

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Subject Matter: Community Health and Wealth Strategy and Delivery Fund

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny – 5th September 2024
Cabinet – 10th September 2024
Council – 11th December 2024

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Communities, Health and Leisure - Cllr Ben Pitt

Report by: Interim Corporate Director (People) - John Taylor

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 were designed to:

1. Practically support the 'Health Embedded', 'Inclusive Economy' and 'Pride in Place' journeys in the Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy
2. Support the objectives within our Corporate Plan, and
3. Clearly signal to partners how HDC wishes to work collaboratively with them to support HDC's Place Strategy objectives.

Since then further engagement with Members, Residents and Partners has continued. The conclusion of this work has resulted in a proposed CHWB Strategy and Delivery Fund.

The CHWB Strategy sets out how we will improve the quality of life for local people and how we will engage with residents to discover and support solutions that will impactfully contribute to positive outcomes.

For the Community Health and Wealth activity to have the intended scale of impact it must be appropriately resourced. This has resulted in the proposal to create an initial £750k fund, for use over the next 3 years, to deliver the commitments made in the CHWB Strategy.

Whilst this initial investment will come from the Council it is intended the fund extends beyond HDC alone as other partners see the benefits of contributing. It provides a framework to use funds in the future in a more joined up way, reducing overheads and administration and directly benefiting the residents of Huntingdonshire.

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 Overview and Scrutiny for review. This will build on the principles presented in this paper and will include detailed proposals around how governance across HDC and partners will be delivered.

Finally, these proposals have been developed with the benefit of input from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) on 5th September 2024 and subsequently Cabinet, at their meeting on 10th September 2024, supported the proposed CHWS Strategy, the Delivery Fund and continued community engagement and co-production activity to inform the delivery of the Strategy.

In order to take forward the Strategy, Council are being asked to support the recommendations set out below.

The Council is

RECOMMENDED

- b) to approve the proposed Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy; and**
- b) to approve the creation of a £750k Delivery Fund, for use over the next 3 years, to support the delivery of the Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy; noting the intention to bring detailed proposals on the mechanics of operation to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further input and review.**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide further information in relation to the approval of a Community Health and Wealth (CHWB) Strategy and the creation of a Delivery Fund to enable progress to be made with delivery.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Community Health and Wealth Building is not a new concept, it is a tried and tested model that has been adopted by many Local Authorities across the country. There is consistent evidence that demonstrates the benefits this way of working can have as well as credible sets of end-to-end social value tools that can measure cost Vs benefits.
- 2.2 The Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy was supported in September by Cabinet, further demonstrating the commitment to place residents at the heart of service delivery whilst tackling issues that matter the most and in the most effective way. The strategy is not a way of working that has previously existed in Huntingdonshire and will require additional funding and resource to ensure that it achieves what it sets out to.
- 2.3 It is proposed to create an initial £750,000 Delivery Fund, for use over the next 3 years. In addition, it is intended partners (both public and private sector) will see the benefits of contributing to this fund to support cross-organisational outcomes and will seek opportunities to replenish the fund in the future. It provides a framework to use funds in a more joined up way, reducing overhead and administration.
- 2.4 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. It is anticipated some of the return on investment may come in the form of improved social benefit (or community wealth), which will be carefully tracked to demonstrate return on investment.
- 2.5 HDC will encourage other partners to contribute to 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.
- 2.6 In addition this work has wider connections to Council Strategy. The Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy brought together residents, businesses and partners to define how they wanted Huntingdonshire to look in 30 years' time. This process identified 5 journeys. 3 of those in particular: Pride in Place, Inclusive Economy and Health Embedded, will be supported by the CHWB Strategy. These journeys all align to the key factors that the Office of National Statistics (ONS) evidence are most impactful to Quality of Life and form the basis of the objectives in the CHWB Strategy, namely good health, social connection and relationships and employment.

- 2.7 Delivering outcomes takes resource, and the May 2024 Corporate Peer Challenge identified as a priority the need to properly resource the delivery of the Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy. This fund will in part enable us to do so. Key to the Huntingdonshire Futures Work was working in partnership with our residents and our partners. This is equally true of the Community Health and Wealth Building approach, which places residents and their outcomes at the centre of what the Council is trying to achieve and how it will work. Residents' needs are no respecter of organisational boundaries, and often the way services are delivered can prove a barrier to some of the outcomes the Council is trying to achieve.
- 2.8 These challenges are often exacerbated by an environment that increasingly sees a range of isolated one-off activity, and rigid funding formulas that see well-intentioned projects fail to deliver transformative benefits. The flexible approach taken by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) regarding Health Inequalities and Community Health Prevention projects over the last two years, are examples of projects that have done the opposite, and seen the community, Councils and Health using core capacity to transform outcomes. The Council should continue this innovative work, working in new ways, removing duplication, and funnelling released capacity into services for residents.
- 2.9 The community co-production (deciding things together) aspect of the scheme will help ensure that residents informs project design boosting impact and sustainability. The fund will be flexible and work will seek to encourage partners and local businesses to contribute to it. This fund is designed to support the delivery of activity that will deliver the objectives in the Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy:
- **Supporting communities to make changes for themselves, we are committed to delivering improvements that residents will see and value** - Residents are the experts in their own lives – The scheme would be heavily directed to the key priorities emerging from community co-production and engagement activities. Supporting the do-enable-influence approach of the Corporate Plan and linked to the Council's Engagement Strategy.
 - **Improving quality of life - Commissioning and supporting project activity which will deliver against the objectives of the Corporate Plan and CHWB Strategy.** Measured carefully to track and report on impact through a series of Impact and performance indicators and outcome measures.
 - **Changing the way we work - Bending and influencing core delivery to unlock additional benefits** – Using the fund to support a "Transformation" in internal and cross-partner ways of working. Piloting approaches that transform the way we meet residents' needs in line with the commitments in the Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 **Option 1** - Continue 'as is' – Recognise the commitment to the Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy but be limited on what can be delivered. This would mean engagement with communities and regular listening exercises but having very limited ability to make meaningful change. The Council would continue to try and secure one off funding that would result in the delivery of worthwhile projects and initiatives and achieve demonstrable results - but with no opportunity of continuous funding. This would mean a continued reactive approach to trying to resolve long term, expensive problems faced by communities as opposed to being able to take a preventative approach which ultimately enables solutions to be delivered more quickly, costing organisations less money in the long run and ensuring better outcomes for residents.

3.2 **Option 2** – Further develop and implement the Community Health and Wealth Fund – if the intention is to deliver outcomes, then feedback from residents and partners on what is needed, and what works, is critical. The mechanisms for delivery of the Community Health and Wealth Fund will be developed with the community and partner organisations but expectations at present are that the fund will make use of three main forms of distribution:

1. Grant giving – with clear criteria and reporting expectations to show impact.
2. 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.
3. Project delivery – universal or match funding, with formal project governance supporting delivery against outcome measured.

3.3 **Proposed Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund Principles**

3.4 ***Demonstrable delivery on the outcomes*** within the Community Health and Wealth Strategy e.g. delivering local employment, or increasing physical activity with supporting measures to enable us to demonstrate progress across inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes

- Inputs – E.g. funding for a community lead.
- Activity measures – e.g. number of events held
- Output – number of people attended; number of people trained etc.
- Outcome and benefits generated – Increase in employment, increase in happiness, decrease in depression etc.

3.5 ***Minimise bureaucracy***

- Within the requirements of strong financial control, it is important that governance and administration are proportionate to the funding being provided. The fund is intended to be responsive and is available to support activity that will contribute to objectives. Therefore, it will seek to minimise complex and laborious bidding processes and make use of assurance and partnership arrangements such as the principles

already available through the integrated care system, the Good to Go accreditation and the previously used delivery partner model.

- The approach is to explore joint input into the oversight of the fund, to support collective ownership of solutions, and commitment to the approach. We will bring back proposals in relation to this.

3.6 ***Who is best placed to deliver the work?***

- The Corporate Plan commits the council to not just doing but also “enabling” and “influencing”. This fund presents opportunities to fund activity by partners best able to deliver outcomes, and to influence the delivery of others. There is an expectation that some funding will pass through to other delivery organisations or support joint activity, be that through Parish Councils, Community groups or others.

3.7 ***How do we simplify processes and deliver services that better meet resident needs?***

- Feedback from residents is that the way services are delivered do not always make sense. Opportunities exist to join these up in ways that will benefit everyone. That could involve dedicated activity to link local young people with jobs in local businesses or to enable community groups to reach out to isolated older people. Where we can use resource to target and support services more effectively for the benefit of our residents we will seek to do so.

3.8 ***Clear reporting*** – as part of the quarterly reporting to Scrutiny on Priority one of the Corporate Plan, we will bring updates on the current usage of the fund, and the impacts being delivered. We would propose bring an annual report updating on the status of the fund.

3.9 ***Governance*** – whilst we would aim to keep governance simple, the objectives of the scheme ensure there is significant benefit in a broad governance that brings expertise, but also the opportunity to ensure good ideas influence core service delivery. We would propose a governance proposal that engages key stakeholders, the community but also the full cross-section of political representation at the Council.

4. **COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

4.1 The Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy and the proposed Community Health and Wealth Fund were presented to Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) at their meeting held on Thursday 5th September 2024. The comments of the panel are noted in the approved minutes provided as Background Papers.

5. **KEY RISKS**

5.1 There is a risk that measuring the impact of the recommended approach may be difficult. However other organisations have successfully delivered this, and it is likely an end-to-end social value tool will be procured that will

provide credible and consistent evidence of the impacts achieved for each project or initiative funded. These will be reported back to Members via normal reporting processes and updates.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN

- 6.1 Subject to endorsement of the proposal for the creation of the Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund, the next steps will be:
1. Continue the collaborative work with the community and partner organisations to ensure the Fund is designed in the most effective way
 2. Develop the detailed Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund policy and re-present to members for agreement with clear governance, processes, templates and reporting mechanisms for the operation of the scheme.
 3. Subject to the above begin operation of the scheme and support the delivery of the Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund.

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

[\(See Corporate Plan\)](#)

- 7.1 Priority 1 of Corporate Plan 2023-28 aims to 'Improve the quality of life for local people'. By **improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents** we want the highest possible quality of life for the people of Huntingdonshire. It will be a place which attracts employers and visitors, and that residents are proud to call home. We will be evidence based, responsive and support the foundations of a good life. This includes personal independence. Prosperity, social connection, community and good health.
- 7.2 The Community Health and Wealth Fund will enable the delivery of the Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy which will result in the achievement of Priority 1 of the Corporate Plan.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Throughout August and September, several workshops were held with members of the community. The sessions focused on what a good life in Huntingdonshire meant to the attendees and resulted in discussions relating to education, employment and training, transport, affordable housing, physical and mental health, open space, crime, finances and future development associated with the business and housing sector. Issues were put into priority order based on the impact that they have on residents' lives and this has informed the focus of the next set of more targeted workshops due to take place before the end of the year.
- 8.2 This engagement has taken place as part of the delivery of the Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy as well as the commitment made

under Priority 1, and for us to be able to act on the issues raised by residents, the implementation of the Community Health and Wealth Fund is essential.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

10.2 At the time of setting the budget in February 2024, it was not anticipated that interest rates would remain as high for so long, so this fund was not part of the overall budget framework. As such it falls outside the approved budget and in line with the constitution for in-year changes, it is being presented to Council for approval.

10.3 The details on the processes to utilise the Fund will be documented and presented to Overview and Scrutiny for further input and development. The working assumption is that a panel be established to consider the applications received. The panel would consist of officers as well as Members. There are existing models that operate in a similar way, such as the Grants Panel, that considers and awards funding via the Community Chest – meaning that wherever possible existing approaches will be reused to minimise rework.

11. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Health and mental health have been identified as a priority for our residents in terms of the impact that it has on quality of life.

11.2 The fund will enable the implementation of initiatives that are focused on prevention, tackling the issues at root cause and finding long term deliverable solutions with demonstratable cost savings for the District Council.

12. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The environment and the impact of climate change on the district and further afield has been identified as a priority for our residents in terms of the impact that it has on quality of life.

12.2 As in 11.2 the fund will enable the implementation of initiatives that are focused on prevention, tackling the issues at root cause and finding long term deliverable solutions with demonstratable cost savings.

13. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 13.1 The District Council is committed to improving quality of life and wellbeing for residents and this is evidenced by Priority 1 of the Corporate Plan 2023-28.
- 13.2 The CHWB Strategy and Delivery Fund will enable a clear route to deliver what we have set out to achieve. It will result in the delivery of projects and initiatives that work, are replicable, scalable and sustainable whilst at the same time, reducing spend by all organisations involved.

LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix A – Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy
Appendix B - Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) 5th September - [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Panel \(Environment, Communities and Partnerships\) on Thursday, 5 September 2024, 7:00 pm - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](#)

Minutes of Cabinet 10th September - [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Panel \(Environment, Communities and Partnerships\) on Thursday, 5 September 2024, 7:00 pm - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](#)

CONTACT OFFICER

Job Title/Name: Interim Director (People) - John Taylor

Tel No: 01480 388119

Email: John.Taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk