



**Prosperous Communities  
Committee**

**Tuesday, 22 October 2019**

**Subject: Public Realm Recommendations**

Report by:	Executive Director for Economic and Commercial Growth
Contact Officer:	Grant White Enterprising Communities Manager  grant.white@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	To update on progress of completed actions and work in-progress following the approval of Public Realm Recommendations by Prosperous Communities Committee on 29th January 2019.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. Members acknowledge the actions completed and currently in-progress for Public Realm Recommendations 1, 2 and 4.
2. Members approve the planned actions for Public Realm Recommendation 3
3. Members approve the proposed changes to the Community Grants Programme for Public Realm Recommendation 5.

## IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

There are no legal implications on the Council linked to this report. Legal advice will be obtained in order to complete Public Realm Recommendation 3.

**(N.B.) Where there are legal implications the report MUST be seen by the MO**

### **Financial : FIN/109/20/SL**

Any costs arising as a result of the actions referenced within the report will be contained within existing service budget provision, specifically;

- Legal services costs (if there are any) for grass verge review work will be met within service budgets.
- Changes to delivery of community grants programme will not impact on the agreed budget so no further funds are required or being requested.
- Litter picking support scheme has been launched using existing service resources so no further requirements or pressures.

**(N.B.) All committee reports MUST have a Fin Ref**

### **Staffing :**

There are no staffing implications. Delivery of activity identified in this report will be using existing staff resources.

**(N.B.) Where there are staffing implications the report MUST have a HR Ref**

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

There are no equality and diversity implications for this report.

### **Data Protection Implications :**

There are no data protection implications for this report.

### **Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :**

There are no significant climate related risks or opportunities for this report. Public Realm Recommendation 2 has now resulted in an enhanced litter picking support offer for local communities which may play a role in protecting local environments.

### **Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations :**

There are no considerations for this report.

**Health Implications:**

There are no significant health implications for this report. Public Realm Recommendation 2 has now resulted in an enhanced litter picking support offer for local communities which may play a role in supporting more volunteering. Volunteering can play an important role in supporting an individual's physical and mental wellbeing through engaged activity and wider social interactions.

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

C&I Committee – 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018:  
“Public Realm – C&I ToR Update Report”

C&I Committee – 26<sup>th</sup> June 2018:  
“Public Realm Interim Report”

C&I Committee – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019:  
“Public Realm Report”

PC Committee – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019:  
“Public Realm Report”

**Risk Assessment :**

--

**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**

**Key Decision:**

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

**Yes**

**No**

# 1 Introduction

1.1 During 2018 the Challenge & Improvement Committee established a member Task and Finish Group to scrutinise the effectiveness of services offered in maintaining rural public realm.

1.2 A delivery plan was approved and a survey conducted with parish and town councils. The results of the survey were analysed by the Task and Finish group along with additional information obtained. A final report was approved by the Challenge & Improvement Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 which contained a number of recommendations on areas of responsibility held by West Lindsey District Council. These recommendations were then submitted to Prosperous Communities Committee for consideration and approval.

1.3 The Public Realm Recommendations were subsequently approved by Prosperous Communities Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

1.4 The Public Realm Recommendations approved are:

- **Public Realm Recommendation 1:**

Undertake to review existing communication and reporting channels between WLDC and parish/town councils

- **Public Realm Recommendation 2:**

Establish a scheme or clear suite of tools/support that WLDC can provide to parish/town councils to support local action on dog fouling, fly-tipping and littering

- **Public Realm Recommendation 3:**

Undertake a review of legal responsibilities for grass verges and explore options for transfer of ownership/responsibility with LCC

- **Public Realm Recommendation 4:**

Review current ability to provide community support and advice to parish/town councils on local issues and community projects

- **Public Realm Recommendation 5:**

Consider the need to re-allocate funds within the Community Grants Programme to respond to and support local issues around public realm

1.5 This report presents Members with an update on actions completed so far and future planned work in order to complete all the approved public realm recommendations.

1.6 For public realm recommendation 5 this report contains proposed changes for the Community Grants Programme.

## **2. Public Realm Recommendations**

The following lists the public realm recommendations along with initial reasoning identified in previous Challenge & Improvement Committee reports and then details of actions completed, work due to be completed or further recommendations for decision.

### **2.1 Public Realm Recommendation 1**

Undertake to review existing communication and reporting channels between WLDC and parish/town councils.

#### **Reason:**

It was highlighted in the survey results that the response from WLDC to reports made by parish/town councils does not always meet expectations. Coupled with on-going issues around awareness of how to report and who is responsible for what service, a review of how WLDC communicates and identification of any areas for improvements is now timely.

#### **Actions:**

1. A new parish newsletter is currently in development by the council's Communications Team. This is planned to begin during October 2019. This action was previously approved by Prosperous Communities Committee.
2. An updated West Lindsey Parish Charter is currently being developed. A separate report setting out proposals to consult with parish and town councils on a new charter will be presented to Prosperous Communities Committee before February 2020. A Parish Charter is used to agree standards of communication and partnership working between local authorities and parish and town councils. The consultation will enable further exploration of any current issues with communication between parish/town councils and the district council.

### **2.2 Public Realm Recommendation 2**

Establish a scheme or clear suite of tools/support that WLDC can provide to parish/town councils to support local action on dog fouling, fly-tipping and littering.

#### **Reason:**

Dog fouling, fly-tipping and littering are offences that cause issues in many rural communities. WLDC already provides support such as litter picking equipment, dog waste bins and signage. This provision is not actively promoted or clearly communicated to parish/town councils as being available. A clear scheme or suite of tools/support would help local communities to tackle these issues.

**Actions:**

1. A new litter picking support scheme has now been launched. The scheme allows individuals and groups to apply to receive litter picking and safety equipment. The ability to loan equipment has also been retained for one-off litter picking events. The scheme has been established using existing resources and making use of online request and reporting tools. In support of this new scheme an online litter collection form has been created allowing groups to request a collection online following any litter picking activity.
2. Trail cameras are in use by the Council's enforcement officers to help gather evidence of fly-tipping offences.
3. The Council has provided dog fouling signs as part of supporting the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for dog fouling in West Lindsey. New requests for dog fouling signage can be considered where there is a need in a local parish.

**2.3 Public Realm Recommendation 3**

Undertake a review of legal responsibilities for grass verges and explore options for transfer of ownership/responsibility with LCC

**Reason:**

Many parish/town councils already perform grass cutting and green space management. Some of these councils may want to take on additional grass cutting of grass verges in order to provide a consistent approach and service locally. A key barrier to this has been the lack of knowledge and understanding around legal ownership and responsibility for grass verges. A review of legal responsibilities and the options for transfer from LCC, WLDC and other agencies will help provide a clear understanding for local parish/town councils.

**Actions:**

1. Work to complete this recommendation is scheduled to begin in January 2020. This will include liaising with Lincolnshire County Council officers and requesting specific actions from legal services. A guide will be produced to provide advice to parish/town councils around grass verge responsibilities and any options open to them.

**2.4 Public Realm Recommendation 4**

Review current ability to provide community support and advice to parish/town councils on local issues and community projects.

**Reason:**

The survey results highlighted a number of specific local issues. The meetings of the Task & Finish Group also included discussion of specific issues in communities some of which occur in multiple places across the district. There is an expectation from parish/town councils that WLDC will help address local issues. It is important to review the current ability to provide support and advice on local issues and WLDC's responsibility and ability to help tackle or resolve them.

**Actions:**

1. A review of the Council's Communities Service structure was completed in March 2019. Following approval by Management Team the structure review included new posts within the Communities Service to meet current needs and to help deliver key elements of the council's Corporate Plan.

**The service structure is:**

- Communities Manager (Grant White)
- Senior Community Action Officer (Shayleen Towns)
- Senior Project Officer – Employment & Skills (Amanda Bouttell)
- Community Engagement Officer – Funding (Matthew Snee)
- Project Support Officer (Stephanie Beattie)
- Community Rail Partnership Officer (Rachel Martel)
- Community Broadband Officer (Carl Knight)

**The service covers the following work areas:****1. Services**

- 1.1 Armed Forces Community Covenant
- 1.2 Community Grants & Funding
- 1.3 Community Rights
- 1.4 Consultation and Engagement
- 1.5 Hemswell Managed Estate
- 1.6 Shop & Pub Watch Schemes
- 1.7 Voluntary Sector Development

**2. Strategic Programmes**

- 2.1 Community Rail Partnership
- 2.2 Hemswell Cliff Regeneration
- 2.3 Place Based Strategy (Social Regeneration)
- 2.4 RAF Scampton Community
- 2.5 Rural Public Realm
- 2.6 Transport Programme
- 2.7 Employment & Skills Partnership
- 2.8 Rural Broadband

**3. Community Assets**

- 3.1 CCTV and Monitoring
- 3.2 Community Defibrillators
- 3.3 WLDC Streetlights
- 3.4 WLDC Green Spaces
- 3.5 Village Hall Wi-Fi

## 2.5 **Public Realm Recommendation 5**

Consider the need to re-allocate funds within the Community Grants Programme to respond to and support local issues around public realm.

### **Reason:**

The survey results have highlighted potential areas where grant funding support could help to improve public realm. With WLDC's Community Grants Programme about to enter year 2 of 5 there may be benefits to reviewing its current remit and exploring opportunities to make changes that would enable local public realm needs to be supported.

### **Proposed Changes:**

To ensure the council's Community Grants Programme is able to respond to changing demands for funding, officers have reviewed current activity and explored challenges facing community projects seeking funding. Many medium to large sized community projects are finding it increasingly difficult to secure sources of external funding. This not only impacts on projects involving public realm but many other areas including health & wellbeing, sports/recreation and community facilities.

To increase the flexibility and effectiveness of the Community Grants Programme the following changes are proposed:

- a) **Change the standard match funding percentage to 50% of total project costs.**
  - Currently the match funding percentage we will fund is 30% of total project costs.
  - By adjusting the match funding criteria of the programme it will enable the council to continue supporting projects in the face of growing challenges of securing external match funding.
  - By not funding more than 50% it still positions the council as an enabling funder of community projects and aligns with our available finances for this programme.
  
- b) **Award more than £8,000 in exceptional circumstances up to a maximum of £20,000.**
  - This will enable the council to support larger scale projects where it can be demonstrated there will be significant community benefit and increased amounts of external match funding secured into the district.
  - The guidance we issued will be updated to advise applicants to contact the council if seeking more than £8,000 for initial discussions.
  - All decisions on awards will continue to be made by the Community Grants Panel which is a Member Working Group.



**c) Award short term 0% interest loans to support cash flow on community projects.**

- This will enable the council to support community projects where the initial cash flow can cause issues whilst waiting for external funding to be paid or recovering VAT.
- The same standard criteria and eligibility would be applied to any short term loans.
- Appropriate financial checks will always be completed to ensure financial compliance and safeguards.
- All decisions on awards will continue to be made by the Community Grants Panel which is a Member Working Group.

**d) Enable the creation of one-off or time limited focus funds**

- These would be for specific events or activities and use existing grant budgets.
- An example includes a focus fund to support community projects during national weeks of action around protecting the local environment.
- The same standard criteria and eligibility would be applied to any focus funds.
- All decisions on awards will continue to be made by the Community Grants Panel which is a Member Working Group.

2.6 As part of annual reporting on the Community Grants Programme, officers will include additional reporting to assess the impact of any changes approved.

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 Members acknowledge the actions completed and currently in-progress for Public Realm Recommendations 1, 2 and 4.

3.2 Members approve the planned actions for Public Realm Recommendation 3

3.3 Members approve the proposed changes to the Community Grants Programme for Public Realm Recommendation 5.