

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning, Skills & Community Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 24th September 2018

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community & Resources

SUBJECT: Community Development Service Annual Report for 2017/18

PORTFOLIO: Community & Sport

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the operational delivery for the Community Development Service for the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That:

- 2.1 Members consider and comment upon the report.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Community Development activity helps 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 a wide range of community initiatives to help tackle strategic objectives and community needs. To this end, Officers have both a strategic and neighbourhood role in co-ordinating support to respond to community concerns and aspirations and create cohesive neighbourhoods which are participative and vibrant, with a strong sense of community connectedness.
- 3.2 The Community Development service was re-structured in April 2016. This involved the absorption of the Area Forum project delivery role and the creation of new Community Development & Projects Officer posts to provide a combined role for joint delivery of Community Development and Local Area Forum support.
- 3.3 The new combined role provided for effective and inclusive community engagement with Council departments and services and the delivery of a range of community initiatives, whilst also supporting Local Area Forums to help provide a mechanism for Councillors to respond to community needs and aspirations and to help meet strategic priorities.

4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The Community Development & Project Officers are neighbourhood based. They work alongside community groups to support them to develop their skills and knowledge to promote community action. This often involves providing advice and guidance around committee structures, financial arrangement, policies and regulations which need to be developed and observed and assisting in delivery of community action. This is the only role that has these functions as a core purpose. Community Development activity strengthens local belonging, addresses inequalities and 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 residents feel about where they live and their overall satisfaction.
- Understanding and targets local priorities - community concerns drive community initiatives and improvements in their neighbourhoods.
- Communicates what the Council is doing and proactively seeks engagement.
- Generates connected communities to create a sense of belonging and facilitating community resilience.
- 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.

4.2 Funding has increasingly become core to the Community Development and Project Officer role, which is particularly important in this current economic climate. The service co-leads on providing funding market places with colleagues in the External Funding Team. 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 are not receiving on-going community development support.

4.3 A performance framework is in place for community development activity. In 2017/18 the Service's performance indicators can be seen in the Table below.

	2017/18	2016/17
Total number of volunteers	312	300
Number of groups worked with	67	61
Number of people benefiting from activity	3825	3700
Number of events/initiatives supported	9	10
Funding secured from CD intervention		
From external sources	£101,519.92	£101,512.00
From internal sources	£68,633.12	£18,037.00
TOTAL FUNDING	£170,153.04	£119,549.00

4.4 For a significant part of the reporting period the Team was operating with reduced capacity. Despite this, and as can be seen from the Table above, overall performance in 2017/18, was higher than in the previous year. The level of funding secured meant that for every pound it cost to provide the Community Development Service a further £1.19 was levered into the borough to support community groups and initiatives. This compares to £0.68 for every pound spent in 2016/17. Levels of 'levered in' funding has fluctuated over the years. Bids translating into funds often involve lengthy timescales and have peaks and troughs in success and the funding arriving in the Borough.

5. GRASS ROOTS DELIVERY

5.1 The following detail provides some examples of projects and groups that the Community Development (CD) Team are working with and alongside across the borough.

5.1.1 Broadheath, Ditton, Hough Green & Hale

Friends of Quarry Court – On-going support provided to this group to improve life for all residents. CD support with a funding application to install a security gate, increasing the resident's levels of feeling safe.

St Michael with St Thomas – Support provided to this organisation with a funding application to renovate their community space. £33k bid was submitted to Garfield Weston Anniversary Fund (awaiting outcome).

Hough Green Allotment Association – CD provided support to source nearly £10k to make site improvements including resurfacing works which enabled the group to install a cabin and toilets with the aim that they can encourage more people to get involved.

5.1.2 Appleton, Kingsway & Riverside

Brennan Lodge Homeless Hostel – CD provided support with funding bids to enable the hostel to purchase equipment to make the environment more homely for the residents.

Monday Luncheon Club – Ongoing support provided in the area of governance and policies to enable this group to get established as a separate organisation. This work continues and alongside this has enabled applications to be submitted to refurbish the kitchen at St Mary's Community Hall (awaiting outcome).

5.1.3 **Birchfield, Farnworth & Halton View**

Halton View Action Group – provided support with a project review for the group to evaluate its work and priorities.

Wonky Garden – Support provided to get the group established including governance arrangements, developing policies and procedures. Successful starter grant received and further funding applications being progressed.

5.1.4 **Grange, Heath, Halton Brook & Mersey**

Halton Zipper Club - provided support to the group through a transition phase with changes to their affiliated body. Assistance provided to re-write constitution and make alterations to their bank account to ensure transparency and independence.

Wicksten Drive Alleycats – support provided to make improvements to the communal garden created through the installation of alley gates. Group sourced funding to purchase a shed for their equipment and a skip to tidy the area.

Weaver Community Arts – with CD support this group received £3900 from Comic Relief Core Strength funding stream to ensure that the group could continue providing its much valued service to its members and to encourage new membership to be sustainable in the future.

5.1.5 **Halton Castle, Norton North & South, Windmill Hill**

Craft Creators – this group was supported with publicity and promotion for a membership drive to increase their sustainability as well as some smaller funding bids to purchase essential equipment and resources.

Murdishaw Over 60s – support was provided to this group to expand their offer to members. Along with the support of the Council's sports development team the group were assisted to run dance taster sessions which expanded to starting up a fitness session at Murdishaw Community Centre.

Windmill Snappers – governance advice was provided to enable this emerging group to set up formally with all the necessary paperwork which led on to sourcing funding to purchase equipment that was required.

5.1.6 Beechwood & Halton Lea

City Arts – CD worked closely with this group to establish the group and a base at Shopping City and secure successful funding bids to purchase essential kit and equipment.

Beechwood Community Centre – continue to support the centre and staff with funding applications and development of activities. The centre has benefited from grant funding support by the forum to improve their pool plant and install bollards to the exterior.

5.1.7 Daresbury

Step Up and Stand Out – assisted the group with governance advice, specifically to write their constitution, appoint the committee and develop safeguarding policies and procedures.

6. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

- 6.1 The Community Development Service also administers Starter and Development grants for community groups. Five existing groups were supported with their project/group costs and three new groups were supported with a starter grant. A breakdown of this expenditure follows:-

Starter Grants & Community Development Grants

GROUP NAME	PROJECT	GRANT AWARDED
Starter Grant		
Halton Lodge Diamonds	Start Up Costs	£150.00
Wonky Garden	Start Up Costs	£150.00
Runcorn Community Action Group	Start Up Costs	£150.00
St Mary's PTA	Start Up Costs	£150.00
City Arts Hub	Start Up Costs	£148.95
TOTAL Starter Grant		£748.95
Development Grant		
Widnes & Runcorn Cancer Support	Art Workshops	£180.00
MerseyWave Music	Recording Sessions	£200.00
Comfort Dolls	Equipment	£200.00
TOTAL Development Grant		£580.00
TOTAL		£1328.95

7. AREA FORUM PROJECTS

- 7.1 As detailed in paragraph 3.2, Community Development and Project Officers also manage Area Forum project applications and delivery. Area Forum money can often help to lever other funding into the borough as match funding; for example third party contribution for Wren applications.

7.2 An annual report on Area Forums is presented to Corporate Services PPB, which provides details of expenditure, match funding, evaluation and case studies. Summary details of expenditure are provided below.

7.3 Summary of spend by each Local Area Forum;

Local Area Forum	Approved Budget	Actual Spend
1 - Broadheath, Ditton, Hale & Hough Green	£52,709.96	£51,643.32
2 - Appleton, Kingsway & Riverside	£44,760.04	£19,217.43
3 - Birchfield, Farnworth & Halton View	£52,480.08	£23,641.50
4 - Grange, Halton Brook, Heath & Mersey	£63,260.00	£55,000.81
5 - Halton Castle, Norton North, Norton South & Windmill Hill	£52,119.96	£36,471.07
6 - Beechwood & Halton Lea	£23,930.04	£21,623.61
7 - Daresbury	£10,750.04	£7,797.74
Totals	£300,010.12	£215,395.48

7.4 The Projects funded through the Local Area Forums are wide and varied, and have been categorised into a number of key areas, which are listed in the following table:-

	Children & Young People	Community Events	Community Resources & Equipment	Community Initiatives	Improved Parks	Landscapes	Pedestrian & Highway Improvements	Community Safety	Total
AF1	£793.53	£150.00	£14,517.00	£1,000.00	£14,600.00	£4,278.32	£0.00	£16,304.47	£51,643.32
AF2	£0.00	£5,000.00	£5,478.49	£2,940.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£5,798.94	£19,217.43
AF3	£1,778.50	£0.00	£5,963.00	£0.00	£7,600.00	£0.00	£1,300.00	£7,000.00	£23,641.50
AF4	£0.00	£3,590.00	£22,463.77	£1,725.38	£13,600.00	£2,800.00	£5,000.00	£5,821.66	£55,000.81
AF5	£6,921.77	£4,320.00	£13,779.30	£0.00	£3,800.00	£0.00	£1,650.00	£6,000.00	£36,471.07
AF6	£0.00	£350.00	£19,413.61	£0.00	£0.00	£1,860.00	£0.00	£0.00	£21,623.61
AF7	£0.00	£0.00	£5,263.24	£2,534.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£7,797.74
Total	£9,493.80	£13,410.00	£86,878.41	£8,199.88	£39,600.00	£8,938.32	£7,950.00	£40,925.07	£215,395.48

7.5 The projects funded through the Area Forum contribute to one or more of the Council's priorities as detailed in the table below. The priority of Environment and Regeneration in Halton can be seen to account for 36% of the funding allocated.

	Healthy Halton	Environment & Regeneration	Employment, Learning & Skills	Children & Young People	Community Safety	Total
AF1	£1,820.00	£22,954.32	£5,271.00	£5,293.53	£16,304.47	£51,643.32
AF2	£249.99	£2,940.00	£5,228.50	£5,000.00	£5,798.94	£19,217.43
AF3	£715.00	£8,400.00	£5,248.00	£1,778.50	£7,500.00	£23,641.50
AF4	£4,893.02	£32,490.24	£8,858.91	£4,866.98	£3,891.66	£55,000.81
AF5	£5,343.33	£8,193.38	£9,935.92	£6,998.44	£6,000.00	£36,471.07
AF6	£16,879.22	£1,860.00	£2,884.39	£0.00	£0.00	£21,623.61
AF7	£224.24	£0.00	£3,609.50	£3,964.00	£0.00	£7,797.74
Total	£30,124.80	£76,837.94	£41,036.22	£27,901.45	£39,495.07	£215,395.48

8. STRATEGIC APPROACHES

8.1 A service evaluation is carried out annually with assistance from the Council's Customer Intelligence team. The summary feedback on the service received for 2017/18:-

- 97% of respondents stated that Community Development support has made a difference to their group
- 83% of respondents rated the service as excellent
- 13% of respondents rated the service as good
- 100% of respondents would recommend the service to other groups

The elements of the service that were most beneficial to groups were:

- Funding advice and support
- General support and knowledge
- Governance advice and policy and procedure

8.2 Open comments received in the evaluation:-

Did receiving help from the Community Development and Project Team make a difference to your group?

Chris has been and continues to be a vital part of our activities helping us to apply and secure grants for our project and pointing us in the right direction on many fronts.

It has enabled us to focus more clearly on what we want to achieve and why. We have raised awareness of the kind of evidence we need to support funding bids. Meetings have been positive experiences.

With previous helpers (from the group) and the lack of funding we were on the brink of folding. Your assistance was and is invaluable.

The support, advice and enthusiasm for our initiative has been invaluable. It has also given us hope that we will be supported in the future with further advice and possible help with other funding applications and avenues.

What did you think was most helpful about receiving help from the Community Development Team?

Excellent communication lines and feedback on matters being dealt with, also empathetic approach to dealing with people and community groups.

Excellent knowledge of community, statutory networks, funding streams, area priorities, area demographics.

Their knowledge of local matters and access to information sources.

Practical funding advice and the sharing of contacts and related information.

If you could improve one thing about the service offered what would this be?

77% of responses either made no comments or left one to say no improvements were required.

10% requested more resources for the service

9. STRATEGIC APPROACHES

- 9.1 Community Development supports the development and delivery of initiatives, activities and events across many Council service areas and within its Community Centres and public buildings.
- 9.2 Community Development is leading on the potential development for a Community Shop in Halton; a social supermarket with training and support opportunities that builds individuals resilience.
- 9.3 Community Development continues to support the Big Local initiative on Windmill Hill which will bring £1million of lottery investment to the area over ten years. Community Development is a key partner in the delivery of the project supporting capacity building for residents and facilitating partnership working.
- 9.4 Community Development is supporting the delivery of the Halton 'Well North' programme; which is providing investment of public health funds to help improve health outcomes. Community Development is leading on the Windmill strand of the programme; the ward within the Borough identified as having the most challenging health outcomes.
- 9.5 Community Development continues to support the development of the Healthy New Towns initiative in the Halton Lea Ward; supporting partners and facilitating joint approaches.
- 9.6 Community Development supports a strategic approach to community engagement in Halton at a partnership level. The service enables and facilitates HBC departments and partner agencies engaging with local communities, it supports the third sector infrastructure that provides the platform for community involvement.

10. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Financial and Resource implications are detailed within the report.

11. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no Policy implications arising from this report

12. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

12.1 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, and Halton happy hearts. This approach raises awareness of health issues and empowers communities to be proactive and build resilience. Examples of this are support to community gardening & allotment projects, patient support groups and liaison with the Health Improvement Team.

12.2 Halton's Urban Renewal

Community development contributes 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. 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. The report highlights the high level of area forum funding contributing to environmental improvements in the Borough.

12.3 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The service works with volunteers; facilitating skills development in committee processes, capacity building, fundraising and consultation. Close working with the Community Centres service also provides volunteer opportunities. Support provided for adult and lifelong learning for community groups.

12.4 Children and Young People in Halton

Community Development activity benefits all ages of residents with many initiatives directly supporting children and young people or having intergenerational approaches.

12.5 A Safer Halton

A sense of community and community connectedness reduces residents' 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

13. RISK ANALYSIS

13.1 There are no significant risks associated with this report.

14. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 1.1 There are no equality and diversity issues as a result of this report as the Local Area Forums and grant support are open and accessible to all Members of Halton's community.