

Report to BTC Full Council Meeting on 1st December 2020 from Cllr Munford

**Subject** A report from the National Association of Local Councils' (NALC) Webinar on 'The Future of Health Challenges Post COVID-19', broadcast on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

### **Summary**

Essentially, the presentations reminded Parish and Town Councils of their role in supporting health and wellbeing in their communities and provided a checklist of actions. The webinar was chaired by Jonathan Owen and is part of the NALC series 'Rebuilding Communities' Presentations were given by Olivia Butterworth (NHS England), Chrissie Geeson (Head of Localities and Partnerships, Suffolk County Council) and Jeremy Hughes (NHS Responders).

### **1. Councils as supporters of health and wellbeing**

Olivia Butterworth, NHS England, emphasised the importance of the contribution of neighbourhoods and the many community groups within them, to the health and wellbeing of the population. Think of the lunch clubs, community centres, pre-school groups, faith groups, local charities, allotment societies, volunteer groups, mutual aid groups, arts and craft groups, theatre groups, musicians and choirs and many more, all of whom play their part in improving the health and well being of the community.

NHS England takes a broad view of health and wellbeing including the so-called 'social determinants of health' which include access to money, work, green spaces, shelter, family, friendships, social activities, sports and leisure activities, all of which keep us healthier in mind and body. Councils are well placed to know their communities, to know those who are socially isolated, cut off from families, vulnerable, unable, for whatever reason, to participate in social activities or get help and support when they need it.

### **2. Primary Care Networks**

Ms Butterworth described the role of Primary Care Networks (PCNs). (Note:- here in Burnham, we are part of the *Dengie and South Woodham Ferrers PCN\**).

Being in contact with the PCN is particularly important during the COVID crisis. PCNs should be engaging with vulnerable groups, those socially isolated, unemployed, homeless, experiencing poverty, unable to use the internet, by using the new Social Prescriber Link worker roles. Councils are invited to:-

- Make contact with their local Primary Care Network
- Help get the message across that the NHS is open and is diagnosing and treating people, however there are new ways to access the health services such as the so-called "digital first" approach e.g. [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or NHS 111, or GP phone triage. Community based help and support is designed to complement these.
- Make contact with your local Patient Participation Group (PPG). NHS England is working to re-energise these groups.

### **3. Know your Community Assets**

Chrissie Geeson emphasised the importance of recognising community assets, including people, places and groups, as a way of measuring the strength of a community. She recommended 'asset mapping' of both buildings and people vital to the community.

For buildings - include buildings such as village halls, community centres, libraries, children's centres, churches, shops, schools... all providing important community hubs.

For people – get to know them all; identify your community champions, your volunteers – support them and their campaigns and promote safe and effective practice through training and safe governance, and local Facebook administrators. Utilise elected members at Parish, Town, District, County levels, Police and Fire services, sports coaches, parents, local church leaders and local organisations such as environmental groups, U3A etc.

#### **4. Community Asset Register Checklist:**

Councils are advised to map the assets in their community and create a register. Various tools are available to help Councils do this.

- a. Register buildings as valuable community assets to help protect them in the future.
- b. Where possible, help them, by providing funding and strong governance guidance, including risk management and safeguarding.
- c. Support them in opening under COVID secure measures.
- d. Register your 'people' community assets, maybe set up an online collaboration space
- e. View community assets, people and buildings as part of the social prescribing initiative, that is, as a way of connecting individuals to groups and activities to enhance their health and wellbeing
- f. Be a conduit for accessing funds, small pots of funding can help a lot
- g. Support the growth of community businesses.
- h. Be aware of who your vulnerable people are
- i. Know your public health data to inform you of particular issues in your area so that plans can be developed to tackle them.
- j. Learning from COVID-19, consider our ability to respond to future emergencies. "Resilient active communities will be the future not more resources"
- k. Write an action plan for the health and wellbeing of your community, and consider the role of the Council, hub, conduit, backstop, facilitator of change?

#### **5. NHS Volunteer Responders**

Jeremy Hughes presented the aims, headlines and activities of this scheme, which carries on until March 2021. Full information can be found on their website [www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk](http://www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk). NHS Volunteer Responders have a number of roles including Community Response Volunteer, NHS Transport Volunteer, Check in and Chat Volunteer. There are 14 or so in Burnham-on-Crouch and Councils are asked to find ways to link up with them and encourage more people to sign up.

#### **6. Proposals**

- 1. that Councillors consider drawing up a Health and Wellbeing Action plan taking these issues into consideration**
- 2. that Health and Wellbeing should be a standing item on the agenda**

*\*Burnham Surgery (Burnham), William Fisher Surgery (Southminster), Dengie Medical Practice (Tillingham), Trinity Medical Practice, (Mayland), Wyncroft Surgery (Bicanacre), and the Crouch Vale Medical Centre, comprising the South Woodham Surgeries - Brickfields Surgery, Greenwood Surgery, Kingsway Surgery.*