

**URN:** 21-011

**Subject:** Community Champions' Programme

**ELT – 17 February 2021**

**Report to:** Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee - 4 March 2021

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## **SUMMARY**

In November 2020, the Government led by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) launched a £23.76 million 'Community Champions Programme' working jointly with National Health Services (NHS) England. The programme invited local authorities and voluntary groups to apply to work with Public Health England to provide targeted support for people shown to be most at risk from Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Borough Council applied and has been successful with its proposal for a series of local interventions. The spend locally will expand access to public-facing communications related to COVID-19, including vaccine advice and information to boost local vaccination take-up.

This report provides Members with an overview of the proposed interventions we will implement working closely with Norfolk Public Health, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk & Waveney CCG colleagues at place level, and the Great Yarmouth & Northern Villages and Gorleston & Southern Parishes Primary Care Networks.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee resolves to:

- a) endorse the proposals for a Community Champions' Programme in the Borough of Great Yarmouth.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 MHCLG's Community Champions' Programme The Community Champions' aims to support a range of local interventions to build upon, increase or improve existing activities to work with residents who are most at risk of Covid-19. This can include helping to build trust and empower at-risk groups to protect themselves and their families. The broader aim of the Programme is to reduce the impact of the virus on all communities, beyond just the target areas that we will work with through this scheme.

1.2 Across the 60 local authorities receiving the grant funding, local projects are expected to:

- Build residents' confidence to integrate and engage more widely in their local communities and mix with people from different backgrounds.
- Adopt approaches to engagement that supports social connection to the local area and builds confidence to use local amenities and services.

- Provide practical solutions to overcome barriers, such as supporting those experiencing digital exclusion.
- Be targeted using the best available national and local sources of evidence of need.
- Exhibit good governance and the collection of robust evidence to enable measurement of progress in achieving the Funds aims.
- Deliver genuine value for money with robust programme management.

1.3 The Council is expected to promote and adhere to Government recommendations, messaging and Public Health England guidance provided to directly from Government and/or through the Local Resilience Forum on and about COVID-19 when providing any activities funded by the Community Champions' Programme.

1.4 To deliver the Programme across the Borough, the Council proposes to work with the Norfolk Community Foundation, relevant local Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, Norfolk Public Health, Norfolk & Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group, the two Primary Care Networks, Police and Norfolk County Council as part of the wider Norfolk Resilience Forum.

## **2. BUILDING UPON A COMMUNITY HUB OPERATING MODEL**

2.1 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Members will recall that the Council established the 'Great Yarmouth Community Hub'. Operated virtually the multi-agency Hub model also provides two physical hub spaces aligned to the two Primary Care Networks in the borough. Via the Community Hub residents have a single point of contact for a range of support services including; COVID-19 guidance, help to self-isolate, well-being, reassurance and access to financial support and food when required.

2.2 Throughout the pandemic the team has engaged with local community organisations, charities, faith groups, community volunteers, the Gypsy and Roma Traveller community, local neighbourhood boards and online mutual aid groups at a grass-roots level to galvanise community capacity support.

2.3 Government-commissioned research ([Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19, August 2020](#)) indicates that Public Health England data shows the impact of COVID-19 has replicated existing health inequalities and, in some cases, has increased them. The largest disparity found was by age. Risk of dying among those diagnosed with COVID-19 was also higher in males than females; higher in those living in the more deprived areas than those living in the least deprived; and higher in those in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups than in White ethnic groups. These inequalities largely replicate existing inequalities in mortality rates in previous years, except for BAME groups, as mortality was previously higher in White ethnic groups.

2.4 Whilst the reasons for this disparity can be complex, there are some simple, practical methods, including routes to communications and messaging, that can ensure residents at greater risk of becoming marginalised understand how to protect themselves, their family, friends and close contacts and what support is available in Great Yarmouth and beyond. This approach is at the heart of Great Yarmouth's Community Champions' Programme which

centres on providing COVID-19 guidance and support through outreach work, to support locally-grown Community Champions and grass-roots community groups who are both trusted and able engage effectively with residents to support the Great Yarmouth Community Hub operating model.

### 3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The Community Champions' Programme consists of outreach work to engage with communities together with a series of practical interventions to ensure all residents, including marginalised cohorts, receive information and guidance in a timely and understandable manner. For the purpose of this Programme, the target cohorts of residents include; those with a learning or physical disability (including sight & visual impairment), speakers of other languages, migrant workers, the Gypsy & Roma Traveller community, and more broadly, Black Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents. Consequently, the proposed interventions which the Government has provided funding to support as part of Great Yarmouth's Community Champions Programme are:
- **Building stronger more inclusive relationships** - with target communities, the development of recognised 'Community Champions'; in the form of local community organisations as well as individuals in communities willing and able to disseminate clear COVID-19 information and guidance.
  - **Supporting the establishment of a sustainable and accessible VCSE-operated food offer** – to complement the work of the Great Yarmouth Food Bank Network, develop an alliance of VCSE organisations to operate a subscription-based community store, creating affordable food options, and providing volunteer-based employability opportunities in association with the Norfolk Community Foundation, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Public Health, the CCG/PCNs and local community groups.
  - **Increase capability and capacity to interact and communicate with those residents at greater risk from COVID-19** – through an outreach programme in association with specialist VCSE providers. Outreach work will include communications and support for early years/education settings, faith groups, BAME, multi-cultural organisations, and disability advocacy organisations.
- 3.2 The outcome of this funding will include the establishment of a growing network of local volunteers; residents, members and local community leaders supported to be 'Community Champions'. Support will include access to online materials, regular briefings and informative webinars together with hardcopy communication resources written with our key target audiences in mind, to explain about COVID-19 testing services, vaccinations services and general advice about staying safe and how to access support should someone need to self-isolate.
- 3.3 Commissioning of outreach work will be undertaken in March with a view to commencement of outreach activities as soon as possible. Where possible, and subject to COVID-19 restrictions, the Council and its partnering agencies will align this targeted community work with enhanced contact tracing, testing and vaccination services already underway.
- 3.4 The council already has links to a strong and active network of local food agencies which are collectively known as the Great Yarmouth Food Bank Network. Made-up of faith groups, local resident mutual aid groups, local VCSEs and registered charities, together they serve

residents who find themselves in food hardship. The Norfolk Community Foundation has been instrumental in securing monetary donations and re-distributing that funding to Norfolk's VCSE and community organisations who have been able to step-in and support their local communities through the pandemic. Since March 2020, the Foundation has raised and invested close to £2million of urgent aid. This funding has enabled Norfolk charities to deliver essential support to the people who needed them: helping them deal with everything from exhausting, everyday challenges to life shattering issues and crisis situations.

- 3.5 In light of the number of grant applications being awarded to organisations to address food hardship in the borough, the Council was approached by the Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF) to partner on an exciting broader community food project. Through these existing local networks and food supplier contacts provided by the NCF's national partners Fareshare and Feeding Britain, the Foundation is leading on the scoping and set-up of a community store model. This will work as part of the existing Food Bank Network by offering residents quality discounted food, advice and ideas about how to prepare healthy meals, and manage on a budget etc. By locating the community stores near to the physical Community Hub locations in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston, multi-agency partners providing advocacy, information and advice services for residents in need of support, as well as the Council's own customer and housing services, can be part of a broader prevention and early help offer.
- 3.6 MHCLG require a monthly progress report linked to a series of Key Performance Indicators for the Programme together with an evaluation report of the outputs and outcomes from the Programme.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The total value of the Community Champions Programme to the borough is £465,000. The requirements of the Programme mean this funding has to be committed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 with spend and projects delivered by September 2021.
- 4.2 It is proposed to commission relevant local voluntary and community groups with proven connection to local community contacts in the target cohort (most at risk residents) to support the Council's delivery of the initiatives described in this report.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Great Yarmouth's recognised Community Champions will tap into their local networks to provide advice about COVID-19, testing and importantly, the vaccination service. The Council will work with Community Champions to identify barriers to accessing accurate information and to provide tailored support, such as phone calls for people who are digitally excluded, helplines, and linking to GP surgeries.
- 5.2 Based on our experience and working knowledge gathered over the last ten months of the pandemic, additional communication support to reflect cultural drivers will increase knowledge and behaviours of how to stay safe from COVID-19. This includes accessible language and content that reflects the social norms and identity of the target communities to increase engagement and awareness of the health risk of Coronavirus.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee resolves to:

- a) endorse the proposals for a Community Champions Programme in the Borough of Great Yarmouth.

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Yes
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Yes
Existing Council Policies:	Corporate Plan, Annual Action Plan, Great Yarmouth Locality Strategy
Financial Implications:	No
Legal Implications (including human rights):	No
Risk Implications:	No
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	No
Crime & Disorder:	No
Every Child Matters:	No