

Subject:	Strengthening Communities and Involving People – Impact Reports		
Date of Meeting:	14 January 2010		
Report of:	Director of Strategy and Governance		
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 The Communities Team of the Strategy and Governance Department are responsible for commissioning and managing the work and activity related to the Strengthening Communities theme of the Local Area Agreement.
- 1.2 The activity commissioned under this theme is split into two areas of activity; the Stronger Communities Partnership, (3.2) and Community Development Commissioning, (3.3).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees to a formal review of the Strengthening Communities commissioning activity.

(The approach will be centred on community needs analysis, identifying priority outcomes and increasing the impact of service delivery. It is anticipated that the review will support wider work within the authority on improving community engagement and cohesion and supporting reductions in inequality.)

- 2.2 That Cabinet notes the Strengthening Communities impact reports.
- 2.3 That recommendations arising from the review be brought back to the Cabinet.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Since April 2008, priority neighbourhood support has been funded through Area Based Grant and corporate recurring funds, with additional LPSA Reward grant funding in 2009.
- 3.2 *The Stronger Communities Partnership (SCP) is delivered by the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (the CVSF) at a cost of £111,000 per year.*
 - Commissioned activity supports the 2020 Community Partnership in its responsibilities for community and voluntary (CV) sector representation in strategic planning and decision making. Partnership approaches to delivery of

the Local Area Agreement and Community Engagement Framework are also supported.

- The supporting programme of work helps to facilitate people from communities, groups and organisations to come together to give their views, identify issues of concern and establish priorities and solutions which are fed into decision-making processes in the city. Key outcomes from the Stronger Communities Partnership work are:
 - (i) Bringing together and supporting communities to have a meaningful voice in local groups and on the 2020 Community Partnership (and its wider family of partnerships)
 - (ii) Championing, supporting and building capacity around community engagement in decision-making in both the third and public sectors
 - (iii) Overseeing delivery of the strengthening and involving communities targets in the Local Area Agreement
 - (iv) Developing successful partnership across sectors and organisations to achieve its purpose.
- Activities also contribute to the Council's Equalities and Inclusion Policy and help the council to meet its Duty to Involve responsibilities. Below are some case studies as examples of impact (see Appendix 1 for further information on impact).

3.2.1 'Influencing' activities include electing representatives onto the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), each of the family of partnerships and other council forums. There are around 30 groups (for example the Healthy City Partnership, the City Sustainability Partnership and Children and Young People's Trust Board) with 72 reps in post. 11 reps have been trained and inducted during the first 6 months of this year and are now responsible for presenting the views of the sector in discussion, thereby influencing decision-making processes.

3.2.2 The SCP has responsibility for strategic development of community engagement in the city and specifically overseeing the implementation of the Community Engagement Framework (CEF). A Learning and Development Task Group and a 'Get Involved' Steering Group have been established to lead specific large scale actions identified in the CEF.

3.2.3 The new 'Equality Coalition' has been established as a sub-group of the SCP. It is facilitated by the Federation of Disabled People and joins together community and voluntary sector groups seeking to lead, develop and support an active, independent network of organisations that have a focus on human rights, equality and diversity issues. It aims to strengthen understanding of these issues; raise awareness of issues that matter in local communities; work with others to affect change and influence local decision makers and to work collaboratively to seek funding solutions.

3.3 *The Community Development Commissioning programme is managed via the Trust for Developing Communities as lead partner at a cost of £330,000 per year.*

- The Brighton and Hove Community Development Commissioning Strategy defines community development as "...a range of practices dedicated to increasing the strength and effectiveness of community life, improving local

conditions – especially for people in disadvantaged situations – and enabling people to participate in public decision-making and to achieve greater long-term control over their circumstances.” (Source: Community Development Foundation 2003)

- Support is given to 13 neighbourhoods in the city (see Appendix 2). In addition, there is support available to broader and generic city-wide community development activity. Projects focus on developing the confidence, skills and capacity of individuals and communities to enable them to come together to identify concerns, seek solutions and to implement these, either alone or in partnership with service providers or other appropriate organisations and agencies.
- Because the emphasis of this work is on supporting communities to identify and act on their **own** priorities and interests there is a strong sense of ownership and personal pride in the outcomes.

3.3.1 Community development and value for money (see Appendix 3 for more detail):

- The total value of the community development commissioning contract is £330,000. With around 80% of these funds spent directly on Community Development Worker (CDW) time, this is equivalent to around 385 hours of direct worker support per week, 10.5 full time equivalent posts.
- Over the last eighteen months total outputs include working with an average of 47 community groups each month, many of which are new or emerging and support self reliance.
- The partner providers have worked with an average of 200 residents per month, to support and involve them in self help, volunteering and engagement activity. This equates to an approximate cost per resident of £137.50 per annum. Many residents worked with are vulnerable, with complex multiple needs and are supported to access community based self help groups. This can result in less demand for expensive public services.
- All of the partner providers support the delivery of community development work by external fundraising and provision of resources from other sources. The Hangleton and Knoll Project and Trust for Developing Communities deliver separately funded (but connected) work; specifically with young people and older people in local neighbourhoods.
- During the last 18 months partner providers have indicated that the total additional value bought to the commissioned activity (both in-kind and in actual funds) amounts to £643,152.
- During the last eighteen months an average of 200 residents per month have been involved in managing and attending local groups (such as parent/toddler, family outings and newsletters). This is equates to approximately 1800 hours per month (assuming each volunteer gives 2 hours a week as per the national indicator).

3.3.2 Community development and partnership working (see Appendix 4).

- Partnership working is crucial to the success of community development work and many initiatives within neighbourhoods. A huge amount of partnership working takes place with many committed and active partners. This approach ensures that resident's priorities are progressed and action is taken. Issues are resolved quickly and resident's satisfaction with services is increased.
- These case studies aim to illustrate how community development work compliments the work of statutory providers by offering their knowledge and expertise of neighbourhoods and by bringing people together:
 - BHCC Housing Management – Community Participation Officers (CPOs) and Community Development Workers (CDWs) often work in partnership around supporting Tenants Associations, especially where they have not been functioning for many years or where there is a need to recruit residents beyond the 'usual suspects'. Where successful, CDWs and CPOs have agreed different roles to support groups consistent with their roles in the community.
 - BHCC Youth Service - Partnership work with the Play Services Team and the Playbus has been exceptional in one example area of the city. The community development worker (CDW) acted as an advocate for the needs of the community that had been gathered through a general neighbourhood survey and through working within the community over several months. The Play Services Team listened to the issues around children and young people, took them on board and took immediate action.

3.3.3 Community Development Commissioning Monitoring Report (Appendix 5):

- Community development work focuses on achieving the following 5 over-arching outcomes:
 - (a) Representative neighbourhood groups supported towards independence
 - (b) Delivery and development of neighbourhood plans
 - (c) Neighbourhood community representatives feel they have greater skills, confidence and knowledge to address their own needs and the needs of their community
 - (d) Activities, projects and groups that reflect local priorities developed and supported to work towards independence
 - (e) Engage with individuals and communities who are seldom heard within neighbourhoods
- Community development work achieves progress and positive outcomes for neighbourhoods, community groups and individuals. The following case studies aim to illustrate some of these outcomes:
 - A detailed household survey on the Bristol Estate has contacted 75% of households and shown a very diverse population with many residents having multiple needs. The Bristol Estate Community Association (BECA) was promoted and it is hoped that this will bring new people into volunteering and to take decision-making responsibility. This will also help to turn negative criticism into constructive consensual action. The survey

has had a significant impact on the BECA committee by broadening their perspective and understanding about the estate and helped them understand their role as representatives of the views and needs of all residents on the estate. 65% of people surveyed feel they can influence decisions in their locality, compared to 50% in September 2006 and compared to 27.6% for Brighton and Hove.

- In Bevendean, a mini action plan around health has been produced, particularly prioritising the needs of older people not currently engaged in community activity. A survey of older people was completed, which aimed to understand the barriers to engagement. Many different methods were employed which will enable the provision of activities that residents want as well as giving valuable information on planning future services/facilities focused for isolated older people. This has led to attendance of 8 highly isolated older people at the Over 60's group.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 3.4 Members are asked to note the excellent work that has been commissioned under the Strengthening Communities theme. It has had significant impact across a range of council priorities and there is a sound business case for continued support.
- 3.5 The ability for communities and individuals to support themselves through self help, early intervention and voluntary activity presents an excellent business model. In addition, this work can support individuals and communities to think through some of these complexities by facilitating discussions with service providers and Members. Local people are often well placed to identify ways in which local need can be met efficiently and provide excellent customer intelligence.
- 3.6 This report recommends that a review of this activity is now timely to consider future arrangements in relation to both funding and policy approach. This is particularly important given the organisational focus on improving community engagement and cohesion and supporting reductions in inequality. In addition, the 2008 Reducing Inequality Review recommended that we reassess and resolve our approach to targeting both people and place to ensure a better balance and a focus on individuals and areas outside of priority neighbourhoods.

Review of Commissioning for Strengthening Communities

- 3.7 The review will be undertaken between January 2010 and September 2010. The aim will be to produce recommendations for Strengthening Communities commissioning priorities by September 2010, in order that these can be implemented for April 2011.
- 3.8 It will be developed according to the following principles:
 - (a) Undertaken in line with appropriate existing policy, strategy and protocol; for example the Community Engagement Framework and Voluntary Sector Compact. The review will also look at the legislative drivers such as Duty to Involve.

- (b) To include consultation with as many key stakeholders as possible including both city wide and local organisations and groups.
- (c) A review advisory group will be established to include key stakeholders and partners from both the community development commissioning and stronger communities element of the work. This group will advise on process and approach but will not be responsible for decision making which will be retained by the City Council as commissioner.
- (d) The review will work to identify impact on commissioned outcomes as well as other outcomes that may have been generated. Importantly, the review will focus on the impact of the work on individuals, communities and the organisations that support them. As part of a move and emphasis towards outcome based commissioning, the review will focus on the existing monitoring systems and approaches and whether these are fit for purpose.
- (e) The review will look at provider strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities for improvement and change.
- (f) The review will seek input from service users and members of the community benefiting from the work and look at individual outcomes.
- (g) A key component of the review process will be the implementation of an Equalities Impact Assessment to examine the extent to which the work is supporting minority and social exclusion groups within the city.
- (h) The review will examine gaps and potential developments, particularly with regard to the Reducing Inequality Review and its recommendation for stronger links between people and place. It will consider how commissioning should therefore change to design services to meet needs.
- (i) The review will also include an element of resource analysis which will include value for money and additional income generation. It will also identify the risks involved in implementing change and/or retaining the status quo.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Strengthening Communities work is measured by the Place Survey and some neighbourhoods carry out their own local surveys. In Brighton and Hove, the percentage of people who feel that they can influence decision making is 27.6%. In neighbourhoods where there has been community development work the percentage is up to 10% higher.
- 4.2 Feedback from Community Engagement Framework consultation processes demonstrated strong support for approaches to engaging with communities which focus on enabling communities address their own priorities.
- 4.3 Consultation with both Council and partner service providers happens on a regular basis alongside regular resident evaluation within the community development commissioning.
- 4.4 The CVSF undertakes surveys of its membership in relation to the Stronger Communities Partnership and responses have included 75% respondees feeling well informed about local / regional / national policy and strategy affecting the sector.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Since the ending of a grant funding stream in 2009 the Council supports the programme through recurrent funding of £220,000, additionally LPSA2 Reward Grant has been allocated to support the programme in 2009/10 and 2010/11. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley

Date: 22/12/09

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The LAA targets related to the Strengthening Communities theme of the LAA have been developed in accordance with the statutory requirements set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The report complies with the requirement for authorities to keep progress against LAA targets under review.

Lawyer Consulted: Carl Hearsom

Date: 22/12/09

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Not applicable.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Not applicable.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Not applicable.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Not applicable.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 Not applicable.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The report recommends that Members agree to formally review this area of work for the following reasons:

- Current arrangements for funding of community development commissioning will come to an end in April 2011.

- A review would support wider work within the authority on improving community engagement and cohesion and supporting reductions in inequality.
- The Reducing Inequality Review recommended that we review and resolve our approach to targeting both people and place, and therefore our priority neighbourhoods work.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Stronger Communities Partnership and Programme Monitoring Update (Apr to Sept 2009)
2. B&H Neighbourhoods with funded Community Development Support
3. Community Development and Value for Money
4. Community Development and Partnership Working
5. Community Development Commissioning Monitoring Report (Apr to Sept 2009)

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None