

Report to the Lowestoft and northern parishes Community Partnership – 30 September 2020

OUTCOMES OF THE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP BOARD HELD 7 SEPTEMBER 2020

1. Progress since the previous meeting held 23 June 2020

At its previous meeting, the Board had considered the potential impacts of Covid-19 on East Suffolk people and places. As a result, several Board Members put themselves forward to form a Task Group to consider the following issues and report back to the September meeting of the Board:

- **Social isolation and loneliness:** Top priority overall for the Board (and for six of the eight East Suffolk Community Partnerships)
- **Sustaining Community Hubs and Community Resilience/Empowering/Capability:** How do we capture and retain community energy – and fill any gaps?
- **Supporting the most vulnerable communities and people:** Covid-19 has not impacted every place and age group equally – how can we reduce these differences during recovery?

The Task Group met on 4 August.

Key decisions:

The Board agreed the following recommendations from the Task Group:

Action 1: Invest £50,000 additional funding in the Hidden Needs grant programme aimed at tackling Social Isolation and Loneliness in identified hot spot areas.

Action 2: Fund 25 additional GrandPads or equivalent (cost £25,000) to enable people with limited resources and no IT equipment/Wi-Fi to get connected (particularly in the north of the District).

Action 3: Hold a focus group with our Community Response Groups to identify what interventions have worked best to support those who are isolated and lonely and expand/sustain these groups.

Action 4 - Invest £100,000 in a new East Suffolk VCSE “Bounce Back Fund” to focus on four themes:

- Help local VCSE organisations and community groups to survive and thrive in a new context e.g. funding for infrastructure, promotion, adaptation, or other relevant costs

- Help local community buildings to reopen and resume enabling community activities safely e.g. for signage, PPE, disposable plates and cutlery
- Help youth organisations, groups, and clubs to adapt their activities and continue to support the mental and physical health and wellbeing of young people
- Help organisations who involve volunteers to thrive and grow in line with the volunteering strategy and campaign

Action 5: Allocate £5,000 of funding for a specific East Suffolk Volunteering Campaign to help people to get into volunteering as a pathway back into work, retain new Covid-19 volunteers by offering them additional volunteering opportunities, and support existing volunteers to continue in a new context. (District-wide campaign but with a specific focus on areas such as Lowestoft where volunteer numbers are low).

Action 6: Work with the key Covid-19 response groups in East Suffolk to develop a place focussed approach to Hardship and Food Poverty and scope out any additional resources required.

Action 7: Task Group to meet again with a particular focus on 'Vulnerable People and Places' to develop proposals for the December Board meeting.

2. Transport

Transport is one of two key priorities for the Community Partnership Board (alongside Social Isolation and Loneliness), however the recent focus of the Board has been on social isolation and loneliness and the Covid-19 response. Transport issues remain a priority (and key element of the discussions in many of the Community partnerships) and the Board is now keen to make progress, particularly given the links to other key areas of activity e.g. isolation, health and wellbeing and youth activities.

Key decisions:

The Board agreed the following actions to refocus on this priority:

Action 1: Put plans in place to ensure that the Transport priority is given substantive focus during the Community Partnership Forum in November (see below).

Action 2: Commission some additional resource to work with the Board to identify potential 'quick win' transport projects and help local organisations and groups to develop these with a tight focus on delivering tangible outcomes on the ground.

Action 3: The Board be prepared at its meeting in December to allocate funding from the 2020/21 Community Partnership Board budget to this priority - ringfenced to support local project development and delivery.

3. Community Partnership Annual Forum: 2 – 6 November 2020

As a response to Covid restrictions on events/social contact the annual forum planned to be held at Trinity Park Conference Centre has been cancelled. The Board has agreed to host a week-long programme of virtual events in its place.

Forum Purpose:

- For the Community Partnership Board to host a high-profile event in East Suffolk for representatives from our communities, voluntary organisations, community groups, public services, and businesses, focussing on the strategic priorities identified by the Board (Social Isolation and Transport) and individual Community Partnerships.
- To celebrate early wins and demonstrate the impact of the Community Partnership Board and Community Partnerships.
- To enable the eight Community Partnerships to;
 - i) highlight the impact they are having within their communities and
 - ii) problem solve shared challenges.
- To share knowledge and expertise in the Suffolk System and beyond to work together for the benefit of our communities and businesses in East Suffolk.

The theme of the event is “**East Suffolk: Bringing Ideas to Life**”. Delegates will have the opportunity to join as many sessions as they wish throughout the week. The programme and booking details will be circulated by the end of September and members of the Community Partnerships are encouraged to attend and support the event, as well as to help promote the event to their wider networks.

Luke Bennett, Partnerships Manager
8 September 2020