

Initial Outcome Proposal to the East Suffolk Community Partnership Board - FY2021/22

(Stage 1 Proposal)

1. Key outcome(s)

Please detail the KEY OUTCOME(S) (measurable and time specific) the proposal is looking to achieve:

The primary outcome that this project will help to deliver is **‘A reduction in isolation and loneliness due to increased community connections through community hubs’** with a range of more specific outcomes contributing to this:

- Improved access to services and support, particularly in rural communities
- Improved access for communities to digital infrastructure through digital community hubs
- Increased connectivity for small businesses with the local community through engagement in community hubs
- Improved perception of community facilities or amenities
- Increased users of community facilities or amenities
- Number of community-led programmes developed as a result of support
- Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of creating new space in community hubs
- Improved energy efficiency of community buildings as part of a net zero approach
- Improved perceived or experienced accessibility to Community Hubs

2. How has the need been identified?

Definitions

Loneliness is a mismatch between the relationships we have and the relationships that we want – the pain of being alone. Isolation is where there is no choice but to be alone. The Campaign to End Loneliness talk about the link between poor health and loneliness but also about the health risks of being lonely.

Prevalence

Despite the headlines and focus of activities to combat loneliness being on older people, the prevalence of people who said that they ‘often/always’ feel lonely is highest amongst 16-24 year olds. Having said that there are significant numbers of people who often/always feel lonely across all age bands in East Suffolk. Reducing Social Isolation and Loneliness is one of the key priorities for the Community Partnership Board and is a priority for seven of the eight East Suffolk Community Partnerships.

Investment

The Board and the individual Communities Partnerships have between them invested more than a million pounds in projects aimed at reducing the levels of Isolation and Loneliness in East Suffolk, including:

- a. Four rounds of ‘Hidden Needs’ grants targeting isolation and loneliness ‘hot spots’
- b. ‘Boost’ grants aimed at reducing isolation and loneliness in specific groups - those with dementia and their carers, those with disabilities and their carers, and people experiencing mental ill health
- c. ‘Bounce Back’ (East Suffolk) and ‘Community Restart’ (Suffolk) grants to enable community groups

- and voluntary organisations to 'open up' again after the pandemic
- d. Grandpads – simplified tablets for older people launched as part of the Covid-19 response in East Suffolk
 - e. Virtual Walks e.g. Lowestoft Mile
 - f. Voice of a Friend befriending in Lowestoft, Kessingland and Carlton Colville
 - g. Covid Buddies (funding provided to Community Action Suffolk)
 - h. Talk and Chat benches
 - i. EAST (Everyone Active, Supported, Together) Bags – Christmas 2020

2022 Workshop

At the most recent Community Partnerships Forum, held at Trinity Park in March 2022, a workshop focussing on Loneliness and Isolation considered emerging data around isolation and loneliness, including loneliness during the pandemic and considered some key questions. The first two focus questions for the interactive part of the session were:

- 1. What already exists in East Suffolk to reduce isolation and loneliness?**
- 2. What are the gaps – who and where?**

The answers to these questions were considered at the September CP Board meeting and an updated list is attached as Appendix A to this proposal. The final two questions were:

- 3. If you had no budget but willing partners, what would you do to support the groups and places identified?**
- 4. If you had a magic wand and unlimited budget, what would you do to support the groups and places identified?**

The ideas generated in response to questions 3 and 4 are summarised below:

1. Designing Solutions – bring local partners together in individual communities to focus on solutions – what assets do we have and what do we need? What are the best ways to identify people who are lonely and isolated?
2. Coordination – a lead partner with dedicated resource, who can map to identify what is already there (to avoid duplication), connect groups together to share spaces and resources, coordinate volunteers
3. Communication – signposting about services that are already available, in different formats (not everyone online), between groups and between areas
4. Community Hubs – all ages, person centred, multi-agency - include a range of services and groups e.g. Pantry, Men's Shed, Citizens Advice outreach, library, digital support, Meet Up Monday, face to face housing support, health services, opportunities to be active
5. Thinking differently – use resources and spaces in different ways to their traditional uses e.g. churches, schools, business premises, more activities in the evenings / weekends
6. Go to people / more outreach – mobile facilities e.g. Vinny Van Go, Rural Coffee Caravan
7. Address transport issues – increase availability, including home to location transport
8. Support for individuals - telephone / digital / face to face e.g. support to attend groups – buddies and paid befrienders, including carers
9. Intergenerational activities – funding for transport, venues, resources e.g. games,

technology, young volunteers to provide company and support for older residents
10. Funding - to enable individuals to participate in things e.g. group fees, seek sponsorship from local businesses
11. Regular Engagement – speak to the public about what they need / can offer, market-place events
12. Capacity Building – upskills local groups and organisations working with Town and Parish Councils
13. Learning – learn from other areas and communities – identify what works, and what doesn't
14. Volunteers – help to identify and support volunteers, develop a volunteer bank to work on different community projects
15. Support Carers – respite (mix of paid and volunteers), support for carers to attend groups and activities

3. Who will benefit from the outcomes?

The voting undertaken at and following the September Board meeting demonstrated that Board Members were most concerned about early years, young people aged 16-24, working age males, those aged 65+ and non-drivers. However several of the Board commented that they would like initiatives to support a reduction of isolation and loneliness in all ages.

In terms of the range of ideas/solutions set out in the final section of 1. above, the five solutions that received the most support were:

1. Community Hubs (number 4.)
2. Address Transport issues (7.)
3. Designing solutions with communities building on local assets (1.)
4. Communication – about what is already available (3.)
5. Learning from others and capacity building (12. & 13.)

Since the conversation at the Board meeting, an opportunity has arisen to bid for some capital funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), a top up to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

ESC has been allocated £1,129,881 across 2 years from the REPF, which succeeds EU funding from LEADER and the Growth Programme. This can be used to fund capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure i.e. grants must be spent on lasting assets such as a building or equipment and on activities that specifically address the particular challenges rural areas face.

Use of funding must be complementary to funding used to support rural areas under the UKSPF and delivered within the UKSPF framework - it is a top-up to help address the extra needs and challenges facing rural areas. Local authorities have been asked to consult local rural partners to deliver the Fund.

The REPF provides capital funding to:

- support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy. This includes farm businesses looking to diversify income streams
- support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy

Projects must be in a rural area:

- towns, villages and hamlets with populations below 10,000 and the wider countryside
- market or 'hub towns' with populations of up to 30,000 that serve their surrounding rural areas as centres of employment and in providing services

The areas of focus are the same as UKSPF interventions, plus two additional interventions (bullets 3 and 4):

- Supporting local business
- Communities and place
- Small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas
- Rural circular economy projects

It is therefore proposed that we should combine East Suffolk CPB revenue funding and Rural England Prosperity Fund programme capital funding to develop a competitive grant scheme aimed at enabling, developing and supporting community hubs in rural communities. This scheme would cross over between business and community needs and provides critical upgrades and improvements to community facilities, so they are fit for modern day, 21st century use.

Rural communities within the district are facing a wide range of compounding issues all at once. These include but are not limited to, rising energy bills, the fact that 60 percent of rural homes have an EPC of D or below, transport within rural areas is increasing in cost due to rising fuel costs, an ageing population in need of additional support and services and poor, outdated digital infrastructure which means that rural areas often find it hard to access fast, reliable digital connectivity. In addition to this, research published by the BBC that revealed almost all 50 of the UK's biggest employers have said they do not plan to bring staff back to the office full-time and demonstrates a need for improved provision closer to home.

ESC is therefore looking to implement a grant programme that will strengthen local rural communities and address the key challenges identified by creating community hubs that are multi-purpose, will deliver modern and 21st century capable community facilities and also provide space for sole traders, workers and small businesses to network with others, work in a space that overcomes the digital constraints many are facing and integrate into their local communities (on relevant grant applications). By combining both business and community purposes these hubs will have a real chance to become hearts of rural parishes and market towns.

This grant scheme will be open to village halls/community centres, churches, community buildings and commercial space looking to have a new purpose. This could include pubs wanting to diversify their offer and ensure longer-term survival. The fund will also be open to landlords of commercial and voluntary space.

The grants will provide funding to upgrade community facilities into community and business hubs in rural areas. Eligible projects include (but are not limited to):

- digital upgrades (equipment and connectivity)
- EV chargers
- net zero upgrades and improvements
- capital improvements such as to create community shops/pantries, meeting space, health or well-being activities, educational activities, skills and employment training, sports and fitness activities, other arts or cultural activities, community cafés, and co-working space

Priority grant applications will include both business and community use, e.g. a co-working space 1 day a week. The purpose is to enable additional activities in community hubs and to narrow the gap between communities and local businesses.

4. How will the outcomes(s) be sustained after the funding period (if appropriate)?

If the programme – which includes a combination of enabling support focussing on how existing community assets could evolve to play a wider role in the community and capital grants for physical changes to buildings – is a success, we would work with local partners to seek additional funding for its continuation.

5. Name of Project/activity that will deliver the outcome(s)

East Suffolk 21st Century Community Hub Programme

6. Brief description of the project / activity that will deliver the outcome(s).

We will deliver the programme by working with partners already active in rural communities, including Community Action Suffolk and the Rural Coffee Caravan (as well as the ESC Communities Officers).

Development stage 1 (pre-REPF process)

This phase of the project will be to promote the opportunities offered through the funding streams and run an initial expression of interest process to establish how many, and which communities may be interested in working with us to explore ideas to expand the use of their community building as a community hub. We will ask each potential community hub site to consider the needs of priority sectors in our population i.e. early years, young people aged 16-24, working age males, those aged 65+ and non-drivers (as identified in Section 3) as well as the wider population.

Development stage 2 (pre-REPF process)

Each interested community facility will receive one to one support to enable them to develop an outline business plan based on engagement with the wider community about existing assets, local needs and the overall vision for the facility (match funding for this element will be provided from existing Business Planning funding)

Stage 1

Once the REPF criteria are agreed and the interventions finalised, there would be a formal process of applications to a grant programme. Grants will support enhancements to existing community hubs to enable additional/new activities to be delivered or existing activities to be expanded, including business uses. Additional uses could include:

- Improved digital infrastructure to enable use of the space as a digital hub by local residents and businesses
- Improved kitchen facilities to enable provision of meals e.g. for a lunch club or cook and share session, use as a Meet Up Monday or for Cooking on a Budget classes
- Building extensions or adaptations to existing rooms/space to repurpose it to provide additional space for a community shop or pantry, outreach services to visit (for example health, money or housing outreach from public or voluntary sector organisations), a digital hub, as a co-working space, health and wellbeing activities, use by a Mother and Toddler Group
- Additional space for circular economic projects e.g. Men's Shed, Makers Sheds
- Changes to enable use as a cultural, arts, heritage or events space
- Adaptations to outside space to enable additional community activities e.g. development of a community growing space, green gym (NOT play equipment)
- Installation of EV chargers
- Net zero upgrades to improve energy efficiency of buildings
- Supporting village halls to help the hyper local economy, local activism etc

Stage 2

Grants awarded and support provided to each community hub to deliver the programme.

Project / activity START DATE; June 2022 END DATE: TBC

7. Who is involved?

Who is involved in developing this outcome proposal?

Who will deliver the project/activity?

Name of East Suffolk Community Partnerships Board Member supporting the project:

Project / activity lead: East Suffolk Council – Nicole Rickard (on behalf of the Board Task and Finish Group)

Name: Various

Organisation:

Telephone:

Email:

8. Give information about match funding here:

Source of match funding:	Funding confirmed?	Amount (£)
ESP Business Planning Fund	Y	£15,000
Rural England Prosperity Fund	N	£420,000*
[* £120,000 2023/24 and £300,000 2024/25]		

Total project / activity cost	£550,000
Total of confirmed match funding	£15,000
Total amount of Strategic funding required	£115,000

9. Identify where the Community Partnership Board Strategic Budget will be spent:

Description of activity or item (by who and by when where appropriate)	Cost (£)
The CP Budget element in 2022/23 will be used to match fund the business planning support for community groups and diversifying businesses. The 2023/24 funding will provide the revenue element of the grants and contribute to support to help develop the projects	£45,000 £70,000

10. How will the project / activity be monitored, and outcomes reported (including project risks)?

Activity will be monitored at each of the stages outlined above. Individual projects receiving funding will be asked to complete a grant monitoring form

Community Partnership Board Member Declaration:

I confirm that I support this proposal:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Lead Organisation Declaration:

I am authorised and eligible to sign and approve this proposal on behalf of the lead organisation and declare the information included in this proposal is true and accurate.

By signing below, the information you have supplied is being collected to allow us to process your application. By completing this form, you consent to East Suffolk using your information in this way.

I understand that in the assessment of this proposal the Council may share information contained within it, with other core funders for funding programmes we have applied too, relevant Council directorates and committees. If you do not provide your consent, we will not be able to process this proposal. Your information will not be used for any other purpose unless we obtain your consent. Your information will be retained for 4 years. You can request that your information is deleted at any time.

Privacy Notice

Data will be processed and held securely and in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (and any updates).

Further information about data protection can be found on the East Suffolk Website <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Your-Council/Access-to-Information/Privacy-Notices/Communities-Privacy-Notice.pdf>

Please enter your name below only if you agree to be bound by the terms set out in this form. We will treat this as your signature of the form.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Please submit this proposal to the Funding Team at grants@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Hard copies can be submitted and returned to: Funding Team, East Suffolk Council, East Suffolk House, Station Road, Melton, Woodbridge, IP12 1RT.

Q1a. Sources of Community Connection

- Meet Up Mondays (CAS/RCC)
- Worry Tree Café's
- Rural Coffee Caravan
- Coffee and Friends Events (RCC)
- Good Neighbour Schemes (CAS)
- Men's Sheds/Menders Sheds/Community Repair Cafes
- Chin Wags (BSEVC)
- Hearts and Minds (BCS and ACT)
- Digital Champions
- Robopets (ESC)
- Christmas Card Campaign (ESC)
- Support/Peer Support Groups
(e.g. dementia, carers, disability, mother and toddler)
- 'Living with / health recovery groups

- Compassionate

Communities/Companions

- Environment / Nature Groups

Gardening Groups

- Park Runs
- Befriending support
- Art/Craft Clubs
- Courses – e.g. photography
- Lunch Clubs e.g. Over 60's
- Social Prescribing
- Community Café's
- Walk & Talk Events

Walking Groups

- Theatre / Dance groups
- Choirs/Singing for Health
- Knit and Natter Groups
- Membership Groups
- Youth Groups/Clubs
- Sports clubs/teams e.g. football, boxing, walking football
- Uniformed Groups - Brownies, Guides, Cubs and Scouts

Keep Fit Classes

Yoga

- Faith Groups
- Book / Reading Groups

Outings and Day Trips

Dog owner walks/get togethers

Q1b. Places of Connection

- Village Halls / Community Centres
- Leisure Centres and Gyms
- Community Café's
- More than a Shop (RCC)

- Top Up and Pop Up Shops
- Supermarkets
- Allotments
- Pubs
- Care Farms
- Dementia Day Centres
- Churches/faith buildings
- Libraries
- Schools
- Supported Housing
- Citizens Advice
- Parish Council offices
- 'Warm Rooms'

Chat benches

Doctors' Surgeries and Hospitals

Hairdressers and Barbers

Cafés and Hotels

Q2. Who are our Priority Groups in terms of isolation and loneliness?

- Early years, particularly children born during the pandemic
- Children
- Young people aged 16 – 24
- Children in care
- Young people leaving care
- 25 – 29 year olds
- Working age males
- Men aged 40 plus
- Single parents
- Aged 50 - 64 - preventative ageing
- Older people 65 plus
- Older people 80 plus
- People who are new to an area
- With mental ill health, particularly Men
- With long term/acute health issues
- Discharged from hospital
- Carers – need respite support
- Non-drivers (particularly rural areas)
- New mum's/dad's
- BAME communities
- Refugees

Other issues of concern include affordability, accessible technology and holding social groups in evening