

5 January 2016

Agenda Item: 7

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF PLACE

UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR TEAM

Purpose of the Report

1. To update members of the Community Safety Committee on the work of the Community and Voluntary Sector Team.

Information and Advice

2. The priorities of the team have been identified as working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector:
 - to improve preventative and core services that help strengthen the local community;
 - to streamline the corporate grant aid process and
 - to promote localism by working with communities to increase community involvement in the way services are shaped and delivered.
3. A key strategic priority for the Council is to ensure that Nottinghamshire has strong communities that are safe and thriving. The reality of the challenges faced means that the Council of the future will be different in the way it is shaped, organised and how services are delivered. The Council is committed to working in partnership with local communities, voluntary groups and volunteers to provide services.
4. Work being undertaken by the team seeks to support ways to develop and strengthen engagement with communities, moving towards a changed landscape of local services with new and innovative models being implemented. The contribution made to improving public services and well-being in Nottinghamshire by communities and the voluntary sector is recognised and supported through both an extensive grant aid programme and direct hands-on support from Community Officers.
5. Over recent years economic circumstances have drastically changed how organisations are funded with the result that only well organised third sector groups can thrive and provide a valuable contribution to the local community. Only by being robustly established and equipped to respond to new challenges can the wealth of voluntary sector organisations across the County maximise the positive impact that they have on local communities.

Working with Communities

6. The work of the Community and Voluntary Sector Team underpins the Council's commitment to building on its reputation of working in partnership with the community and voluntary sector to help build local capacity. The range and scope of activities which members and officers are involved in seek to help to drive programmes with communities to deliver local solutions and move towards providing services in a different way.
7. The Council has several important roles to play in supporting communities to:
 - Build a strong sense of community, capacity and pride through collaborative partnerships.
 - Engage in the planning and delivery of services.
 - Generate and sustain their own capacity to respond to the challenges which Nottinghamshire faces.
8. Building confident and stronger communities is especially important within the current climate and the Team has been working with different communities across Nottinghamshire to help support local activities. These activities bring individuals together to celebrate the uniqueness of localities by helping to encourage and empower communities to take ownership and pride in the places they live and the people they live with. Examples of this include:
 - Supporting a local Boxing Club in the Harworth and Bircotes area in order to progress the establishment of "fit for purpose" facility providing sporting opportunities for local young people. The project has received £5,000 in funding through NCC's Corporate Grant Aid Programme Innovation Fund to enable the refurbishment of a building which will provide a base equipped with up to date facilities including a disabled work station which will promote health and well-being alongside encouraging community safety. This one off seed corn funding is providing a base for supporting with applications to Lottery and Coalfield Regeneration Trust.
 - Councillors Liz Plant and Alice Grice joined 109 British Iranians and their guests at the Grange in Radcliffe on Trent on Sunday 18 October. Funded by the community cohesion fund and private donations the event was designed to bring together the Iranian community in Nottinghamshire to celebrate the Persian festival of Mehregan. This volunteer led event included a slideshow of home photos detailing Iranian life and society, an exhibition of Persian artefacts, food, music, poetry and traditional stories. The Office for National Statistics estimated that, in 2011, 83,000 Iranian-born people were living in the UK. As a region the East Midlands has the eighth highest population in the UK with an estimated 2,000 to 4,000 living in Nottinghamshire. The Mehregan Thanksgiving festival; the autumn festival of harvest was specifically chosen as a calendar date to bring the known community in Nottinghamshire together, to gather information on how best to support Iranian community, by the Iranian community, the organisation is called NIMA.
 - Veterans Information Network Nottinghamshire, [VINN] held a civilian Life seminar 12 November hosted by NCC. Returning to civilian life after leaving the armed forces can prove a struggle for many veterans. Charities in Nottinghamshire have come together to form a partnership to help those in need. The Veterans Information Network Nottinghamshire, VINN is a collective of local and national charities working together to support the welfare and wellbeing of the Armed Forces and the Veteran community in

Nottinghamshire, which consists of all people who are or have been regulars, reservists or cadets and their immediate families. The event was opened by the Leader of the County Council Alan Rhodes. A first for Nottinghamshire the programme included presentations from the Royal British Legion, 7th Infantry Brigade, Combat Stress, Remploy, NCC Children, Families and Cultural Service, Age UK, Soldiers Sailors & Families Association. Also included was a video of the work being carried out at Stanford Hall, near East Leake, to create the Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre to be opened in 2018. In addition to those presenting, they were joined in an exhibition by; Army Benevolent Fund, HMS Sherwood, Army Families Federation, Remploy, Royal Air Forces Association, Forces in the Community, Defence and Military Welfare Service, RAF Families Federation, East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadet Association, and the Naval Families Federation.

- 110 delegates attended the event with political representation from every Borough and District, officers from the City, Police, Fire Service, housing providers, CCG's, business and Community and Voluntary Sector. The VINN core group with Cllr Ian Campbell, Armed Forces Champion, in attendance met on 1 December at Portland College to discuss feedback and next steps. Cllr Ian Campbell advised that he had contacted all local councils to encourage them to appoint an Armed Forces lead and was hoping to organise a first group meeting of all of them in March 2016.
 - As a follow up a work programme has been agreed which includes web site development. As part of NCC's commitment to the 'community covenant' NCC will dedicate space on its public website, to highlight the work and support available to the Armed Forces Community. An armed forces champion workshop to be held in June, to look at the range of services on offer, sharing best practice, identifying what's happening in communities, sharing information about sources of funding and encouraging the Champions to be pro-active in their boroughs and districts
9. Through the Community & Voluntary Sector Team, the Council is working with the voluntary and community sector to engage them in the planning and delivery of services by helping to build capacity and confidence to drive improvements in quality of life, influence decisions which affect them and consider their role in the delivery of services. This includes:
- Supporting the development of the Manton community garden initiative, the team has recently developed new publicity with the aim of promoting the project and attracting volunteers. This to be integrated with the Centre for Sport and Learning community engagement initiatives. Work underway to enlist community workforce to construct new facilities to improve the site and prepare the area for activities in the spring of 2016.
 - The team are supporting a new initiative to combat social and rural isolation in Bassetlaw. The aim is to improve access to social networks and signpost to services locally thereby hoping to improve the health and wellbeing of the community. Links made with service providers including BCVS, Bassetlaw Action Centre, Police Service, Fire Service, MIND and local groups. Initial meeting took place on Wednesday 2 December 2015 and will continue to develop in 2016.
 - Capacity building in communities to support empowerment and resilience which equips communities and people with the skills and knowledge to help them contribute to their changing communities, for example, maximising the findings of the State of Voluntary Sector Report to engage with all voluntary and community stakeholders to focus on future collaborative working. Work is now underway, as part of the Council's Community Empowerment and Resilience Programme to agree the challenges faced and

developing a shared vision which addresses issues of sustainability, leveraging capacity and building confidence.

10. As part of NCC's duty to promote community cohesion across Nottinghamshire, the team is supporting communities by working in partnership with the Voluntary Sector and other stakeholders to facilitate and enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration, which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another to promote equal participation in wider society.
11. Through the delivery of all its services the Council's role in fostering integration is an important element of a cohesive community which is a priority. To help support this priority, funding has been allocated from the Community Safety initiatives budget to support activities across Nottinghamshire. The Community & Voluntary Sector Team have worked with communities to develop projects and activities which encourage residents to take a positive stance towards ensuring that integration occurs within their own communities.
12. The activities and projects being supported promote integrated and cohesive communities to enable people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, to know and understand their rights and responsibilities alongside trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly. Activities and projects have aimed to promote: A shared future vision and sense of belonging; a focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity and the promotion of strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds. These activities and projects are detailed in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Other Options Considered

13. The report sets out how the Council priorities are being addressed.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

14. To inform Members of Community Safety Committee of work undertaken to support the community and voluntary sector in Nottinghamshire

Statutory and Policy Implications

15. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

16. To note the work undertaken by the Community and Voluntary Sector Team

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Constitutional Comments (EP 21/12/2015)

This report is for noting only

Financial Comments (CSB 22/12/2015)

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 'None'

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All

Appendix 1 – Community Cohesion Projects

Activity / Project	Funding	Area Covered
SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND NETWORKS [SKN] Community Interest Company: – Caribbean group: Life in a suitcase, when Caribbean's arrived on the shores of Great Britain all they has with them was all they could carry in a suitcase. SKN propose to take packed suitcases full of genuine artefacts to schools / community venues, set up a display and deliver talks and presentations about life for Caribbean's from 1950s to present day.	£1,050	Countywide
Rushcliffe Together: Community conference, to be held at Rushcliffe Civic Centre on 27 th January 2016, half day conference – start 10am. Main theme is Gypsy and Travellers, advice and information. Presentations and workshops delivered and overseen by NCC & Rushcliffe Advice Network.	£750	Rushcliffe
SHARED VALUES: Initiative promoting social cohesion in Worksop, Bassetlaw. In partnership with the Voluntary Sector, the team is supporting community events – SHARED VALUES – designed to enable people of different backgrounds to get on well together. Bringing together English and East Europeans in December 2015 there will be opportunities for shared experiences incorporating cultural exchange, basic language examples and food from different countries. The initiative will also support language classes engaging volunteers to assist with English / Polish language. Complimented by a follow up event in Spring 2016 these activities will strengthen community relations, underline positive actions and promote social cohesion.	£1,000	Bassetlaw

Appendix 1 – Community Cohesion Projects

Activity / Project	Funding	Area Covered
Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum: An orientation programme for refugee and asylum seeking young people ages 13-19 who are newly arrived in Nottinghamshire. Provision of a tailor made 6 week course for newly arrived young people from asylum seeking and refugee communities. Sessions will include: Information on life in the UK (geography, money, customs, law, staying safe). Local information and orientation to Nottinghamshire, enabling access to youth specific services and places of interest (e.g. leisure centres, youth centres, libraries and applying for a library card, Weekly ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) lessons on a range of themes / topics. Information / workshops on a variety of life skills.	£4,000	Countywide
N&S Partnership Plus areas : Initiative to engage with local East European community concentrating on positive actions in order to address social integration, language issues, anti-social behaviour and provision of services. A mapping exercise underway to determine population concentration, current provision and engagement opportunities. In addition work is planned to engage local employers, recruitment agencies, churches and schools.	£1,000	Newark & Sherwood