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HOME
CULTURE
ECOLOGY
MOVEMENT
LIFETIMES

Exploring living, affordability and life in the city centre
Winchester Vision 2020–2030 Working Group handbook **PART 2**

HOME

Winchester Vision 2020–2030
handbook **part 2: Target recommendations,**
following the four week working group
period, September and October 2020.

“Whilst we don’t want someone at the council telling us what we need we do need someone with the time and budget to make things happen. The council have a responsibility to deliver so they can’t sit back and wait for volunteers to sort it out”.

Exploring living, affordability and life in the city centre.

Beginning in March 2020, the Winchester Vision project ran a series of listening initiatives, such as interviews, street audio recordings, social media interactions, digital walks. From this research, a series of five key targets emerged. These targets were described in Handbook Pt. 1 as starting points for working group activities.

This is Handbook Pt. 2 and is a record of the process of each working group. It explains how each group arrived at its key recommendations. These five working group reports will directly inform the final Winchester Vision 2020 - 2030

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What is Home?

The Home group considered Housing and Neighbourhoods in Winchester. Firmly established from the earlier work within the Vision, the task was to find ways to make positive change – it was less about what those changes should be. Much of that had been clearly set out, over recent months and years elsewhere, by the City Council, County Council, other public agencies, by local single-issue groups, by ‘the great and the good’, and by numerous other stakeholders. Often this was done via major consultation exercises on site-based projects.



**800
metres**



IMAGE: STATE GOVERNMENT OF VICTORIA, VIA *THE CONVERSATION*

Group facilitator's summary.

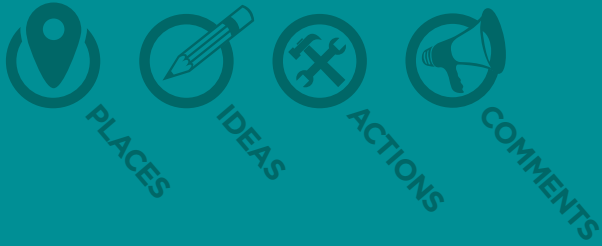
As with the other Working Groups the challenge was to define the HOW – how could change be effected in the future, what were the mechanisms, who were those best placed to 'do stuff'.

At some point someone said: "We can have lots of ideas but they all need somewhere to happen." This reminds us that, as well as WHAT and HOW, there is also WHERE – the spatial dimension. Where are the places in the city in need of repair, support and development? And where were the opportunities for growth and evolution?

Initial discussions in the group revolved around the city centre and issues of traffic, the declining High Street, flooding, wayfinding and other perennials. There was a strong feeling that, understandably, the city centre tended to attract most attention and investment (or potential investment). Whilst the city centre is, and will remain, an important focus for all the city's communities (and, of course, also for those visiting for work or recreation) the group wanted to look beyond its cobbled streets.

With the benefit of their knowledge of their own home environments, and their different experiences, the group focused on the problems, delights, challenges, assets and people of the city's distinctive neighbourhoods.

The group mapped and explored together the city beyond the busy centre, educating each other about their communities, each located in an identifiable area and with varying access to facilities such as schools, shops or recreation space. Together they described the components of an ideal neighbourhood in Winchester, and worked out some of the ways to help bring these about.



Home recommendations

The collection of ideas below range from micro to city scale but have one thing in common: a belief that the people of Winchester can come together to make positive change. They are based in optimism and anticipate a collective will to make ALL of the city better.



Key findings

1 Everything begins at home

Building trust amongst Winchester's citizens means starting with modest projects in their communities. From these stepping stones grander projects can be tackled.

2 Encourage communities (100SW)

There at least 100 Small WINS that could be made in the first six months if the energy in the neighbourhoods was harnessed. Reaching out to these people should happen in week 1.

3 Open up

Trust will only grow once a truly open and inclusive approach is taken across the board. Releasing maps showing council land is one such initiative. Empowering junior officers is another. Taking a uniquely graphical approach to explaining difficult decisions could be another.

4 Get creative

As we say here, a time for action is a time to try new tricks. Entirely new approaches to getting things done have to be trialled. This could include, for instance, taking up offers of help from within the community -and adding a small resource too.

5 Make plans

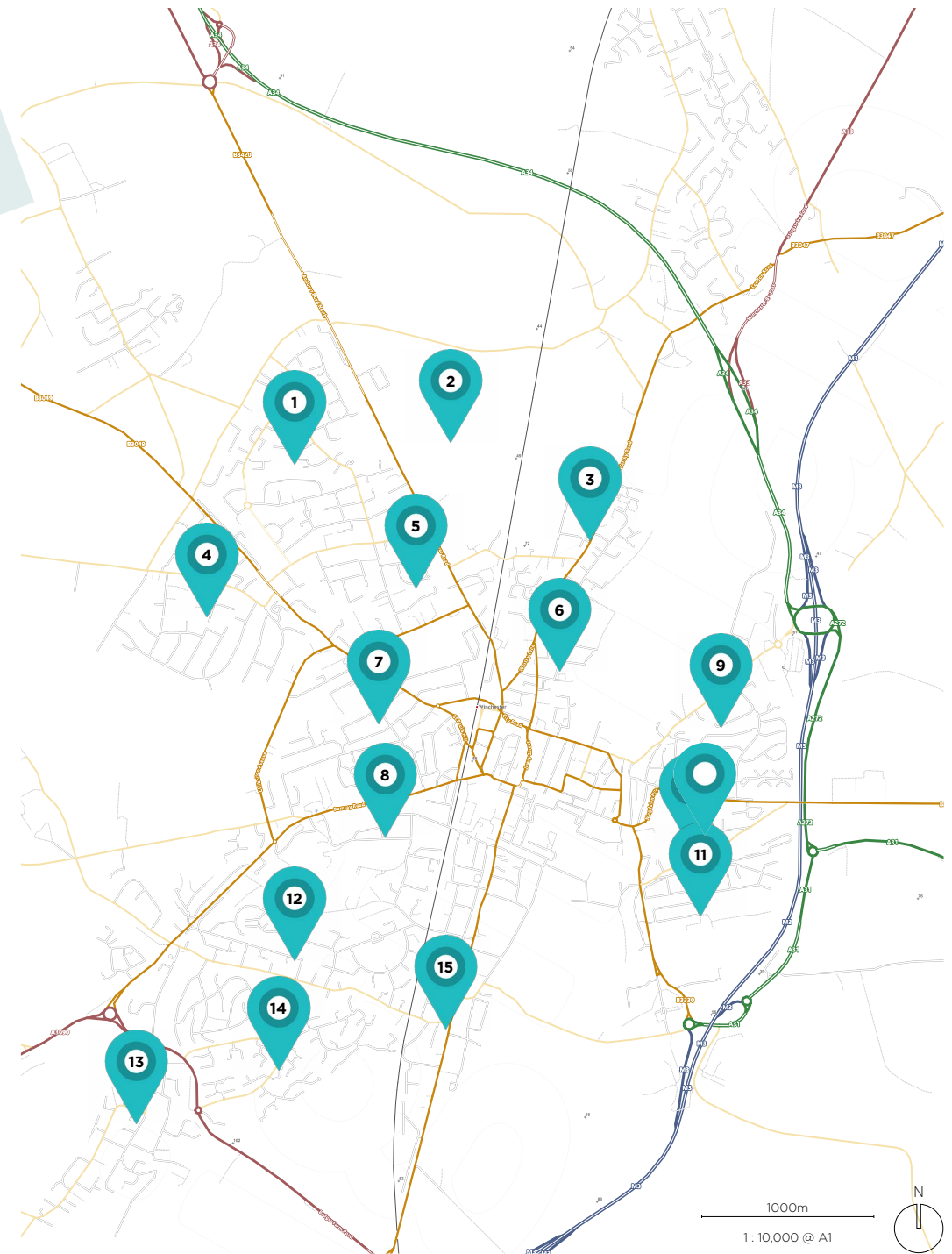
Planners need Plans and there is a willingness to break the mould. New housing is critical to keeping Winchester as a living city -so why not ask local experts to draw up a city master plan that focuses on Housing above all else?



The neighbourhoods of Winchester

The group moved around a map of the city quickly agreeing the boundaries of its neighbourhoods. Badger Farm, Fulflood, Hyde and Harestock, for example, were each seen as having their own established identity in the eyes of their residents. Sometimes, of course, these would differ from the views of neighbours in neighbouring neighbourhoods or those further afield. Whilst not discussed in the group it is common for different parts of a town or city to be regarded in a particular way by those not living there, and this will typically be a blend of positive and negative attributes – eg. “it’s a bit scruffy to look at but at least it still has convenience shops and it seems to have a strong community spirit” OR “the houses there are beautiful with huge gardens but you’d have to drive to get a pint of milk”. The residents of each will generally be clear eyed about the merits or advantages of the area they live in, and the specific challenges they face that others nearby might not be aware of. The HOME group examined a few areas of the city to see what they offered in terms of facilities and activities. And created a map identifying a number of target projects.

1. Weeke/ Harestock
2. Kings Barton new
3. Abbotts barton
4. Tegdown - There are no facilities here
5. East Weeke
6. Hyde
7. Fulflood
8. West Hill
9. Winnall
10. Highcliffe
11. Bar End
12. Stanmore
13. Olivers Battery
14. Badgers Farm
15. St Cross



SECTION

1.

Where do you call home?

Home is an emotive topic affecting so many dimensions of our lives. Home and family lie at the foundation of all societies, and building and protecting both are at the core of our adult existence. Family is now seen in all its diversity and Home can similarly mean many different conditions.

In Handbook 1 we asked Where do you call Home? This acknowledged that some might say “Winchester”, their home town, and others might say “No. 22 Uplands Road”, where they sleep, eat, etc. Our Group started with the first answer and considered their city centre in all its glory. The passion shown was unsurprising but still invigorating. The group clearly felt strongly about an area in which none of them lived. What is it about Winchester’s city centre that drives otherwise sane and undemonstrative folk halfway to distraction? In part it appears to be due to a lack of action, not on the Grand Projets like Silver Hill or Station Approach, but on the obvious and easy wins, like signposting the high street from the station.



“Housing needs to be affordable for the less affluent who work in care homes, fill your supermarket shelves and dispose of your rubbish as well as those that have white collar employment.”



HELP FINDING YOUR WAY

Improved physical signage of existing walking and cycling routes so they are better used. Aiming for reduced pollution, more exercise, safer neighbourhoods, increased use of local amenities by locals as well as tourists. Increased sense of knowing the place we call ‘home’

HOW

Physical signage and where needed access improvements. Engage locals re what should be signed and where the bottle necks / issues are.

WHERE and WHO

Train station to city centre walking via upper high street, Winall moors nature reserve from city centre.

WCC / HCC highways / Community - canvas local opinion/use existing groups to flag opportunity areas



Week 1 Blog extract:



“As a first session together... we spent most of our time talking about the city centre which is obviously important to everyone. We talked about the visitor experience, the problems of ‘the high street’, what teenagers can do in the city centre, how ‘expensive’ Winchester struggles with a boho arts/workspace offer, public transport to and from the city, ‘diversity’, and how ‘good’ projects seem to get lost on the way to delivery. Although we spent most of our time simply discussing Winchester as a whole, we did manage to capture a lot of different aspects of our subject Home. We created a mindmap showing all of these and shared this around the group after our session. We also began to add our thoughts to actual places in the city, mostly the city centre, on an online map.”

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SAFE ROUTES TO EVERYWHERE

Adapted walking and cycling routes to make them safer and more attractive (then sign post as above). Aiming for reduced pollution, more exercise, safer neighbourhoods, increased use of local amenities by locals as well as tourists. Increased sense of knowing the place we call ‘home’.

HOW

Identify network of main pedestrian and cycle destinations – both current and potential – and seek funding from the businesses, organisations and communities at each.

WHERE and WHO

Pedestrian crossing / traffic calming at railway bridge / St Kames terrace junction. Impacts walking / cycling journeys from Station to university / hospital. Also Fulflood to city centre via station instead of Stockbridge road tunnel. Local businesses and organisations / WCC / HCC (highways) / Sustrans



HELP FILLING YOUR DAY

A digital ‘one stop shop’ for how to get around and to / from Winchester by public transport / walking / cycling – ie: a TFL.gov.uk but for Winchester / Hampshire. Can also be used to link into a ‘what’s on’ / amenities in Winchester and how to get to them. Aiming for increased use of public transport, walking and cycling (instead of cars) because people can easily find out times connections, route and when walking or cycling is faster than bus / car.

HOW

Option to piggyback on tech used by TfL for example – and pay a fee but generate revenue from online advertising. Or get a local web company or one of the public transport service providers to develop and maintain the site. NB – also use to advertise ‘park and ride’

WHERE and WHO

Everywhere! Digital so can also be used for visitors / on phones on the go in town. WCC / HCC + a digital expert to say what the most effective way to do it and how to also use it to generate revenue



“Let’s utilise spaces outside the city centre to give pockets of activity”

SECTION

2

Neighbourhoods and communities.

Winchester is a compact city where everyone lives within a 30 minute walk of the centre (if the centre was the prison). As such the city centre does perform a daily role in the lives of many citizens. But the fortunate and well-designed neighbourhoods of the city benefit from their own facilities such as shops, parks, schools and social venues. In some cases, particularly the larger developments, this was by design, in others it might be because one of the city's radial routes passes through or near it, so that passing trade and destination businesses help support the local offer.

There are perhaps 15 distinct neighbourhoods beyond the city centre. Some of them are recognisable to all whereas others require an established local to point out the fine lines between them. Rich in their diversity they add to the sum of the city principally through the communities that inhabit them. Stanmore, for instance, is of a significant size and was built for social housing but is now also home for a sizeable student community. In numerous ways it differs from Hyde. One of these is the latter's close proximity to the city centre.

Another is the relatively tight streets of Hyde in contrast to the greenery of Stanmore's gardens and public spaces. In each location there are committed, energetic and resourceful people looking for ways to contribute for the good of their community.



Space to come together

Community focus hubs utilising existing buildings / facilities – sport, leisure, pop up markets, food etc. Aiming for increased sense of belonging to a neighbourhood or to Winchester itself. Opportunities for local businesses. Making better use of existing infrastructure in 'down time' (eg weekend and evenings for schools). Bringing use and revenue to the city centre by using large former retail spaces for new purposes. A WFH win.

HOW

Outsource the project to identify the need and possible locations. Then set up using local businesses and volunteers, schools etc.

WHERE and WHO

Peter Symonds college – sports fields, indoor sports, music and arts facilities, meeting halls. Westgate / Weston schools – badminton already there, other sports indoor and outdoor. Brooks shopping centre – empty units. Ex 'River Cottage' restaurant building in Abbey Gardens. What council owned buildings are there in the city?

WCC to appoint someone to co ordinate / negotiate. Local organisations/communities to have a budget to set up / run

“If we created shared workspace mini-hubs in redundant shops they could be run by the community or a B Corp and out of office hours provide space for young people or community groups”



Can I help you?

Appoint a 'Making Things Happen' person / organisation. Aiming for Increased resident happiness as no longer just talking / consulting. If council have heard that residents no longer want just talking then they might realize that 1) in own self interest to make things happen if want to get re-elected 2) council does not have good track record on this so better get in an expert.

HOW

Write a brief, council agree to allocate a modest budget.

WHERE and WHO

All over the city. WCC to appoint re 'what' needs to happen but leave the 'how' to the appointee.

Week 2 Blog extract:



"There are plentiful shops... much more than in town. Three supermarkets about 10 min walk away next to the doctors surgery and chemist. There is also an Indian, Chinese, Pizza place and chippie along with a bookies, charity shop ,Costa, post office and podiatrist. Minus point... steep uphill walk afterwards but there is a good bus service!



..The biggest rarity in Winchester though has got to be the free car park! It is used a lot by people from local villages who drive there, park and get bus into town."

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Sharing is caring

Shared surface streets for a fairer distribution of resources . Aiming to Improve access for non-car drivers, and encourage walking and cycling. Promote movement of people between neighbourhoods. Health, safety, wellbeing.

HOW

Eg. Northwalls: Addition of priority pedestrian/cyclist crossings. Removal of kerbs. Gordon Road: Removal of kerbs and paths. Hyde Street: Implement one way traffic City out to Worthy Lane (traffic calming measures/cameras). Designated cycle lane. Removal of kerbs. Jewry Street - 2 way cycle lane.

WHERE and WHO

Northwalls, Gordon Road, Hyde Street, Jewry Street. WCC / HCC (highways)/ Sustran / Govt.



Let's play together

Develop and enhance the recreational and social/community function. Promoting Increased resident happiness.

HOW

Lido (River Park)
Courts (netball, basketball - River park)
Outdoor gym (River Park and Chaundler Road). Picnic area - addition of eating benches and bins (River Park and Chaundler Road).
Pop-up café (River Park) - capture parents at school drop off/pick-up, dog walkers, rec users etc. Social areas.

WHERE and WHO

River Park and Chaundler Road. WCC / Sport England / Winchester University.

"It would be great to have really frequent, small Hopper buses circulating around the neighbourhoods."

SECTION

3.

Is that an opportunity over there?

In every street, park and alley of every city in the country there is scope for improvement. Some will be in private properties with the rest in the public domain. In many cases these will relate to the fabric of the city, few elements of which age gracefully achieving that soulful patina rightly revered in an era of vintage this and that. Fixing the park gate, repainting the corner property, cutting back the pavement hedge are some of the thousands of small jobs that are the responsibility of hundreds of people in a neighbourhood. In most cases they get done, in some they don't. Fixing the unfixed is one small but worthwhile challenge.

In some cases the factor requiring improvement will be invisible to the naked eye. This is because it is really an opportunity and not strictly a problem. The problems still need fixing but in parallel our group identified other targets that could be met at the same time: more social interaction, more fun, a greater sense of community cohesion, and so on.



We're here every week

Mobile Library/ Bookstore / Coffee cart. Aiming for Community interaction / Education (reading +)/ Streetlife. A WFH win

HOW

Either tender opp commercially OR use WCC/ HCC resources

WHERE and WHO

Various neighbourhood locations – at 10-20minute walk distances apart.
Local community / WCC/ HCC/ Schools/ Universities



We're also here every week

Takeaway food/Mobile restaurant /Farmshop. Aiming for community interaction / Education (healthy eating; food options)/ Streetlife A WFH win.

HOW

Seek community-sourced providers (instead of commercial tenders).

WHERE and WHO

Various neighbourhood locations – at 10-20minute walk distances apart.
Local community / Schools / WCC highways and licencing



WinchesterEats

Delivery from Local Independent Food & Services. Aiming for access for consumers and increased catchment for business. A WFH win

HOW

Local commercial operator – could be one of the independent stores themselves or a local marketeer

WHERE and WHO

Whole city (and local villages) and local businesses.



This is our land

A Register of (WC&HC) council-owned land on the WCC website. Aiming to inform local communities of public land in the city and encourage them to bring forward ideas for its reuse (either temporarily or permanently).

HOW

WCC simply upload a plan of WCC and HCC landholdings

WHERE and WHO

Whole city. WCC / HCC.

Week 3 Blog extract:



“Why does one community seem to have a stronger spirit and sense of unity than the next? In our week 3 session we started to look at HOW small (or large) changes could be made in a neighbourhood – and a lot of these seemed to rest or rely on the viability, sustainability, happiness and harmony of the place itself.”

.. The socio-ethnic-economic mix may have a positive influence, but not always. A diverse community can appear disparate but can work well together, perhaps in pursuit of a common cause – save the post office/park/parking for instance. Equally a community of people with similar backgrounds can find it easier to relate to, and work with, each other, but not always. The combination most difficult to make succeed would appear to be the community comprising two very different groups of people.”

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“This suburb is like a large village... people talk to each other and there is a mixed age range, although predominantly older”

SECTION

4.

Can we help?

Having reviewed our work to date the group concluded by setting down key targets and identifying common threads. The group was aware that they were not wholly representative of the city's citizens and alternative views could be found. Not everyone would agree, for instance, on the need to better empower local communities, but the majority would and a time for action was a time to try new tricks.

The HOME Working Group started with a broad agenda and finished with one too. The group considered how, when and where to build more homes. They wanted them to be created by people who knew Winchester – the architects and builders – and it appears this is generally true, at least in the public sphere. But the group wanted most to focus on how to make the neighbourhoods of the city feel more like home. This could include more homes in some neighbourhoods, perhaps to address an imbalance in the community, or simply to offer young people a first home, or perhaps to help fund a piece of infrastructure – like a shop or café.

Some of the group wanted to get directly involved – form an action squad – which could be just the solution needed. Others saw Citizens Assemblies or other democratic structures as worth exploring. All demonstrated they had the imagination and can-do attitude that Winchester's new Vision for 2030 requires.

“One of my children lives on a new development on the outskirts of Andover and the Co-Op there really is a community store. They are the collections point for a community food share where the local Tesco donate best-before and other non-perishable goods as well as locals donating.”



Co-living in the city

Communal living concept. Halls of residence-style accommodation with shared amenities to appeal to younger age group, or mixed ages. Aiming for City accommodation for those leaving home and/or working in the city.

HOW

One, any or all of the following:
WCC Invest directly;
WCC seek Commercial investors;
Both universities create or promote co-living;
Local plan allocates land for co-living.

WHERE and WHO

City centre. WCC / HCC / Universities /
Commercial investors

Week 4 Blog extract:



“We talked about forming the Winchester Guerillas, or an A (Action) Team. Modestly resourced local doers (something Winchester is blessed with lots of) would apply their private sector project management and delivery skills to making small projects happen in the city. These would be based on the 5 Working Group targets and spread across the city.

..At one point someone said: Do the council recognise that they don't have a great reputation for getting things done? Today's commercial environment is all about being agile. What is needed is a culture change.”

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Shop local and global

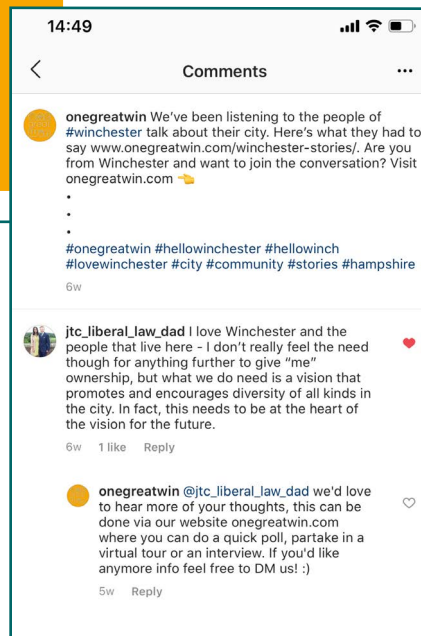
Develop local shopping centres and enable community to come together to source locally. Aiming for Increased resident happiness. A WFH win

HOW

Outdoor/Indoor market – River Park Leisure Centre. Sunday market. Pop up food stores and market/mobile groceries.

WHERE and WHO

River Park Cattle Market (Worthy Lane), WCC / Hampshire Farmers Markets / Ooooby (www.ooooby.org/hampshire)



“Why don't we move the bus station to that car park near the train station and have some joined up transport?”



More than a plan

Neighbourhood Action Plans can cover a range of social, economic and environmental issues, which includes housing, the environment, community safety, leisure and access to services and facilities.

HOW

WCC work with community in each Neighbourhood

WHERE and WHO

Whole city. WCC / local communities.



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