

Report of the Community Hubs Review Group

Recommendations of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee tasked with investigating Community Hubs, their use, function and implementation by the Children, Education and Communities (CEC) Scrutiny and Policy Committee to facilitate the implementation of a Community Hub Strategy for the City of York.

Summary

1. This report outlines the process that the Scrutiny Sub-Committee took in their investigation, it also shares the findings of the Sub-Committee and provides recommendations for embedding a Community Hub Strategy in York.

Background

2. In 2016 a Local Development Strategy Document (4 Community Growth York, see annex 1) was submitted as part of a bid for European Union funding that was unfortunately not successful.
3. In 2017, the Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement was asked to approve a Project Plan for Local Area Based Financial Inclusion (annex 2).
4. The Liberal Democrat and Green groups formed a new administration after the May 2019 local elections and as part of that, highlighted a desire to establish more Community Hubs throughout York.
5. In March 2020 the Covid19 pandemic began; this involved the restriction of movement, particularly for vulnerable people. As a result communities came together to support one another and help provide food for the most vulnerable. As well as this, poverty continued to cause difficulties in communities throughout York and as the lockdown reduced people's earning potential, communities stepped up to help each other tackle the symptoms of poverty.

6. In June 2021 it was agreed by CEC to form a Scrutiny sub-group to look at how Community Hubs could best support communities in York by posing the following questions.
- What can a community hub provide for its community?
 - How effective is a community hub at identifying need?
 - What is required to make a community hub sustainable in York?

Recommendations

7. Members are asked to consider

Option 1: To recommend that the Executive take note of this report (particularly paragraph 10, points a-g) when setting policy and strategy on Community Hubs.

Reason: So that the Executive can make good and informed decisions regarding community provision in York.

Option 2: To edit, add to or choose to retain some but not all of the points a-g at paragraph 10 before recommending that the Executive take note of this report when setting policy and strategy on Community Hubs.

Reason: So that the Executive can make good and informed decisions regarding community provision in York.

Option 3: Not recommend anything to Executive.

Findings

8. With the support of the Research and Evaluation Assistant (Community Hubs) the group carried out a desktop exercise looking at best practice when setting up a community hub (annex 3).
9. The group then carried out a series of interviews with community hub providers from around the country, facilitated by the Research Officer (annex 4).
10. The group identified that successful community hubs require the following:

- a. The ability to support on a range of issues and not just one. Residents who make use of community hubs for a particular issue often have multiple complex needs.
- b. A clear desire to help people but also tackle the source of problems, not just the symptoms.
- c. An opportunity to bring communities together whilst providing safe spaces for residents with sensitive issues.
- d. A volunteer base to help with capacity and provision.
- e. Almost all the community hubs spoken to had at least some paid staff. This seemed to be a key element to a lot of provision.
- f. A clear means of income generation; whether that be through council grant, national lottery funding or in some cases it was found that a building lent to a community hub on a long-term lease gave that organisation the ability to rent out space to generate income. It was clear that without a suitable funding model these community hubs would fail.
- g. A clear method of community consultation to generate community buy-in and identify community need.

Consultation

- 10. The Scrutiny sub-group consulted with several officers in the council with relevant experience as well as several community hub providers around the country (see annex 4 for the write up of the Community Hub interviews)

Options

- 11. Members can choose to make the recommendations outlined in this report or edit and adapt those recommendations before making them or choose not to make any recommendations at all. These recommendations should be made to the Executive to support the implementation of a Community Hub strategy.

Council Plan

- 12. This report 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

13. **Financial** – As there is no base budget available to support any additional financial implications of this report, it is expected that the hubs should be self-financing on an ongoing basis. Wards have been given £200k in 2022/23 to support Covid 19 recovery efforts in local communities across the city from the Covid recovery fund. Given the proven and important role of hubs in Covid recovery it would be entirely legitimate for Ward Members to use that fund to help seed-corn / stimulate / develop the business plan of their local hub in order to kick-start where appropriate and to help with future financial sustainability.

Human Resources (HR) As per the financial implication

Equalities An EIA (Equalities Impact Assessment) will be developed for the Executive Report

Legal None

Crime and Disorder None

Information Technology (IT) None

Property None

Other None

Risk Management

14. If CEC policy and scrutiny committee decide to take no recommendations forward to Executive, or Executive do not accept the recommendation of Scrutiny, then the best practice learned from the Scrutiny may not benefit the further development of Community Hubs in York.

Contact Details

Authors:

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Not applicable - Member Scrutiny Review,

Report
Approved

n/a

Date

03 May 2022

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial

Richard Hartle

Head of Finance: Children, Education & Schools

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the Democratic Services.

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

- Annex 1 4 Community Growth York, Local Development Strategy
- Annex 2 Report of the Assistant Director – Communities and Equalities, Project Plan for Local Area-Based Financial Inclusion
- Annex 3 Community Hub Information Pack
- Annex 4 Community Hubs Interview Summary

Abbreviations

CEC Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
EIA Equalities Impact Assessment