

MINUTES

Meeting: Westbury Area Board
Place: Leighton Recreation Centre, Wellhead Ln, Westbury BA13 3PT
Date: 4 December 2024
Start Time: 7.00 pm
Finish Time: 8.30 pm

Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to: Ben Fielding - Senior Democratic Services Officer 01225 718656, benjamin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk, (Tel): 01225 718656 or (e-mail) benjamin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk

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In Attendance:

Wiltshire Councillors

Cllr Gordon King, Westbury East
Cllr Suzanne Wickham (Vice-Chairman), Ethandune
Cllr Carole King, (Chairman) Westbury North

Wiltshire Council Officers

Graeme Morrison, Strategic Engagement Partnerships Manager
Dominic Argar, Assistant Multimedia Officer
Ben Fielding, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Total in attendance: 12

<u>Minute No..</u>	<u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u>
1.	<p><u>Apologies</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Matthew Dean and from Dilton Marsh Parish Council, who were unable to attend the meeting due to a Parish Council meeting.</p>
2.	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2024 were presented for consideration and it was;</p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To approve and sign as a true and correct record of the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2024.</p>
3.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of disclosable interests.</p>
4.	<p><u>Chairman's Announcements and Information Items</u></p> <p>The Chairman of the Area Board drew attention to the following information items, which were contained in the agenda pack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Project. • Cost of Living Update. • Vaccine Confidence Training Sessions. • BSW Together Update. • Community First Update. • Local Transport Plan.
5.	<p><u>Wiltshire & Swindon Police and Crime Commissioner</u></p> <p>The Area Board received an update from Philip Wilkinson, Wiltshire & Swindon Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The update included but was not limited to the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC outlined that he had now been in post for three years and was currently in the process of rewriting the Police and Crime Plan. • Over the past three years there had been positive improvements for Wiltshire Police, and that they had now been taken out of special measures and recently graded as outstanding in a recent report which had taken place in October. • It was outlined that such improvements had taken place due to having a proper HQ with effective leadership and an effective chain of command in

place of the previous committees that had been used. This was therefore enabling the Police to have the right people, systems, and policy procedures in place.

- It was noted that though there had been improvements there were still issues for concern for example the Force was still ranked in a middle position for response times in the control centre.
- It was outlined that as arrests and prosecutions had risen, each crime type had decreased within the county, including domestic abuse, violent crime, rape, and anti-social behaviour. This suggested a direct correlation with the effectiveness of the Force.
- Wiltshire Police was now the top performing Force for County Line disruptions per capita, with it reference made to the joint regional work with other forces for Op Scorpion.
- A positive overview was provided for speeding, with it noted that previously 1,324 points, fines and courses had been awarded, which had now risen to circa 15,000 in the last year.
- It was outlined that the new Police and Crime Plan would include two new priority areas of retail crime and harm caused to shop workers.
- An overview of the work being conducted regarding rural crime was provided, with it noted that previously the rural crime team had only had two officers, which had now been expanded to nine officers as part of a joined-up approach with fourteen individuals arrested since 1 October who had been engaged in serious rural crime.
- It was stated that currently the PCC did not know the budget he would be set by government, but previously Wiltshire had delivered more than most other Forces in the country though they had received less funding due to population density.

After the update, there was time for the following questions and points to be raised:

- A question was raised regarding what had brought Wiltshire Police up to an outstanding grading, with it stated that the right systems, policy procedures and people were now in place with a performance framework now in place for the Chief Constable who was being held account via fortnightly meetings.
- A discussion took place about how in the past medium and large stores had had store detectives in order to assist with the Police to which it was clarified that it was the responsibility of the shop to have security measures in place. It was however outlined that Wiltshire Police was providing support for retailers, such as advice on internal design. Additionally, on a local level, Inspector Oakley had spoken with the two Tesco stores in Westbury who had suggested that in the past year they had been subjected to £75,000 of shoplifting and that unfortunately the store detectives were regionally allocated with the detective for this region predominantly spending time in Frome due to there being a larger risk.
- It was suggested that it would be positive for the Neighbourhood Police team drop-in session times to be shared on social media pages.

6.

Partner and Community Updates

Updates were received from the following partners:

- **Wiltshire Police**

The Area Board noted written updates attached to the agenda. In addition, Inspector Lou Oakley provided a verbal update which covered the following points:

- An overview of the local Neighbourhood Policing Team was provided.

Business Crime

- It was noted that Inspector Oakley had been given Operation Lead in the county for business crime and that a delivery plan was currently being worked on.
- An Offender Intervention Panel had been set up in order to manage prolific offenders in order to identify the root cause of shoplifting.
- In Warminster PC Hamel had met with every retailer and had produced packs for them, with this work set to be replicated in Westbury.
- Further detail was provided on the work being conducted with Tesco and that a problem-solving plan was set to be put into place.
- A day of action was set to take place involving an operation relating to crime in the run up to Christmas with extra response officers provided to the team in order to provide extra support for foot patrols in Westbury and rural areas.
- There had been a “Shop kind” campaign which has been promoted due to an increase in violence against shopkeepers.
- Inspector Oakley was set to meet with Sainsburys to discuss shoplifting with it hoped that there would be learning points to be taken away and implemented.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- There had been a significant increase in ASB in the Westbury area involving shoplifting and arson. The team were currently increasing patrols and conducting investigations on the matter with three suspected youths.

National Operations

- Op Sceptre took place on 11 November as a dedicated national week of action tackling knife crime.
- Last week “Blunt Truth” was delivered to Year 9 Students at Matravers school, which was an hour-long knife crime education session to educate on impact of knife crime, what they should do if someone they know is carrying a knife, and how to report it.

Further Local Work

- It was outlined that there was covert work taking place in the background in relation to serious crime groups and that work had recently taken place in relation to exploitation, county lines and cuckooing, with positive work taking place with Turning Point.

- Upcoming dates of events for the Neighbourhood Policing team were outlined in the agenda pack as well as future community drop-in sessions.

After the update, there was time for the following questions and points to be raised:

- The shoplifting taking place in the Tesco shops in Westbury was discussed, with it stressed that this was a decreasing spiral which needed to be corrected. It was suggested that in the shops there wasn't many shopkeepers, and that the ones working were often too busy to report issues; therefore, work was being done to improve the reporting system. Reference was also made to Crime Outlook Officers who would consider the design of stores and provide a report as to how improvements could be made.
- Positive feedback was provided to the Neighbourhood policing team on how an issue had been escalated on behalf of a resident and that the service received had led to a positive outcome.
- A discussion took place regarding the current criminal justice system and whether Wiltshire Police were inhibited by this, to which it was noted that the Wiltshire Police was working to the sentencing guidelines provided and that the Chief Constable had stated that the Force would not be inhibited from charging criminals. The discussion also included consideration of a national level, with it noted that the Police would do anything that they could to enact justice as fast as possible and that the PCC was lobbying as much as he could.

- **Town and Parish Council Nominated Representatives**

The Area Board received the following verbal update from Cllr Jeff Ligo on behalf of Bratton Parish Council. The update covered the following matters:

- At the last meeting of the Parish Council, the Neighbourhood Plan was approved for submission to Wiltshire Council with it hoped that a referendum would take place on the date of the local elections in May. Cllr Ligo emphasised this had been a terrific achievement by the team of volunteers involved.
- Over the last 4-5 years the Parish Council had worked with voluntary organisations in the community which had enable them to grow bigger and stronger. The example of the Tidy Bratton Group was cited, which had now taken over from Wiltshire Council in removing leaves.

The Area Board received the following verbal update from Cllr Suzanne Wickham on behalf of Dilton Marsh Parish Council, who noted that there had been great volunteer work taking place in Dilton Marsh including regular litter picks and tidy ups.

Councillor Gordon King noted that it would be very much appreciated if Parish

	<p>Councils would be able to send details of their local volunteer groups over to Graeme Morrison, Strategic Engagement Partnerships Manager in relation to the neighbourhood collaborative work taking place.</p>
7.	<p><u>Area Board Priority Update</u></p> <p>The Area Board received updates from Lead Councillors in relation to the following local Area Board Priorities:</p> <p>Improving the Health and Wellbeing of Our Community (Cllr Gordon King)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health and Wellbeing Group met at the White Horse Practice with officers of the ICB on 5th November to consider and complete the Neighbourhood Collaborative readiness review. After which, Graeme Morrison, Strategic Engagement Partnerships Manager collated all responses given at that meeting. • Graeme continued to received input until 15th November, when the final review was presented to the ICB for comment. A few suggestions were mentioned before the review was completed. • The next steps would be to meet with all voluntary groups in the new year, where a project would be chosen based on the data and the consensus view and begin the process of establishing a steering group. • Claire Scudamore was currently contacting members of the voluntary sector to invite them to this gathering. All Area Board councillors were automatically invited. <p>Wellbeing for Young People and Positive Activities (Cllr Carole King)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference was drawn to a recent article produced by the Police and Crime Commissioner, which outlined successful funding applications which had been made to the Community Action Fund; many of which being for youth groups. The article could be found via the following link: More community projects supported through PCC's Community Action Fund <p>Local Environmental Action (Graeme Morrison, Strategic Engagement Partnerships Manager on behalf of Cllr Matthew Dean)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As mentioned previously, the Area Board were working with Westbury Town Council to arrange a "Westbury Environment Day" in June 2025, which would bring together local environmental groups with a town fete feel. • Last week there was a meeting of the Area Board Environment Lead Councillors, during which the pollinator project was reference and off of the back of this an Area Board had initiated a plan to have a project similar to the one in Westbury. • During the meeting, one of the Wiltshire Council Environment teams discussed air quality and that though the Council had a statutory duty to measure nitrous dioxide, there was an increasing concern for PM2.5

(particulate matter), with the Council soon to be investing in 100 devices to measure PM2.5. With there being 18 community areas in Wiltshire, it was likely Westbury would receive some of these and would potentially be able to purchase more using Area Board funding if they wished to do so.

- Councillor Gordon King raised a point about the Wiltshire Council Carbon Literacy training, which upon completion required attendees to make a pledge on what they would do to improve the environment. It was suggested that the Area Board Members could collectively discuss how they could fulfil their pledges.

Combatting Child Poverty (Cllr Suzanne Wickham)

- It was reported at the previous Area Board meeting that work was being conducted with Funky Foods, who had run cookery sessions, to find a school venue for future sessions which would enable parents to not have to pick up and drop off at multiple locations.
- Carl Houghton, Spurgeons Community Family Navigator outlined that in his role he had recently met with Funky Foods who had promised three sessions before September 2025 and potentially a further five sessions after September 2025. The idea was to find a relevant space to host these sessions in order to fill gaps in communities. Any suggestions for venues would need to be provided by next week.
- Carl Houghton, Spurgeons Community Family Navigator also outlined that St Johns Ambulance were going to be provide free first aid sessions at that these would be taking place across the twenty-one libraries in Wiltshire, including Westbury.

8.

Area Board Funding

The Area Board considered the following applications for funding:

Youth Grants:

Westbury Parochial Church Council All Saints Church - £5,000 towards Friday Fun Youth Club.

Decision

Westbury Parochial Church Council All Saints Church was awarded £5,000 towards Friday Fun Youth Club.

**Moved – Cllr Carole King
Seconded – Cllr Gordon King**

After the discussion of the grant application, Graeme Morrison, Strategic Engagement Partnership Manager provided an overview of the remaining balances of the grant funding pots.

9.	<p><u>Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG)</u></p> <p>The Chairman introduced the minutes and recommendations from the LHFIG meeting held on 31 October 2024. The Chairman also provided detail on a substantive bid that had been placed for work on Frogmore Road which would shortly take place.</p> <p>After which, it was;</p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Local Highways and Footway Improvement Group meeting held on 31 October 2024 were agreed as a correct record as well as approving the spending recommendations within.</p>
10.	<p><u>Urgent items</u></p> <p>There were no urgent items.</p>
11.	<p><u>Close and Future Dates</u></p> <p>The date of the next meeting was 12 February 2025.</p>