

Devizes Area Board

20 June 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. 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. *Climate change and the environment:* There has been good engagement locally with the “Wiltshire Climate Change Strategy” and “Green and Blue Infrastructural Strategy” that have both now been adopted. Devizes also took part in the Local Nature Recovery Pilot series of meetings. The Air Quality & Sustainable Transport group have made good progress via helping to implement new cycle parking for the marketplace, providing funding towards the Strategic Outline Business Case for the planned Devizes Gateway rail station and commissioning a Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for the community area. Once complete, this can be used to bid for further funding towards putting ideas for new walking and cycling routes into place.
- ii. *Children and young people:* The area board is working to support the groups that provide activities and support to our young people. The area board awarded funding towards services and activities for our young people including a pop-up youth club in The Green, places on outward-bound courses with the Youth Adventure Trust and support for youth clubs as they re-start after the pandemic. The area has many groups already active with young people and the area board has supported them to continue their work. For young children, Devizes Area Board has put significant investment into playgrounds, helping to install new equipment giving the children the chance to play, socialise and keep healthy. The area board has worked alongside Devizes Town Council, the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner and other partners to put services and activities in place to combat the current level of teenage ASB.
- iii. *Older People:* Via the Health & Wellbeing group, Devizes Area Board has hosted two events for older people this year. In September was the 3rd Showcase event highlighting the many groups, services and activities available to older people in this area. Also that month was a tea dance aimed at encouraging people to come along, socialise over a cup of tea and have a go at dancing. The area board has also supported Wiltshire Museum to train volunteers to run reminiscence sessions with older people, in particular those living with dementia, using the museum’s collections to trigger memories of past times. The area board contributed to the Men’s Shed re-opening following closure during the pandemic.
- iv. *Community Safety:* The Community Area Transport Group (now LHFIG) has worked extensively to look at speed within our town and villages and put measures in place to try to prevent excessive speeding. There has been a number of traffic surveys to gauge speeds and then put enforcement in place where needed. Devizes town centre has been assessed for a new 20mph limit. That speed is suitable for the town and the significant funding needed to put the new limit in place is being developed with partners. As mentioned before, the area board is working with a range of partners to put new activities in place in the town and surrounding area for teenagers. This work includes looking a potential venue

for a new youth club and welcoming young people to represent their peers at town council meetings and feeding those views into local decision-making.

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 of it is now out of date. This is partly due 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 Devizes area, this includes

- [Wiltshire Citizens Advice Annual Report](#)
- [Wiltshire Intelligence Bringing Evidence Together](#) (JSNA Update)

For the Devizes Community Area, it should be noted that

- 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 challenge is to consider what local actions we can undertake.
 - Inflation is very high with fuel costs doubling or more in price. This is hitting the poorer families and the elderly / vulnerable the most. Also for consideration is the significant number of households not on the gas grid who rely on increasingly expensive and irregular supplies of heating oil.
 - The pandemic has worsened people's mental health. Direct impacts include being admitted to hospital; long COVID symptoms; suffering a bereavement; and post-traumatic stress caused by working conditions. Indirect impacts include lasting effects of the lockdowns and unemployment along with loss of opportunities seen by young people. The effects of long-term shielding amongst older and clinically vulnerable people still remain to be seen.
 - Research carried out by Community First who spoke to over 100 young people and their families identified a need to improve youth provision. This, coupled with Wiltshire Council's own youth survey from autumn 2021 tells us a great deal about youth services.
- 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:

- Some organisations are finding it difficult to find volunteers with some not returning due to anxiety over COVID-19, e.g. Devizes LINK
 - The demand upon our health services including the number of COVID related cases continues to be high.
 - Many people, especially the older and more vulnerable have lost confidence and are reluctant to socialise again.
 - There has been an increase in poor mental health and depression resulting from the pandemic. Young people have been particularly affected, especially over lockdowns, schooling and sitting exams.
 - Whilst our economy is opening up after lockdowns and furlough, some sectors are still affected. Combined with high inflation, high energy prices and the cost-of-living crisis, many households will continue to struggle financially.
- 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, especially as it is very rural and there are many who do not have access to transport or/and do not use digital forms of communication
- 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 in consultation with the chairperson of the Area Board 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 the intended outcome 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; and
- To 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. Climate Change and the Environment

Lead: Cllr Tamara Reay

Actions:

- i. Promoted the draft Climate Change Strategy and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and encouraged local involvement and feedback
- ii. Helped to feed into the Local Nature Recovery Plan process
- iii. Working with Devizes Town Council and Cycle Friendly Devizes, new cycle parking has been established at the marketplace.
- iv. A new Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan is being developed for Devizes and surrounding parishes. This will create ideas for new routes and develop the active travel offer in the area.
- v. Financial support has gone into business plans for Devizes Gateway rail station. A decision on the next stage is due very soon.
- vi. A new hard standing and bus shelter has been created to serve Horton Road, residents of Lay Wood and the nearby businesses.

Who	What	How Much	Feedback
Atkins Consultants	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	Up to £30,000	To create a plan for new walking and cycling opportunities and bid for further funding
Devizes Gateway	Contribution to Outline Business Case for Devizes Gateway	£10,000	Awaiting results of further discussions with DfT.
Bishops Cannings PC	New bus shelter for Horton Road	£5,500	To serve residents of Lay Wood estate
Devizes TC	New cycle parking for Marketplace	£1,080	
Worton and Marston PCs	Work to footpath linking villages	£5,000	Improves health, active travel and contributes to lowering carbon emissions

2. Children and young people

Lead: Cllr Dominic Muns

Actions:

- i. Funded local youth clubs to re-open following pandemic closures and for the pop-up youth club to be on The Green in Devizes for a week during the summer holidays.
- ii. Supported vulnerable young people from the area to take part in Youth Adventure Trust's outward bounds course to build their resilience and support them through hard times.
- iii. Worked with Devizes TC, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner and other partners to develop solutions to current spate of teenage ASB seen within town.

- iv. These ideas overlap with services on offer to all young people from the town and can be a way to support all young people.
- v. Work underway to create new LYN for area
- vi. Wiltshire Youth Survey promoted resulting in approximately 85 responses and providing useful information on what support young people require.

Related funding:

Who	What	How Much	Feedback
Wiltshire Youth for Christ	Pop-up youth café, summer '21	£3,850	A week of activities on the Green for young people over the summer
Bromham PC	Resurfacing bike track	£5,000	Getting the 'pump track' back in action to provide activity for young people
Youth Adventure Trust	Supported places on their outward-bound course	£2,990	10 young people from Devizes area from the most disadvantaged backgrounds being supported through the course
Bromham Youth Club	Re-opening the youth club	£2,542	Running costs to re-open the club following both the pandemic and a fire
Market Lavington PC	Pro-skateboard event	£1,200	Putting on an event for local skaters with ramps and pro skater workshops
1 st Lavington Sea Scouts	Sail off	£1,880	Training and upskilling of sailing coaches and Leaders
Great Cheverell Youth Club	Create new youth club	£1,675	To start a new youth club in the village.

3. Older and vulnerable people

Lead: Cllr Simon Jacobs

Actions:

- i. Put on the 3rd annual Showcase event to highlight activities and services for older people in our area.
- ii. Hosted the Be Active Tea Dance at the Bear Hotel in September '21 as a way for people to socialise after pandemic restrictions eased.
- iii. Wiltshire Museum supported to train volunteers to use their "reminiscence boxes" based on the museum's collections and run sessions with older people.
- iv. Helped Devizes' Men's Shed to re-open safely following pandemic closure.
- v. Funded a new defibrillator for Needham House available to residents and all those living on Victoria Road.

Related funding:

Who	What	How Much	Feedback
Health & Wellbeing Group	Be Active Tea Dance	£150	
Devizes Men's Shed	Re-opening after pandemic	£150	
Wiltshire Museum	"Common Ground" reminiscence project	£900	Training volunteers to lead these sessions
Bassline Circus	Creative workshops & community street theatre event	£4,920	Working with vulnerable people to create a new performance as part of Devizes Street Festival
Needham House residents	New defibrillator	£1,899	To be used by all residents along Victoria Rd.

4. Local Economy

Lead: Cllr Iain Wallis

Actions:

- i. Worked alongside Devizes Indie to support events in town
- ii. Helped to promote Devizes as tourist and shoppers' destination
- iii. Supported Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race as a way to promote the town and what goes on there.

Who	What	How Much	Feedback
Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race	Promotional materials to raise Devizes' profile	£1,800	
DOCA	Refurbish community radios	£990	Radio handsets available for all community events within town and wider area

5. Community Safety

Lead: Cllr Kelvin Nash

Actions:

- i. Assessments for new 20mph speed limits carried out throughout Devizes. Lower limit is appropriate and can be implemented within town. Now developing funding with partners.
- ii. Working with town council and Police & Crime Commissioner to put strategies in place to combat current spate of teenage ASB within town
- iii. Developing a "suite" of possible solutions for traffic and speeding issues for local councils to call on that fits their own situation.

APPENDIX B – Suggested priorities for 2022/23

The following are some possible priorities for the Area Board to consider for the coming year

Potential Priority	Key objectives	Possible councillor lead and delivery working group
Support the provision of positive activities for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish LYN for community area • Continue to support youth groups and sports clubs to provide activities • Work with current partners increase range of activities within Devizes as diversion from ASB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Dominic Muns, Devizes TC, OPCC, Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Youth for Christ
Investigate new car-share club for Devizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attract a new car club to Devizes • To cut down on number of cars on our streets, and thus cut congestion, air pollution, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Tamara Reay, Community Engagement Manager, Air Quality & Sustainable Transport Group, Devizes TC
Build on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new ideas for walking and cycling routes within area • Look for significant funding to deliver these • Encourage green or active travel throughout the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Tamara Reay, Community Engagement Manager, Air Quality & Sustainable Transport Group, Wiltshire Council
Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help address loneliness and isolation • To address some of the causes of poor mental health in the area • To encourage people, especially those older & more vulnerable, to be physically & mentally active • To develop Showcase and “Trolley Olympics” into annual events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Simon Jacobs, Health & Wellbeing group
Use new LHFIG to engage with parish councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give local councils a range of solutions to their traffic issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Dominic Muns, LHFIG

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•To support local councils put in place these solutions | |
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APPENDIX C – Priority Working Groups for Devizes Area Board

The following working groups of Devizes Area Board support the board's priorities and will help to implement the actions arising:

1. Local Highways and Footpaths Improvements Groups (LHFIG)
Chair - Councillor Dominic Muns

(All of the Area Board's Councillors may choose to attend the LHFIG)

2. Devizes Health and Wellbeing Group
Chair – t.b.c.
Councillor Simon Jacobs – lead member
3. Devizes Air Quality & Sustainable Transport Group
Chair – Councillor Tamara Reay (also lead member)