Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Yeovil

Date: Wednesday, 1 November 2023

Time: 7.00 pm - 8.45 pm

Location: Virtual

Chaired by: Cllr Mike Hewitson

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Mike Hewitson	Somerset Council
Andy Kendall	Somerset Council
Tony Lock	Somerset Council
Graham Oakes	Somerset Council
Oliver Patrick	Somerset Council
Evie Potts-Jones	Somerset Council
Wes Read	Somerset Council
Peter Seib	Somerset Council
Andy Soughton	Somerset Council
Gwen O'Sullivan	Barwick & Stoford Parish Council
Paul Herbert	Brympton Parish Council
Karen Taylor	Chilthorne Domer Parish Council
Clare Owen	Closworth Parish Meeting
Duncan Goodes	East Chinnock Parish Council
Leona Drayton	Montacute Parish Council
Stephen Bartlett	Mudford Parish Council
Dave Peters	Odcombe Parish Council
Mike Phillips	Stoke Sub Hamdon Parish Council
Annette Davies	West Camel Parish Council
David Neal	West Coker Parish Council
Rob Stickland	Yeovil Without Parish Council

Hannah Snowden	Spark Somerset
Paul Elliston	Somerset Rivers Authority
Gill Waldron	Yeovil District Hospital

Other attendees:

Name:	Representing
Gill Giliott	Barwick & Stoford Community Centre
Linda Snelling	Yeovil Bus User Group & Somerset Bus Partnership
Natasha Rand	Yeovil Champion for Connect Somerset programme
Pip Tucker	Public Health, Somerset Council
Sarah Moore (Clerk)	Montacute Parish Council
Fiona Elphick	Phoenix Voices
Fiona Clements	Village Agent for Yeovil
Gail Beaver	Phoenix Voices
Amanda Card (Clerk)	Yeovil Town Council
Anita Perry	West Coker Parish Council
Ray Sibley	Barwick & Stoford Parish Council
John Allan	

Officer attendance:

Name:	Representing
Kate Hellard	Somerset Council
Nathan Turnbull	Somerset Council
Emily Window	Somerset Council
Jo Morris	Somerset Council

Summary of discussion:

Agenda item: **Summary of key points of discussion and outcome:** **Action by:**

Item 9: **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from:
Somerset Councillor Emily Pearlstone
Somerset Councillor Faye Purbrick
Sue Murrison – Closworth Parish Meeting
A representative from East Coker Parish Council
Emma-Jayne Hopkins – Yeovil Town Council
Christine Saint - Montacute Parish Council
Kaitlyn Higgins - Barwick and Stoford Community Committee

Item 10: **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest from Somerset Council Councillors present at the meeting.

Item 11: **Notes from the Previous Meeting**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 7 August 2023 were approved.

Item 12: **Public Question Time (for items not covered on the agenda)**

A question was asked in relation to Somerset Council's financial position and how this would affect future work of the LCNs. In response, the LCN Development Lead said that there was an opportunity in the coming months to consider what services and themes in the local area were really important and to bring together a wide range of partners. She referred to some of the other LCNs who had set up working groups and brought in a number of other organisations from the voluntary and community sector to start taking some actions forward. This had not required direct funding from Somerset Council. Some of those actions would influence the way that Somerset Council delivered its services locally and some would be delivered by a number of partners. There could also be external funding opportunities available to the LCN.

It was noted that the Parish and Town Clerks had received a briefing from Somerset Council officers regarding asset and service devolution and there could be opportunities in the future for parishes to group together.

It was concluded that there was a lot of opportunities for LCNs in the current climate and they would not be impacted by the financial position of Somerset Council.

Item 13:   **Highlights of themes discussed at the last meeting**

The Chair explained that the twelve key themes identified as areas of priority at the first LCN meeting on 7 August were:

- Accessibility to Town
- Highways
- Somerset Council
- Children and Young People
- Communication and Connectivity
- Housing and Planning
- Public Transport
- Employment
- Environmental Issues
- Antisocial Behaviour
- Health and Wellbeing
- Flooding

Members of the LCN would be asked to look at narrowing down the identified themes to three top priorities during the discussion item. This was also an opportunity to look at the priorities in more detail as well as identifying any areas that may have been missed.

Item 14:   **An introduction to data**

Kate Hellard, LCN Development Lead provided an introduction to data specific to the Yeovil LCN and presented a slide with some statistics regarding:

- Population
- Crime rates
- Residential properties
- Internet connections
- Road collisions
- Households with no access to a vehicle
- Pupil numbers

It was explained that the high level data itself did not tell a story but it could be a starting point for seeking further information and drilling down. It was acknowledged that experiences from local communities alongside the data was important to see the bigger picture. It was highlighted that as discussions around

priorities evolve much more comprehensive data could be provided through partnership working.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:
- It would be interesting and helpful for the data to be broken down between the parishes and the town.
- Clarification was sought regarding the threshold for free school meals. It was questioned how the Yeovil LCN data compared to other LCNs in Somerset. In response, Kate Hellard confirmed that she would circulate a comparable table with other LCNs with the notes of the meeting.
- A request for a detailed population breakdown figure detailing the number of adults and children.

Item 15: **Discussion: To discuss and agree themes based on previous meeting discussion**

The Chair invited the LCN members to join break-out groups to identify three priority areas from the twelve identified at their initial meeting in August. After the discussions, the groups feedback was:

Group 1
Some of the highlights and themes could be grouped together and were interdependent on each other for example affordable housing, the environment and flooding seemed to be a natural grouping of issues. Similarly, accessibility, highways and public transport and accessibility to the town. Housing and planning could also be grouped together.
Discussions were held regarding crime levels and the government boundary review and its implications.
The group heard about Pheonix voices, a community choir which could support in reducing loneliness and isolation.

Group 2
The main issues identified were connectivity, public transport and highways which had a massive impact on people's accessibility to employment and education.
Newton Road which runs from behind the cinema to Yeovil junction was given as an example of people walking along a 60mph road which was unsafe, and it was recognised that discussions could be held with bus companies and other

providers to address the issues.

Antisocial behaviour – was this due to a lack of preventive services such as youth facilities. It was not all related to young people and some issues were law enforcement issues.

Health and wellbeing – this covered a wide spectrum from loneliness and isolation through to mental health and physical health.

Group 3

The main issue identified was Highways. It wasn't just about the quality of the roads but also about sunken lanes, signage, clearance of gullies and roadworks. It was felt that parishes could do more but there were certain restrictions that prevented this.

The second theme identified was the need to improve health and well-being and the need for people to work together in the voluntary sector.

The third issue related to flooding and highway gullies.

Other issues discussed were anti-social behaviour, transport and communities and productivity.

Discussions were also held regarding the Ranger service which linked in with Highways.

Group 4

The main issues identified were:

Highways – speed, traffic, traffic control, parking

Planning/Housing – Phosphates, affordable housing

Anti-social behaviour – good to involve housing associations in the LCN meetings

Discussions were also held regarding public transport and some parishes only had one bus service as well as communication and connectivity and the need to support the elderly and look at their views could be obtained

Item 16:   **Next Steps - themed meetings and working groups**

It was agreed to start to look at developing some working groups to focus on the following themes:

- Connectivity and Transport
- Antisocial Behaviour

It was felt that it may be more beneficial to hold the working

groups during the day to accommodate partner organisations being able to attend.

The working groups would first look at the current picture and the information available as well as what they needed to know and how they could obtain this information. The work of the LCN was about working together to see if a difference could be made and how things could be changed and measured to make sure the changes could be sustained in the future.

LCN members would be invited to attend the working groups as well as other appropriate partner organisations. The intention was to hold a couple of meetings and then to report back progress to the next LCN meeting in January if possible.

It was acknowledged that there was a lot of work for the LCN to undertake in the coming weeks and months. Once the LCN had started to develop and define its priorities it would become more relevant for organisations and voluntary groups to become engaged with the LCN.

Item 17:   **Dates of future meetings**

The provisional dates for future meetings were noted as:

- Thursday 4th January 2024 – venue to be confirmed
- Thursday 7th March 2024 – venue to be confirmed

A request was made for the proposed date in January to be moved to a later date in the month.

Contact officer for meeting: LCN Team lcn@somerset.gov.uk