

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 21 January, 2019

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services

Timebanking Project - Twelve Month Monitoring Report

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Cabinet on progress implementing the Timebanking project and to propose an extension to the initial phase of the project.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet note the twelve month monitoring report in relation to the Timebanking project and approve an extension for a further 12 months, to enable options to be explored regarding potential for the expansion of the project.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To ensure the Timebanking project is implemented effectively and the key outcomes are achieved.

Background

2. The Timebanking project was approved by Cabinet on 23rd October 2017 (minute C115). It is an innovative approach to increase volunteering amongst Council tenants. Previous research has highlighted the significant benefits that can be derived from volunteering, including increasing confidence, self-esteem and the improved skills of participants. At a community level, active citizenship has been shown to promote better community spirit and successful/ resilient communities.
3. To take the initiative forward, a partnership was formed with a local social enterprise called Spice. Spice, who have recently re branded as 'Tempo', specialise in Timebanking and has a proven track record of working with local authorities, housing associations and public sector organisations across the United Kingdom. This enabled the Council to adopt a well-developed system which included an established currency of time credits, a network of outlets where time credits could be redeemed and a means of tracking and monitoring the use of time credits.
4. On the 13th June 2018, Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee received a six month progress report which highlighted the significant progress to date and showed how Timebanking was increasing volunteering by Council tenants.

5. The Cabinet report of the 23rd October 2017 included a recommendation that Cabinet would receive an evaluation report after 12 months of the Timebanking project.

Relevant Issues and Options

Resident consultation and priorities

6. Prior to the implementation of the Project, a wide range of tenant consultation took place, including questionnaires to individual tenants and soundings taken from existing Residents Boards. This feedback informed how the project was set up as well as the initial priority areas.
7. A steering group was established to oversee the delivery of the project and a number of tenants form part of this group. This ensures the project aims continue to reflect the issues that are important to tenants.
8. Tenants' views also form an important part of the evaluation of the project. Individuals who take part in volunteering are asked to rate a variety of things, including their confidence levels, self-esteem etc. prior to starting to volunteer. They are then asked again at various stages of their participation in the project in order to track their progress. Some of the headline information is included in the progress report which highlights the significant impact volunteering has had on individuals.

Monitoring and evaluation

9. Over the last 6 months, the Community Investment Team has continued to promote Time Banking to increase the number of Vale Homes' tenants actively engaging in volunteering. This has not only brought significant benefits to the individuals involved in volunteering but has also improved our local communities. Volunteers have been involved in a number of activities including maintaining community gardens, litter picks, painting and running community based sports activities
10. Over the summer months there was a significant increase in those engaging with volunteering activities which was expected in part due to the school summer holiday period. Through active support and encouragement, many partner groups were also more proactive in registering new members, these groups include Amy Evans Centre, Vale People First, Gibby Green Fingers and Pave the Way
11. Within the Cabinet report, very clear targets were outlined in relation to the outcomes for the project and to gain further insight to the value of developing volunteering services for tenants. These targets measure the difference Timebanking makes to tenants and ensure value for money. Appendix 1 sets out the progress to date against each of the targets identified.
12. It is clear following the first year of Timebanking; the project is achieving the ambitious targets set. The project is bringing benefits to the local community and enabled the creation of a strong network to build on, when rolling the project out further. Some tenants have told staff it can be a challenge to leave the house and they lack the confidence to become involved in their community. The incentives offered in the form of credits alongside the support and training provided by the Community Investment Team is empowering tenants to overcome these barriers. At the end of the first year 100% of those who have engaged in Timebanking activities, either agree or strongly agree that they feel more positive and confident as a result of getting involved.

13. With well over 9% of our tenants already engaged in the project, including those from some of the most vulnerable tenant groups we house, the project is engaging those furthest away from employment or joining the local community.
14. The plan for next year is to continue meeting with new tenants at tenancy sign-up to embed volunteering and the community investment 'offer' from the first meeting. It is also planned to switch the focus to the rural Vale and develop projects in St Athan and Llantwit Major. These areas have been identified as there are lower levels of tenant engagement.
15. Given the success of the project to date, there is potential to work with new partners and roll out Timebanking regionally throughout the Vale. This has been picked up by the Public Services Board and discussions will take place in order to develop viable options for taking this forward.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

16. The agreed cost of the project is £14,918.00 per year which is met from the existing budget allocated from the housing revenue account. The value of the Timebanking credits issued is also capped to ensure no additional costs are incurred.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

17. Increased voluntary working will help to improve the local environment. It could also increase personal training and development opportunities, which is particularly important for residents who have been long term unemployed as it could improve their future employment prospects. Health and well-being should also be improved by providing residents with incentives to increase their physical activity.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

18. There is a service level agreement in place between the Council and Tempo which ensures that the Council is not liable for any losses or claims from the Timebanking project.
19. In respect of insurance, officers liaise with the Council's Insurance Officer to ensure that participating organisations have sufficient public liability insurance cover in place.
20. Organisations participating in this project are required to comply with the Council's Safeguarding procedure, which include DBS checks where appropriate. If any commissioning or contracting requirements occur in the future, Officers will liaise with colleagues in the Council's Legal Department to ensure that robust service level agreements are put in place.

Crime and Disorder Implications

21. Timebanking increases community engagement and active citizenship. It is also likely to reduce anti-social behaviour and community conflict. One of the key outcomes sought during the project is to engage young people in order to increase their self-confidence and to instil in them a feeling of value to their local community.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

22. Timebanking will be available to all Vale of Glamorgan Council tenants who wish to become involved in volunteering. There are a range of opportunities that will enable people of all ages and abilities to be involved.

Corporate/Service Objectives

23. Developing a Timebanking scheme within the Vale is consistent with the Corporate Plan 2016-20:

Wellbeing outcome 1: An inclusive and Safe Vale.

Objective 1: Reducing poverty and social exclusion

Objective 2: Providing decent homes and safe communities.

Policy Framework and Budget

24. This report is a matter for executive decision by Cabinet.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

25. This report will affect all council tenants and therefore no individual ward member consultation has been undertaken.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

26. Homes and Safe Communities.

Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer

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Officers Consulted

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Committee Reports

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Appendix 1

Outcome	Progress to date	RAG
<p>5% of Council tenants or members of their households to be actively engaged in volunteering</p>	<p>There are currently 364 tenants signed up to Time Banking which is 9.5% of all tenants. This is above the level anticipated when the project was developed. The majority of tenants engaging in the project are those furthest away from employment and most have not been involved in volunteering previously.</p> <p>During year two of the project, it is planned to focus on engaging tenants in specific areas such as St Athan and Llantwit Major -to build stronger relationships in these areas. As part of this, Tempo will focus on recruiting new spend partners in the rural Vale, so tenants have an increased opportunity to spend the credits earned.</p> <p>70 of the tenants who registered for Time Banking have continued volunteering for over 3 months and 45 have volunteered for over 6 months. This suggests that volunteers are staying engaged not only to earn credits but also because they are also enjoying volunteering.</p> <p>Vale Homes' tenants have volunteered over 1600 hours of their own time within the Vale which has brought benefits to the wider community. 88% of volunteers live in Barry, with the next largest uptake from Penarth. The Community Investment Team chose to focus on these areas in order to use an existing network of partner organisations to assist in the promotion and registering of volunteers. Focus was also placed on St Luke's and St Paul's Avenue in Penarth as the Residents Group was very enthusiastic and embraced the concept behind the initiative. There have however been volunteers from a number of other areas including Llantwit Major, Cowbridge, Dinas Powys, St Athan, Sully and St Brides Major.</p> <p>Over the last 6 months, information has been provided to new tenants regarding time banking, volunteering opportunities and general community investment activities at point of sign-up. This has been an effective means of recruiting volunteers and will continue next year together with additional sessions at Barry Job Centre.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>

	<p>Over the last year the team have worked hard to build relationships with other agencies within the Vale to promote Timebanking to tenants as well as identifying possible volunteering opportunities for tenants to get involved in. A steering group has been established and to date, 25 partners have joined enabling them to issue time credits to tenants. At the end of quarter 3, Tempo reported that 644 credits had been redeemed, at a wide range of outlets including the Memo Arts Centre, Barry Leisure Centre, Coconuts Indoor Play Centre, Techniquet and the Royal Mint Experience.</p>	
<p>To have established 3 innovative Timebanking projects to benefit the local community, including rural areas</p>	<p>During the first 12 months, 4 innovative projects have been launched including:</p> <p>Improving wellbeing –</p> <p>Working in partnership with the Amy Evans Centre, a project has been created to provide volunteering opportunities for tenants who experience poor mental health and wellbeing. As a result, 15 tenants who are supported at the Centre have signed up to volunteer by taking part in environmental project, working at Porthkerry Park, Cosmeston Lakes and the Community Garden in Treharne. Those who took part in the activities have reported increases in their wellbeing as a result of being outdoors and a reduction in loneliness and boredom. The activities also brought people together with other volunteers and the individuals have continued to volunteer on a regular basis. As a result, they have built up enough time credits to go paint balling as a group.</p> <p>Community Cohesion –</p> <p>The STAR group is a Resident Board in Penarth who are committed to improving their local community. The group have a strong core membership but were keen to attract new members.</p> <p>STAR have embraced Timebanking and actively promoted it in the area, registering residents to take part in litter picks to improve the local environment. The group also worked with the Community Investment team to arrange a ‘community day’ during the</p>	<p>GREEN</p>

	<p>Easter holiday- which included a number of children’s activities. The event was staffed by volunteers and was well attended by local residents who all enjoyed the day. One tenant shared that it was amazing having things on their doorstep and to meet new people living in the area. During the event, 6 new tenants signed up to take part in activities such as litter picking, planning a summer event and befriending in the area.</p> <p>Tenant Champions –</p> <p>Staff have built links with local grass roots community groups, Resident Boards and individuals to encourage them to become tenant champions. This has included supporting activities such as the Ty lolo Bike Club, litter picking, and Halloween themed tenant consultations. These tenants will now support others moving into the area and provide a welcoming face as well as supporting the Neighbourhood Managers in delivering the new neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>Improving Green Space –</p> <p>During the summer period the Community Investment Team, in partnership with the Colcot Residents Board and ‘Gibby Green Fingers’ gardening group, have created a community garden at Margret Avenue. This has brought together a number of local residents who have taken part in a number of volunteering opportunities, including painting railings, creating planters out of tyres, clearing the site and working together to develop the plans for the future site. The local school have also been involved in the development of the site and will be actively involved in the future management of the space. Through this project in excess of 200 volunteering hours have been generated and a disused piece of land has been brought back to life.</p>	
70% of tenants who engage in Timebanking report gaining new skills	80% of those who have engaged in Timebanking have reported an increase in skills. Not only have tenants brought additional value to the local community through volunteering, but they have also gained a range of new skills which have included gardening, public speaking and interview skills. All of these skills will support tenants in accessing employment or going on to be involved in other volunteering services. During the first year	GREEN

	<p>of the project, the majority of volunteers have engaged in gardening, environmental activities or community events which have created learning opportunities, reduced social isolation and built stronger communities.</p> <p>Over the next year it is planned to build on progress to date and create a range of volunteering opportunities which will enable tenants to gain additional skills including support with digital inclusion, arranging events and contributing towards tenant communications such as the tenant newsletter.</p>	
<p>60% of those who engage in Timebanking report increased self-esteem as a result of volunteering</p>	<p>Tenants were asked to rate their self-esteem when they register for Timebanking and then again after various time periods following volunteering to enable the 'difference made' to be tracked. Following volunteering, 86% of tenants reported a feeling of increased self-esteem. This is significantly higher than expected when developing the project and it is rewarding to note that volunteering is making such a positive difference to tenants. For many of those with low self-self-esteem, it is very difficult to build up the motivation to get involved with activities or they struggle to see they have any skills that may be of use. By running projects in local communities and actively recruiting volunteers, it has helped overcome some of these barriers to reach the people in most in need.</p> <p>87% of those who have engaged report feeling more confident and having a greater sense of self-worth as a direct result of volunteering.</p> <p>87% report they have made new friends through the project and increased their social network which has reduce social isolation as well as improving people's health.</p> <p>68% of tenants who got involved in our community volunteering events reported improved feelings of mental.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>
<p>70 Young People living in Council properties get involved in volunteering via Timebanking</p>	<p>In order to build strong cohesive communities it is important to get young people involved in community activities. Not only does this reduce the amount of youth ASB within areas, it also enables young people to make a valuable contribution to the local community. Since launching Time banking, 151 young people have registered with the scheme, which</p>	<p>GREEN</p>

	<p>is just over 40% of the total number of those engaging in the scheme. There was a significant increase in young people getting involved during the summer months. In addition to tenants', staff have also worked with specialist services to engage young people in volunteering activities which include those with an identified mental health condition and young people with learning disabilities who wish to move into their own accommodation.</p>	
<p>Tenants and residents report feeling valued for their contributions to the community</p>	<p>The communities where volunteering has been promoted during the first year now fully understand how Timebanking works and have started to identify community based spend ideas. Community groups have also approached the Community Investment team with new project ideas because they see the value volunteering makes to local areas. In the first 12 months, the focus has been on reducing social isolation by encouraging tenants to become more involved in community activities. This has included volunteering at our community garden in Gibbonsdown, running community events such as the Halloween party in the Coldbrook area of Barry or delivering leaflets. As a result of these activities, tenants report feeling valued by the wider community.</p> <p>A key aim of the local authority to build stronger cohesive communities and volunteering supports this. 100% of tenants who have engaged with Timebanking report feeling valued by the local community, and given that this demographic have not previously been involved in volunteering or community work, it represents a huge shift.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>
<p>Greater ability to deliver effective services with the resources available</p>	<p>The first 6 months of the project has focused on the promotion of Timebanking, bringing partners on board to support the sustainability of the project and getting tenants registered via Tempo. The volunteers registered are already bringing benefits to the local community and supporting us to do more with the resources available.</p> <p>The next 6 months have focused on building community links and empowering tenants to take the lead on running grassroots projects within their own neighbourhoods. This has helped bring communities together as well as enabling Vale Homes to deliver a tailored approach to Neighbourhood Management.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>