RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 28 OCTOBER 2014
title: RIBBLE VALLEY ENTERPRISING PEOPLE INITIATIVE
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: DAVID INGHAM, PARTNERSHIP OFFICER

1   PURPOSE

1.1   This report provides committee with an update on the culmination of a two year project funded by Lancashire County Council in Ribble Valley to encourage the development of micro enterprise to support those with a personal budget, which are part of a new way of managing care and support called personalisation, and strengthen that individual's role in the community.

1.2   Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – The support of individuals and groups from all parts of Ribble Valley to develop and start-up businesses and develop in a spirit of enterprise and effective support networks.

- Corporate Priorities – To support business start-up and innovation particularly amongst vulnerable and rurally isolated residents improving wealth and health

- Other Considerations – None

2   BACKGROUND

2.1   The Council in conjunction with Lancashire County Council initiated a scheme that aimed to help individuals and groups explore their enterprise ideas in Ribble Valley.

2.2   The project ran for two years, ending in March 2014, although several aspects of the initiative have become sustainable and of course the resultant business start-ups continue.

3   INFORMATION

3.1   The project engaged with over 350 people in Ribble Valley and specifically worked with 63 individuals and groups, resulting in 21 business start-ups.

3.2   An extra £75,000 funding was levered into the area.

3.3   Attached to this report at Appendix 1 is the briefing given to elected County Council Members outlining the results of the initiative. The full report is available in the Members' Room.

3.4   A group of volunteer mentors from the project has been set up to continue offering support to those wishing to set up a micro enterprise and that group recently organised

the inaugural Ribble Valley Business Awards. The Enterprising People web site continues to be maintained so that the opportunity remains to offer one to one support for micro enterprises and recruit new Ribble Valley enterprise champions and mentors.

4   CONCLUSION

4.1   That Committee note the contents of this report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS (1)

For further information please ask for David Ingham, extension 4549

REF: Author/typist/committee/date

Lancashire County Council

Tuesday 17 June, 2014

Briefing on the Evaluation of the Enterprising People initiative in Ribble Valley

This briefing is to update on the evaluation of our two year Enterprising People initiative. This project was to encourage the development of micro enterprise to support personalisation and strengthen communities. Please also see the full report.

Achievements

In total the project helped 63 individuals and groups to explore their enterprise ideas and by 31 March 2014 had helped 19 to start up with two further starts expected after this date. Thirty information sessions took place in local community venues. The project engaged with over 350 people to form an extensive enterprise network. To give further sustainability the project trained 12 volunteer enterprise mentors and worked with them to establish a social enterprise. They will continue supporting others after the end of the project and coordinate an exciting new initiative – the Ribble Valley Business Awards.

Broader outcomes of the project included increased social capital (connections and access to opportunity), confidence and skills amongst those the project engaged with. There was also added value with an extra £75k funding leveraged into the area.

Things that worked well included recruiting local enterprise champions, strong local authority support, proactive network building from the start, topic based events at community venues, use of case studies, clear and simple communication including use of village newsletters and social media, being local and use of word of mouth plus ensuring longer term sustainability by recruiting volunteer mentors.

Lessons learned

Micro enterprise and delivery of local support

The development of micro enterprise was intended to increase choice of local support services for the health and wellbeing of adult social care customers and other citizens. Enterprises set up included personal care services, daytime support, therapeutic, handy person, gardening, pet care services and many more. Although the support developed is benefitting local people many adult social care customers have been unable to purchase this with personal budgets. This is because the enterprises were not preferred providers and wider wellbeing support is often not agreed to be paid for via personal budgets. However, grounds for optimism were found and it is argued that a greater take up of direct payments coupled with a 'local by default' approach to commissioning will encourage this.

It was also recognised that people should access support to follow up wellbeing related issues identified during support planning even if these needs would not be met through self-directed support. The role of Help Direct, Connect for Life and others is mentioned.

Adult social care customers as entrepreneurs

Another intention was that adult social care customers would receive support to explore their ideas and set up their own enterprise as an alternative to employment or daytime support. Social care staff did not refer our customers however local providers did. Six people in receipt of personal budgets were supported directly. This included via one to one support and a series of accessible workshops with 12 adults with learning disabilities. The full report includes case studies such as Jonathon who was supported to develop and expand AWEtistic Desines to design, create and sell his bags all over the world!

It was found that social workers, providers, support workers and parents often acted (consciously or unconsciously) as gatekeepers so limiting opportunities for people to explore enterprise and so realise the potential benefits from doing so. It was highlighted that creative support planning and greater buy in from frontline staff would not only result in a true micro enterprise market but would also bring added benefits such as increased social capital and opportunities for adult social care customers themselves.

Identification of effective asset based approaches

How social capital/asset based community development approaches can support general wellbeing and resilience and reduce the demand on more expensive elements of public/health services is considered. The full report provides case studies of different asset based models. Elements of an effective asset based approach were identified and a detailed set of recommendations given to support future initiatives. This includes laying foundations with leadership, long term strategic approach and sufficient resource. Ensuring stakeholder buy in and local champions to connect within and across communities to build on gifts and assets for local development are also recommended.

Recommendations

Twelve recommendations were made to reflect the lessons learned outline above. These are summarised at the end of this briefing note for easy reference.

Looking ahead

Foundations for sustainability were built into the project by training a group of volunteer enterprise mentors and by creating a largely online network of local enterprise. The Enterprising People social enterprise mentors are taking over the project website, business awards and other tools with the intention (funding dependent) to continue delivering one to one support to micro enterprises, continue connecting activity and the network and working in partnership with initiatives such as Inspire, Thera and others.

For more information please contact

Sarah McTigue (Locality Commissioning Manager) at sarah.mctigue@lancashire.gov.uk or on 075000 65523.

For more on case studies and other information go to the enterprising people website: http://www.enterprisingpeople.org.uk/enterprisingpeople.aspx

A summary of the full evaluation report recommendations

To deliver effective micro enterprise support:

1. If seeking to design a micro enterprise project to support the development of bespoke local services, build on the learning here as to what works and in particular recognise the importance of preparing the ground for such a project, engaging local enterprise champions, proactively connecting with the asset base and identifying and valuing appropriate outcomes.
2. In Ribble Valley explore opportunities for ongoing funding to support the Enterprising People connector, advisor and mentor network to deliver outcomes as above.

To realise the potential of personalisation in terms of micro enterprise:

3. Increase take up of direct payments – training, culture, support and communication
4. Enable and resource creative support planning (which includes taking opportunities to build social capital).
5. Build an evidence base to properly value social needs in comparative terms.
6. Move to commissioning and procurement being 'local by default'. Build social value aspects into the commissioning process.
7. Normalise enterprise as an option for service users, including recognition of part time enterprise as a valid option, and drive awareness of its wider benefits to frontline workers and carers. Build trust in enterprise support.
8. Ensure appropriate support is available to people and groups developing micro enterprises as per recommendation 1.

To enable effective asset based community development and the building of social capital

9. A successful approach will be initiated at a top tier/sub regional level with leadership buy in and integrated into the strategic development of public services, with a long term approach and sufficient resource behind it to gain full value. This must also include a mechanism for recognizing the full value of asset based/social capital approaches.
10. This strategic development of services should include actions that recognise that activity areas such as personalisation, procurement and commissioning have a significant role to play in enabling the development of social networks, local services and the community asset base.
11. The initiating body should act as an enabler supporting the development of bespoke local approaches. Ensure broad buy in and active support at a local level from relevant stakeholders. Ensure commitment from service providers to feedback and learning.
12. Each community is different and project design at a local level should be based on local conditions including the strength or weakness of the asset base. But key success factors include:
    a) Local champions known and respected with the community;
    b) A partnership network built around the community asset base that acts as a resource and support structure for the project;
    c) Good connectors and co-ordinators with the experience, trust and credibility to do the job;
    d) Maximising the value of people and organisations already in connecting roles; and
    e) Capacity to support new and growing initiatives – i.e. good enterprise support that's draws on the lessons of this project.