



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 23 APRIL 2025
Subject	WITNEY COMMUNITY INSIGHT PROFILE
Wards affected	Witney Central, Witney South
Accountable member	Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities Email: Rachel.Crouch@westoxon.gov.uk
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Summary/Purpose	<p>This report relates to the Witney Central Community Insight Profile which has been published on the Oxfordshire Data Hub website and presented at the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 13 March 2025. It includes three reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Witney Central Community Insight Report (Produced by Community First Oxfordshire) and related appendices.• Witney Central Data Profile• Witney Central Community Profile Summary of Findings <p>It links to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and is a useful mechanism to pull together all the data and insight available at a local level to help inform future action planning and drive positive change in the community. Furthermore, the profile highlights the links to the Marmot Principles and the aims of Oxfordshire Marmot Place to tackle health inequalities in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>It is anticipated the profile will be useful for local partners to help with data needed for funding applications and developing local initiatives. The profile is aimed at community services, is relatable and can be used by everyone in the community.</p>

Annexes	<p>Annex A – Witney Community Profile Summary of Findings</p> <p>Annex B – Witney Community Insight Report</p> <p>Annex C – Witney Community Data Profile</p> <p>Annex D – Appendix 2 – Research questions.</p> <p>Annex E – Appendix 3 – Health survey.</p> <p>Annex F – Appendix 4 - Community survey report</p>
Recommendation(s)	<p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <p>I. Note the content of the Witney Central Community Insight Profile, its three reports and appendices.</p>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>A Steering Group, established at the start of the process, included the following: the WODC Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, WODC Councillors, Witney Town Councillor, WODC and OCC Officers and a cross section of community groups and organisations working in Witney. Community insight research was conducted and reached a total of 167 individuals.</p>

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** In September 2024, Community First Oxfordshire was commissioned by West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council Public Health to undertake community insight research in Witney Central.
- 1.2** The aim of the research was to capture the opinions of the community in relation to:
 - the local strengths and assets that support and enable health and wellbeing
 - the challenges to health and wellbeing and what would help to address these.
- 1.3** The views and experiences collected are intended to help develop a better understanding of what local people think about health and wellbeing and how it can be improved.
- 1.4** The Witney Central Community Insight Report should be read in combination with the separate Witney Central Data Report. Together, these documents comprise the Witney Central Community Insight Profile (CIP). A summary covering both documents has also been produced.
- 1.5** The report aims to help West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, and other local stakeholders and organisations working in Witney to plan better for the future and develop services and projects to improve health and wellbeing outcomes in Central Witney.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Community Insight Profiles (CIP) are being created to ensure that we understand as fully as possible the health outcomes, and factors that influence these outcomes, within wards in Oxfordshire where residents are most at risk of poor health or experiencing health inequalities.
- 2.2** Ten wards were identified in the Oxfordshire Director of Public Health Annual Report (2019) as having the greatest number of small areas that were listed in the 20% most deprived in England in the Index of Multiple Deprivation update (published November 2019). Profiles for all these areas are now published.
- 2.3** Further CIPs are now being created for areas across the county identified as falling within the 30-40% most deprived nationally according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, 2019) and where local partners feel there would be added benefit to developing a Profile.
- 2.4** Witney contains three small areas listed in the IMD 2019 that fall within the 40% most deprived in England. Before starting work on this Profile, the Oxfordshire County Council Public Health team consulted with local stakeholders in Witney about the extent of the geographical area to be used for selecting data for this profile. Discussions informed by data and local intelligence highlighted priority areas that the stakeholders wanted the work to focus on. It was agreed that the CIP work would cover LSOAs West Oxfordshire 009A, 010B and 010F to complement existing work in Windrush Valley Estate (Smiths Estate) which has been aimed at supporting residents facing the greatest inequalities. It was agreed that Witney East 08B would not be included at this time.

2.5 Oxfordshire County Council's Public Health team are working with local partners to develop the CIPs, which give a detailed picture of both the health needs and the supportive resources in the community. The reports use local data and community feedback following an asset-based community development model (ABCD). The aim of this CIP is to:

- Understand the experiences of those living in Witney Central in relation to health and wellbeing
- Outline the health outcomes and the factors which can influence these health outcomes and bring this to life through the voices of the community
- Provide information and recommendations for local organisations, stakeholders and residents working to improve health and wellbeing in this area.

3. SUMMARY OF POPULATION AND DATA

3.1 The Community Data Profile (Annex C) provides an overview of facts and figures about the Witney Central Community Insight area. Where relevant, data for the Witney Central Community Insight area is compared with West Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire County, and the England averages.

3.2 Population and housing

- According to the latest Office of National Statistics (ONS) population estimates (mid 2022) the Witney Central Community Insight area had a resident population of 5,703 residents.
- Between the 2011 and 2021 Census surveys, the resident population of the Witney Central Community Insight area increased by 22%. This was more than double the West Oxfordshire increase of 9%.
- The population by broad age in the Witney Central Community Insight area grew between 2011 and 2021, with a 25% increase in children, a 24% increase in working aged people, and a 15% increase in people aged 60 and over.
- The proportion of social rented housing in the Witney Central Community Insight area (39%) was more than double the average for West Oxfordshire (13%) and Oxfordshire (15%).

3.3 Health

- The prevalence of hypertension, obesity, depression, and osteoporosis among GP patients reported from the two GP practices located in or close to the Witney Central Community Insight area, were well above the NHS Oxfordshire and NHS England average.
- 2 out of 32 local health and wellbeing indicators from the Witney Central (MSOA), were ranked as worse than the England average. These were:
- Emergency hospital admissions for injury, ages 15-24 years
- Emergency hospital admissions for self-harm (All ages)

- The proportion of adults receiving structured treatment for drugs or alcohol in the Witney Central Community Insight Area was higher (worse than) the Oxfordshire average.
- The rate of people per 1,000 population (16+ years) who are entitled to claim personal independent payment due to mental health in the Witney Central Community Insight area remained higher than the rate for Oxfordshire since March 2021.

3.4 Employment

- A much higher percentage of people in employment in the Witney Central Community Insight area were in the (generally lower paid) caring, leisure, sales, process, and elementary occupations.
- A quarter of the residents in the Witney Central Community Insight area were retired and this is similar to the average for West Oxfordshire.

3.5 Poverty and deprivation

- According to the 2021 Census, the Witney Central Community Insight area has a higher proportion of households classified as deprived at 55% than the averages for West Oxfordshire at 43% and Oxfordshire at 44%.
- The Witney Central Community Insight Area has a higher proportion than average of residents living in poverty compared with Oxfordshire for the following:
 - A higher proportion of working aged residents were claiming unemployment-related benefits.
 - Higher rates of child poverty and of pupils eligible for free school meals.
 - A higher rate of older people in poverty and claiming pension credit.
 - The Witney Central Community Insight area has a lower proportion of households estimated to be in fuel poverty compared to the Oxfordshire average. However, one small area within the Witney Central Community Insight area has a much higher proportion of households estimated to be in fuel poverty compared to Oxfordshire average.

3.6 Crime and community safety

- For the period 2022, the overall rate of crime in the Witney Central MSOA area was higher than the Oxfordshire average.

3.7 Access to green space

- Mapping by Natural England shows that the Witney Central Community Insight area is surrounded by accessible natural green and blue spaces including woodland, playing fields and other sports facilities.

4. COMMUNITY ASSETS AND LOCAL GROUPS

- 4.1** A local asset-mapping exercise was conducted by Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) from September to December 2024 to identify key community-based groups, organisations and

agencies which are active in the area. A full list of community assets, including local activities compiled by CFO can be found on the [Oxfordshire Data Hub](#) website in [Appendix I](#) – Groups, organisations, and assets.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

5.1 Community engagement by Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) reached a total of 167 individuals which included:

- 51 one-to-one interviews with local residents
- 19 one-to-one interviews with representatives from local groups and organisations
- An online survey completed by 32 total respondents
- 4 one-to-one conversations with children and young people
- 7 focus groups attended by 61 people in total (29 children and young people, and 32 adults).

A full breakdown of the community insight research and its findings can be found in the Witney Central Community Insight Report (Annex B).

- 5.2** The engagement covered Witney Central as a place to live, transport, social and community infrastructure, anti-social behaviour, keeping healthy and its challenges including the cost of living, housing, mental health, particular challenges for younger people and for asylum seekers.
- 5.3** Residents were positive about the range of shops and services and mainly satisfied with the availability of healthcare and open spaces. They commented that there are lots of groups and support organisations in the area. However, access to some healthcare services such as NHS dentistry, remain an issue for some residents. Access to community-based health support, particularly for young parents, also came across strongly as an issue.
- 5.4** Most people felt that Witney Central is a friendly place with good community spirit. Although some expressed reservations relating to anti-social behaviour and some experience of racism.
- 5.5** It was the first time that asylum seekers and refugees were engaged in consultation for an insight report. Responses were generally positive but there were some concerns relating to the availability of healthy food and frustrations around not being able to work.
- 5.6** Whilst overall it was felt that there is a lot happening in the area, not everybody is necessarily aware of everything that is going on. Some people reported feeling distanced from community consultations and involvement, particularly children and young people.
- 5.7** Themes that emerged focussed on organisation's issues and challenges around a lack of volunteers and the importance to improve support for volunteers to improve the chances of retention.
- 5.8** There was a strong sense that community work takes time. This was a common finding – noting that there needs to be more of an emphasis on long term funding to allow the all-important relationships and trust to be built.

- 5.9** Demand relating to special educational and neurodiversity needs is growing. Isolation is a strong theme, especially amongst older residents. There was strong support for the Council's Community Builder role which makes connections, nurtures relationships, and links people into activity and support organisations.
- 5.10** Community First Oxfordshire asked residents what more could be done to support health and wellbeing and some of the responses included activities/groups for young people, greater access to health visitors, improved transport, cooking skills sessions.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT

- 6.1** A range of recommendations developed from the community insight gathering are summarised briefly below by theme. Any actions resulting from these recommendations are the responsibility not just of the Council but of the wider system and community. A detailed discussion on these recommendations can be found in the Witney Central Community Insight report (Annex B).

6.2 Healthcare, access, and inclusivity

- Access to healthcare: discussions to explore improvements to local services
- Community-based mental health and associated health and wellbeing initiatives
- Additional support for SEND and neurodiverse needs
- A 'Local inclusivity and accessibility information campaign and audit'

6.3 Community and integration

- Develop a holistic, community-wide communication strategy
- Extend community development worker support
- Anti-social behaviour initiatives
- Extend community development activity on Smith's Estate
- Warm Spaces publicity campaign
- Extension of food bank offer

6.4 Supporting community-based groups and organisations

- Improve joint-working and networking
- Improve grant application processes and explore longer-term funding
- Explore funding opportunities to support extended community action
- Launch a Witney Volunteer Drive

6.5 Community action: meeting identified needs.

- Additional support for young people: safe spaces and access to support workers
- Additional support for asylum seekers: transport and exercise

6.6 Community action: improving resiliency and developing skills.

- Introduce community-based Life Skills sessions

- Extend befriending and community transport initiatives
- Seek new partnership connections to support and extend innovation in community health and wellbeing

6.7 Public realm, environment, and transport

- Local environment/streetscape improvement discussion
- Public transport improvement discussion

7. NEXT STEPS

7.1 The officer will be working alongside the local Steering group to undertake the following actions:

- Review the recommendations in order to prioritise actions and identify action owners
- Design and operate a grants scheme
- Oversee and review a programme of interventions

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

8.1 There are no alternative options.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no financial implications to this report. Oxfordshire County Council has provided funding as follows:

- A one-off payment of £5000 for project/stakeholder management
- A one-off payment of £5000 for the community insight element of the project
- A one-off payment of £25,000 for Officer time to support taking forward the recommendations of the CIP and contribute to the Oxfordshire-wide Community Health Development Officer programme
- A one-off payment of £25,000 to be disbursed as community grant funding to support taking forward the recommendations of the CIP, in line with agreed Oxfordshire County Council governance. The grant disbursement programme is expected to start from May 2025.

9.2 Evaluation is required to be completed by 1st November 2026.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Council is required to deliver the remaining elements of the project in line with the legal agreement.

11. RISK ASSESSMENT

11.1 If the Council fails to deliver the programme as set out in the legal agreement, in the appropriate timeframe, there is a risk that funding will be removed.

12. EQUALITIES IMPACT

12.1 As stated in the Contract, WODC shall:

- Comply with current equality law and fulfil duties under the Equality Act, 2010, for people with protected characteristics
- Respect the diversity of local communities by providing Services in a safe environment free from discrimination where all individuals are treated fairly, with the dignity and respect appropriate to their needs
- Ensure that the Service is culturally sensitive, non-discriminatory and promotes social inclusion, dignity, and respect.

13. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

13.1 This is a report which makes recommendations for local action to tackle inequalities. Whilst priority projects are not yet identified it will be key for providers and activities to work at a local level to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. We will be seeking to mobilise local services where possible and secure sustainable community-led solutions.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 None.

(END)