

Supporting Communities Case Study

Introduction

The Supporting Communities Project was a joint project between Powys County Council and PAVO, initiated in response to the high volume of Community Asset Transfer related enquiries received by both organisations.

The aims and objectives of the project:

- To provide a stronger visible presence for community delivered services across Powys.
- To support locally delivered services in a sustainable manner with effective working partnerships and collaborative approaches.
- To ensure that Powys is recognised as an exemplar for community delivery.
- To work in partnership to actively engage communities in making sense of the issues which affect their lives, setting goals for improvement and responding to problems and needs through empowerment and active participation.
- To work with the community to identify their needs and issues and formulating strategies to address those issues.
- To give people the opportunity to transform their own lives and meet local need.
- To increase the strengthen the number of services and assets delivered by communities in Powys.

The project commenced in April 2017 with the appointment of two Development Officers, namely Pauline Chapman-Young and Nick Venti. Nick moved onto another PAVO project shortly after and was replaced by Tim Davies, who commenced his duties in July 2017.

The project was introduced to work with organisations and groups to facilitate the successful outcome of the Council's 'Community Asset Transfer Programme'. This enabled communities to take up the running and management of council properties, land, and services. Development Officers acted as a conduit between the Council, PAVO, and the groups; making sure they were fit for purpose and well equipped to step up to the challenge of managing an asset.

Organisations that secured an asset prior to the commencement of 'Supporting Communities' were visited to give an opportunity for the groups to share information on their experience of asset transfer, which was used by the 'Supporting Communities' and Council officers to help future asset transfers. Some of the groups required support to overcome difficulties they had encountered.

The 'Supporting Communities' project expanded into additional areas of support, with officers facilitating and supporting towns across the county under the Powys County Council led 'Tri-Town' initiative.

The 'Tri-Town' initiative is an area of work that County Councillors would like to see rolled out across the county. It's an opportunity for communities, closely located, to work together to benefit them both economically and sustainably.

The ball has started rolling in Llandrindod Wells, Builth, Rhayader and recently Talgarth, Crickhowell and Hay.

The initiative is in its infancy, but officers are hopeful that success in these towns will inspire others to pick up the baton and make the most of working together.

Challenge

In the Autumn of 2017, Powys Council Policy in relation to Asset Transfer changed with lease rather than freehold being the new preferred option.

The change in policy resulted in the slowing of communities expressing an interest in asset transfer, which meant that some of the 'Supporting Communities' project key performance indicators became difficult to achieve.

Progress with developing projects has been slower than hoped for a number of reasons, mainly due to the fact that all the groups and organisations that the project has supported are run by volunteers, meaning project officers have had to work at their pace. There are numerous examples of projects that have started and been supported by the 'Supporting Communities' project that will not be completed before the end of the 'Supporting Communities' project.

Solution

The 'Supporting Communities' project was set up to support voluntary organisations through the Community Asset Transfer Process. The project aimed to give the groups information, support, and guidance to give them knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions.

Benefit

The 'Supporting Communities' project has provided a link between Powys County Council and the organisations pursuing an asset transfer.

With project officers in place, groups and organisations have had a dedicated adviser, with whom they could discuss a myriad of issues and seek advice. This has included specific information on legal structures, governance, funding opportunities, business planning, compliance, health and safety, best practice, and training.

Result

The aim of the project as illustrated above was to support organisations by giving them knowledge and confidence to enable them to make informed decisions, whilst some groups have proceeded with a successful asset transfer, others decided not to proceed after making their own decisions after considering the facts based on information provided by the project. It should be noted that an organisation not proceeding with an asset transfer is not seen as a failure, as one of the main aims of the project was to ensure that organisations had the capacity and necessary skills in place before committing to operating a service or building for a significant period.

Project Outputs/Outcomes

Output (Case Level Indicator)	Achieved
No. of feasibility studies	
No. of networks established	3
No. of jobs safeguarded	
No. of pilot activities undertaken / supported	1
No. of community hubs created	
No. of stakeholders engaged	32
No. of participants supported (awareness raising events only)	227
Case Studies	36

Outcomes	Achieved
No. of jobs created	
No. of communities benefitting	23
No. of businesses benefitting	2

Project Contact Details

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www.pavo.org.uk

Partners/Match Funders Logos



Project Details

Key Data	Project Specifics
Delivered by:	Pauline Chapman-Young & Tim Davies, PAVO
Start Date:	April 2017
End Date:	June 2019
LEADER Theme:	3 – Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local services

Financial Details

Description	Amount	%
Total Expenditure:	£167,200.61	100.00%
RDP Funding:	£133,673.24	79.95%
Match funding:	£33,527.37	20.05%

Case study completed on: 28.2.2020