**Options Appraisal**

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| **Project Name:** | **Community Agents Southern Cluster Consortium** | **Ref No:** | **Overton/Rainbow** |
| **Background: Preamble** | | | |
| The Community Agents Initiative is an innovative approach to meeting the social needs of the over 50s and vulnerable population of Wrexham. The Community Agents initiative was primarily designed as a signposting service and also to solve practical challenges experienced by people in the community, those being discharged from hospital and continue to live independently in their own communities. Initially, it was established to build relationships across the sectors, to provide up-to-date information and link clients to existing services and activities in order to better meet the needs of the over 50s age group of clients. Currently, Community Agents Wrexham are predominantly providing advice and support to the over 50s and vulnerable people across the borough, many of them in need of general support not currently provided by statutory services.  Initially, the initiative had an ambition to become a consortia model with Care2Cooperate supporting and exploring the concept alongside existing Councils employing Agents. As the initiative was already imbedded within the Community Councils it was decided at a Clerks Forum who currently employ Community Agents that they were happy to continue as the employer of the Agents direct. However, it was suggested that when other areas come on board, that the concept is considered as a model of delivery.  Following further discussions with Community Councils of the Maelor South area and WCBC a process began to explore a range of options for the future delivery and what could be developed that would achieve the outcomes they were looking to support the future of the Community Agents initiative Wrexham. As the funding from the Intermediate Care Fund via WCBC meant that the geographical scope would be limited, there would be only 16 wards that could be included (based on allocation of funds) although there are 34 wards in the County Borough which includes some of the more rural smaller wards in the Southern Cluster. Therefore, an options appraisal has been conducted and allowed for a different delivery model option to be explored and evaluated against the set of agreed criteria, which has led to the selection of the preferred option for the area.  In order to evaluate the delivery model options, 2 main themes for investigation have been used:  Option one; Community Council direct employment for Community Agents in the Maelor South area. This was not considered by the Community Councils as they do not have the capacity and willingness to employ.  Option two; the requested option of delivery - Mini Consortia with Overton being the Lead for commissioning arrangements with Penley Rainbow Centre.  **Option two - Micro Consortia Option – Preferred Option**  Overton Community Council being the lead body and working with, The Rainbow Centre Penley, will demonstrate the potential for a relatively small community-based provision to make a positive and cost-effective contribution to the local strategic health and well-being priorities at the same time providing a strong foundation for this type of provider to continue making a positive contribution through further commissioned services in the future. Utilising the Rainbow Centre for this option the Rainbow Centre would manage Community Agent/s for and on behalf of the Southern Cluster area (Maelor South) of Wrexham and 6 Community Councils who have expressed an interest in this method of delivery (Overton, Maelor South (Penley and Bettisfield), Bronington, Bangor Isycoed and Hanmer) within the initiative.  This has led to a request and final recommendation about the preferred delivery model which the Community Councils named above would like to be taken forward.  **The proposal**  That the Rainbow Centre will:  Manage Community Agent/s for the 6 Community Councils who have expressed an interest (Overton, Maelor South (Penley and Bettisfield), Hanmer, Bronington and Bangor Isycoed) within the scheme.  They would allocate a number of Community Agent hours to support each area based on population and need:    To further this; The Rainbow Centre would be commissioned by Overton Community Council who would act as lead of a mini consortium consisting of the above Community Councils. Overton would enter into an agreement with WCBC as the lead and receive funding for the delivery of the initiative. Within this arrangement there would be a payment for 2 permanent positions and 2 temporary in the first instance.  A Steering Group would be formed from the respective Community Councils each electing a member to participate/champion. Reports will be made at the Steering Group and cascaded to each Community Council involved in the initiative.  The Rainbow Centre would be responsible for the overall management of the Community Agents; providing full access to Human Resource processes including:  •An Induction, ongoing Training and Support, use of staff handbook and associated documents including lone working policy and procedures, safeguarding training, confidentiality and Data Protection policy and procedures, DBS Checks (recharged to the consortium) and Line Management support including managing performance and absence.  • Provide Office Space & Administration Support  • Promote the Community Agent role via all the Rainbow Centre’s marketing activity including; ‘Something for Everyone’ newsletter which is distributed to all the rural villages in the catchment area  • Strengthen links with local agencies to encourage referrals and link people to local services  • Establish drop ins at local venues, including Social Prescribing from Overton Medical Practice  • Prepare monthly progress reports to the Steering Group for each Community Council  Added Value  Also the Rainbow Centre will;  • Provide accessible transport to ensure people can physically access services outside of their home  • Offer new peer support groups via the befriending team, which will promote health and wellbeing, based on the needs reported to them by the Community Agents, for example, they are keen to pilot ‘walk and talk’ at local venues  • Provide training based on needs, for example training for carers on ‘moving and handling’ ‘health and safety’ and ‘caring with confidence’.  • Involve and utilise existing partnerships to receive referrals to the project and to make referrals from the project  • Introduce volunteers to support the Community Agent, including establishing peer support groups and enabling local people to attend them  • Explore options for match funding to run new training and support groups through applying for further funding  Outcomes that will be delivered as set out in the Main tasks of the Community Agent initiative:  • Work with each respective Community Council to support older and vulnerable people within the communities to promote access to services, independence and quality of life  • Reduce isolation and loneliness for older people in the South Cluster  • Respond to the issues and needs identified and provide accurate, high quality information  • Create referrals to relevant agencies and service providers with follow ups to ensure clients are engaged with  • Engage with clients in a friendly, courteous, prompt and appropriate manner, using excellent communication skills and ensuring delivery of high quality customer service at all times.  • Be aware of the particular needs of the client group including those unable to access services directly and to refer these clients onto other services effectively.  Develop effective working relationships with all partners and stakeholders including Community Councils, local authority, health practitioners and other relevant CVS bodies and services.  •Access and accurately maintain electronic/hard copies of client records, calls and referrals ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act.  •Use IT equipment appropriately and effectively.  •Effectively promote the Community Agent service and engage older people in the most appropriate way.  •Maintain a database of clients to assist with the monitoring of outcomes of the service  •Adhere to all health and safety requirements and lone working procedures both in the home and in the communities taking reasonable and practical care not to do anything that may endanger the employee or others.  •To arrange Coffee Mornings and drop in’s at local Community bases, and to be involved in running peer support groups and events as required.  •Prepare monthly progress reports for Community Councils, Community Agent Coordinator and WCBC.  •Give presentations to the Community Councils on work undertaken  •Gather responses to questionnaires on the delivery of the service  In order to deliver the service based on 2 Permanent and 2 Temporary positions.  The cost charged to the Lead Community Council would be for associated IT equipment and mobile phone(s). (IT equipment and phone(s) which will be the property of the Community Council and returned to them when/if contract ends).  Mileage would be recharged to Overton acting as lead which in turn will reclaim from WCBC on mileage claim forms submitted monthly along with receipts.  Value of contract based on 2 Permanent and 2 Temporary (4) £8620 = £34480 and £1800 for equipment  **Total: £36,280** | | | |

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| **Option 1:** | |
| **Details** | Community Council direct employment same as other Councils in the Borough. Initially, one Community Agent was to be placed in each of the Community Council Wards. All Community Council Wards of the Southern area where contacted with only; Bronington – Overton – Maelor South (Penley and Hanmer) Bangor Isycoed - Bettisfield coming forward and inviting to present initiative at their respective Council meetings. All were in favour of the concept, but not willing to be an employer. |
| **Pros** | That community engagement would be achieved locally and with Community Councils being the employer was that local knowledge could be utilised and for each to establish networks with relevant services and agencies within each of the communities. |
| **Cons** | That Community Councils will not participate in initiative due to lack of capacity or willingness. More expensive delivery of the service. |
| **Risks** | Employing and managing Agents especially within smaller Community Council Wards. |
| **Costs** | **£55,320** |

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| **Option 2:** | |
| **Details** | Electing one Community Council to act as lead for other 5 Creating mini consortia utilising Rainbow Centre to deliver on their behalf |
| **Pros** | Cost effective – additionality – future funding – good networks already established – transport  Support from GP Practices - Overton and Hanmer to link in offering Social Prescribing referrals and letters of support have been obtained to this effect. Social Prescribing already taking place |
| **Cons** | None identified |
| **Risks** | None identified |
| **Costs** | **£36,280** |

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| **Conclusion:** |
| *It is requested and preferred by Overton Community Council acting as lead Council that the Mini Consortia involving respective Community Councils named above be confirmation and justification of recommended option two.* |