

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area Communities and Neighbourhoods
Date 11 March 2020



COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

KEY DECISION

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To support the Council to take forward its approach to Community Wealth Building (CWB) by developing an Inclusive Economy Charter. This Charter is in line with the CWB motion passed by Full Council on 29 January 2020.
- 1.2 To use the Charter to build upon the Council's existing good practice, and to address social, economic and environmental inequalities.
- 1.3 To set out a series of milestones for involving communities and other key stakeholders in CWB.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That an Inclusive Economy Charter is developed and launched by the end of June 2020, underpinned by an action plan. That this Charter includes a space for communities and stakeholders to pledge their support.
- 2.2 That the Council pilots a Community Balance Sheet in partnership with its Cooperative Neighbourhoods Programme. That this balance sheet is published alongside its annual statement of accounts.

- 2.3 That the Council agrees a set of metrics to measure the impact of CWB on day-to-day business, and that this process is supported by a cross-departmental working group.
- 2.4 That the Council facilitates a CWB Group to review progress and to validate findings of impact work. This group will support the Council to share best practice at a regional and national level.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 CWB approaches focus on how much money is held and reinvested in an area for the benefit of local communities. For the Council, this relates to how much business it does with local suppliers, and how it supports local people to connect to, and drive forward, a sustainable and inclusive economy.
- 3.2 The Council has been developing its approach to CWB over the last 6-9 months, which includes working in partnership with colleagues from the University of Hertfordshire.
- 3.3 This approach has identified four key foundations that underpin an inclusive economy. These are procurement and social value, training and skills, cooperative and social economy growth, and tackling climate change.
- 3.4 A motion in favour of CWB and developing an Inclusive Economy Charter was passed by Full Council on 29 January 2020.
- 3.5 The Council is well placed for moving forward with CWB, having continued to invest in some of the essential infrastructure. This includes provision of community development work and partnership work with the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector.
- 3.6 This engagement includes establishing a sector-based leadership group comprising providers and funders linked to the VCSE sector.
- 3.7 On engaging with major developers, e.g. those involved in town centre regeneration, the Council has a proven mechanism in place (Stevenage Works). This already involves two other key anchor institutions, the DWP and North Herts College.
- 3.8 Stevenage Works provides a framework for supporting large contractors to work with local communities, which includes connecting local people to training, work placement and job opportunities.
- 3.9 The roll out of the Council's Cooperative Neighbourhood Programme provides opportunities to embed CWB from the outset. This provides the infrastructure needed to involve communities in CWB.
- 3.10 Furthermore, the Cooperative Neighbourhood Programme provides the strategic framework needed to support cooperative and social economy growth, should external resources become available.
- 3.11 Similar to the roll out of the Cooperative Neighbourhood Programme, the Council's work on tackling climate change is timely, with strong links between climate and economic sustainability.

- 3.12 On sharing its practice, the Council is developing a policy statement on CWB for Herts Growth Board, along with a business case for external resources.
- 3.13 This business case is in the early stages; however, it enables the Council to consider how it can increase the speed and scale of its CWB work.
- 3.14 The interest and support provided to the Council by the University of Hertfordshire shows the potential for engaging other anchor institutions, alongside those already involved through Stevenage Works.
- 3.15 The interest in CWB nationally is increasing, and Stevenage can draw upon the more established work of areas such as Preston, Plymouth, and Bristol, whilst ensuring that CWB is applied in a Stevenage context.
- 3.16 The recommendations on Community Balance Sheets (2.2) and establishing a group to validate impact work (2.4) ensures that Stevenage is adding to the regional and national debate, helping to set the pace for taking CWB forward at a district-level.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 On developing and launching an Inclusive Economy Charter (2.1), this takes forward the motion passed by Full Council on 29 January 2020. Launching this by 30 June provides time to engage stakeholders in design and development. Going beyond this timescale would risk losing momentum and / or the opportunities to make a case for external resources.
- 4.2 On piloting a Community Balance Sheet (2.2), this enables the Council to test CWB at a community-level, which in turn will increase engagement from key stakeholders. Linking this to the Cooperative Neighbourhood Programme supports alignment to community development work. Publishing community balance sheets alongside the Council's annual statement of accounts demonstrates the Council's commitment to CWB and supports a wider understanding of how the Council works to achieve Value for Money.
- 4.3 On agreeing metrics for measuring progress (2.3), these will support the Council to identify the extent to which CWB is becoming embedded in day-to-day work. They will also help to highlight those areas that require the engagement of external partners. Regular meetings of a cross departmental working group will ensure join-up, and consistent messaging to stakeholders.
- 4.4 On setting up a CWB group (2.4), this will support the Council to validate its work on developing tools to measure CWB, including Community Balance Sheets. Inviting specialist onto this group will ensure that Stevenage has a voice when it comes to shaping the CWB agenda both regionally and nationally. This includes providing evidence to inform the development of emerging funding programmes, e.g. replacement funds for EU programmes.
- 4.5 To support these recommendations, the Council has developed an integrated model of delivery, showing the potential for running a series of pilots relating to the four foundations of CWB. The extent to which this model can be adopted will depend upon the success or otherwise of leveraging external

funds, although there are options to undertake smaller scale work in the interim, e.g. a pilot Community Balance Sheet.

- 4.6 In addition, the Council has developed an Inclusive Economy Wheel, which shows the relationship between the four foundations of CWB and higher-level impacts. As per 4.5, the activities in the outer ring of this model are dependent upon the availability of external resources in the medium term, however, the wheel provides a helpful tool to engage stakeholders, and potential funders, over the next 12 months.
- 4.7 Both the integrated model of delivery (4.5) and Inclusive Economy Wheel (4.6) are included in the appendices of this report.
- 4.8 A Portfolio Holders Advisory Group was held on 27 February 2020. This confirmed support for the CWB approach. A summary of the main discussion points are shown in 4.9 and 4.10. These will be included as part of the action plan.
- 4.9 The main discussion points included exploring the role of the health service in CWB, rethinking procurement, engaging local businesses in contract readiness, promoting local spend, developing community balance sheets, and developing partnerships with the VCSE. The
- 4.10 On alignment with other areas, the Portfolio Holders Advisory Group identified links to existing work with VCSE in culture and sport, and the Council's digitalisation and commercialisation strategies.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 In order to take forward its current CWB work, the council has invested staffing resource alongside the in-kind support provided by the University of Hertfordshire.
- 5.2 Looking ahead, the recommendations made in this paper have been set in order that they can be achieved using a similar level of resource.
- 5.3 Any significant scale-up of the CWB approach, e.g. as per breadth of activities contained in diagrams (4.5 and 4.6) will require additional resources.
- 5.4 These resources will need to be levered through business cases or other applications made to external investors.
- 5.5 The proposed CWB Group will support the Council to keep up-to-date on potential funding programmes and / or research opportunities.
- 5.6 Where small scale work is carried out, e.g. in partnership with community development workers, risk assessments should be made to ensure this doesn't impact on the ability of officers to carry out their existing duties.

Legal Implications

- 5.7 There are no direct legal considerations, however indirectly CWB might impact on current strategies, e.g. procurement. The procurement manager is

engaged. Legal will need to be engaged where applications are made for funding, and where agreements need sign off and / or delivery partners need to be procured.

Risk Implications

- 5.8 Where external funds are applied for, or received, a full risk register will need to be produced including provisions made for the council to manage the funds, and to assess proportionality of funds against outputs and results.
- 5.9 Where small scale pilot activities take place, a local risk register should be produced in partnership with relevant services, e.g. community development, in order to ensure there are no negative impacts on capacity to deliver existing services.
- 5.10 Where this pilot work includes engagement with external stakeholders, a risk register should take into account how the Council maintains a leadership role in order to ensure join-up.

Policy Implications

- 5.11 Where CWB is considered a cross cutting theme, there are potential implications on a number of policies. These include procurement, and the review of this strategy will be supported by involving the Procurement Manager in the CWB Working Group.
- 5.12 Join-up across policy development is further supported by inviting the Corporate Policy and Research Officer onto the Working Group.

Planning Implications

- 5.13 There are no immediate planning implications, although planning and CWB are linked areas of work, and the Council may wish to further explore this relationship in due course.

Environmental Implications

- 5.14 There are no immediate implications, although pilot work will support CWB to understand the need for connectivity between specific localities and place.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.15 Climate change is included as one of the key foundations of CWB. Therefore, impacts are expected to be positive. Cross referencing to emerging climate change strategy will be facilitated by the Working Group.

Staffing and Accommodation Implications

- 5.16 No direct implications although risk registers will ensure that pilot activities do not reduce capacity to undertake day-to-day work. HR have been invited onto the working group and there are links to the workforce development agenda.

Human Resources Implications

- 5.17 As per 5.16.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.18 These will be monitored where any pilot work is undertaken and are expected to be positive. For example, a key reason for supporting cooperative and social economy growth is to reduce inequalities by supporting job creation for people who are disadvantaged in the labour market.

Service Delivery Implications

- 5.19 Implications on current service delivery will be monitored. Any negative impacts will be considered in a local risk register, to reduce likelihood of CWB impacting on capacity to deliver day-to-day services.

Community Safety Implications

- 5.20 No direct implications at this stage. To be monitored in local risk registers.

Information Technology Implications

- 5.21 No direct implications at this stage, although any review of digital services will need to consider CWB, e.g. this might include further development of procurement portals.

Safeguarding Children Implications

- 5.22 No direct implications at this stage. To be monitored in local risk registers.

Other Corporate Implications

- 5.23 Identifying links to other corporate work will be supported by the Working Group.

Other Implications

- 5.24 Approaches for engaging with external stakeholders and at the appropriate level will require coordination. This includes engagement with businesses. To support, Communications should be engaged.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

APPENDICES

- A Flow diagram showing Integrated Model (reference Paragraph 4.5)
B Diagram showing Inclusive Economy Wheel (reference Paragraph 4.6)