

Decision Maker: **Executive**

Date: **18 September 2019**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: **Tackling Loneliness Summit**

Contact Officer: Naheed Chaudhry
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Chief Officer: Ade Adetosoye, Chief Executive

Ward: N/A

1. Summary

The Leader of Bromley Council commissioned a Summit on the issue of Tackling Loneliness to be held during national Loneliness week 2019. Over 120 delegates attended the summit and contributed wholeheartedly to its intended objectives.

The summit enabled local organisations and services to connect those at risk of loneliness, focusing particularly on intergenerational activity for new mums, care leavers and older people.

A well facilitated 'market place' hosted community groups in the Grand Hall, supporting summit delegates to network and share ideas; the intention to facilitate, enable and encourage an active community sector.

Ultimately the summit intended on facilitating a conversation around loneliness to raise awareness and reduce stigma. The summit celebrated considerable attendance and positive evaluations and feedback.

This report provides a summary of the Summit and its outcomes.

2. Reason for Report going to Executive

2.1 To report on participation of the Loneliness Summit.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to note the activities that took place at the Loneliness Summit and its outcomes.

Health & Wellbeing Strategy

1. Related priority: Diabetes Hypertension Obesity Anxiety and Depression Children with Complex Needs and Disabilities Children with Mental and Emotional Health Problems Children Referred to Children's Social Care Dementia Supporting Carers

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable:
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Total savings: Not Applicable:
 4. Budget host organisation:
 5. Source of funding:
 6. Beneficiary/beneficiaries of any savings:
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Supporting Public Health Outcome Indicator(s)

Yes

4. COMMENTARY

4.1. At the beginning of the municipal year the Leader of the Council expressed his desire to tackle the issue of Loneliness in his address to Full Council. Through Councillor Cuthbert he went on to commission a Loneliness summit to be held during National Loneliness Awareness week 2019.

Objectives of the Summit

4.2. Over 120 delegates attended the summit hosted by the Council on 21 June 2019. The summit objectives were in line with the National strategy and the Council's local aspirations; objectives:

- a) Enable everyday services to connect those at risk of loneliness. Focusing on intergenerational working: new mums, care leavers and older people.
- b) Enable community groups to support people to come together – what can we do better together?
- c) Building a local conversation, tackling stigma around loneliness. Just as we understand the importance of looking after our physical health and increasingly our mental health, so too must we look after our social connections, and understand that they are key to our wellbeing.

4.3. Through feedback evaluation forms over 90% of delegates stated that the Summit had met its objectives.

4.4. What is Loneliness and Social Isolation?

4.5. Loneliness is defined nationally as “a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship. It happens when we have a mismatch between the quantity and quality of social relationships that we have, and those that we want”. Loneliness is therefore, simply put, a personal experience and can mean different things to different people.

4.6. Loneliness is often used interchangeably with isolation, but while they are linked and can often overlap, they are not the same. It is possible to be isolated without feeling lonely and conversely to feel lonely while surrounded by people.

4.7. Loneliness and social isolation can affect anyone at any time.

4.8. Loneliness Summit Outcomes

4.9. The Summit introduced the issue of tackling loneliness by presenting the known causes of loneliness and its well documented impact on physical and mental wellbeing. Key triggers of loneliness were presented alongside key statistics of known prevalence locally. See appendix one Summit presentation.

4.10. Best practice research advises that intergenerational activity has particular benefit for older people. With an aging population set to rise further, focus on intergenerational ideas felt appropriate. The Summit facilitated idea generating workshops to tackle the issue of loneliness for new mums, care leavers and older people from the perspective of intergenerational work.

4.11. A broad range of ideas were generated by delegates including raising awareness, developing projects within their existing organisational objectives or in conjunction with other organisations. Delegates committed to working more with other organisations, publicising existing activities and becoming more involved in the community.

4.12. Eight workshops were held during the Summit: four focussed on older people and two each on new mums and care leavers. During each workshop delegates were asked to share examples of intergenerational projects which had worked well and identify projects which members of the workshop could take forward. Workshops were well very attended, with 52 people participating in a conversation about new mums, 62 contributing to ideas about how to support young people who leave care and 92 people sharing ideas about how to mitigate loneliness for older people.

4.13. Projects identified during the workshops included

New Mums:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Facebook page for all activities and events for new mums and families and publicise events/activities • Holding joint 'Me and My Baby' and 'Primetime' activities in Mytime Active • Start buddy schemes for new mums with Dementia Centres • Replicating good practice to deliver workshops and activities for new mums across the borough • Promote a family event through the Children and Family Centres and support families without access to transport to attend
Care Leavers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Associations to work with Leaving Care team to provide white goods • Trading Standards to offer 'Test Purchasing' role to looked after children and care leavers • Care Homes to offer work experience opportunities for care leavers • Utilising community kitchen facilities in children centres to teach 'cooking' independence skills to care leavers
Older People:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age UK Bromley and Greenwich to access funding and develop an information portal for services and activities • Dementia Intergenerational Project involving Mindcare, Community Links Bromley, Mytime Active, Libraries and Glebe Housing • Young Volunteers Project - Inviting participants in Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes to volunteer at residential homes • Intergenerational Dementia Choir • Volunteer Transport/Drivers Co-ordination Scheme

4.14. In addition Councillor Cuthbert has been exploring Clarion Housing Futures funding to identify if groups can access funding (up to 200k) and is working with interested resident's associations and the Shaw Trust on implementing new projects that bring together older and younger residents.

4.15. Councillor Cuthbert has also been working with the local media to regularly promote and highlight groups and activities taking place in the borough.

4.16. During the Summit delegates were given the opportunity to network whilst visiting the Market Place in the Great Hall. Twelve organisations manned stalls in the Market Place providing information on services and volunteering opportunities, a further four organisations provided literature about their organisations.

4.17. Feedback

4.18. Feedback was sought from delegates to rate the usefulness of the presentations, Market Place, workshop discussions and networking opportunities on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest rating. All four elements were rated as four or above: the workshops received the highest rating at 4.7. Over 90% of delegates stated that the Summit had met its objectives.

4.1. When asked what they had learnt from the day, individuals stated that they had come to a greater understanding of loneliness as well as the needs of care leavers in particular. Most mentioned an increase in knowledge of the number and range of services and activities already available in the borough and the associated need to ensure that this information was readily available to organisations which come in contact with people at risk of or experiencing loneliness.

5. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND CHILDREN

5.1 Vulnerable people and children are more likely to experience worse outcomes in their physical health, wellbeing and behaviour when they are affected by loneliness and social isolation. By raising awareness of the potential impact on individuals and enabling those to participate more fully in their community such outcomes can be reduced.

5.2 Participants attending the Summit were those most likely to support vulnerable residents this included:

- Health and social care providers in the statutory and voluntary sectors, such as, Age UK Bromley and Greenwich, Bertha James Day Centre, Bromley Healthcare, Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich Mind, Bromley Mencap, Bromley Well, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, Shaw Trust and St Christopher's Hospice;
- Voluntary groups such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Community Links Bromley, Contact the Elderly, Careplus, CASPA and Latch Project;
- Community groups including residents' and village associations as well as Rotary Clubs, Neighbourhood Watch and U3A;
- Extra care housing providers, care and nursing homes and housing associations;
- Faith groups from across Bromley;
- Local businesses including The Glades and
- Leisure providers such as Bromley libraries and Mytime Active.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.