

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

To: **General Purposes Committee**

Meeting Date: **20 October 2015**

From: **Sarah Ferguson, Service Director Enhanced and Preventative Services**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **2015/011** *Key decision:* **Yes**

Purpose: **This paper accompanies the proposed strategy to build resilient communities, for review and agreement from General Purposes Committee.**

Recommendation: **It is recommended that the General Purposes Committee formally agree the Community Resilience Strategy as attached to this report.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The public sector faces enormous challenges in the next few years. Rising demand together with significantly reduced resources makes redesigning public services imperative. Put simply, the public sector cannot continue delivering services in the way that it does now.
- 1.2 Alongside this, there is a growing body of research and evidence to show that local community-based support can be more effective in supporting some vulnerable people – and better at preventing some of the crises which necessitate costly Council services.
- 1.3 *Stronger Together – our strategy for building resilient communities* represents the culmination of work that has been happening across the Council on the back of these two immediate imperatives. It proposes a fundamental shift in the way that service provision and local communities interact; essentially, repositioning the Council as part of the wider community, with a real focus on building the capacity of local people to help us to meet local needs together.
- 1.4 The concepts and actions within this strategy have been informed by officers and Members across the Council, from a series of meetings, workshops, discussions, Member seminars and more latterly a more formal Programme Board with membership drawn from each directorate. It has been developed alongside the Council's new operating model, reflecting the cross-cutting nature of both the work and the potential impact. Community Resilience is an enabler within the operating model.

2. SUPPORTING ACTIVITY

- 2.1 Our strategy proposes six areas of activity. Each represents a specific part of the work we need to take forward, and there are developing action plans for each area. The six areas are:

- Communication
- People helping people
- Council members
- Our workforce
- Community spaces
- Partnerships

Further detail on each of these areas can be found within the strategy document itself, together with a clear articulation of what the Council aims to achieve by 2020.

3.0 FINANCIAL BENEFITS AND BUSINESS PLANNING

- 3.1 There is evidence to show that this approach can deliver improved services for less money. But it is difficult to accurately predict the savings that will accrue from fostering more resilient and supportive communities. Our business plans will consider the following:

- **Costs avoided** – for example, less costly care packages for older people, where neighbours and friends can do some of the things that we currently ask domiciliary care providers to undertake;

- **Helping to guide where savings could be made in front line services** – for example, where local parents step up to successfully offer peer support through children's centres or other community spaces and therefore reduce the need for services for parents in crisis, or where communities part-fund some highways improvement work or help to maintain local footpaths;
- **Mitigating the impact of cuts which will have to be made to front line services** – for example, by ensuring there is a greater wealth of volunteer capacity in local areas with people willing and able to give some time to help others including through more organised opportunities such as timebanks, or through raising awareness and perceptions of volunteering opportunities.

3.2 There is increasing emphasis on demand management within the Council's business plan. This strategy is central to our ability to manage demand for our services - through supporting families and communities to do more to prevent the escalation of need and also to support the most vulnerable. It will drive our work with local communities to help, for example, to support a network of opportunities for socialising to combat loneliness and isolation in older people, or to encourage local people to look out for their vulnerable neighbours. For the most vulnerable, this strategy articulates our intention to combine our own care delivery with that from local people, for example by building capacity locally to support carers with their caring, or including local community support within care plans for adults with disabilities.

3.3 Council staff will place additional focus on helping to create groups and networks of people who face (or have faced) similar issues or needs, for example, parents with children who have a disability, or people with caring responsibilities. In this way people will increasingly be able to get some of the help and advice they need without recourse to our services.

4. **ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

4.1 **Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The Bank of England estimates that around 15 million people volunteer regularly on a formal basis, and that the same amount of time is spent on informal volunteering, which might be running a neighbour to a doctor's appointment or taking an elderly relative to do their shopping. They calculate that the economic value of volunteering could exceed £50bn a year.
- Individuals benefit from doing things for others, though the balance of benefits differs across individuals. For example, younger people highlight the importance of acquiring new skills and enhancing employment prospects, while older volunteers benefit from increased social interaction and improved health. Enjoyment and satisfaction rank high across all volunteer types, and it is clear that there are economic benefits for the individual. The Bank of England estimates that the gains to the individual in terms of wellbeing, improved health and increased employability might exceed the £50bn-plus benefit to the recipients of volunteering.

- It is therefore reasonable to suggest that building and supporting increased volunteering across the county will have benefits for the local economy.

4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- There is evidence that community engagement and resilience supports the adoption of a healthy lifestyle as a community norm and engagement in health improving initiatives
- The benefits to those supported by volunteers include improvement in health, wellbeing and independence
- Supporting community resilience builds increased social capital, cohesion, empowerment, and improved relationship with organisations.

4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- The County Council, along with other partners in the public sector, will have to make reductions in front line services in order to meet the significant financial challenges ahead. This strategy is a key aspect of the Council's approach to mitigating the impact of those cuts on those who need support but could manage without the intervention of statutory services.

5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Implications for delivery of savings are outlined in paragraph 3. There are no significant additional costs incurred in the delivery of the overall strategy – though some actions may require short-term revenue input in order to achieve identified savings (invest to save). Delivery requires no additional staffing capacity, rather it asks our staff to work in different ways to secure support for people and places from within the local community.
- The strategy helps to establish how we best use our property assets to achieve the most value for Cambridgeshire residents.

5.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The strategy is designed to mitigate the impact of reductions in local government funding. As such it should help to guard against the risks identified in the corporate risk register around failure to deliver our five year business plan, namely:
 - Lack of capacity to respond to rising demand for service provision, in new and existing communities

- Failure to produce a robust and secure business plan over the next 5 years
 - Failure to deliver the current five year business plan.
- There will be a continuing legal duty on local authorities to ensure that vulnerable people are not exposed to additional or unreasonable levels of risk as a result of the implementation of these strategic objectives.

5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Evidence indicates that services delivered by local people within local communities can be more successful than statutory services at reaching people who may need support. Our strategy should therefore support more equal and diverse accessible provision locally.
- Our services will become increasingly more localised, less uniform and more bespoke, so that we can meet local and individual need within each specific community context.
- People identify themselves within different communities, not only the geographical community in which they live. People are also part of communities with shared interests (e.g. the Women's Institute, or the local Allotment Society) and this strategy will drive our approach to building relationships and harnessing capacity within these communities too.

5.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- We recognise that successful delivery of this strategy will hinge upon the relationships we have with other agencies in local communities – at a strategic planning level as well as between people working in local areas. There have been some early discussions with voluntary sector organisations and other statutory agencies to further develop a partnership approach to developing and supporting community resilience.

5.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The role of Members is critical to the success of this strategy – in engaging communities and in acting as community advocates. For this reason, this strategy has been circulated in draft form to all Members for comment prior to being considered at General Purposes Committee. The role of Members is further outlined on pages 11-12 of the strategy.
- A number of councillors have volunteered to become early adopters of this work, piloting this new and critical way of working. They have formed a "Councillors as Community Connectors" group, meeting as an action learning set, and the learning from their experience will inform our direction going forward. Councillors are invited to express an interest in joining cohort two of this programme, which will begin in January 2016.

5.6 Public Health Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- There is evidence that community resilience and engagement can have a positive effect on the health of Cambridgeshire residents, by supporting the adoption of a healthy lifestyle as a community norm and improving engagement in health improving initiatives. Targeting efforts where people have greater health needs will have the most impact. This would include focusing on more deprived areas, on those who are isolated and do not access services, or those where increased self-care or community support is required would have a larger impact on health.
- Building community resilience will impact on many of the needs identified in different Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs), including the following:
 - Migrant communities
 - Long Term Conditions
 - New Communities
 - Homelessness and at risk of homelessness
 - Vulnerable children and adults
 - Autism, personality disorders and Dual Diagnosis
 - Carers
 - Older People's Mental Health

Source Documents	Location
Stronger Together – Cambridgeshire County Council's strategy for building resilient communities	Box OCT 1210 Shire Hall Cambridge
In giving, how much do we receive? The social value of volunteering. Andrew G Haldane, Chief Economist, Bank of England	www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Pages/speeches/default.aspx
NICE Guidelines PH 9 Community Engagement	https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph9/chapter/Appendix-C-the-evidence#evidence-statements
JSNAs	http://www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/jsna