

Community and Business Units (The Space)

Executive Summary

This project delivers ‘The Space’, a new multi-purpose building forming a critical part of a village centre Hub. The Space will be integrated with the existing public toilets, volunteer base, and future community café in an attractive courtyard development set within Culbokie Green.

The Space offers flexible co-working and office areas, treatment rooms, and a digital meeting room to promote economic regeneration. By providing rental facilities for local businesses, health practitioners, and third-sector organisations, the project will enhance access to vital services, address disadvantage, support community resilience and promote community wealth building. Critically, The Space will generate a sustainable income stream ensuring the hub's long-term viability, anchored alongside a biodiverse greenspace and active travel route.

The project champions The Place Principle by establishing a vibrant, centrally located focal point linking community life, enterprise, and green infrastructure. Through collaboration, it brings together a shared plan addressing community priorities and resource coordination.

The project will be located in the Culbokie Settlement Zone, which falls in the lowest SIMD decile for geographic access to services. It will also serve the wider Black Isle, which also suffers from a lack of access to services. In addition, it is expected to draw users and tenants from the Dingwall, Conon Bridge, and Alness areas; all within 15-minute drive with a wider range of disadvantages. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation that covers these areas is Black Isle North, Black Isle South, Conon, Dingwall and Alness.

The Project

The project is to develop 'The Space' a 100 m² multi-purpose, low energy building in the heart of Culbokie. It is part of a bigger Community Hub project being developed on land owned by the Culbokie Community Trust within the biodiverse setting of Culbokie Green.

The Space will comprise:

- rental space for an anchor tenant,
- 2 community health rooms,
- meeting room with video conference facilities,
- flexible community space with up to four (removable) hot-desks.

Community Issues and Priorities

The building seeks to address issues of:

- inequalities of access to services due to a very limited bus service and no local health provision;
- loss of young people from the area due to a lack of local business and employment opportunities
- a lack of community income and wealth generation to support long term growth, resilience and financial sustainability.

The specific priorities identified by the community during a community consultation in 2023 were the need for health services, some shop front space (for example, for a butcher, hairdresser or crafts), a digitally connected meeting room, office space and hotdesk/coworking space.

Project Aims

Reflecting these issues and priorities, three principle aims have been set for this project which will strengthen the economy and achieve a high level of social outcomes:

1. To complete the construction of The Space, as an integrated part of the Community Hub, leading to the further transformation of Culbokie village centre from an abandoned field into a vibrant, attractive and biodiverse community facility supporting community wellbeing
2. To provide critical local services and business opportunities with a priority on health and wellbeing, addressing disadvantage and environmental sustainability
3. To generate the necessary income to secure the Hub's future

We expect the project will also build further momentum to enable the development of the final component of the Hub - the community café.

In tandem with this application, we have also applied for funding from the DTAS Strengthening Communities Programme for a 3 year Business Development Officer post. The role of this person will be:

- to establish management systems and ensure high levels of building occupancy,
- to engage with health, care, business and environmental groups (including key third sector organisations) to refresh local data and address priority needs in the village

- to ensure the smooth running of the building and to transition to a long term management system based around automation and efficiency.

This complementary investment is designed to help us directly convert construction success into long-term organisational sustainability.

The Wider Context

The Space is part of a much larger project to develop the Culbokie Community Hub. This began with the development of a new Local Plan in 2011 when the community identified an opportunity to address some key issues in the village (identified above) on a centrally located piece of abandoned land, as well as the lack of any real focal point or heart to the village. This led to a process of community consultation and a feasibility study in 2014 resulting in the purchase of land for the project under the Community Right to Buy in 2015. A full postal ballot of the CCT membership area in late 2014 voted 82% in favour of the project to create a Community Hub and greenspace. Since then, successive consultations have been held on the specific developments.

To date the following parts of the project have been completed:

- Culbokie Green and Am Fasgadh shelter (completed 2022)
- 6 affordable homes (completed 2023)
- a rapid EV charge point (completed 2024)
- toilets and Potting Shed volunteer base (completed 2025)
- a community café (still to be built)

The Community Hub will be set around an attractive courtyard and is fully integrated with Culbokie Green – a unique and biodiverse village centre greenspace designed for both people and wildlife. Shortlisted in 2025 for the prestigious Nature of Scotland Awards, it includes wildflower meadows, a community orchard, a pollinator bed, a shelter, outdoor table tennis and play facilities. It's maintained by a group of volunteers, the Green Team, who have a tool store and base in the Potting Shed. Had the land not been purchased by the community it would most likely have been sold for house building, further exacerbating the lack of local services and opportunities.

Current Status

All necessary permissions have been obtained for the construction of The Space (including planning consent and a building warrant). A fully documented open tender exercise earlier this year led to the selection of a preferred builder out of three bidders. The tender has since expired and will be refreshed should this funding be approved. A contingency to allow for an increase in prices has been added to the tender figure for the purposes of this application.

CCT has its own insurance cover and the successful contractor will be required to hold insurance cover while the building is under construction.

Fit with Local Plans, Strategies

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (Adopted June 2024)

The Space is fully aligned with Local Plan policies. The Culbokie Community Hub and The Space are located on land area CU3 designated for housing, community and business and there is a requirement that the site is developed in accordance with our approved planning consents 21/01930/FUL, 18/05806/PIP and 21/00660/MSC. Planning policies for CU3 include “Promote a mix of housing, business and community sites in central locations”.

Regeneration Strategy

The Space is aligned with the Regeneration Strategy vision - where ‘all places are sustainable and promote wellbeing and the most disadvantaged are supported’. It addresses many of the Regeneration Strategy outcomes:

- Economically sustainable communities outcome: This project will contribute towards a stronger local economy, local jobs, business support, a thriving village centre and good digital connectivity
- Physically sustainable communities outcome: The project furthers the development of an attractive, well designed and sustainable village centre integrated with a biodiverse greenspace and connected to all parts of the village by the Culbokie Active Travel Route (see below)
- Socially sustainable communities outcome: The project is community-led, focusing on local needs, providing access to a range of services and providing a focal point for social and economic interactions

Black Isle Place Plan 2024

The priorities of The Space, the wider Community Hub and Culbokie Green reflect the priorities of The Black Isle Place Plan. Its vision is for the Black Isle to become a ‘net zero carbon, sustainable and resilient community with opportunity, health and wellbeing for all.’ Our work to date on Culbokie Green, the public toilets, an active travel route, as well as other projects such as our Sharing Shed and Community Market, strongly support the priorities of the Black Isle Place Plan. The Place Plan also prioritises the development of community hubs (including this one in Culbokie) to provide a range of community services within a 20 minute walk, wheel or cycle from home.

Scottish government priorities

The Space directly addresses the following priorities:

- Growing the economy - by providing local employment opportunities, supporting those working from home and small businesses and business start-ups.
- Tackling the climate emergency – by constructing the building beyond regulatory standards of energy efficiency and reducing car journeys of users and clients.
- Ensuring high quality and sustainable public services – by addressing health and disadvantage within the community with support from 3rd sector organisations and therefore reducing pressure on public services

Environmental Impacts

From inception, the Community Hub has been planned and designed to minimise impact on the environment and to support nature and net zero targets. Culbokie Green is already a haven for wildlife and has been shortlisted for a Nature of Scotland Award. A rapid EV charger has been installed to support the transition away from fossil fuel transport and the toilets and potting shed meet very high energy efficiency standards and include the use of timber and recyclable materials. The Space will be no exception. The building has been planned to achieve an excellent energy performance standard (EPC A+), to include photovoltaic panels for energy generation and to be 'battery ready'. The building will be timber-clad to help lock in carbon and materials have been selected to be easily recyclable.

Alignment with the Place Principle

This transformational project in Culbokie village centre is strongly aligned with the main tenets of the Place Principle. It arose from an aspiration held by both the community and the Planning Department to develop an integrated plan for the village centre to address gaps in community services and regenerate the area. Many partners have since collaborated to develop a vision for a vibrant Community Hub and to bring it to fruition including private sector players such as Tulloch Homes and SWARCO/Pogo (EV charge point), Cairn Housing Association, Ferintosh Community Council, HIE, and many other community and 3rd sector organisations. While volunteers in the community have led this development, this shared ambition across all sectors has helped to drive the project forward and to focus resources to gradually bring this ambitious and transformative project to fruition.

Concurrent work by the Culbokie Community Trust to develop an active travel route through the village (which started in 2018 and is now under construction) brought in Sustrans as an additional collaborator. Sustrans helped to secure walking, wheeling and cycling routes from the Hub, radiating out to all parts of the village and to extend the nature-based placemaking at Culbokie Green into the wider village. This greatly improves the opportunity for people of all abilities to access the Hub without the need for a car.

Evidence of Need

1. Local Disadvantage

During the period 1981-2011, the Culbokie Settlement Zone more than doubled in size to a population of around 1250. Historically, Culbokie was an important, thriving agricultural village with many small shops and services; over the years its identity has changed to a heavily car-dependent dormitory for the larger towns due to continuous housebuilding, new road connectivity and a lack of public transport. This led to a loss of local services and employment opportunities and the village now has just one small shop and one pub. There are other rural inequalities, such as poor broadband and sporadic mobile phone coverage and there are no vacant commercial premises suitable for new businesses. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks Culbokie in the lowest decile 1 for geographic access to services. The two nearest Medical Practices have no plans to locate any outreach facilities in the village.

According to census information, the area has an ageing population (in 2011, 21% aged 60-75 set against the national average of 15%), which leads to increased issues of isolation, loneliness and increased demand for health services. According to local healthcare providers, there are people in the locality with a wide range of long-term physical and mental health

conditions from all age groups (15% living with limiting long-term health issues or disability – NHS 2019). Public Health NHS has stated that residents are 32 minutes from the nearest health/retail provision which is greater than the Highland average.

This project speaks to many of these areas of disadvantage. It reverses the loss of local services and businesses, provides support for working people, provides health and wellbeing services within the community and draws in 3rd sector organisations to address specific areas of local disadvantage.

A recent call for sites for the new local plan includes the potential for an additional 212 houses in the village. This will amplify the existing disadvantages if it comes to pass.

2. Why is support required

The high capital cost of a new commercial/business building, coupled with the need for affordable rents was the determining factor in the decision that loan funding for construction would not be viable and the project could only achieve its objectives if the building was funded through capital grants. However, few funders support community economic development making this RCGF funding vital to realise the aspiration to support business and disadvantaged people in the area.

3. How this project addresses local needs

The inclusion of two treatment rooms in The Space specifically designed for community health needs seeks to alleviate the disadvantage of a lack of nearby healthcare provision. The rooms will be hired by non-statutory health practitioners, therapists and third sector organisations on an ad hoc basis to run sessions for small groups or individuals. This offers the potential to provide:

- physical therapies such as podiatry, physiotherapy, complementary therapies;
- talking therapies such as bereavement counselling, suicide prevention;
- other health and wellbeing support such as NHS Near Me, diabetes screening.

The co-working area seeks to address feelings of isolation experienced by remote home-workers and the rental space will provide an opportunity to support local businesses.

CCT is in the final stages of agreeing Heads of Terms with a local resident who wants to start a hairdressing business in The Space. We expect to agree a ten-year lease which will give us confidence in the sustainability of the building and the potential to generate a surplus to support other CCT activities. In addition, this will support the 20 minute neighbourhood ambition for both the hairdresser and her clients.

All these activities will generate income and the business plan prepared by Just Enterprise in 2023 shows a small surplus being realized by the end of Year 1. This meets the need for this element of the Community Hub to provide income generation to give financial resilience and sustainability to the wider Community Hub.

Readiness to Deliver

Project Start Date

A Building Warrant was granted in June 2024 and there followed a tender exercise carried out by our architect which resulted in 3 bids and a preferred builder being identified. The tender has since expired and we anticipate doing a formal re-tender to the two top bidders (subject to procurement approval) as soon as funding has been confirmed. This will allow construction to commence in May 2026.

Project Management

The Project will be managed by our architect (LDN Architects) who will be directly instructing the contractor and liaising closely on all aspects of the build. They will undertake monthly inspections of progress and will issue monthly interim certificates for the completed work which will then be invoiced to CCT for payment.

The process will be overseen by the CCT Project Management Group (PMG). The PMG is made up of CCT Directors and volunteers who contribute their professional skills in project management, construction, health and social care, business and community development. They also bring their shared experience from developing and delivering the Culbokie Green project and the Toilet/Potting Shed building on time and to budget.

There will be monthly site meetings with the CCT PMG, architect and site manager to resolve and anticipate any issues immediately. This approach worked successfully during the construction process for the Toilets and Volunteer Base.

If appointed, the DTAS funded Business Development Officer will be working on management systems, marketing and liaison with potential tenants to ensure the building is a success from day 1. They will have a key supporting role in ensuring the furnishing, fittings, signage and equipment are designed with the needs of future tenants in mind.

Funding

Work is currently underway to secure the remaining funding to implement the project.

- CCT has a capital reserve of around £190,000 from selling a portion of the land to a community housebuilder, two legacies and local fundraising efforts. £30,000 of this money has been earmarked for this project. One legacy of £75,000 was donated for the sole purpose of contributing to the café project. The balance is required as a safeguard against unforeseen costs, costs ineligible for grant funding and as a cash flow buffer.
- HIE has strongly supported the project to its current stage and has indicated that they would look favourably on providing ‘the last brick in the wall’ should other funding not be available.
- Unfortunately, while THC has strongly supported this project to its current stage, it has not yet been able to identify any suitable funds for construction.

Timescale

The tender allows 30 weeks for the building construction. We have extended this in section 2.5 (Milestones) in order to allow for slippage. We anticipate the building being completed by the end of March 2027 and ready for occupancy in May 2027.

The Business Case

Following the COVID pandemic, CCT felt it essential to refresh early community consultation work in case community needs and desires had changed. The Impact Hub undertook a feasibility study including community/ stakeholder consultation and options appraisal at the end of 2022 and produced a revised business plan in 2023.

Community consultation

The key findings from a community and stakeholder survey were similar to those from the earlier consultation in 2018:

- 75% in favour of health rooms for a range of services and therapies;
- 58% in favour of a small retail space;
- 36% in favour of a digitally connected meeting room;
- 29% in favour of a co-working space;
- 15% in favour of dedicated office space.

Several suggestions were made of the type of retail to consider although many wanted to avoid duplication with the shop. The most popular suggestions in order were butcher, hairdresser and craft shop. Although a butcher was the most mentioned, it would conflict with the existing shop.

Options Appraisal

The options appraisal focused on two types of construction styles that would provide the required facilities:

1. Repurposed end-of-life portacabins (75m²),
2. New build (100m²).

The recommendation made by the Impact Hub and agreed by the CCT Board is that a new build would be the most viable option in terms of cost, space requirements, supply, energy efficiency and potential for income generation. In addition, being a permanent building, its value would be reflected on our balance sheet.

Building design in general is mindful of future repurposing if necessary to ensure the offering remains sustainable and resilient to the impact of unforeseen changes in the community. If, for example, the demand for hot desks is less than expected, the space is suitable for alternative uses, for example a pop up shop, either on a temporary or permanent basis according to demand.

High energy efficiency is a priority to lessen the impact on the environment and also to support affordability for users.

Business Plan

The Business Plan produced by the Impact Hub in 2023 was based on evidence of demand from the feasibility study. It assumes conservative uptake in year one, increasing in years two and three. It forecasts a surplus of £4,113 in year one, rising to £8,945 and £11,630 in years two and three. These figures assume the capital cost of the building will be grant-funded and do not include any loan repayments. This demonstrates the viability of the building if capital grants are available. If loan repayments were included the project would not be viable, demonstrating why the market has failed to develop socially valuable business space in the village.

With this opportunity of funding through RCGF, we're honing our business plan figures based on recent research and with assistance from a volunteer who is a director of a chartered surveyor firm and can advise on market demand, rental costs and tenancy agreements. Subject to support from a DTAS funded Business Development Officer we would expect to achieve target occupancy and financial results.

Early results from refreshed research show the following:

- Office space: Feedback from various office and workspace providers in the Highlands indicates a consistent demand, particularly for small units accommodating one or two people. Several locations, including Dornoch, Cromarty, Inverness, Hopeman, and Stornoway, report full occupancy and waiting lists for smaller office spaces, although larger offices can be harder to fill. There tends to be minimal turnover among existing tenants.

Hot desks/co-working: Based on recent interviews, our research indicates demand for rural hot desks, primarily from homeworkers and remote workers who will travel up to 15 minutes. This catchment extends to Alness, Dingwall and Conon Bridge where no current spaces exist and includes a population of around 15,000. Success relies on fostering a co-working community through social events and attracting digital nomads and corporate users. We recognize that user build-up will be gradual.

Community Involvement

In 2014, the opportunity arose for the community to buy the designated site and the Culbokie Community Trust was formed to take this forward and embarked on the Community Right to Buy process during 2014/15. A full Feasibility Study for the development of a new Community Hub was carried out in the second half of 2014, led by Urban Animations, and included an extensive community consultation. A design was drawn up to reflect community priorities which included a community greenspace, a café, and a multi-purpose building for business and community use. A full postal ballot at the end of 2014 resulted in a vote of 82% in favour of the land purchase. With support from the Scottish Land Fund, CCT purchased the site in 2015.

The community-owned land was intimately connected with a 2.5ha neighbouring field zoned for housing leading and the need for an integrated plan led to a delay in our ability to physically progress the project until 2021. We fostered a positive relationship with the commercial housebuilder which resulted in a legal agreement leading to a land exchange and reciprocal commitments. This 'dormant' period while the new housing was built was used by CCT to continue community consultations on specific aspects of the plan including:

- Design plans for Culbokie Green
- Designs for the Community Hub buildings

All homes were leafleted to encourage high levels of engagement and varied options of face to face and virtual engagement were offered. The results from these consultations were used by our professional team to develop transformational plans for the project.

In addition to these specific consultations, CCT maintains open channels of communication with the community to provide updated information and encourage feedback. For example:

- CCT has a membership of 417 including full members, junior members and associates (those who live outside the Community Council postcode area). All members receive a monthly newsletter by email, giving updates on project progress and other news on CCT activities.
- The CCT Board has a stand at each monthly community market displaying the latest information and two or three Board members or volunteers are available to discuss progress and any concerns with all members of the community.
- Social media and the CCT website are used to promote progress and advertise CCT activities to the wider community and non-members and to engage with the public.

- The AGM is well advertised locally and attendance is encouraged by combining it with an interesting speaker relevant to the community and work of the Trust. This provides another opportunity for the wider community to engage with the project.

Over time the CCT Board has been involved in and had representation on other local groups /organisations such as the Community Council, Church Centre and Findon Hall committee. Relationships have also been fostered with the two local businesses: the Culbokie Inn and Culbokie Stores. Both owners are kept abreast of plans to ensure there will be no conflict and both have shown strong support for the project, evidenced by their generosity towards fundraising events.

The project has been entirely community-led and delivered from inception. CCT's Board and Project Management Group are supported by over 100 volunteers involved in many aspects of delivery. This includes the involvement of volunteers with specialist skills – both professional and practical. Other volunteer project groups supporting delivery including:

- a fundraising group that organises events and raises around £4,000 per year
- the Green Team which meets weekly to look after Culbokie Green

Through engagement over many years, the community has come together to regenerate abandoned land in the village centre and to build a local economy that works for everyone. By collaborating and supporting local businesses and disadvantaged people, it will support community wealth building by ensuring more wealth is retained and shared locally.

As mentioned above, HIE and THC have supported the project financially since inception and we wouldn't have reached shovel-ready status without them. The Impact Hub/Just Enterprise augmented HIE and THC funding with support in the form of their time to conduct the Feasibility Study, Options appraisal and Business Plan in 2022/23. Their experience in supporting remote working helped shape the hot desk area. In addition, we partnered with Tulloch Homes in a legal agreement that led to a land exchange and the development of the infrastructure (road access, land shaping and services) for the Community Hub worth around £75,000. We also partnered with Cairn Housing Association leading to the sale of surplus land for around £70,000 and the development of 6 additional affordable rental homes within the new housing development.

Over the years, we have engaged with a range of private and public organisations (as mentioned above), with local councillors and our MSP and with third sector organisations such as Age Scotland, Highland Hospice, Black Isle Cares and Transition Black Isle. The project has been shaped with their involvement and we have letters to evidence their support. Links with some organisations that were previously strong have lapsed as timescales for project completion lengthened and the incentive to maintain relationships without productive outcomes fell away. A good example is a relationship with the mental health charity Birchwood Highland (now Centred) with whom we had worked hard to achieve a signed agreement that they would run the (as yet unbuilt) community café for the benefit of their clients. This experience demonstrated to us that partnership building must be timely so that the investment of hard-pressed service providers (and volunteers) leads to real outcomes.

We believe that partnership with 3rd sector organisations is the most effective way to achieve our aims and is a key plank in our strategy for addressing disadvantage. Recognising the issue outlined above, we plan to refresh and strengthen partnerships that will bring community services to The Space once funding is confirmed. If we are successful in our application to DTAS for a Business Development Officer, this will be part of their role during the construction phase and beyond.

Regeneration Outcomes

Physically Sustainable Communities

- Transforming a straggle of unrelated dysfunctional village elements into a vibrant, coherent, inclusive and effective community

- Enhancing the range of daily activities including employment and healthcare that can be readily achieved within the village envelope, thereby reducing unnecessary car journeys
- Creating a community infrastructure underpinned by principles of environmental sustainability and biodiversity
- Delivering a building designed to exceed energy efficiency standards, reducing carbon emissions and contributing to Scotland's net zero ambitions

This project will be transformational to the physical regeneration of our village. Following the rapid growth of the village since the 1980s, it now spans 2km of the B9169 and has no specific centre. The land purchased is near the shop and pub and will create a central focus and meeting point. Culbokie Green has already become a key gathering space and draws additional users due to the EV charge point and toilets already completed by CCT. In addition to local residents, these new facilities are used by those servicing the area (health and social care staff, tradespeople and deliveries), by tourists and by walkers on the John O'Groats trail who bring spending power to the village and wider Black Isle. Work is underway (due for completion Spring 2026), on a new active travel route which was designed by CCT in collaboration with the community, Sustrans and THC. This will link the Community Hub to the whole village with new accessible pavements, traffic calming, shared use paths and greenspace enhancements to promote biodiversity. It further supports the local plan in providing access to services and fits directly with the Black Isle Local Place Plan (October 2024) in supporting the 20 minute neighbourhood and local services.

The development of the Green to date has been progressed with environmental sustainability and biodiversity as a priority. This is evidenced for example by the creation of wildflower meadows and a pollinator bed using 'no-dig' methods, by the construction of a green shelter, by the avoidance of chemical weedkillers and through the introduction of a local composting system which converts green waste into fertiliser. These principles will be sustained in the construction of The Space, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The building has been planned to achieve an excellent energy performance standard (EPC A+), to include photovoltaic panels for energy generation.

Economically Sustainable Communities

The purpose and design of The Space is to meet the needs identified in the community consultations and detailed in Section 2.8 while ensuring that it, and the wider Hub, are financially viable. This will be achieved by:

- Providing a location for accessible employment and training facilities in the immediate locality, helping to counter a loss of young people from the area and economic fragility.
- Offering opportunities for remote working by providing hot-desks and a flexible, digitally connected meeting room with welcoming co-working opportunities.
- Supporting micro-enterprises, freelancers and care providers, contributing to local economic resilience and providing new healthcare facilities.
- Achieving financial sustainability through income generation from rentals and services both from within and outside the village.
- Reducing unnecessary duplication and promoting improved efficiency through the provision of shared infrastructure which is multi-purpose and adaptable.

The area of strongest deprivation/disadvantage in our locality is geographic; CCT seeks to address this by providing two treatment rooms for visiting health practitioners and therapists. Such provision is particularly attractive in a village with a higher-than-average proportion of older people for whom 'local is best' and with this comes social opportunities. Further support

is available from our community-led ‘wee bus’ which will transport clients from their home to the Space and back again on a ‘pay what you can’ basis.

The Space has been designed with flexibility at its core. The largest room (25m²) will be suitable for many business types, with our anchor tenant a business start-up hairdresser who lives in Culbokie. Once established, this will offer opportunities for training young people and for renting a chair to other hairdressers seeking to be self-employed. Consultation with other similar projects (Cromarty Links Hub, Dornoch Area CIC, Impact Hub) confirms expectations of demand for small business spaces in rural areas.

The Space includes provision for 4 hot desk spaces primarily designed to support home workers and start up businesses and to provide a sense of community and alleviate loneliness for those working alone. Our marketing will prioritise local workers but will also reach out to surrounding communities within a 15 minute radius where no similar facility exists, and to digital nomads and corporate users with remote teams and projects.

Should our application to DTAS to fund a Business Development Officer be successful there will be capacity to develop and refresh connections with the community, business support groups and third sector organisations to bring their services to the village. New services could be accommodated in a treatment room or the meeting room on an ad hoc basis, or by a longer tenancy in one of the treatment rooms. Decisions will be made according to community needs and wishes.

The projected profit and loss in our Business Plan anticipates a small surplus being realised from year 1 and increasing in subsequent years. This projection gives us confidence that the building will be self-sustaining and that there will be surpluses available to support the other key Hub facilities i.e. the existing toilets/volunteer base and the proposed café.

Socially Sustainable Communities

- Fostering a sense of common identity across longer-term and more recent residents of the rapidly expanding village
- Enhancing community well-being through the provision of immediately accessible health, support and beauty facilities
- Providing shared infrastructure (meeting rooms, video conferencing, hot-desks) that can be used by multiple agencies and groups
- Enabling collaboration between health, care and community organisations
- Supporting local ownership and decision-making through flexible spaces and services tailored to local needs

The Community Hub and Culbokie Green have been designed to bring people together and improve social cohesion, develop support networks and reduce loneliness. The Space has been planned primarily to provide spaces for businesses and third sector organisations to provide accessible services that meet local need while generating revenue to ensure sustainability and community resilience. In marketing available spaces, organisations which will bring the range of priority services to the village will be targeted. Priority will be given to those who provide high levels of social and environmental benefit. Our approach is to use the Business Development Officer to secure occupation of the building but also to involve high social value organisations who are much better placed than CCT to provide specialist services. This might include for example provision of support group sessions for a range of mental health or other disabilities, winter warmth provision, or a base for volunteer mentorship.

Impact on the local community and the wider regional area will be measured by gathering data on the type and number of hires of the treatment rooms and meeting room, and where hirers are coming from. This will tell us the range of services being offered and who is

providing them. To find out who is benefiting we will monitor the type and provenance of hot desk users ourselves and from time to time we will ask businesses and organisations hiring our spaces to provide information on who is using their services and where users are coming from. Together, this data will provide an excellent overview of local and regional impact.

Legacy

The legacy will be a space for local businesses to provide priority local services particularly healthcare along with a welcoming and inclusive co-working and digitally connected meeting space. Subject to funding success through the DTAS Strengthening Communities Programme, a Business Development Officer will be working to secure the required partnerships and occupancy to achieve operational and financial targets. Our business plan indicates that by Year 3 we expect to generate a surplus of around £11,500 per year from a turnover of £18,000 (figures from Impact Hub Business Plan). We plan to establish a user group working with CCT to foster collaboration and mutual support between users, help promote innovation in the building use and, to support the management of the building including environmental sustainability.

In the longer term, once the building use and partnerships are established and in order to ensure ongoing financial sustainability we will operate the building with reduced staff. This is likely to involve a part-time administrator coupled with digital entry and automation to achieve efficiencies.

We already have at least 100 volunteers who take on varied roles such as running the monthly Community Market, opening and closing the Sharing Shed daily, acting as caretaker for the public toilets, undertaking maintenance on Culbokie green and fundraising activities. We are confident that this tradition will continue and volunteers will play a key role in managing The Space from Day 1 taking on roles that will support staff, fill gaps and add local expertise and knowledge.