

Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 24 September 2020
Title of report:	Talk Community strategic overview
Report by:	Cabinet member health and adult wellbeing

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To approve the Talk Community strategic approach and its implementation, including the development and delivery of a comprehensive Talk Community programme and strategy.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the Talk Community strategic approach and its implementation be approved and;**

- (b) authority be delegated to the director for adults and communities to take all operational decisions necessary to ensure adoption and implementation of the proposed Talk Community programme and plan, within available revenue and capital resources, subject to further governance when required.**

Alternative options

1. Do not adopt Talk Community as a demand reduction strategy for the council. This option is not recommended as Talk Community has been developed specifically to address 'system wide' challenges faced by the council and its partners and harness the great resources evident in local communities. No alternative comprehensive approach to these challenges and opportunities has yet been established in practice elsewhere. Without a strategic approach to communities, demand for council services will escalate well beyond resources and opportunities to promote wellbeing and tackle health inequalities will be missed. This would bring significant risk to the council's finance and reputation, whilst also not achieving the best outcomes for individual people.

Key considerations

2. Talk Community is the strategic delivery vehicle for the community ambition of the Herefordshire County Plan 2020-2024 to improve the sustainability, connectivity and wellbeing of our county by strengthening our communities.
3. It is the council's strategic approach to prevention, enabling people to get the assistance they need and managing demand for more specialist services. It conveys an aspiration and culture which prioritises prevention, innovates and intervenes at the earliest possible point to make independence and wellbeing inevitable. The key message and vision of Talk Community articulates an ambition and culture which innovates "to make independence and wellbeing inevitable". It has been developed by the council during the past year through engagement across all parts of the council and other agencies. The approach has support from partner agencies across the NHS, community safety and voluntary, community and faith sectors. Further engagement with communities and stakeholders will take place during 2020/2021 to consolidate the scope of Talk Community and its future development. Talk Community was also cited positively in the recent LGA Corporate Peer Review of the council as the preferred vehicle for delivering much of its priorities relating to communities.
4. Recent events such as the floods and Covid-19 nationally have highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the council's and community partnerships. Talk Community offers an alternative approach: that the choices people make and the behaviours they adopt can be pivotal, or identify the change of course, needed to address the issue. It's not just another word for change, it involves a new vision, a different solution and a new business model. There are five strategic aims of Talk Community, shown below, all of which focus on facilitating the pivot described above and change the focus to one of prevention, health, wellbeing and independence at all stages of life for all ages and in a way that is specific and locally defined, building upon a core approach across the county;
 - Putting wellbeing, social value and strengths based approaches in all practice, policy and decision making.
 - Ensuring that prevention and early intervention are prioritised.

- Targeting resources based on need and place, maximising impact and value for money.
 - Challenging and developing our culture and practice, and
 - Working in partnership with a focus on system integration at all levels.
5. Herefordshire's strengths based approach to adult social care has demonstrated this by finding solutions for people in local, informal, community based support through community brokerage and other approaches. A comprehensive approach to prevention through communities will enable the appropriate management of demand for support and services across the council. This has reduced use of formal care among older people whilst sustaining high levels of customer satisfaction. An approach as broad as Talk Community can be expected to have an impact on the breadth of wider determinants of health; such as loneliness, social deprivation, frailty, domestic abuse or anti-social behaviour. Talk Community will also demonstrate an asset based approach to communities which relates directly and strategically to the strengths based models.
 6. The scope of Talk Community will align parts of the council and will offer an approach that is fundamental to the council's future delivery and prevention agenda. It compliments prevention activities taking place for different groups within communities, including children and young people where early help activity is already taking place. The scope enables all ages, cross-directorate opportunities with the key ethos and aims of Talk Community being threaded through all that we do and provides an overarching framework for joint working.
 7. Talk Community will be articulated through a strategy and implemented through a comprehensive programme. The strategy will be adopted by the Director for Adults and Communities in consultation with the cabinet members and all Directors across the council, the programme will be developed and implemented within available revenue budgets and subject to separate reports where capital spend is required.

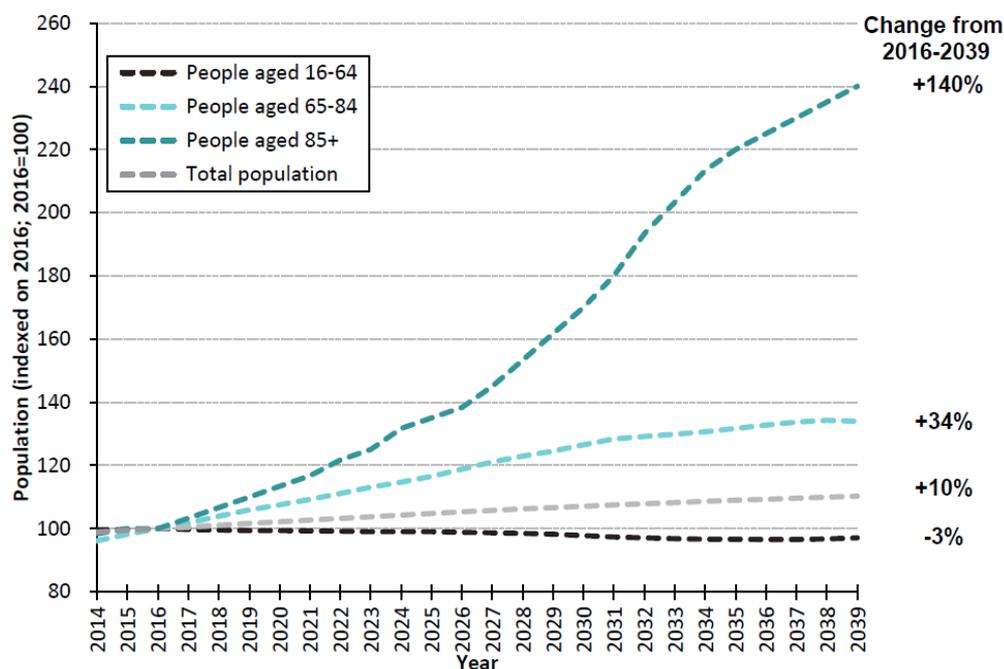
Scope and purpose

8. Talk Community is very broad in scope, encompassing:
 - People; as participants in communities, as volunteers and community leaders, including people who are vulnerable and may need some support. There is focus on people staying well and independent and feeling safe and included in their communities.
 - Place and space; making use of and sharing community places, creating the buildings and open spaces that local people want and will use, co-location of public and community services including the arts and leisure services, ensuring accessibility and connectivity and considering the impact of and upon new communities created through large scale housing developments.
 - Economy; recognising and developing the role of businesses in communities, promoting the county's buoyant social enterprise sector, developing the wellbeing of the workforce and healthy workplaces, whilst recognising the contribution to the local economy of the health and social care sector.
9. This breadth of Talk Community combined with a singular focus on the role of communities appears to be without precedent around the UK. A Talk Community strategy will set out the vision and strategic approach, along with plans in the eight areas of the programme, which will be reviewed annually.

10. Although innovative in its scope and overall concept, Talk Community will be making use of established practice from a number of fields including community development, early help and prevention for children and families. It will build upon and benefit from a diverse history of investment and development in communities by the council and its partners, often using external funding.

Need and demand

11. Talk Community is a transformation approach to managing demand. The great majority of demand for health and social care services is among older people and Herefordshire's over 50 population is above national levels, with rapid growth projected among over 65s locally. In the 18 years to 2038, Herefordshire's older population will account for over 30% of the whole county. On the current trajectory it is predicted that there will be rapid rises in numbers of over 85s and people with dementia, with significant pockets of high need in market towns and several rural areas. See diagram below:



12. These demographic changes threaten to overwhelm health, care and council provision locally, although the council is planning ways to encourage more young adults to remain in and come to Herefordshire. Demand for care and support is also expected to increase among young people and vulnerable families, unless new solutions are found to tackle health inequalities and localised deprivation.
13. Although the ageing population may overwhelm health and social care it does also offer opportunities with volunteering and community leaders which can bring experience and a wealth of skills which is fundamental to Talk Community.
14. With the expected increases in demand, the council and NHS cannot (and should not) hope to meet these demographic challenges through existing or future formal care services. The resources do not exist for a successful service response and that approach would do nothing to address the fundamental challenge of population need. The Talk

Community approach aligns well with the NHS long term plan in many of its priorities and emphases. Evidence from public health research, community development and social action shows that the solutions lie in self-care/help, behaviour change and communities.

Operational Function for Talk Community

15. Whilst Talk Community is a proactive, preventative approach it also has a strategic operational function that has provided support to communities during the flooding in February and with the Covid-19 pandemic since March. Talk Community mobilised a county-wide centrally coordinated tactical operational response for vulnerable people and the shielded cohort which has supported our communities immensely. The Talk Community approach co-ordinated services across the council resulted in a significant amount of positive feedback from our communities and the support that has been provided is illustrated in the table below:

Flooding - February	COVID 19 – March to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Big Herefordshire Clear Up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters sent to 80,000 households
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 400 volunteers from the council and other partners mobilised • Reaching over 40 communities in 3 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk Community helpdesk received over 4,000 calls • 2000+ people supported - 1300+ with food supplies and 900+ with medication collections • 1500 volunteers registered • 150 community groups actively engaged • 200+ community contacts made • 200 council staff redeployed into Talk Community • Including 70+ link workers redeployed as liaison officers with communities & providing advice and support

16. The talk community response to both the flooding and the Covid-19 pandemic has enabled the council to ensure that Talk Community is central to a system-wide response to Covid-19 and the outbreak plan. It has provided an opportunity for Talk Community to have a key role in any future outbreak management plan and other opportunities by working directly with communities and providing support across the council and the system.
17. The information gained from communities, groups, volunteers and community organisation through both the flooding and Covid-19 pandemic has provided a rich understanding to identify the areas of need, support and those areas with thriving and developed communities and gaps which will be utilised for future planning.

Talk Community programme

18. The Talk Community programme is an iterative process due to the changing nature of the recent local and national events and the impacts on the communities. To ensure it meets

the changing demands these events have brought about the Talk Community programme provided below which covers eight areas;

- Talk Community hubs
- Talk Community integrated hubs
- Developing a county of learning and upskilling communities
- Talk Community outreach kitchens
- Developing, supporting and enhancing the voluntary sector infrastructure
- Sustainable food county
- Talk Community Business
- Developing the Talk Community approach to support the economic recovery for all ages

19. There is an ambition to establish 20 Talk Community hubs by March 2021, appendix one shows a map of the communities that are in delivery and engagement stage of hub development. Hubs will be led primarily by volunteers in communities and consequently, each will be different and reflect local interests and needs. Hubs will provide local signposting, and information to promote wellbeing and support of vulnerable people. Many will also host and promote local volunteer led groups, activities and wider community participation, as well as enabling co-location of public and community services. In some cases, primary and community health services will offer clinics and other patient facing support to people, closer to where they live. Talk Community hubs will generally be building based although different types of models will be explored including a mobile hub or “the person is the hub”. Hub buildings could include village halls, pubs, community centres, arts centres and churches.
20. A number of community groups have come forward prior to and through covid-19 to lead potential community hubs throughout the county, including rural and urban locations. The council is offering a range of support to emerging Talk Community hubs to help them to launch and establish themselves on a continuing basis, including help from a dedicated project team. A grant scheme has been established to provide seed funding, supporting the development of Talk Community hubs and this has been approved through separate governance. This will offer grants of up to £2,500 to community groups who want to develop a Talk Community hub.
21. Talk Community hubs were in development prior to covid-19 and these discussion are being progressed again now and further engagement is taking place with local communities who have been active in helping their most vulnerable during the covid-19 pandemic to enable them to continue to support their local community through a Talk Community hub.
22. Talk Community includes a new programme promoting and supporting the role of business in communities. The council will recognise, support and enable the contribution to communities made by Herefordshire’s established businesses through investment, employment and workforce participation. The county’s buoyant and diverse social enterprise sector will be celebrated, supported and promoted. There will also be a significant focus on the wellbeing of the business workforce and healthy workplaces. Underpinning the Talk Community Business approach is a recognition of the scale and contribution to the economy represented by the health and care sector and by voluntary and community organisations.
23. Talk Community will also encompass the exploration and development of integrated hubs. These buildings have capital investment allocated to the Talk Community approach and represent a commitment to regeneration and integrating public facilities and local business

within communities. Integrated hubs are different from and will complement Talk Community hubs by providing more substantial facilities, targeted to communities of particular need and/or potential. These hubs will combine new community facilities with tackling health inequalities and supporting local business and employment. Buildings will be developed or converted on sites already in the Herefordshire public or community estate. These may be in market towns or rural locations. Detailed work will take place across the council and with partners to develop the scope of the concept and its planning, along with identifying potential sites.

Joined up working and Community Development

24. Talk Community calls for a co-ordinated strategic approach across all directorates of the council and there are many examples of how this will help to deliver the greatest impact on service demand and for communities themselves. Council and community libraries offer great potential in supporting Talk Community and building on what they currently do with a focus for signposting, community based support and co-location of volunteer and public services. There are many examples nationally of libraries operating as hubs in various guises and these can be reviewed and sampled and distilled to enable Herefordshire's libraries to play a versatile and dynamic role at the heart of Talk Community.
25. Proposals for Talk Community Business are being developed in close alignment with existing and emerging economic development projects. Talk Community business and integrated hub developments all provide opportunities for joining up with the council's active travel, energy reduction and wider environmental developments.
26. The Talk Community approach also provides an opportunity for an all ages approach and to support the children and families agenda with community development and enhancing the offer to those most in need. The covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on families and children from an economic and health perspective therefore by considering the support from communities will widen the support available.
27. Talk Community success will be enhanced if it is adopted as a whole system approach through the council's key partnerships around health, community safety, education and learning and beyond. The council is engaging with Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS trust to help ensure the success of Talk Community in managing demand for formal care. This will be taken forward largely through Herefordshire's Primary Care Networks (PCNs) with their localised whole population approach.
28. The Police and other community safety partners are keen to become involved in Talk Community, seeing the potential to address key priorities such as domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour. There are many opportunities to develop joint work with the new university, NMITE through Talk Community, as well as exploring lifelong long learning developments with wider partners. The council is also exploring a very wide and integrated approach to its relationships with Herefordshire's farming sector.

Accountability, outcomes and communications

29. Being able to recognise, share and demonstrate the impact and value of Talk Community will be critical to its success and credibility over time. This is important to help ensure that Talk Community actually works but also to recognise the achievement and innovation taking place in Herefordshire. Evaluation and evidence are also crucial in bringing inward

investment to new developments and local communities. This will draw on best practice across a variety of fields. As work on value and impact progresses, this will be integrated with performance management practice within Adults and Communities and other directorates.

30. Talk Community requires some new and particular approaches to communicating, in order to;
 - Engage effectively and openly with communities
 - Promoting specific new developments including Talk Community hubs to the public.
 - Establish an appropriate profile for Talk Community as a whole, regionally and nationally, across both professional and public networks.
31. The communication approach will start from refining and articulating the key messages within Talk Community and encompass social media, mainstream media, marketing materials and potentially audio-visual products. It will be necessary to confirm the resources required to implement Talk Community communications and the most effective way to co-ordinate these.

Community impact

32. Talk Community is closely aligned to the council's new county plan and is directly incorporated within the council's Community ambition, and the delivery plan. All elements of the Talk Community strategic approach will contribute directly to this ambition and many will also help drive delivery of the other two ambitions for economy and the environment. In relation to economy in particular, Talk Community business and integrated hubs are expected to have a significant positive impact.
33. The development of Talk Community has drawn heavily upon the local joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA), Understanding Herefordshire and in particular, the analysis of needs of older and disabled people in relation to the rapidly ageing local population. All of the rich data provided through the JSNA is informing, shaping and supporting the philosophy and approach of Talk Community.
34. Talk Community is also closely aligned to the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board and indeed, its progress and performance will be reported regularly to the board. Talk Community is all age in focus and is expected to benefit children and young people significantly, through Talk Community hubs, integrated hubs and Talk Community county of learning. The impact for people living with long term conditions is expected to be very widespread, being a significant focus for some of the programme areas.

Environmental Impact

35. The proposed strategic approach seeks to deliver on the council's environmental policy commitments and aligns to the following success measures in the County Plan.
 - Work in partnership with others to reduce county carbon emissions
 - Increase the number of short distance trips being done by sustainable modes of travel – walking, cycling, public transport
36. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability,

achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.

37. The development of the strategic approach has sought to minimise any adverse environmental impact and will actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance. The Talk Community team will work closely with the Sustainability & Climate Change colleagues to maximise reducing impacts on the environment and Talk Community can enable the partnership working with communities.

Equality duty

38. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this 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.

39. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.

40. The Talk Community strategic approach will lead to a wide range of changes, projects and initiatives in some cases delivered by the council or its partners but most often by communities themselves. Where appropriate, an Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for individual initiatives and changes. It is not expected that Talk Community will lead to any negative or regressive impact for any groups of people sharing a protected characteristic. Great care will be taken in planning and implementation to ensure this is so.

41. It is anticipated that Talk Community will lead to general benefit and opportunity for groups of people sharing protected characteristics. These will arise from projects such as Talk Community hubs, the integrated hubs and talk community outreach kitchen and will include the involvement of primary and community health services and communities developing to become safer, more inclusive and cohesive. Changes are likely to benefit older people, young people, disabled people and a range of other groups of people. This will be a key consideration in reporting to Health and Wellbeing Board.

Resource implications

42. The Talk Community strategic approach is primarily focused on managing demand for services provided by the council and others. This reduced demand on resources will be seen over a number of years and further modelling and performance monitoring is required to enable any savings and cost avoidance to be projected and measured effectively. Talk Community builds on established strengths based practice within adult social care, which has demonstrated during 2018 to 2020 that savings can be delivered whilst sustaining or improving customer outcomes and satisfaction.

43. Many areas of the Talk Community approach and delivery programme have no direct financial implications for the council. However, the programme as a whole will involve significant staff time for teams and services throughout the adults and communities directorate and increasingly across the council more widely.
44. The implementation of Talk Community Hubs over the two to three years to 2022 incurs an investment of £500k which encompasses:
- A project implementation team of four project managers
 - A seed funding grant allocation programme of £125k
 - Marketing and promotion and associated costs for the hubs
45. The spending on Talk Community hubs was approved by full Council in February 2019 and the funding has been drawn from reserves. Any wider revenue costs of Talk Community programme areas will be met through available revenue budgets.
46. The development and building of integrated hubs is estimated to cost £2m in capital investment excluding revenue costs of feasibility, community engagement and project management.
47. £2m has been provisionally allocated from the council's capital programme to fund the integrated hubs initiative, along with £200k of revenue funding for feasibility, engagement and project management. However, the spending of capital funding on any specific proposed integrated hubs will be subject to separate governance on the basis of a further business case. The timescale for the spending of capital on integrated hubs is being reviewed and updates to the scheduling of the provisional allocation will be requested as appropriate.

Legal implications

48. There are no specific legal implications in respect of the recommendations in the report.

Risk management

49. The Talk Community strategic approach and programme is very broad and encompasses multiple programme areas and so few specific risks arise from the strategic approach itself. Risks will emerge and be managed as appropriate in each area of the programme. Some potential risks are identified below.

Risk	Mitigation
Talk Community is not successful in managing the demands for services in the county	Evidence through the strengths based model in place within adults and communities demonstrates this approach.
NHS partners will not engage fully so that demand reduction and prevention impact on health will be deferred or behind social care.	Continued engagement with NHS partners through the health and wellbeing board and projects such as talk community hubs and robust presentation of evidence of demand reduction with associated cost modelling.
Insufficient community groups come forward to set-up talk community hubs	Up to 20 groups have expressed an interest in becoming a talk community hub with many

	more possibilities identified for 2021. There is widespread interest and effective support available from the council
Hubs are not successful as focal points for community support and participation and so are ineffective at diverting demand away from formal care and supporting resilience.	Hubs will represent the enthusiasm, passion and local knowledge of volunteers and local community leaders to support their community, supported by training and other resources. Recent community engagement through the pandemic and floods has demonstrated the support for talk community and hubs.
Businesses will not engage with Talk Community to bring greater investment, support and connectivity for businesses in communities. Social enterprise will not contribute to community capacity and resilience.	Many businesses already invest and contribute to communities. Social enterprise is already buoyant in Herefordshire and active in supporting wellbeing and vulnerable people. The Talk Community business programme will plan engagement and 'selling' the concept.
Integrated hubs will not attract support from local communities or will be delivered beyond target timescales and budgets	Scoping and proposals for integrated hubs are at an early stage, will be subject to detailed business cases and will be followed by in depth engagement with communities and exhaustive review of site options and cost modelling. Projects will not proceed unless all the elements for success are in place. Integrated hub development will be subject to further governance.
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Talk Community provides the strategic community ambition for the delivery of county plan.</p> <p>Talk Community provides a new opportunity to manage demand for health and social care services, through promoting wellbeing and independence and community based support for people who need it. This will be of particular benefit in the context of continuing local demographic changes.</p> <p>Talk Community will help build the capacity and resilience of communities to enable wellbeing and manage demand.</p> <p>Talk Community provides wide ranging opportunities to build upon existing strategic and operational partnerships across the</p>	

system. It will also enable much wider participation of residents in their communities.

Consultees

50. Consultation with political groups has been undertaken and positive feedback was received.
51. Adults and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been consulted on a number of occasions in relation to Talk Community. There has been particular focus given by the committee to proposals for Talk Community hubs and integrated hubs, among other initiatives. The committee has welcomed and supported the proposals and has asked for more information to be provided in relation to integrated hubs and other programmes in due course. These requests have been incorporated into the report and to the development of Talk Community in practice.
52. There has been extensive consultation through formal meetings with senior leaders and others in the NHS including Herefordshire CCG, Wye Valley NHS Trust, Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (previously 2gether NHS Foundation Trust), Taurus GP federation and primary care locality networks (PCNs) and engagement with NHS and community safety partners plus one-public-estate and housing partners. NHS organisations have welcomed and are fully supportive of the Talk Community proposals, have agreed to support the wider “whole system” promotion of the strategic approach and to consider adopting specific aspects of Talk Community within their services and strategies.
53. There has also been engagement with West Mercia Police and other community safety partner organisations who have also been broadly supportive of the approach and particularly supportive of plans for Talk Community hubs.
54. Parish councils have been consulted and informed about Talk Community proposals and programmes through three Parish Council Summits in September 2019 and July 2020. These were attended by approximately 90 parish councillors and clerks and featured extensive discussion. Various specific ideas and thoughts have been provided by parish councils and these have been reflected in the wider development of the Talk Community strategic approach. The council has engaged with individual parish councils in supporting their proposals for Talk Community hubs which will result in a number of Talk Community hubs being established during 2020/21.
55. Two Talk Community conferences were held in January 2020 for staff of the adults and communities directorate, other council directorates and some partner agencies. These elicited very positive support for Talk Community and a wide range of specific ideas and suggestions which will be incorporated into the development and promotion of the Talk Community programme.
56. Volunteers and organisations in communities and the county wide community, faith and voluntary sectors have been engaged in a variety of ways in developing the Talk Community strategic approach. This has included attendance at sector events, direct engagement with local groups over potential Talk Community hubs and other proposals, as well as in other forums. It is proposed to hold Talk Community conferences or workshops in each of the five localities linked to PCNS during the spring of 2021. These

will include professionals, community groups, volunteers and people using support in the locality.

Appendices

Appendix one – Talk Community Hub map

Background papers

None