

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	12 April 2018

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To present an update from the Community Engagement team on Resident Engagement, Staff Engagement, Blackpool Fairness Commission and Future Engagement.

### 2.0 Recommendation:

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the content of the report and highlight any areas for further scrutiny which will be reported back as appropriate.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation:

3.1 To ensure robust scrutiny of those areas where Community Engagement activity is essential to council plans.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered: None

### 4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is

- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

### 5.0 Background Information

5.1 Following the successful allocation of £300,000 in the Fylde Coast Vanguard for

Community Engagement, in December 2016, the Community Engagement team moved across to Public Health.

5.2 In late 2017 there were changes in staffing with both staff members leaving the organisation for new opportunities. The position of Community Engagement and Partnership Manager has been filled by Chloe Shore who will be splitting her time between Jobs, Friends and Houses and Council Engagement. The position of Community Engagement and Development Officer is currently out for recruitment.

### 5.3 **Opportunities**

Embedding a strategic approach to engagement into the Council's policy and strategy formation processes will support departments in meeting best practice, prevent over engagement and allow clear reporting outcomes. In addition there is an opportunity for Councillors to support engagement within their wards allowing the team to connect their community knowledge into council processes to encourage development and more open communication.

### 5.4 **Risks**

With limited available resource the team will operate at a strategic level, facilitating other departments in effective engagement and working to embed best practice and basic reporting. The lack of current strategic Key Performance Indicators and engagement specific reporting doesn't allow the Council to clearly report overall resident engagement or progress against council objectives.

## 6.0 **Community Engagement Activity**

### 6.1 **Residents Engagement**

As part of the Council's obligation and commitment to consult with residents on proposed changes to the local area, a number of projects and events have taken place.

- **Commissioning Consultation**

As part of ongoing commissioning within public health, consultation will take place regarding any proposed changes to services to ensure service users are able to shape their services.

- **Town Development**

As part of the 'Make Blackpool Better' campaign there has been extensive work within communities to consult and inform. This includes the recruitment of a Public Liaison Officer, business visits, trailer events, the use of the highways consultative forum and monthly business meetings. In addition to this social media and print advertising have been used to inform residents of work plans.

- **Residents Research**

Regular surveys and research with local residents to understand their perceptions of the local area and feedback on council services. This includes an on-going rolling street survey across town centre locations and a representative resident survey commissioned every few years to benchmark progress and performance.

- **Infusion**

The Council has an in-house research service called Infusion which delivers a range of research and consultation projects for departments using its local fieldwork capacity and team of researchers.

- **Social Media**

Social media engagement is increasingly relevant allowing for timely dissemination of news. The council has over 12,000 likes on Facebook and 19,500 twitter followers, with posts cover a wide range of topics including events, local information and job opportunities.

- **Vanguard project**

Members of the Public Health team are working to make sure that people and communities are at the heart of current and future planning of services. The ambition is to fully incorporate coproduction. They have facilitated discussions between the NHS and wider partners, such as my Council colleagues and the voluntary, community and faith sectors, to ensure that all are aware of the plans and ambitions with these new models of care.

## **6.2 Staff Engagement**

- **Budget Consultation**

Eight budget engagement events took place across Blackpool prior to the Council's budget setting process. To encourage attendance times and locations were mixed. The meeting aimed to understand priorities ahead of reductions being identified. A Chief Officer was in attendance at each event.

- **Staff Volunteering Time**

Plans are underway to encourage staff to donate their time to support local projects throughout the year. A trial took place at Kingscote park in late 2016, focussing on tidying the space and creating a welcoming environment for residents.

- **Lancashire Volunteering Partnership**

The Lancashire Volunteer Partnership was established in 2016 between public services who wanted to provide one gateway into public service volunteering. The aim is to make volunteering for public services rewarding and to provide opportunities for people to make a real difference in their local communities. The Infusion Team is working to add all council volunteers onto the system

### 6.3 **Blackpool Fairness Commission**

- **Grange Park CLC and Community Farm Development**

The building is now open with a launch event and Community fun day planned for the 13 and 14 of April 2018. Consultation took place on the rename and branding, the final choice was '@TheGrange' in a mixture of primary colours. Community engagement and consultation will continue to ensure the building is community focused with planned events and free room hire for community groups.

- **Dementia Friendly Town Status**

Blackpool has now achieved this status with press planned to promote the success in the run up to Dementia Awareness Week. The Fairness Commission helped to set up the Dementia Action Alliance in Blackpool and supported the Dementia Hubs activity, signposting support, engaging with those living with the disease and their carers, working alongside multiple partners.

- **Fairtrade**

Blackpool has now achieved Fairtrade Town Status through extensive work with local schools and businesses. Work will continue in this area through a sub-committee to ensure Fairtrade status is maintained.

### 6.4 **Blackpool Youth Council**

The Youth Council has been undertaking extensive engagement through the 'Make your mark' ballot and following Youth summit whereby the opinions of over 4,700 young people in Blackpool were collected and reported on to local stakeholders. Prominent issues included mental health and curriculum for life and work experience hubs.

### 6.5 **Future Engagement**

With engagement going on throughout various council departments there is the need for a best practice 'tool kit' to encourage positive engagement and ensure best practice is followed. The focus for the community engagement team in the upcoming year will be to develop and roll out a tool kit to ensure consistency in messaging and prevent over engagement and disillusionment.

As mentioned above Council Members are in a strong position to support engagement. To support this the Corporate Performance and Delivery Team have planned Social Media training for Councillors in the coming year.

Engagement will continue around the 'Make Blackpool Better' campaign to maintain strong levels communication and increase awareness of the positive effect of this work.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

**List of Appendices:**

Appendix 8(a) Ladder of Engagement

Appendix 8(b) Youth Council Report on Make Your Mark ballot

Appendix 8(c) '@TheGrange' final logo

**7.0 Legal considerations:**

7.1 The Council has an obligation to consult with residents and a commitment to engage. As such it makes sense to outline best practice with the use of a Community Engagement Strategy/Toolkit to ensure the Council is consistent in its perception of minimum engagement across all directorates. Currently services manage their own engagement and consultation resulting in varied experiences. This leaves us open to criticism.

**8.0 Human Resources considerations:**

8.1 Despite moving to Public Health there is significant cross over between Community Engagement and the work of the Corporate Performance and Delivery Team. As such a representative from the Engagement team will attend team meetings to ensure robust information sharing and internal awareness. The relative lack of resource within the team means that it will operate at a more strategic level and support facilitation of engagement with other departments.

**9.0 Equalities considerations:**

9.1 None

**10.0 Financial considerations:**

10.1 Council Community Engagement funding comes from the managing directorate.

10.2 The Fairness Commission has a budget of £5,000 to support its activity.

10.3 The Vanguard Project has a £300,000 grant assigned to Community Engagement activities across the Fylde Coast this financial year.

**11.0 Risk management considerations:**

11.1 Possible legal challenge if adequate consultation isn't undertaken.

**12.0 Ethical considerations:**

12.1 None.

**13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

13.1 Not applicable.

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 None.