

Chippenham Area Board

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; and
- ✓ Regularly reviewing and communicating progress against the chosen priorities.

3. Progress on 2021/22 Area Board priorities

The Area Board working with its partners and the wider community has focussed its attention over the past year on the priority areas below. Appendix A summarises the progress that has been made so far.

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. For the Chippenham Community Area this includes;
 - Engagement with community groups, networks and forums:
 - Health & Wellbeing Forum
 - Community Safety Forum
 - Town Development Team
 - Police Tasking Meetings
 - Partnership Board
 - Pubwatch
 - Purple Flag
 - Area Board Local Youth Network
 - Area Board Climate & Ecological Emergency Forum
 - Chippenham Town Council Climate & Ecological Advisory Group
 - Chippenham Town Council Neighbourhood Plan
 - Chippenham Arts Team
 - Wiltshire & Swindon Youth Network
- ii. 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. In particular, the evidence suggests that the ongoing key areas to focus are;
 - Youth engagement, employment and positive activity opportunities
 - Addressing Climate Change
 - Supporting positive mental health and wellbeing
 - Supporting the local economy
 - Reducing anti-social behaviour

However, groups report the growing concern over the cost of living crisis and ensuring residents get the support they need both financially and from support services and to make sure this is through a joint up, holistic and collaborative use of local resources.

- iii. 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.
- iv. 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 chairperson of the 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 the intended outcome 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; and
- 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 progress made against priorities for 2021/22

- i. **Priority Theme: Youth Engagement & Mental Health** – Area Board working with the Local Youth Network partners have funded 9 projects for young people, 4 specifically aimed at enhancing young people’s mental health. Spending over £30,000 but unlocking provision to the tune of over £81,000. The Area Board has hosted 8 Local Youth Network meetings in the past year with many more break out group meetings to focus on project delivery. Key projects support are weekly youth work sessions, LGBT work, anti-social behaviour work, counselling, online safety, and fitness initiatives.
- ii. **Priority Theme: Support Climate & Environment Projects** – The Area Board has launched its Climate and Ecological Emergency Forum due to continue to meet quarterly bringing together over 15 local partners to address climate and environmental issues in the community area, and work closer together to achieve this. The Area Board has supported 10 projects addressing climate change through tree planting, community gardening, litter picking, walking routes cycling initiatives and solar panels.
- iii. **Priority Theme: Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour** – The Area Board is an active partner in the towns Community Safety Forum hosted by Chippenham Town Council. Over the past year the Community Engagement manager has hosted multiple Task Groups to address pockets of ASB in the town and bring partners together to resolve the issues. Furthermore, the CEM attends bi-weekly Police tasking meetings to contribute community issues and be the bridge to VCS groups to support police initiatives. Over the past year the Area Board has funded over £10,000 towards CCTV, ASB youth work, and bike marking kits.
- iv. **Priority Theme: Loneliness & Isolation** – The Community Engagement Manager has worked with local VCS partners to re-launch the Health & Wellbeing forum, and represents the Area Board during the meetings. There are 3 active ‘Champions’ representing older and vulnerable people whom feed issues back into the Area Board. During 2021/22 Area Board allocated all of its £7700 funding towards older peoples projects, specifically older peoples events in the Neeld, offering older people social events, with activities. Furthermore, they have support the day centre services and worked with partners to ensure growth and stability in regular activities for older people. Additionally the Area Board has contributed funding towards community facility improvements, ensuring these buildings are fit for purpose for many more years of community use.

- v. **Priority Theme: Economy & Night-Time Economy** – Over the past year the Pubwatch scheme has grown in strength and the Community Engagement Manager is a partner at this forum to link with the high street businesses leading the night-time economy. More recently the Area Board is now represented via the CEM on the new Partnership Board looking at addressing all aspects of the high street to grow the economy and make Chippenham a vibrant place to visit. The Area Board are delivering, with partners, The River Festival, a community event to draw public to the town. The Area Board has funded support to promote local small business events such as craft fairs and arts trails, whilst also using its social media outlets to promote activities in the town.

- vi. **Priority Theme: Mental & Physical Wellbeing** – The Area Board has funded multiple projects supporting people physical health, dance projects, walking routes, cycle initiatives and playing field improvements, such as MUGAs. Additionally, they have also awarded funding to the leg ulcer club helping older people recover fast from leg conditions. Across the entire life course Area Board and the Community Engagement Manager have supported projects dealing with people's mental health, either through funding or working with partners to help deliver provision. This has ranged from the launch of a new bereavement support group, the new community hub, counselling for people affected by drug and alcohol abuse, and LGBT provision to name a few. Awarding over £32,000 in funding towards this priority.

APPENDIX B – Suggested priorities for 2022/23

The following are some possible priorities for the Area Board to consider for the coming year

Potential Priority	Key objectives	Additional comments
Youth engagement, employment and positive activity opportunities		
Addressing Climate Change		
Supporting positive mental health and wellbeing		
Supporting the local economy / Cost of Living Crisis		
Reducing anti-social behaviour		