

## Briefing note

### Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

#### Title: Resilient Communities

### Service area: Resilient Communities

### Portfolio: Councillor G Perry, Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities

#### 1. Aim

At the Social Care and Health OSC the Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> November, Members discussed the 'positive impact on adult social care of the interventions of the resilient communities model' and resolved to request a report to a future meeting.

This briefing note gives a background to the approach and looks at examples of how it works in communities.

#### 3. Know

Resilient Communities is a holistic approach to working with communities. It is a strength based approach which supports personal responsibility, community led solutions, integrated services and integrated statutory support. The approach works in a variety of settings but is incredibly strong when dealing with community support. It is strong in this area because it builds on the trust and relationship that already exists between communities and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and between the Council and the VCS. The relationship between the sector and Council has been transformed over the last few years and is very positive.

The focus of the briefing is the community element of the resilient communities approach which is built on professional delivery in nice spaces with caring people.



On the ground the resilient communities approach builds on these trusted relationships and uses kindness, friendship and a sense of belonging to add to the professional approach within our key community assets to deliver support in the heart of our community. This support is intended to build individual and community wellbeing that:

- Keeps people in their homes longer
- Keeps people in their communities longer
- Keeps people active longer

All these elements build towards a better experience for our residents and importantly reduced demand on statutory services. During the COVID-19 pandemic the power of our community groups in building on Council support to provide individual care and support at the heart of our communities has been outstanding. They became our community front line leading on local support in not only traditional community support areas but also in areas such as lateral flow testing, vaccination support and surge testing. The Community stepped up and responded in a professional way. Most importantly when our community groups are involved the level of kindness, support and care within our communities increases.



The work of our community partners speaks for itself and several partners are attending scrutiny to do just that.

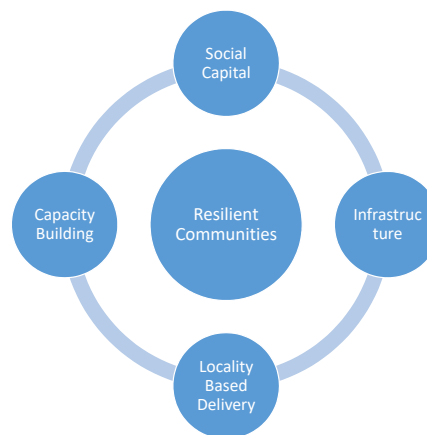
The programme is linked to the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- **COMMUNITIES** are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion
- **PEOPLE** have increased independences, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities

The Resilient Communities approach is gaining momentum within the Council and with key partners. It is a strength based approach which requires:

- Good, in house knowledge of the voluntary and community sector;
- Commitment to co-design and collaborative working where appropriate;
- Increasing Social Capital within Walsall both on a personal and organisational level.
- Key elements of infrastructure to support the work. Making Connections Walsall and a voluntary sector infrastructure organisation are two key elements of that infrastructure.
- Strong collaboration with partners such as WHG

## Resilient Communities - Capabilities



In addition to these core elements speed of decision making, a closer relationship with our communities, appropriate levels of monitoring and a more holistic approach to issues are planned by-products of resilient communities.

### **Sector Capacity**

The Walsall Community Network were at the heart of our COVID-19 Community response and saw the benefits in collaborating to best meet the needs of the communities of Walsall. The network is made up of the following organisations:

Aaina Community Hub  
Bloxwich Community Partnership  
Brownhills Community Association  
Collingwood Centre  
Frank F Harrison Community Association  
Manor Farm Community Association  
Moxley People's Centre  
Old Hall People's Partnership  
Park Hall Community Association  
Pelsall Community Centre  
Ryecroft Community Hub

Sneyd Community Association  
Streetly Sports and Community Association  
Walsall Black Sisters Collective  
Willenhall CHART

These are geographically spread and are close to their communities. Other organisations such as Darlaston All Active collaborate with network members and others on a number of initiatives. These key community assets have their own strong local networks of local organisations where collaboration is key.

The Council is also building new capacity in the Borough, often in partnership with WHG, One Walsall, Walsall Together and other partners. This working across partners is key to avoiding duplication, increasing collaboration, encouraging new organisations and improving the community offer to residents.

Capacity to support people in their communities is vital and key investments are being made to ensure capacity is increased where it is needed.

## **Case Studies**

Person A was referred to a Community Organisation when their partner was hospitalised with Covid 19. As their condition deteriorated, we supported Person A with weekly befriending calls, and facilitated them to visit when permissible. Their partner slowly recovered and was eventually able to return home. Person A has subsequently attended coffee/support mornings and offered their time volunteering with gardening activities at the Centre.

Person B's mental health deteriorated considerably due to the impact of the isolation resulting from the pandemic. After a long career as a dance instructor they were spending more time in bed and lost all motivation. After weekly telephone befriending calls, they subsequently agreed to attend a coffee/support morning. Although very anxious initially, and struggling to overcome a speech impediment exacerbated by their poor mental health, Person B gained confidence, made new friends and now visits another group member to deliver and collect books for them to read.

A resident was signposted to a local community organisation. It was arranged that hot lunches and newspapers were delivered during lockdown by volunteers. They began benefiting from this service too but when lockdown eased began coming to our centre. They now come to our coffee mornings/lunch club and any entertainment we may be hosting, without their carer. The resident now mixes with other members and has gained confidence.

A resident was referred to a community group during the height of the pandemic. They have been receiving befriending calls throughout 2021 but had not really had the confidence to leave the house during the lockdowns. Doorstep visits were made once a month as well as weekly calls. They began attending coffee and chat at the beginning of January 2022 for the first time. A staff member walked with them round to the centre. They really enjoyed attending and met an old friend of theirs who they hadn't seen for a number of years. The resident came by themselves this week and said

they had also been to the local shops during the week, as she felt more confident.

These are individual cases that have made a difference to individual's lives. Once in a community organisation there are wide ranging opportunities to engage in activities which beat loneliness and isolation and increases wellbeing.



Paul Gordon

Director of Resilient Communities

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022