

Gloucester City Council

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Meeting: | Cabinet | Date: | 6 March 2024 |
| Subject: | Community Wellbeing Engagement Update | | |
| Report Of: | Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Communities | | |
| Wards Affected: | All | | |
| Key Decision: | No | Budget/Policy Framework: | No |
| Contact Officer: | Gupti Gosine- Community Wellbeing Manager Gupti.gosine@gloucester.gov.uk | | |
| | | Tel: | 396288 |
| Appendices: | None | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on community engagement work carried out by the Community Wellbeing Team.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** to note the community engagement work undertaken by the Community Wellbeing Team, particularly using Asset Based Community Development and strengths-based working.

3. Background and Key Issues

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 3.1 In the last year the team have delivered initiatives such as hosting Race Relations Tea Breaks with colleagues, promoting awareness campaigns such as Suicide Prevention Day and attending training courses such as Mental Health First Aid, Bystander Intervention and Applied Suicide Intervention. Officers have also supported community groups with their events including Windrush Day, Black History Month and International Women's Day.

Asset-based Community Development

- 3.2 Officers have continued to work to promote volunteering opportunities to staff and enhance the staff volunteering policy to increase the number of volunteering hours across the organisation. An event is currently being planned for Council Officers in partnership with Gloucester Community Building Collective, Gloucestershire Constabulary and Active Gloucestershire on building stronger and safer communities which is due to take place in April.

Championing the Armed Forces Community Covenant

- 3.3 Officers work with the Armed Forces County Partnership to increase working and volunteering opportunities for the armed forces community as well as working with the HR team to improve recruitment opportunities, aiming to provide veterans and their families with more opportunities to apply for positions at the council. Officers also supported the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum with Armed Forces Day in June and attended the Police Open Day with the Veteran's Outreach Team.

Hate Crime Awareness Partnership Member,

- 3.4 Officers deliver training sessions for staff and the community and work on campaigns to reduce the number of hate crimes and incidents in Gloucestershire. This included outreach work on Hate Crime Awareness Week, and events for Holocaust Memorial Day and National Interfaith Week.

Gloucester Dementia Action Alliance

- 3.5 The Gloucester Dementia Action Alliance is growing and now includes representation from NHS, Managing Memory, Fair Shares, Gloucester Community Building Collective and 2 Experts by Experience. The group meets quarterly and are working together to improve life for those living with Dementia in Gloucester by raising awareness, educating, signposting and encouraging people to create their own support networks. As part of this work Officers supported the Dementia Action Week with the NHS roadshow in May and are due to run a community session at Smiles Coffee Shop in March. The Lead Officer is trained to deliver awareness sessions and has trained more than 20 City Council staff over the last year.

Youth Engagement

- 3.6 The Youth Engagement Officer joined the Council at the end of March 2023 after external funding was secured.
- 3.7 Initial findings have suggested the following:
- Young people often feel that consultation is tokenistic, and they don't see change as a result, reinforcing that belief.
 - They would like to see young people voices escalated.
 - They are keen to be proud of the City and to show this.
 - They want more opportunities but struggle to find out what is happening or struggle to participate for financial reasons.
- 3.8 Following a review of best practice models with Councils in other areas, including Stroud Youth Council and the London Mayors Peer Outreach Workers and Action Group members, funding has been secured to deliver a project where young people lead on peer research/social action. This work will support and inform the development of an evidence-based Youth Engagement Strategy.

Youth Violence Prevention

- 3.9 Youth violence prevention work has delivered a number of outcomes over the past year:
- Formation of Youth Violence Prevention Steering Group and Strategy Group
 - Delivery of a Theory of Change workshop in July bringing together 70 people from different agencies to identify the themes of the Strategy 2024-2029.
 - Database of 120 organisations/agencies committed to reducing youth violence.
 - In partnership with Gloucester Cathedral, delivery of the first **Gloucester Young People's Action Summit** in January 24 which included 65 young people recruited and paid to participate as facilitators, delegates and performers from 26 different organisations – 50% from global majority, and 120 delegates.
 - Presentation to G15 Heads and Student Reps Jan 24.
 - Linking with other workstreams such as the Serious Violence Duty and Urban Street Gangs work.
 - Mapping local provision with other stakeholders
 - Supporting UoG student research for SSGP.
 - Supported the Knife Angel to come to the City in February 2023 and the Knife Bee to Kings Square in February 2024.

Youth Consultation and other work

- 3.10 Supporting consultation on the Cheltenham, Gloucester & Tewkesbury Strategic & Local Plan including working with Young Gloucestershire on the questions used in the young people's area of the consultation, contacting schools, creating social media content with young people and a professional film maker.
- 3.11 Supporting colleagues in heritage/ cultural services and working with Safer Spaces Officer on shared activities including working with the University of Gloucestershire, Active Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire College.

Nourishing Gloucester – Food Equality

- 3.12 The Nourishing Gloucester, Food Equality Strategy was endorsed by Council in April 2023.
- 3.13 The primary aim of the strategy is to ensure that, in future, everyone in Gloucester has access to nutritious food and no one goes hungry, whilst also acknowledging that there are broader issues affecting our neighbourhoods which are closely interlinked with food insecurity.
- 3.14 The Nourishing Gloucester Food Forum has been established, meeting bi-monthly and including statutory and VCSE organisations to look at several emerging priorities collectively.

Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF)

- 3.15 As District lead for HAF, Officers have worked alongside The Venture to build relationships with individuals, businesses, schools and VCSE organisations in

communities across Gloucester City and more nationally, to support the development and delivery of the HAF programme.

- 3.16 A strong network of local community anchor organisations has been formed and we support them to deliver the HAF programme and build their organisational capacity.
- 3.17 During the Spring, Summer holiday periods of 2023, the HAF programme provided activities and food with over 20 community partners across the City to 2061 children over Spring and 4857 children over the Summer. Utilising some of the Household support fund we have been able to feed the whole family not just children attending the activities and the pen play sessions with the Eat Well Wagon have further enabled this universal offer to happen.
- 3.18 The Venture Team and the approach that has been taken in Gloucester City has been recognised by the Department of Education and won an award for 'effective local partnerships'.

Financial inclusion

- 3.19 Working with Feeding Gloucestershire 'Worrying About Money' leaflets have been produced through the Independent Food Aid Network to support residents to access support to address the root causes of poverty which would mean they can afford to buy adequate, healthy and nutritious food.

Household Support Fund

- 3.20 The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) provided Gloucestershire County Council with a fourth tranche of the Household Support Fund for the period April 2023 – March 2024. The objective of the fund is to provide support to vulnerable households in most need of support, to help with significantly rising living costs.
- 3.21 Since April 2023, Officers have been working with GCC and VCSE delivery partners to distribute £328k to households in Gloucester City which provided support with supermarket shopping vouchers to purchase food and other household essentials, white goods which also included kitchen essentials and emergency energy support.

Integrated Locality Partnership & Strengthening Local Communities

- 3.22 ILPs are partnerships made up of local Government, NHS, Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, housing and increasingly communities, people and wider partners such as police, education etc. Partners work with each other to bring services together and plan how they are delivered to our local populations. The ILP works together as one, 'integrated' system to deliver the priorities set out by the Health and Care Partnership to tackle health inequalities and consider the wider determinates of health.
- 3.23 Throughout the year the partners have been working to align priorities to make use of funding provided by NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board. The following projects will be worked on during the next few months:
 - Active Places – placed based work in Coney Hill
 - Active People – Stop Smoking interventions at community level

- Active Communities – Health and Wellbeing Funding to VCSE organisations through a grant application process

Gloucestershire Funders

- 3.24 Gloucestershire Funders is a collaboration between several charitable foundations and organisations who can provide funding for not-for-profit organisations in Gloucestershire. Officers attend the fortnightly meeting to provide insight and local knowledge into organisations that have applied, and it also provides an opportunity to build relationships with the funders and understand the challenges faced by VCSE organisations, the nature of projects emerging etc based on their applications. We can also signpost to alternative funding opportunities that we might be aware of.

Blackbridge Sports and Community Hub

- 3.25 Community Wellbeing Officers continue to work alongside the Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society to support the development of the Blackbridge Community and Sports Hub.
- 3.26 The facility will provide the local community and the wider City with affordable sport and exercise facilities, support such as counselling, mentoring and advice services, learning and skills development for adults and young people, youth clubs and social and community groups for all ages.

Safer Spaces Consultation

- 3.27 Making our public spaces safer and supporting our residents has been a reoccurring theme in enquiries to the Council. The aim of this consultation alongside the Safer Spaces Officer role is to help to improve spaces in our communities/city. Feedback will help to develop community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects and support resident led ideas to improve our open and green spaces, and design out crime. Ongoing work in the improvement of our public realm will also help to attract further investment, and the Safer Spaces officer will develop opportunities for community led work to be showcased in the city centre, encouraging people to visit.
- 3.28 www.commonplace.is is a citizen engagement platform where people can share their thoughts, views and ideas about an area through pinning on a map and commenting on this specific area.

Community Safety/Solace

- 3.29 Gloucester City Council adopts a support, engage, and enforce approach to street based anti-social behaviour in City Centre such as street drinking. This approach acknowledges that these issues require a multi-agency partnership approach to ensure vulnerable individuals who require support are offered it at every opportunity and that enforcement action is only considered where engagement has been exhausted and behaviours continue to impact on others negatively.
- 3.30 The City Council commissions a service through Gloucester BID to provide an 'on-street' presence through City Protection Officers (CPO's) who are the first responders to these issues. The CPO's engage with individuals engaging in these

behaviours and will make necessary referrals to key partners such as P3, Change Grow Live and Streetlink. This engagement and offer of support will continue but should negative behaviours continue, individuals will receive warnings and/or have their alcohol removed by either CPOs or in partnership with the Police.

- 3.31 An example of this 'no tolerance' approach was the recent, Operation Ebrus, which was set up by the City Council in partnership with the Police and City Protection Officers to address the issues with anti-social street drinking. An intensive on-street presence by multi agency officers engaging with individuals and removing alcohol sent a very clear message to individuals who continued to ignore warnings and we're having a negative impact within the City Centre.
- 3.32 Where individuals were and continue to be identified by partners to be causing alarm, harassment and distress they are referred to our dedicated anti-social behaviour (ASB) partnership, Solace. Solace investigate and take action where there is significant risk to victims or communities, the team have obtained multiple anti-social behaviour injunctions against individuals due to their continued and significant behaviours city wide. These anti-social behaviour injunctions are just one civil tool available to us, through the partnership, used where appropriate to control the behaviours of individuals impacting on others. Between January 2023 – January 2024, Solace have investigated 59 high risk cases associated to on-street behaviours.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

- 4.1 ABCD and strengths-based working is at the core of our approach and has become second nature to Officers working in the engagement side of Community Wellbeing. We are using our own positive experiences of working in this way to guide and support other Officers in the council in order to work differently, in a way that is better for residents and the organisation as a whole.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 Strengths based working contributes to healthier neighbourhoods with residents more engaged with where they live and therefore more protective of their local environment.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Gloucester City Council could have continued to work in a traditional way in all of the examples mentioned above. However, this would have reduced the opportunity for residents to become more engaged and get involved in issues they feel passionate about. It would also mean that there are cases where we use enforcement options available to us when an underlying cause of a problem is overlooked, meaning a sustainable solution is not found.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 No recommendations are made in this report, it is for information only.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 The Council will continue working with residents in a meaningful way, supporting partnership working with key community organisations in each area who are well established and trusted by residents. The overall aim being that residents feel listened to and that they can actively shape the plans, so the regeneration happens 'with' them and not 'to' them.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this update report as it covers activities funded through the budget and remit of the Community Wellbeing Team.

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

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 None

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

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 There are no risks associated with this update report.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant for this report as it is giving an overview of work undertaken rather than proposing service changes.

12.2 Considerations are given when undertaking all community engagement to ensure that we do not adversely impact on any group and that we are fostering good relations and promoting advancement of opportunities within the community.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 From a community safety point of view we have found that working with residents, including alleged perpetrators, has led to more creative problem solving and solutions that are more sustainable because they are led by the individual rather than the agency.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 None

Background Documents: None