

# **Title of report: Community Based Support Services**

**Meeting: Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting date: Monday 29 January 2024**

**Report by: Service Director - Communities**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards)

## **Purpose**

To provide the opportunity for the scrutiny committee to contribute to the strategic review of Talk Community which is underway.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) The committee note and comment on the rationale and process for the strategic review of Talk Community and performance information provided in Appendix 1; and**
- b) The committee determine any recommendations it wishes to make in regard to informing the strategic review**

## **Alternative options**

1. There are no alternative options. The council has key responsibilities around prevention, wellbeing and partnerships as detailed in the Care Act 2014. These general duties are:
  - a) promoting individual wellbeing
  - b) preventing needs for care and support
  - c) promoting integration of care and support with health services

- d) providing information and advice
- e) promoting diversity and quality in provision of services
- f) co-operating
- g) safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect

## **Key considerations**

2. Talk Community has been operating since 2020 with the aim of building more connected communities where everyone can thrive. The work contributes to prevention and reducing demand on statutory services by supporting individuals and communities with their health and well-being. Talk Community respond to community need and work closely with partner agencies delivering health and social care and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE).
3. Demand on statutory services continues to increase and as the landscape is changing a review of Talk Community is being undertaken to understand the impact of Talk Community, to make its services and activities visible and inform the future direction of the service. The outcome will be a long term strategy for Talk Community that maximises the council's contribution to reducing demand and improving health inequalities. The review was started in November 2023 and will be completed at end of March 2024.
4. The review process is set out below:
  - a) assessment of the performance of Talk Community
  - b) engagement with internal and external stakeholders, including Talk Community staff, VCSE, Town and Parish Councils, health partners, Talk Community hubs and Talk Community volunteers
  - c) analysis of the strategic and policy landscape in which Talk Community operates to identify strategic drivers
  - d) research into best practice in measuring/evaluating the contribution of empowered communities to prevention and increased community resilience
5. The current Talk Community delivery model supports activities that build community relationships, facilitate partnership working, capacity building of community organisations, provision of information and advice and networking. The work has played a significant role in responding to identified individual and community needs. Case studies demonstrate the value and impact of Talk Community.
6. Talk Community has provided support to households, residents, community groups and volunteers through a range of activity. These include
  - a) provision of financial advice to over 3,900 households
  - b) delivery of roadshows to 460 residents to assist them in dealing with cost of living issues
  - c) maintaining the Talk Community Directory to provide information and advice on a range of issues including health and social care securing 200,000 hits per annum
  - d) facilitating 128 healthy lifestyle groups
  - e) training 1937 residents to make healthy lifestyle choices

- f) assisting 782 community groups to secure funding and investment
  - g) provision of 25,000 opportunities for children and young people to participate in free, positive activities during school holidays funded by the Holiday Activity and Food fund
  - h) established 75 community hubs and digital access points
  - i) trained 268 volunteers in financial advice provision
  - j) connected 25,000 individuals to support services through the hubs
  - k) involved 342 volunteers in supporting the hubs
  - l) trained 254 volunteers in mental health awareness and first aid
  - m) organised 62 Community Action meetings and 7,330 drop-in sessions annually.
7. In addition, Talk Community have managed a number of funds provided for community benefit by national government. These include the covid recovery fund, the Household Support Fund and Holiday Activity and Food fund. These funds have seen c£8.2m investment in community support over the last three years. These funds cease at the end of March 2024. In 24/25 Talk Community will be managing a UK SPF Community Resilience fund to provide small grants for community activity which will enable some of the community initiatives supported by national funding over the last three years to be sustained.

### **Community impact**

- 8. A stated ambition in the council's County Plan 2023/24 is to strengthen communities to ensure that everyone lives well and safely together. The Talk Community model is a central underpinning to this priority.
- 9. The purpose of Talk Community is to support and enable individuals and communities to identify opportunities to improve their health and well-being in a targeted way in localities. The service works closely with voluntary sector and community groups of all sizes and with a network of volunteers offering information, advice and activities in the Talk Community hubs.

### **Environmental impact**

- 10. Talk Community facilitate the delivery of services at local level reducing the need for residents to travel. Where possible information, advice and signposting is accessed online to reduce carbon footprint and the impact on the environment.

### **Equality duty**

- 11. Talk Community works within communities supporting groups that experience deprivation and barriers to accessing services.

### **Resource implications**

- 12. There are no immediate resource implications as a result of this work.

### **Legal implications**

- 13. There are no immediate legal implications arising as a result of this report.

## **Risk management**

14. There are no immediate risks as a result of this work.

## **Consultees**

15. Stakeholder views are being collected to inform the review.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Strategic Review of Talk Community

## **Background papers**

None identified