

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD: 17 JULY 2014**

**REPORT OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITIES STRATEGY**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's comments on the County Council's draft Communities Strategy, which is attached as Appendix A to this report. The draft Strategy sets out how the Council will address three specific priorities:

Priority 1: Building the resilience and capacity of communities to support themselves and vulnerable individuals and families - thus reducing demand on public services

Priority 2: Supporting community groups to take over relevant services, including those currently delivered by the County Council, and to work more closely alongside us to design and deliver services

Priority 3: Developing voluntary and community sector organisations in Leicestershire as effective providers in a mixed, diverse market which supports delivery of our service devolution and support for vulnerable people priorities, and effective commissioning of the sector

2. It is felt that there are a number of important links between the ambitions set out this Strategy and the role and remit of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

3. The County Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2014/15 – 2017/18, including the 2014/15 revenue budget and capital programme, was approved by the County Council on 19 February 2014. The MTFS sets out a new vision for the County Council and a new Target Operating Model (TOM) which reflects the imperative to adopt a much more integrated approach to prevention and early intervention so that fewer people are reliant on costly public services.
4. The County Council's Strategic Plan was approved by the Council on 21 May 2014. It sets out high level priorities and supporting actions and targets for the Authority over the next four years. The Transformation Programme, approved by the Cabinet on 6 May, sets out how the Council will transform both services and the ways it operates to deliver its priorities and meet financial challenges. The programme also highlights the need for a new relationship with communities.

5. As a detailed plan for supporting Leicestershire communities, the Communities Strategy aligns closely to both the Transformation Programme and Strategic Plan.
6. The County Council Cabinet approved the draft Communities Strategy for a 10 week consultation period, from 23 June to 1 September, at its meeting on June 17.

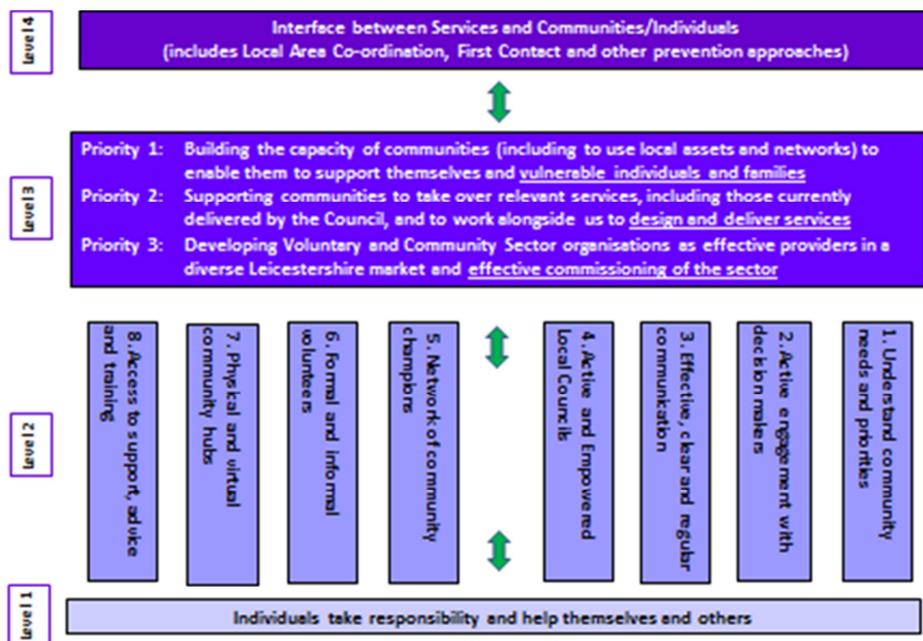
## **Background**

7. The Council has a longstanding track record of working in partnership with its communities and 'helping them to help themselves', including through its previous Big Society and Communities in Charge initiatives. In 2010, the Council worked with partners, local community groups and voluntary sector organisations to develop and agree four Leicestershire aspirations:
  - Everyone can be involved in their community
  - Everyone has opportunities to influence decisions that affect them
  - Local people are able to shape and deliver public services
  - Local people and organisations grow the Big Society together
8. However, there is now less money, increasing demand for services and major changes to both public services and the welfare system are in train. The combined effect of these changes on communities is that fewer services will be available to fewer people and there are likely to be more vulnerable people at risk.
9. In response to the more challenging financial climate, the Council has developed a new Communities Strategy. This moves away from the generic aspirations set out in paragraph 7, to instead focus on working with communities to reduce demand for services, supporting communities to work alongside the Council to deliver services/take on devolved service delivery and repositioning the voluntary sector as part of a vibrant and effective market that supports the Council in delivering its ambitions.
10. Significant change is required in order to achieve the required savings whilst protecting the most vulnerable individuals and communities. It is therefore essential that the Council works with partners in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors to reduce demand for services through prevention and early intervention approach and empowers communities to work alongside it to deliver key services to Leicestershire citizens.

## **Proposals/Options**

11. The diagram below sets out the four distinct, but closely connected, dimensions to our approach to working with communities. These are described in detail, working from the top of the diagram:

## Leicestershire Communities Model



### Interface between services and communities/individuals

12. The interface between services and communities/individuals, level four on the diagram, will become increasingly important over the coming months and years. There are a number of different 'enablers' within this interface, one of which is Local Area Co-ordination (LAC). LAC is a key dimension of the unified prevention approach at the heart of the Better Care Plan and will be tested in eight learning sites from autumn 2014. Local Area Coordinators (LACs) will be based within the community, have close links to the local GP practice(s), work with between 50-65 individuals and their families at any time and provide a vital interface between vulnerable individuals/families, services and communities. They are a single, accessible point of contact, identifying and supporting vulnerable people, particularly those with disabilities, the frail elderly and those with mental health issues, before they hit crisis.

### Priorities

13. The three level in the diagram reflects our three priorities:

- a longer term 'demand management' role, which involves building capacity and resilience of local communities to support themselves and vulnerable individuals and families;
- supporting community groups to take over relevant services, including those currently delivered by the County Council, and to work more closely alongside us to design and deliver services
- an intention to developing voluntary and community sector organisations in Leicestershire as effective providers in a mixed, diverse market which supports delivery of our service devolution and

support for vulnerable people priorities, and effective commissioning of the sector

### 'Building blocks'

14. The second level shows the 'building blocks' of the Communities Strategy. These are the things that local voluntary organisations, Town and Parish Councils, community groups and partner organisations have told us need to be in place in order for communities and the voluntary sector to be able to work with us to deliver our priorities:

#### **Strong and Resilient Communities...**

- understand community needs and priorities
- engage actively with public services
- communicate effectively with service providers
- have active local councils and residents groups
- nurture a network of champions
- support formal and informal volunteering
- operate a wide range of activities from one or more community 'hub'
- have access to the right funding, support and training

### Role of individuals

15. The final level is about how we encourage individuals to make better choices, including how to live healthier lives and how and where to live. We also want to encourage people to take greater responsibility for themselves and others, including by improving their physical and emotional wellbeing, to reduce the risk that they will need to rely on services in the future.

### **Consultations/Patient and Public Involvement**

16. The consultation on the draft Communities Strategy runs for a ten week period between 23 June and 1 September 2014. This will enable a final version to be considered by the Council's Cabinet on 14 October 2014. All members of the County Council will be consulted, along with LCC staff, Town and Parish Councils, community groups, voluntary sector organisations and public sector partners and stakeholders.
17. The consultation will seek views on the draft Strategy document as a whole, the three identified priorities and eight 'building blocks', and on specific aspects of the outline delivery plan. As outlined above, this will include

questions about the best way for the Council to engage with communities and their representatives in the future.

### Resource Implications

18. A number of the Council's budgets will be aligned to the final Communities Strategy, including a range of Voluntary Sector contracts and grant funding arrangements. The Communities Strategy has a role to play in terms of establishing the role of communities in all relevant future transformation and service change proposals.
19. The repositioning of the funding and staffing resource currently used to support Community Forums will ensure robust engagement with communities, residents, stakeholders and partners around the Council's transformation agenda.

### Timetable for Decisions

20. The 10-week consultation period on the draft Strategy runs from 23 June to 1 September 2014.
21. A further report, summarising the consultation findings including any comments from this Board and proposed changes to the draft Strategy, will be presented to the Council's Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

### Conclusions

22. The draft Strategy represents a move away from generic support for all communities in Leicestershire towards a more nuanced approach, focusing on new ways of working with communities to utilise the Council's reduced resources to best effect. The consultation exercise will help the Council to develop the final Strategy and refine the outline delivery plan.
23. There are a number of obvious links to the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board, not least the emphasis on individuals taking responsibility for themselves, including their own health and well-being, communities supporting vulnerable individuals and families in a preventative/early intervention capacity and ensuring an effective interface between services and communities, including through Local Area Coordination.
24. Comments are therefore sought from the Board on the draft Communities Strategy.

### Background Papers

Cabinet 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012 Final Report of the Scrutiny Review Panel on the Big Society

[http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00003392/AI00031496/\\$BBigSocietyPanelReport.doc.pdf](http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00003392/AI00031496/$BBigSocietyPanelReport.doc.pdf)

Cabinet 16<sup>th</sup> January 2013 Communities in Charge Programme

[http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00003628/AI00033436/\\$Hcommunitiesinchargeprogramme.doc.pdf](http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00003628/AI00033436/$Hcommunitiesinchargeprogramme.doc.pdf)

## **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

25. A copy of the Cabinet report was sent to all Members of the County Council under the Members News in Brief service.

## **Officers to Contact**

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## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Draft Communities Strategy

Appendix B – Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment

## **Relevant Impact Assessments**

### Equal Opportunities Implications

An Initial Equalities and Human Rights Assessment has been carried out on the Strategy. This is attached as Appendix B.

### Partnership Working and Associated Issues

It is anticipated that the County Council will work with partners to deliver specific aspects of the Communities Strategy, including through the Stronger Communities Board.