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Agenda item:

[No.]

Cabinet

On 23 March 2010

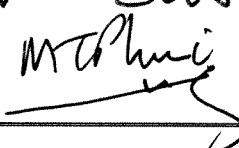
Report Title: Building Social Capital

Report of:

Niall Bolger, Director, Urban Environment, and

Mun Thong Phung, Director of Adults and Community Services

Signed :  8th March 2010 .

Signed :  08/03/10

Contact Officer : Dale Phillipson, Assistant Director, Business Strategy and Improvement, Urban Environment

Wards(s) affected: **Some**

Report for: **Non-Key Decision**

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To seek Cabinet authority to explore opportunities for a pilot programme to increase social capital in the Borough.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member

2.1 Building social capital is key to developing socially cohesive, sustainable

communities. The work being done in other local authorities shows that social isolation can be reduced, and quality of life improved. We need to explore innovative models of support such as this to achieve the aspirations we have for our communities.

3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities:

3.1 A programme to build social capital would specifically address three Council priorities:

- A Healthy, Caring Haringey
- A Thriving Haringey
- Delivering High Quality, Efficient Services

3.2 The programme will also directly contribute to five of the six Sustainable Community Strategy Outcomes, namely:

- People at the Heart of Change
- Economic Vitality and Prosperity Shared by All
- Safer for All
- Healthier People with a Better Quality of Life
- People and Customer Focused

4. Recommendations

4.1 That Cabinet authorises officers to continue exploratory work for a potential pilot programme for increasing social capital within the Borough. The activities will include preliminary negotiations with a not for profit organisation (Participle) on the programme scope, outcomes, benefits and investment.

5. Reason for recommendation

Background

5.1 This report sets out proposals for the development of a pilot programme to build social capital in the Borough. Programmes that help build and enhance social capital (also referred to as social enablement) seek to promote the sharing of skills, knowledge and communication within communities.

5.2 There are a number of initiatives emerging nationally focused on increasing social

capital. Individuals in all communities are faced with a series of increasingly complex issues, from the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children, an ageing population, entrenched worklessness, economic uncertainty and the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Traditional forms of public administration are no longer sufficient in themselves to provide the remedies to the broad range of issues facing society. New forms of service delivery and support need to recognise that local authorities are themselves part of a complex network of systems engaged in the delivery of public services; this network includes central and local government, public, private, voluntary and community organisations, elected representatives and, increasingly, individual and citizen-focused activities. Recent examples of interventions aimed at increasing self-help and social enablement focused on behavioural change and the concept of the co-production of services.

5.3 There is no single definition of social enablement; it is a concept that can be used flexibly to respond to local issues. In Haringey we propose the concept as: 'people and communities being actively control of their own lives and having the skills to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their own self help and their own communities' civic life'. To achieve greater social enablement and increased social capital, we need to work with people in a different way so that they have the skills and capacity for everyday, enriching lives. This means putting into place new measures to increase the capacity in communities.

5.4 Individuals have needs, but also have abilities. Increased social capital can create a new cadre of active and entrepreneurial citizens, owning, co-producing, directing and running services. It can also act as a catalyst for mobilising a range of volunteers and helpers who can directly contribute to the life of their community. The potential benefits of such a model are clear; improved individual and community well-being, and greater self-determination.

5.5 In addition to the potential for improving well-being, there is potential for financial benefits. Recent initiatives in other local authority areas show that the benefits of increased social capital includes the reduction in the sense of isolation felt by many older people. This, together with having ready access to a wider range of community based support, reduces the likelihood of institutional care being needed. A service model where there is a 'personalisation support' is not only more inclusive, but also preventative of later interventions. Other models focused on building social capital address inter-generational work.

5.6 During the past two years Participle – a not for profit organisation – has been leading innovative programmes in other local authority areas (notably Southwark, Westminster and Camden). The primary focus of their work has been on ageing and encourages older people to develop new skills and learning, provides support for small domestic jobs and promotes a social network. The project is called a 'Circle' and is a membership-based community initiative that provides a range of social support activities based on a small quarterly membership payment. The payment funds volunteers and paid helpers (paid at the rate of the London Living Wage).

6. Haringey Pilot

6.1 We propose that work is undertaken to formally explore the potential for a programme to increase social capital in Haringey. The pilot would enable us to identify specific outcomes for the borough using the experience of organisations that are leading this work in other areas. The development of a pilot will also allow us to scope potential financial benefits.

6.2 We propose that the pilot is based on the 'Haringey Circle'. Work is needed to explore the specific nature of such a programme, its outcomes, costs and savings. Specification for such a pilot should have a formal, external evaluation against identified outcomes and project objectives. Work is beginning with Participle on exploring this. Owing to the recent emergence of such programmes there has been no formal evaluation or research into the benefits.

6.3 The project will require an initial financial investment from the Council. Discussions are at an early stage but preliminary work indicates that the costs of a Haringey Circle would be in the range of £600k to £775k for a five-year programme. The business model identifies financial savings being made during the lifetime of the project, however savings are linked to the scope of the project and as this has not yet started, specific financial savings are not yet available.

6.4 We propose to use a specific grant for this purpose, funded through the Area Based Grant, with supporting performance management arrangements. The project would require robust governance and project management arrangements. In order to achieve this, and reflect the wide range of stakeholders involved, we recommend a Steering Group be established, comprising representatives from Adult, Culture and Community Services, Children and Young People's Services, Urban Environment and corporate finance. In addition, a representative from the Haringey Forum for Older People would be invited to join the Steering Group.

7. Other options considered

7.1 We are not exploring any other options in relation to social capital or social enablement.

8. Summary

8.1 Programmes focused on increasing social capital and social enablement in other areas are showing early signs of success. The challenges facing local government and partner agencies now and over the coming years mean that we have to explore innovative solutions that are sustainable and deliver an improved quality of life for our residents. A pilot project focused on building social capital will help us to determine

whether such a model will provide some of those solutions for this Borough.

8.2 This reports sets out a proposal for undertaking further exploratory work with Participle with the aim of developing a pilot Haringey Circle. The recommendation is for Cabinet to authorise officers to continue preliminary work with Participle with the aim of providing a further, detailed report and recommendations during first quarter of financial year 2010/11.

9. Chief Financial Officer Comments

9.1 The exploratory works are not expected to incur costs. Should proposals for the development of a wider project arise from the exploratory works, such as a Haringey Circle, it will be necessary to identify specific funding and savings before more detailed work can progress.

10. Head of Legal Services Comments

10.1 At this stage proposals are not sufficiently advanced for me to be able to offer any legal comments but there is no reason why these discussions should not take place.

11. Head of Procurement Comments

11.1 The Head of Procurement has been consulted on this paper, but as no procurement is required, there are no comments to be included.

12. Equalities &Community Cohesion Comments

12.1 Haringey is an extremely diverse Borough and responding to the different needs of the various communities and individuals in terms of community cohesion, inclusiveness and equality of opportunity is challenging. The equalities service would recommend that appropriate equality and diversity performance indicators are developed and included in performance monitoring and evaluation arrangements. This will assist the Council to demonstrate the equality of opportunity in terms of access and benefit of all social capital programmes delivered under this initiative.

12.2 It is recommended that equal opportunities monitoring and the development of equal opportunities performance indicators is included in the exploratory discussions with Participle.

13. Consultation

13.1 Consultation will be undertaken with a wide range of partners and voluntary groups as the pilot programme is shaped.

14. Service Financial Comments

14.1 There are no costs being incurred at this time, however provision can be made for small expenditure (if required to enable the exploratory work) via the ABG grant. Should the exploratory work lead to proposals for a Haringey Circle, funding of between £600k – £775k will need to be identified.

15. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs

15.1 None.

16. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

16.1 None