



Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement & Community Safety

Northampton Borough Council

15 June 2020

Councillor Community Fund

Since 1 April 2020, a total of £18,855 has been spent by councillors on supporting the delivery of positive outcomes in their wards. £11,550 of the total has funded organisations that are directly supporting those most vulnerable in our communities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Partnership Support

We have received 47 applications for the partnership grant for funding for 2020-2021. The panel have met and will put forward their recommendations for the projects that will be supported this year.

Northampton Community Resilience Hub

A network of key officers, including; the community safety & engagement team, Northampton Partnership Homes, customer services and redeployed museum staff have been coordinating the requests that have been coming into Northampton's community resilience hub.

More than 6000 volunteers have signed up to support vulnerable residents in Northampton –these volunteers have been and continue to be matched up with the existing community groups (126 that have registered) in the Town. The hub has been working with the volunteers to ensure that support is in place for each resident that has requested help through the central support line. More than 800 vulnerable people in Northampton have requested help and been supported with emergency food deliveries, food collection, shopping, furniture collection, prescription collections, emotional and mental health issues, loneliness and social isolation and financial support.

A leaflet with the contact details for the support helpline has been delivered to every household in the Borough thanks to 26 of our volunteer groups, NBC staff, NSport and the British Red Cross.

Forums

18 May 2020 – IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia) marked virtually, a series of speeches and a pre-recorded minute of noise from our LGBTQ community groups and allies.

Youth forum started planning the 'youth app' in partnership with communication and digital teams at NBC, the app will allow young people to see what youth provision there is in the Town, searchable by location.

Events

No outdoor events have been held throughout April and May, and all outdoor events for June have been postponed. This is in line with the Governments lockdown and health guidance.

However, to celebrate VE Day Northampton set up a virtual programme of events on the 8 May working with partners and these included the following:

- performances were broadcasted on the Mayor of Northampton's Facebook page on Friday 8 May, and throughout the Bank Holiday weekend
- All performers gave their time and equipment for free
- Sermon read by Father Oliver Coss - Rector of All Saints' Church
- themed choral hymns performed by the All Saints' Church Choir
- 'In Memoriam' poem written by local poet James McInerney
- Mayor of Northampton addressed the citizens of the Borough
- 'Unmentioned in Despatches' poem read by Deputy Mayor
- Northamptonshire Indian Hindu welfare organisation spoke about community values – 'we are stronger together'
- Northamptonshire Royal Signals Chairman addressed the citizens of Northampton with a VE Day speech
- Playing of the 'Last Post' by former HM Services Bugler
- Playing of 'Battle's O'er' and 'VE 75 Years' by the Northamptonshire Pipe Band
- National Toast to the Heroes of WW2 led by the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire
- 'On the Home Front' 'virtual' mystery tour by Northampton's Looking Glass Theatre
- Town Crier call for peace around the world performed by the Looking Glass Theatre
- The bells of All Saints' Church rang out for peace 75 times
- 'Virtual VE Day 75' Live Jive Dance Zoom Party performed by Step by Step Dance School
- Illumination of The National Lift Tower and sing-along to Vera Lynn's wartime favourite, 'We Will Meet Again' provided by MLE Pyrotechnics Limited

Because of the successful VE Day virtual celebrations, we are looking to deliver other virtual programmes for some events throughout the year.

Culture & Heritage

Abington Park Museum's last day of opening to the public was Sunday 15 March before it temporarily closed. All scheduled exhibitions, events and activities up to the end of August have been cancelled due to uncertainty as to when the Government guidelines will lift restrictions. Any bookings for ticketed events that had been received were refunded. Several weddings and private hires have either been rebooked for later in the year or cancelled and deposits refunded. The cancellation of schools, events and postponing of various income earning hires has negatively impacted on our income targets. A number of museum staff have been redeployed to the Covid teams. Three members of staff are co-ordinating support for referrals receiving details of residents needing support with picking up prescriptions, food delivery, shopping, mental health support and loneliness, then matching these with volunteers/organisations that can provide the help and support. Other staff are involved in the delivering these actions. Other staff are helping manage redeployment of council staff to assist different task

groups and undertaking the administration for the testing of council staff exhibiting symptoms on a countywide basis. This work is positively contributing to the council response to the Covid 19 crisis and helping to provide support and assistance to some of our most vulnerable residents.

A series of social media interactives is currently being planned and staff are planning for how we can safely reopen later this year abiding by the 2m social distancing rules. An exhibition is in development looking at the response of individuals, communities and essential workers and services in Northamptonshire to the Covid 19 pandemic. Some of this material will enter the museum collections to help document this highly significant moment in time.

Museum Expansion Project

A Practical Completion certificate was issued to the main contractor on 9th April and the council took back possession of the building. A number of snagging items remain outstanding and work was paused due to the Covid-19 lock down. During May and June there has been a slow resumption of work and a skeleton staff are managing access for Wildgoose contractors.

A programme for exhibition installation under Covid 19 safe working practices has been developed. Work will begin on install once all Wildgoose contractors have left site, with a provisional start date of end of June. Work is expected to be completed in early December, though this is subject to revision once the impact of new working practices is better understood. A revised opening date will be confirmed on this basis.

Customer Services

Customer Services has managed to deliver an interrupted service whilst balancing Covid19.

This was achieved by introducing robust contingencies to ensure that all services were available. We balanced the business need, including the increase of contacts due to introduction of chargeable green waste and staff needs enabling us to make reasonable adjustments to protecting staff whilst continuing to deliver our service.

We have achieved this through working closely with our Partners, LGSS and NPH to agree and continue to review the new working processes. We are meeting regularly to plan the recovery stages to ensure that we are planning to be available to support the most vulnerable during the recovery period.

In addition, we are working closely with the Community Cell and are calling approximately 150 residents per week to completing welfare checks. These calls will continue through the recovery stages enabling us to identify issues early and working with Partners to put measures in place preventing increased vulnerabilities.

We are supporting a local community who are asking for donations of pillowcases and fabric by having a collection point in the OSS. The local community are then making Laundry bags for NHS and Care Homes staff to transport their uniforms.

We continue to work closely with our existing Partners to help support them through the recovery process.

We are speaking with NDAS (Northampton Domestic Abuse Service) to discuss a presence in the One Stop Shop (OSS) for people experiencing Domestic Violence providing a safe place to receive support. NDAS are keen to start a drop-in clinic in the

OSS and when it is appropriate this service will be operating three times a week from the One Stop Shop.

Community Safety

Although within the last 12 months we have seen an overall increase in crime of 0.4%, the all crime rate for the Community Safety Partnership is moving towards the average for our Most Similar Group, which reflects a stronger performance than our comparator partnerships in a time of rising crime levels.

Although incidents of anti-social behaviour recorded by Northamptonshire Police fell by 18.8% during the year. The reduction was seen in the majority of the wards across the town. However, it is worth noting that Police are recording breaches of the COVID regulations as anti-social behaviour offences and we should expect to see a significant increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB) reports in the first quarter of 2020/21. A secondary measure for anti-social behaviour is criminal damage: figures for the Partnership decreased by 2.1% compared with 2018/19.

We have a coordinated response to the Covid-19 breaches, where ASB is highlighted and enforcement action required, our ASB Team and environmental health are working closely with the Police and Northampton Partnership Homes.

We continue to work with Free2Talk on the Home Office Trusted relationships project, who have increased the areas they are covering in the Town, with additional funding from the Home Office for the next 12 months. We are also supporting with the opening of several youth spaces in the Town. An information sheet detailing which youth services continue to be provided has been produced and shared amongst frontline officers to ensure our young people continue to access services and are supported in the community.

Kings Heath, Briar Hill, St Crispins/Upton all had their first local multi-agency neighbourhood meetings at the end of March. All went well, issues being identified and then action plans to be developed.

Councillor Anna King
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety