

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	19th July 2017
Subject:	Update on the work within the Partnerships and Engagement Team		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Communities & Neighbourhoods		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Isobel Edwards, Partnership and Engagement Officer		
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Appendices:	1. Funded Community Projects 201617		
	2. Funded Youth Projects 201617		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the activities in the community and neighbourhood teams, to include our work on community building, social prescribing and VCS grants.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the content of the report be noted.

3.0 Background and updates on key areas of work

- 3.1 Principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) guide our community and partnership work and have done so since 2012 when Gloucester City Council and other partners adopted this way of working. ABCD focuses on the strengths of a community, believing that everyone has gifts and something to contribute. It places citizens at the centre believing that they can come up with their own ideas for how to make their neighbourhood a better place to be. It is the role of the Community Builder to have those conversations with residents and then connect them to neighbours who share similar aspirations in order to make things happen. We believe that this will, over time, make communities more resilient and self-sufficient. Our role is to support communities to recognise strengths and deliver for themselves, as opposed to be mere passive recipients of public services.

3.2 Community Building

3.2.1 Gloucester City Council continues to invest in community building, particularly with Barnwood Trust and Gloucestershire Police. Partnership and Engagement Officer, Verona Vidal is currently on secondment to Barnwood Trust to work as a Community Builder in Westgate Ward for 2 years from December 2016-2018. Verona works alongside Marcus Essabi a Police Community Support Officer who has also been seconded to work as a Community Builder. Verona is covering the Greyfriars and Linden Homes Estates, whilst Marcus is focussing on Brunswick Square and Gloucester Park and both are continuing to build links with local residents in Westgate through street walks, local events and using the Barnwood Trust camper van as a conversation hub on adhoc days. They are also building strong links with the refugee community through the world café in Brunswick. Marcus has recently connected a group of Iranian boys to a local Arabic cafe owner who has shown an interest in supporting refugees coming to Gloucester and helping them adapt to a new culture. Verona has recently discovered an interest from local traders in setting up market stalls on Westgate Street to complement the events that take place in the area. Both Community Builders are 'people mapping', taking details of every person they meet and plotting them on to a map so that they can make connections between residents, groups and organisations.

3.2.2 Some of the community building stories from Greyfriars and Tredworth this year include:

- Supporting a diverse group of residents in Tredworth to organise a second street party. The street party planning group includes some residents who were involved last year as well as new residents from other BME communities and local shop owners. There are plans of a follow up event to look at " Making Tredworth Beautiful"
- Building relationships at the All Nations Centre and assisting in the preparations for a Community Welcome Day in April, which included helping residents knock on doors in the surrounding streets. Well over 100 people attended and shared their interests for future events including a coffee morning, activities in the school holidays and a musicians group
- An East Meets West community [event](#) to bring together residents on two sides of the same street, initiated by a local resident.
- Supporting an individual who has set up a mental health support group and who is passionate about community cohesion to build links with the Muslim community
- Building a relationship with a care home resident with dementia who is originally from the Caribbean but is now based in Stroud and who had come into contact with another community builder working in this area
- Linking an asylum seeker to a community centre where there is support for families with learning disabilities

- 3.2.3 The research teams at Barnwood Trust and Gloucestershire Constabulary are currently conducting joint research into the impact of community building taking place across the county, with support from Gloucester City Council.
- 3.2.4 The research involves both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The qualitative fieldwork includes producing people maps to document the spread of the community builders' connections, as well as the links that develop amongst residents. Regular 'download' interviews with community builders are also taking place. Residents and community groups will also be invited to take part in the research to share their experiences.
- 3.2.5 This research is part of a larger program of work being undertaken by Barnwood Trust's research team on the impact of the organisation's work and of Gloucestershire Constabulary's work to capture outcomes from the 'Building Community Capacity and Resilience Initiative.'
- 3.2.6 Gloucester City Council is the first local authority in the country to formally adopt ABCD and strengths based working. Croydon Council have supported community builders since 2012 and were a key partner in mentoring some of the community builders in Gloucester but have not taken ABCD as a guiding principle within their council structure. Since 2014 the city council have received many enquiries from other local authorities who have heard about the highly regarded ABCD work in Gloucester. Bristol City, North East Somerset and Surrey Councils have visited in order to learn about the Gloucester Community Building journey with the view to bringing ABCD to their own organisations.
- 3.2.7 There are now 7 community builders in Gloucester City and a further 3 in the rest of the county and all are employees of and/or managed by Barnwood Trust. Of the 7 Gloucester Community Builders, there are 2 in Westgate (Marcus and Verona as mentioned above), Louise (on secondment from Gloucestershire Police) in Barton and Tredworth, Liam Daniels and Byron Mockridge in Podsmead, Kat Gibson in Barnwood and Hucclecote and Katie Peacock in Matson and Robinswood. There is also consideration for future community builders. The recent creation of the Corporate Obligations Planning Group which is attended by a Corporate Director and Head of Place as well as Officers from Planning, Regeneration and Community Engagement provides an opportunity to discuss the use of S106 funding for alternative community provision. Suggestions have been put forward for this funding to be spent on Community Builders should this be what is needed to support greater cohesion between new and existing communities.

3.3 Social Prescribing

- 3.3.1 The city council continues to facilitate the highly successful Gloucester Social Prescribing team which has been based at Herbert Warehouse since the project was piloted in December 2014. Social Prescribing is a project with the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, Gloucester City Council and the Independence Trust. GPs refer patients who repeatedly visit the surgery with depression and/or anxiety symptoms caused by non-medical issues to Social

Prescribing Coordinators who support the patient for up to 12 weeks by connecting them to groups and activities in their neighbourhood. Examples are:

- Supporting a lady suffering from anxiety to become a city council volunteer guide at the Museum of Gloucester. She has a passion for Ancient Roman History and is able to share her extensive knowledge of this subject with residents and visitors. This has decreased her social anxiety, improved her confidence and gives her the feeling that she is giving something back to her local community.
- Referring a patient who had previously suffered a brain injury and was depressed due to being out of work to the exercise on referral scheme and the Learn Direct confidence building workshop. This improved his health and wellbeing dramatically and he is now in part time work.
- Mental health support through the VCS. Many patients have found great benefit in the support they have received from charity and voluntary run counselling service 'Listening Post'. At Listening Post they have access to a trained counsellor for a number of weeks and are only required to pay a small donation.
- Community groups with a physical activity focus. A large number of patients have spoken about the positive impact they have experienced from being referred into exercise such as a walking group or gardening club in their local area.

3.3.2 Coordinators aim to 'help people help themselves' by placing the emphasis on the patient who will set goals for themselves and make steps each week towards achieving them. To date, the Gloucester Social Prescribing service has supported 289 local people. In November 2016, The Clinical Commissioning Group commissioned Dr Richard Kimberlee from the University of the West of England to carry out an evaluation of social prescribing in Gloucestershire as a whole. From his report we can understand that the primary outcome measure was an improvement in patient wellbeing. This was determined by the Warwick Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale (WENWBS) which the Coordinators complete with every patient at the beginning and end of their support pathway to measure the effectiveness of the service. Kimberlee's report confirms a significant increase in patient wellbeing scores. Kimberlee also evaluated the rate A&E admissions and came to the conclusion that there was a 23% decline amongst those patients who had been referred to the social prescribing service. Not only was this lower but it is contrary to an increase in emergency admissions in patients who were referred to the social prescribing service but refused the support. There is also evidence to confirm a clear reduction in patient encounters with GP services. GP visits declined by 21% in the 6 months after referral to a social prescribing coordinator compared to 6 months before. The number of GP home visits declined by 26% and the number of GP telephone calls by 6%.

3.3.3 We are planning to continue hosting the service due to the successful working relationships between the Social Prescribing Coordinators and staff from Housing, Environmental Health and Community Engagement who come into contact with the same residents. The Coordinators are also able to signpost patients into much needed volunteering roles in the City as well as connect patients to their local community builder, providing more sustainable solutions to the patient's depression and anxiety and enabling them to contribute to their local community. In addition, the city council is making links with the 'Culture on Commissioning' strand of the Great Places bid, to ensure that there are effective links with social prescribing and that the development of this project benefits from the learning of the successful Social Prescribing project.

3.4 Grants

3.4.1 Gloucester City Council allocated £44,700 of **community grants** in 2016/17 to 13 different projects across the City. Projects were varied but shared common themes of developing resident's skills, increasing volunteering, building strong communities and supporting partnership working. Examples include Moreland based charity 'Increase the Peace' who worked with local actors and members of the community to produce a film about knife crime; community radio station GFM provided free training for local people who have an interest in music and production which led to an increase of 10 volunteers at their organisation; and Friends of Saintbridge Pond who worked with a local youth group and members of the surrounding community to improve part of the balancing pond area. (See appendix 1 for a full breakdown of funded community projects)

3.4.2 Gloucestershire County Council provided the City Council with £50,000 of **youth grant** funding to administer to local projects in 2016/17. A total of £41,402 was allocated to 24 projects to the benefit of over 2,000 young people. The main outcomes were; an increase in the confidence and wellbeing of young people, an increase in their physical activity levels and a reduction in antisocial behaviour. Many projects also saw an increase in volunteering. Examples are; the Filipino Association of Gloucestershire who supported their younger members to organise and run the annual Philippines Independence Day and Play Gloucestershire who trained children to become Young Play Organisers so that they can help facilitate play sessions. (See appendix 2 for a full breakdown on funded youth projects)

3.5 Blue Light Training

3.5.1 Over the last financial year, a number of informal and formal events have taken place to raise awareness and train officers in strengths based working. Over the last 12 months, Officers from public protection and environmental projects have joined staff from Gloucestershire Police and Gloucester City Homes on the 'Blue Light' Training program. This was delivered by a former Police Officer who specialises in positive problem solving and appreciative inquiry. Over the six sessions, staff learnt how to deal with issues and complaints in a positive way with the aim of reducing demand and increasing

community confidence. Since the training, staff from all 3 organisations have started to put the new methods into practice by talking to residents in Coney Hill. Staff discovered a desire for greater community cohesion and will be working with residents to hold the first participatory budgeting event in the coming months.

3.6 Relationship with the VCS

3.6.1 The city council continues to strengthen its' relationship with the VCS and plan to work collaboratively in the future to organise meetings and events for networking and discussing relevant topics. The city council also supports the VCS through the partnership with Volunteering Gloucestershire. The weekly volunteer matching service signposts local people to volunteering opportunities and has seen over 100 residents fill much needed voluntary roles in the city during 2016/17.

3.7 Gloucester Lottery

3.7.1 Gloucester Lottery provides an opportunity for the VCS and other local good causes to raise additional funds. The Lottery was launched in January 2017 with support from the Finance team who arranged the gambling license and researched into the best option for a local authority lottery. As of June 2017, Gloucester Lottery now has 48 registered causes and is raising a total of £28,142.00 per year. Of that, £11,949.00 is raised amongst the good causes with the remaining £16,192.80 in the central fund which will be commissioned to community projects in spring 2018. Gloucester Lottery currently has 481 players buying a total of 902 tickets; a fantastic start. We are refreshing our communication plan and have invested in a low cost advertising campaign through Facebook in June in order to boost ticket sales.

3.8 Rising Gloucester

3.8.1 New structures are in place as the city council has recently supported the formation of the Youth Forum, also known as 'Rising Gloucester'. Rising Gloucester is made up of 20 16-17 year olds from across the city with representation from 7 out of the 8 Secondary Schools. 2 meetings have taken place so far where members highlighted issues that are important to them and identified actions to try and resolve them. They feel strongly about improving the relationship between the older and younger generations and have plans to attend a local coffee morning to build relationships with older people. They also would like to raise the amount of young people who vote and have discussed increasing voter registration at their sixth form centres and colleges.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

4.1 Principles of ABCD guide all of our work with communities.

4.2 Mainstreaming a culture of ABCD across the council is an important priority in the next year. This will require a multi-faceted approach. We need to embed

the principle in our policies, strategies and plans, our HR processes and we need to develop, train and support officers to adopt these principles in how they discharge their duties. We also need to influence partners who deliver in our communities (including Health, Police and County Council) to shift their delivery model to a more asset based approach. This will take time.

- 4.3 The current re-organisation (Together Gloucester) has provided a good opportunity to embed the commitment to ABCD more structurally. It was one of the design principles for the new structure and a 'requirement to deliver services with regard to the principles of ABCD' has been included in all job profiles in the new structure. All managers are expected to champion the principles of ABCD and the new post of 'Community Wellbeing Manager' is expected to act as the operational lead for ABCD. Whilst this is not sufficient to ensure that the Council will work in a strengths based way, it provides us with an appropriate HR framework.

5.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 5.1 Over the last 12 months we have significantly strengthened our links with partners in Health, the Constabulary and the County Council to contribute to the prevention and self-care work and to influence commissioning practice. We are key contributors to Enabling Active Communities and Prevention Board.

- 5.2 Key projects include:

- i. Taking the lead in the development of a Social Impact Bond for vulnerable women with multiple and complex needs. This will see a two year joined up investment of £100,000 by five commissioners (GCC, Gloucestershire County Council, CCG, PCC and Gloucester City Homes) to provide in-depth person centred support to 25 individual women through the Nelson Trust. We are keen to develop a local 'concept of proof' and are looking for a local social investor. We expect the SIB to start in the autumn.
- ii. The CCG are investing £50,000 into Gloucester for a local community led project to demonstrate the impact on an asset based approach to promote wellbeing and health and reduce demand on GPs and/or A&E. The project is being scoped and is likely to see a community builder within Kingsholm who will be based within 'Roots Café' with strong links to the local GP practice.
- iii. We are taking a lead role across the County to explore and promote how the planning function can better contribute to creating resilient and healthy communities. This is happening through a number of workshops, training and support to officers across the system with a view to improving officers' mutual understanding of planning and health; generating political and system leadership by-in to the planning and health agenda and pro-active engagement with developers.

5.3 Together Gloucester provides a prime opportunity to spread the culture of ABCD furthermore. The new community wellbeing team will be the driving force behind this piece of work and aim to support and encourage staff to encompass this new way of working through events, meetings and training. Barnwood Trust will be a key partner in this and will support community wellbeing as the program is rolled out.

6.0 Financial Implications

Not applicable.

7.0 Legal Implications

Not applicable

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. More importantly, ABCD has seen significant positive improvements to people and their communities.

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

11.1 ABCD 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.

Sustainability

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

Staffing & Trade Union

11.4 None identified.

Background documents: None