



Policy and Resources Committee 5 December 2011

Community Development Strategy 2012-15

Purpose of report

To ask members to approve the Community Development Strategy 2012 to 2015 that sets out the rationale for how we will support the development of new community plans across the district and the resource requirements for this new work.

Attachment(s)

Appendix 1 – Community Development Strategy 2012-15

1.0 Background

- 1.1 East Northamptonshire Council has been undertaking Area Based Initiatives (ABI) in our most deprived communities since 2006. The current two ABIs will conclude January/February 2012 and there are no plans to extend the programme further.
- 1.2 Our Corporate Plan 2011-15 sets out our vision of “*working with our communities to sustain a thriving district*”. This is about making sure our local communities have the best possible support to help them achieve what they want, now and in the future. This will support our Corporate Plan outcomes of:-
 - A good quality of life – sustainable
 - Strong community leadership
 - Knowledge of our customers and communities

2.0 New approach to community development (rationale)

- 2.1 The new Localism Bill proposes to give local people a much greater say in what happens in their areas. From this we expect to see local communities wishing to develop Community Plans and Master Plans, which will set out the important issues they want to tackle over the next few years.
- 2.2 The Community Development Strategy 2012-15 sets out a new approach to community development, which in essence is about supporting our local communities in developing community plans. It is proposed that this new approach will begin from 1 April 2012 and the strategy identifies a rationale for how we will take this work forward. The first priority will be to support our market towns who have seen the biggest growth and have specific issues about the vitality of town centres.
- 2.3 Raunds has a Master Plan and Rushden a Master Plan focusing on the town centre. Irthlingborough is developing a Master Plan which is due to complete at the end of the current financial year. Oundle is preparing a plan to be completed in 2012 and Higham Ferrers and Thrapston are in the process of producing plans.
- 2.4 There are a few Parish Plans in place across the district and these are at different stages of implementation. Part of the new community development work will be to support the refresh of these plans.
- 2.5 The role of Community Development Officers will be to act as brokers or enablers of the process, providing advice and facilitation support and helping to engage partners in delivering actions.

3.0 Equality and diversity implications

3.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising. Community development activity encourages everyone within the local community to come together and work together regardless of background, ability or belief.

4.0 Legal implications

4.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report or the strategy.

5.0 Risk management

5.1 The strategy recognises the large number of parishes across East Northamptonshire and it is expected that different parishes will require different levels of support from us. The work programme set out in the strategy will guide the timeframes necessary for supporting each individual community plan project. However it needs to be kept in mind that the development of some plans could take longer than others, which may impact on resources available.

6.0 Financial implications

6.1 Provision exists within the current Area Based Initiatives budget (CKU001) to complete the ABI projects as planned. A budget will not be required in 2012/13 as there are no plans for further ABI projects.

6.2 The current Community Planning budget (CFA004) has been in place to support activity with the Local Strategic Partnership (ENable). The Board of ENable took the decision not to continue with the LSP following this council's withdrawal of involvement and secretariat support (minute 86 4 July 2011 refers).

6.3 It is proposed to transfer £15,000 from the ABI budget (CKU001) to the Community Planning budget (CFA004) in 2012/13 to support the new community development work. The following table summarises the changes and potential savings:-

Budget	Provision in 2011/12 (£)	Provision in 2012/13 (£)	Increase/saving In 2012/13
Community Planning (CFA004)	5,000	20,000	+ £15,000
Area Based Initiatives (CKU001)	20,000	0	- £20,000
Saving in 2012/13			5,000

6.4 It is proposed that the budget would support the facilitation and prioritisation processes with each plan and help community groups to get projects and activities underway. It will be necessary to put in place a framework for how the budget would be utilised.

7.0 Corporate outcomes

7.1 The new strategy will support the achievement of our Corporate Plan outcomes as set out in section 1.2 above.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 Members are recommended to:

1. Adopt the new Community Development Strategy 2012-15
2. Approve the rationale for moving forward with community development from 1 April 2012, as set out in this report and section 6 of the strategy.

3. Approve the resource requirements as set out in section 6 in this report.

Reason: To support local communities in East Northamptonshire to develop community plans that contribute to the achievement of our vision of “working with local communities to sustain a thriving district” and our Corporate Plan outcomes.

Legal	Power: Local Government Act 2000				
	Other considerations: None				
Background Papers: None					
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Date: 7 November 2011					
CFO		MO		CX	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Community Development Strategy 2012-15

Version 0.4 – Draft for P&R Approval

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v0.3	November 2011	Draft to CMT and corporate comment
V0.4	November 2011	Draft for approval by Policy & Resources Committee 5 December 2011

NB: Draft versions 0.1 - final published versions 1.0

Consultees

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Corporate Management Team	
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Links to other documents

Document	Link

Additional Comments to note

Final version to be presented for approval at Policy & Resources Committee meeting 5 December 2011

Contents		Page
1.0	Introduction	5
2.0	Scope	6
3.0	Outcomes	6
4.0	Where are we know?	7-8
5.0	Where do we want to be?	8
6.0	How will we get there?	8-10
 Appendices:		
	Appendix 1 – Programme for supporting the development of community plans	11-12

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 East Northamptonshire is made up of many communities, all with similar and differing ideas and aspirations, challenges and problems. Some of our communities have seen rapid growth over the last few years and further change is expected.
- 1.2 Our Corporate Plan 2011-15 sets out our vision, which is **working with our communities to sustain a thriving district**. This will be about making sure our local communities have the best possible support to help them achieve what they want, now and in the future. We see this as **Community Development**.
- 1.3 *Community Development is about supporting groups and networks of people taking joint action on matters that concern them most and help people to influence the decisions that affect their lives. (Community Development Foundation)*
- 1.4 The Council's community development work will be lead by the Community Partnerships Team to support local communities to become more sustainable. This will be important to us in achieving our vision and the following outcomes set out in our Corporate Plan:-

A good quality of life – sustainable

We will

- Produce Master Plans for Higham Ferrers and Thrapston, building on their development for the other towns in the District, to give local people a say in how all our towns should develop over the next 10 years.
- Develop Neighbourhood Plans for those villages and rural areas that want them and work with Town and Parish Councils and local communities across the District to implement them.

Strong community leadership

We will

- Seek to engage Town and Parish councils and local communities in plans and developments that affect their areas
- Aim to support and develop capacity within local communities to help them to help themselves

Knowledge of our customers and communities

We will

- Engage with local communities to understand their needs

2.0 Scope

2.1 Community development has been taking place across the district for some time and co-ordinated by a number of organisations including ourselves. The range of projects is wide and examples include:-

- Area Based Initiatives in Rushden and Irthlingborough
- Town and Parish Plans and Design Statements e.g. Oundle 2020
- Initiatives and schemes aimed at getting young people to take part in positive activities
- Community safety initiatives

2.2 The Government's **Localism Act** brings forward changes giving local people more say in what happens in their local areas. It proposes that we will see a much greater involvement of local communities in developing Community Plans, or Neighbourhood Plans and Masterplans, which are linked to planning and require a greater input from the Council's Planning Officers.

2.3 In developing a Community Plan, a local parish or town will be able to set out all of the key things it wants to do over the next few years to help make the local community sustainable. From this various planning and design issues may emerge, which lead to the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.

2.4 The skills set of the Council's Community Partnerships Team and other officers will be very important to this new way of work. This will be the Council's approach to community development over the next 3 years and is set out in this **Community Development Strategy**.

2.5 As with all strategies it covers:-

Where are we now? – What have we done so far and the skills we have learnt from that work that can support the new approach to community development?

Where do we want to be? – A picture of how community development activities will support local communities, town and parish councils to set out their needs and achieve them.

How will we get there? – A 3-year plan that we will follow to deliver community development in East Northamptonshire.

2.6 The strategy will demonstrate improved outcomes for our:-

Local communities – we will work with them to identify what they want for their local areas and support them to deliver this.

Council Officers – will be able to understand and have a clear direction of how we will support local communities.

Councillors – will be able to support and develop capacity as district elected representatives of local communities

3.0 Outcomes

3.1 This strategy will contribute to the Corporate Plan outcomes set out in section 1

4.0 Where are we now?

4.1 Our main community development work has been with the **Area Based Initiatives (ABI)**. These have been 3-year projects taking place in our most deprived areas measured by the **Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)**. The areas are:-

- Rushden Pemberton (2006 to 2009)
- Irthlingborough John Pyel (2008 to 2011)
- Rushden Hayden (2008 to 2011)

4.2 The first steps in the ABIs have been to encourage local residents to come together and say what matters most to them. Various community events and activities have helped local people develop their skills and confidence to make local improvements. Residents' Groups and Associations are in place and over the time of the ABIs have become more and more equipped to take direct action themselves.

4.3 The ABIs have been co-ordinated by the Community Partnerships Team. Officers have used their skills particularly in the areas of:

- Communicating with local residents including people from different backgrounds
- Encouraging local residents to work together and communicate with each other
- Facilitating public meetings and consultation activities to capture people's thoughts and ideas
- Supporting local people to build their confidence to tackle issues
- Working with partners to find practical solutions to local issues
- Leaving the community groups with the confidence to continue with the work

4.4 The ABIs have allowed us to build strong links with partner organisations such as Northamptonshire Police, housing associations and town councils. This has helped achieve the outcomes of the ABIs, particularly around an improved living environment and reduced crime and anti-social behaviour.

4.5 Whilst the ABIs have been taking place in targeted urban areas a number of community development activities have been underway in other parts of the district. **Parish Plans and Town or Village Design Statements** are recognised ways in which a local community identifies what they value and what they want to see improved.

4.6 Five Parish Plans are in place across the district and others are currently in preparation. Support for the development of these plans has up to now been with an external agency. However, the grant that has supported this activity has now come to an end. Parish Plans are an action plan for a Town or Parish Council. Some of the actions within them will be done directly by local people and groups, whereas others need support from us and other organisations.

4.7 A number of key documents within the planning framework set out how individual areas of the district will develop over the next few years. These include North Northamptonshire

Core Spatial Strategy, Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston (RNOT) Plan and the emerging Four Towns Plan. In addition to this the Localism Act will bring about opportunities for Town and Parish Councils to become further involved in the planning system. This could be through the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan, which can be formally adopted by us as part of the planning framework.

- 4.8 All of this means change. There are no plans to carry out further ABIs. However we recognise the valuable skills set that officers in our Community Partnership Team and other Teams have drawn from this work and other projects, that will support the involvement of local communities in plan development.

5.0 Where do we want to be?

- 5.1 Our Community Development Strategy aims to facilitate the following:-

- Support Town and Parish Councils developing Community Plans.
- Support the local communities to prioritise what issues they want to take forward in their plans.
- Enable the local communities to achieve the outcomes set out in their plans.

6.0 How will we get there?

- 6.1 We have to be realistic about what we can achieve through this strategy with the resources available. The district is made up of 51 parishes, within which are 6 market towns. It will be necessary for us to adhere to a rationale for our community development work over the next 3 years.

- 6.2 We recognise that towns and parishes will need different levels of support from us in developing their community plans and this will take the form of:-

- Those who will be able to undertake the work themselves
- Those who will need some support from us
- Those who will need us to act as a catalyst to help them to get the process underway

It may not necessarily be the town or parish council directly taking the lead or being the catalyst for a community plan being developed. In some cases an interested group within the town or parish will take this forward on behalf of the town or parish council.

- 6.3 The role of the Community Partnerships Team will be to act as a 'broker' or 'enabler' for the process to produce community plans and this could include:-

- Providing advice and facilitation support for running public meetings and consultation events
- Providing advice and support on prioritising activities
- Supporting the groups to engage partner organisations in delivering actions

- 6.4 In addition to this we have a range of other 'in-house' services that could support the development of community plans. These include, for example printing services for questionnaires and surveys, creating and analysing surveys and questionnaires with specialist software and external funding advice.

- 6.5 Our first priority will be to support our market towns as they have seen the biggest changes in recent years.
- 6.6 We cannot predict how many of our parishes will want to produce community plans. Some parishes may want to join with neighbouring parishes and produce joint plans. Some of our parishes already have Parish Plans, which are at different stages of implementation. Given the large number of parishes in the district, our community development support will need to be given on a first come, first served basis.
- 6.7 Appendix 1 is an outline work programme for our community development work. It sets out how we will approach this work in relation to where individual parishes are at i.e. those who require existing plans to be refreshed and those who are starting from scratch. As the programme gets underway we will develop a **Community Plan Resource Pack** that the community groups can call upon when developing their plans.
- 6.8 The Community Partnerships Team will also be able to act as enabler and advisor to the groups in terms of delivering the actions in the their plans. Below is an example from the Raunds Masterplan to illustrate how we could help deliver the plan:-

What do they have?	What do they need (as identified in the plan)?	How can we support them to achieve this?
Community facilities	Investigate demand and options for community spaces, including possible additional uses of St Peters CEC and vacant shops and buildings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the setting up of a local interest group (as a sub-group to the Town Council) to co-ordinate action on this project. 2. Secure involvement from partners and specialist bodies 3. Offer external funding advice
	Provide and promote new outdoor youth activities that are well integrated with the town	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage young people in identifying the specific things they would like in their town e.g. local youth conference 2. Offer external funding advice
	Consider asset transfer of some community facilities so they become run and managed by the community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the setting up of community groups to run facilities including appropriate training 2. Offer external funding advice on further development

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Appendix 1 – Programme for supporting the development of community plans

Scenario	Areas where the CDOs will provide advice and facilitation support	Timeframe allocated	Specific controls
Parish has an existing Parish Plan which requires updating and refreshing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review progress and achievement of actions in current plan • Identify gaps and new priorities • Develop way forward (i.e. new action plan) 	6 to 8 weeks in total	<p>The parish council or group would need to take the initiative to refresh/review the existing plan and approach us for support.</p> <p>Once the new action plan/way forward is developed the parish council or group would need to co-ordinate the delivery of the plan. CDOs could provide advice and sign-posting to other services as the plan gets implemented.</p>
Parish Council or interested group within the parish want to develop a community plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public event to raise awareness and launch consultation • Development and analysis of questionnaires for surveys • Presentation of survey and consultation results • Prioritisation meetings/workshops • Plan preparation 	CDO support role available for 6 to 8 months for each individual plan	<p>The Parish Council or Parish Group will lead the development of the community plan.</p> <p>Each community plan project will be assigned to an individual CDO to provide our support. CDOs will provide the advice and facilitation support as and when required, which will allow them to work on a number of plans at any one time.</p>
Group of parishes want to join up to produce a single community plan for a specific area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate an initial planning meeting for the joint plan project • Public events to raise awareness and launch consultation • Development and analysis of questionnaires for surveys 	CDO support role available for 6 to 8 months for each joint plan	<p>The parishes producing the joint plan will need to develop a protocol for how the plan will be produced i.e. lead body, how differing issues will be dealt with etc. The CDO will support this process.</p> <p>As with the above each community plan project will be assigned to an individual CDO to provide our support. CDOs will provide the advice and</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of survey and consultation results • Prioritisation meetings/workshops • Plan preparation 		<p>facilitation support as and when required, which will allow them to work on a number of plans at any one time.</p>
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