

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Cities of Service Update
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 10 November 2015
Cabinet Member: Councillor Penberthy
CMT Member: Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)
Author: Darin Halifax (Cities of Service Chief Service Officer)
Contact details Tel: 01752 305446
email: Darin.Halifax@plymouth.gov.uk

Ref:

Key Decision: No

Part: I

Purpose of the report:

Michael Bloomberg, the former Mayor of New York developed the Cities of Service (C of S) model to encourage people in their communities to “do their bit”. Nesta, the UK’s innovation foundation, backed by the Cabinet Office, announced in 2013 that it wanted to bring C of S to the UK. Local authorities were invited to bid for volunteering projects that addressed evidenced need in their area. Plymouth was successful in receiving funding over two years to deliver two specific projects – Energy Champions and Grow, Share, Cook. A service plan was developed with Nesta along with key metrics measuring delivery. Cities of Service UK was launched nationally in September 2014. This report is to update Cabinet of the progress made since the local launch in October 2014.

The Brilliant Co-operative Council Corporate Plan 2013/14 -2016/17:

The Cities of Service project and its emphasis on targeted volunteering directly reflect the Council objective of Plymouth becoming a fairer city where everyone does their bit.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

The Cities of Service project has been funded by Nesta with match funding provided by Public Health, Plymouth Energy Community, Families with a Future and the Family Intervention Project. Our funding is secure until the end of the project in May 2016.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

Child Poverty – The Energy Champions project aims to help at least 200 households to save money on their fuel bills. This will include at least 50 families currently on pre-payment meters. Our Grow Share Cook project is providing 103 families with a supply of free fruit and vegetables for a year as well as delivering fresh produce to the city’s food banks and soup runs.

Health and Safety – Full DBS checks are made on Cities of Service volunteers as required

Equality and Diversity

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? Yes (attached)

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

I, Cabinet to note progress of Cities of Service project

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Plymouth City Council runs its own volunteer initiative to meet corporate need. This is a viable option, but using the Cities of Service branding gives us the opportunity to add more emphasis and provides an international profile to the initiatives.

Published work / information:

None

Background papers:

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Equality Impact Assessment	x									

Sign off:

Fin	akh1 516.4 2	Leg	2419 8/DV S	Mon Off	2419 8/DV S	HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	NA/ CS/4 11/C P/10 15.
Originating SMT Member Tracey Lee													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper is to inform Cabinet of the progress of the current Cities of Service (C of S) projects and the future plans for the programme.

2. What is Cities of Service?

2.1 The C of S model builds on the work of former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who pioneered the approach, designating New York as a service city and creating opportunities for thousands of citizens to serve their community.

2.2 As a C of S, we aim to find new and innovative ways to harness the power of volunteers to address strategic city issues. Many other cities have replicated this approach. Today in the United States, the C of S coalition includes more than 195 cities successfully mobilising thousands of volunteers to improve their communities' one task at a time. Volunteers give their time on high impact initiatives in the service of others and their local areas, with cities sharing successful strategies to ensure the most effective initiatives are copied by others.

2.3 Plymouth was one of seven UK local authority areas that gained C of S status in 2014 in a competitive process. On deciding which projects to concentrate on, we used evidence from the Fairness Commission Report "Creating the Conditions for Fairness". This enabled us to identify local challenges that we could best address by mobilising volunteers alongside public services. As a result, we have delivered two key projects on topics that fundamentally affect all of us – heating and eating.

2.4 In October 2014, a report was brought to Cabinet to agree and adopt the Cities of Service plan. During that Cabinet session, it was requested that a progress report was brought back to Cabinet after a year of delivery.

3. Current projects – what we have achieved so far

3.1 Energy Champions

3.1.1 Alongside the initial £15,000 project funding from Nesta, a further £55,000 match funding was invested by Plymouth Energy Community (PEC) to provide support for volunteering. This included recruiting a co-ordinator to work with the C of S Chief Service Officer to recruit, train and support volunteers to achieve the PEC's broader aims as well as the C of S targets.

3.1.2 Up to and including September 2015, we have achieved the following figures,

- 44 Energy Champion Volunteers
- 1,965 individuals receiving energy advice
- Average savings per household of £178.00 per year
- Total savings of £134,210 per year
- 100% of households taking up advice saved at least £60 per year.

3.2 Grow, Share, Cook

3.2.1 Alongside the initial £15,000 project funding from Nesta, a further £41,000 match funding was invested by Public Health, Families with a Future and the Family Intervention Project to provide support for the Grow, Share, Cook project. Also, Plymouth Community Homes supported us in supplying a converted van to transport produce to areas where it is most needed.

3.2.2 In partnership with Nesta, we commissioned Food Plymouth partners to deliver Grow, Share and Cook as 2 small separate projects (one project delivering the growing and sharing, the other delivering the cook sessions). The Cities of Service Chief Service Officer oversees and coordinates the activity to ensure consistency and connectivity.

3.2.3 Up to and including September 2015, we have achieved the following figures,

- 73 Grow, Share, Cook Volunteers
- 103 of our most disadvantaged families receiving a fortnightly delivery of free fruit and vegetables to their door
- 12,440 portions of fruit and vegetables given to people
- 1,120 individuals have been fed including the families receiving the fortnightly delivery, Foodbank users and people accessing the soup run.
- 216 pots and pans donated at the August Pots and Pans Amnesty
- 90% of recipients reporting improved cooking skills
- 100% of recipients reporting a healthier diet as a result of Grow, Share, Cook

4. Future projects

4.1 There are two further Cities of Service projects planned to be launched in November 2015.

1) Right to Read – We will be recruiting volunteers to attend primary schools settings to both read to and be read to by children. Our initial targets are,

- 50 volunteers
- 10 participating schools
- 150 children participating in the scheme
- 90% of children showing a marked improvement in their reading skills
- 90% of schools stating that the scheme has had a positive impact on participating pupils

2) Pledge Plymouth – We will be asking people to give 15 minutes of their time per month to improve life in our city and then use social media to tell us what they have done. Our initial targets are,

- 6 different themed campaigns each lasting 6 weeks (e.g. I pledge to help my neighbour, I pledge to help my street etc.)
- 200 different individuals pledging for each campaign
- 200 different tweets/Facebook entries for each campaign
- 1,200 different pledges for the duration of the project
- A brief report for each campaign outlining the impact of the activity undertaken.

5. One Plymouth

5.1 C of S has also been a catalyst to a new approach to volunteering in the city. This involves PCC along with One Plymouth and voluntary sector partners working together to establish,

- A common approach to volunteering and civic engagement
- Targeted volunteering projects that meet corporate and city need
- Shared formal volunteering protocols e.g. role profiles
- Improved IT support to enable volunteers to “do their bit”.

6. What happens after May 2016?

6.1 Cities of Service Chief Service Officer post – Although this has yet to be confirmed officially, it is extremely likely that Nesta funding for the post will cease on 31/5/16. The current post holder is working with the Chief Executive to look at possible options for the future.

6.2 The projects – For each of the current projects, the Cities of Service Chief Service Officer is developing business plans with partners to ensure the projects are sustainable. In addition, he is working with delivery partners to access internal (e.g. Social Enterprise Investment Fund) and external (e.g. Big Lottery Power to Change and Reaching Communities) funding pots to both continue and scale up activity.

6.3 The new projects will be coordinated and delivered using existing C of S and PCC infrastructure and as a result, the only cost will be the salary of the Cities of Service Chief Service Officer.