

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017-2018**

**HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item No. 4**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC  
HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY  
SERVICES**

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
COMMUNITY HUBS IN RHONDDA  
CYNON TAF**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update Members on the development of Community Hubs across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 To scrutinise the contents of the report.

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Council's approach to building resilient communities and early intervention and prevention includes the development of Community Hubs that provide a range of citizen based services in one or a number of closely located buildings in priority neighbourhoods. These facilities will support a preventative approach that enables individuals and families to access support as early as possible to prevent problems from escalating.

3.2 Community Hubs will include a range of services provided by the public and voluntary sector. Bringing services together will provide a better public service offer and create economies of scale in terms of staffing and building costs. Making better, more cost effective use of our community assets and reinvesting resources in new or retrofitted, fit for purpose buildings will enable services to be sustainable in the longer term.

## **4 STRATEGIC & POLICY CONTEXT**

4.1 The proposal to develop Community Hubs across the County Borough has developed in response to a number of strategic priorities:

### **Cwm Taf Public Services Board – Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-2023**

4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a well-being duty on public bodies that they must carry out sustainable development, including publishing well-being objectives and taking all reasonable steps to meet those objectives. Following completion of its Well-being assessment, the Cwm Taf Public Services Board (PSB) has set the following three objectives:

- To promote safe, confident, strong and thriving communities improving the well-being of residents and visitors and building on our community assets.
- To help people live long and healthy lives and overcome any challenges.
- To grow a strong local economy with sustainable transport that attracts people to live, work and play in Cwm Taf.

4.3 In addition, the PSB has identified that across these objectives it will need to work differently to tackle loneliness and social isolation. In the short term (1-2 years), the PSB proposes to develop Community Zones as an area or place based approach focussing support to improve outcomes for our areas with the greatest challenges.

### **The Cwm Taf Regional Plan 2018-23**

4.4 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 requires each area to develop an Area Plan. In Cwm Taf this is called the Regional Plan. This five year plan sets out how the Cwm Taf Social Services and Well-being Partnership Board will respond to the findings of the Population Needs Assessment completed in 2017.

4.5 A number of cross cutting priorities have been identified for regional action. This includes ensuring consistent, timely and easy access to information, advice and assistance that supports resilience and well-being. This priority includes developing Community Hubs and associated links with the Cwm Taf PSB Community Zones pilot.

### **Our Valleys, Our Future Delivery Plan**

4.6 In July 2016, the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys was set up by the First Minister. On 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017, the Taskforce published its high-level action plan Our Valleys, Our Future. The plan had three key priorities:

- Good quality jobs and the skills to do them.
- Better public services.
- My local community.

- 4.7 On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017, The Taskforce published a delivery plan setting out how these priorities will be achieved, who will be involved, the expected benefits and timescales for completion.
- 4.8 The priority for better public services includes an action to use existing, and create new, community hubs, in which public services work together with the third sector to provide services for local communities. The expected outcome is that public services will be more responsive to people's needs. In addition to the action concerning community hubs, the delivery plan includes a range of actions that will improve the health and well-being of communities, including developing an integrated Early Years system, tackling ACEs, improving access to mental health services, promoting social prescribing and the enhanced community use of school buildings.

### **Welsh Government's Children First Initiative**

- 4.9 In October 2016, the Cabinet Secretary for Children and Communities invited organisations to express an interest in developing "Children's Zones" in Wales. This is a place based approach, bringing together different organisations to improve outcomes for children and young people. The aim is that through a shared strategic vision, long-term sustainable reductions are achieved in the inequalities experienced by children in disadvantaged communities when compared to those in more socially advantaged areas.
- 4.10 In response to this challenge, the Cwm Taf Public Services Board (PSB) submitted an expression of interest to Welsh Government. Whilst the proposed approach will have tackling adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) at its heart, the building of resilience to achieve sustainable change will require a whole family approach. This whole family approach will tackle ACEs through building the resilience of the child at the same time as challenging and changing the behaviours of parents.
- 4.11 A resilient community requires the engagement and investment of the whole community and as such any place based approach should be inclusive. It was therefore proposed that the approach in Cwm Taf was to develop and pilot "Community Zones" in two communities in Cwm Taf, namely The Gurnos in Merthyr Tydfil and Ferndale in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 4.12 The expression of interest to Welsh Government was approved in June 2017 and Cwm Taf is now one of five Children First pioneer areas in Wales developing this approach.

### **Funding Flexibilities Pathfinder Project**

- 4.13 This Council is one of eight local authorities in Wales that is currently part of a Funding Flexibility pathfinder project with Welsh Government. This project brings together ten previously separate grant funding streams together into a single Early Intervention and Prevention Support Grant. The aim is to allow local authorities, as the lead delivery bodies, to have greater flexibility on how the grants are spent to meet the Welsh Government's strategic outcomes. This will allow for strategic commissioning of services to meet local needs; greater efficiency through a single approach to commissioning, contract monitoring and evaluation delivering better value for money; and encouraging innovative approaches to service delivery. The ten programmes included in the pathfinder project are:

- Supporting People
- Flying Start
- Families First
- Communities First Legacy Fund
- St David's Day Fund
- Homelessness Prevention
- Rent Smart Wales Enforcement
- Childcare and Play
- Promoting positive Engagement (for young people at risk of offending), and
- Communities for Work Plus

4.14 In the application for flexible funding, the Council has proposed that funding flexibility will be utilised to support:

- **The Resilient Families Programme** – which brings together a range of strategic work streams and priorities to provide a single focus for all partners to engage with and commit to the delivery of family focussed intervention support services that strengthen the resilience of families.
- **Integrated Family Support Framework** – which organises the operational delivery of supporting services to families and identifies where different service provision fits within a continuum of family support.
- **Resilient Families Service** – a new and improved model for Team Around the Family that enables us to respond to the needs of families swiftly and effectively.
- **Community Zones/Children First** – the development of a network of community zones across Cwm Taf that focus on tackling adverse childhood experiences through co-location of public and third sector service and co-production with local communities.
- **Early Years Integration** – in collaboration with Welsh Government, Cwm Taf UHB and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council create a fully integrated Early Years system in Cwm Taf.

## 5. DEVELOPING COMMUNITY HUBS IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

5.1 In response to the strategic priorities identified in section 4, it is proposed that the Council develop a number of Community Hubs across the County Borough. These Community Hubs will support and be at the centre of up to ten neighbourhood networks each reflecting a recognisable community in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

### Expected Outcomes

5.2 This approach is expected to deliver the following outcomes:

- Better public services that are joined up, cost effective and accessible.

- A community in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised.
- A community that is well connected.
- A community that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.
- A community that promotes and protects its culture and heritage.

### **Objectives**

5.3 This approach will develop an infrastructure to support:

- A single point of contact within communities to access good quality information, advice and assistance.
- A platform to develop community capacity and volunteering.
- Encouragement for older people to stay active and connected to delay or prevent them needing statutory services.
- Opportunities for people to improve their mental health, well-being and confidence.
- Opportunities for people to improve or maintain their physical health.
- Opportunities for parents and families to improve their relationships and parenting skills.
- Opportunities for vulnerable people to seek support and be signposted to other services as appropriate.
- Opportunities for people to learn and develop skills in support of employment.
- Provide flexible community space for people to meet, share interest and socialise, thereby tackling loneliness and social isolation.

### **Identifying the Neighbourhood Networks**

5.4 In determining where the Community Hubs should be located, consideration was given to the population size, natural boundaries and town centres, identifiable communities, alignment with school catchment areas, existing community support such as Communities First and Flying Start and availability of public transport. On this basis, ten geographical areas were identified and a community profile prepared of each area, including demographic, socio-economic, housing and educational attainment data.

5.5 It is proposed that a phased approach over three years be taken to the development of the Hubs and neighbourhood networks based on the analysis of this information and evidence of greatest need. The following catchment areas are ranked accordingly:

- Rhondda Fach
- South Cynon
- North Rhondda
- South Rhondda
- Mid Rhondda
- North Cynon
- North West Taff Ely
- North East Taff Ely
- South East Taff Ely
- South West Taff Ely

- 5.6 It is proposed that for each area potential Hub buildings are identified following a mapping exercise of existing public and third sector assets and services. It is proposed that over a period of three years eight to ten Hubs are developed across the County Borough. Some of these may be run by the Council, some by other third sector organisations and others in partnership. This will depend on the needs of the community and the opportunities available in each area.
- 5.7 All Community Hubs will have a number of services located together that are responsive to local needs. These may include services such as a library or community cafe that encourage access and establishes the Hub's status as a valuable community asset. Each Hub will include flexible community rooms that can be used by community groups or partners. The Hub will provide information, advice and assistance on site and link with other facilities and provision across the wider network of community support in the area run by public or third sector organisations. The Hub will provide employment support through the Community for Work programmes.

## **6. PROGRESS AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS**

- 6.1 Members will be aware of the work already undertaken to locate services together at Porth Plaza and this will continue as the centre develops into the Community Hub for Rhondda South.
- 6.2 In Aberdare, through the RCT Together programme, the Council has agreed a leasehold transfer of St Mair's Day Centre to Age Connects Morgannwg (ACM) who will develop a Community Hub with a range of services including a social enterprise bistro, community space for local groups to hire, childcare provision and a headquarters for ACM to provide community outreach, befriending and information, advice and assistance for older people.
- 6.3 In Mountain Ash it is proposed to develop the existing Day Centre as a Community Hub to provide a range of Council services from the same location. This will provide direct access to many of the services residents need on a daily basis as well as providing opportunities to receive employment support and information, advice and assistance on a range of issues that affect people's quality of life and well-being. There will also be potential to develop links with the proposed Primary Care Hub to be developed in Mountain Ash by the Cwm Taf UHB.
- 6.4 The co-location of services will enable the Council to provide a community cafe where food is available throughout the day, including hot meals. Residents and community groups would continue to have access to rooms to meet and these would also be available for use by partner organisations. There would be a significantly enhanced library service, ICT suite and support for employment and skills development.
- 6.5 A four week focussed consultation was undertaken in Mountain Ash from the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018, the results of which will be considered by Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

- 6.6 In Ferndale it is proposed to work in partnership with a third sector organisation, Fern Partnership, to develop a Community Hub that will serve the Rhondda Fach. The Community Hub would include a range of community based services including the relocation and enhancement of Ferndale Library. Fern Partnership would provide a comprehensive childcare offer from the Hub and a range of information, advice and assistance will be available to the community together with employment support programmes. It is anticipated that the Ferndale Community Hub will deliver the Council's commitments to Welsh Government's Children First initiative.
- 6.7 Fern Partnership will be the anchor organisation and have overall responsibility for the Community Hub. It is proposed that the Council enter into a leasehold agreement with Fern Partnership whereby they will take responsibility for the building and then sub-let part of the building to the Council. This is an innovative approach where the Council will be co-locating its services in partnership with a third sector anchor organisation. It is anticipated that this will be a more cost effective and sustainable model.
- 6.8 A four week focussed consultation was undertaken in Ferndale from the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018, the results of which will be considered by cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

## **7. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

- 7.1 The development of Community Hubs across the County Borough will contribute to the Council's corporate priorities:
- Economy – building a strong economy.
  - People – promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
  - Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work.
- 7.2 Community Hubs will deliver better public services that are joined up, efficient, coordinated and located close to the point of need. A focus on tackling adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and supporting early years will assist in giving children the best possible start in life. The Hubs will help people to access the support they need to develop skills and confidence so they can access employment and support our local economy.
- 7.3 Each Community Hub will support a neighbourhood network with local residents, businesses and services where there is an ongoing dialogue between the community and public services, creating a platform to support volunteering. Communities will be able to access information, advice and assistance at the Hubs that enables residents to maintain or improve their health and well-being.
- 7.4 This proposal is consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:
- Long-term – each community hub will seek to achieve long term sustainable change in their community.

- Prevention – this approach is a key element of the PSB and Council’s increased emphasis on early intervention and prevention.
- Integration – this proposal contributes to a range of strategic priorities as described in section 4, in an integrated and coherent approach.
- Collaboration – intrinsic to this approach is collaboration with other public services and the third sector.
- Involvement – communities will be involved through a different approach to engagement and co-production.

7.5 This proposal makes a direct contribution to the seven national well-being goals, in particular a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

7.6 In addition to contributing to the Council’s corporate priorities and the well-being goals, this proposal will meet the council’s commitment to the Welsh Government’s Children First initiative and contribute to the priorities in the Our Valleys, Our Future Delivery Plan.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

8.1 This report sets out proposals to redesign and enhance community based services on offer across the County Borough. By bringing aligned services together into Community Hubs, there is potential to increase the usage of some of our valued but underutilised assets and to enhance the services on offer to residents by modernising and extending the range of services and information, advice and assistance on offer from a single accessible location.

8.2 Where possible the Council will explore opportunities to work with partners or the third sector as anchor organisations. This will enable a more sustainable approach to delivering community services, maximise opportunities for the third sector to access external funding and further enhance the offer to local residents.

8.3 Each Hub will support a neighbourhood network, linking with other services and third sector organisations to ensure services are complimentary and joined up. Community engagement will be central to the approach, with each Hub acting as a platform to reach out to vulnerable people in the community and support opportunities for volunteering and skills development.