Melksham Area Board

22 June 2022

Annual Review of Local Priorities

1. **Purpose of the Report**

   I.   To report on progress made in addressing the area board priorities selected for 2021/22
   II. To consider any new evidence or information that will help inform the area board in selecting its priorities for 2022/23
   III. To highlight potential priorities for the area board to consider for 2022/23
   IV. To inform the area board of the broad mechanism for delivering these priorities including where appropriate leads, working groups and allocating funding.

2. **Introduction**

   This report has been written by the Community Engagement Manager in consultation with the area board chair. It is provided to help celebrate the success so far and support the area board councillors in setting their priorities for the coming year.

   In early 2021, the Community Engagement Manager combined data from the community area "Joint Strategic Needs Assessment" (JSNA) with other sources of data and additional local intelligence. This was used to produce a community area status report that highlighted where further local improvements may be required. In May 2021, this report was shared with local area boards to help inform which priorities it should focus its energy and resources upon.

   Given the challenging financial environment both nationally and locally, area boards are encouraged to continue to develop this evidence led approach to its work, so that they can have the greatest impact on the lives of our communities. This includes:
   ✓ Selecting priorities and directing resources to where there is the greatest need and where the area board can make a tangible contribution
   ✓ Being clear on what the area board is trying to achieve and the mechanism for doing so
   ✓ Regularly reviewing and communicating progress against the chosen priorities.

3. **Progress on 2021/22 area board priorities**

   Despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the move to online meetings, the Melksham Area Board over the past year has continued to host public discussions, broker debates and commission activities. A focus for attention has been

two large infrastructure projects: consultation on routes for the A350 Melksham Bypass and the construction of the Melksham Community Campus. Appendix A summarises the activities of the board and its working groups, its grant-giving and the progress that has been made against the identified area board priorities of: youth engagement; environment; reducing isolation and loneliness; supporting low-income individuals and families; and reducing anti-social behaviour.

4. **The context for agreeing new area board priorities**

The selection of area board priorities should be undertaken using both the evidence available to us, as well as the context within which we are operating. Both are continually changing, and the following is provided to help inform the area board's decision.

i. The Joint Strategic Needs Analysis was collated 2 years ago in 2020 and although it used the latest information available at the time, some it is now out of date. This is partly due the significant impact COVID-19 has had on issues such as debt, the economy and mental health as well as the release of more up to date data that was not previously available.

ii. Two news sources of data for Wiltshire that have analysed data during COVID and subsequent start of the recovery are now available. These are:
☐ Wiltshire Citizens Advice Annual Report Annual report (citizensadvicewiltshire.org.uk)
☐ Wiltshire Intelligence Bringing Evidence Together (JSNA Update) Recovery JSNA Wiltshire Intelligence

In addition:
☐ Inflation and the cost of living is currently going through a spike with fuel costs and utility costs doubling or more in the past year; the Government has provided financial support to offset the impact of these additional costs on the poor, the elderly and the vulnerable in our society but the impacts on those in poverty are likely to remain significant.

iii. The 2021/22 area board priorities were selected whilst in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. The demands of this public health crisis demonstrated the importance of partnership working with some services struggling to cope and many of our community groups and organisations unable to operate. The focus of our time and resources has been upon coming together and supporting the vulnerable within our communities. As we now emerge from the pandemic, the focus is shifting away from this reactive response and onto the rebuilding of our communities. This is likely to be a gradual recovery as the evidence suggests that:

- Some organisations are finding it difficult to find volunteers with some not returning to work due to anxiety over COVID-19
- The demand upon our health services including the number of COVID related cases continues to be high
- Many people, especially the older and more vulnerable have lost confidence and are reluctant to socialise again
- There has been an increase in poor mental health and depression resulting from the pandemic; some young people have been particularly badly affected

iv) The last 2 years has seen a change in the way that people communicate, especially with the shift to more permanent home and remote working. This has allowed a new approach that includes the ability to be more inclusive and a reduction in the need to travel. The area board is encouraged to embrace these opportunities but also mitigate against any local impact upon our communities, especially as there are many who do not have access to transport or/and do not use digital forms of communication.

v) In the Melksham community area there are some local issues that may influence the selection of priorities going forward, including:
- the high rate of local house building and the delays in providing community facilities such as doctors, dentists, schools to serve the new residents
- ongoing consultation and uncertainty over the proposed A350 Melksham Bypass and potential impacts and opportunities for the town centre
- opportunities presented by the opening of the community campus for improvements to the health and wellbeing of local people

vi) Wiltshire Council has released its new business plan, outlining its strategy for 2022-2032. It focusses upon the 4 themes of "Empowering People", "a Resilient Society", "a Thriving Economy" and "a Sustainable Environment". In addition, Wiltshire Council on the 1st February 2022, approved both the Wiltshire Climate Strategy and Wiltshire's Natural Environment Plan. The area board should be aware of these plans and seek to help deliver them at a local level

5. **Agreeing and delivering priorities for 2022/23**

The Community Engagement Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Melksham Area Board has provided a list of possible priorities for consideration. These can be found in Appendix B. The area board should carefully consider how many priorities it can work on at any one time and ensure that they are meaningful for their local area. As a guide, it is recommended that where an area board has 4

or less councillors, no more than 4 priorities are selected at any one time. Larger boards can select up to 5 if they believe that they have the capacity to deliver on them. Area Boards can at any time select, review or amend their priorities in order that they remain relevant and linked to current needs

As well as being evidence led, priorities should be selected where the area board believes that it can realistically make a positive impact upon them. To aid the delivery of the chosen priorities, the Community Engagement Manager will support the area board councillors including in the creation and management of an action plan. This plan will include clearly defined, manageable and measurable outcomes so that what is trying to be achieved is fully understood and will in turn facilitate the annual review of delivery on local priorities.

The key mechanism for delivery is to support the local community to use their own experiences, abilities and passions so that they are empowered to shape and deliver positive change. To achieve this the area board may wish to consider allocating funding where money is required to help deliver the required aims. The area board may also look to set up a local working group to lead on the delivery of a priority, especially where no suitable group already exists.

It is recommended that for each priority selected, an area board councillor takes responsibility for overseeing its delivery and reporting back to the area board on progress. The Community Engagement Manager will support the area board councillors in undertaking this work.

6.   Area Board Lead Councillor Role Description

Area Boards are invited to appoint lead Councillor(s) representatives for each of the priority themes that they have selected. The following guiding principles are in place for Councillors who take a role as an Area Board lead for a priority theme:

- To be the main Area Board point of contact for local officers, councillors and residents within their respective lead area
- To attend (and usually take the role as chair) relevant working groups of the area board
- To work collaboratively and cooperatively with relevant local partners, community groups, volunteers and outside bodies
- To provide regular updates back to the area board in relation to their lead area, including providing feedback on the success or limitations of previously funded Area Board grants
- To diligently and democratically consider any funding applications, ensuring due process is undertaken.
- To in consultation with the local Councillor, monitor feedback for those grant applications that relate to the local priority the lead Councillor has responsibility

for, ensuring that relevant feedback on progress and outcomes is provided to the Area Board

7. **Recommendations**

    I.   The area board is asked to acknowledge the progress update from the 2021/22 local priorities work.

    II.   The area board is asked to consider this report along with its appendices and decide upon the priorities it wishes to focus on in the coming year.

    III.   The area board is asked to appoint a councillor lead for each of the selected priorities.

    IV.   The area board is asked to appoint any required working groups in relation to each priority. Note; any existing externally operated groups may already be in place and should be acknowledged and noted.

APPENDIX A - Summary of Area Board activities by theme 2021/22

THEME	ACTIVITY
Health & Wellbeing	Health and Wellbeing Group discussions including; COVID vaccination rollout; review of NHS estate; support to stroke survivors; carer support; lunch clubs and day centres Support to Melksham COVID-19 community response, including food parcels, medicines, friendly phone calls Promotion of Healthier Communities project to encourage physical activity, healthy diets and lifestyles on target estates Promotion of "that meeting space" in the old Art House Café premises
Older People	Production of a directory of activities for older people in Melksham area Work with Age Friendly Melksham on a baseline survey of older people's needs Recruitment of a Carers Champion and development of a programme of support to unpaid carers
Children and Young People	Official opening of Skate Park mini-ramp Wiltshire Youth Council elections held; 13 year old Jedidah Mundia and 17 year old Tom Hiscocks from Melksham Oak School elected Support for 4Youth services: after-school/ evening youth clubs; teen counselling; SEND club Youth Needs Survey published Plans for a Young Carers event to say "thank you" for the work they do
Community Safety	Regular liaison with Police including successful street-based youth work project, funding now ended Membership of CCTV Working Group, scoping a camera system for the town centre and KGV park New CCTV camera funded at skate park. Riverside Walk resurfacing to remove dangerous potholes

THEME	ACTIVITY
Housing	Support to Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and referendum
	Review of Section 106 contributions towards community facilities
Environment	Consultations on the Climate Strategy and Natural Environment Plan
	Approval of Clackers Brook restoration plans by Wildlife Trust
	Plans for Wilts and Berks Canal restoration
	Tree planting at Lower Woodrow and Shurnhold Fields
	Funding scheme for community management of public open spaces
	Support to Priority for People initiative to promote walking, cycling, public transport in the town centre
	Member of Environment and Climate Working Group
Transport	CATG discussions and capital funding – speed limits, drop kerbs, crossings, footpaths, bollards, signs, nameplates
	Consultations into Melksham A350 bypass route options
	Discussion of impact of Cleveland Bridge closure in Bath
	Approval of major highways maintenance plan
Employment and Economy	Levelling Up bid to Government for town centre investment
	Melksham House investment and planning application to create workspace hub
	Christie Miller sports centre demolition
	COVID business support grants awarded
Arts, Culture and Leisure	Community Campus build updates including archaeological dig and time capsule burial
	Support for Berryfield Village Hall public works loan
	Promotion of Celebrating Age project to deliver arts, music and theatre to isolated and vulnerable individuals in the Melksham area

APPENDIX A - Melksham Area Board grant funding 2021-2022

Over the past year the Area Board has provided funding support to projects through its Community Grants, Youth Grants, Health and Wellbeing Grants and CATG transport grants, totalling £87,325.

Fund	Applicant – Project	Grant
Community	Bowerhill Scouts - "Scout and About" project to purchase a minibus	£ 7,000
Community	2385 Melksham Squadron – additional training and development and capital expenditure support	£ 5,014
Community	Melksham Station Hub - canopy in the piazza area	£ 5,000
Community	Shaw and Whitley Community Hub - set up of a community shop	£ 5,000
Community	Cllr Alford - resurfacing the Millennium Riverside Walk	£ 5,000
Community	Christ Church, Shaw - reordering and redecoration to form a community hub	£ 5,000
Community	Melksham Cricket Club - new cricket playing Astro	£ 5,000
Community	Riverside Club - improvements to the existing kitchen	£ 2,895
Community	Independent Living Centre - replacement of oil tank and removal of bees nest in chimney	£ 2,300
Community	Cllr Hubbard – cycling support in Melksham	£ 2,075
Community	Melksham Station Hub - fitting weatherproof blinds to the canopy and improved signage	£ 1,500
Community	Spurgeons - Canberra Centre Community Garden Project	£ 1,000
Community	West Wilts Model Car Club – purchase of a replacement computer to run club racing events	£ 995

Fund	Applicant – Project	Grant
Community	Cllr Sankey - CCTV camera in the Melksham Skate Park area	£ 990
Community	Friends of Shurnhold Fields - replanting of 200 saplings in WW1 Wood	£ 750
Community	Cllr Hubbard - defibrillator to be sited at the cricket pavilion at King George V Playing Fields	£ 495
Community	Keevil Parish Council - paved area at Banfield recreation ground	£ 379
Community	Melksham Town Council - new cabinet for the defibrillator at the Pavilion in King George V Park	£ 345
Community	Public Open Spaces Fund 2022 – carry forward all unspent funds to encourage community environmental action	£ 10,000
Youth	4Youth - "TeenTalk" Young Peoples Counselling	£ 5,000
Youth	4Youth - expansion and delivery of Thursday youth club for young people aged 13-19 years	£ 4,855
Youth	Melksham Amateur Swimming Club - Vital Swim Teacher Training	£ 750
Health & Wellbeing	Young Carers event – allocate additional funds for a young carers event in Autumn 2022	£ 2,750
Health & Wellbeing	Melksham Free Dining - "Coming Together to Dine With Us" project to support the costs of free lunches and after-meal social activities for the elderly and vulnerable	£ 2,500
Health & Wellbeing	Celebrating Age Wiltshire - match funding for Yr 2 of the project	£ 1,500
Health & Wellbeing	Alzheimers Support - "Movement for the Mind" project for local people with dementia	£ 782
Health & Wellbeing	Melksham Talking Newspaper – running costs	£ 500

Fund	Applicant – Project	Grant
Health & Wellbeing	Spurgeons - Canberra Centre Parent Support Project	£ 500
CATG	Broughton Gifford Traffic Management Measures	£12,500
CATG	Melksham Old Broughton Road – drop kerbs	£ 2,750
CATG	Melksham Bath Road / Union St bollards	£ 750
CATG	Steeple Ashton Ground Sockets for SID	£ 500
CATG	Melksham Sandridge / Maple Footway CAT survey	£ 450
CATG	Semington Littlemarsh Road Markings	£ 250
CATG	Melksham Heather Avenue Bollard	£ 250

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

Community	£ 50,738
Youth	£ 10,605
Health and Wellbeing	£ 8,532
CATG Transport	£ 17,450

GRAND TOTAL 2021-2022   £ 87, 325

PLUS CARRIED FORWARD

Open Spaces Fund 22/23   £ 7,749

APPENDIX A - Summary of progress against priorities 2021/22

i) Youth engagement and positive activities for young people
Investment in the Skate Park mini-ramp, official opening held; Wiltshire Youth Councillors elected for Melksham; 4Youth providing after-school and evening youth and SEND clubs; funding provided towards teen counselling and Thursday club; youth needs survey published; opportunities promoted at new community campus including plans for a young carer "thank you" event; efforts made for better engagement with Melksham Oak School; grant support to Bowerhill Scouts, 2385 Melksham Squadron, Melksham Cricket Club and the West Wilts Model Car Club.

ii) Environment
Consultation held into Climate Strategy and Natural Environment Plan; restoration plans for Clackers Brook discussed and agreed with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust; support for new tree planting at Lower Woodrow and Shurnhold Fields; plans discussed for the Wilts and Berks Canal restoration; support to Conigre Mead volunteers; Riverside Walk resurfacing to remove dangerous potholes; support to Priority for People initiative to promote walking, cycling, public transport in the town centre; member of Environment and Climate Working Group promoting community action on climate issues; grant support to Melksham Station hub and for a defibrillator in KGV Park.

iii Reducing isolation and loneliness
Health and Wellbeing Group discussions including support to COVID response through food parcels, medicines, friendly phone calls; funding the Celebrating Age project to deliver arts, music and theatre to the old and isolated; support to stroke survivors; carer support; a directory of activities for older people; support to Rainbow day centre; promotion of "that meeting space" as a community hub; recruitment of David Walker as Carers Champion and development of plan for carers support; work with Age Friendly Melksham on a baseline survey of older people's needs; grant support to Shaw and Whitley community hub, Christ Church Shaw, Movement for the Mind classes, Talking Newspaper and the Riverside Club.

iv. Reducing anti-social behaviour
Regular liaison with Police; member of CCTV Working Group scoping new camera system for town centre; new camera funded at skate park; successful street-based youth work project in liaison with Police, funding now ended.

v. Supporting low income individuals and families
Discussions with Selwood Housing regarding support to Forest and Queensway estates; promotion of Healthier Communities project to encourage physical activity, healthy diets and lifestyles on these estates; investigation of Youth Investment Fund bid in Forest ward; funding offered to Food Bank; promotion of adult and community learning courses at "that meeting space"; grant funding for parent support project at Canberra Childrens Centre and for the "Melksham Free Dining" lunch club.

APPENDIX B – Suggested priorities for 2022/23

The following are some possible priorities for the area board to consider for the coming year, in no particular order:

Potential Priority	Key Objectives	Comment
Reducing isolation and loneliness	Support events for old and vulnerable people; support to Celebrating Age; development of age-friendly action plan; development of a carer support plan; delivery of a young carers thank-you event; support to Melksham-Ukraine refugee support group; work with NHS to deliver on its estates plan review; support village communities	Deliver through Health and Wellbeing Group
Youth engagement	Host special event for Young People; secure better engagement with Melksham Oak School; re-launch healthy schools initiative; involve Wiltshire Youth Councillors in the work of the area board; establish an online local youth network with an annual in-person forum involving stakeholders from across the community area and led by young people; promote positive activities available for young people at the campus	Deliver through new Local Youth Network model, led by young people
Environment	Deliver community action including tree and wildflower planting; encourage community management of public open spaces; support restoration of the Clackers Brook and the Wilts and Berks Canal; support the Conigre Mead volunteers; promote walking, cycling, public transport, clean air initiatives	Deliver through Environment and Climate Working Group
Reducing anti-social behaviour	Continue to work closely with the Police; scope and commission a CCTV system for the town centre; find alternative funding for street-based youth work; bid to the Youth Investment Fund for new youth facilities on the Forest estate	Deliver through CCTV Working Group
Supporting low income individuals and families	Work with Selwood Housing to address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on target estates such as Forest and Queensway; promote skills and training; adult and community learning; apprenticeships; job search opportunities	Deliver through new working group?