

Cherwell District Council

Executive

4 July 2016

Annual Report and Review of the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme

Report of Director of Operational Delivery

This report is public

Purpose of report

To consider the activity and achievements of the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme in 2015/16; the partnership activity and areas of focus for 2016/17.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note both the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme progress made in 2015/16 and the areas requiring continuous improvement; and
- 1.2 To support the priorities for focus in 2016/17.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme is a targeted, long term programme of work, set up to increase life chances and address health inequalities within three wards in Banbury. A priority within Our District, Our Future is to tackle areas which rank on the lower end of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. There are several areas in Banbury across the three wards of Ruscote, Neithrop and Grimsbury & Castle which rank amongst the 20% most deprived in the country.
- 2.2 The Programme is entering its sixth year and has a long term aim 'to create brighter futures for Banbury people', by tackling evidenced disadvantage and health inequality. The overall aim is to break the cycle of deprivation, but it is recognised that the route to a brighter future will be different for each individual. This Programme recognises that individuals have diverse needs around health, skills, access to services, housing and financial stability.
- 2.3 The Programme has six themes which are well developed over several years and supported by theme leads. Each year, an annual report is produced which looks back at recent activities and achievements and forwards in terms of priorities, areas of focus and the need for change.

3.0 Report Details

Activities and Achievements in 2015/16

- 3.1 During 2015/16, the programme has continued to meet its objectives and address the local challenges. The attached 2015/16 annual report details in section 3 the activities and achievements for each of the six themes.
- 3.2 2015/16 saw a greater focus on key local issues of health improvement and employability whilst maintaining the cross cutting thematic approach. The volunteering 'market place' events have continued; aimed at encouraging and recruiting more volunteers.
- 3.3 Particular successes in the last year include
- A further reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training.
 - All three children's centres increased their Early years Foundation Stage scores
 - The proportions of all pupils attaining a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of the Foundation Stage, in the prime areas of learning, improved in 2015 across the wards.
 - The attainment of Pupil Premium children in 2015 significantly improved in the Neithrop and Ruscote wards in comparison to 2013 and 2014.
 - 16 new affordable housing units for shared ownership were delivered, and a further 22 units were brought back into use as part of the Council's award winning Build! Programme.
 - 52 homes were improved through the intervention of the Council's Private Sector Housing Team.
 - There were 60 participants in the healthy cooking skills programme.
 - A reduction in anti-social behaviour incidents.
- 3.4 The focus on two health improvement and employability workshops was particularly beneficial with many new multi-agency actions and new initiatives arising as a result. This approach of concentrating on key issues is appearing to prove worthwhile and should be continued whilst the benefits arising are assessed over a longer period.

Key Issues and Future Challenges to Inform Priorities

- 3.5 There are a number of current challenges which need to be considered and addressed where possible as part of the Brighter Futures Programme. These include;
- Following the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, the lowering of benefit cap from £26,000 to £20,000 for families outside of London and from £18,200 to £13,400 for singles claimants.
 - The ongoing concern about the lower life expectancy of older people in the Brighter Future wards, particularly males.
 - The effects of public sector austerity in the form of service cuts to children's centres, day care centres and community transport.
 - Inconsistent primary school improvement and the drop in GCSE attainment in Banbury Schools.
 - Changes to ward boundaries and the impact on data gathering and analysis.

- 3.6 A response to these changes needs to be considered. The whole public sector is still under fiscal pressure with on-going austerity measures, and that welfare reform will continue. This means that the focussed approach of the Programme will be even more relevant in the future, as additional effort will be required to squeeze the maximum value out of the partnership resources available and to ensure they are targeted at those most in need.
- 3.7 It is anticipated that there will be a greater emphasis by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group beginning in 2016/17 through its emerging Health Inequalities Commission work to tackle health inequalities which will support the emphasis being placed on the health and wellbeing theme.

Proposed Priorities for 2016/17

- 3.8 Each of the current themes, and the objectives and priorities that underpin them, contribute to the longer term aims of the programme, reflect local needs and issues and take into account the impact of factors such as the availability of housing and public services, changes to the benefits system and educational attainment. Each theme aims to work at a local level to ensure that tangible outcomes are delivered; improving the quality of life and opportunities for residents across the key wards in Banbury. This approach should continue.
- 3.9 It is important that this themed approach continues especially where the changes highlighted in 3.5 above sit largely with one organisation but impact on many services delivered by others eg benefit changes. It is proposed that the key issues multi agency workshops continue in 2016/17 with Child Poverty (planned for July 2016), Educational Attainment (late Autumn 2016 to be informed by the 2016 exam results), and then Support for the Vulnerable in early 2017, which can consider the effect of OCC service and budget cuts. In addition, a follow up stakeholder event following the health and wellbeing workshop is planned for 2017.
- 3.10 Many of the above workshop issues are inter related where overlaps will exist but all are particularly relevant to the Brighter Futures Programme's objectives and can capture other partnership opportunities which are either emerging, or are in place.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Brighter Futures partnership has for several years continued to work effectively in focussing the best use of resources on those most in need. Harnessing work related to the six themes is proving valuable but continuous improvement eludes in some areas; specific areas of concern, which are well below comparative averages, remain
- 4.2 The context in which the partnership is operating is changing in relation to population, funding, and organisational change. Organisational and service change in a partnership context is particularly challenging.
- 4.3 The relatively recent 2011 census information has identified changes in the make-up of the ward population in relation to a big increase in private rented households, an increase in single adults, lone parents and HMOs, increasing ethnic diversity, and specific issues such as a lack of qualifications of lone parents. Of particular concern is the comparatively high level of child poverty in our wards.

- 4.4 It is important to periodically review the Programme and in light of the challenges described above, now is an appropriate time. There is a need to take account of current strengths and to consider what other partnership opportunities there are, along with specific issues which are relevant to the people of the wards being supported. This is why the continued focus proposed for partnership activity concentrating on child poverty, educational attainment, supporting the most vulnerable and health inequalities are all inter related, relevant to the Brighter Future's Programme's objectives and capture other partnership opportunities which are in place.

5.0 Consultation

Multi agency theme leads in Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 Given the very wide ranging nature of the Brighter Futures Programme, there can be many different options and permutations of key priorities, areas of focus and mechanisms to progress. Therefore, no specific alternative options are identified.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The Brighter Futures Programme is based largely on the combined resources of all partners. The Council does hold a residual budget for the Programme in a reserve account.

Comments checked by Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer, 01295 221634;
paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 There are no specific legal implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by Richard Hawtin, Team Leader – Non-contentious Business, 01295 221695, richard.hawtin@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Risk and Equality Implications

- 7.3 The most significant risk arising from the Brighter Futures Programme is that of the effect of those in need who are currently supported, losing that support due to budget and service cuts across the public sector. The Programme is a form of mitigation but does not offer a complete solution to this.

Whilst the impact of service changes by different partner organisation is uncertain, as the focus and objectives of the Brighter Futures remain the same, it is not anticipated that there will be an adverse impact to equality groups of the Programme changes proposed in this report.

Comments checked by Caroline French, Corporate Policy Officer, 01295 221586, caroline.french@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk:

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

Most Banbury wards but specifically Ruscote, Neithrop and Grimsbury and Castle.

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Cherwell: A Thriving Community - Delivery and extend the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme to provide opportunities for some of the District's most disadvantaged people.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Kieron Mallon, Lead Member for Banbury Futures

Document Information

| Appendix No | Title |
|---------------------|--|
| 1 | The Brighter Futures in Banbury Annual Report 2015/16 |
| Background Papers | |
| None | |
| Report Author | Ian Davies, Director of Operational Delivery |
| Contact Information | 030000 30101, ian.davies@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk |