

Cheshire East Council

Cabinet Member for Communities

Date of Meeting: 19th October 2015

Report of: Steph Cordon Head of Communities

Subject/Title: Franchise Model – Community Hubs

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Les Gilbert

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. Cheshire East Council as a Residents First Council is leading a programme of work along with our partners, to develop vibrant and sustainable Community Hubs, which are shaped and developed by local communities, providing the right services in the right place, at the right times. They are a key element of our ambitious programme to empower our communities, providing information and access to help for residents, tackling the causes rather than the symptoms. They are centres that deliver for those in need, with a wide range of outreach early intervention and prevention services, to protect our vulnerable residents. We are also challenging our partners to deliver more through community hubs, providing services more efficiently and effectively and which meet specific needs.
- 1.2. The Cabinet Member for Communities approved a new Franchise Model for Community Hubs on the 20th July 2015. It is a social franchising model, which is first and foremost about partnership, offers a range of benefits to its members and puts local communities first.
- 1.3. This report provides details of two applications received by Cheshire East Council from local groups wishing to apply for a franchise and form a Community Hub.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Cabinet Member for Communities awards a franchise to:-
 - Barnies, Crewe
 - The Welcome, Knutsford
- 2.2. That a start-up grant of up to £2,000 is awarded to Barnies, Crewe and The Welcome, Knutsford and a package of on-going support is provided.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. Cheshire East Community Hubs (CECH) franchise provides a robust framework to establish a recognised standard of governance and ensures consistent service standards across services and activities provided.
- 3.2. Two Expressions Of Interests have been received by Cheshire East Council from Barnies, Crewe and The Welcome, Knutsford applying to be awarded a franchise.
- 3.3. Barnies and The Welcome have evidenced within their application forms that they meet the criteria set out.
- 3.4. Barnies and The Welcome both commit to being active members of the Cheshire East Community Hub network and agree to attend meetings and receive training.
- 3.5. The application forms also include evidence from both groups confirming each possess level 1 of the CVS GRIPPP self-assessment assurance process which demonstrates they each have the necessary governance processes in place.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The application process provides the portfolio holder the opportunity to fully assess each Expression of Interest and consider an outcome based on a 3 stage process. The Portfolio Holder can decline the applications and offer support to fulfill the criteria for approval within a specified time.

5. Background

- 5.1. Barnies is located on the border of Crewe Central and St Barnabas wards. It attracts many residents from both these wards and is re-inventing itself from a little used community venue to one that is undergoing refurbishment at the same time as providing more services locally. St Barnabas Hall is owned by the Church Council and EEA (Education Enterprise Alliance) have a a lease to run Barnies social centre currently Wednesday to Friday 10 am - 3 pm (from November Monday to Friday). EEA pay a contribution to the PCC for use of the hall. New services developed as part of their hub work include:
 - lunch clubs
 - IT training
 - community garden
 - NEET programmes
 - Advocacy
 - Community Café.

- 5.2. The Welcome is based on the Longridge estate in Knutsford and provides a café and drop-in facility to local residents. The building is leased by The Welcome, Knutsford Limited which is a registered charity and it is managed by a board of trustees. New services as part of their hub work include:
- Work Club
 - Credit Union
 - Lunch Club
 - IT Training
 - Mentoring Scheme.
- 5.3. Cheshire East Council is working with partners to develop a Franchise model for Community Hubs, which offers a range of benefits to its members.
- 5.4. The Cheshire East Community Hubs (CECH) franchise provides a framework which ensures Community Hubs:
- Have local and effective governance arrangements in place, with quality assurance provided through a validated self-assessment process.
 - Deliver a core offer plus additional services to meet local needs, to high and consistent service standards.
 - Deliver social impact based on local need, in line with our Residents First aims.
 - Share existing learning in the borough, with local organisations helping each other, making it quicker and easier to start up community hubs.
 - Are locally owned and operate flexibly to meet their local context and circumstances.
 - Develop a strong network of organisations, but those organisations running hubs remain local and close to their frontline.
 - Offer a wide range of local services, achieving economies of scope in service delivery.
 - Deliver economies of scale through the network, by accessing joint purchasing, marketing, recruitment, back office functions, bidding, tendering, policy credibility etc.
 - Provide financial sustainability for the future of local assets and local service provision.
 - Enable sharing which combines social and financial goals.
 - Work through genuine and mutually beneficial partnerships, under a common identity.
 - Devolve power and control to local communities and encourage innovation.
- 5.5. Applicants applying to the franchise, must demonstrate they meet the GRIPPP self-assessment assurance process, which is externally validated to demonstrate that the organisation has good governance in place including:

- Governance – look after the direction, development and legal responsibilities
 - Resources – in place to enable them to get work done
 - Information – on local area and how to get things done
 - Projects – deliver tasks and activities
 - People – connect, network and involve local community
 - Premises –additional requirement for hubs to ensure premises run effectively.
- 5.6. Applicants for membership must ensure Community Hubs meet the core offer e.g. provide access for at least 20 hours per week.
- 5.7. Barnies, Crewe and The Welcome, Knutsford in applying for a franchise are entering into a commitment to participate in their Community Hub networks in their respective localities.
- 5.8. Both groups have included within their Expressions Of Interest information which evidences they possess all the elements required to apply for franchise status, as summarised in Appendix 1.

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

- 6.1. Crewe Central, Crewe St Barnabas, Knutsford

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Policy Implications

- This will support the reduction of dependency on public services and also support our commitment as a Residents First Council to the co-production of services.

7.2. Legal Implications

- The opportunity of applying for a franchise should be well advertised and made available to all eligible organisations.
- The core requirements and terms and conditions of being a franchisee need to be documented in a legally binding agreement.
- Adequate on going review of the standards of service delivery will be necessary to ensure that the endorsement provided by Council branding is justified.

7.3. Financial Implications

- The start-up grant for franchise applications will be funded from the Community Hub part of the Community Investment Reserve. There is sufficient funding in this earmarked reserve for these two applications.

7.4. Human Resources Implications

- No Human Resource implications to this approach.

7.5. Equality Implications

- Applications for franchise status is encouraged from all groups irrespective of race, religion or gender.

7.6. Rural Community Implications

- Community Hubs developed in rural communities are encouraged to apply for franchise status.

7.7. Public Health Implications

- No public health implications to this approach.

8. Risk Management

- 8.1. Any potential risks have been considered and mitigated against in this context.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1. (a) Completed Expression Of Interest forms from Barnies, Crewe and The Welcome, Knutsford.
- (b) Cabinet Members for Communities paper dated 20th July – Community Hubs Update.

10. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:-

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Appendix 1.

Criteria	Evidence provided	
	Barnies, Crewe	The Welcome, Knutsford
At least 20 hours per week (at centre or through a network arrangement) of access for the public or service users to access information and services	<p>The centre has a current regular programme of 25.5 hours per week. From December an additional 6 hours will be fixed into the weekly programme when activities transfer from the Oakley centre</p> <p>Barnies Social Centre opening hours are Wed – Friday 10 - 3pm with evening activities Monday to Friday for various groups</p>	<p>The Welcome currently operates over 37 hours per week.</p> <p>This accounts for 29 core hours with additional hours providing access for specific classes, clubs and community meetings.</p>
Premises available for communities and local organisations to book for group activities 7 days/evenings per week excluding times set aside by managing organisation for own use eg place of worship	<p>The Hall is available for additional bookings on none fixed hours.</p> <p>The centre is also flexible in hosting additional bookings on social centre days as they have access to 2 halls and outdoor spaces and will move around users if they can to enable full use of the centre</p>	<p>The Welcome operates a flexible timetable and will open its doors to the community as and when required outside of the core hours including evenings and weekends.</p>
Agree to collection of data quarterly – Footfall, volunteer hours, services and data sharing	<p>Visitors log used daily</p> <p>Individual sessions provide quarterly data.</p>	<p>A regular log of the number of volunteers and the hours they provide are maintained.</p> <p>The Welcome website records all diary activity and records attendance statistics for projects delivered.</p>
Promotion of all local community services and activities, including those available at the venue (and within network).	<p>Building notice boards</p> <p>Venue Flyers & Newsletter distributed locally and in public buildings and local shops and supermarket</p>	<p>The Welcome provides a mentoring service, and is host to the local Community Spirit Residents Association.</p> <p>Information relating to estate</p>

		<p>based activity and other services in the local area are also advertised and promoted.</p> <p>The Welcome is the venue for locally based projects and offers practical support to vulnerable residents with the provision of food parcels.</p>
Signposting and links to a range of public information and services	<p>One of the centres new services is an Advocacy service</p> <p>Public notice boards are well used to display local events and a information.</p> <p>A Information station (wall of display holders filled with service and activities literature) is to open shortly which will be accessible by centre and church users</p> <p>As well as new external notice boards</p>	<p>The Welcome provides a range of support classes including a Job Club, Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Credit Union, Craft Club, Computer and IT classes, Body fabulous and 10yrs to 19yrs Youth Club.</p>
Agree to annual review	Yes	Yes
Be active members of the local and Cheshire East Community Hub network and commit to attend meetings and training	Have and will continue to attend and host Crewe Network and Local Area Hub Network meetings	Have and will continue to attend and host Longridge Network and Local Area Hub Network meetings across Knutsford
Meet GRIPPP self-assessment assurance process, which is externally validated to demonstrate that the organisation has good governance in place.	Level 1 achieved 30 th September 2015	Level 1 achieved 28 th September 2015