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# Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report for:</b>	Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of report:</b>	General Communities Activity Report
<b>Date:</b>	13 March 2024
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Councillor Sheron Wilkie, Portfolio Holder for Place
<b>Part:</b>	I
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices:</b>	N/A
<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b>	VCS – Voluntary and Community Sector HCC- Herts County Council HSP – Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership SLA – Service Level Agreement COL - Cost of Living

## Report Author / Responsible Officer

Diane Southam – Assistant Director Place Community and Enterprise



<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery Climate and ecological emergency
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	<b>1.</b> To provide an update the activities of the Voluntary Sector, Shopmobility, Cost of Living work, Community Grants, Health Inequalities, and Healthy Hub areas of work within the Communities and Leisure team

<b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b>	<b>1.</b> That Members note the report and identify any areas where they require additional information
<b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>	<b>N/A</b>

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper provides an update on Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Commissioning Framework, Shopmobility Service, Cost of Living (COL), Health Inequalities and Healthy Hub, Grants and Funding activities during September 2023 to February 2024.

## 2. Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Commissioning Framework

2.1. Cabinet approved the new framework on 12 December 2023, the four services that were commissioned are detailed below:

- Information, Advice and Advocacy, delivered by Citizens Advice Dacorum
- Supporting the Voluntary Sector, delivered by Community Action Dacorum
- Reducing Social Isolation for Older People, delivered by Age UK Dacorum
- Promoting Healthy Relationships, delivered by Relate London Northwest and Hertfordshire, and Mediation Herts.

2.2. Discussions to define and agree the new outcomes measures are concluding and the Service Level Agreements will commence 1 April 2024. The grant awards to the partners are made for a period of 3 years starting in 2024 with an option to extend for a further 2 years upon review.

2.3. Reports on the performance of the new VCS arrangements will be reported on an annual basis to this committee.

## 3. Shopmobility Service – One year contract extension

3.1. The shopmobility service provides a range of manual wheelchairs and electric scooters to resident and visitors with mobility issues. The service, delivered by Community Action Dacorum (CAD), enables people to shop and socialise in Hemel Hempstead town centre, which they might otherwise be excluded from doing.

3.2. A one year extension to the current contact arrangements has been agreed (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025) to enable the Council to undertake a soft market testing exercise of other providers of mobility services, and to review usage and future service level requirements. The direct market engagement will take place between March and June and, following this and the review of usage and service level requirements, a report will be prepared on the preferred approach to commissioning this service from 1 April 2025.

## 4. Cost of Living (COL) Advice

4.1. A joint online and in person COL event was held on Friday 26 February 2024. The event brought together colleagues across the voluntary, community and business sectors (including Community Action Dacorum, Citizen Advice, Dacorum Borough Council, Better Housing, Better Health, DENS, and Aaron Services to provide advice to residents around a host of key issues.

- 4.2. There were also two walk-in centres in Hemel (at the RoundHouse in Marlowes and at the South Hill Centre) where those who are digitally excluded or prefer to be in-person were able to attend. These residents were then linked into the online meeting as appropriate to speak to their experts of choice. This online approach allowed the event organisers to offer a wider range of experts who can deal with fewer clients as they can continue to work on other things when not needed. As a result, there were offers of support from external organisations that we wouldn't have otherwise participated.
- 4.3. The Dacorum COL group is currently reviewing the success of the event and planning for future campaigns and initiatives in 2024 to support residents during this ongoing challenging period. The group also links into the wider Hertfordshire COL network.

## 5. Health Inequalities

### 5.1. Bikes without Barriers – Herts Disability Sports Foundation (HDSF)

- HCC have funded £5k to further the original work, DBC have adapted the project to work with younger children and to provide some instruction to adults. HDSF are asking schools to contribute £500 from their PE & School Sports Premium and they have also secured some charitable funding for the project. There is funding for up to five schools in the borough, one is signed up already and HDSF are in talks with at least two others who officers worked with previously.

### 5.2. Shape Up Programme - 7 cohorts of 12-week fitness and nutrition courses run by Watford Football Club's Community Sports and Education Trust, commissioned by DBC.

- Cohorts 4 and 5 are underway with good numbers signing up, the new venue are Grovehill Community Centre. We will be planning for cohorts 6 and 7 as well as the extra cohort Watford FC are funding as the 'mop up' session for reduced numbers in earlier cohorts. DBC are working with the trust to use some of the funding to provide an option to facilitate or encourage the groups to continue meeting up and exercising.
- The Dacorum Activity Directory – a directory of physical activity options in Dacorum is complete and has been given to Watford FC to disseminate to all 'graduates' of the programme to encourage them to find something to continue their increased physical activity levels. It will also be given to applicants that were not offered a place so that they have lots of options to commence something independently. It will also be put on our website and shared with our partners.

### 5.3. South Asian recipe book, health and wellbeing day and live cooking demonstrations

- NHS funding has been granted to work with the ADDA Club to adapt an existing recipe book which has been written to lower diabetes levels within the South Asian community. The book will be launched as part of an annual fun day that is run by Baytus Salaam (formerly the Dacorum Bangladeshi Welfare Association) at the end of the summer which attracts 300-400 people. The funding also covers some live cooking demonstrations, which will support the recipes in the book.
- The plan is to have a clinician (NHS / HCC) taking blood pressure readings and giving advice as well as colleagues from Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership (HSP) running some physical activities with children and adults.

### 5.4. Moving More culturally diverse exercise videos

- Officers are working with HSP and their Moving More platform to create some new exercise videos from members of the South Asian community. HSP have agreed funding for 3 videos and DBC are working with Herts Asian Women's Association (HAWA) who are producing some sample videos to show us what they can do. The three videos would reflect the various communities within South Asia; video 1 run in a very traditional style led by a personal trainer with a face covering and music from nature; video 2 in a more contemporary style with South Asian music and dance moves; video 3 Bollywood style.
- The longer-term plan is to create a suite of videos from many different communities, for example Caribbean, Polish, Romanian and HSP have already agreed to fund some Moroccan videos. The videos

will be led by members from each community with culturally appropriate clothing, movements, and music from that culture.

#### **5.5. Everyone Active – Exercise Referral Programme: new desktop app**

Everyone Active who operate DBC leisure facilities are in the process of rolling out the 'Referral ALL' app onto the desktops of Herts GP's. This will allow GP's and other health professionals to refer patients into the leisure centres to access the social prescribing activity programmes available to residents with long term health conditions.

### **6. Healthy Hub**

#### **6.1. Project Updates**

- DBC officers continues to support residents physically and virtually with our 'Healthy Hub Dacorum Core Offer' on health and wellbeing. There has been a total of 499 interactions with residents between October and December 2023. The total number includes referrals, partnership project appointments and footfall in our hub centres.
- The project provided residents with the latest health and wellbeing updates through our January edition of the Healthy Hub Newsletter. This month we focused promoting our 'core offer', the new timetable for Beezee Bodies courses, the healthy start campaign, cost of living support, The Hertfordshire Mind Network's Nightlight service, and the Healthy Walks service. There are over 260 subscribers for our monthly newsletter, and we are thriving to increase this.
- In January DBC promoted the 'We're With You This Winter' Campaign via our communication channels. The campaign focuses on raising awareness of how Healthy Hubs can support residents with issues such as quitting smoking, drinking alcohol less, getting more active and reaching a healthy weight.
- Officers have commenced fortnightly drop ins at Hemel Job Centre, the first took place on the 24th January and all six slots were taken. These appointments are for job centre clients who have health and wellbeing issues that are impacting their ability to gain sustainable employment. Those seen needed support with issues such as their mental health, housing concerns and benefits advice.
- NHS health checks under the 'Healthy Hub' offer continue to operate once a month at the South Hill Centre. Due to the popularity of these health checks, we were given extra appointments on 26th January which were fully booked.

### **7. Grants & Funding**

#### **7.1. Community and Small Grants**

Following a scoring process the following organisations were awarded a Community Grant.

- Hemel Tamil Association
- Inclusive Ltd
- Pepper Foundation
- Expressions Academy
- Tring Together
- Beecreative

The grant funded items such as:

- Books and equipment, sports activities, and dance workshops
- Tring Summer Festival, Gadebridge Park Festival and Eco Workshops

7.2. In addition to these grants, five community groups received £500 each including Boxmore WI and Sensa Cricket Club.