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| Meeting: | Cabinet | Date: | 17 June 2015 |
| Subject: | An update on Asset Based Community Development and Public Health in Gloucester | | |
| Report Of: | Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods | | |
| Wards Affected: | All | | |
| Key Decision: | No | Budget/Policy Framework: | No |
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| Appendices: | None | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the progress of implementing Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and Public Health interventions.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) The contents of the report be noted.
- (2) The progress made against the Council Plan to implement the Asset Based approach be noted.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Partnerships and Engagement Team is responsible for the following functions:

- Promoting ABCD and assisting with recruiting and support for Community Builders
- Encouraging volunteering opportunities
- Facilitating and administration for the Gloucester Partnership
- Administration of community grants
- Advising on and undertaking consultation and engagement
- Influencing community profiles
- Engagement with community groups
- Supporting the Military Covenant

In addition to this, the team also contribute significantly to:

- Health and Wellbeing within the City
- Managing the Social Prescribing Project on behalf of the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

- Hearty Lives Project in Podsmead
- Panel Member on Big Local Project in Podsmead
- Rugby World Cup – Community Connections.

3.2 The team became fully staffed in June 2014 following recruitment of two Partnership and Engagement Officers. The Partnership and Engagement Officers are involved in a range of areas including Volunteering, Rugby World Cup, Social Prescribing, Grants Administration, ABCD in schools pilot and driving the Your Gloucester brand which is an umbrella name for everything the City Council does within ABCD.

3.3 In order to measure the effectiveness of community development, the team have engaged with Barnwood Trust and the University of Gloucestershire. They are both involved in researching the outcomes and returns on community investment. Barnwood Trust are exploring stories and experiences while the University of Gloucestershire will report on the value of investment in monetary terms. The data from this should be available from autumn 2015. Social Prescribing already has monetary outcomes such as smoking cessation and reduction in alcohol consumption. The aim is to put equivalent outcomes against reduced social isolation having greater purpose within a community.

Progress of ABCD

3.4 Gloucester City Council, along with other public sector partners in Gloucester, including the Clinical Commissioning Group, Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Constabulary, adopted the ABCD model in 2012. ABCD is a strategy for sustainable community-driven development. It is about communities driving the development process themselves by identifying assets and creating opportunities. This leads to less reliance on other organisations.

3.5 ABCD starts with communicating effectively with communities. Asking people what *they* think is good about where they live, what *they* want to do more of in their community, what *they* are good at and *their* passions. By beginning with this approach, rather than maps and statistics on deficiencies, the person immediately holds a greater stake in their community.

3.6 There is still clearly a role for public sector services but, in following ABCD, these organisations will be co-producing outcomes rather than planning them in isolation. ABCD will reveal well-connected communities of people, who feel valuable and can support each other.

Community Builders

3.7 Community Builders are people who talk to people in communities and uncover their passions and skills. By asking people what they are good at, what they like doing and what they would like to do more of in the community in which they live, it is possible to start connecting people with similar thoughts, interests and ideas. Through their conversations, Community Builders help to connect like-minded people who share passions and skills that leads to uncovering assets that can build the community in the way its residents want.

3.8 People who are better connected are healthier and happier people. Not only is being socially isolated extremely bad for health but, as people become more connected and

share ideas and thoughts, the community will have a greater degree of control of what they want from where they live.

Community Building achievements during 2014-15

- 3.9 There are currently Community Builders in Podsmead, Kingsway and Matson. Matson was chosen to host a Community Builder because of the success of the Redwell Centre as a community asset. Podsmead was chosen as the Big Local project was built upon the principles of Asset Based Community Development, and required a Community Builder to work with people in the area as a grassroots project. Kingsway was chosen as a new development to ensure the community built with the people moving to Kingsway.
- The Community Builder in Kingsway has been in post for 13 months. In that time, Kingsway has developed its own identity and, through connections made by the Community Builder, a running group has been formed. This group has made arrangements for the first park run to be held in Gloucester – this is a huge achievement and demonstrates that it was the will of the community that led to the creation of the running group as this was not an initial ambition at the outset. Similarly, there are camera clubs; games clubs; football teams; dementia cafes and groups - all of these have originated through finding strengths and passions and connecting the community. Lessons were learned about how to introduce a Community Builder into a community. When new Builders are introduced into communities, it should be done after working with existing networks such as tenants and residents associations.
- 3.10 In Podsmead, the Big Local project continues to bring together local people, local talent and skills for the benefit of the local area. “Changing Creations” has been set up in Podsmead – this is an art group for those coping with or recovering from health issues such as chronic pain, illness or depression. There are well-being benefits from the group that brings local people together in a supportive environment. The Community Builder in Podsmead left recently and a new Community Builder will be taken on in the near future.
- 3.11 In Matson, the achievements of the Community Builders has been evaluated less. There are two part time Community Builders in Matson. One of the Builders left in November 2014 and was replaced. The Community Building posts have existed since January 2014. Evaluating achievements and outcomes does take time and in mature communities such as Matson the changes are more subtle. There is now an epilepsy support group started by a resident, and the Redwell Centre itself has been a strong community asset for a long time. It is intended that over the forthcoming 12 months we begin a Social Return On Investment assessment at The Redwell Centre to record achievements.
- 3.12 Over the past year, it was identified that a clearer employment structure is needed for Community Builders. It has become clear as the roles have developed that more accessible training and support would be beneficial for all Community Builders to enable them to deliver as effectively as possible. To take this forward, the new Community Builder in Podsmead will be directly employed by Barnwood Trust who will be able to provide training and support in the implementation of ABCD. This will be funded entirely by the Big Local.

Other areas of work

3.13 The Partnerships and Engagement Team are also involved in the following areas of work:

- Twice weekly drop-in service for volunteering: this provides access to 1:1 support to discuss local opportunities and secure volunteering vacancies
- Host and manage the Social Prescribing Pilot for the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The pilot is the biggest in the County and has won further funding from the Prime Ministers Challenge Fund to continue.
- Close working links with Barnwood Trust. This has given us access to resources including workshops and training that will assist with the ABCD approach in developing welcoming and inclusive communities.
- Developed the 'Your Gloucester' brand as a way of providing grants for community action.
- An event will be held at the City Council to further our links with the military and veterans under the military covenant.
- The Partnership and Engagement Team are the co-ordinators for the Health Walks for the City. Through administration support and small grants, the health walks are growing in both number of people walking and groups.

Social Prescribing

3.14 The City Council is continuing to host the Gloucester Social Prescribing Hub on behalf of the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The Hub Coordinator is seconded from the Independence Trust. The interim evaluation has seen 14 completed evaluations which is the highest number in the County so far.

3.15 Health outcomes for those 14 people are significantly improved from when they first contacted the service. The important part of the project for the Partnership and Engagement team is to replicate what works well for improving health outcomes in such a way as to benefit people without having to go to their GP first.

3.16 The team is part of the Cultural Commissioning project which is seeking to use arts and culture as part of a mental health and wellbeing framework. The team has supported place-based art in Gloucester, especially Strike a Light Festival and Multi-style battles. Both of these projects bring participatory art to Gloucester and are key to community connections.

Community Legacy

3.17 The Community Legacy group continues to meet. This group was set up to work with communities and other organisations to tackle the causes of deprivation and to improve the quality of life for residents living in the City. It helps to enable connections to be made and our understanding of where we can help grow social capital and support communities. A group to replace the Olympic Legacy group is soon to meet with representatives from public health and the CCG – this will build on successes of Social Prescribing.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 The alternatives are not to implement the principles of ABCD or another model. ABCD has already been implemented and appears in the Council Plan. Therefore, this report is not whether we should implement ABCD but to report on progress.
- 4.2 Other models for community involvement exist, but ABCD has significant evidence that it does support communities well. Other organisations, such as the CCG, Police and Barnwood Trust, are also implementing ABCD and therefore any other option would be different to what other organisations are doing.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 To update Cabinet on the implementation of ABCD in line with the Council Plan.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 6.1 The City will benefit from more Community Builders. Community Builders are key in co-producing outcomes and interventions with people that build on local assets. Kingsway is proof of this in all the clubs and connections that have been made in the last twelve months.
- 6.2 A method of evaluating the work of the team, both with numerical data and shared stories is needed. This will be done in collaboration with Barnwood Trust and University of Gloucestershire. The outcome will be around subjective wellbeing.
- 6.3 The team are to begin ABCD workshops across the city to encourage social action within communities. Supported by the Your Gloucester grants and support, this represents devolving power locally. There will be internal workshops for teams across the Council beginning in September 2015. These will be bespoke for the team and delivered by the Partnership and Engagement Team.
- 6.4 There is a schools project to use ABCD to support schools as local assets, and support educational attainment from a community approach. A member of the team is a governor at St James' School and this is already showing huge interest from parents.
- 6.5 Two city centre projects around fly-tipping and people having a stake in the city. These projects have been suggested by residents and by supporting communities with a passion to take control of where they live, it is hoped that issues that the City Council are being tasked to do can be resolved in the community.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 The table below summarises the allocations of grants.

| Grant Name | Amount Allocated | Amount Spent |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Your Gloucester ABCD Grants | 20000 | 2000 |
| Star People Grants (from Local Strategic Partnership) | 10000 | 1480 |
| Health Inequalities Grant (from County Council) | 50000 | 7000 |

Star People Grants are for each of the learning sites. The £10K budget is allocated to all three sites and they can spend on seed funding community activity. Only Kingsway has spent this budget so far.

7.2 The grants set out in the table in 7.1 are not recurring grants. There has been some work to ensure the grants are more easily accessed and can be paid directly to an individual's bank account.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

Funds in Gloucester Partnership

The Gloucester Partnership holds funds provided by NHS, County Council, Police, Green Square, which were used to fund the Community Builders. However, the decision to use the funds lies solely with the Gloucester Partnership Board.

The Health Walks is a volunteer lead programme and the City Council provide small expenses to print leaflets and help the hold recruitment events.

The Big Local is supported by the Senior Partnership and Engagement Officer. The City Council does not provide any other support to the Big Local other than officer time.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 Under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council has a general power of competence, to do anything that individuals generally may do. This would include the provision of services such as those outlined in this report.

(Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

9.1 The most significant opportunity is to provide power and space for people to take a responsibility for issues that matter within their communities.

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 10.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

Moreover, ABCD has seen significant positive improvements to people and their communities. A Social Return On Investment evaluation will illustrate this in both monetary terms and in stories of people affected.

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

- 11.1 The work of the Partnerships and Engagement team can help increase social interactions and add to a feeling of security, thus reducing the fear of crime.
- 11.2 Studies have shown that increased social connections and community projects can add to a feeling of security in communities as well as lower crime (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002)

Sustainability

- 11.3 ABCD principles should help lead to sustainable, healthy lifestyles.

Staffing & Trade Union

- 11.4 None identified.