

Westbury Community Area Status Report February 2021

Background and context

The overarching aim of this document is for Westbury Community Area Board to understand how to support local responses from communities, businesses and organisations and link this to the work of Wiltshire Council, it's partners and agencies, so that collaboratively we can tackle issues including those arising from Covid-19.

The Westbury community area saw an incredible response to the Covid-19 pandemic with the community groups, the town council and the various parish councils in the surrounding villages coordinating volunteers leading the response and strategic partners working collaboratively to support our communities. This effort combined with significant help being provided by individuals for neighbours and friends and smaller volunteer schemes not affiliated to any particular group, as well as other existing support groups meant every person within the area has access to support from one source or another. Some of these groups and individuals continue to offer additional support.

As we now look ahead, this document provides a summary of information that can be utilised to help inform the local community response. It brings together the differing data and information sources from across the community area that will help us to understand the state of our community and the impact of Covid-19. It also highlights communities that may have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and it considers how the actions, projects and plans that are emerging will be collated and supported.

Over time this document will be regularly updated in response to changes, new information and actions undertaken.

The Westbury Area Board ultimately aims to establish and work closely with a Westbury Community Area Recovery Group. This group will aim to engage with key local partners, business and community stakeholders to work together to rebuild our local community. Whilst the impact of Covid-19 is considerable, it is recognised that some local issues already existed and that these will need to be tackled as well.

The Westbury Community area consists of the town of Westbury as well as the parishes of Bratton, Edington, Coulston, Dilton Marsh and Heywood and Hawkeridge. A key requirement is to ensure that all within the community area have the same opportunity to engage with this work.

Whilst it is natural to focus on the negative impacts of COVID-19, it is important to recognise and build on any positives that have occurred. These include the closer working between organisations, increased community cohesion, new volunteers and the wider use of the internet / social media to enhance communication between agencies and users.

Community data and information

Local data has been collected from a range of sources to provide an overview of the current situation within our community. This is being combined with the outcomes of discussions on the impact of COVID-19 to inform the key issues emerging and where resources should be focussed.

- JSNA local data sets – (collected in winter 2019)
<https://www.wiltshireintelligence.org.uk/community-area/westbury/>
- COVID19 support group survey – (June 2020)
- Wiltshire CAJSNA 2020 Community Survey Results (Westbury)
- Series of themed meetings held with partners and community members in December 2020 attended by: Wiltshire Councillors, Town and Parish Councils, partners from Health Services, Police, Community Groups, Faith Groups, Local Businesses, Local Schools, Charities and others
- Public online survey hosted on www.Slido.com in December 2020 and January 2021
- Additional Partner organisation data
 - I. Link scheme data
 - II. Wiltshire Money
 - III. CAB
 - IV. Town and Parish Council plans
 - V. Local business forums / Inspire for Biz Chamber of Commerce

Context for this report

It is important to read this report with the following in mind:

- The process of identifying and agreeing the key concerns is not an exact science and both statistical and anecdotal evidence can be misleading. No two people will completely agree on what should be included so trends, commonality and correlation have been looked at when deciding what to include. This report should therefore be viewed as an informed indicator to the state of the Westbury Community Area.
- The Westbury Community area is an excellent place to live and work. It is recognised that a tremendous amount of good work and substantial improvement has taken place over the past few years due to the dedication and hard work of so many within our community. However, the remit of this report does not include capturing these examples and the focus is upon those issues identified by the community as being the most important.
- Some of the areas highlighted from the JSNA data where the Westbury Community areas seems to not be doing so well will need looking at in the context of when and how it was collected.

- The variance between JSNA data in all community areas may not always be of any great significance. Wiltshire is also a great county to live in and sometimes we are comparing good with excellent
- Further investigation will be required with some of the data as it may not tell the whole story. E.g. who particularly is being affected? Are there differences between local communities and minority groups? Is the issue located in a specific geographical area?
- This will be a “live” document. As of February, we are still in the pandemic and its effects on our communities may change over the coming months and this will be reflected by changes to this document where necessary.
- The remit of this document is to identify the emerging issues due to the pandemic, not to identify solutions or actions to be taken to tackle these issues – this will be for the Covid-19 Recovery Action Plan to identify. The Recovery Action Plan will be informed by the contents of this document

Understanding the emerging themes and the impact of COVID-19

Analysis of the data so far suggests the following issues are emerging. This list may increase and change after further consultation and as new data arises

Issue and impact of COVID 19 pandemic	Supporting evidence source
Young People	
Spike in children suffering from anxiety and developing mental health needs for various reasons including:	
Uncertainty around differing restrictions – especially where siblings go to different schools	Discussions with local schools
Youth activities not taking place – e.g. Bratton Youth Club has completely shut down	Discussions with parish councils and other youth workers
Young people developing anxiety due to missing out on learning due to constraints of remote learning	Discussions with local schools
Young SEND people developing anxieties due to different understanding of reasons for restrictions. This will be exacerbated if services return online rather than face to face	Discussions with local schools and college
Lack of extra-curricular activities has impacted mental and physical health	Discussions with local schools
School community ethos has been lost – no whole school events	Discussions with local schools

Lockdowns have exacerbated isolation felt by young people in rural areas	Discussions with local schools and parishes
Tensions at home have a knock on effect on children – regular issues being seen include tensions around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Employment • Financial difficulties • Domestic incidents • Mental health issues for parents 	Discussions with local schools
With tensions at home increasing this has had a particular impact on primary aged children who often internalise these anxieties	Discussions with local schools and Parish Councils
Lack of IT equipment at home has caused gaps in education for those without internet access	Discussions with local schools
Gaps have formed between friendship groups who have not seen each other	Discussions with local schools
Some necessary changes in childcare arrangements has caused tensions in some situations	Discussions with local schools and Parish Councils
Financial stresses due to parents work situation has caused anxiety among young people. Pre-covid, 13% of young people in Westbury were living in poverty, compared to Wiltshire average of 9.4%. This will have been exacerbated by the pandemic with more parents being made redundant or self-employed people seeing work opportunities reduce	Discussions with local schools and JSNA data 2020
Social gaps have widened because of lockdowns especially for those children without siblings	Discussions with local schools
Access to mental health support and counselling for parents, young people, school staff is currently insufficient	Discussions with local schools, parishes and Army Welfare Service
Impact on educational attainment	
Full impact on educational attainment of lockdowns and home learning cannot be fully assessed yet but significant academic gaps have already been identified	Discussions with local schools
Lack of access to internet has affected some young people and results in an inability to access remote learning – this causes an ever-widening academic gap for those without this facility	Discussions with local schools
When returning to school while restrictions were eased, concentration levels among some children have been noticeably worsened by lockdown	Discussions with local schools
Impacts on Physical Health of Young People	
Impacts on young people's physical health/BMI have been identified	Discussions with local schools
Lack of school-based activity reduces the opportunity for young people to exercise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No after school clubs 	Discussions with local schools

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PE lessons very difficult to effectively deliver remotely 	
Local sports clubs have been unable to run their youth activities due to restrictions	Discussions with local partners and clubs
Mental health issues identified above can be a barrier to participating in exercise	Discussions with local partners
Other issues identified	
Incidents of concern relating to safeguarding issues being reported in schools have shown a worrying increase since the start of the pandemic	Discussions with schools
Some families still struggling with the basics – food, utilities and internet access	Discussions with local schools and community groups
Increase in the number of domestic violence incidents being reported	Discussions with Westbury Community Policing Team
Unemployment in young people is rising and there are fewer apprenticeship opportunities – pre covid 82 apprenticeships per 10,000 16 year-olds compared to Wiltshire average of 139	JSNA data 2020
Older people	
Mental health	
Local clubs and organisations unable to operate leaving many people with far fewer opportunities for social contact e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westbury Day Centre • Lunch Clubs • U3A groups • Tai Chi group • Spiritual group • Alzheimers support groups • Ramblers association • Westbury Shed 	Discussions with groups and organisations
Repeat callers with mental health issues have been contacting the police	Discussions with Wiltshire Police
Loneliness is a big issue for those struggling to access services	Discussions with groups and organisations
In some areas reliance on community support groups raises the issue of dependence – will people be confident enough to go back out when it is safe to do so	Discussions with organisations and groups
Other issues	
Reports of scam and nuisance callers has markedly increased since start of the pandemic	Discussions with community groups and Wiltshire Police

Working age people and families	
Anxiety/Mental Health	
Anxiety is high among families around employment status – has furlough and other govt support just “delayed the inevitable” in terms of businesses closing. This has not affected everyone equally with lower earners more likely to suffer	Conversations with community groups and charities and online slido.com survey
Reduced opportunities for social interaction	Conversations with community groups and charities
Anxiety around housing has increased as employment anxieties increase	Conversations with community groups and charities
Crosspoint have noticed an increase in users whose employment status has changed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loneliness • Mental health issues • Domestic incidents 	Conversations with community groups and charities
Other issues	
Reports of domestic incidents has increased	Conversations with community groups and charities
Increased levels of relationship breakdown – this often takes a few weeks for people to admit	Conversations with community groups and charities
A lack of internet access at home is an issue for some families – working and schooling from home is a problem	Conversations with community groups and charities
Local Business	
Income has reduced for many businesses while expenditure has increased – increased expenditure includes investing in PPE for staff as well as investing in infrastructure to create COVID-safe environments	Conversations with local businesses
Local businesses – especially small businesses – are feeling burden of responsibility over wellbeing of their staff	Conversations with local businesses
Demands on business owner’s time has increased with the need for monitoring regulations alongside day to day business	Conversations with local businesses
Reduction in income for many businesses due to:	Conversations with local businesses

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of footfall in town centre – exacerbated by non-retail businesses in town centre reverting to home working so staff are not in town on lunch break • People reverting to online shopping • Some non-essential retail businesses having to shut down altogether during full lockdown measures • Lack of activities by organisations such as clubs and groups – this affects hospitality businesses in particular 	
Some businesses have struggled to access financial support through their bank – are banks cutting back on lending to business	Conversations with local businesses
Some businesses have done well – food businesses, business support organisations who have helped other companies access government and local authority support, construction businesses	Conversations with local businesses
Expectation is for situation to get worse before it gets better	Conversations with local businesses
Businesses have anxieties over support that will be required for staff when restrictions ease – how will they support staff with mental health issues, and avoid reluctance to return to the workplace	Conversations with local businesses

It is important that this is an inclusive process as possible with special attention to ensure that the villages and minority groups have equal opportunity to feed in and partake in this recovery work. However, it is recognised that some may choose not to engage, and that work will take place that is not captured in this document.

How local actions can be supported

The local response within the Westbury Community Area should be one of co-production recognising that to rebuild our communities, it is important that we work together, sharing information and resources where appropriate.

Westbury Area Board covers the whole community area and is responsible for this document. It links local delivery to Wiltshire Council, the Police, Public health and other partners. It is a formal body with influence and powers. It has its own funding to help support local initiatives.

Westbury Community Area Recovery Steering Group will be community formed and led. It is free from any statutory or legal responsibilities. It should consist of a range of local organisations, councils and community activists who have chosen to come together to collectively help deliver and support local action. It should act as a steering group bringing together the local work identified by the thematic leads.

Thematic Leads (2 per theme) will network together local stakeholders who are or wish to be active within their theme. Existing groups may be utilised or, where required, a new group may be established. The leads will be responsible for carrying out any further investigation, bringing together work currently happening and identifying gaps. Each lead

will also be on the Westbury Community Area Recovery Steering Group and they will link to the Area Board who are able to offer support and financial help where appropriate. The 4 themes are:

- I. Economy and employment**
- II. Health, well-being and adult care**
- III. Engagement with families**
- IV. Young people, education and children**

Westbury Area Board will receive updates of how this work is progressing as a standing item at its meetings. It will formulate its own work plan of short term and longer-term actions that will support and contribute to the local priorities.

Next Steps

- I. Discuss this document and agree approach at next Westbury Community Area Board meeting (11 February 2021)
- II. Engage and consult with all Town and Parish Councils (February - May 2021)
- III. Engage and consult with partner organisations (February - May 2021)
- IV. Bring this document for discussion and agreement at AB meeting along with proposed AB work plan and recovery group's plan (First Area Board meeting of new council)
- V. Review this document and Area Board work plan regularly in response to changes and celebrate completed actions (At least every 2 months or as required)