

Priorities for working with the voluntary and community sector to support vibrant connected communities

- 1 Build effective partnerships and working relationships that support stronger connected communities.
- 2 Extend the council's services by building capacity through specialist partners.
- 3 Learn from the community response to COVID-19 and embrace new ways of working.
- 4 Help people to connect with their communities.
- 5 Support community-led approaches to help build resilient communities.
- 6 Focus on early intervention and prevention to support people to avoid crisis.

Priorities for developing volunteering and social action strategy

- v1 Recognising the value and promoting the benefits of volunteering
- v2 Enhancing accessibility, choice and diversity
- v3 Providing positive and rewarding volunteering experiences
- v4 Bringing communities together to volunteer and enable social action
- v5 Engaging employers and business leaders to play their part
- v6 Developing a more joined up approach to volunteering within the council.

Priorities for working with the voluntary and community sector to support vibrant connected communities

Priority 1 Build effective partnerships and working relationships that support stronger connected communities

Action	When	By whom?	Success measures
Set up a working group to oversee and monitor the delivery plans. Where appropriate, create additional groups to focus on particular areas of work, such as volunteering.	Year 1 and ongoing	BCP Council, other public sector organisations, businesses, VCS organisations and groups.	Effective working group established to oversee the delivery plans. Active working groups that are enabling outcomes. Progress being made against the delivery plans.
Facilitate and support new and existing partnerships that include the VCS organisations to tackle local community issues e.g. food insecurity, homelessness, community safety.	Ongoing	BCP Council, other public-sector organisations, businesses, VCS organisations and groups	More joined up networks and better understanding of what support exists. A broader range of representatives included in partnerships
Share information more effectively about the council's existing partnerships, agreements and working relationships that exist across the area.	Year 1	BCP Council and partnerships	Development and promotion of partnerships register for staff and councillors.
Create opportunities for council staff and other organisations to share information about the working relationships that exist to increase knowledge more broadly across organisations and avoid duplication of services.	Ongoing	BCP Council and partnerships	Information is shared more widely through various communication channels to promote work and support that exists across the conurbation. This includes sharing information between different partnerships, at meetings, in reports, bitesize examples. Increased awareness monitored through annual surveys.
Community Partnership Forums is a new initiative led by CAN working in partnership with BCP Council, health and a wide range of voluntary and community sector encouraging our communities to come together and tackle local issues that are important to them.	Year 2	CAN with BCP Council	Partnerships established. Baseline for attendance established. Feedback annually reviewed to understand usefulness and any areas for development.
BCP Council to look at more ways to co-design and solidify partnership working that values the input of all parties.	Ongoing	BCP Council and Partnerships	Examples of co-design and the outcomes shared to raise awareness and promote more partnership approaches. Consider if other partners, especially VCS organisations can be lead partner.
Develop and co-design partnership agreement with the voluntary and community sector, reviewing previous Compact agreements and deciding on key principles for future effective working relationships	Year 1	BCP Council, CAN and other partners	Co-designed partnership agreement established and promoted.

Priority 2 Extend the council's services by building capacity through specialist partners

Action	When	By whom?	Success measures
Provide financial support to infrastructure and operational partners so that the council can leverage their expertise to extend the service and support available to local residents.	Ongoing	BCP Council with various voluntary and community sector organisations	Continued grant funding to the voluntary and community sector for specialist support and extension of council services. Partners are able to evidence measurable outcomes and difference this has made to communities. Measurable outcomes measured and reviewed as part of the council's performance data.
Promote the work of the voluntary and community sector more broadly within the council and across partnerships to strengthen understanding of the work of specialist partners and their areas of expertise and support available	Year 2	VCS organisations with BCP Council	Working with relevant partners, such as Community Action Network, to share more about the grant agreement that exists and how it can support council staff and councillors. Raise awareness of the work of the VCS through staff engagement sessions and as part of the transformation of the council.
Create opportunities to share best practice to inspire more innovation and effective ways of working	Ongoing	BCP Partnerships / BCP Council	Share best practices and create bitesize examples to share via newsletters, internal council staff pages, staff briefing sessions.
Create a deeper understanding of community needs through the expertise, knowledge and support provided by the VCS	Year 2	BCP Council with various VCS organisations	Diverse communities are able to receive the help and support they need. Outcomes on the support provided and case studies are captured through quarterly contract monitoring.
Promote and continue to deliver BH Coastal Lottery and associated Small Grant Scheme.	Ongoing	BCP Council	Regular Small Grant Fund allocation to good causes across the area. Case studies and outcomes promoted to continue to raise awareness.
Develop a Living Legacy Fund with Dorset Community Foundation to help fund projects that help to support our communities	Year 1	BCP Council, Dorset Community Foundation	Local grant funding scheme receiving requests from projects that help to achieve the outcomes in the Council's corporate plan. £50,000 allocated in 2021/22 by BCP Council with a minimum of £50,000 match funding provided by DCF.
Improved connections between public sector commissioners and the VCS that embraces the social value act principles	Year 3	BCP Council and partners	Positive feedback and examples from the VCS sector

Priority 3 Learn from the community response to Covid and embrace new ways of working

Action	When	By whom?	Success measures
Work with the VCS and partners to understand the learnings and best practice of how the council worked with others in the response to the pandemic and embed these within our new ways of working. Review national work and learnings from the COVID-19 community response that may provide additional best practice approaches to BCP Council.	Year 1 and 2	BCP Council, CAN	Building on the work of the Together We Can steering group to collate learning across partners. Work with partners to pull together the learning from the COVID-19 Local Support Grant allocated from central government. Embed any national learnings within the delivery plans
Understand the longer-term impact of the pandemic to determine the way in which the council can help support communities in their post-COVID-19 recovery. Use data sets and intelligence to gather insight on the scale of the impact of COVID-19 on local communities and particular areas.	Year 1 (Winter 2021)	BCP Council, Together We Can, Public Health Dorset, CAN, BCP partnerships	Targeted support developed through Connected Community Co-ordinators and expansion of Community Development team.
BCP Council will recruit 3 'Connected community coordinators' for 1 year to focus on helping communities recover from the impact of COVID-19. They will address particular issues across the conurbation, such as loneliness and anxiety	Year 1 (Autumn 2021)	BCP Council	More residents are able to access the support and services they need to help recover from the impact of COVID-19.
Work with local organisations and community groups to understand ways in which we can work together to aid the sector's recovery	Year 1	BCP Council / CAN / Partnerships	Voluntary and community sector is helped with its recovery and sustainability – evidence through feedback. Work with CAN to provide more support to organisations to help the sector to recover.
Learn from the powerful community response to understand how to continue to enable communities to unite and support each other	Year 1	CAN, BCP Council and Together We Can partners	Communities are connected using learnings from the pandemic and embedded within the new normal
Find ways to help people connect more easily, such as sharing platforms and other technologies.	Year 3	CAN, BCP Council	Sharing platforms and technologies are used to successfully connect people with case study examples
Work with partners to support those negatively impacted by COVID-19 to find volunteering and work experience to help with their recovery.	Year 2	BCP Partnerships / CAN / BCP Council	Evidence through partner work and stories from those with lived experience.

Priority 4 Help people to connect with their communities

Action	When	By whom?	Success measures
Invest in BCP Council's community development team ensuring we have dedicated workers in all of our priority neighbourhoods across BCP	Year 1	BCP Council	Recruitment of staff actively working in priority neighbourhood areas
Help communities within targeted neighbourhoods to develop and flourish by understanding community needs and interests.	Year 1	BCP Council	Investment in BCP Council's Community Development team ensuring we have dedicated workers in all of our priority neighbourhoods across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.
Help communities and groups to set up activities and new initiatives that help create vibrant and connected communities	Ongoing	BCP Council and CAN	BCP Community development workers in priority neighbourhood areas, CAN providing support in other BCP areas.
Work more closely with our diverse and seldom heard groups within communities. For example, work through the BCP Council Community Equality Champions Network and the Community Engagement and Consultation strategy as well as other partnership work	Year 2 and 3	BCP Council and VCS organisations	More residents from underrepresented groups feel more connected and able to participate in local activities, volunteering and social action.
Improve awareness and create better signposting across networks, organisations and communities to make it easier for people to access the support they need.	Year 1	BCP Council and Partnerships	Connected community coordinators bringing together networks of support and helping communities to recover from the impact of COVID-19. Create networks that facilitate organisations and community groups to come together to understand community needs, share knowledge, expertise and resources to collaborate and respond to need.
Create communication plans that run alongside partnership working that shares information with residents about how they can connect with others in their communities and get support	Ongoing	BCP Council and partners	Increased awareness and take up of support within the voluntary and community sector and wider community settings.
Work with partners to deliver initiatives that tackle digital exclusion and improve communities' digital skills and look at opportunities to increase access to the internet for vulnerable people and other priority groups	Year 2	BCP Council and partnerships	Working with partners to identify ways to provide digital skills training and access to digital inclusion, such as through Dorset Council's digital champions work.

Priority 5 Support community-led approaches to help build resilient communities

Action	When	By whom?	Success measures
Train council staff about community-led strength-based approaches and embedding these principles in council work. Training to council staff and the voluntary and community sector.	Year 1, 2, 3	BCP Council, external providers, Prama, CAN	Training sessions provided to council staff Strength based framework and principles embedded into council work .
Share examples of strength-based approaches that already exist in council work and partnerships with Communities (e.g.Homelessness Partnership, Community Safety Partnership, Access to Food Partnership, Future Parks work).	Year 1	BCP Council	Examples shared across organisations.
Engage a strategic leadership approach within the Council to enable corporate wide support for strength based approaches	Year 1	BCP Council	Community and Partnerships workstream for the Transformation of the Council will embed strength based approaches
Work with communities to help them to set up their own initiatives and groups to respond to need.	Year 2	BCP Council, CAN	CAN to support to groups to set up new initiatives. Create more ways to share information about local activities and groups, building on the ways people connected during recent lockdowns. Priority neighbourhoods supported by the BCP Council community development team along with CAN.
Help people to become more self-reliant through finding support and solutions to help address their needs. Support residents to develop their own skills and capabilities to become resilient and thrive.	Ongoing	BCP Council and partners	BCP Council Transformation programme More people accessing information and services where needed via online portals and websites (Corporate KPI)

Priority 6 Focus on early intervention and prevention to support people

Action	When	By whom?	Success measures
Better share information on early intervention and prevention work that is already taking place across partnerships and work with the voluntary and community sector to learn and extend on such approaches.	Year 2	BCP Council, CAN, Dorset ICS and BCP Health and Wellbeing Board	Share best practice through networks and online presence. Publish best practice on relevant webpages.
Embed lived experience examples within the development work to shape council services. Create case studies that show real life examples of those with lived experience and the benefit of these approaches.	Ongoing	BCP partnerships	More real-life stories and case studies are shared across networks For instance, the Dorset Carers Partnership Board and the reference group of carers that help with developing services for carers.
Work in partnership to look at ways in which the voluntary and community sector can provide wellbeing support alongside more formal health services. Work with the Health and Wellbeing Board to integrate early intervention and prevention work, particularly by VCS, more broadly across Our Dorset Integrated Care System, with particular focus on food security and health inequalities.	Year 1	Access to Food partnership Vibrant communities work	Residents experiencing food insecurity are helped before crisis points and helped to bounce back and recover from crisis more quickly.

Priorities for developing a volunteering and social action strategy

Priority v1 Recognising the value and promoting the benefits of volunteering

Action	When	By whom?	Success measures
Work with CAN, our umbrella infrastructure charity and volunteering hub to support and encourage volunteering. Promote the volunteering hub provided by CAN for people to find out about opportunities that are available	Year 1	CAN	Volunteer hub is used by more people. Establish baseline and set annual targets.
Evidence the impact of volunteering on improving lives, including social value models.	Year 2 and 3	CAN, BCP Council	Training staff in evaluating volunteering to social value models and in using the data generated to plan and improve the volunteering offer.
Improve the image of volunteering to a wider audience through inspiring stories and examples, promoting champions from different backgrounds and circumstances.	Ongoing	CAN, BCP Council	Sharing inspiring stories and bitesize examples.
Build on the achievements from the TWC initiative and look at ways to sustain interest in ongoing volunteering, taking into consideration the difference in crisis response versus ongoing volunteering. Learn from other national COVID-19 community responses to embrace innovative ways to encourage volunteering and social action	Year 2 and 3	CAN, BCP Council	Examples of TWC volunteers continuing to be involved in volunteering.
Work with local businesses and organisations to involve volunteers and develop new approaches to volunteering. Share good practice, increase recognition and improve the experience for volunteers	Year 2 and 3	CAN, BCP Council, businesses	CAN's Business Supporter Membership established and positive feedback from businesses. Examples of local business involved in volunteering and social action. Work with the Economic Development team to raise awareness and establish baseline once resources are in place.
Maintain momentum and build capacity for sustained growth in volunteering through local VCS organisations	Year 2	CAN, BCP Council	VCS organisations feel supported and well informed to be able to recruit and expand on the use of volunteers where appropriate

Priority v2 Enhancing accessibility, choice and diversity

Action	When	By whom?	Success measures
Work with organisations and communities to identify and breakdown potential barriers to volunteering		CAN, BCP Council and Partners	Barriers better understood and overcome to enable more people to feel they are able to participate in volunteering and social action opportunities
Utilise insight from surveys and other feedback to improve the Council-led volunteering offer across communities.e.g.Future Parks, Culture Volunteers, public consultation survey and other feedback from the voluntary and community sector	Year 1	BCP Council and CAN	Learnings shared more broadly across the council.
Work with partners to improve accessibility of opportunities to enable underrepresented groups to get involved in a broader range of volunteering opportunities	Year 2	CAN, BCP Council and partners	More residents feel able to participate through a broader range of accessible volunteering opportunities offered across BCP.
Arrange training with specialist partners to provide expert advice on how to better support those with protected characteristics as well as better understand specific communities to help improve the opportunities that are currently available.	Year 2	BCP Council and partners, such as DOTS Disability	Training provided and improvements made to opportunities and services available
Work with the sector to identify connections and encourage volunteering, work with support organisations that help to reduce loneliness and look at ways to encourage volunteering	Year 2	BCP Council and CAN	Loneliness and social isolation network established across BCP and better signposting to support BCP Council Connected Community Coordinator recruited and helping to support the network and people across BCP
Develop new approaches to volunteering to make giving time easier	Year 2	CAN and BCP Council	Work with Smart Cities and other partners to develop volunteering App.
Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to volunteer through a diverse range of opportunities.			
Work with relevant partners to reach out to young people and look at ways to support more people to get involved in volunteering, social action and work placement opportunities, and looking at intergenerational opportunities.	Ongoing	CAN, BCP Council schools, colleges, universities, BCP Youth Forum and other relevant others	Linking more opportunities onto the BU Students Union Volunteering Hub and greater student participation in organising student led community volunteering projects.

Support those who are long term unemployed by securing experiences which build confidence, develop employability skills and enable a return to work. Promote volunteering opportunities to those who are furthest away from employment through the support organisations that help them.	Year 2	CAN, BCP Council and partnership	Examples of those unemployed being involved in volunteering opportunities. Secure experiences which build confidence, develop employability skills and enable a return to work for those that are long term unemployed. Review structure of vocational volunteering, work experience and apprenticeships, in terms of crossover, purpose, recruitment, equalities.
Support care leavers and others to find opportunities and have sufficient support to get involved.	Ongoing	BCP Council	Care leavers able to better access volunteering and work experience opportunities

Priority v3 Providing positive and rewarding volunteering experiences

Action	When	By whom?	Success measures
Working in close partnership with CAN and the local VCS to help improve the local volunteering opportunities and experiences available	Year 2	CAN, BCP Council	Positive feedback from those volunteering
Increase the range of rewarding and meaningful volunteering opportunities available	Year 2	CAN, BCP Council	More volunteering opportunities available and positive feedback from residents
Explore ways to celebrate volunteers' efforts	Year 2 and 3	CAN, BCP Council	Celebratory events/ awards ceremonies taken place and positive feedback from volunteers. Celebrate volunteer efforts, including activities during the annual Volunteer Week in June.
Provide information and support to individuals and organisations with responsibility for managing and coordinating volunteers.	Ongoing	CAN, BCP Council	Toolkits and training provided to relevant individuals.
CAN will develop a 'ready to volunteer' training programme for volunteers	Year 1	CAN	Programme established by CAN. Monitor take-up and establish annual targets for number of volunteers.
Support VCS organisations to provide volunteers with appropriate levels of training and support.	Year 2 and 3	CAN, BCP Council and partners	VCS organisations providing relevant training and support to volunteers

Priority v4

Bringing communities together to volunteer and enable social action

Action	When	By whom?	Success measures
Make it easier for people to sign up and access a range of volunteering opportunities	Ongoing	CAN, BCP Council and partners	People able to sign up to the CAN volunteer hub and find opportunities. Better promotion and signposting to opportunities through a broader range of ways, including online and offline ways.
Support communities to come together to create self-organised volunteering to address local challenge	Ongoing	BCP Council and CAN	Promote and support examples of community-led approaches across the wider BCP area such as Play in the Streets, street parties and Friends of Groups
Learn from the community response to COVID-19 and look at ways to sustain such approaches e.g. COVID-19 support groups, neighbourly street WhatsApp groups, corporate offers of support etc.	Year 1	CAN, Together We Can partners	Community groups are active and support local communities with needs, both at a neighbourhood level and by communities of interest.
Review sharing platforms and other technologies to help people connect more easily to build strong connected communities	Year 3		Refer to Priority 3.
Create more opportunities for joined up approaches in the way in which organisations work with and recruit volunteers	Year 3	CAN, BCP Council and partners	Better information sharing between organisations and groups to work together to recruit volunteers.
Support and develop existing volunteering groups at different stages of their development	Ongoing	CAN and BCP Council	CAN providing support to new community and voluntary sector groups and organisations to develop

Priority v5 Engaging employers and business leaders to play their part

Action	When	By whom?	
Work with CAN's Business Support worker to help create further connections for businesses to work with local communities	Ongoing	CAN	Strong network of businesses that are coming together with the VCS and providing support. Promoting volunteering to staff and access to the volunteer hub. E-network emails to connect and share info
BCP Council will explore ways to help staff to get more involved in volunteering in their communities. This may include employer supported volunteering, whereby staff can take paid time off to undertake public duties (such as school governor, magistrates etc.) as well as general volunteering, including support to local charities and organisations	Year 1 review, to start in 2022	BCP Council HR team	Employer supported volunteering scheme explored and offered to council staff. Staff can link with CAN's volunteer hub for opportunities.
Create more opportunities for skilled and vocational volunteering that will help build skillsets	Year 2 and 3	BCP Council and partners	Residents have access to ways to improve their skillsets through vocational volunteering
Look at employability skills and supporting people into the workplace	Year 2 and 3	BCP Council and partners	Residents are supported into the workplace
Improve the promotion and range of work experience available across BCP Council	Year 2 and 3	BCP Council and partners	Better promoted opportunities across BCP area through a range of ways to reach more people
Review previous and existing initiatives within the council and consider ways we can engage with business around volunteering and corporate social responsibility agendas	Year 2	BCP Council with businesses and CAN	Network established that links businesses with the sector and council to support volunteering and social action opportunities.
Promote and learn from local employers' policies around Employee Supported Volunteering, which supports staff to volunteer.	Year 3	BCP Council with businesses and CAN	Network established that links businesses with the sector for volunteering and social action.

Priority v6

Developing a more joined up approach to volunteering within the council

Action	When	By whom?	Success measures
Review previous work to date that has been undertaken across the three council's regarding volunteering and agree on a BCP Council-wide approach.	Year 1	BCP Council with support from CAN	Staff network created to share information about volunteering that exists, to include officers involved in volunteers with Culture Volunteers, Arts festival, community transport, Family Hubs, greenspaces volunteering, Children's services, Care leavers
Create synergies across departments such as toolkits and templates where appropriate and beneficial, and in balance with individual service unit delivery requirements.	Year 2		Shared templates and toolkits across departments. Identify ways to share volunteer opportunities through CAN's volunteer hub and other appropriate ways. Share information about databases and CRM systems for managing and recruiting volunteers within and across departments.
Look at how we can create common processes and practices where possible, such as recruiting volunteers so that it is easier for people to sign up to volunteer with different council departments	Year 2		Easier process for people to sign up to volunteer with the council. Establish baselines for volunteering. Easier and more secure ways for information to be managed and used when managing volunteers. Common evaluation and satisfaction framework which informs planning.
Evaluate and consider responses to the public consultation to better understand people's experiences of volunteering and work placements with the council and look at what works well and doesn't	Year 1		Better promotion and understanding by residents of opportunities available at the council.
Further develop volunteering and work experience opportunities within the council to be inclusive for all communities and support our most vulnerable to get involved	Year 3		Work with partners to improve the offering and diversity of for volunteering with the council.
Create a communication plan to better publicise and promote volunteering and work opportunities that exist at the council	Ongoing		Opportunities promoted more widely to residents.