
Meeting of the Public Health Select Committee – 31st July 2023

Report of the Director of Public Health

The ‘Life in Lye’ programme

Purpose of report

1. To provide an overview of the ‘Life in Lye’ programme and its approach to improving community cohesion and reducing health inequalities in Lye through a system-wide, place-based approach.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Public Health Select Committee:
 - take note of the report and the activity which has taken place to date
 - note the alignment with the Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy and The Forging A Future Dudley Borough Vision
 - note that Public Health have to submit quarterly reports to the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to report on activity in line with the agreed funding proposals
 - advise on opportunities to build on this work

Background

3. Despite receiving a bad press in recent years, Lye was once a thriving destination point largely due to the excellent curry houses which people would travel to from miles around. Lye today is an area with many strong community assets including its history, the many sociable, welcoming, and friendly people, its community buildings, community leaders and groups, independent businesses, and green spaces. The ‘Stories of Lye’ collected in 2019 highlight people’s passion for Lye and the ideas and energy they have to make it an even better place. The Lye New Histories Project delivered during 2021-22 further highlighted the things which people from different communities in Lye have in common (such as home, family, friendship, and community) and the potential to bring communities together through creative

activities, to build trust, share cultural identities and work together to address local challenges.

Previous work in Lye/partnership working

4. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic a Lye Community Cohesion, Health and Engagement Group was Chaired by the Head of Community Safety. The group brought together people working in Lye to report on their work and discuss new and emerging issues which required action.
5. In July 2022 a partnership meeting took place to discuss integrated and joined-up models of care in Dudley, with a specific focus on the challenges and ambitions for Lye. People asked, *“how can we support each other to work collaboratively in Lye?”* *“How can we work differently to engage the diverse communities in Lye and increase access to services, when needed?”* and *“how can we share and utilise our resources in the best way to benefit the people of Lye?”* The group aspiration was to co-produce a new model of working in Lye based on stories and insight from those living and working in the area.
6. Following this meeting, small pots of funding were obtained from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Health Inequalities Fund and the Police and Crime Commissioner Fund to focus on a new approach to improve community cohesion and address health inequalities. The Life in Lye programme was initiated in January 2023 by the Public Health Manager for Healthy Communities, Dudley Council and the Strategic Commissioning and Transformation Lead for Mental Health and Prevention in Dudley Integrated Health Care NHS Trust. Membership of the group and terms of reference are attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

A new approach

7. “Over the last decade, local authorities have been grappling with the triple challenge of ever-increasing complexity, growing demand for services, and continuing reductions in resources. Many people report having worked on the same problems in the same way for many years and are frustrated to see how little has changed. They recognise that the people they serve are complex, with individual contexts and needs, and that the issues they face can’t be resolved by a single, simple service model. There is recognition that over-professionalisation and the ‘customer’ management approach from previous decades not only leaves them ill-equipped to meet the challenges communities face but can be wasteful and even harmful. Councils have therefore responded with a renewed vision of their role, demonstrated through the adoption of more person- and community-centred approaches.”

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¹ Asset-Based Community Development for Local Authorities. Nesta, 2020

8. Asset-based community development (ABCD) is an established and well-documented approach that a number of local authorities have adopted to build more effective relationships with communities to meet a broad range of outcomes. There is growing recognition that asset-based approaches need to be at the heart of plans to tackle health inequalities and other 'wicked' issues.
9. The Life in Lye programme takes an asset-based approach by focusing on values, principles, and ways of thinking to:
 - identify and make visible the health-enhancing assets in a community
 - see citizens and communities as the co-producers of health and well-being, rather than the recipients of services
 - promote community networks, relationships and friendships that can provide caring, mutual help and empowerment
 - value what works well in an area
 - identify what has the potential to improve health and well-being
 - support individuals' health and well-being through self-esteem, coping strategies, resilience skills, relationships, friendships, knowledge, and personal resources
 - empower communities to control their futures and create tangible resources such as services, funds, and buildings.
10. This approach is not about expecting communities to do more and save public money but about investing in more sustainable and effective approaches to reduce health inequalities. By supporting people to build on their strengths and make new connections their resilience increases and dependence on services decreases.
11. This approach requires a shift in attitude and an understanding of the limitations of a 'deficit' way of seeing the world.

From... Deficit approach	To... Asset-based approach
Focus on problems, deficits or weakness; focus on past failures	Focus on opportunities and strengths; focus on future possibilities and successes
Local people as 'customers', 'clients' or 'service users'	Local people as 'citizens'
Provide services to people	Develop and co-produce services <i>with</i> people
Responds to 'problems'	Finds opportunities for growth and social change, gives people ownership of their experiences
Reliance on outside 'experts' and bureaucratic systems	Non-bureaucratic, focus on people's strength and knowledge, prioritises community
Grants or funding given to agencies or government	Grants or funding given to local associations or groups
Programmes are the answer	<i>People</i> are the answer

12. Working in an asset-based way is community-led, long-term, and open-ended. A mobilised and empowered community will not necessarily choose to act on the same issues that health services or councils see as the priorities. The timescales are longer than many of the current publicly funded projects. Professional staff and councillors have to be willing to share power; instead of doing things for people they have to help a community to do things for itself.
13. Mick Ward of Leeds City Council (recently retired), has written an excellent introduction to the way in which he and his team have understood the ABCD approach: *“Asset-based community development and asset-based approaches begin by finding out what the people living in a community care enough about to work on together to change, develop and/or sustain,”* he writes. *“It recognises and celebrates the uniqueness of neighbourhoods and the interdependencies of communities. Central to the approach is finding and recognising the assets of an area; anything from a patch of unused land, a neighbour who knows the local baby groups, a local business who is happy to share their office space, a fast-food restaurant where young adults meet or a retired teacher looking to meet new people.”* *“They will be different in every area, but whatever they are these community assets are the building blocks of sustainable community building efforts.”* In the words of Cormac Russell, asset-based community development is *“the way by which*

we can build healthier, safer, prosperous and more inclusive communities”. In a world of complex, interdependent challenges, growing inequalities and a continuing struggle for public funding, the adoption of this approach has become all the more necessary. Fundamentally, local authorities unlock new ideas and resources when they recognise communities as contributors and a source of rich abundance, rather than recipients of rationed services and pockets of demand.²



14. In an area such as Lye, with high levels of health inequalities and community tensions, creating more resident-to-resident relationships, connecting people by identifying common ground and shared interests and enabling them to exchange skills and resources will support them to act on the issues which are most important to them.
15. Asset based approaches cannot be delivered by councils alone. The Life in Lye programme will bring together partners across the system to focus on a new way of working in line with these principles, approaches, and desired outcomes, to harness the power of employers, networks and communities. By focusing on what is done as a system and at the place level, the programme will focus on a single framework which starts with listening and sharing power with communities with humility.

A whole system approach

² Asset-Based Community Development for Local Authorities. Nesta, 2020

16. The Life in Lye programme takes a whole system approach to health inequalities. Systems thinking is a way to make sense of a complex problem and is particularly helpful in public health when:
 - looking at long term issues
 - there are multiple stakeholders (populations and organisations)
 - there are multiple causes that influence and interact with each other
 - there are different/ conflicting perspectives on an issue
 - there is no single explanation for what is causing the issue and no single solution that will fit all situations.
17. Systems thinking starts by discovering a sense of communitywide perspective and innovation; asking the right questions, considering many possible outcomes, and working collaboratively to create practical solutions and initiatives; and developing creative thinking to match creative situations.
18. This programme focusses on discovery conversations, creating and facilitating opportunities for building understanding of different perspectives and experiences, creative thinking, collaboration, and co-production of solutions to some of the wicked issues in Lye.

A place-based approach

19. The Life in Lye programme is taking a place-based approach to target the specific circumstances in Lye and engage local people as active participants. A place-based approach is about understanding the issues, interconnections and relationships in a place and coordinating action and investment to improve the quality of life for that community. It considers critical stages, transitions, and settings where large differences can be made in population health, rather than focusing on individual conditions at a single stage in life.

Health Inequalities

20. Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair, and systematic differences in health between different groups of people. They are rooted deep within our society, and they are widening, leading to disparate outcomes, varied access to services, and poor experiences of care.
21. Addressing and reducing health inequalities has been a consistent ambition for many decades yet attempts to do so have had mixed success. Health inequalities are often considered to be wicked problems – issues that are complex in terms of causal pathways, difficult to define with no immediate solutions. They pose challenges to traditional approaches to policy making and programme implementation.

22. Too often in the past interventions to address health inequalities have focussed on one approach, most notably behaviour change interventions and condition management. However, people need capability, opportunity, and motivation to change, and this is unlikely to happen when the wider determinants of health are not also being addressed. Equally, positive health outcomes can only be achieved by addressing the factors that protect and create health and wellbeing, such as community life, social connections and having a voice in local decisions. These community determinants build control and resilience and can help buffer against disease and influence health-related behaviour.
23. The Life in Lye programme is taking a whole system approach to address the complex causes of health inequalities by:
1. **Taking action on the wider determinants of health** by facilitating opportunities for greater understanding and collaboration between those living and working in Lye so they can co-design solutions to some of the wicked issues.
 2. **Unleashing the potential within communities** by discovering community assets, making them visible, mobilising, connecting and celebrating them; and encouraging people to think about how they can build good health and wellbeing from within the community.
 3. **Delivering services with system, scale and sustainability** by facilitating conditions and opportunities which enable people to build on and strengthen existing services and reduce duplication/ smaller, fragmented projects.

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Making an impact on inequalities



Community Cohesion

25. Community cohesion is closely linked to integration as it aims to build communities where people feel confident that they belong and are comfortable mixing and interacting with others, particularly people from different racial backgrounds or people of a different faith. The more people that know their neighbours by name and the more collectively a community behaves, the safer it becomes.
26. This programme aims to increase community cohesion by:
 - focusing on the things which people from different communities in Lye have in common, such as family and sense of place,
 - finding out what people care about and want to change in their local community and using that as a starting point for shared activities.
27. The core group carefully manage expectations in relation to speed of programme delivery to ensure that time is protected for relationships to develop; understanding and trust do not emerge overnight.

Project scope

28. The year 1 scope of the Life in Lye programme includes:
 - Discovery conversations with people living and working in Lye – carried out through listening events, 1-1 conversations and the ‘Let’s Chat’ community bus, with a focus on aspirations, opportunities, and a shared vision for Lye; what is working well and how could we make things even better.
 - Monthly community litter picks – to engage more local people, particularly the Roma community, and collaborate with existing community activists.
 - Lye walking group – to bring people together from the diverse communities in Lye, to explore new outdoor environments, get to know each other and build trusting relationships.
 - ‘Make it Happen’ (or similar) support to develop community-led projects in line with people’s aspirations for the area, to engage more people in community life, increase and strengthen relationships within and between community groups.
 - A family learning approach to developing English skills for the Roma community.
 - Welcome to Lye network – to facilitate greater understanding of the community assets, aspirations and opportunities in Lye and collaborate to address the challenges facing those who live and work there. To coordinate system wide learning, training, and development opportunities to enable a shared understanding and approach to working in Lye.

- Welcome to Lye booklet and community information events – to provide a friendly and simple guide to activities, groups, and services in the area as well as other useful information such as how to report issues with poor housing etc, particularly for those new to the area.
- Showcase of the creative artworks produced through the Lye New Histories project to celebrate the diverse communities in Lye and their culture so people feel recognised and valued.
- Community newsletter – to share positive stories and information about what is happening in Lye, to build on what is great.
- Co-design sessions – bringing people together around a ‘wicked’ issue to understand the underpinning factors and co-design a solution.
- Community volunteer roles and paid community connector roles to facilitate asset-based community development alongside the community development workers.
- Working with anchor organisations to build on opportunities for volunteering, training and employment, in line with people’s interests, passions and skills.
- Exploring the potential for a community hub/ co-working space to build stronger relationships and enable greater collaboration between those living and working in Lye and provide a space for community led activity.

29. Quarterly reports are submitted to the ICB and PCC and include progress, risks and issues, finance, and case studies.

Finance

30. The ‘Life in Lye’ programme has received £10,000 funding from the Integrated Care Board for work in support of the health inequalities agenda and £20,000 from the Police and Crime Commissioner for work to increase community cohesion. This funding must be spent by the end of March 2024.

Law

31. The Localism Act 2011 provided councils and communities new powers and rights to continue to make a difference locally. This power gives councils more freedom to work together and with other organisations in new ways, be it to drive down costs or simply work more effectively. Crucially it gives councils increased confidence to do creative, innovative things to meet local people’s needs.

Risk Management

32. This programme is managed in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. Risks are documented in programme monthly highlight reports, then reviewed and discussed to agree mitigations and actions as part of the routine governance of the programme during monthly Core Group meetings. To ensure timely risk identification, reporting, ownership and oversight, risks are also discussed and logged during weekly operational meetings and escalated to the Strategic Lead where necessary.
33. Some of the current risks and mitigations include:

Risk	Mitigation/ action
The growing community tensions resulting from anti-social behaviour – impacting on community engagement and reputation of Lye (red)	Core group have collated a response to the recent community petition and call to action and are arranging to meet with the lead resident to discuss how we can work together.
Staff capacity to facilitate the full scale of the programme (amber)	Role descriptions for voluntary and paid roles are in draft format and these positions will progressed during Aug/ Sep with funding from the PCC.
Scope creep – focus deviates from the scope agreed by funders (amber)	Scope review undertaken at July Core Group meeting which will be used to inform and define the project implementation document.
Managing expectations in relation to speed of delivery and outcomes (amber)	Strong leadership and consistency from the Core Group in communicating and applying the values, principles and approach fundamental to the successful delivery of this programme.

Equality Impact

34. The Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duty requires public authorities to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations covering all protected characteristics. This duty applies to council services even if they are not delivered directly by the council.

35. The Life in Lye programme should have a positive impact on all as it seeks to be inclusive, empowering and focusses on valuing people's strengths and contributions rather than seeing people as in a state of 'need'. It also seeks to build greater collaboration between individuals, groups, and communities irrespective of their age, gender, race, religion, or any other characteristic.
36. Through the discovery conversations and the 'Welcome to Lye' network meetings people will collectively identify the barriers to accessing a range of opportunities and services (such as language, lack of trust, cultural stigmas, lack of education etc.) and coproduce a way to address these, working as one system in Lye.
37. A Health Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT) audit is currently being completed and includes the scope of the work programme, the key sources of data and insight, the causes of inequalities and how this work programme is likely to impact on inequalities. It has demonstrated that the Life in Lye programme is maximising the potential for positive impacts on health inequalities by:
 - Acting on some of the specific causes of inequalities
 - Targeting action on populations who face the biggest inequalities
 - Designing the work with communities who face the biggest inequalities to maximise the chance of it working
 - Seeking to increase people's control over their health and lives
38. The Life in Lye programme builds on previous work with children and young people through the Lye New Histories project which engaged with over 100 children and young people from Roma/ Romanian, Muslim and British backgrounds. Seventy-two pupils from Rufford Primary School and Pedmore High School took part in a series of theatre workshops to help them reimagine what Lye could offer and what resources, projects or activities they felt could add greater social cohesion between the diverse communities in the place they call their home. Thirty young people from Lye Community Centre took part in a social media challenge and used images to convey a 'Sense of Place' to show the emotional association they had to their home, community, family and friends.
39. Young girls from the Roma community took part in traditional dance workshops to showcase their cultural identity. Alongside this the group discussed a range of issues affecting young females within the Roma community such as education and early arranged marriages. They also created artworks to depict their local area and their aspirations.

40. The Life in Lye programme is providing a legacy for this work by utilising and building on the assets produced (artwork etc.) to showcase the different cultures and create a sense of pride and belonging as well as using the insight to inform programme delivery.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

41. The Life in Lye programme is being facilitated by Officers from the Healthy Communities team. This includes the Public Health Manager as Strategic Lead, the Senior Health Improvement Coordinator as programme manager and three Community Development Workers as project facilitators. A proportion of each of these roles is allocated to this programme.
42. At this point in time there is no project support resource for this programme, and therefore all admin tasks are completed by the core project team. The volume of programme and project related administrative tasks should not be underestimated and it is prudent to acknowledge impact on resource capacity and plan with this in mind. If the core project team learns of any project support capacity, it shall be further explored.
43. The successful delivery of this programme is dependent upon all members of staff consistently communicating and applying the principles, values and behaviours which underpin asset-based community development. Reflective learning and practice are built into the programme governance through twice weekly operational stand-up meetings and reflection and learning logs. Relevant learning resources and opportunities to learn from others through networking and field visits are also being built into the programme delivery.
44. The 'Welcome to Lye' network will provide a platform for people working across the system to come together, learn and collaborate so that this new way of working is embedded and becomes the way of working in Lye.

Commercial/Procurement

45. The Life in Lye programme identifies, mobilises, connects and builds on existing community assets to create a stronger, more connected and resilient community. In line with this approach the funding from the ICB and PCC is being invested, wherever possible, in local businesses, groups and people. This will ensure that funding for Lye stays in Lye rather than being spent on commissioning external agencies etc.
46. A 'Make it Happen' initiative will be run as part of the programme; this invests small amounts of money into community led projects to enable

them to get started whilst also connecting them to other community assets to ensure their sustainability.

Environment/Climate Change

47. A key focus of this programme is on improving the local environment to improve community cohesion and health inequalities. This will be achieved through both community-led activities (such as community litter picks, awareness raising and education, growing projects etc), as well as by facilitating greater collaboration between the community and partners to better understand some of the wicked issues such as fly-tipping, litter, and poor housing conditions, and take a solution-focussed approach. See appendices 2 and 3 for some additional information from these teams in relation to current activity.
48. The Life in Lye programme also contributes to several of the United Nations sustainable development goals, including:
 - No poverty
 - Good health and wellbeing
 - Quality education
 - Gender equality
 - Reduced inequalities
 - Sustainable cities and communities

Council Priorities and Projects

49. The Forging a Future For All Borough Vision is at the heart of the 2022-25 Council Plan. The Borough Vision is made up of seven aspirations for how the borough should be by 2030. This programme contributes to the Borough Vision aspiration – ‘A place of healthy, resilient, safe communities where people have high aspirations and the ability to shape their own future’ by focussing on opportunities for growth and social change and giving people ownership of their experiences.
50. The programme contributes to all four Council Plan 2022-2025 priorities:
 - the borough of opportunity – by building on people’s skills and interests and encouraging them to engage in new opportunities and pursue their aspirations
 - the safe and healthy borough – by facilitating a whole system place-based approach to tackle health inequalities, increase community cohesion, tackle discrimination and promote safe communities.
 - the borough of ambition and enterprise – by supporting those living and working in Lye to engage with the Lye Design Code and

Masterplan regeneration work so that their vision and aspirations for Lye inform future developments

- the destination of choice – by celebrating the diverse culture, history and communities within Lye and helping to change negative perceptions of the area by increasing community cohesion and community safety.

51. Programme delivery reflects the 4 principles outlined in the new Health and Wellbeing Board strategy, by building community capacity and resilience, focussing on the wider determinants of health, and advocating for a shift to person/ community centred approaches which build on the skills and assets of people, communities, and practitioners.

52. Programme delivery is in line with wider Council and Borough activities and projects including:

- Data protection - there is robust governance in place for this programme which ensures that all GDPR requirements are being adhered to in line with the Council policy.
- GP, health provision and public health – the ‘Welcome to Lye’ booklet and network focusses on increasing awareness of and access to information/ support/ services in the area.
- Local housing needs – collaboration with colleagues from housing, environment and local landlords to better understand and address some of the factors contributing to litter and fly tipping.
- Local deprivation and cost of living – identifying people’s aspirations, skills and interests, providing opportunities to develop these and exploring potential for paid work. Working with CAB to increase access to support/ services through the cost-of-living hubs and advice sessions.
- Green spaces and the safety of the community – collaborating with regeneration colleagues to ensure the community are involved in the Design Code and Masterplan work and supporting community-led projects such as litter picks.



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Appendices

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for the Life in Lye Programme Core Group.

Appendix 2: Additional information in respect of housing enforcement.

Appendix 3: Additional information in respect of street cleansing.

List of Background Documents

Asset-Based Community Development for Local Authorities. Nesta, 2020

https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/Asset_Based_Community_Development.pdf

Stories of Lye - <https://www.allaboutdudley.info/news/stories-of-lye/>