

Committee: **Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development**

Date: **15 October 2014**

Report By: **Chief Executive**

Title of Report: **Notice of Motion: Loneliness Partnership Project**

Purpose of Report: **To consider a Notice of Motion from Councillor Ungar proposing the establishment of a Loneliness Partnership Project**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development recommends the County Council agree to the amendment to the Notice of Motion as set out in paragraph 2.6 of the report

1. Financial Appraisal

The Notice of Motion calls for £100k to be allocated from the Corporate Transformation Reserve. The capacity to support the initial development work for the wider project is available from existing resources without the need to make this draw.

2. Background Information

2.1 The following Notice of Motion has been submitted by Councillor Ungar:

“That East Sussex County Council initiate a Loneliness Partnership Project, in the form of a scoping exercise over a one year period. This project to include the Voluntary Sector, NHS and stakeholders, to assess and make policy proposals for an integrated county-wide and sector approach to tackling loneliness and social isolation. A budget of £100k to be allocated from the Corporate Transformation Reserve, to be used to employ an experienced researcher and support staff or to commission external work”.

2.2 In line with the Council's practice the matter has been referred by the Chairman to the Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development for consideration to help inform the debate when the County Council considers the motion at its meeting on 21 October 2014.

2.3 The County Council has agreed that one of its four key priority outcomes is to “Help people to help themselves”. It is recognised that people, families and communities across East Sussex have huge potential to thrive and to support each other and that there is a substantial infrastructure of public and voluntary and community sector work across the county that can seeks to achieve ambition. Exploring what we can do, with our partners and communities, has already been agreed by the County Council through Reconciling Policy Performance and Resources, as one of the key components in the next medium term planning period. In delivering this priority the Council will need to consider a broad range of issues, which will include reducing social isolation and loneliness. If we are to be to be successful, work must be based on:

- evidence of the needs of our communities, both of localities and of communities of interest;
- building on the assets we have in communities, both physical and in terms of community activists; and
- evidence of what has given a good return on investment and is sustainable in the long term, from both local, national and where applicable, international experience.

Given the severe financial restraints that we are under, investment will need to be prioritised against the potential projects which will give the greatest long term impact.

2.4 Developing our plans to deliver the “Helping people to help themselves” priority is a complex piece of work and must involve both a one council approach and close engagement with partners and communities. The next step in the work is a discussion with all members at the next Whole Council Forum on 24 October and it is then proposed to establish a cross party Members Reference Group (along the same lines as the income generation group) to guide the development of the work. The Members Community Resilience Group will be chaired by the Leader of the Council (whose portfolio includes Public Health) and each group will be asked to identify members to join and regularly attend the Group.

2.5 The creation of the reference group will support the development of a holistic approach. Appropriate resources will need to be identified to support our community resilience work and these will be quantified and reported through the RPPR process in November- January with a view to implementation in 2015/16 and beyond. The capacity to support and undertake the initial development work is available from existing resources.

2.6 It would be contrary to taking a rounded approach to building community resilience if one aspect of this work were to be dealt with in isolation and there is a significant risk that, if agreed as currently expressed, the approach set out in the Notice of Motion would hamper engagement with partners about the broader project. It is therefore proposed to recommend an amended Notice of Motion to the County Council as follows:

That East Sussex County Council agrees the importance of working with residents, communities and local partners to achieve its priority outcome to “help people help themselves” and recognises that tackling loneliness is an important element of the work. The County Council notes the development, through the 2014 Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process, of a One Council approach and supporting action plan to achieve this priority and agrees the creation of a cross party Member Reference Group, to be chaired by the Leader of the Council, to guide the development of the work prior to formal consideration through RPPR cycle in November- January.

Becky Shaw
Chief Executive