

MELCOMBE REGIS BOARD

‘Helping make Melcombe Regis a safe, healthy and great place to live and work’



Strategic Plan 2017-21

APPENDIX 1

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Melcombe Regis

Melcombe Regis is at the vibrant heart of Weymouth. Situated on the north shore of the harbour and extending to Lodmoor Hill, it includes Weymouth seafront, town centre and the residential areas of Greenhill and the Park District. Yet, despite its attributes it is the Borough ward with most evidence of multiple deprivation and is within the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country (Public Health England Local Health Profiles 2015). It scores high levels of deprivation in living environment; education; skills and training; health; employment; income and crime. The area has seen few improvements since the previous index was published in 2010.

Melcombe Regis has many great features that are enjoyed by locals and thousands of visitors every year. But it is a ward with many constituent parts. The blend of private and rented housing, homes of multiple occupancy; hotels; guesthouses and retail; commercial and leisure activities make up a very diverse area. Despite performing relatively well, Melcombe Regis has suffered from the structural decline of seaside resort towns, low paid seasonal jobs and cheap, poorer quality housing has created a high transient population many with complex needs. Health and wellbeing is affected by a variety of factors, some of which are amenable to change, either by personal choice such as diet or by external influences, for instance changes to the local environment.

The Board

The Board has been established in recognition of the serious issues facing Melcombe Regis and that no individual agency or group can achieve the impact needed, especially in the current harsh financial climate. The Board recognises the great work being done already by the Team Around Melcombe Regis, community and voluntary groups; health providers; police and local councils. A key role of the board is to bring agencies together, often at senior level; to understand the complex relationships between the factors affecting Health and Wellbeing; help give direction; remove obstacles and enable change. This is no 'quick-fix' and the Board commits itself to its vision. It is a social injustice that average life expectancy in the ward is up to 10 years less than other areas of the Borough, this must change.

Agencies that are represented at the Board are listed on the last page of this plan.

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Our Vision

Melcombe Regis is a safe, healthy and great place to live and work

To achieve this we will;

- Identify priorities for action and work with partners who share our vision
- Ensure that local people are at the heart of what we do
- Seek and pool funding opportunities, working closely with the business community
- Challenge ourselves to be measurably successful

Priority Themes & Plan

The Board has looked at work done prior to its establishment and from this agreed six priorities around which the plan is structured;

- Housing – residents live in good quality housing which is affordable
- Community - a strong, integrated community with ready access to opportunities and services
- Environment – a restored sense of pride
- Health - everyone can lead healthier lives and support is provided for those in greatest need
- Employment - more jobs for local people and barriers to education, training & employment challenged and removed
- Crime - crime and anti-social behaviour is reduced and people feel safe

The 5-year rolling plan recognises that meaningful change will take time to achieve. The plan contains some work already started or due to commence under the ownership of a Board agency or others and new work, but is by no means a comprehensive picture. The plan will evolve as work progresses and its success will be dependent upon Board agencies planning and working together; being inclusive with local communities and valuing the many that are already working locally to improve Melcombe Regis.

Housing

Residents live in good quality housing which is affordable

Why it is important

The linkage between housing and health is well proven - people should be able to have the expectation of decent affordable homes.

In Melcombe Regis there are a significant number of flats above retail and commercial premises and a higher concentration of houses in multiple occupation within the main housing area, the Park District. Here, the housing is predominantly older, back of pavement stock with in variable condition. Some of the HMO's fall within the limited mandatory licensing regime but others do not and again, the condition of the stock is variable.

Because of the relative low cost of housing (usually the more cramped, lacking facilities, in disrepair), there are a higher proportion of people living locally who in poverty, without employment, have complex physical and mental health issues including substance abuse and addiction. A number of agencies supply 'supported' housing in the area and when not managed well, can lead to problems for clients and the community.

As the town centre ward, homelessness and rough sleeping is visible and rising, as it is nationally. Despite this, there is some good work underway co-ordinating interventions.

Key features, such as over half the housing tenure is in the private rental sector; higher proportion of disrepair, poor facilities and overcrowding and, people living with complex needs have to be addressed.

Priorities

- **Provision of a mixed range of affordable housing**
- **Achieve a higher standard of housing conditions**
- **Making sure vulnerable residents are safe in their homes**

1. Provide a mixed range of affordable housing through;

- Delivering new family housing
- Providing access to low cost home ownership initiatives
- Reducing the concentration of supported housing

Action in 2017-18

- Carry out a detailed analysis of licensing options for private rented sector (PRS) homes
- Report and recommendations to WPBC councillors about licensing options
- Work with Registered Providers to explore housing investment options, including PRS homes

2. Achieve a higher standard of housing conditions through;

- Innovating to secure improvements in the private rented sector
- Securing an external refurbishment programme for homes and street-scene
- Developing and adopting a new Housing Enforcement Policy for the area

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Action in 2017-18

- Pilot housing advice sessions in GP surgeries and the community centre

3. Make sure vulnerable residents are safe through;

- Getting behind front doors to identify and tackle housing problems faced by vulnerable households
- Ensuring supported housing providers do a good job
- Getting homeless rough sleepers off the streets

Action in 2017-18

- Task and finish group to review and improve response to rough sleeping

Community

A strong, integrated community with good access to resources and opportunities

Why it is Important

Building resilience within communities and improving access to resources (information; skills; technologies; funding) helps reduce inequalities particularly the impacts of unemployment, lower incomes and poor health outcomes.

A strong community is one that is diverse and inclusive and has the ability and opportunity to make things happen. It is in the unique position to help identify what makes their community work and how it can be improved. With the right support, it can take on many grass roots activities and act as a design and delivery point for resident's needs.

Melcombe Regis is varied with its commercial; leisure; retail and residential features and here, we are focusing on people who live in the area and their community. And, that community is very diverse with a core of older people who have lived in the area for a long time and a relatively high proportion of transitory people moving through short-term rented accommodation. Community cohesion is low and resources under-utilised.

There is a lot of great local work going on through initiatives such as 'Working With You' and 'Our Place' and the role of the Melcombe Regis Board is to support and help grow such work. Also, to identify new opportunities.

A key challenge for the Board is how it engages and works with the community that it is there to work alongside and help.

Priorities

- **Supporting a community that welcomes all and works together for the common good**
- **Supporting and enabling residents to celebrate and improve their own living and working environment**
- **Improved information on and access to opportunities and services that deliver quality of life improvements for local people**

1. Supporting a community that welcomes all and works together for the common good through;

- Identifying the range of different cultures, faiths, backgrounds and religions represented by the communities of Melcombe Regis
- Identifying the common and varying needs of these diverse communities
- Encouraging collaborative community events and projects to discuss and address community issues and celebrate achievements.

Action in 2017-18

- Audit of resident community and identification of community leaders
- Establishment of a fully representative community forum
- Hold a community information event to introduce collaborative work in Melcombe Regis and encourage community input

2. Supporting and enabling residents to celebrate and improve their own living and working environment through;

- Encouraging use of the Park Community Centre by a range of voluntary and community groups
- Facilitating communication between local community and voluntary groups and supporting collaborative community projects
- Working with partner groups such as the Team Around Melcombe Regis to help deliver their priorities

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Action in 2017-18

- Audit of voluntary & community groups established in the area & assess needs and desires
- Produce Working with You project update
- Increased footfall at the Park Community Centre

3. Improved information on and access to opportunities and services that deliver quality of life improvements for local people by;

- Getting useful information to all who would benefit by a range of information streams
- Ensuring the sustainability of The Park Community Centre as a mainstream community hub and The Lantern Centre as a crisis service hub
- Informing the development of the Living & Learning Hub

Action in 2017-18

- Production of a community directory for new residents and on-line resource guide to key contacts and services
- Production of an easy-reference resident's advice card
- Production of a development plan for The Park Community Centre
- Enable the improvement and better use of the community website

Environment

A restored sense of pride

Why it is important

The infrastructure of a neighbourhood and the provision of opportunities to enjoy outdoor space has a profound effect on physical, social and mental health. Melcombe Regis is fortunate to be surrounded by a great harbour and beach but some of the inner areas are less attractive and less well maintained. The health impacts of people who live and work there are affected by issues such as air quality and noise; availability of accessible out-door spaces that suit their needs; the look and feel of the streets; accessible travel arrangements and whether people feel connected with other communities. Neighbourhoods need to be safe, vibrant and viable.

Highlighted issues include the flooding that occurs at certain times of the year; a feel that some streets are unattractive and unsafe and small pockets of green and open space could be made more attractive to users. Regular maintenance of street infrastructure, pedestrian safety and targeted lighting is also important as is the general problem of rubbish and unwanted seagull activity.

As well as these immediate problems, the Melcombe Regis Board will work so that partner agencies, community and business groups consider environmental impacts in all future policy making and for the people who live and work here help shape what their environment looks and feels like.

Priorities

- **Public space is clean, safe and accessible**
- **Twenty-first century facilities, building on great coastal and seafront attributes**
- **Economically active and well maintained retail and commercial property**

1. **Public space is clean, safe and accessible through;**

- Keeping pedestrian areas attractive, clean and well maintained
- Providing targeted lighting options to priority areas.
- Ensuring good air quality
- Greening the urban environment

Action in 2017-18

- Run and evaluate the environmental enforcement project
- Win funding from Coastal Communities Fund to design and install new lighting
- Include Melcombe Regis in the Dorset Air Quality project

2. **Twenty-first century facilities, building on great coastal and seafront attributes through;**

- Implementing the Town Centre Master Plan to regenerate key sites
- Securing funding to improve flood protection measures
- Ridding the area of problem pockets of public land
- Making public space attractive, accessible and healthy places to be
- Improve play and recreation in the area

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Action in 2017-18

- Ensuring that our priorities are reflected in the Peninsula development plans
- Audit problem public land and improve at least 3 sites
- Work with the community to submit £1M+ Heritage Lottery Fund bid for Radipole Park Gardens

3. Economically active and well maintained retail and commercial property through;

- Helping empty retail and commercial property back into use
- Requiring property owners and tenants to keep property maintained

Action in 2017-18

- Audit, and get to know where the problem properties are, plan and improve
- Raise awareness and use of business support and regulatory powers by relevant agencies

Health

Everyone can lead healthier lives and support is provided for those in greatest need

Why it is important

Public Health England's Local Health Profile for Weymouth and Portland highlights stark health inequalities between residents of Melcombe Regis, other wards in the Borough and the rest of Dorset. For example, average life expectancy for men in the ward is 10 years less than a neighbouring area. The reasons for this are complex but are shaped by a higher transient population; low income; poorer lifestyle and housing and a higher proportion of people with complex mental health problems.

Many of the key determinants of health are being explored elsewhere in this plan and so here there is a more specific focus around prevention of ill health through lifestyle changes and where ill-health or disease is present, living as well as possible with it. Key to prevention are diet and nutrition; physical exercise and smoking cessation programmes. Health screening programmes are important for early diagnosis and currently have low take-up in the area. Drug and alcohol and mental health interventions also need to be reviewed and strengthened.

It is about building upon lots of good work already taking place which includes the day to day delivery of GP and pharmacy services in a much stressed environment; the mental health outreach nurses project to our most vulnerable people; an exercise referral scheme and bids to Sport England to get funding to improve local provision.

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Priorities

- **Living well**
- **Improving heart health**
- **Improving mental health and wellbeing**

1. **Living well;**

- Empowering residents of Melcombe Regis to take care of their health. For example, encouraging more take-up of the LiveWell Dorset referral and self-help schemes to support positive behaviour change in:
 - Physical activity
 - Weight management
 - Smoking cessation
 - Reducing alcohol consumption
- Delivery of a programme of initiatives to increase the amount of physical activity undertaken by local people
- Building health improvement into local planning policy and decisions to help reduce health inequality

Action in 2017-18

- Engagement with GP practices to encourage LiveWell Dorset use and the Living and Learning hub project to promote health.

2 **Improving heart health, in particular cardiovascular disease and diabetes, through**

- Using more targeted NHS health checks programme to improve early identification of disease
- Encouraging GPs to participate in the Right Care programme for a better and more consistent approach to diabetes care

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Action in 2017-18

- Working with Public Health Dorset to explore how the NHS health checks programme can be better targeted in the area

3. Improving mental health and wellbeing though;

- Commissioning of a new service provision for people with alcohol and drug related issues
- Supporting and implementing the recommendations of the Mental Health service review and provision of mental health first aid by appropriate staff
- Recognising the importance that physical environment plays upon mental health

Action in 2017-18

- Implement actions arising from the Alcohol Concern workshop
- Facilitate a local mental health stakeholders event
- Ensure local planning prioritise elements to improve physical environment for local community wellbeing

Employment

More jobs for local people and barriers to education, training & employment challenged and removed

Why it is important

Economic development resulting in good-quality, stable employment, is crucial to health and wellbeing for those able to work. This is especially important for young people as they are less likely to find work later in life and, more likely to experience poor long-term ill health, if they are out of the workforce as young people. More generally, unemployment increases the risk of fatal or non-fatal cardiovascular disease and all-cause mortality, by up to 2.5 times. Mental health and depression are significant risks of unemployment with studies showing one in seven develop clinical depression within six months of losing their job.

Health behaviours such as drinking, smoking and lack of exercise are far greater among the long-term unemployed than among people in employment; these effects can last for several years even after a person has found employment. Getting back into employment increases the likelihood of improved health by almost threefold, and significantly improves quality of life.

Weymouth and Portland is characterised by an ageing population, relatively stagnant population growth and a falling cohort of working age and younger people. The profile for Melcombe Regis has the highest proportion of residents classified as transient singles poorly supported by family and neighbours' (46.7%), followed by 'residents with strong local roots' (18.5%) and 'lower income workers in urban terraces' (18.5%). Just over 1000 residents between the ages 16-64 (total population in this group is 3962) are not registered for work, suggesting that a high percentage of this number are in the transient population. A quarter of the employed sector are in low skilled employment, with only a third in a high skill occupation. In part this is due to the seasonal nature of work in the area. We need to make it easier for people to find the right support to increase their skill levels, become employment ready or start up their own businesses.

Priorities

- **Providing a shared services centre as a one-stop local resource**
- **Supporting apprenticeship pathways**
- **Planning for growth and encouraging business start-ups**

1. Providing a shared services centre providing greater access to skills, training and employment opportunities through;

- Re-locating the current service to a new location in-line with the living and learning hub project
- Enhancing the work of the service with a targeted approach to providing better focused skills training and career packages

Action in 2017-18

- Progressing the service re-location into a shared facility and develop the offer to Melcombe Regis residents
- Deliver a local road-show promoting learning; skills; apprenticeships and employment opportunities

2. Supporting apprenticeship pathways through;

- Utilising the Dorset Public Sector Apprenticeship Framework to promote apprenticeship opportunities
- Promote Weymouth College Apprenticeship programme in conjunction with the Government's Small, Medium sized Enterprise Apprenticeship Levy and work with businesses to encourage take-up of the scheme

Action in 2017-18

- Number of apprenticeship taken up
- Promotion of apprenticeships to local people

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3. Planning for growth and encouraging business start-ups through;

- Maximising the employment, training and work experience opportunities for local people that can be gained from major regeneration and redevelopment projects
- Providing more cohesive and comprehensive support for enterprise and start-ups including a comprehensive business support package
- Developing pop-up shop opportunities and support for artisan markets
- Establishing a business start-up and entrepreneur support service

Action in 2017-18

- Identify employment and community development opportunities from the 5 regeneration sites in the town centre and other major redevelopments, promoting these opportunities to local people
- Establish a dedicated communications plan that is focused on promoting employment, training and apprenticeship opportunities to local people
- In conjunction with Weymouth College, hold a Dorset Growth Hub workshop in Weymouth promoting business start-up and entrepreneurship career pathways
- Identify a facility or facilities that could be utilised for a Pop-Up Shop and establish a programme to encourage entrepreneurship
- Produce a business start-up and entrepreneurship digital brochure that identifies pathways, local advice and support

Crime and Community Safety

Crime has been reduced along with anti-social behaviour. People feel safe

Why it is Important

Crime and the fear of crime are important determinants in health and wellbeing. Following sustained falling crime rates, Weymouth has recently seen significant rises in some crime categories, following national trends. Although some acquisitive crime continues to fall (burglaries and vehicle crime) there have been rises linked to the town centre including robbery, public order, violent crime, assault and serious sexual offences.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has increased within nuisance and environmental categories mainly associated with the night-time economy (NTE). There is also a continuing problem related to street drinking/begging impacting upon public perception of the town centre.

Melcombe Regis has seen an increase in Dangerous Drug Networks (DDN) activity and significant resources from Dorset Police have been deployed, often under the radar, to tackle this criminality and the risk that it presents to vulnerable people.

There is a lot of good, collaborative work taking place. Some of this has been recognised nationally with schemes including Best Bar None; RU2 Drunk; voluntary earlier closing for licensed premises and the Street Pastors. The town has just been accepted into the Home Office Local Alcohol Action Area programme. And, a record number of Criminal Behaviour Orders have been gained to control offensive behaviour in the town.

Keeping local people informed about the facts and on-going work is key to lessening the fear of crime.

Priorities

- Preventing public place violent crime linked to the night-time economy
- Reducing the number of people seriously harmed including those linked to the supply of controlled drugs
- Reducing the number of victims of crime and antisocial behaviour

1. Preventing public place violent crime linked to the night-time economy through;

- Improving our knowledge and intelligence of the NTE through better information sharing between agencies
- Generating economic growth by creating a vibrant and diverse NTE and working with businesses to maximise opportunities to improve look and feel at night
- Designing-out crime and creating safe pedestrian routes

Action in 2017-18

- Develop an NTE strategy for delivery by partners of the NTE Group and/or submit an application for Purple Flag accreditation
- Ensure that the learning and best practice identified by the Local Alcohol Action Area Programme is embedded within a refreshed NTE action plan

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2. Reducing the number of people seriously harmed including those linked to the supply of controlled drugs through;

- Developing a more co-ordinated and effective partnership approach to identifying and managing those individuals most at risk of harm from drug suppliers
- Ensuring those at highest risk of harm are provided with appropriate support by relevant agencies
- Implementing a multi-agency strategy to guide tactical actions to reduce vulnerability of those at risk of harm from drug suppliers

Action in 2017-18

- Through case studies, understand and improve multi-agency practice to reduce harm
- Improve our understanding of the community intervention services available and referral processes
- Continue development of the information sharing and case management meetings between Police, Housing, Community Safety, Community Mental Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group to reduce the vulnerability of people at risk

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3. Reducing the number of victims of crime and anti-social behaviour through;

- Maintaining a focus on reducing street-drinking; rough sleeping & begging in the town centre

Action in 2017-18

- Develop a consensus on tackling street drinking and the multi-agency response to it – ensuring learning and best practice from the Alcohol Concern Workshop is incorporated within the approach
- Improve our understanding of the community intervention services available and referral processes
- Continue development of information sharing and case management meetings between agencies to reduce the vulnerability of persistent street drinkers
- Review commissioned services to ensure they work effectively in reducing street drinking
- Explore the viability of a Community Safety Accreditation Scheme for Weymouth supported by the Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner
- Apply for Home Office Police Transformation Funding to develop a placed based approach to reduce the vulnerability of persistent street drinkers, rough sleepers and those begging

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Measuring how we do

It's important to know how well we are doing. Each of the priorities in this plan has a performance measure and these will be tracked to ensure good progress and inform the work ahead. The Board will monitor progress and recommend that partner agencies report progress to their leadership teams. Over time, and by working better together, we are committed to improving people's lives in Melcombe Regis.

Board Members

Dorset Councils Partnership
Dorset Police
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue
Weymouth College
Public Health Dorset

Dorset County Council
Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner
Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group
Team Around Melcombe Regis
Aster Housing