Vulnerable Adults, Health & Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting:	Thursday 7th March 2024
Classification:	General Release
Title:	WCC Community Hubs Programme
Report of:	Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive, Westminster City Council and Executive Director, Adult Social Care and Health for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council Frances Martin, Executive Director of Environment, Climate & Public Protection Serena Simon, Director of Communities
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Communities, Children and Public Protection
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	The Community Hubs Programme aims to support #2035 and the Fairer Westminster agenda by improving access to integrated council, health and VCS services, and creating spaces for residents to connect, run activities and improve their health and wellbeing.
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1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report outlines the Council's proposed Community Hubs Programme, which aims to improve access to integrated council, health and VCS services across the city. It discusses how the Community Hubs Programme will support the #2035 ambition and the Fairer Westminster strategy, by addressing health inequalities and enhancing community health and wellbeing.

1.2. In 2022, Westminster City Council launched its new Fairer Westminster agenda, establishing a range of commitments to improve life outcomes for Westminster residents under five key pillars.

1.3. The Fairer Westminster plan includes the delivery of a set of new 'Community Hubs' which should bring communities together to make it easy for everyone to access services and support across our neighbourhoods, by:

- Working in a place-based way, recognising the unique assets, opportunities, priorities and needs of communities living in different neighbourhoods

- Reducing health inequalities, including those faced by our Global Majority communities

- Making contacting council officers and accessing support much easier, and improving how we work to provide effective and timely resolution of issues

- Improving how we listen to our residents and incorporate their views into our work, informed by the new Charter for Community Participation

- Furthermore, Community Hubs will support the Council's broader corporate ambitions and statutory obligations, with regards to equalities, the climate emergency and its Strategic Asset Management Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan commitments. Community Hubs are also named in the Future of Westminster Commission report.

1.4. The report seeks the Committee's scrutiny and recommendations on the design, delivery and evaluation of the Community Hubs Programme, with a focus on the links to health outcomes and partnerships.

1.5. The report does not focus on individual Community Hub sites identified, but rather on the programme approach across Westminster, and the principles and practices which will be applied to embed and deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes across the city, through the programme.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

2.1. The Westminster Community Hubs Programme aims to support the Council's Fairer Westminster strategy and #2035 ambition to tackle health inequalities across the city, by improving access to integrated council, health and VCS service locations, and to create spaces for residents to connect, run activities and improve their health and wellbeing.

2.2. More specifically, the report aims to review the proposed Westminster Community Hubs Programme approach to address the following lines of enquiry:

1. How will the Community Hubs programme support the health and wellbeing of Westminster's communities?

2. How will Community Hubs contribute to the uptake of health services and their outcomes?

3. How have the areas of need been assessed and how will the Hubs meet the demand for services that are needed?

4. What services and support will be provided across the Council's hubs that promote health and wellbeing for Westminster residents, including through new housing offices?

5. What work will be carried out with residents, partners and the voluntary sector via the Community Hubs?

2.3. The Vulnerable Adults, Health and Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the proposed approach and make recommendations as to how it could be further developed and improved.

3. Background, including policy context

3.1. The Community Hubs programme is an ambitious and innovative initiative that aims to improve the lives of Westminster residents by creating accessible, collaborative and co-designed spaces across the city. The programme has five key objectives: to increase community resilience and reduce health inequalities; to provide better access to services and support; to enhance collaboration between the council and the communities; to strengthen civil society and the voluntary sector; and to contribute to the council's equalities, climate emergency and financial commitments.

3.2. The programme will deliver three types of Community Hubs, depending on the needs, opportunities and preferences of each area: short-term hubs, which will provide a pop-up or meanwhile space for community meetings, events and drop-ins; Hub 'Lite' sites, which will establish community spaces within existing council-led or VCS-led buildings; and full Community Hubs, which will target priority #2035 communities and be fully co-designed and community- or VCS-led. Each Community Hub should complement existing activities and services in the area, and contribute positively and additional to its local neighbourhood.

3.3. The appended Community Hubs Programme Approach PID provides a comprehensive overview of the rationale, delivery approach and success metrics proposed for use through the programme. The following paragraphs summarise how this relates to tackling health inequalities and improving health outcomes more specifically in relation to the Committee's focus:

1. The Community Hubs programme will help Westminster's communities to be healthy and well by providing spaces that are easy to reach and that work together to offer different kinds of services and support that

suit the needs and goals of each community. The programme will work on reducing health inequalities, making it easier to access services, supporting civil society and the voluntary sector, and helping the council meet its EDI, climate emergency and financial goals. The programme will also try to increase community links and social resources, improve health and quality of life results, and encourage community participation and influence.

2. Community Hubs will contribute to the uptake of health services and their outcomes by co-locating and integrating health services with other forms of support and community activity, making them more convenient, attractive and holistic for residents. Community Hubs will also seek to address the barriers and challenges that prevent some residents from accessing health services, such as lack of awareness, trust, cultural sensitivity or digital inclusion. Community Hubs will also work with health partners to promote health prevention and early intervention, and to monitor and evaluate the impact of health services and support on residents' health and wellbeing.

3. The areas of need have been assessed using a combination of data sources, including indices of multiple deprivation, health inequalities data, civic strength and community needs data, asset and service mapping, and community engagement insights. These data sources have been used to identify priority communities and neighbourhoods, key needs and challenges, and potential opportunities and solutions. The Hubs will meet the demand for services that are needed by co-designing the space and the model with communities, ensuring that they reflect the preferences and priorities of local residents and organisations. The Hubs will also provide a flexible and responsive platform for delivering services and support, enabling them to adapt to changing needs and circumstances over time.

4. The services and support that will be provided across the Community Hubs will vary depending on the specific context and needs of each hub, but they will generally include:

   - Housing support, including advice, guidance, repairs and maintenance, rent payments, and tenancy management

   - Health and social care services, including GP surgeries, clinics, pharmacies, mental health support, and adult social care

   - Employment and skills services, including job search, CV writing, training, work experience, and volunteering opportunities

   - Welfare and advice services, including benefits, debt, immigration, legal, and consumer rights

   - Community and voluntary sector services, including advocacy, mentoring, peer support, befriending, and counselling

- Community activities and events, including sports, arts, culture, leisure, education, and social groups

- Café and catering facilities, providing affordable and healthy food and drink options, and opportunities for social interaction and enterprise

- As part of the Fairer Westminster housing commitments, the Council has opened three new housing offices to date, with a further planned for Soho in 2024/25. These new offices aim to give our residents better face-to-face contact with our housing staff in order to improve customer experience, including timely support and resolution of issues when needed. Bayswater Children's Centre, which is one of the new housing offices, has been identified as a community hub site, which will act as a gateway to the wider range of services and support available through the community hubs.

- Hub sites will be selected through a rigorous mapping and site identification process which identifies gaps in specific geographical areas, particularly in relation to #2035 communities, to complement existing council and voluntary sector assets, including family hubs, youth hubs, libraries, leisure centres and other council and voluntary sector sites.

5. The following work will be carried out with residents, partners and the voluntary sector via the Community Hubs:

- Co-designing the space and the model of the Community Hubs, ensuring that they are shaped by the input and feedback of local stakeholders

- Co-delivering the services, integrated service model and support in the Community Hubs, ensuring that they are delivered by a diverse and representative range of organisations and individuals

- Co-managing and co-governing the Community Hubs, ensuring that they are run by and accountable to the communities they serve

- Co-evaluating and co-learning from the Community Hubs, ensuring that they measure and demonstrate their impact and value, and continuously improve and innovate

3.4. The following external witnesses have been invited to speak at the Vulnerable Adults, Healthy and Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee:

- Dr Ben Holden, Public Health Consultant, Imperial College London – to speak about links between shared community spaces and improved health outcomes as part of #2035

- Iain Cassidy, CEO, Open Age – to speak about how to enable older people to become more active in their community

- Jackie Rosenberg, CEO One Westminster– to speak about how the voluntary sector manages space and can be best supported to do so by the council

- Liz Thorpe-Tracey, Founder, Happy Lizzy Event Planning CIC – to speak about how community organisations can effectively run community spaces

4. Financial Implications

The financial implications, risks and opportunities associated with the programme are as follows:

4.1. The Community Hubs programme has a £10m capital allocation for the delivery of Community Hubs across Westminster from 2023/24 – 2025/26. It is also considered that there are sufficient revenue contributions within the capital programme to allow for some changes to the £10m capital spend – i.e. some can be allocated to elements of delivery which are now considered revenue within the Programme.

4.2. The establishment of new, additional or expanded sites for community activity and service delivery will require additional revenue funding to maintain operations, which will need to be considered in the context of the benefits to be delivered, the Council's existing cost pressures and in relation to its broader estate and obligations. Any additional costs that may be required will be developed through the development of respective hub business cases, and later requested through the budget setting process as required, and relevant approval sought.

4.3. The programme may generate financial benefits through increased service efficiency, effectiveness and integration, as well as improved social value and community wellbeing. These benefits may be realised through reduced demand for services, increased income from services, improved asset utilisation and management, and enhanced social return on investment. Any benefits that are found will be included in future years budget setting processes.

4.4. The programme may also create financial opportunities for collaboration and partnership with other organisations, such as the voluntary and community sector, local businesses, educational institutions and health and social care providers. These opportunities may in due course result in shared resources, co-investment, co-delivery and co-commissioning of services and activities, as well as increased innovation and diversity of provision.

5. Legal and Governance Implications

5.1. The Community Hubs programme is overseen by a Spotlight Leadership Group comprising the Lead Member, Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Housing and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector and Lead Member SEN and Learning Disabilities Champion, in addition to senior leaders from across the organisation. Its delivery is supported through a programme delivery board, to be established.

5.2. The programme needs to comply with the relevant statutory and contractual obligations that apply to the council and its partners, including planning (including any potential change of use implications), procurement (including tender requirements incorporating accountability, delivery and outcome requirements), health and safety, data protection, equalities and human rights. This may require obtaining legal advice, conducting due diligence, drafting and reviewing agreements, and ensuring quality and compliance standards.

5.3. The programme needs to ensure that Community Hubs are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the local residents, especially those from disadvantaged or marginalised groups. This will require conducting equality impact assessments, engaging with diverse communities and stakeholders, and embedding EDI principles and practices in the co-design and delivery of the hubs.

5.4. The programme needs to establish clear and transparent governance arrangements for the community hubs, including the roles and responsibilities of the Council, the operators, the service providers and the community representatives. This may require developing governance frameworks, terms of reference, performance indicators, reporting mechanisms, and accountability processes.

5.5. The programme needs to monitor and evaluate the impact and value of the community hubs, both individually and collectively, on the social and economic outcomes of the local area and the council's strategic objectives. This will require setting up evaluation frameworks, collecting and analysing data and information, and reporting and disseminating findings and recommendations.

6. Carbon Impact

6.1. The Community Hubs programme aims to contribute to the Council's commitment to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030 and a carbon neutral city by 2040. The programme will assess the carbon impact of each hub site and seek to minimise the emissions associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of the hubs. The programme will also work with Corporate Property and Climate Emergency colleagues to enhance the environmental sustainability and resilience of the hubs, such

as by using renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, reducing waste and water consumption, and promoting site greening. The programme will report on the carbon impact of each hub site as part of the business case and evaluation process.

6.2. The following bullet points summarise the main actions that the programme will take to reduce the carbon impact of the community hubs:

- Assess the baseline and projected emissions of each hub site, taking into account the building type, size, location, design, materials, usage and occupancy.

- Apply circular economy principles to minimise the use of materials and resources, maximise the reuse and recycling of materials, and avoid the generation of waste in the construction and operation of the hubs.

- Incorporate low-carbon and energy-efficient technologies and solutions in the design and retrofit of the hubs, e.g. smart meters, insulation and ventilation systems etc.

- Engage with hub users, operators, partners and suppliers to raise awareness and encourage behaviour change towards reducing energy consumption, waste generation and water use in the hubs, and to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport.

- Monitor, evaluate and report on the carbon impact of the hubs on an ongoing basis, as part of regular progress, review and evaluation reports, highlighting the achievements, challenges and lessons learned, and identifying areas for improvement and further action.

7. Equalities Impact

7.1. The Community Hubs programme forms part of the Fairer Westminster strategy and the Council's #2035 ambitions to tackle health inequalities. Its focus is on responding to existing inequalities through the provision of new spaces, joined up services and local activities. The impact of this work is intended to improve outcomes for people with protected characteristics.

7.2. Each Community Hub will serve a different geographical area, with different needs and populations. An equalities lens will be applied to the planning, development, engagement and delivery of each Community Hub, for which a business case including an EQIA will be produced. This will ensure that the programme evidences how it meets its equality duty in different contexts through a consistent process.

8. Consultation and Engagement

8.1. The Community Hubs programme is based in taking a collaborative approach to design and delivery with Westminster's communities, as well as partner organisations and wider stakeholders. Section 3.3, point 5 outlines the dimensions in which this approach will be applied:

- In the physical design of community hubs, working with design professionals to inform plans, shape spaces and agree specifications

- In the programme development and design of each community hub, both feeding into and shaping the programme of activity and combination of services which operate from each site

- In governance and management of community hubs, shaping the operating model through a co-design process and playing an active and ongoing role in governance, management and decision-making

- In evaluation and monitoring, through governance and communications, providing feedback on their experiences and the effectiveness of each hub, and reviewing performance on the basis of monitoring data

8.2. Engagement has been undertaken with Cabinet and ward members to inform the initial scope of the programme from its inception. Ward members will be engaged in the development of each Community Hub local to them.

8.3. Each Community Hub is co-designed with residents, partners and internal stakeholders, with a brief developed through community engagement. Around 450 residents have been engaged to date through the Community Hubs programme, with a report to be produced for the north, south and central parts of Westminster respectively on completion.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Paul Perkins,
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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A | CH Programme Approach PID v3 (including agreed hub sites map)