

## **Cabinet – 9 September 2015**

### **Ryecroft Community Hub**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Harris – Community, leisure and culture

**Related portfolio:**

**Service:** Communities

**Wards:** **Blakenall Ward**

**Key decision:** No

**Forward plan:** No

#### **1. Summary**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012 Cabinet made a decision to pilot community hubs, one of which was Ryecroft Neighbourhood Resource Centre, now known as Ryecroft Community Hub. The purpose of this report is to consider funding that would support Ryecroft Community Hub to become financially self-sufficient within a 12 month period.

#### **2. Recommendations**

That Cabinet approve the allocation of further grant funding of £50,734 to Ryecroft Community Hub.

#### **3. Report detail**

3.1 The original community hub concept was based on community organisations delivering a variety of services through local venues. The Council invested in two pilot projects, Ryecroft Neighbourhood Resource Centre and Moxley Peoples' Centre where they can evidence and demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of the concept of a community hub model on local residents.

The objectives of the community hubs are that they will:

- Build Capacity in local communities to improve services for residents.
- Strengthen the sustainability of local community organisations and their ability to deliver Council objectives
- Reduce dependency on public services by supporting self-sufficiency and independent living.

3.2 The total financial contribution by the Council to Ryecroft Community Hub for the duration of the three year project amounts to £225,824.00. This was awarded in the form of grants and the expenditure and performance of the project has been monitored by the Community Development team.

The investment was designed to encourage self-sufficient, independent living thereby reducing reliance on Council services and longer term costs.

- 3.3 An evaluation report was approved by Cabinet on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015, which highlighted the following observations;
- The pilot project increased access to local services that effect life chances of residents by around 60%, including the main issues of employment and improving health.
  - Hubs increased the role of the voluntary and community services in the delivery of services in Neighbourhoods which increases the take up of services by residents.
  - There is evidence that bringing different organisation together that did not work together but have similar objectives can increase the flow of residents across services, but this takes time for organisations to understand and trust each other's way of working.
- 3.4 Ryecroft Community Hub has focused on delivering the following projects;
- Jobs and Enterprise Training where 170 people participated in activities, including training for business start ups.
  - Children and Young People. There are a number of activities supporting young people including a junior youth club. Many of the activities are inter-generational catering for young people and parents.
  - Education activities which include basic numeracy courses delivered in collaboration with Walsall College and WHG.
  - Development of Social enterprises which has led to the creation of the following;
    - Peoples Gym aimed at fitness and lifestyle.
    - Community Footprints Training targeted at providing training to the local community in hair and beauty and various holistic meditation and relaxation techniques.
    - Ryecroft Community Printers
    - Gio's Italian at Heart Restaurant
    - NDS Decorators
    - Bits IT solutions company
    - IT for all for repairs and back office systems
    - Walsall Energy Scheme for local residents
    - ZEAD web designers
    - Ryecroft after school club
    - Past meets the future caterers for functions and events
- 3.5 Ryecroft Community Hub has to date supported 11 start up businesses that employ 24 people and work with 12 volunteers.
- 3.6 The Ryecroft Community Hub project is committed to becoming self sufficient and this will be achieved in 12 months with the development of a robust business plan and the securing of a twenty five lease, which will enable the organisation to access external grant funding from the Big Lottery.
- 3.7 To support and drive this programme forward there has been a request for further funding of £50,734 to allow time for the Community Hub to become self sustaining. £27,417 of this funding would be used to deliver further support and guidance to the existing projects for a period of 12 months. During this time the organisation will seek to attract external grant funding.

A further £23,317 is required in relation to registration fees to national accreditation, awarding bodies and the delivery of training courses for the unemployed.

Detail of the investment proposal submitted by the Ryecroft Community Hub is provided below;

- Community Hub guidance and support £27,417
- Implementation of the Matrix Quality Standard to enable Ryecroft Community Hub to be accepted onto the Skills Funding Agency – registration cost £4,000.
- Preparation and Delivery of SME business computing course for 50 learners - £1,422.
- CPD Assessor training course - £1,335.
- NCFE registration – A national awarding organisation which focuses on designing and developing and certificating nationally recognised qualification and awards - £1,600
- Delivery of a City & Guilds business administration course for 20 learners - £1,360
- City and Guilds Enterprise course including assessor IV and registration fees for 20 learners - £13,600

Children's services are currently working with Ryecroft Community Hub to ensure appropriate training and accreditation solutions are in place.

#### **4. Council priorities**

4.1 The Ryecroft Community Hub delivers against the following priorities;

- Support the Cost of Living
- Creating jobs and helping people get new skills
- Improving Educational attainment
- Helping local high streets and communities
- Promoting Health and Wellbeing

#### **5. Risk management**

The Council could decide not to provide further funding to the Ryecroft Community Hub in which case without the mentoring and support of the Hub Manager the businesses may struggle and the hub may not continue to develop. If further funding is awarded it would be on the understanding that funding would be targeted at self sustaining the organisation financially, resulting in non reliance of Council funding for financial security and growth. A quarterly performance report will need to be provided by Ryecroft Community Hub to the Council, which demonstrates how the organisation is moving towards financial sustainability.

#### **6. Financial implications**

The Ryecroft Community Hub project has received £225,824.00 in Grants from the Council. If agreed this additional funding of £50,734 will be found from revenue contingency as it is unbudgeted, one off expenditure and there is no ongoing commitment.

## **7. Legal implications**

The grants manual has been followed and grant agreements approved by Legal Services will be put in place in respect of the grant and any further grants given to Ryecroft Community Hub.

## **8. Property implications**

There are no property implications.

## **9. Health and wellbeing implications**

The findings from the evaluation reported to Cabinet on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015 demonstrates that the project contributes to improving the health and wellbeing of local residents.

## **10. Staffing implications**

There are no staffing implications.

## **11. Equality implications**

There are no equality implications.

## **12. Background papers**

- Cabinet Report, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012 – Strengthening Community Based Services
- Cabinet Report, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013 – Community Hubs Pilot Evaluation Report
- Cabinet Report, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014 – Community Hubs First Year Evaluation Report
- Cabinet Report, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015 – Community Hubs Shaping a Fairer Future
- Cabinet Report 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015 – Community Hubs Final Evaluation Report

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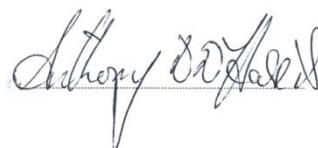
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03 September 2015

Councillor Harris  
Portfolio holder



03 September 2015