

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 15 November 2018

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Physical Environment

**SUBJECT:** Community Shop

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide Members with an update following the appraisal of options for the introduction of a Community Shop in Halton and to seek Members' approval to progress a preferred option.

## **2. RECOMMENDED: That**

- 1) Executive Board approve that the Council progresses the option of working with Community Shop, and other partners, to deliver a Community Shop at the Onward Homes Priory House Office (“the Onward Homes Option”);**
- 2) Council be recommended to approve an amendment to the Capital Programme and a £50k capital allocation be approved to provide a contribution towards the costs involved in developing a Community Shop in Halton, and;**
- 3) the Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Physical Environment, to take all such actions and to make any decisions necessary in order to progress “the Onward Homes Option”.**

## **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1** At their meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018, Executive Board received a report setting out a number of options to progress the potential delivery of a Community Shop in Halton. Members approved that, following the outcome of the appraisal of those options, a further report be presented to the Board for consideration to be given as to how best to proceed to deliver a Community Shop in Halton.
- 3.2** The potential options for delivering a Community Shop in Halton, as set out in the previous report to Members, were to;

- Develop an 'Integrated Hub' on Windmill Hill
  - Introduce a Community Shop into a current Council asset, including the current Windmill Hill Children's Centre Building or Upton Community Centre
  - Undertake a further site/buildings options appraisal to identify alternative premises
- 3.3 Since the previous report, there have been key developments with regards to two of the above options; the Integrated Hub and the identification of alternative premises, details of which are set out below.

#### **4.0 POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR A COMMUNITY SHOP IN HALTON**

##### **Integrated Hub**

- 4.1 A feasibility study for an Integrated Health & Wellbeing Hub for Windmill Hill was commissioned by the Big Local Partnership and Well Halton in September 2017. In January 2018, Community Shop asked to be part of this feasibility study and this was agreed by the Big Local Partnership Steering Group.
- 4.2 The feasibility study is now complete and has been circulated to stakeholders for feedback. The recommendation arising from the study is to create a 'hub' development; providing a ground level extension to the Children's Centre building to allow the co-location of a Community Shop alongside the Children's Centre and to provide new multi-functional meeting room spaces. The proposal also includes extending St Berteline's Church Hall to accommodate flexible 'community space' and a larger café space. A new car park on the former GP Surgery site and public realm improvements to support fluid access to the site and traffic management are also proposed. This recommendation is estimated to cost £4.5 million and would require approximately 97 weeks for procurement and build. At this stage, there is no capital funding secured to deliver this project.
- 4.3 Feedback on the study recommendation has been received from a number of stakeholders. The Big Local Partnership Steering Group considered the stakeholder responses at a meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and, in summary, the feedback is as follows;
- Clinical Commissioning Group – The CCG's approach is based upon the 'One Halton' work and tackling thematic areas of health needs with general practice population sizes. There are therefore no plans to commission any specific services for Windmill Hill and, as such, the CCG cannot commit to the recommendations progressing.

- Public Health - support the study and feel a key anchor tenant is essential for long term sustainability. Whatever the outcome of the study, Public Health will consider an offer of outreach health improvement services to Windmill Hill as there are existing assets that could support this activity.
- Onward Homes – is supportive of the study however, they have concerns about the level of investment required and feel a Community Shop is pivotal to any development and if one is not realised then what would be on offer would largely be what is currently in place.
- St Berteline's Church – supportive however, anxious at the lack of 'buy in' from the local community to the proposals. Feel a staged approach to any development may begin to build community confidence and be more achievable.
- Big Local Partnership – In 2012, Windmill Hill was awarded £1m 'Big Local' funding to be spent over a 10 year period. Following the award of the funding the Windmill Hill Big Local Partnership was established. This is a resident led Partnership that has identified community infrastructure/facilities as a key priority in their strategic plan.

The Big Local Partnership is opposed to Community Shop being sited on Windmill Hill. The Partnership has stated that it will not invest any of its Big Local funds towards the development of a Community Shop or the Children's Centre site as they feel that Community Shop is a Borough-wide initiative and should be sited elsewhere.

The Partnership is keen to support the proposed development at St Berteline's Church, to enable broader access to community activity, and it will consider investment of Big Local funds to this element of the scheme.

- Residents – Windmill Hill has 1,003 households and a population of 2,364 residents. As part of the feasibility study, each household received information about the options for a Hub development and was invited to provide comment and feedback on their preferred option. 33 written responses were received.

The Big Local Partnership facilitated a session to allow residents to provide feedback on the study. Big Local have reported that those residents who attended the session were very concerned about the recommendation of the study as they felt that the local community had only asked for 'community space' to be developed and the other elements of the recommendation were too ambitious and not what the community desires.

In July, Officers held two open sessions to provide Windmill Hill residents with an update of the options contained within the feasibility study. A number of residents who lived in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site attended these sessions and provided feedback on the recommendations. These residents expressed concern about any change in use and perceived that the development would result in the 'saturation of the assets' and lead to traffic management issues.

### **Further Site/Building Options Appraisal**

- 4.4 As a result of their ambition to introduce a shop into Halton, Community Shop has been actively seeking to identify potential sites or buildings. Community Shop recently approached the Council and advised that it had been in dialogue with Onward Homes and was exploring the potential to locate a shop at their Runcorn Office site, Priory House, which is located next to Shopping City.
- 4.5 Onward Homes have been progressing a transformational programme of re-organisation. Their new structure requires a small staff team being located at the Runcorn office and therefore surplus accommodation is available to be utilised for other purposes from January 2019. Some staff will remain at the site hence, it would become a shared space facility. Onward Homes are keen to develop this option and see Community Shop as an opportunity to provide access to the reduced cost retail offer and other support that can positively impact their tenants.
- 4.6 Community Shop are also keen to see this option developed, in partnership with the Council and Well North/Halton, to create a 'hub' approach where other initiatives could also be located alongside the shop. Well North/Halton are similarly keen to progress this option.
- 4.7 Community Shop have advised that the anticipated cost to remodel the accommodation they would occupy is £330k. This is significantly less than the anticipated £4.5m to develop the Integrated Hub option and the circa £800k that would be needed to develop the Windmill Hill Children's Centre option.
- 4.8 Community Shop will be seeking support towards the capital costs from financial contributions from project partners and support with grant applications. Where Community Shops exist elsewhere, Local Authorities have been very supportive by contributing either capital funding or buildings. It is being recommended that the Council makes a £50k contribution towards the capital costs which would provide a match funding source to help enable the remaining funds to be secured.

## **Recommendations**

- 4.9 Officers have worked very closely with the local Ward Councillor to introduce a Community Shop in Windmill Hill. A model had been identified to help achieve this, through the development of an Integrated Health and Wellbeing Hub, however, after considering the feedback set out above it is now considered that it would not be possible to progress this option.
- 4.10 The most viable option to achieve a Community Shop in the Borough appears to be to progress of the option to introduce a shop into the Onward Homes Priory House Office. Community Shop have advised within their business plan for 2019 that they have commitment to two Community Shops opening in the Liverpool City Region, one by April and the second by October, and not only could the Onward Homes option allow the shop to be opened within desired timescales, the level of capital funding required to deliver the project is much reduced compared to other options and will provide increased opportunity for it to be secured.
- 4.11 Members are asked to approve a recommendation that the Council progresses the option of working with Community Shop, and other partners, to deliver a Community Shop at the Onward Homes Priory House Office. It is also recommended that the Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Physical Environment, to take all such actions and to make any decisions necessary in order to progress the delivery of a Community Shop in Halton.
- 4.12 With regards to the options of delivering a Community Shop at the Windmill Hill Children's Centre building or Upton Community Centre, these can remain as potential future options that could be revisited in the event that the Onward Homes option is not realised.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The financial implications are set out within the report.

## **6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no new Policy implications as a result of this report.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **7.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

Community Shop is targeted at households in need of support, and children & young people would benefit by virtue of the targeted approach.

## **7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The model provides permanent employment opportunities. There would be opportunities to support linkages to further employment across the retail and logistics partners linking into Halton Employment Partnership (HEP). The mentoring programme focusses on skills development and employability.

## **7.3 A Healthy Halton**

Access to low cost food provision, including fresh produce, will improve the quality of food intake. The mentoring programme that goes alongside the shopping offer will increase knowledge and practice of healthy eating for the scheme participants and their households.

## **7.4 A Safer Halton**

A sense of community and community connectedness reduces residents' fears of crime where they live. Residents are likely to feel a stronger sense of belonging and safety in an environment where the community members know each other, are active and there are established links to other stakeholders like police, housing associations, community wardens, etc. Community Shop can engender this approach in the Community Hub.

## **7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

A Community Shop would be an asset within the Borough and provide a targeted retail offer. A location is yet to be determined, but will be identified through exploration and further understanding of the Shop's impact.

## **8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

Community Shop provides the opportunity to address food poverty, work intensely with individuals to support building skills and employability prospects, create employment opportunities and overall positively impact on health and wellbeing.

There is a risk that not securing the establishment of a Community Shop will result in the failure to realise these benefits in Halton.

## **9.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES**

This initiative targets the most financially disadvantaged residents in Halton's Community. Poverty and inequality are often elements of a complex set of circumstances which present exclusion. This initiative aims to tackle poverty and generate improved life chances for disadvantaged members of our local community.

**10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board Report 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2015 - Community Shop	Municipal Building Kingsway Widnes	Angela Scott
Executive Board Report 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2018 Community Shop	Municipal Building Kingsway Widnes	Angela Scott
Executive Board Report 20 <sup>th</sup> September 2018 Community Shop	Municipal Building Kingsway Widnes	Angela Scott