

**REPORT TO:** Employment, Learning & Skills Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Communities

**PORTFOLIO:** Neighbourhood, Leisure & Sport

**SUBJECT:** Community Services

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide an annual report on the Community Development service delivery for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

the report be noted;

## 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Community Development supports the creation, development and sustainability of independent local community groups. This generates the capacity for effective and inclusive community engagement with council departments and services thus enabling the delivery of many hundreds of community initiatives to tackle strategic objectives and community needs. The Community Development team have both a strategic and neighbourhood role in co-ordinating partnership support to respond to community concerns and create cohesive neighbourhoods which are participative and vibrant with a strong sense of community connectedness.

## 4.0 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The team consists of six members of staff including one Senior Officer. The Community Development Officers are neighbourhood based and work to the Area Forum patches. They work alongside community groups helping them develop their skills and knowledge to support community action. This often involves advice and guidance around committee structures, financial arrangements, policies and regulations which need to be developed and observed and assisting in delivery community action. Community development is the only role that has this as its core purpose. It strengthens local belonging and addresses inequalities. It provides a conduit between communities and the public sector which fosters a relationship that:-

- Promotes a strong sense of place, local services really matter to how people feel about where they live and their overall satisfaction.
- Understands and targets local priorities – community concerns drive community initiatives and improvement in their neighbourhoods.
- Communicates what the Council's doing and proactively seeks views
- Generates community respect – activity brings residents together, intergenerational work in particular has had a significant impact in breaking down perceptions between young and old in communities resulting in people feeling safer.

Funding has increasingly become core to the Community Development role, particularly in this current economic climate. The service co-leads on providing funding market places with colleagues in External Funding. These events are always popular with many enquiries for follow up support in accessing funding. This has been a useful mechanism to link with groups who aren't receiving on-going community development support.

4.2 A performance framework is in place for community development activity. In 2012/13 the services performance indicators can be seen below.

	2012/13
Total number of volunteers	929
Number of groups worked with	135
Number of people benefiting from activity	12,152
Number of partners involved	89
Number of events/initiatives supported	27
<b>Funding secured from CD intervention</b>	
From external sources	£205,309.54
From internal sources	£116,713.50
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>£322,023.04</b>

4.3 For every pound it costs to provide community development, in 2012/13 a further £1.38 was levered into supporting community initiatives. This measure has peaks and troughs over the years, in the previous operating year the figure was £1.67 however, capacity within the team during the year was reduced due to longer term sickness, maternity leave and a vacancy within the team. The current economic climate with greater competition on grant funding will of further hindered this.

## 5.0 GRASS ROOTS DELIVERY

Ward Members receive quarterly briefings and annual reports on Community Development activities across the Borough. Below is a snapshot to give a flavour of neighbourhood activity extracted from the Annual Reports.

### 5.1 Broadheath, Ditton, Hough Green & Hale

- **Halton Ambassadors** – Support was provided to this new group to get them started and this included governance advice, support to access funding and ensuring safeguarding procedures and policies were in place.
- **Friends of Naughton Fields** – facilitated the start-up of this new tenant and residents group and provided advice surrounding governance and other essential paperwork as well as supporting the group to source funding.

## 5.2 Appleton, Kingsway & Riverside

- **New Shoots** - Lead support to this community initiative to provide fresh fruit and vegetables at low cost. Supported the expansion to eleven food clubs across Halton and the submission of a lottery grant. Has now registered as a Community Interest Company.
- **Art Unlimited** – provided support to this group to update their policies and procedures as they weren't fit for purpose. Advice and guidance was given on an Arts Council and an Awards for All bid and a borough wide Arts Council bid is now being explored.
- **Widnes Foodbank** - worked with the committee as they got this project off the ground to support them to get funding to ensure their ideas were viable.

## 5.3 Birchfield, Farnworth & Halton View

- **Moorfield School** – worked with school to access Area Forum and Awards for All funding to enable them to install outdoor play equipment and a fitness trail for the benefit of the children.
- **Halton Speak Out** – provided support on a number of funding applications and advice to develop their business plan.
- **Birchfield Gardens** – carried out consultation with local residents and groups to ensure that successful Wren and Area Forum applications were submitted for the redevelopment of the gardens.

## 5.4 Grange, Heath, Halton Brook & Mersey

- **Grange Community Forum** – continue to facilitate this group of local residents and partners with the work focused on project development and events. These included a diamond jubilee celebration and a summer fun day.
- **Runcorn Veterans Association** - Support has been provided to this new group regarding governance and procedures as well as funding support and advice for equipment and instruments for their band. This new group will support ex forces personnel as they return to civilian life.
- **Carnegie Steering Group** – Provided support and advice to the partnership of community groups looking at community and management of the old library on Egerton Street including advice on many aspects of the Localism Act, particularly the Community Right to Bid process.

## 5.5 Halton Castle, Norton North & South, Windmill Hill

- **Murdishaw Health Centre** – Worked closely with the centre to support them to engage more widely with their patients, this included consultation tools and techniques.
- **Friends of Halton Trinity Methodist Church** – Work has taken place with the group around sourcing funding, event planning and action planning to ensure that they stay focussed and are able to achieve what they set out to.
- **Castle Kids Fun Club** – Support to this group included advising on risk assessments and assisting them to write safeguarding policies and procedures.

#### 5.6 **Beechwood & Halton Lea**

- **Welcome Club** – support to access Area Forum funding
- **Dorset Gardens** – support around event planning and wider community engagement.

#### 5.7 **Daresbury**

- **Moore Scouts** – grant support to enable 80+ of Halton's young people to benefit from scouting activities locally and regionally and support the volunteer involvement in scouting.

### 6.0 **SERVICE EVALUATION**

6.1 A service evaluation is carried out annually assisted by the Customer Intelligence Unit. The evaluation achieved a 48% return rate, which would indicate the service is valued by the groups.

The responses demonstrated:-

86 % of respondents stated Community Development support has made a difference to their group

90% of respondents rated the service as excellent and 10% as good

100% of respondents would recommend the service to other groups

Open comments were received for a number of questions and a snapshot of responses is provided below:-

#### **Did receiving help from the Community Development Team make a difference to your group?**

“The interest and guidance has enabled us to be proactive in the community. Since completing our improvement project to improve heating, insulation and floor covering, we have restarted our coffee morning for local people in Widnes, hired the building to Brownies and Guides, and it's been used by Wellbeing Enterprises for courses. There have been a significant number of people using the building”.

“Yes it made a huge difference, the support from CDT in particular Karen Jacobs was very much a turning point this support and understanding had a major influence in bringing the Club Halton Farnworth Hornets in to the 21st century. Thank you...”

“The team have helped us secure funding to enable us to continue the work with schools and community groups; the team are now helping us put together an up to date business plan as we prepare to go for further funding.”

“The community development team makes a positive different by (a) giving the sense that people are on our side, and wish to support us, valuing what we do, (b) by giving honest informed advice on funding and general organisation and making contacts”.

“We have had training (committee skills) and this has made us work better as a group. We have also had support and guidance on funding applications.”

“By putting us in touch with funding organisations; organising meeting with HBC (i.e. Paul Wright); helping us to set up our fishing club (i.e. helping us with the constitution, advising us on banking, rules and regulations) Adele Clarke was fundamental in helping us to set up West Bank Angling Club.”

### **What do you think was most helpful about receiving help from the Community Development Team?**

“Each member of the team has a deep understanding of the issues which are impacting on local communities and a good knowledge base.”

“Adele is always genuinely supportive, interested and helpful. We have a long term relationship with Adele, she is not here one day and gone the next. She also understands the challenges of community development - the erraticism of volunteers and the stretching of timescales.”

“They are able to direct to different funding bodies and to explain the criteria and requirements for each one. Gill inspired confidence in me to complete applications myself and I will always be grateful for her help.”

“The information and knowledge they have is fantastic. We have applied to organisations that we would never have thought about, also the support with the applications is fantastic as well. I wouldn't know what to put for most of the applications but Kerry always points me in the right direction”.

### **If you could improve one thing about the service offered what would this be?**

On a positive note there were no areas identified for improvement apart from comments saying that groups could do with more time with their Community Development Officer but they also understood that it was a resource for the whole community.

## 7.0 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

The Community Development service also administers grants for Starter, Community Development and Voluntary Youth grants. The grant allocation for 2012/13 was:-

### Starter Grants & Community Development Grants

GROUP NAME	PROJECT	GRANT AWARDED
Grange Community Forum	Start-up Costs	£150.00
St Bedes Helping Hands	Start-up Costs	£150.00
Runcorn Town Carnival	Start-up Costs	£150.00
Umbrella Halton	Start-up Costs	£150.00
OATS Science Club	Start-up Costs	£150.00
Runcorn Veterans Association	Start-up Costs	£150.00
Private Todger Jones Statue Appeal	Start-up Costs	£150.00
Four Estates	Café Equipment	£400.00
Halton Brook Residents Association	Bingo Machine	£360.00
Runcorn Veterans Association	Musical instruments & equipment	£400.00
Widnes Rugby League Heritage Society	Stationery	£400.00
HASCAS	Room hire, administration etc	£150.00
New Shoots Community Food Club	Promotional banners	£400.00
Age UK Mid Mersey	Equipment	£398.58
Halton Speak Out	Materials & Stationery	£400.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£3958.58</b>

### Voluntary Youth Grants – Group & Bursary Support

GROUP NAME/INDIVIDUAL	PROJECT	GRANT AWARDED
Bursary	Dance	£250.00
Bursary	Cheerleading	£250.00
Ignite Youth Church	Youth Festival	£600.00
Bursary	Dance	£250.00
Bursary	Dance	£250.00
Bursary	Expedition	£250.00
Bursary	Dance	£250.00
Halton Komets	Equipment & Materials	£600.00
Bursary	Angling	£250.00
14 <sup>th</sup> Farnworth Methodist Scout	Group Expedition	£600.00

Group		
1 <sup>st</sup> Moore Scout Group	Group Expedition	£600.00
Ella Together CIC	Drama Workshop	£600.00
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> Runcorn Scout Group	Sports Equipment	£592.71
Xscape Explorer Scout Unit	Training	£600.00
Bursary	Dance	£250.00
14 <sup>th</sup> Farnworth Methodist Scout Group	Group Expedition	£600.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£6792.71</b>

## 8.0 STRATEGIC APPROACHES

Community Development has had a key role supporting a community led approach to Health & Wellbeing during the transition of public health to local authority delivery. The team is supporting Area Forums in developing a grass roots approach which provides a direct relationship between health service providers and local communities. This has resulted in a number of themed events in Local Area Forums delivering health checks, awareness of early signs and symptoms, information on being active for all sections of the community, etc. The team is supporting community groups in developing initiatives that tackle health challenges and empower residents to have a proactive approach to community wellbeing.

Community Development continues to provide support to the Big Local initiative on Windmill Hill which will bring £1 million of lottery investment to the area over the next ten years. A formal partnership structure that demonstrates a community led approach needs to be in place to draw down the funding with a strong emphasis on community engagement informing priorities and objectives, these will be in place by March 2014.

Community Development leads a Community Engagement Practitioners Forum which meets quarterly. The Forum is an opportunity for joint training, networking and identifying joint areas of work for front line officers across agencies operating in Halton.

Community Development supports Community First in the Appleton & Mersey wards alongside External Funding and Halton & St Helens VCA. Community First provides grass roots funding for community groups and voluntary sector organisations. The allocation is £33,910 over 4 years for each area, 2012/13 is the second year of delivery.

The Community Development Manager is the designated Armed Forces Champion for Halton. This requires liaison with Armed Forces units, developing strong links with veteran support organisations and ensuring policy and services meets the pledges set out in the Armed Forces Covenant.

Community Development supports a strategic approach to community engagement in Halton at a partnership level. The service enables and

facilitates HBC departments and partner agencies engaging with local communities, it supports the third sector infrastructure that provides the platform for community involvement.

## **10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **10.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

Community services deliver Halton's Got Talent each year engaging with hundreds of young people, signposting to culture and performing arts activities and showcasing youth hubs to increase participation. Intergenerational activity generating cohesion between young and old in communities. Grants for voluntary youth groups and bursary support provide benefits in activities being accessed and opportunities for young people being realised.

### **10.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Employment within the service areas. Volunteer opportunities and skills development in committee skills, capacity building, fundraising, consultation, etc. Support to adult and lifelong learning for community groups and neighbourhood delivery.

### **10.3 A Healthy Halton**

Community development supports a whole area approach to health and wellbeing linking appropriate partners and stakeholders to work jointly with all sections of Halton's community responding to health issues, i.e zipper club, alzheimers group, lunch bunch, Halton happy hearts. This approach raises awareness of health issues and empowers communities to be proactive. Examples of this are support to New Shoots fruit & vegetable initiative, community gardening & allotment projects, patient support groups and liaison with the Health Improvement Team.

### **10.4 A Safer Halton**

A sense of community and community connectedness reduces resident's fears of crime where they live, they are likely to feel a stronger sense of belonging and safety in an environment where the communities know each other, are active and there are established links to other stakeholders like police, housing, community wardens, etc. Community Development attends Tasking & Co-ordination to contribute to a co-ordinated approach.

### **10.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

Community development contribute to wider community initiatives and regeneration in the areas they are sited. There are numerous community gardening and local environmental projects across the service working jointly with key stakeholders. The service has a key role in Castlefields Regeneration which is now ten years into the programme. Delivering community development within the neighbourhoods linking into the Area Forums provides a mechanism for local people to influence improvements for their area and translate aspirations into objectives.

## **11.0 RISK ANALYSIS**



11.1 The service has a robust performance management mechanism.

12.0 **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES**

12.1 The Community Development service is open and accessible to all of Halton's Community. The service supports both groups providing general community initiatives and those who represent marginalised sections of the community, i.e. Halton Umbrella providing a network for black, minority and ethnic residents, many groups who exist to support disabled, support those suffering severe ill health, etc.

13.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act.