



BRIGHTER FUTURES IN BANBURY

Annual Report 2022 - 2023



**Cherwell local
strategic Partnership**

Foreword by Councillor Chapman

My role as Lead Member for Healthy and Safe Communities has a wide-ranging brief, and gives me the opportunity to meet and work with many of the organisations who contribute to improving life for residents in Cherwell. This is an enormously satisfying part of my role, and I'm very pleased that this report gives the opportunity to showcase some of the fantastic work happening in the areas of greatest deprivation in our district.

North Oxfordshire is a leafy, generally prosperous area, but not all residents are lucky enough to enjoy all its advantages. The Brighter Futures in Banbury Partnership exists to increase the opportunities for all residents in the areas of greatest deprivation to benefit from creative, community based initiatives to enable them to lead healthy and safe lives. In this report you will read about projects which have helped residents access green spaces, healthy meals and physical activities.

This year, in particular, the thread which runs through the report is the challenges that the cost-of-living crisis has brought to both residents and the organisations which exist to support them. Just as there are many factors (including the war in Ukraine, the last effects of the Covid pandemic and Brexit, to name some of them), there are many effects on individuals and the organisations working in the Brighter Futures area.

For individuals on low incomes the cost-of living crisis has a huge impact as their household budgets are already stretched to the limits and sometimes no further economies can be made. Colleagues at Citizens Advice have reported that the number of people seeking debt advice from them and who find themselves in a position where their income is not enough to meet their essential outgoings, has risen dramatically.

You will see that the stories in this report show how community organisations have worked to help residents deal with the direct and indirect effects of the cost-of-living crisis. It has been important to provide increased support as actual and perceived food insecurity have increased. Responses have included direct help such as providing warm spaces for residents who struggle to pay their fuel bills, opportunities to eat a nutritious meal or to afford the ingredients to make one at home. This support brings much more than the crucial help with food directly, fighting isolation, helping with mental health issues, helping to create / enhance social environments and activities which help improve wellness.

Many organisations have worked in partnership – for example, Citizens Advice has partnered with the Sunshine Centre and The Hill to provide advice sessions in trusted local venues so that those most in need can access them. A major demonstration of Brighter Futures partnership synergy is at the various open space events, such as the annual Summerfest play day in Princess Diana Park. On the face of it, these events offer fun, activity and involvement as well as free participation / food for those most in need. Statements like this, though true, don't capture the joy, fun and positivity of these important events.

I hope that you will feel a sense of positivity when reading the stories in our report, and I would like to thank all the partners and community members who have contributed to it. However, I also need to say that I believe that all the energy and commitment will reduce long term inequality of health outputs, but that shift is built from many layers of sustained incremental steps. There is no 'magic bullet', the magic is in the co-ordinated committed passion of the communities and partners.

Table of Contents

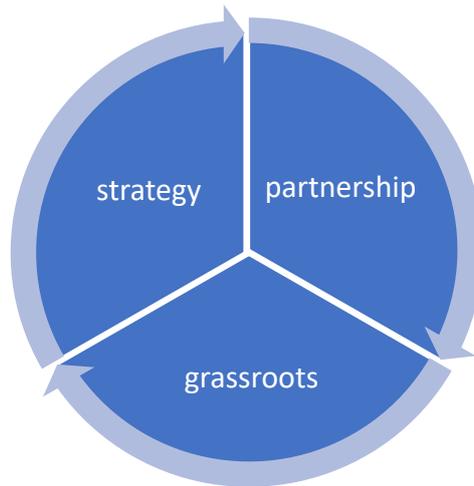
| | |
|--|----|
| Foreword by Councillor Chapman | 2 |
| Introduction | 5 |
| Brighter Futures in Banbury - Our themes | 6 |
| Where do we work? | 7 |
| Strategy..... | 7 |
| Partnership | 7 |
| Grassroots..... | 8 |
| Strategy..... | 8 |
| UK Shared Prosperity Fund..... | 8 |
| Developing profiles for each of the three Brighter Futures Wards | 13 |
| Better Lives Through Culture..... | 14 |
| Safer Streets | 16 |
| Partnership | 18 |
| Equipping our members to support their users and their communities..... | 18 |
| Healthy Place Shaping Team food grants | 19 |
| Local Networks | 20 |
| Partnership to promote employment opportunities..... | 21 |
| Grassroots..... | 22 |
| Sunshine Centre Community Larder..... | 23 |
| The Hill Youth and Community Centre | 23 |
| Bridge Street community garden project with Sunrise Multicultural Project food project | 25 |
| Safer Streets young people’s consultation | 26 |
| Community Insight - Ward profiling consultation | 27 |
| The Sunshine Centre – Partnership project – Saplings..... | 27 |
| Partnership Project with Muddy Feet – Forest school/Nature Play..... | 28 |
| Looking ahead..... | 29 |
| Strategic Alignment | 29 |
| Listening to partners and communities..... | 29 |
| Cost-of-living..... | 29 |
| Specific Project work will be developed from this year’s strategic work:-..... | 29 |
| Projects receiving funding attached to the Community Insight work..... | 29 |
| Delivery of the levelling up funding projects Year 1..... | 30 |
| Grimsbury Community Centre refurbishment..... | 30 |

| | |
|--|----|
| The Mill Arts Centre Community Connect initiative | 30 |
| Bridge Street Community Garden | 31 |
| Supporting Organisations who support the community | 31 |
| How to contact us:..... | 34 |
| Appendix 1 – Our Partners | 35 |
| Appendix 2 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund draft interventions | 37 |

Introduction

The Brighter Futures in Banbury Partnership has worked together to improve lives in Banbury for more than 12 years. It brings together partners from a wide range of disciplines; health, education, business, voluntary, community and faith groups, all coming together to find ways to promote the health and wellbeing of residents in the 3 wards of Banbury with greatest levels of deprivation.

The Partnership's aim is to improve life chances and break the cycle of deprivation through improving health (and its broader determinants) and increasing opportunities for residents in other spheres of their lives. Using an asset based approach to our work¹ means that we look for the strengths and capacity in the community, rather than focussing on what is wrong.



The breadth of experience and expertise within the partnership enables it to look at the full spectrum of activities which this work involves, which can be summarised as strategy, partnership and grassroots activity. In the Brighter Futures Partnership, these do not exist in isolation, but in a cycle where learning is passed between the three areas of work. In this report, we will show examples from each of these areas to illustrate how each contributes to the effective working of the partnership, and how closely they are interlinked.

We encourage our partners to develop and deliver services in a way which makes communities feel part of the process of developing and delivering services, recognising the inherent challenges of such an approach but believing when done well the benefits have greater reach and impact.

Partners see that demand for interventions is increasing in both volume and complexity, at a time when they are receiving reduced funding. Working in partnership, with shared objectives, provides support for organisations and the individuals working in them. The longevity of the partnership means that trust has developed between the partner organisations leaving them well placed to create joint projects and to make combined bids for funding.

An example of how the partnership works in this way is provided by the Safer Streets Programme. First of all strategic collaboration between Cherwell District Council and Thames Valley Police resulted in a funding award from the Home Office.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asset-based_community_development There is a huge volume of writing on Asset Based Community Development, this is a place to start

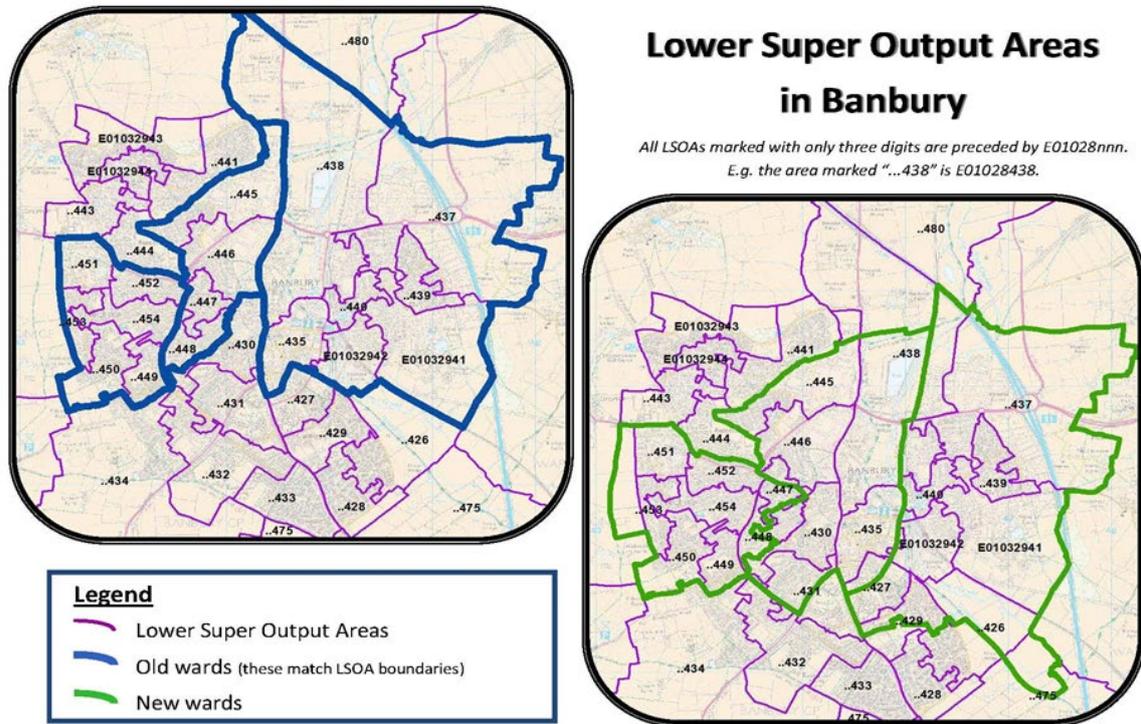
Partnership working with Cherwell Theatre Company, schools and the strategic partners led to a successful arts programme in schools for young people and grassroots consultation by BYCE uncovered young people's own concerns about the issues of feeling safe when away from home, resulting in practical actions to address the matters they raised.

Brighter Futures in Banbury - Our themes



Members of the partnership bring expertise from a variety of fields. The work of the partnership is co-ordinated according to the themes shown in the image above. The partnership does not allow the themes to act as a constraint, but rather seeks for projects and initiatives where partners can work across the themes. Having these themes brings focus and balance to the work the partnership are undertaking.

Where do we work?



Strategy

The partnership includes partners who are working at a high strategic level, sometimes participating in national or county wide initiatives. This enriches the partnership through a greater understanding of national policy issues, as well as being a major factor in bringing funding into the area. The examples of strategic work we will look at in this report are

- Obtaining UKSPF levelling up funding
- Developing ward profiles for each of the wards, in consultation with residents
- Better Lives through Culture
- Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership & Safer Streets project.

Partnership

The long standing nature of the partnership has allowed high levels of trust to develop between the members. This helps through information sharing, joint project working and an understanding of how the agendas of different organisations overlap. There are many examples of this working in the Brighter Futures area, but in this report we will focus on:

- Events held to support and inform partner organisations about the response to the cost of living crisis
- Coordinating information sharing neighbourhood networks in Grimsbury and North Banbury

The partnership is co-ordinated by a steering group with representatives from:

- Cherwell District Council (including Safer Communities, Wellbeing, Housing, Economic Development, Performance and Insight)
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Sanctuary Housing
- The Sunshine Centre
- Citizens Advice
- Oxfordshire County Council (including Social Care, Public Health)
- Thames Valley Police

The influence and reach of this partnership stretches out to other professionals, organisations and community groups, some examples of which appear in [Appendix 1](#). This is not an exhaustive list!

If you would like to know more about being a partner to the Brighter Futures project, please [contact us](#).

Grassroots

One of the strengths of the partnership is the commitment of a number of community based organisations. Often working on tight budgets and with very little time to spare, representatives from these groups make the effort to contribute to the partnership. Their knowledge of people in the community is what makes the Brighter Futures partnership a listening partnership – genuinely in touch with local people and their dreams and fears. In this report, this side of the partnership is demonstrated by:

- Activity programme at the Hill
- Bridge Street community garden project with Sunrise Multicultural Project food project
- Sunshine Centre programme
- Tailored consultation developed for Safer Streets
- Ward profiling consultation

Strategy

The partnership includes members who work at a strategic level. There is a two way flow between those working on strategic planning and those who are delivering services directly to the public. The partnership equips grassroots partners with an understanding of strategic developments and works as a conduit for strategists to understand the needs and concerns of people in the community. The following are examples of where the partnership has worked together to bring funding and new initiatives into the Brighter Futures areas and to develop a deeper understanding of the people who live there.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund was designed to build pride in place and to increase life chances across the UK.

Cherwell District Council made a successful bid to the The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), and is set to receive a total investment of **£1,255,94** (Year 1 - £152,421; Year 2 - £304,841; Year 3 - £798,684). The funding will be invested according to three investment priorities – Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills.

Cherwell District council's proposal identified five key delivery themes against which UKSPF funding will be prioritised:

- Business retention and growth
- Green economy
- Attract investment in town centres
- Community and cultural development
- Enhancing life chances and economic opportunities for our most vulnerable residents

Investment Plan interventions will be selected according to these delivery themes. See appendix 1 for more detail on the proposed interventions.

Banbury Ruscote

2021 CENSUS DATA

27% BANBURY RUSCOTE RESIDENTS
HAVE NO QUALIFICATIONS (9%
HIGHER THAN A NATIONAL FIGURE)

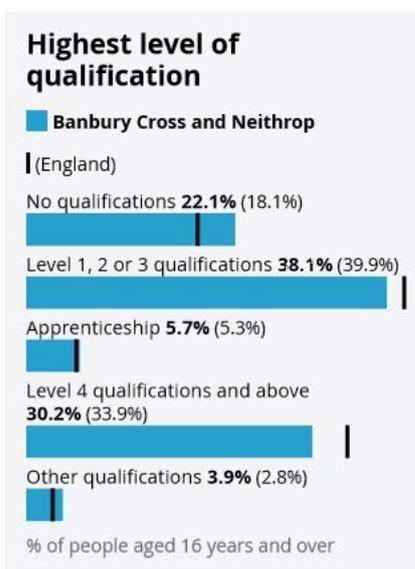
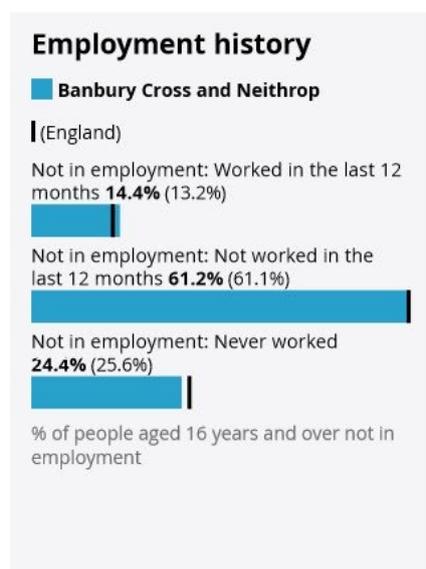
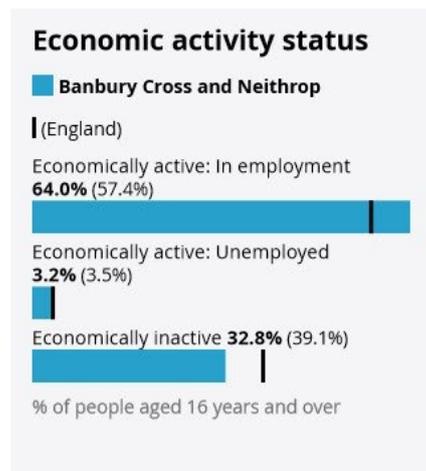
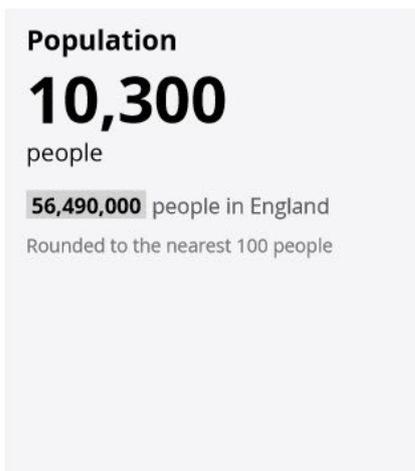
The investment has been gained for the whole district of Cherwell, but it is clear from the priorities behind the fund that residents in the Brighter Futures wards are most likely to be beneficiaries of the interventions. The images below illustrate the different employment challenges in each of the Brighter Futures wards as shown by the 2021 census.

For detail, see the area maps below.

In summary, a higher-than-average number of people in the Brighter Futures wards have no qualifications, and a lower-than-average number of people have level 4 or above qualifications. However, the number of people who are economically inactive or who have never worked correspond closely to the national average, and

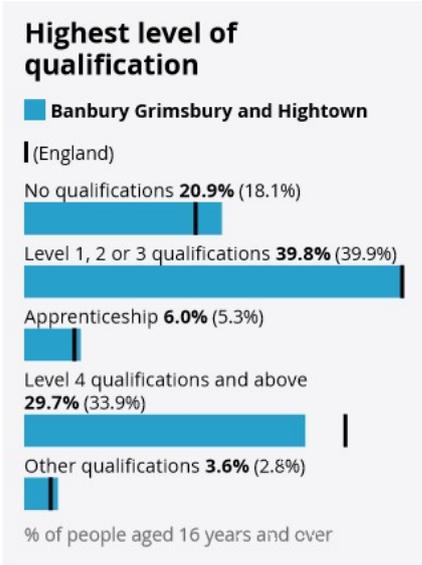
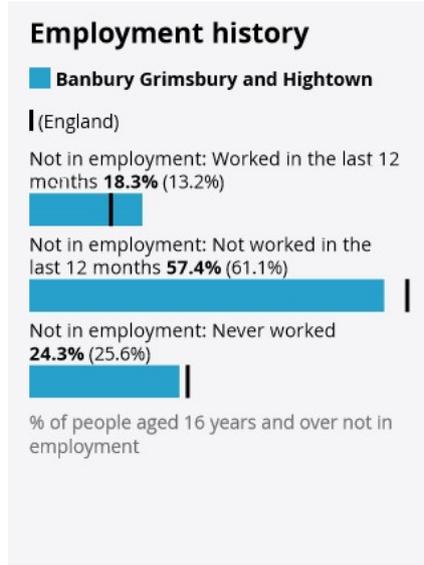
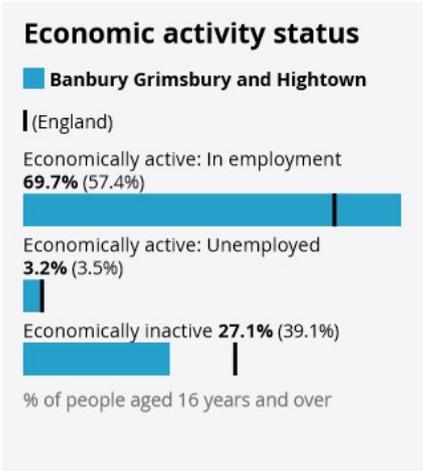
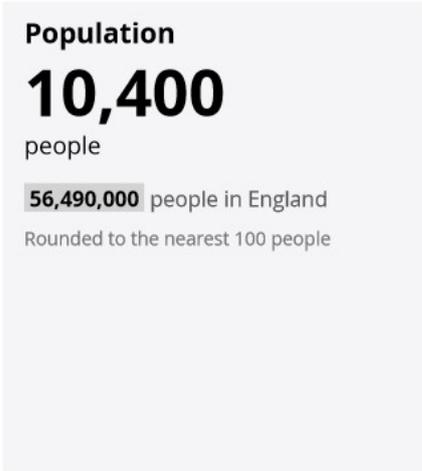
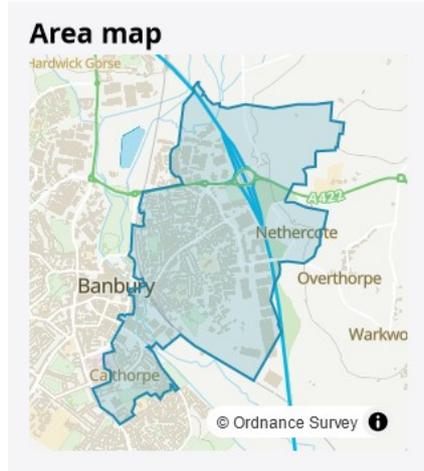
this is likely to be a reflection of the high number of low skilled jobs which are available in the area.

Banbury Cross and Neithrop



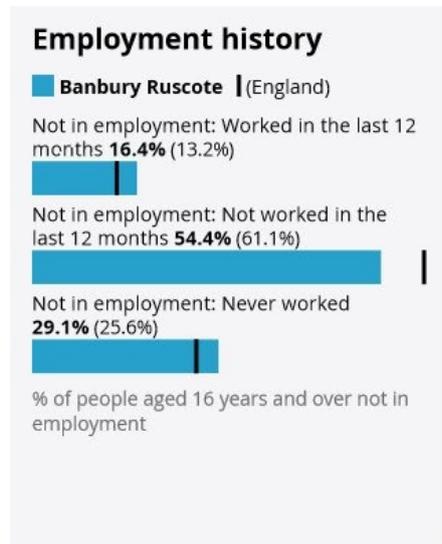
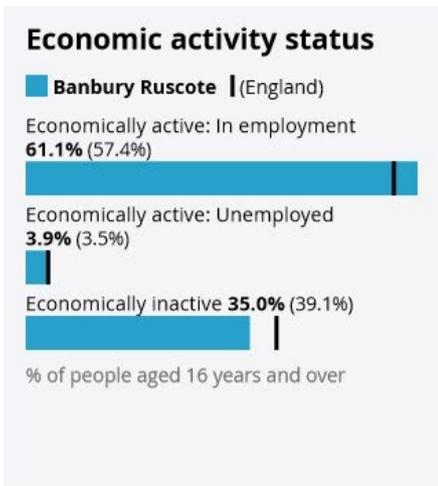
Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Banbury Grimsbury and Hightown



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Banbury Ruscote



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Developing profiles for each of the three Brighter Futures Wards

Levels of deprivation and health inequality

Life expectancy in Banbury Ruscote is 76 years and in Banbury Hardwick is 82 years. The insight work that has taken place has shown that in Banbury Ruscote, 50% of children are receiving free school meals and 26% are living in poverty

residents are most at risk of poor health, or experience health inequalities (i.e., the Brighter Futures Wards).

The Council engaged Community First Oxfordshire to gather the experiences and voices of residents from all age groups, representing the range of communities in the area, and collect qualitative data to capture the opinions of the community. This was to cover the community's feelings about the local strengths and assets that support and enable health and wellbeing, and also their challenges to health and wellbeing and what would help to address these. There was a focus on the impacts of COVID-19 and access to food and healthy eating. Community organisations and people working in the three wards were consulted as well as individuals.

Community First Oxfordshire used a variety of methods to consult the community, including 1:1 interviews with residents and representatives of community based organisations, as well as attending activity sessions.

Events such as Winter Wishes provided a way to consult the wider community (see below for more detail on community networks and events)

Working with steering groups made up of community partners, Cherwell District Council has been commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council's Public Health team to project manage the development of community profiles for three wards in Banbury where

Community First Oxfordshire researcher

"These one-to-ones were particularly useful in allowing researchers to talk to a range of local residents across a range of different demographics, particularly in relation to age and gender."



The poster features a central graphic of hands holding a circle with the text 'BRIGHTER FUTURES in Banbury' and 'COMMUNITY INSIGHT FUND'. Below this, it provides details about the fund's purpose, application criteria, and contact information. The background is orange with icons of people and a heart.

The Brighter Futures in Banbury fund has been created following the work that was recently carried out in the local area, creating community profiles. The profiles used community knowledge and insight to better understand the experiences of those living in Banbury Grimsbury, Ruscote and Neithrop in relation to health and wellbeing.

The Brighter Futures in Banbury fund will support projects that promote health and wellbeing and strengthens communities.

Apply for funding to support current or new projects that:

- Improve health and wellbeing
- Promote the use and knowledge of local facilities and new or existing activities

Your project must be delivered in at least one of these areas:

- Banbury Ruscote
- Banbury Neithrop
- Banbury Grimsbury

Groups or not for profit organisations aiming to support local residents to improve their health and wellbeing can apply for up to £3000.

You can find out more about the community profiles by scanning the QR code.

Apply by visiting www.cherwell.gov.uk/CommunityInsightFund
For further information please contact grants@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

As part of the work, Community First Oxfordshire analysed the finding and made recommendations for further actions. A steering group has taken up the work of delivering the actions, and this will form a large part of the work of the Health and Well-being theme for during 2022/23/24.

A benefit which has already been realised from this work was the engagement of partners in the wards, strengthening the networks between communities and the partners who work in this area.

The full ward profiles can be read here [Community Insight Profiles | Community insight project | Cherwell District Council](#)

Better Lives Through Culture

Impact in School

HARDWICK SCHOOL

'The project was an absolutely brilliant opportunity for the whole community to come together. For the school to see something that the children and staff are engaging in from reception all the way through to Y6 was quite unique and joined us together as a school after what was quite a challenging period of time post Covid.'

*- Graeme Page, Head Teacher
Hardwick School*

The Better Lives through Culture (BLTC) Partnership Investment programme is supported by Artwork as part of a £1 million investment programme to create lasting impact and strategic change for children and young people. Artwork organisation aims to bring "arts and creativity available to absolutely everyone. We aim to break through barriers and develop new ways for people to discover the success, empowerment and sheer joy that the arts and creativity can bring to classrooms, communities and careers".

This hugely successful programme involved two arts organisations,

18 professional artists, eight Banbury schools and two community settings to engage over 1,200 children and young people in inspiring creative activity including animation, theatre, dance, visual arts, sculpture, carnival and music. The children taking part had all been affected by the Covid 19 pandemic.

The impact of Covid-19 and lockdowns on children and young people is still being assessed and understood, and termly reports are published by Ofsted.

The key themes coming from this research are:

- newest cohorts in primary arrived with lower starting points than previous years, struggling more with peer interactions, behaviour, school readiness and attitudes to learning
- some Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were displaying poorer behaviours, including having difficulties socialising with peers
- some pupils were taking longer than usual to settle in and get used to the school routine
- an increase in pupils with poor mental health and well-being
- gaps in literacy and language were frequently noted across both primary and secondary schools. Specific areas of learning loss include writing, stamina, spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, handwriting, and – in particular – phonics knowledge

The programme offered 5 BFIB schools an extended time with various artists working with themes tailored to the requests of each school.

At William Morris School Year 2 and year 6 created a Carnival. At Orchard Fields School 60 year 4 children created an Animation Film, and all Dashwood pupils created a sculptural tree to celebrate 125 years of Dashwood. Hardwick School created a Carnival for all children parents and staff.

Impact in School

ST MARY'S SCHOOL

'For me one of the most special moments is seeing some of the children who perhaps find social interaction and relationships more difficult and are rather anxious in their daily presentation at school and work go 'actually this is something that I am part of and I can do the same as everyone else' and they didn't stand out, they could all work together and a real sense of belonging to their class and their group and their school and that I'm really proud of.'

Victoria Woods Head Teacher St. Mary's

Impact in school

WILLIAM MORRIS SCHOOL

'For the wellbeing of with our children it's being massively, massively important: we've come out of a very difficult Covid period and they haven't had these kinds of experiences, some of them ever'

- Alistair Johns, Head Teacher William Morris

The project evaluation demonstrated a wide range of outcomes, including the following: -

All schools saw a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the children taking part during and after their BLTC project. As a result of these projects staff report that children have more confidence, resilience, and interest in the arts.

Relationships between schools, local communities and parents have been strengthened and developed through Better Lives Through Culture.

BLTC contributed funding that opened up other access to other funders for Cherwell Theatre Company to support

- a film and workshop about e-safety that engaged 48 schools
- a workshop about substance abuse delivered in 12 schools across Banbury
- the development of a Healthy Relationships project that attracted further funding from the Home Office

Better Lives Through Culture in Schools

Headteachers from schools in the Brighter Futures wards commented on the value of the project, noting that for some pupils the cultural activities were outside their experience. Headteachers also noticed wider benefits to children, absolutely meeting the brief of “better lives through culture”.

Their findings are backed up by research from the Cultural Learning Alliance. The following points are an extract from their report – **Key Research Findings: The Case for Cultural Learning**

1. Participation in structured arts activities can increase cognitive abilities by 17%
2. Learning through arts and culture can improve attainment in Maths and English
3. Learning through arts and culture develops skills and behaviour that lead children to do better in school
4. Students from low income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree
5. Employability of students who study arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment
6. Students from low income families who engage in the arts at school are twice as likely to volunteer
7. Students from low income families who engage in the arts at school are twice as likely to vote as young adults
8. Young offenders who take part in arts activities are 18% less likely to re-offend
9. Children who take part in arts activities in the home during their early years are ahead in reading and Maths at age nine
10. People who take part in the arts are 38% more likely to report good health

<https://protecteu.mimecast.com/s/eLUvCnG4qiGG9Vh9woym?domain=culturallearningalliance.org.uk>

The impact of North Oxon Cultural Education Partnership’s Better Lives Through Culture programme was celebrated at an event that brought together schools, cultural organisations, stakeholders and supporters. Its outcomes eloquently demonstrate the power of high-quality arts experiences to benefit children and young people’s wellbeing and resilience.

The evening, held at [The Mill Arts Centre, a key partnership venue](#) in Banbury, provided an opportunity for the contribution and commitment of the artists, school leaders, teachers and community volunteers to be recognised. The programme included the first showing of two films that capture the vivid excitement of children in the project schools and their teachers’ reflections on the impact of the experience on their pupils.

At St Marys' school (in the Brighter Futures in Banbury wards), 60 year 3 pupils had participated in a dance performance with Motionhouse which was performed at the Mill. We have permissions to share this 6-minute film sharing feedback directly from the artist, staff and students."

<https://vimeo.com/774331546> Password: better

North Oxon Cultural Education Partnership
presents:

BETTER LIVES THROUGH CULTURE

Roundtable Review

The Mill Arts Centre
Wednesday 9 November 4pm - 6pm

We are delighted to look back at achievements and share experiences with peers and partners in a relaxed roundtable setting with light refreshments

The North Oxon Cultural Education Partnership supports a growing network of schools, arts organisations and community partners working together to provide high quality arts experience opportunities to benefit children's and young people's wellbeing and resilience through coordinated funding resources and shared expertise.

The 'Better Lives Through Culture' programme delivered a wide scope of inspiring work with over 1,200 children in eight Banbury schools and two community settings, with 18 professional artists and arts organisations.

Special recognition and thanks goes to all the amazing staff and volunteers from all the participating schools, The Hill Community Centre and the Banbury Mosque who made these projects possible through their dedication and commitment to the work.

THANK YOU

We are all hugely grateful for the many talented and inspirational artists and arts organisations who contributed to the programme:

| | |
|--|--|
| Animation station www.animationstation.co.uk | Mariana Pinho Carnival Dance www.gandaia.co.uk |
| Helen Battelley www.musicandmovement.org.uk | Motion house (dance) www.motionhouse.co.uk |
| Cherwell Theatre Company www.cherwelltheatrecompany.co.uk | Simon Tipping (carnival arts) http://routecanalarts.org.uk |
| Emily Cooling (visual arts) www.creatingart.co.uk | Tom Cross (visual arts) |
| Community Albums www.communityalbums.com | Iona Fabian (animation) |
| Anne Marie Cadman (visual arts) www.annemariemcadman.co.uk | Paul Midgeley (samba music) |
| Diane Gorvin and Phil Bews (public artists) www.settlementsculptures.co.uk | Sarah Wright and Sarah Copeland www.themillartscentre.co.uk |
| Julie Edwards and Ron Thompson www.planetartsculpture.co.uk | Orinoco www.orinocoscrapstore.wordpress.com/about-us |

The High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, Mark Beard, marked the achievement of Artsmark by Hill View Primary school (in the Brighter Futures wards). Project organisers, Paula Bailey and Tara Murtagh-Stewart of Cherwell District Council also allowed time for reflection and discussion that will contribute to project evaluation and future initiatives.

To find out more about Artswork visit [Home | Artswork - Southampton](#)

Safer Streets



Thames Valley Police and Cherwell District Council's Safer Communities Team made a successful bid to the Safer Streets Fund, enabling a variety of work to take place.

The Safer Streets Fund is a Home Office fund, which provides investment funding for police forces and local authorities to invest in crime prevention initiatives. The Government has stated that giving people “the security and confidence that comes from having a safe street and a safe home, and this is central to the mission of levelling up”. The Government’s Beating Crime Plan shows how efforts will be focused on ‘hotspot’ areas where crimes are disproportionately concentrated and the Safer Streets Fund forms a key part of this approach. In the Cherwell District Council area, the Brighter Futures wards represent such a hotspot. The bid for funds for Banbury was based on combatting Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and promoting feelings of safety through tackling inappropriate gender perceptions held by young people.² The proposal seeks to develop positive based gender attitudes in young people (under 18) as an evidence based preventative approach.

Violence Against Women and Girls is diverse and complex, and only partially represented in crime data. We know that for every reported incident there will be many unreported experiences of harassment, abuse and violence. In some cases, the incidents that women and girls experience will be so normalised in their experience that they may not initially recognised them VAWG. Though VAWG is experienced and perpetrated by individual, its roots and affordances which permit people to turn a blind eye to VAWG are social, cultural and structural. This means that tackling VAWG at the local level calls for steps to tackle underlying factors and not just the downstream expressions of VAWG in crime data.

The Office for National Statistics reported that between 2 and 27 June 2021, one in two women and one in seven men felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a quiet street near their home according to their Opinions and Lifestyle Survey. Moreover, two out of three women aged 16 to 34 years experienced one form of harassment in the previous 12 months, with 44% of women aged 16 to 34 years having experienced catcalls, whistles, unwanted sexual comments or jokes, and 29% having felt like they were being followed.

The Government’s Tackling Violence against Women and Girls report (July 2021) highlights the important of addressing harmful gender perceptions at a young age-

“We must address the attitudes and behaviour that can underpin crimes of violence against women and girls as part of our approach to tackling them. To do this, more needs to be done to raise awareness and understanding of them across the public and among professionals, and to make sure more of our children and young people understand what healthy relationships and behaviour look like.”

Research on VAWG identifies that people are routinely exposed to influences that normalise VAWG. Where “low-level” VAWG such as ‘catcalling’, is normalised and accepted, the foundations are laid of creeping normalisation of progressively more extreme forms of VAWG. Tackling VAWG effectively calls for early intervention to counter the attitudes and behaviours that permit gender-based discrimination to exist and thrive.

Local engagement and consultation will be ramped up in priority areas in the programme to identify the most appropriate and effective interventions. The interventions are based on providing knowledge and skills for young people to make informed decisions, and to give them agency including supporting their peers.

Young people’s engagement in violence

Local data from the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit highlights that serious violence amongst young people is most often committed by peers - nearly 75% of offences against those aged 11-14 were committed by those aged within the same range.

² The fund focuses on violence against women and girls, though it notes that this is an umbrella term and the offences can also have an effect on men, boys, transgender people, those who identify as non-binary, deaf and disabled people.

The planned programmes are

- 1) Delivery of school-based mainstream modular programmes for children in key stage 2 and 3, to develop the knowledge, skills, and capabilities to make informed decisions and manage situations whereby others negatively influence them, within a safe, classroom setting. At the same time, the school-based delivery also facilitates the development of more vigilant school practices.
- 2) The development of a creative arts programme to empower young women and men to take an active role in the prevention of sexual, gendered and peer-on-peer abuse in their schools and wider community, giving profile and agency to their voices.
- 3) The delivery of a schools-based social action programme in the areas where the highest need is identified for work with specific cohorts of young people. This programme supports young victims of crime, including significant numbers of girls and young women following experiences of sexual harm, abuse and violence. The programme also serves schools concerned about a culture of harassment amongst young people
- 4) Development and delivery of a Youth Ambassadors Project to empower local young people to act as leaders in their community
- 5) An element of funding for participatory budgeting has also been included to enable and empower local communities, especially young people, to act on any further needs emerging from the ongoing local consultation.

Partnership

The Brighter Futures in Banbury partnership works on a formal level through quarterly steering group meetings and two partnership events each year. The Steering Group provides an efficient forum for information sharing between groups, both preventing duplication and providing synergistic relationships between organisations.

It provides a great opportunity for strategic partners to have a reality check with delivery partners, and for ideas to flow between the two.

In addition, the Partnership has, over time, supported trusting relationships to develop between the partner organisations leading to much more nuanced initiatives being developed.



How Partnership works

“An excellent working relationship between Hill staff, Cherwell Council and Sanctuary Housing Association has created strength of purpose at the Hill with a strong support network for staff”

National Lottery Community Fund Report

Equipping our members to support their users and their communities

The Brighter Futures Partnership hosts two events for the members and other invited partners during each year. The events are designed to focus on issues which are relevant to members equipping them to deal better with local issues of concern. It is also an opportunity for members to meet other partners face to face, and to discuss ways of what the current problems really are – and to devise ways of tackling them together. Members can share their organisations experiences and best practice, through a “market stall” style session or more informally.

In 2022/3, unusually, both events focussed on the same theme – the cost-of-living crisis. The first event focussed on providing information and support which partners needed to help their users through the highest levels of inflation of food prices for 45 years combined with an increase in the price of energy. Topics included the Citizens Advice Energy Matters initiative, explained by the local specialist.

The members of the partnership collaborated to produce a document with tips and information which was made available online within days of the event.

HOW THE EVENTS SUPPORT PARTNERS

“As the Neighbourhood Partnerships Manager for Sanctuary Housing and joint theme lead for Housing in Brighter Futures, the Brighter Futures partnership events are invaluable. Aside from the information side of the events they are a fantastic opportunity to engage with all agencies and partners working in these wards. I often catch up with partners I haven’t connected with in a while or meet new ones which is very helpful.”

Charlie Heritage, Neighbourhood Partnerships Manager, Sanctuary

The second event continued the cost-of-living theme, taking a closer look at food security and growing your own food. Again, keynote speakers provided inspiration and information, this time including speakers from the Banbury Community Action Group’s Bridge Street Garden and an explanation of the Oxfordshire Food Strategy and how it applies locally. As well as providing an explanation of the strategy, staff from a local community centre, The Hill, were invited to explain their local initiatives to combat food poverty. This includes a highly successful Winter Warmers programme, where local residents were provided with a delivery service of a free hot soup and this was provided throughout the winter months in partnership with the Volunteer Driver Service. The Hill were also the first venue to open as a Warm Welcome facility.

A second collective resource was produced based on tips from the membership, this time on growing your own food and on local growing spaces.

Making these resources is an illustration of how the “hive mind” of the partnership works – the

partners had heard stimulating speakers on locally relevant topics, had the opportunity to discuss this with their peers and partners and then produced a resource for the benefit of all the members.

Healthy Place Shaping Team food grants

Healthy Place shaping refers to a collaborative approach designed to promote healthy behaviours through sustainable, well-designed communities, where people want to live and work, and where there is a sense of community and belonging. The impact should be on the wider determinants of health rather than medical services.

Oxfordshire County Council describes its approach in this way

“This approach can apply to new developments and to the regeneration of existing communities and involves action across these three areas:

- **The built environment:** *shaping the built environment, public realm, green spaces and infrastructure at a local level to encourage healthy living*
- **Community activation:** *helping local people to live healthier lives with the support of community groups, schools, and employers*
- **New models of care:** *delivering new approaches to care closer to home and minimising hospital-based care.*

Cherwell District Council used its funding and close relationship with local community groups to offer £15,000 in Community Food Organisation grants. Individual grants of up to £750 for capital or revenue were made to support organisations providing or assisting in the provision or storage of food.

The importance of projects supporting people’s access to healthy food is illustrated The Food Foundations report which states that the percentage of children with obesity in their first year of

school has risen by nearly 50% in one year, affecting twice as many children in the most deprived 1/5th of the population compared with the least deprived 1/5th³. Access to nutritious fresh food is a fundamental contributor to good health and wellbeing. Ultra-processed foods tend to be cheaper and more readily accessible to those on low incomes. By working together there has been an opportunity to improve access to food and build upon the services the community value.

Safer Streets working with Cherwell Theatre Company

The successful strategic bid for Home Office funding described in the section above included the wish to develop a creative arts programme to empower young women and men to take an active role in the prevention of sexual, gendered and peer-on-peer abuse in their schools and wider community, giving profile and agency to their voices. This led to a partnership with local theatre group, Cherwell Theatre Company to devise a project to tackle this issue in a way which would be accessible and relevant to young people.

Children's growth

CHILDREN IN THE MOST
DEPRIVED 10%
POPULATION ARE ON
AVERAGE OVER 1CM
SHORTER THAN
CHILDREN IN THE LEAST
DEPRIVED 10% BY YEAR

The project, known as The Enact project empowers young people to take an active role in their school setting. Through the Safer Streets Initiative, Healthy Relationships creative arts sessions were provided to 8 groups of young people in year 10 or above in the Cherwell District. Cherwell Theatre Company told us:

“The groups worked with our practitioners to identify the issues they felt were most prevalent in their school that relate to sexual violence. The students then had the opportunity to deliver an arts-based intervention to younger students in their school on their chosen theme. Alongside this work, each group had a professional writer join them who was commissioned to create a piece of work based on

their ideas and opinions. This work was then performed professionally in two performances at The Mill Arts Centre and The Theatre Chipping Norton. Free copies of the play texts and films are available on the CTC website for use with schools and community groups.”

To find the play text or learn more about Cherwell Theatre Company visit [Cherwell Theatre Company | Banbury Youth Theatre](#)

Local Networks

One way in which the Brighter Futures Partnership members share the benefits of partnership working is via local networks in North Banbury and Grimsbury. Local networks provide an information sharing highway for local community groups and members, as well as a way for strategic partners to listen to the local community.

The network meetings are informal. Designed to encourage participation from community members who might be put off by lack of experience of public meetings. It gives members confidence to share their feelings, issues and concerns and encourages groups to work together rather than in competition. The meetings enhance the community groups' understanding of how local government and other agencies work, while the agencies benefit from direct communication with the community. As well as providing information, the networks can act to encourage community members to develop sustainable community skills, which benefit their locality in the longer term.

³ Broken Plate report [The Broken Plate 2023 | Food Foundation](#)



The presence of the local networks was a great benefit in the Ward Profiling work as it enabled the researchers access to a cross section of community groups and residents who were already accustomed to discussing the local situation. Looking ahead the networks will continue to support this work by assisting in the applications for grants available through the Public Health team’s ward profiling work

The Brighter Futures Partnership members co-operate with community groups in the localities to arrange inviting events which attract community members to attend. As well as free or low-cost activities which support both family and community relationships, the events include innovative ways to carry out consultation with residents,

such as placing their “wishes” for the neighbourhood on a festive tree. This secures a high level of engagement and at the same time, avoids the common issue of “consultation fatigue” – people actually want to attend!

Partnership to promote employment opportunities

The No Limits’ project is delivered in partnership by SOFEA and Aspire; funded by and supporting the ambitious new OxLEP Skills Social Contract Programme, No Limits aims to remove barriers that the Oxfordshire community might have getting into work, education, or training.

The project introduces a comprehensive programme of support over the next 12 months to help address the legacy impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Working from community settings across Oxfordshire, such as food larders and community centres, the support is person-centred and focused on supporting people who have been at risk of being held back by the detrimental effects of the pandemic and who are now at risk of being affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

Four target groups cover most people in need in our communities:

- Young people who have experienced education disturbance and/or unemployment, or at risk of NEET
- Improved social mobility for minority ethnic communities
- Those furthest from the labour market including employment support for those identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) for COVID, and/or affected by the digital divide, food poverty or other socio-economic deprivation
- The Over 50s- aligned to the OxLIFE⁴ priority of the Local Industrial Strategy⁵, to support people to contribute to the economy into later life through longer and flexible careers

⁴ Oxfordshire Social Contract, OxLIFE. OxLIFE provides a comprehensive skills programme to support Oxfordshire’s workforce to rebuild their skills capability and connect with opportunities in the future economy being created across the innovation ecosystem to support people to have longer and more flexible careers as demand for skills change. The programme includes a Skills Pathway Service to upskill employees including connecting to opportunities being created in adjacent sectors of the economy where skills can be transferable; and Skills Progression Support working with deprived communities to improve social mobility and employability, paired with a Progression Support Fund to cover costs of barriers to employment, which will build career pathways into new sectors of the economy.

⁵ [The Oxfordshire Investment Plan - August 2020_0.pdf \(oxfordshirelep.com\)](https://www.oxfordshirelep.com)

Taraji Ogunnubi is the Programme Manager for the No Limits Programme, and gave us this powerful case study, showing how No Limits provided a life changing opportunity for a Banbury resident, by working with community based agencies.

John (not his real name) was an ex-offender who had just completed his prison sentence. He approached us for support in finding work in the care industry, which he was passionate about. However, he was worried that his criminal record would prevent him from getting a job in this field, and he was struggling to find employers who were willing to hire him.

An individual who previously received support from the triage team referred John to the No Limits programme, which helps ex-offenders find employment. They provided him with support and guidance on how to apply for jobs and how to disclose his criminal record to potential employers. With their help, John applied to different care homes and organizations and was eventually offered a role at a local care home for the elderly.

However, John still faced a challenge in obtaining a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check, which is required for anyone working with vulnerable adults. He was worried that his past involvement in drug dealing would be an issue, and he would not be able to get the check. The charity provided him with guidance on how to apply for a DBS and supported him throughout the process. After a few weeks of waiting, John received his DBS clearance, and he was able to begin working at the care home.

The triage team also provided John with a laptop to help him with his work training and to access courses in the future. John is now undergoing training at the care home and is excited to start his new career in the care industry. He is grateful for the support and guidance he received from the charity, which helped him to turn his life around and get back on track.



**Taraji Ogunnubi, No Limits
Programme Manager, SOFEA**

Brighter Futures in Banbury (BFIB) has played a pivotal role in strengthening my connections with various charitable organizations in the Banbury community. Our partnership with BFIB has been instrumental in enhancing the reach and effectiveness of the "No Limits" program. Without their support, engaging with the community would have presented significant challenges.

Grassroots

The strength of the Brighter Futures Partnership's links with the community is best illustrated by these "stories", provided by the agencies working most closely with residents. They show the positivity and strengths which underly the asset based work in the Brighter Futures area, and illustrate the way in which partnership members are always listening to the community to identify needs on an individual and a community level. They also show the breadth of the initiatives that organisations undertake. While this is incredibly supportive to the community, it brings with it a need for those working in the organisations to be supported, to work the "magic" referred to in Councillor Chapman's introduction. Here are just a few examples of how the magic happens:-

Sunshine Centre Community Larder

In September 2021, The Sunshine Centre launched a Community Larder. The larder is open 5 days a week and is open to all members of the community. Users can choose from tinned foods, packet foods, fresh foods and sanitary and health items. The team at the Sunshine Centre have noticed an increase of demand since the Cost-of-Living Crisis and are working hard to continue meeting the needs of the community. The project is supported by some wonderful volunteers that also make cakes for the larder, so that families who are struggling can still enjoy a treat.

"The larder helps me and my kids tremendously. I use the veg to make soups and I freeze the bread and rolls. If I know someone is struggling to get out, I will take bread for them as well as we all need help with affording food. By using the larder, it frees up a few pounds so I can buy other things for my kids e.g., Calpol."

Centre, sometimes I would need to go to the shop but the pantry have what I needed. I love the fact there is fresh fruit and vegetables. It is extremely helpful for someone who is struggling financially. Every now and again there has been fresh made cakes and soup!"

Quotes from users of the Larder March 2023:
"it's been a lifeline for me, it also saves on waste of food. Some people don't like asking for help and having a larder means you don't have to ask".
"Having the sanitary products and occasionally toothbrushes and toothpaste really helps, as it means I can spend extra on buying healthy food for my children."
"When I am at The Sunshine

Affording a healthy diet

THE FOOD FOUNDATION'S
'BROKEN PLATE' REPORT STATES
THAT THE POOREST 1/5TH UK
HOUSEHOLDS WOULD NEED TO
SPEND 45% DISPOSABLE INCOME
TO MEET GOVERNMENT
RECOMMENDED HEALTHY DIET –
COMPARED TO 10% FOR
WEALTHIEST 1/5TH

The Hill Youth and Community Centre

The Hill Youth and Community Centre has developed a diverse and engaging programme to appeal to local residents, by engaging with its community around them to find out what local people really want. It tells a story in itself how the centre has responded and offers so much opportunity and support. The centre uses the feedback gathered at events such as Winter Wishes and Springfest to engage local residents to shape a programme that's relevant and supports their needs. The manager has developed relationships with local organisations such as Oxford United Football Club, for the great benefit of local residents. In addition, the building is offered for use for hosting important local activities such as health scans, greatly increasing the likelihood that local people will participate.

The programme includes physical, social and arts activities which all contribute to residents' well-being. A typical programme is shown below to illustrate the diverse nature of the offering.

| Day | Time | Activity | Target |
|------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Monday | 3.45pm | Sports Activators | Children/young people |
| | 5.45 – 6.45pm | Cherwell Theatre Company | Youth |
| | 7.15 – 8.30pm | Youth Club | Youth |
| Tuesday | 9.00am | Men's Breakfast Club | Adults |
| | 10.30am | Groove Light | Adults |
| | 12.30pm | Soup lunch | Adults |
| | 1.30pm | 50+ and friends bingo | Older adults |
| | 4.00pm | Tea on Tuesday | Adults |
| | 5.00pm | Lego Club | Young people |
| | 7.00pm | Girls' Group | Young people |
| Wednesday | 10.00am | Gardening Club | Adults |
| | 5.30pm | SEN Group | Families |
| Thursday | 10.30am | Ceramics | Adults |
| | 6.00pm | Sports | Young people |
| Friday | 9.00am | Men's Breakfast Club | Adults |
| | 11.30am | Active Neighbourhood Scans | Adults |
| | 1.00pm | Active Neighbourhood Scans | Adults |
| | 4.30pm | Oxford United Football Club | Youth |
| | 5.30pm | Vocal Band | All ages |
| | 5.45pm | Oxford United Girls' Football Club | Youth |

Spotlight on Men's Breakfast

The Men's Breakfast initiative was set up at The Hill to give men of all ages an opportunity to come together each week with no particular activity focus, other than to share breakfast and a cup of tea. The Hill team could see that there was a need for a men's group, to develop a social setting where local residents could come together from all backgrounds to just talk, share daily issues, support each other, and have fun. The group has grown and is now a firm Friday favourite in the diary, where Jason and Alex give a warm welcome and prepare good food each week and get involved in the chat and lively discussions. This has helped hugely with the men's mental health which we know is important with suicide being the largest killer of men. It provides them with an opportunity to talk and get to know each other in a safe and trusted environment.

The initiative soon got the attention of a local produce company "Produce Warriors" who contacted The Hill to offer free food to support the weekly sessions, which helps with the sustainability of the group in the future. Having regular weekly sessions allows organisations and groups to join the group to share information, advice, and support in an informal way and without judgement. The men that attend also now feel part of The Hill family and can link to other opportunities that take place in the centre as well as having access to great resources that can support their day to day lives. The sessions will keep evolving as the organisers listen and respond to what the men want, with good practice being shared with other community groups and partners across the district to replicate the success.

Alex who supports the cooking each week and has grown in confidence after being a young person accessing The Hill's youth sessions and learning cooking skills as part of the Play:Full initiative and achieving his food hygiene qualification. His support to Hill's programme and his volunteering hours earned him the Young Persons Volunteer Award at this year's Cherwell Volunteer Awards, a great example of Brighter Future's success.

Bridge Street community garden project with Sunrise Multicultural Project food project

Bridge Street Community Garden is one of the projects led by the Banbury Community Action Group. The group's aim is *"to create a sociable space where people can connect with nature"*.



The Community Action group welcomed a range of groups to the Garden during 2022-23. Members hosted 11 intergenerational public events, which featured a variety of activities such as an Easter celebration with games and a Garden Egg Hunt, a seed and plant swap, two collaborative gardening sessions with Sunrise Multicultural Project, a creative eco-event for the Great Big Week, two singing circles, an Eid celebration, a bird and insect educational event organised by Wild Banbury, an event with Age UK where participants planted wildlife friendly seeds creating a dedicated space where people can gather and remember loved ones who are no longer with us, a Pride dance workshop and picnic in partnership with the LGBTQ+ group.

During these 11 public events, the CAG recorded 389+ individual visits (people of all ages and backgrounds); some regulars came on numerous occasions, and others visited for the first time. The number of participants per event varied between 20 to over 60.

MEMBER OF ASPIRE

"When I was 16, I came here, and there was nothing but grass and rubbish.

Now it's a beautiful garden.

We need more spaces like this in Banbury.

They improve people's mental health."

Parallel to the above-mentioned public events, the group held 25 tailored gardening sessions from April to mid-September to meet each of these group's specific needs, abilities, and interests.

One of the successful projects during this year was a joint venture between the Garden and the Sunrise Multi-cultural Play Project (a long-standing provider of activities for adults and children in Banbury). Several kilos of tomatoes and squash were taken from the Garden to a nearby community kitchen run by Sunrise Multicultural Project. A women's group called Connected Communities, whose members include asylum seekers and refugees, cooked and shared them as part of a communal meal.

We actively involved the women's group in the Garden. To do this, we asked our multicultural volunteers to help us translate our flyers into multiple languages (Arabic, Urdu, French, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.) and distributed them via the hotels where they live. We are very happy to welcome asylum seekers and refugees to the Garden.



An event held in collaboration with Sunrise Multicultural Project at Bridge Street Garden was a great success. Over 60 participants attended the event, including local residents from Grimsbury, asylum seekers staying at Banbury hotels. Several Asian ladies from Sunrise Multicultural, residents from The Hive (Homeless Oxfordshire), and people from Aspire, who are recovering from substance abuse, also attended.

There was a diverse mix of people of all ages, including grandmas and little children. The Garden volunteers provided support in setting up and running the event.

The atmosphere in the Garden was friendly and playful, and people from different groups who don't usually mix talked to each other. Free, locally-made samosas and other healthy snacks and refreshments were offered. Participants harvested spinach, chard, mint, and various herbs to take home. They also helped with gardening jobs such as planting, weeding, watering, painting planters, cutting grass, and shifting soil.

Some people sat in the pergola to chat and enjoy each other's company, particularly the older generation. Oxford City Councillor Shaista Aziz and her mum travelled from Oxford to join the event and were very positive about the community work and how lush the Garden looked. They were interested in the work currently ongoing at the Garden with local female minority groups and people on the fringes of society, including refugees, asylum seekers, people recovering from substance abuse, single mums recently separated from abusive partners, people with mental health issues, the LGBTQ+ community, and the local multicultural community.

A lady from Aspire had an inspirational talk with an asylum seeker from Saudi Arabia, while another asylum seeker from Brazil was excited to plant a pear tree as her middle name means pear tree, and it was a meaningful experience for her. A local older lady living in Grimsbury said that coming to the Garden and meeting other people was meaningful to her after recently escaping a difficult phase of her life.

Safer Streets young people's consultation

Funding from the Police and Crime Commissioners office enabled an important piece of youth engagement to take place across Banbury to find out how safe young people felt on their streets in the community and what were the main causes for concern.

The piece of consultation was conducted by BYCE (Banbury Youth, Community Enterprise) who have a proven history in detached youth work in the district. A variety of engagement methods were used to reach as many young people as possible across the town and 50 young people responded to the consultation. BYCE linked to youth, community facilities and schools in the town, including The Hill, The Banbury Madni Mosque and Grimsbury Community Centre to hold events, working groups and one to one interviews to collect their feedback, making it easy for young people to have a voice. This piece of engagement work was key to help focus a plan to spend a budget to improve community safety in the town, including physical elements to localities as well as new projects and initiatives for the future.

This piece of work highlighted areas in the town that needed to be focused on where young people didn't feel safe and this intelligence has been shared with stakeholders who can use the information to bring about change and build into their strategic thinking for the future. It also highlighted the issue around young people having access to charging points for their phones which would make them feel safer in areas they socialised in the town, many of which are parks and open spaces. They also wanted to have safe and warm places to go, detached youth workers visible in their towns where they could talk to people or get information easily. This consultation has helped give the Brighter Futures in Banbury partnership a brilliant piece of insight and intelligence that can be used in the partnership to develop new opportunities and

support, using the "you said we did" approach to listening to our local young people to help shape change.

"I have enjoyed joining other young people to speak about what makes me feel worried and unsafe where I live. I see on the news lots of bad things happening and this is good to be able to speak about things in Banbury, and to hopefully make a difference to keeping us safe"

Benches with charging points have been sourced and will be installed in a number of locations across the town, a youth festival of opportunities

will take place at The Hill this autumn and youth sessions will be taking place across the town to continue the youth engagement and allowing Banbury youth to have an ongoing voice.

Community Insight - Ward profiling consultation

Community First Oxfordshire undertook a thorough consultation exercise as part of the ward profiling work, including interviews with community organisations, personal stories, focus groups and a community survey. The report commented that while improvements can always be made, the area is well networked and information about organisations and opportunities is generally well shared. The Brighter Futures partnership and local networks can be seen as a major contributor to this success.

The consultation allowed a detailed work plan to be drawn up, which will be overseen by a steering group of local stakeholders. Local people will be given an opportunity to apply for grant funding for projects which develop the ideas in the workplan in a way which appeals to the local community.

[Community Insight Profiles | Community insight project | Cherwell District Council](#)

The Sunshine Centre – Partnership project – Saplings



Supporting mental health

“Saplings has made such a difference to my emotional wellbeing throughout pregnancy. I was really struggling. It also gave me the opportunity to find out about and access OXPIP.”

parent accessing the service

parenthood is a smooth transition.

In 2023 the Sunshine Centre will have been working in partnership for 10 years with Banbury Community Midwives to facilitate the Saplings Antenatal group. The partnership has expanded in recent years with Oxfordshire Parent Infant Therapists joining the team.

Saplings is unique in Oxfordshire and has been awarded a silver NHS achievement award. It serves to add an enhanced service to families antenatally who have social and mental health needs, giving them a support package throughout their pregnancy and seeking to ensure their journey into

The partnership does this by offering women their antenatal checks in the Sunshine Centre building, and inviting them to come along to a weekly antenatal group where they can enjoy social contact with other parents to be, experience education with themes such as labour and childbirth, attachment, looking after your baby, being healthy, positive mental health and how to achieve it, signposting and providing information for onward support.

Families also have access to OXPIP parent infant psychotherapists and can self-refer for one to one sessions based at The Sunshine Centre or other local facilities, and outreach support via The Sunshine Centre’s Children and Family Community Workers.

The Saplings group seeks to give children the best possible start in life.

Partnership Project with Muddy Feet – Forest school/Nature Play

The Sunshine Centre is acutely aware of the benefits both educationally and socially of learning outdoors. We are also aware that being outdoors in the natural world can have positive effects to a person's mental health. We have been thrilled in 2022 / 2023 to partner with Muddy Feet to

Benefits of contact with nature

Below are two quotes from parents following the Autumn sessions.

- ***“Really enjoyable and my son has done things I'd never have thought he was capable of.”***
- ***“My son has the freedom to explore and be himself.”***

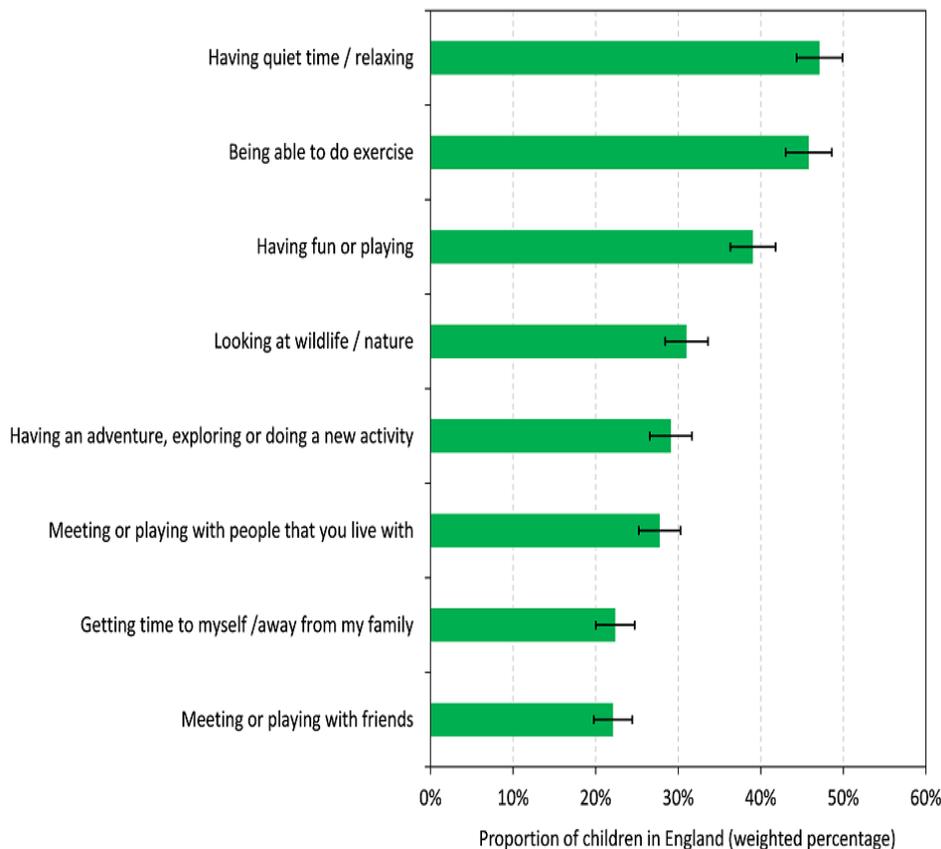


facilitate Spring and Autumn sessions for Parents and their preschool children, using our local outdoor space (Princess Diana Park). The families have explored nature and outdoor learning opportunities and created a blueprint to embed being next to nature as part of their family life.

The Sunshine Centre's experience backs up the findings of a national government survey on outdoor education ⁶ “The link between natural environments and health and wellbeing outcomes is increasing well understood. This survey suggests the positive role of nature in supporting children's

wellbeing during coronavirus. For example, eight in ten (83%) of children interviewed agreed that being in nature made them very happy. This figure was higher for children who stated they had spent more time outside since coronavirus (91%) and even higher for those children who stated they had spent more time outside looking at wildlife/nature (94%).

Children reported wide ranging benefits from spending time outdoors. The most reported things that children enjoyed about spending time outdoors during coronavirus were having a quiet/relaxing time (47%), being able to exercise (46%) and having fun playing (39%).



⁶ [The People and Nature Survey for England: Children's survey \(Experimental Statistics\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-childrens-survey-experimental-statistics)

Looking ahead

Strategic Alignment

We will continue to scan the strategic horizon and align our work with relevant strategies such as Oxfordshire County Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Cherwell District Council's Wellbeing Strategy, 'Everyone's Wellbeing' the LEP Local Industrial Strategy. We will make use of census data as it continues to be released, and will use the latest JSNA report to inform our work.

Listening to partners and communities

We will continue to develop and enhance ways of reaching the communities that the Brighter Futures partnership was created to serve. We have a strong tradition of doing this and of using the knowledge gained to inform our work at the strategic, partnership and grassroots levels.

Cost-of-living

Cost -of-living

17% INCREASE IN THE COST OF FOOD AND NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS OVER 12 MONTHS TO DECEMBER 2022

The cost-of-living crisis remains a major focus for the Partnership's work. The rate of inflation has slowed, but this follows a period of very high increases particularly in food and energy costs. Many people remain in a precarious financial position, and others are entering one due to higher costs including mortgage interest costs.

Citizens Advice in North Oxfordshire and South

Northants have reported that "More people in higher income households are at risk of homelessness due to rent arrears."

Specific Project work will be developed from this year's strategic work:-

Projects receiving funding attached to the Community Insight work

Funded by the Public Health team, the findings from the ward profiling work quoted below will be used to inform a series of activities, available through a grant / bidding process. The Brighter Futures Partnership will be key to supporting this work.

"A range of local assets to support health and wellbeing were identified, from green and open spaces to local shops and services, community spaces, community groups running a range of activities and external-based institutions active locally. For residents, green spaces and parks were highly used and valued assets, with people also enjoying walking and socialising. There are some improvements that would be welcomed here, for example to address litter, the state of repair of facilities, and develop local walks. Location is also seen as a benefit, with the proximity to shops and services frequently mentioned.

Many respondents however, had issues accessing health care, giving rise to anxiety. It is clear that many residents value the groups and activities available locally as well as the physical assets such as community centres and other settings which host or facilitate these activities. Various non-Ruscote and Neithrop-based organisations (e.g., charities or agencies) are also

locally prominent and valued for the support (and funding they provide). Collectively, there is a range of much-needed support in relation to social interaction and health and wellbeing with a number of successful initiatives developed and rolled-out over recent years (many ongoing). Local community networks are well-developed and there is a strong sense of a commitment to improvement across the long term.

That said, there was a generalised lack of awareness in the wider community about what is available locally in terms of local groups, organisations, and support. Significant numbers of residents do not know where to get information about what is happening locally and do not feel listened to. This is widely acknowledged, there being a sense across the board that communication within the community needs to improve in order to reach more people.

Additionally, while most felt safe in the community and a sense of positive identification and neighbourliness was generally expressed, significant minorities do not feel part of the community. In addition, while some enjoyed the multicultural make-up of the community, there was evidence of racial tension and a sense that more could be done to build bridges between different parts of the community, building more trust and connection. A range of health and wellbeing challenges were raised.

Mental health and isolation were common concerns and there was a generalised perception that COVID-19 has contributed (negatively) to already existing concerns. The cost of living is also contributing to stress and anxiety. There was a strong sense that the community could benefit from more mental health initiatives and support. There was also much comment in relation to young people, and the need to provide more youth workers and offer informal but supported spaces which could offer pathways to positive engagement with a range of identified issues including mental health and bullying.”

Delivery of the levelling up funding projects Year 1

Grimsbury Community Centre refurbishment

Funding secured to invest in Grimsbury Community centre to refurbish the toilet and washroom facilities to enable more people to access the community facility engage in community opportunities. This will support all users of different ages and abilities and allow a key centre, in a BFIB ward, to offer high quality, hygienic, accessible washroom facilities , in turn more users will access the services on offer.

The Mill Arts Centre Community Connect initiative

The Mill Community Connect initiative allows all community groups, schools, and organisations in the BFIB wards to access high quality arts and cultural opportunities and has been made possible from levelling up monies under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This will allow all ages of residents living in the Banbury wards to choose to visit live performances, workshops, and activities free of charge and where transport or accessibility are a problem, this is funded too.

The objective of this funding pot is to enable residents from target neighbourhoods to access arts and cultural opportunities at The Mill, which they would otherwise be unable to access.

The fund will be prioritised towards:

- Reaching people who have not previously attended any of The Mill's programme
- Community groups who have never previously or haven't recently accessed The Mill's programme
- Groups who have enabled their users to choose what they want to access.

Through this programme, The Mill is aiming to build stronger links with local communities to help shape the future programme, so that its programme better reflects the community it sits within

Bridge Street Community Garden

Bridge Street Community Garden has also secured 3 years of UKSPF monies to encourage new groups to use the garden and have their own growing spaces for their users to access all year round. The monies have also been used to develop a programme of skills workshops for Banbury residents to learn and encourage the importance of growing food and accessing nature.

Supporting Organisations who support the community

A recent Oxfordshire Community Foundation report highlighted an issue which is of concern to the Brighter Futures Partnership – the need to support staff within the support organisations: -

The report writers found through consultation with charitable and community groups that

“More support is needed for frontline practitioners to make sure they are equipped to be handling those issues” Oxford Parent-Infant Project (OxPIP)
In the Public Health ward profiling report, Oxfordshire Community First commented that

“Another prominent theme of the research is that locally based groups and organisations are struggling with resources. Funding is an ongoing problem and the volunteer pipeline for many is drying up (exacerbated by COVID-19). A sense of frustration was generally expressed – given that there is a clear and growing need for services and support, more people could be reached if more resources were available. Organisations want to do more and what they do is valued by those accessing it – but further development is being stymied by a lack of capacity. Innovation in the type of funding being offered should also be considered - more focus on core as opposed to (or in addition to) project funding could permit organisations to more creatively deploy their resources and contribute to longer-term financial sustainability.”

The Brighter Futures Partnership provides support to organisations through:

- bringing partners together to make joint funding bids – working collaboratively rather than competitively
- allowing partners an easy route to share and access data about the Brighter Futures wards
- providing this report as a resource which can be used to support funding bids
- developing a buddy scheme to provide peer support particularly to managers in small organisations where there is no comparative role in the staff of the organisation.

Charities are struggling to survive, let alone thrive

Charities have dipped into their reserves too many times and cannot see an end to price rises that affect their own costs, in particular energy, premises and salary costs. Charity workers and volunteers are experiencing stress and burnout due to the continued demand for services and the lack of financial and other resources to support them.

Looking ahead, we will remain a growing partnership, welcoming new members, listening to communities so that we can understand their ambitions. We want to find the balance between planning ahead and being able to respond quickly to changing circumstances and we know that our ability to do this is rooted in our relationships with local people and the organisations who serve them. We will support communities to build on the assets they hold within themselves, making those small incremental steps described by Councillor Chapman in his introduction. And they may be small steps, but they can be powerful agents of change when supported by the amazing community groups our area holds.

Thank you to all the theme leads

| Name and Role | Organisation | Email | Brighter Futures Role |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Councillor Phil Chapman | Cherwell District Council | phil.chapman@cherwell-dc.gov.uk | Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities |
| Nicola Riley | Cherwell District Council | nicola.riley@cherwell-dc.gov.uk | Assistant Director: Wellbeing & Housing Services |
| Steven Newman | Cherwell District Council | steven.newman@cherwell-dc.gov.uk | Employment Theme Lead |
| | Department for Work and Pensions | @dwp.gov.uk | Employment Theme Lead from 2022/23 |
| Jon Wild | Cherwell District Council | jon.wild@cherwell-dc.gov.uk | Community Development Manager |
| Tim Tarby Donald | Oxford United in the Community | charityninja@outlook.com | Stronger Communities and Volunteering Theme Lead |
| Paul France | Cherwell District Council | paul.france@cherwell-dc.gov.uk | Housing Theme Lead |
| Charlie Heritage | Sanctuary Housing Group | charlie.heritage@sanctuary-housing.co.uk | Housing Theme Lead |
| Tom Gubbins | Cherwell District Council | tom.gubbins@cherwell-dc.gov.uk | Health, Wellbeing and Physical Activity Theme Lead |
| Kate Austin | Oxfordshire County Council | Kate.Austin@oxfordshire.gov.uk | Health, Wellbeing and Physical Activity Theme Lead |
| Inspector Iain Roberts | Thames Valley Police | Iain.roberts@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk | Safer & Stronger Communities Theme Lead 2020/21 |
| Katey Humphris | Cherwell District Council | Katey.humphris@cherwell-dc.gov.uk | Safer Communities Theme Lead 2022/23 |
| Sharon Graham | Citizens Advice | Sharon.graham@cano.org.uk | Stronger Communities and Volunteering Theme Lead |
| Kate Winstanley | Independent | Kate_consultancy@yahoo.com | Facilitation and strategic support |
| | | brighter.futures@cherwell-dc.gov.uk | Facilitation and admin support |

How to contact us:

Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

Tel: 01295 221980

Email: brighter.futures@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

[View the Brighter Futures webpages at
https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/118/communities/873/brighter-futures-in-banbury](https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/118/communities/873/brighter-futures-in-banbury)

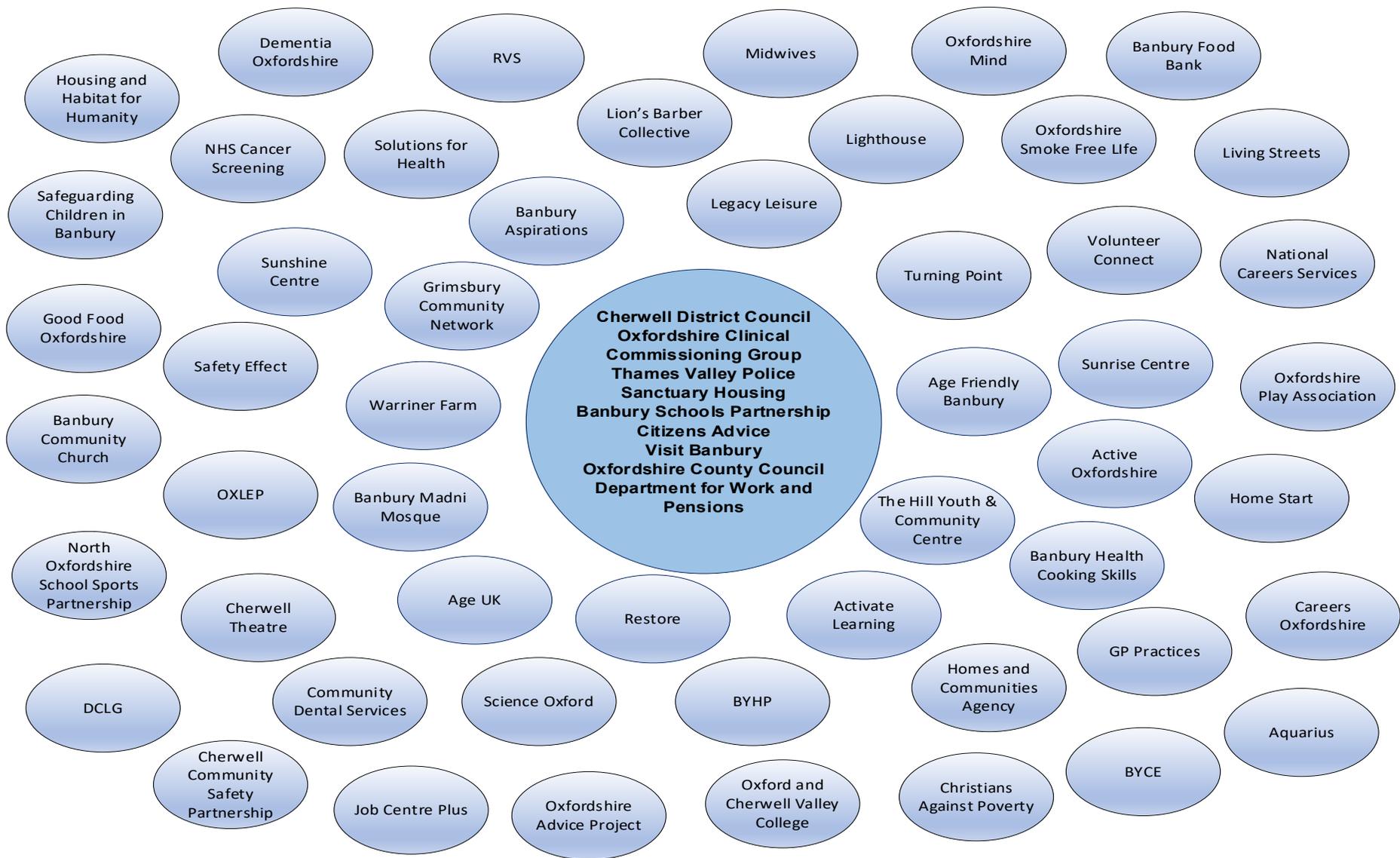
Report written by Kate Winstanley kate_consultancy@yahoo.com



Appendix 1 – Our Partners

This list is not exhaustive. If you would like more information, or would like to become a partner, get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

- Activate Learning
- Active Oxfordshire
- Age Friendly Banbury
- Age UK
- Aquarius
- Banbury Aspirations
- Banbury Community Church
- Banbury Community Safety Partnership
- Banbury Food Bank
- Banbury Healthy Cooking Skills
- Banbury Madni Mosque
- BYCE
- BYHP
- Carers Oxfordshire
- Cherwell Theatre
- Community Dental services
- DCLG
- Dementia Oxfordshire
- Good Food Oxfordshire
- GP practices
- Grimsbury Community Network
- Home: Start
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Housing and Habitat for Humanity
- Job Centre Plus
- Legacy Leisure
- Lighthouse
- Living Streets
- Midwives
- National Careers Service
- NHS cancer screening
- North Oxfordshire Schools Sports Partnership
- Oxford United in the Community
- Oxfordshire Advice Project
- Oxfordshire Mind
- Oxfordshire Play Association
- Oxfordshire Smoke Free Life
- OxLEP (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership)
- Restore
- Safeguarding Children In Banbury
- Science Oxford
- Solutions for Health
- Sunrise Centre
- Sunshine Centre
- The Hill Youth and Community Centre
- Turning Point
- Volunteer Connect
- Warriner Farm



Appendix 2 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund draft interventions

| Delivery theme | UKSPF Investment Priorities | Draft UKSPF Interventions |
|--|---|--|
| Business retention and growth | Communities and Place Supporting local business People and Skills | E16: Investment in & support for town centre retail & service sector E17: Development & promotion of visitor economy E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems E24: Training hubs, business support offers, 'incubators' for start-ups E26: Support for growing the local social economy E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth E38: Local areas to fund local skills needs |
| Green Economy | Supporting Local business People and Skills | E29: Supporting decarbonisation whilst growing the local economy E39: Green skills courses E40: Retraining support - high carbon sectors |
| (Attract) investment in town centres | Communities and Place Supporting local business | E1: Improvements to town centres and high streets, E16: Investment in & support for town centre retail & service sector E26: Growing the local social economy |
| Community and cultural development | Communities and Place People and Skills | E2: Community & neighbourhood infrastructure projects E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces E4: Enhancing existing cultural, historic & heritage institutions offer E6: Local arts, cultural, heritage & creative activities |
| Enhancing life chances and economic opportunities for our most vulnerable residents | Communities and Place People and Skills | E10: Local sports facilities, tournaments, teams & leagues E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living E33: Employment support for economically inactive people E34: Courses including basic, life & career skills E35: Enrichment and volunteering |