion, marketing and understanding of the service and its benefits to West Lindsey, and will assist in heightening the profile of Localism within the District Council. Additionally, many community and voluntary groups, including Parish Councils, have their own websites and / or newsletters, and it will be important to maximise exposure through these means.

6. Communication with Locally elected members

Elected members are key as Community Champions for their areas and it is essential that they are informed and knowledgeable on the aims, objectives and activities of the Localism service. This will ensure that all local Councillors are informed and aware of what the Localism service can offer and what it will be providing. As the local Councillors are at the heart of their communities and are often used as point of contact by their local electorate, it is important to have them as informed as possible to allow them to provide accurate information and an informed signposting service where appropriate. Progress reports will be provided through the Localism service and the Challenge and Improve Committee

7. Communication with Stakeholders

A range of initiatives and methods will be undertaken to ensure that not only are service providers aware of the Localism function and its benefits, but to make sure that “buy in” is secured from the services and that practitioners actively promote the Localism function and its services where appropriate. It may be appropriate to hold a number of presentations (informal or formal) to as wide a number of stakeholders as possible. This would provide information on exactly what the Localism service can do and what is providing in West Lindsey.

8. Communication with Community and Voluntary Sector

The community and voluntary sector (VCS) has a vibrant presence in West Lindsey, despite the growing funding and economic constraints that are affecting this sector locally and nationally. Already there are strong links with elements of the VCS in West Lindsey including joint work with Community Lincs, the Volunteer Centre, and many of the Parish and Town Councils and local Community Groups. They are committed to work towards improving the lives of the people within their communities and most are keen to engage with any service that can work with them to further this aim. These organisations already have a wide network of community and voluntary sector groups that they already engage with and this will be utilised and further developed through conducting a “mapping” exercise to ensure that community assets and Volunteering numbers are identified. The Localism team will promote their service by participating at their events, engaging with a variety of groups and networks, and distribution of publicity and activities of interest to them. These methods will provide a personal service that allows for questions and discussions to take place to allow people to raise any issues they may have

9. Communication with Partner Organisations

It will be vital to develop and maintain robust relationships with all organisations, voluntary and statutory, to ensure promotion and information can be channelled through these methods. This can be accomplished through continuing to provide a professional service including attending events, supporting existing and new initiatives, and attending mutually beneficial meetings and forums. There are a wide range of Partnerships groups within West Lindsey and it will be important for the Localism team to support and engage with them on a regular basis, and to ensure that these Partnerships have a good solid understanding of the role and remit of the Localism service.

The Strategic partnerships that the Localism service will communicate and engage with will be crucial to influencing the development of strategies, policies and identification of priorities that will affect the Localism agenda for West Lindsey.

10. Communication with National and Regional Organisations

In order for the Localism service to receive support and access to a wider base of knowledge, skill, expertise and information, good working relationship and liaison will need to be developed and maintained with a range of organisations, but in particular with Lincolnshire County Council and other

regional bodies. Liaison with other District Councils can be mutually beneficial to develop to create an environment where the free exchange of best practice and learning can be shared. Good practice has already been shared at a regional and national level (with East Herts Council and the LGA) and this should continue to take place to keep the profile of WLDC as high as possible to ensure maximum impact and influence at a national level

11. Monitoring and Reviewing

This strategy will, once endorsed, be reviewed on an annual basis through the Communities Board, along with a review of the effectiveness of the Localism service. The Communications Delivery Plan will be monitored and reviewed on a 6 monthly basis as a minimum requirement, and more frequently if appropriate. This process will be carried out through feedback mechanisms being developed put in place to provide 360% feedback from all those who use and work alongside the service and will assist to performance manage the Localism function. Feedback will also be requested, and appropriate methods developed, from others who engage with the Localism team, whether they are an individual, a voluntary or community organisation, a statutory provider or a service within West Lindsey District Council. This will be integral to reviewing where changes need to be made to ensure the service provided is as effective as possible, in terms of both communication and delivery.

12. Conclusion

As stated earlier, effective communication will be key to delivery of an effective and successful service. Additional opportunities for promotion, publicity and positive marketing of the Localism service should be taken where they occur and flexibility and creativity will be needed to ensure that maximum positive exposure and promotion is achieved

APPENDIX 3

Localism – Communications Delivery Plan

	Activity	When	Aims	Outcomes
1	Creatively promote through developing Minerva Intranet and Extranet Localism pages	Dec 13 and on-going	Maximise currently available avenues for promotion To provide a user friendly, informative, interesting and interactive site	Informed users of site Information shared Service promoted
2	Develop WLDC webpages for Localism	Feb 14 and on-going	Maximise currently available avenues for promotion To provide a user friendly, informative, interesting and interactive site	Informed users of site Information shared Service promoted
3	Liaise with Comms team for internal and external marketing and promotion of the service and its benefits through positive news	On-going	Showcase success stories to promote the service Demonstrate the benefits of engagement with the service	Increased engagement with the service Increased positive impact in the communities
4	Articles for local media and statutory, community and voluntary group newsletters – through Comms team	On-going	To promote in a positive light To demonstrate the benefit of engaging with the Localism service	Widespread recognition and promotion of the service and it's benefits
5	Investigate and develop methods of promotion through social media	On-going	Increased audience for promotion and information sharing	Informed users of site Information shared Service promoted

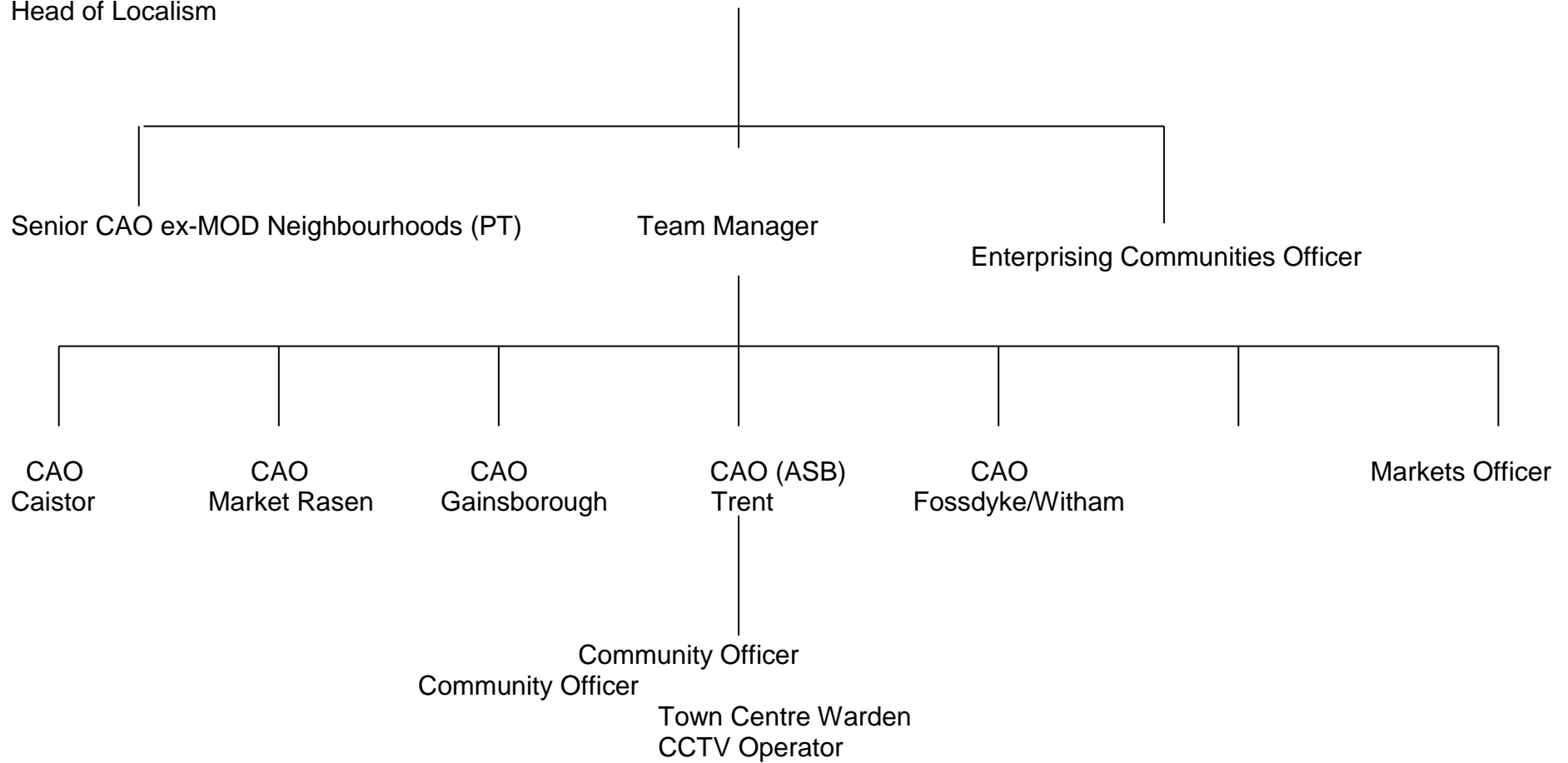
	Activity	When	Aims	Outcomes
6	Members survey undertaken	Jan – Mar 14	To inform the consultation undertaken in 6 above Ensure all Councillors have an opportunity to provide their views	Will provide a benchmark for satisfaction from members More informed, engaged and supportive members
7	Attend external events and sessions to promote Localism service, grants, volunteering opportunities etc	On-going	To develop an understanding of the service with as wide an audience as possible Promote available grants	Increased engagement by the service Increased grant applications Increased volunteering
8	Team Manager to attend internal team meetings for all services	On-going	Promote service to WLDC Identify opportunities for joint working	Informed Officers Effective partnership working
9	Design and produce a quarterly newsletter / fact sheet / action plan on current activity in each area. Use Minerva and contacts	From Jan14 onwards	Provide information on on-going initiatives Advertise successes Encourage participation	Informed audience Feedback provided
10	Hold an initial meeting with elected members, Community Action Officer and Team Manager for each area	May – July 2014	To consult with them on how they wish to be informed by and engage with the Localism service To provide a dialogue for issues and initiatives in each area	Informed and engaged Councillors Improved understanding of the Localism service Improved communication
11	Mapping exercise of community assets	Jan 14	Understanding of communities Assist with Community Rights legislation	Improved understanding of community needs

	Activity	When	Aims	Outcomes
12	Mapping exercise of demographics	April - June 14	Contribute towards priority setting Clear understanding of communities	Accessible and useable local information Improved understanding of community needs
13	Provide outreach sessions for public access to Localism team	On-going	Encourage use of the service Promote Community Action officers in their area	Rural communities will have greater access, influence and engagement
14	Appropriate and relevant training for the team	On-going	To ensure team members have appropriate skills to promote, deliver and develop the service	A skilled and knowledgeable team
15	Promotion of WLDC Localism approach through regional and national organisations	On-going	To promote WLDC approach to other Councils and organisations Share best practice and learn from experience	Best practice shared and lessons learnt WLDC promoted and marketed Potential opportunity to provide a “consultancy / expert” service
16	Circulation of a Parish quarterly newsletter	Quarterly	To promote the work of the Localism Service To provide opportunities for joint work Improved communications	Improved communication More joined up work and initiatives
17	Set up Parish Council cluster meetings	Annual	To promote the work of the Localism Service To provide opportunities for joint work Improved communications	Improved communication More joined up work and initiatives NB. This will be further investigated for effectiveness

APPENDIX 4

Current Structure Localism

Head of Localism



APPENDIX 5

West Lindsey District Council Member Localism Survey 2014

As part of the Localism review, we want to know how members feel about the Localism service including areas where the service performs well, areas where the service needs to improve, your experience of the team, and how you wish to be kept up to date with initiatives and progress. The more information you can provide us with on your own experiences, the better informed we will be to improve the Localism service within West Lindsey. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, the answers to which will form part of future recommendations for the Localism service moving forward. It would be very much appreciated if you could spend a little time in completing this questionnaire. If you have any questions or queries please contact Ruth Farningham, Team Manager, on ruth.farningham@west-lindsey.gov.uk.

1. How satisfied are you with the Localism service within West Lindsey? Please rate from 1 to 10 with 1 being very poor and 10 being excellent. **Please tick one box only**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	0	1	1	3	2	1	0	1	1
(0.0%)	(0.0%)	(10.0%)	(10.0%)	(30.0%)	(20.0%)	(10.0%)	(0.0%)	(10.0%)	(10.0%)

2. Are you aware of the Localism team, who they are and what they do in your area? **Please tick one box only**

6 Yes
(60.0%)
4 No
(40.0%)

- 3.a Do you have regular contact with the Localism team? **Please tick one box only**

6 Yes
(60.0%)
4 No
(40.0%)

- 3.b If yes, who is this with? **Please give as much detail as possible**

7 (100.0%)

- 1: Joanne
3: All
4: Joanna Riddell
5: Joanna Riddell is head of Localism and Paul Compton is our local contact, through the GAIN meetings.
6: Paul Crompton, Joanna Riddell, and more recently Ruth Farningham,
7: Ruth as I am involved in this review.
8: The most appropriate officer for the specific enquiry or project.

4.a Do you know who the Community Action Officer is for your area? **Please tick one box only**

6 Yes
(60.0%)

4 No
(40.0%)

4.b If you answered yes to question 4.a do you have contact with them? **Please tick one box only**

5 Yes
(71.4%)

2 No
(28.6%)

5. Are you aware of the aims and objectives of the Localism Service? **Please tick one box only**

5 Yes
(55.6%)

4 No
(44.4%)

6. What do you feel are the main strengths of the Localism service? Please be as open as possible? **Please give as much detail and be as open as possible**

9 (100.0%)

1: Looks good in Gainsborough, some good work being done with the Police.

2: Keeping members of the area groups informed.

3: Knowledge

5: Picking up issues from the local community groups.

6: Collecting information, linking volunteer groups, encouraging ambitions for the area.

Attempting to reduce duplication of effort and provision of resource. Highlighting funding streams available. Managing GAIN. Advising on skills needed to develop projects.

Attending various meetings in the area to communicate the Council standpoint and role of volunteers. Having a person to contact who has knowledge of the local area . Developing and encouraging contact between the Council and businesses and other agencies underpinning the local community.

7: Good officers so it has potential

8: In acting as advisors to and enablers for community ideas and projects.

9: I have no idea. No one has ever really given me a briefing about how the council is structured.

10: I believe the aims are good, it is the lack of time and personnel and cash to sort out LOCALISM.

7. What do you feel are the main weaknesses of the Localism service? **Please give as much detail and be as open as possible**
10 (100.0%)

- 1: Nothing seems to be happening in the Witham Area
- 2: We do not get any feedback from the area managers. it would be useful to know what the people living in the areas know about localism, And if they feel they have a part to play.
- 3: Lack of feedback, too thinly stretched, too many gentle nudges and very little firm action.
- 4: communication with Cllrs and the area communities has not been adequate. How many individual area meetings have been held since the areas where formed. Communities are capable of recognising their needs but struggle on their own to del. regular contact is required to maintain a flow of progressive work within communities.
- 5: No vision for Gainsborough in this millennial year of it being the Capital of the country. What a wasted opportunity.
- 6: Less of an issue in Gainsborough than some of the areas perhaps? It seems that we do not yet engage closely with local health service providers, who may be unaware of the support the Council may be able to give in partnership. Should we try to attract a local GP to attend GAIN (may find none of them live locally)
- 7: For much of West Lindsey it seems to mean nothing.
- 8: That the role could potentially be seen as being a relatively minor one in the context of officers' other responsibilities.
- 9: I have no idea who is in it. The area meetings seem to have stopped.
- 10: Councillors and Parish councils as a whole do not understand what is meant by Localism-THEY Need Information!

8. From the end of January 2014, the Localism service will be providing members with quarterly updates by e-mail on the following:
- a. achievements in each area,
 - b. a summary of Anti-Social behaviour statistics, activities and achievements for West Lindsey

Is there anything else would you like from the Localism team? **Please give as much detail as possible**

8 (100.0%)

- 1: It would be good to have some action and have a look at what is important to individual areas - one size does not fit all.
- 3: Fpn & Court reports. Lots of them
- 4: regular contact, helping to find solutions.
- 6: Letting us know where volunteer groups have realisable schemes to benefit the community, listing issues which reduce likelihood of some projects progressing. Alerting us to opportunities to help, or to areas of concern that we should know about. Encouraging the ward Councillors to share information about our community's health and wellbeing. Informing us about strengths and weaknesses in the local economy , and where the Council could have a supportive role
- 7: How the localism team can help their area.
- 8: No, but I believe the opportunity to recognise and share the achievements in each area to be by far the more important.
- 9: Not at this time.
- 10: LOCALISM IN PLANNING! LOCALISM IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT!

9. Are there any other comments you wish us to take into account?

4 (100.0%)

- 2: The area summits started very well. Only we don't meet any more, So the momentum has been lost
- 6: A new venture which has concentrated attention on the need to know what are the issues and problems, as well as achievements in our area, it is focussing attention on information that will shape the Council's priorities short , medium and long term - hopefully thus making it a more effective Council, serving the actual rather than perceived needs of local resident and businesses
- 8: No, but thank you for the offer.
- 9: Nope.