

Cherwell District Council

Executive

7 September 2015

Annual Review and Report of the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme

Report of Director of Community and Environment

This report is public

Purpose of report

To consider the activity and achievements of the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme. To consider a different approach to managing the partnership activity and its areas of focus from this year.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note both the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme progress made in 2014/15 and the areas requiring continuous improvement.
- 1.2 Support the change in approach to partnership activity.
- 1.3 Support the new priorities from 2015/16.
- 1.4 Receive a further detailed report on the changes to the County Council's Children's Early Intervention Services to enable the Council to contribute to the formal consultation process.

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 and 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 route to a brighter future will be different for each individual. This programme recognises that individuals have diverse needs covering issues 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 and a Steering Group. Each year, an annual report has been produced which looks back at recent activities and achievements and forwards in terms of priorities, areas of focus and the need for change. This forward looking part this year has been given more prominence due to the extent of population and organisational changes which are taking place and the need to respond to that.

3.0 Report Details

Activities and Achievements in 2014/15

- 3.1 During 2014/15, the programme has continued to meet its objectives and address the local challenges. The attached 2014/15 annual report details in section 3 the activities and achievements for each of the six themes.
- 3.2 2014/15 saw a greater push on engagement with the voluntary and community sector in Banbury with a range of support initiatives. This commenced with a sector engagement workshop in December 2014 hosted by Banbury and Bicester College and was followed by a volunteering 'market place' event in January 2015 in the Town Hall aimed at encouraging and recruiting more volunteers. Both events were regarded by those attending as a success with greater support being provided to those voluntary sector bodies requiring it and over 100 members of the public registering a wish to volunteer with local voluntary groups.
- 3.3 Particular successes in the last year include
- A third year reduction (over a third reduction) in the number of people claiming job seekers allowance.
 - An increase in the numbers of children who achieve the national expectation in phonics at Year 1.
 - Improved outcomes for children who access pupil premium funding.
 - Increased support to carers.
 - Increased number of smoking quitters, a reduction in the rate of teenage conceptions and an increase in the number of carers identified.
- 3.4 Despite this level of activity and outcome, there is still the need to strive for continuous improvement especially in educational attainment, health related matters and support for those in most need. An area of continued focus should be the number of young people who are NEET (Not in education, employment or training) where the figure at the end of the year is similar to that of the start.
- 3.5 There was a continuation in 2014/15 to offer some financial support to partnership projects where they are of direct relevance to the Brighter Futures programme objectives. The following projects were supported and undertaken successfully;

- Aspiration days for primary school children in years 5 and 6 taking part in Banbury and Bicester College workshops and activities which encourage their skills and talents
- Intensive support in coaching, ICT and job search skills to the over 40s who had been unemployed for over 12 months
- English speaking and listening skills for carers at the Sunshine Centre
- Voluntary sector engagement and volunteer recruitment events
- Sunshine Centre summer day trips for disadvantaged children
- Support for BYHP young people activities

Key Issues and Future Changes to Inform Priorities

- 3.6 The recently obtained 2011 census information has identified changes in the make-up of the ward population. The key changes are a big increase in private rented households, an increase in single adults, lone parents and HMOs, increasing ethnic diversity, from 11% minority groups in 2001 to 24% in 2011 and specific need such as a lack of qualifications of lone parents. Of particular concern is the comparatively high level of child poverty in the Brighter Futures wards.
- 3.7 A response to these changes needs to be considered in the context that 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 to ensure they are targeted at those most in need.
- 3.8 It is anticipated that there will be a greater emphasis by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group in 2015/16 through its emerging Health Inequalities Commission on tackling health inequalities which supports very well the emphasis placed on this through the health and wellbeing theme.
- 3.9 Child poverty has recently had a new emphasis given to it by Government. This originally stemmed from the paper produced (2012) by the Centre for Social Justice (set up in 2004) “Rethinking Child Poverty” – the paper argues the current measure is inadequate and fails to acknowledge that poverty is about more than lack of income. Very recently, Government announced a new way of measuring child poverty which would focus on “root causes” of poverty and that in place of the Child Poverty Act 2010, new legislation will use:
- the proportion of children living in workless household
 - long-term workless households
 - education attainment of all pupils and the most disadvantaged pupils at age 16.
 - a range of other measures and indicators of root causes of poverty will also be developed by the Government, including family breakdown, debt and addiction, details of which will be set out in a children’s life chances strategy.
- 3.10 A forthcoming concern is the Oxfordshire County Council’s (OCC) need to save £6m minimum from its £16m budget for children’s early intervention services. This is particularly relevant to the Brighter Futures Programme because of the central role played by the children centres of East Street, the Sunshine Centre, and Britannia Road plus the Woodgreen Early Intervention Hub. The proposal is to

develop a smaller scale service based on an integrated 0 to 19 years response to families' needs with the focus on the prevention of the escalation of need. As a consequence, there will be fewer venues, no separate children centres and early intervention hubs and an anticipated reduction in current universal services.

- 3.11 The location points for the new service and the scale and range of services provided from those points will be determined on the basis of need as defined by indices of multiple deprivation, children on protection plans, children in need and percentage of under 5s. The Brighter Futures wards of Ruscote and Grimsbury and Castle should feature prominently but how this will translate into venue(s) and services is uncertain and very concerning.
- 3.12 OCC intend to undertake a public consultation on this process between September and December 2015. Dialogue has already commenced at officer level to ensure OCC is fully aware of the central role children centres and the Woodgreen Early Intervention Hub play in relation to the Brighter Futures Programme. It is intended to report separately to Executive on this matter in order to submit a formal and detailed response to OCC.

Proposed Priorities for 2015/16

- 3.13 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 takes into account the impact of factors such as the recession, availability of housing, accessibility of 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 to help improve quality of life and opportunities across Banbury. This approach should continue.
- 3.14 However, how this is done should change to ensure there is a key focus on specific issues and best use is made of the resources we have. It is proposed that, supported by the continued work of the six themes, there should be four quarterly workshops which bring together all relevant organisations and experts to consider with each workshop focusing on one of the following four issues;
- Partnership activity concentrating on **child poverty** influenced by this being a local pressure and anticipated changes in legislation.
 - Partnership activity concentrating on **health inequalities** supported by the OCCG led development and work of a Health Inequalities Commission.
 - Partnership activity concentrating on **employability** to capture the critical on going work of raising educational attainment and aspiration, reducing the number of NEETs, ensuring young people are fit for employment and to match these to the needs of the local economy.
 - Partnership activity concentrating on **supporting the most vulnerable** which brings together the key County Council services, TVP, Cherwell's housing services with its RSL partners and the voluntary sector
- 3.15 Many of the above are inter related where overlaps will exist but all are particularly relevant to the Brighter Future's Programme's objectives and capture other partnership opportunities which are either emerging or are in place.
- 3.16 It is envisaged that all lead partners will continue the current activities but that greater focussed partnership working and opportunities will arise from the workshop

approach described above rather than the Theme Leads and Steering Group meetings. Workshops are proposed on a quarterly basis to which wide partner invitations will be issued to key organisations such as Sanctuary Housing. This approach will be supported by the engagement of a workshop facilitator to work with the lead agencies in planning the content, agreeing contributors, arranging venues etc and following up with the agreed actions and outcomes of each.

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. The work of the six themes is proving valuable but continuous improvement remains to be achieved as there are still specific areas of concern which are well below comparative averages.
- 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. This combined with future significant budget and service cuts means that it is even more important for the Council to lead and concentrate partnership resources to best effect.
- 4.3 The Programme to date has been progressed based on a number of theme lead meetings for coordination purposes and occasional wider Steering Group meetings to consider the overall Programme and its direction. This has required support from CDC to administer and is dependent on the availability of key representatives in different organisations being able to attend. This has proven to be challenging on occasions due to the additional pressures caused by regular changes in partnership organisations.
- 4.4 The recently obtained 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.
- 4.5 It is important to periodically review the Programme and in light of the scale and nature of the challenges described above, now is an appropriate time. When doing so, 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 proposed wider partnership activity concentrating on child poverty, health inequalities, employability and supporting the most vulnerable 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 the remaining balance for which is £43,360.

Comments checked by Brian Wallace Service Accountant, 01295 221737,
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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,
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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 and further welfare reform is uncertain, as the focus and objectives of the Brighter Futures remain the same, it is anticipated that the continued targeted effect of the Programme will minimise any adverse impact to equality groups.

Comments checked by Caroline French, Corporate Policy Officer, 01295 221586,
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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: Thriving Communities - Delivery of the Brighter Futures in Banbury programme to provide opportunities in 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 2014/15
Background Papers	
None	
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