

Localism Policy

Context

1. The County Council, as is reflected in its Strategic Plan 2010-14 is 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
2. This can be described as Localism – where individuals are encouraged to contribute and are empowered as a community so that they can achieve their ambitions for the place where they live.
3. This policy sets out the County Council's commitment to Localism and how it will support this through its decision making service delivery and by the actions it will develop to implement the Policy.

Scope of this policy

4. The principles and commitments set out in this policy apply to all services and decisions of the County Council. Consideration should be given to ensure that services and decisions are consistent with the policy.
5. The principles and commitments will be achieved through the key actions outlined in this Policy and a delivery plan.
6. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a number of new requirements for local authorities to implement including new rights for communities to challenge to run services and to protect community assets.
7. The procedures developed to implement the key actions of this policy will provide for compliance with the following requirements:
 - The Localism Act 2011 - provisions known as the right to challenge and the right to buy/bid.
 - Code of Recommended practice on Data Transparency

Principles and Commitments

8. The County Council will encourage individuals to contribute and empower local communities so that they can achieve their ambitions for the place where they live:
- through **open, responsive and accountable public services** – sharing information and data so that the public can understand the services that they receive and influence decisions about them, so that they better reflect communities' needs.
 - by **Enabling and empowering individuals** – making it easier for individuals to contribute to services and to get things done in their community.
 - by **Enabling and empowering communities** – working with parish/town councils and other representative groups to improve the quality and responsiveness of local services, which are accessible, accountable, sustainable, provide value for money and benefit the community.

Commitments

9. To provide **open, responsive and accountable public services** the County Council will:
- a. Share data on the commissioning of our public services, including transparency about our spending, contracts and tenders where appropriate.
 - b. Share information on the delivery of our public services including policies and procedures for the operation of services, performance reporting, satisfaction and customer feedback.
 - c. Shape our services to meet the needs of our customers through community participation in the planning and delivery of our public services
 - d. Ensure that key service commissioning decisions are taken by Elected Members who can hold public service providers to account for delivering on their obligations to service users.
10. To **enable and empower individuals** the County Council will:
- e. Champion the contribution that local people make through volunteering and ensure that individuals are able to volunteer to support the delivery of appropriate public services
 - f. Help local people to become more active in their communities by removing unnecessary barriers and rules to allow individuals to take action where they live

- g. Support the development of a sustainable voluntary and community sector in Nottinghamshire that can help local people to volunteer in the community
 - h. Encourage past and present County Council employees to volunteer in the community and provide support to those that choose to
11. To **enable and empower communities** the County Council will:
- i. Engage with parish/town councils about changes to local services received by their community
 - j. Support communities to set up parish and town councils where the appropriate level of community interest has been reached¹
 - k. Engage with Community and Neighbourhood Forums or a County Council committee of local Members where there is no parish/town council and insufficient support for establishing one
 - l. Have regard to the views of parish/town councils and appropriate community forums when setting the priorities for local services delivered by the county council
 - m. Provide options for parish/town councils, community forums and voluntary organisations seeking to deliver local services, through a framework for devolved services
 - n. Provide for parish/town councils to take over small areas of land owned by the County Council where it is surplus to requirements and can be put to community use

Key actions to meet the commitments set out in the policy

12. The County Council will undertake the following key actions to meet the commitments set out in this policy:
- a. Deliver an Implementation Plan to ensure that the principles and commitments set out in this policy are achieved
 - b. Prepare a framework for devolving services for parish/town councils seeking to deliver local services (m). Evaluate the merits of incorporating a Lengthsman Scheme into the framework based on a number of pilots.
 - c. Prepare statements on
 - the operation of the Right to Challenge
 - how volunteering can support the delivery of appropriate public services (e, g, h)
 - the community use of small areas of land owned by the County Council where it is surplus to requirements (n)

¹ The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007: 50% of electors for an area with less than 500 local electors, 25% of electors for an area with between 500 and 2,500 local electors, 10% of electors for an area with more than 2,500 local electors