

**Decision Session - Executive Member for
Culture, Leisure and Communities**

14 October 2020

Report of the Corporate Director Children, Education and Communities
Portfolio of the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities

Community Hubs – Post Covid Recovery

Summary

1. This paper updates the Executive Member on the delivery of Community Hubs and outlines proposals for their use in community recovery following the impact of Covid-19.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to consider the proposals and to approve:
 - the community action focused model set out in paragraphs 7 and following
 - the resource allocations set out in paragraph 21

Reason: To continue to move forward with development and delivery of a network of Community Hubs.

Background

3. In November 2019 the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities agreed an approach to supporting community venues to develop their respective offers as community hubs.
4. It was agreed that a “Good Place Network” be developed for York, which all community venues will be invited to join, with opportunities for peer support and sharing best practice as well as a ‘York Community Hubs’ accreditation scheme. A development programme was also agreed focussing on the potential for hubs to address:
 - Food Poverty

- Child Poverty
 - Support for families/early help
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Enterprise and Access to work
 - Skills development
 - Equality of access to services
5. Since that meeting, and the outbreak of Covid-19, the Council has operated a network of hubs (accessible to volunteers, but not open to the public) to coordinate volunteer activity and distribution of essential supplies to those residents who needed support.
 6. In June 2020 a paper was taken to the Executive to consider how CYC could best support York's recovery from the impact of Covid. A key strand of this focused on a community-based approach, centred on Community Hubs. It was agreed that detailed proposals would be brought back to the Executive Member.

Recovery Phase – A Community Action Focused Model

7. In this phase hubs will be maintained in their current form to continue to provide support to those who need it. We anticipate this to be a mix of those who have previously been shielding, those experiencing financial difficulties due to furlough/redundancy and families who may previously have accessed drop-in sessions during school holidays.
8. A key element will be to change the Covid-19 helpline into a new Post Covid-19 'Action line'; making the clear transition from an emergency response to a community approach, taking into account fluctuations in national guidance. Whilst people who have Covid-19 or are self-isolating will still need the emergency support, we want to highlight to people that we are now looking at longer term solutions; both for those directly affected by the virus and for those affected by the longer term impacts individually and within the community.
9. This model emphasises a person-centred approach and supports applicants through a crisis and helps build resilience to prevent future crisis. The aspiration of this approach will stop the cycle of crisis and response.

10. This approach and its ambitions dovetail into work currently taking place in Adult and Children's Social Care and Housing, as well as the voluntary sector, which seeks to emphasize preventative, asset based approaches to alleviate crises and reduce demand on high cost services. This alternative support model would achieve this through working more flexibly to support individuals and communities. This would mean less focus on an approach which looks to stabilise crisis, moving the focus to supporting applicants to identify ways to prevent crisis re-occurring and build resilient support networks. The use of family group conferencing methods (which have been highly effective in other areas) would also be developed as part of this initiative – initially linked to the re design of early help in children's services.
11. Community Hubs will work in conjunction with ward teams in each ward to link existing community groups with those that have been formed in support of the COVID response, with the aim of establishing a network of trusted community groups that will provide support to residents; both in the recovery phase and during any future periods of lockdown.
12. As lockdown restrictions continue to ease the hubs will start to build to ensure there is at least one community hub for each ward offering a physical meeting place for local people to come together, and filling in the gaps between existing community venues.
13. Hub managers are currently working to identify those who may benefit from engaging in a local hub long term and starting to interact with them by virtual means such as weekly wellbeing calls and socially distanced doorstep chats.
14. A 'living map' of the city is being produced by Business Intelligence Hub supported by Community Involvement Officers and Local Area Coordinators. This will provide residents with a visual representation of support and community offers available them across each ward.

Resident Experience

15. When residents have Council Tax or rent arrears this will be used as a trigger point for contact as it indicates potential longer term challenges. This will provide a main front door for residents in crisis. Using an integrated assessment will allow applicants to tell their story once and then be considered for support to pay rent, Council

Tax or receive support to meet other needs. This will give a much improved citizen journey from first point of contact with the Council, overall improving the relationship between the Council and communities.

16. Those whose crisis requires immediate attention would potentially be provided with emergency support from York Financial Assistance Scheme, Community Hubs or other crisis services.
17. Investment in benefits and financial advice capacity and the commissioning of Citizens Advice to provide outreach services in the hubs (as detailed below) will further strengthen this approach.

An Area Based Approach

18. Moving forward we intend to bring services together more effectively at community level. This will include those teams, such as Local Area Teams and Local Area Coordinators (LATs and LACs) who currently work on an area basis, as well as services, such as public realm, that have not previously worked in an area-based way, in order to co-ordinate their responses to community need.
19. Hub Mangers will facilitate regular meetings between staff working within each area. It is envisaged that the staff who would be involved in this approach, as a minimum, are:
 - Community Involvement Officers/Hub Managers
 - The proposed new Public Realm Area Managers
 - Housing Management Officers
 - Local Area Coordinators
 - Local Area Teams
 - Representatives from Enforcement Teams
 - Representatives from Adult Social Care Community Teams
 - Representatives from Public Health
 - School Effectiveness Service and representatives from York Schools and Academies Board

- Any other areas as requested

Feedback from these meetings would be passed to councillors and ward teams regularly via their Community Involvement Officers, and councillors would be able to use the same mechanism to pass hubs relevant local intelligence.

Volunteering Legacy

20. A further detailed paper on updating the city’s volunteering strategy and building on the legacy of volunteering during lock-down will be brought back to the Executive Member in due course following further work with partners. However, a key element of this that it will be beneficial to move forward without delay is the establishment by York CVS of a volunteer centre to help with the recruitment, training and deployment of volunteers, and an allocation of funding to support this is included in this proposal. This will allow York CVS to capitalise on the increased interest shown by residents in volunteering during the crisis. CVS have recently secured £100k of lottery funding to support this work.

Resource

21. It was noted by the Executive that additional staff resources would be required to implement the roll out of community hubs, and that operational budgets for hubs would be required in order to commission activity in them, such as financial inclusion work. The following table outlines proposed resource allocation over the next two financial years:

	20/21	21/22	
Continue the current community hub / food poverty post	N/A	£54,000	Continuation of an existing role currently funded to the end of March 21
A hub co-ordinator post	£18,000	£18,000	
Invest in benefits/financial advice capacity	£10,000		
Funding for a Volunteer Centre (led by York CVS)	£10,000	£30,000	

Commissioning of Citizens Advice York	£20,000		To provide support the hubs model
A Grants and Commissioning fund for cross-city activity in support of vulnerable people	£20,000	£50,000	
Total	£78,000	£152,000	£230,000

22. The Commissioning fund will work in a complementary way to the Ward Funding process and the work of the Financial Inclusion Steering Group and partners. The fund will facilitate the commissioning of work in order to respond to identified gaps; for example food projects addressing ‘holiday hunger’ could expand their offer into wards with unmet need.

Options

23. It is open to the Executive Member to approve the proposed approach or to suggest an amended approach.

Analysis

24. This initiative has the potential to create improved community facilities for local residents as well as opportunities for residents to take a lead in tackling local issues and developing services.

25. The Community Hubs will continue to act as City of York Council’s delivery mechanism for support to vulnerable residents during Covid recovery and any further lockdown measures.

Council Plan

26. This proposal for Community Hubs will contribute to the city’s Coronavirus Recovery Plan, building on what we have learned during Covid-19.

27. Supports the Council’s vision for community recovery ‘*To build strong and resilient communities for all, working with residents and with our partners and mobilising the energy and talents of our community organisations, schools and voluntary sector*’.

28. This report also supports the Council's commitment to working with both local residents and with partners to improve York's communities. This initiative will make a particular contribution to the following Council Plan themes:

- Good Health and Wellbeing
- A Better Start for Children and Young People
- Well-paid jobs and an inclusive economy
- Safe Communities and culture for all

Implications

29. Financial

The total cost of the resource requirement set out at paragraph 20 is £230k over the two financial years 2020/21 & 2021/22. £154k of this can be funded from the council's Emergency Assistance Grant with the remaining £76k being funded by the Hardship Fund.

Human Resources (HR)

As discussed in paragraph 21 additional staff resource would be required to support this roll out.

Equalities

A community impact assessment has been completed and the impact on communities so far has been positive. As we move from an emergency response to a recovery model we will continue to consult internally (as per paragraphs 18-19) and with community groups and the VCS to ensure the Community Action Focused Model is as accessible as possible to all. This will be regularly monitored and reported back on.

Legal

N/A

Crime and Disorder

N/A

Information Technology (IT)

N/A

Property

Use of community venues will be monitored as we transition from emergency support to a permanent model.

Risk Management

30. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified associated with the proposals contained in this report are those which could lead to the inability to meet business objectives and to deliver services, leading to damage to the Council's reputation and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations. The level of risk is assessed as "Low". This is acceptable but means that regular monitoring is required of the operation of the new arrangements.

Contact Details

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Report **Date** 1 October 2020
Approved ✓

Specialist Implications Officer(s) List information for all Financial:-

Name: Richard Hartle

Title: Head of Finance: Adults, Children and Education

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

'Connecting People and Places – A Community Hubs Approach'

Decision Session of Executive Member for Culture, Leisure &

Communities, 22 November 2019

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=736&MId=11507&Ver=4>

'City of York Council Recovery and Renewal Strategy' Annex 3

'Coronavirus Community Strand'

Executive, 25 June 2020

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=12293&Ver=4>