



Health and Wellbeing Board

WEDNESDAY 23 MARCH 2022

REPORT TITLE:	TOWNS FUND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
REPORT OF:	DAVID HAMMOND, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, WIRRAL COMMUNITY HEALTH & CARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

REPORT SUMMARY

In July 2021, the Council was notified of the in-principle award of up to £25,000,000 from the national Town Deal Programme by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now renamed Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities - DLUHC).

This 'in principle' award is offered subject to the successful completion and approval of business cases for the projects included in the bid submission.

This report provides the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update on the development of the two of the ten Towns Fund projects in Wirral that have a direct impact on health and wellbeing:

1. The 'Wellbeing and Opportunity Centre' project is being led by Open Door Charity with Wirral Community Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust and is the focus of this report.
2. The 'Education Engagement Network' project is led by Wirral Metropolitan College. The connection between these two projects will be addressed in the presentation.

Town centre regeneration is a long-standing priority for the Council.

The Wirral Plan 2021 - 2026 has been developed and the focus covers the following five themes:

- Safe & Pleasant Communities
- Brighter Futures
- Active and Healthy Lives
- Sustainable Environment
- Inclusive Economy

These Towns Fund projects deliver against all of the above themes. Most specifically, they will contribute significantly towards the ambitions for a thriving and inclusive economy, creating jobs and opportunities for all.

The Birkenhead Towns Fund area covers parts of the wards of Birkenhead and Tranmere, and Seacombe, though the benefits of the projects are Wirral-wide and affect all wards.

It is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to note the development of the Wellbeing and Opportunity Centre project and the Education Engagement Network projects and their potential for positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Wirral residents and the quality of integrated service delivery.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 These projects represent an innovative and broad approach to supporting better health and wellbeing, relevant to the work of the Health & Wellbeing Board.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The design and service model for the Wellbeing and Opportunity Centre are being refined, to be described within a full business case. A final model has not yet been developed. The full business case will demonstrate the effectiveness, outcomes and sustainability of the proposed offer.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The objective of the national Towns Fund is to drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth. Birkenhead is one of 101 towns to bid into the fund. The fund is for capital projects and is designed to support:

- Urban regeneration and land use
- Skills and employment
- Connectivity (transport and digital)

- 3.2 Birkenhead set up a Towns Fund Board responsible for developing a vision and agreeing a clear programme of intervention that will help achieve that vision. IN July 2021, Birkenhead was awarded £25m funding. The connection between economic development, educational opportunities, life chances and health, led to the in-principle agreement to fund the projects noted in this report.
- 3.3 The funds will be released once full business cases have been developed by the respective project teams and approved by Wirral Borough Council.

Wellbeing and Opportunity Centre

- 3.2 The 'Wellbeing and Opportunity Centre' project arose from combining outline project proposals put forward by The Open Door Charity and the Health, Wellbeing & Community Task & Finish Group, realising the synergy between them.
- 3.3 It is centred on the Treasury Annex Building, on Cleveland Street, which will be renovated as part of the development. This building is next to Wirral Metropolitan College's Hamilton campus on the corner of Hamilton Square.
- 3.4 The vision is for a nationally significant centre where arts, culture, health and wellbeing and life opportunities combine to create an attractive and inspiring community offer.

Welcoming, holistic and inclusive, it will combine a wide range of activities and service offers from the community and voluntary and statutory sectors with a focus on children, young people and families.

It will develop stronger relationships, understanding and coordination across the teams that work from and link with the site.

- 3.5 The full business case for this development is required by June 2022. If approved, building work is likely to take place in 2023 with a target for the centre opening in early 2024.

Education Engagement Network

- 3.6 The investment from Towns Deal will fund the renovation of a number of existing buildings and provides digital infrastructure for a network to be created to enhance engagement with education for hard to reach groups.
- 3.7 The projects will consist of a hub and spoke model, where the central hub will exist as both a physical base and a digital platform, bringing together education, advice, guidance, and specialist services.
- 3.8 The eight spokes will then each house different services targeting vocational skill pathways aimed at vulnerable groups. By way of example, upgrades to Spoke 3- Tomorrows Women, Watson Street, will pay to convert two rooms for use as counselling/ relaxation/ learning areas to assist vulnerable women, with the funding allocation paying for decoration, flooring, lighting upgrades, IT and signage to achieve the desired conditions.
- 3.9 The hubs and spokes are as follows:

Hub, Treasury Building: Wirral Met College providing skills progression to employment for 16-18 yr olds and adult learners to complement a recent investment made by Liverpool Combined Authority and the Council (combined £1.4million investment) to enable Trade Union Education and Professional Services Education in the Treasury Building.

Spoke 1, Argyle Street: Wirral Council providing a 'Care Leavers Response Centre'.

Spoke 2, Central Library: Wirral Council providing targeted community engagement in a severely deprived neighbourhood.

Spoke 3, Watson Street: Charity Tomorrow's Women targeting vulnerable women.

Spoke 4, Beckwith Street East: Wirral Change targeting the BAME community.

Spoke 5, Hamilton Street: Forum Housing targeting vulnerable young people estranged from their families.

Spoke 6, Europa Boulevard: Probation Service, targeting low level offenders with rehabilitation services.

Spoke 7, New Price Street: Spider Project, targeting people at risk of addiction.

- 3.10 The full business case for this development is now drafted. If approved, building work is likely to commence in 2022.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising directly from this report.
- 4.2 For the 'Wellbeing and Opportunity Centre', financial implications for the project will be fully understood through the work associated with the development of the full business case.
- 4.3 The 'Education to Employment' project harnesses existing revenue funding for the design and delivery of education and training for young people and adults that is central to Wirral Metropolitan College and Wirral Council's Lifelong Learning department. This will make this project sustainable and builds upon the strong college/council strategic partnership to deliver a relevant, place-based curriculum.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report. Legal considerations will be subject to the project development and full business case approval process.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are project development monies associated with the Towns Fund that are being used to resource the project with technical support. Staff time from a range of organisations is being contributed to progress the project.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Risks are being managed within the project structure. As this report represents a project update during the full business case development process, there are no risks to Wirral Council identified in this report or related to the recommended decision.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Significant consultation is taking place with partners and stakeholders during the Design phase of the project. Dozens of engagement sessions have been held with residents and the teams from the community, voluntary and statutory services who provide universal or targeted services for the potential centre users.

These engagement sessions culminated in two multiagency workshops in early March. The output from these sessions will be translated by the Design team

architects into ideas to be shared with participants, to ensure the design and service offer best meets the aspirations of those contributing.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken in relation to each of the projects to ensure they meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty in order to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The project is being developed with inclusion and equality at the forefront of their planning.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The process of renovating the Treasury Annex building will carefully consider the environmental impact of the works. It is an existing, material-dense and old building. A 'Fabric First' approach involves reusing building fabric where possible to reduce the embodied energy associated with new building materials. An 'Environmental Sustainability Feasibility Study' will give a clear understanding of what is and isn't possible within the building from the outset, with environmental targets set accordingly.

It is expected that the project will reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, but this is subject to a finalised design.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The creation of the Wellbeing Centre and the opportunities that it will realise for local people, with Open Door Charity the leading organisation in this, is wholly supportive of Wirral's Community Wealth Building Strategy, particularly local employment and community development.

11.2 The education and skills designed and developed through the Education to Employment project, will directly support the needs of a number of vulnerable groups (spokes) to define and build a relevant offer that turns those needs into a demand-led offer that supports skills for life and work, reflective of key community drivers.

**REPORT AUTHOR: David Hammond, Deputy Director of Strategy
Wirral Community Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust**

email: david.hammond9@nhs.net

APPENDICES

Presentation to follow in supplemental agenda

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Towns fund monitoring and evaluation strategy

Towns fund prospectus

Towns Deals: full list of 101 offers

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Economy Regeneration & Development Committee – Town Deal Acceptance of Grant	22 November 2021
Economy Regeneration & Development Committee – Birkenhead Town Deal funding request	26 January 2021
Director of Regeneration & Place - Delegated key decision report – Town Deal Accelerated Grant	4 November 2020