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| **Title of meeting:** | Cabinet |
| **Subject**: | Health Determinants Research Collaboration |
| **Date of meeting:** | 5th March 2024 |
| **Report by:** | Matt Gummerson, Assistant Director of Public Health |
| **Cabinet Member:** | Councillor Matthew Winnington, Community Wellbeing, Health & Care |
| **Wards affected:** | All |

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1. **Requested by**    Helen Atkinson, Director of Public Health

2. **Purpose**

2.1 To provide an overview of Portsmouth's Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) including the key plans for the Development Year and where support from Cabinet and Directors is required.

3. **Information Requested**

3.1 Portsmouth City Council (PCC) has successfully bid to become a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) HDRC. Funding has been awarded for a Development Year from 1st January 2024 and, subject to satisfactory achievement of the agreed milestones for this year, for a full HDRC for five years from 1st January 2025 until 31st December 2029.

3.2 HDRCs will boost research capacity and capability within local government. They aim to further embed a culture of always using evidence when making decisions. HDRCs will use research findings to understand how decisions impact on health and health inequalities. They will be based in and led by local government, with core funding from the NIHR. The focus will be on building research capacity and capability between local government and the academic sector. Creating a multi-disciplinary Research and Development (R&D) team will enable the council to become more research-active and thus more involved in shaping and driving forward the research agenda around tackling health inequalities in a way that is most informative for the decisions and issues the city faces.

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3.3 In total funding has been awarded to 30 HDRCs across the UK[1]. The first HDRCs began their work in December 2022, with a further set starting in January 2024 and a final tranche in January 2025. Each HDRC has been awarded up to £5million over five years. Portsmouth has received an additional £250,000 for its Development Year, along with those other authorities in a similar position.

## 4. Current position

4.1 PCC has signed a contract with the Department of Health and Social Care for the 72 months of the HDRC including the Development Year. It sets out in detail what will be delivered via the Business Case and the funding that is allocated against each of the objectives. This funding is for the infrastructure to support research, not for research itself or for interventions. The aim is for the infrastructure funding to enable applications for research funding for specific projects.

4.2 HDRC Portsmouth has been developed in collaboration with the University of Portsmouth (UoP) and HIVE Portsmouth. Both organisations will receive a proportion of the funding as per the Business Case. This will bring in expertise from the university across diverse aspects of the challenges the HDRC seeks to address, from research design and governance to evaluating cultural change in organisations. HIVE Portsmouth will lead the HDRC's work to ground the programme within our communities that experience health inequalities. This includes establishing the core HDRC team within the HIVE Hub so the work is based in a community setting. The HDRC leads from HIVE and UoP are funded to work with PCC during the Development Year.

4.3 HDRC Portsmouth has a core team who are funded to lead the work during the Development Year and into the full HDRC, comprising:

- Co-Director Leads (0.05 FTE): Helen Atkinson and James Hill
- HDRC Director (0.2 FTE): Matt Gummerson
- Research Development Lead (0.8 FTE): Gail Mann / Sam Belfrage
- HIVE Senior Health and Care Consultant (0.2 FTE): Innes Richens
- UoP Academic Lead (0.4 FTE): Associate Professor Nikki Fairchild
- UoP Strategic Lead (0.1 FTE): Professor Gordon Blunn

## 5. Development Year Plans

5.1 The updated Business Case submitted to NIHR and approved in December 2023 sets out the plans for the Development Year. This is summarised in section 4.2 below and set out in more detail in the letter to the NIHR detailing the response to their feedback

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[1] Health Determinants Research Collaborations | NIHR

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on the full application (Appendix A). The objectives were written specifically to respond to the feedback from the funding committee, in line with the guidance provided.

5.2 The Development Year plan comprises six objectives with key activities and milestones:

i.      Infrastructure set-up for development year to lead into Year 1 of full contract (2025): this includes setting up the Steering Group and Community Research Reference Group; and putting in place Collaboration Agreements with partners. It also includes recruiting early to the Programme Manager, Community Research Engagement Lead and Communications and Engagement Lead roles, although consideration will need to be given to what length of contract can be offered until the full HDRC funding is confirmed, hopefully in September 2024 (see 4.3 below).

ii.     Engage with both mature and 'Development year' HDRCs for support, guidance, learning and collaboration.

iii.    Engage the teams across PCC and partners who will be delivering the full HDRC: testing ways of working through pilot projects; using the learning to create Job Descriptions for HDRC roles in extended council teams; working with UoP to design and deliver training to support the cultural and research delivery ambitions of our HDRC.

iv.    Engage with and familiarise council leaders and partners with the HDRC award in preparation for launch in 2025.

v.     Design and commission the HDRC evaluation: this is funded within the HDRC grant and is a key part of the HDRC Portsmouth approach to learning by doing.

vi.    Develop our strategy to progress a system-wide community research infrastructure in Portsmouth and collaborate with partners and the public to develop principles and practice guidelines. This builds on current work led by the Research Development Lead e.g. the Sandbox and Community Participatory Action Research projects.

5.3 At the start of month 7 (July 2024) a report will be submitted to NIHR demonstrating achievement of agreed milestones. This will inform the decision to proceed with the full HDRC from January 2025. Completion of the remaining activities in the Development Year will ensure a successful start to the full HDRC.

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## 6. Key Development Year opportunities

6.1 HDRC Portsmouth will bring significant opportunities to strengthen our relationship with UoP and the wider academic sector, leveraging in research funding that can enable partners locally to test new approaches and tackle health inequalities.

6.2 It will provide an opportunity to develop a new relationship with our communities in which they identify and help deliver the research that is needed to support meaningful change locally. Working with Elected Members will be crucial in their role as representatives of local communities, conduits into those communities, and decision-makers within the local authority.

6.3 The HDRC can support work across all directorates that addresses wider determinants of health, as set out in the City Vision and the city's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2030. The HDRC has been designed to build research capacity and involvement into existing teams across the council so that a sustainable model is created beyond the lifetime of the current funding.

6.4 Cabinet Portfolio holders and their Directors are asked in particular to engage with and support the following Development Year activities:

- Support your teams to engage in activity to prepare for the HDRC e.g. thinking about how extended roles in existing teams can add value to current work and bring in new opportunities

- Encourage staff to engage with training opportunities around topics such as:
  o Community-led research
  o Research design
  o Realist Evaluation

- PCC Senior Leader HDRC Development Session (July, tbc)

- Elected Member HDRC Development Session (September, tbc)

## 7. Next Steps
7.1 The objectives and milestones for the Development Year will be worked up into a detailed delivery plan by the core team. An interim steering group will be established to approve and oversee delivery of the plan, as outlined in section 4 above. Collaboration Agreements will be put in place with UoP and HIVE Portsmouth by the end of March 2024.

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7.2 Recruitment for the HDRC Programme Manager will begin as soon as possible, with the aim to have the person in post by July to manage delivery of the HDRC including the transition from development year into full HDRC. This may need to initially be on a 6 month contract with potential to extend to 5 years once funding is confirmed.

7.3 Once the full HDRC is confirmed, a further report will be brought to Cabinet.


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Signed by (Director)

**Appendices:**
Appendix A - HDRC Feedback Response letter to NIHR, 21st November 2023

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

| Title of document | Location |
|---|---|
|  |  |
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**Appendix A - HDRC Feedback Response letter to NIHR, 21st November 2023**

### Portsmouth City Council (PCC) HDRC Development year plan (January-December 2024)

This plan summarises our proposed activity for our HDRC development year and responds to the areas for which the HDRC panel requested further development to enable our proposed HDRC to be ready to move forward.  By working on the areas of culture change, health inequalities and capacity building we will be able to more clearly articulate the aims and vision needed to achieve impact and sustainability of the HDRC.  The panel also recommended that our plans for community involvement should be developed during the development year, to enable clearer articulation of our intentions.

### Committee feedback 1: Strategic aspects around culture change, health inequalities, capacity building of the HDRC requires further development to enable the proposed HDRC to be in the right position to move forward and clearly articulate the aims and vision to achieve impact and sustainability of the HDRC.

**Objective 1:**  Infrastructure set-up for development year to lead into Year 1 of full contract (2025).

**Activity:**
1. Establish interim HDRC Partnership Steering Group, as described on our HDRC Organogram, to monitor progress against objectives for Year 0
2. Establish the Community Research Reference Group (*see objective 6 below)*
3. Allocate time for key existing roles in Year 0 (co-Directors, Assistant Director for Strategic Intelligence and Research, Research Development Lead)
4. Recruit to posts to work during Year 0: Programme Manager, Project Administrator, Comms lead, Community Research Engagement Lead

**Milestones / stop-go criteria**

| | |
|---|---|
| January 2024 | Programme Manager and Community Research Engagement roles advertised |
| April 2024 | Interim Steering Group established with draft Terms of Reference |
| July 2024 | Programme Manager in post/ Community Research Engagement Lead in post |
| October 2024 | Other funded roles in Development Year recruited to |
| October 2024 | Community Research Reference Group established with draft Terms of Reference |

**Costs: Specify personnel costs for the funded roles here**.
We are requesting 9-12 months funding during the Development Year for the existing posts that have leadership roles costed into the full HDRC: co-Directors, Head of Strategic Intelligence and Research, Research Development Lead, Strategic Lead and Academic Lead at UoP, Senior Health and Care Consultant at HIVE Portsmouth.

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In addition, we have included 3-6 months funding for the Programme Manager and Project Administrator, Community Research lead and Communications Lead
**Total salary costs** (including overheads and partner indirect costs) **£239,261**

**Objective 2**: Engage with both mature and 'Development year' HDRCs for support, guidance, learning and collaboration.

**Activity**
1. Peer discussion at HDRC Director level - 4 quarterly meetings
2. 1-2 Learning visits to established HDRCs (2 or 3 members of core team)
3. Minimum of 6 action learning sets/ support meetings

**Milestones / stop-go criteria**: Not applicable
**Costs: Travel/subsistence costs for core team learning visits covered within staff overhead costs**

**Objective 3:** Engage teams and organisations who will be involved in our full HDRC post transition in learning experiences that support them to understand and align with our HDRC ambition, build insight into health inequalities, build productive relationships and learn from each other's roles, skill sets and perspectives. *(NB although community engagement is dealt with in Objective 6, we will also include community partners in these learning experiences).*

**Activity:**
1. Deliver and evaluate a minimum of 4 mutual learning collaborations that build capacity and develop cultural commitment to generating and using research evidence to address health inequalities.  These will also support identification of Discovery Research (see section 4.0 of Detailed Research Plan). These collaborations will be between (eg) University of Portsmouth (UoP) academics (led by Associate Professor Nikki Fairchild), PCC practitioners involved in our HDRC delivery and VCS and business leaders in the city, and supports preparation for objectives 3.1 (Aim A) and 3.3.2 (Aim C) in the Detailed Research Plan. This work will also directly inform the development of Job Descriptions and Person Specifications for the posts listed in objective 3.1. The communications lead will promote this activity and the learning generated.

   Examples of learning collaborations that will contribute to capacity building, our strategy for addressing health inequalities (experience and/or policy-led), and relationship development in preparation for Year 1:
   a. PCC Public Health Intelligence analyst paired with Dental Academy researcher to identify research topic that combines local Public Health intelligence with academic methods to address/examine a local challenge e.g. poor oral health outcomes for children in more deprived parts of Portsmouth.
   b. Internal collaboration between PCC's Systems Development Service team and a member of the Public Health team on new research/ improvement work in

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       preparation for closer joint working when HDRC begins e.g. access to sexual health services for marginalised communities / homeless healthcare pathway

  c. PCC Information Governance / UoP participation in design of ethics/governance processes suited to community research and co-production. Link with the NIHR Public Health National Specialist Centre for support/expertise.

  d. Research/Marketing officer work with UoP Survey specialist to agree opportunities for joint working and embedding academic practices during the 5 years of HDRC delivery to target areas of known health inequality e.g. healthy behaviours and impact on adolescent health.

  e. VCS partner (HIVE Portsmouth) working with Public Health and UoP academic to plan research into a known area of health inequality e.g. transport access for disabled people.

  f. PCC/UoP communications collaboration on development of a communications strategy for community research projects in a way that positively supports regional/national awareness of, and city-wide dialogue about community involvement in health inequalities research.

2. Complete Job Descriptions and Person Specifications for HDRC roles operating as part of extended council teams (informed by the above)

3. Staff training: Design and deliver tailored training that supports the cultural and research delivery ambitions of our HDRC.  These will be co-developed and delivered by our UoP co-applicant, Associate Professor Nikki Fairchild who will work alongside with existing partners in the city (Community researchers, VCS, NHS as well as PCC) who are developing their community research expertise and collaborating with us.
   Proposed topics:
   a. Community-led research: principles and practice (working with partners at HIVE Portsmouth, Solent Research Academy and Portsmouth Hospitals University Trust)
   b. Building Blocks of Health/ Research design workshop:  Training with a dual purpose of promoting our focus on Health Determinants in an accessible way and supporting participants through a workshop activity, to work together to design Health Determinant-linked research projects.
   c. Realist Evaluation Action Learning and dissemination: Building on training and project initiation, this action learning will support those delivering projects to progress and share their learning and methods with other practitioners interested in evaluation methods.

## Milestones / stop-go criteria
| | |
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| June 2024 | A minimum of 2 examples of PCC/UoP learning exercises, reporting to Steering Group on progress/outcomes |
| July 2024 | Delivery of a training session (collaboration between UoP and partners) |
| Sept. 2024 | A minimum of 2 further examples of PCC/UoP learning exercises reporting to Steering Group on progress/outcomes |
| Nov. 2024 | Completed Job Descriptions/ Person Specifications for 6 key roles to be recruited once we have confirmation of transition to the full HDRC award. |

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Nov. 2024    Delivery of a further training session resulting from a collaboration between UoP and partners

**Costs: personnel costs covered in Objective 1, Communications budget, Training/event costs - room booking/ refreshments** (£2,700 in Development Year to cover this and Objective 6)

**Objective 4:** Engage with and familiarise all council leaders and partners (Directors/Deputy Directors/ Health and Wellbeing Board, Health and Care Portsmouth) with the HDRC award in preparation for 2025 delivery. Draw from discussion opportunities highlighted by senior leaders for research, contributing to a bank of Discovery projects. This objective supports preparation for Objective 3.3 Aim C in Detailed Research Plan.

**Activity:**
1. Gain commitment from Directors/senior leaders to support their team members to engage in preparation activity (Objective 3) and reaffirm HDRC commitments.
2. PCC Board/ senior leadership development session - Building Blocks of Health and the value of the HDRC across Directorates.
3. Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet reports to further cement buy-in to the HDRC plans and opportunities.
4. Councillor HDRC development workshop. Involve Councillors in discussion about Health Determinants relevant to their wards and begin generating (Building Blocks of Health-related) ideas for areas where evidence would support decision-making. Gain commitment to engaging with the collaborative Discovery projects, supporting them as needed and considering the findings /implications for policy relevant to their communities/ portfolios.
5. Communications and dissemination (Detailed Research Plan 6.2). Deliver a case example – using an existing community project (CPAR/Sandbox) and/or relevant partner project findings eg Reducing Teenage Pregnancy (PHUT) we will develop/ test a communications strategy *(Comms role/partnering with UoP comms)* that ensures information is disseminated in accessible/compelling formats and that we test horizontal spaces for dialogue between community/researchers/decision makers about findings and implications for policy change.

**Milestones / stop-go criteria**
January 2024 activity    Present to Directors Board to secure support for Development Year
March 2024 opportunity    Report to Cabinet on Development Year plans and full HDRC
July 2024    PCC Senior Leadership development session
September 2024    Elected Member development session (post-election)
October 2024    Report Communication/dissemination case example

**Costs:**    n/a - will be covered by costs of PCC roles set out above

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**Objective 5:** Design and commission HDRC Evaluation

**Activity:**
1. Finalise evaluation needs and plan, based on the proposal in Detailed research Plan 3.3.3
2. Commission evaluation for HDRC delivery from Jan 2025

**Milestones / stop-go criteria**
June 2024          Evaluation design complete
December 2024     Evaluation commissioned

**Costs: There are no additional costs with commissioning of the evaluation**

**Committee feedback 2: Community engagement and involvement needed clearer articulation and should be developed further during the development year:**
**Objective 6:** Develop our strategy to progress a system-wide community research infrastructure in Portsmouth and collaborate with partners and the public to develop principles and practice guidelines. (Supports preparation for Objective 3.2 Aim B in the Detailed Research Plan)

**Activity:**
1. Meet with our city partners and local community researchers to join up the work we are (separately) doing in community research. This collaboration will align community research principles and processes in the city (for example, employment arrangements for community researchers, a training offer for community research and supporting research to engage with policy and decision-makers).
2. Community research participation events/ small group conversations involving all partners to build on learning from current projects about the nature/value of community research and conditions that support its delivery. Use citizen spaces/ links with community groups.
3. Plan and deliver a workshop to engage community and business Leaders in Portsmouth in our HDRC, to strengthen our network of support organisations – facilitated by co-applicant at HIVE Portsmouth.  This will enable those who already understand the assets and opportunities in the city's communities to be part of shaping the work.
4. Continue to support and learn from community research activity in the city, led by PCC (eg Sandbox and Community Participatory Action Research projects) and those led by partners (eg Solent Academy and the Young Foundation).
5. Develop HDRC community engagement strategy that reflects both principles and activity recommended through the above activities
6. Communications campaign to raise awareness of the strategy/partnership across the city and system/ value of community research
7. Establish HDRC Community Research Reference Group (and plan for our Research Prioritisation Group).  We will work with partners to identify people who have been

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actively involved in delivering community research in the city, alongside our UoP/VCS/NHS partners

**Milestones / stop-go criteria**
May 2024     Workshop to engage community and business leaders in HDRC plan
July 2024     2 x Community participation gatherings
Sept. 2024    Co-produced principles and practice guidelines for community research published
October 2024     HDRC Community Reference Group established with draft Terms of Reference

**Costs: personnel costs covered in Objective 1, Communications budget, Training/event costs - room booking/ refreshments** (see costs for objective 3), **HDRC base in Hive Hub at 50% of full HDRC capacity for development year**

**Finance Feedback:** We have responded to each of these points in the 'response to feedback' tab.

**Intellectual Property (IP)Feedback:** We have added section 6.2.1 'Intellectual Property' to the Business Case (Detailed Research Plan) to clarify ownership of background and foreground IP and completed this section on the 'response to feedback' tab.

**Compliance with NIHR's Preventing Harm in Research Policy:** We confirm that PCC has safeguarding policies in place whose principles comply with the NIHR Safeguarding Guidance. We will ensure that new policies and resources developed through the HDRC, e.g. around research ethics and integrity, are linked to the corporate safeguarding approach.

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