



OUR PLACE! PROGRAMME

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 37/14

19 MAY 2014

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on progress with the Town Council's Our Place! programme.

No. DETAIL

1) GETTING STARTED

- a) The Town Council's successful application to the Department for Communities and Local Government's Our Place! programme released a grant of £3,000 and the support of an appointed Relationship Manager, David Newton, to prepare a Development Strategy by the end of May this year.
- b) As reported last month, the first priority for this *Getting Started* stage of the programme was to ensure that all key local stakeholders for the programme – residents, public sector agencies and local business leaders – were consulted about the programme and asked for their commitment to it.
- c) This was achieved by a series of meetings with representatives of each of those three participants addressed by our Relationship Manager; at the end of each there was clear evidence of support and commitment.

2) VISION GROUPS

- a) Over 50 residents signed up to join one of more of six Vision Groups, tasked with identifying the priorities in their respective areas - Older People, Young People, Recreation, Open Spaces, Prosperity and Opportunity – as the basis for discussions with the agencies currently delivering the services related to those areas of local life.
- b) Each appointed its own Co-ordinator and the Co-ordinators agreed to meet together with the Town Council staff team and Mayor to co-ordinate progress and arrange for notes of meetings to be taken and shared.
- c) The first Co-ordinators' with that team took place on 23 April and a common approach to the initial meetings of their Groups agreed.
- d) Those initial meetings have now all taken place with lively and stimulating discussions and the outcomes from them will be considered by the next Co-ordinators' meeting with the Town Council team on Tuesday 20 May.

3) AGENCY ENGAGEMENT

- a) It is the joint working between the agencies responsible for delivering the wide range of services that Ventnor needs and benefits from that is at the heart of the Our Place! programme.
- b) The Town Council is very conscious of the resource pressures all those agencies face in their current work and the extra commitment this programme will require from them in that context.
- c) In following up the initial lunchtime meeting with senior staff from 16 of those Agencies more detail about the programme was circulated to all of those who had attended in the form of a letter from Steve Stubbings with an attached Briefing Paper from the Town Clerk.
- d) Copies of both of those are attached to this report for information.
- e) As time is very short for the completion of the Development Strategy document that needs to show evidence of Agency commitment the Briefing Note was clear about the support that would be needed:
 - o sharing of data on all aspects of service delivery in Ventnor;
 - o detailed asset mapping of financial, staffing and other resources available within Agencies' current and planned budgets for work in Ventnor;

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- assistance with the Cost Based Analysis element of the model – consultancy support for that will be available;
 - willingness to meet with the Vision Groups for discussion and information sharing; and
 - a letter from each Agency expressing a commitment to support Ventnor's Our Place! programme that we need to receive by 20 May.
- f) At the time of writing this report – 14 May – six had already replied in writing with strong evidence of commitment and we know that others are in preparation.
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4) DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- a) The template provided for the Development Strategy is a challenging document given the extremely short time between its issue in early April and its deadline for submission of the end of May.
 - b) Our intention is to submit by 23 May as the programme organisers have indicated that those received by that date will have decisions made about their continuation with the programme into the *Getting Going* stage within two weeks whereas those submitted after that date will have a longer wait.
 - c) Good progress has already been made, based on the developments outlined in sections 2 and 3 of this Report and the very detailed research, particularly in the document's highly technical areas, conducted by the Town Council's Economic Development Officer, Nicky Cox.
 - d) However, the work required to complete it will take well into next week and will include a further staff session with our Relationship Manager before its submission.
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5) GETTING GOING

- a) All areas whose Development Strategies are accepted will be allocated a *Getting Going* grant of £10,000 and details for spending that need to be included in the submission. There will also be an allocation of consultancy days and time from the Relationship Manager.
 - b) An application can also be made for additional funding of up to £7,500 as a *Going Further* grant, payable from September.
 - c) This will be to fund the work required in the preparation of the town's Operational Plan, the draft for which needs to be submitted by the end of November.
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6) RECOMMENDATION

- a) In view of the timescale required to complete the first stage of the work of the Vision Groups, secure all the relevant agency sign-ups and complete the data gathering and document drafting and checking, it is unlikely that a draft will be available to Members at this meeting.
 - b) Although the document will be available to all Members by email before submission, the Town Council is recommended to delegate authority for Town Council approval to the Town Clerk advised by the Community Development Working Group meeting of 21 May.
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Partners' Letter

30 April 2014

Dear

We're very grateful for the interest you've shown in the government's Our Place! programme we're engaged with along with 122 other areas nationwide.

As our programme appointed Relationship Manager explained at the lunchtime event you attended with us, the timetables are very tight: our first milestone is to submit a Development Strategy by 23 May.

That needs to include evidence of Partner Agency support for the Town in exploring collaborative inter-Agency working inclusive of community-based input to be expressed in a detailed Operational Plan to be agreed with the Department of Communities and Local Government by March next year.

I've asked our Clerk, David Bartlett, to provide a briefing paper on the programme's objectives and process that is enclosed with this note from me. David will, of course, provide any further information you or your colleagues would find helpful at this time.

I hope you will be willing to arrange for us to have a letter or email confirming your organisation's commitment to and support for the programme.

Yours

Steve Stubbings
Mayor



OUR PLACE!

PROGRAMME BRIEFING NOTE

2 MAY 2014

This note summarises the purpose and processes of the programme with links to relevant documents, outlines Ventnor's commitments within it and, in section 5, asks the public service delivery agencies active in the Town for their essential support.

1) CONTEXT

This phase of the Department for Communities & Local Government's (DCLG) Our Place! programme has two antecedents: *Neighbourhood Community Budgets* and *Our Place! Pilots*, with the first merging into the second.

Community Budgets were announced in 2010 and launched in 12 areas: *as a method of integrating public services and giving local public service partners the freedom to work together to redesign services around the needs of citizens, improving outcomes, reducing duplication and waste and so saving significant sums of public money.*

The House of Commons Communities & Local Government Committee reported on their progress in October 2013, accessible [here](#).

In July 2013 the Local Government Association published its own assessment of the programme - now branded as Our Place! - accessible [here](#).

Two of the Pilots were Town Councils, Haverhill and Ilfracombe. It is the latter that has attracted most attention nationally and, as a coastal town, has much in common with Ventnor. Its final Operational Plan, published in March 2013, is accessible [here](#). It's a long document but opens with a 3-page Executive Summary.

2) THE MODEL

In a DCLG Seminar in Birmingham last September attended by Mayor and Town Clerk, a presentation – [accessible here](#) - provided a summary of the learning to date.

Slide 5 of it shows the model that had emerged from the pilots that they were proposing to roll out into another 100+ areas nationwide with support funding of £4.3M to be spent by 31 March 2015.

3) CURRENT PROGRAMME

The DCLG programme leaders visited the Town Council in January at the Mayor's invitation to discuss Ventnor's possible inclusion.

Our application was accepted on 25 February and Ventnor is now among the 123 areas included in the current programme. A spreadsheet listing all the successful applicant areas and their objectives is [accessible here](#) [needs to be opened with Excel].

We're now in the *Getting Started Stage*, supported by a grant of £3,000 and 3 days of the Relationship Manager, David Newton, who gave the programme outline at the lunchtime meeting of 24 March.

To be included in the 100 areas taken forward to the *Getting Going Stage* we have to submit a detailed Development Strategy by 23 May, supported by a further grant of £10,000, 4 days of a Relationship Manager and 5 Consultancy days.

Additional funding is available for areas *Going Further* – of £5,000-£7,500 – and for a small number judged to be *Breaking New Ground*, up to an additional £20,000.

4) PROGRESS TO DATE

On the day of the lunch time meeting with Partner Agencies, we also held a Breakfast Meeting with key players in the town's private sector and an evening meeting with community representatives.

The attendance lists at the lunch time and the breakfast meetings are [accessible here](#).

One substantive and sustainable project has already emerged from the private sector session as a direct result of people who don't normally work together identifying both a common need and the means to address it.

The evening meeting, with over 80 residents, has developed into signed up membership of one of six Vision Groups.

At subsequent meeting of all those Groups on 16 April each appointed a Co-ordinator – not a Member of the Council – and agreed an initial list of Agencies they would need to meet with and the information they would want to gather.

The Co-ordinators met with the Town Council staff team on 16 April for a more detailed briefing on working practices and priorities. They have arranged for each of their Groups to meet separately during next week with written notes submitted in time for another Co-ordinators' meeting prior to our completion of the Development Strategy template.

Here we already have an established framework for the essential involvement of residents in the preparation of the Operational Plan that will give substance to our other very well developed community engagement practices.

We were also encouraged by the very positive responses from the Agencies represented at the lunchtime meeting with a clear acknowledgement of the need to work together and the value of doing so.

This programme adds a further element: working closely with the town's communities with an openness for service delivery to be influenced by the priorities for the town that residents identify.

5) PARTNER SUPPORT

Ventnor Town Council has already benefited from significant Partner support and collaboration: in our successful application to the Coastal Communities Fund, in the development of Salisbury Gardens, in joint working, in direct project funding, in providing relevant information and in good practice advice.

This programme takes that to a new level, with potentially much greater benefits to all its participants.

The background documents make clear that the essence of the programme is about Agencies achieving more value for less cost: greater efficiency through reducing service overlap and sharper focus on priorities identified in direct discussions with the town's stakeholders.

Our Development Strategy cannot be – and does not have to be – the whole picture; but it does have to have evidence of the journey towards the Operational Plan having started and being underpinned by both understanding of and commitment to the programme's elements.

Specifically, that will need from Agencies:

- a) sharing of data on all aspects of service delivery in Ventnor;
- b) detailed asset mapping of financial, staffing and other resources available within

Agencies' current and planned budgets for work in Ventnor;

- c) assistance with the Cost Based Analysis element of the model – consultancy support for that will be available;
- d) willingness to meet with the Vision Groups for discussion and information sharing; and
- e) a letter from each Agency expressing a commitment to support Ventnor's Our Place! programme that we need to receive by 20 May.

We recognise that the demands the programme will make will be greater for some Agencies than for others.

For those asked to carry the heaviest weight, we are planning to provide for the cost of several days' senior staff time at an appropriate rate within our application for the £10,000 next stage funding where that would be helpful.

6) PURPOSE

In completing the Application Form for the programme, the purpose of our participation – as listed on the Successful Areas spreadsheet referred to in section 3 above – was expressed as:

Ventnor Town Council is committed to co-ordinate the collaborative production of an Operational Plan by 31 March 2015 together with the town's communities, the agencies and organisations active in it and its private sector that by its implementation will lead to improved health and wellbeing, a renewed and refreshed economy and enhanced community capacity. The over-riding aim of the proposal is to stimulate activity in all three of those areas to begin the reversal of the cycle of decline that has already left half the town's population living in two Lower Super Output Areas. An important subsidiary aim of the proposal is to provide case study evidence and mentoring support in the battle against decline by other coastal towns on both the Isle of Wight and the mainland.

We – with your support – have a remarkable opportunity both to improve life for a town that has areas among the most deprived on the Island – and feels its isolation keenly – and provide a vanguard experiment in doing things differently for coastal towns with their particular problems: recent research on which is [accessible here](#).

For further information or to arrange more detailed discussions please contact David Bartlett either on 855217 anytime, or at townclerk@ventnortc.org.

The national web site for the programme is [here](#).