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Finding a Community Builder

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Will Lilley gave us some context to asset based community development (ABCD)

In an era of public sector cuts how can communities be better supported to solve problems the "professionals" can't.

County Council (Staffordshire) are interested in concept of ABCD. They have funded some work for Nurture Development to explore ABCD in local communities. SITRA will provide the evaluation.

Possible pilot to take place in Lichfield where we are a big stakeholder as we own the vast majority of social housing.

We've also been testing community connectors with older people in Gloucestershire

ABCD is essentially seeing that people can do things for themselves

ABCD builds on the skills knowledge and attitudes of the existing community.

What are assets?

Primary: interests - something you are passionate about
Also could be physical space - e.g disused land

Secondary asset is us: professionals

Role of Community Builder is to identify people with skills and connect them with each other. This session was to explore the questions we need to ask before we commission or scope this "role".

These are the questions we want to answer (bear in mind some of these are negative as purpose is to get questions on table)

Who is this for - Bromford customers or wider?

No - it's not for Bromford customers but we have to make sure our resource is focused on them.

What will happen if we don't get involved or this pilot doesn't happen?

We'll lose valuable learning. It would still happen

Best Examples Out There?

Excellent [evaluation from Croydon](#) also Leeds

[C2 Communities in Redruth](#) great example of articulation

Possibly it's a 10-15 year timescale possibly to see benefits

What Culture does it take?

Recognising this is test of culture - concentrating on working with people with loads to offer not in need.

Talking about whether it's right to walk away from people who don't want to engage

Is this just a fad? Why are we doing this?

It's fits our approach and philosophy of Bromford Deal

Recognition that current approaches are unsustainable - we can't expect organisations to keep plugging 'gaps'.

Do we measure our services in the right way? How many people did you remove yourself from this week?

What does success look like?

Us not being needed! Or needed to do the right things

What would the role actually do?

What would the person do when they get up in the morning..

Is it a role?

Recognizing that we couldn't just co-opt it on to someone's role

What's different about this from the Deal

We don't just have loose conversations.

Difficulty of articulating this "role" and might be something to test.

What would we test?

A month or so of someone's time just to have conversations

No script or rules - just identify strengths in community (gift inventories?)

Would there be community resistance?

Is this just BS?

Other questions we need to answer:

Is this a time limited pilot?

Is there anyone else who could do this?

Who would be accountable for community builder role?

Did this golden community ever actually exist or are we kidding ourselves?

What if the community went in a direction that didn't match the organisational vision (It doesn't matter! ABCD is not top down)

What makes a good community builder?

How would we communicate this?

Role of Community Builder

Someone separate from Bromford history/policies/proc

Energetic and Comm Development

Conversations about aspirations - "Gift Inventory"

Character of colleague or person is key

Identify Common interests

Summing up - we have a lot of questions we can't answer and we think we need to accelerate a four week test/fact finding mission. Everybody agrees a good idea but we have no Bromford evidence to draw from as we have never just had a role to build conversations and make connections.

Feel this needs pre-test - where we let someone loose unhindered by protocol and rules. This needs to be a person sufficiently schooled in ABCD thinking that they can self direct.

Two page summary and test plan to be produced for submitting to Community and Health Squad