

Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee
31 January 2018

Implementing a Communities Strategy within Devon

Report of the Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment & Prosperity

1. Introduction

- 1.1. On 28 November 2017 the committee considered the Council's new Community Strategy and requested further information regarding its delivery and implementation.
- 1.2. The committee considered that whilst the Council had co-ordinated and published this work, the strategy reflected a collaboration of input, activity and views from across a wide range of partners and communities. Therefore, the delivery of the strategy, to be truly effective, would be best achieved in partnership and through collaboration.
- 1.3. The Council's plans for implementation reflect its ambition for collaboration on these themes but also the reality and complexity of working across partnerships to this end. The Council and strategy recognise the respective strengths, expertise and leadership of partners and communities in key areas, therefore any response will need to take account of local people, geography and existing networks.

2. How were the priorities for action identified?

- 2.1. During late 2016 and early 2017 an extensive Community Needs Assessment was commissioned, conducted and published. This work was based on a wide range of input from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE), wider partners, and took account of community surveys, localised data, the latest national research and evidence. In addition, the Council's own experience and expertise in working with communities was considered. This needs assessment can be found here:- [Communities Needs Assessment](#)
- 2.2. The needs assessment made observations across seven key themes: - Volunteering; communications and engagement; commissioning; community assets and environment; role development; business and the economy and data and intelligence.
- 2.3. Building on these observations and themes the Council has worked with partners and a range of stakeholders to determine a set of practical actions for the initial year of implementation. We will publish an updated plan in subsequent years. This action plan has been agreed by the Council's Leadership Group.
- 2.4. Members will recognise that determining the scope and scale of actions is a challenging task, given that for some, the theme of Communities covers almost every aspect of the Council's work and remit. The action plan focusses on opportunities to provide additional capacity, knowledge and information to people and communities, where it is required. We must recognise that many communities and organisations function and thrive without input from bodies such as the County Council.

3. What are our key action areas?

- 3.4 Commissioning and funding –
 - To pilot and procure a locally accessible crowd funding solution to enhance local innovation and bring additional funding to projects in communities

- To review TAP and Locality Funding arrangements and consider alignment to crowd funding opportunities
- Review VCSE Infrastructure arrangements and funding across Devon and align to DCC Action Plan Priorities

3.1. Volunteering –

- To pilot software to help people in communities to connect with local people and to match people with skills/time/assets with those with specific needs.
- To update the Council's relevant policies and communicate DCC workforce opportunities for volunteering
- To develop an 'impact volunteering' prototype project with local VCSE partners (where the benefits to volunteers are understood and measured – alongside the wider outcomes of the project)

3.2. Communications and engagement –

- To develop a new website and utilise to promote opportunities for community capacity building including volunteering and funding
- To communicate advice and support relating to community development, capacity building tools, initiatives and funding opportunities

3.5 Role Development –

- Explore opportunities to refresh DCC (and partnership) locality based arrangements to develop local connections and resources
- To review support Members and other local arrangements; to develop a range of support through community facilitators/community development staff who will be identified and developed

3.6 Evidence and evaluation – Measurement will be developed to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy and analysis into data capturing local and community experience and outcomes.

4. Progress to date and next steps

4.1. Progress on implementation is being regularly monitored and the committee may wish to consider the delivery, through an annual review.

4.2. The development of some actions will be of particular interest to Members and to this committee specifically. Given the nature of the work the specific implementation and the learning would benefit from input and direction from Members – for example developing crowd funding opportunities and how elected Members are supported.

4.3. This Committee may wish to consider undertaking a more in-depth piece of work examining and inputting into the key action areas from the Community Strategy.

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Electoral Divisions: All

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[Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers](#)

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