



PRCC.26 15/16

**Prosperous Communities
Committee**

Date: 29th October 2015

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Localism – Future Priorities and Review

Report by:

Chief Executive

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

The purpose of this report is to review past Localism policies and to agree priorities for Localism based on the corporate plan priorities agreed.

RECOMMENDATION:

That committee note and approve the review of the report and agree priorities for future years.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

N/A

Financial:

FIN REF 83/16

All priorities will be delivered within resources and budgets.

Staffing :

Staff have been consulted on the proposals and the paper reflects views.

Roles will be refocussed and re-organised to reflect the new priorities and the financial challenges facing local government. Where this is the case additional consultation will take place in line with HR policies.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

A focus on access to Services, is the basis for more resources to be devoted to subjects such as rural transport.

Risk Assessment :

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

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

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Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

x

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

x

No

1. Background

- 1.1. The Localism Strategy for West Lindsey has been part of the Entrepreneurial Vision for the organisation and how we serve our communities since 2011.
- 1.2. Since 2010 with dwindling public sector funding to the public sector has meant a focus on:
 - a Developing priority neighbourhoods such as ex MOD villages and South West Ward of Gainsborough.
 - b Developing Community Enterprise and groups to help themselves and others.
 - c Helping to increase volunteering and helping people to help others and themselves.
 - d Geographic areas of the District to develop a network of parishes and councillors in those areas to identify and deliver community action to resolve issues that are parish, village or neighbourhood specific.
- 1.3. Over the last five years much has been achieved.
 - a An overall MOD strategy and support for development of community groups has resulted in funding for community facilities, prevented closure of a RAF base with multi million pound investment at Scampton. Development of community facilities at Hemswell, Brookenby and Newtoft. Development of Enterprise Parks at Hemswell and Brookenby. A recognition of the strategic and economic position of Hemswell and Scampton with other assets along the A15 corridor influencing economic and devolution strategies. This work has also achieved in excess of £100k for Hemswell in order to provide a ball park and in excess of £800k in order to build a new village hall in Newtoft. This physical work has been complemented by the development of community partnerships at Hemswell Cliff, around the Brookenby Community Centre and support for a wide range of community groups.
 - b Work in the South West Ward has achieved mixed success with reduction in empty houses. However issues such as environment crime and community instances of disorder continue to impact on what is otherwise a thriving community. In development are a strategic multi-agency partnership, a multi-agency tactical group and resources re-aligned so that additional support can be given to tackle environmental crime and other priorities within the ward. Elsewhere in Gainsborough an urban shop is being development in Park Springs and options for the future sustainability and viability of the Community Centre is progressing.
 - c Use of community action grants and enterprise funds has seen stronger existing enterprises such as community shops and cafes or new groups such as the Lancaster Trust with the organisation, vision and commitment to improve their neighbourhoods. This has included the development, implementation and administration of grant schemes, including the award of

190 grants totalling £111,725 through the Councillor Initiative Fund, 155 grants totalling £73,525 through the Community Chest and 42 grants and six loans totalling £568,160 through the Community Assets Fund. As well as the Council's input external funding of £2,615,070 has been levered into the District.

- d The Council has reviewed and supported investment in the voluntary sector, helping to sustain a strong infrastructure vital for community development. Citizens Advice, Volunteer Bureau, Community Lincs, Parish Councils and the faith community are all seen as key anchors for helping to grow community groups and develop areas. In addition 11 contracts have been developed with and awarded to VCS organisations benefiting West Lindsey communities totalling £636,600 over a three year period. In terms of volunteering during 2014/15 165 projects were supported to assist community groups in delivery improvements within their communities. This has resulted in 7,180 volunteer hours in 2013/14 and 41,788 volunteer hours in 2014/15.
- e Elected members through use of their Councillor Initiative Fund have helped local communities grow and used their funds to leverage external funding and volunteering.
- f The Localism team has supported the achievement of these successes and helped to focus on increased funding and volunteering. This has helped position West Lindsey as a Council that has a national reputation for its understanding of and investment in community development.
- g The area/geographic specific working and profile of areas has not been as successful due to senior management capacity with other work priorities, issues being more thematic or specific to villages or an area that does not meet the six areas defined.

2. Challenges for the Future

2.1. Five years on the District and Council faces some similar and some new challenges which influences its priorities for future years.

- a MOD sites – The key challenges now are about infrastructure and complex issues such as management companies and their links to local parish councils.
- b South West Ward – a focus on enviro crime, ASB and other behavioural issues that impact on educational attainment, mental health, employability etc.
- c Rural connectivity and access to services. With ageing populations in our sparsely populated rural areas, unable to access cars and reducing public transport services in the light of cuts, access to vital services such as health will become an increasing challenge. In addition areas such as Hemswell Enterprise Park have the confidence and ability to grow with all the right

conditions. A key hindrance is the availability of transport for a workforce market that might not have access to a car.

- d Developing our community self-help via social media and technology. These platforms are already successful with self-help for public services, Facebook and Twitter. Future opportunities that technology presents have not been fully harnessed and need to be addressed.
- e Mainstreaming community development and self-help across all Council services. Again whilst Localism has been successful there needs to be more focus on delivering e-service outcomes through developing the community to help themselves and others.
- f Achieving greater funding to communities and groups and mainstreaming funding achieved by services for both the community, the Council or area as a means to achieve high level outcomes for all areas whether public protection, health, economy, housing, etc.
- g Further financial challenges of reducing funds to councils over the next four years.

3. Proposals

- 3.1. MOD work becomes part of business as usual other than specific projects. Therefore infrastructure will be part of strategic planning functions.
- 3.2. A move from a focus on geographic areas of the District to a focus on rural and urban projects, programmes and strategies to resolve specific issues based on evidence, e.g. Rural Transport.
- 3.3. A greater use of digital and social media technology to achieve greater community action.
- 3.4. Focus resources in areas where there is greatest potential to draw down funds into the Council and the District.
- 3.5. Increase delivery through partnership and devolution work.
- 3.6. Use whole Council transformation model for mainstreaming across all services an ethos of greater self-help, engagement and external funding to help communities help themselves and others, and act as a key strand for reducing demand for public services.