

Notes from the Rural Services Network

North West Regional Seminar

Kindly hosted by Lancashire County Council

7th October 2019

Present (For apologies, please see page 5)

Cllr Sue Sanderson, Cumbria County Council (chair)
Cllr Kate Parkinson, Cheshire East Council
Cllr Cosima Towneley, Lancashire County Council
Andrea Hines, Allerdale Borough Council
Cllr Michael Green, Lancashire County Council
Cllr Albert Atkinson, Lancashire County Council
Cllr Stella Brunskill, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Cllr Will Clark, Cumbria County Council
Malcolm Harrison, Pub is The Hub
Jonathan Taylor, Cumbria County Council
Phil Green, Lancashire County Council
Ian Cass, Forum of Private Business
Cllr Marion Fitzgerald, Allerdale Borough Council
Cllr Kevin Frea, Lancaster City Council
Carol Hill, Cheshire East Council
Amanda Phillips, United Utilities Water
Cllr Richard Sherras, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Cllr Graham Gooch, Lancashire County Council
Sean McGrath, Lancashire County Council
Cllr Tony Austin, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Cllr Lizzi Collinge, Lancashire County Council
Cllr Alan Whittaker, Chorley Council
Cllr Lillian Burns, NALC
Cllr Julia Berry, Chorley Council
Alastair Sheehan, HB Villages
Cllr Anne Cheetham, Lancashire County Council
Mark Gutteridge, Community Futures Lancashire
Fiona Hasson, Alertacall
Helen Noble, Pennine Prospects
Ian Kirby, C.Co
John Heselwood, Cheshire Community Action
Ivan Annibal, Rose Regeneration
Andy Dean, RSN

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

David Inman, Director Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 813693

www.rsnonline.org.uk email: admin@sparse.gov.uk twitter: @rsnonline

Introduction

Councillor Sue Sanderson welcomed everyone, setting out the context for the meeting. Each attendee then introduced themselves and outlined their key interest in rural services.

Andy Dean, Assistant Director RSN, set out the background to the operation of RSN and the purpose of the regional meetings. Andy highlighted the RSN's call for a Rural Strategy. Further details, including the opportunity to sign up to this call, can be accessed via this [link](#).

Presentations

Copies of all presentations are available via the RSN website.

Fiona Hasson, Alertacall – “How innovative daily contact can reduce loneliness and promote safety, wellbeing and choice for older people”

Alertacall provide daily contact services via telephone or other device to over 15,000 customers. The service is provided through a number of housing association and other clients as well as direct to customers.

Perceptions of traditional pendant alarms can be negative for a variety of reasons. They are a passive tool and provide little information regarding changing needs over time.

Alertacall provide a home telephone set for each client which has an 'OK' button which the client simply presses each day. If the button is not pressed there are a series of responses, at varying scales and dependent on the escalation system agreed with each client, which Alertacall implement.

This system can detect changes to patterns of contact, which can be due to a number of reasons, and does not require any specialist equipment. Importantly, the system includes human contact via the telephone with well-trained call handlers.

The service makes people feel less lonely and can support faster, safer hospital discharges as well as reducing re-admissions

A three-month free trial is offered to new clients. Further details can be accessed via the Alertacall [website](#).

Helen Noble, Pennine Prospects – “The South Pennines Park: a first for the country”

Set up in 2005 as a cross sector partnership, Pennine Prospects includes 15 local authorities and covers an area of 120,000 hectares within easy access of over 8 million people.

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

David Inman, Director Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 813693

www.rsnonline.org.uk email: admin@sparse.gov.uk twitter: @rsnonline

The initiative provides a new approach encompassing social, economic and environmental elements. The Park provides a different approach to managing the landscape by reconnecting rural and urban communities.

Partnership working across boundaries and across political interests has been a key success and you can read more of the wide range of activities which have taken place via the [website](#).

Ian Kirby, C.Co – “Contribution-based Reorganisation”

C.Co is a consultancy arm of CIPFA and aims to support local authorities and other public authorities.

C.Co has seen an increase in local authority out-sourced services coming back in house.

The ‘Contribution-based’ model looks at individual roles and the contribution they make to the service and objectives of the organisation.

Contribution is determined at 6 levels:

- chief executive
- strategic
- transformational
- operational (multiple services)
- service (single service) and
- work (single focus activity) levels.

This is not a linear/hierarchical structure.

A methodical approach is critical in relation to this process and it is important that organisations embark on the process with their ‘eyes wide open’ and do not underestimate the culture of the organisation involved.

More information about C.Co services is available on their [website](#).

John Heselwood – Cheshire Community Action

John outlined three areas of the work of Cheshire Community Action (CCA):

Health & social care:

CCA run a ‘Pathfinder’ service which helps people find their way to the services they need. Every £1 invested in this service has saved £7 of taxpayers’ money for other services.

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

David Inman, Director Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 813693

www.rsonline.org.uk email: admin@sparse.gov.uk twitter: @rsonline

An 'Integrated Care Partnership' model has been adopted between Clinical Commissioning Groups, Hospital trusts, Public Health and Adult & Social Care in local authorities. In 2018, CCA won a contract for the management of long-term health conditions. This initially involved a process called 'appreciative enquiry' of conversation and engagement with 555 people across Cheshire West.

Neighbourhood planning

CCA support Neighbourhood Plans across Cheshire. 86 Neighbourhood Plans are currently either 'made' or underway. CCA supported 70 of these.

A recent survey demonstrated that the majority (58%) of Neighbourhood Plan steering group members were not parish/town councillors.

Community-led Housing

This is a recent area of activity for CCA and involves support for communities wishing to take more control of housing development through a variety of different models. A successful community-led housing conference had been held in October 2018 as part of a nationwide programme supported by the Nationwide Foundation.

You can read more about the work of Cheshire Community Action via their [website](#).

Issues raised through discussion

Specific points raised included the following:

- A range of models exist in relation to community-led housing. For example, some communities develop and manage homes themselves through the establishment of a Community Land Trust or similar vehicle, whilst others enter into partnership arrangements with Housing Associations and others.
- Some areas see strong interest in the development of Neighbourhood Plans for a variety of reasons. For example, some aim to fill a void where there is no up-to-date Local Plan in place whilst in some areas local authorities are particularly encouraging of the Neighbourhood Plan process.
- The Neighbourhood Plan process can often begin from local opposition to development but can also be very useful in helping communities understand what they need.
- Pennine Prospect is a good example of the successfully managing a complex partnership across many local authorities.
- There is a close potential association between the service provided by Alertacall and vulnerable persons registers held by utility companies.

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

David Inman, Director Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 813693

www.rsnonline.org.uk email: admin@sparse.gov.uk twitter: @rsnonline

- It was agreed that personal contact on the phone with fully trained people is an important element of the Alertacall service.
- Whilst new housing development is beginning to take on board new technological solutions in relation to care, simple solutions can often be the easiest option for many people. For example, the Alertacall service does not require specialist equipment – just a phone socket.

Suggested actions for RSN

- All presentations made to the seminar reflect different aspects of innovation. It was agreed that RSN should be encouraged to maintain a focus on innovation and publicise good case studies as they become available.
- Transport is always a key issue and it is important that this remains a key focus for RSN, underpinning many rural services. It was noted that a series of interesting presentations on this topic had been made at the RSN annual National Rural Conference 2019 in September.
- Library services were seen as one example of services being innovatively delivered more locally in many communities. Cheshire East representatives referred to a current pilot project which will take books out to people who are unable to access library services. This project includes a befriending service and is due to commence shortly. Pub is the Hub referred to a number of pubs in Cornwall which host libraries and are directly linked to the council's central portal.

Lancashire County Council were thanked for hosting the meeting and all members were thanked for their attendance and positive contributions.

Apologies

Paula Lythgoe, Rural Forum
Kerry Bolister, Housing Plus Group
Kate Pym, Pym's Consultancy
Richard Parish, National Centre for Rural Health and Care
Marion Rogers, Parkinsons UK
Dean Kinsella, Exmoor National Park
Cllr Bridget Hilton, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Deb Lindop, Cheshire East Council
Gemma Johnson, Lancashire County Council
Ian Frost, Allerdale Borough Council
Muna Abu-Jaber, Lincolnshire Refugee Doctor Project
Cllr Jean Parr, Lancaster City Council

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

David Inman, Director Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 813693

www.rsnonline.org.uk email: admin@rsn.gov.uk twitter: @rsnonline