

KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC21/067

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	20 th January 2022
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Asset Mapping Project
Wards Affected:-	All

1. Purpose of Report

To advise members about this project, and to seek instructions on how members wish to proceed.

2. Recommendations

That the Committee notes the availability of funds to carry out preparatory work on asset and service mapping , agrees to accept these funds for various activities and that this committee should act as a working group, if required, to develop proposals on the use of the money.

3. Information

3.1. NCALC have advised that they have been successful in securing a grant of £281,625 from the UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF) to map important community assets and services across the county, by parish. The purpose of the grant award is “to build capacity in parish and town councils, develop a solid evidence base, and design an administrative framework for devolution in Northamptonshire. It is a unique and ambitious project which will enable North Northamptonshire Council (NNC), West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and the county's 271 parish and town councils and parish meetings parish meetings to be well prepared for any future decisions about devolution”.

3.2. It is understood that £4000 of this money will be made available to KTC for it to conduct its own asset review.

- 3.3. NCALC'S commentary on the project goes on to say "The funding will provide parish and town councils in North and West Northamptonshire with the opportunity to take some time to think about and explore what potential future devolution involves. It offers the chance to develop a solid evidence base from a community perspective by mapping assets and services that are provided by the unitary councils, and to build local capacity & skills. NNC and WNC have said that they do not intend to devolve wholesale assets and services in 2022/23, so this is about preparing for the future. We have an opportunity to explore what is involved with the devolution of assets and services well before any decisions need to be made and any specific funding implications arise. Parish and town councils in other areas exploring devolution, such as Milton Keynes and Cornwall, did not always have the luxury of this advance thinking time. Support activity will include for example training on how to prepare a sound business case for the purposes of any future community bids for assets and services. We know that parish and town councils will have very differing ideas and levels of interest in this, and that is to be expected. We want to harness a spirit of shared purpose, collaborative working, and innovation to help us build new strengths that will benefit communities in Northamptonshire for years to come. More detailed information about the project will be published soon which will explain how your council can take advantage of the opportunities (without making any commitment about future interest in taking on assets & services). "
- 3.4. The scope of the project is defined as including assets owned by NNC, services provided by NNC, and assets of community value. (see the PDF embedded as appendix one below).
- 3.5. At this stage, Northants CALC is asking all councils to include an item on their agendas in January 2022 "To note Northants CALC's Asset Mapping Project (AMP) and to create an AMP Working Group". Appendix Two sets out a suggested approach to doing the work, although this seems geared to a rural parish area with a relatively small number of assets and isn't practically achievable in a town of our size. It is also not yet clear how this process enables a capture of service delivery. In any case, the unitary authority has an asset register, which, whilst it would need some interpretation, should set out all the Council's assets by location.
- 3.6. Appendix three contains a presentation by *Local Council Support Associates* with an offer of support from them in delivering the project.
- 3.7. Appendix four is an extract from the NNC Asset Register for properties it owns in Kettering. This doesn't include the housing stock or land designated as highway.

4. Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1 At this stage, there is no consultation proposed.
- 4.2. The clerk has spoken to officers at NNC, who are aware of the project. They are currently drafting a policy on how community asset transfers might be conducted in future.

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1. The money is available until the end of March 2022 and therefore can be accessed by the Town Council even if it decides to end its membership of NCALC at the end of March 2022.

5.2. It is not clear at this stage what costs the grant will meet or whether it is the right sum for the task, nor what the resource implications in terms of time commitment would be.

6. Policy Implications

6.1. The project assumes both that NNC is likely to embark on a devolution programme in the relatively near future and that town and parish councils wish to acquire assets and service responsibilities as a consequence of such devolution. Nothing in this Councils' corporate plan seeks, as a policy, even a partial devolution of services or assets from NNC. Any offer by NNC to carry out some form of devolution or delegation of functions or transfer of assets would need to be examined closely for the costs and benefits associated, the overall efficiency impacts involved and the net benefit to council tax payers in town. A business plan will need to be drawn up for each asset or service transferred or devolved, and an assessment made of any liabilities and operating costs on a case by case basis.

6.2. The Council has already taken on allotments from the unitary council and is due to take on market management from the end of this financial year.

6.3. The project will enable the Council to consider how it might react to, or even initiate any proposals to devolve or transfer services or assets ahead of time.

Background Papers

Material from NCALC

12/1/22

Appendix one scope and definitions



amp-definitions-and-
scope.pdf

Appendix Two – quick start guide



amp-quick-start-guid
e.pdf

Appendix Three – presentation from LCSA



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