

Trowbridge Area Board

May 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 and wider members. 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 but some of the key achievements include:

- i. Supporting low-income individuals and families:** Three community fridges have been established by Trowbridge Future working and supporting low-income individuals, families and under-represented groups, to reduce food waste going to landfill and providing additional food for those in need. The FUEL Holiday Activity and Food Programme has been delivered in Trowbridge for young people eligible for benefit-related free school meals, working in partnership with local organisations to provide additional support for young people. Wiltshire and Swindon Credit Union presented to the Area Board and local partners to raise the profile of services on offer. The Wiltshire Family Learning Team are preparing budgeting courses and other useful workshops for delivery in Trowbridge. Debt counselling services supported and funded the Area Board
- ii. Youth engagement, employment and positive activity opportunities:** A significant amount of young people responded to the Trowbridge Youth Survey to help inform future investment into positive activities through the Area Boards. The Child Wellbeing Partnership are now well established with a key priority of building a “child friendly Trowbridge” and being a diverse and inclusive platform for young people in the community. A Teen talk service has been provided as well as regular youth club and detached youth work sessions and financial support for a new Youth Worker apprentice
- iii. Supporting positive mental health and wellbeing:** The Celebrating Age project continues to be a success in Trowbridge and across Wiltshire. Financial support has been awarded to Families Out Loud and Care Home Volunteers. Dementia Action Trowbridge has held a number of public Dementia Friends sessions and worked with local businesses to make them more Dementia aware. Projects to support improvements to woodlands and ponds will provide relaxing spaces for the community. Active support has been provided to help with the challenges of 2021/22 including COVID-19, changes in provision for older people and supporting individuals and families arriving in Trowbridge from Ukraine.
- iv. Reducing Anti-Social behaviour:** The local Police and PCSOs have provided regular updates of the on-going work within the community. Some wards have had walk arounds with the Police present and engaging conversations with residents and partners. Support has been given to groups setting up new Neighbourhood Watch schemes as well as continued action from Community Speed Watch groups.

- v. **Addressing climate change & protecting green spaces:** Improvements to woodlands, pathways and ponds have been supported by Trowbridge Area Board. Trowbridge ECO group are engaging locally with the community and partner organisations such as Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. Trowbridge has benefitted from Waste Free Masterclass workshops and regular litter picking events across the community. Wiltshire Climate Change Strategy and Green and Blue Infrastructural Strategy have both been adopted by Wiltshire Council

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 to 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 Trowbridge Community Area, this includes:
- The [Wiltshire Climate Strategy](#) and [Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy](#) have both now been adopted and Wiltshire Council have committed themselves to being carbon neutral by 2030.
 - The Area Board Youth Survey engaged with partner organisations to better understand the young people of Trowbridge and to inform future investment into positive activities through the Area Boards.
 - The increase in inflation is affecting lower income individuals and families, due to the increase costs in fuel, food, energy and childcare. There is a demand on local organisations, such as the Community Fridges across the town as the number of residents in need of support is growing significantly.
- 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:

- **Social isolation and loneliness** - Nationally, 7.2% of adults often or always felt lonely (Feb 2021: ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey).
 - **Barriers to preventing older people living the life they'd like to lead** – include mobility issues, lack of confidence using technology, and physical health.
 - **Lack of volunteers** – the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on volunteering due to social distancing measures and other restrictions. Local organisations are discovering a difficulty in finding suitable volunteers, with a certain number not returning due to anxiety or health problems during COVID-19
 - **Mental Health support** - There has been an increase in poor mental health and depression resulting from the pandemic. Young people have been negatively impacted and anxiety and self-confidence/esteem are rated high on having an affect on young people in Trowbridge from the Wiltshire Youth Survey.
 - **Rebuilding community life** - social connectedness is central to our health and wellbeing, and rebuilding social activities, community participation and social support, can have powerful effects on health and wellbeing for all residents.
- 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.
- Whilst the option of being able to adapt and move to remote working and digital engagement during the pandemic was suitable for some residents, this also generated challenges and exclusion for certain group, relating to the lack of devices or data, lack of confidence in using technology, poor internet connections and broadband.
- 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 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 be 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.

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

1. Supporting low-income individuals and families

- Three community fridges have been established by Trowbridge Future working and supporting low-income individuals, families and under-represented groups, to reduce food waste going to landfill and providing additional food for those in need.
- Allotment projects have begun in partnership with Selwood Housing, residents coming together to grow their own vegetables.
- Conversations with The Community Foundation have taken place looking to fund cookery classes and provide essential kitchen items
- The FUEL Holiday Activity and Food Programme has been delivered in Trowbridge for young people eligible for benefit-related free school meals, working in partnership with local organisations to provide additional support for young people.
- Wiltshire and Swindon Credit Union presented to the Area Board and local partners to raise the profile of services on offer. The Wiltshire Family Learning Team are preparing budgeting courses and other useful workshops for delivery in Trowbridge.
- Debt counselling services supported and funded the Area Board
- Working in partnership with the Family and Community Learning service to encourage further participation in their courses from under-represented groups and considering options to deliver courses to the Ukrainian community

2. Youth engagement, employment and positive activity opportunities

- The promotion and engagement of the youth survey resulted in data to help inform future investment into positive activities through the Area Boards.
- The Child Wellbeing Partnership are now well established with a key priority of building a “child friendly Trowbridge” and being a diverse and inclusive platform for young people in the community.
- A Teen talk service has been provided by 4Youth for local young people
- Regular youth club and detached youth work sessions haven taken place across Trowbridge by Trowbridge Future and Wiltshire Youth For Christ
- Area Board financial support for a new Youth Worker apprentice with Trowbridge Future
- Plans to expand the Child Wellbeing Partnership to engage a diverse audience through the Youth Ambassadors, local Wiltshire Youth Councillors and the Youth Voice panels within schools
- A bid is being prepared for the Youth Investment Fund to improve facilities in Studley Green and Longfield
- Collating provision of free or low-cost youth activities for Ukrainian refugees to participate in a range of activities during the summer months

- The FUEL Holiday Activity and Food Programme has been delivered in Trowbridge for young people eligible for benefit-related free school meals in the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays 2021, and plans to include places for Ukrainian citizens during the 2022 programme.

3. Supporting positive mental health and wellbeing

- The Celebrating Age project continued for another year across Trowbridge, delivered by Wiltshire Music Centre
- Grant funding awarded to Families Out Loud to support families of drug and alcohol users in Trowbridge
- Care Home Volunteers project supported by the Area Board
- Dementia Action Trowbridge has delivered public Dementia Friends sessions and worked with local businesses to make them more Dementia aware.
- Improvements to Green Lane wood and pathways have been made as well as improvements to Southwick Country Park
- Broadmead Pond have an active community group maintaining the area and making improvements
- Provided support for individuals in sheltered housing schemes in Trowbridge to find suitable activities in their communities to reduce social isolation and encourage community participation when the previous support ceased
- Actively supported community groups with the challenges of 2021/22 including COVID-19, changes in provision for older people and supporting individuals and families arriving in Trowbridge from Ukraine

4. Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

- Continued updates on local policing at Area Board and Town / Parish meetings
- PCSO patrols of local areas continue, Studley was visited by Deputy PCC during a community stakeholder walkaround.
- New Neighbourhood Watch schemes have been set up locally
- Continued action from Community Speed Watch groups
- A funding bid to the Youth Investment Fund will include money for secure fencing and CCTV across two sites

5. Addressing climate change & Protecting Green Spaces

- Promotion of the draft Climate Change Strategy and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and encouraged local involvement and feedback (strategies now adopted)
- Trowbridge ECO have a strong programme of work locally and actively encourage more members to get involved

- Trowbridge has seen Improvements to woodlands, pathways and ponds supported by Trowbridge Area Board with Cllrs leading initiatives and the board backing with grant funding.
- Wiltshire Wildlife Trust are working locally with community groups and schools as well as with the Future High Streets project around the River Biss.
- Regular litter picking events take place across Trowbridge, some led by the community and others by town and parish councils

APPENDIX B – Suggested priorities for 2022/23

The following are suggested priorities for the Area Board to consider for 2022/23:

Priority	Key objectives for 2022/23	Councillor Lead
Supporting low income individuals and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Wiltshire Family Learning team and Wiltshire & Swindon Credit Union to develop a free to access budgeting course • Fund and deliver cookery classes for those on low incomes. Providing essential kitchen items as part of the project • Ensure strong promotion of all essential additional grant funds for individuals on low incomes ahead of the energy price increase in October • Continued support to the 3 community fridges operating across Trowbridge 	VACANT
Youth engagement, employment and positive activity opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Child wellbeing Partnership to engage with key partners in the Trowbridge community to collaborate and information share for the benefits of young people in Trowbridge • Expand the Child Wellbeing Partnership to engage a diverse audience through the Youth Ambassadors, local Wiltshire Youth Councillors • Support Trowbridge Future with their bid for Youth Investment Funding • Review the priority issues and activities as highlighted in youth survey • Assist key stakeholders in developing a Youth Voice event for young people in Trowbridge to impact youth provision in the area • Co-ordinate provision of free or low-cost youth activities for Ukrainian refugees in a range of activities during the summer months across the community 	VACANT
Supporting positive mental health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and help grow the kindness café project started by Trowbridge Future • Continue to support and promote health and wellbeing workshops delivered by Amber Foundation getting young people back on their feet and in to accommodation • Actively support community groups with the challenges of COVID-19, changes in provision for older people and supporting individuals and families arriving in Trowbridge from Ukraine to reduce isolation and loneliness • Working with key stakeholders to assist venues in the town to be more dementia friendly and enrol in the Safe Places scheme 	VACANT

<p>Supporting the local economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Future Highstreets project team and local stakeholders with the £16m funding for Trowbridge • Actively promote public engagement in any leisure provision consultation • Support and promote a jobs fair locally, in partnership with secondary school/s and/or college • Identify and seek to narrow skills gaps between local business requirements and the local population experience • Continue to support, promote and encourage growth of the Weavers Market and independent traders • Support local retailers and businesses on the High Street • Identify and promote local initiatives to address Fuel Poverty and IT Poverty 	<p>VACANT</p>
<p>Addressing climate change and protecting green spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage community groups to adopt the Climate Change Strategy and Blue Infrastructure Strategy • Collaborate with Trowbridge ECO to explore options for supporting local actions • Continued support for community grow projects across the community • Continued support for less food waste by supporting community fridges and local education with cookery classes • Promote and engage individuals and groups to complete the new Wiltshire Council sustainable transport survey • Actively encourage and promote litter picking events across the community 	<p>VACANT</p>