

10 July 2013		ITEM: 21 01104233
Cabinet		
COMMUNITY HUBS – IMPLEMENTATION PHASING		
Report of: Councillor L Worrall, Portfolio Holder for Communities		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Yes	
Accountable Head of Service:		
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive		
This report is: Public		
Purpose of Report: To set out the proposed programme for a phased implementation of community hubs and to outline the progress of the South Ockendon pathfinder		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Hubs programme is integral to the Corporate Plan objective of transforming the future role of the Council based on principles of:

1. Empowering independence and enabling job growth.
2. Creating strong and connected communities.
3. Transforming services to be more efficient.

The Community Hub paper to March Cabinet set out the strategic design principles to guide the community hub roll out programme.

This paper now sets out the progress made in engaging with communities to assess the readiness for the roll out programme. The paper sets out a framework and rationale for broad phasing to progress future individual business cases subject to further engagement. In addition, the report shares on-going learning from the South

Ockendon Centre Pathfinder thus far to help inform and underpin our approach to the roll out programme.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet:

- 1.1 Note the success of the South Ockendon pathfinder and the value this has created.**
- 1.2 Agree the proposed programme for a phased implementation of community hubs.**
- 1.3 Give delegated authority for future business cases to be developed and approved by the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities.**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1 Within the context of the Corporate Plan, the development and roll-out of community hubs will facilitate a new relationship and way of working between the Council and communities. It will also enable, under the umbrella of the Community Engagement Strategy, a consolidated approach to a range of 'localism' initiatives, including; Asset Based Community Development, Local Area Co-ordination, Community Led Planning and Community Councils. These, alongside an increased focus on volunteering, build an ambitious vision of shared leadership between communities and public services to realise and deploy all of a community's resources to build resilience and strength within neighbourhoods.
- 2.2 The strategic significance of the community hub programme to the future of the Council and its on-going transformation work will ensure that individual service area and community based initiatives can come together to achieve a more efficient and greater collective impact. This programme seeks to empower stronger communities that are resilient to any future reduction in public funding. In doing so the ambition for Council services for Community Hubs include:
 - Opportunities to realise integration of health and social care budgets.
 - A focus for Local Area Co-ordinations and citizens engaged with Asset Based Community Development to explore ideas and connect people so they are better supported in the community, by the community.
 - The development of community plans to prioritise local improvements.
 - The place where people think of first if they cannot find what they are looking for via the web.
 - Where a community solution is the first consideration with traditional services sought where specific needs are required.

- 2.3 This will allow for a genuine co-production approach, greater empowerment and say from within communities on where and how effort and resources should be focused, and the shape and identity of services available. It will enable each hub to be designed and operated in a way that best suits local needs and circumstances.

3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:

- 3.1 A key starting point to establishing a roll-out programme has been to engage with and talk with communities to gain their views on readiness. Thurrock CVS have been asked to take the lead on this to provide an independent perspective and collation of local views and opportunities for hubs across the Borough. This work has been reported into the new Community Hub Partnership Board (CHPB) and has been used to inform the phasing of hub development and implementation over the next 2-3 years.
- 3.2 The readiness assessment exercise has been undertaken during March, April and May and has sought to:
- Involve all communities that are interested in hub developments in their areas
 - Ensure a shared understanding of the underpinning strategic principles.
 - Establish a joint view of local priorities and appetite for a hub model.
 - Use a simple process for capturing views and informally evaluating local readiness with communities.
- 3.3 The process has consisted of four key elements:
- An initial workshop hosted by Thurrock CVS with all community forum organisations on 19th March.
 - Expression of interest questionnaires sent to all community forum organisations to identify those areas seeking to engage in further discussions.
 - One to one follow-up meetings with interested areas to gauge readiness through informal discussions covering:
 - Local alignment with strategic design principles and potential to achieve outcomes being sought
 - Fit with existing local initiatives and scope of community capacity and leadership to support hub
 - Viability of area (size, population and extent of local issues and needs)
 - Potential for new public service delivery initiatives with the council / other statutory bodies
 - Extent of current information and advice network coordination
 - What can be practically achieved in next 12 months / next 24 months
 - A joint early view with local areas of type of hub model and project development best suited to the current state of readiness.
- 3.4 Following the initial workshop on 19th March the following 9 forum areas have expressed an interest in developing a hub in their locality:

- Aveley, Chadwell St Mary, East Tilbury (Welcom), Little Thurrock, Orchards, Purfleet, Stanford-le-Hope, Stifford Clays and Tilbury.
- Some of these areas are willing to work with neighbouring areas that may not feel ready to lead an expression of interest (e.g. Corringham and Fobbing with Stanford-le-Hope).

3.5 A summary of the key findings from the follow-up readiness discussions with those areas expressing an interest is set out in the following table:

Area	Key readiness findings
Aveley	Active Community Forum providing Information, Advice and activities Engagement already taken place with residents around a similar Community Hub Building. There is an opportunity to improve statutory provision Opportunities to strengthen joint working between community and Council
Chadwell St Mary	Health Clinic interested in becoming a partner Housing enquiries currently operating from Library There is no recognised focal point for Information, Advice and Signposting beyond Housing and Library provision Ageing population and young families/single parents – the Forum reports high levels of food poverty and ASB
East Tilbury (Welcom)	Active Church networks providing activities and information No community focal point since BATA moved out No recognised focal point for Information, Advice and Signposting since the CAB contract with the Children's Centre expired other than the Library. The Forum reports high levels of food poverty and ASB
Little Thurrock	No community focal point providing information, advice and signposting Ageing population Possibilities of working with neighbouring wards
Orchards	Transient community – 37 languages spoken in the local nursery Isolated ageing population The community feels distinct from Grays Town and from Seabrooke Rise: they would be unlikely to access services in these areas. There is a perception that the area has been forgotten due to proximity with Grays.
Purfleet	Active community engagement Health Centre interested in becoming a partner Over the next 18 months a new community centre at St Stephens will be built. A growth hub area which may offer new opportunities for community space LAC learning site area
Stanford-le-	Strong community leadership

Hope	Talks already have taken place to work with Corringham, taking potential population size to 30,000 No join up of Information & Advice and signposting to existing organisations Lots of underutilised buildings Ageing population – 3 older people’s complexes. 25% of the population are young people. LAC Learning Site
Stifford Clays	Ageing population and limited activities for young people Mixed tenure of private and social housing No focal point for Information & Advice, signposting or internet access
Tilbury	Four very active community groups, one currently running Information & Advice and credit union. Engagement already taken place with residents for their vision of Tilbury. A lot of history associated with existing buildings Growth hub area

3.6 In summary, the discussions with areas have revealed the following state of readiness positions:

- a) Stanford le Hope, Stifford Clays and Chadwell St Mary have agreed that some further community discussions are necessary but that they are essentially ready to bring forward hub proposals during 2013/14, for implementation in 2013/14 or 2014/15. These proposals would be based on either a network of existing facilities or a South Ockendon style adaptation to an existing building.
- b) Aveley, Tilbury and Purfleet have agreed that some further discussion are necessary but that they are essentially ready to bring forward hub proposals during 2013/14 but that they would be looking to create a new build facility that could take up to 2 years to build.
- c) East Tilbury (Welcom) and Linford have agreed that some further readiness work would be beneficial over the next 12 months to develop local capacity and create a stronger position from which they could bring forward hub proposals for implementation during 2014/15.
- d) Little Thurrock and Orchards have agreed that they would need significant further community co-ordination and development support over the 12- 24 months to build the foundations needed to support a hub model. For these areas implementation would not therefore be practical before 2015/16.

3.7 The Community Hub Partnership Board will progress on this basis with the intention of opening another two Hubs in 2014. The phasing and modelling will be subject to viable business case agreement and will reflect the operating principles around community engagement agreed to date.

3.8 We propose that follow-up work is undertaken with those community forum areas that did not express an initial interest and that as appropriate these are added into the programme at a future date.

- 3.9 Running parallel to the community readiness assessment, the Council has collated information relating to service change opportunities, planned regeneration and development activities and commercial opportunities through asset rationalisation. This will support the Community Hub Partnership Board to form a view of the Council's major issues and priorities for each area based upon service plans. This will be aligned with community aspiration where possible, and will help inform the phasing of the roll out
- 3.10 Considering all of the above, the Community Hub Partnership Board (CHPB) has proposed an implementation approach as follows:
- An overall programme and timetable that is realistic for all and is supported in a way that ensures each hub is successfully established and bedded in.
 - The precise nature of how the hub strategic design principles are developed and work in each area will be determined locally. This will ensure that each hub model is designed with local ownership and reflects local needs and priorities.
 - All of the areas who have expressed an interest will be actively involved as part of the programme from the outset, irrespective of where their hub implementation and roll-out is positioned within the overall timetable.
 - As an immediate first step further work will be done with all areas identified in 3.6 (a) above, through July and August to scope out in more detail how best to progress their specific hub proposals. This will ensure that communities have the strongest possible foundation and platform to move forward with the necessary project preparation and implementation activities. Crucially it will put communities in the lead in saying what is developed in their areas, where and when.
 - Hub implementation projects will follow best programme management practice and will be progressed through a series of stages and approval gateways that will incrementally build to live running as follows:
 - Strategic design leading to approval of an outline business case.
 - Detailed operational design leading to approval of a full business case
 - Implementation delivery and live running hand-over
 - Post live running support and benefits realisation
 - Individual business case will be brought forward on an area-by-area basis for recommendation to the CHPB. This report seeks delegated authority for the Assistant Chief Executive to approve business cases in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities.
 - The Community Hub Partnership Board will oversee project development and delivery. All areas involved in the programme will have access to project and programme management support provided by the Council and capacity building support from Thurrock CVS. Revenue funding of £200,000 has been identified within reserves in 2013/14 to assist project development. This will include community engagement, volunteer involvement and capacity building as needs are identified across each working group for separate Hubs. Capacity will be provided via Thurrock Council and CVS via the Community Hubs Partnership Board reporting to the Transformation Board.

- 3.11 The exact nature of Hub development will vary from area to area and it is therefore difficult at this stage to be precise about the length of time each hub will take to implement. Learning and processes established from the South Ockendon pathfinder will be available to accelerate the development work elsewhere.
- 3.12 We have assumed, for planning purposes, that those hub projects that will be networked across existing facilities and/or require some re-purposing of an existing facility (like South Ockendon) will take on average 12 months to progress from capacity building, strategic design and business case through to implementation completion and post-go-live support.
- 3.13 Where areas require significant new building works the timescales will necessarily be much longer - up to two years depending on the nature of the development proposed.
- 3.14 The Community Hub Partnership Board (which will include community representatives) is meeting regularly and is reporting to the Transformation Board. It will oversee the development of a detailed programme plan and will assess and approve on a case-by-case basis:
- The readiness work needed before a detailed hub implementation project is required.
 - The business case for each hub project and approvals of budget and other support needed.
 - The positioning of each hub within the roll-out programme.
- 3.15 This represents a change to the March Cabinet paper which had suggested bringing business cases back to Cabinet on a case-by-case basis. Given the amount of interest in progressing hubs, delegated authority will expediate this process, unless the capital investment represents a Key Decision under the Council constitution, in which case these individual business cases will be brought to Cabinet.
- 3.16 The community hub rollout programme is designed to support the development of more resourceful and resilient communities that utilise the strength of communities first and services second. The programme will establish a network of community hubs across the Borough and as such will be an 'invest to save' programme through which services and other projects will be able to use to support the realisation of their efficiency and financial savings objectives. Examples of benefit areas enabled by the availability of community hubs across the Borough include:
- The development of local volunteers and support networks delivering early intervention and prevention support (particularly in the health and social care areas).
 - More effective co-ordination and mobilisation of all local assets and resources
 - A focal point for the targeting of Council localism initiatives and invest to save opportunities.

- Improved co-ordination and targeting of information, advice and guidance across all sectors that meet local priorities.
- Hot desking facilities in hubs that will support the enablement of efficiencies from flexible working and Civic Office space utilisation.
- Trained volunteers who support and teach people to use web-based solutions for advice, information and transactions that will accelerate the Council's customer channel shift objectives.
- Creating opportunities for the multi-use of buildings, enabling rationalisation and disposal of surplus buildings.

3.17 Whilst those and other benefits will deliver savings, until the impact of the hub operation is fully understood and the timing and extent of savings are clearer, it is not possible to assign a specific savings figure to the hub development programme. It is too soon therefore to expect the delivery of the targeted £300,000 saving against community hubs in 2013/14. Alternative savings will need to be identified and officers are already working on this.

3.18 In addition, future business plans must be clear about the ongoing revenue commitments required to enable delivery. A large part of the success of the South Ockendon Centre is achieved through two dedicated staff as well as ongoing delivery costs such as resources, volunteer expenses etc. Some of the funding for this resource has been identified through Children's services and Housing. Our experience from the South Ockendon Centre will allow a more precise approach to future business planning with some evidence of costs available to inform a shared approach to how to finance Hubs.

South Ockendon Centre Update

3.19 Further illustration of the value that we expect hubs to create can be seen from the early successes of the South Ockendon pathfinder. The South Ockendon Centre (SOC) has been open since the end of March and early live running experiences are clearly illustrating the potential of the community hub programme to enable benefits to be realised by service areas and to add real value as a co-ordinating focal point. For example since opening at the end of March:

- The majority of the activities facilitated by the South Ockendon Community Forum (SOCF) from the Derwent Parade premises, are now using the SOC. These include: Neighbourhood Action Panel, Credit Union, Stop Smoking Service, Batias, Age Concern, Braingames, Wool and the Gang, Belhus Art Group.
- In excess of 30 new groups and offerings have been attracted into the Centre. These include: PEG (Parent Engagement Group), CARIADS – caring for carers, Job Junction – CV's and employment prospects for young people, SSAFA – providing lifelong support for anyone serving or who has served in the armed forces, CORAM – Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities, Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions, A range of teaching and tutoring groups, Surgeries, including Police Beat, Councillors and Housing (Rents and Benefits).

- CARIADs have been particularly impressed with the facilities and support they have been getting from the Centre, which has enabled them to identify 10 new carers in the first 6 weeks, compared to 5 in the 3 months prior to them using the Centre.
- The Centre manager successfully coordinated responses to the very high volume of enquiries received during the first few weeks following opening due to the welfare reform changes. The SOC acted as a co-ordinating focal point ensuring subject experts from Housing and Revenue & Benefits teams were on hand to work alongside volunteers.
- The Centre now has 20 trained volunteers regularly helping out on various shifts with another 80 on a waiting list.
- Over the first 11 weeks of operation the number of hours donated by volunteers has increased from 71 in the first week to in excess of 120 now. A total of 1,290 hours were donated over this period in total which, based on the minimum living wage of £8.55 equated to just over £11,000 in 11 weeks.
- Talks are taking place with Ngage to see if the centre could become a satellite volunteer centre.
- One person has fed back that the support they got from a volunteer at the centre in helping them write their CV has resulted in them getting an interview for a job, something they were not getting before the help they received.
- There have been dozens of compliments received by the Centre since it opened thanking volunteers for the help and friendliness and congratulating on the new look and feel of the centre, such as;
 - *“What a difference! Lovely atmosphere, great to have a place for people to gather together. Very well done!!”*
 - *“Very impressed and satisfied with information received.”*
 - *“Julie (a volunteer) is fantastic. Julie has helped me so so much. I’m very grateful and want to say a massive thank you.”*
 - *“Was very impressed and grateful. This service is better than the Council.”*
 - *“Great community service. Everything under one roof. Great.”*
 - *“Very, very impressed with the hub. It is buzzing and friendly. Amazed with all that is going on.”*
 - *“I like it here. It’s great.”*
 - *“Very pleased and very helpful. Ten out of ten.”*

3.20 The on going learning for the South Ockendon pathfinder will be fed into each project through the Partnership Board.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

4.1 The proposed approach will enable local plans to be developed in collaboration with communities, come forward at an optimum time and within an overarching strategic framework to ensure fit and alignment with the future direction of the Council.

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Thurrock CVS and the South Ockendon Community Forum as well as the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Communities have been members of the programme board.
- 5.2 The community hub programme is part of the Council's overall Transformation Programme and therefore is regularly reported to the Transformation Board for their feedback and to ensure that this remains on target and aligned to the overall Transformation agenda.
- 5.3 Cabinet approved the pathfinder project in November and the proposals to engage with communities on hub readiness in March. These reports were also presented to the Children's O&S committee and Health and Well-Being O&S committee.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 6.1 This is a key part of the Transformation strategy in the Council.
- 6.2 This project directly support all 5 corporate priorities as well as develops and new way of working with the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector that gives this sector a greater say in how services can be co-designed and delivered.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: Sean Clark
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The funding for further roll-out has been identified and provision made within capital programme and revenue identified from reserves to support the start up in line with the agreed use of reserves.

The ongoing revenue costs for each Hub will need to be identified in the specific Hub Business Case and Financial Services will need to be involved in assessing this as part of the review process to ensure any additional funding is identified and achievable within existing budgetary arrangements.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: Lindsey Marks
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Legal implications arise from the proposals to form and enter into new governance arrangements as part of a new joint venture with community partners.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: Samson DeAlyn
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The community hubs will be shaped by local communities and take full account of the local profile of the needs of residents. It is expected that greater access will be afforded for groups who find existing services difficult to access. An Equality Impact Analysis will need to be conducted at different phases of this project to ensure as plans develop they meet the needs of 'diverse groups' of residents.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 A widening of Community Hub development across the Borough will help residents, the Council and other bodies in the statutory, voluntary and private sector to develop an offer, responsive to local need and shaped by the local community. It is proposed as a transformational and cost effective way of strengthening local communities and managing demand.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:

- November and March Cabinet reports
- Reports to Audit O&S. Health & Well-Being O&S, Children's O&S

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

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