Portishead Town Council Full Council
Agenda item 13: Recommendation to delegate authority to the Clerk and Chairman to sign the Community Renewal Grant Fund Memorandum of Understanding with North Somerset Council and allocate resources to deliver the Portishead Community Hub pilot project (Councillor Paul Churchill / Project Officer)
19th January 2022

1. **Background:**
   a. **Introduction:**
      i. This project is part of the North Somerset Community Hubs programme which responds to the Community Renewal Funding (CRF) theme of 'Investments in Communities and Places'.
      ii. Portishead would receive Government Shared Prosperity funding via North Somerset Council to pilot a Community Hub which to provide a central place in Portishead for residents to gain access and knowledge about community organisations and support and provide a consistent space for community members to gather and interact.
      iii. This is the first project to be delivered by Portishead Town Council under the Portishead Wellness Partnership.
      iv. The pilot Hub is expected to be delivered from the Beacon Hub in the High Street, with strong connections with other town facilities e.g. Portishead Youth Centre and the Community Halls.
   b. **The purpose:**
      i. The purpose of the Community Hub is to build on the positive community action that emerged in response to COVID-19 and enable community entrepreneurship that responds to locally identified problems and gaps in support services.
      ii. Research identifying local priorities, strengths and gaps will take place and be used to enhance community networks and resources resulting in holistic wellbeing support tailored to Portishead.
   c. **Rationale for the recommendation:**
      i. This is an opportunity to increase local engagement and build on the community's strengths.
      ii. The response to COVID-19 highlighted points of disconnection which limit Social Prescribing (NHS England definition: "Social prescribing is a way for local agencies to refer people to a link worker. Link workers give people time, focusing on 'what matters to me' and taking a holistic approach to people's health and wellbeing. They connect people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support") and consequently places greater pressure on services such as local medical centres.
      iii. This project will test the methods to enhance social cohesion and strengthen the provision of social prescribing at little cost to the Council.

2. **Project objectives:**
   a. **Deliverables**:
      i. Tangible Hub activity (COVID-19 restrictions permitting):
         1. Pilot the feasibility of a Community Hub by renting a premises, which if successful could lead to further funding bids to establish a long-term Community Hub after the six months.
         2. Increase the quality and quantity of support services and community groups' interaction with residents and each other.
         3. If future COVID-19 restrictions prevent a physical Hub, focus will switch to an online / phone service (plan B).
      ii. Portishead Town Council Wellness Strategy:
         1. Research and develop informed joint strategic planning for new / improved activities and services in Portishead.
         2. Holistic wellbeing network that enables greater access for intervention before crisis point.
      iii. Innovation plans:
         1. Stimulate delivery partners' plans for innovative service development in Portishead.
      iv. Carrying out a feasibility study:

          1. Research to identify residents' demand for different services, local priorities and less visible Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations.
          2. Ongoing project assessment using effective monitoring and financial management systems to show how the project responds to local research and runs in parallel with others e.g., North Somerset Council Empowering Communities Programme.

  v. Creating a business Case:
          1. Evaluation of the project with an assessed case for continued investment beyond the CRF funding period.
          2. Research based recommendations for local policies and the new UK Shared Prosperity fund.

b. Connection to Council strategic themes:

  i. Wellbeing:
          1. The Hub will provide a physical space for organisations and residents to engage and cooperate, ensuring better connection and support with services and community groups.
          2. The hub will provide a space of belonging for residents with the option to engage with groups and organisations.
          3. The research and use of the hub will also enhance knowledge of what the local community believe will enhance their wellbeing whilst having access to funds specifically for that purpose.
          4. The project strengthens the Council's links with vital heath, wellbeing, and community organisations, which will delver the pilot under the Portishead Wellness Partnership.

  ii. Prosperity:
          1. The Hub would have the ability to signpost to services which help with vocational skills and financial management.
          2. In the long run there is also the possibility to use the space to enhance visibility of local businesses and provide volunteering opportunities.

  iii. Sustainability:
          1. The Hub would be able to accommodate groups and educational sessions that enhance residents' nature connectiveness.
          2. In the long term, if this project leads to a permanent Hub, it could be used to showcase affordable ways to run businesses and households in a sustainable manner.

  iv. Efficiency:
          1. The project funding will be provided by the UK Government, via North Somerset Council (the fund and programme manager), the Council will provide people resource and expertise.
          2. The Hub also provides an opportunity to signpost residents to Council services and facilities.

3. Delivery plan:

  a. Delivery partners / governance:
    i. Delivery partners are drawn from the Portishead Wellness Partnership including Alliance Homes, Citizens Advice North Somerset and the Woodspring Integrated Partnership.
    ii. A CRF working group has been established with members expected to attend fortnightly meetings with actions to perform.
    iii. The Council is responsible for administering, spending, monitoring, and reporting on the fund to North Somerset Council and will act as the project lead.

  b. Research:
    i. Sector specialists and local VSCEs will share local knowledge and existing data where possible.
    ii. Residents will be asked to engage in a survey and focus groups to understand their needs and priorities.
    iii. Ongoing research will be done as residents begin to use the hub.

Description	Milestone Deadline
First funding payment received (subject to MOU terms)	January 2022
Complete collation of all existing data, activity, budget information, project plan	January 2022
Sign of MOU and agree the high-level Project Plan	19th January 2022
Hub becomes operational and ongoing research starts	January / February 2022
Second funding payment received (subject to MOU terms)	March 2022
Wellness strategy, innovation plans, feasibility study and business case developed	12th May 2022
Third and final funding payment (subject to MOU terms)	June 2022
Pilot project ends and formal evaluation starts	June 2022
If need is demonstrated, search long-term Community Hub funding	July 2022 onwards

4. **Council resources:**
   a. Budget / resource allocation:
      i. £55,512.38 CRF external grant funding to be used before the end of June 22.
      ii. Of this, a maximum of 10% (£5,551.24) can be used for capital expenditure.
   b. Procurement policy:
      i. All goods and services will be procured using the Council's approved Procurement Process, which also matches the MOU requirements.
      ii. Project costs include rent for the space, facilitation, promotion and communications and activity support.
   c. Long-term costs:
      i. The funding must be spent by June 30th.
      ii. There are no planned residual costs after the pilot project ends, unless further funding is sought to establish a permanent Community Hub.
   d. Staff resource:
      i. The Council's Project Officer is the project delivery lead, supported by the Project Manager, Town Clerk, Bookkeeper, and Councillors
         1. Project Officer Lead approx. 120 days
         2. Project Manager approx. 10 days
         3. A facilitator will be engaged to host the Hub during the pilot.

5. **Risk assessment:**
   a. Risks of doing the project:

Risks	Mitigation	Resulting risk level
Not securing a premises within budget and time frame (should the current arrangements fall through)	Use the Council's Community Halls to pilot a community hub to avoid spending time and money on refurbishing a new temporary Hub	Amber
Meeting all the milestones within the six-month period particularly achieving meaningful research data	Research exercise will be fast tracked, partly due to existing relationships with local groups and organisations, and partly due to Delivery Partners' extensive reach	Amber
Hub is underused, particularly due to COVID- 19 restrictions	Appropriate and consistent comms and PR If necessary, the plan B remote service solution will be the main focus	Amber

   b. Risks of not doing the project:
      i. Lose the £55,512.38 Government funding
      ii. Could affect Portishead's position in applying for future Shared Prosperity Funding.

iii. Lost opportunities from community networks established from the Portishead COVID-19 response.
iv. Inability for some services to operate from Portishead.
v. Less opportunities for community entrepreneurship.
vi. Demand for mental health support on the local GP practises will remain under supported.

6. Impact analysis:

	Potential impacts (positive / negative)
Wellbeing & health	• Increased capacity and confidence for organisations to extend work in Portishead and enhance cross- organisational signposting without the need to first visit a GP • Extended wellbeing service provision in Portishead • More wellbeing and health needs identified and addressed
Equality, diversity, inclusion & safety	• Increase accessibility points for community groups and support services in Portishead • As a space for the community, the Hub will be closely monitored for equality, diversity, and inclusion.
Crime, disorder & transport	• Possible reduction in crime anti-social behaviour from feeling more connected to community. • Less transport needed to access services operating in Bristol and Weston.
Transparency	• Direct channels of communication between services providers and the Town Council. • Research and use of the Hub will enhance the opportunity for resident feedback. • Regular progress reports will be presented at Council Committee meetings and the project will be included in regular financial reporting.
Council / community finances	• No negative impact on the Council or community's finances
Scale (number of residents benefitted	• The potential is to benefit the entire town

7. Recommendations:
a. To delegate authority to the Clerk and Chairman to sign the Community Renewal Grant Fund Memorandum of Understanding with North Somerset Council and accept the grant funding.
b. To allocate resources to deliver the Portishead Community Hub pilot project.