

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

20 MARCH 2013

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION ANNUAL UPDATE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks to update members as annual update on the Community & Voluntary Organisations supported by Melton Borough Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.2 **Members note and comment on the Annual Update on the Community & Voluntary Organisations supported by Melton Borough Council.**

- 2.2 **Members note and approve the on-going work to develop the Credit Union service in Melton.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Melton Borough Council has for many years supported Community & Voluntary organisations that provide support and services aligned to the Council's priorities. Through Service Level Agreements their contribution and benefit to the community has been regularly evaluated. This report seeks to update members on those services.

In February 2011, members of the then Overview & Scrutiny Committee undertook a comprehensive review of all voluntary & Community Organisations supported by Melton Borough Council and the outcome and recommendations forms the current funding provided to those Organisations identified below:

3.2 Key Organisations Update

Voluntary Action Leicestershire/Voluntary Action Melton (Total Funding £15,440)

Voluntary Action Leicestershire, VAL have been successful in securing the VCS contract for Leicestershire, they have had a reduction in funding which means that they have had to rethink how they provide services to the voluntary and community sector and some of that will be where staff are based or whether a more universal service is on offer.

The core offer of VAL will still be:

- **Support to groups** (funding and advice)
- **Volunteering** (individuals and organisations)
- **Policy** (briefings and sector engagement)

VAL's County priorities are to be thematic based and on the following topics:

- Communities in Charge
- Older people - Ageing population

- Supporting Leicestershire Families
- Vulnerability and Mental Health
- Healthier population
- Economy/Worklessness

Over the past 6 months, Voluntary Action Melton (VAM) has employed a Community Engagement and Representative Officer who has been supporting the local VCS groups in accessing information, making them aware of current policies, changes and news they could impact on their projects or service, being a go between the Melton Borough Council and the VCS community.

The Community LinX Forums have been well attended and working with MBC they have been themed to current issues MBC are addressing: Ageing Well and Worklessness. The latest one will be around funding which is still an issue for community and voluntary groups, as funding is getting tighter and the need for evidence, support and engagement with the service users is becoming more important therefore the VCS group can be missing skill and opportunities so there is the need to encourage

Due to the outcome of the recent procurement exercise, VAM will no longer be able to represent VCS groups, VAL will be taking this over and the Community LinX forums will still continue to be run by VAL 4 times a year. VAM will need to develop a more strategic sustainable offer to remain viable and officers are working with VAL in order to explore this potential. A further report will be presented to members in June should VAM be able to develop a sustainable offer.

3.3 Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)/Clockwise Credit Union (Total Funding £52,500)

Members of the Community & Social Affairs Committee have received regular reports on this service and how it has developed since the closure of Melton CAB in September 2011.

During the last 12 months the CAB have seen over 1300 people at Parkside and helped resolve over 1500 queries. This number is continuing to grow month on month.

Regular meetings have taken place between the Council & the CAB Chief Executive regarding the future approach & provision of the Melton service. A Service Level Agreement is currently being written that continues to ensure the CAB provide the currently agreed services, plus those as defined in accordance with the UCP, Economic Development, Welfare Reform activities.

From the 1st April 2013 the service will increase to 30 hours per week of advice from the following locations

- Parkside - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday
- Melton Library - all day Tuesday
- Children's Centre - PM Mondays & Thursdays
- Long Clawson Surgery - PM Wednesdays

In addition to the general advice service above, customers will have access to the CAB Customer Contact Centre, free Legal Advice, the Macmillan Cancer Advice service, specialist Money Advice Advisors & fuel poverty specialists all based at Parkside.

As part of the full integration into Parkside we have been piloting a series of CAB sessions from the 2nd floor within the People team and will continue the integration arrangements of their team into MBC and with other partners promoting the clear links with the Job Centre Plus coming in and use of Children's Centres to meet their client base.

3.4 Clockwise Credit Union

The Melton branch was initially set up with funding from the Department for Work and Pension and Melton Borough Council in 2008 as a pilot to demonstrate the value of access to credit union facilities in rural communities. DWP also provided 2 years revenue funding for the branch. This came to an end towards the end of 2010. At that time Clockwise took the decision to continue to fund the branch, but did not wish to take the risk of being tied into the lease for nine years so the branch was moved to its current location on Leicester Street (funded by members' money). The lease comes to an end in March 2013.

Since its opening in 2008, the branch has been a huge success in terms of financial inclusion with over 800 Melton residents, previously seen as financially excluded using their services, which include savings and affordable Loan products, However the branch, which is judged on its loan book performance, has struggled to grow during the economic downturn and a decision was recently made to close the branch when the existing lease ends on the 31st March 2013.

Clockwise is currently looking for alternative accommodation and have a number of options. The Council is continuing to work closely with Clockwise to ensure they have a valuable presence in Melton and is in discussions regarding the possible funding for a part time dedicated development post to develop and deliver the appropriate financial services to provide customers with the help and advice needed with the introduction of the Welfare Reform changes and forthcoming Universal Credit.

Officers are currently working with the organisation with a view of retaining this valuable service in Melton.

3.5 Home-Start Melton & Rutland (Total Funding £ 3,220)

This organisation runs a Family Support Group in Melton as part of their work promoting social, personal and economic well-being for families with young children. The group meets once a week and families attending live in the Borough and are struggling with a range of issues including poor mental health, isolation, child behaviour issues, parental ill-health, low self esteem and low educational attainment. Families attending are encouraged and supported to develop stronger support networks, signposted to educational or support opportunities and helped to improve self esteem.

During last year they supported 58 families' through Family Support Group in Melton and a further 17 through volunteer support in the Borough. Each week there are structured activities for children helping develop literacy and numeracy skills, as well as readiness for school.

Home-Start offers support, friendship and practical help to families in Melton with at least one child aged under 5, where families are experiencing stress or difficulty.

3.6 Melton & District Furniture Project (Total Funding £7,420)

The main objectives of this organisation are to relieve, either generally or individually who are in need, due to hardship or distress arising there from by:

- The provision of furniture and other household accessories, including electrical appliances and whilst reducing landfill.
- To relieve the needs, hardship or distress of such persons in need by providing furniture, household goods and bric-a-brac. A referral scheme, which is linked into social services providers, ensuring help is available for the most needy.
- The relief of unemployment by the provision of work experience, training, support, guidance and help back into work.
- To provide a supportive, educational environment for special needs mental health and other groups.

Last year the organisation created 24 volunteer and placement opportunities, which calculated into over 9,500 hours. Based on a basic pay rate of £6.08 generated £58k of volunteer time.

In regards to goods the organisation collected 3,758 items of furniture in Melton & Rutland of which 1,875 were delivered and 1,260 was taken by clients directly from the Organisation.

In Melton alone the Organisation calculate that the total tonnes reused were 99.868.

3.7 Shopmobility Melton Mowbray (Total Funding £1,420)

Shopmobility's objectives continue to support the independence of vulnerable people who have impaired mobility living within Melton or visiting the Town.

The scheme provides the loan of wheelchairs and motorised scooters to enable those who require access to shops, business and places of interest in Melton Mowbray town centre.

Many of their users live within Melton's priority neighbourhoods and simply cannot afford the cost of their own scooter.

Last year the organisation had approx 90 member's join or renewal membership with over 850 loans in total.

Their latest report suggests 44% of their users are from Melton, with 27% from Leicestershire and 29% from other UK areas.

A typical case study is related to one member who is able to catch the bus into Melton and is met by a volunteer; the lady suffers from a degenerative liver and has recently suffered a stroke. Without the accessibility to the scheme the lady would have to rely on care services or look to sheltered accommodation to take care of her needs.

3.8 Age UK (Total Funding £7,060)

Formerly Age Concern the organisations runs a range of activities at the Gloucester House facility.

Gloucester House is a community centred building in the centre of Melton Mowbray, offering a range of services, predominately for the over 50's but across the whole of the age spectrum. It provides facilities and support services for people with special life challenges and gives an opportunity for social interaction and fulfilment. These include:

Four different Day Care Groups are offered from Monday to Friday and each caters for people with specific needs. This varies from high dependency care to people requiring social contact and stimulation. Transport to and from the centre is arranged where necessary and meals are provided.

Other activities include:

- Tai Chi
- Dance Fitness
- Flower Club
- Coffee Shop
- Mature Movers Fitness
- Yoga
- Sequence dancing

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The services delivered by the organisations above relate to a number of priorities identified in the Council's Corporate Plan:

1. Improving the well-being of vulnerable people
2. Encourage people to take an active role in their communities
3. Improve quality of life for people living in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The total budget for Grants to Community & Voluntary Organisations for 2013/14 is £87,780. Officers will continue to ensure these resources deliver services aligned to the council's priorities and demonstrate value for money.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 There are no direct legal implications related to the recommendations in this report.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

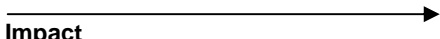
7.1 No direct implications have been identified, however, members are asked to note that many of the services provided by the organisations are directly to vulnerable individuals and families which support safer communities.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 No Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for this report; any reduction in the funding provided to the organisations that may negatively impact on them is subject to an EIA as part of a report to members.

9.0 RISKS

Probability					Risk No.	Description
Very High A						
High B					2	
Significant C						
Low D						
Very Low E			1			
Almost Impossible F						
	IV Negligible	III Marginal	II Critical	I Catastrophic		



Impact

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 No implications have been identified.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Although there has been no specific consultation in the drafting of this report, there is on-going community involvement to ensure services remain effective and in cases the Council develops joint projects for the benefit of the community i.e. Furniture Project, VAL/VAM, CAB, Credit Union.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All wards are affected

Contact Officer: H Rai - Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods

Date: 1 March 2013

Appendices: None

Background Papers: Annual Reports

Reference: X: C'tees, Council & Sub-C'tees/CSA/2012-13/20-03-13/Community & Voluntary Organisation Annual Update