



# Communities at Risk Policy Document

Version 0.1

**A placed based approach to supporting and empowering communities at risk**

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 West Lindsey is a large rural district with a diverse mix of communities. Communities can be a place such as a town or village but also a group of people that form a community through a shared characteristic.
- 1.2 The West Lindsey Communities at Risk Policy Document has been developed to ensure that Council services meet the needs of the most vulnerable and at risk members of our community.
- 1.3 Working with partners we shall identify and build on the positive work currently being done and recognise what more can be done to continue to improve the lives of everyone in West Lindsey.
- 1.4 The policy document sets out our approach to supporting communities at risk and how we respond to new and emerging issues that contribute to vulnerability. We shall develop and maintain action plans for identified communities at risk outlining how the Council and partners shall take pro-active and positive action.

# 2. What or who is a community at risk?

- 2.1 A community can become at risk through compounding environmental and socio-economic factors that have a negative impact on the environment, the community and the people living there. Typically a community will be seen as a specific locality such as a neighbourhood, village, town or area. The size of a community at risk can range from an entire place down to individual streets.
- 2.2 A community at risk can also be defined by a common factor rather than just geographical location. Examples of a community defined by commonality include:
  - people with disabilities and health issues
  - those who are rurally, socially or digitally isolated
  - people in debt or those who require financial assistance
  - those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
  - older people
  - migrant workers, ethnic minority groups, refugees and asylum seekers
  - the long-term unemployed and those living in poverty
  - victims of and people at risk of anti-social behaviour and domestic violence
  - people in need of support to access food or heat their homes

### 3. Context

- 3.1 West Lindsey District Council’s Corporate Plan 2019-2023 outlines a number of strategic objectives that aim to reduce vulnerability.
- 3.2 The plan sets out our vision that:

**“West Lindsey is a great place to be where people, businesses and communities can thrive and reach their potential”**

- 3.3 The Communities at Risk Policy Document will play a key role in helping to deliver this wider vision and making improvements under the following strategic focal points within our Corporate Plan:

Our People	Our Place
Health & Wellbeing	Economy
Vulnerable Groups & Communities	Housing Growth
Education & Skills	Public Safety & Environment

- 3.4 We will use information and data to provide an evidence base to direct Council resources, ensure that the needs of communities are understood and that the activities undertaken have a clear context and rationale. It will help inform future Service Plans and the wider Corporate Plan.
- 3.5 To view the Council’s Corporate Plan 2019-2023 please visit: [www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/corporateplan](http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/corporateplan)

### 4. Aim of this policy document

- 4.1 The primary aim of this policy document is:

**“To guide and direct appropriate responses in order to create strong and self-reliant communities and promote positive life choices for disadvantaged residents”**

## 5. Identifying a community at risk

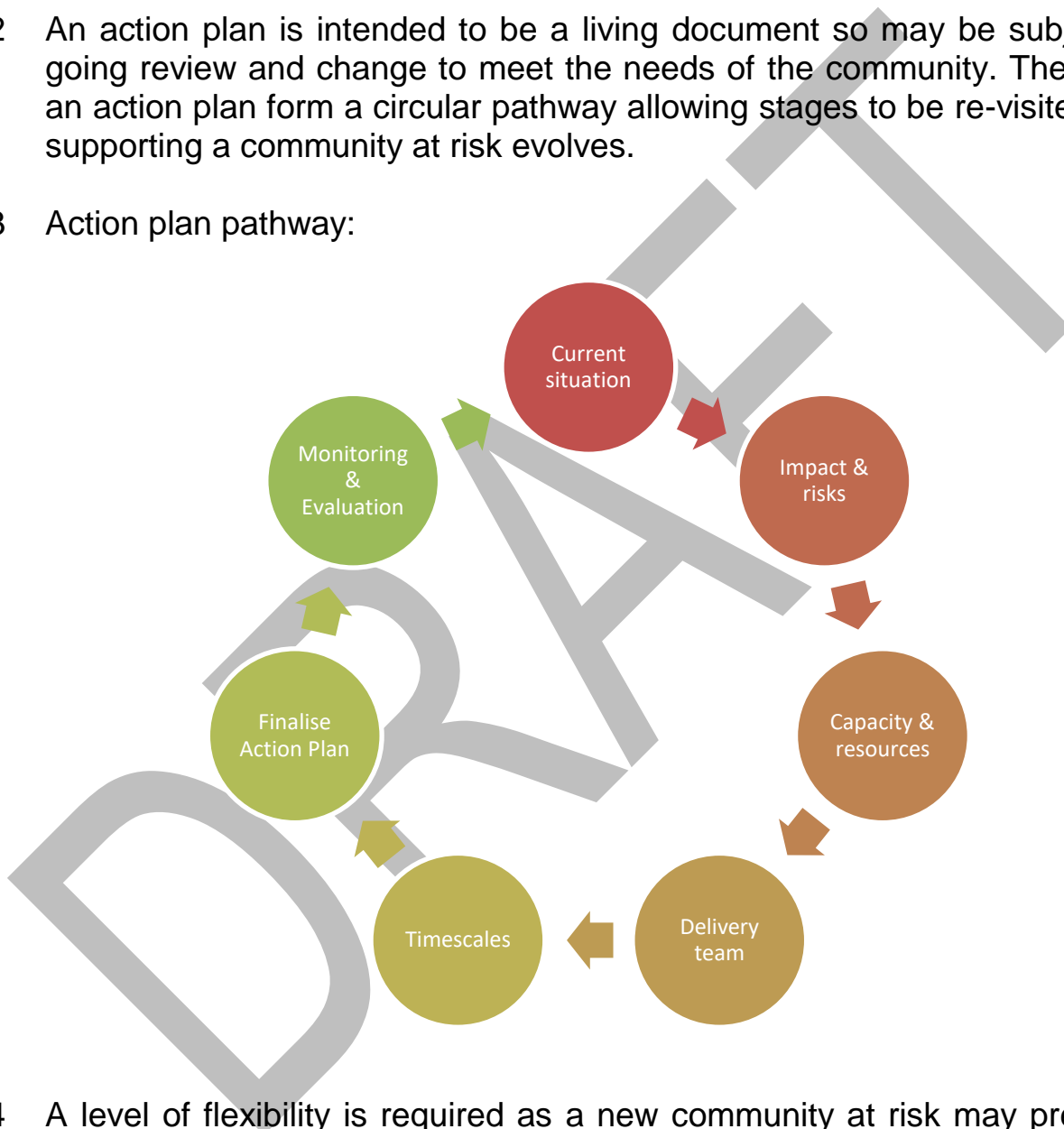
- 5.1 There are a wide range of factors and information that can help identify a community that is or is becoming vulnerable. The policy document includes a mechanism for identifying and triggering a response to an emerging community risk. This new mechanism is detailed later in this document.
- 5.2 The following are key sources that can help highlight and then identify a new or emerging community at risk:
- **National, regional and local data**
    - > New data that identifies an issue
    - > New interpretation of data that identifies an issue
    - > Changes in data that show a negative increase or decrease
  - **Customer interactions**
    - > Increase/decrease in specific requests (i.e. housing assistance)
    - > Increase in complaints about a specific issue
  - **Partnerships and stakeholders**
    - > Issues raised/reported to partners
    - > Information or intelligence received from partners
    - > Issues impacting partners and their services/customers
  - **Specific event**
    - > Campaign group forming
    - > Protest or petition organised
    - > Incident leading to escalation (i.e. a serious crime being committed)
  - **Member or officer report**
    - > Report of issue from a member or officer
    - > Issues reported directly to member or officer
- 5.3 Each year we produce a State of the District Report. This report provides the most up to date information on a range of topics including health, housing, population, demographics and socio-economic data.
- 5.4 Ward and/or Parish Profile data will also be used where available to help identify positive and negative changes which may result in a community risk.

## 6. Community Risk Register

- 6.1 The Community Risk Register is a recording and management tool to support the effective response and delivery of actions for identified vulnerable communities.
- 6.2 The register is a corporate resource and accessible by all service areas to ensure all work linked to a vulnerable community is managed in one central place. It will allow joint collaboration between teams and partners on specific areas of work and avoid duplication.
- 6.3 The Community Risk Register includes:
- **Database of communities at risk** – containing:
    - > List of vulnerable communities along with key information
    - > Action plans for specific vulnerable communities
    - > Reporting and monitoring information
    - > Evidence and data gathered
  - **Action Plans**
    - > Action plan templates to achieve consistent approach
    - > Details of specific services or activities being delivered
    - > Provides supporting data for the service or activity being delivered
    - > Sets out monitoring and evaluation methods
    - > Details any resources required
  - **Community at Risk Trigger**
    - > Trigger reporting mechanism for emerging vulnerable communities
    - > Trigger available to use by officers, members and partners
    - > Information obtained feeds into the database for assessment/action
- 6.4 The register forms part of the Council's existing safeguarding reporting system to ensure close partnership working between both individual and wider community safeguarding risks.

## 7. Action plans

- 7.1 For any identified community at risk an Action Plan shall be created. This will guide any services or activities to address the issues identified. By using a standard template we will have a consistent approach which can easily be shared with wider partners.
- 7.2 An action plan is intended to be a living document so may be subject to on-going review and change to meet the needs of the community. The stages of an action plan form a circular pathway allowing stages to be re-visited as work supporting a community at risk evolves.
- 7.3 Action plan pathway:



- 7.4 A level of flexibility is required as a new community at risk may present very different issues to past or existing ones. Some of the stages in forming the action plan may be completed very quickly in order to respond to a high level of risk identified at an early stage.
- 7.5 It is important that whilst there is a process to help achieve consistency the paramount objective is to protect and safeguard a new or emerging community at risk.

7.6 Each Action Plan shall contain the following information which may be completed at different stages during a response to a community at risk:

**1. Current situation** (what's happening right now)

- Evidence/data
- Current partner involvement
- Extent of change/impact
- Urgency assessment

**2. Impact and risks**

- Risk assessment
- Likelihoods
- Impact on people
- Impact on community
- Risks of no action

**3. Capacity and resources**

- Current capacity and resources
- Additional capacity and resources required
- Partner resources

**4. Delivery team**

- Designate lead officer(s)
- Designate response team (who is doing what?)

**5. Timescales**

- Timescale for action
- Timescale for reporting

**6. Finalise Action Plan**

- Short/medium/long term actions
- Details of actions/interventions
- Capacity and resources
- Outcomes to be achieved
- How it will be monitored
- How it will be evaluated

**7. Monitoring and evaluation**

- Gather data for monitoring
- Complete evaluation



## 8. Community at Risk Trigger

- 8.1 The Community at Risk Trigger operates on the same basis as our Safeguarding report a concern process. It allows elected members and officers to make a direct report of any concerns about a new or emerging community at risk.
- 8.2 When a report is made it will be reviewed by a nominated officer within the Communities Service. They will make an assessment and if necessary look to obtain further supporting information. The report will be logged on the Communities at Risk Register.
- 8.3 If further action is required the nominated officer will do one or more of the following based on an initial risk assessment:
- Raise the report with our Housing Board
  - Raise the report with our Management Team
  - Take immediate action in conjunction with service managers
- 8.4 The Housing Board and Management Team can further assess the report and delegate further actions to specific services and officers including the need to prepare an action plan.
- 8.5 The trigger is available to access through internal systems and also promoted to wider partners for external use.

## 9. Community Risk Assessment

- 9.1 When a report is initially received as part of the trigger process, nominated officers will complete a Community Risk Assessment. By assessing the situation along with the potential risks, impact and likelihood, we can better inform our decision making and possible responses.
- 9.2 As part of a Community Risk Assessment officers may need to gather additional information and communicate with partners. The methodology for completing the assessment is set out within the Council's Risk Management Strategy 2019-2023.

### **WLDC Risk Management Strategy 2019-2023**

<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/my-council/how-the-council-works/key-plans-policies-and-strategies/risk-management/>

## 10. Reporting and monitoring

- 10.1 The Communities at Risk Register will record monitoring information in a central location and allow for regular reporting. Reporting on work linked to communities at risk will be included in Progress & Delivery Reporting on a quarterly basis.
- 10.2 Regular reporting will be made to the Housing Board and Management Team. An annual Communities at Risk Report is produced for Prosperous Communities Committee.

## 11. Communities at Risk Fund

- 11.1 The Communities at Risk Fund supports delivery against agreed action plans for communities at risk. It is a revenue and capital fund that can cover the costs of preventative and response based actions. The fund is managed by the Enterprising Communities Service, overseen by the Housing Board and responsible directly to Management Team.
- 11.2 Any use of the fund requires clear identification of need on an agreed community at risk action plan. All action plans require agreement and approval by the Housing Board and Management Team.
- 11.3 The fund can be used to fund council led activity or external activities and works delivered by partners and service providers.
- 11.4 The following are examples of what the fund could support but this is not an exhaustive list:
- Purchase new equipment
  - Pay for services from external providers
  - Fund voluntary/social enterprise sector activities
  - Street scene improvements to reduce a negative issue
- 11.5 The need and intended outcomes of allocating funding will be detailed within a Community at Risk Action Plan. As part of the community at risk monitoring stage this will also include monitoring and evaluation on any funding spend.
- 11.6 Where funds used to grant fund external activities, the established mechanisms for our Community Grants Programme shall be used to ensure correct management and governance.

## Version Control

Version	Changes/Comments	Officer	Approved by	Date adopted
0.1	Draft policy document for Committee approval	Grant White		