

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Councillor Community Leadership Support Programme 16 January 2014

Report of Chief Officer (Governance)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide a progress update for Council Business Committee on the Councillor Community Leadership Support Programme and more detail on the Community Leadership Conference to be held in June 2014, as requested.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To note the Councillor Community Leadership Support Programme progress to date.
- (2) To consider the content of the Community Leadership Conference and agree to only go ahead with a minimum of 25 registered councillors.
- (3) To consider the future level of support expected from officers considering the resource implications identified in the pilot.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On 14 March 2013, this committee considered a report on the outcomes of the Keep it R.E.A.L (Responsive, Efficient, Accountable and Local) project.
- 1.2 Community Leadership is one of the four priorities in the Corporate Plan 2013/14. The Keep It Real project recognised the importance of the role of Ward Councillor, not only as an essential advisory service to constituents but in terms of local community leadership.
- 1.3 The role of Ward Councillor includes championing the interests of the ward and local people and working with the local voluntary sector, faith groups, resident and tenant groups, service providers and local businesses. This is particularly important at this time of austerity and chimes closely with the city council's Take Pride campaign, part of which aims to encourage communities and individuals to do their bit to support themselves and their communities.
- 1.4 The report considered by the Committee explained that one of the key themes from the Keep it REAL project was 'ward councillor support'.

2.0 Councillor Community Leadership Support Programme

2.1 In June 2013, Management Team received a Keep it REAL project update report, including feedback from Council Business Committee.

2.2 The report outlined that since the Council Business Committee meeting, Communications and Democratic Support had developed a work programme in order to further support members in their wards in the following areas:

a) In providing essential advisory service to constituents

b) Demonstrating community leadership

- championing the interests of the ward and local people
- working with the local voluntary sector, faith groups, resident and tenant groups, service providers and local businesses
- providing feedback to officers to support corporate customer insight of service need and delivery

c) Encouraging and supporting communities to volunteer/take responsibility for areas

Actions included:

Internal Councillor Support

- Review induction and training programme to reflect changing community leadership role of councillors including time management support.
- Review Elsie councillor pages in light of the Keep it REAL project learning eg add links to local leadership work books and updated communications toolkit.
- Review communications toolkit in light of the Keep it REAL project learning and re-launch.

Ward Councillor Support

- Officers work with a ward councillor and a part of their community to pilot a project to educate citizens in how they can affect a positive change for their area. For example on reducing dog fouling in an area.

Sharing knowledge and experience

- Examine ways to provide networking, knowledge/experience sharing opportunities to build better relationships between members to encourage working together eg annual councillor conference.
- Review the O&S shadowing system to help improve relationships and communication between Cabinet and other councillors.

3 **Progress to date**

3.1 Proposed Councillor Community Leadership Conference

A report was considered by Council Business Committee on 12 September 2013. The Committee resolved:

- (1) That a conference be held on community leadership in June 2014.
- (2) That a report be brought to a future meeting with detailed proposals for the conference.

In line with resolution (2) Appendix A outlines the proposed content of the Councillor Community Leadership Conference. Members are asked to consider the proposals.

It is recommended that relevant members of Management Team or Assistant Heads would speak at the conference and that the council's consultation and engagement officer would facilitate the workshop sessions. The Leader from Barnsley Council, Sir Stephen Houghton, has agreed to speak about his community leadership experience (subject to dates) as an LGA peer free of charge. The proposed exhibition will be co-ordinated by the consultation and engagement officer; however, it will be up to services to decide whether they would like to have a presence.

Council Business Committee may also wish to suggest potential speakers and topics to be addressed.

Due to the proposed outside speaker and catering arrangements, it is recommended that a minimum of 25 registered councillors is required for the conference to go ahead.

3.2 Update on Agreed Council Business Committee Actions (as detailed in section 2)

- It was not possible to submit an item on working relationships between city councillors and members and officers of Lancashire County Council to the Three Tier Forum as at this time Lancashire County Council only accept agenda items from Forum Members, not via a Committee. This will be raised with the County Council.
- An investigation into councillor exit interviews has taken place.
- Time Management Training took place on 30 May 2013.

3.3 Update on other Councillor Community Leadership Programme Actions:

- Council Business Committee approved the 2013/14 Member Development Strategy on 27 June 2013. Community Leadership Training was held on 24 October 2013 (10 available places taken)
- Councillor Elsie pages are continuously being updated.
- The Councillor Communications Toolkit will be reviewed and updated (including learning from Councillor led community project pilot) in early 2014.
- Comments have been requested from relevant councillors on the O&S shadowing system.

3.4 Update on Councillor Led Community Project Pilot

The aims of this pilot project are to:

- support ward councillors' work with communities and address issues of community interest
- share the learning with other councillors who in turn can use this to run similar projects.

It is being piloted in Heysham North via one of the councilors involved throughout the Keep It Real project.

The pilot has consisted of officer support to help ward councillors:

- identify a potential project in their area
- organise two community meetings which aimed to bring key people together in their community to identify issues
- develop solutions and consider how they can make things happen in their area.

Support has included a number of officer meetings and community meeting design, facilitation and support, resulting in actions for councillors to identify key contacts, promote, invite people to the meetings and take agreed actions forward.

Two community meetings have taken place (30 October and 10 December) at West End Impact. A number of relevant officers were invited and briefed.

Outcomes to date include:

- Heysham North councillors supported to work with their community to address issues of community interest.
- Helped to raise awareness of the financial challenges that the council is facing, role of local councillors, role of community and various reporting channels.
- An agreed programme of activities including walkabouts, litter picks and a combating dog fouling event.
- Development of a potential community/councillor newsletter.
- Agreement from active members of the community to help deliver the programme of activities and newsletter.
- Residents agreed to take individual action eg take care of a piece of land
- A number of new local resident and organisation contacts for Members to engage and community with on community issues in future.

3.5 Resource implications and sharing learning

The consultation and engagement officer support has included various meetings with councillors, briefings and discussions with relevant officers, planning, designing and facilitation of two community meetings, distributing online invitations and posters, thank you's, writing up and online distribution of meeting notes and developing actions as a result of the community meetings. Other officer's support has included the creation of two posters, attending meetings and following up actions.

Offering this level of support to other councillors would have resource implications for a number of council officers which will need to be considered when deciding whether

this support could be offered to other councillors. The consultation and engagement officer's support for the councillor community led project will end in January 2014 (6 months support).

The learning from this pilot will be shared via the councillor newsletter and Community Leadership Conference, this will also be an opportunity for other councillors to share their experiences and learning. The Councillors Communications Toolkit will also be updated to support other councillors to carry out their own community discussions/projects.

4.0 Details of Consultation

4.1 The programme of work arises out of the Keep It Real project which included consultation with a range of councillors and has been developed and approved by Council Business Committee and Management Team.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The Councillor Community Leadership Support Programme is being taken forward and progress has been made in each area. Members are asked to consider the content of the Community Leadership Conference to be held in June 2014 and the level of support expected from officers considering the resource implications identified in the pilot.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

It is hoped that the Councillor Community Leadership Programme will have positive impact on ward communities as councillors will be provided with opportunities to gain relevant information, skills, experience and confidence to lead and work with their communities.
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LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A key financial implication has been staff time to deliver the Councillor Community Leadership Support Programme to date, if it was decided to offer the same level of support to more councillors staffing implications would need to be assessed and any costs reported back to a future meeting.

The Councillor Conference will be financed from within the 2014/15 proposed Member Training & Development budget of £4,100 subject to budget Council)

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources: No known implication

Information Services: No known implications

Property:

No known implications

Open Spaces:

No known implications

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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Appendix A - Proposed Councillor Community Leadership Conference Content

- From 9.30am Registration, refreshments and exhibition viewing

(A potential exhibition on top community issues services with relevant officers and inspirational community leadership case studies)

- 10am Welcome and introductions
- 10.05am Setting the scene – what is community leadership (relevant skills), importance of community leadership in current financial situation etc.
- 10.15am Localism and planning issues including community rights
- 10.45am Questions
- 11am Invited inspirational speaker
- 11.15am Questions
- 11.30am Refreshments
- 11.45am Lancaster City Councillor led community projects including Sandylands pilot
- 12 noon Workshop session (move around at some point)
To focus on Members community leadership experiences and/or localism/planning issues, any required support and action.
- 1.30pm Thank you and close – Conference evaluation forms
- Networking lunch and exhibition viewing