

MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

THURSDAY, 16 MAY 2013 2.30 PM



GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Kelham Cooke
Councillor Vic Kerr
Councillor Charmaine Morgan

Councillor John Nicholson (Chairman)
Councillor Adam Stokes
Councillor Mrs Jean Taylor

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Councillor Teri Bryant
Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright
Councillor Mrs. Linda Neal
Councillor Mike Taylor (Portfolio: Strategic Resources - Well Run Council)

OFFICERS

Strategic Director (Tracey Blackwell)
Operations Director (Ian Yates)
Head of Community Assets (Paul Stokes)
Strategic Lead for Economic Development and Regeneration (Corrine Garbett)
Environmental Health Services Manager (David Price)
Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer (Carol Drury)
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)

1. MEMBERSHIP

The PDG was notified that Councillor Vic Kerr would be substituting for Councillor Thompson and that Councillor Adam Stokes would be substituting for Councillor Wootten for this meeting only.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Griffin and Councillor Adams (Portfolio Holder: Arts and Leisure).

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

No interests were disclosed.

4. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 7 MARCH 2013

The action notes from the meeting held on 7 March 2013 were noted.

5. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Residents' parking Stamford

Following the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE), Lincolnshire County Council provided waivers for Stamford residents which expired at the end of May 2013. Subsequently Lincolnshire County Council agreed the continuation of the waivers in Stamford pending the introduction of a parking scheme for residents.

Waste contamination campaign

A working group of the PDG had met on Monday 25 March 2013 to consider issues surrounding the contamination of recyclable waste in preparation for a new disposal contract. Under the new contract the Council would pay a financial penalty for any loads where the contamination rate exceeded 5%. A copy of the action notes from the working group was circulated with the agenda.

When the working group considered ways to reduce the level of contamination of recyclable material, the key emphasis was placed on education. The working group recognised that in some circumstances, despite efforts to educate, there might be instances where it would be necessary to replace silver bins with an additional black bin. Particularly highlighted were houses of multiple occupation where space was limited and properties where the transience of residents was high.

Some concern was expressed about the low limit of permitted contamination and the likelihood of charges. The working group had considered this but found that the potential income the contract could generate was greater than any charges made against the authority.

Recommendation:

That the action notes from the Waste Contamination Working Group should constitute the recommendation to the Healthy Environment Portfolio Holder.

6. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE

High hedges

At its meeting on 7 March 2013, the PDG recommended that:

“In the instance a breach is found in respect of high hedges costs should be borne by the subject of the complaint and not the complainant. “

The Good Housing Portfolio Holder informed the PDG that the recommendation could not be implemented as the subject of the charge was prescribed in law.

Health and Well-being

It was hoped that the tender document in respect of health and well-being would be available by 17 May 2013. SKDC would then prepare a bid in respect of the delivery of those services.

7. CULTURAL STRATEGY

The Council’s Strategic Lead for Economic Development and Regeneration gave a presentation on the draft Cultural Strategy, a copy of which was circulated with the agenda for the meeting. She explained that this was a new strategy which would deliver the Council’s priority of promoting leisure, arts and culture - a key driver behind the Council’s growth agenda. Specific action plans would sit under the strategy; each action plan would include consideration of potential risks and ways they could be mitigated.

Key topics within the presentation included:

- A recap of the Council’s vision for the district in 2021, its strategic mission and corporate aims
- Working in partnership to deliver the strategy
- Defining the scope of the term culture
- Current provision within the district in respect of culture, sports and leisure highlighting those services that the Council provided
- How the ambition for the district in 2021 would be reflected in the urban centres and rural hinterlands
- How to promote the benefits of South Kesteven’s culture
- Preserving and developing the district’s unique cultural offer
- Enabling and encouraging people to participate in cultural activity

Members of the PDG discussed the draft strategy, considering whether each area was sufficiently covered. A number of additional suggestions were made:

- The strategic vision should recognise local competition and seek to promote the district as the destination of choice
- The strategy should recognise education, particularly highlighted were

classes for older people

- The cultural offer within the district should be referred to generically to prevent the assumption that all services were provided by the district council (e.g. libraries and museums)
- Distinction should be made between built and natural heritage. The strategy should also recognise local architecture
- The details of current cultural provision should recognise opportunities presented by river-ways and waterways within the district
- Current provision should also incorporate parks and street scene
- In considering potential partners, thought should be given to international partners through twinning arrangements

The PDG also considered the ambitions for each town that were listed in the presentation.

Grantham: Positive feedback was given on the development of a flexible space on St. Peter's Hill. It was suggested that greater importance should be credited to the town's historical attributes and promoting tourism. The two-week 'love your market' event was being used to promote Grantham's market.

Stamford: It was suggested that the future vision for Stamford should incorporate an active family entertainment scene.

Bourne: The strategy for Bourne aimed to build on its unique character as a town centre supported by local people. The key ambitions for Bourne concentrated on community spirit and promoting cultural assets already in place. Members suggested that developing Bourne market could help achieve the vision for the town.

Deepings and the rural hinterlands: The suggestion was made that tourists could be attracted to the fen area of the district with the introduction of a 'Fen Trail'.

Recommendation

- 1. That the Portfolio Holder considers the issues raised by the PDG for inclusion in the draft Cultural Strategy***
- 2. That the Cabinet approves the adoption of the draft Cultural Strategy***

8. PRIVATE SECTOR RENEWAL POLICY

The Environmental Health Services Manager summarised report number ENV584. He clarified that 17,100 premises in the district's private stock did not meet the decent homes standard and 11,700 dwellings had category 1 hazards (those hazards that present the most risk of harm to health). The most common category 1 hazard was excess cold.

Key considerations for the PDG included:

- As limited funding was available to deal with category 1 hazards, (it was projected this would last for the financial year) should the council review its distribution policy.
- How a landlord accreditation scheme could help improve the quality of private sector housing across the district and support the Council in its statutory homelessness responsibilities.
- The impact of the Environmental Protection Act which would require the private sector to meet minimum energy efficiency standards on available housing stock.
- The potential impact of benefits changes on demand for single bed units and houses of multiple occupation (HMO). The district council retained responsibility for licensing and dealing with complaints about HMOs.
- Ways to promote independent living, including disabled facilities grants, making a funding contribution to the Handy Person Scheme and promoting the First Contact Scheme.
- Bringing empty homes back into use including penalties for properties which have been empty for over 2 years, grants for house owners and opportunities to generate income through the new homes bonus.

The PDG agreed to set up a working group meeting to consider the report and make recommendations on the broad principles around which the policy would be based.

Agreed

The PDG agreed to hold a workshop to consider the private sector renewal policy in detail.

9. LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME

The Environmental Health Services Manager explained that work was underway to develop a landlord accreditation scheme. Elements of this would be considered in conjunction with the private sector renewal policy.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted. The Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer summarised the Annual Review 2012/13 for the Communities PDG. The group had met 7 times, considered 18 substantive items and made 11 recommendations. One opportunity for future progression was developing collaborative working between PDGs.

11. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed at 16:38.