



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019**

**21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION PROGRAMME:  
COMMUNITY HUBS CAPITAL GRANT SCHEME**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLOR J ROSSER AND COUNCILLOR LEWIS.**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with details on the Council's applications for funding under the Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme -Community Hubs Capital Grant Scheme.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the information contained in this report.
- 2.2 Agree to the receipt of £1.06 million of capital funding from Welsh Government.
- 2.3 Agree to include the funded projects outlined in sections 5 and 6 in the capital programme.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To inform Members of the receipt of grant monies and to advise on the expenditure plans and proposals for these monies.
- 3.2 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.

- 3.3 The priorities identified in the Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme Community Hubs Capital Grant Scheme align closely to the Council's community hub priorities.
- 3.4 The Council has indicated through its Corporate Plan (the Way Ahead 2016-2020) its commitment to draw down as many funds as possible to support its investment priorities. Two of the five business case applications submitted under the Community Hubs Capital Grant have been successful, attracting £1,000,000 for the Ffynnon Taf Primary Community Hub and £60,000 for the Porth Plaza Community Hub. This will reduce the requirement for the Council to provide all of the funding for these developments.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Welsh Government released information regarding the Community Hubs Capital Grant Scheme in December 2018, indicating a closing date for all expressions of interest as 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
- 4.2 A group of officers from a range of Council services (including Education, Regeneration, Corporate Estates and Community Services) were invited to a meeting to discuss potential options. A shortlist of options were drawn up and 5 expressions of interest were approved for submission. The relevant Cabinet Members were informed of the suggestions prior to submission of the expressions of interest.
- 4.3 The five projects submitted on 4<sup>th</sup> January were:
  - Ffynnon Taf Community Hub
  - Canolfan Teulu Seren Fach
  - King George V Athletics Track, Clydach Vale
  - Treorchy 3G, Ystradfechan Park
  - Porth Plaza Community Hub
- 4.4 Welsh Government indicated that all 5 had been approved as eligible to submit a full business case. Ffynnon Taf Community Hub and Porth Plaza had been assessed as Priority 1 while the three remaining projects had been assessed as Priority 2. In the latter case it was indicated that while they were regarded as eligible to proceed to the next stage, particular attention would be required to address the way these facilities would enhance access to their services by the wider community.
- 4.5 Welsh Government issued a letter on 9<sup>th</sup> April indicating the outcomes of the five business cases that had been submitted by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. This can be seen at Appendix 1. This indicated

that the business case for Ffynnon Taf Community Hub and Porth Plaza Community Hub had been successful.

## **5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS**

### **PORTH PLAZA**

- 5.1 Porth Plaza is an existing community asset which is currently underutilised by the public in its existing format. The funding will be dedicated to improve the accessibility, internal lay-out and the aesthetic appeal of the building so that the community will have a welcoming, safe and appropriate building from which to access an enhanced range of services.
- 5.2 An extensive mapping exercise was undertaken by officers to identify community buildings, services (spokes) and forums in the South Rhondda area and gaps in provision were identified including:
- Open access play schemes;
  - Youth provision in Porth Town Centre;
  - Activity based services, respite and befriending services for the and frail;
  - Accessible and inclusive opportunities for individuals with Learning Disabilities
- 5.3 Funding accessed through the community hubs capital grants programme, along with core Council funding allocated to the development of community hubs will be used in Porth to further develop the following facilities:
- A single point of access for community members to gain Information, Advice and Guidance;
  - An enhanced library facility which will include a comfortable seating area, children's area and improved digital resources;
  - Privately run childcare facility;
  - Additional community space for meetings and events;
  - Additional space for targeted service delivery including activities for 50+;
  - Fit for purpose space for youth provision;
  - Expanded Employability Support;
  - Accessible toilets and changing facilities for adults to comply with the Equalities Act.
- 5.4 The work will be undertaken in two phases. Phase 1 will focus on the reconfiguration of the ground floor and the removal of the Communities for Work and Communities for Work + teams to the third floor. This will

take place in June in order to accommodate the closure of Alec Jones Day Centre and the transfer of Day Centre activities to Porth Plaza. Day Centre activities will initially be facilitated on the ground floor where there is easy access from the adjacent car park and a significant space that can accommodate a wide range of activities for the over 50s.

- 5.5 Phase 2 will take place in October and will involve the reconfiguration of the interior of the first floor and the mezzanine area which will see the library being moved to the front of the building where it will be more visible to the public, and changes will be made to the One4All consultation rooms and space created for youth provision.
- 5.6 A training programme and work package has been developed for all staff working at Porth Plaza so that they understand the one public service approach that is expected to be implemented at the hub and to prepare them for the changes that will occur. Work has also been underway to begin to develop the Neighbourhood Network but this work will require the appointment of a Coordinator in order for it to develop in line with expectations and with the hubs in other areas.
- 5.7 A range of potential partners have expressed an interest in delivering at the hub including Spectacle Theatre, Womenshed, Citizen's Advice and it is expected that there will be wider use by community groups as the hub is developed.

## **6. FFYNNON TAF PRIMARY COMMUNITY HUB**

- 6.1 The purpose of the grant is to develop community learning facilities and co-locate services to ensure maximum use by members of the community.
- 6.2 RCTCBC are investing £995,000 to provide a new extension which will increase capacity at Ffynnon Taf Primary School (FfTPS) to cater for demand for pupil places. To further develop the project, the £1,000,000 grant funding secured would provide a new hall, an Early Years setting and additional community spaces within the school. These facilities would be constructed alongside the classroom extension, providing larger, more suitable and accessible facilities for the school and local community to use. Should planning permission be granted, the works would be scheduled to commence during the school summer holidays to minimise disruption to pupils.
- 6.3 A mapping exercise was undertaken by Council officers to determine gaps in services across RCT. The exercise showed that the current community services in Taffs Well are popular, and that support was needed to develop local buildings and facilities to provide for additional service users. Creating additional community spaces in FfTPS would further develop childcare in the area and ensure that existing community

services such as the Community Development Association (CDA) are able to increase in size to meet local demand.

- 6.4 Little Friends play group currently operate in the Pavilion at Taffs Well Park which has no main drainage infrastructure resulting in temporary toilet facilities having to be used. These facilities are enough to maintain a play group setting but are not to the standard that we aim to provide for children in RCT. Little Friends are also a non-maintained registered education provider and a spot purchaser for Flying Start places. Providing Little Friends play group with purpose built facilities for childcare would allow them to increase the number of CIW registered places and the number of sessions offered. This would create additional capacity to provide for an increase in demand for childcare places.
- 6.5 The voluntary CDA in Taffs Well operates from a small shop front and offers services such as:
- A small community library;
  - basic ICT facilities which are used by the Job Club;
  - advice drop in sessions on topics such as Universal Credit;
  - a hub for distributing recycling bags.
  - Reading Group

Co-locating some of the CDA services onto the school site will create more opportunities and larger, more suitable spaces for some of their activities and allow existing school resources such as ICT to be utilised by the wider community, expanding this provision to better meet the needs of residents in Taffs Well.

- 6.6 At present there is no hall in Taffs Well large enough to accommodate sporting activities and music events and the current hall at FfTPS is also unsuitable for such activities. The after school club that currently operates is limited by the space available which restricts the type of activities it can offer. A larger hall will enable the club to increase its CIW registered numbers and support the development of their holiday club which will meet the needs of parents. The hall could also be used to:
- Support other sporting events and teams such as the local Yoga and Martial Arts classes, dance and keep fit classes;
  - Provide an excellent facility for community arts and music groups such as a rehearsal or concert space for the local mixed choir.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 These developments will have a positive effect on equality and diversity as services will be developed to meet individual needs and be more accessible locally. In particular specific arrangements have been made to ensure there are appropriate changing rooms for individuals with mobility and medical needs and the hubs will facilitate the development of

information, advice and guidance so that people of all ages can access the support they need when they need it.

## **9. CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 The Porth Plaza Consultation was undertaken at Porth between 29<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018 in relation to the proposed strategy for the regeneration of the town which included a question in relation to the development of Porth Plaza as a community hub. 75% of respondents were in favour of this proposal. The full Cabinet and Consultation report can be seen at:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Cabinet/2018/04/19/Reports/AgendaItem3DevelopingCommunityHubsinRCT.pdf>

- 9.2 Letters of support for the development of a community hub at Porth Plaza were provided by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Citizen's Advice (CA). The DWP welcomed the opportunities that this would offer to unemployed and economically disadvantaged customers, including more accessible advice and support to gain employment and access to support in developing digital skills at the time of the roll-out of Universal Credit Full Service. The CA indicated that a recent review of their community based provision had identified a lack of accessible community venues in the Rhondda Valleys and once developed they would be keen to use Porth Plaza as a venue for the delivery of free, independent and impartial advice to residents in the area.

- 9.3 Ffynnon Taf Community Hub Consultation took place with relevant service providers which included meetings to discuss the opportunity of co-location, as well as possible configurations of the new extension to maximise school and community use. The consultees for this proposal included:

- Ffynnon Taf Primary School
- Little Friends Play Group
- The Community Development Association.

- 9.4 Ffynnon Taf Community Primary School sent a letter of support which welcomed the opportunity to become a Community Hub and a focal point of contact, promoting local art and heritage projects that promote education, the environment and health and wellbeing in the community. A positive response was also received from Little Friends Play Group who sent a letter of support emphasising that they would be able to provide education for more children and expand their services for the local community in a new setting. The garden at the back of the school site could be used as a horticultural project to cater for intergenerational projects within the local community, which Little Friends have already

expressed an interest in coordinating. The Community Development association also expressed an interest in expanding the CDA to provide much needed additional community facilities at the centre of Taffs Well which will be accessible to all.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The funding allocation of £1,060,000 is 100% grant funded and there is no requirement for any match funding or financial contribution from the Council.

## **11. LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations set out in this report.

## **12. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 12.1 The development of community hubs align with the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- priority of promoting independence and positive lives for everyone
- creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work

- 12.2 The development of community hubs meets the requirements of the five ways of working. The Council views the development of community hubs as a sustainable model of service delivery that will ensure improved outcomes for individuals and will prevent the escalation of problems through ensuring access to early intervention and support. There is a collaborative approach to the development of the hub as Council services work closely together with a range of third sector, private and public sector organisations to develop each hub in accordance with the needs identified by the community through a range of activities and events. The development of the wider Neighbourhood Network ensure that local communities and individuals are at the heart of the model and contribute to the design of programmes and services delivered.

- 12.3 Community hubs contribute to the following well-being goals:

- **A prosperous Wales** – Ensuring access to a world of lifelong learning in community venues for all ages with support provided for the development of digital and employability skills.
- **A more resilient Wales** – By building resilience through a whole-family approach that prevents or mitigates adverse childhood experiences in

children and challenges or supports change behaviours in adults in order to improve outcomes for young people and children.

- **A healthier Wales** – By ensuring access to information, advice and guidance through face to face support from a range of services; access to books and the Book Prescription Scheme and online resources so that people are better able to make more informed choices for the benefit of their health.
- **A more equal Wales** – By providing easily accessible support at community venues for people of all ages in disadvantaged areas so that they can achieve as well as people in more privileged areas of the county.
- **A Wales of cohesive communities** – By providing attractive and safe community buildings where people of all ages can meet to learn together, receive advice and support and develop community projects together, the community in which they live will become more well-connected.
- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** – By enabling access to a range of activities that will support the development of Welsh language skills and promote opportunities to engage with the rich cultural heritage of the county.

### **13. CONCLUSION**

- 13.1 The allocation of funding for the development of community hubs is a positive development and will ensure that residents of all ages in Rhondda Cynon Taf will have access to high-quality premises and facilities where a range of services can be facilitated to meet their needs.
- 13.2 Attracting external investment is important as it ensures that the Council is maximising its resources so that it can continue to invest in key areas and roll-out the hubs programme across the county.

#### **Other Information:-**

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee –**  
Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

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