

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee

To: Councillors Baker (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair), Daubeney, Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Barker

Date: Tuesday, 1 December 2020

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Remote Meeting

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 23 November 2020. The attached additional documents are now available for the following agenda item:

- 4. Voluntary Sector Work/Activity** (Pages 1 - 18)
This report provides an update on the council's arrangements for managing volunteers in response to Covid-19 in the current recovery phase.

This agenda supplement was published on 24 November 2020.

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Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee**1 December 2020**

Report of the Corporate Director People

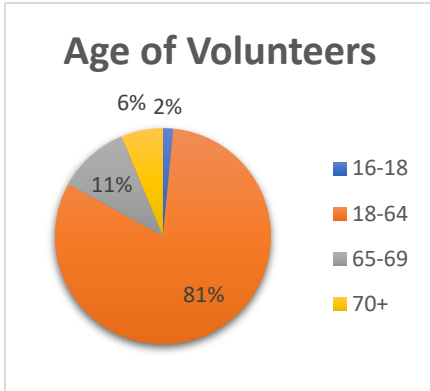
Management of council volunteering in response to Covid-19**Summary**

1. This report provides an update on the council's arrangements for managing volunteers in response to Covid-19 in the current recovery phase.
2. This paper should be read in the context of the paper taken to the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities in October, entitled *Community Hubs – Post Covid Recovery* (attached at Annex 1). With respect to the recovery phase, that paper provided for hubs to be maintained in their current form to continue to provide support to those who need it but beginning to make a clear transition from an emergency response to a community approach, looking at longer term solutions, both for those directly affected by the virus and for those affected by the longer-term community impacts. The model emphasises a person-centred approach helping to build resilience to prevent future crisis.

Background**Registration:**

3. During the first COVID-19 national lockdown period over 4,000 citizens registered an interest in volunteering; however, in August, reflecting the changes in people's circumstances, volunteers were asked, through the fortnightly email, to update their records through an online survey in order to continue to be offered future volunteer opportunities. As a result over 600 people are now on this revised volunteer database.

Allocation of volunteers:



4. We use the updated registration process to provide offers based on volunteers' interest, skills and where appropriate the area of York they are from. Most volunteers are aged 18-64; we had to restrict volunteer opportunities initially for the 70+ to meet government guidance. This meant that volunteers 70+ could only undertake tasks at home like wellbeing calls.

There is a stronger representation of female volunteers with only 30% being male. So far we have successfully allocated volunteers to every appropriate request with over 1,000 volunteers allocated. We did, however, have one request for a male volunteer to do socially distanced walks for someone with autism and mild learning disabilities, initially with no suitable match. However, 9 citizens have since come forward after doing a call out through the fortnightly newsletter.



5. During the early phase of COVID-19, it was recognised that many local citizens were in need of regular contact whilst maintaining social distancing. Volunteers initially supported this through being



allocated to wellbeing telephone calls. We set up a referral process through the COVID-19 Helpline and widened the offer to include doorstep natters, pen pals, walking buddies and IT connection to loved ones.

[Age UK York](#) have a 'home from hospital' service, which is very important to support the discharge process of patients from York Hospital. They work closely with a number of teams within the trust and also are based there.

As part of our Covid-19 response, the council has provided [Age UK York](#) with 25 additional volunteers from our [pool of volunteers](#), who came forward recently to offer their support. These volunteers will be supporting the hospital, [Yorkshire Ambulance Service \(YAS\)](#) and the council during the outbreak. They will primarily be helping people get from the hospital to their homes (following discharge) and giving them a hand with any shopping they need when they get home, to help them get settled in. Volunteers will also be helping people to urgent appointments such as cancer treatments, to free up the [YAS](#) capacity which is crucial during the pandemic.

This also contributes to the council's local social care support, as the [Age UK York](#) volunteers will be reporting back to their office to identify any further support needs, which will then be shared with the council to ensure we don't miss anything during this busy time.

All the volunteers are being inducted now and will be starting very soon. Gemma Oliver, Technical Project Manager said: *"It has been amazing how quickly and seamlessly everyone within the council, CCG and Age UK York have pulled together to get this service set up as quickly as this. It is also amazing to see how many members of the public are willing to step forward and help out during the pandemic; it is heart-warming. I feel very proud to have helped extend this service to support more people leaving hospital during this difficult time."*

Also, to help the volunteers to deliver this service, local residents and businesses have been offering their support by donating disposable seat covers for the vehicles, so that we're able to follow PPE guidelines and keep everyone safe. We've now received 1,800 of them, so would like to say a special thanks to: **Stoneacre Ford York, Vantage Toyota York, Butts of Bawtry and Fulford Auto Services**, for their support.

Buzz

6. The approach used by the Volunteer Management Team (VMT) was to act as a brokerage to allocate volunteers to groups or organisations that required them. Where it was not possible to do so we would

Volunteers working with the Local Area Coordinators

"Since the lockdown was implemented, I started to get many new introductions from residents in Clifton, who were ringing the council helpline.

They needed, amongst other things, supermarket vouchers, benefits advice and their prescriptions collected.

Residents that I had worked with in the past also got in touch by text, phone call or Facebook messenger, reporting that they were all struggling with isolation, uncertainty and occupational deprivation. These residents used to get visits from their families and friends weekly, some of them used to attend community groups that are now temporarily closed.

As a Local Area Co-ordinator (LAC), it's important to address the person holistically and help the person to stay safe, resilient, independent and connected to their communities. The lockdown has been a big challenge but also a good opportunity to reflect on what we value and what is important for us as social beings.

The council has received numerous applications from volunteers willing to complete tasks for residents, such as wellbeing phone calls to isolated residents. The list for volunteers was shared with the LAC team.

Having a long list of local people willing to help other locals is truly the LAC dream! Clifton is a diverse ward; it has elderly residents, people living with mental health issues and also young families, to mention just a few. To ensure their needs and preferences could be met, I identified a group of people including a retired social worker with experience in mental health, a community support worker, a woman shielding as she recovers from cancer, a young art therapy student, and a mum on maternity leave. I got in touch with some of the volunteers, shortlisting candidates by skill set, interests and life experience.

All the volunteers were matched to residents living with mental health or alcohol issues, residents who don't have any family, residents having to with their ex-partners and are finding the lockdown extremely challenging, and residents who asked for a friendly call to tackle the negative feelings and thoughts the lockdown can bring. What is so important is that these calls work in both ways. They help the isolated residents, but they also help the volunteers too. They are all on different journeys in their lives.

Residents feel now safer and less isolated by receiving these calls, and are less likely to need input from formal services. This is a good example of people helping people, and of activating a community-based solution - concepts we LACs often talk about.


Some time ago, I read a quote that really got me thinking: "We are all in the same storm, not the same boat". We all have had different life experiences, which have shaped us to cope differently with the crises we encounter in life; we all have different social support networks, financial capacity to be off work or not and health issues etc. This is why it's important to help each other to get through this crisis as safely as we can, sharing our gifts, knowledge, time and experience.

I hope this crisis keeps demonstrating to all residents in York that we are not alone and that we will never be alone no matter the circumstances. We are a strong community which is only getting stronger, day by day."

create an introduction between the resident and the volunteer and had a lead person to liaise with to ensure this remained as a positive experience for both resident and volunteer. The Local Area Co-ordinators now have a range of volunteers which include these specialist match volunteers. This will enable future volunteer matches to take place where people have indicated

they would like to support someone with specific needs.

7. The VMT can provide additional information about any DBS in place, if they have a driving licence and advise around requiring business insurance. ID badges were initially provided to any COVID-19

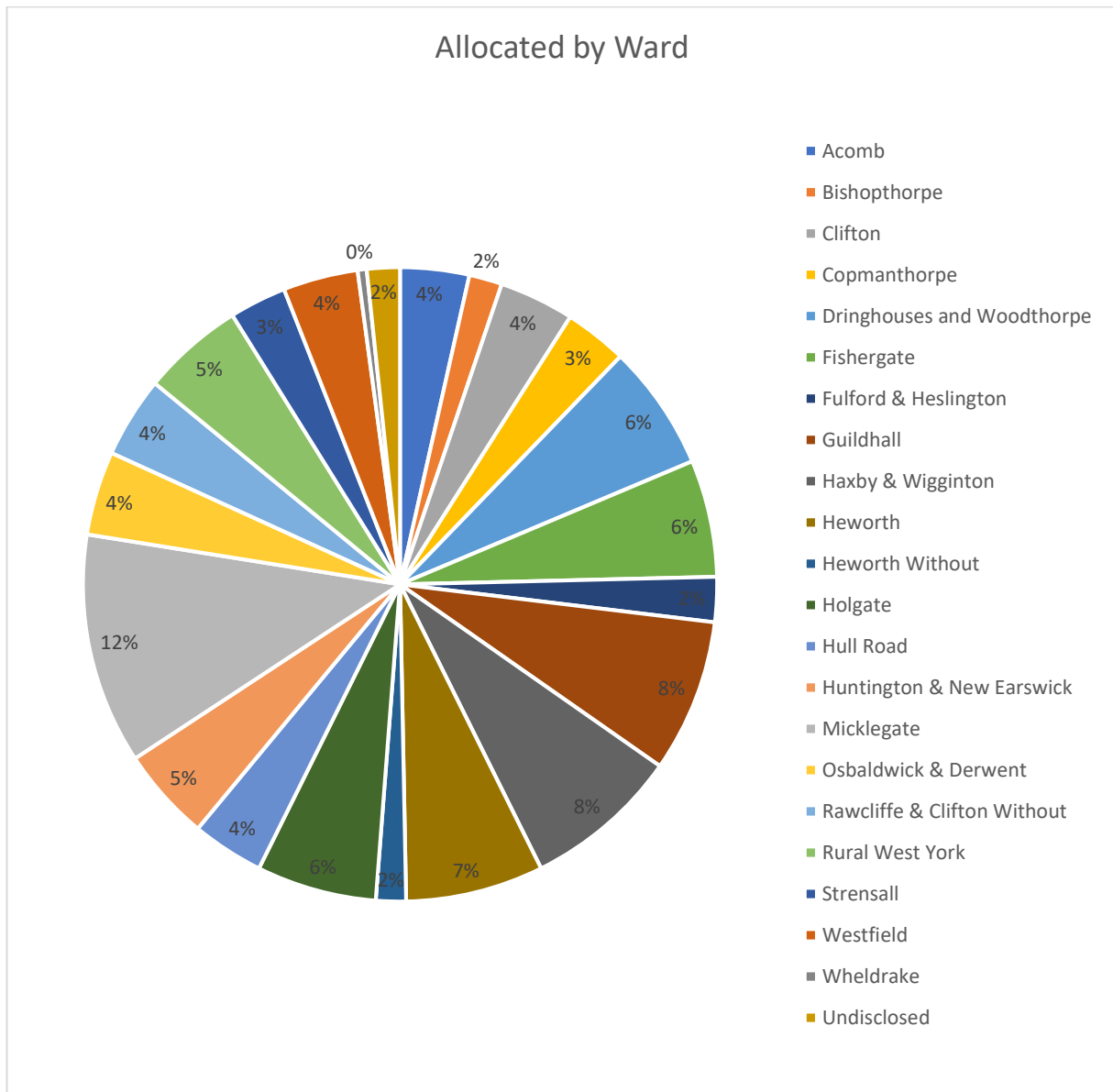


To service our community hubs with food for the medically shielded, we have created a central depot with volunteer drivers and vehicles to transport goods to the hubs. There, food boxes are put together and delivered to people identified through our dedicated support line.

From making phone calls to thousands of residents, the volunteers in the hubs are building a picture of the amount of food needed and how urgently, meeting special dietary needs and adding to the government-supplied food.

volunteer in the community as well as validation letters where a volunteer was collecting food for a number of residents and quantity of items were

restricted per person. The VMT also arrange safeguarding training through the Workforce Development Team portal and information governance training with a volunteer agreement signed before they start either issued by the council or the organisation requesting the volunteers to lay out expectations of the volunteer.



Post-COVID Volunteering model:

8. The other reason for updating the volunteer registrations was to provide the opportunity to plan for post-COVID volunteer opportunities and to make any considerations of how this would fit into the People Helping People strategy, utilising this group to inform any further progress:

9. **Formal volunteering** – applicants had the opportunity to indicate whether they would like the opportunity to volunteer for a charity or organisation. York CVS were at the stage of planning to create a volunteer centre and have received funding from CYC and the lottery. They now have two volunteer coordinators in post. The intention is then, at the agreed right time, to ask permission to pass their details onto York CVS to provide options that are available to them.

10. **Emergency volunteers** – we have been working with the emergency planning team to look at the best approach to maintain a list of volunteers ready to respond in any future emergency. It was agreed that any registered volunteers would be contacted at the agreed right time to see if they would be happy for their contact details to be passed onto ‘Ready For Anything’. They have confirmed they would then be the go to volunteer group in York and North Yorkshire for future responses including any future pandemics. It was agreed that the Volunteer Management Team would continue to lead on the volunteer response for COVID-19 until this is no longer required.
11. **Children & Families** – the children’s directorate already had a team of 100 volunteers to support parent and children initiatives. The re-registration will enable the VMT to identify and pass on contact details to bolster this offer.
12. **Employee volunteering** – it was recognised that many registered volunteers were furloughed and may not have the capacity in their personal time to volunteer on their return to work. Those that indicated an interest in Employee Volunteering were contacted and arrangements made for the volunteers to be passed onto York Cares who co-ordinate this offer for the city.
13. **Social Action** – many registered volunteers expressed an interest in one off volunteering opportunities to make a difference in their community. This will in particular build on the amazing acts of good neighbourliness, kindness and people helping people at a hyper-local level. York University students, through a group called York Community Consulting are working with the VMT to look at how social action call outs could be facilitated through the website Live Well York. The Volunteer Centre are now also looking at one-off volunteering so we are working together with York CVS to provide the best solution going forward.
14. It is apparent from the VMT registration process that most citizens are interested in a number of these volunteer stands so we need to ensure there is “no wrong door” to ensure people know about all the options available and will look for GDPR compliant approaches to prevent the need for any joint registration. We will also use the Live Well York volunteering page to ensure people are aware of the options available.
15. York has a fantastic history for volunteering and this pandemic has created the opportunity to build this infrastructure which will be an essential tool for community resilience in years to come.

Contact Details

Author:

Carl Wain

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Charlie Croft
Assistant Director (Communities & Culture)

**Report
Approved**



Date 24 November 2020

Wards Affected:

All



Annexes

Annex 1 – Community Hubs Report

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**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>

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