

Communities and Neighbourhood Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 10 February 2015

Contact in the Capital - Community Communications additional pilot

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| Item number | 7.1 |
| Report number | |
| Executive/routine | |
| Wards | All and in particular Pentland Hills, Sighthill/Gorgie |

Executive summary

This report recommends adding Wester Hailes Digital Sentinel (a WHALE Arts managed project) to the two previously agreed 'Contact in the Capital Pilot Projects' (North Edinburgh and Craigmillar) agreed by Corporate Policy and Strategy on 5 November 2013. The inclusion of this project will bring the total number of projects to three and will add value to the final evaluation by ensuring a broader geographical spread of projects across the city.

Links

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| Coalition pledges | P33 |
| Council outcomes | CO23, CO24 |
| Single Outcome Agreement | |

Contact in the Capital – Community Communications additional Pilot

Recommendations

It is recommended that Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee:

- 1.1 Agrees to allocate up to £12,000 to assist in the further development of the Wester Hailes Digital Sentinel.
- 1.2 Agrees that this project be included in the evaluation report of the Community Communications Pilots, scheduled for April 2015.
- 1.3 Agrees to consider an update report to the next Committee (May 2015), setting out the pilot projects' progress towards meeting their objectives, particularly in relation to training and future sustainability.

Background

- 2.1 On 5 November 2013, the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee approved the Community Communication Pilot Project report. Committee subsequently agreed, on 25 March 2014, to proceed with the projects in both North Edinburgh and Craigmillar (described in Appendix 1) as well as, to transfer the governance to the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee.
- 2.2 The pilot scheme presented options for improving the ways in which the Council communicates with residents with a renewed emphasis on two-way communications and community driven initiatives.
- 2.3 With the Capital Coalition's commitment to a renewed focus on dialogue with communities and decision making which better reflects public opinion, Edinburgh has the opportunity to use innovative communications developments, while maximising the channels already operating within communities.
- 2.4 The governance arrangements around the pilot project have recently been reviewed. This found that the programme is operating in accordance with decisions previously reached at the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee. The Wester Hailes Digital Sentinel approached the Council for inclusion in the pilot projects. Its involvement would help to ensure a better geographical spread across the city by including the South West in the pilot, as well as the North and East of the city.
- 2.5 The Wester Hailes Digital Sentinel is a community news website, set up to report on all kinds of local news about the area of Wester Hailes in the South West Neighbourhood. It has employed a young trainee reporter to report on local stories and raise the profile of the project, paid through Community Jobs

Scotland funding. It also received a one of grant of £10k from the Carnegie Trust to employ a more experienced reporter to provide training. This funding has now come to an end.

- 2.6 The project has an editorial Steering Group with representatives from various local organisations and community representatives.
- 2.7 The Wester Hailes Digital Sentinel meets the following previously agreed criteria for the Council Community Communications Pilots.
 - Adds value to an existing communications channel or uses new technology /social media to add value and save money;
 - Enables information to reach people more quickly or more effectively;
 - Offers ways to reach hard to reach audiences;
 - Provides two way communications – encouraging feedback and ongoing dialogue;
 - Provides opportunities to be adapted or replicated for use in other areas and communities;
 - Enhances community capacity and in particular links in to Community Council or other community based group activity; and
 - Offers opportunities for training and skill development.

Main report

- 3.1 The Wester Hailes Digital Sentinel wishes to develop further by working to develop closer links with young people through a number of channels including making links with the media studies course through the Wester Hailes Education Centre as well as working with other academic institutions.
- 3.2 The projects aims to utilise funding to highlight achievements so far, further engage local people and recruit and train more local reporters. The project intends to print 500 copies of an eight-page edition to engage people and encourage people to use the website through a QR code as well as highlight the project to those in the community without digital access or who are not digitally aware.

Measures of success

- 4.1 The pilot projects will be fully evaluated and reported to Council based on previously reported performance metrics.

Financial impact

- 5.1 It is proposed that the £12k costs of this pilot project is cross-charged to all services on the same basis as the other projects previously agreed by Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee. The addition of this project to the overall pilot would complete the funding allocation originally assigned to the overall programme of up £50k.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

6.1 As this is an extension of an existing pilot there is very little risk anticipated.

Equalities impact

7.1 Accessibility issues will be considered within this pilot with particular attention paid to engagement with and involvement of difficult to reach groups.

Sustainability impact

8.1 The continuing drive to reduce printed material has a positive environmental impact.

Consultation and engagement

9.1 Consultation has taken place as follows:

- Councillors survey (2013)
- Cross-service working group
- Workshop (members and officers) to develop new ideas (August 2013)
- Edinburgh People's Survey 2012 communications questions
- Discussion with Wester Hailes Digital Sentinel.

Background reading/external references

[The Edinburgh People's Survey 2012, Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 26 February 2013.](#)

[Local Government Reputation: delivery for people LGA 2010](#)

John Bury

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Links

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| Coalition pledges | P33: Strengthen Neighbourhood Partnerships and further involve local people in decisions on how Council resources are used. |
| Council outcomes | CO23 – Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individual are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community. CO24 – The Council communicates effectively internally and externally and has an excellent reputation for customer care. |
| Single Outcome Agreement | |
| Appendices | Appendix 1 – Two projects currently part of the pilot project |

Appendix 1

The following projects are already currently part of the pilot.

1 **Community news and digital development - North Edinburgh News (£25k)**

- North Edinburgh and specifically the Forth Ward provide a good cross section of demographic profiles based on the Edinburgh residents' mosaic profiles and the Edinburgh People's Survey demographic profiles.
- North Edinburgh has a locally well regarded community newspaper and blog and is currently developing a website. Developing a digital platform would be a cost effective and sustainable way to enhance community-led, two way communications in the area while retaining local trust in the North Edinburgh News brand.
- As with the other proposed pilot projects, best practice models and specific advice would be sought from The Media Trust.
- Forth Neighbourhood Partnership has a successful youth forum and the proposal is to involve young people from this and other areas of North Edinburgh in the running of the NEN and provide training opportunities in digital platform development, citizen journalist skills and social media marketing skills.
- The North Edinburgh Young People's Forum have been awarded a small community grant to support community journalism training and this pilot project could expand this opportunity to many more young people in the area.
- There are seven community councils in the area covered by the North Edinburgh News. The proposal is to strengthen the community council and youth involvement in the North Edinburgh News and to use the platform to publicise local activities and community initiatives.
- Strengthening community councils as a conduit for improved two- way communications with the Council and with communities was identified as desirable through the survey of Councillors carried out in 2013.
- Community councils have recently been through a nomination and election process and it is clear that some community councils would benefit from the ability to publicise their activities more widely and encourage the involvement of younger people.

2 **Digital Chronicle (working title) – Craigmillar area (£13.5k)**

- Craigmillar is an area that continues to undergo significant regeneration work with a focus not only on the physical environment, but also within education, health and well-being, employment, economy and social cohesion. The reintroduction of a local news platform would be a key enabler to help co-ordinate this work and actively involve and engage local residents.

- The local community through various Portobello & Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnership meetings and sub-groups, and engagement exercises have identified the need for a local media platform to help bind the community and give a sense of place and purpose, provide information about local events and service developments, and counter negative perceptions.
- The revival of a local news platform would help support some of the key messages to reinvigorate the role of Castelbrae Community High School in the heart of the community and help increase the school roll. The community's involvement in the development of a new hyperlocal digital news and events sharing platform is crucial to its success.
- The pilot project and school would support young people to take an active role in developing a hyperlocal news and events channel and provide skills in citizen journalism, photography, video and recording.
- This project would also be an excellent vehicle to involve the wider community and support work to help close the digital gap that exists in some of Edinburgh's communities.