

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 JULY 2010

COMMUNITY PRIDE & SELF HELP – SUMMARY OF RECENT ACTIVITY

Background

1. **Definition** : Individuals and communities having the confidence, capacity and ability to do things which improve their communities, rather than having to rely on others to respond to all of their needs.
2. **Our aim** : to significantly reduce barriers so that individuals and communities are more able to help themselves.
3. **How** : by identifying barriers and developing an action plan for the Council. It is also planned to develop some self-help targets for the next 3-5 years for the Oxfordshire 2030 Delivery Plan so that all organisations involved in promoting self-help work together to reduce barriers – e.g. health, district Councils, Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA).

Review

4. Officers are undertaking a review of existing council activity that encourages self-help. The review will be concluded in mid-July. Initial findings are as follows :

The council currently delivers a wide variety of activity which can be said to encourage self-help and community pride, for example :

- **Volunteering** – increasing the numbers of volunteers supporting our services.
- **Community safety** – promotion of self-help activities that improve community safety, encourage resilience (for example: flooding groups) and increase community responsiveness.
- **Community-led planning** (for example : parish plans) – providing advice through Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) and responding to plans.
- **Information and communication** – improving access to information, advice and guidance held by the council and links to other providers.
- **Premises** - improving access to our premises for community uses (for example: community use of school buildings).
- **Grants** – reviewing our advertised grant schemes to ensure they are meeting needs and are sustainable.
- **Rationalisation** – reducing duplication wherever possible (for example: volunteer recruitment).

Issues for the scrutiny meeting to consider

5. Scrutiny have an opportunity to investigate the barriers that people experience when they want to do something for themselves.

In doing so it is important that we identify areas:

- that we can do something about : for example: the bureaucracy around checks on those working with young people may be a barrier to volunteering to run a local youth club but requires government legislation to change.
- that are relevant to our services and statutory responsibilities : for example: Community Safety provide an “Are you prepared?” booklet to every household to help people in emergencies.
- where we can add value and do things better for less : for example : improve access to useful information on our website.

PAUL JAMES
Head of Partnership Working

June 2010