

## **TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**Health & Wellbeing Board – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**TITLE Partnerships Covid-19 Community Support Response**

**REPORT OF Louise Mills Service Delivery Manager Health Improvement**

### **PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

#### **1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

The Council with partners rapidly recognised that there were individuals and households that may need help beyond the support offered by Government during lock down. Specifically those without family, neighbours or other social networks and who needed help with purchasing or accessing food, accessing medicines and also importantly social contact to address loneliness, anxiety and or other wellbeing issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

During March 2020 at the start of the first lockdown the council with partners launched a dedicated Community Support Line through which to coordinate this support. Strong communities are vitally important, the current pandemic has shown how important the community sector and individuals are in responding to the needs of local people and just how much they can achieve.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

To note the action and approach taken to provide timely and effective community support to our most vulnerable residents during the pandemic.

Partnerships and strategic plans with the primary aim of strengthening communities and improving health and wellbeing should continue to build on this work, ensuring we are well placed to respond should we need to in the future.

#### **3. IMPACT OF ACTION**

Through its targeted community support approach the council with partners has been able to provide direct support to 1 in 5 households during lockdown – specifically those residents who are vulnerable and without family, neighbours or other social networks to offer support during this difficult time.

Following our recent Residents Survey, 74% of respondents said that the support the Council and partners had provided to residents during this pandemic was helpful.

#### 4. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Vulnerable residents - Specifically those without family, neighbours or other social networks and who needed help with purchasing or accessing food, accessing medicines and also importantly social contact to address loneliness, anxiety and or other wellbeing issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	April 2021	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	No	The Council has supported this work using existing Council budgets and the additional Covid grants allocated to Local Authorities by the Government . Should further lockdowns be imposed requiring additional provision of resources to support the community, appropriate budgets or grants would need to be identified at that time. MSB 16.03.21
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	No	In response to the Covid-19 pandemic ,the Council formulated and implemented initiatives with its partner agencies in accordance with the Council's statutory duties ,powers and responsibilities, as such are amended and updated from time to time.  This will continue , as appropriate, and there are no further specific legal implications arising from this report  KF 18.03.2021

<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes/No	<i>If yes, briefly list any other significant impacts, risks &amp; opportunities- see separate guidance note for areas to consider</i>
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	Borough-wide impact

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **INFORMATION**

The Council with partners rapidly recognised that there were individuals and households that may need help beyond the support offered by Government during lock down:

- A recognition that the national food delivery service was taking time to get up and running and that the quality and reliability of this service was inconsistent
- That households that required prescription medicines were not receiving the support that they required.
- That some residents that were asked to shield may not have the networks they required to access Government support.
- That other vulnerable residents, whilst not on the shielding list may find lock-down equally difficult and were voluntarily choosing to self-isolate – older residents, those living on their own, those on low incomes, those in receipt of social care support
- Those having to isolate due to showing symptoms or having been in contact with somebody that had tested positive for Covid-19.

From the outset there was a clear commitment across the council and partners to use resources to provide support – for example a workforce that could be redeployed to new roles. We had willing partners and an established network of volunteers to work with and draw support from. The Council is a recognised voice in the community with the effective means to communicate and reach vulnerable residents.

During March 2020 at the start of the first lockdown the council with partners launched a dedicated Community Support Line that was open 7 days a week to all our residents. The council wrote to 78,000 households advising them of the support that was available and how to access it. A dedicated project team worked quickly to set up provisions across the borough, drawing on the skills and expertise of council staff, working with Town and Parish Councils, local community groups and volunteers, as well as local supermarkets and pharmacies to provide assistance with:

- Purchasing or accessing food
- Accessing medicines
- Collecting pensions
- Gas/Electricity top-ups
- Making 'safe and well calls' and home visits if necessary, to make sure that our most vulnerable residents were ok, received some social interaction and could access help if needed

As partnership working was already well embedded, we were able to very quickly work with and mobilise a wide range of partners and stakeholders to support our most vulnerable residents, including our network of Town & Parish Councils, Telford Crisis Support Network, Telford InterFaith Council, local community centres and a wide range of community volunteers.

We were able to refer people on to support in their own community, with our partners and volunteers stepping forward to deliver food parcels, meal delivery, carrying out shopping and prescription collections, keeping in touch calls and safe and well visits. Through these referrals residents developed meaningful connections in their community.

Through this approach the Council with partners:

- Provided direct support to 1 in 5 households during lockdown (including food shopping, prescriptions, safe and well calls)
- Recruited 1,100 + community volunteers that were mobilised to support us throughout lockdown
- Worked with 80 voluntary and community groups to work on our Covid specific response
- Has seen new services develop by groups as a result of the impacts of Covid and what was needed to help address issues around social isolation and loneliness
- Supported 4 new community groups to establish as a result of lockdown - as they wish to continue working together and helping local communities
- Delivered a successful 'Kindle Kindness Fundraising Campaign' raising more than £20,000 to provide kindle devices to keep patients in the Princess Royal Hospital and residents of care homes in touch with family and friends
- Provided a regular Home Library service delivering books to over 150 adults who were vulnerable or socially isolated and unable to access books online
- Coordinated a locally developed Let's Get Telford Healthy Campaign which engaged more than 1000 adults in a 12 week email and information campaign to make lifestyle changes (linking to the national Better Health Campaign)
- Delivered free school meals directly to the homes of our children most in need
- Awarded grant funding to a range of voluntary sector organisations such as food banks and charities tackling homelessness to continue their work
- Provided volunteers to help the vaccination sites across the borough – including Telford International Centre, Wellington Medical Practice, Wellington Pharmacy (operating at AFC Telford), Newport Medical Practice (operating at Audley Court), Woodside Pharmacy and Stirchley Medical Practice

To summarise the main challenges:

- **Additional funding pressures due to the increased demand** – in response the council provided additional funding for key partners in the voluntary and community sector that were assisting with providing emergency community support.
- **Making sure that community buildings and the people actively supporting local provisions were safe** – community partners were supported through training and completion of risk assessments
- **Many volunteers already supporting these community groups became unavailable as many were vulnerable themselves or having to self-isolate** – to assist with this the Council ran a recruitment campaign at the start of lockdown to recruit as many community volunteers as possible to help us provide this community support. At the time many people had more time available due to lockdown restrictions or being on furlough. Given the volunteering processes already set up in the Council we were able to quickly get them up and running (through clear role descriptions, risk assessment and supporting guidance) and getting out and about where it was needed the most.
- **Adapting to new ways of working as face to face contact was no longer possible**

Next steps:

Strong communities are vitally important, the current pandemic has shown how important the community sector and individuals are in responding to the needs of local people and just how much they can achieve. As lockdown restrictions begin to ease work will continue as we reflect on the lessons learnt from covid and to harness and build on the great work that's been achieved through working in partnership. Examples include:

- **Continuation of Keeping in Touch (KIT) Befriending calls** - A number of voluntary sector organisations are continuing to provide the befriending calls to those identified vulnerable or isolated and as needing support through the Community Support Helpline. These are: Senior Citizens Forum, All Nations Church, Gt Dawley Town Council, Stirchley and Brookside Parish Council, Donnington Community Hub, Leegomery Community Centre, Newport Hub/ Rotary Lite, Hub on the Hill, Inter Faith Council, CEIA (Community Empowerment in Action), CVS/ Wellbeing Independence Partnership.
- **Volunteering** – the council's Community Support Team are in the process of launching a new Community Champions scheme from the end of this week to recruit volunteers to share Covid related messages to our seldom heard groups. The project is being funded by Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. Key partners such as Telford Interfaith Council, Signal, PODs and Telford and Wrekin CVS

are being funded to support with the recruitment, training and translation/interpretation of information.

- **Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council** – ongoing development and expansion of the current service operations with a focus on the provision of **community classes** for topics such as emotional resilience, debt and budgeting advice, cooking classes and employment support; **out of hours emergency food support**; and working with a network of **community champions** who can work in partnership with services, to help ensure that key messages are disseminated across all BAME communities in ways that are clear, do not cause confusion and help to build relationships amongst communities and with authorities.
- Further development of the **Telford Crisis Support Network** given its role in supporting vulnerable residents with issues relating to welfare, food and fuel poverty.
- We continue to work with the VCSE sector to tackle **social isolation and loneliness**. We have:
  - Co-ordinated campaigns linked to Loneliness Awareness Week and the DCMS Let's Talk Loneliness Campaign
  - Kept in contact with 70 Loneliness Champions recruited from our 2018 conference to understand and share what they are doing around this agenda and motivating them to continue the good work.
  - Delivered the Art of Wellbeing Programme which provided a range of creative activities for residents with digital access to support wellbeing.
  - Continued to work with partners to develop a Cultural Resource Hub. The hub will provide activities and guidance to carers and to adults and older people who identify as lonely or isolated, income deprived, disabled or are living with a long-term health condition. Initially creative activity will be via a virtual hub delivered online with a longer term plan to link with our libraries and community hubs to create a network of cultural resource hubs that people can visit.
- Driven by Age UK & Health Improvement a small steering group are developing an **Age Friendly** toolkit built around five areas of interest to:
  - Enable older people to stay in places of their choosing during their lifetime
  - Help older people play an active role in local communities for as long as possible
  - Encourage the development and continuation of healthy behaviours that support a good later life

- Increase opportunities for participation & involvement
- Foster positive attitudes across all age communities towards older people and later life
- Our Primary Care Network **social prescribing** link workers continue to support some of our most vulnerable residents. As a partnership we are benefitting from being part of a Midlands Social Prescribing Network and a Regional Learning and Development Programme. This is providing valuable insight and is helping to shape our local delivery plan and services. A small steering group continue to meet to develop this programme of work. So far we have:
  - ✓ Established a link worker network
  - ✓ Secured a training grant of £5000 from Health Education England
  - ✓ Partnered with Energize Active Partnership and Shropshire County Council to secure funding from National Charities Together to deliver a Green Social Prescribing Programme
  - ✓ Recruited a Community Sport & Health Apprentice within the Sutton Hill Partnership
  - ✓ Developed the social prescribing functionality of the Live Well Telford online directory
  - ✓ Secured funding to develop a Cultural Resource Hub

Over the next 6-12 months we plan to:

- Expand the network to include more partners
- Engage all link workers and community practitioners in a training programme to develop their knowledge and skills
- Apply for grant funding to further develop our approach
- Connect with our Active Partnership, Natural England and the Arts Council to develop our community offer
- Map our social prescribing pathway to identify areas requiring more focus
- Continue to develop partnerships with our community hubs
- Recruit Community Connectors to support patients to connect with community support
- Deliver a 2 year Green Social Prescribing Programme
- Pathway development with wider support services (debt advice, housing)

### **Holiday Activity and Eat Well Programme**

Our well established Holiday Activity and Eat Well Programme continued to provide support to children and families throughout the pandemic. Telford and Wrekin Council has since been awarded additional grant funding from the Department of Education to work with partners to extend and develop this offer to provide a programme of physical activity, enrichment activities, nutritional education and food education for families and carers during the Easter, summer and Christmas holiday periods for

children and families in receipt of free school meals and children with special educational needs and disabilities. A project team has been established and a virtual programme of activity is planned for Easter in line with the current government restrictions.

4. **IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

No further information to add

5. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

None

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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