



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:

Individuals Overview and Scrutiny

CMT Lead:

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Policy context:

The Activate Havering Project aims to strengthen voluntary action in Havering, by maximising community assets and co-ordinating volunteering, as well as tackling social exclusion experienced by many older people

SUMMARY

1. In 2011, the Havering Strategic Partnership (HSP) allocated a one off amount of its Performance Reward Grant funding to develop a project called 'Unlocking the Potential of Local Support Networks and Volunteers in Havering'. The project was designed to maximise voluntary action in Havering through using the skills and experience of older people and to develop a new approach to combating social exclusion and isolation, commonly experienced by older people. This project is now known as Activate Havering.
2. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested an outline and update on the Activate Havering programme, the National Campaign to End Loneliness and the Help not Hospital Project. This report sets out the background to Activate Havering and outlines progress to date.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the Activate Havering Project and to note its progress.

REPORT DETAIL

1 Background

- 1.1 In 2011, the Havering Strategic Partnership (HSP) allocated a portion of its Performance Reward Grant funding to develop a project called 'Unlocking the Potential of Local Support Networks and Volunteers in Havering'. The project was designed to maximise voluntary action in Havering by using the skills and experience of older people and to develop a new approach to combating social exclusion and isolation, commonly experienced by older people. The principle being that if we tackle issues early on, and prevent people from becoming lonely and isolated in old age, we will in turn reduce demand on public services in the future and promote independence in older age. The project was a response to the Over 65 Outreach Project which identified loneliness and isolation as a key concern of older people in Havering.
- 1.2 Since then the blueprint for a project called 'Activate Havering' has been developed. The project builds upon the vast array of local voluntary sector support networks that currently exist in Havering.

2 National Campaign to end loneliness

- 2.1 In March 2012 The Campaign to End Loneliness and Department of Health hosted a summit to tackle loneliness in older age. Representatives from local government, charity and business sectors were brought together to gain wider commitment to overcoming loneliness.
- 2.2 The Campaign is a coalition of organisations working together through research, policy, campaigning and innovation to combat loneliness and inspire individuals to keep connected in older age.
- 2.3 Published research shows that loneliness has a similar impact on mortality as smoking, and is worse for people than obesity. It has significant links to hypertension, depression, and increases the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease by 50%. To tackle this problem the Campaign is working with local councils and health bodies to promote good practice.
- 2.4 With funding from the Department of Health, the Campaign to End Loneliness has developed a toolkit to put loneliness onto the local health agenda. During July 2012 the Minister of State for Care Services, launched the "Loneliness and Isolation: Toolkit for Health and Wellbeing Boards", a new resource to enable Health and Wellbeing Boards to better understand, identify and commission interventions for the issue of loneliness in older age. At the July 2012 conference DEMOS, a government think tank presented their research in which they noted the activities of Activate Havering as a good practice case study.

3 Activate Havering

3.1 Activate Havering as well as being a response to the “Over 65 Consultation Project” has been adjusted to respond to the National Campaign to End Loneliness. After carrying out research of other projects designed to maximise community capacity by generating voluntary action, our approach under Activate Havering will consist of:

- A ‘social membership’ scheme to improve older peoples social networks to prevent isolation
- A co-ordinated approach to volunteering to enhance volunteering opportunities and provide more opportunities for local people to get involved
- Delivery of a sustainable handyperson service to carry out minor household repairs to ensure older people can be safe at home, a key element of our ‘Prevention’ agenda
- A consortia solution to befriending, which involves providing trained and vetted volunteers to visit older, and other vulnerable, people
- Working with Havering’s diverse faith sector to strengthen the support they are able to give to families and older people within their communities
- Maximising the use of council and borough facilities by linking and promoting services through the new and existing structures and building upon the work of Care Point

3.2 These objectives are central to the Council’s corporate plan under the Goal for Individuals and will contribute directly to the wider aims of the Living Ambition.

4 Havering Circle: A “Social Membership” Scheme

4.1 This element of Activate Havering seeks to combat social exclusion by setting up a social membership scheme. ‘Participle’, a Community Interest Company, was commissioned to provide a Membership Scheme which promotes social activity and independence in later life. Participle calls this model a ‘Circle’. The Circle concept is relatively new and has been operating in four local authorities (Southwark, Hammersmith & Fulham, Suffolk and Nottingham). It is a membership organisation open to anyone over the age of 50 in the geographical area in which it operates. Members telephone their Circle to request support, whether to do more around life's practical tasks or shared social interests; a chance to learn something new; to engage in member requested social activities; to receive low level care support; or just to be part of their local community.

4.2 There is a small membership charge of up to £30 per year which entitles members of the Circle to receive a monthly newsletter and to participate in Circle organised activities, link up with other Circle members or just receive support from Circle services.

4.3 Because of its links to the ‘Big Society’ agenda, Participle has been chosen by the Cabinet Office to pilot more Circles, with the emphasis on developing a London-wide Circle. They have been awarded £800,000 from the Social Action Fund to do this.

4.4 Havering Council now has the opportunity to access £150,000 of this funding by working with Participle to establish a Havering Circle. A proportion (£150,000) of the money allocated to Activate Havering from the Performance Reward grant funding is being used as match funding.

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- 4.5 The contract to commission a Havering Circle has been finalised and subject to negotiations will be signed in September with a Circle being established in November 2012.

5 A co-ordinated approach to volunteering

- 5.1 It is proposed to develop alongside the Havering Circle a new pilot volunteering agreement with the Havering Volunteer Centre, housed at HAVCO, an organisation already commissioned by the Council to provide volunteers for volunteering opportunities. This additional component will deliver the capacity and capability to initiate, recruit, train and manage volunteering activities that directly support the Council's priorities, including community clean ups, inter-generational community activities, and other community engagement opportunities.
- 5.2 It is proposed to run this project as a one-year pilot. The pilot will be performance based and managed through the Community Engagement Team within the Corporate Policy and Community section. Subject to the first year pilot being a success there will be the possibility to extend the offer thereafter.
- 5.3 These opportunities might include initiatives such as: Cold Weather Befrienders, volunteers to help us identify people at risk of fuel poverty; opportunities for Olympic Ambassadors after the Games have ended; Community Clean ups; more community engagement exercises with older people; and providing volunteers for the Troubled Families programme and other key initiatives. A programme of projects has been agreed with HAVCO and the grant with conditions agreement has been agreed. Recruitment for a volunteer organiser has commenced and the first clean up campaign is scheduled for November 2012.

6 Help Not Hospital

- 6.1 Help Not Hospital is a twelve month health and social care funded project. It will provide support to people who do not currently meet "Fair Access to Care" criteria. This will be achieved through low level interventions to support people following hospital discharge or to prevent them being admitted to hospital. The targeting of people is important, but the key is to complement Integrated Case Management (ICM) and reablement by increasing the likelihood of people sustaining independence and being able to remain at home with a good quality of life.
- 6.2 Key aims of the project
- Reduction in unplanned hospital admissions
 - Reduction in bed days
 - Additional reductions in:
 - A&E attendances and excess bed days
 - Admissions to residential and nursing home care
 - Reduction in visits to GP surgeries where no medical intervention is required
 - Reduction in packages of Home Care
 - Delay or eliminate need for residential care
 - Increase independence skills of people within the community
- 6.3 A contract was awarded to The British Red Cross and the project will initiate on the 3rd September 2012. Following a 6 week 'start up' they will start taking referrals from social care, health and voluntary sector organisations from the 15th October 2012.

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- 6.4 The project will have two co-ordinators based at Yew Tree Resource Centre who will recruit and train volunteers from the Community to deliver the service. This project will link with the volunteering project with senior volunteers being referred to the Red Cross.
- 6.5 Monitoring of the project will be via project boards, monthly reports and quality of life questionnaires which will be tracked via the health and social care database.

7 Havering Safer Homes

- 7.1 The provision of handyperson services is a key aspect of Activate Havering and preventative models. The existing handyperson service is in its final year of confirmed funding at current levels due to national reductions. The current service is delivered by Age UK in partnership with the Council's Community Safety and Supporting People teams.
- 7.2 Much of the work revolves around the installation of handrails and other tasks designed to reduce slips and falls. The current service is free of charge to users, and so is not financially sustainable in times of significantly reducing government funding.
- 7.3 A draft charging policy has been prepared and consultation with current handy person service users is underway to assess the appetite for a chargeable service. Age UK plans to introduce a pilot charging scheme in October 2012 to assess the sustainability of the service. The draft charging scheme is tiered to ensure that it reflects residents' ability to pay to ensure that charging does not cause hardship. The impact of the pilot will be closely monitored and evaluated.

8 Befriending/Faith Sector

- 8.1 It is anticipated that if Befriending services across the Borough work more closely together, potential efficiencies could be achieved through economies of scale. Meetings have been held with Havering befrienders and a composite job description has been drafted and a joint training commission has been prepared.
- 8.2 It is recognised that faith organisations have an important role in developing the community resilience. However, faith organisations, like other community groups, generally lack the capacity to participate in traditional local government structures or to run large scale volunteer programmes without funding, training and other professional support. They may not be aware of how to refer people to public services, or indeed what services are available for people in need. Activate Havering will work with befriending services to provide training for the faith communities in the opportunities available. In addition a faith outreach survey is underway to identify the current capacity of the faith community and to seek the faith sectors views on the support they might want in helping to tackle isolation and exclusion in older age.

9 Activate Havering Activities

- 9.1 In order to give a foundation for future initiatives a number of activities have been negotiated with existing partners. These include:
- 9.2 Havering Museum has developed an Active Havering Variety Club designed to meet the needs of Havering residents who are isolated and those aged 50 and over. The bespoke club will provide a creative and fun environment in Havering Museum where individuals can build their self-confidence and make friends while

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participating in learning and social activities. The museum plans to provide refreshments and hold a Christmas party. Events will be held every two weeks from October 2012 until the end of March 2013. The Variety Club programme is designed to mentally stimulate and energise people whilst encouraging them to become more active within the club, and in other activities across Havering.

9.3 Negotiations with SLM, the Council's leisure centre operator, identified a commitment to support Havering's desire to improve community resilience and the local health and well being agenda. A consequence of these discussions, to optimise the usage of facilities and to maximise the health benefits, led to a locally brokered initiative to provide free swimming and other benefits at specified off peak times for those aged 50 years and over.

9.4 Age Concern Havering has agreed to help promote and launch Activate Havering. With support and funding from Activate Havering they are celebrating Older People's Day on 1st October 2012 using the national theme of the 'Big Skills Share' and the Activate Havering's focus on staying healthy. They plan to hold two different events on the same day:

- Queens Theatre – This will primarily be an information event where older people will be given information about the varied range of activities and learning opportunities across the borough. The venue will be used to host a number of stands that promote the themes of sharing skills and improving health. Invited stakeholders will include local colleges, representatives from the libraries, community safety and health promotion and stands from other invited stakeholders, such as mobile phone operators who will offer advice on new technology.
- The second event will be activities based where the plan is to host a celebration of older people with a variety of activities and taster sessions such as Tai Chi, Zumba and yoga.

9.5 Age Concern are organising three days of different health and well being activities in September. This will include reduced cost or free taster sessions including badminton and table tennis at the YMCA, indoor bowls and bowling at "Number 10" ten pin bowling alley. Age Concern will link with SLM to run healthy walk activities from Hornchurch Sports Centre and ensure that borough wide initiatives such as the free swimming and badminton are promoted.

9.6 In conjunction with the community chef Age Concern will organise and run four community cookery workshops targeted at people over the age of 50. Two sessions will be held in Rainham and two in Harold Hill.

10 Conclusion

10.1 Coordination of initiatives and projects will support the development of the vision and aims of Activate Havering which are:

- Being an older person in Havering means that you are part of a 'community' that supports each other.
- Older people, especially those without immediate family support, will not suffer from social exclusion caused by loneliness.
- Public sector, voluntary sector and community led services are co-ordinated to maximise their positive impact for local people.

- 10.2** The project will be adjusted to meet the needs of local residents and the good practice identified through the Campaign to End Loneliness.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

Performance Reward Grant (PRG) was awarded in 2011 to fund the projects listed above. The current projected spend profile is still being confirmed as there are some decisions pending around allocating all of the PRG funding. Befriending and the handy person service currently receive Adult Social Care funding and are not currently expected to attract any additional PRG.

There was an Executive Decision (ED) published on 26 July 2012 that detailed the funding implications related to the Havering Circle. In summary, this took care of £150k of the PRG which was match funded by Cabinet Office funding. The scheme is expected to be self sustaining in the future. A membership charge of up to £30 per year is levied. £50k per year for two years PRG funding was also released via this ED to fund a volunteer scheme.

Legal implications and risks:

There are no apparent legal implications in noting this Report.

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no HR implications arising directly as a result of the report

Equalities implications and risks:

The projects and activities detailed in the report address issues faced by a number of people categorised as protected groups, notably older people, women and people with disabilities. Activate Havering is intended to positively affect the lives of these (and other) groups. In line with the Council's Equality policies, any new or altered services will be subject to equality impact assessments insofar as they have the potential to affect (either negatively or positively) people's lives.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None