

Equality Impact Assessment: Report and EIA Action Plan

Purpose

Policy/Service under development/review:	Empowering Communities: BCP Council's Voluntary and Community Sector and Volunteering Strategy 2021-24
Service Lead and Service Unit:	Amy Gallacher, Community Engagement
People involved in EIA process:	Amy Gallacher, Community Partnerships Officer Cat McMillan, Head of Community Engagement Jemma Waine, Research Officer, Insights Team
Date EIA conversation started:	01.04.21 The strategy and the consultation process have been developed over a period of months; the process began in April 2021.

Background

Our Vision is to ensure that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole is a vibrant, connected community which provides meaningful opportunities for volunteering and social action, which empowers a thriving Community and Voluntary Sector to help support community needs.

This Community and Voluntary Sector and Volunteering strategy outlines a set of priorities and key actions, through partnership and collaborative working, over the next three years to achieve this Vision. It focuses on:

- How we work with the Community and voluntary sector to support connected vibrant communities through partnerships and collaborative working, as well as helping residents to build resilient communities
- Recognising the impact of Covid: Learning from the community response to Covid to embrace new ways of working, as well as helping those negatively impacted by the pandemic to find opportunities to play an active, valued role in their communities
- Focusing on the development of volunteering and social action opportunities across the wider community, including Council-led opportunities as well as volunteering and social action that takes place through the community and voluntary sector, local business and more informal mechanisms.

Volunteering within BCP Council is currently carried out in isolation across different departments. Through the strategy and delivery plan we will establish a working group to enable a more joined up approach between departments that work with volunteers. This will enable better sharing of information and resources between departments to improve synergy, efficiency and consistency, where appropriate, so that it is easier for people to volunteer with the Council.

This has led to different volunteer and work placement experiences with the Council. The legacy Councils also had their respective approaches prior to the creation of BCP Council and this has not been harmonised. This strategy brings together a more joined up approach to volunteering and work experience opportunities across the Council and will enable better communication between departments through a working group.

Many people across the BCP area participate in some form of volunteering, whether it be formal volunteering for an organisation, or self-organising and neighbourliness, through a community

group or a local online group chat. However, the strategy aims to encourage and enable more people from a diverse range of backgrounds and life circumstances to participate in volunteering and social action activities that is of benefit to themselves as well as others.

In order to better understand people's views on volunteering, the Council ran a public consultation focusing on volunteering approaches, volunteering with the council, the effects of the pandemic, partnerships with the community and participating in local activities that help others. This [public consultation](#) was carried out over four weeks, from 14 April to 12 May 2021. It was carried out online using BCP Council's engagement platform using a survey which allowed respondents to give their views, with hard copies available in libraries. There were 477 responses to the survey and the [full report can be found here](#).

The feedback received was used to shape the development of the draft strategy which then was published on the Engagement HQ consultation feedback for further comments. Alongside this engagement, there was also:

- Internal Engagement session and individual meetings were undertaken with 40+ Officers that are involved in volunteering or work with the community and voluntary sector.
- External Engagement session with 32 organisations and community groups
- Members and Parish council briefings
- Engagement session with BCP Youth Forum
- Close engagement with Community Action Network and other partners such as Dorset ICS Engagement Leads network
- DOTS Disability is an organisation run by and for Disabled people, older people and carers. They were commissioned by BCP Council to undertake a consultation on the draft strategy and provided a feedback report to help improve accessibility of services, volunteering and work experience opportunities.

The data from community and voluntary sector organisations responding to the Community Action Network (CAN) survey has shown 51% of the organisations that responded were worried about future funding and their respective sustainability in the short/medium and long term. The strategy provides a set of principles for how the Council will work support and collaborate with the community and voluntary sector to help it to thrive.

Findings

1) Not everyone feels they are able to volunteer

The consultation highlighted that not everyone feels they are able to volunteer. Around a third of the respondents in the consultation (30%) stated that not having enough time and family/work commitments were key factors that prevented them from volunteering.

Some people may lack the confidence to start volunteering (13% of respondents) or do not feel they have anything to offer. These are people who could really benefit from volunteering and the opportunities it can bring individuals. They need support to build trusted relationships to get involved, which takes time. Other factors that were reasons for not volunteering included lack of opportunities that fit my preference/needs (15%) and health conditions (15%).

Only 4% stated they were not interested in volunteering.

The majority of the respondents had volunteered in the last twelve months and planned to continue to do so. Over 65 year olds are significantly more likely to have started volunteering more than 3 years ago compared to any other age group. Of the respondents aged 16 to 34 years old, 33% had started volunteering in the last twelve months, perhaps reflecting the change in circumstances during national lockdown to facilitate time available for volunteering.

Respondents aged 35-44 are significantly more likely to want to get more involved to help others in their local community compared to those aged 65+ but are significantly more likely to disagree that they have enough support to set up initiatives compared to those aged 45+. Respondents who have a disability are significantly more likely to have volunteered with a specific charity or organisation rather than conducted spontaneous volunteering.

2) People are not always aware of what volunteering and work experience opportunities are available

Only 29% said they are aware of volunteering opportunities at the Council and even fewer (17%) were aware of the work experience opportunities.

Just under a quarter (24%) of respondents have volunteered or carried out unpaid work experience with the council. Respondents were asked what would encourage them to volunteer with the Council. Of the 220 comments, the most prevalent themes were:

- More information needed on volunteering opportunities (such as what the role involves, and specific information made available about the role)
- Make it easier to find opportunities (such as knowing where to look for opportunities and that opportunities are advertised regularly).

Nearly half of respondents look for volunteering opportunities directly through an organisation (47%) and Community Action Network (44%).

3) Volunteering and work placement opportunities need to be more open and accessible to all

Just over two fifths of respondents (41%) believed these types of opportunities were not open and accessible to everyone.

Females were significantly more likely to say no to this question than males. Respondents aged 65 and over were significantly more likely to agree that these opportunities are open and accessible.

Respondents were asked about how the Council can make it more open and accessible for everyone to want to get involved in council-led volunteering and work experience. Of the 272 comments received, the table below shows the main themes:

Themes	No of comments
Better awareness	193
Identify needs of different groups	32
Clearer information	30
Partner with other organisation/ stakeholders	30
Better/ easier registration form	22
Flexible hours/ opportunities	15
Interesting/well run opportunities	15
General comment	8

Base: 272 comments

Regarding better awareness, respondents want to hear about things through a range of ways including:

- Online through social media, local news outlets
- Community Posters e.g. at libraries/shopping centres
- Informed chats/meetings to say exactly what is involved.

Regarding identify needs of different groups, responses included:

- Make volunteering opportunities that can be accessed and carried out digitally, so that people who are housebound can do something useful.
- Perhaps those who would benefit greatly from volunteering, like adults with disabilities could be prioritised for some roles. Many of these adults are very reliable, competent and skilled and just need that extra support to get them started. A link could be made with local charities, like Autism Wessex community support team, to discuss opportunities
- Make these opportunities widely known through all types of media - not everyone has the internet!

Respondents commented on **what volunteering or work experience opportunities they would like to see more of at the Council**. The most prevalent themes were environmental/conservation, young people/children/families and health and wellbeing. For instance, more volunteering opportunities for 16-18 year olds as it is good for young people to be able to try out different roles and support and engage with their communities in a positive way. Others also wanted to see more opportunities to help those who suffer with mental health, loneliness and those living alone.

There also needs to be **better communication** about why the Council is working with volunteers. Some of the comments received showed concern that the council should employ and pay staff to carry out its responsibilities or would only volunteer if they were sure they weren't taking away what could be a paid job for someone.

Working with the Community and Voluntary sector to support Connected Vibrant Communities

Ongoing pressure on budgets and resources both within the Council and across the Community and Voluntary sector (CVS) means that now more than ever we need to work more effectively together through joined up approaches to share expertise, knowledge and resources to support community needs.

The Community Action Network (CAN) survey showed the negative impact it has had on local community and voluntary sector organisations. Critically, around half of the organisations that responded (51%) were worried about future funding and their respective sustainability in the short/medium and long term. 31% of the organisations that responded were struggling to still offer support or were 'on hold' during 2020.

In response to the pandemic, BCP Council led the Together We Can initiatives, working in partnership with a variety of organisations, community groups and residents who offered to help and support shielding and other vulnerable people in our communities. This has included providing a helpline and supporting with needs such as access to food and coordinating a local vaccination programme. The majority of the consultation respondents (94%) agreed that these types of partnership approaches are important to help support the needs of our communities.

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The strategy outlines our ambition to support a thriving, vibrant community and voluntary sector across BCP, along with our desire to put volunteering at the heart of our communities, ensuring there are diverse, rewarding opportunities to volunteer, which are accessible to all.

Supporting the Community and Voluntary Sector to thrive

It sets a framework and principles for how the Council will work with the Community and voluntary sector to support connected vibrant communities through partnerships and collaborative working, as well as helping people to build resilient communities. The focus is on how we can work together to support those most vulnerable in our communities. BCP Council works closely with a range of partners, including community and voluntary sector organisations, faith groups, community and resident groups, local business and other organisations to respond to community needs, and will look to further strengthen and expand on this collaborative working to reach more within our communities.

We need to learn more from those that have **lived experience** of the challenges we are trying to help solve. In partnership, we need to better understand the pathways that have led people into crisis and how we can help people recover or intervene early to prevent entering into crisis where possible. These stories need to be shared more broadly across networks to help with the support that is being provided and how and when people feel they are able to access support.

The Council is embedding more **community led and strength-based approaches** to community development within its services. This strategy refers to such frameworks but is not leading on this policy. We hope that the strategy will positively affect service users by removing barriers to volunteering and encourage all residents including those with protected characteristics to play an active role in their communities.

Developing a volunteering and social action strategy

We want to involve more people in volunteer action to help build vibrant communities with outstanding quality of life where everyone plays an active role.

This strategy is the commitment of BCP Council, working in partnership with Community Action Network, our umbrella infrastructure charity and volunteering hub, to support and encourage volunteering. We want to support local people who want to help and give the gift of their time, experience and insight, to do so safely and effectively. Giving them a great volunteering experience, and positively impact the organisation/community where they are volunteering.

The delivery plans include working with a range of partners to reach out to particular groups within communities to promote opportunities and also better understand the barriers to people participating or wanting to play an active role in their communities.

BCP Council are investing in the Communities team to support communities through place based and strength based approaches. It will recruit additional resource to focus on helping communities recover from the impact of Covid and address particular issues across the conurbation, such as loneliness and anxiety caused by lockdowns.

The public consultation has provided some good insight into the need to promote opportunities more broadly and through a range of ways to reach more people. There have been several suggestions and comments for improvement, which will be taken on board. In addition, there will be further conversations through trusted partners to better understand improvements that can be made to encourage more people to participate.

- ***Different ages***

The delivery plans include working with a range of partners to reach out to particular groups within communities.

Young people - For instance, with younger people, we will work with educational establishments to reach out to young people, as well as working with BCP Youth Forum to better understand ways in which to encourage more young people to volunteer and provide opportunities that are meaningful to them. The delivery plan also includes working with Bournemouth University to connect with their students that participate in helping in their local communities. In addition, we will work with other educational establishments to ensure we raise awareness of the opportunities

that exist locally for people to get involved in, as well as better understand what opportunities may be missing.

Through the Council's corporate parent role the strategy looks to help those in care and care leavers with opportunities in volunteering and work experience.

Older people – The delivery plan includes a communications plan to reach target audiences. It will include the need for communicating opportunities through a range of ways to reach all within our communities. For instance, respondents aged over 65 years are significantly less likely to use the internet to find volunteering opportunities. Respondents aged 55-64 years are significantly more likely to use CAN than those aged 45-54 years and 65 and over. CAN are a key partner that we will work closely with and promote opportunities through its volunteer hub.

Working age population – The consultation highlighted barriers to volunteering, such as time constraints and other commitments. The strategy will look at ways to make opportunities more flexible and accessible for more people to get involved. Additionally, through the work with engaging with business leaders, it will look at how employers can support and help their staff to get more involved in local opportunities.

The delivery plan will also encourage a broader range of opportunities to be offered that are flexible to make it easier for people to get involved, such as being able to get involved if you are housebound or during the evenings if you have work commitments during the day.

- **Different sexes/genders**

There were far more females that responded to the survey and within the responses were more aware of opportunities to get involved. There needs to be stronger communication to reach out to males within our community to give feedback; and further engagement to find out what opportunities would be more attractive to encourage more males to get involved in volunteering and work placement opportunities.

- **Those with caring responsibilities**

The delivery plan includes working with the Dorset dementia partnership to reach carers and support them to be involved in local community activities. For instance, during the pandemic, there were telephone friendship groups set up to help support people to stay connected within their communities, including supporting those with caring responsibilities.

BCP Council are also represented on the Dorset Carers Partnership board, a group formed of representatives from both council, health and third sector as a way of working together to better support carers across Dorset.

- **Those with physical disabilities**

The strategy was shared with DOTS Disability to provide feedback and the delivery plans will include further engagement with this partner to improve the accessibility of opportunities for those with physical disabilities.

- **Those with mental disabilities**

The strategy was shared with People First Forum to provide feedback and the delivery plans will include further engagement to improve the accessibility of opportunities for those with mental disabilities. This includes working with the BCP Learning Disability Partnership Board to reach out to partners and providers to better understand what opportunities can be provided and how we can help more people to get involved and play an active role in their communities.

- **People from different ethnic groups**

The Council will work with relevant partners such as Dorset Race Equality Council and trusted community leaders to reach out to different ethnic groups within communities. There are some inspiring stories of how people have helped during the pandemic to feed and support others. The strategy aims recognise a wide range of social action activities that take place and explore ways to share knowledge and create more connectedness across communities where people feel supported.

- **People from different religious groups**

Faith groups provide strong networks and great opportunities that help people feel connected to others within their community. Faith communities also engage in an enormous amount of activity to help in their communities, and provide hubs through their buildings that are used to host activities and spaces for people to connect. These are a huge asset. There are some incredible examples of some great volunteering and social action that happens locally and the Council and others work closely with various faith communities as part of this strategy.

BCP Council Equalities Network group also provides an opportunity to continue to look at how we engage and include all within our communities to feel part of a community as well as connect with others within their local areas.

- **People in different socio-economic groups**

Through this strategy and action plan, we will invest in BCP Council's community development team ensuring we have dedicated workers in all of our priority neighbourhoods across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. It will help communities within targeted neighbourhoods to develop and flourish by understanding community needs and interests and provide additional resources through connected community coordinators to help communities to recover from the impact of Covid.

The delivery plans include helping the long-term unemployed and others including those whose employment has been affected by the pandemic to return to work through work experience opportunities and placements.

The plans include encouraging people to volunteer in their local area and use sustainable modes of transport to reach the activity. This should help to overcome any costs to volunteering as well as help reduce carbon footprint.

- **People from the Armed Forces Community**

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant Agreement, the delivery plan includes working in partnership with the existing Dorset partnership group to engage this community in the delivery plans.

Please tick any characteristic that will be affected – there can be more than one.	Age ¹	Disability ²	Sex	Gender reassignment ³	Pregnancy and Maternity	Marriage and Civil	Race	Religion or Belief	Sexual Orientation	Armed Forces Community	Human Rights	Any other factors/groups e.g. socio-economic status/carers ⁴
Positive outcomes												
Increased take up of volunteering and work experience opportunities	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓				
Greater choice of volunteering activities/opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Publicised more broadly	✓	✓	✓									
Place based work to contribute to local community needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improved overall experience for volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Better partnership working and sharing of resources/knowledge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Working with communities and the sector to respond to locally identified needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Negative outcomes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of diversity of volunteers	✓		✓					✓		✓		✓
Inconsistency on policies supporting volunteers and work experience	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Opportunities not publicised enough (esp. off-line)	✓	✓	✓									
Lack of sufficient funding may lead to reduced services and support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

¹Under this characteristic, The Equality Act only applies to those over 18.

²Consider any reasonable adjustments that may need to be made to ensure fair access.

³Transgender refers people have a gender identity or gender expression that differs to the sex assigned at birth.

⁴People on low incomes or no income,

unemployed, carers, part-time, seasonal workers and shift workers

Conclusion

The strategy aims to improve the breadth and depth of volunteer and work placement offerings that exist in BCP and to be more accessible to all.

The delivery plan involves working with a range of partners to better understand and review ways to provide meaningful volunteering, work experience and social action opportunities to support everyone to be able to play an active role in helping each other and themselves.

It will further explore ways to better understand and engage with individuals and communities to create more opportunities and positive experiences with volunteering and work experience. It includes working directly with community and voluntary sector organisations, faith groups, local businesses, educational settings and others within our community to reach a broad range of residents and raise awareness of how people can feel more connected and play an active role locally.

The consultation revealed the need for better communication and promotion of the opportunities that are available to be more accessible to all. The delivery plans include working with relevant identified partners to better understand some of the barriers to volunteering and strengthen the networks and relationships to make it easier for people to actively participate in their local communities. It is focused on connecting communities together and enabling better signposting to support and services.

The proposal includes a dedicated volunteer co-ordinator to help facilitate and administer the delivery plans, alongside the creation of relevant working groups to bring together stronger networks to focus on this area of work. This includes a more corporate wide approach to volunteering and work experience with the Council – sharing of policies, frameworks, documents and best practice. In turn, individuals volunteering or those carrying out unpaid work experience with the Council receive a more streamlined approach in their engagement with the Council.

Investment in community development roles within the Council will provide additional resource to facilitate networks and bring together communities based on geography, communities of interest.

There are health and wellbeing benefits to volunteering, and we aim to continue to raise awareness, including through shared stories, about how it can have a positive impact and change on people's lives. In addition, by providing a broader range of opportunities and promoting more clearly work experience placements, we hope to support people with their employability skills and opportunities and have a positive impact. Volunteering and feeling connected within a community also helps to reduce loneliness and isolation and improve people's mental health. There are a range of ways that people can get involved and find areas of interest that can help support them to be more active and involved locally.

The challenge may be that Communities share their thoughts and they are not acted upon to help improve on the volunteering and community and voluntary sector that exists. In turn, there are missed opportunities to help improve service delivery for current and potential service users. There is a risk that although the priorities are to look at improving the volunteering and social action opportunities available to people may be achieved but those that we are trying to reach may continue to decide not to play an active part. Whilst there was a promising neighbourly response to helping others during the pandemic, individuals may decide to return to their previous ways and not wish to be involved in more sustained work.

Whilst we recognise the negative impact that Covid 19 has had on BCP communities and the local sector, we are still in the pandemic and do not know the full extent that the pandemic will have on our local communities. The Covid-19 pandemic could continue to have a significant

impact through further outbreaks locally that were not expected. This would impact or delay the delivery of the strategy and action plans. During the pandemic, organisations and people adapted to change and will continue to do so even if not at optimal delivery. The strategy includes annual reviews to be able to amend plans accordingly.

If the aims of the consultation and subsequent strategy are achieved then there will be a positive impact upon the wider community through the availability of additional/more people having capacity to volunteer and more people feeling connected to others in their community.

Summary of Equality Implications:

BCP Council's Voluntary and Community Sector and Volunteering Strategy aims to have a positive impact on helping to create opportunities for all residents, including supporting those with protected characteristics and local priority groups, to feel part of their community and play an active role to support community needs. The strategy involves working closely with a range of voluntary and community sector organisations and groups, to recognise the differing needs of individuals and groups and consider ways to overcome barriers to participation as part of the delivery plans. The strategy aims to enable everyone to feel confident to volunteer in a variety of ways, to help others in their communities across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

There is currently a lack of diversity in the people that declare they volunteer locally. The public consultation revealed that many felt that volunteering and work experience opportunities were not open and accessible to everyone and that there are barriers that prevent people from volunteering. However, the strategy and delivery plan are focused on improving this by increasing the range of opportunities and the way in which these are shared more broadly across communities. The delivery plans involve working with a range of relevant partners to reach out to under-represented groups and improve the range of formal volunteering opportunities available, such as younger people, long term unemployed, care leavers, those with disabilities and a broader representation from ethnic minority groups. Ongoing engagement will identify any additional under-represented groups.

The strategy identifies ways to develop a broader range of volunteering and social action opportunities available across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. It prioritises areas such as enhancing accessibility and choice of opportunities available, as well as better understanding the barriers to volunteering that prevents some people from getting involved. It includes better promotion of opportunities through a range of ways, including working with trusted community leaders to reach target audience groups to help increase the diversity of those involved in such activities. The plans look at how to provide positive and rewarding experiences and sharing inspiring stories from a diverse range of people to improve the image and concept of volunteering to a wider audience.

The strategy also focuses on how BCP Council works with the voluntary and community sector to support vibrant connected communities. It is focused on building effective partnerships and working closely with specialist partners within the voluntary and community sector to better understand and respond to the needs of all within our communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted many within our communities, and this strategy looks at ways to help communities to recover. Networks such as the BCP Council Community Equality Champions Network provide opportunities to work more closely with our diverse and seldom heard groups within communities, and look at ways to help underrepresented groups feel more connected and able to participate in local activities, volunteering and social action.

There could be a potential negative impact on some people who:

- are not confident using the internet or accessing information online
- do not fully engage with methods of communication used by the council
- do not have English as their first language
- have low literacy levels.

The plan will aim to provide information in a range of ways and to better understand audience needs and target communications which will mitigate any potential negative impacts.

Through the strategy, a number of actions have been identified to recognise all protected characteristics of those within our communities, and work more closely to support them to get involved in their communities. These have been listed out in the EIA action plan along with any potential areas for negative impact and mitigating actions.

BCP Council will work with relevant partners to better understand and engage with individuals and communities to create more opportunities and positive experiences with volunteering and work experience. This includes working with a broad range of organisations and groups, particularly within the voluntary and community sector, faith communities, local businesses, statutory agencies and other groups to reach more people within our community and find out how we can help them to be able to participate more and feel connected with others. There are many specialists within our local area that have strong trusted relationships with particular community groups and we will work together to engage with them and find out ways to better engage and reach a wider set of residents within our communities. The strategy impacts all protected characteristics and is focused on how we can bring different parts of the community closer together to share experience and support each other. The delivery plan identifies partners to work more closely with, but through the programme, we expect to broaden the range of organisations that are involved.

The plans include encouraging people to volunteer in their local area and use sustainable modes of transport to reach the activity. This should help to overcome any costs to volunteering and work experience as well as help reduce carbon footprint. Work with partners will include reviewing how accessible opportunities are for people to get involved.

It is focused on connecting communities together and enabling better signposting to support and services. The delivery plan includes building on the neighbourliness seen during the pandemic and support ways for people to come together to help others. Investment in the communities team to support community development and the coordination of these plans will help to deliver on these actions.

The proposal includes a dedicated volunteer co-ordinator to help facilitate and administer the delivery plans, alongside the creation of relevant working groups to bring together stronger networks to focus on this area of work. This includes a more corporate wide approach to volunteering and work experience with the Council – sharing of policies, frameworks, documents and best practice. In turn, individuals volunteering or those carrying out unpaid work experience with the Council receive a more streamlined approach in their engagement with the Council.

The strategy outlines a set of principles to how the Council will work with the community and voluntary sector to support them to thrive. It is fundamental that we provide the right level of support to help the sector to be sustainable and in turn avoid a reduction in services/support available to communities where needed.

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Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Please complete this Action Plan for any negative or unknown impacts identified above. Use the table from the Capturing Evidence form to assist.

Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact	Timescale	Responsible officer
Not all residents feel they are able to volunteer or feel part of their local community	Work with a range of external partners to better understand the barriers to volunteering and how we can improve diversity in those that are involved in volunteering and social action	Year 1	Volunteer coordinator and relevant officers across the Council, working closely with Community Action Network
Lack of awareness of volunteering and work experience opportunities available at the Council	Better promote the opportunities available through a wider range of media, materials and networks. Be clearer and provide more information on what the opportunities involve.	Year 1	Volunteer coordinator and relevant officers across the Council, working closely with Community Action Network and the Communications department
Council-led volunteering and social action opportunities do not feel open and accessible to all	Work with a range of external partners to improve awareness and better identify the needs of different groups to help improve accessibility	Year 1	Volunteer coordinator and relevant officers across the Council, working closely with a range of external partners
Covid-19 has had a negative impact on the local VCS sector and local communities	Work with partners to look at ways to help support organisations and groups to recover, including financially and operationally. Additional resource and capacity being provided to help focus on connecting communities and building	Year 1	Various partnerships that the Council are involved in, as well as a broad range of Officers working with local communities

	community resilience. Look at opportunities to create stronger networks, partnerships to share resource, skills and funding.		
Some challenges with lack of knowledge and signposting to relevant support	There is a vast range of services and support available that continually evolves, we need to have a stronger understanding and easier way to navigate and find out what support is available to better signpost people.	Year 2 onwards	Various partnerships that the Council are involved in, as well as a broad range of Officers working with local communities – to better share information more broadly within organisations as well as across partnerships

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