



## OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (Mole Valley)

### Mole Valley Localism Programme – next steps

7<sup>th</sup> March

#### KEY ISSUE

The Local Committee are asked to review of the direction of the Mole Valley Localism Programme one year on.

#### SUMMARY

From when the Mole Valley Pilot was established in June 2010, Local Members worked with officers to identify to agree six work streams which would allow us to approach Localism in a number of different ways. The six themes were chosen as they were relevant to local people and because both Councils played a role in delivery. The blurred edges of responsibility sometimes led to missed opportunities and there was potential for customer focus to become hazy in terms of service delivery.

One year on it is appropriate to review the direction for the work streams in the programme.

#### OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to**

1. agree the Asset Management Sub Group continue and be requested to focus on identification of land strategies that should be identified in the Local Planning process
2. agree that the Youth Member Champion Group continue and undertake any formal role as required by the Transformation project but also review the total resources dedicated to youth as indicated in the initial Localism project brief

3. agree that the work continues to devolve S106 money to community groups with a particular emphasis on 1) devolving S106 money from the county council to community groups 2) a focus on S106 monies allocated to education and libraries being identified and reviewed for release 3) supporting the development of an approach to CIL
4. agree that the work around street scene continues as opportunity arises

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 From when the Mole Valley Pilot was established in June 2010, Local Members worked with officers to identify to agree six work streams which would allow us to approach Localism in a number of different ways. The six themes were chosen as they were relevant to local people and because both Councils played a role in delivery. The blurred edges of responsibility sometimes led to missed opportunities and there was potential for customer focus to become hazy in terms of service delivery. The themes were
  - Smarter alignment and use of property
  - Local service development and joint commissioning – youth services
  - Alignment of section 106 spending to maximise efficiency and impact
  - Alignment with schools confederations to support SSP and LSP objectives – including early interventions
  - Local service development and commissioning – street scene
  - Mainstreaming LSP objectives to ensure a focus on priority places
- 1.2 It is important to note that both Councils were already active and effective in the local area but there was recognition that we could be more effective and responsive to local needs by joining up better.
- 1.3 The methodology for each theme was not prescribed and some time went into establishing the issues to be addressed. The change in national government brought a different set of language to the landscape. However, in the broadest terms, total place, localism and big society all had complementary aims – how to make public service accountable to the citizen, efficient and effective. Therefore the pilot
  - mapped or quantified the existing resources and assets of the two bodies
  - focussed on change in ‘ways of working’ which would quickly pay large dividends
  - engaged local residents to determine outcomes
- 1.4 It was also acknowledged that total place and localism had a broader base than just the work of the two authorities. This programme operated in the context of already successful delivery by a wider range of partners through bodies such as the CSP and the LSP. However, as the scope of the pilots developed it became clearer that the pilots looked at integrating more traditional ‘regulatory’ functions than focussing on partnership work in the LSP/CSPs.
- 1.5 At early stages in the work, the focus was largely within the two authorities but that did not suggest that the Parish Councils, VCFS or other public sector

agencies did not have a role to play. In many cases the scope of the pilot allowed us to use this learning as a springboard for greater join up with other bodies at a local level and as a route to start to create a demand and purpose for single budgets.

## **2.0 WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED – ONE YEAR ON**

### **2.1 A fresh way of working**

The key approach to this pilot was to 'free up' thinking and move to action. Therefore governance arrangements were light touch and took the form of a Total Place Board and Member Champion Groups but with all decisions made by Mole Valley Local Committee (MVLC).

This approach led to an invigorated way of working where officers and Members from both authorities truly worked collaboratively to make a difference to services. This has taken time to achieve but has built capacity to make change in the future.

### **2.2 Practical outcomes**

Our practical outcomes are not complicated – the pilot is all about leadership and will. However there are some quantifiable outcomes.

- Two joint litter pick/central verge clearance was undertaken effectively saving the cost of two road closures and reducing inconvenience to drivers
- S106 monies were pooled from district and county for developments in Leatherhead Town Centre.
- Following pooling of S106 monies, a joint approach to developments in Leatherhead High Street were secured. A local working group was formed between elected Members and the local community, joint consultation held and reports twin tracked to MVLC and MVDC Executive. Although not an unusual approach, the pace of working together was swift due to the commitment to jointly commission. Effectively the vision was shared and owned by the two authorities and pushed forward to action.
- The objectives of the youth stream were broadly comparable to the Youth Transformation project. Members were clear that both pieces of work should integrate and that MVLC should be a vanguard for the roll out of Transformation and effectively test the approach. Through joint mapping and information sharing, Members have been fully sighted on the needs of young people in the district.
- A decluttering programme for Dorking High Street including removal of redundant street furniture and changes to signage.

In addition a range of commitments are in place to take work forward

- Commitment to devolving responsibility for small areas of grounds maintenance to a Residents Association. Discussions continue as the options are as varied as a contract monitoring role through to procurement at a local level.
- Commitment to co-location of public services at Pippbrook

- The views of local community groups were sought as to potential areas of S106 spend. We have agreed that responsibility for spend could be devolved to a Parish Council or community group (with appropriate governance arrangements)

### 3.0 NEXT STEPS

#### 3.1 A new focus for 2012

The work we have undertaken to date has become business as usual – which is a huge success. The outcomes have not been complex but have required leadership and a commitment to do something differently. Interestingly, the areas of work that have progressed most effectively have been the themes in which both authorities have an active role. There has been less progress in themes where the emphasis for action is more significantly in one authority.

However, local government faces an unprecedented level of resource restraint at this time. In many ways this makes the Localism work more important as public authorities strive to work efficiently but over the past year the commitment to collaboration in many public sector areas has grown many fold. Therefore it is appropriate to focus work in the areas that will reap most reward and not duplicate work that has been put in play by other drivers. Therefore it is appropriate to refresh the scope of the pilots. A review of progress to date is shown in Appendix 2 with proposals for next steps summarised below.

##### 3.1.2 Smarter alignment and use of property

Work has progressed well in respect of co-location, efficient use of public buildings and exploring options for development opportunities.

*It is proposed that the Asset Management Sub Group continue this work with a particular emphasis on identification of strategies that should be identified in the Local Planning process (joint lead)*

##### 3.1.3 Local service development and joint commissioning – youth services

Significant steps were made to integrate this work with the Youth Transformation project with Mole Valley effectively acting as vanguard for the work.

*This work should continue and there is a role for the MCG to review progress and outcomes over the year (lead SCC).*

*There is also potential to review the larger youth landscape as initially proposed in the brief (joint lead)*

##### 3.1.4 Alignment of section 106 spending to maximise efficiency and impact

The original vision was to use the Leatherhead High Street Development work to act as an exemplar for joint working. A community working group was convened and a master plan developed. Works were undertaken but then there was a period of slow down on the project. However, further community meetings have recently been held.

*It is proposed that this work progresses but is removed from the Localism work programme.*

The second element of this work was to passport S106 monies to local groups. This has been achieved for district council contributions and discussions continue with respect to county council. Some Highways work is identified for funding via S106 monies in 12/13.

*It is proposed that this work continues as a Localism programme with the emphasis on 1) devolving S106 money from the county council to community groups 2) a focus on S106 monies allocated to education and libraries being identified and reviewed for release (lead SCC) 3) supporting the development of an approach to CIL*

### 3.1.5 Local service development and commissioning – street scene

The practical deliverables of joint litter pick/grass cutting project have come out of this theme and this will continue. Progress has also been made in the de-cluttering initiative with rationalisation of signs etc in Dorking High Street with further works planned to enhance the visual appearance of the town. However teams delivering this work are heavily involved in the logistics of the Olympic Road Cycle Race and extensive effort can not be put into this work until the Autumn.

*It is proposed that the decluttering work continues as part of the Localism pilot and further areas of joint working are identified in due course.*

*One area to explore will be to devolve grass cutting/arbocultural work directly from the county council to community groups or parish councils (lead SCC)*

*In addition there is potential for minor highway matters to be devolved to Local Committee and the process to achieve this should be established (lead SCC)*

### 3.1.6 Alignment with schools confederations to support SSP and LSP objectives – including early interventions

Improved relationships between the Confederations, School Heads and the district council have resulted from this work. However, the introduction of Academies has taken the focus off the County Council led work to relaunch confederations but the deliverables of the project are focussed extensively within the County Council remit

*This project should be removed from the Localism programme*

### 3.1.7 Mainstreaming LSP objectives to ensure a focus on priority places

This area was less of a works stream but more of a commitment in that if activity needed to take place it should focus in the MV priority areas first of all. However, Members of the Local Committee were co-opted onto the Mole Valley Community Partnership to provide a conduit of information.

*There are no tangible outcomes from this work just an improved communications flow therefore this stream should be removed from the Localism programme but the member links maintained.*

## 3.2 Membership of Member Champion Groups

There is also opportunity to review the membership of the Member Champion Groups.

*Smarter alignment and use of property*

Cllr David Howell (MV) (present as portfolio holder for community and assets), Cllr Stephen Cooksey (SCC), Cllr Hazel Watson (SCC) and Cllr Tim Hall (SCC).

*Vacancy for a district councillor*

*Local service development and joint commissioning – youth services*

Cllr Chris Townsend (SCC) and Cllr Hazel Watson (SCC).

*Vacancy for a district councillor*

*Alignment of section 106 spending to maximise efficiency and impact*

Cllr Phil Harris (MV), Cllr Tim Hall (SCC), and Cllr Stephen Cooksey (SCC)

*Vacancy for a district councillor*

*Alignment with schools confederations to support SSP and LSP objectives – including early interventions*

Group to disband - Cllr David Howell (MV) and Cllr Clare Curran (SCC).

*Local service development and commissioning – street scene*

Cllr David Sharland (MV), Cllr Valerie Homewood (MV), Cllr Stephen Cooksey (SCC) and Cllr Helyn Clack (SCC).

*Mainstreaming LSP objectives to ensure a focus on priority places*

Cllr C Townsend (SCC), Portfolio Holder for Partnerships MVDC

#### **4 CONSULTATIONS**

Initial discussions were held with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the MVLC to shape the direction of this work for the coming year.

#### **5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

All activity is being resourced from existing budgets

#### **6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

This work is being undertaken across the district and there is opportunity for all residents, community groups or organisations to become involved

#### **7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

Many of the themes build positive outcomes for crime and disorder, for example, the principle of communities taking greater ownership for their areas builds positive community relations

#### **8 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The key approach to this work was to 'free up' thinking and move to action and this approach is clearly transferrable across Surrey. Simply 'loosening up' ways of working and decision making arrangements can be very effective. The MCG were not constituted Task and Finish groups and therefore not bound by procedures and clarity on voting rights but focussed on making change happen.

The recommendations take forward projects that have definable outcomes and that will make a difference to our communities. A prime element in several workstreams was to devolve responsibility for service delivery to community groups, residents associations or Parish Councils who have shown great interest in the opportunities available. The pilots have shown that this is fairly easily achieved with the minimum of governance arrangements and a model for use across Surrey could be developed.

## **9 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

The work in the Localism pilot continues and regular updates are provided to Local Committee

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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Version No.      Date:      Time:      Initials:      No of Annexes:

