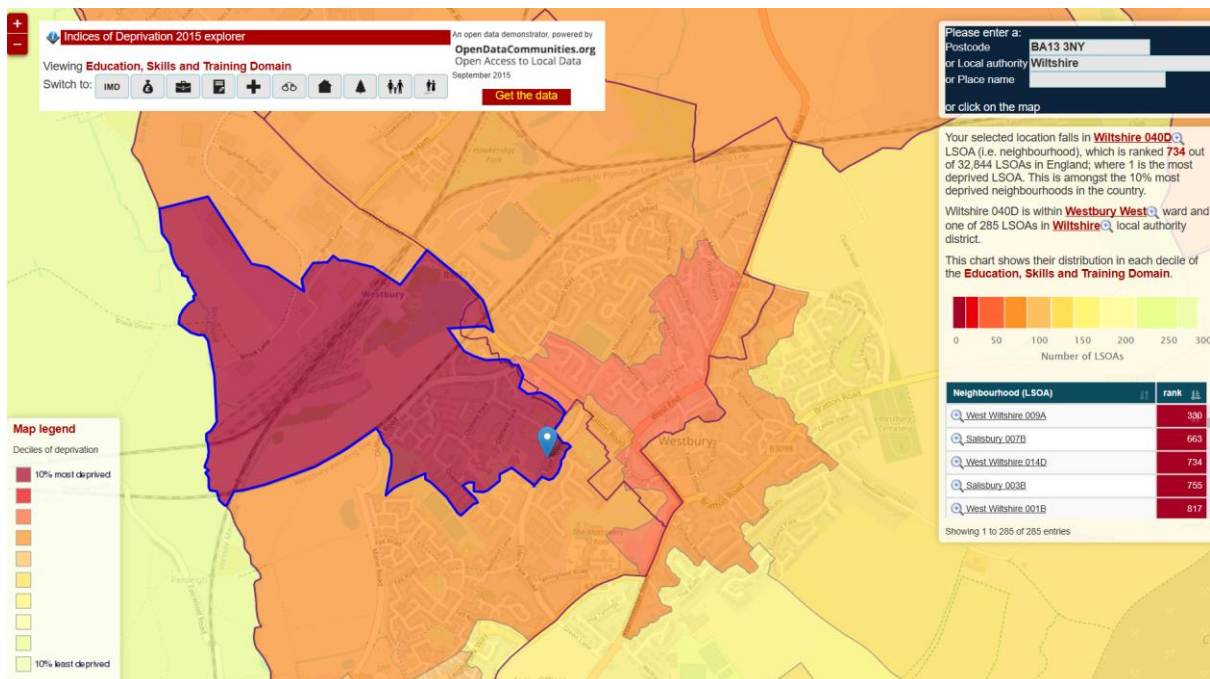


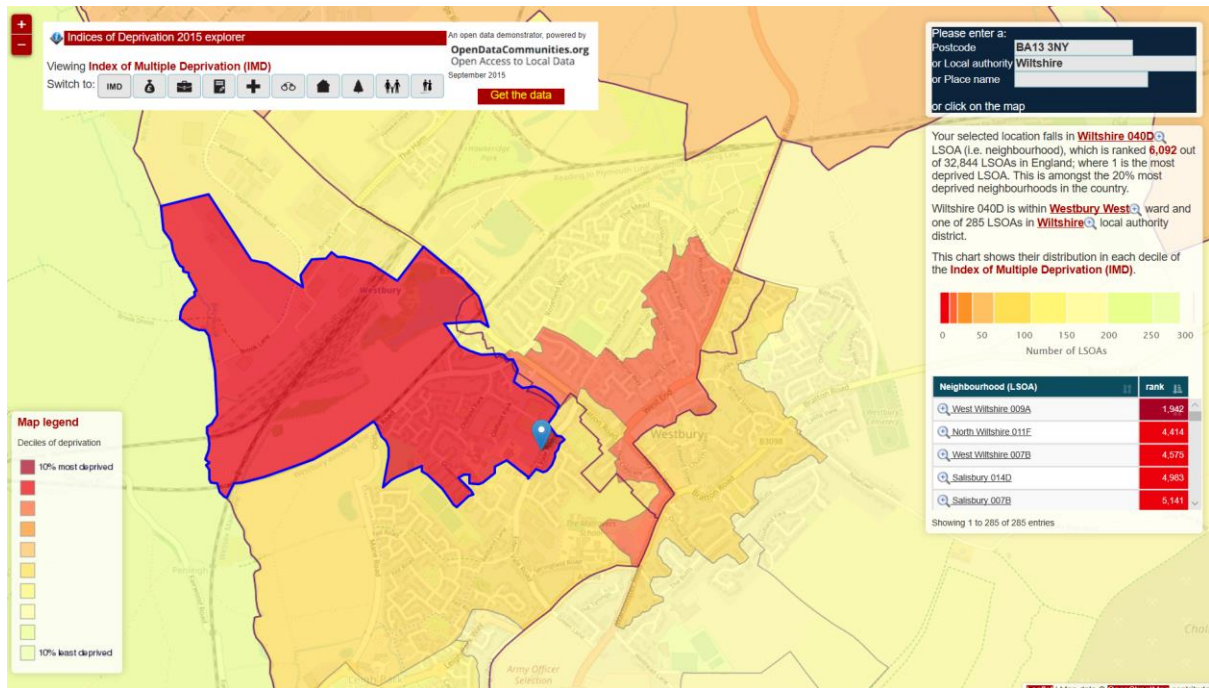
Westbury town Council fully supports the report submitted by Nadine Crook

In addition:

1. We consider this was a flawed consultation. We are concerned about the nature of the consultation questionnaire in which the questions were leading and allowed little option to take other views. For example, the first question asked respondents to say if they thought staff or buildings more important which sets up a false dichotomy between the two implying that there had to be a choice of one or another. The option to maintain both was not offered. In general, the questionnaire led people only to support the proposition.
2. Some the data used in the consultation is anecdotal e.g. asking the opinion of health visitors rather than using verified data on the subject.
3. The Wiltshire Council did not consider or offer other options. The consultation was only about the proposed solution (closing the building).
4. Westbury Town Council was not approached in the spirit of partner working.
5. The proposal would seem to be contrary to several Wiltshire Council policy including the 2014 children strategy (reducing child poverty)
6. The area of Westbury particularly served by this centre is in the bottom 10% nationally (as low as 3% in some data) for education, skills and training domain. One of the key aims of these children's centres is to ensure that children are not already significantly behind their peers in terms of development and school readiness. Statistics show that children who begin school at a disadvantage largely continue in this way. This does not seem to have been highlighted. It is also commonly accepted that failure to benefit from education can be "inherited".



This should be considered in conjunction with the index of multiple deprivations which is also high for this area:



7. The proposal as put does not support vulnerable children and families.
8. The town council is also concerned about the damage to a sense of community in the town. For a relatively small amount of money, this decision is again sending a message that even when there is a need, Westbury ranks below than other less needy locations in the eyes of Wiltshire Council.
9. The consultation was not well publicised; many in the town were unaware of it.
10. The consultation did not seem to make much of the fact that the area in which the centre is located and from which many users or potential users come, educational levels are low (LSOA is in the bottom 10% nationally in the educational domain); this means that many people there would have been unable or unwilling to respond to an online questionnaire.
11. We are also concerned that there has been considerable confusion amongst public as to the proposals around the special schools and the children's centre because the consultations ran at the same time. Some who have responded mistakenly believe that they have responded already. Some people believe that this process has been cancelled when in reality, it was the similar sounding special schools.