

## **Cabinet – 20 October 2021**

### **Resilient Communities - Safer Streets**

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Councillor G Perry
<b>Related portfolios:</b>	All
<b>Service:</b>	Resilient Communities
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Forward plan:</b>	Yes

#### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The Administration has placed the Resilient Communities philosophy at the heart of its approach to securing a cleaner, greener, safer and stronger borough. Alongside this, people's feeling of safety and the environment in which they live are key drivers of resident satisfaction, one of the three Proud promises.
- 1.2 Cabinet is asked to consider a Resilient Communities initiative called Safer Streets. It is the next step in the Council's approach to supporting residents and communities in participating and building in an assets based approach to key community issues.
- 1.3 The initiative puts residents and co-design at its heart, and its focus is what is important to an area. It is wide ranging in terms of scope and utilising four levels in responding to challenges, these are:
  - a) Personal responsibility
  - b) Community led solutions
  - c) Integrated services
  - d) Integrated enforcement
- 1.4 Safer Streets is the next step in the development of the Resilient Communities model, which has proved successful during the COVID pandemic. We will be building social capital in localities and using a modest cash investment to pump prime the initiative.
- 1.5 A report will be prepared for Cabinet for 2022.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves a Safer Streets Programme pilot as part of its commitment to delivering Resilient Communities.

2.2 That Cabinet approves a revenue budget of £50,000 for 2021/22 to support the Safer Streets Programme pilot.

2.3 That Cabinet receives a report in April 2022 on the delivery of the pilot areas.

### 3. Report detail

#### **Context**

3.1 In October 2019, Cabinet approved a paper on Resilient Communities entitled 'Resilient Communities – A New Model of Personal Responsibility, Community Led Solutions, Integrated Community Safety and Community Protection and Enforcement'. This introduced the concept of Resilient Communities, which is a strength-based approach that, where appropriate, utilises individuals and communities to support themselves and underpins that support with integrated services and integrated enforcement.



3.3 **Personal responsibility** – This aspect of resilient communities focuses on individuals and families. It looks to ensure that people are communicated with effectively and then asks people to act responsibly in their everyday lives. This approach can be used across a whole range of activities from litter to more complex criminal activity. It seeks for people to understand what they can do for themselves.

3.4 **Community Led solutions** - The community response to COVID-19 and the involvement of many of our community organisations was remarkable. The services delivered throughout the pandemic could only be achieved with a strong community sector. The sector provided high quality and adaptable services focused on the needs of our communities. Community organisations have a strong track record of delivery.

- 3.5 **Integrated Services** – The Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) programme and work with MHJ are good examples of integrated services delivering joined up programmes of work with Resilient Communities playing a part in supporting Council activities. Ensuring that teams have a joined up approach for the benefit of residents is key.
- 3.6 **Integrated Enforcement** – We must work effectively with our partners to ensure residents are supported and protected. Walsall is a nice place to live and work and those that want to create issues for residents through fly tipping, ASB or other illegal activities are not welcome. There is and will continue to be better work with partners to ensure residents of Walsall have good partnership responses.
- 3.7 The COVID-19 pandemic-focused attention on the efficiency and effectiveness of local communities and the voluntary sector in tackling issues and taking responsibility for solutions. The strength-based approaches identified have proved a great success. Lessons from this very difficult period include:
- a) Building trust between communities and statutory services is a key design feature of a resilient communities approach. This trust is slow to gain and quick to lose. It requires good honest communication, a listening style and respect for communities.
  - b) Communities are happy to play their part in solutions if they are appropriately supported. The success of local litter pick groups provides good evidence.
  - c) Small investments may build large increases in social capital.
  - d) Residents respond positively to speedy resolution of issues. This can impact the view of council performance in line with our Proud approach.
- 3.8 The approach needs a focus on sound community working and efficient council and partner working. Both need to be aligned and the Proud programme and promise brings an opportunity to further align our services with our resilient communities approach.
- 3.9 The Community and personal responsibility of Safer Streets will be led by activity to listen to our residents and communities, understanding what is important to them and flexing our services to meet those needs. It will involve investing small amounts of money on community projects that encourage ownership of issues and co-designing of solutions with residents and communities. This might be:
- a) Forming a new neighbourhood watch;
  - b) A small investment in street furniture or scrubland;
  - c) Parking enforcement activity;
  - d) The use of a physical barrier to stop fly tipping;
  - e) The installation of a community book box linked to a book exchange;
  - f) Supporting the creation of a litter-picking group;
  - g) Any other appropriate activity.
- 3.10 The investment would be expected to see a return in social value in an area. It would, if appropriate link in with local community groups and would increase the resilience within a community. We have already learnt, that through our Walsall for All activity, that a small investment in a community can bring an increase in social value and have already trialled the approach in areas such as Short Heath where our support for a community group, has led to increased return through volunteering through the COVID-19 pandemic, litter picking, supporting people

who are socially isolated and social activity. The small investment created a strong link to our community, which will allow us to take on more projects with the community. Council resources are stretched and this approach will leverage social value into our communities.

3.11 To take this approach forward the Council will not be put any boundary restrictions on its scope. We will select five or six areas to pilot the approach and work with communities to scope the pilots. We will involve partners in our work to ensure we maximise our investment and ensure it is aligned to need and local priorities.

3.12 Services in scope are, but are not limited to:

- a) Green spaces
- b) Litter picking
- c) Fly tipping
- d) Library services
- e) Housing standards
- f) Anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- g) Noise
- h) Speedwatch
- i) Neighbourhood Watch
- j) Street Watch
- k) Community Watch
- l) Parking
- m) Places of Safety
- n) Neighbourhood Natters
- o) Cohesion

3.14 The Resilient Communities approach has already been well received by residents, it changes the dynamic of the relationship with them and improves the reputation of the Council. The Resilient Communities approach was already in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, its true power was magnified during the pandemic. We do not want to lose the momentum so pace is key to the success of our pilot areas. From this initial work, we will then bring a paper back to Cabinet that seeks to mainstream the approach.

#### **4. Council Corporate Plan priorities**

4.1. The wide nature and scope of the Safer Streets Programme means that it could cut across all the Council Corporate Plan priorities:

- a) **ECONOMIC** Growth for all people, communities and business. We would want to work with local businesses to build further connections with local communities. There are great relationships in some areas already and great co-working examples.
- b) **PEOPLE** have increased independences, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities. Residents are a key part of the Resilient Communities models. Involvement of residents in the Safer Street will increase their wellbeing and allow appropriate signposting and support.
- c) **INTERNAL** Focus – All Council services are efficient and effective. A key element of our work is the efficiency and effectiveness of our work. As we work with residents, we will be providing feedback to our internal services.

- d) CHILDREN have the best possible start, are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well. Our work will include Children within its scope.
- e) COMMUNITIES are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion. Communities are at the heart of Resilient Communities. The asset-based approach, will enable us to build community confidence and create social value.

4.2 As the corporate plan points out, the COVID-19 pandemic has made us rethink how best we can meet our three PROUD promises:

- a) Improved customer experience
- b) Improved staff satisfaction
- c) Financial benefit and service efficiency

4.3 The Resilient Communities approach has been stress tested throughout the pandemic and has proved successful.

## **5. Risk management**

5.1 There are no significant risks in relation to Safer Streets, there will be a risk register supporting each of the Safer Streets initiatives.

## **6. Financial implications**

6.1 There is a requirement for £50,000 per annum to support the Safer Streets programme. Funding for 2021/22 will be allocated from current underspends within resilient communities. Funding for 2022/23 onwards will be found through the reallocation of existing budgets within resilient communities with no overall budget impact.

## **7. Legal implications**

7.1. There are no legal implications relating to this report.

## **8. Procurement Implications/Social Value**

8.1 There are no direct procurement implications for this report and any resulting procurement processes will comply with the Council's Contract Rules.

## **9. *Property implications***

9.1 There are no direct property implications of this report

## **10. Health and wellbeing implications**

10.1 Building confidence in our communities alongside giving residents the opportunity to join in activities for community good will have a positive impact on Health and Wellbeing.

There is strong connectivity between Public Health outcomes and Safer Streets and a partnership approach would be welcomed.

## **11. Staffing implications**

- 11.1 There are no staffing issues from this report. An associated piece of work is the current restructure within Resilient Communities, which is nearing completion.

## **12. Reducing Inequalities**

- 12.1 The work that will be undertaken as part of Safer Streets, whilst not directly focused on inequalities. However, issues, including issues relating to crime and ASB often will have an inequalities aspect, as there is a strong connection. Issues that increase social value and kindness will have a positive impact on reducing inequalities.

## **13. Consultation**

- 13.1 Our service design and delivery as part of our Safer Streets, will be co-designed with our residents. This work will be consulted on as part of the implementation of Safer Streets.

## **Background papers**

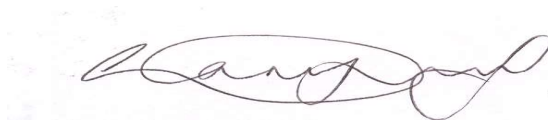
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