

## AVDC COMMUNITIES TEAM REPORT

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report is to inform members of the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee of the recommendations contained within the 'AVDC Communities Team Report' following the recent review of the service.

### 2 Recommendations

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| 2.1 That the committee note the recommendations contained within the attached report and consider whether any comments should be forwarded to the relevant Cabinet Member. |
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### 3 Supporting information

- 3.1 As part of the Commercial AVDC Programme a review of the Communities Team has been undertaken. AVDC is currently facing severe financial restrictions and is looking to mitigate a reduction in funding of approximately £5million by 2020/21, through a combination of income generation and efficiencies.
- 3.2 The current Communities Team is part of the Community Fulfilment Sector and is currently made up from various sub teams including, Community Safety, Community Engagement, Grants and Project Support and the Communities Delivery team. These four teams currently vary considerably in the roles that they perform and the services to the community that they offer.
- 3.3 As one would expect due to the differing nature of the four sub teams, the Communities Team currently performs an eclectic range of services which does include various statutory elements, but with the majority being non-statutory. Despite this, the team currently provide major benefits to our local communities in line with our mission to serve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the vale. These community benefits range from helping keep communities safe, strong and also contribute to the well-being of many of our local residents.
- 3.4 The attached report in Appendix 1 details the various recommended service delivery changes.

### 4 Resource implications

- 4.1 Should the recommendations contained within this report be accepted in full it is believed that as a result of our efficiency review we can reduce our 1.7m commitment to community priorities by approximately £250,000 whilst maintaining key statutory and policy priorities.

# Commercial AVDC Programme

## AVDC Communities Team Report

### Commercial Review July 2016

#### 1) Executive Summary

- 1.1) This report has been written to highlight the potential changes that can be made to the services delivered by the Communities Team following the Commercial Review which commenced in January 2016. AVDC is currently facing severe financial restrictions and is looking to mitigate a reduction in funding of approximately £5million by 2020/21. It is envisaged that this funding gap will be bridged by a combination of methods including increasing our income generation and delivering general efficiencies. While a number of the community services that this team delivers would remain because of the impact and value they deliver, we believe that some services can be removed or delivered differently.
- 1.2) If all of the current recommendations are accepted it is believed a saving of £252,135 can be achieved with a reduction in the level of staff resources required (equating to a 36% annual reduction).
- 1.3) The proposals contained in this report are subject to formal consultation with staff, trade unions and employee representatives.
- 1.4) Due to the nature of the service the report contains various recommendations which will have to be considered by both AVDC's Commercial Programme Board and Cabinet due to the potential local political impact that these changes may have.

#### 2) Introduction

- 2.1) The current Communities Team is part of the Community Fulfilment Sector alongside Forward Plans, Strategic Housing and Economic Development. It is made up from various sub teams which include Community Safety, Community Engagement, Grants and Project Support and the Communities Delivery team. These four teams vary considerably in the roles that they perform and the services to the community that they offer. These services have come together to form the Communities Team following various previous internal restructures.
- 2.2) As one would expect due to the differing nature of the four sub teams the Communities Team currently performs an eclectic range of services which does include various statutory elements, but with the majority being non-statutory. Despite this, the team currently provide major benefits to our local communities in line with our mission to serve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the vale. These community benefits range from helping keep communities safe, strong and also contribute to the well-being of many of our local residents.

- 2.3) The roles that are undertaken within the team are not at all process driven and the community benefit produced is exceptionally difficult to quantify or monetise. Over the past few years many of the team have adopted a more commercial approach, with an emphasis placed on income generation to help cover the costs, but despite this it is a “loss” making team, in financial terms, to AVDC. The community benefit however, should not be underestimated or ignored.
- 2.4) This review has therefore investigated all of the teams’ undertakings and makes recommendations on what it is believed should be continued and also what should be stopped, changed or moved internally. It is highly probable that several of the recommendations contained within this report will be politically sensitive. However, for information, the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Communities and Civic Amenities has been consulted on the various recommendations included.
- 2.5) Alongside this review of the Communities team, the overarching view of Community Fulfilment has also been taken into consideration and recommendations linked to this have also been included. One of the main aims when this sector was first formed was for it to become the strategic arm of the Council linking many of the existing services together to help ensure that AVDC is operating at its most efficient. The Communities Review is therefore the first step towards this and what has become clear is that some of the recommendations contained within this report will impact on the wider sector, with the existing Strategic Housing team in particular.
- 2.6) The Grant Funding Programme contained within the Communities team has only very recently been subjected to a review and this was presented to both Finance and Services Scrutiny and Cabinet in July 2016. The programme has been reduced over the past 6 years from £619,672 to just under £400,000 for 2016/17. The way in which the grants are prioritised has also been amended to include:

‘Priority should be given to services for which there has been an increasing demand; services that will provide the most impact for the council’s investment; and services whose outcomes contribute the most to the council’s corporate priorities, assessed by the Panel as part of the application and scoring process.’

Following this recent review, it is not proposed to look at this again until the end of the current grants programme in 2017.

### 3) Current Position

- 3.1) At the beginning of 2016/17, the total annual budget for the Communities team was £1,766,600. This figure includes staff salaries, predicted to be £698,182 including posts listed as project funding (ASB Officer and Community Safety Officer), but excluding the Community Chest Grants Officer and the Active Vale Co-ordinator (due to the fact that their salaries are covered in full by external funding).
- 3.2) Excluding the Sector Lead and the Corporate Director, the current Communities Structure is made up of the equivalent of 18 staff members, many of who work part time hours. This team also attracts external funding to help subsidise 3 posts which include, the Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator, the Community Safety Officer and the Active Vale Co-Ordinator.

### 4) Summary of Recommendations

- 4.1) This section sets out the specifics of the proposed changes, which are summarised immediately below:
- 4.2) Create new AVDC Strategy and Partnership team, which will take responsibility for drafting required strategies and policies across front line services within AVDC. This team will replace / expand on the existing Strategic Housing Team. This will be subject to the business review of Strategic Housing.
- 4.3) Community Safety – Move the the Community Safety team to the newly formed AVDC Strategy and Partnership Team, whilst achieving savings from amending existing roles (explained below, 5.5 – 5.9).
- 4.4) The role of the Community Engagement Officer, Cohesion and Wellbeing should also be linked to the Community Safety team with more of a focus given to Prevent.
- 4.5) A number of services are proposed to be stopped, moved to a different team internally or delivered in a different way. See section 5 below for a breakdown of these services. Work should be undertaken with external partners to attempt to facilitate the continuation of any community services AVDC will no longer offer.
- 4.6) Savings identified from previous underspends / savings - £64,519

Grants Support Costs	4,500
Equalities and Cohesion	5,000
Project Development Fund	10,000
Crime Audit	1,500

CCTV (potentially more to come)	25,000
BT Line Rental	5,000
District Play Services	5,000
Equipment Repairs (Leisure, Play)	1,000
Additional Computer Equipment	2,000
Equipment (Leisure, Play)	4,160
Advertising, Publicity & Marketing	1,359

- 4.7) Delete the current Communities Manager Post – saving £82,766 (including on-costs)
- 4.8) If all of the current recommendations are accepted in full it is believed a saving of £252,135 can be achieved with a reduction in the level of resources required. This represents a reduction of 36% of the current salary commitments.
- 4.9) Further savings are likely to be realised over time as the different work streams are either stopped or delivered differently and these will be itemised and represented in next year's budget.
- 4.10) Where it is accepted that services should be stopped, work should be undertaken to attempt to ensure that these services can be continued by other agencies, potentially from the next financial year. All options should be explored, including the potential for AVDC to still deliver these, subject to the costs being met, eg. Parish Councils willing to meet the cost of organising and running Play in the Parishes for example.

## 5) **Service Changes**

### **Services proposed to be stopped**

- 5.1) Over the past few months an analysis of the work of the Communities team has been undertaken in a variety of ways. This included initial work with the team managers and then later with the wider team in detailing the many various work streams that are undertaken. These were then each examined individually to estimate the cost of delivering these services, along with an analysis on how these serve to contribute to AVDC's overarching mission statement.
- 5.2) Following this, these work streams were broken down further into three distinct groups, which represent the current aims of the Communities team's overall vision. These aims are:
- To ensure communities feel safe (Safe)
  - To encourage economically strong, cohesive, confident and active communities (Strong)
  - To encourage residents to lead healthier, happier and longer lives (Well-being)

From this analysis it became clear that many of the suggested services proposed to be stopped are within the 'Well-being' aim. The vast majority of the statutory functions came within the 'Safe' aim, with those remaining contained within the 'Strong' aim.

Based on this, the services proposed to be stopped are as follows;

- Activate Dance Festival
- Support for Aylesbury Vale Arts Council
- Aylesbury Vale Community Chest (already programmed to stop in March '17)
- Support for Bucks School Games (Inter School competition)
- Energise Gold (Activities for the elderly)
- Love Parks (National initiative to encourage people to parks)
- Ladies Only Swimming (Limited offer also included within Active Vale)
- Music in Quiet Places (Concerts in rural areas)
- MUGA Projects (Multi Use Games Area Activities)
- Play Around the Parish (Play activities in more rural areas)
- Purple Flag – Co ordination and submission (safe town centre)
- Stoke Mandeville Stadium Committee Representative
- Theatre in the Villages
- Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Funding Fair
- Village Pub Competition
- Women's Network (empowerment)
- Youth Council / Forum support

5.3) With the district predicted to grow significantly in the coming years, the impact of this has to be considered within this review. This growth lends support to the importance of maintaining robust Community Safety and Community Cohesion services. It is imperative that the district continues to be a place which is considered an attractive place to live and work, where people feel safe.

5.4) Within this review a survey was also sent to 117 partners (including all of the parishes) asking for their opinions on the different elements of the Communities team they work with, along with their views on if we were to reduce or stop the service(s). 39 partners responded to the survey and summary is attached in Appendix A. These results reinforce our recommendation on the services to be potentially stopped as it can be seen that the Arts, Play, Ageing Well and Sport categories came low down in their priorities. It should be noted that there were some discrepancies within this report and we are linking Community Cohesion and Community Engagement as one. We are also linking Safeguarding to Community Safety.

### **Services to be moved to a different team internally**

- Community Safety
- Chairman's Events
- CCTV
- Local Democracy Sessions – (aimed at young people)
- Purple Flag (if we continue to offer this)

### Community Safety

- 5.5) As this review has progressed there have been changes to staff which have had an impact on the review. This has included the previous Community Safety Manager leaving and the post being redesigned, with a part time Community Safety Advisor currently in post to fill any gaps until this review is completed. The current Communities Manager has also recently changed roles and this post is currently vacant and proposed for deletion.
- 5.6) It is therefore recommended that AVDC takes advantage of this period of change and grasps the opportunity to deliver the service in the most efficient manner going forward. When the Community Fulfilment Sector was first created it was envisaged that this sector would become the strategic arm of the Council. In order to bring this to fruition the first steps should be taken within this review.
- 5.7) The proposal is therefore to maintain a specific Community Safety service but, move it within Community Fulfilment. However, rather than retain the Strategic Housing team in its current form it is recommended that this team becomes a more generic strategic and partnership team, which would be responsible for writing the various strategies throughout the Council, with input from the service experts as and when required. It would be responsible for the continued delivery of affordable housing and our approach to Community Safety throughout the district. This would be a major change for AVDC but one it is believed would be the most efficient and allow expert resources to be concentrated on delivering the relevant services.
- 5.8) Moving the Community Safety team would not release any savings in its current form and therefore a new team structure is proposed. This would consist of a part-time Community Safety Advisor (SG5), a Community Safety Officer (SG3) and a reduced Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Co-ordinator role (SG3 (proposed)). Should this recommendation be accepted it would achieve a saving of approximately £26.5k per annum.
- 5.9) In relation to the current Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) post, substantial changes are suggested, which will require agreement from Thames Valley Police (TVP) who part fund the post. Initial discussions have been had with the Area Commander, who is open to delivering this role in a different way. One of the major changes proposed is to remove the line management / supervision of a TVP officer and pass this back to TVP. Another major change is to attempt to stop the direct contact to this team and ensure all new enquiries are passed through our new Customer Contact team in Customer Fulfilment. Any cases will only be passed to the newly created ASB post should they require case management intervention. Further discussions will also need to take place in agreeing the level of support our existing Environmental Health Officers / Enforcement Officers can provide. It maybe possible to reduce this post further in time by working to encourage our relevant partners to take on the responsibility themselves.

#### Chairman's Events

- 5.10) An existing role (limited to 13 hours per week) organising the Chairman's events currently sits within the Communities team. This role is theoretically funded from a budget outside of Communities, and it is recommended that further work be undertaken to explore the future function of this role further.

### CCTV

- 5.11) A review of the CCTV monitoring contract is underway and once completed this report recommends moving the service to our Commercial Property and Regeneration Sector.

### Local Democracy Sessions (aimed at Young People)

- 5.12) It is understood that this is a statutory function that AVDC has to undertake. Whilst it would be possible to continue with this service within the Community Fulfilment sector, consideration should be given as to whether this service would be more appropriately managed within Democratic Services.

### Purple Flag

- 5.13) The value of signing up to the Purple Flag accreditation scheme needs to be considered in depth. Little value is given to this within the Communities team and should AVDC wish to continue this it could be moved to the Commercial Property and Regeneration Sector within the Town Centre agenda. The renewal fee for the Purple Flag is £1000 and needs to be submitted every two years to retain the accreditation. Further work on this needs to be undertaken alongside the Town Centre Manager, in order to gather the relevant customer insight, helping inform the final decision on whether we retain this project or not.

### **Services to be offered in a new way**

- ASB Co-ordinator role
- Heritage Flame Ceremony
- Play in the Park
- Roald Dahl Parade
- VCS Funding Fair – someone else to run / organise this
- Disability sports clubs
- Doorways Dance club
- Ladies Only swimming (if we continue to offer this)
- Sportivate / Diversionary Activities
- Event bookings and Business Support

### ASB Co-ordinator role

- 5.14) Please see paragraph 5.9

### Heritage Flame Festival

- 5.15) This currently is held every two years and this year's event is costing approximately £350-400k. Whilst it is considered an excellent community event, attracts external funding and sponsorship, and has the potential to raise the profile of Aylesbury Vale, it is recommended that we review the scale and funding of the event for the future, with our partners in the Bucks Legacy Board.

### Disability Sports Clubs and Doorways Dance Club



- 5.16) These come within the 'Well-being' area of Communities. We do not have a statutory duty to continue these activities and it is recommended that we look to other providers who maybe willing to take these on.

#### Roald Dahl Parade

- 5.17) AVDC should continue to host the Roald Dahl Parade, but not in its current format. Attempts have been made this year to bring in more income by offering more paid activities and it has generated a higher level of interest. It is recommended that the current work being undertaken, to potentially change this event to a profit making children's literary festival, be continued with a further review to take place after the next event in 2017. The level of public interest and support for this event should not be underestimated and analysis on this year's event is currently being undertaken.

#### Play in the Park

- 5.18) Like the Roald Dahl Parade this event should be continued but not in its current loss making format. Despite only making a loss of approximately £800 (including officer time) it is still an unnecessary expense to AVDC. However, it is believed that it will not require much work to make this an event which covers its costs and will make a profit. Further work will be required for this to happen with potentially expertise brought in from elsewhere. In a similar vein to the Roald Dahl Parade, the public support for this event should not be underestimated.

#### Voluntary and Community Funding (VCS) Fair

- 5.19) AVDC currently organises and provides the venue (free of charge) for the annual VCS Funding Fair. Further investigation should be undertake as to whether another external partner will take on the organisation of this event, with AVDC providing the venue.

#### Ladies Only Swimming

- 5.20) AVDC currently offers two forms of ladies swimming. One is ladies only swimming, which cost AVDC approximately £6,000 to put on in 2015/16. The other is Ladies Swimming Lessons offered under Active Vale. This however, does not guarantee a ladies only session, only a lane. Further investigation should be undertake as to whether these could be combined, or if the Ladies Only Swimming should be stopped.

#### Sportivate / Diversionary Activities

- 5.21) Currently we offer different activities which could be tailored more towards acting as diversionary activities when there is a spike in ASB. In changing the way we deliver these services we would be able to calculate more accurately the cost of delivering these and the benefit they produce eg. if there is a direct impact in reducing the level of ASB. Effective use of task and finish groups should be used also, to ensure that we do not continue to offer these services when the initial problem has been reduced/removed.

#### Event Bookings and Business Support

5.22) The current Communities team take manual bookings for events on AVDC's land and for the various events which are organised by the team. This report recommends that these processes are re-designed to be fully automated where possible and allow the customer to book on-line, with the new system being managed by the Customer Fulfilment sector. These bookings are currently handled by the business support team within Communities and it is expected that this resource will be significantly reduced should the admin and contact trials proved successful.

6.0) **Next Steps**

6.1) Once member agreement has been obtained a new structure can then be consulted on and put in place.

6.2) Work should be undertaken with external partners to attempt to facilitate the continuation of any community services AVDC will no longer offer.

6.3) Further savings are likely to be realised over time as the different work streams are either stopped or delivered differently and these will be itemised and represented in next year's budget.

**Communities Team Survey to Parishes and Partners- June 2016**

**Executive Summary**

**General Information**

The survey was sent to 117 local Parishes or service delivery Partners of the Communities Team between 22 June and 30 June 2016.

The number of responses totalled 39, of which one responding survey wasn't completed properly by just entering a series of characters in the text boxes. The total number of correctly completed surveys represented a 32.4% response rate. Two respondents were connected to Akeley Parish Council.

**Purpose**

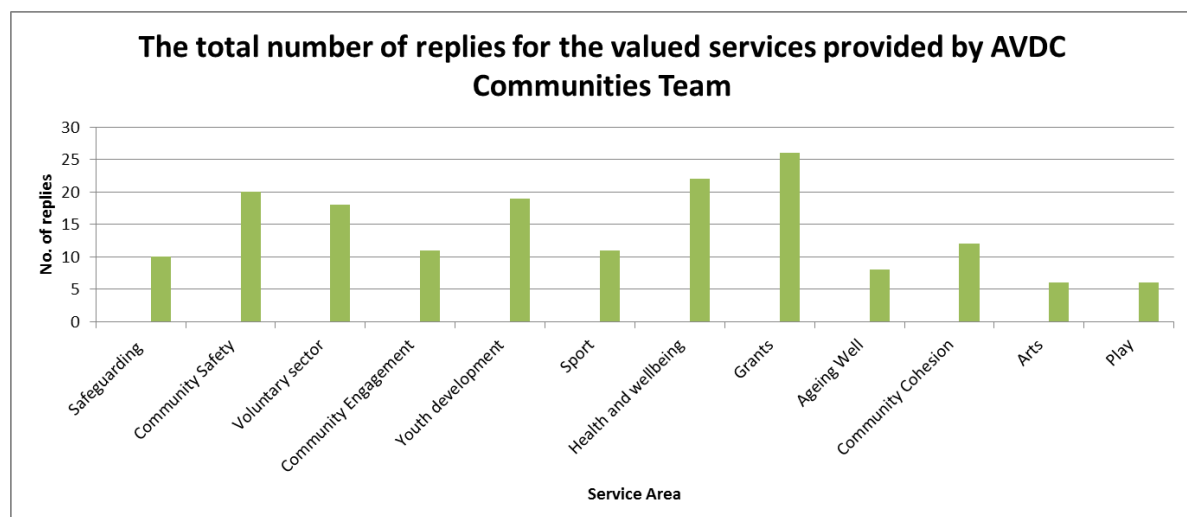
The purpose of the survey was to understand from the perspective of the local parishes and partnering organisations;

- which of the services that the AVDC Communities Team provides offers the greatest value to their respective body/organisation and their reasoning behind the choice
- which services could be managed more efficiently
- what the net impact would be if the given service(s) were reduced or ceased.

**Survey Responses**

The total number of responses for the valued services is shown below. Of all the respondents, each one could include up to ten differing services, typically the respondents selected between 1 – 5 services.

The response totals are shown below and do not feature in any specific order along the horizontal axis.



Of the 38 reported highest value services, only 16 comments were made as to their justification for the service being of greatest worth. Only 13 comments were made supporting the second suggested highest value services and 12 comments for the third highest value, followed by 11 and 9 comments for the other top five listed services respectively. Not all comments made were pertinent or completed appropriately by the respondents. A series of graphs are available upon request to show how the perceived service were valued.

The respondents were asked as to how services could be managed more efficiently for the highest valued services as they suggested. The number of replies varied and not all were applicable, but the comments received were 11, 7, 5, 5, and 5 for the highest valued services from first to fifth. These responses will be reviewed and again are available upon request.

When asked if the valued services could be reduced or ceased a majority suggested that such actions would be of high or medium impact, which was anticipated. Unfortunately given the reporting mechanism of Survey Monkey, charts were provided as to the perceived impact but there was no way of understanding to which services they were referring.