BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

To:	**Children and Young People's Committee**
Meeting Date:	**8 March 2016**
From:	**Adrian Loades, Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services**
Electoral division(s):	**All**
Forward Plan ref:	**N/A**

Key decision: **No**

Purpose: **To introduce *Stronger Together – Cambridgeshire's Strategy for building resilient communities,* and to seek the views of Children and Young People's Committee on the actions taking place in support of this strategy.**

Recommendation: **Children and Young People's Committee is asked to comment on the actions proposed to support the Community Resilience Strategy.**

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1.0   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.

1.5   The Council's General Purposes Committee agreed to adopt this strategy at its meeting in October 2015. Since then officers and Members across the Council have been developing activity to make this strategy a reality.

2.0   FINANCIAL BENEFITS AND BUSINESS PLANNING

2.1   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.

2.2   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.

2.3   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.

3.0   SUPPORTING ACTIVITY

3.1   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

3.2   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.

3.3   **Communication**

3.3.1   A comprehensive Communications Strategy and Action Plan are in place to support the Community Resilience Strategy. In the meantime work has already started in raising awareness of the challenge being faced by the Council and ways we and the community can help one another as part of the Council's Budget Challenge Campaign.

3.3.2   A regular update is now being sent to Parish Councils and a letter has also been sent with supporting materials that they can use themselves or in local publications. A menu of ideas and support offers, case studies and online resources are now being developed to help Parish Councils, the community and other organisations to develop their own local activity that will mitigate the impact of our budget and service reductions. Communications to staff have begun and will increase with official launch of the Community Resilience Strategy, and we are increasingly publicising the good work that is already happening in local communities, with or without our support.

3.3.3   The way the Council is using social media has been changing in order to better place the Council and its services as part of the wider community rather than a centralised provider of services. This means the Council can actively target communities in a geographic location but also communities who share an interest or need. This in turn allows a much more targeted and cost efficient approach as well as engaging with people where they are having the conversations rather than expecting them to come to the council.

3.4   **People helping people**

3.4.1   This workstream aims to facilitate people helping people in a range of capacities across the county. People help people in a broad range of ways – from very informal help for a neighbour, through to more facilitated volunteering such as peer-to-peer support. Within this workstream we will look at how the Council can support people helping people in both formal and informal ways. We aim to build on existing good practice across the Council, for example, in libraries, and develop the links between service provision where this is needed.

3.4.2   Activity planned includes:
- The delivery of three pilot learning sites aiming specifically to build community capacity. These will take place in Godmanchester, Ely and Littleport, and the Abbey area of Cambridge. The Godmanchester site will build upon the "mini-patches" work happening through Transforming Lives.
- Work on building peer support mechanisms across the county.
- Aligning our VCS contracts around our Community Resilience strategy.
- Making available a toolkit for staff and Members, providing advice on sources of funding, support and training that community groups can access, useful tools, tips and techniques for building capacity in communities, and examples of successful activities and case studies.
- Identifying occasions where our staff may not feel they are able to link vulnerable people with sources of support from within the community – and making sure our policies and processes facilitate this whilst also keeping people safe from harm.
- Further development of Time Banks and Time Credits.

3.5   **Council Members**

3.5.1   The first Councillors as Community Connectors cohort is now complete. Two further cohorts are planned. The purpose of this group is for pro-active Members to work together to mutually improve knowledge of how to help build capacity within the communities in their divisions. The material they have covered includes: community engagement techniques, discussions with service leads regarding how the councillors' community role can support services, and practical ideas to take forward. Attendance has been slightly lower than anticipated; of the 18 who signed up, 12 remain engaged with the programme. A number of councillors on the programme have initiated new activity including; holding a village meeting to ask how the community can do more, arranging for members to be trained as Community Navigators and instigating parish clusters.

3.5.2   The programme has been a conduit for the Cultivating Communities Small Grants pilot through which communities can work with their County Councillor to apply for a grant to fund local community-led partnership projects.

3.5.3   *Stronger Together* has stimulated positive conversations with local councils. Some have approached the council to ask what they could do to help mitigate the impact of the cuts, and a number of county members have started discussions with their parishes to stimulate ideas. Examples of activity include:

- Histon and Impington parish proactively working with a county officer to further develop their already substantial community offering
- Development of a Parish menu outlining examples and suggestions of ways our two councils can work together
- An invitation to officers to attend Huntingdonshire Joint Rural Forum to discuss 'Where will the axe fall and how can towns and parishes help?'
- Cllr Tew convening parish cluster meetings where parishes are now collaborating on projects
- Cllr Downes holding a Village Meeting explaining the situation and asking for ideas. These are now coming forward through their Community Plan.
- Monthly briefings of relevant information to all Local Councils from the County Council Communications team

3.5.4   At this early stage the approach we are adopting is to work with the willing, engaging with proactive local councils who approach us.

3.5.5   There is a need to understand the different nature of the geographical communities we serve, particularly in relation to Cambridge City where this local community based work takes on a different complexion, and the task for Members as Community Connectors is highly likely to be different.

3.6   **Our workforce**

3.6.1   LGSS is leading on this workstream. The draft Council Workforce Strategy is being revised to reflect the new direction of Customer First being introduced and the final product will include the requirements of our work on community resilience.

3.6.2   In the meantime, there will be a workshop in the New Year to plan how we will support our staff to gain the skills and expertise they will need for this new way of working.

3.7   **Community spaces**

3.7.1   The use of the Council's assets will play a pivotal role in supporting an integrated approach to community resilience. At this point however there is still work to be completed before a detailed proposal can be developed that sets out how we will use our assets to help our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient. There are a number of stages that are necessary in this process. The first is to define exactly what the Council's service offer is. Work has been undertaken on this and it is starting to take shape. Once complete this will be mapped against an assessment of community need using the various data sets and forward projections to facilitate this process.

Having determined the needs and priorities of communities a gap analysis will be undertaken by comparing this assessment to the location of the existing public estate. It is highly unlikely that the existing infrastructure and the identified infrastructure needs will be aligned and therefore the process will create some surplus assets and perhaps some investment requirements.

3.7.2   We have begun work on identifying those aspects – buildings, staff and activity – which we could potentially bring together across children's centres and libraries in a given geographical location. We will build on this over time to identify one community-facing hub space in each community (geographical size to be determined), which will be the local "front door" for the provision of information and advice, preventative activities, developing and brokering community support, and networking and partnership working across all of our services. This will mean reducing our property portfolio as we join up across services, and will involve working with other Partner organisations who also desire a local presence.

3.8   **Partnerships**

3.8.1   A series of individual meetings are taking place with partners to explore the resonance of the strategy with their own objectives. Discussions are also taking place at partnership boards to establish any cross-cutting strategic links which need to be made. From these discussions, any countywide actions and goals will be developed as well as any specific local activity to take the work forward. These conversations will have been concluded by March 2016, with a proposal that they are presented back to Cambridgeshire Public Services Board for strategic sign up. In Fenland, initial discussions have been taking place under the auspices of the Fenland Strategic Partnership to look at whether rethinking the totality of the resource being allocated across agencies in a community through the lens of community resilience could assist the process of re-focussing services.

4.0   ACTIVITY IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

4.1   Our focus within children and young people's services is increasingly to build strength and capacity with people's relationships and networks - so that they rely less on statutory services and to prevent escalation to more costly provision. We are improving the way that we work across our wider partnership arrangements – for example, with voluntary sector providers – so that where we do provide services they are part of a wider package of support locally. We aim to work *with* the community rather than *on* the community, facilitating networks of support and promoting community and peer support activity. For example, our Youth and Community Coordinators have supported volunteers to start successful youth sessions in rural Fenland, and helped local parents to set up their own support group for families with children with additional needs.

4.2   The examples below demonstrate how some principles of community resilience can be mainstreamed (for example though the workforce), as well as how small projects can be grown, with a view to making a wider and more systematic change in how we work.

4.3   Our work and our plans across children and young people's services have already begun to take the approach outlined here. Specific examples include:

4.3.1   **Changes to the way that our practitioners work:**

- Strengthened role of staff in building community capacity, explicit in job descriptions, and some dedicated roles with small commissioning budgets (Youth and Community Coordinators)
- Strengthening the role of Childrens Centre Managers to have a more explicit role in relation to community capacity building
- Developing a Think Family approach which looks at the whole family needs, focussing on strengths and sustained change, and extending the approach to adult services
- Refocussed role of our Family Intervention Partnership (FIP) staff on building the capacity of local support alongside schools to help children and young people at risk of exclusion
- Locality managers working more closely with local councillors and with parish councils
- Building on the learning from the Family Group Conferencing team so that social workers are better able to link their clients with local sources of support
- Applying the learning from the Hidden Insights work, aiming to embed the approach in our workforce development plan

4.3.2   **Changes to our work with the voluntary sector:**

- New specifications for voluntary sector contracts which are explicit about building capacity in local communities to support each other, including developing peer-to-peer support networks
- Stimulating and facilitating voluntary sector activity to support learning outcomes in settings and schools
- Expanding the volunteer driving scheme to support home to school transport

4.3.3   **Working better across the Council:**

- Seeking to integrate library and children's centre provision where appropriate as part of the Community Hubs work

4.3.4   **New and innovative ways of working within communities to help people to link with sources of local community support:**

- An explicit focus on building interconnections and networks of services, and being committed to maintaining these.
- An increased focus on communicating better with local communities, for example children's centres using social media

5.0   ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1   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.

5.2   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.

5.3   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.

6.0   SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

6.1   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.

6.2   **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:
  - o Lack of capacity to respond to rising demand for service provision, in new and existing communities
  - o Failure to produce a robust and secure business plan over the next 5 years
  - o 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.

6.3   **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.

6.4   **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 further develop a partnership approach to developing and supporting community resilience.

6.5   **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.

6.6   **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:
  o Migrant communities
  o Long Term Conditions
  o New Communities
  o Homelessness and at risk of homelessness
  o Vulnerable children and adults
  o Autism, personality disorders and Dual Diagnosis
  o Carers
  o Older People's Mental Health

Source Documents	Location
Stronger Together – Cambridgeshire County Council's strategy for building resilient communities	http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20076/children_and_families_practitioners_and_providers_information/370/providing_children_and_families_services/5
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