

**Public
Key Decision - No**

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy and Delivery Fund

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny – 5th September 2024
Cabinet – 10th September 2024

Executive Portfolio: Cllr Ben Pitt

Report by: Oliver Morley, Corporate Director (People)

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

In July 2024, a set of principles for a proposed Community Health and Wealth Building (CHWB) Strategy were brought to Overview and Scrutiny for input. These principles and the strategy brought today were designed to practically support the Health Embedded, Inclusive Economy and Pride in Place journeys in the Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy, support the objectives within our Corporate Plan, and clearly signal to partners how we wish to work collaboratively with them to support the Place Strategy objectives. This in turn built on the areas current Community Strategy approved in October 2021.

Since that meeting, more work has taken place to continue to consult with a range of strategic partners and co-production sessions undertaken with members of the community testing the approach and the three proposed objectives of the work. Namely:

- To improve physical and mental health via supporting an increase in **physical activity**
- To support economic resilience via a focus on **employment and skills** and barriers to this.
- To support **social connection** and sense of community.

Feedback from the Community has been positive, with energy and commitment being shown by residents who worked together to develop proposals to improve outcomes locally. Attendees at the sessions have supported the overall approach proposed, and community members came together with public sector partners to begin to develop a suite of possible activities that could deliver against the objectives of the Strategy. There is a commitment from HDC to continue this co-production aspect of the work, with additional meetings scheduled for September, and more under development for October and beyond.

The feedback from Members at the Scrutiny session in July, input from strategic partners and critically the feedback from the community co-production sessions has informed the proposed Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy, and supporting Action Plan which is brought in front of you today.

The Health and Wealth Building Strategy has at its heart a focus on how HDC can maximise its contribution to local quality of life, by supporting economic resilience, social connection, and physical activity. Firstly, by ensuring we make active choices around how we operate as a business, and the decisions we make on matters like what we buy, and who we buy it from, who we employ, and how we use our assets. Secondly, and perhaps more significantly by laying out how the Council will engage and work with residents, to understand how community outcomes could be best delivered, and by working with the community to support projects and deliver on initiatives that will make these outcomes a reality.

This strategy will bring about a significant change, a transformation, in how we work to deliver outcomes, with and for the community. Placing community voices, and the principles of enable and influence at the heart of how we work. For this to be more than talk, there needs to be both a clear action plan and appropriate resource to deliver this. That is why the scheme is supported by a proposed Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund.

Members are being asked to approve the creation of a Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund of £750,000 for use over an initial three-year period. This fund has been enabled by a number of factors, but most critically higher than forecast interest on our treasury balances over the current year, and significantly higher than anticipated resident take-up in year one of the garden subscription service. Something we forecast continuing in year two of operation. Given the temporary nature of this benefit there is a strong will to ensure these surpluses are made available to benefit local residents, and to ensure the same residents are able to play a key part in directing their use. With the intent that this money is used to support longer term enduring benefits for our residents and the area as a whole.

Central to this fund will be open governance and transparent reporting of both spend and impact. Subject to approval of the creation of the fund, a detailed paper outlining the mechanics of operation will be brought back to scrutiny for review. This will build on the principles presented here, and include detailed proposals around how we ensure broad governance across our Membership and with partners.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Comment on and support the proposed Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy
2. Comment on and support the creation of a Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund to support the delivery of the Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy. Subject to approval of a detailed proposal on the detailed operation of the Fund.

3. Comment on and support the continued community engagement and co-production activity to inform the delivery of the strategy.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks feedback and support from members on the proposed Community Health and Wealth Building (CHWB) Strategy, and the creation of a supporting Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund, as well seeking support for of an enduring programme of “Community co-production” to support the delivery of this.

2. BACKGROUND TO THIS WORK

- 2.1 The first priority in HDC’s Corporate Plan is to improve the quality of life for local people. Our residents benefit from many services, that we and other organisations deliver, but ultimately their overall quality of life will be driven by factors beyond the control of any single organisation. The Community Health and Wealth Strategy seeks to provide concerted focus to working with communities to maximise the contribution HDC makes to our resident’s quality of life, through what we do, how we work, and how we use our influence with partners to do the same.
- 2.2 Our previous Community Strategy - Huntingdonshire’s 2021 Community Strategy – Transition Plan 2021 to 2023, was built on significant engagement with the public during Covid and beyond, where the Council spoke personally to 1 in 6 households in the area, and reviewed evidence of what solutions work, and what residents wanted. This input confirmed that prevention is better than cure, the role of good employment as primary to resident and household success and saw the Council make commitments to seek to join up public service delivery where opportunities to support positive outcomes exist.
- 2.3 A set of principles were brought to members for comment in July 2024. Since that meeting, more work has taken place to continue to consult with a range of strategic partners and co-production sessions undertaken with members of the community testing the approach and the three proposed objectives of the work. We have received broad support for the principles, which have informed the strategy brought before you today.

3. PROPOSED APPROACH

- 3.1 For the reasons in the original principles paper in July, it is proposed that the CHWB Strategy focus on three key objectives, all of which are closely linked to the individual characteristics and circumstances which were shown (by the office of national statistics) to have the largest contribution to adults’ average ratings of life satisfaction:
- self-reported health (large contribution)
 - marital status (large contribution)
 - employment status (moderate contribution)i”
- 3.2 The proposed objectives of the strategy are as follows:
- To improve physical and mental health via supporting an increase in physical activity
 - To support social connection and sense of community.
 - To support economic resilience via a focus on employment and skills and barriers to this.
- 3.3 To ensure the Council maximizes our contribution to these objectives it is proposed that we adopt in the strategy a model known as “Community Wealth Building”. This approach builds on a well-established model focusing on the role of “anchor institutions”, and their role in

supporting positive outcomes for communities. Community Wealth Building is a model developed by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), which has at its heart a recognition that the decisions that large organisations make in conducting their business have the potential to make significant contributions to local social, economic and environmental success. The model contains five “pillars”

- Fair employment and just labour markets
- Progressive procurement of goods and services
- Socially productive use of land and property
- Plural ownership of the economy
- Making financial power work for local places

These pillars supported by underlying best practice and frameworks, enable public sector agencies to consider how their approach to procurement, investment, employment practices, and their use of land can further local social outcomes.

3.4 Part of the reason for an approach like this, is the momentum that already exists across local partners, and the close alignment with local shared objectives. Figure 1 identifies opportunities in the area, and work already underway, that link neatly to the community wealth building pillars. There is no desire or intent to pursue everything all at once, but to measured view across opportunities and to progress with those where the opportunity is greatest, and the appetite strongest.

Figure 1

CWB Pillar	What we already have planned	Challenges in the public sector system	Opportunities for us and our residents	Why would a Hunts resident care?	What would we need to do?
Progressive procurement of goods and services	1. Social value policy review	How to deliver community outcomes with limited capacity	7% of HDC spend is within Hunts. Could generate £XXm of local contribution.	Jobs for local residents.	4. Invest in progressive procurement and work with partners.
Socially productive use of land and estate	OPE Development of housing	Housing availability	3. Rebuild of H'brook Hospital A428, EWR.	Housing supply More pleasant place	6. Enhanced land holding review and approach.
Fair employment and just labour markets	Apprentices 1. Continue toward employer of choice	NHS workforce strategy. Extensive use of locums. Social care workforce Food waste work	Linking of local jobs to residents who will benefit A428, EWR build. Leisure build.	More local jobs. Delivered by local people.	5. Develop employment pathways with partners for our residents.
Making financial power work for local places	1. CIS review & CIL refresh	Inequality and housing affordability	CIS reserve and partner investment approaches & local pension fund		6. Influence investment of local Pension & inv funds
Plural ownership of the economy		CCC are pursuing in social care	Support of CIC's and Co-ops		

3.5 Maximising how our own policies contribute to local social outcomes is a step entirely within our own control. Within this local procurement spend, and ensuring the principles included within our new social value policy support local outcomes, is perhaps the biggest contribution that we can make to local employment in the way that we conduct our day-to-day business as a council. This will be combined with continued focus and delivery of our workforce strategy. Increasing the local spend where it makes financial sense to do so, will support local employment, and local tax receipts. Partners are exploring similar approaches and are keen to explore this further with us. Cambridge City Council are already taking this approach. Proposals for how we will pursue this are captured in the CHWB Strategy action plan.

- 3.6 The strategy in front of you today seeks to place outcomes for residents at the heart of the strategy. Any projects that are developed in response therefore need to have a good understanding of the needs, desires and challenges that those residents have, and how any solutions could best support these. In many places this may not see us “do” much, rather it may be about “enabling” and “influencing” to join up activity and create smooth pathways for residents.
- 3.7 Over the summer 3 community co-production sessions were organized and recruited to, with excellent support from local members across the chamber. Despite good interest and take up, we struggled to secure attendance for a Saturday morning session. Something which has informed our planning for future sessions. Initial feedback from the community co-production sessions, welcomed the approach, and supported the key objectives of the strategy. Identifying numerous practical areas where Community Health and Wealth outcomes could be more effectively supported. Link communities and local employers. Some areas of work developed by the groups included the development of Local talent pathways and improved skills offer for young people, older people offering technical and construction training to young people in empty retail units and Cross generational mentoring and ideas for community board game cafes for isolated young people.
- 3.8 Additional sessions are scheduled for September and more focussed events are being planned for October, to ensure we hear from more targeted groups that we have not yet heard from. The next step will be to drill down into specific areas of work with those who are interested in shaping more detailed plans.

4. COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WEALTH DELIVERY FUND

- 4.1 The Corporate Peer Challenge was clear on its recommendation that the Council clarifies its position with regard to transformation and appropriately resources the delivery of the Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy. It is therefore only appropriate that an ambitious strategy such as this comes with a supporting delivery budget. It is proposed to create a £750,000 fund, for use over the next three years to support the delivery of the objectives in the CHWB strategy.
- 4.2 The primary source of the initial funding for the scheme is higher than forecast income, firstly interest on our treasury balances over the current year, and significantly higher than anticipated resident take-up in year one of the garden subscription service, something we forecast continuing in year two of operation. Given the temporary nature of this surplus there is a strong will to ensure these surpluses are made available to benefit local residents, and to ensure they are able to play a key part in directing their use. With the intent that this money is used to support longer term enduring benefits for our residents and the area as a whole.
- 4.3 The operation of the fund will follow the principles of a sovereign wealth fund, whereby one-off windfall income is treated as exceptional and is invested for the longer-term benefit of the residents who live there, aiming at supporting recurring benefits and (ideally) a replenishing fund. Partners will be encouraged to support and make use of the fund to embed a holistic approach to social success, and to support cross partner working. This will be shaped by ongoing community co-production. It offers the opportunity to support early intervention and prevention work, which is a core duty of the Integrated Care System.
- 4.4 The fund will be available to support activity that can support the objectives of the strategy, a detailed policy will be brought back to members, but it is anticipated that most funding would fall into one of the following three categories.
- a. Grant giving – with clear criteria and reporting expectations to show impact.
(Immediate term)

- b. Subject matter expertise resourcing and capacity – commissioning work, buying services, or recruiting staff to support the delivery of the programme of work, again with delivery measures in place. (Short-medium term)
- c. Project delivery – universal or match funding, with formal project governance supporting delivery against outcome measured. (Medium-Longer term)

Key to the successful operation of the scheme is openness and transparency on both operation and impact of the funding. It is proposed that the governance of the scheme encompasses local political balance, but also representatives from stakeholders and the community.

5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 This Strategy and supporting fund directly contribute to Priority 1 of the Corporate Plan with its objective of Improving Quality of Life for local people, as well as Priority 2: Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations, due to its focus on employment opportunities and skills.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The funding for the Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund will come from exceptional income above budget expectation and used to support the delivery of the strategy over an extended period.

8. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – [Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy](#)

Appendix 2 – [Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund](#)

ⁱ [Personal well-being in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

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