

Meeting of:	Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 18 September 2019
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Timebanking - Monitoring Report
Purpose of Report:	To update the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee on progress implementing the Timebanking project
Report Owner:	Nick Jones - Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader
Responsible Officer:	Miles Punter - Director of Environment and Housing
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	This report will affect all Council tenants and therefore no individual ward member consultation has been undertaken. The report has been reviewed by Officers from the Legal and Finance teams.
Policy Framework:	This report is a matter for information and noting
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report highlights the progress in delivering the Timebanking project over the last 12 months and updates Members on the work being undertaken to extend the project further and to work with other partners across the Vale. All of the targets for Timebanking have been met and the scheme has been an effective way of increasing the levels of volunteering amongst Council tenants. 488 tenants have signed up to the scheme and taken part in volunteering, donating over 4,516 hours of their own time to community activities and events. This has proved beneficial to the participants, enabling them to build confidence, increase their self-esteem, get to know neighbours and make friends. It has also helped some people to gain work experience and jobs. In terms of community benefits, volunteering has brought neighbours together building community spirit and improving the areas where people live. There is scope to extend the Timebanking scheme further to work with new partners and benefit people who are not Council tenants. This has not been possible previously due to the fact the project is funded by Council tenants. Earlier this year, a workshop was held involving a range of partners from the Public Services Board (PSB) as well as other agencies- to raise awareness and identify potential benefits. There was wide scale support for the initiative and a number of suggestions put forward about how the Timebanking could be developed further. Subsequently, 	

a working group has been established to take forward specific ideas and develop them into detailed proposals. Any viable proposals will be shared with Members at a future date.

Recommendations

1. That the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee note the monitoring report in relation to the Timebanking project.

Reasons for Recommendations

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

1. Background

- 1.1 The Timebanking project was approved by Cabinet on 23rd October 2017 (Minute C115 refers). It is an innovative approach to increase volunteering amongst Council tenants. Research has indicated there are significant benefits for individuals and communities as a result of volunteering. These include increasing confidence, self-esteem and skills of participants and at a community level, promoting better community spirit and creating more successful/ resilient communities.
- 1.2 To take the initiative forward, a partnership was formed with a Social Enterprise called Tempo. Tempo specialise in Timebanking and have 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.
- 1.3 Progress updates have previously been provided to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee in June 2018 and December 2018.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 Since the Timebanking project was set up, the Community Investment team has continued to promote volunteering to Council tenants. This has resulted in significant benefits to the individuals involved in volunteering but also increased community spirit and helped build stronger communities. Volunteers have been involved in a number of activities, including maintaining community gardens, litter picks, painting, befriending, providing peer support for vulnerable people and running community events.
- 2.2 The work undertaken has ensured that the targets set at the outset have been exceeded and each month new volunteers are signed up, further increasing the scale of volunteering across the Vale. There are now 488 tenants and their family members signed up for Timebanking and they have generated over 4,516 hours in volunteer time.

- 2.3** During the last 6 months there have been several interesting developments with Timebanking in the Vale. There have been 93 new members joining the scheme and an increase in community spend of 208 hours. Community spend involves Timebanking members setting up their own events and charging entry for events via time credits. Examples of community spend activity include coffee mornings, fundraising events, garden parties and day trips.
- 2.4** Corporate spend for the last 6 months has totalled 872 with 4 new groups signed up to Timebanking. The new groups are; Llantwit Major Garden Project in partnership with Safer Vale, Repair Café (Penarth), Redlands Sheltered Housing Scheme and the 15+ Local Authority Youth Team.
- 2.5** There have been several good news stories involving individuals and groups who are involved in Timebanking during the past 6 months. Firstly, group leader Janet Rees from Cwtch Cymru, a Peer Led Mental Health support group who hold their meetings at the Vale Hub, won Volunteer of the Year at the Bro Radio Community Awards for her work in supporting the group as their Timebanking lead. The group has been on several Timebanking trips to Dyffryn Gardens, Pedal Power and the Wales Millennium Centre.
- 2.6** Nicky Vickery won the 'Be a Good Egg award' at the Bro Radio Community Awards for her continuing excellent work at Gibby Green Fingers community gardening group. During the past 12 months Nicky has secured funding from the Strong Communities Grant Fund and the Waterloo Foundation to support her role as a community champion and the Gibbonsdown lead for the litter picking groups. Nicky and the volunteers from Gibby Green Fingers have been on Timebanking trips to Quasar, the Memo Arts Centre, Taskforce Paintballing and Barry Town United.
- 2.7** Out of the total of 872 time credits earned and spent the four big spend partners are Memo Arts Centre, Legacy Leisure, CADW (castles) and Techniquest. These showcase the different types of activities that volunteers spend their time credits on. New spend partners include Dyffryn Gardens, Royal Mint Experience, Cardiff Devils and Jump (indoor play centre).
- 2.8** At the start of the year, the Community Investment team prioritised more involvement in the Western Vale, enlisting support from the local PCSO and community members. Following a Timebanking surgery at Llantwit Major Library, a community champion was identified and they have worked closely with staff to promote Timebanking in the local area. Several new community projects have started as a result of this partnership working including a successful garden support project, which involves tenants helping to maintain gardens for elderly or vulnerable neighbours. A number of volunteers have got involved and this has already made a big difference in the local area.
- 2.9** Timebanking in general has made a big impact on people's lives, with volunteers reporting marked improvements in their self-esteem, increased levels of

confidence, new skills and feelings of well-being. There have been some very powerful case studies to show the benefits to individuals, including feedback from an individual shared at the Public Services Board workshop who shared the fact their volunteering has helped improve their own mental health and given them 'something to live for'.

- 2.10** One of the issues identified to date has been that Timebanking is restricted to Council tenants in the Vale. This is due to the way the scheme is funded (via the Housing Revenue Account). Discussions have therefore taken place with a range of partners about the scope to roll this out and to secure additional resources or alternative sources of funding. These discussions included a workshop which a wide range of organisations attended. This enabled partners and potential partners to hear, first hand some of the successes of the project, via presentations from individuals and groups who have taken part and to have discussions in groups about how Timebanking could support the aims of different partners.
- 2.11** Following the workshop, a working group has been established in order to review the ideas and develop proposals for expanding Timebanking across the Vale. Further information will be shared about potential approaches as part of future monitoring reports.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

Long term

- 3.1** The approach being taken to the Timebanking project maximises the chances of the project continuing to be viable in the long term and ensures that Council tenants and members of the public can continue to take advantage of volunteering opportunities which improve their quality of life.

Prevention

- 3.2** The approach to Timebanking helps to improve individual's well-being, enabling them to be more confident, develop better self-esteem and feel more valued. This can lead to health benefits and also has acted as a springboard to some individuals who have gone on to access training or employment. Timebanking has also improved community spirit and led to some people taking a more active role in their communities- this helps ensure that Council estates are great places to live.

Integration

- 3.3** Whilst Timebanking has been developed within the Housing team, there are benefits to expanding the project and working with partners in order to deliver a more integrated service to citizens in the Vale of Glamorgan. The report refers to some specific proposals which take account of this need.

Collaboration

- 3.4** The key to success of the Timebanking project so far has been the partnership approach taken. The staff team have worked closely with a wide range of partners who have been able to encourage people to volunteer and also offer volunteering opportunities. This has increased the number of people who have taken part and provided a varied range of opportunities, including environmental works, befriending, community events etc. A collaborative approach is also being taken to working with Public Service Board partners to look at options for expanding the scheme in future.

Involvement

- 3.5** Tenants have been involved in Timebanking from the beginning. Prior to introducing the project, consultation was carried out with individual tenants and soundings taken from tenant groups and this shaped the approach taken. Close links have been formed with the individuals involved and staff continue to provide support, encouragement and assistance to help people derive the maximum benefit from volunteering.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** The project is being delivered within existing Housing team resources, however any expansion of the scheme would need to be funded or supported by partners. Any proposals for changes to the scheme would include more detail about additional financial resources required.

Employment

- 4.2** There are no direct employment implications arising from this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.3** There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The project is however designed to ensure that all tenants have an opportunity to get involved in volunteering. This includes specific projects which have been developed to involve young people, vulnerable people and person's whose health restricts their day to day activities.

5. Background Papers

None.