

# Cabinet

25 November 2021

## Community Powered Warwickshire Ground Breaker, Partner Mobilisation and Mainstreaming Phases

### Recommendation(s)

1. That Cabinet notes and comments on the completed analysis phase of the Community Powered Warwickshire programme, as set out in section 3 of this report.
2. That Cabinet approves the proposed next steps for the ground breaker, partner mobilisation and mainstreaming phases of the programme, as set out in sections 4 to 6 of this report.

### 1. Background to this report

- 1.1 The Community Powered Warwickshire (CPW) programme was initiated in March 2021 to support delivery of the Council's COVID Recovery Plan, specifically Priority 4 "Harness the power of our communities to tackle inequality and social inclusion". Community action was a notable strength of Warwickshire's response to COVID, enhancing the longstanding positive reputation, contribution, and role of our vibrant voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. The programme draws on good practice from notable councils which have embedded community power to achieve significant benefits in terms of outcomes, community engagement and finance.
- 1.2 The CPW programme also supports delivery of the objectives of the Council's Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2020-25, approved in September 2019, and as such is relevant to all the Council's priority outcomes.
- 1.3 Community power is closely connected to key local priorities, including place shaping, development of the Integrated Care System, addressing inequalities revealed by the pandemic, and tackling climate change. It is resonant to all the draft priorities for the refreshed Council Plan:
  - Vibrant Economy and Places: right jobs, training, future skills, education, infrastructure, and places.
  - Best Lives: communities and individuals supported to live safely, healthily, happily, and independently.

- Sustainable Futures: adapting to and mitigating climate change and meeting net zero commitments.
- 1.4 The CPW programme aligns with emerging national policy themes around the Levelling-Up White Paper which is expected to emphasise a community powered approach:
- Uniting and levelling-up every part of the country and building back better from the pandemic.
  - Encouraging and extending “pride in place.”
  - Growing the private sector, raising living standards, spreading opportunity, improving public services, working with communities, and restoring people’s sense of pride in their communities.
- 1.5 Examples of national policy direction include: [Trusting the People](#) by New Local and the New Social Covenant, which explores how to level up the country through a “double devolution” to councils and communities; a report by Danny Kruger MP, commissioned by the Prime Minister, [Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant](#), which made a series of proposals to sustain the community spirit we have seen during the coronavirus pandemic.
- 1.6 Community power is also closely connected to changes in the Council’s public engagement strategy, principally through development of the Voice of Warwickshire residents’ panel, for which recruitment is ongoing:
- To better understand needs and improve how the Council works with communities to tackle the huge challenges we face in a world that has been changed by COVID; and
  - To share views on big issues in Warwickshire, such as health and wellbeing, climate change and sustainability, community safety, education, transport, economic growth, inequalities, and inclusion.

## 2. The Community Powered Warwickshire programme

- 2.1 The CPW programme has the following objectives:
- To develop a place and/or interest-based programme of change designed to position community power at the heart of the Council’s work and connected to the major priorities for Warwickshire and the Council.
  - To foster and build community capacity and capability in support of upstream intervention and prevention, deliver better outcomes for residents, and ensure our approach is flexible to meet the needs of different places and avoiding a “one size fits all” approach.
  - To develop a clear and simple narrative about the programme that can motivate and guide councillors, employees, partners, and community

catalysts, and that lays the foundations for a Warwickshire Offer between the Council, residents, communities and partners.

- To provide councillors, the Council workforce, partners, and community catalysts with a sense of ownership of the programme.
- To capture best practice from the pandemic response and enable new and innovative approaches to flourish as part of COVID recovery, encouraging new initiatives and practical steps to develop and embed a refreshed role, purpose, and approach for the Council post-COVID that works in the context of the wider emerging public service policy agenda.
- To create the enabling elements that will support communities including a social investment fund to support the overall objectives.

2.2 New Local has been commissioned until early 2022 to provide a focused injection of external expertise and capacity, working alongside internal staff, to establish and define a community powered programme which underpins the ongoing Council Plan refresh. Community power has been emphasised as a key building block and enabler to delivering the Council's vision to make Warwickshire the best it can be, sustainable now and for future generations, and to support wider developments such as the Integrated Care System, climate change, tackling inequalities and place shaping.

2.3 The phases of our work with New Local are:

- **Analysis:** providing a clear picture of what the Council is already doing to achieve community power, what more it could be doing, developing a clear narrative, pitch, and brand for community power.
- **Ground breakers:** drawing on the analysis work to identify a series of projects to shift to a community powered approach in specific spheres and locations of the Council's work focusing on both communities of interest and place.
- **Partner mobilisation:** bringing together key partners of the Council such as the Borough and District Councils, Health, Police, Town and Parish Councils, VCSE sector organisations and local businesses to jointly develop sustainable and supported community power partnership visions, initiatives, and wider programmes.
- **Mainstreaming:** identifying practical steps to make community power the default approach to the Council's work. Placing a particularly strong emphasis on culture and behaviour change. Developing an evaluation framework for CPW including strategic measures linking into the Council's wider Key Performance Management Framework, which is currently in development.

2.4 This report updates Cabinet on the Community Powered Warwickshire programme to date, and the next steps.

### 3. Findings of the analysis phase

- 3.1 New Local has produced a report relating to the analysis phase which is available to members if requested. This phase of work has provided a clear picture of what the Council is already doing to achieve community power and what more it could be doing. It has helped shape a clear narrative which will inform the draft Council Plan, and a clear analysis which will inform the next stages of developing a community powered Warwickshire and Council.
- 3.2 The analysis phase has identified five principles of community power:
- A relationship with residents which is honest, open, realistic, and transparent, but also optimistic, positive, and collaborative. A relationship that brings communities' voices and experiences into the heart of organisational decision making and the design and delivery of services.
  - Public services with the operational flexibility to be innovative, inclusive, and collaborative, achieving the best possible results by empowering staff and working in a context-sensitive and co-productive way with communities and partners.
  - Community building and empowerment to equip every local area in the county with the skills needed to participate, lead change and flourish.
  - Relationships with organisational partners and other tiers of local government in the county which place an emphasis on common cause, ongoing dialogue, and finding ways collectively to enhance outcomes for communities.
  - Place-based approaches that unlock the local expertise of residents, to redress inequalities and genuinely level-up outcomes for all communities.
- 3.3 Five community power imperatives have been identified, to underpin the vision and narrative for community power in the Council Plan:
- Be clear, simple, impactful, and self-evidently useful, using normal language, not jargon.
  - Not be a clean break or "reboot" but build upon, and recognise, existing, widespread community powered achievement.
  - Generate momentum and a sense of shared endeavour, both externally and internally: mobilising the whole Council workforce, galvanising partner organisations, community groups, and residents.
  - Be flexible and useful across diverse contexts, relevant to every part of the county, various kinds of organisation and communities of place and of interest.
  - Balancing realism and honesty with genuine aspiration and ambition.
- 3.4 An emerging narrative around "Stepping Forward" has emerged from the analysis phase, reflecting:

- The imperative for the county and its various places and communities to step forward post-pandemic, and to apply the learning from the outstanding community-powered elements of the collective response to, and ongoing recovery from COVID.
- The substantial amounts of community powered work already ongoing, e.g., around co-production and strengths/asset-based working, and the fact that we are starting from a high base.
- The need to move forward and to make progress on the band of major challenges, the pandemic being one, but which also bring major opportunities.
- The need to work collaboratively with communities and partners across the sectors.

3.5 Drawing from the analysis phase, the draft refreshed Council Plan is expected to reflect the Stepping Forward narrative.

#### 4. Ground breaker phase

4.1 The aim of the ground breaker phase is to identify a series of initiatives to shift to a community powered approach in specific spheres and locations of the Council's work focusing on both communities of interest and place. The intention of the ground breakers is to test the community power vision in a range of ways and in areas of strategic significance, enable learning and to embed community powered approaches.

4.2 Five ground breakers have been identified from a wide range of suggestions emerging from the analysis phase. These have been refined from an original list of around fifty suggestions that were gathered through several months of interviews, workshops, and documentary research.

| Ground breaker  | Assistant Director Lead   |
|---|---|
| <b>Community Powered Place-Shaping</b> - <i>A joined up approach to place-shaping. Maximising community engagement and building on community assets. To include specific work to test community-powered approaches that can underpin major physical infrastructure changes through the Transforming Nuneaton programme.</i> | Sarah Stear / Communities and Partnerships.                     |
| <b>Stepping Forward Starts Here</b> - <i>Unlocking the time and skills of Council staff and encouraging the use of this in the interests of communities.</i>  | Sarah Duxbury / Human Resources and Organisational Development. |
| <b>Highways to Help</b> - <i>Creating a unified and co-produced way of working across the transport, highways, and road safety policy area.</i>   | Dave Ayton-Hill / Transport.                                    |
| <b>Wellbeing Neighbourhoods</b> - <i>Creating the conditions for better place-based wellbeing, making the most of community assets.</i>   | Shade Agboola / Public Health.                                  |
| <b>Community Supermarket/s</b> - <i>Galvanising communities while combatting inequalities through the enabling medium of affordable food. The ground breaker will include a fixed site in</i>   | Sarah Stear / Communities and Partnerships.                     |

- 4.3 A fuller description of the ground breakers is included as Appendix 1. The ground breakers are currently being set up and mobilised. For each, 3 or 4 key outcomes, including success factors, will be identified. The set-up phase will have a strong practical focus, including what needs to happen to launch the ground breaker and how it will be sustained if it is effective.
- 4.4 Working groups will later form around each ground breaker, including those individuals involved with the workshops and external input relevant to the subject. Working groups will report into the CPW Steering Group chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture.
- 4.5 The ground breakers will be progressed using an agile approach and within the existing resources of the respective service area. Where a ground breaker is taking place in collaboration or partnership with a VCSE sector or partner organisation they may be able to apply for additional funding through one of the Council's current streams, including the Social Impact Fund subject to appropriate separation of decision-making roles being in place.

## 5. Partner mobilisation phase

- 5.1 The major products of the partner mobilisation phase are:
  - One-to-one conversations with key partners, including the Borough and District Councils, Police, Town and Parish Councils, VCSE sector organisations and local businesses.
  - Specific work alongside NHS partners, especially regarding the VCSE elements of the Integrated Care System.
  - The Big Conversation event that took place on 4 November, facilitated by New Local and attended by 100 delegates, which was supported by four preparatory co-productive workshops and an elected member development session.
- 5.2 The *Keeping the Spirit Alive – Community Powered Warwickshire Big Conversation* event on 4 November was attended by approximately 100 delegates from across the county and was very successful. The key messages to emerge from the Big Conversation event are:
  - The paramount importance of trust across all sectors and at all levels.
  - The importance of the following principles:
    - ❖ Listening to Warwickshire's diverse and different communities, acting on their views and priorities, and avoiding 'one size fits all' approaches.
    - ❖ Identifying common ground and common causes.
    - ❖ Keeping it simple.
    - ❖ Recognising and drawing on lived experience.

- ❖ Sustainable funding, not necessarily extra funding.
- ❖ Giving people the opportunity to come together and to collaborate.
- ❖ Co-production.
- Accepting that:
  - ❖ Not everything will go as planned; some things will fail, and this is part of the learning and trust building process.
  - ❖ To build community power takes time and patience.
  - ❖ We are starting from a high baseline of community action and community power.
- Acknowledgement that the VCSE sector can deliver more, but only if public sector organisations let it, and only if it is properly resourced.

5.3 One key proposal emerging from the discussions at the Big Conversation event, and using the Wigan exemplar, focused on the idea of developing a “Warwickshire Offer” for community power. The discussions on this theme highlighted the importance of:

- A long-term strategy for community power.
- A clear vision to mobilise people.
- Recognition of the needs of different communities and areas, and the hyper-local aspect of community power.
- An agreed qualitative way of working at a system level, linking into the Integrated Care System.
- Strong system leadership for community power across the County and its diverse places and communities.

5.4 In terms of building on the Big Conversation and very much linked to partner mobilisation is the proposal to explore the concept of a Warwickshire Offer and take it forward with partners in a way which works for Warwickshire and its different communities of place and of interest and is based on the principles above for which there was strong support at the event on 4 November, recognising that this is the start of a conversation which collectively we can build on over the coming 3 to 6 months. Further detail is set out in section 6 below.

## **6. Mainstreaming phase**

6.1 Embedding a deeper community-powered approach across the Council will require organisational change, building on the existing transformation of the organisation. Consequently, there are two key objectives for the mainstreaming phase:

- To identify ways that the Council can embed community power in Warwickshire.
- To deliver a roadmap that when delivered will enable the Council to become, and be recognised as, a leading community powered authority.

6.2 Five initial products have been identified to deliver these objectives:

| Product                        | Description  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>1. Evaluation framework</b> | To develop a framework to evaluate the long-term impact of community powered approaches. This will identify a series of appropriate metrics and methods to assess the extent and impact of community power.  |
| <b>2. Role of councillors</b>  | To work with councillors individually and on a place-based basis to better understand any local issues where community power could make a difference, to help councillors connect their local communities with other council/ partner/ VCSE initiatives and to provide officer support for councillors in delivering their critical role in local, community-powered approaches. |
| <b>3. Culture change</b>       | To create a culture and conditions within the Council which encourages maximum use of community powered approaches. This will include organisational development and consideration of how the new target operating model and strategy and commissioning functions can accelerate and embed community powered and preventative approaches.  |
| <b>4. Core functions</b>       | Engagement of finance, legal and procurement in CPW to ensure support functions understand community powered approaches and adapt to support them.   |
| <b>5. Warwickshire Offer</b>   | A countywide offer suggesting a relationship with residents and communities that embeds the principles of community power, early intervention and prevention, enabling the Council and other public services to maximise impact and focus resources on areas of greatest need by helping communities identify their own priorities and contribute to addressing them.            |

6.3 The evaluation framework will adopt the principles of connecting people, simplicity, and the ability to be absorbed into the mainstream. The framework will inform and support the development of the Council's new performance management framework which is currently in development. The framework will focus on:

- Outcomes, e.g., what good looks like in terms of community power in Warwickshire?
- Simple statements in terms that will be meaningful to relevant communities and demonstrate quantitatively their impact.
- A maximum of 5 to 10 high-level metrics of qualitative impact.

6.4 A Warwickshire Offer will incorporate existing work around:

- Community capacity-building.
- Social Value policy implementation.
- The Start with Strengths approach, which underpins our approach to delivering children's and adults social care service.
- Asset-based community development (ABCD).



- Co-production, i.e., people and professionals pooling resources, including skills, knowledge, experience, interests, passions and networks, to work together as equal partners, sharing power and sharing responsibility.
- Voice of Warwickshire residents' panel and community engagement framework.
- Strengthening Town and Parish Council relationships; and
- The factors and principles mentioned in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3.

6.5 The mainstreaming phase will also draw on and support several ongoing pieces of relevant work, as follows:

- **VCSE sector services recommissioning:** the three services are currently being tendered and will be awarded by the end of 2021, with the services starting on 1 April 2022. All three of the services play an important role in developing community power, especially around early intervention, prevention, and co-production.
- **Town and Parish Council relationships:** A reference group of around 20 councils has met since October 2020 with meetings focusing on specific topics including transport, health and wellbeing, and climate change. A monthly newsletter to all Town and Parish Councils started in April 2021.
- **Social Impact Fund:** the fund launched on 4 November at the Big Conversation event. The application window will close on 30 December 2021, with all awards being made by 31 March 2022. Heart of England Community Foundation has been commissioned to operate the fund on the Council's behalf.
- **The Green Shoots community climate change fund:** so far, the fund has awarded £625,000 of grants to local community groups to tackle climate change at a hyper-local level, and a second round of funding is expected in early 2022.
- **Development of the Integrated Care System:** The mainstreaming phase will support development of the ICS, especially the VCSE sector strand.
- **COVID projects:** There will be additional investment into the VCSE sector through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, the Household Support Grant, and the DEFRA Emergency Assistance Fund.
- **Social Value:** Following Cabinet approval of the Social Value Policy in October 2021, associated work to implement this is ongoing. Social value provides a way to amplify delivery of the Council's priority outcomes without requiring additional investment, while community power provides a new, additional lens through which to consider all social value activity.

## 7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. All activity is expected to be undertaken within existing budgets.

## 8. Environmental Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct implications although Community Powered Warwickshire strongly supports the Council's climate change programme. All activity undertaken as part of the CPW programme will continue to consider any climate change implications in how it is delivered, e.g., using technology to reduce travel.

## 9. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 9.1 New Local commissioned work is expected to conclude in early 2022. Dedicated internal resources are in place until the end of March 2022. As part of development of the Council Plan Delivery Plan, discussions are ongoing regarding future resourcing for CPW and the need for a dedicated delivery plan.

## Appendices

Appendix 1. New Local Ground Breaker descriptions.

## Background Papers

None

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|--------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None.

Other members: Chair and Party Spokes of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.