

Building Stronger Communities:

Community development and neighbourhood community partnerships & projects



To: Community Services Scrutiny Committee 18th January 2018

Councillor Richard Johnson, Executive Councillor for Communities

Report by:

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Wards affected:

Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey, Trumpington, West Chesterton

Non-Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 As part of the approval of the Council's Building Stronger Communities strategy (BSCS) in June 2017, officers were asked to feedback in January 2018 on progress with delivering the strategy; also to review the future approach to community development work and in particular Neighbourhood Community Partnerships & Projects (NCPs).
- 1.2 The report also provides an update in Appendix A on the Community Centres Strategy work plan.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the revised approach and resourcing of the Council's outreach community development work as outlined in section 4 of this report.
- 2.2 Approve the approach to the funding and support for NCPs from 2018/19 as outlined in section 5 of this report.

3. Background

3.1 Community development enables people to work collectively to bring about positive social change. This is a long term process, starting with people's own experience, and it enables communities¹ to work together to:

- Identify their own needs and actions
- Take collective action using their strengths and resources
- Develop their confidence, skills and knowledge
- Challenge unequal power relationships
- Promote social justice, equality and inclusion

The outcome of this capacity building work is to enable people to improve the quality of their own lives; the communities in which they live and societies of which they are a part.

3.2 Community development services thus play an important role in delivering the Council's vision of 'One Cambridge - Fair for All'. Services are delivered through four strands of activity:

- **Core Community Development Work** – this is a 'bottom up' approach, engaging directly with individuals and groups to work on issues that are important to them. It seeks to enable people to gain confidence, knowledge and skills.
- **Neighbourhood Community Projects (NCPs)** – the provision of support and opportunities for residents to participate in formalised project structures in their local area, and deliver projects to address issues and concerns in their local neighbourhood.
- **Outreach Services** – provision of statutory and voluntary sector services delivered in a community setting e.g. digital inclusion, debt advice.
- **S106² funded work in to support new communities in areas of major growth** – community development work in new communities.

3.3 There are two drivers for a change in approach:

- To align to the outcomes of the BSCS and opportunities for prioritisation of services to greatest need, as outlined in the original scope of the community provision review.
- The Council's current 3 year funding commitment for Neighbourhood Community Projects (NCPs) will conclude on the 31st March 2018. NCPs need clarity on the Council's requirements and support going forward.

¹ Communities can be defined by geography, identity or interest.

² Funding from planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

4. Building Stronger Communities

4.1 Principles

- Responsive outreach service planning targets resource at highest needs alongside thematic priority work.
- Service delivery to residents with the highest needs via Council community centre provision.
- A more flexible resource that can be adaptive to the changing needs of a growing city.

4.2 Approach

- a) Using an evidence base to inform targeted short, medium and longer term service planning from 2018-19.
- b) Aligning the work to strategic objectives, such as the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy, and engaging with other service areas and partners to maximise outcomes.
- c) Improving confidence, skills and knowledge to improve the quality of lives, and the communities where people live.
- d) Encouraging resident involvement and participation in decisions that affect them.
- e) Encouraging the integration of new and existing communities.
- f) Enable opportunities for people to come together to build stronger communities.
- g) Building the capacity of voluntary groups to help create sustainability.

4.3 Impact

The revised approach will change delivery as follows:

- a) The use of evidence to inform the use of all community development resources.
- b) Scope to address the issue of temporary funding for some areas where there is evidence of need.
- c) A transparent and accountable approach to funding external groups to meet Council objectives.
- d) A better balance between managing buildings and services for the highest need areas of the city.

4.4 Staff Resources

Currently, 76% of community development staff resource is engaged in managing and operating community centres. 12% of staff time is engaged in delivering core community development work and support to the NCPs. As the BSCS is implemented, there may be opportunity to redeploy resources currently focused on centre management and operation to work directly in the highest need areas of the city.

5. Neighbourhood Community Partnerships & Projects

- 5.1 Following a review in 2014, funding for the three NCPs was approved to 31st March 2018. The groups were encouraged to maximise opportunities for external funding in order to lessen their financial reliance on the Council in future years. The funding available for this work currently totals £84k and this includes support for facilities, staff and project costs.
- 5.2 The Kings Hedges and Arbury NCPs have now merged to form the North Cambridge Community Partnership which is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered charity³. It has a new committee and has taken on the management of Lawrence Way and the service level agreement for Nuns Way Pavilion and the community projects in Arbury and Kings Hedges areas.
- 5.3 Abbey People continue to deliver a range of community projects in the ward. It is currently reviewing its status with advice from the Charities Commission and the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS).
- 5.4 Both NCPs have community workers employed by the City Council which deliver an agreed work plan in each area. Vacancies have arisen over the course of this year which has mean the current workers are on temporary contracts until the end of March 2018 (i.e. until the future approach is clarified).
- 5.5 In order to align to the BSCS, the following changes are proposed:
- NCPs will be asked to submit proposals to undertake community development activity in accordance with the Council's priorities which will then be considered for funding. This will take the form of a 3 year business plan to be agreed in March 2018.
 - A focus on strengthening governance and developing greater independence and sustainability.
 - To encourage partnership working with other local community based organisations.
 - Development of a transparent approach for future use of NCP funding and align this with the community grants process.
 - New NCPs may come forward.
 - The funding for this type of work will sit within the wider community development resource, so that it can be used flexibly to meet the needs of local communities.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-types-how-to-choose-a-structure>

6. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

Initial analysis indicates that the implementation of the BSCS could release funding from facility related costs, which could then be reinvested in new facilities and community development work. More detail will emerge through the detailed feasibility study and as the plan is implemented.

(b) Staffing Implications

The implementation of the BSCS may affect members of staff over a period of time, and consultation with them will take place in accordance with the Council's organisational change policy.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the community provision review and no further implications arise as a result of this. The approach further strengthens the positive impact arising from the commitment to align people and resources, as well as buildings, to high need areas.

(d) Environmental Implications - None

(e) Procurement Implications - None

(f) Community Safety Implications

Work in local neighbourhoods may have a positive impact on community safety by working with groups of local people to build confidence and skills to help them to address issues which impact on the quality of their lives.

(g) Consultation and communication consideration

A communication and consultation plan will be implemented.

7. Background papers

Previous reports to this committee have informed this report: 29th June 2017; 19th January 2017; 30th June 2016; 14th January 2016; 8th October 2015.

8. Appendices

Appendix A – Update on the BSCS Facilities Work Plan

9. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Jackie Hanson, Community Funding and Development Manager tel: 01223 - 457867, email: jackie.hanson@cambridge.gov.uk.