

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Corporate Policy & Performance
DATE	25 th November 2010
DIRECTOR	Stewart Carruth, Director of Corporate Governance
TITLE OF REPORT	Working Better Together – Update
REPORT NUMBER:	CG/10/195

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides members with an update and proposals for developing local collaborative planning initiatives aimed at saving money in the future by developing a joined up service approach that will more effectively address and prevent the long term costs associated with failure to solve complex social problems.

The report builds on the proposals outlined in the report to this Committee on the 10th June 2010 (CG/10/112) and proposes Raising Educational Attainment and Achievement in the Northfield, Cummings Park, Middlefield and Heathryfold neighbourhoods as the focal theme for the first initiative and identifies the themes of community safety, older people and care services as the focus for further initiatives.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee is asked to:

1. agree that the initial collaborative project will focus on improving educational attainment and achievement in the Northfield, Cummings Park, Middlefield and Heathryfold neighbourhoods and the themes of community safety, older people and care services as the focus for further initiatives.
2. remit this report to the Education, Culture and Sports Committee for information and note that a further report providing specific detail on how the initiative will be delivered will be provided for that Committee.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The approach being proposed is intended to build on community and neighbourhood planning to date applying learning from the U.K experience of Total Place projects which were designed to tackle the current major challenge for the public sector of doing “more with less” . This will involve an audit of current spend on proposed themes eg investment and expenditure in raising and improving educational attainment and achievement. An important element involves consideration of relevant trends and therefore predictive growth in costs of continuing with existing models of service delivery and the need for a whole system approach across the public service in the future.

A feature of the Total Place initiatives in England involved a high level audit of all public sector investment across the pilot areas. This involved not only the levels of investment in Councils, Health Boards, Police services etc but also the wider investment through central government in providing welfare benefits and other costs associated with central services. As part of demonstrating the financial impact in terms of savings from the localized initiatives, it would be beneficial to measure this within the context of overall investment to the city e.g. if the proposed initial project leads to more positive outcomes for young people when they leave school we need to demonstrate the benefit in terms of reduction in welfare provision and make the case for reinvestment in preventative work. In the North East of Scotland it is estimated that there is £2 billion of expenditure through the public sector; the Director of Corporate Governance is in discussion with partners on proposals for how we can achieve a better analysis of this expenditure in the future.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that the Officers Steering group (see 5.12) which has been established to oversee and manage the initial project, and subsequent initiatives, should give early consideration to the deployment of resources required to support and deliver initiatives within the current financial constraints and should report where necessary to appropriate Committees of the Council. Officers are discussing, with both the Scottish Government and The Improvement Service, the possibility of national support in the development of a Total Place approach and the initiation of projects.

In relation to the initial theme being proposed a further report for the Education, Culture and Sports Committee is proposed to provide detail on how the project will be progressed and developed at the local level and identifying any resources considerations that may need to be addressed.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The Corporate Policy and Performance Committee of 10th June considered a report (CG/10/112) from Stewart Carruth, Director of Corporate Governance which focused on changes needed to save money by developing local collaborative planning for more efficient service delivery and by developing joined up services that more effectively address and prevent complex social problems.
- 5.2 The main benefits being sought from taking forward the Total Place approach are to:
- achieve efficiency savings and redeploying resources to improve service impact and outcomes
 - reshape the most efficient long term investment of the public sector settlement
 - taking a whole system approach, redesign service systems in key thematic areas to effectively stem the predictable demand for public services
 - develop more effective preventative models of service design
 - build local leadership capacity for collaborative working, community action and individual resilience
 - mainstream the learning across the whole service system
- 5.3 The initial report proposed that the geographic focus should be on the priority regeneration areas with a clustering approach to maximize economies of scale. The report also proposed a gradual roll out of initiatives so that the learning from collaborative working can be fully captured and used to inform subsequent initiatives.
- 5.4 As part of developing this approach officers in Corporate Governance developed a “prototype” demonstration presentation based on the cluster of neighbourhoods in the northwest of the City i.e. Northfield, Middlefield, Cummings Park and Heathryfold which examines the specific theme of raising educational attainment and achievement.
- 5.5 Socio-economic and demographic information for this area, along with relevant education performance data and initial outline financial information regarding expenditure on learning factors was gathered in order to demonstrate the approach. The proposed project would examine this expenditure in more detail and analyse current service delivery in relation to achieving outcomes.

- 5.6 Long term costs associated with responding to complex social problems, using comparisons from the Total Place pilot projects in England and other national cost comparison research findings were used to estimate the long term financial costs associated with system failure based on the area and theme identified at 5.4. For example:
- a) The current direct cost of government interventions and provisions around a family in chronic crisis is conservatively estimated at being up to £250,000 per year per family. The number of looked after children and families at risk supported to stay together or in their own communities in Aberdeen, in April 2010, was 383.
 - b) Academic studies have shown a link between an individual's education, labour market prospects and his or her probability of turning to crime. The average cost per youth crime is estimated at £4,585 per crime. In 2009 there were 1,650 offenders under the age of 16 in the City. There are a significant number of youth offences occurring in the Northfield area.
 - c) The cost to the public for young people who have negative destinations, post compulsory education, is significant in terms of direct benefit claimed i.e. Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) at £50.95 per week as against productivity loss to Aberdeen's economy if an average weekly wage of £252 was secured for the 16-19 age group. In September 2010 the total claimants for the City was 3,430 this includes 860 in the 18-24 age group.
 - d) The economic benefits of higher education are significant the average cost to the state per graduate in one study estimated this at £21,000 with the net return in additional taxation and national insurance over a lifetime estimated at £72,000 per graduate.

There is therefore a strong rationale for adopting a whole systems approach as this has the potential to not only benefit individuals and communities as a whole but also reduce the costs to the public by stemming the costs associated with systems failure.

- 5.7 The presentation was used to brief members prior the Corporate Policy & Performance Committee in June and has subsequently been used to brief the Extended Management Team and has provided the basis for further discussion with each Services' Senior Management Teams to identify potential areas/themes where the business case to develop this approach is compelling.
- 5.8 The ""prototype"" identified the following summary of factors that relate to educational attainment and achievement and provide a strong business case for developing this approach in this area of the City further:

- a) There are over 3,500 children aged under 16 in the Northfield ward. This is 22% of the total ward population – the highest percentage in Aberdeen.
- b) A large number of Northfield's adult population have no recognized qualification.
- c) Benefit claimants account for more than 20% of Northfield's working age population.
- d) A high proportion of school children at Northfield schools are entitled to free school meals – eg over 60% at Bramble Brae (the highest in Aberdeen).
- e) Primary schools in the Northfield area have relatively high proportions of Looked After Children on their rolls.
- f) Attainment at Northfield Academy is the lowest in Aberdeen. In 208/09 only 4% of S4 pupils achieved 5 plus awards at level 5 or better.
- g) Northfield Academy has the highest number of secondary school exclusions in Aberdeen.
- h) Less than three quarters of Northfield Academy school leavers have a "positive" destination – i.e. leavers who go onto further education, higher education, employment or training.
- i) The absence rate at Northfield Academy in 2008/09 was 14%, the second highest in Aberdeen after St Machar Academy.
- j) There are relatively high levels of youth offending in Northfield.

5.9 The Education, Culture and Sports Senior Management Team have fully considered the information from the "prototype". The information relating to low educational attainment, comparatively high absence and exclusion rates alongside the range of existing investments on aspects aimed at tackling disadvantage in the area provides a strong case for developing this initial work further.

It is therefore proposed that Raising Educational Attainment and Achievement in the Northfield, Cummings Park, Middlefield and Heathryfold neighbourhoods should be the focus for initial project development.

5.10 The Housing and Environment Senior Management Team in considering the initial report have identified the need for a focus on providing better environments and places for people to live. Aspects

such as community safety also feature within this potential theme. Grampian Police are very supportive of the Total Place concept and see the benefits collaborative working and a stronger partnership approach can bring. Previously, they had initiated similar collaborative approaches including the Total Communities work that was successfully piloted in Torry and Kincorth and more recently, in the Tillydrone neighbourhood, they carried out some analytical work which could provide the basis for building a second initiative. It is therefore proposed that this theme should provide the basis for a further collaborative initiative.

The Social Care and Well Being Senior Management Team recognized that their service tends to be, in general terms, providing services to vulnerable families and individuals as a consequence of societal problems so moving to more preventative models of working would, if successful, be beneficial in the long term; stemming potential problems for the future. Two areas for potential development have been highlighted;

- i. older people – in terms of how we collaboratively plan for the implications of the rise in the elderly population and encourage older people to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.
- ii. care services - how we can intervene, prevent and support people in the future.

It is therefore proposed that these themes should provide the focus for further collaborative initiatives .

Officers Steering Group

5.12 Given the cross-cutting nature and the interdependency factors that contribute towards tackling complex social problems a Steering Group has been established to oversee and manage this initiative. This comprises a Head of Service representative from each of Senior Management Team's with the following outline remit:

- provide leadership
- engage partners
- identify future themes
- review Business cases for key projects
- monitor implementation of key projects
- evaluate outcomes from key projects
- update stakeholders (including community stakeholders)

- appoint service champions
- ensure robust governance arrangements for decision making , reporting to Committees and informing Council Members.

and it is envisaged that, as the first projects are identified and initiated, the Steering Group could be expanded to include representatives of our main partners. The Officers Steering Group currently comprises Paul Fleming, Head of Customer Service and Performance, Hugh Murdoch, Head of Asset Management and Operations, John Quinn, Head of Regeneration and Housing Investment, Tom Cowan, Head of Adult Services and Charlie Penman, Head of Education Development Policy and Performance.

- 5.13 In taking forward the proposed projects, officers propose exploring the use of Social Return on Investment methodology and modeling to quantify the potential benefits to all stakeholders of different patterns of investment changes to systems and processes.

6. IMPACT

The proposal and approach set out in this report supports Community Planning, the delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement and the objectives of Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking by identifying priorities for joined up service delivery and more effective collaborative working with partners and citizens.

In relation to the 6 priorities set out in the 5 year business plan the initial proposal focused on raising educational attainment and achievement would help towards:

- a) providing for the needs of the most vulnerable people
- b) helping to ensure that all schoolchildren reach their potential and
- c) ensuring efficient and effective delivery of services by the council and with its partners.

The principles that underpin the approach being proposed, dependant on the focus for further initiatives, have the potential to support the delivery of all six priorities over the next 5 years.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Total Place: A Whole Area Approach to Public Services , pub HM Treasury , March 2010

The Cost of Exclusion: Counting the Cost of Youth Disadvantage in the U.K, pub Princes Trust, April 2007

Economic Benefits of Higher Education Qualifications, pub Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Feb 2005

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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