

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Community Transition Strategy 2021-23

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 14th October 2021

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Community Resilience and Well-Being, Councillor Simon Bywater

Report by: Corporate Director (People) - Oliver Morley

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

This report presents the proposed Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire; and how Huntingdonshire District Council will work with residents and community groups to support the best possible outcomes for Huntingdonshire, its residents and businesses. Huntingdonshire DC has a strong record of having supported and worked in partnership with our residents and the community organisations that support them over an extended period. This report lays out the ways in which we seek to expand and build on these strong foundations.

Much of this approach builds on the evidence based, innovative and genuinely co-produced activity that has taken place during the period of Covid impact. It lays out how HDC will seek to deliver on its ambitions for the best possible outcomes for residents in partnership with our residents and community groups, who share these objectives.

This Strategy has been written following strong input from Community groups, ongoing shared working arrangements and a series of workshops which took the learning from Covid and how the District had responded. It is hoped and believed, that it represents a shared vision and way of working for the future.

This Strategy is presented as a Transition Strategy, recognising that the Place Strategy for Huntingdonshire will represent the largest community engagement activity in a generation, and this engagement should rightly influence and shape the Community strategy. We therefore wanted to lay down a clear commitment to objectives and ways of working in the immediate term but provide an opportunity to review and update this on the back of the Place Strategy consultation.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

To endorse the proposed Community Transition Strategy and the list of actions that sit within the supporting Action Plan.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks endorsement of the proposed Community Transition Strategy and the list of actions that sit within the supporting Action Plan.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) has a strong ambition for Huntingdonshire, its residents, and communities. Evidence is compelling that people who live in strong communities, tend to be happier, and achieve better outcomes. Similarly public services are able to have the greatest impact where residents and communities are able to take advantage of opportunities, building self-reliance and aspiration. The foundations of good work, residents enjoying good health, where people enjoy a good start and people live within a good place, benefit everyone.
- 2.2 These outcomes however are beyond the remit or reach of any one organisation. Rather it requires a process for joint working that seeks to help people help themselves, that offers a helping hand where required, and that interlinks support in a way that removes duplication and presents resources to residents in a way that makes sense to them.
- 2.3 Within this context it is essential that the area has a Community Strategy which seeks to lay out the ambitions for the area and the process by which engagement will take place with residents and those seeking to meet community needs. That is the intent of this strategy.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Many District areas do not have a Community Strategy in the form this is presented. There is no statutory duty to do so. However, following the significant review of evidence and insight, testing of impacts and trialing of Community interventions a key opportunity for such a document has been identified. This work has also led to the conclusion that attempting to “do” community to others both does not meet the ways of working to which we aspire or enable the production of the kind of flexible and responsive services that our communities need.
- 3.2 Another option exists of leaving the Community to deliver to their own needs. However that would leave the Community to push ahead without the support of one of its key allies and advocates. There is a lot the District Council can do, and a lot we have learned from our Community colleagues. We believe that through the alignment of our efforts, the District Council has a key role in coordinating and convening, supporting community groups, and developing new ways of working with them to achieve more together than we can apart.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers & Partnerships) is due to receive this report at its meeting on 7 October 2021. Comments from the Panel will be circulated in advance of the Cabinet’s meeting.

5. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

5.1 The key impact of this Strategy is to ensure all partners involved in supporting Communities within Huntingdonshire will be clear on how we intend to work and the outcomes we are seeking. The strategy lays out how we intend to work around four themes, our approach will be:

- Evidence based and responsive
- Engaging and capacity building
- Proactive
- Creative

5.2 The key risks to which the Strategy responds largely lie around longer term Covid impacts (captured in the areas Covid Impact Assessment), and Covid Recovery dashboards dealt with in the Recovery work plan.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 The supporting Action Plan lists the 14 actions that we will be pursuing in order to deliver against the Community Strategy over the next 2 years.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

7.1 This report delivers against significant aspects of the Corporate Plan and the People element (Good Start/Good Health): We want to make our district a better place to live, to improve health and well-being and support people to be the best they can be:

- People – Support people to improve their health and well-being
- People – Develop a flexible and skilled local workforce
- People – Develop stronger and more resilient communities to enable people to help themselves

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Throughout the Covid outbreak we have worked cross organisationally as a core way of operating, meeting on a fortnightly basis as equals with relevant Community partners. We have also undertaken regular project work and joint working in relation to emergency food need, and the development of process and technology solutions to cross agency working. It is this co-production space, working as equals to develop shared solutions which is critical to delivering the objectives laid out in this report.

8.2 In addition to this we ran a series of 3 joint workshops with the County Council, and Community partners to take the learning from Covid and to reflect on what had worked well, and what we needed in the future. All of this is captured in the document.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Not applicable to this report.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Resources are in place to deliver this activity within currently committed resources. Where gaps exist projects will be developed on a case by case basis.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This approach is not anticipated to have any negative impacts on the equalities agenda.

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

12.1 The Community Transition Strategy provides a clear direction for what we are doing (and proposing to do), why we are doing it and what impact it is having in terms of Community outcomes. It is believed to be an appropriate response to the challenges we are currently facing, and the challenges we are forecast to see in the future.

13. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Community Transition Strategy 2021-23

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name/Job Title: Oliver Morley, Corporate Director (People)
Tel No: 01480 388103
Email: Oliver.Morley@huntingdonshire.gov.uk