



CABINET

Tuesday 1 October 2019

PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE LEISTON TOGETHER INITIATIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1 Leiston Together was established as a place based enabling initiative in January 2017 by two funding partners, the then SCDC and Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council. The original three year funding agreement is due to expire in December 2019. The initiative has made significant progress against its objectives since its inception and is highly regarded by all partners and the local community.
- 2 Leiston Together has made significant progress in achieving its objectives as a Coastal Community Town and addressed both community and economic development issues and opportunities. Furthermore, it has been a positive example of the potential of place based initiatives to increase community capacity, regeneration and create change and improvement for local residents and visitors to the town.
- 3 In order to build on these achievements and to address further community and economic priorities, it is proposed that East Suffolk Council and Leiston cum Sizewell Town Council fund an extension to the current funding term. The priorities identified for a new programme will include the development of additional capacity to support economic growth and community development which will be sustainable beyond the life of the partnership which will be key in the context of the proposed Sizewell C new nuclear development.

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| Is the report Open or Exempt? | Open |
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| Wards Affected: | Leiston |
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| Cabinet Members: | Cllr Letitia Smith and Cllr Craig Rivett |
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| Supporting Officers: | <p>Nicole Rickard Head of Communities 01502 523 321 Nicole.rickard@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Paul Wood Head of Economic Development & Regeneration 01394 444249 Paul.wood@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</p> |
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Leiston Together place-based partnership board was established in 2017 by the two funding partners; the then Suffolk Coastal District Council and Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council. It was developed to provide a co-ordinated approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities across the four priority areas identified in the 2015 Our Place review, namely:

- Town Centre Regeneration
- Health and Wellbeing
- Business Support
- Local provision for young adults

1.2 To support the objectives of LT a three year funding agreement was put in place by the District and Town Council amounting to £30k pa (£27k pa from ESC New Homes Bonus, and £3k pa from the Town Council, plus some additional costs that were covered by the Council) covering the period January 2017 to December 2019. In order to drive forward the co-ordinating and enabling activity required against the four priority areas, a Change Manager, Elspeth Gibson was appointed in late 2016. The partnership Board also agreed the appointment of an independent chair, Barry Norman, who brought a wealth of leadership experience from his career with the Metropolitan Police and subsequent community focussed roles. The board consists of partners from the following organisations:

- East Suffolk Council
- Leiston Town Council
- Suffolk County Council
- Leiston Community Land Trust (CLT)
- Community Action Suffolk
- Alde Valley Academy
- Suffolk New College on the Coast

1.3 The main focus of the board's activities is to support the development and implementation of the Leiston Together Delivery Plan. This plan sets out the specific projects being progressed to achieve the objectives across the four priority areas.

- 1.4 Since the adoption of the delivery plan in January 2017 the following progress has been made:

Town Centre Regeneration

- Ambitious vision for Town Centre developed
- Independent Housing Needs Survey undertaken
- The Leiston CLT has formally constituted as a Community Benefit Society with a Board of Trustees and over 140 members working to a vision for the town centre regeneration.
- Completion of externally funded Town Centre Regeneration Study following a successful funding application to MHCLG
- In December 2019 ESC purchased empty retail properties on the High street with the potential to support the town centre regeneration scheme. Leiston CLT is now occupying one of these units in order to engage with the public on the regeneration scheme plans.

Health and Wellbeing

- Secured £35k for the Leiston Links Social Prescribing Project in 2018. The success of this pilot project led to its adoption as part of the new Connect for Health project managed by Access Community Trust.
- Leiston hosted a Community Matters four week pop up public engagement event in Spring 2018 to offer residents the opportunity to access information, support and workshop sessions from organisations across a wide range of Health and Social Care, Adult Education, Employability, Volunteering, Voluntary Services and Community Safety. Almost 90 sessions took place over the 4 weeks.
- Progressed the Leiston Dementia Project with Leiston approved as working towards being a Dementia Friendly Town. Funding secured to extend the project to Saxmundham and Aldeburgh and a new Worry Tree (mental health) Café established.
- Establishment of the Leiston Good Neighbour Scheme to provide a befriending service for older people in the town.
- Launch of the Sizewell Park Run attracting over a 100 people each week. Project developed in partnership RSPB Minsmere, EDF, SCDC and SCC and has led to significant social cohesion impacts including Leiston surgery becoming one of the first Park Run Practices.
- NHS 70th Anniversary Tea Party 23rd July 2018 organised in partnership with Leiston WI, the Long Shop and Leiston Surgery.

Business Support

- The 2018 monthly Business Networking events culminated in the relaunch of Leiston Business Association as part of the East Suffolk Means Business Festival.
- Regular business networking events continue to take place - the increased profile for local business has been greatly welcomed by the local business community.
- A survey of local businesses took place to provide a formal response to the Sizewell C stage 3 public consultation.
- Creation of Leiston Events Group which achieved great success with local events such as the Leiston Big Weekend and Leiston on Ice. Over the 2 days around 2000 people attended the 'Big Weekend' events. Led to the establishment of a community fund for local voluntary groups with a further programme of events planned for 2020.
- £44k secured from the Coastal Revival Funding to create a new Information Point in the town for residents and visitors hosted by Leiston Film Theatre, the location is ideal for promoting Leiston as a tourist destination.
- CCF funding used to appoint a temporary Business Development Co-ordinator which was critical for the relaunch of the Leiston Business Association

- Leiston developed a Leiston Farmers Market, hosted in the Long Shop on the third Saturday of each month in partnership with Leiston Business Association and are currently reviewing variants on the market theme for future events.

Local Provision for Young People

- Launch of Suffolk New College On the Coast provision in Leiston for post 16 year olds in September 2019 following significant engagement with and support from the Board
- Joint working with EDF Energy to identify a practical transport led solution to support young people accessing skills and training opportunities in Ipswich.
- Closer links established between LT partners and Alde Valley Academy e.g. games workshops, Crucial Crew Plus, Careers sessions to ensure school is an integral part of the community

2 REFRESHED DELIVERY PLAN

- 2.1 To ensure inclusive and comprehensive engagement regarding the future of the Leiston Together partnership, a workshop was organised in June 2019. The purpose of the workshop was to determine firstly, the business case (or otherwise) for extending the partnership's current term and thereby the requirement to seek further funding for the partnership and secondly, if the need for Leiston Together to continue was agreed, to develop a refreshed set of priorities for inclusion in a new delivery plan. The attendees, who included representatives from all board member organisations, were unanimous that whilst a considerable amount had been achieved against the current delivery plan there was still a significant amount of activity required to address the priority areas, including a large number of ongoing projects, to warrant an extension to the current funding term.
- 2.2 Once this principal had been agreed the workshop then focussed on both ongoing and additional activity that was required and would form the basis of a new delivery plan, to fully deliver the partnerships current and future priorities and ensure sustainability. The results of this exercise are set out in the Leiston Together Strategic Plan in Appendix A. It was agreed that the current LT priorities should be refreshed and broadened to be less project based and capture more strategic activity. As a result the proposed new themes are:

Destination Leiston

Covering activity such as town centre regeneration, place branding, events and active tourism

Leiston Lives

People centred activity such as social prescribing, dementia friendly activity and the development of community assets

Leiston Means Business

Business development activity such strengthening the business association

Leiston Future

Focus on access to skills/ training development for young people

Digital Leiston

Digital connectivity activity e.g. WiFi connectivity project

Greener Leiston

Local action to tackle climate change

2.3 In addition to agreeing the above thematic priorities, the workshop discussion also focussed on the following broader areas:

- Saxmundham – the town faces many similar challenges to Leiston, however does not have a dedicated resource in place to tackle these. A future place-based model could be developed which also includes priorities for Saxmundham and could be jointly managed.
- Sizewell C – the partnership will need to co-ordinate a local view on the mitigation measures required in response to the proposed Sizewell C new nuclear development to ensure that any potential negative impacts are addressed and any opportunities are maximised. This will need to align strongly with the district, county and regional level mitigation priorities currently being developed. The proposed delivery plan provides a strong basis for this mitigation plan
- Additional Funding Opportunities – during its current term the partnership has been successful in securing external funding from a range of sources. Therefore LT will continue to explore sources of funding to support the new priority themes, potential future sources include the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), EDF Energy and Coastal Communities Fund

3 COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- 3.1 ESC will be establishing a new Community Partnership (CP) model across the whole of East Suffolk in early 2019. This new initiative will consist of eight CPs across the whole district including one which will cover the Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham area (including a number of rural parishes). CPs will be innovative and solution focussed bodies providing an opportunity for district and county councillors to connect with their communities. Each CP will develop a short work plan focussed on priorities identified using data and local insight.
- 3.2 The intention is for the CPs to complement existing place-based partnerships such as Leiston Together and therefore any future programme for LT needs to be developed within the context of CPs and with an understanding of the role, responsibilities and priorities of the local CP. Workshops to determine the priorities of the CPs will take place during the autumn of 2019 in each of the eight CP areas, including the Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham area.

4 FUNDING OPTIONS

- 4.1 In order to deliver the proposed new strategic plan a new funding agreement will need to be put in place. It is proposed that this continues on the same funding split i.e. 90% pa from ESC and 10% pa from the Town Council, although the costs have increased slightly since the initial three year funding period.
- 4.2 Three options for a new funding agreement were considered – a three year programme, a two year programme and a 15 month programme. The Leiston Together Board favoured a two year extension. It is recommended that the Cabinet support the middle option i.e. a new 2 year programme of funding for Leiston Together.

5 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 5.1 The LT partnership was established to enable the delivery of community and economic development priorities and therefore strongly supports two of the three central strategic pillars of the business plan i.e. Enabling Communities and Economic Growth. Through the

co-ordination and enabling of the delivery plan LT has also focused on the following specific business plan actions:

- Support local business associations and partner organisations to create vibrant market towns which are attractive to residents, businesses and visitors
- Increase physical activity, participation in sport and recreation across all age groups and implement additional local health initiatives
- Develop Dementia Friendly Communities across East Suffolk
- Fund and support community led initiatives to improve health and wellbeing, including Men's Sheds, Carer Support projects and Mental Health First Aid

6 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An extension of the LT funding agreement for two years from January 2020 to December 2021 would cost the Council £36,000 per annum or a total of £72,000 over the 24 month period. Leiston Town Council has provisionally agreed a 10% contribution of £4,000 per annum.
- 6.2 As part of the workshop exercise it was agreed that a review of the governance of the LT Partnership Board would be required if an extension were approved. It was recognised that although the current board is representative of key local organisation (listed in section 1.2) new board members would be required to ensure the partnership is more inclusive and to address the new priorities identified by the Board. Specifically, these should include EDF to ensure strong links to the existing and proposed nuclear power stations along with representatives of environmental, cultural, young people, BME and disability groups.

7 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 7.1 This report has been prepared having taken into account the results of an Equality Impact Assessment. This Assessment has identified that Leiston Together currently supports a number of projects that benefit young and older people, people with disabilities and those who are economically disadvantaged and therefore that these protected characteristic groups are likely to be positively impacted by an extension to Leiston Together.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 A comprehensive consultation exercise took place with all members of the current LT Board to determine both the requirement for, and the thematic priorities of, an extension to the current funding agreement. The consultation exercise is detailed in Section 2.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Three options to extend the current LT funding agreement were considered, as set out below:
- A new 3 year programme (Jan 2020 – December 2022), which would provide a significant amount of time to deliver against all the priorities in the new delivery plan and ensure sustainability for those longer term activities. This would also replicate the length of the initial agreement and be in line with the extension the Felixstowe Forward partnership received in 2018 and the six year funding period for Lowestoft Rising. There would, however, be a long period of cross over with new CP for the area and not provide an

early opportunity to have a full review the future of LT in light of the development of the new CP.

- A new 2 year programme (Jan 2020 – December 2021), which was recommended by the LT board. The board recognised there had been significant investment to date and felt that a further 2 years would provide adequate time to deliver against the priorities in the new plan and enable them to ensure sustainability of ongoing projects.
- A 15 month extension (Jan 2020 – March 2021) which would allow some further progress against the new delivery plan but also allow a review of the future of the partnership to take place at a time when the CP for the area is becoming embedded and there is a clear plan in place, albeit for a much wider area. This would then provide an opportunity for an assessment of both plans to ensure they remain complementary.

- 9.2 A further option would be to provide no further funding beyond December 2019. The Leiston Together Board could continue but would have no dedicated staff to co-ordinate and enable ongoing and future delivery plan actions. The Board itself strongly feel that there is still significant work to be done and that it would be detrimental to our relationship with the local community and its representatives for the funding partnership to end now, particularly in the context of Sizewell C.

10 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 The Leiston Together Partnership was established to tackle a range of socio-economic challenges identified within the 2015 Our Place Review and whilst the partnership has co-ordinated and enabled a wide range of actions to tackle these challenges and indeed seize a number of opportunities to secure external funding, this is due to having a dedicated Change Manager in place.
- 10.2 The proposed extension to the funding for Leiston Together will allow the continuation of this co-ordination and enabling role in relation to a refreshed delivery plan and the ongoing challenges facing the town in the context of the Sizewell C new nuclear development and the creation of the new Community Partnership for Aldeburgh. Leiston and Saxmundham.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet approves an extension of the Leiston Together partnership for a further two years from January 2020 and provides funding of up to £80,000 (£40,000 per annum) towards a new funding agreement.

APPENDICES

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| Appendix A | Leiston Together Strategic Plan |
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.