
Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
Cabinet Member

4th November, 2015
20th November 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise – Cllr Abbott

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Public Health

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Active Citizens, Strong Communities Strategy: Progress Update and Priorities

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The Active Citizens, Strong Communities Strategy was endorsed at a joint cabinet member meeting on 26 November 2014.

The overall aims of the strategy are: *We want to encourage, enable and empower residents to be active citizens, building strong, involved communities and to be partners in reducing demand and improving services. We will work with local communities and local people to intervene before problems reach a crisis and to find solutions that reflect and build on local people's skills, experience and capability.*

As this is a developmental strategy, it was agreed that an initial progress update should be provided by December 2015, which should include further recommendations for actions to support implementation. This report provides progress updates for agreed actions in the Implementation Plan (see the Appendix).

This report also provides updates on progress made towards making Coventry a *social enterprise city*, which was supported in principle by the cabinet member in November 2014. This aspiration is entirely consistent with the aims of the Active Citizens, Strong Involved Communities Strategy and could provide a real boost to realising the strategic aim. It is intended that actions to achieve that vision will be incorporated into the Implementation Plan.

The main focus of the report is to consider key learning that has emerged from a number of pilot engagement programmes and other opportunities for strengthening implementation. These include: the launch of the Ignite Programme and development of an Early Action Resilience Centre, which will provide a city-wide resource to share learning and champion good practice; the refocusing of the Coventry Partnership which will provide opportunities for networked communities; and, the 'Transforming Communities, With Communities' which has provided a

cross-partner 'team' with skills and knowledge needed to transform the way that organisations and communities work in neighbourhoods.

This learning will inform proposals for future implementation, which will be brought to the cabinet member by December 2015.

Recommendations:

The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board is asked to:

- 1) Consider the recommendations from the report to the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise
- 2) Identify any additional recommendations for future policy direction.

The Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise is asked to:

- (1) Note the progress made towards implementing the Active Citizens, Strong Communities Strategy and the learning from specific initiatives
- (2) Agree to consider a revised implementation plan by December 2015
- (3) Continue the Councils commitment to work in partnership, to encourage and support the growth of social enterprise towards the longer term aim of Coventry being a Social Enterprise City, and, agree to incorporate this into the Implementation Plan

List of Appendices included:

Active citizens; strong and involved communities Implementation Plan Update October 2015

Background Document

None

Other useful document:

Active Citizens, Strong Communities Strategy

<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CId=667&MId=10573>

Community Development Service - impact and priorities – the report will be discussed at: Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) on 4th November, 2015
Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise on 20th November 2015

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

Yes, it will be considered by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) on 4 November 2015

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Active Citizens, Strong Communities Strategy: Progress Update and Priorities

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The Active Citizens, Strong Communities Strategy was endorsed at a joint cabinet member meeting on 26 November 2014. It was agreed to be a developmental strategy and that a progress update against on an initial implementation plan along with further recommendations for implementation should be provided by December 2015.
- 1.2 The overall aims of the strategy are: *We want to encourage, enable and empower residents to be active citizens, building strong, involved communities and to be partners in reducing demand and improving services. We will work with local communities and local people to intervene before problems reach a crisis and to find solutions that reflect and build on local people's skills, experience and capability.*
- 1.3 Subsequently, learning from pilot engagement initiatives, launching of the Ignite programme and developments through the Coventry Partnership, are providing new opportunities to achieve the strategic aims across the city.
- 1.4 As budgetary and service demand pressures on the Council and other public sector organisations continue to increase, it is imperative that partner organisations work cohesively to re-focus and renew relationships with citizens to achieve the confidence and trust necessary to work together to achieve radical transformation of the way that services are delivered.
- 1.5 In November 2014 the Cabinet Member considered the outcomes of a round table event on social enterprise and gave support in principle to working towards Coventry as a social enterprise city. This would require working in partnership and recognising the expertise of the sector to encourage and support the growth of social enterprise.
- 1.6 The aspiration for Coventry to become a Social Enterprise City is entirely consistent with the aims of the Active Citizens, Strong Communities Strategy and could provide a real boost to realising these, for example through ensuring that resources in the city to develop social enterprises are directed towards fledgling community based enterprises. This report therefore brings together progress updates for each so that opportunities to achieve complementarity can be seized.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 Progress and lessons learned

- 2.2 A summary of the progress made against agreed actions is attached as the Appendix.
- 2.3 Key achievements include successful delivery of the Transforming Communities, With Communities Programme, which included skills development through two action learning sets for employees from a range of organisations, including Coventry City Council (libraries, adult social care, Community Development Service), West Midlands Police, Grapevine, Coventry Law Centre, and Willenhall Community Forum. The programme was provided by Mutual Gain and facilitated by the Insight Team. Key achievements include:
 - Participants have developed and practiced skills for empowering engagement techniques – appreciative inquiry, participatory budgeting, focus groups etc.
 - An enthusiastic cross-organisation 'team' committed to supporting the city to develop active citizenship
 - Recruitment and engagement of previously inactive residents in appreciative inquiry to widen participation in development of the Willenhall Community Forum's neighbourhood plan

- Asset mapping with residents, community organisations and ward councillors in Cheylesmore
 - Participatory budgeting to allocate section 106 money (set aside from development of the local Asda store) to a range of local projects in Cheylesmore, which was citizen led, support by local ward councillors and has brought together established community projects with more diverse members of the community
 - A resource pack to use for planning and conducting future events
- 2.4 Success by Coventry Law Centre and Grapevine in attracting funding for the Ignite Programme has resulted in the launch of transformational partnership working in two neighbourhoods to build personal resilience and refocus services towards early help to reduce the need for crisis level interventions for vulnerable residents; one in Bell Green will redesign tenancy support for Whitefriars tenants; and, another in Willenhall will redesign children's services.
- 2.5 A key aspect of the Ignite Programme is an emphasis on sharing learning and promoting good practice across the city. This will be through an Early Action Resilience Centre, which provides an excellent opportunity for partners to share lessons, tools and techniques that emerge from the Ignite Programme and other initiatives to promote active citizenship.
- 2.6 Across the city a range of statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations actively support communities to form new groups, run events, encourage volunteering and access funding etc. These include the Coventry City Council Community Development Service, Public Health Insight Team, Voluntary Action Coventry, Coventry Law Centre, Grapevine, Coventry University, West Midlands Police, University of Warwick, Age UK, Whitefriars, Coventry Cathedral, Coventry and Rugby CCG and others, including through the Coventry Partnership.
- 2.7 A strategic group, has met three times to oversee implementation of the strategy, which included a range of partners from statutory, voluntary and community sectors. As a result it has become apparent that there are a wide range of initiatives already taking place across the city, which are promoting active citizenship and using asset-based approaches.
- 2.8 It also highlighted a top-down management style of implementation of the strategy to be problematic. Realisation of the strategic aim requires changing the culture and practice within organisations as well as re-focussing relationships with communities. Implementation relies on a fundamental letting-go of power by managers and employees within organisations and development of different and more personal relationships with active citizens; employees in organisations need to work alongside, encourage and devolve responsibility to citizens.
- 2.9 It will also require considerable collaboration amongst organisations from all sectors to ensure that scarce resources needed to support and encourage communities are utilised as effectively as possible.
- 2.10 **Social Enterprise Update**
- 2.11 Following the round table event in October 2014 two further meetings took place in 2015 involving representatives from social enterprises, support organisations, universities, housing associations and Council. After the first meeting in January 2015 a small sub group met to consider the benefits and first steps for Coventry to become a social enterprise city. The group made recommendation to the wider group where there was a commitment to make sure that future plans had clear benefits for the city and social enterprise in particular. The aim of future work would be to grow the size and scale of existing social enterprises, create new social enterprises and overall grow the size of the social economy in Coventry.

2.12 Growing social enterprise in the city could have a number of potential benefits that would contribute to the Council Plan priorities and also to the Active Citizens, Strong Communities Strategy. These include:

Economic benefits

- more people employed by social enterprises and more income being generated
- more good quality jobs for local people
- improved retention of money within the local economy by raising the profile of social enterprise and encouraging inter trading between social enterprises
- contributing to the growth of the entrepreneurial culture of the city by identifying new talent and retaining existing talent.
- finding new models for the delivery of public services.

Raising the Profile of Social Enterprise within the city

- Increased understanding of social enterprise amongst mainstream business and the wider public.
- To inspire and involve all parts of the community in entrepreneurial activity

Building Community Capacity

- Enabling communities to grow their capacity to take control of their own futures by the use of social enterprise.
- Finding ways of allowing social enterprises to strengthen our diverse communities

2.13 Early engagement with the wider social enterprise sector is an important next stage. Initial research suggests that there are over 200 social enterprises in the city and these need to be engaged with quickly to get buy in and support. There are two key activities currently being planned by partners:

- A networking event to engage with the wider sector, planned for late 2015 and co-ordinated by a lead from Coventry University.
- Creation of a steering group to oversee the development of the Social Enterprise City programme. Ideally this would be a highly influential group including social enterprises and partners capable of leading change in key areas of activity across the city. Invitations to the steering group would follow from the networking event.

2.14 The Council has also looked at its own procurement procedures to make it as easy as possible for social enterprise to access information and compete for contracts for Council goods and services. It will also take steps to raise manager's awareness to encourage them to consider social enterprise as part of their purchasing decisions.

2.15 Recommended proposal

2.16 It is proposed to bring back a revised Active Citizens, Strong Communities implementation plan for consideration by the cabinet member by December 2015, which is based on the learning from Mutual Gain and the Ignite Programme.

2.17 The plan will include proposals for optimising the use of the Early Action Resilience Centre for sharing learning and promoting good practice and proposals to report progress to the cabinet member.

2.18 It will also build upon developments happening through the Coventry Partnership, which is developing a web-based presence that provides information, opportunities and encouragement for collaboration within communities and with organisations.

2.19 Future work will build upon current engagement activity already taking place across the city, including through Coventry Partnership and organisations listed in paragraph 2.6

2.20 It is proposed that the growth of social enterprise in the City becomes a part of the Active Citizens, Strong Communities strategy. This will maximise opportunities for partnership, networking and engagement.

2.21 An alternative option would be to continue to implement the Active Citizens, Strong Communities strategy in the current fashion. This option is not recommended as it would be less effective than learning from implementation to date.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 An event was held with participants of the Transforming Communities, With Communities Programme along with representatives from Coventry City Council and partner organisations. There was consensus that partners should work together to change the way that community engagement takes place.

3.2 There have been three meetings involving social enterprise and partners to explore views and engage with interested parties to shape the growth of social enterprise. The resulting programme for a social enterprise city will be sector lead with contribution from the Council.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 It is proposed to bring back a revised implementation plan by December 2015 that will enable the City Council, with its partner organisations, to realise the strategic vision.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Legal Services

5.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications resulting from the reports proposals. Implementation of the Strategy is taking place in the context of continued cuts to Government resources for local government and it is anticipated that the Strategy will complement the aim of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy in trying to manage within the reduced level of resources that it faces.

5.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

This report recommends bringing back a revised implementation plan that will strengthen the ability of the Council to work collaboratively with partner organisations and residents to achieve the Council's key objectives, specifically to *Deliver our priorities with fewer resources; Making the most of our assets; Active citizens, strong involved communities.*

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Risks are identified and managed through an implementation plan and through regular reports to the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

There are no impacts at this stage.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

There are no equality impacts at this stage, however a key aspiration of the future approach to building effective collaborative relationships will be to ensure that those groups of people with protected characteristics or who live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are actively encouraged to get involved and equalities will be strongly incorporated in any approach taken. This will be reflected in the revised implementation plan.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

The revised implementation plan will build upon developments happening through the Coventry Partnership and the Ignite Programme and will be developed with partner organisations. This will further strengthen partnership working in the city.

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This report is published on the council's website:

www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings

Appendix: Active Citizens; Strong and Involved Communities Implementation Plan Update October 2015

Key Pillar	Action	Lead(s)	Milestones	Update
1. Building Capacity	Develop a voluntary sector-led Centre of Excellence	Law Centre Grapevine	Programme Launch Oct 2015	The Ignite Programme was launched on 1.10.15 and will include setting up and Early Action Resilience Centre, which will share lessons, techniques and encourage good practice across the city.
	(New) Develop a citywide database of community groups and resources to make it easy for people to identify community assets Produce an electronic city-wide map of assets for use in planning service changes and community engagement (new)	Coventry City Council (CCC) – Community Development Service CCC - Insight Team / CDS	Published March 2015	Community Activities Directory has been published on the Council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/cad and is well used. An electronic map has been developed, to visualise activities taking place at locality level and will be useful for community engagement events and strategic impact assessments.
2. Co-Designing and Co-Delivering Local Services	Introduce and test co-production through People Directorate (supported through the Transforming Communities With Communities Action Learning Sets and the Community Development Service)	CCC - Insight Team		Action learning sets focussed upon allocation of section 106 money and neighbourhood planning, not People Directorate services. An update on the Transforming Communities With Communities Programme is given below in the section <i>Supporting Staff to Work Differently</i>
	Support and test co-production in a) Parks	CCC – Parks		An action plan is to be produced, Community Development Team is assisting Graham Hood in producing a Gold/Silver/Bronze service level agreement by early Nov and then further discussions with the 'Friends of Spencer Park' will be arranged.
	b) Preventative support for older people (integrated neighbourhood team)	Coventry and Rugby CCG		The service is currently being commissioned and due to be live by December 2015. The service

Key Pillar	Action	Lead(s)	Milestones	Update
				specification was developed in partnership with voluntary and community sector organisations
	c) Age-Friendly City	CCC- Public Health/ Coventry University/ Age UK		The age friendly programme began formally in October 2014. A variety of activities and events have been conducted in order to achieve the WHO outputs for year 1 including the establishment of a governance board, a scoping study across existing Age Friendly Cities in the UK, identifying organisations who will be key to implementing plans, raising awareness, working closely with Coventry Older Voices and a baseline assessment Three partnership themed working groups have been established for the selected priority areas, with involvement of older people to develop detailed themed action plans to make improvements in the areas raised and to oversee their implementation and evaluation.
	d) (New) Places of Welcome	Whitefriars	Develop 20 Places of Welcome by Dec 15 Launch January 2016 Case study/film to be produced to highlight lessons that can be applied to other service areas	New initiative building upon Birmingham initiative. It aims to connect socially isolated people, sharing local information via a network of small community organisations, including faith communities, who offer an unconditional welcome to local people for at least a few hours a week.
3. Supporting Staff to Work	Deliver the Transforming Communities With Communities	Insight, CCC	Training completed and action learning	The programme has been delivered, including training in these techniques:

Key Pillar	Action	Lead(s)	Milestones	Update
Differently	<p>Programme</p> <p>Cheylesmore Participatory Budgeting Event</p> <p>Willenhall Appreciative Inquiry Event</p>	Insight Team/CDS/Mutual Gain	<p>sets initiated by Sep 15</p> <p>3 training and development sessions and the event July 18th</p> <p>Appreciative Inquiry Event June 13th</p> <p>Download learning and agree next steps Sept 2015</p>	<p>appreciative inquiry, focus groups, social media engagement, service co-design and co-production.</p> <p>Two action learning sets were delivered across two neighbourhoods. In Cheylesmore an asset mapping event was held to involve residents in identifying the strengths and resources in the community and to explore aspirations. A community planning group, including all three ward councillors, was recruited and it developed and organised a participatory budgeting process, which culminated in a 'voting day' to allocate section 106 money to community bids for funding. In Willenhall focus groups were held to understand why some demographic groups are much less likely to participate in neighbourhood planning activities. A subsequent appreciative inquiry event engaged local residents who had not previously been involved in developing a neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>A download day was held to share learning and ideas about how to roll out good practice across the city with key stakeholders</p> <p>This action will be supported by the Early Action Resilience Centre, who will run events to promote asset based working and earlier intervention, and will encourage sharing</p>

Key Pillar	Action	Lead(s)	Milestones	Update
	Identify and promote local champions within key services/ agencies to lead on nurturing and promoting asset based working within their organisation - drawing on the programme above	Law Centre Grapevine	Champions identified by January 2015	of learning
	Develop proposals for training and workforce development that shares skills across the public and voluntary sector	CCC – Workforce Development & VAC	Training & development proposals agreed by March 15	The Workforce Services Team have just launched their new corporate Learning & Development offer. Plans to work with other organisations in the City are underway. Voluntary Action Coventry have offered to provide a work placement for a participant on the Aspiring Leaders programme.
	Work with the voluntary sector to identify what 'good' looks like	CCC- Insight / VAC	Voluntary sector led workshops to be complete by March 2015	Voluntary Action Coventry Innovation Awards 2015 resulted in 9 award winners: <i>Building resilience in individuals without creating dependence</i> winners: Grapevine / Law Centre; Kairos WWT, Valley House, Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre. <i>Helping people to access the right preventative services before an issue becomes a crisis</i> winners: Coventry CAB; Coffee Tots; Crossroads; FWT <i>Demonstrating a new business model</i> winner: Positive Youth Foundation
4. Working with local statutory and voluntary	Lead and support development of an Early Action Funding bid	Coventry Law Centre, Grapevine, Insight CCC, Whitefriars,	Bid submitted by Nov 15	The bid was successful and implementation has begun, including recruitment and appointment of a

Key Pillar	Action	Lead(s)	Milestones	Update
sector partners to access external funding		CCG	Funders decision by Mar 15	Programme Manager and Ignite workers. A launch conference was held on 1 October and work has started work with children's services and Whitefriars to begin to plan the start of the work.
	Our Place Application – Diabetes demonstration site (New)	Coventry Cathedral	Bid submitted May 15	Bid was successful. This project will extend the engagement and innovation approach used in the successful Ripple Project and provides a platform to help redesign (co-produce) services for individuals with Type 2 diabetes.
5. Learning and Review	Gather in learning from the initiatives above and review priorities for future implementation of the strategy	Insight, CCC	Develop and agree research support to evaluate this programme Report progress and recommendations for future priority actions to cabinet members by Dec 15	Recommendation is to share learning and develop evaluation techniques through the Early Action Resilience Centre (EARC) Learning will be regularly disseminated via the EARC and the intention is to stimulate change by building support in the form of a social movement. a report back will be made in December 2016 It is proposed to bring back recommendations by December 2015 This report sets out progress made and it is proposed to provide a further report setting out priority actions for the future by Dec 15