

# WEST END



## **West End Morecambe Big Local** ACTION PLAN 2022-2025



Members of a Children's Forum pilot set up by WEM in 2019. Their ideas are now laying the foundation for an environmental project in our new action Plan.

# Welcome

If you were on a group given one million pounds over ten years to improve the lives of people in Morecambe's West End, how would you spend it? It's a simple question that's deceptively difficult to answer given the array of issues and concerns facing this diverse community. After three years of trial and error it became apparent to us that we might be asking the wrong question. Anyone can spend money, and everyone will take it, but the real question is how do we make a difference? This is why we changed our name from West End Millions to West End Morecambe Big Local and why we are now more focused on the underlying issues, seeking to build stronger foundations rather than papering over the cracks.

The challenges in our community that first attracted Big Local funding are becoming more profound and urgent. On top of the health and social impact of COVID-19, many families are now facing increasing financial hardship with ever rising energy and food costs. That's why our objective over the next three years is to implement lasting and sustainable change and this is only possible when we clearly identify the needs and allocate funds strategically. We can't work miracles and can't meet every expectation, but we have good reason to believe we can have a meaningful impact on the wellbeing of the West End. This plan looks at some of what we have done in the past few years and sets out our plan to build some positive change for the future. We hope you will support our ambitions and even take part in helping us achieve them.

*Chris Price – Chair of West End Morecambe Big Local*



Local Trust

Big Local



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WEM does not have a physical office so the best way to contact is via our website [www.westendmorecambe.co.uk](http://www.westendmorecambe.co.uk) or email [admin@westendmorecambe.co.uk](mailto:admin@westendmorecambe.co.uk)  
You can write to: West End Morecambe Big Local c/o LDCVS, The Cornerstone, Sulyard Street, Lancaster, LA1 1PX





# Introduction

## About West End Morecambe Big Local

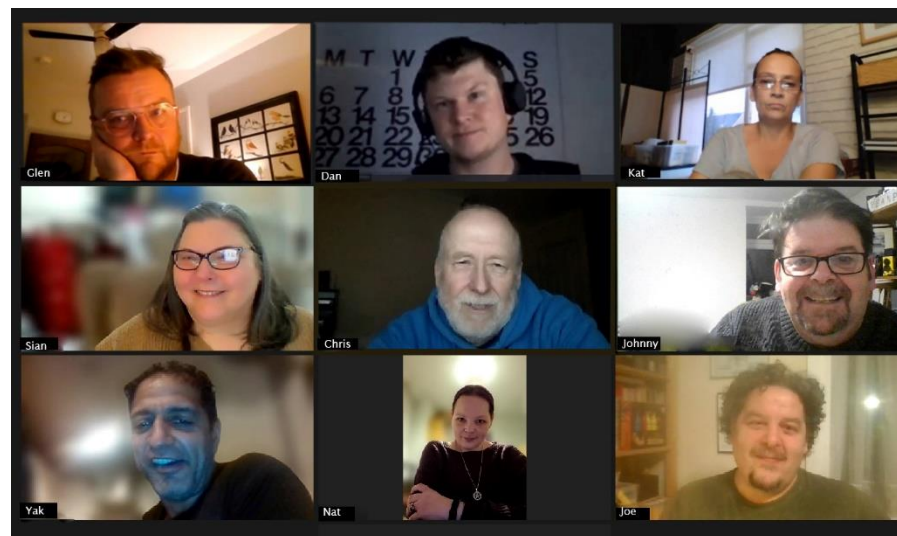
West End Morecambe Big Local (WEM) is a resident-led community partnership that works toward making the West End a better place to live. We are one of 150 similar partnerships across the country who make up a programme called Big Local.

Big Local is a national project set up to provide at least one million pounds to each of 150 communities in England. Big Local is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and managed by Local Trust. The funding awarded to each Big Local area was provided on the basis that it can be spent over 10 years at the communities' own chosen pace, and on their own plans and priorities. WEM was awarded one million pounds over ten years. That is around one hundred thousand pounds per year although the actual spend is flexible. This is not grant cash to fund anything and everything. Instead WEM is charged with spending that support through an Action Plan. This document is our new Action Plan for 2022 – 2025 (as well as a review of 2018 – 2021). Each plan has to be agreed by the Local Trust, who manage the Big Local programme

The ethos of WEM is to work collectively and to build positive relationships with other individuals, local groups and organisations like the Council. It does not get involved in political or religious activities. WEM is not a typical community group. We are not a charity, nor do we have a bank account. Big Local holds the money for us and we draw on the support of a local trusted organisation (LTO) who do our finances.

WEM has had its ups and downs. It's succeeded with some things and made mistakes elsewhere, but this is in line with the Big Local approach which is patient and non-judgemental – giving communities the time and opportunity to learn, make mistakes, resolve disagreements and overcome challenges for themselves, on their way to achieving their ambitions. In doing this the partnership has gone through changes, the most recent being a slight change in name and a move to commissioning activity rather than the idea of just giving grants.

If you are a West End resident, voluntary group or organisation, public agency or local business and want to find out more, go to our website and see what's new. To keep up to date join our online mailing list.



Some of the WEM partnership members, and staff. Despite the excitement of Zoom technology, we are looking forward to a return to physical meetings.

## Partnership

The West End Morecambe Big Local partnership is not a typical community group, being neither a charity nor having a bank account. Big Local holds the money for us and we draw on the support of a local trusted organisation (in our case Lancaster District CVS) who do our finances. We also have a very small staff team that together, work around three days a week.

The partnership members are responsible for agreeing a shared vision based on the priorities of their community, creating an Action Plan (this very document) to prioritise what it will do. The role of a partnership member is diverse and changes as the partnership itself develops. To a large extent the partnership is shaped by the members but the common goal to work together in an inclusive and open way. The ethos of WEM is to try and work collectively and to build positive relationships with others where that's possible. We recognise WEM is not for everyone, but we can play a part alongside the scores of other local groups and organisations to make the West End a better place to live.

Over the last four years we have had many different members involved and our thanks goes to all who contributed something positive. Our thanks also go to our staff and to our Local Trusted Organisation – all of whom have worked with absolute professionalism, sometimes in difficult situations, to meet WEMs needs. We also want to thank our Big Local rep who offers advice and regularly guides the partnership through the ins and outs of Big Local. Finally, the partnership wants to thank all the individuals who have taken part in developing or making projects happen - hundreds of people who remain nameless but who are the core to what we aim to do.

Over the past four years WEM has worked with and supported many local organisations including some of those listed here. These do not include those receiving smaller Community Chest Grants.



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# REVIEW

## Review 2018-2021

In 2016 the West End Million (as it was then called) reflected a microcosm of the interests in the West End. This Big Local initiative had been an opportunity that many flocked to. Some saw Big Local as the opportunity to work together as a community, others saw the 'million' as a source of cash. A few felt it was a chance for control against a local authority they felt had let them down. Despite some positive work the ability to create positive change was compromised by those competing agendas. The early years then delivered limited funding down very familiar routes which saw some rewarded, others ignored, and the community generally left in the dark as to what was happening. A second plan appeared to offer little change and so the Local Trust, who manage Big Local nationally, asked the partnership to pause and rethink. Changes were made with some people going on and others coming in.

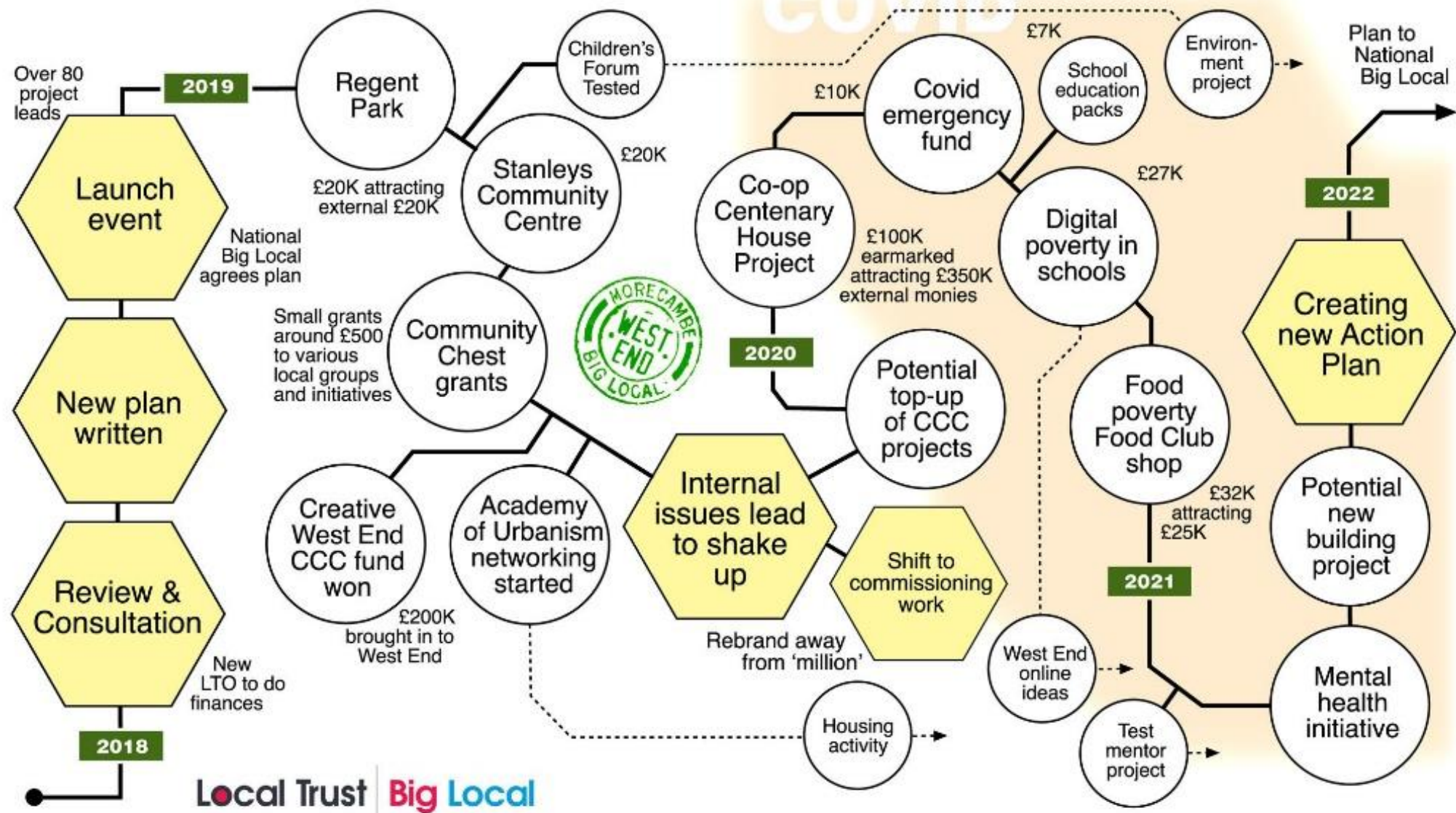
Learning from what happened a refreshed WEM sought to create a new Action Plan that was more inclusive and looked at wider needs. By the end of 2018 a new plan was complete. Everyone involved was proud to have worked on it and the plan was met with enthusiasm by the Local Trust. There was immediate progress: a launch event, a small community chest scheme, the start of some larger projects, and evidence that trust could be rebuilt. Yet just as

things looked good an internal conflict broke out around funding and control and with roots in earlier grievances. While the problem was eventually resolved, a huge amount of time and energy had been given to sorting out the dispute. The knock-on effect was to severely delay our work, but there was also a silver lining. The challenge pushed WEM to take its final step toward commissioning activity, a move that would better ensure the needs we meet are shaped by the community rather than smaller interests. To seal the deal WEM dropped the 'million' and changed its name to West End Morecambe Big Local. Then followed a greater challenge that no one expected. The nightmare of Covid has tried everyone in every way. In terms of Big Local, some partnerships paused their work, others jumped in, and WEM managed somewhere in-between. We were heavily restricted but still managed to deliver two major projects and support a Covid emergency fund.

It has taken time, but we have learnt what works and does not work locally with the realization that single interests and in-fighting are an element of the community dynamic. Understanding local issues, finding answers, and securing funding are challenges we take in our stride. The bigger challenge is getting different individuals and groups to work collectively, to find positive cooperation between often different approaches and opinions. This problem is rarely acknowledged but if it is not addressed it makes positive change harder to achieve.

Despite all the challenges WEM has managed to deliver; not as much as we'd like but enough to be proud of. The next few pages give a flavour of what we've done over the last four years and the hard work and commitment given by many both to try and make a difference in the West End.





2018 saw major changes to the way 'West End Millions' was run. A new Action plan began to deliver successful work, but the organisation also ran into internal issues which delayed activity. Having resolved that the world encountered the Covid crisis. Despite this we have managed to deliver some unique successful initiatives.

# Story of the projects

One of the first initiative set up was a small Community Chest fund to offered small grants of around £500 with an expectation that some applications might expand.

## ● Community Chest Grants £500 to £2,000

One of the smallest grants of just £250 allowed a new casting company developed by a West End businesswoman to take on local extras. At least five local people were then enabled to appear in The Bay on ITV, Coronation Street, and a Sky television series. The business said “It is hard to access funds for start-up businesses in this area, but a small amount of money makes a big difference to the lives of those who receive it. Other early grants included £500 to a charity which supports LBTQI people in Morecambe to help set up a website to promote the first Morecambe Pride festival which took place in 2019. A similar grant helped provide accessible seating for those attended More Music’s Seagull Café - a weekly music making project that ran before the pandemic. Further Community Chest grants supported a directory published by West End Impact, a portable cinema at the primary school, training for staff at Home-Start, support with Flu vaccinations at Stanleys Community Centre and various activities with the Alhambra Friends Group, Grace Ministries, and the Melting Pot.

A £500 grant helped organise a Haunted House Film Festival in October 2019, allowing opportunities for 12 young people to work as volunteers. Ultimately the festival wasn’t repeated but other Community Chest grants were expanded into larger initiatives. West End & Heysham North Allotments had £2,000 towards the building of a new community hub for the allotments which provide growing space for the local community. West End Primary School also

received around £2300 towards a giant initiative to take the whole school on a visit to see some live theatre.

## ● Regent Park £20,000

The 2018-2021 Action Plan laid out a series of themes that WEM wanted to develop, and links were made with various partners to try and work in a way that met the outcomes we’d set. The first large project had to be agreed quickly in order to meet the deadline for an extra £25,000 from the government’s Pocket Parks Plus scheme.



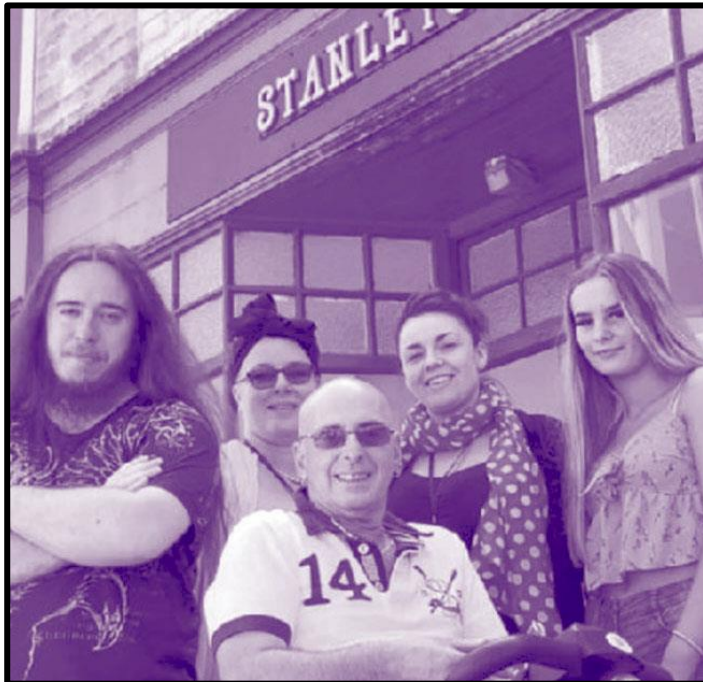
Regent Park



The funding was vital in improving Regent Park and led the park to receive a Green Flag and being nominated for a national award. According to Stefanie Gray, Lancaster City Council's engagement and development officer, "The funding transformed the park" and residents could still take advantage of this space during lock-down.

#### ● **Stanleys Community Centre £20,000**

Stanleys Community Centre has provided a wealth of activity over the years but in 2019 the group running it was set to close. Staff and volunteers put together plans to set up a brand-new Stanleys to build on previous work but with the major change of becoming a registered charity. It was a period of high risk for sustaining the centre. WEM provided £20,000 funding to support them and bring security for a year of major change, providing them with a solid foundation to take Stanleys forward and then access other funding.



Stanleys

The support helped Stanleys to fully establish themselves as an independent charity and the centre is now run by people who are committed to helping develop it. They have built up a portfolio of new work to help achieve their goals. The centre continued to serve its community even when the pandemic struck. £3000 of the funding was targeted at helping Stanleys develop its long-term future and that work is now well under way, and other potential links with WEM are being discussed.

***“WEM spring-boarded the rest of our success because of the fact that without that support we wouldn’t have made it through the first years. The impact of that initial investment is just starting to be seen now in 2022. We are really grateful for their support and the trust they showed in us.”***

*Robyn Thomas, Stanleys Community Centre*

#### ● **School Education Packs £7000**

As well as supporting the local urgent response fund for the Covid-19 crisis, WEM agreed an important partnership with West End Primary and Sandylands Primary schools to provide education packs for over 600 local children. The packs were delivered in a leather backpack-for-life with pencils, pens, notebooks, scissors,

glue and everything needed for schoolwork at home. Allison Hickson, Head teacher at Sandylands Primary, said “The children needed the correct equipment to complete their work. Support from West End Morecambe Big Local has enabled our children to be equipped to continue with their learning at home during the crisis. It will also enable them with learning from home after the return to school as well.”

### ● Covid Emergency Fund £10,000

When Covid struck WEM was aware that its normal processes wouldn't work but we immediately stepped in with £10,000 worth of support for the local emergency fund. The fund was facilitated by Lancaster District Community & Voluntary Solutions (LDCVS) who WEM works with very closely. Their chief executive, Yak Patel said: “We knew there would be financial pressures on groups in the West End so another challenge was to get money to them so they could continue operating. WEM immediately understood what the difficulties were going to be, and their support was 100%.” WEM's contribution to the emergency fund will have supported all or in part various local emergency activity including.

- Morecambe Bay Food Club access to food
- More Music supporting vulnerable people
- Prop Up, contacting their service users
- Stanleys Community Centre, support and buying PPE
- West End Impact, free meals, and local support
- Wise Up workshops, mental health support
- A youth programme of activities and support

### ● School Computers initiative £27,000

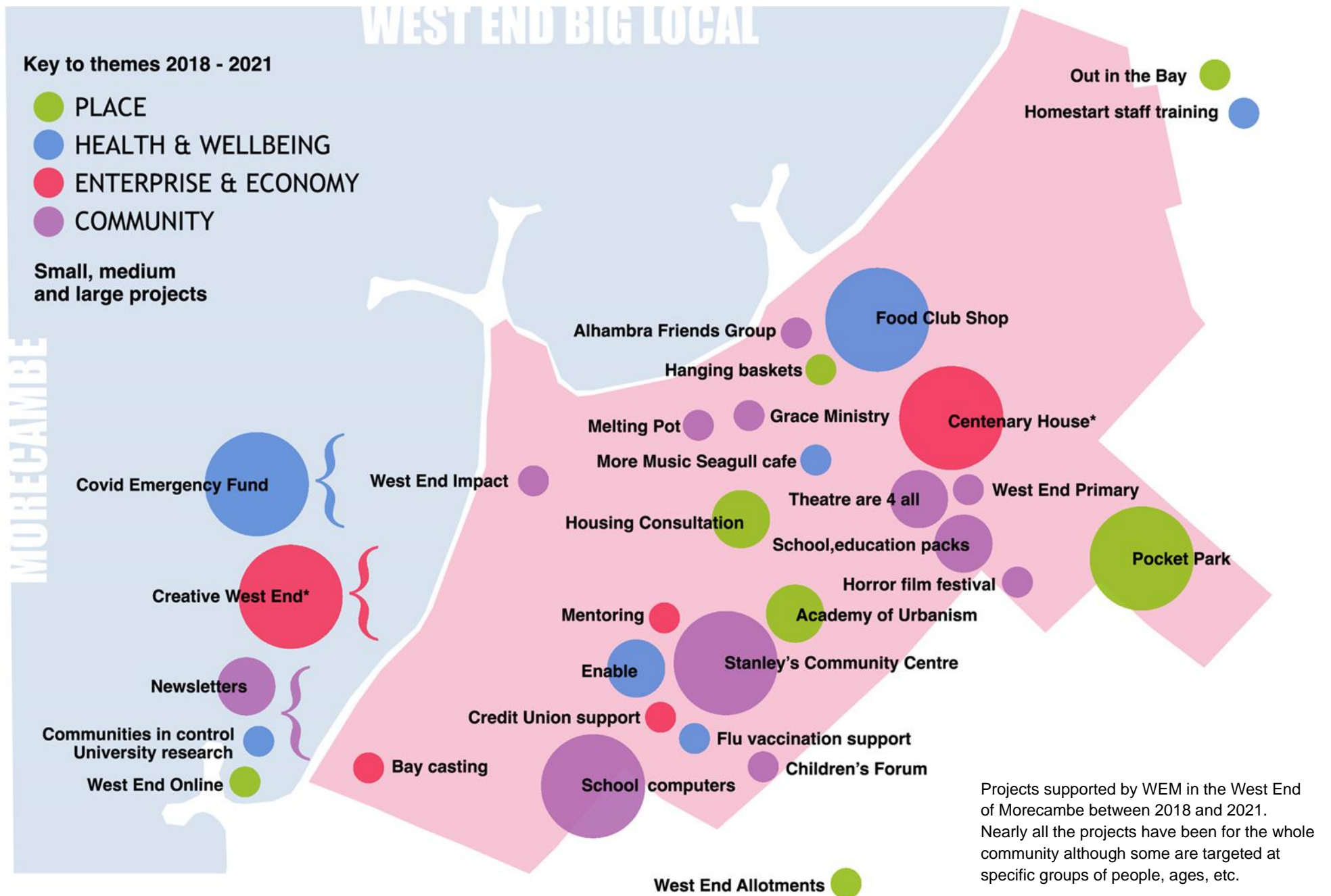
An ongoing issue of digital exclusion had been in WEM's sights for some time, but the Covid lock-down raised its urgency, particularly for families of primary school children. Talking with over 170 local families, parents were asked about existing resources and

challenges they faced with online schoolwork. Some were doing okay but many were struggling with online access and lack of a usable computer. One family only had a single smart phone in the house and with three children trying to share that phone to do homework. WEM's staff worked with Sandylands and West End Primary schools to develop a project to buy £27,000 worth of computers, the equivalent of one for every year-six child in both schools.



Headteacher Alison Hickson takes delivery of one of the WEM computers

The equipment will be handed down to each new year of children, therefore benefitting the school for the next five years and maybe more. WEM's support was described as 'amazing' by the deputy head of Sandylands.





When the children returned to school, baseline assessments were carried out and reading results were more or less in line with where the pupils should be for the start of a new year. Teachers believe this was a direct impact of accessing home learning on the laptops.

The schools felt the project had engendered a sense of collective pride in West End children. Parents also benefited with a number of training sessions looking at mental health and well-being facilitated with computers loaned out to families.

***“We would like to thank you, everyone – it’s hard to put into words what an impact this funding has had on our children and their families.”***

Penny Lupton, deputy head of Sandylands

### ● Food Club Shop £32,000

Food poverty has long been a priority for WEM and the pandemic again put even greater emphasis on the issue. Linking with the local food poverty alliance WEM developed a project involving Eggcup and Stanleys Community Centre and provided £32,000 to help establish a new community food outlet in the West End. The project helped draw down another £25,000 from other sources and the shop has proved a great success. The club uses surplus food, donated mainly by supermarkets, and for a weekly fee, distributes it via their own members at the shop outlet in Albert Road. They work with other groups including Stanleys and the Olive Branch food bank as part of a buying co-operative to supply additional food to members and service users. Different to a foodbank, the food club



The food club shop

provides a shopping experience and allows members to choose the food that works for them. The new outlet has enabled Eggcup to increase its number of memberships available for the community by over 200, equating to 462 individuals including 154 children. Membership numbers are quickly heading toward the work become largely self-sustaining.

“This scheme saves them and their community significant amounts of money on their food shopping every week and also widens members’ food experience, allowing them to try new foods without the risk of wasting limited money on food they or their family might not like,” said Eggcup project manager, David France.

A recent survey showed almost all participants felt that Eggcup had made a significant difference to their personal finances. Almost 80% said they felt like a member of Eggcup as opposed to feeling more like a "customer". A significant number of members are interested in, or already volunteering with Eggcup which increases their confidence and has other benefits.

***“WEM were fundamental to getting this off the ground. From the outset they understood our vision for the project and were excited by it like we were. Our relationship has been really honest which is often the hardest thing to achieve - the conversations we had made us confident in working together.”***

*David France, Eggcup project manager*

### ● Centenary House £100,000

Centenary house will be familiar to local residents as the Co-op building on Regent Road. Long empty it is now owned by the Council who have been working with The Good Things Collective (formerly The Exchange) to use it as a Creative Community Enterprise Hub. The plan is to bring this long-neglected building back into productive use and support local creative community activity alongside affordable co-working space and programmes aimed at incubating new enterprise. In February 2020 WEM earmarked a potential £100,000 to support the project, on the condition that a business plan was written to evidence how the

project would work. This is part of the due diligence WEM is obliged to do by Local Trust before funding at this scale can be released. A specialist consultant evaluated the plan, and due to a range of technical challenges it was felt not to be strong enough to allow us to release the funding. Although alternative routes were explored a way forward could not be found. Ultimately the conditions necessary to proceed with the funding were unable to be met. After the first version of our Action Plan was written the earmarked support has therefore fallen through.

The Centenary House project itself aims to continue and if it can secure the necessary funding elsewhere will look to meet similar outcomes. Alternative uses for WEM's earmarked funding are now being worked through in line with Spending Plan B (see page 29).



Centenary House



## ● Smaller work

Not all the smaller projects WEM looked at were grants and we tested some other initiatives such as supporting hanging baskets with the Town Council and working with the Credit Union to offer free membership to residents living in the West End.

Enable, a chronic health group for residents, received £1,500 for running a self-care course for members.

Another £500 has gone towards testing out a pilot mentoring project for local professionals.

A £4000 grant from the previous WEM plan saw the last of a series of local newsletters called 'More Together' delivered locally. The project involved local people in the production. Kevin Goodall, of More Together newsletter said, "We are extremely grateful for the support received from WEM since the very beginning of our journey. It wouldn't have been possible to do it without you!"

The final edition included a pull-out newsletter from WEM itself which then evolved to become a stand-alone newsletter. Three more WEM newsletters have since gone out to nearly 4000 West End households.

In terms of communication WEM also completely overhauled its website in late 2018 and re-launched it alongside the 2018-2021 plan. The site has been the mainstay of communicating WEM's activities and has increased users and views ten-fold in three years since relaunch (to 2500 and 8300 respectively).

WEM has since been developing a new community initiative in the shape of a 'West End Online' website that will act as a promotional tool and directory for local shops, services, and organisations. This is expected to launch in 2022.

WEM's newsletter goes out to around 4000 households, shops, etc. in the West End.





## ● Other initiatives

As well as funded projects WEM has worked to develop strategic conversations and plans. We have worked with Lancaster District CVS to encourage networking on health issues and WEM initiated a special network session with a national group called Academy of Urbanism – bringing in key players together in the West End to look at improving housing and the built environment.

That latter project has led on to various other work including commissioning Good Things Collective with £3700 to do some local housing consultation as well as other initiatives that will feature in our new 2022 plan.



Children's Forum pilot

Another unique initiative was a pilot for a children's forum held in 2019. Recognising that roughly 17% of the population in the West End are under twelve years old we set up a pilot Children's Forum to look at engagement with local children to influence and shape the work of WEM. The pilot was extremely successful and has already placed a marker for work in our 2022 plan. The hope is future meetings will be able to act as decision makers on their own project.

## ● Creative Civic Change brings in £200,000 to West End

In May 2019 Local Trust, who manage the Big Local programme, launched a new initiative called Creative Civic Change: a three-year programme open to only 14 communities around the UK. Its purpose is to use creativity to generate meaningful civic change in their area.

Creative Civic Change (CCC) “offers flexible, long-term funding, in-area mentoring and a substantial peer learning programme. Residents are in the lead every step of the way. Whatever the local priorities, the programme will help these communities use creative methods to achieve them.”

Two partnership members of WEM worked with other local partners to help secure this extra £200,000 fund for creative work the West End. The local scheme, called Creative West End runs independently of WEM and is managed by a steering group of local partners and organisations including several local organisations who deliver arts activity.

Details of their work can be seen at [www.creativewestend.net](http://www.creativewestend.net)



# Big Local Outcomes

West End Morecambe Big Local's progress over the last Action Plan has had its ups and downs. However, when we reflect and consider what we have achieved, often under challenging circumstances, there are many things that have been extremely positive. Not least in strengthening our **community's ability to identify needs and take action in response to them.**

WEM realised that giving out grants in response to different individual interests was not addressing the fundamental challenges faced by the West End so WEM looked to work more strategically. Against a prevailing misconception of entitlement to the funds, WEM shifted its focus from grant giving to commissioning activity, where needs are better identified, and work is targeted on evidence rather than individual agendas or funding shortfalls.

There is often a tendency for voluntary and third sector organisations to identify themselves as 'the community' when they represent specific and often focused demographics within the wider community. A key component of our 2022 Action Plan is working with different local partners in order to create a more inclusive picture and to leave a legacy by which future mainstream funding is better targeted and more responsive to the diverse needs of the West End.

This agenda goes hand in hand with **increasing the skills and confidence of people** to identify and respond to needs. There is huge inequality in the levels of capacity in our community and this is, again, a barrier to change. WEM has made some small in-roads into this issue but with the challenges we've faced it has taken us nearly three years to feel confident in ourselves to invest in work that will increase the skills and confidence of others.

In terms of the Big Local outcome about **community making a difference to the needs it prioritises** WEM has done well. The pandemic forced long sitting priorities to the fore and our move to commissioning allowed projects such as the Food Club Shop and the School Computer initiative to prove we can make a significant impact. Time out during covid has also allowed us to begin looking at other priorities such as mental health and has given WEM the chance to develop our next Action Plan in a much deeper way than we might otherwise have done.



Our Action Plan launch way back in 2018

We cannot yet say if we have met the outcome where **people feel that their area is a better place to live.** We know that will be true for some individuals but circumstances that extend beyond our community, such as the pandemic, make such a task an uphill battle. Another challenge is determining what 'community' means in terms of the West End as a whole. Many people love the West End and are proud of it despite its rough edges. Others are frustrated by both the venom and the antipathy that comes from some quarters of

the same community. We also have to contend with some who just see it as a place to drop off, perhaps because of cheap property, but never a place to emotionally invest in. Altogether the 'community' of the West End is more fragmented than we had imagined (and that some would like to admit) but this just emphasises the vital need for people to work together. This is why something like WEM is perhaps more vital than even we ourselves realised.

## Spend 2018 – 2021

Previous WEM Action Plans had covered a year each with the third Action Plan, reviewed here, covering a planned three-year period which was extended by several months due to the impact of the pandemic on the partnership's work.

Action Plan July 2018 – Dec 2021			
	Planned	Spent	Committed
Projects	£282,000	£131,000	£150,000
Delivery Costs	£136,000	£128,000	
Total	£418,000	£409,000	

- (i) 98% of planned budget spent or committed
- (ii) Estimating spend for 2018-2021 of £175k +£86K (crosses over two proposals), £117k of this as delivery and £144 as projects.
- (iii) All figures have been rounded to the nearest 1000.

Despite two large commitments not being spent within the expected timeframe the overall costings came close to meeting the expected budget. Delivery costs average around £32,000 a year but this

covered a huge range of headings including two part time staff (totalling 22 hours per week) as well as a freelance press officer and some occasional consultant's fees. These delivery costs are in line with what might be expected from Big Local. WEM also delivered direct pieces of work including three newsletters (each £1100 to print and deliver) along with promotional items like a bag and a defunct attempt at re-branding in 2019. Room hire and basic administrative cost also accompanied. A standard Big Local fee of 5% on spend goes to our Local Trusted Organisation in return for them delivering the financial and legal administration of the local programme but this money is handled completely separately and is not part of the working WEM budget.

From the start of the Big Local programme and the first two Action Plans (plus a brief interim period) the programme spent approximately £150,000 up to the end of 2017. Commitments and spend between 2018 and the end of 2021 came to a grand total of £409,000. That now leaves approximately £788,000 of Big Local funding remaining to commit in the new plan. The overall total is nearly 20% higher than the originally designated one million pounds due to interest on the early years of the national fund.

## Summary and the new plan

If WEM had to summarise what it has done against its last 2018 plan, and the impact and progress on its priorities, we would divide the results into thirds. The first has really achieved things, meeting key aspirations and really making some headway on the outcomes we'd hoped to achieve. The second has developed a lot of learning and now set more solid foundations to deliver what we'd hoped in our next plan. The final third has been more problematic. Internal frustrations and challenges with the work means we at times struggled to make headway. This was then compounded by the horrible impact of Covid. Together these most notably impacted on our overall spending, which we recognise is below the general average for Big Local.





Image: W. Drinkwater

However, WEM has come on leaps and bounds from the internal problems and from weaknesses identified in previous years plans and now has a self-confidence to move forward in a way that was never there before.

We held a small photo competition in 2020 and the winner above, captured at the start of the second lock-down, sums up many feelings about the last few years and our hope for the future.

# ACTION PLAN

## Action Plan 2022-2025

### An amended vision

WEM's vision has evolved with each action plan. For this new plan we have revised and tightened up our previous vision to help us focus the work we are going to deliver.

This maintains a broad framework which unites the different themes which govern both our work and the work of other partners. Building on four previous themes we have now added education and together this follows a template for a holistic working that identifies the building blocks of a community based approach.

### West Ends Morecambe Big Local Vision

WEM's vision is to be a catalyst for positive change in the West End.

- Community: the heart of what we do, how we work together.
- Health: a foundation to help people thrive.
- Economy: helping and encouraging enterprise
- Education: growing through new skills and learning.
- Place: improving our physical neighbourhood.

This is the basis for our Action Plan, the work we do and the legacy we will leave.

Underscoring this vision our organisation is also emphasising five key priorities so that learn from previous years' work and ensure we can successfully meet our obligations to Big Local. This being the shared vision for the West End and our goals being specific to what we can and should achieve.

### Priorities

1. Setting specific commissioned projects, that work strategically for the West End, the majority of which have significant detail, but some offered further time to evolve.
2. To expand on trusted relationships with larger partners to deliver work and draw in matched funding / support.
3. We are going to avoid getting bogged down in grant giving and the micro politics which has dogged previous activity.
4. Recognising our delayed spending and confidently making it up to fully commit all spend within the programme.
5. To develop a solid legacy based on credible options

We believe that this vision, these priorities, and subsequent goals, will best enable WEM to attain the four outcomes set out in the Big Local programme: a community better able to identify local needs and take action in response to them, residents with increased skills and confidence, making a difference, and feeling our area is better place to live. The work set out in the 2022 – 2025 plan reflects this vision and priorities and the WEM partnership is sure of its ability to now deliver the objectives it sets out and catch-up in terms of spend. We know that some Big Local partnerships committed all their funding in the first few years and then managed the activity. WEM will provide a counter to that approach by making our larger commitments in the latter stages of the programme.



The spread of work in the new plan covers work that has been developed over months of discussion and consultation with partners in the community. Some work is ready to roll out almost immediately and other work is primed to begin detailed development. All is based on preparations which means we know we can deliver.

The legacy of the pandemic is inevitable and will shape some of this work but in many ways covid just highlighted pre-existing needs. The challenges that the West End continues to face are not small and the relative impact WEM is small in comparison to what public services and other organisations deliver in the area. Therefore, our focus is about shifting how we collectively identify need and how we better work together to meet common interests.



# Objectives 2022-2025

## ● Mental Health Work

As it stands there are multiple local and district partners who are involved in mental health activity in the West End. The positive contribution they make is unquestionable and their good work exists despite a long-term imbalance between local needs and the resources or funding available to meet for them.

Mental Health Work				
Community	Health			
Goal: Supporting community mental health and improved delivery				
Outcomes		Budget £50,000		
1	Potential direct support into services			
2	Improving strategic mapping of real need.			
3	Influencing top-down change in strategic funding.			
4	Considering voice of effected community			

However, there are factors which reduce the effectiveness of collective work. Trust between different sectors is stretched. Strategies for activity are uncoordinated and agendas can be skewed by funding interests of particular organisations. Evidence of

different needs are patchy, and the outcome of activity is sometimes indistinguishable from general community work. Many of these issues are acknowledged privately but rarely feature in shared conversations about working together. With so many groups delivering 'mental health' activity the greatest frustration is the lack of any common measure of need or outcomes. Our project aims to deliver direct mental health activity but also attempts to address some of these other points in some way. WEM has had extensive local discussions on this theme. In terms of direct support to services there is clear evidence to suggest that children and young people are a critical group in terms of current need. WEM has already begun linking with potential partners, including the local NHS.

## ● West End Online

We will develop a medium / longer term commission that targets individuals who are socially excluded or who have lagged behind in digital skills. The most significant issue is how to provide meaningful support such as training and assistance in a way that is welcoming and reduces the anxiety of general digital / education settings. The work of the national Good Things Foundation offers examples to look at. Any commission will likely need to bring a local organisation together with a strategic partner who can offer wider digital skills. Together they will endeavour to draw in other support and funding to expand the potential that any WEM investment offers.

Activity needs to be as open as possible but necessarily directs key opportunities to those most in need in a manner that is evidenced based and meaningful. It is therefore essential to clearly define target groups and avoid generic definitions such as 'helping all the community'. There is currently a very limited access to digital skills or services through local groups and what does exist is piecemeal

and uncoordinated. WEM would incentivise this in a limited way as part of any wider commission if groups will meaningfully commit to some form of shared public service. We will build on our previous school initiative and expand where possible on opportunities for families as well as the schools as venues for wider community use.

We will also target mainstream services and higher education to link and encourage more take up of existing resources such as IT training through the schools, colleges or university and encourage them to find ways to enhance the resources and offers available to people of the West End.

“West End Online”				
Economy	Education			
<b>Goal:</b> Tackling issues related to digital social exclusion in the West end				
<b>Outcomes</b>			<b>Budget £40,000</b>	
1	Engage socially excluded / those lagged behind in digital skills			
2	Improve public access to low-cost IT / online facilities.			
3	Support children and families through education settings.			
4	Drawing down mainstream services and providers to the West End			

A secondary aspect of this project already started is developing a 'West End Online' website which draws together all the shops, groups and community resources within the area and provides both a one stop directory but also collectively supports scores of local groups and businesses in promoting what they offer.

## ● Stanleys Community Centre

Stanleys Community Centre is the West End's only independent community centre not aligned to a particular strand of work (such as the arts) or host organisation (such as a church). It has a track record of meeting local needs, in particular for members of the community experiencing hardships of one form or another. It has recently gained charitable status and has links with many local services including the local medical group. In 2019 WEM agreed to support Stanleys with £20k as part of its establishment as a charity and the foundation as a community hub. WEM is keen to see Stanleys thrive, but it cannot endlessly offer project by project support and now plans something more in line with our aim to support things strategically.

We are now working to acquire Stanleys centre for long term ownership in the community. In simple terms this is economically sound as annual rent over a decade comes to well over a £100k but the reasons are not financial alone.

Stanleys Community Centre				
Community	Health	Economy	Education	Place
Goal: Taking a property into permanent community ownership				
Outcomes			Budget £150,000	
1	Improved and safeguarded sustainable long term community hub.			
2	Supporting wide range of services.			
3	Improve physical quality of space.			
4	Enabling new opportunities.			

It means Stanley's group can justify investment in refurbishing the property, which is currently in a poor state of repair. An external consultant has been brought in to establish how this work might proceed and ensure due diligence is met in order to meet Big Local's national criteria.

This strategic purchase of a property is the only example raised by any West End community organisation other than Centenary House but due to WEM's status we would be unable to own the building ourselves so a primary question will be who will hold it in trust on behalf of the community. Initial conversations suggested there would be several ways this could happen and whilst there are many questions to resolve most appear to be about how rather than if it can be done.

Rough costings have been worked up but whilst the budget earmarked is significant it also underwrites completion on a project we believe will attract close to equal match funding when finished.

## ● Food Poverty Project Wraparound

Food Poverty Project Wraparound				
Community	Health	Economy		
Goal: Expanding on successful Food Club shop				
Outcomes			Budget £18,000	
1	Potential enhancement on previous support			
2	Linking support between food / energy / finances			

The success of Eggcup in fulfilling WEM's aspiration on a project tackling the issue of food poverty has meant we wish to consider ways in which the service can be further sustained or enhanced. Talking with various partners has also made it clear that now is the time to engage with other related issues such as fuel poverty and home finances. We will therefore be enhancing our previous support and aiming to link activity with these other issues.

Current plans are considering member and volunteer support with the process of exploration, finding out about members, what they want and need, and what they can offer. Secondly to support the creation of a three-year intensive, one-to-one support project to help people furthest from the labor market move closer to employment or other fulfilling activity.

## ● Family Mentoring support scheme

Our positive partnership with Eggcup on the food club shop project has led to shared ideas for a bold project changing the culture of benefits and the 'charity' offered to families living with issues related to poverty. We are proposing to carry out a pilot project for a direct support scheme, where help goes directly to the family in need, and they work with an assistant who supports participants and acts as adviser. We know that numerous stop-gap interventions in people's lives have limited impact in the long-term.

We believe a person-centred approach (which takes the individual and their situation and then puts them in the centre of decision making) will offer at least the same level of impact, and potentially improve on it. Eggcup would be the trusted partner working on an initial scoping exercise with WEM. Other key organisations and agencies would then be invited to invest in the project and learn



from its activity. The initiative will work with around five to ten local families, and we envisage employing one full time peripatetic advisor. We are confident this project will also raise further match funds from other parties. After scoping, the mainstay of the project would last one year. In some ways this concept is taking Big Local's 'hyper local' philosophy to its ultimate configuration, by empowering individuals and families to make their own decisions and then assisting them on the journey they have chosen to endorse.

Family mentoring & direct support scheme				
Community	Health	Economy		
Goal: Pilot project looking at empowering families in poverty				
Outcomes			Budget £52,000	
1	Proving capacity of families to self-manage complex social issues			
2	New shared delivery partnership			
3	Evidence based learning on the 'hyper local' approach			

***“If Big Local doesn't do this I don't think there are other people who would be this brave. It is an opportunity to do something innovative, see what we learn, and add to the evidence base.”***

*WEM partnership member*

## ● Housing

WEM has spent many months discussing and sharing ideas related to housing and recognise our ability to create significant change on this theme is constrained. We recognise the quality and social balance of housing plays a fundamental part in the social fabric of our community in terms of well-being, health and economy of the West End so we therefore aim to.

1. Improve relationships between sectors involved in housing
2. Increase engagement of residents in housing decisions
3. Raise overall housing standards in the West End

Some local partners are keen to focus on developing a social housing portfolio, WEM instead will focus on influencing change and attempting to improve relationships between sectors – particularly between different types of tenants and between tenants and landlords.

Housing				
Community	Economy	Place		
Goal: Contributing to underlying housing issues and relationships				
Outcomes		Budget £20,000		
1	Supporting tenants / homeowners and engagement of landlords to support good practice			
2	Supporting Council on strategy, licencing and enforcement			
3	Encouraging local social housing			

## ● Community Networking and Unity

Experience over the past four years has shown that while there are many local community groups and organisations working in the West End there is a disparity in the levels of personal and organisational capacity. Similarly, some residents looking to enact change within their community have the experience and skills to be proactive while others having passion and commitment but no capacity to even begin. Local groups, with the best of intentions, tend to be focussed inwards, reluctant to share knowledge, skills, or capacity with other like groups. This is in part because of limited resources but also because of competition over funds and entrenched views on shared work.

The most significant impact of this on the community is the lack of strategic planning and work between different groups, despite many working with the same residents and nearly all dealing with interconnected issues. WEM has made unsuccessful attempts to encourage more strategic working locally so it will now seek alternative ways to encourage change. Part of this work will link in closely with the activity of the local Lancaster CVS and networking in the West End. Capacity building will look at individuals within the voluntary sector as well as empowering residents looking to address issues within their community. We aim to draw in closer ties with the local College and University as well as key third sector partners who are committed to meaningful sharing of skills and capacity. WEM is in related discussions with some higher education establishments about having greater presence in West End.

One difficult realisation we have had to come to terms with is that the West End is far from a single unified community. Having experienced decades of neglect and deprivation the collective and cohesive aspects of 'community' have been steadily eroded. There are elements of the community that live in quiet parallel to each other. Some people are proud of the West End, while others just live

Community Networking & Unity project				
Community	Education	Place		
<b>Goal:</b> Potential to support small strategic initiatives				
<b>Outcomes</b>			<b>Budget £58,000</b>	
1	Capacity building of active group members			
2	Local partners working through collective network			
3	Basic business skills: planning, finances, etc			
4	Empowerment for resident voices			
5	Collective community pride activity project			

here and nothing more. Local organisations seek to build a positive sense of community through outreach, aspirational creative work, and events, but there is limited evaluation on what strategic impact or legacy is achieved. There remains a pervasive sense of the West End being done to, which is compounded by landowners (often living far away) with derelict and dilapidated property, and the legacy of short term and inconsistent development where change is often temporary, incongruent, and sometimes even regressive. One specific outcome under this initiative then, is to pilot a bespoke community unity project. Examples from elsewhere include street cleaning parties and community gardening projects. The key to any such an initiative is that it is meaningfully shared by groups in the area and is less delivered to residents but more actively involves them in delivery.

## ● Children's Environmental project

Children up to twelve years old make up roughly 17% of the West End population. More progressive community activity would regard this large part of the community as having an important voice in shaping improvements to the community and that their direct views and choices should be taken onboard and valued. WEM initiated an innovative Children's Forum project in 2019 where local issues were discussed by a representative group of young children from the West End. This initiative was much delayed by both matters being dealt with in WEM and schools then having to cope with the pandemic. We were committed to expanding on the engagement of children in decision making on a real time project and that will now focus on a collection of points raised by the children under a heading of Environment.

Children's Environmental Project				
Community	Health	Education	Place	
Developing children's environmental ideas into a physical project				
Outcomes		Budget £30,000		
1	Expanding children's democratic engagement			
2	Feasibility study on environment concept			
3	Improve physical quality of space.			
4	Enabling new opportunities.			
5	Potential link with Eden North if it goes ahead			

The project we will carry out includes a feasibility study on the concept of an environment 'dome' (taken literally or conceptually) shared by both primary schools in the West End. This project has a lot of detail to work through but already has a great deal of shared interest from key partners and tentative promises of additional funding. This project could form an excellent satellite project to the Eden North initiative but would meet an identified local need irrespective of that national venture.

## ● Celebrating community

Parts of the West End are blessed with a mixture of creative industry, both amateur and professional. This in part was the reason for the West End successfully accessing the Creative Civic Change program. Despite the value this brings there may be gaps between the social impact it brings to the West End beyond the value to the creative sector itself.

Celebrating community				
Community				
Goal: Resident focussed creative activity that celebrates community				
Outcomes			Budget £50,000	
1	Social focus creative project/s			
2	Activity that renews collective public engagement			
3	Creative bridging work additional to existing activity			



As the area recovers from the pandemic there is also evidence to show a need to bring people together, through activity that meaningfully unites the community. We've set aside £50,000 to focus on this and may choose to expand on existing creative opportunities or consider alternative approaches to achieve our objectives. Then looking to fill in gaps not being covered by others and securing links to the social value of any work delivered. This may link with the 'unity' work we will deliver. Some ideas are already beginning to filter through consultation with the wider community.

## ● Frontierland / Horizon Initiatives

There are some significant town wide initiatives which could impact heavily on the West End and its community, each raising both hopes but also concerns. Our timeline will not allow us to invest in these to any major degree, but WEM can play a role in helping shape work to better reflect local issues.

The Frontierland site is the empty brownfield location of the old theme park which has become almost emblematic of both the physically and emotionally challenges faced by the West End. Over decades this empty eyesore has cut directly into Morecambe's seafront and left the West End separated from the town.

The Council have recently acquired the site and hopes are now that something can finally be done to heal this wound. The question is what and, most importantly for WEM, how the process of redeveloping the site will involve local people. Previous history has seen even the best intentions of planners run aground in terms of consultation and the balance between meeting aspirations but being economically viable will be a hard one to reach. WEM is perfectly placed to help consult local people and has agreed to engage with the Council at the earliest possible stage on helping them with community discussions and adding value as a potential partner.

Frontierland & Horizon initiatives				
Community	Economy	Place		
Goal: Influence and seed fund for future local development				
Outcomes			Budget £22,000	
1	Supporting community influence on discussion and planning			
2	Encouraging investment in new strategic projects			

There are some other small irregular initiatives on the horizon, and the likelihood of others in the next four years all of which have some potential strategic benefits to the West End. One example is discussion over a new illuminations project along Morecambe front. Something WEM would like to encourage in terms of the West End front up to the Battery. Another discussion has been had around asking West End businesses (in general or along the front) if they wish to revisit joining Morecambe's Business Improvement District (BID). The future of Eden North is not yet assured but if it is given the go ahead the impact on the West End could be significant both in positive terms such as employment and investment but also problems with house prices rising. There is real fear (and some initial evidence) that 'gentrification' could be a big issue.

These and other unexpected new developments cannot be major WEM initiatives during the lifetime of Big Local, but we would like the opportunity to at least have a voice in shaping what these may do and leading on local consultation where possible.

NB: In not being able to tightly predict these outcomes the funding allocated could also act as contingency money toward other projects or be drawn back if unspent (see Plan B).

## ● WEM organisation & management

The running of the WEM itself has offered a reasonably stable platform by which to manage and oversee work whilst delivering practical day to day needs. We recognise that WEM is not as speedy an organisation as some others might wish, but that reflects the limited staffing and reliance on volunteers. We propose to continue as is but seek to improve working in better ways where that is reasonable. For example, whilst we are very keen to get back to physical partnership meetings, we have also recognised the time saving value of online meetings for more general discussions. We also work to keep the community informed about what WEM does and there may be ways we can expand our website or build on our community newsletter distributed to 4000 households.

We work with key partners to help shape work and to consult with different sections of our community. Many partnership members are involved in other community activities.

WEM organisation & management				
Community				
Goal: Basic running of West End Morecambe Big Local				
Outcomes			Budget £198,000	
1	Supporting management and running of WEM partnership			
2	Staffing (currently totalling 22½ hours) plus freelance			
3	Maintaining basic level of organisation			
4	Communications and events			

All help ensure that WEM remains embedded in, and informed by, our wider community. With covid restrictions now limited we also have an increased ability to engage more directly with the public through specific consultation work and events.

With a much tighter focus on work in this new Action Plan WEM's members will be focussed on delivering those outcomes. However, there are elements of that work that still require more development and more engagement with targeted communities within the West End. With this being the final Action Plan, the partnership will also be slowly beginning to consider the future after Big Local. Our staff and wider partners will support us on continued engagement strategies that lays out ways in which WEM as a whole, and partnership members individually, can continue to share information about WEM's work and to feed the community's issues back into WEM. None of this would be possible without the ongoing support of our Local Trusted Organisation (LDCVS) who manage the Big Local finances as well as the ongoing support and network offered by our Big Local and the Local Trust team.

### Objectives: Summary

Covid and the lock downs have presented many challenges to engaging with the community over the past months. Nevertheless, WEM has managed to engage with and reflect current feelings and strategic priorities seen as necessary in the West End. Naturally many of these often reflect issues of recovery after the pandemic but others are deeper long-term needs which people are seeking to address. One of the few silver linings to the slowdown of work during Covid is that it has enabled WEM to look in far more detail than before. This has several benefits...

- A much higher level of specific targeted projects
- Some projects ready to roll out almost immediately
- A simpler tighter focus for the future partnership

- Greater confidence over delivery and spend
- Work that is notably strategic
- Resolve to avoid being drawn into community politics

## Spending Plan B

Conscious that significant spend has been earmarked to certain projects not yet finalised the partnership has also considered what might happen if for some unexpected reason the projects did not proceed. Depending on timescales there is some potential that the outcomes of these, and other projects as well, could be transferred to alternative providers. However, WEM ultimately has to consider spend and our initial 'plan B' approach is to extend existing projects or meet new identified needs.

**The Fuel Poverty project** is an example of this which has recently been added to the list of projects (October 2022) with an expected spend of £30,000.

Fuel Poverty Project				
Community	Health	Economy	Education	
Goal: Supporting residents and community			Budget £30,000	

There are a number of other unlisted projects and initiatives which WEM is aware of. None of these have been highlighted in our plan

but there is again some potential to develop these within the timeframe of this plan if that was necessary. Commitment and spend milestones on the bigger projects will be monitored regularly so the partnership can implement change as needed. Whatever the outcome our objective is to deliver solid meaningful activity but also to fully commit our spending within the Big Local timeframe.

## Themed Spending

We have also carried out a rough estimation of where themed spending comes, by weighting breakdown of emphasis under each individual project (see separate project charts).

Themed spending equivalent 2022 - 2025		
Community	23%	£135,700
Health	14%	£82,600
Economy	24%	£141,600
Education	13%	£76,700
Place	26%	£153,400
Projects total		£590,000



## Costings and spend

The following covers the approximate schedule for spend we have planned for 2022 – 2025 including known potential match funding

Projects 2022 - 2025	2022		2023		2024		2025		Total	Match
	Q1/2	Q3/4	Q1/2	Q3/4	Q1/2	Q3/4	Q1/2	Q3/4		
West End Online			£10,000	£10,000	£8,000	£8,000	£4,000		£40,000	
Stanleys centre		£5,000	£145,000						£150,000	£150,000
Mental health work			£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000		£50,000	
Food wraparound	£9,000	£9,000							£18,000	
Housing		£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£3,000	£3,000	£2,000		£20,000	£20,000
Children's environmental project			£7,500	£7,500	£7,500	£7,500			£30,000	£50,000
Community network & Unity projects			£15,000	£15,000	£10,000	£10,000	£4,000	£4,000	£58,000	
Family mentoring & support		£2,000	£14,000	£30,000	£4,000	£2,000			£52,000	£25,000+
Celebrating community			£10,000	£10,000	£7,500	£7,500	£5,000	£10,000	£50,000	
Frontierland / Horizon initiatives		£1,000	£6,500	£6,500	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£22,000	£15,000+
WEM organisation	£24,000	£24,000	£24,000	£24,000	£24,000	£24,000	£26,000	£26,000	£172,000	
Plan B spending		£26,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000			£126,000	
	<b>£33,000</b>	<b>£1,000</b>	£93,500	£110,500	£67,500	£65,500	£42,000	£41,000		
Remaining Big Local Morecambe budget									<b>£788,000</b>	
Spend 2022 - 2025									<b>£788,000</b>	

- Match funding are reasonable expectations based on existing discussions.
- These are estimated spends and will evolve and adapt as things progress.

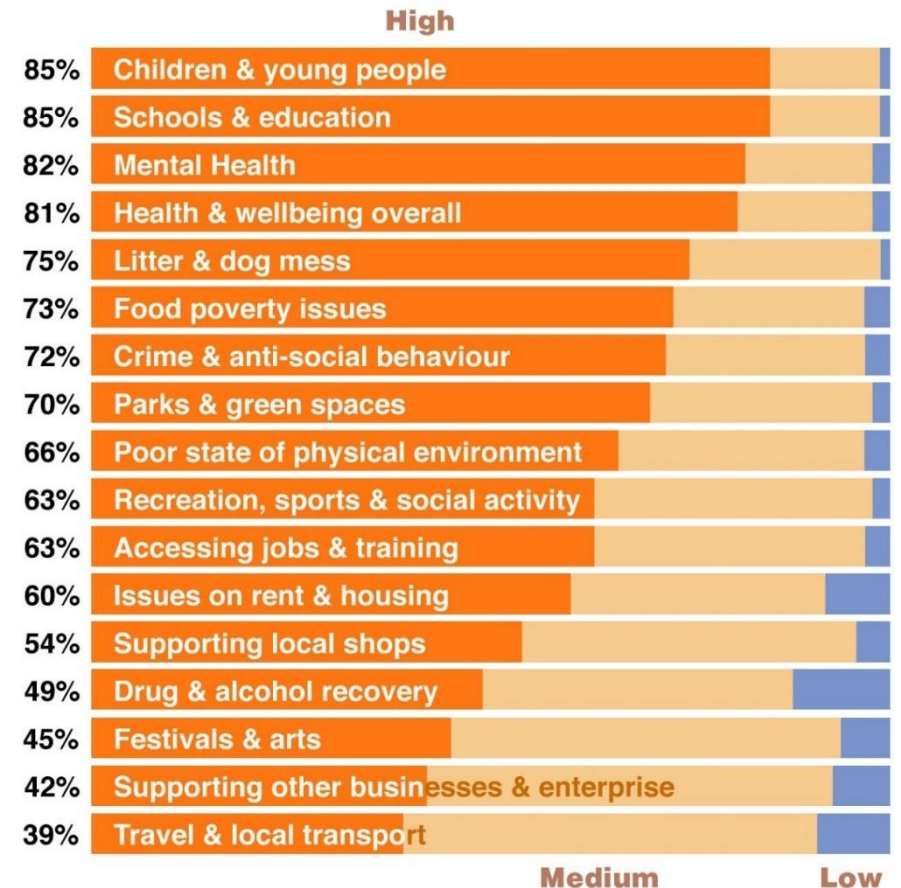
# Supporting information

## Consultation: how our work meets strategic need

Despite the challenges of covid we have managed to maintain a healthy connection with local views and opinions. To some extent these have not changed significantly from earlier findings but the impact of Covid and other social pressures as highlighted certain issues (such as mental health) as more pressing.

The carry-over of information and both good and bad learning from previous Action Plans and iterations of the WEM partnership has helped shaped the direction of our new plan.

We have also carried out a community survey with 200+ families in the area and a balancing focus survey gathering responses from non-family participants. The results of these suggest our work is heavily in line with local priorities. We have also carried out a series of interviews with leading voluntary and public sector partners. The results of this are more nuanced but again suggest that much of the background approach we are taking is in line with the needs and pressures of multi-sector working. Our community development worker has also been involved in hundreds of hours of linking with key partners to draw up information and detail on the various proposals. Several written reports from the same source have periodically guided specific themed work. A small administrative group has worked with the support of our Big Local representative pulled together material for the partnership to then review, discuss and agree.



West End Morecambe Big Local carried out an online survey with 200+ families at a local primary school. This is one way to stay in touch with what local resident's views and priorities are. This doesn't dig into detail, but it helps paint a general picture to help see if we are in line with local thinking. Participants were offered a range of subjects (like those used in a 2018 WEM survey) and asked to prioritise them between low to high priority.

This survey was delivered via a local school which may have given some higher emphasis to 'schools and education' although the issue of children falling behind at school during covid is an issue of concern expressed elsewhere. The issue of 'children and young people' was also close to the top of a previous survey that questioned a completely different demographic in 2018.

It is likely that the pandemic has this time raised both health headings higher than 'food poverty' which was previously more of a priority (and a topic of much local debate during the time of the previous survey). The focus on 'crime and anti-social behaviour' has notably gone down in priority. The challenges of lock-down may also explain an increased focus on recreation, sports, and social activity which was close to the bottom previously. 'Drug and alcohol recovery' and 'supporting other businesses' have notably dropped but other lower priorities have largely remained the same.

Despite the pandemic the issue of 'litter and dog mess' maintained its standing and, as always, this subject could be said to reflect a feeling of the degree (or lack of) mutual care from neighbours in a community – this in part explains our community unity project. It was noted that a couple of responses to broader questions this time included less than charitable views of some fellow citizens.

We asked if there were other priorities not listed. 8% of respondents gave an additional suggestion. Most suggestions related to individual interests, which is understandable, but there were multiple comments around the lack of activities, clubs, and hobby classes for primary age kids (and adults) both in the West End and Morecambe. That point also strongly filtered into the responses to a further question about the future of Frontierland where some kind of activity or leisure centre was emphasised.

When compared to the similar survey from 2018 the results show changes but more in terms of emphasis rather than any fundamental shift. The findings showed less of a tendency to

relegate topics into low priority as happened previously, but this may be down to slightly different survey methods used this time.

## **Focused feedback**

We also carried out two focus consultations, one with a small group of residents whose circumstances place them within the sphere of social exclusion. This was a random selection, but we targeted individuals without school age children, in part as a control to the survey done through schools and responses did indicate some shift in emphasis on children. We also carried out ten conversational interviews with individuals who might be defined as leaders in the voluntary, public, and business sectors along with two local politicians. All this focus work was done under the same anonymity as the survey and used the initial survey subject list as a primer.

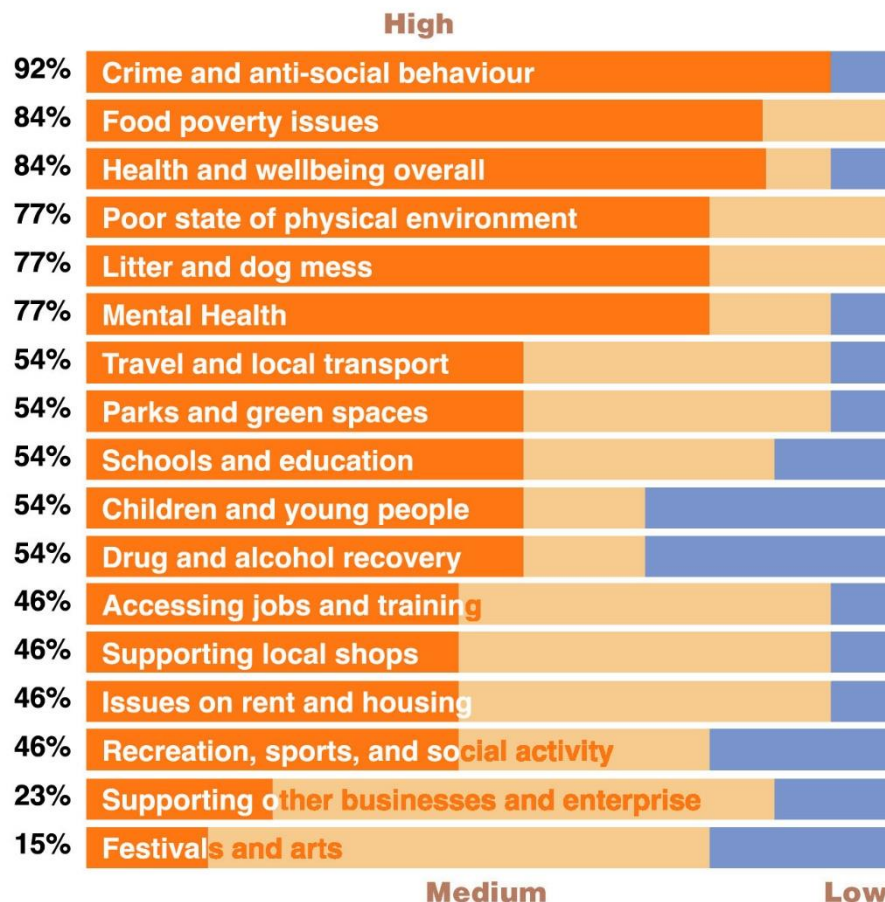
### **(i) Small resident's group**

Results were largely in line with the bigger survey with similar commentary on themed questions.

On the subject of mental health there were additional comments about the need for more advertising of what's available and that it would be good to have one single location in the West End for addressing mental health. On housing the more notable comments related to noisy and anti-social neighbours as well as the poor state of the local environment, dog mess, rubbish, etc.

Post-covid issues included the same topics as the larger survey: people having grown apart, children making up for lost time, supporting local shops and the cost-of-living crisis. Potential responses were again similar with help and activities for the young, mental health support and events, activities, places to improve people meeting and community spirit





With responses coming through the local food club project there was a slight weighting on related issues including the vital need for those services and a suggestion of adding a place to get a shower, wash clothes, use phone / computer, get advice help.

## (ii) Community leaders

The conversational interviews with leaders in the voluntary, public, and business sectors asked participants to prioritise five issues. Children and young people were the notable priority for many with food poverty, and issues on rent and housing also being raised. Health and mental health together similarly so.

Accessing jobs and training, accompanied by poor state of physical environment was the next most chosen topic. Below this came supporting businesses and local economy, with crime and anti-social behaviour, local transport, drug and alcohol recovery, and a caveated festivals and arts drawing briefer mentions.

There were some trends on issues not listed in the original primer. One theme was reconnecting with people after the pandemic. It was felt some moments of positive civic engagement during covid had waned, leaving a need to still take care of each other and support people with mental health, families, work, and recovery. Some also felt there had been further erosion of already poor democratic engagement and limited power over local democracy.

There were a few of points about holistically looking at issues of people's increased social exclusion, also community wealth and capacity, simply looking out for each other and building pride. A business comment noted some new shops setting up but how the physical customer base locally had dropped away with shops were closing further days and Saturday trade sometimes being negligible. There were some mixed points raised about local arts, one being as something on offer to local children but also the question about what taxpayers really get out of local arts activity. Another comment noted some creatives were taking up shops (a positive) but limited opening and high prices jarring with the value they might bring.

Issues of concern for the post-covid period collectively followed a number of themes. One conclusion was that we are, in some ways, dealing with a kind of post-traumatic stress disorder for the whole community. That and practical concerns over lost education, mental

health, and employment. A brief positive was the opportunity to now build on some digital progress that took place under lock-down.

The question is how to now build a sense of safety for communities to start enjoying life, for the vulnerable, the isolated, and all of us to start interacting again. In rebuilding relationships, a social network and also a support network, how do we rediscover confidence and friendships. One person noted “How do we get people out of the front door? Bring their kids, bring a friend, to find out how are you coping?” There were several comments that might be interpreted as organising some activities or events around a theme of “Are you okay?” or “It’s okay to not be okay.”

Another issue was the cost of living increases with real concerns about the impact on places like the West end. Also, life skills and spending patterns of younger generations – people now paying for things rather than being self-sufficient. One example was just-eat apps becoming the norm but how it compromises both cooking skills and disposable income. A parallel point was raised about individual mentoring to help people improve their life chances and living skills, and to seize what opportunities there were.

There were also some specific notes about a possible increase in suicidal thoughts with young people, increased online gambling and some further references on improving democratic accountability with the Town and City Council’s.

One final point raised by some was the hidden dysfunction that exists across parts of the sectors they work within; how real needs were sometimes being overlooked and how the hidden people politics often dominated the way things were done or not done, and where funding sometimes appeared to go.

# Legacy

## Legacy Statement

Our legacy statement has been devised as a result of several months of discussion with our key stakeholders. It reflects both available data and the ongoing conversation we have within the West End. Whilst the opportunity for structured consultation has been limited in the last two years, our partnership members and Community Development Worker have established ongoing relationships with residents and with the local organisations that support them.

We have made the decision to focus on five big issues in our final plan, partnering with a range of key stakeholders rather than acting as grant givers. We wanted to move away from funding that gave a pound for pound return, to commissions that leverage changes which would otherwise be beyond the modest funds we have access to. Rather than passively assessing progress, we want be at the heart of it – working alongside those making key decisions about the West End.

Our final plan is based around five issues shown to be vital from our previous three plans, centering on health. Our definition of health is one that addresses its social determinants, and takes the CDC’s model as its basis, that is:

- Community: the heart of what we do, how we work together.
- Health: a foundation to help people thrive.
- Economy: helping and encouraging enterprise
- Education: growing through new skills and learning.
- Place: improving our physical neighbourhood.

Whilst the model is aimed at significant levels of public investment, we believe it can also be applied successfully at a community level, using the combined resources of social organisations and local delivery partners, of which we see ourselves as one.

We are working, in part, as brokers bringing voluntary sector organisations and commissioners to the same table, working towards the same understanding. We also want to bring in different ways of looking at new problems – our experience with the Academy of Urbanism has shown us how useful this can be. Our Big Local funds allow us to underwrite new approaches, take risk and encourage commissioners to take a path less well trodden.

Whilst writing our current plan we consciously avoided references to poverty, something of a given in the West End but not a theme that would prove useful for looking ahead. Instead, we are looking to the development of programmes that deal with poverty and deprivation but present Morecambe's West End as a sandbox for programmes that present as both innovative and extensible.

We expect our legacy to be that we have fostered relationships that are more substantial and based on mutual understanding and services that reflect the needs of residents as they are planned, delivered and evaluated.



## Demographic data

The West End Morecambe Big Local area contains the older part of the West End of Morecambe that developed from the nucleus around the Regent Road area. It straddles the LA3 Morecambe and LA4 Heysham postcode areas. Its western boundary is the Promenade between Morecambe and Heysham. Its southern boundary is Fairfield Road. Its eastern boundary is Balmoral Road up to Albany Road, with an easterly salient that incorporates Regent Park. Its northern boundary extends up to the southern edge of Morecambe's Retail Park and includes the empty Frontierland site.

Area statistics are made up from various different data sources, much of which covers geographic boundaries that are different to WEM's specific boundary. However, the data is useful in looking at general outline of the local populations. Some new 2021 census data will be available this year.





## Population

The population of the WEM area is in the region of about 5,000 people. There are considerably more people aged 0-15 in the West End (3% higher than Lancashire average) and less people over 65 than the average for England and the Northwest (9% lower).

According to 2011 census the population is largely white British with the largest ethnic minority community being Polish. The West End has slightly lower than average levels of white British residents at 84.5%. 11% of the population is non-British white, 2.7% Pakistani and 1.5% Indian. In total 17 different ethnic groups are living in the West End all some of these figures represent just a handful of individuals. A number of households have no-one in the family that has English as their main language.

The 2011 census indicated the population has fallen since 2001 in the West End but has risen on average in the Northwest. The population has since risen again but has only to 2001 levels.

## Vulnerable People

In May 2017 9.4% of benefit claimants relating to unemployment were aged 18-24 which is more than three times the Northwest average. This has risen to 19.3% which is close to three times the rate for Lancashire. It began to rise sharply in February 2020. The number of working age residents claiming benefits has fallen to 21% but this is still almost double the average for Lancashire and the Northwest.

An average of 49% of the working age population is in receipt of Universal Credit. 28% are entitled to the housing element of the credit, more than four times the Lancashire average. More than double the number of residents receive benefit for work limiting illness than the Lancashire average.

The people of the West End live in the most deprived 20% of areas in England against a regional average of 32%. The population is considered to be deprived in terms of...

- Health which is more than double the regional average
- Employment which is more than three times the average.
- Living environment which is more than three times the regional average.
- Crime which is more than four times the average.
- Family housing
- Children's education

33% of pensioners are claiming pension credit against a regional average of just under 20%. Just under 4.5% of the working age population is receiving mental health related benefits. Those residents claiming PIP are almost double the Lancashire average at 13.2% and the number of households with Limited Capacity for Work is at 7.4% of households compared to a 2.3% average.

## Housing

33% of the population are living in flats against a Northwest average of 3.5%. 41% of houses are owner occupied compared to the average of 65% and 48% are with private landlords against a Northwest average of 14%. The average house price has risen to £116k which is 62% of the Lancashire average. 72% are in council tax Band A against a Lancashire average of 38%. Just over 12% of the population is in overcrowded housing which is double the Northwest average. 66% of the population live in housing more than 100 years old compared to a average of under 19%.

## Crime

As of July 2021, this has fallen from 345 to 312 crimes per 1000 population with the Lancashire average staying the same as 126

per 1000. These are mostly anti-social behaviour incidents and violent crimes which are running at 85 per 1000 as opposed to the average of 32.

### Education

Education figures do not appear to have changed much from the 2011 census with 28% of the working age population have no qualifications and pupils being below Northwest averages of achievement at all key stages although the Key Stage 4 (secondary) trend is approving.

### Economy

These figures are from the 2011 census. There is either no change or figures have not been updated. Average weekly household income is £528 as compared to the Northwest average of £678. The largest sectors West End residents are employed in are retail followed by health and social work and accommodation and food services. The largest employers based in West End are health followed by retail and then hotels and catering.

Roughly 24% of the local workforce are employed in managerial or professional occupations. The Northwest average is 38%. 21% are in low-skilled jobs compared to 12% average.

20% of households are living in fuel poverty.

### Access

This covers various issues that affect people locally.

- 48% of households in West End don't have a car against the Northwest average is only 28%.

- Access to broadband and broadband speeds is roughly half that of the Northwest average.
- Democratically 25.6% of the population voted in the 2019 election as opposed to 33.8% as a Lancashire average.
- Despite the vista of the Bay the actual total access to greenspace is recorded as 0.5% against the Lancashire average of 2.1%.

### Health

As of 2017 healthy life expectancy for men is 54yrs and 57yrs for women. This is just under 10 years lower for men and 8 years lower for women than the Northwest average. Actual life expectancy is 72 years for men and 79 years for women. Note: This means that men are expected to have 18 years of ill health by the end of their life and women 22 years.

Incidences of coronary heart disease are 85% higher, respiratory disease is 64% higher and circulatory disease is 44% higher than the national average. Emergency hospital admissions are 64% higher than the national average with this rising to more than 123% for coronary heart disease and 114% for pulmonary disease. People in West End are less likely to eat healthily and more likely to smoke.

Depression is more prevalent at 15% compared with a Lancashire average of 11%.

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Sources: Local Insight and OCSI (Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion) bulletin. July 2021. Utilising numerous different sources within it.

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Enhancing the food club project



Local Trust

Big Local



WEM does not have a physical office so the best way to contact is via our website [www.westendmorecambe.co.uk](http://www.westendmorecambe.co.uk) or email [admin@westendmorecambe.co.uk](mailto:admin@westendmorecambe.co.uk) You can write to: West End Morecambe Big Local c/o LDCVS, The Cornerstone, Sulyard Street, Lancaster, LA1 1PX

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