

Key Decision Required:	No	In the Forward Plan:	No
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CABINET

13 JUNE 2014

REPORT OF THE WELL-BEING AND PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO HOLDER

A.5 COMMUNITY BUILDER PILOT UPDATE

(Report prepared by Jon Barber)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide Members with an update and the detailed outcomes so far of the Community Builder pilot.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Builder Pilot forms part of the Whole Essex Community Budget - Strengthening Communities work stream. 'Strengthening Communities' aims to enable the development of stronger and more resilient communities by:-

- Building a better understanding of community capacity, skills and assets;
- Creating connections between individuals and across communities; and

For the communities in Tendring this project seeks to deliver:-

- A reduction in social isolation with the development of strong social networks to support members of the community;
- An increase in local people becoming active participants in improving their own health and wellbeing;
- Low-level intervention for those that require it, reducing future dependency on public services;
- Improved support for local volunteers;
- Local service delivery is transformed into sustainable, community-led services where appropriate; and
- Communities and individuals are more resilient, knowledgeable, and independent.

Initiatives delivered include the regionally recognised Winter Warmers Project in which almost 850 people in Clacton and Harwich were supplied with warm clothing and bedding, donated by the community and delivered by volunteers

A food drive initiated as a result of the Winter Warmers Project resulted in over £1200 worth of food directly benefitting 145 local families in need.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Cabinet notes the progress made by the Community Builder pilot.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Community Builder pilot contributes towards delivering the 'Help children and adults achieve their full potential' and 'Address deprivation' priorities as detailed in the Council's Corporate Plan, aiming to identify both examples of good practice and areas where communities need support to become more resilient and sustainable and, ultimately, less reliant on statutory services.

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance and Other Resources

The pilot has been funded through successful grant funding from Essex County Council. The grant funding included costs incurred through the delivery of the work including the salary of the Community Builder plus two Community Apprentices.

Risk

There is minimal risk to Tendring District Council in delivering this service other than reputational damage if successful outcomes are not delivered.

LEGAL

There are no legal implications.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder / Equality and Diversity / Health Inequalities / Area or Ward affected / Consultation/Public Engagement.

Wards affected: All

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Groundwork from the start of the pilot has been substantial, linking in with identified community need via a variety of networks, charities and voluntary and statutory agencies. This has identified best practice, gaps in provision and natural partnerships that have developed.

The Community Builder identified a number of areas of focus which aimed to deliver sustainable community benefit; being delivered for the community by the community.

Winter Warmers

A partnership between the Citizens Advice Bureau, Tendring District Council (TDC) and the Princes Trust created an initiative that received substantial support and has been welcomed by the agencies in support of the hardship being faced by families and individuals in the community.

A pop-up shop in Clacton was secured with assistance from TDC and working in partnership with the Princes Trust, twelve Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) young people decorated and refurbished the shop using materials which they secured as donations from local businesses. All stock items were donated by the community.

The shop opening was televised by Anglia News, who highlighted that for many families, soaring energy prices can often mean having to decide between buying food or heating their home during the winter.

The Clacton pop-up shop was open for business for 2 weeks during December 2013. The headline outputs were:-

Clacton Winter Warmers project 2nd – 13th December 2013	
274 adults 111 children	Number of Tendring residents who benefitted from the project
952	Items of warm Winter clothing distributed to residents in need
60	warm duvets and blankets were given out
40%	households which benefitted were in receipt of benefits for disabilities or long term health conditions
25%	households in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefit as the main source of income
60%	single people living alone
15%	single parent households
22 (8%)	adults declared themselves as homeless, with no fixed abode
21	Wards where residents benefitted from the project. - 22% living in Pier Ward; - 19% from Alton Park Ward; and - 18% from Golf Green Ward.
17%	households said they had problems with debt and were signposted to the CAB
35%	Retired residents
8	partner agencies who made referrals to the project

With further support from TDC and additional volunteers from the Tendring Tenants Panel, The Harwich Society, Citizens Advice Bureau and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, the pop-up shop was transferred to Harwich in February 2014. The shop was initially scheduled to open for 2 weeks but was extended for another week due to the evident need of the local community.

Headline outputs for Harwich were:-

Harwich Winter Warmers project 10th – 28th January 2014	
240 adults 200 children	Number of Tendring residents who benefitted from the project
1142	Items of warm Winter clothing distributed to residents in need
222	warm duvets and blankets were given out
27%	households which benefitted were in receipt of benefits for disabilities or long term health conditions
22%	households in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefit as the main source of income
54%	single people living alone
22%	single parent households
1	adult declared themselves as homeless, with no fixed abode
15	Wards where residents benefitted from the project. - 42% living in Harwich East Central Ward; - 31% from Harwich East Ward; and - 10% from Harwich West Central Ward.
32%	households said they had problems with debt and were signposted to the CAB
9%	Retired residents
14	partner agencies who made referrals to the project

Food Banks

The Community Builder project received a significant amount of food donations from both retail organisations and from the public as an extension from the Winter Warmers Pop-up Shops that were located both in Clacton and Harwich.

In addition to this, TDC asked its staff to donate instead of exchanging Christmas cards, which resulted in them raising £200 so they could purchase food to donate to this project. When Sainsbury's in Clacton was approached with the donation to purchase food items, they suggested a 'Food Drive' event to try and match the amount with public donations.

The Community Builder project organised the all-day event in February 2014 by recruiting volunteers from the Citizens Advice Bureau, Sainsbury's, TDC, local councillors, Walton Foodbank, Harwich Salvation Army, Essex County Fire and Rescue and young people from the Community Action Panel.

The day achieved an amazing £1200.00 worth of food donations from the customers which resulted in us being able to help 145 families in need, benefitting from the donations received.

The donations were then distributed to the four main Food Banks in Tendring:

- Salvation Army in Clacton
- Foundry Court in Manningtree
- Walton FoodBank at the Community Centre

- Salvation Army in Harwich

Food Banks are experiencing a significant increase in need with the most common reasons for claims being benefit sanctions, benefit delays, low income due to an increase in zero hour contracts and unemployment.

Harwich Food Bank, based at the Salvation Army since August 2013, has seen a 60% increase in needy families and individuals attending its Food Bank.

Clacton Food Bank, also based at the Salvation Army, has also seen an increase of 60% since the same quarter in 2013 with the majority of clients coming from Pier / Alton Park / Golf Green / Rush Green Wards.

CURRENT POSITION

Tendring Tenants Panel (on-going)

The Tendring Tenant's Panel was identified as an asset to the community which could benefit from additional upskilling in order to further meet the needs of the community. The Panel is often a first contact for residents with varied problems, and not just housing related.

A pocket-sized 'Handy Guide to Public Services' was produced and distributed to all Panel members who in turn committed to recording the usage of the guide and to providing case studies of where their intervention has assisted. A programme of 'Community Ambassador Training' has also been sourced to develop the Panel members' Community Connector role.

Little Lambs Day Nursery

Families in Mistley which use the Little Lambs Day Nursery have a range of support needs and are unable to access appropriate services.

The owner of the day nursery was recruited as a Community Connector. Working with the Community Builder. Wider needs of some parents have been subsequently met such as delivering a free budgeting workshop and debt counselling. The owner of the day nursery also managed to source a set of children's bedroom furniture for a single parent in desperate need. These support services are being delivered at the nursery's premises and aim to support the families to live within budget and avoid unmanageable debt and reduce the dependency on statutory services.

Mistley, Manningtree & Lawford Parish Councils

Mistley, Manningtree and Lawford Parish Councils required support in sourcing volunteers to carry out community projects, raising the Councillors' and Clerks' awareness of local support services to facilitate their roles as Community Connectors, and identifying the most vulnerable elderly people in their communities in order to plan support for the Winter.

The Community Builder facilitated contact with The Prince's Trust Team Programme, which provided volunteers to clean, repair and repaint thirteen benches and a shelter along The Walls in Mistley, as well as the seating next to the War Memorial. Mistley Parish Council commended the young volunteers for their hard work, and reported that 'many tourists are attracted to the riverside and enjoy the views from the seating along The Walls, which now looks considerably improved and has attracted many appreciative comments from the local community.'

The Community Builder has agreed to provide copies of the Tendring Tenants Panel 'Handy Guide to Public and Community Services' to the Clerks and Councillors to help facilitate their Community Connector role.

The Community Builder and Essex Fire & Rescue Service discussed using the Parish Safety Agents model as a vehicle to identify the most vulnerable elderly residents in the parishes. Discussions about this are ongoing.

Mental health in central Clacton

Residents with enduring mental ill health living in central Clacton have poor health and wellbeing due to lack of day services. Many of these residents live in bed & breakfast accommodation and have to leave their homes at 9am and have nowhere to go. Poor quality of life leads to deterioration in their mental health and readmission to the acute psychiatric unit.

The Tendring Health and Wellbeing Board was approached to consider joint commissioning for a new mental health day service in central Clacton, which could be developed into a Mental Health Hub. The service would utilise both paid staff and volunteers, and would aim to reduce demand for primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare services, and prevent service users from descending into crisis when Universal Credit is introduced. The Board agreed that a business case could be produced by the Tendring Community Builder project for consideration at the next meeting.

Availability and cost of public transport

It has been identified that availability and cost of public transport is a barrier to people moving into employment.

Working in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau, a funding application has been submitted to the DWP Flexible Support Grant Funding programme for pump-priming to set up a new Car Banking Scheme. The scheme will facilitate car sharing for journeys to work for people living in the Tendring District, helping to cut travel costs and alleviate the problems with public transport. The result of the application should be known soon.

After school activities in Rush Green, Golf Green and Bockings Elm

The Community Builder facilitated meetings with Councillors and officers from Tendring District Council and other key partners to explore solutions to the problem. As a result of this, a funding application was submitted by Inclusion Ventures to Sportivate, to set up a boxing skills club during the summer holidays - currently awaiting the outcome of the application.

In addition, a meeting was held to discuss how alternative self-defence classes could be set up and made sustainable in the community. These would be applicable to both young people (especially those experiencing bullying) and victims of domestic violence. The partners have been tasked to carry out research and a further meeting is scheduled to progress the project.

Recycling of medical aids - walking frames, bath aids and perching stools

There is currently no mainstream facility in the District to recycle medical aids such as walking frames, bath aids and perching stools. The Essex Equipment Service and hospitals do not have the resources to collect this equipment.

The Community Builder has met with a variety of partners to investigate the need for this facility. There were two outcomes from the research; namely that such a service is required and that there are many unemployed people who are looking for work experience who would be happy to help with repair, refurbishment and distribution of the aids.

APPENDICES

There are none.