

Devolution of Discretionary services

Progress so far...

NALC Larger Towns Conference

2 December 2015

Royal National Hotel

London

Jeremy Rowe Cabinet Member - Localism Cornwall
Council

Mark Williams Clerk – Falmouth Town Council



Background

- Rurally dispersed population of 530,000
- Unitary in 2009 – previously Cornwall County Council and 6 District Councils
- 123 Cornwall Council Members
- History of “political coalitions” and of in-house service provision
- 213 Town and Parish Councils
- Vibrant VCSE community
- Low-wage economy / high % SMEs

Current Context

- Cornwall Council facing £196M budget savings
- Pressure on discretionary community based services
- Some externalisation of services
- Closer working with TPCs / VCSE
- 160+ Agency Agreements with TPCs
- 50+ Neighbourhood Plans being developed
- 80+ Community assets listed
- 80+ Community Emergency Plans in place / being developed

Preparing the landscape

- Create the right overall culture – build Trust
- Promote local collaboration
- Recognise that every community is different
 - Local ambition?
 - Local partnerships and collaboration?
 - Trust of local community?
 - Local capacity?
- Carrots work better than sticks
- Culture of peer support
- Recognise it takes time

Developing the Culture

- Close working relationship with CALC and SLCC
- SLA with CALC
- Critical friend
- Joint training partnership
- Representation on Devolution Board
- Attendance at officer meetings
- Evidence to Devolution Policy Advisory Committee
- Support to Community Link Officers
- Thematic forums – Planning, Waste, Transport

Capacity Building and Challenge

- Challenge around promoting need to improve capacity – promoting awareness
- Utilise European Funding
- Producing checklists / model specifications
- Creating local support peer support groups
- Communicate benefits and successes!
- Local accountability – complimentary representative and participative democracy
- General Power of Competency

Cornwall's Devolution Framework



Devolution Framework – 6 Options

- Option 1 – Influencing / Monitoring
 - Street Cleansing
- Option 2 – Joint / enhanced delivery
 - Environment, Traffic Enforcement
- Option 3 – Agency Agreements, Licenses
 - Grass cutting, roundabout sponsorship
- Option 4 – Delegated Delivery
 - Formal gardens, Libraries, One Stop Shops
- Option 5 – Services cessation
 - Public Conveniences, allotments
- Option 6 – Retained
 - Winter maintenance, coast protection

Devolution Challenges

- Identifying “true” current costs – operational & management
- Conflicting priorities – income earning assets for individual services v. wider overall council savings
- Resources to undertake this work – an additional activity to the traditional ‘core offer’
- Negotiations take time and need continuity
- Capital injections can assist in driving proposals forward that might otherwise fall
- Balancing the views of social value v. capital receipts v. revenue costs

Team Roles – Communities & Devolution

Community Link Officers

- Build the local relationship and platform of trust

Dedicated Devolution team

- Devolution Specialist
- Communications and Engagement Specialist
- Core - Property, environment, highways etc.
- Aligned – Libraries, leisure etc.
- Support – Finance, HR, legal etc.

Robust Programme Management

Quick decision making

Case study – Tintagel Visitor Centre



Case study – Municipal buildings Falmouth



Case study – St Day clock



Case Study – Jubilee Pool, Penzance



Case Study – Portwrinkle



Unintended Consequences

- Waste Contract
- To “value” or not to “value”
- “Swiss cheese” effect
- Car Park Orders and enforcement
- TUPE and pensions
- Insurability
- General Power of Competence

The Future?

- Changing role of Town / Parish Councils
- Changing role of Parish Clerk – Parish Manager?
- Raising appreciation of the role (£) of the Clerk!
- 4 year business plans?
- Govt. Funding – Our Place, Power to Change etc.
- General Power of Competence
- Arms length trading opportunities?
- Formal / informal mergers/ clusters?
- Different local aspirations, money, capacity, social capital differ

In conclusion

- There are competing priorities within Cornwall Council, with partners and within the community.
- Long term v short term
- Devolution **TAKES TIME** and requires willingness, resources, time, capacity and skills that only some local councils possess
- Confidence grows incrementally within a community and lead to larger projects being tackled.
- The devolution process requires dedicated staff internally and community support externally.
- Each community is different!



**The Sky is the
Limit!!**

Contact details

Website

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