Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Chief Executive
to
Cabinet

On 18th September 2018

Report prepared by:
Fiona Abbott

Connecting communities to avoid isolation
A Part 1 Agenda Item

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1. **Purpose of Report**

   To present the final report of the in depth Scrutiny project entitled 'Connecting communities to avoid isolation'.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 That Cabinet approves the report and recommendations from the in depth scrutiny project attached at **Appendix 1**.

2.2 To note that approval of any recommendations with budget implications will require consideration as part of future years' budget processes prior to implementation.

3. **Background**

3.1 The People Scrutiny Committee selected its topic at the meeting on 11th July 2017 (Minute 170 refers). The project plan was agreed by the Scrutiny Committee on 10th October 2017 (Minute 374 refers).

3.2 The specific focus of the review was around exploring issues around connecting communities and isolation focussing on the enabling role of the Council, partners and also the role of elected Members. Some further detail can be found in **Appendix 1**, point 2.

3.3 The Member Project Team, which was chaired by Councillor Cheryl Nevin, met on 5 occasions, including a facilitated workshop session on 22nd November and an evidence gathering session on the afternoon of 12th January 2018. The project Team comprised Councillors Helen Boyd, Steve Buckley, Mo Butler, David Garston, Chris Walker, Margaret Borton, Caroline Endersby and Lawrence Davies. Officer support was provided by Sharon Houlden, Sarah Baker, Fiona Abbott and Rob Walters.

3.4 The People Scrutiny Committee received a detailed update at the meeting on 30th January 2018 (Minute 696 refers) and in April 2018 agreed that the project would be concluded early in the 18/19 Municipal Year (Minute 899 refers).

3.5 The final report from the in depth scrutiny review undertaken in 2017/18 has now been agreed by the People Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 19th July 2018 (Minute 151 refers).

4 Recommendations

4.1 In accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10 (Part 4 (e) of the Constitution), the in depth scrutiny report is now attached at **Appendix 1** for approval by Cabinet. It should be noted that approval of any recommendations with budget implications will require consideration as part of future years' budget processes prior to implementation.

4.2 The recommendations from the review are as follows:-

1. That following on from the workshop in January 2018, the Service Transformation Team continue to work with members to establish how some of the key messages can be explored further. This will be aligned closely to the Southend 2050 work and, in particular, the Locality Approach.

2. To promote the offer of skills training to give residents confidence to write bids, to access grants and funding, to build trust between residents and the Council, enabling small groups to become more sustainable. Service Transformation are developing a template/checklist in this respect. An example of a successful small bid will be made available on the website in the near future.

3. To undertake a review of the Councils event policies with a view to removing unnecessary obstacles for small events to happen led by community groups.

4. Create an environment where local groups can link up with each other with the assistance of community catalysts/mentors/champions.

5. Continue to promote a strength based approach via our community hubs through a variety of means, including the website, in support of the Locality Approach.

5. Other Options

Not applicable.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision and Critical Priorities – Becoming an excellent and high performing organisation.
6.2 Financial Implications – there are financial implications to some recommendations but as yet they are unquantifiable. However, any recommendations progressing with associated financial implications will need to go through the annual budgetary process before implementation, as currently no revenue or capital budgets exist for the proposals.
6.3 Legal Implications – none.
6.4 People Implications – none.
6.5 Property Implications – none.
6.6 Consultation – as described in report.
6.7 Equalities Analysis – Implementation of the recommendations needs to have regard as to whether loneliness disproportionally affects people of a particular

age, people with a disability or people with English as second language, women and children etc. Whilst all groups can experience loneliness, evidence suggests that key determining factors such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, environment, income and age often have an impact. As the implementation of the recommendations progresses, officers will develop strategies to ensure that the circumstances of each person are considered.

6.8 Risk Assessment – none.

7. Background Papers

Notes from project team meetings, emails to witnesses.

8. Appendix

Appendix 1 – in depth scrutiny project report