

POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

16 APRIL 2014

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CORPORATE ISSUES

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress of certain corporate issues and to brief on emerging developments.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 **A further report be brought to this Committee upon the opportunity for further integrated locality services;**
- 2.2 **The report be noted in general.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)

The Leicester, Leicestershire Economic Partnership (LLEP) submitted the SEP as required by midnight on 31 March 2014. In accordance with the delegated authority due to be granted, the Chief Executive authorised the Council's support to the Plan. The SEP is due to be considered by Government prior to the LLEP taking matters forward.

The Officers are studying the SEP closely to identify areas of development which fit with the Melton Priorities. Members are aware that the bid for the Cattle Market was submitted and accepted by the LLEP for inclusion in the SEP.

3.2 Rural Affordable Housing

As Members will recall this Council is leading on behalf of the District Councils on a revised approach to the support and successful development of Rural Affordable Housing. The Districts are working partnership with relevant Housing Associations, together with the County Council and the Leicestershire Rural Partnership.

The Partners have modernised their partnership approach and are as Housing Authorities, developing a five year rolling programme of Rural Housing Needs Assessments which will enable rural schemes to be developed as well as prepare a body of evidence which will assist appropriate development control and as required, the negotiation of Section 106 Agreements. This approach was noted in the SEP as an appropriate approach to the provision of Rural Affordable Housing. The County Council through the Leicestershire Rural Partnership is acting as Accountable Body for the modernisation of the service and following a tendering exercise Midlands Rural Housing was appointed as the Rural Housing Enabling Partner.

On behalf of the LRP and the Partnership, a Bid has been made to the LLEP for monies to continue to support the provision of Rural Affordable Housing.

3.3 Relationship with Local Businesses

The Council is in the final stages of developing a business partnership with the local Rotary Clubs to facilitate the passage of information and guidance to local SME's and other companies in relation to the new bidding regimes and provisions the Council has put in place such as business rate relief schemes. The Town Centre Managers have been running taster training and support sessions for businesses which enable particularly independent traders and small businesses to access information and support in a digestible and appropriate manner. Frequently these sessions are joined to Rotary Club activity when businesses have already made provision for that time.

The Council is also looking at a study of industrial/commercial activity by SME's in the Rural area to assess the support and access to funding they made need to enable their businesses to grow. Government Policy indicates that it expects SME's to lead the recovery and therefore your Officers intend to examine the spread of SME's across the Borough, their impact on local business and as indicated the level of support, guidance and access to funding which may assist their further development to the benefit of the economy in Melton.

3.4 Transformation and Partnership

The Council has long worked in partnership with other public sector organisations, including Districts, the County, Police, Health and others in the Community, Voluntary and Public Sector. Recently the Council's focus on transformation, effectively and efficiently meeting need and through support, the provision of tailored services which assist in reducing demand, has focussed this week on integrated services and effective partnerships which deliver to the Council's objectives and priorities.

At the present time the Council delivers certain back office services in partnership with other Leicestershire and Welland Councils. In particular the Welland Audit Partnership and Procurement Partnership have changed and modernised their services to meet the requirements of an expanding number of Partners. The Council is also a member of the delegated IT partnership led by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. This Partnership has successfully transferred the delivery of the Council's IT support and development through to Steria, adding capacity, resilience and knowledge to the Council's former provision. At the present time, the commissioning partners which include Hinckley and Bosworth, Oadby and Wigston and Blaby District Councils are considering and designing the service they would wish to let through future partnership commissioning which our Officers are ensuring includes adequate provision for the Council's transformation programme.

The Council continues to work with neighbouring partners in areas of common interest such as the research and development work around the Wind Supplementary Planning Document with Rushcliffe Borough Council and the exploratory work with both Harborough District Council and alternatively Rushcliffe Borough Council in relation to the provision of Waste Collection Services. Other partnerships including those mentioned in the sections above deal with the provision and commissioning of Locality Based Services including car parking, provision of support to the Welland Market Towns and the Gypsy and Travellers Unit amongst others.

With the County Council's approach to transformation of its services, an opportunity has developed at the request of this Council to work more pro-actively towards the development of integrated services around People and Place in Melton. This will build on the excellent work already carried out by this Council through the Children's Services, Supporting Leicestershire Families and the Early Years Contract to extend the services into more areas where locality based and managed provision will add value to both organisations but more particularly provide seamless services to local people.

This will link into the Council's Transformation Programme particularly those aspects related to supporting vulnerable people and promoting behaviour change which will facilitate social, financial and digital independence. This will benefit both Councils as it will enable the effective management of need as well as start to reduce and manage demand. To do this effectively the Council will wish to have discussions concerning adult social care as well as those relating to children, young people and families.

The County Council has indicated it is willing to examine this approach further. The Council has offered itself as a pilot authority in taking this approach forward which would then benefit the organisations and local people whatever structures of Local Government or the provision of public services exist in the future.

A more detailed report on partnership working and this initiative in particular, will be provided to a future meeting of this Committee, as appropriate.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The matters set out within this report illustrate how in a fast changing and challenging public sector environment, the Council is endeavouring to work in partnership with a variety of organisations to meet its objectives and priorities as well as effectively deliver necessary services in the locality.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no particular financial implications arising from this report other than the partnership approaches set out in the final section above are aimed at effectively and efficiently delivering Council services in the locality.

The partnership contribution to the Rural Housing Enabling Partnership is met from existing budgets as previously reported.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 The Council currently has a Memorandum of Understanding with Leicestershire County Council, which enables through delegation, effective integration of services in the locality.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 There are no particular implications arising from this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 This report sets the scene for possible future changes in service provision which will be subject to Equalities Impact Assessments as may be required. Matters relating to the Rural Affordable Housing Partnership are dealt with by the LRP and County Council as the Accountable Body.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 The main risk is detailed below.

Probability
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Very High A				
High B				
Significant C				
Low D		2, 1		
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

→
Impact

Risk No.	Description
1.	Loss of opportunity for effective integrated locality services
2.	Not meeting the challenge for the provision of rural affordable housing

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Consultation was carried out as appropriate and required with respect to the Rural Affordable Housing Provision particularly with respect to Registered Providers and District Councils. Discussions and consultation with the business community is on-going with the recent Business Forum being an example.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All.

Contact Officer: Lynn Aisbett, Chief Executive
Date: 7 April 2014

Background Papers:

1. Relevant notes of the Rural Housing Enabling Project Group – so far as these do not relate to commercially sensitive information.
2. Relevant notes/papers to the Rural Housing Enabling Steering Group

Reference : X : Committees\PFA\April 2014\Item 17 LA Corporate Issues