

<b>17 July 2014</b>		<b>ITEM:</b>
<b>Health and Wellbeing Board</b>		
<b>Community Resilience</b>		
<b>Report of:</b> Les Billingham, Head of Adult Services		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-Key	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Les Billingham		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Roger Harris, Adults, Health and Commissioning		
<b>This report is:</b> public		
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> To update the board on progress made in the various projects designed to build community resilience.		

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

It is recognised that there is a correlation between individual health and well-being and the social connections and networks of support (social capital) available to individuals within their own community (*cf The Marmot Review*).

The Council's Building Positive Futures programme has formed a working partnership across the council and voluntary sector with the aim of building community resilience and social capital by strengthening the connections between and across communities. This partnership has brought together a number of related projects and programmes under one banner: 'Stronger Together'. This name reflects the shared understanding that no one service or organisation has the solution to health and well-being; only by working alongside individuals and communities, can we realise the social capital/value that is so essential to individual health and well-being.

This report summarises progress in relation to: Local Area Coordination (LAC) and Community Hubs – the two programmes that are the most advanced.

The report also describes forthcoming developments in relation to Timebanking and Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Community Builders – these initiatives have been programmed so that they can dovetail with the development of the community hubs, creating a strong synergy between these complementary approaches.

Ngage are hosting a government funded Community Organisers project which has also been brought under the Stronger Together umbrella and this initiative is also described in this report, for reference.

Other work streams that ASC are initiating are also described as they are intended to align what happens 'in the Civic Centre' with the community building work.

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1.1 To note the progress made to date and plans for future work

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 2.1 Individual and community resourcefulness and resilience is a cornerstone of the Health and Well-being Board's strategic vision. This vision corresponds with the ambitions of Building Positive Futures – to create hospitable, neighbourly communities that are inclusive and support people to age well at home. Building Positive Futures created a community development programme with a number of connected work streams – the first to be initiated being Local Area Coordination which was established in July 2013, in three locations.
- 2.2 The Stronger Together partnership, which now meets monthly, oversees all locality based community-building activities – bringing together projects initiated or managed by the council as well as those initiatives led by the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector. The partnership spans Community Hubs, Community Organisers, Local Area Coordination, Timebanking and Asset Based Community Development.
- 2.3 One of the first tasks of the Stronger Together partnership was to create a coherent approach between and across a number of different locality-based projects. As a result, it was agreed that the community building initiative originally proposed by Building Positive Futures - Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) needed to be aligned with other planned community-based programmes. The ABCD Community Builders, which were originally scheduled to start in 2013, were moved to 2014 to link with the community hub development programme. This re-scheduling also meant that the ngage Community Organisers programme - a central government initiative that was introduced in Thurrock, could be established independently, without any confusing overlaps with other Thurrock-initiated projects. A matrix which maps these initiatives by ward has been developed to provide an overview of what is happening in each locality.
- 2.4 The Stronger Together partnership has hosted a workshop in June, for council, voluntary and statutory partners to share all neighbourhood based work involving door knocking and community mapping (i.e. fire safety visits, well homes visits, public health initiatives etc). The aim being to streamline activity where possible and agree a collaborative approach to community mapping (i.e. a strength-based map of community assets and resources).

- 2.5 The Stronger Together partnership recognise that in order to build community resourcefulness and resilience, all statutory services need to change current practice – moving from a professional/service/menu driven approach to one which starts with individual and community strengths. This represents a significant culture change and a fundamental re-shaping of the relationship between the council, the broader public sector and citizens.
- 2.6 Public Health have been very supportive of this change in approach and culture across the board, providing funding for the development of Local Area Coordination as they see evidence of the Coordinators’ preventative impact within localities. Public Health are also very interested in the emerging thinking around commissioning differently, with more emphasis upon community and strength-based approaches and are keen to develop Thurrock’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessments within building on these two themes.

### **3. PROGRESS REPORT ON COMMUNITY BUILDING & STRENGTH-BASED INITIATIVES:**

#### **3.1 Community Hubs (see also Appendix 1)**

Two Hubs have opened - one in Ockendon and one in Chadwell, and we are working with four other communities to develop their hubs. Each Hub will be different, designed and developed around the priorities and strengths of the community it serves. This approach is evidenced by the very different Hubs that have been opened in Ockendon and Chadwell, although both have similar visions.

##### **3.1.1 Ockendon has been open for just over a year and has demonstrated its success across a wide range of activities:**

- Arranging events so that local residents can learn about the groups and organisations that can support them and how they can support their own community;
- The recruitment of many local volunteers, some of whom have used their volunteering experience at the Hub to help them get permanent paid employment – at the time of writing this report seven people have returned to work as a result of volunteering at the Hub.
- Working with local GPs so that residents with non-medical conditions can be referred to the Hub where they can join community groups, develop friendships and become more confident and able to enjoy their lives. The result can be less reliance on their GP, thereby freeing up GP time.
- Support is given to a wide range of local people with form filling, support with on-line services and validation of documentation. This results in fewer trips into Grays – which is expensive for people with limited resources.
- Helping citizens to resolve queries with the support of their peers.

- Residents from neighbouring wards attending the centre, rather than travelling to a council office.

3.1.2 Chadwell has only been open a month and therefore evidence of the impact it has delivered is therefore limited. The opening event was well attended and there are a range of groups and organisations that have expressed an interest in supporting the Hub. There are a number of volunteers who have been trained enabling the hub to open 2 days a week.

3.1.3 In relation to the four community hubs in development, the Stronger Together team are harnessing the ABCD tools and techniques and these embryonic community hubs, deploying many of the strength based approaches such as gift boards, ideas fairs and identifying community connectors. This approach will strengthen the community hubs' capacity as they take off.

3.1.4 This approach is already paying dividends as exemplified by a recent example of a gift exchange in Chadwell; a single mother re-housed to Chadwell with a young son, was unable to deal with the over-grown garden. The recent ABCD event, highlighted the local school has an allotment project that it wanted to expand into the community. As a result, the local school cleared the garden for the mother and the young son is now connected with children his own age.

### 3.2 **Local Area Coordination** (see also Appendix 2)

Following the successful piloting of Local Area Coordination (LAC) in three areas, it has now been extended to 6 areas and a manager has been appointed. Collaboration with the Essex Fire and Rescue Service and Public Health has enabled this growth.

3.2.1 The feedback from people who have been supported by the LACs and by professionals continues to astound and move us. One psychiatrist contacted us to thank the LAC for the dramatic impact they had had on a client who had been a long term user of mental health and other health services. Two people supported by the LACs, participated in the recent LAC recruitment process, expressing their appreciation of the support given.

3.2.2 Results have exceeded expectations and include:

- People supported to find non-service solutions to problems - leading to savings on social care funded day care @ £45 per session;
- Increasing relationships and circles of support – leading to the prevention of delays in hospital or interim residential beds – saving £1,220- £3,159 per week; and a family no longer needing direct payments @ £544.80 per month.
- Improved access to information (improving choice, control, health and well-being) – leading to savings in translation fees.
- Overwhelmingly positive feedback from people supported
- Strong partnership working with the Fire Service through the secondment of a Fire Officer as the Purfleet LAC, particularly in relation to individual

cases of hoarding and the training of health and care staff regarding home safety checks

### 3.3 **Community Organisers** (see also Appendix 3)

The Office for Civil Society is leading the development of the community organisers' programme through LOCALITY, and has committed to the training of 5,000 independent community organisers over the lifetime of the current Parliament to support the Big Society plans.

- 3.3.1 Community Organisers play an important role in building community spirit, encouraging local community action, and generally empowering communities to tackle the issues that matter to them. The core of the work is listening to people in communities and out of this listening, to develop networks of listeners and activists. Their role is to bring people together, listen to ideas, build networks and mobilise people to tackle issues which are important to them. The type of action taken will depend on the listening and dialogue which precedes it, and may include making improvements locally, lobbying council and service providers, planning issues etc.
- 3.3.2 Experience to date has revealed that there is a general feeling within some communities where residents feel they have no control or power over their lives. This has developed a feeling of being "done" to, with the result of many people tending to leave decisions to the council and expecting it to service their needs. There is a dependency culture that can only be changed by people wanting to improve things and do more for themselves on an individual basis or as a community.

### 3.4 **Asset Based Community Development – Community Builders**

For reasons outlined at 2.3 above, the ABCD Community Builder programme - was postponed until 2014. Two localities have been successful in bidding to host a Community Builder and the recruitment process has recently been completed.

- 3.4.1 Despite this later start, the ABCD tools and techniques which underpin the Community Builder's work are being deployed as part of the development of the four new community hubs.
- 3.4.2 The Small Sparks programme – another dimension of the ABCD approach has supported 15 projects. Small sparks uses a co-production approach to community-led initiatives. Funding of up to £250 is matched with the 'sweat equity' of the community. To date, projects that have been supported include community gardens, park cleaning equipment, street parties, friendship clubs for vulnerable groups and many more. All of these projects make the community look better and/or bring people who are isolated or lonely together with other members of the community.

- 3.4.3 Community of Practice events have also been held throughout Thurrock. They are a learning forum for people to come together to develop expertise and get involved in implementing the ABCD approach. They enable information sharing and encourage and support local initiatives. Going forward, these events will be primarily locality based to enable better links to the development of Community Hubs. Such events have already taken place in Stifford Clays, Chadwell St Mary and Aveley and have proved successful.

### **3.5 Timebanking**

The Stronger Together partnership has agreed to introduce Timebanking as an approach because it complements all the projects described in this report; Timebanking is based on the notion of reciprocation and gift-giving and can work on an individual-individual basis and organisation to organisation basis. We therefore see Timebanking as an underpinning ‘enabler’ strengthening all of the work underway in communities, encouraging active volunteers to ‘bank/donate’ their voluntary hours and drawing in new volunteers who are attracted to the approach. The intention is to introduce the approach at locality level, thus strengthening the connections within local communities. However, software will support the Timebanking network working across the whole of Thurrock so that people can make the relevant connections outside of their immediate community, if necessary.

- 3.5.1 Case studies are available from Timebanking UK which provide impressive evidence of how Timebanking enhances job prospects and improves health and well-being.

### **3.6 Adults, Health and Commissioning**

Within the Adults, Health and Commissioning Directorate, we are developing two related workstreams that aim to introduce strength based approaches to social work and commissioning practice. A Task and Finish group is being established to review social work practice. This follows on from several workshops we have run for the Directorate which have examined the opportunity to ‘think beyond’ traditional service responses.

- 3.6.1 In relation to commissioning, two workshops - one held at the end of June, and the other to follow on in the summer, are examining strength based approaches to commissioning practice. The first workshop explored the potential contribution of micro community enterprises to care and support services, commissioning differently through co-production and the new Public Service (Social Value) Act. The second workshop will work on the legal and procurement issues that impinge on innovative approaches to commissioning. In tandem, a small scale piece of work is now underway to encourage the development of micro community enterprises with an initial focus on Ockendon. This follows on from a mapping exercise to establish details of existing micro enterprises in Thurrock.

- 3.6.2 As mentioned at 2.6 Public Health have been very supportive of the Stronger Together agenda and in relation to commissioning, an event is to be held on 10 July to launch a community health fund that will enable communities to develop their own health-promotion initiatives. The event will also explore how public health programmes could be delivered differently within communities.

### **3.7 ANIMATE**

Animate is a programme focused upon the intergenerational exchange of skills, experience and knowledge between older people at or thinking about retirement, and younger people who are jobless or beginning work and who would benefit from such an exchange.

- 3.7.1 The Adult, Health and Commissioning Directorate were successful in bidding for funding for this initiative receiving approximately 100,000 Euros'. A "kick off" meeting was held in Madrid in May and a user engagement plan has been drafted.
- 3.7.2 Using ABCD techniques, the Local Area Coordinators' 'on the ground knowledge' and the overall Stronger Together approach will enable Thurrock to mobilise interest and local ownership of this initiative which addresses our ageing well agenda by empowering older people through utilising their interests, skills and desire to contribute, whilst delivering the added value of supporting younger people in to employment.
- 3.7.3 As this programme is essentially an adult skills initiative we have been working closely with colleagues from that area and have agreed to have the programme governed by the Economic and Skills Partnership. However we will still retain responsibility for delivery and will provide regular updates as appropriate.

### **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

- 4.1 Building community resilience and resourcefulness is a long term objective. However, the impact of a number of initiatives coordinated through the Stronger Together partnership and the Local Area Coordination Steering Group is already being felt on the ground. Co-production as a way of working with individuals and communities is becoming embedded and impressive results are now apparent. Individual stories and stories of community activities illustrate the power of strength based working and the positive impact it can make. If this approach is sustained in the longer term, then the Health and Wellbeing Board's strategic vision for resilience and resourcefulness will be realised.

### **5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 Co-production lies at the heart of the community resilience building approach and is evidenced through many initiatives described in this report. Events

such as the forthcoming Public Health launch of the community health fund demonstrate that co-production increasingly underpins work in a range of service areas. This approach will also inform the Engagement Plan for the Health and Social Care Transformation, and the integration of social care and health care under the Better Care Fund arrangements.

## **6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

6.1 Building Community Resilience addresses each of the Council's Five strategic priorities:

- Create a great place for learning and opportunity
- Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity
- Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities
- Improve health and well-being
- Protect and promote our clean and green environment

6.2 In relation to the first and second priorities, in addition to the ANIMATE project, Adults, Health and Commissioning has embarked on a project to support micro-community enterprises that will provide a range of local support services that people can commission as part of their care package. The experience of the Community Hubs is that volunteering can lead to enhanced job prospects.

6.3 In relation to the third priority, the Small Sparks scheme is making a contribution to local communities through small scale funding matched by community 'sweat equity'.

6.4 Our strength based approaches-, Asset Based Community Development and Local Area Co-ordination, contribute to the delivery of the fourth priority by ensuring we help residents maintain independence in their community, and enable people to regain skills and confidence, while offering protection to vulnerable people.

6.5 Our focus on the fifth priority is central to promoting active ageing amongst local residents as well as the health and wellbeing of all residents.

## **7. IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**  
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There are no financial implications



7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Dawn Pelle**  
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There are no legal implications.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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The comprehensive approach set out in this paper to improve community resilience is likely to have a positive impact on all communities, including those at risk of poor health and well-being. Each approach helps to reinforce the collective ambition to empower communities, valuing the contribution of many who may have previously felt at risk of exclusion and therefore helping to build cohesion in Thurrock.

7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

None

**BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):**

- Fair Society Health Lives (The Marmot Review) 2010.

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

- Appendix One – Community Hubs
- Appendix Two – Local Area Coordination
- Appendix Three – Community Organisers

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Appendix 1.

**Community Hubs**

Community Hubs have evolved from the need to work differently with the Voluntary Sector and our communities. The approach to developing community hubs has been co-production, whereby the Council, Voluntary & Faith Sector, and local communities develop local solutions together. We have drawn upon the ABCD approach - building on the strengths of communities to make them stronger and more self-sufficient.

Hubs are run by the community for the community and rely on local volunteers to signpost and support users. These are complemented by support organisations that are coordinated through the Hub as well as local groups that meet and are coordinated through the Hub.

Community Hubs are a key element in the overall Stronger Together programme, which can act as a central coordination facility and focal point for local residents. Hubs are still in their early days; however the evidence, particularly from Ockendon, has demonstrated that there is a strong and varied, and as yet untapped community spirit in Thurrock just waiting to be given the chance to flourish.

Community Hubs, in conjunction with the other Stronger Together initiatives, are able to provide a springboard that can allow communities to develop, whilst at the same time, supporting the Council in changing how it delivers services and the reduction in costs it must achieve, at the same time equipping communities to become more resourceful and resilient and thus enhancing the quality of people's lives.

## Appendix 2.

**Local Area Coordination**

Local Area Coordinators' starting point is a strength based question about 'what a good life looks like', and there is growing evidence that this is the most powerful starting point when working with people – enabling the LACs to help vulnerable people to find their own local solutions. The solutions pursued often do not lay with services, but rather, more informal local solutions that enhance the overall health and well-being of an individual/family, taking them out of a crisis situation to a more sustainable situation. The LACs have also become a conduit for helping people to contribute to their local communities.

Where a service is the right solution, the LACs help co-ordinate a response which invariably crosses service and organisational boundaries. People supported range from 27-94 years old and have come via a number of routes - GPs, Councillors, professionals, the community hub, housing association and residents.

Local Area Coordination is overseen by a multi-agency/multi-service Steering Group resulting in the strengthening of partnership working and the identification of opportunities to share resources more efficiently. The partnership with the Fire Service has produced highly effective working relationships which contribute to fire-prevention.

Thurrock and Derby City are leading with Inclusive Neighbourhoods the launch of a national LAC network to offer best practice, guidance and support to local authorities that are implementing LAC. This network will enable the development of comparative evaluation of cost/ benefit and raise the profile of LAC nationally. The network will operate at member level, managerial and operational levels, helping to share good practice and learning across the UK.

Appendix 3.

**Community Organisers**

Community organisers are employed by LOCALITY and hosted by local organisations on a secondment basis. ngage is the host for Community organisers in Thurrock and host a team of 4 community organisers. They began their roles in February 2014 and are working within the ward areas of Tilbury St Chads, Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park, Chadwell St Mary and West Thurrock and South Stifford. These areas were selected to support a further government initiative called Community First, and each of the ward areas have a Community First panel.

Trainee Community Organisers undertake a 'Foundations of Community Organising' accredited training programme which is based on the Root Solution Listening Matters programme. The Community Organisers are currently working on their 5th Assessment since they began their role in February.

The Community organisers have been in post since February and although there is some evidence to show the impact it has made on an individual case basis, it is envisaged that through the continued listening process with residents, issues will emerge that people can then begin to influence and resolve together and communities will begin to organise themselves better to bring about change.