Minute of the Building Stronger Communities Group
held on Thursday, 24th January 2019
Committee Room 2, 14 City Square

Present: Alison Anderson - Neighbourhood Services - Environment
Angie Ballantyne - Dundee Voluntary Action / TSI
Ben Gibson - Hillcrest Housing
David MacDougall - Maryfield Forum
Gary Knox - City Development
John Hosie - Neighbourhood Services – Communities
Paul Davies - Community Planning (chair)
Peter Allan - Chief Executive’s
Robin Shields - Neighbourhood Services – Housing
Ron Neave - North East Forum
Stella Carrington - Lochee Forum
Wendy Scullin - Coldside Forum

In Attendance: John Berry - City Development – Sustainable Transport

Apologies: Alice Bovill - Strathmartine Forum
Christine Humphrey - Strathmartine Forum
Elaine Zwirlein - Neighbourhood Services
Joyce Barclay - Health & Social Care Partnership

1. Introductions & Apologies
Peter welcomed everyone to the meeting and a round of introductions was made. Apologies received are listed above.

2. Minute of December Meeting
Agreed as accurate.

3. Matters Arising
- Presentation on Literacy and its impact on accessing services has been scheduled for the February meeting
- Samantha from Food for Thought has been in touch with Peter and Derek to progress work on food poverty

4. Chairs Group – Issues & Information Sharing
The main discussion at the meeting was around the Gathering which is to be held in Committee Room 1 on the 14th May. The group’s main focus at the moment is on determining what topics to cover. Forums are to look at this during their February meetings in order to help the Chairs Group reach a consensus and plan the agenda.

5. Priority Updates
5.1 Travel Networks
John B provided an update which focussed on the work of the Dundee Transport Forum and Local Bus Services:

Dundee Transport Forum
- This has been developed into a more formal group over the past year, and currently has two sub-groups that focus on (i) transport networks, and (ii) getting people out and about, including reducing social isolation
A document is being compiled on the range of available transport services in the city e.g. the Blether Bus, Community Cars, etc. The information will include who can use them, how to access them, and when they are available. Once complete it will be shared through various frontline staff.

The website covering transportation is to be updated over the next couple of months.

Blether Buses were launched in Lochee and Coldside in 2018 for people making short journeys. Numbers have been lower over the winter, and this will continue to be monitored in order to determine their ongoing usefulness. There are also options for rolling out the service to other parts of Dundee.

Strategic links have been made with the Health & Social Care Partnership’s Frailty Strategic Planning Group. Items from the recent DP Forum on Tackling Loneliness & Social Isolation will also be taken into account as part of fitting in with the bigger strategic picture.

The Flow Centre in Lothian was visited recently. This is an NHS coordinated service to help patients get to where they need to be for treatment.

- A query has been raised as to whether this could be done in Dundee too.
- There is a need to collate data on how much of an issue transport to appointments is.
- To take something like this forward, it would need DCC, NHS, and the Scottish Ambulance Service (who also deliver the Patient Transport Service) to collaborate.

Dundee Community Transport is also delivering ‘Out & About, enabling groups of people to go on short trips e.g. to the V&A, Dobbies, Arbroath, etc. The service uses DCC minibuses and drivers, and needs promoting to relevant communities.

Local Bus Services

- National Express Dundee implemented a major review of their network on the 13th January – the first changes made in 15 months, some quite large.
- Dundee Transport Forum had previously fed back on the proposed changes, but this doesn't seem to have made much difference to the plans.
- National Express will be reviewing the changes over the next few months, so there may be further tweaks to services.
- National Express Dundee have been fined £35k for poor services provided in October 2018.
  - Stella added that she had attended the hearing about this at which it was shown that the company were short of 20 drivers due to holidays, and the Traffic Commissioner held them to account over this stating that the punishment ‘could have been a lot worse’.
- More positively, they are about to introduce contactless payment on their buses.

Discussion followed, which included:

- Communication of the changes in January have not been well communicated, with copies of the new timetables not available until several days after they came into effect.
  - The Stobswell Forum put out a newsletter four times a year which could help get the word out regarding changes.
- Discussions lead to comment being given, but little change to plans being made by the bus companies. This compares with City Developments range of plans which are subject to independent review and changes do get made. Could MSPs be asked about legislation around bus services and taking into account consultation?
  - John indicated that there is a Transport Bill working through the Scottish Parliament at present which could change the balance by the end of 2019. There is still an opportunity to comment on this, and a response from DCC has already been submitted. John to share information on this and the DCC response with BSC members. (Information on the Bill can be viewed here).
John concluded with a final piece of good news – the 1.4km long path between Stannergate and the City Centre is now open for use by pedestrians and cyclists.

5.2 Fairness
Peter circulated a summary of the Fairness Commission recommendations, grouped under three key topics, (see attached) and gave an update on them:

People & Money
- Hillcrest Housing Association are already in the process of amending their debt recovery letters to be more supportive in tone
- Creating a single access point for financial advice is a simple idea, but harder to put into practice due to the wide range of agencies involved and the variance in the types of service they provide
- The Scottish Government are looking at 3-4 areas to pilot a Citizens Basic Income at present

Mental Health
- A 24/7 drop-in facility would help to address some of the current gaps in people’s ability to access mental health services
- Improving the sensitivity of frontline staff across agencies through training would help people to feel more supported and get access to the additional services they need
- Research carried out by the Commission is currently being analysed, with the results to be published soon
- Mental health services provided at Carsview are currently under review
- The work of the Dundee Drug Commission will also impact on mental health services

Stigma
- We need to provide the press with the right kind of story, in the right way, to have an impact on public opinion and the way people think about those experiencing poverty
- More research is needed. It is especially hard to identify people experiencing in-work poverty as they are the least likely to be accessing services

The recommendations will be incorporated into the revision of the Fairness Action Plan during 2019.

The Community Commissioners involved in this have all grown in confidence. They have presented their findings at a DCC Committee, to the Dundee Partnership, and to the Cabinet Secretary for Communities & Local Government. They are now looking at ‘what next’ and maintaining a role / involvement within this agenda, supported by Faith in Community Dundee.

A third, and final, Fairness Commission will also be set up. We are now seeking 12 new civic commissioners and 12 new community commissioners, with lived experience. Anyone with suggestions for Commission members to contact Peter.

Alongside this, we aim to undertake a long term approach through the setting up of a Fairness Leadership Panel by the end of 2019. Dundee is also working on a Child Poverty Strategy, which needs to be in place by June 2019.

Discussion followed, which included;
- Getting information from children in poverty could be a useful source of information
  - The Cost of the School Day project has listened to the views of children & young people. Peter to invite a speaker to present on this as part of the next update on Fairness (April 18th)
While those experiencing in-work poverty are a priority, services are still geared towards helping those without jobs, and so there is a need to change delivery. A small number of organisations do operate at the times needed rather than ‘office hours’ (e.g., Includem). Bringing about the wider change in practice by services will take time.

6. Dundee Community Regeneration Fund:
6.1 Grant Applications
All applications were approved.

Paul informed the group that due to budget constraints, the decision had been taken for there to be no carry forward of unallocated DPCRF monies from this financial year to the next. Where an award has been made to a Physical / Environmental Improvement and this experiences delays, we will still be in the position of being able to consider permitting funds to be carried forward to enable completion of works, as we have in previous years.

Discussion followed, which included:
- David informed the group that Maryfield have recently had a group state that they are unable to carry out a sizable piece of planned work, and so the allocation remains with the Maryfield Forum (note: funds were never released to the group), with little time to reallocate this.
- At present we do not know what allocation the DPCRF will receive, due to the scale of savings needed across DCC.
- The overall impact of budget savings on communities will be looked at by this group once decisions have been made (late February Committee).
- Money allocated to Dundee Decides projects is ring fenced for these and will be unaffected.
- Angie and Alison asked for a breakdown of the remaining funding by grant type. Paul to supply this to them.

6.2 Projects Failing to Report
No groups have been added to the list this month, and all interim reports expected have been received.

The following projects are ineligible for funding due to not having reported on funded activity from 2017-18:
- EE1730 – St. Pius X Church – Community Café
- F1706 – Broughty Ferry & District Men’s Shed – Shed Development & Start Up
- L1719 – Lochee United Junior FC – Arts Project
- L1727 – Dundee & Angus Recycling Group CIC – Equipment
- NE1709 – Mill O’Mains Community Pavilion – Summer Programme
- NEY1708 – Mill O’Mains Community Pavilion – Youth Project

7. Local Community Planning
John provided an update on three items within Local Community Planning;

Dundee Decides
- Work is still in progress on a number of projects.
- Meetings are taking place in February regarding these, and so more information will be available at the next BSC meeting.

Census 2021
- John and Judy Dobbie (Head of Library & Information Services) recently attended a national meeting on planning for the next census.
- The aim is for ~80% of returns to be completed online.
- A pilot is to be held in three Local Authorities.
- Dundee needs to identify a lead officer to liaise with census organisers.
A community engagement plan is being developed which will be made available for comment.

International Community Development Conference
- A good response has been received for this to date
- John and colleagues are in the process of setting up a series of Practice Exchange events to be held on the 27th/28th June, following on from the conference. Five have been agreed so far, with a sixth under consideration. The five are:
  - Community Growing
  - The Decentralisation Journey, to involve LCPPs, Regeneration Forums, Community Councils, Neighbourhood Representative Structures, etc.
  - Young People, involving a range of youth groups, Youth Council, etc.
  - Fairness Commission, involving the Community Commissioners from the second Fairness Commission
  - Humanitarian Support for Refugees
- Twenty places for local people / staff are available. If interested, contact John

8. AOCB
8.1 The Big Lunch
Alison passed on information regarding The Big Lunch, part of the Eden Project’s activities that aim to reduce loneliness & isolation by helping neighbours and communities connect with each other. See attached for more information and an invitation to the meeting planned for the 15th February.

8.2 ADP Membership
The ADP is currently undertaking an extensive review of its activity and membership. It is hoped that membership will include community representation in the future.

The funding for the ADP sits within NHS Tayside, and it is currently unclear what is specifically spent on tackling addictions due to overlap with other conditions. It was also noted that only one public meeting has been held at which questions could be asked, and further such meetings would be appreciated.

9. Date of Next Meeting
Thursday 21st February, Committee Room 2, 14 City Square

Attachments:
The Big Lunch – invitation to 15th February meeting
Fairness Commission Recommendations