Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 17 February 2021

Supportive Communities - Update and Delivery Plan 2021/22

Cllr Johnny McMahon, Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing said,

"This council is committed to working with communities and the voluntary sector to deliver local, financially sustainable services that are valued by those who need them.

This approach showed its value during 2020 when those in need received a wide range of help and support, including food deliveries, collection of medical prescriptions and a friendly voice at the end of the phone.

Our intention now is to further improve the digital-based support available and, with the help of communities, the voluntary sector and parish councils use different approaches to ensure those who are 'digitally excluded' are not left behind."

Report Summary:

The Supportive Communities Programme was agreed by Cabinet in March 2020. Since its 'go live', shortly afterwards, the programme has worked in collaboration with the voluntary sector and adult social care practitioners to support the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, introduced and embedded Community Help Points, launched multiple online tools to strengthen our digital information, advice and guidance offer and handed out £203,199 in funding to local community groups to help them to support their communities.

This report sets out in more detail the background and achievements of the Supportive Communities Programme during 2019/20 and our aims and priorities for 2020/21, including our response to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lessons learned. The report also outlines the programme's relationship with the Communities Principle.

This report provides Cabinet with the following update on the Supportive Communities Programme:

Context for the programme

a. What the Supportive Communities Programme has achieved.
b. The lessons learned during 2020, including the response to Covid-19.
c. The proposed 2021/22 proposed priorities.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

a. Considers the 'lessons learned' for the Supportive Communities Programme in 2020;

b. Notes the achievements of the programme so far; and

c. Agrees the high level aims and priorities for the programme in 2021/22.

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Supportive Communities – Update and Delivery Plan 2021/22

Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing

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Report of the Director for Health and Care

Introduction

1. How we work and connect with our communities to ensure residents can help themselves and each other is central to everything we do. As such, strengthening our communities was identified as a key principle in our refreshed Strategic Plan 2018-22.

2. Staffordshire County Council has a strong record of working alongside its communities to design and deliver locally based, financially sustainable services that are well used and valued. We have been one of a group of Councils that embraced this approach nationally.

3. However, there is still much more to do if we are to continue to re-design public services alongside our communities. Following the Covid-19 pandemic and its ongoing impact, **supporting and empowering our communities is more important than ever before.**

4. We saw a huge number of volunteers and community groups working tirelessly across the county to support each other and the most vulnerable people in their local area. This effort was supported by Staffordshire County Council, working flexibly and quickly with our partners in the public and community and voluntary sector to connect people to the local support and help they needed.

5. The **Communities Principle** report that was presented at December's Cabinet outlined how we plan to support residents to stay healthy and resilient. This report will go into more detail around how the Supportive Communities Programme has already supported and plans to support this key strategic principle.

6. This report provides Cabinet with the following update on the Supportive Communities Programme:

a. **Context** regarding work undertaken to date.

b. **What the Supportive Communities Programme has achieved** so far.

c. **The lessons learned during 2020**, including the response to Covid-19.

d. **Proposed priorities** for the programme moving forwards.

Context

7. Supporting people to live independently within our communities has been an enduring council priority. It has been acknowledged for some time that a growing older population in Staffordshire may lead to more people needing our support and care. Inspiring our communities to be healthy and independent is, therefore, a key strategic priority.

8. We know, on average, that Staffordshire Cares Contact Centre (the 'front door' to Adult Social Care services) receives 7,300 contacts a month, of which 75 per cent (around 5,450 queries) can be signposted to other support in the community, or require no further action.

9. Analysis shows that most of these issues are related to social isolation, cleaning or house maintenance, food shopping, and transport. Strikingly, all these issues are better supported by the community rather than social care or other public services.

10. Using an asset-based approach to supporting people's independence and wellbeing is widely recognised as essential to support people living independently in their homes for longer.

11. This is not new; many aspects of the supportive communities' model have been in place for some time and evolving for many years, however we needed to scale them up, so they became our standard operating model.

What the Supportive Communities Programme has achieved so far

12. The Supportive Communities Programme embraced the Council's vision and strategy **to encourage community responses; investing in digital to encourage self-help; and supporting our workforce to be strengths based** – all with communities at the heart of the programme. This can be illustrated in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Supportive Communities Programme

13. The objectives for the programme for 2020 were as follows:

    a. To **achieve a 75% deflection rate** from our Contact Centre to Assessment process (around 5,450 queries signposted to other support in the community, or require no further action)

    b. To **increase the number of citizens and our workforce who utilise our digital offer**

    c. To **increase the number of community assets** that are registered on Staffordshire Connects

    d. To **ensure our workforce has the tools** to support adults and carers to access opportunities & information which will enable them to meet their needs

    e. To **support our communities and citizens** to understand who may need support in their community to meet their own needs with local solutions

    f. To **maintain or reduce** the number of citizens requiring funded packages of care by providing greater levels of community-based support before this stage is reached

14. The programme went live in March 2020 and was immediately pivotal to supporting Staffordshire's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Working alongside Support Staffordshire (our voluntary sector partner), key local anchor organisations, our nationally recognised 'best practice' libraries and the 'cells' that were created to

manage the Councils' response to the emergency, our Supportive Communities model was proven to be fundamental to the success of our response.

Figure 2 provides examples of some of the support that the Supportive Communities model provided.

Figure 2: Supportive Communities Response to Covid 19

15. In addition, the Supportive Communities Programme also delivered:

   a. Digital

      i. Launched a **refreshed web based digital offer** to ensure that older adults and people with additional needs had the knowledge and resources to support themselves at home.

      ii. **Enhanced this offer** through the delivery of targeted Coronavirus Information pages, the HealthApp finder, and the Do It Staffordshire volunteering platform to help communities people stay safe and well as they self-isolated.
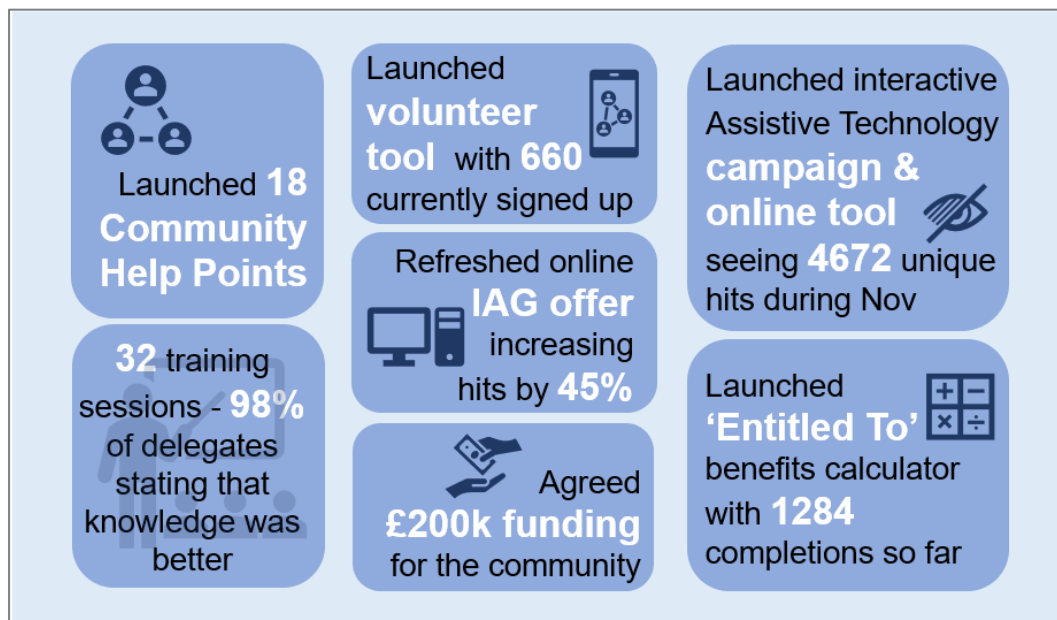
   b. Workforce

      i. **Supported operational teams**, including First Contact and area-based practitioner teams, to utilise new and existing digital resources.

      ii. Facilitated, in partnership with Support Staffordshire, **Supportive Communities based training** (up to the end of November supporting 310 delegates) enhancing skills and providing a comprehensive toolkit covering:

         • Signposting and resources;
         • Communication and safeguarding;
         • Assistive technology and digital skills.

c. Communities

 i. Worked closely with partners, including the voluntary sector, to ensure vulnerable citizens (including the clinically extremely vulnerable) had **access to the support they needed** through the lockdown.

 ii. **Supported** 1350 Staffordshire residents to step up to volunteer through the iCare and iCount campaigns.

 iii. Provided our communities with **information, advice and guidance** and **linked them to voluntary and local community resources**.

 iv. **Supported 149 Mutual Aid Groups** to step up during the Covid-19 pandemic to support their communities with varying local offers, through effective relationships with our partners (including local anchor organisations).

Figure 4: Supportive Communities Delivery During 2020

Launched 18 **Community Help Points**

Launched **volunteer tool** with **660** currently signed up

Launched interactive Assistive Technology **campaign & online tool** seeing **4672** unique hits during Nov

Refreshed online **IAG offer** increasing hits by **45%**

32 training sessions - **98%** of delegates stating that knowledge was better

Agreed **£200k funding** for the community

Launched **'Entitled To'** benefits calculator with **1284** completions so far

Lessons Learned During 2020

16. As part of the Council's approach to recovery from Covid-19, several 'lessons learned' have been identified that the Supportive Communities Programme will use to shape and steer the next phase of delivery:

a. There was a community led **proactive local response** across Staffordshire that was delivered quickly and with little cost.

b. We saw a **significant increase in social action and volunteering**, both formally and informally, supported by the Council's iCare and iCount campaigns.

c. **The VCSE sector has been vital** during the response, and we have seen a significant number of new groups forming at a hyperlocal level. However, the

sustainability of parts of the sector has been affected by the pandemic, and the VCSE will need ongoing support to remain sustainable.

d. The **use of digital has increased** during Covid-19 across all sectors, with significant parts of the Council's services moving online. However, despite positive work to improve digital inclusion during lockdown, the impact on those still digitally excluded is likely to be worse following Covid-19.

Proposed Priorities 2021/22

17. The Supportive Communities Programme makes up part of the wider strategic Communities Delivery Plan as one of its three core workstreams. Although the programme will have its own plans and governance within Health and Care, delivery will be coordinated through the Communities Leadership Group to ensure alignment of priorities, resources and learning in each locality.

18. Work is ongoing to establish the Supportive Communities Programme as part of the adult social care pathway. This includes embedding the recently launched Community Help Points (using local assets such as libraries and anchor organisations), promoting self-help and digital resources (including Do-It Staffordshire and Staffordshire Connects), and supporting the wider workforce with training and development. The programme will also support on the ongoing focus on building capacity in the VCSE sector.

19. In 2021 we will build on the success and learning during 2020 with a greater emphasis of working collaboratively with local communities. We aim to:

a. **Widen our scope** beyond the primary support need of older people to include all adults who contact Staffordshire County Council Adult Social Care.

b. **Extend our focus across the adult social care workforce** to encompass all support areas.

c. Extend our focus to **embed this approach within our commissioned providers and wider partnerships**.

d. Continue to **improve our digital and assistive technology offer** whilst supporting individuals who are digitally excluded in alternative approaches by improving access.

e. **Engage and work more collaboratively** with communities, voluntary sector partners with a particular focus on working with Parish Councils.

f. Underpin all of this with **strong partnership arrangements, robust data and insight and effective communication and engagement.**

Governance

20. This a key priority for Health and Care, with and led by the Assistant Director for Strategy, Public Health and Prevention. The Programme Board brings together senior colleagues from across the Council and Garry Jones from Support Staffordshire to lead and deliver the programme. This is also a key programme

within the wider communities' principle and is an integral part of the Communities Delivery Plan that was agreed by Cabinet in December 2020.

Legal Implications

21. There are no specific legal implications for the Supportive Communities Programme. Amy commissioning work or changes to community assets undertaken as part of the programme will follow the standard legal requirements of our commissioning, procurement, and property management processes.

Financial Implications

22. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report

List of Background Documents / Appendices:

Community Impact Assessment

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