

<b>Item No.</b> 10.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 20 October 2020	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Update on Implementation of the Southwark Community Support Alliance	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councillor Helen Dennis, Social Support and Homelessness and Councillor Alice Macdonald, Communities and Equalities	

**FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR HELEN DENNIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SUPPORT & HOMELESSNESS AND COUNCILLOR ALICE MACDONALD, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND EQUALITIES**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown, the Southwark Community Hub was set up to provide support to many thousands of vulnerable Southwark residents. This included social and welfare support and access to essential food and other supplies. Initially a local authority initiative, the Southwark Community Hub rapidly developed to become a joint-initiative between council services, voluntary and community sector (VCS) and health providers. This was an incredible effort across the community and we are immensely grateful to partner organisations, charities and volunteers who all contributed to the collective response.

As reported at the September cabinet meeting a cross sector Review Group was set up to explore the future of the Hub, and how we capture benefits of the networks it established into the longer term. This review heard evidence from the council, voluntary organisations, NHS, mutual-aid groups, faith organisations and many others, including testimony on how this partnership has benefited Southwark on a fundamental level. The previous cabinet report outlined the intention to transform the Hub into the Southwark Community Support Alliance, not just an offer of emergency support, but also to achieve a long-term step change in the way we support those most in need in our community together.

This report updates on the implementation of the proposals since September and puts in place the building blocks for the creation of a Southwark Community Support Alliance moving forward over the next two years. The pandemic was a tragedy but saw an outpouring of community feeling and unprecedented collaboration that we can be rightly proud of. If the actions we take moving forward are to succeed we need to ensure that we build on this legacy and create the new alliance together with common goals. The report therefore commits us to working together with the partners to develop our plan for the future.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the cabinet:

1. Agrees to the implementation and timescales of the 16 recommendations for the revised Community hub model / Southwark Community Support Alliance that are required as the first steps to addressing the short-term (by March 2021) and the long-term (by March 2022) needs of the Community Hub.
2. Notes that cabinet on 08 September 2020 instructed officers to test new ways of providing housing, employment, skills, money, social care and immigration support in local communities - including testing how support from established public & VCS providers can be made accessible in partnership with local community 'anchor' organisations rooted in each part of the borough.
3. Notes that this work will be overseen by an implementation review group made up of representatives across the voluntary and community sector, council and health partners and that membership will be agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Support & Homelessness.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

4. At the previous cabinet meeting on 8th September, officers were instructed to return with a further report in October 2020. This was to set out a plan for implementation of the council's response to the recommendations of the review-working group.

### ***The Community Hub Review Group***

5. A cross sector review group was established and chaired by Cllr Kieron Williams including representatives from the council, VCS and health. This group led the review, and took evidence from partners from across all sectors on the response. This included views on priorities for the future of the Community Hub and lessons learned on future partnership working.
6. The review group undertook an extensive programme of engagement and considered evidence from a wide range of sources that included:
  - The eight local community food hubs that formed part of the Community Hub
  - Funders like United St Saviours who had supported the response
  - Services dealing with people needing hardship support and accessing the Southwark Emergency Support Scheme
  - Mutual-aid groups who mobilised thousands of volunteers alongside other grassroots community groups like Tenants & Residents Associations
  - The Forum for Equalities and Human Rights in Southwark
  - Adult Social Care Providers
  - Health and Social Prescribing workers.
  - Public Health officers
  - Voluntary & Community Sector organisations across the borough who engaged in a wide-ranging series of events organised and facilitated by Community Southwark.

7. The review also has also drawn on a range of research into the impacts of the pandemic in Southwark and on the work of the Community Hub itself, including:
  - Survey of a representative sample of people supported by the current Hub arrangements
  - Survey of a representative sample of Southwark’s population
  - Survey of voluntary and community organisations
  - Analysis of people served by the current Community Hub arrangements,
  - Rapid needs assessment to understand the health and wellbeing impact of the pandemic.
8. A number of key findings have emerged through this evidence concerning the challenges and opportunities facing the borough that have helped to frame the recommendations on the development of the community hub.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### ***Summary of key findings and recommendations of the review group***

9. The review concludes that we need a clear framework to build on the lessons and opportunities of the community hub work over the longer-term. This requires clarity of vision, operating model and underlying principles. Taken together, this framework forms the governing recommendation of the report.
10. As set out in the key findings, the review process has touched on a number of wide-ranging issues that will require concerted work by partners over the longer-term. The review group identified a number of these contingencies and makes recommendations for how these areas of work can be aligned with the framework set out for the borough.

### ***A Southwark Community Support Alliance***

11. Moving forward the review recommended that we should develop a Southwark social/ community support alliance that is focused on providing social support that delivers long-term reductions in inequality, building on the successes of the Community Hub, and founded on the following outcomes and framework.
12. The high-level outcomes for the alliance are
  - To improve outcomes for Southwark residents in ways that reduce inequalities in:
    - Self-efficacy
    - Health & Wellbeing
    - Resilience
    - Income
    - Food security & nutrition
    - Employment
    - Education & skills
    - Debt
    - Homelessness

13. The proposed framework for the Southwark Community Support Alliance is:

- A borough wide access point – so people can find the support that is available for them.
  - Local community hubs/anchor organisations - providing advice and support in each part of the borough, with an agreed common role however provided by organisations each with their own unique mission and operating model. Including making best use of space and the collective estate within neighbourhoods to support delivery.
  - Grassroots community groups (MA groups & TRAs etc.) working to ensure support reaches those who need it.
  - Advice and support services (benefits, employment, housing, debt, immigration, social care etc.) provided by the voluntary and public sector, including independent advice.
  - Information and knowledge hub – provision of up to date information on central government policies, Southwark’s policies and procedures, changes in regulations and training support for advice providers.
  - Population group based ‘hubs’, providing access to specialist support:
    - Aging Well Hub
    - Wellbeing Hub
    - All-age Disabilities Hub
    - Children and Families Centres
  - Referral systems, including embedding the use of a CRM system and development of CRM system as a community platform for disseminating information to providers.
  - Data sharing, at a feasible and proportionate level between partners in the network.
  - Coordination & engagement, including an overall coordination group and one or more forums to ensure wider key partners are engaged and mechanisms to engage the wider voluntary sector (building on the current community hub arrangements).
  - Communications, so Southwark residents understand how to access the support and advice they need and are aware of how to volunteer and donate to crisis support.
14. The change came as a result of a recognition of the emerging scale of the crisis and the requirement to concentrate and coordinate resources to ensure that appropriate support could be provided to those most in need. Following on from the 16 recommendations that were within the previous cabinet paper these will be incorporated and delivered as described below with the more detailed implementation plan set out in Appendix 3:

### **Delivery and implementation of the Southwark Community Support Alliance**

*These are the 5 Short-term (October 2020 – March 2021) deliverables for the Southwark Community Support Alliance*

- 1. Move the current model to a new revised model that incorporates the 16 recommendations** (Appendix 2 shows the draft model)

- a) Food poverty is often one of the most pressing issues people face but is rarely the root cause of their difficulties. To maximise their wellbeing, many people need to be able to address housing, employment, skills, money, social care, immigration and wider issues. However, people often find the support that is available hard to access.
- b) The aim is to better join up 'social prescribing' services that have developed organically in Southwark incl. PCN social prescribing link workers so that this best supports Community Hub partners, can assist with collaborative/cross working and improve outcomes for local residents.
- c) Collaboration and communication between partners will ensure a joined up, multi-disciplinary approach, which will reduce duplication and cater to the widest possible range of health and care needs.

## **2. Data CRM systems - Review IT systems**

- a) Further, develop upon the current data sharing of referrals and data between public and VCS bodies. To embed this work and in so doing to reduce duplication of effort and achieve better outcomes for Southwark residents.
- b) To continue to develop and embed a social support referral system – building on the success of the work Community Southwark have been leading using the Airtable platform.
- c) To prioritise connecting digitally excluded people and identify how access to devices and data that can be improved for people who cannot currently afford them and strengthen their digital skills.

## **3. Food Delivery** – To provide an improved food provision, that is more desirable for the Food hubs and residents and is sustainable (even during another lockdown) and at a better cost to all.

- a) COVID-19 has made starkly clear the levels of food insecurity in our borough. Continue to strengthen the collaboration and coordination between Southwark's foodbanks.
- b) Partners in Southwark share a long-term aim to end food insecurity and poverty and the need for foodbanks. As part of that aim there is strong interest in collaborating to develop more affordable community run food options.
- c) The review recommends scaling up community run low cost food projects - working through the Southwark Food Action Alliance to develop options for affordable food provision that support people's dignity and independence (including community supermarkets, pantries etc), linked to the review of the food security plan.

## **4. Criteria for food access**

- a) To develop a stronger common approach to emergency food provision – working through the Southwark Food Action Alliance, including establishing aligned

criteria/thresholds, ways of avoiding duplication of service to individual people and shared relationships with food suppliers.

- b) Standardise monitoring criteria across food-aid organisations. Find ways to share intelligence across all food organisations in the borough.
- c) Work with those residents with personal experiences of food insecurity to inform service design and embed the dignity principles in all Community Hub work done in the borough.

#### **5. Update all procedures, Standard Operating Procedures and governance**

- a) Establishing good clear governing structures for key stakeholders and internal departments to ensure they are held accountable to the success of the Southwark Community Support Alliance.
- b) Developing wellbeing scripts and processes that are aligned with the vision, aims and outcomes of the Community hub.
- c) Enable all partners to work together to understand more about those groups that were identified as experiencing a disproportionately negative impact of COVID-19. By standardising the way they collect, use and act on data and understand how all partners can collectively work towards improving health outcomes. This will include a thorough analysis of all the data available within the council and key stakeholders. In particular, this would include a review of monitoring data on local residents accessing services both before and during lockdown to identify changing patterns of demand and emerging trends, especially since services have moved predominantly online.

#### ***The Long-term (March 2021 – March 2022) objectives for the Southwark Community Support Alliance***

- 15. The partners will work with Community Southwark on a joint piece of work on encouraging and supporting volunteering. This will include how we can develop volunteers that reflect the demography of local communities, and what we can offer volunteers (e.g. functional skills training, career pathways for younger volunteers).
- 16. Throughout the review we have heard that a high proportion of people tipped into poverty by COVID-19 do not have full recourse to public funds. Without a welfare system to fall back on people in this situation have been left in acute financial hardship. There is an urgent need to better understand the scale of this issue and to make the case for a more humane immigration system.
- 17. Undertake research to better understand Southwark's population who do not have full recourse to public funds – to identify the scale of the population and the issues they face. Working with the VCS groups that are currently supporting large number of people in this situation to undertake the research.

#### ***Reviewing capacity building support***

- 18. There is a strong desire across VCS organisations in Southwark to work together to improve social support. Almost all VCS organisations in the borough are small and need support to develop. There is strong interest in doing this in reciprocal ways that

link more established and emerging organisations so they can learn and improve support in their areas together.

19. The review recommends that the council work with Community Southwark to review how capacity building support in the borough can best support the development of Southwark social/ community support alliance.

### ***The role of Funders***

20. In the first phase of the response to the pandemic local and regional funders stepped forward to support the huge scale of community activity meeting the needs of vulnerable people impacted by Covid-19. Businesses and others also came forward with donations of food, other goods and services.
21. The review recommends that funders in Southwark should consider how they can best use their existing resources to support the delivery of these recommendations.

### **Policy implications**

22. The Council Plan 2018-22 sets out the overall policy framework. This plan describes the commitments, measures and milestones to achieve the Council vision of a fairer future for all. It was adopted by Council Assembly in November 2018 and provides a council wide plan for delivery across all services to 2022. At its meeting on 5 May the cabinet agreed to instruct officers to review the Council Plan and medium term resources strategy in the light of the pandemic's impact on the borough and bring forward, where necessary, updated proposals to Cabinet by September 2020. The issues raised in this report will be factored into this work taking account of the broader policy and financial landscape as local and national recovery and renewal planning.

### **Community impact statement**

23. COVID-19 continues to impact residents and partners across the borough. As has been previously noted by cabinet the issues raised demonstrate, the full impact of COVID-19 on the borough cannot yet be known. This will become clearer in the months ahead. Some impacts may not be clear for some years.
24. 53. The report notes the disproportionate impacts on vulnerable people and in particular on BAME groups. Cabinet is recommended to take forward a programme of work that responds to the inequalities exposed by COVID-19.
25. The wider social, environmental and economic impact on residents and the borough are significant. In considering, planning ahead for and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on our borough the council, working with partners, will undertake the necessary work to more fully understand any specific implications on a particular group or groups of individuals in our community.
26. The Public Sector Equality Duty will be taken into account as we deliver services and respond to the continuing impact of COVID-19 on our borough as well as plan any changes to policy and operations arising from that impact. This will include more detailed identification of any vulnerable groups and individuals who may be in particular need of targeted support through the ongoing community support alliance.

## **Resource implications**

27. The estimated cost to the council to the end of December for the work on the Community Hub is £1.2m (£935k to date) including food, staff costs and support for VCS partners. There will be additional costs of continuing this response to the pandemic, circa. £250k up to end of March, bringing the total estimated cost of the Community Hub to £1.45m.
28. This will be a call on the emergency funding from central government. Should the need to step up the response again because of the continued increase in the spread of covid-19 and further lockdowns these costs could be higher.
29. Beyond 31 March 2021, resource implications from this work will be met within existing resources, and if necessary considered through the process of agreeing the new Policy & Resources Strategy between November 2020 and February 2021.

## **Consultation**

30. The review of the community hub has involved extensive consultation with partners in the VCS and health sectors and with residents impacted by Covid-19. It has also involved consultation with officers across the council. Moving forward co-design with partners and residents is a key principle of the approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable residents

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Director of Law and Democracy**

31. The Localism Act 2011 gives councils a general power of competence whereby they have power to do anything that individuals generally may do. The establishment and ongoing development of the Community Hub as described in this paper is an exercise of those powers.
32. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in making this decision the Cabinet must comply with its public sector equality duty which requires it to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
33. The community impact statement set out in the report identifies relevant matters to be taken into account in discharging that duty and confirms that there will be ongoing consideration of this duty in the development of the proposals.
34. Whilst there is no legal duty on the council to carry out a consultation exercise in relation to formulating this approach, the report demonstrates how the council has appropriately taken account of the views of relevant groups and individuals in the community
35. The ongoing development of the community hub is an executive function reserved to Cabinet that includes the "approval of policy and procedures governing the Council's relationship with the voluntary sector".

36. Officers from legal services will be available to provide advice and assistance in the development of the various strands identified in the report including on data sharing and governance issues.

**Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (H&M020/62)**

37. This report sets out implementation and timescales of the recommendations required as the first steps to addressing the short-term (by March 2021) and the long-term (by March 2022) needs of the Community Hub.
38. As noted within the resource implications, the estimated cost of the Community hub is £1.2m to the end of December, with a further estimated amount of £250k to help with the short term deliverables (by March 2021), not including any additional costs should there be further lockdowns. The Strategic Director of Finance and Governance in consultation with the Cabinet member for Finance and Resources will determine the most appropriate allocation of Covid-19 emergency funding to council priorities.
39. Notwithstanding the government funding that has been made available to the council to mitigate the exceptional costs arising from Covid, it will be insufficient to meet the full financial impact on the council, therefore, careful consideration of the costs associated with the short term deliverables and the ability to continue this work within available resources beyond March 2021 will help minimise the financial burden on the council.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Previous Cabinet paper - Community Hub - supporting the needs of the most vulnerable	Communities Division, Environment & Leisure 160 Tooley Street	Stephen Douglass 0207 525 0886
<b>Link (please copy and paste into your browser):</b>		
<a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&amp;MId=6662&amp;Ver=4">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&amp;MId=6662&amp;Ver=4</a>		
Papers of the review working group	Communities Division, Environment & Leisure 160 Tooley Street	Stephen Douglass 0207 525 0886
<b>Link (please copy and paste into your browser):</b>		
<a href="https://www.communitysouthwark.org/southwark-community-hub-one-stop-support-during-the-covid-19-coronavirus-crisis">https://www.communitysouthwark.org/southwark-community-hub-one-stop-support-during-the-covid-19-coronavirus-crisis</a>		
Fairer Southwark Food Plan	Communities Division, Environment & Leisure 160 Tooley Street	Stephen Douglass 0207 525 0886
<b>Link (please copy and paste into your browser):</b>		
<a href="https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/for-professionals?chapter=4">https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/for-professionals?chapter=4</a>		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Summary of the Review Recommendations
Appendix 2	Proposed Model for the Southwark Community Support Alliance
Appendix 3	Two Year Implementation Plan
Appendix 4	Proposed Governance Structure

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Helen Dennis, Social Support & Homelessness and Councillor Alice Macdonald, Communities and Equalities	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Michael Scorer, Strategic Director of Housing & Modernisation	
<b>Report Authors</b>	Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities Daniel Hooper, Community Hub Project Manager Isabelle Pearce, Community Hub Project Manager	
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<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
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