

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Council	REPORT NUMBER: CMU1
FROM: Councillor Derek Davis, Cabinet Member for Communities	DATE OF MEETING: 2 November 2021
OFFICER: Nadeem Murtuja, Assistant Director, Communities & Wellbeing	KEY DECISION REF NO. N/A

UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the work of the Communities and Wellbeing Portfolio and an outline of plans for the next 6 months.
- 1.2 The areas within the scope of this portfolio include the wellbeing of communities, leisure, sport and physical activity, community development, community grants, community safety and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.3 Over the last 19 months, a major focus of the work of this portfolio has been on supporting communities through the Covid pandemic and also working with them on recovery.
- 1.4 The work of this portfolio is primarily directed by the Communities Strategy, Wellbeing Strategy and Local Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and their associated Delivery Plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 This information report is for noting only.

3. KEY ACTIVITIES TO DATE

Covid Response

- 3.1 Over the last 19 months we have been at the heart of the Covid-19 response to communities, contacting more than 6,000 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents to offer support and making over 25,000 calls to our housing tenants to support their needs during the lockdowns.
- 3.2 We also dealt with over 1,500 calls into the Home But Not Alone Service, with many cases presenting complex challenges that required ongoing support.

Community Grants

- 3.3 In 2020/21 we provided community grants for 107 projects with a total value of £600k. This included financial and other support for 48 community organisations that were

directly providing Covid response in their local communities. In addition, we administered 63 Member Locality Grant awards, totalling £47k.

- 3.4 At the end of September 2021, half way through this financial year, £308k in community grants had been allocated to 45 projects.
- 3.5 In addition, we have been working with partners to support community groups with advice and Restart Grants to enable them to get back up and running following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions. Since May 2021, 9 sports clubs have been awarded a combined total of £15k from the Babergh allocation of Community Restart Funding and 18 Community Groups have been awarded a combined total of £21k.
- 3.6 The grants application process has also now been digitised.

Community Safety

- 3.7 27 CCTV cameras have been installed in Belle View, Sudbury and Hadleigh, supported by 24 hour monitoring delivered through a contract with West Suffolk Council. We have also agreed to lease a mobile CCTV camera, fully dedicated to Babergh, from West Suffolk Council.
- 3.8 The Council has carried out a thorough review of its own approach to anti-social behaviour, while also playing a key role in a system-wide multi-agency review with partners. As a result we increased our officer capacity to respond to anti-social behaviour work as part of the Council's budget setting for 2021/22, introduced a new case management system that is shared with partners, drew up a new multi-agency information sharing protocol and revised our approach to Victim Impact Assessments and the Community Trigger. Training has also been provided for Members and for officers. During Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Week officers held information stalls in town centres.
- 3.9 Reported incidents of domestic abuse have increased during the pandemic. We have been involved in domestic abuse awareness raising campaigns, have received additional Government funding for a dedicated Domestic Abuse Officer in the Housing Solutions Team and continue to contribute grant funding to Lighthouse Womens Aid. In addition staff are being trained as Domestic Abuse Champions in order to recognise the signs and know where to signpost to specialist support.

Activities under the Communities, Wellbeing and Leisure, Sport & Physical Activity work strands

- 3.10 The Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and the Wellbeing Strategy have been developed in consultation with Members and partners and were agreed in July and September 2021 respectively. Delivery Plans will now be developed to support these strategies and will build on existing work set out below.
- 3.11 Hadleigh Pool was refurbished and modernised, supported by £2.4m of investment by the Council, £200k provided by Hadleigh Town Council and a Sports England grant of £150k. The refurbishment includes:
- a new pool with five 25 metre lanes of Sport England competition standard;
 - a sauna;
 - spectator seating;

- improved disabled access to the pool via easy access steps and handrail and pool pod lift;
- Changing Places toilet and shower facility;
- exterior sunshade and artwork designed by community groups and a local artist;
- access through to the existing changing facilities; and
- a new plant room and storage for swimming club and pool equipment.

- 3.12 The £2.4m extension and refurbishment of Kingfisher Leisure Centre included:
- a two-storey extension to house a new community and exercise room and dance studio;
 - extended and refurbished 100 station gym, increasing capacity from 40 stations;
 - improved fitness changing rooms;
 - new poolside wet changing and toilet facilities;
 - improved lighting, décor, and mechanical equipment; and
 - New cycle storage.

Separate to the refurbishment scheme, a 40 bay solar carport will soon be erected on the site, creating a new sustainable power source, which when combined with battery storage will feed into the leisure centre, leading to reduced energy costs.

- 3.13 Free school holiday swims for children and young people continue at our leisure centres.
- 3.14 The Active Schools programme aims to reduce obesity and inactivity in children and has been delivered in 8 locations in Babergh; these were Acton, St Gregory & St Peter (Sudbury), Gt Waldingfield, Woodhall (Sudbury), Hadleigh Beaumont, Bures, Wells Hall (Gt Cornard) and Pot Kiln (Gt Cornard).
- 3.15 The Active Well-Being Project supports older adults to stay active and is currently running in Glemsford and Shotley, with plans to expand further.
- 3.16 The extended school holiday programme offered 11 projects in Babergh including swimming, drama, cookery, dance, football camp, arts activity days and science workshops.
- 3.17 We are piloting the 'Our Parks' project, which runs at the recreation ground beside the Stevenson Centre in Great Cornard until the end of October and was developed to target inactivity by providing free activity sessions led by an instructor in outdoor spaces. There has been a total of 543 attendances at these sessions since April 2021.
- 3.18 We were delighted to once again host the Women's Cycling Tour with stage 6 coming through Glemsford and Long Melford in Babergh on Saturday 9th October. Amongst the activities we organised were: 'The Design a Jersey' competition in schools; work with partners to promote cycling through the 'September Cycle Competition' and well as offering funding to local areas to run activities.
- 3.19 Dementia Action Alliance have restarted face-to-face activities, such as bowls club, activity classes and music. Dementia Friendly awareness sessions have delivered to both internal staff and partners.

- 3.20 We have supported Chill Chat and Play in partnership with Home Start Mid in both Hadleigh and Sudbury to support parents with perinatal mental health concerns using arts therapy in home and group sessions.
- 3.21 The Hadleigh Food Project addresses social isolation and overall wellbeing by delivering a healthy eating cookery skills programme, which also connects people to an ongoing friendship network in their locality.
- 3.22 We have also been working closely with the multi-agency Integrated Neighbourhood Teams on the wider determinants of community health on a variety of projects, most involving social prescribing, whether linked to mental health, aging well, isolation and loneliness, dementia and work with young parents.

4. KEY ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

- 4.1 Develop a Delivery Plan to support the Wellbeing Strategy.
- 4.2 Develop a Delivery Plan to support the Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, with a strong focus on local, community-based activities, including work with schools on shared use of sports facilities.
- 4.3 Continue to work internally within the Council and with partners to develop an intelligence-led approach to place-based delivery.
- 4.4 Implement the Locality Officer model in the Communities Team to support this place-based model of working.
- 4.5 Continue to work closely with the multi-agency Integrated Neighbourhood Teams to address the wider determinants of health and continue adult social prescribing.
- 4.6 Agree the business case for Youth Social Prescribing with partner agencies and agree a joint funding strategy, outcomes and priorities.
- 4.7 Develop a programme of Holiday Activity Fund activities for Christmas and Easter holidays and, subject to funding, for half terms.
- 4.8 Work with our Leisure providers to extend the Active Schools and Active Wellbeing projects, which come to an end in December 2021.
- 4.9 Develop community outreach programmes with our Leisure providers, working with Schools, Parish Councils and Health providers to deliver GP referral schemes and activities in care homes.
- 4.10 Continue to support and work with groups to access grants for community projects and improvements to local facilities.
- 4.11 Build on the community volunteering experienced during the pandemic with a focus on supporting already established groups and volunteers and helping create new groups in areas where there are none.

Conclusion

- 5.1 There is little doubt that we continue to operate in a challenging environment because of Covid early research predicts the impact on some communities could be significant. Therefore, we are working at pace with partners to target resources where they are most needed now and working on influencing systems that will aide recovery and “up the ante” on preventive services and interventions in the short to mid-term.
- 5.2 We have a lot to be proud of, and cannot be complacent, community resilience, the response of our leisure providers, coupled with vision, priorities and direction of our Communities and Wellbeing strategies provide us with a sound basis to deliver for our communities.