

Local Community Network

Yeovil LCN meeting notes – Monday 6th January 2025 (online only)

Virtual Attendees:

Ali Hart	Promise Works
Clive Wakley	East Coker PC
Cllr Evie Potts-Jones	Somerset Council / Yeovil Town Council
Cllr Graham Oakes	Somerset Council / Yeovil Town Council
Cllr Tony Lock	Somerset Council / Yeovil Town Council
David Neal	West Coker PC
Julie Ferguson	Brympton PC
Karen Taylor	Chilton Cantelo Parish Council
Natasha Rand	Connect Somerset / Yeovil Art Space
Paul Herbert	Brympton PC
Rob Stickland	Yeovil Without PC
Sue Murrison	Closworth PC
Beth Poole	Yeovil LCN Link Officer
Emily Window	LCN Project Officer
Kate Hellard	LCN Development & Engagement Manager

Apologies:

Cllr Faye Purbick	Somerset Council
Cllr Mike Hewitson	Somerset Council / Barwick & Stoford PC
Cllr Wes Read	Somerset Council
Duncan Goodes	East Chinnock PC

Summary of key points of discussion and outcomes:

Item 1: Welcome and Approval of Previous Notes

Vice Chair Rob Stickland opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and extending New Year wishes. The meeting notes from the previous session were reviewed, and no amendments were proposed.

Item 2: Data Review – Issues and Opportunities

Overview by Beth Poole and Kate Hellard:

Emphasised the role of data as a foundation for developing Local Community Networks (LCNs) and presented a summary of the circulated data packs, highlighting themes relevant to Yeovil LCN, such as population demographics, health inequalities, employment trends, and crime statistics.

Key Data Insights:

- **Population:** Moderate growth observed, with significant challenges around housing demand, affordability, and waiting lists for social housing.
- **Health:** Notable mental health concerns, with high rates of anxiety and depression reported. Lifestyle-related health issues such as low physical activity, obesity, and chronic illnesses (diabetes, cardiovascular diseases) are prevalent.
- **Crime:** Yeovil LCN area has higher-than-average crime rates nationally. Violent crimes and anti-social behaviour (ASB) are prominent issues.
- **Employment:** Low unemployment but concerns about reliance on specific sectors such as engineering and care. Potential gaps in employment quality, including gig economy roles and insecure contracts.

Discussion Highlights:

- Karen Taylor requested parish-level data to better understand disparities, particularly in communities with higher proportions of elderly residents.
- Councillor Graham Oakes highlighted strong engineering/manufacturing and care sectors in Yeovil LCN, supported by major employers such as Leonardo and Yeovil District Hospital. However, rural unemployment remains a challenge due to limited transport options.
- Paul Herbert expressed interest in understanding reasons for economic inactivity and the prevalence of gig economy roles within the area.

Emerging Themes for Potential Further Exploration:

1. Barriers to employment in rural areas, including lack of transport and skills gaps.
2. Deeper investigation into crime data, particularly the drivers behind violent crime and ASB.
3. Exploring connections between health disparities and access to local services.

Item 3: Information Gaps and Sharing

Collaborating with HDRC:

- The Somerset Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) offered to assist in addressing gaps in local data and identifying opportunities for targeted action.
- Proposed areas for HDRC involvement:
 - Analysis of cardiovascular health risks and potential interventions.
 - Understanding economic and social barriers affecting rural communities.

- Investigating trends in employment quality and its relationship with health outcomes.

Local Knowledge and Grassroots Insights:

- Participants were encouraged to share locally driven research and anecdotal evidence to complement formal data sources.
- Suggestions for data sharing included:
 - Ali Hart referred to data on early childhood trauma linked to adverse health outcomes she could share/signpost to.
 - Community-specific insights into local challenges, such as rural isolation and access to services.

Item 4: Stakeholder Mapping

Discussion Points:

- The importance of broad representation in the LCN was emphasised, with several voices missing from current discussions, including:
 - Youth representatives.
 - Ethnic and cultural minorities, particularly those working in Yeovil's healthcare sector.
 - Local grassroots organisations such as Westfield Community Association and Wyndham Park Community Association.

Action Plan:

- Circulate the current stakeholder list for review and update.
- Develop a targeted engagement strategy to onboard stakeholders from underrepresented groups.
- Include representation from sectors such as education, transport, and healthcare in future meetings.

Stakeholder Engagement Themes:

- Aligning stakeholders with meeting agendas to ensure their contributions are relevant and actionable.
- Strengthening ties between urban and rural parishes within the LCN area to encourage collaboration and shared solutions.

Item 5: Planning for Future Meetings and Themes

1. Youth Engagement and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB):

- Address concerns about ASB near schools and public spaces.
- Promote early intervention strategies through youth-focused organisations.

2. Health and Well-being:

- Tackle physical inactivity and obesity with community-driven initiatives.
- Explore solutions for addressing mental health disparities.

3. Transport and Connectivity:

- Investigate rural transport challenges and their impact on employment and inclusion.
- Explore innovative transport solutions to improve access to jobs and services.

Item 6: Working Groups Review

Current Progress:

- No updates presented.
- Aligning working group efforts with the themes discussed during this meeting was suggested to maximise impact.
- Proposals for new working groups to be an ongoing consideration as issues and opportunities emerge through better understanding of data, and with greater engagement and participation with the LCN.
- Consider forming a health and well-being working group to address lifestyle-related challenges in Yeovil LCN, particularly in relation to cardiovascular issues and defibrillators. Links between ASB hotspots and bleed kits could also be explored with opportunities for training.

Item 7: Next Steps and Future Meetings

Dates of Future Meetings (venues to be confirmed):

Monday, 24th March 2025
Monday, 23rd June 2025

ACTIONS

Action	Action Owner	Date
Circulate stakeholder list for review	Beth Poole	January 2025
Identify and engage missing stakeholders	All LCN participants	Ongoing
Collaborate with HDRC for targeted research	Beth Poole	January 2025
Develop LCN-wide maps for defibrillators/bleed kits	Rob Stickland / Beth Poole	March 2025
Organise thematic meetings	LCN Team	Ongoing