

Bristol Health and Wellbeing Board

Title of Paper:	DPH Annual Report 2023 The Power of Us: We are Bristol, One City Many Communities
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Date of Board meeting:	14/12/2023
Purpose:	Information and discussion

1. Executive Summary

The title of the 2023 DPH annual report is 'The Power of Us: We are Bristol, One City Many Communities'. The report explores the importance of strengthening communities and the subsequent benefits of community development for health and wellbeing outcomes of local populations.

The individual chapters of the report describe the impact of community development on different aspects of society:

- 1) **Social capital theory**, which describes human networks of connection, norms and trust, creates the conditions for health and wellbeing.
- 2) **Asset based approaches** value 'what's strong, not what's wrong' in communities. Purposeful action, with and by, minoritized and excluded communities is needed to overcome the discrimination and other intersectional factors which lead to health inequalities.
- 3) The places in which we live are where many of our social connections are formed and the **built and natural environments** play a key role in facilitating this.
- 4) **Creative and cultural activities** improve people's health and wellbeing. Several local programmes which implement arts and culture, and activities to boost **mental wellbeing** are included in this chapter.
- 5) **Community ownership and co-production** can enable communities to mobilise, grow and own local resources. This is possible when we support and sustain local community action.
- 6) The **One City, Many Communities approach** to the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis have shown just what is possible when as a city we act with intent to remove barriers, to listen, collaborate and share leadership and resources.
- 7) **A Call to Action** – see Recommendations

2. Purpose of the Paper

The publication of a DPH annual report is responding to a statutory duty from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. It is an independent report on a topic relevant to public health and to the local population, chosen by the Director of Public Health. It gives the opportunity to explore the evidence base on that topic and informs the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

3. Background, evidence base, and what needs to happen

Social relationships play a hugely important part in our individual wellbeing. Indeed, social isolation and loneliness can be as bad for our health as other risk factors such as smoking. The extent to which we have control over our lives, have good social connections and live in healthy, safe

neighbourhoods are all important influences on health. While social groups and communities can help us maintain and enhance our sense of self-worth through collective self-esteem. These community-level factors are some of the building blocks for good mental and physical health and can buffer against stressors throughout our lives.

This report explores the science underpinning why communities are important for health and what we can do in the city to create the conditions to help promote and support positive, thriving and resilient communities.

Extensive national and international literature is cited throughout the report including studies and evaluations from disciplines of sociology, arts and culture, architecture, urban planning and public health, alongside local case studies which include the voice of Bristol communities. The principles within the report align to the Bristol Health and Wellbeing Strategy's vision and the BCC Corporate Strategy.

4. Community/stakeholder engagement

We have included the voice of different communities embedded throughout the report with eleven different 'The Power of Us' stories. This builds on the success of a public event held at the Council in March 2023 called 'People Power'.

5. Recommendations

The final chapter of the report is a call to action. Creating the conditions for health through community requires commitment from everyone; individuals, businesses, the NHS, the voluntary sector, the local authority and of course, communities themselves.

Everyone can support the creation of One City, Many Communities by:

- Finding ways to promote, nurture and enable local community action and leadership
- Creating the conditions to support local community owned infrastructure
- Taking an asset-based approach to developing communities, by focusing on what's strong and not what's wrong
- Actively engaging in networks for community connection and knowledge exchange
- Investing in the development of trusting and trusted relationships
- Developing the conditions to support collaboration, co-production and shared decision making.

6. City Benefits

The DPH Annual Report demonstrates how taking a 'We are Bristol; One City, Many Communities' approach to building community power and wealth has potential long-term benefits for citizens and keeps our focus on equity, social justice and wellbeing to find sustainable ways forward, supporting people most impacted by low income, poverty and inequity.

7. Financial and Legal Implications

No financial implications. Legally, the publication of the Annual Report 2023 ensures compliance with the statutory duty under Part 3 of the National Health Service Act 2006 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012).

8. Appendices

The full report is published on the BCC website: [Director of Public Health annual report 2023/24 \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk) There is an easy read version available.