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| REPORT TO: | Scrutiny Commission |
| SUBJECT: | Community Recovery Post Covid -19 |
| LEAD OFFICER: | Eileen Mallon |
| CABINET LEAD MEMBER: | Cllr. J Morgan |
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| ORIGIN OF ITEM: | At its meeting on 12th October 2020 the Commission agreed that it would be beneficial to receive updates from the Council's remaining Covid Recovery Cells. This is an update on the Community Recovery cell |
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| BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE | To provide the Commission with an update on the work of the community recovery cell. |
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 12th October 2020 the Scrutiny Commission resolved that 'the Scrutiny Commission received updates from the remaining Covid Recovery cells; Community and Economic. These would alternate, starting with an update on the Community Recovery cell at its meeting on 16th November 2020.' This is a summary report to provide an update to the Commission.
- 1.2 The Community Recovery Cell continues to meet, although the frequency of meetings has been reduced to reflect the fact that many of the items being covered by the group are being delivered over a longer period of time than when there was a requirement to provide emergency responses. Therefore, the cell meets on a monthly rather than weekly basis as was the case during the lockdown period.

2. Report

- 2.1 The work programme for the cell is attached at Appendix A. Members will note that the plan is still being followed through 4 themes, Building Stronger Communities, Building Safer Spaces, Building Community Connections, Building a Lasting Legacy. Within the themes there are some key activities which have been the major focus of the group since the Commission considered the community recovery activity at its meeting in August. These key areas are outlined below.

2.2 Community Hub

The major focus of the hub has been to continue to ensure that there are systems in place to provide ongoing support to those who need it including food parcels, befriending and shopping by volunteers eg assistance with food shopping and prescriptions. The distribution of food has now largely reverted to local food banks, although the food bank at John Storer House (JSH) continues to have over 230 weekly clients (mixture of delivery / collection) alongside 72 parcels for the homeless. In addition, they have continued in a coordinating role to manage the Hub with assistance from the Council. The Council has extended the secondment of an officer to JSH to the end of December 2020 to support these transitions, in addition to other staff who are continuing to support with co-ordination, the food bank and deliveries. This will be considered alongside the reintroduction of lock down measures and the need for additional support.

JSH have also brought the Loughborough Against Corona Volunteer project in house and are managing the database of active volunteers so that they can match any future requests from people who require help and support. JSH have also incorporated the befriending service element into their core business.

A Charnwood Food Poverty Officer, managed by The Bridge, has been appointed and has been working with all members of the Charnwood Food Poverty Group (CFPG) including the Hub. In September the Shepshed & Soar Valley food banks reopened, residents are being directed to local food banks in those areas and the Mountsorrel Community Fridge is now up and running. The CFPG members are starting to see an increase in new referrals with the Hub seeing an average of 15 new clients a week, capacity for some food banks may become an issue should things start to escalate.

Plans are in place to scale things back up, should there be further need for increased deliveries with any new shielding or lockdown restrictions. Discussions have taken place with the University and there is also an ability to provide deliveries for students who are isolating and unable to access food deliveries if needed, although there is no indication that this will be required at this time.

Consideration is being given to the level of support that JSH may need in the longer term to enable the community hub activity to continue. Their Trustees have agreed in principle to host the Hub until March 2021 if required, although the CFPG are exploring options for its relocation.

In addition, some of the £540,000 allocated to Leicestershire County Council by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) from its Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies fund has been allocated to Charnwood. £69,127 has been awarded to support local food banks to help

vulnerable people and those shielding access food, toiletries, and other essential supplies. £64,111 has also been allocated to the Borough Council to assist with signposting and emergency support to vulnerable people and those self-isolating, including assistance with food, low level mental health and wellbeing and utility costs.

23 Leisure, Culture and Events

All leisure centres and swim facilities were open, and up until the Government's announcement of a second lockdown plans were in place to increase the range of activities available. This work is now on hold until the leisure centres can reopen at the end of lockdown.

The museum will also be closed to the public during lockdown and will move to an online service only. Events planned to take place during November are now in the process of being cancelled. Remembrance Day, Armistice Day and the reading of the Loughborough Fair's charter to mark the 799th year of the Fair are now likely to be made available via a live broadcast with no members of the public in attendance.

The Christmas markets and plaza that were planned to take place in November have also been cancelled but a shop-safe and shop-local initiative will still go ahead encouraging local shopping on and off line.

Football and cricket have been opened and pitches brought back into use, however, these facilities will not be operating during lockdown.. Parkrun was hoping to return at the end of October, however, this did not come to fruition.

In partnership with Leicester-shire and Rutland Sport, the community Hub, Charnwood Lifeline Service and Charnwood's Housing teams the Sport and Active Recreation team have delivered over 1100 physical activity bags to encourage older people to stay active at home as well as access to 5 x virtual seated exercise videos.

Workplace Health instructors are being utilised to deliver weekly yoga, circuit and mindfulness sessions to all Council staff, these are accessed via Zoom. In addition, 10 stretch videos have been produced and have been inserted into weekly staff calendars to encourage staff to take a break from their workstation and stretch.

The October Half Term Holiday Activity Programme was delivered online, children were able to participate in a variety of daily physical activity challenges, the programme reached 5,094 individuals over three different social media platforms with gymnastics being the most popular post.

Guided Walks resumed in early August, walkers can choose from 14 different walks ranging from one hour health walks, Nordic walks and longer walks for the more experienced walker. To date 200 individuals have attended walks with over 1000 attendances. The

Choose to Move weight management class has recommenced and is currently taking place on a weekly basis outdoors on Jubilee Park, with the aim of moving this class back indoors over the coming weeks. Both the walks and the Choose to Move will be put on hold during the lockdown period and will be reassessed going forward.

2.4 Parks and Green Spaces

All parks and open spaces have been open with additional signage regarding social distancing measures. Improved and enhanced woodland areas are being considered with progress made on a Tiny Forest scheme. Funding is being sought from the Forestry Commission to create a new woodland in Hathern. Officers are working with Hathern Parish Council on this project with the hope of planting 13,000 trees in the autumn of 2021.

From the 5th of November, due to lockdown, a number of facilities will be closed in line with national guidelines. These facilities are likely to include;

- Sports pitches and the golf course
- Outdoor gyms
- Multi Use Games Areas.

Parks and play areas will remain open throughout lockdown.

2.5 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Homelessness remains a considerable challenge for the Council, the Housing Options Team has received over 643 Housing Advice and Homelessness applications.

The Council have not seen the expected spike of Domestic Violence/Prison/Hospital Discharges reported nationally.

There are currently 85 cases in temporary accommodation and a further 13 rough sleepers for whom the council accommodated under the emergency provisions.

The Council led on a collaborative bid for funding under the Next Steps Accommodation programme across the County and received £329,000. This includes funding for:

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| • Extended emergency accommodation | - | £210,908 |
| • Supported accommodation | - | £ 53,735 |
| • Private rented sector/reconnection incentives | - | £ 45,300 |
| • Support staff | - | £ 20,000 |

The Council also submitted an individual bid for longer term move on accommodation, for the provision of seven properties with support for rough sleepers. On the 29th October 2020, the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP announced the funding allocations for 3,300 units of

accommodation for rough sleepers nationally, which included £586,487 for Charnwood. All allocations are subject to due diligence and contract, and all future years' revenue payments are contingent on satisfactory performance against grant conditions and objectives.

3.0 National Lockdown 5th November – 2nd December

- 3.1 With effect from Thursday 5th November, the whole of England was placed into national lockdown, meaning a requirement to work from home where possible, and the closure of some businesses. As a consequence, the Community Recovery cell will revert to response mode, to ensure that we can maintain services and support our communities, especially those who are vulnerable. Details of all the restrictions and the support available for individuals and business are on the Council's website here https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/news/2020/11/03/changes_to_council_services_for_new_national_lockdown_measures

Appendices: Appendix A Work Programme

Background Papers:

None

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