

Cabinet Report – 14th January 2010

Strengthening Communities and Involving People – Neighbourhoods and Community Development

Community Development and Value for Money

This paper relates to the commissioning of activity for the strengthening communities theme of the Local Area Agreement, (LAA). In particular it addresses the value for money contributions arising from commissioned community development activity in the cities priority neighbourhoods.

For ease of use the report is set out against a number of themes enabling value for money to be shown across a broad range of priority areas.

1. Background Information

The community development commissioning programme is managed via the Trust for Developing Communities as lead partner. The Hangleton and Knoll Project and Serendipity, (a local Community Interest Company), are then sub-contracted to provide services in the Hangleton, Knoll, Whitehawk and Bristol Estate areas of the city.

The Brighton and Hove Community Development Commissioning Strategy defines community development as "...a range of practices dedicated to increasing the strength and effectiveness of community life, improving local conditions – especially for people in disadvantaged situations – and enabling people to participate in public decision-making and to achieve greater long-term control over their circumstances." (Source: Community Development Foundation 2003)

In total, this arrangement means that we commission community development support in 13 neighbourhoods in the city. Two other neighbourhoods (Tarnar and Eastern Road), are provided with support via a Council post. In addition, we have also commissioned a small pot to support broader and generic city-wide community development activity via the Trust for Developing Communities.

2. Cost/Benefit Analysis

The total value of the community development commissioning contract is £330,000.

With around 80 % of these funds spent directly on Community Development Worker, (CDW), time, this is equivalent to around 385 hours of direct worker support, or 10.5 full time equivalent posts.

Over the last eighteen months total outputs include working with an average of 47 community groups each month, many of which are new or emerging.

The partner providers have worked with an average of 200 residents per month, to support and involve them in self help, volunteering and engagement activity. This equates to an approximate cost per resident of £137.50 per annum.

3. Income Generation

A critical function of the commissioned work is to undertake and support fundraising in local communities. This enables a diversification of funding in the area, which is often matched by voluntary funding efforts such as jumble sales, sponsorship campaigns and fun days.

All of the partner providers support the delivery of CDW by external fundraising and provision of resources from other sources. The Hangleton and Knoll Project and Trust for Developing Communities deliver separately funded, (but connected), work; specifically with young people and older people in local neighbourhoods.

During the financial year 2008/9, the partner providers have indicated that they have generated an additional £278,852 in funds which is available for a variety of specific projects and/or group running costs, with an additional £194,452 via in-kind activity, (such as equipment, worker time, free rental periods etc). In the last six months of 2009/10, the work has created £85,236 in additional funds and £84,612 via in-kind resources.

This means that the total additional value bought to the commissioned activity over the last 18 months amounts to £643,152.

Listed below are a number of specific examples that illustrate this:

- 3a. The Portland Road and Clarendon Forum has been supported by the community development worker to access **£29,500** to support the development of Stoneham Park café. (BURA Awards for Best Practice in Regeneration nomination: Cllr Brian Oxley, Sept 2008)
- 3b. In Hollingbury the HAPPI group (Hollingbury Active Parents for Park Improvement), has worked with their CDW in order to

support further fundraising activity to match their Playbuilder grant and recently received **£40k** from Veolia.

- 3c. In H&K a youth group has been working with the Friends of Knoll Park, and raised **£10k** towards a new AstroTurf in Knoll Park and the project identified a further **£8k** to match PCT funding for the Inclusive Communities Black and Minority Ethnic project.
- 3d. In two areas, CDWs are supporting Probation's Unpaid Work Team to provide free labour to tackle issues such as environmental hotspots.

4. Efficiency and Effectiveness

There are a number of ways in which the commissioned activity has shown a positive impact on City Council services. This has helped to improve efficiency and effectiveness across a number of service perspectives.

4.1 *Service Design*

Community Development Workers, (CDWs), support a range of neighbourhood forums across the city including Local Action Teams, (LATs), and over-arching neighbourhood groups. These forums provide opportunities for residents and service users to influence the design of services in their area. Examples include:

- 4.1a. 643 people were involved in neighbourhood forums over the last two quarters, of whom 95 were newly recruited. Involvement included helping to shape the My Play Space, (Playbuilder), programme in the city's neighbourhood parks.
- 4.1b. In Coldean, the annual 'Coldean Community Conference' is supported by CDWs and provides a forum for consultation on local priorities. This year the event reached 51 people who contributed to the creation of a local action plan for the area.

4.2 *Service Delivery*

CDWs are based in the community and provide outreach support to many council services wishing to target services. This means that council (and other) officers are able to more quickly target those people most in need of their services. Community development provides much of the underpinning capacity building that enables the community to be involved in service initiatives because it will more

often than not have supported the creation and ongoing development of the infrastructure on which this engagement depends.

Examples include:

- 4.2a. Helping to distributing smoking cessation information, promoting and encouraging residents to come along to the Get Involved launch, engaging 'hard to reach' men for the men's health screening programme piloted by Adult Social Care.
- 4.2b. The Coldean Library project in 2008 received significant input from commissioned community development organisations. They supported the development of the Steering Group through community involvement and were quoted as 'being invaluable in terms of reaching out widely and providing simple, practical advice', (Libraries Manager).

4.3 *Service Coordination*

Services require coordination at neighbourhood level in order for them to be effective, efficient and avoid duplication. Clear evidence exists to demonstrate greater value for money where services are integrated.

Examples include:

- 4.3a. In many areas, including Queens Park, Craven Vale and Moulsecomb, CDWs are helping to organise and facilitate practitioner's forums. These forums provide spaces for front line workers, across all disciplines, agencies and organisations to meet and agree joint approaches to work for example, enforcement work with anti-social individuals.
- 4.3b. In Bevendean a mini action plan around health has been produced, particularly prioritising the needs of the elderly community. This brings together local service providers including Adult Social Care and the methodology used led to 8 previously isolated older people attending the Over 60s support group.
- 4.3c. The Hangleton & Knoll Project supports the Community Action Forum attended by local residents and community group representatives alongside organisations such as the City Council's Community Warden, Park Ranger, Housing Officers, 3 local Councillors, MP, Neighbourhood Watch, Police, City Clean, Neighbourhood Care Scheme, and other organisations when invited.
- 4.3d. The Hangleton and Knoll Project also supports a number of other resident-led forums including the Parents Network, the 50+ Steering group, the Friends of Knoll Park, (7 committee members and 15 volunteers involved with the park work days organised by the Park Ranger), and the Friends of Hangleton Park. All of these forums provide a central point for the City Council to attend and

address issues directly with the local community e.g. the Children's Centre, and Parks departments.

- 4.3e. The inclusive Communities Steering Group supported by the Hangleton and Knoll Project provides a forum for local residents and services to co-ordinate the delivery of work to local black and minority ethnic communities. Initiatives have included a research project, establishing a range of healthy activities including Egyptian dance and health walks, and a cultural event. 38 black and minority ethnic residents now attend weekly activities developed through this forum.

5. Reducing Demand and Tackling Inequality

As a key priority for the local authority, commissioned providers are asked to demonstrate how they are reducing demand for expensive City Council (and other public sector service providers) services and tackling inequality related to both people and place.

5.1 Self Help

Active communities provide neighbouring and informal support to their members. A wide range of community groups in the area helps to foster self help and supports early intervention approaches. Examples include:

- 5.1a. Portland Road and Clarendon post natal depression support group.

CDW provide a range of support to community centres and facilities around the city. All of these centres provide activities and support to their local communities, as well as signposting and advice.

- 5.1b. The Vallance Community Centre has 6 residents aged 70 and above volunteering as IT support workers for the local drop ins. This has reduced their feelings of isolation and enabled other older people to come in and learn about IT.

- 5.1c. The community Support Drop-In, supported by the Hangleton and Knoll Project, provides a mental health support service to local residents. It has a committee membership of 8 local residents, and has recently been supported to gain funding to deliver Pilates classes which now has a membership of 17 local residents and a waiting list.

- 5.1d. Two local residents in H&K were supported from being community activists, through to undertaking training on the WICO and are now employed as CD workers. Two months ago one of the Hangleton and Knoll volunteers who had been out of work for three years successfully gained employment.

5.2 Signposting/Referral

CD helps to signpost and formally refer people to services where self help groups may not be available or appropriate. This signposting and referral helps the City Council and others to reach out to those people traditionally defined as 'hard to reach'. Examples include:

5.2a. In Hangleton a 'Community Chat Room' provides a safe and supportive space for people with problems or difficulties who do not feel confident to access more traditional groups or activities. These drop-in sessions are delivered by the HKP CD worker who is currently undertaking the NVQ4 in Information, advice and guidance.

6. Improving Customer Experiences

6.1 *Accessible and local communication*

CDW's support engagement with public services. This leads to increased levels of awareness of the range of the public sector offer. Often the work involves mediating and or supporting individuals to fully engage and overcome any barriers such as jargon. Examples include:

6.1a. Additionally the work supports the increase of community communication mechanisms for example newsletters, noticeboards and community websites. This also includes training and support 'community reporters' who regularly send articles to the Argus.

6.1b. During the last six months, 10 community websites have been supported through training and volunteer support; these profile services and provide an accessible 'jargon free' point of contact.

6.1c. The Hangleton & Knoll Community Directory now provides details of local community groups and services, managed by a committee of local residents and supported by a CDW.

6.2 *Ability to influence decisions.*

Extensive support is given to support involvement in service design, delivery and planning. This significantly increases the perception that local people are able to influence decisions in their area and helps to ensure appropriate, value for money interventions. Examples include:

6.2a. A dedicated neighbourhood survey, supported by CDWs and volunteers identified that 65% of people felt they could influence decisions in their locality, compared to 50% in September 2006.

6.2b. Also links to all of the neighbourhood forums supported where local decisions are made e.g. in H&K – Community Action, 50+

Steering group, parents network, friends of Hangleton Park, Friends of Knoll Park.

6.3 *Increasing volunteering*

There is a huge range of national and local evidence of the value of volunteering.

6.3a. During the last eighteen months an average of 200 residents per month have been involved in managing and attending local groups (such as parent/toddler, family outings and newsletters). This equates to approximately 1800 hours per month, (assuming each volunteer gives 2 hours a week as per the national indicator).

The work also helps to increase the numbers of people taking up governance roles, for example, school governors, trustees, sitting as representatives on local and city wide forums.

6.3b. The Chair of Bevendean LAT and the chair of the Portslade Community Forum have been supported to take on the role of chairing the Stronger Neighbourhoods Group (a city wide sub group of the LSP).

6.3c. H&K recruited a new trustee aged 18yrs at their most recent AGM who had been supported through the youth work process, local resident attended the city wide LAT meeting on behalf of Community Action.

7. Community Cohesion and Resilience

The work additionally contributes to the community cohesion agenda and the Local Area Agreement indicator, L1, '% of people who feel they can get on with others from different backgrounds'. This contributes to creating resilient communities that work together and challenge damaging community activity such as anti-social behaviour, crime and racism.

7a. During this year 157 open community events have been organised ranging from community festivals and fun days to healthy neighbourhoods celebrations. An open event in Hangleton and Knoll attracted 50 residents from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, some of which have gone on to access other community and self help groups.

7b. Work with Probation's Unpaid Work Team is bringing together offenders and residents and has led to the 'adoption and

- befriending' of some of the individuals serving sentence in their own community.
- 7c. Innovative approaches to working with black and minority ethnic communities have been adopted and include developing relationships with Polish, Chinese, Turkish and Indian traders in Portslade.
 - 7d. In H&K two new groups have been supported in the last month to start up – a Russian Social Club and a BME Embroidery project.
 - 7e. The transitional nature of some communities, for example the Stanmer Heights area of Hollingbury means that constant outreach and engagement is critical to preventing isolation.
 - 7f. In Queens Park and Craven Value intergenerational work has taken place through simple craft activity groups. At the same time information about services (including adult social care) was provided and explained.
 - 7g. Support to a Poets Corner group meant that over 4000 people attended events during the Festival fortnight. BME residents had significant representation at the Family Fun Day both attendance and 6 BME food stalls and 27 local artists exhibited at a Community Arts Fair. We started Coldean Festival which has now run for two years.
 - 7h. 30 positive articles in the local media with regard to activity in our deprived neighbourhoods.