

**East Suffolk Community Partnership Board. Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

**Peer Challenge of Community Partnerships and Draft Action Plan**

**1. REPORT PURPOSE:**

This report contains:

- Summary of the findings of the recent LGA Peer Challenge of Community Partnerships
- Outcomes of the recent Community Partnership Visioning Day
- A draft plan of action

The Board is being asked to consider this information and agree what actions should be taken to address the issues raised.

**2. RECAP:**

A brief reminder of the Peer Challenge Process:

**2.1 Who:**

The Peer Challenge Team ('the Team') consisted of:

Steven Pleasant (Lead Officer Peer), Chief Executive, Tameside Council & Accountable Officer at Tameside and Glossop CCG  
Cllr Isobel Darby, Buckinghamshire Council  
Rachel Joyce, Director of Corporate Affairs, Harrogate Borough Council  
Rob Gregory, Assistant Director Communities and Neighbourhoods, Stevenage Borough Council

Supported by:

James Mehmed, LGA Peer Challenge Manager  
Rachel Stevens, LGA Project Support Officer

**2.2 When:**

The challenge took place over three days 12 – 14 October 2021

**2.3 What:**

East Suffolk Council asked the Team *"What can we do to enhance the Community Partnerships and what changes might be required to make them more effective in the future?"*

The Team structured the review around three themes:

1. People

- Do we have the right people around the table?
- Are they representative of their communities?

- Are they fully engaged and are they playing their part in ensuring that existing local connections are being maintained and local priorities being addressed?
- Are the Community Partnerships missing any opportunities in terms of community engagement?
- We would also welcome comments on the role of the Chair.

## 2. Process

- Are the Community Partnerships and the Board being run in a way that encourages collaboration, problem solving and the collective powers of influence (albeit in the context of meeting virtually over the last 15 months)?
- Do our processes allow people to contribute in the most effective and meaningful way?
- Are the governance arrangements conducive to ensuring that maximum benefit is achieved?

## 3. Outcomes

- Is the model we have achieving our vision or are there more effective models worth considering?
- Is this an effective use of taxpayers' money?
- How might the Community Partnerships be supported by the Council to operate better in an increasingly data led environment?
- Do we know if the Community Partnerships and the Board are delivering the outcomes that we set them up to deliver?
- Do we understand which projects are effective and which are not?

### 2.4 How:

The review was carried out virtually. Having firstly received a wide range of background documents, the Team embarked on a programme of engagement which included:

- 22 virtual MS Teams meetings
- Circa 60 people engaged
- Internal colleagues, community, partners & business community

## 3. RESULTS:

At the conclusion of the challenge the Team shared insights they had gained through the process and gave recommendations for East Suffolk Council and the Community Partnership Board to consider.

### 3.1 Insights:

- Significant variation in stages of development between CPs.
- Communication across the CPs - Quick win.
- Some processes getting in the way.
- Impact of Covid.
- Criticality of Chairs, Vice Chairs and Communities Officers.
- Views from you staff.
- Community leadership – Critical role of CP Chairs.
- Meeting format.
- Need to get out more.
- Grant giving process.
- Scale of opportunity.

### 3.2 Recommendations:

1. Take time to reflect, review and reset the compass for Community Partnerships.
2. Celebrate what you have achieved.

3. Manage the transition from virtual meetings to an increased face-to-face format to support relationship building.
4. More effective communication within and across the CPs and the CP Board
5. Further engage with communities of interest e.g. young people
6. Invest in creating increased capacity and capability in the wider system.
7. Create a learning and development plan to support the next phase of delivery. (Chairs, Vice Chairs and Officers)
8. Quick win – Improve communication between CPs and outwards with localities
9. Consider strategic sponsorship of CPs from across the organisation
10. Build stronger linkages through locality teams e.g. economic development and health
11. Ensure all related processes and commissioned support are congruent with your vision for CPs
12. Review grant and funding processes
13. Move away from traditional meeting style
14. Understand how you identify success, impact, and ROI
15. Make the shift to more facilitative problem solving
16. Develop a robust evaluation framework.
17. Strengthen oversight – ensure grip.
18. Engage all stakeholders internal and external on the next steps for Community Partnerships.

#### 4. RESPONSE

A Community Partnerships Visioning Event was organised at Trinity Park Conference Centre on behalf of the Community Partnership Board and approximately 40 invited delegates attended, comprising Community Partnership Board members, Community Partnership Vice Chairs, Key representatives from partner organisation and East Suffolk Council officers. The challenge posed to everyone at the event was:

***'How can we learn from and respond to the recommendations identified through the Peer Challenge?'***

A workshop was facilitated to help delegates identify top priorities for action against each Peer Challenge recommendation and these were recorded and pulled together after the event to form the draft ***Community Partnership Peer Challenge 2021 Action Plan*** included in **appendix 1** to this report.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to consider the Draft Community Partnership Peer Challenge 2021 Action Plan and:

- i) Agree what actions should be taken to address the issues raised by the Peer Challenge Team.
- ii) Task the Community Partnership Steering Group to oversee implementation of the action plan on behalf of the Board and report back regularly on progress.

Luke Bennett ESC Partnerships Manager 10/11/21