

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 June 2014

REVIEW OF PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE LOCALISM INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY

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RECENT REFERENCES:

OS58 – Localism Informal Scrutiny Group – Final Report – 21 January 2013
PHD471 – Recommendations of the Localism Informal Scrutiny Group – 20 June
2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The final recommendations of the Localism Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) were agreed by the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Economic Development via Portfolio Holder Decision Notice in June 2013.

This report summarises progress against these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee notes the progress made to date in implementing the recommendations of the Localism Informal Scrutiny Group and raises any issues with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

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1 Background

- 1.1 The Localism Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) reported the outcome of their review to The Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2013 (Report OS58 refers). Particular emphasis during the review was given to the General Power of Competence and Neighbourhood Planning.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 sets out progress made in delivering the recommendations of the ISG.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

2 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 2.1 The Community Strategy sets the objectives of promoting community cohesion and ensuring the quality of the place we enjoy is maintained and enhanced. Support for parish councils through Neighbourhood Plans and other forms of community planning will help the Council achieve these objectives.
- 2.2 Encouraging a more entrepreneurial approach to the Council's work will support the Strategy's objective around medium term financial planning to ensure effective use of available resources including asset management.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 3.1 The recommendations set out by the ISG do not require any further resources other than existing staff time. Member training expenses will be met from the Member Training budget.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 There are no significant risks arising from this report or from the recommendations of the ISG.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Progress against the Localism Informal Scrutiny Group's recommendations

Progress against the Localism Informal Scrutiny Group's recommendations

No.	Original ISG recommendation	Progress/Current status
1	That any future staff re-structuring should consider re-designating existing posts, or creating new posts, to encourage a more entrepreneurial approach.	<p>There have not been any significant restructures over the past year where the opportunity to do this could have been taken. However given the budget restrictions in the coming years, income generation will be a key part of our financial strategy and an entrepreneurial approach will be an important skill for staff, especially for our senior managers. Whilst we have not designated any post in particular, we are seeking to recruit, for example, more surveyors in the Estates Team to support our move to increase our property income.</p> <p>We are also working with Eastleigh Borough Council as part of our joint Learning and Development provision and are in the process of reviewing all of the competencies for our managers. Entrepreneurship is being considered as a part of these competencies. This would be used as part of the appraisal process and would help identify any future learning and development needs in this area for our managers</p>
2	The City Council should investigate what support parish councils might need to achieve or maintain Quality Parish Council status and, within the constraints of current resources, create a relevant support package. This support should be enshrined within a Localism Partnership Agreement between WCC and the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) within which WCC support for the Quality Parish Scheme, the MDC (Member Development Charter) and CiLCA (the Certificate in Local Council Administration) is expressed.	<p>The Quality Parish Council (QPC) scheme is currently being reviewed by the National Association of Local Councils and there has been no guidance issued as to when the scheme will be live again. This situation will be monitored via HALC.</p> <p>As a qualified clerk is a key criterion of the existing QPC scheme, and this can be demonstrated through the securing of a CiLCA, it is suggested that work on creating a Localism Partnership Agreement is delayed until further clarity is secured on the future of the scheme. This will ensure the Agreement is set against a national standard for parishes which will set out practical areas in which the</p>

		City Council can offer support.
3	The City Council accepts the Hampshire Association of Local Councils' offer to brief officers and Members on the competence framework for the parish sector, to include the Quality Parish Scheme, the MDC and the CiLCA.	Democratic Services will be supporting several community governance reviews for parish councils later this year, therefore Stephen Lugg (Hampshire Association of Local Councils) will be invited to brief officers and Members in tandem with that piece of work. It is hoped by that time there will be further guidance available on the Quality Parish Council scheme or its alternative.
4	The City Council should instigate a systematic annual programme of training for community leaders, officers, councillors and others to provide them with a good understanding of what can be achieved through good community planning, and how places can be improved at all levels.	<p>A section on community planning is being integrated into the annual member induction training programme, the first of which will be delivered for new Members in 2014/15.</p> <p>A report will be given annually to the Senior Managers' Group (SMG) to update on progress made with community plans across the District and also to highlight any changes in policy or approach. Officers are also involved in community planning on an ongoing basis as the Community Planning team liaise with them as appropriate when communities are pulling together action plans relevant to their areas of responsibility.</p> <p>The Community Planning Manager has an ongoing relationship with community leaders and activists, supporting their aims in community planning and providing them with case studies, good practice and other useful information. This regular contact has been found to be successful and provides more support than a formal training programme. The Strategic Planning team have also been working closely with communities in the larger parishes and in the Winchester town area to develop the Local Plan Part 2 which will support communities in influencing their local area at the statutory planning level.</p>