



Purpose

1. To update the Overview Committee on the development and implementation of the County Council's Localism Policy.

Information

2. The County Council's Strategic Plan 2010-14 commits the authority to embracing Localism as part of the Priority to foster aspiration, independence and personal responsibility. The County Council is also committed to ensuring that :
 - local people can make decisions about their lives and where they live
 - communities are involved in the way services are shaped and delivered
 - communities can be proud of their local area and residents can help to keep their local areas clean, tidy and safe
3. These commitments can collectively be described as **Localism – where individuals are encouraged to contribute and come together as a community that is empowered so that they can achieve their ambitions for the place where they live.** The County Council has been working towards this agenda for some time and a summary of achievements was reported to Cabinet in September 2011.
4. In addition to progressing the County Council's existing commitments, The Localism Act 2011 introduced a number of new requirements on local authorities including the implementation of new rights for communities to challenge to run council services and to bid to purchase community assets.

Development of Policy

5. It was proposed to Cabinet in September 2011 that the County Council's approach to Localism should be based around a policy providing clear direction as to the Authority's commitments, setting

out the actions that the Authority intends to take to deliver on them and incorporating the new statutory requirements placed on the County Council by the Localism Act.

6. A draft Localism Policy was proposed and agreed at the meeting of the County Council on 26 January 2012. A copy of the Policy is attached as an appendix to this report.
7. The Policy was developed by a cross party group of elected Members. The views expressed by Members at a seminar held on 1 December 2011 and at the Overview Committee on 19 July 2011 were used to inform the development of the Policy.
8. Engagement work with town/parish councils and the voluntary and community sector commenced in October 2011 to inform the development of the Policy. Information on Localism and the new statutory requirements has also been made available on the County Council website.

Implementation

9. The policy includes a number of specific key actions to
 - Deliver an Implementation Plan to ensure that the principles and commitments set out in the policy are achieved
 - Prepare a framework for devolving services for parish/town councils seeking to deliver local services and to evaluate the merits of incorporating a Lengthsman Scheme – a scheme through which parish/town councils could employ an individual to maintain local highways amenities within their area - into the framework following a number of pilots.
 - Prepare statements on
 - the operation of the Community Right to Challenge
 - how volunteering can support the delivery of appropriate public services
 - how the community could use small areas of land owned by the County Council where it surplus to requirements
10. The implementation of these will be subject to the appropriate decision making requirements and will be informed by further engagement with Members of the County Council, town/parish councils, district/borough councils the voluntary and community sector and others.
11. The Overview Committee is invited to comment on issues for consideration as part of the implementation of the policy.

Recommendation:

12. It is recommended that the Overview Committee consider the information provided and identify any further opportunities to deliver Localism in Nottinghamshire.

Councillor Joyce Bosnjak

Chair of the Overview Committee

Background Papers:

The Localism Act 2011

CLG: Decentralisation and the Localism Bill: an essential guide December 2010

Nottinghamshire County Council's Strategic Plan 2010-14