

Westbury Community 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.

- a. Digital inclusion
- b. Tackling social isolation and loneliness
- c. Local environmental action
- d. Wellbeing for young people and positive activities
- e. Reducing child poverty

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. This includes
 - [Wiltshire Citizens Advice Annual Report](#)
 - [Wiltshire Intelligence Bringing Evidence Together \(JSNA Update\)](#)
- 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
 - Use of services such as the foodbank has increased
 - Use of mental health services has increased, particularly among young people
 - In some areas, attainment levels at schools have been impacted
 - Fewer groups enabling people to have social interactions now exist
 - Patterns of the occurrence of domestic incidents has changed
- 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 including considering those that do not have connectivity or the facility to engage in a remote way.

- 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 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.

Report Author: Graeme Morrison Community Engagement Manager
E-Mail: graeme.morrison@wiltshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX A - Summary of progress made against priorities for 2021/22

Digital Inclusion

Health and Wellbeing Group Digital Inclusion Project

Working in partnership with Ability Net – sessions delivered to digitally isolated individuals at Westbury Community Project and Edington Parish Hall over period of 12 weeks. Individuals provided with a device to get online, and sessions to learn basic skills such as emails, online shopping and banking, video calling applications and more.

2nd tranche to begin in late June/early July 2022.

Support provided to schools to provide IT facilities to families in need

Grant funding provided to Westbury Schools Heads group to provide IT devices to families who are digitally isolated

Support provided to Wiltshire Digital Drive

Area Board grant funding was awarded to Wiltshire Digital Drive, a Community Interest Company which provides devices such as laptops, tablets and desktop computers to families and organisations in need.

Increase in opening hours of Westbury Library

As we have emerged from the pandemic, the opening hours of Westbury Library have been generally increasing back to pre-pandemic levels. The Library has computers available for public use and staff are able to provide support to those that need it.

Tackling social isolation and loneliness

Digital Inclusion Project

The digital inclusion project outlined above has provided those individuals identified with a weekly or fortnightly session that provides social interactions as well as providing education around how to use digital devices.

Re-establishment of Westbury Community Area Health and Wellbeing Group

Regular meetings of the Westbury Community Area Health and Wellbeing Group have restarted – the group aims to bring together groups who work with older and vulnerable people to create a network of like-minded groups who will initiate and support projects that improve health and wellbeing within our community.

Plans beginning to establish a “Health and Wellbeing Day” in Westbury – a free event which would bring together organisations to promote the activities and services which are available to Older and Vulnerable people within the community.

Support for activities at Westbury Community Project

Community Engagement Manager Graeme Morrison has provided weekly support to Westbury Community Project to develop the work done at the centre, increase use and ensure the long-term viability of the centre.

Organisations based at the centre include Westbury Community Workshop, Community Fridge, Westbury Youth Club, Westbury Area Network as well as several commercial operations.

Westbury Day Centre Jubilee Event

Funding provided for the Day Centre Jubilee Event to be held in June. The day centre runs weekly sessions that provide the opportunity for social interaction for dozens of older people who would otherwise be socially isolated

Local Environmental Action

Westbury Community Area Environmental Forum

Event hosted in autumn 2021 at Westbury Community Project.

Local environmental interest groups came together to discuss their work and projects with the public and to network with others and identify joint working opportunities.

Presentations were delivered by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust on the Bitham Brook renovation project and Bratton Parish Council on a memorandum of understanding between local parish councils to enable joint working on projects with a focus on environmental projects particularly in relation to improving cycling and walking connectivity between the villages, Westbury town and Westbury train station.

Bitham Brook Habitat Improvement Scheme

Bitham Brook Habitat improvement scheme Phase 1 completed. Improving the area of Bitham Brook for walkers, cyclists and dog walkers as well as for the local wildlife.

Funding has now been allocated to Phase 2 to extend this work beyond The Mead and into The Mead Lakes area of Bitham Brook.

Pollinator Friendly Areas Project

Working in partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and town and parish council, the area board is initiating and has allocated funding to a Pollinator Friendly Areas Project. The project aims to create a network of sites across the community area which are ideal environments for bees and other pollinators.

Wellbeing for Young People and Positive Activities

Westbury Young People Awards

The successful Westbury Young People Awards made a welcome return following a 3 year break due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The area board worked with Matravers School to deliver the event in the main theatre at the school. Local businesses sponsored awards in a variety of categories which recognised the achievements and contributions of young people within the community.

200 people filled the room to enjoy the event which, as well as the awards, included musical, drama and dance performances from talented young people from around the area.

Award categories included sporting, arts and volunteering awards as well as a new special Covid-19 local hero award.

In-School Mental Health Services Support

Funding was provided to Matravers School in early 2021 to increase the counselling service provided in school following a report that demand, and as a result, waiting lists had increased.

4 Youth Mental Health Service

The Area Board funded, jointly with Westbury Town Council, 4 Youth to provide a youth mental health counselling service which is available to any young people within the Westbury Community Area. This provides an alternative to young people with mental health issues who do not wish to access services within their school environment.

Westbury Youth FC Ground Improvements

Grant funding provided to Westbury Youth FC to improve the facilities at their ground on Redland Lane

POPCAN Summer Holiday Club

Grant funding provided to POPCAN to fund 10 free places for 5 days a week for 5 weeks of the summer holidays.

Young People's Graffiti Sessions

AB awarded funding to Westbury Youth Club to run graffiti sessions for young people to learn how to produce graffiti art as well as to provide education around acceptable spaces and use of the skills taught.

POPCAN Family Funday

Area Board funding awarded to POPCAN for their annual family funday in summer 2022. A large event open to all of the community in the summer.

Mayors Jubilee Street Party

Area Board funding awarded to Westbury Town Council for the Mayor's Jubilee Tea party – a free event for young people in Westbury.

Reducing Child Poverty

Several of the actions and activities already mentioned above have been aimed at having an impact on reducing child poverty and the impacts of child poverty as well as the priority under which they are listed. These include:

- Support provided to Westbury School Heads group to provide digital devices to families in need
- Support provided to Wiltshire Digital Drive
- In school mental health services
- 4 Youth mental health services

Establishing adult education courses at Westbury Community Project

Community Engagement Manager Graeme Morrison has come to agreement with Wiltshire Council's Family and Community Learning Team and Wiltshire College to provide adult learning courses at Westbury Community Project. Courses such as basic English and Maths and employability skills such as CV writing etc.

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
Combatting Social Isolation and Loneliness	To reduce isolation among older and vulnerable people in our community, reducing and/or delaying the need for adult social care	Existing priority
Digital Inclusion	To eradicate unwanted digital isolation within the Westbury Community Area	Existing priority – could potentially be “rolled into” social isolation priority above?
Wellbeing for Young People and Positive Activities	Improving the health and wellbeing of young people with a particular focus on mental health. Providing positive activities for young people	Existing priority
Reducing Child poverty	Providing opportunities for low income families Combatting the impacts of child poverty such as mental health	Existing priority – could potentially be “rolled into” the young people’s priority above
Local Environmental Action	To support and initiate projects which improve the local environment, including air quality, improving wildlife and biodiversity in our rural areas as well as in our town and villages	Existing priority
Supporting Local Business	Supporting the local economy	Not on local priority list for 2021/22