

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## The Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme

2 July 2013

### Report of Director of Community and Environment

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present for consideration the performance of the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme in 2012/13, to consider the 2013/14 priorities and other associated Banbury matters.

This report is public

#### Recommendations

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The meeting is recommended to consider:

- (1) The progress and 2012/13 performance of the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme; and
- (2) Other aspects to be considered in the forthcoming activities of the Programme.

#### Details

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##### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme has been running for just over three years and during this time, it has made significant progress with effective multi-agency focus and many joint actions.
- 1.2 The Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme is about making a difference to those families and individuals in greatest need. Most of these reside in the wards of Grimsbury & Castle, Ruscote and Neithrop. The activities include continued effectiveness of multi-agency working, helping those in most need, having a common purpose and understanding amongst key service deliver partners, taking a long-term approach, making best use of current and anticipated reducing resources and engaging with local people and communities in Banbury to influence activity.

- 1.3 In undertaking this Programme, there are a number of key principles which are adopted. They are as follows
- The focus on health inequality issues will by its nature need long term economic, social and environmental actions to be fully effective;
  - The outcomes sought must be relevant to the communities targeted and the specific needs of people in those communities;
  - This is an on going Programme, not a project and as such there will be a need to embed actions in mainstream service provision for all participating agencies.
- 1.4 The third year's activities and outcomes can be found in the attached 2012/13 Annual Report at Appendix 1. This report has been considered the Brighter Futures multi agency Steering Group and by an informal councillors meeting involving most of the councillors from all three tiers of local government who represent the three key wards. The local councillors meeting was an opportunity for local members to understand better the range of activities which have taken place and are planned, to influence those and to consider relevance performance data. Several interagency service suggestions also arose from the meeting.

## **2. Proposals**

- 2.1 The third year's activities and outcomes can be found in the attached document at Appendix 1. Across the whole programme, there has been good performance and the bullet points below provide a summary that is explored in more detail in the main body and appendices of the report.
- Reduction in the number of people claiming job seekers allowance
  - Reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training.
  - Improvement in educational attainment in terms of CGSEs and Key Stage 2.
  - Reduction in the number of recorded crimes and incidents of anti-social behaviour.
  - Delivery of 23 new affordable homes across Banbury and environmental improvements to East and Centre streets in Grimsbury.
  - Increased take up of health screening, carers breaks and benefits entitlement.
- 2.2 In addition to these key performance improvements were the successful completion of a number of new multi - agency initiatives. These included;
- Delivery of a 'Talent Match' toolkit to assist with employment.
  - A credit union established for the area.
  - A new YMCA Training Centre for NEETS.
  - 230 homes insulated in the Brighter Futures wards.
  - Environmental improvements completed in Grimsbury.
  - Additional numbers of cookery skills courses completed, cervical screening, smoking quitters, carers breaks achieved.
  - Three Connecting Communities events and an Opportunities Fair took place.

- 32 new recreation sessions at the Hill Youth Community Centre.
- Three e community noticeboard websites went live.

Proposals for 2013/14 are essentially about ensuring that the good progress over the past few years is consolidated as sustained improvement in the forthcoming years. In addition, a greater effort is to be made to extend the number of partners who contribute to the project through better communication, coordination and engagement.

- 2.3 When the Brighter Futures Programme was discussed previously by the Committee, it was requested that a future report include information on any impact arising from air quality (an Air Quality Management Area having been declared with respect to Hennef Way) and the impact of environmental pollution (recycling rates in Banbury Grimsbury and Castle being low). Similarly, at the meeting on 24 April 2012, the Committee received a presentation of the changes to the national benefits, including the introduction of Universal Credit. During the debate reference was made to the potential impact the changes might have on the objectives of the Brighter Futures Programme.
- 2.4 The **air quality** issue has not featured as a Brighter Futures activity in its own right as, despite its localised effect, it is largely a town wide matter and will follow its own statutory process.

Hennef Way, Banbury is currently the only Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Cherwell. A further assessment report has been completed for this area which is subject to comment and revision if necessary, when consultation with Defra, on behalf of the Secretary of State, is complete. This report confirms the AQMA boundary where the nitrogen dioxide annual mean air quality objective is likely to be exceeded, looks at additional monitoring, splits the traffic down, models possible mitigation scenarios based on traffic flow and makes recommendations for additional monitoring. Once comment is received from Defra, this will be issued to statutory consultees and any wider consultees considered.

- 2.5 A steering group for this is assisting in developing an action plan for improving air quality at the affected properties in this area currently within the following five headers:
- Barrier / Monitoring changes
  - Journey Information / awareness raising
  - Electric vehicle take up infrastructure / awareness
  - Air Quality health benefit promotion
  - Development control assessment and obligations

We hope to link into existing schemes, proposals and aspirations of private and public sector bodies to assist the development and delivery of the action plan.

- 2.6 A detailed assessment report of air quality between Oxford Road / Bloxham Road to Southam Road has been completed. This is again subject to comment and revision if necessary, when consultation with Defra, on behalf of the Secretary of State, is complete. This report concludes the annual mean air quality objective is likely to be exceeded in several areas along this stretch of road where receptors are present and is close to the objective at

other locations. It recommends an AQMA is declared which includes these properties as a minimum. The boundaries of the AQMA will need to be considered in due course and a further assessment and action plan will be created in due course aiming to improve air quality and ensure future development does not have significant adverse effects or impact air quality.

- 2.7 With regard to low **recycling rates** and potential environmental pollution, it is acknowledged that there are lower recycling rates evident in the three Brighter Futures wards compared to elsewhere in the District as residents have less inclination to do so. This is sometimes compounded by the types of properties in these localities such as flats and houses in multiple occupation. Having said that, the proportion of households which have blue bins is encouragingly high and there is always a good residents' response to neighbourhood blitzes. The Council has therefore responded by undertaking proportionately more neighbourhood blitzes than elsewhere and is reviewing the number and location of community bring banks to make it easier to recycle
- 2.8 The Brighter Futures wards appear to be no different than similar wards elsewhere in the country and if anything, have comparatively higher recycling rates and no notable street litter or fly tipping issues despite the nearest OCC household recycling centre being some four miles outside the town.
- 2.9 There are a number of issues regarding **changes to the benefits system** and the effect on the Brighter Futures Programme. The first is that some of the changes have only just been implemented and therefore there has been insufficient time which has elapsed to gauge with any meaning and accuracy what the effect might be. Also, many benefit changes have not yet been implemented.
- 2.10 Reports are being prepared to obtain a current snapshot of the benefit caseload and then map that against postcodes to get a breakdown by ward. Unfortunately, it is not possible to do this retrospectively for dates in the past. Therefore, going forward, we will be creating bespoke reports wherever possible to compare data at different times and to assess trends and effects.

### 3 **Conclusion**

- 3.1 The Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme is now well established as a targeted multi agency initiative over the long term. Whilst Cherwell District Council leads it in terms of organisation and coordination, there are many partners which make very valuable contributions in so many ways.
- 3.2 The key performance indicators used in 2012/13 indicate a positive direction of travel but there is much more still to do over the long term to ensure the improvements are sustainable and the numbers in greatest need continually reduce.
- 3.3 The issue of finance generally is a cause for concern. The original financial allocation for the Oxfordshire programme is now nearing full spend. Additional resources are being sought and in some cases offered e.g. the Government's Troubled Families Programme (described locally as Thriving Families). Whilst these opportunities are welcomed, they are few in number. What is therefore

clear at this point is that in addition to very limited additional funding, core budgets of partner organisations will be smaller in the future.

- 3.4 The most important aspect about funding is therefore not about how much new funding will or will not be available, but to ensure the most effective and efficient use is made of what ever resources are available irrespective of cutbacks. Whilst there are few new and enhanced multi-agency initiatives proposed for 2013/14, it is expected that more will be developed as the partnership base is widened.

## **Implications**

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**Financial:** There are no 2013/14 implications arising from this report. The District Council implications of the proposals contained in this report are based on current approved service plans and budgets. Further consideration will be necessary for the Lead Member to determine the use of the special reserve agreed for this programme.

Comments checked by Joanne Kaye, Service Accountant, 01295 221545

**Legal:** There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Team Leader – Planning & Litigation, 01295 221687

**Risk Management:** There are no notable risks associated with this report

Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager, 01295 221563

## **Wards Affected**

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The Brighter Futures in Banbury programme focuses on the Wards of Ruscote, Neithrop and Grimsbury & Castle but its benefits can and do extend to most of Banbury

## **Corporate Plan Themes**

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Brighter Futures in Banbury is a prominent part of the Council's 2013/14 Corporate Priority "A District of Opportunity", to work with partners to tackle disadvantage in the District.

## **Executive Portfolio**

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Councillor John Donaldson  
Lead Member Banbury Brighter Futures

## **Document Information**

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<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	2012/13 Brighter Futures in Banbury Annual Report
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
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