

Proposed Arrangements for developing strategic arrangements for Community Involvement/Engagement/Participation work in South Cambridgeshire

To: **South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership**

Date: **10th October 2066**

From: **Kirsten Bennett, Chief Executive, Cambridgeshire ACRE
Jez Reeve, Chief Executive, Cambridge CVS
Simon McIntosh, Assistant Director of Community Services,
South Cambs District Council**

Key decision: **To establish an LSP Community Engagement Group.**

Purpose: **To inform the Board of recent Government developments in community engagement in order to develop the delivery of public services.**

Recommendation: **The LSP Board is asked to support the establishment of a Community Engagement Group to develop a strategic approach to this agenda.**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Government's agenda for community involvement and engagement, across a wide range of policy areas, is gathering momentum. For example:
 - 1.1.1. The "Together We Can" plan sets out to enable people to engage with public bodies and influence the decisions that affect their communities.
 - 1.1.2. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) gives Cambridgeshire's public, private and voluntary sector service providers greater opportunities to define local priorities and co-ordinate resources and activity to address them.
 - 1.1.3. New arrangements for LSPs detailed in the document "Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping the Future" make proposals for clear pathways that link parishes and neighbourhoods in the delivery of an area's Sustainable Community Strategy.

2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/ENGAGEMENT/PARTICIPATION

- 2.1. Examples of Community Involvement/Engagement/Participation work already undertaken in South Cambridgeshire include:
 - 2.1.1. A model of community engagement and involvement in rural areas using parish plans as a tool for communities to self-evaluate local needs. The work supports the LAA targets under the safer and stronger communities block, "To empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decision making and the delivery of services".
 - 2.1.2. Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils providing dedicated support to parish councils working towards Quality Status. A quality parish council is representative of, and actively engages, all parts of its community, providing vision, identity and a sense of belonging. It works to facilitate the needs and

wishes of its community and voluntary groups whilst working in partnership with principle authorities and other public service agencies.

2.1.3. Neighbourhood Policing Panels based on local priorities identified by local people as the issues that need to be dealt with in their area and then police and partners working together to tackle them.

2.1.4. Engaging the voluntary and community sector through the South Cambridgeshire "Voluntary Sector Forum". Voluntary and Community Sector organisations play an important role in the life of South Cambridgeshire in bringing people together around a wide range of issues, in providing direct services and in encouraging and promoting active citizenship.

2.1.5. Community involvement in health services through the Patient and Public Involvement in Health Forums and other PCT Patient groups.

2.1.6. The development of neighbourhood and community learning agendas, which are supported through resources such as the community access points.

2.2. Apart from these programmes there are those that seek to involved hard-to-reach groups and new communities, such as migrant workers and travellers.

3. PROPOSAL FOR WAY FORWARD

3.1. Most public and voluntary sector service providers are dealing with new approaches to delivering public services that seek to engage and involve communities in improving the quality of life in their own areas. At the moment the agenda is fragmented with organisations often seeking to involve the same people in different ways.

3.2. It is proposed that a sub-group of the LSP is established to start to develop a strategic approach to community involvement/engagement/participation work throughout South Cambridgeshire. It is thought that if a more joined-up approach is achieved then this will ensure peoples' views are not just listened too but also acted upon.

3.3. The work aligns and will develop a district, partnership based, response to Countywide developments such as:

3.3.1. The development of a countywide Community Cohesion Strategy, through which it is proposed that Cambridgeshire public service providers take a proactive approach to Community Cohesion by offering a user-friendly overarching strategic framework that can evolve through partnership working and community engagement;

3.3.2. The LAA Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which states that work will centre on communities and the support needed at organisational and individual level to develop community empowerment by joining up current initiatives relating to community planning and community development, community cohesion, neighbourhood management, parish council development, Compact development, volunteering and infrastructure support services and workforce development.

3.3.3. A co-ordinated approach to the development of Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure support. Taking forward work established under the ChangeUp Programme and Defra's Rural Social and Community Programme. This would include the establishment of improved local voluntary sector networks and voluntary and community support.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1. The LSP Board is asked to support the establishment of a Community Engagement Group to develop a strategic approach to this agenda.

Kirsten Bennett
Direct Dial: 01353 865041
E-mail: kirsten.bennett@cambsacre.org.uk

Jez Reeve
Direct Dial: 01223 716875
E-mail: jez@cambridgecvs.org.uk

Simon McIntosh
Direct Dial: 01223 724150
E-mail: simon.mcintosh@scambs.gov.uk