

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 7 December 2017

Subject: Timebanking- Opportunities to expand the approach throughout the City

Report of: Director of Neighbourhoods

Summary

Building on the report that was presented to Committee earlier in the year on Volunteering activity, this report provides a very brief update on how volunteering has developed and is supporting the delivery of the “Our Manchester” approach.

Timebanking is very much about building on people’s strengths, skills & assets, and provides a different approach to volunteering, and the report sets out the opportunity to support the expansion of the approach throughout the City.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note and comment on the report.

Wards Affected: All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Overview of Volunteering Activity in the City- Communities & Equalities Scrutiny Committee (4th January 2017)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Earlier this year, the “Overview of Volunteering activity in the City” report to this Committee, provided a snapshot of how residents, businesses and the voluntary & community sector, were all volunteering significant amounts of their time, demonstrating a strong sense of citizenship and pride in their City.
- 1.2 This paper was set within the context of the Our Manchester Strategy (2015-2025)- 1) its “vision”: Manchester to be in the top-flight of world class Cities- people called for a City that is thriving, filled with talent, fair, a great place to live and buzzing with connections); and 2) a “way of working”: we work together and trust each other, we’re proud & passionate about Manchester, we listen and build from strengths, and we “own it” and we’re not afraid to try new things.
- 1.3 It was clear that people volunteered for many different reasons (even though they may not have thought what they were doing was actually volunteering). This ranged from wanting to give something back to where they lived/worked, making a difference to the people around them, developing new skills to help with employment/career aspirations, building confidence, improving health & wellbeing, and even making new friends. It was also clear that without volunteers, some activities would not have happened.
- 1.4 At the end of that report, a number of Future Considerations & Opportunities were outlined, that would go some way to enabling more and more people to volunteer in their City. This report provides a brief update on progress in this area.

2.0 Progress on encouraging more volunteering activity throughout the City:

- 2.1 Key progress is as follows:
 - The City of Manchester State of the Voluntary Sector was updated by Macc (from 2013) and reiterated the importance of volunteering. It is now estimated that 111,000 residents volunteered 279,000 hours per week with an economic contribution of £252.1m per year;
 - The Manchester Volunteer Centre (funded by the City & operated by Macc), which matches volunteers with organisations, now has an increased number of residents registered (over 19,000) doing many great activities- age friendly, homelessness, cohesion, raising funding for good causes, plus much more;
 - The City’s Manchester Volunteer Inspire Programme (MCRVIP), which matches volunteers with sports, leisure & events opportunities, now has an increased number of volunteers registered (5,900 and 3,100 live in Manchester). This system is now being expanded (Spring 2018) to bring together opportunities in Libraries, Culture & Galleries, Parks, Green Spaces, neighbourhood clean-ups, recycling projects+ (areas where it is clear there are thousands more people already volunteering);

- The City has now brought a number of its separate funding streams together for the Voluntary & Community Sector (Community Association, Equalities, Health & Wellbeing, Mental Health and Carers). The 3 year grant fund was launched in September and goes live from April 2018 to March 2021. It will help provide community facilities, one to one/group support, engagement/representation of residents, and networking to strengthen the resilience of the voluntary sector at a neighbourhood level. Residents being involved in the governance/delivery in a voluntary capacity, are key components of groups being allocated any funding;
- The new Youth & Play Fund has gone live (Young Manchester and 2 year grant from April 2018-March 2020). It will be delivered by neighbourhood and citywide voluntary & community sector groups to ensure children and young people have good quality Youth and Play services in their area. The fund will be supporting activities that increase volunteering opportunities for young people and giving them a voice in their City;
- “Good Neighbour” approaches (Age Friendly) are going from strength to strength throughout the whole City with hundreds more residents helping other residents (often elderly or those feeling isolated) to get out more and experience what the City has to offer;
- Through the Community Asset Transfer process, the City is continuing to work with groups who are keen to take ownership of, in the main, surplus Council buildings/spaces to breathe new life in to them and create many volunteering opportunities. 18 transfers have now been completed with a further 19 being progressed;
- The Council has refreshed its Volunteering Policy to encourage more of its Officers to volunteer their time/skills to benefit communities, as well as strengthen their own development and understanding of what neighbourhoods need;
- Celebratory events show appreciation for the army of volunteers who constantly go the extra mile on a weekly basis. For example, the City Council’s Sport Awards (October) and Be Proud Awards (November), Manchester Youth Council’s Buzz Awards (October), and Macc’s Spirit of Manchester Awards (October). In addition, weekly Be Proud stories feature in the Manchester Evening News, which enable good news stories to be shared more widely; and
- Consultation will shortly start on the citywide Employer Engagement strategy, which will incorporate the Corporate Social Responsibility agenda to inspire and connect businesses to communities, and maximising opportunities for employee volunteering (this will run alongside the Greater Manchester Mayor’s Employer Charter consultation).

3.0 Timebanking- Building on our People assets

3.1 Building on the significant levels of volunteering activity throughout the whole

City by residents, businesses and the voluntary & community sector, people being proactive and getting involved in their community is not new. However, the Timebanking approach is different, but complements those wider volunteering activities. The following sections tell the Timebanking story, outlines significant opportunities the City can consider to support the expansion of the approach, and ends on a number of next steps to take this conversation forward.

- 3.2 Manchester's neighbourhoods are full of individuals and groups with an amazing range of skills, gifts, hobbies and talents, that can often go undiscovered and undervalued, but play a huge part in helping those communities function. Timebanking is about harnessing these and increasing mutual support and reciprocity in the heart of neighbourhoods by using the person's skills & interests, without having to find or fit in to a volunteering role, and is flexible without having to make any regular commitment. It's about linking local people, from all walks of life or circumstances, to share their time & skills by "depositing" their time to give practical help and support to others, and then "withdrawing" their time when they need help or support themselves. Everyone's time and skills are valued equally- 1 hour in for 1 hour back.
- 3.3 Timebanking has 4 principles and based on the core values of "co-production":
- **People are assets-** the real wealth of society is its people. Everyone has the ability to contribute;
 - **Redefining Work-** focus is on whatever it takes to bring up healthy children, preserve families, make neighbourhoods safe and vibrant, care for those that need additional support, redress injustice and make democracy work;
 - **Reciprocity-** about reducing dependency and asking people to give something back where able (we need each other and we have what we need if we use what we have); and
 - **Social Capital-** we require a social infrastructure as much as a physical infrastructure. Social networks require ongoing investments of social capital generated by trust, reciprocity and civic engagement.
- 3.4 There are currently around 250 Timebanks in the UK (supported by Timebanking UK), with 5 in Manchester (Real Neighbours-Wythenshawe, Community Timebank-South Manchester, 2 in North Manchester- Harpurhey Timetraders and the Manchester Communication Academy, and a new one being developed by One Manchester (central/east/south Manchester). More information is provided below.
- 3.5 The benefits of Timebanking are immense, as evidenced from those already operating in the City and across the country:
- Builds community cohesion (helps bridge any divides such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age, as it only defines people by what they are prepared to do for others); and ensures that local people are enabled to become valuable members of their neighbourhood;
 - Builds social networks of people who give and receive support from each other, enabling people from different backgrounds who wouldn't otherwise meet, to come together and form connections and long lasting friendships;

- Members gain equal access to resources that might be typically beyond their means depending upon their economic position (low income, out of work, long-term health conditions for example); and
- People are able to solve their own problems at particular points in their life.

4.0 Timebanking Models:

4.1 There are 3 core Timebanking models, which all operate differently, but all maintain 1 hour in equals 1 hour back. The first 2 are what the City's Timebanks are modelled on (Appendix 1 provides a picture of how it can actually look in practice):

- **Person to Person:** 1 hour gardening for 1 hour of DIY; 1 hour of sewing for a 1 hour Spanish lesson etc;
- **Person to Agency (could be a business, voluntary & community sector group):** 2 hours delivering leaflets in exchange for taking an unused space on a 2 hour training course or social event; 1 hour helping at an event in exchange for 1 hour's use of IT equipment; and
- **Agency to Agency (as above):** Helping organisations to share underused resources and skills. For example, 2 hours support in writing a funding bid in exchange for use of a meeting room/kitchen or sports facilities for 2 hours; 3 hours of litter picking for a clean-up event in exchange for 3 hours use of a gazebo, tables & chairs for another event.

4.2 The national charity, Timebanking UK, is the only membership organisation in the country offering support & resources to establish Timebanks (the Chair of the Board of Trustees, who is also the Wellbeing Development Lead for Macc, will be attending the meeting). A summary of what Timebanking UK can provide is as follows:

- **Membership support:** Clear guidance, policies & procedures (including safeguarding for example), training and bespoke software to establish and co-ordinate Timebanking activities, as well as regional networks to share expertise and good practice;
- **Support for Members and the Wider Sector:** Web site full of resources, ongoing training, Toolkits, monitoring & evaluation of impact, and Quality Standards (introduced the Timebanking UK Quality Mark for those Timebanks that adhere to the core principles/values of Timebanking); and
- **Membership Options x 5:** Annual memberships providing a range of support from Bronze (£120), to Silver, Gold, Gold Level Plus+, up to Platinum (£3,000- a bespoke package of support to set up a Timebank and ensure it has the right things in place so can be successful and sustainable).

5.0 Timebanks in Manchester

5.1 There are five Timebanks in operation in the City. Three of these have been in place for a number of years now:

- **Real Neighbours- Wythenshawe:** Established by Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG) early 2016, but builds on an approach since 2010.

It is co-ordinated by 2 full-time members of staff (funded by WCGH and the City Council Wellbeing Fund). It is a Person to Person/Agency model with over 200 members / 40 voluntary & community groups benefiting, with over 12,000 hours of recorded activity since going live. Activities have related to the "Grand Day Out" in the Wythenshawe Forum helping over 55's become more active, engaging in running of the Wythenshawe Games. There is a link in with a local GP Practice in Newall Green where the Timebank Co-ordinator spends time at the practice each week to build membership, and it is also linked in to 2 Neighbourhood Provider Partnership Groups, which are co-ordinated by the GP Federation (social prescribing).

- **Community TimeBank- South Manchester:** Established by Southway Housing (SH) in December 2012 and is co-ordinated by a full-time member of staff (also funded by SH). A Person to Person/Agency model with over 400 members / 45 voluntary & community groups benefiting, over 10,000 hours of recorded activity since going live (5,000 this year alone). Activities have related to gardening, dog walking, sewing, knitting, DIY, cooking and learning a language (Appendix 1 shows how it works in practice).
- **Harpurhey Timetraders- North Manchester Wellbeing Centre:** Established by the Wellbeing Centre (WC), and started early summer 2017 (been in the planning for 3 years). It is co-ordinated by a part-time staff member (6 hours per week) and also funded by the WC. A Person to Person model with over 45 members and 100 hours exchanged to date. Examples relate to gardening, drafting a letter, food/cooking, arts/crafts+.
- The Timebank at the **Manchester Communication Academy** (Primary & High School) in North Manchester (British Telecom as the lead Academy sponsor), is at an early stage of operating with a new lead staff member about to start at the Academy. A brand new Timebank is now starting to be looked at by **One Manchester** (Registered Provider in Central, East and South Manchester), and will select one area initially to test the approach.

6.0 National Perspective:

- Timebanking is gaining more Parliamentary support. The Chairperson of Timebanking UK has recently attended an All Party Parliamentary Group Roundtable to talk about Pro Bono (in Pro-Bono Week- early November) & Timebanking, and in December, will be attending the House of Lords to talk about the linkage with Adult Social Care;
- Timebanking UK is looking at developing a "crypto currency" or a social coin to link Timebanking to an alternative economy that reduces dependency on money. £240k has been secured from the Government and Charities to pioneer the "Hull Coin", and is an application of the blockchain technology used in other digital currencies such as Bitcoin. The approach is a like a corporate loyalty card for community loyalty, and this will be tested further to inform a potential national rollout;
- Awaiting the next call (mid December 2017 with an April 2018 deadline) for proposals from Urban Innovative Actions (European £ and the UK still eligible-

average bids range between 2-4 million Euros). Could be opportunities through the Urban Poverty or Circular Economy strand, but need more information. A Local Authority partner is needed (& a % of match funding); and

- Timebanking has been given a benefits disregard by the Government, as the emphasis of Timebanking is on the social benefits, as opposed to the economic benefits (therefore, everyone can get involved- claimants must still be able to job search for the right number of hours and attend meetings and interviews as required).

Local Perspective:

- There are Timebanks to build on in the City, together with a strong network of resident groups, neighbourhood forums, other voluntary & community sector groups, schools & Further/Higher Education, business networks and public sector bodies, where conversations can take place on the potential to raise the profile of Timebanking and grow the approach Citywide;
- Opportunities to look at capacity to develop the approach, as well as bringing the 5 Timebanks together to share good practice, and sharing/swapping skills across the City, not just at an area level (instances where requests for time can't be fulfilled, as those particular skills aren't registered on the local database, but could be in another area);
- The City Council, like other partners, contracts/commissions with a range of organisations to deliver activities or supply services on its behalf e.g. operating Leisure Centres, Sporting Arenas/Events, Theatres, Street Cleansing, Waste & Recycling, Health & Social Care, Education and Adult Learning etc (& all the new arrangements highlighted in 2.1) - opportunities to maximise social value to support the Timebanking models; and
- Opportunities through the integration of health and adult social care teams at a neighbourhood level- GP's, Pharmacies, Hospitals, Health Centres, Health Ambassadors etc. Timebanking has already been looked at as part of the Preventative approach, but needs resourcing. There are also links to the social prescribing approach starting in North Manchester in December and the rest of the City in 2018 (currently an approach in Wythenshawe too)- this is about finding out what is important to the person, not just referring to external services to fix needs- the wider community can play a role.

7.0 Next Steps:

7.1 Given the strong focus on strengths, skills & assets, that everyone has a contribution to make in their neighbourhood, and the local/national opportunities, raising the profile of and supporting the expansion of Timebanking activity across the City to help deliver the Our Manchester Strategy, is an opportunity not to be missed. The next steps include:

- Working Group to be established to develop an action plan to work up options. This will involve residents, businesses, the 5 local Timebanks, Timebanking UK, Macc, City Council, Manchester Health & Care Commissioning plus others);

- To support the establishment of a specific Timebanking Network for Manchester where best practice can be shared and the growth of the approach supported; and
- A request will be made to the Our Manchester Investment Fund to support this work.

Appendix 1- What Timebanking actually looks like in practice

