

Kings Heath-Community Centre Scoping Proposal



Document Content

Area Background
Community Need
Scoping request
Contact Details



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Social & Cultural Issues:

WNC is currently redeveloping Unit 16 on park Square, in Kings Heath, to be taken on as a new community centre. At this time, we are looking for an organisation, who may be interested in taking on the space, for the benefit of the community. Kings Heath has been a high priority area for public services for a number of years now. The area itself sits within the top 10% most deprived areas in the country as in need of a permanent community space

Across Kings Heath, there is a large mix of cultural diversity that has caused a variety of community engagement issues for partners working within the area. Kings Heath has a mix of Bangladeshi and Polish community scattered throughout the ward. Over the years, the members of the local partnership management group have struggled to gain a strong community bond within these groups for a variety of reasons.

Local services are constantly stretched trying to support those in need and unfortunately these figures have not improved across the last decade, with the recent census stats confirming this.

Due to the large range of diversity, crime and level of unemployment, gaps in service provisions are wide. Foodbanks from local charities and businesses support more families within Kings Heath compared to the rest of the town. There are only a few wards on the east of the town that require more support.

The financial difficulties for those living in the area means that simple items of furniture, including small items such as children's toys, are hard to come by. There is a local toy library that tries to support families with young kids who can't afford toys, by letting them borrow toys before returning them, in the same way a library lends books. The local church assists with finding basic furniture such as a bed for families in need. Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) also look to support families by providing them with basic home improvement materials such as paints etc, to help families improve the quality of their home for free.

All these services struggle to run but are always wanted and supported by the local community; however funding has created challenges for them over the years. There is clinic based at the local community centre that is overstretched, more so off the back end of COVID. The partnership management group continuously looks to support all partners and groups within, for the benefit of the public.

There is one big issue in the area caused by geographical reasons. Kings Heath has an estate called Rye Hill, which is unfortunately separated from the rest of the area by a huge field and requires a 5-minute drive to access it. Due to this separation and distance, the majority of the services supporting the ward are not accessible by the residents of this estate and is even not consider as part of Kings Heath. Attempts have been made by local partners to get groups that support the neighbouring ward of Duston, to support the residents of Rye Hill with their services; unfortunately, this has not happened. This is an area suffering problems relating to crime and social segregation, which adds to the large list of reasons Kings Heath requires further support.

Access to Services/ gaps in service provision:

Over the years we have seen services close and leave the area for various reasons, leaving a hole in community assets. We have also seen the use of the pre-existing community spaces change priority through the GP practice. The centre used to have a community hall that was used by a resident's association and the local youth club.

The area doesn't have an open space that can be used by partners to run services such as youth clubs, stay and play (formally known as mums and tots), a resident's group, plus other services and drop-ins that have been requested in recent times. Services in the area have been trying to accommodate the residents needs through their facilities but with limited space and access times, they cannot function as desired. For example-

- ◆ *Stay and play* - This is running at the school however can only be run during the week and during school times

- ◆ *Youth group* - Run by Free2Talk, they use their small hub with a capacity limited to 10. They do use outdoor spaces such as the green, but this is limited to summer time only with better weather and lighter hours. There is a waiting list to join the group which is creating a barrier in the area where youth intervention work is of high importance due to ASB, Knife and Gang Crime issues.

- ◆ *Resident support drop-in sessions and clubs* - On the back of the consultation requests for service support relating to career support and advice; financial support and advice; elder support/social clubs, were made by much of the public. Spaces such as the Free2Talk hub and the NPH paint shop offer their space, however they do have limited capacity and aren't designed to support these services. The toy shop wants to help but also don't have the space or correct facility, the same with the church, and the school is limited due to their opening times.

Scoping Request

Within the square in Kings Heath, there is a currently a vacant building, suitable to be used as a community centre. Unit 16, formally known as the sure start centre, is currently undergoing some improvement works but in time, will be available for use.

At this time, we are seeking a scoping proposal from any service or organisation that may be interested in taking on this building as a community centre. At this time we ask that you submit a business case with the following information-

- ◆ Your service and its background
- ◆ How you would use the building
- ◆ What services you would work with, for the benefit of the local residents (including community groups, partners and professionals)
- ◆ Your organisations financial capability and sustainability plan
- ◆ What funding opportunities you have available
- ◆ What outcome you would set to achieve by taking on the centre and how you would measure them

Please see the next page for the buildings floor plan

Important Notice

Please note that at this time, we are only seeking a scoping request/business case from services. This is not an official application for the unit as at this time, WNC are looking to understand what services can provide, by taking on the centre, so that we can assess what support can be offered in return.

Contact info

Should you have any further questions please contact-

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