

Devizes Community Area Status Report

Winter 2020

Background and context

The overarching aim of this document is for Devizes Area Board and its partners 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 Devizes community area has seen an incredible response to the Covid-19 pandemic with volunteers leading the response and strategic partners working collaboratively to support our communities. Every person within the area has access to support from one of the many community groups that were set up, many of which are continuing to offer additional support as we enter a second period of tight restrictions.

As we now look ahead, this short 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 local 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 Devizes Area Board has kept strong working links through councillors and officers and collaborated closely with Devizes Town Council, parish councils and the many community-based groups that came into being due to the pandemic. The area board has supported key local partners, business and community stakeholders working 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 Devizes community area consists of the town of Devizes as well as the parishes of All Cannings, Bishops Cannings, Bromham, Cheverell Magna, Cheverell Parva, Easterton, Erlestoke, Etchilhampton, Market Lavington, Marston, Potterne, Roundway, Rowde, Stert, Urchfont, West Lavington and Worton. 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, good neighbourliness, new volunteers and the wider use of the internet / social media. There has also been a reduction in car journeys, that has led to an improvement in air quality. This is good news for Devizes, one of Wiltshire's Air Quality Management Areas.

Community data and information

Local data is being 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)
- JSNA 2020 – Demography and overarching indicators
- [Children and young people mental health needs Assessment](#)
- [Gypsy, traveller and boater populations health needs assessment Wiltshire](#)
- [Office for National Statistics](#)
- COVID19 support group survey – (June 2020)
- Wiltshire CAJSNA 2020 Community Survey Results (Devizes)
- Consultation with Town and Parish Council meeting - (beginning January 2021)
- Discussions with other key groups including, but not limited to:
 - I. Schools
 - II. Chamber of Commerce
 - III. Devizes Indie
 - IV. Spurgeons
 - V. Devizes Churches Together
 - VI. Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living
 - VII. Alzheimer's Support

Understanding the emerging themes and the impact of Covid-19

Context

- The Devizes 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
- Some of the areas highlighted from the JSNA data where the Devizes Community areas seems to not be doing so well, needs to be looked at in the context of the findings. For example, Wiltshire is consistently one of the safest counties in the country and there are no areas where there are significant safety concerns. Equally the variance between data in all community areas may not be of any great significance
- Further investigation will be required with some of the data as they may not tell the whole story. Equally in some cases the most recent data available is a few years old. The situation may have changed.
- It needs to be recognised that due to Covid-19, some of the issues highlighted are not just a local problem but of concern nationwide. Debt and financial challenges are examples of this.

The impact of Covid-19 has affected some groups in the area more than others and exasperated some pre-existing issues. Further investigation will be required in some cases to ascertain who needs what support. Possible groups may include:

1. *Young people* – They face challenges such as finding employment, poor mental health, lack of support or positive activities, as well as disruption to education. 11.3% of 0-19 year olds in Devizes Community Area are thought to be living in poverty. This is higher than across Wiltshire (9.4%) (JSNA data pack). There are two areas within Devizes town that rank in the 30% most deprived areas of England and one further area within the 40% most deprived (IMD, 2019).
2. *Older and vulnerable people* – The need to self-isolate more has had a negative impact on mental health, and an increase in loneliness and depression. Many of the volunteer-led support groups offered telephone support calls to those most at risk of loneliness. Those living with dementia have been one of the most vulnerable groups. Life expectancy amongst both males and females is lower in Devizes, by one year each, than the Wiltshire average. (JSNA data pack)
3. *Families on low income* – We have seen an increase in debt and consequently the demand for supporting services. This is linked to employment, housing, mental health, loan sharks and other issues. In Devizes Community Area, 8.9% of homes are considered to be in fuel poverty, compared with 9.3% in Wiltshire.
4. *Minority and BAME groups* – The BAME population of Devizes is very similar to the make-up of Wiltshire overall, with a slightly smaller Black community than average. There is a known Polish community which is supported by its own cultural groups.

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. The purpose of this further consultation work is to gather data and local information to fully complete the picture of Devizes Community Area:

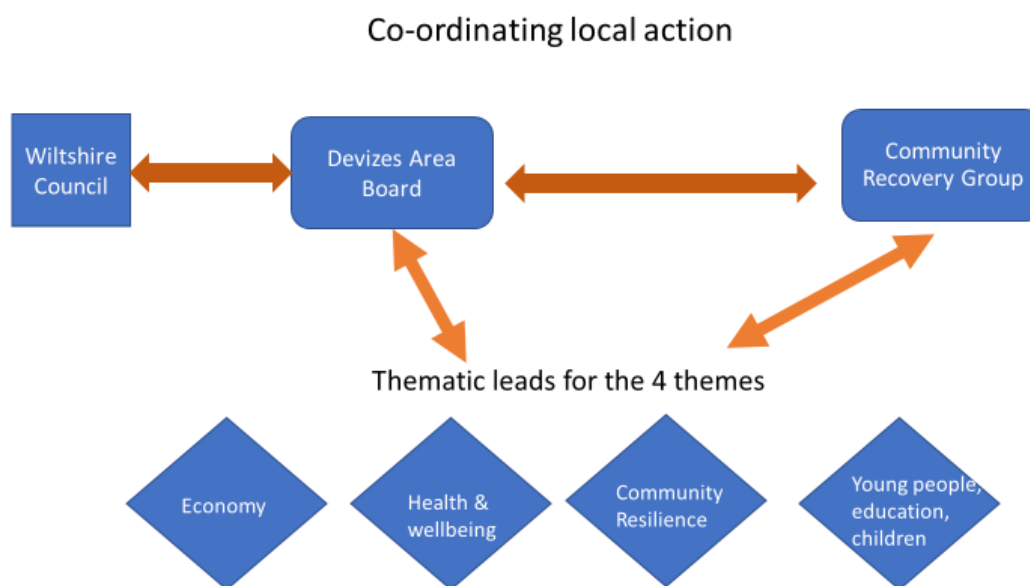
Possible Emerging Issues

- **Economy:**
- **Community Resilience:**
- **Children, education and young people:**
- **Health & well-being of older and vulnerable people:**

It is important that this is as inclusive a 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 Devizes Community Area is one of co-production recognising that to rebuild our communities, it is important that we work together, sharing information and resources where appropriate.



Devizes Area Board covers the whole community area and is responsible for this document. It links local delivery to Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Police, Public Health Wiltshire and other partners. It is an accountable body with influence and powers. It has its own funding to help support local initiatives that support the recovery and also encompass issues that existed prior to Covid-19.

By adopting this process and document, Devizes Area Board will look to set up the following:

Devizes Community Area Recovery Steering Group is an aspirational community formed and led group. It would be free from any statutory or legal responsibilities. Consisting 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 would act as a steering group bringing together the local work identified by the thematic leads.

Thematic Leads (two per theme) will network together local stakeholders who are or wish to be active within their theme. Existing groups such as the health and wellbeing group may be utilised. Where required a new group may be established or the leads may simply use virtual networking. 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 Devizes Recovery Steering Group and they will link to the area board who are able to offer support and financial help where appropriate. The four themes are:

1. **Economy:**
2. **Community Resilience:**
3. **Children, education and young people:**
4. **Health & well-being of older and vulnerable people:**

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

Next Steps

- I. Discuss this document and agree approach at Devizes Area Board meeting (11th Jan)
- II. Division members with community engagement manager to engage and consult with all town and parish councils (between January and March Area Board meetings)
- III. Engage and consult with partner organisations (Continually)
- IV. Engage and consult with specific groups (Continually)
- V. Use the above information to inform the formation of a vision for what the community in the Devizes area to be like.
- VI. Update this document as a result of engagement and vision
- VII. 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)