

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning & Skill PPB

DATE: 9 January 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Communities

PORTFOLIO: Neighbourhood Leisure and Sport

SUBJECT: Community Services

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide an annual report on the Community Development service for the period up to 31st March 2012.

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.

3.2 Locality working was introduced to the service in April 2010 linked to the expiry of the neighbourhood management initiative. This mechanism involves community development supporting an increased role for partners and community involvement in the Area Forums. Area Forums contribute £45k per annum to Community Development for this support.

4.0 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The team consists of 5 FTE with one Senior Officer, 3 full time and two part time CDO's. The budget for Community Development is £284,590, with an income target of £42'490, a net budget of £242'100. They 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.
 Understanding and targeting 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 2011/12 the services performance indicators were:-

Total number of volunteers	2418
Number of groups worked with	173
Number of people benefiting from activity	16620
Number of partners involved	295
Number of initiatives supported	50
Funding secured from CD intervention	
From external sources	£202,559.92
From internal sources	£134,776.60
TOTAL FUNDING	£337,376.52

4.3 For every pound it costs to provide community development £1.39 is levered into supporting community initiatives. This measure has peaks and troughs over the years. Due to the current economic climate grant schemes are much more competitive and it is harder to secure funding. Given this and the fact that we carried a vacant post for much of the year the service has still managed to lever in more than what it costs to run the service.

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**

- **9th All Saints Brownies** - support to source holiday fund, equipment, resources & storage.
- **12th Widnes Scouts** – support to source equipment.
- **Krystallaires Majorettes** – support to source equipment. The group engages a number of young girls in a healthy and positive activity.
- **Halebank Primary School** – work was done with the school to fund development of pathways, a trim trail and a nature trail.
- **Chestnut Lodge PTA** – supported the development of this new group with guidance on policies and procedures.

5.2 **Appleton, Kingsway & Riverside**

- **Boys Brigade** were supported to fund a new mini bus and implement management arrangements to enable West Bank Community Forum, St Mary's Church and the school to utilise the mini bus.
- **West Bank Community Forum Christmas Extravaganza** – support to the steering group to plan the event and co-ordinate the funding applications to enable the event to take place.
- **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.
- **St. Mary's Community Centre** – Icarus Project. A large energy efficiency project – support was provided with writing a business plan and the first stage saw new windows installed at the centre.

5.3 **Birchfield, Farnworth & Halton View**

- **14th Farnworth Methodist Scouts** – supported group to access funding to purchase IT equipment that is used by all church groups.
- **Widnes North Residents Association** – provided on-going CD support to newly established group. Supported with completing CRBs, promoting the group and tackling issues highlighted by the community.
- **Knights Community Choir** – supported the start-up and development of this group. Also supported an inter-generational project where the choir worked with choirs from local schools and a Samba band.

- **Halton View Action Group** – CD attend and support monthly meetings. Support the group to source funding to install Street Snooker.
- **Halton Speak Out** – continuation of work with a particular focus around funding for group and ELLA.

5.4 Grange, Heath, Halton Brook & Mersey

- **Grange Community Forum** – CD have provided support and guidance for the group to formalise and continues to facilitate the group. Key success throughout the year have included; Pooches on Parade, an event to promote responsible dog ownership, a successful funding application to WREN for floodlights for the multi-use games area at Grangeway, the first community newsletter and an the intergenerational IT project.
- **Runcorn Boys Club** - ongoing support has been provided as specifically the groups has been assisted to raise funding to refurbish the club. This work included new heating, a new kitchen, new toilets, new flooring, improved accessibility and redecoration. Unfortunately a fire at the club meant that this work has been delayed.
- **Runcorn Christmas Fayre** – CD played a key role in securing funding for the event and the engagement of voluntary and community groups in taking part. This event has very quickly become an established annual event in Runcorn. It promotes the Town and builds civic pride and a sense of belonging.
- **Private Thomas Todger Jones Appeal Committee** - Support was provided to establish this group and work towards installing a statue of WW1 hero, Private Thomas Todger Jones. An appeal committee is now in place, Local Area Forum funds have been secured and a plan is in place to apply for further funding.

5.5 Halton Castle, Norton North & South, Windmill Hill

- **St Mary's Miniatures** – support was provided to the group to develop policies and procedures around safeguarding. The group have also been given funding advice and support to organise events.
- **Castlefields PPG** – The CDO has attended meetings to provide advice and support, specifically around training and has also provided training to the committee.
- **Murdishaw Project Group** – The CDO takes a lead in co-ordinating this group and develops a number of projects that promote and develop the centre and reports to the board of directors.
- **Windmill Hill School** – The CDO supported the school and parents to set up a 'Friends of' group and has assisted them with funding applications.
- **Lymm Fishing Club** – the CDO helped the group to source

funding to provide an accredited course for young people.

5.6 **Beechwood & Halton Lea**

- **Welcome Club** – CDO provided regular general advice and support to the group and helped the secure funding to organise a celebrational event for people aged over 55.
- **Hallwood Park School Community Allotments** – worked with the school, Haddocks Wood Allotment Society and other partners to develop a project for adults with learning disabilities.
- **Halton Lodge Community Centre** – On-going support provided to the group and in particular assistance with the action plan and funding advice.
- **Beechwood Community Centre** – Attended planning meetings and support manager with an action/business plan for building works and promotion of the centre.

5.7 **Daresbury**

- **Moore Parish Council** – support to plan and organise a summer fair.
- **Haddocks Wood Allotment Society** – on-going general support and advice with a focus on funding requirements.

6.0 **SERVICE EVALUATION**

6.1 A service evaluation is carried out annually and for the period 2011/12 the Research & Intelligence team assisted us with this. 55 responses were received, a 49% return rate. This indicates those that utilise the service place a high value on its provision.

The responses demonstrated:-

98 % responded to say CD support had made a difference to their group.

78 % responded to say they had received support and funding.

80% of respondents rate the service as excellent and 18% as good.

100% of respondents stated they would recommend the service to other groups

The elements of the service they used most are:-

- Applying & managing funding
- General community development help and information
- Networking support

The suggestions for future service improvement were:-

- I think that the expertise within the team should be highlighted to other group as I feel that their enthusiasm and energy could be of immense value to them.
- Recommend raising the profile of the service and what it offers.

- Nothing! Since my work has taken me to different boroughs I can't believe how lucky we are in Halton. So there is nothing to change, just keep up the good work.
- As far as we are concerned things are so good. Congratulations and many thanks to Karen and all those involved.

77% of respondents felt that there were no suggestions they could make mainly as a result of feeling the service was already so good.

Some comments received in the evaluation were:-

- In every aspect, Gill Watson has supported this appeal 100%. She provided much needed guidance and was ready to offer advice and support at all stages – and is still involved with making this appeal a success. She attends all committee meetings and offers much advice and information which is invaluable.
- The support we receive from Adele Clarke is excellent. She is supportive, honest and works hard on our behalf. She is always approachable even to members who are nervous or easily intimidated and handles very well those who are tricky customers. I trust Adele. The sense of a trustworthy friend who can give advice and support is a huge advantage to a community group and it helps us be more confident and outgoing.
- The Community Development Team has helped in two ways. First in directing us to grants and second by involving us in community activities especially with community cohesion events.
- The manner which Kerry deals with people really is a pleasure and she is very helpful to all.
- Trustworthy; Knowledgeable; Understanding; Honest; Efficient
- To have a person of Karen's experience, encouraging and guiding our group through the procedures of the services available to us is an experience in itself. The time, effort and common sense that Karen uses in her efforts to the community are a credit to herself and the Community Development Team.
- The team are a great help as they are the first port of call if we need assistance with a project or a problem.

7.0 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

The Community Development service also administers grants for Starter, Community Development and Voluntary Youth grants. The grant breakdown for 2011/12 was:-

Starter Grants & Community Development Grants

Budget of £6,500

GROUP NAME	GRANT AWARDED
Southlands Court Residents Association	£200.00
Art Unlimited	£400.00

Pathways	£300.00
The Park Family Association	£150.00
Precious Memories 4 Mya	£150.00
The 8D Association	£150.00
Cultivate	£300.00
The Heath Drama Group	£400.00
Friends of HAFS	£200.00
Wicksten Drive Crafters	£300.00
Halton Haven Hospice	£400.00
St George's Court Tenants Association	£332.00
Friends of Trinity Methodist Church	£150.00
Widnes and Runcorn Cancer Support Group	£300.00
The Independent Service Group	£300.00
Warrington Road Families Group	£150.00
Catch 22 Charity Ltd	£170.00
Crafty Crafters	£300.00
Haddocks Wood Allotment Society	£190.00
St Paul's PCC	£250.00
Just Chill	£150.00
Hale Dance & Social Club	£200.00
Diabetes UK	£250.00
Knights Community Singers	£150.00
Upton Rocks Residents Association	£150.00
Halebank Youth Club	£250.00
TOTAL	£6242.00

Voluntary Youth Grants – Group & Bursary Support
Budget of £18,980

GROUP NAME/INDIVIDUAL	GRANT AWARDED
Bursary – Dance	£250.00
Bursary - Dance	£250.00
Bursary – Music	£200.00
Victoria Park Environmental Team	£370.00
Bursary - Dance	£450.00
Runcorn Premier Majorettes	£400.00
Xscape Explorer Scouts	£600.00
Bursary – Dance	£250.00
Bursary – Dance	£150.00
Bursary – Dance	£150.00
Bursary -Cheerleading	£250.00
Bursary - Dance	£250.00
CHAPS	£300.00
Widnes Rugby League Heritage Society	£500.00
Bursary - Dance	£250.00
Ht TK	£600.00

Bursary - Expedition	£250.00
Northwest Cheshire Scout Active Support	£115.00
Bursary - Music	£300.00
TOTAL	£5635.00

8.0 STRATEGIC APPROACHES

Community Development has a key role supporting a community led approach to Health & Wellbeing in 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. 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 has a pivotal role in developing the Big Local initiative on Windmill Hill which brings £1 million of lottery money 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.

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.

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 provides support to Umbrella Halton, a group that supports the minority ethnic community of Halton. In November 2011, the group held its inaugural general meeting and formed a committee. This committee now meets regularly and is already making a difference.

Community Development supports a strategic approach to community engagement in Halton at a partnership level. The team had a key role

in developing Halton's Partnership Community Engagement Strategy and continues to support the Community Engagement Network and Action Plan to deliver on the strategy's objectives.

9.0 **FUTURE CHALLENGES**

9.1 The Community Development service supports the growth and sustainability of civic community engagement. It starts at a grass roots neighbourhood level and is core to the government notion of localism and indeed the previous labour government's empowerment agenda. No other service exists to create and support active communities but many require the platform of community development to reach communities, consult and engage or deliver services in our neighbourhoods. The service often reaches the parts other stakeholder and services simply can't reach.

9.2 Community Development has an income target of £42'490. This will be achieved through the Area Forum funding contribution to supporting locality working for 2012/13. In the past few years it has also been met through Service Level Agreements for Intergenerational activity and support to Neighbourhood Management. The service needs to identify future income opportunities to support the sustainability of the service.

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, ie. 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.