Report to	Calne Area Board
Date of Meeting	08/12/2020
Title of Report	Update for a Calne Community Area Recovery Plan – Impact upon young people

Purpose of the report:

1. To note conversations held at the area board and more broadly in the community relating to the impact of Covid-19 upon young people.

2. To consider potential priorities and actions to include in a local Calne community area recovery plan.

1. Introduction

During informal catch up meetings held throughout the Covid-19 crisis, Area Board members have discussed producing a simple local recovery plan to help pull together basic information about needs, resources, actions and existing support relating to the following groups within the community:

- People who need to shield
- Children and Young People
- Older People
- Vulnerable adults and Carers,
- The Economically vulnerable
- Community Volunteers.

This was felt necessary to help assess how the area board could best work with the local community during the current period, through future local lockdowns and into the future.

This update relates to young people and has been produced by the Community Engagement Manager following discussions held at the Area Board meeting on 15th September 2020 and subsequent conversations with Wiltshire Council colleagues, partners, and young people themselves.

2. Review of conversations at the Area Board on 15th September 2020

Local partners engaging with young people were asked to provide an update to the area board, providing their knowledge and experience based on interactions with young people (and the wider community). These informed discussions among all those attending the meeting which, included the following points.

- **Wordfest**

  o Recognition of evidence that links poverty and literacy, much of the Wordfest background strategy is based around original research and reviews of the National Literacy Trust.

- Concern about young people and families within local areas identified in the indices of deprivation.

- Are gaps in learning more pronounced for these families and young people?

- Are gaps linked with access to technology, equipment, books and to families struggling in the face of supporting their children and young people to learn remotely?

- Do we also need to look at adult literacy as part of this issue, so that literacy levels in the community are improved for everyone.

- Wordfest has received a donation of reconditioned laptops from a local IT support business based in Westbury – these will be utilised to enable adult learners to access the groups existing learn to read course.

- **Rise Youth**

  - Detached (street based) youth engagement was helping to support young people at a time when traditional indoor youth provision was not possible.

  - Some young people were expressing anxiety as a result of the Covid Crisis and uncertainty about how this had, would affect their education and future opportunities. There had also been expressions of grief and anger following tragic events which had impacted upon the local community in the last year as a result of the deaths of several young people through tragic accident and a terrible murder. This impact was further impounded by ongoing speculation and interest from local and national media.

  - Youth workers were providing ongoing contact and support, but also signposting to relevant counselling and guidance around these issues and other.

  - There was ongoing dialogue with local police and town council officers regarding the evidence of drug use in the Town. Youth workers were equipped to provide advice about drug use and had links to other partners who could deliver more direct information and advice to individuals and through street-based work.

  - A range of different approaches to delivering support to young people was in place in the community before lockdown in March 2020. These had been arranged and funded by a variety of different organisations. It was felt that a more joined up approach to planning, funding and delivery could provide a more meaningful approach to working with young people and a more appropriate use of resources.

  - There appeared to be an issue about the availability of laptops and internet access, for young people to access schoolwork from home.

- **Kingsbury Green Academy**

  - Introduction of a range of social isolation measures

o Recognition that gaps in learning had widened during the lockdown periods.

o Development of a recovery curriculum through an online portal.

o Strong push to try and improve access to books and young people engagement with reading whole books, rather than extracts to develop ownership of stories.

o Focus on addressing and explaining issues surrounding inequalities, specifically racism, in reaction to the 'Black Lives Matter' issues and narrative at the forefront of social comment.

- **Ongoing conversations:**

The Community Engagement Manager continues to engage with partners, Wiltshire Council colleagues and local volunteers working with young people and also with the wider community.

It is suggested that the following issues are most referred to when discussing issues affecting young people in the Calne Community Area:

Education and Training:

- IT Poverty
- Literacy – book/story 'ownership'
- Academic achievement gaps

Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing:

- Ongoing relevant youth engagement
- Vulnerability to drugs, alcohol and concerns about 'County Lines'.
- Positive activities – identified with young people not for them
- Access to appropriate advice, guidance, mentoring and counselling

- **Priorities and actions to consider including within a recovery plan:**

Concern	Action
Links between poverty and literacy	• Identify, support and promote initiatives being developed locally regionally and nationally to support young people and families who are likely to be negatively impacted by a widening academic achievement gap. • Explore opportunities to improve access to IT equipment and broadband for all young people and especially those living in economically vulnerable households. • Promote literacy, book ownership and the love of stories.

	• Maintain regular communication with the school and encourage/support their recovery curriculum and transition schemes.
Provision of joined up, relevant youth support, guidance and activities.	• Develop new opportunities to provide a combination of ongoing street based/café style youth work providing support, signposting, mentoring. • Encourage and support relevant activities for young people, especially during school holidays and at times of locally recognised anxiety. • Develop links between local youth providers and encourage their ongoing conversations, training and development especially relating to new approaches to youth work, safeguarding and funding opportunities.
Listening to young people.	• Discuss and develop a new, locally relevant forum, not necessarily aligned to the community area and not necessarily requiring young people to sit in a meeting. • Develop new approaches to engage with young people, through street-based youth work, schools and technology etc. • Encourage partners to adopt a common method of engagement (e.g. one cross agency youth survey). • Develop joint working and share resources. • Focus on needs and development opportunities.

3. Next Steps

If these points are felt to be an accurate representation of the current status, they will be included in the forthcoming community area status report – which it is hoped will inform future actions and ongoing priorities for the area board and the Calne area community.

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