

**DEVELOPMENT OF A CITY WIDE EMPLOYABILITY PROVISION  
& A NEW APPROACH TO BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

**HOUSING & COMMUNITIES (COUNCILLOR LYNDA THORNE)**

**AGENDA ITEM: 10**

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**DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES**

**Reason for this Report**

1. To provide an update on the exit arrangements for the Communities First Programme and to report back on the findings of the consultation undertaken to inform the way forward.
2. To agree new arrangements for delivering Employment Services in Cardiff.
3. To set out the proposed approach to building community resilience and improving community involvement and engagement.

**Background**

4. On 14 February the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children announced that Communities First would be phased out by 31 March 2018. Instead there would be a new approach to tackling poverty. The new approach is focused on employment, early years and empowerment.
5. Communities First is a programme that works with residents, community organisations, business and other key agencies to focus on improving the wellbeing and resilience of communities. There are currently four Communities First areas in Cardiff. Each area or “Cluster” is managed by a third sector organisation.
6. Action is being taken, where possible, to mitigate any negative impact from the closure of these programmes. Council funding was made available to help the organisations to develop sustainability plans this funding has provided staff training; consultancy to assist with business plan development and specialist workshops on commissioning and procurement.

7. The Welsh Government is making new funding available from April 2018. The priority for this funding is helping people into work and building resilient communities. The new funding comprises of an:
  - a. Employability Grant, the exact amount of this is unknown but is likely to exceed £650,000 per annum
  - b. Legacy Funding of £563,361 per annum.
8. In addition the European funded Communities for Work programme, currently delivered alongside Communities First, will continue to be funded until 2020, with an allocation for Cardiff of £584,903 per annum.
9. While this funding is welcome it is significantly less than was previously available. In 2016/17 Cardiff received £2.98 million in Communities First funding, £578,000 for Communities for Work and £157,000 for the Lift employment programme. It is therefore very important that best use is made of the reduced funding that will be available.
10. In order to consider the best way forward following the closure of Communities First a public consultation exercise was carried out during September this year. 1,596 responses were received to the survey which was available on line and in hard copy in hubs and other community buildings. 5 focus groups were held in the Communities First areas. Two briefing sessions were also held with elected members. Further details about the consultation are contained within the report. The feedback from this consultation has been used to inform the proposals below.

## **Issues**

### **Employability Review**

11. Due to the need to achieve best value a full review of Employability Support across the City was carried out. The review identified over 40 different schemes offering employment support in Cardiff each with their own eligibility criteria. While the Council's Into Work Service offers open access services, the provision of more in-depth support and mentoring depends on postcode and various eligibility requirements such as age, benefit entitlement and ethnicity.
12. Current employment support in the city is complex and it can be difficult for people to find the right service for them. There is no clear pathway into services and no needs assessment to ensure that the most vulnerable individuals receive appropriate assistance.
13. It is clear that there are pockets of poverty throughout the City, not just in Communities First areas, and this need is not currently being met. Cardiff is also seeing higher levels of in-work poverty than in previous years and support for those already in employment is currently very limited. The review made clear that there is a need to change services in Cardiff to improve accessibility, link together the many existing services and ensure that help is available to everyone who needs it, across the city.

14. As a result of the review a proposed new approach to employment services has been developed that will offer services across the city based on need.

### **Proposed New Employment Service**

15. It is proposed that the Council should directly provide core employment services across Cardiff. The new approach would bring together the various funding streams, including Communities for Work, the Employability Grant and the Council's own into work resources to create one service provided directly by Council employees. The new service would include the following:

#### Gateway into Service

16. A simple gateway to services via range methods including phone, internet, and face to face. Face to face access would be available through community hubs, libraries and other community buildings. The job clubs would continue to offer assistance with CVs and job search but this will be extended across the city.

#### In-depth Mentoring and Support

17. For those people who need additional support, a specialist mentoring service will be available. For the first time this will be available based on need regardless of postcode or benefit entitlement. One to one support will be provided to help people address any barriers they have to returning to work. The mentors will also help people with more complex needs address a range of issues by referral into specialist programmes.

#### Effective Employer Engagement

18. The Employment Service will work with Economic Development to understand the needs of employers and prepare people for real job opportunities. The service will link with both national and local employers to identify future skills requirements and inform the development of training provision.

#### Self-Employment and developing Social Enterprise

19. The new service would offer advice and assistance to help people to set up their own business or social enterprise, to help develop the entrepreneurial culture in individuals and communities.

#### In Work Poverty

20. The new approach would include support for those in low paid employment and on zero hour contracts, helping people to achieve higher level skills or more sustainable employment opportunities.

### Effective monitoring

21. By having a core service provided by the Council it will be possible to develop a single data base with one view of the individual to monitor outcomes. This data will help identify any gaps or duplication in services across the city and also measure the success of interventions more robustly.

### Proactive approach

22. Not all individuals will seek help and a proactive approach is needed to engage with these hard to reach individuals. This will be a key part of the design of the new arrangements. Close links will be developed with those who provide services to vulnerable and hard to reach individuals such as social landlords, health and hostel services to identify clients who are in need of the service.
23. The Council has access to information that would allow for the effective targeting of support to those most in need, such as those affected by Universal Credit and other welfare reforms.
24. The services will continue to work in foodbanks, job centres and other community venues to reach out to people who are in crisis and unsure of where to find help.
25. The new service will provide volunteering and work experience opportunities and link closely with the Cardiff Commitment to connect people to opportunities in Public, Private and Third Sector organisations.

### **Consultation - Employability Service**

26. Consultation was undertaken on the proposed way forward for Employment Services and there was considerable support for the proposed approach.
27. 82% of respondents to the public survey agreed with the proposal that the Council should directly provide and coordinate the services with only 6% disagreeing. 92% of respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce the simple gateway into services. Useful information was gathered during the consultation on preferred methods of contact and types of support that people would like included in the new service. This will inform the detailed planning of the new provision.
28. Given the support for the changes it is proposed the new arrangements for Employment Services are taken forward with the aim of full implementation by April 2018.

## Building Resilient Communities

29. The Welsh Government's Legacy Fund is being made available from April 2018 to take forward the learning from Communities First and support the development of resilient communities.
30. The impact of the closure of Communities First was considered during the consultation:
  - 577 respondents were aware of the Communities First Programme. Of these 235 indicated they had taken part in a project or activity (only 15% of those who took part in the survey). 214 people were able to indicate which Communities First area they received support from.
  - Most had been involved in "Training and Community Learning", "Volunteering Opportunities and Time Credits" or "Support to Gain a Job or Qualification". These projects or activities were also the most valued by respondents.
  - 135 respondents, of the 215 that answered the question, felt there would be gaps after Communities First closes. More than 100 respondents went on to explain what they thought those gaps would be. Loss of community involvement and engagement, alongside volunteering and training were identified as key issues.
31. The consultation also explored how to build community resilience and improve community involvement and engagement:
  - 33% of respondents felt that they had a say in decisions about their community compared to 43% who did not, 24% did not know. Most respondents indicated that they have their say by taking part in surveys or questionnaires or being kept informed by reading newsletters/articles. When asked how they would like to be involved in the future these were also the top answers, however attending community events, workshops and involvement with a formal panel were also popular. There was a clear indication that respondents would like more opportunities to get involved on a face to face basis.
  - Respondents were also asked how they are currently involved in their community. The top three answers were "Community Volunteering", "Helping others in my Neighbourhood" followed by "Member of a Community Group". These were also the activities people were most likely to get involved in the future.
32. Engagement with the survey was good with nearly 1,000 comments received. This information has been combined with the learning from the stakeholder events and Members feedback sessions to identify the potential gaps in services and to inform the next steps.

## Potential gaps in Services

33. Three key themes have been consistently identified as potential gaps in services, these have been summarised below:

### Health and Wellbeing

The identified need here included:

- Low level Mental Health Support and Confidence Building Activities
- Health and Wellbeing Support
- Befriending/Self Help/Peer Support Groups
- Low level Therapeutic Training (art projects/sewing groups/knit and natter)
- Social Prescribing linked to GP's
- Engaging with Older People and avoiding social isolation
- Low level community based volunteering

### Pathways into learning

- Pathways into community based learning provision, including ESOL and Basic Skills
- Work with parents, children and young people linked to education

### Community Engagement/Involvement

- Support for Community Groups
- Building and maintaining local knowledge and networks
- Formal/Structured volunteering/Time credits
- Community events to encourage engagement
- Signposting/Promotion of other Organisations and Services

34. Having considered these potential gaps and the comments from the consultation it is proposed to commission two services:

- A City Wide Health and Well Being Service offering low level Mental Health and Wellbeing Support and community based activities including volunteering, befriending and peer led support.
- A city wide service to develop Pathways to Learning – this would promote access to and coordinate community based ESOL and Basic Skills provision. This would include working with parents, children and young people to encourage participation in learning opportunities and the provision of community homework clubs.

35. These commissioned services would be funded by the Welsh Government Legacy Fund. They would provide city wide services that complement statutory services while avoiding duplication.

36. In addition it is proposed that a new city wide approach to Community Involvement and Engagement is put in place. The new approach will

build on the learning from both Neighbourhood Partnerships and Communities First to create a new framework for participation across the City, anchored in the Hubs, Libraries and Wellbeing Centres.

37. The service will identify local issues and priorities and bring together the right people to find the solutions. It will also provide opportunities for Community Groups and individuals to get involved in their local area. It is proposed that this core Community Engagement and Involvement service will be supported and delivered by Council employed staff, funded through the Legacy Grant.
38. Volunteering programmes that provide both formal and informal opportunities for people to volunteer at a level that's right for them should underpin all three proposals.

### **Next Steps**

39. Further work is required to develop all three strands of the Building Resilience Programme. It is proposed a full review takes place that includes mapping current provision and further face to face public consultation. The review will identify what is already available across the city, how people access these services and if there are any gaps or duplication. There is also a potential opportunity for joint commissioning with other partners such as Health.
40. The information gathered from the review, mapping and consultation exercises will inform a proposed way forward for cabinet approval by Spring 2018 on:
  - Commissioning a Health and Wellbeing Support Service across the City
  - How to provide pathways to Community Learning
  - A new approach to Community Involvement and Engagement
41. Support will be provided to third sector and community organisations to ensure they are fully able to take part in any procurement process. It is also proposed that in 2018/19, an allocation of legacy funding is made available to those community organisations most at risk due to the closure of Communities First. This allocation will be for one year only and will be aimed at helping these groups to further develop their sustainability plans.

### **Consultation**

#### **Scrutiny/Member consultation**

42. Two briefing sessions were held with Elected Members on 30 August and 3 September 2017. The proposals were also presented to Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee on 14 September and 9 November 2017 and will be considered by the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee on 15 November 2017. The Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee's letter and response can be found at **Appendix 1**.

## **Public Consultation**

43. The online consultation opened on 6 September and ran until 4 October 2017. 4,000 hard copies were distributed to 18 locations across the City including Hubs, Libraries and 5 other community venues. Engagement sessions also took place in Job Clubs operating in Hubs across the City. A total of 11 drop-in sessions were held in community building, including 6 outside of Communities First postcodes.
44. Social Media networks such as Twitter and Facebook were also utilised to promote the consultation with a potential reach of 131,578 users. The survey link was also shared with 86,868 email network users, including Neighbourhood Partnership, Youth Services and Communities First Networks. The link was also shared with 75 Elected Members and all Community Councils.
45. This resulted in 1,596 people taking part in the survey, with nearly a thousand separate comments made. A copy of the full Consultation report can be found at **Appendix 2**.
46. In addition five Focus Groups were held in Communities First Cluster Areas. A total of forty two people attended the sessions. Key findings to emerge from the focus groups are very similar to the findings contained in the online survey results. The full report can be found at **Appendix 3**.
47. The results of the consultation have been considered and taken into account when developing the proposals in this report.

## **Reason for Recommendations**

48. To ensure that Cardiff's residents are supported into employment through the delivery of a joined up service that makes best use of all available funding.
49. To ensure that the any gaps left by Communities First are mitigated and that a robust approach to Building Community Resilience is developed.

## **Financial Implications**

50. The Council has been invited to submit grant bids which includes an award for an Employability Service and a separate grant for Building Resilient Communities. In relation to Employability Services, the proposal in this report involves merging services provided by the Council and external partners into a single more efficient service delivery mechanism. The proposal is likely to involve the transfer of staff which will need to be managed within any grant funding approved. Current grant terms are for a period of two years and the directorate will need to ensure that costs of delivering the service are managed within the grant approved. Any additional costs during the grant period or arising on cessation of the grant will need to be managed within existing Directorate Budgets.

51. The report also refers to a similar approach in terms of provision of a single service provided or commissioned by the Council for Building Resilient Communities. This is subject to a further report to Cabinet when proposals are confirmed to ensure a more joined up approach to service delivery. Part of the grant receivable in 2018/19 is to be used as one off grant to continue legacy funding following the closure of Communities First. Savings proposals are outlined in the budget consultation for 2018/19.

### **Legal Implications**

52. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. standing orders and financial regulations; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.
53. An Equalities Impact Assessment [EIA] is attached at **Appendix 4** Findings from this assessment have informed the proposals set out in this Cabinet report. Further EIAs will be completed for any additional specific areas of risk identified following this Cabinet decision.

### **HR Implications**

54. There are TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) 2006) implications for the proposal set out in this report. This will involve the transfer of a number of employees from their current employer into the Council. Initial consultation has taken place with the Trade unions on this matter as well the current employers of the individuals concerned.
55. Further consultation will take place following Cabinet's decision and the Council will carry out the transfer of the employees in line with the requirements of TUPE.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree the approach to future delivery of Employment Services as set out in the report.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Housing Communities and Customer Service to take the necessary actions to implement the new Employability service and transitional arrangements.

3. Authorise officers to review the approach to Building Resilient Communities programme, including a public consultation exercise, to inform a proposed way forward for Cabinet consideration.

**Sarah McGill**

Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services

10 November 2017

*The following appendices are attached:*

Appendix 1: Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee Letter and Response.

Appendix 2: Consultation Report

Appendix 3: Focus Groups Report

Appendix 4: Equalities Impact Assessment