

# AGENDA ITEM 11

## COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

16<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015

### REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

#### COMMUNITY & VOLUNTEER INITIATIVES UPDATE

##### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update members on the latest community and volunteer sector initiatives that have recently take place in the Borough and to summarise potential plans for the future of the sector.

##### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **That Members of this Committee note and approve the report.**
- 2.2 **That Members approve the development of a “Road to Resilience Strategy” as an outcome of recent community initiatives.**
- 2.3 **That Members approve events of similar nature over the next year.**

##### **3.0 KEY ISSUES / BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Increasing austerity and cuts to funding are a threat to many local services. As a result, the Community Voluntary Sector (CVS) are increasingly taking on and running these services. Yet this sector is also facing many challenges. Local authorities must gain an in depth understanding of the local CVS that work to support and help the community and its people to flourish, in order to create lasting sustainable and resilient communities.
- 3.2 In the face of austerity, being resilient and sustainable is vital, as it helps communities and the CVS to deal with and adapt to any barriers they may encounter. By improving community understanding and reducing any confusion, we will hopefully inspire communities to become more resilient and sustainable.
- 3.3 Officers in the Corporate Policy Team have, over the last 11 months, been working to develop a deeper understanding of the CVS in the Borough of Melton through various initiatives and to strengthen the Council’s relationship with this sector.
- 3.4 This includes a Resilience in Your Community Conference (22/01/15), attended by many key community group leaders, with the aim of better understanding the difficulties faced by the CVS, how this sector can promote community resilience and what the CVS would want MBC to do to support this sector. From group discussions it was evident that there are committed individuals and groups in the community who make a substantial contribution to the CVS. In terms of the difficulties faced by

groups lack of time, pressures on resources and recruiting volunteers were key issues raised.

3.5 A Local Community Group Capacity, Capability and Needs Study was also conducted late 2014/early 2015, which allowed MBC to make an assessment of and evaluate the capacity, capability and needs of the CVS in the Borough. This led to numerous conclusions:

- Taking a proactive approach with regards to addressing CVS needs by offering appropriate help, advice and support so that MBC can service these needs, where possible;
- MBC consulting with Big Lottery to highlight and address the deficiencies in the capacity and capability of groups with regards to writing external funding bids and acquiring funding;
- MBC building upon the success of the Community Resilience conference in order to increase CVS awareness of what help, support and advice MBC can offer;
- MBC working with partners, such as Voluntary Action Leicestershire, to provide the necessary tools to enable the local CVS to develop more sustainably, whilst also promoting community resilience;
- MBC continuing to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of the CVS within the Borough and to continue to assist the CVS by helping to address and overcome any barriers they face;
- MBC encouraging communities and individuals to harness local resources and expertise to help themselves to grow and flourish for the future;

3.6 A Community Volunteer Fair was held Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August, as part of the annual Melton-by-the-Sea summer event in the town centre. The idea for such an event resulted from suggestions of those that attended the Resilience in your Community conference in January.

3.7 A variety of community voluntary groups from the Borough showcased at the event, each having their own market stall to engage with the public and champion the work they do in the local community. Sponsorships were obtained to support the event from Melton Mowbray Building Society and The Co-operative. In total, 16 community groups displayed throughout the day and the event was well attended, with footfall bolstered by the main Melton-by-the-Sea event taking place simultaneously.

3.8 Feedback from the event was mostly positive, with some groups requesting a similar event to take place next summer. A representative from Pablo's Horse Sanctuary stated: *"It was a great opportunity to raise the profile of the charity and to network with the other organisations there. And to learn more about what is on offer in the Melton area. We were also able to share with the public what we are currently doing at the sanctuary and to raise much needed funds for the charity."*

3.9 The benefits of hosting such an event include:

- Providing opportunities for local community groups to network and establish improved working relationships, whilst promoting social cohesion;
  - Championing and celebrating the work of local volunteers and groups that often contribute hours of unpaid work to the local economy;
  - Providing opportunities for local community groups to recruit volunteers and promote their cause;
  - Improving MBC's relationship with the local community and voluntary sector
- 3.10 Building upon the initiatives that have taken place over the last 11 months and taking into consideration the outcomes raised in point 3.5, it is proposed that a more formal strategy be developed to draw together findings and set out clear actions and outcomes for the future. It has been suggested this strategy be named "The Road to Resilience Strategy", which will clearly set out MBC's ambitions regarding increasing community resilience and strengthening the CVS across the Borough of Melton.

#### **4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are clear links to priorities within the Corporate Priorities 2015-2020:

**Place:**

- (a) Helping to provide homes and environments that meet local needs.
- (b) Creating a well-connected Borough.

**People:**

- (a) Encouraging strong, healthy and resilient communities.
- (b) Supporting the most vulnerable to overcome disadvantage in order to live independent lives.
- (c) Tackling the root causes of offending to create safer communities.

**Agile Council:**

- (c) To effectively manage demand delivering well-respected value for money customer focused services with pride and efficiency.

**Goal:**

- (d) Sustainable Borough

4.2 There are also clear links to the Sustainable Community Strategy under the following objective:

- Increase the local community's resilience to empower them to address future challenges

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report.

5.2 Any associated costs with event operations were met from existing budgets e.g. marketing materials.

5.3 Sponsorship monies obtained from the Melton Mowbray Building Society and the Co-operative.

## **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

6.1 No direct legal implications have been identified.

## **7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

7.1 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

## **8.0 EQUALITIES**

8.1 No equality impact assessment implications at this stage.

## **9.0 RISKS**

9.1 There are no direct risks identified.

9.2 Appropriate risk assessments carried out for events, as appropriate

## **10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

## **11.0 CONSULTATION**

11.1 Various local community groups, clubs, charities etc. have been consulted prior to, during and after events in which they have been involved and regarding initiatives which may directly/indirectly affect them. Feedback has been welcomed and considered during development of events and projects to encourage communities to take a more active role in their communities.

## **12.0 WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All wards are affected.

Contact Officer: Amy Scoins, Community Policy Officer

Hannah Buck, Project Funding Officer

Appendices: A: Collated Feedback

B: Pictures from the event

Date: 28/08/15