



## **Chesterfield Pride in Place Town Board Community Hub Project Update Report**

**11<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To update the Board on the strategy for developing a community hub, informed by the findings of the feasibility study that was commissioned by the Town Board in March 2025.
- 1.2 The Board will receive an update from Chesterfield Borough Council on the community hub and will seek support for a recommended way forward.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note the key strategic findings from the KADA study.
- 2.2 To support the recommendation of the accountable body to undertake a soft market testing exercise to determine the market interest of the operation of a community hub in light of the feasibility study findings.
- 2.3 To note that the accountable body will present an update following the soft market testing at a future board meeting.

### **3.0 Introduction**

- 3.1 In March 2025, the Town Board allocated £20,000 capacity funding towards the delivery of a feasibility study into the potential of a community hub in Chesterfield Town Centre. Chesterfield Borough

Council led the procurement exercise on behalf of the Board, with support from Board members. KADA Research, specialist consultants were appointed and commenced work in December 2025.

3.2 The purpose of the feasibility study was to:

- Develop a scope for a shared community space in Chesterfield town centre, to be run by the voluntary and community sector.
- To consider the different types of community activity that could be delivered from a space, and provide options into a suitable size, space, location and operational model of delivery.
- Identify activities that could be delivered in the shared community space (or hub) with an expected emphasis on those focussed on promoting good health and wellbeing, highlighting how our communities and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations can make a full contribution to this agenda, including working with new public health approaches such as creating health and emerging NHS neighbourhood health service provision.
- Set out options, opportunities and challenges for the development of a community space.
- Highlight how community organisations can create activities to provide useful spaces, with a view that the space becomes a destination to attract increased vibrancy and footfall into the town centre.

3.3 KADA Research attended the Town Board meeting in February 2026 to present their approach to carrying out the study and report on early conversations. Since then, they have continued to engage with the sector and key stakeholders to finalise the feasibility study. Most recently, KADA led a consultation session with key stakeholders on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026, to inform their final report. Participants were invited to review the key themes and provide further input.

3.4 KADA are producing their findings from the study in two reports. Report 1 is a strategic document that sets out the demand and scope of a community hub and Report 2 is an operational and financial document that details a viable model for the delivery of the community hub.

3.5 In order to protect the procurement and commissioning process these reports will be shared through soft market testing to allow a fair and transparent process for all potential applicants and beneficiaries.

3.6 If the Board were to continue to support this project, it should be noted that the project fits under the Pride in Place pre -approved interventions around health and wellbeing, specifically the “integration and co-location of health and wellbeing services”.

#### **4.0 Key strategic findings from the KADA study.**

4.1 The feasibility study highlights that through KADA’s Research there is clear demand for a community hub in Chesterfield town centre from the voluntary sector and the wider community.

4.2 Consultations with the Chesterfield VCSE groups found that existing community space is oversubscribed and the gap analysis identified the absence of an anchor, multipurpose hub in the town centre as a structural gap. Moreover, KADA confirm through the consultations undertaken that this gap is actively felt by community organisations and the public, and that co-location will help support resilience in the sector.

4.3 As part of the brief KADA were asked to identify target user groups and their specific needs and to consider which services may or may not be compatible with each other. The consultants identified the hub's primary audiences should be people who would benefit from prevention and early intervention before they reach crisis: people at risk of mental ill-health, isolation and loneliness; families with young children and working age and adults managing health and economic challenges. While the report acknowledges the need for a space for specialist support to the most vulnerable people in the community, it is not felt that this is compatible with the community hub project.

4.4 The study concludes that from the work done in the financial and operational document there is a way for this project to be a viable model. The hub's primary strategic purpose is prevention and early intervention, reaching people before needs become acute, in a setting that feels genuinely welcoming rather than clinical or institutional.

Three key objectives have been highlighted that support this:

- Integrating support from the VCSE sectors so that people can access multiple forms of support without navigating the sector themselves
- Reducing premises costs and administrative burden for VCSE organisations
- Generating the regular, sustained town centre footfall.

4.5 The study identifies the three elements to the delivery offer:

1. Community activities including exercise, creative groups, social events, and youth provision. This would create the welcoming, non-stigmatising atmosphere in which the prevention offer can operate and bring the wider footfall from a range of demographics that sustains the hub financially.
2. Shared space and infrastructure for VCSE organisations: flexible meeting rooms, hot-desking, private office space, and shared facilities, functioning both as a cost-reduction mechanism for the sector.
3. Health, wellbeing and prevention offer (social prescribing and navigation, mental health and peer support), NHS health outreach, employment and debt advice, and family and early years support.

4.6 It is proposed that a 'hub-and-spoke' model is recommended, with the community hub serving as the anchor for specialist provision, health and wellbeing sessions, VCSE workspace, and social prescribing, while neighbourhood-level spokes, embedded in existing institutions such as GP practices, libraries, schools, faith buildings and community organisations, extend reach into wider communities across the borough.

4.7 The engagement sessions held by KADA highlighted a demand from VCSE organisations for flexible meeting rooms, confidential one-to-one space, hot-desking, and shared training facilities provision that is currently limited to a small number of venues with significant constraints. It was also highlighted that there is an appetite for organisations to work together to explore the potential of forming a Community Interest Organisation.

## 5.0 Proposed way forward

5.1 Whilst the feasibility study evidence demand and a viable model, the accountable body recommends that soft market testing needs to be undertaken to establish the appetite from the voluntary and community sector to progress with this work and how such a community hub could be delivered.

5.2 Following completion of the soft market testing, if a way forward can be established, it is recommended that a process is developed to invite interest from organisations seeking to deliver the community hub. This is a process that will need to be undertaken to satisfy the accountable body from a commissioning/procurement perspective.

- 5.3 In progressing with the soft market testing process, it is important to ensure fairness and transparency. This is one of the reasons that the feasibility study assumptions are not being shared at this time.
- 5.4 The momentum developed within the sector through the development of the feasibility study needs to be maintained. It is envisaged that the soft market testing starts as soon as possible and an update will be brought back to a future Town Board meeting.
- 5.5 As a reminder to the Town Board, undertaking development work on this project at this stage does not pre-empt any decisions it may take regarding the allocation of the main programme funding. The project development work is designed to aid more informed decisions by the Board.