



Title	Wellington Community Development Strategy & Delivery Plan 2026–2029
Meeting	Community Committee
Date of meeting	18.05.26
Action Required	Approve the Wellington Community Development Strategy & Delivery Plan 2026–2029
Report Author and email address	Laura Batcha <a href="mailto:laura@wellingtontowncouncil.co.uk">laura@wellingtontowncouncil.co.uk</a>

## 1. Introduction

This report presents the Wellington Community Development Strategy & Delivery Plan 2026–2029 for consideration and approval by the Community Committee.

The Strategy provides an overarching framework for Wellington Town Council's approach to community development and sets out how activity will be coordinated across existing community development platforms, partnerships and future initiatives.

The report is being brought back to Committee following previous Member feedback requesting:

- clearer identification of who community development activity supports
- improved visibility of current activity and delivery
- stronger explanation of the role of existing community development platforms
- clearer links between strategy, delivery and preventative community support

The Strategy is intended to provide:

- clearer strategic direction
- improved coordination across programmes and partnerships
- a framework for future delivery planning and reporting

- greater visibility of the breadth of community development activity already taking place across Wellington

The report seeks Committee approval of the attached Strategy.

## 2. Background

Over the past 12 months, Wellington Town Council has experienced significant growth in community development activity through:

- the opening of the Kings Arms Community Hub (KACH)
- the development of Cradle to Career (C2C)
- Wellington becoming Somerset's first Best Start in Life (BSiL) Family Hub location
- the development of Wellington Cares
- additional partnership and pilot activity linked to wellbeing, community cohesion and preventative support

Alongside this growth, there has been increasing recognition of the need for:

- clearer strategic coordination
- improved visibility of activity and outcomes
- stronger reporting arrangements
- clearer alignment between projects, partnerships and wider community priorities

The Strategy has therefore been developed to provide:

- a clearer structure for community development activity
- a shared understanding of Wellington Town Council's role within community development
- improved long-term coordination across platforms and partnerships
- a framework for future delivery planning, reporting and evidence collection

The Strategy also reinforces Wellington Town Council's role as:

- a connector between residents, organisations and services
- an enabler of partnership and community-led activity
- a platform builder supporting accessible local support, prevention and community resilience

The Strategy recognises that Wellington Town Council is not a replacement for statutory services. Instead, the focus is on strengthening local connections, improving coordination and supporting earlier intervention where possible.

Operational delivery across the Strategy is already underway through existing activity linked to:

- Kings Arms Community Hub
- Cradle to Career
- Best Start in Life
- Wellington Cares
- Connect Somerset partnership activity
- wider community engagement and pilot initiatives

The attached Strategy is intended to provide the overarching framework for this work between 2026 and 2029.

### 3.Links to Council Vision and Place Plan

**An inclusive, safe and secure town**

The Strategy supports early intervention, community wellbeing, partnership working, safeguarding awareness, accessible local support and support for vulnerable residents.

**A town with a diverse, thriving and resilient local economy**

The Strategy supports employability activity, partnership working with employers, skills development and wider community resilience.

**A town with vibrant cultural, sporting and social communities**

The Strategy supports social connection, community participation, wellbeing activity, volunteer involvement and community cohesion.

**Proud and protective of our heritage, green spaces and biodiversity**

The Strategy supports community engagement and future partnership opportunities linked to environmental awareness and sustainability activity.

**A destination of choice for people to live and work and for businesses to be located**

The Strategy supports community infrastructure, resident wellbeing, community resilience and improved quality of life.

### 4.Financial Implications

The Strategy itself does not create additional immediate financial commitments.

Community development activity is currently supported through a combination of:

- existing Town Council budget allocations
- partnership delivery
- externally funded activity
- grant funding

- volunteer involvement

Current significant budget areas linked to community development include:

- Cradle to Career funding
- Youth Development funding
- Community Development budget allocation
- project-specific external funding and partnership contributions

The Strategy is intended to support:

- improved coordination of existing resources
- clearer prioritisation of future activity
- stronger alignment between projects and identified community need
- improved opportunities for external funding applications and partnership investment

Future delivery plans and project proposals will continue to be brought separately to Committee where financial approval is required.

## 5.Risks

### **Risks if approved**

- Some partnership-based activity remains dependent on external funding and wider partner commitment
- Long-term preventative outcomes may take time to evidence fully

### **Risks if no action is taken**

- Community development activity may continue without a clearly agreed strategic framework
- Increased risk of duplication or disconnected project development
- Reduced clarity around Wellington Town Council's role within community development
- Reduced ability to prioritise future activity and funding decisions
- Reduced visibility of existing community development activity and preventative work already taking place

### **Risk Mitigation**

- Annual delivery planning and Committee reporting

- Ongoing partnership coordination and monitoring
- Maintaining a focused platform-based approach rather than expanding into large numbers of disconnected projects
- Continued development of evidence collection and reporting arrangements

## 6. Considerations

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Wellington Community Development Strategy & Delivery Plan 2026–2029

## 7. Appendices

Appendix A – Wellington Community Development Strategy & Delivery Plan 2026–2029

# **Wellington Community Development Strategy & Delivery Plan**

## **2026–2029**

### **1. Purpose of this Strategy**

This Strategy sets out Wellington Town Council's approach to community development between 2026 and 2029.

It provides a clear framework for how the Council will support residents, strengthen community connections and improve access to local support and opportunities.

The Strategy also provides an overarching framework for community development activity, helping ensure that projects, partnerships and future initiatives remain aligned with identified community priorities, available capacity and the Town Council's wider role within Wellington.

### **2. What Community Development Means in Wellington**

Community development in Wellington is about helping the town remain connected, supportive and resilient by improving access to local support, strengthening community relationships and enabling preventative approaches that reduce the risk of crisis wherever possible.

This includes supporting community cohesion by creating opportunities for residents from different backgrounds, ages and experiences to connect, participate and feel part of the wider community.

As Wellington continues to grow and change, community development also plays an important role in helping residents feel connected, informed and able to access support locally.

Wellington Town Council's role is not to replace statutory services. Instead, the Council aims to strengthen local connections, improve coordination where possible and support accessible community-based approaches that help residents earlier and more effectively.

## 2.1 Core Role of Wellington Town Council

Within community development, Wellington Town Council's role is primarily to act as a:

- **Connector** between residents, organisations, services and partners
- **Enabler** of local activity, partnership working and community-led support
- **Platform builder** creating accessible spaces and structures where support, opportunity and connection can grow over time

This approach helps ensure that community development activity remains coordinated, sustainable and proportionate to the Town Council's role and capacity.

## 3. What Residents Told Us

Consultation and engagement activity carried out across Wellington highlighted several recurring themes. Residents consistently expressed a strong desire for Wellington to remain welcoming, connected and community-focused.

Feedback also demonstrated the importance of:

- accessible local support
- opportunities for connection
- support for families and young people
- community wellbeing
- stronger awareness of available services and activities

Residents also highlighted concerns about maintaining community connection as Wellington grows and changes over time.

### 3.1 Key Resident Themes

Key themes identified through engagement activity included:

- reducing isolation and strengthening community connection
- support for children, young people and families
- accessible local support and wellbeing provision
- community activities that encourage belonging and participation
- opportunities for volunteering, skills and engagement
- improving awareness of local support and services

These themes continue to inform the Council's community development priorities and delivery approach.

#### **4. Community Development Platforms**

Community development activity in Wellington will be coordinated through a small number of connected platforms.

This approach helps:

- avoid duplication
- strengthen accountability
- improve coordination between organisations
- support earlier intervention
- create clearer pathways into local support

The Council's approach is intended to strengthen long-term community infrastructure and coordinated support pathways rather than develop large numbers of disconnected projects or short-term activity.

##### **4.1 Kings Arms Community Hub (KACH)**

The Kings Arms Community Hub provides Wellington with an accessible and trusted community anchor point where residents, organisations and services can connect, access support and build relationships locally.

The Hub supports a wide range of community activity including:

- wellbeing support
- youth provision
- family support
- signposting and early help
- partnership delivery
- volunteering and community engagement

The Hub is intended to function as more than a building or room hire space. It acts as a local access point for community connection, preventative support and partnership working.

## **4.2 Cradle to Career (C2C)**

Cradle to Career is a long-term partnership approach focused on improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

The programme aims to reduce fragmentation between education, wellbeing and wider support pathways by strengthening connections between schools, families, community organisations and local services.

The Wellington Cradle to Career approach continues to develop through a number of themed strands including:

- employability
- family support
- reading and literacy
- early years
- mobile phone and digital wellbeing work

The programme is partnership-led and intended to support long-term system coordination and earlier intervention over time.

## **4.3 Best Start in Life (BSiL)**

Best Start in Life focuses on improving support for families during the early years of a child's life.

The programme aims to strengthen early support pathways, improve coordination between services and ensure families are better able to access guidance and support locally.

Activity linked to Best Start in Life includes:

- early years engagement
- family support
- partnership working with health visitors and providers
- improving pathways linked to school readiness and child development

## **4.4 Wellington Cares**

Wellington Cares is a developing community support platform focused on improving local coordination around unpaid carers, volunteers, community-based care and early intervention support.

The programme aims to improve awareness of local support, strengthen community-based networks and help residents navigate available care and wellbeing services more easily.

Wellington Cares also provides opportunities to strengthen local resilience and partnership working as wider support systems continue to evolve.

## **5. Community Navigation and Partnership Coordination**

Wellington Town Council also hosts the Connect Somerset Neighbourhood Champion role.

The role supports:

- community navigation
- partnership working
- early help and signposting
- stronger connections between residents, organisations and services

Rather than operating as a standalone programme, the role works across multiple community development platforms and initiatives.

This includes supporting activity connected to:

- Kings Arms Community Hub
- Cradle to Career
- Best Start in Life
- wider community engagement and partnership activity

The role helps strengthen coordination between organisations and improve local access to support through earlier connection and signposting where possible.

## **6. Supporting Initiatives and Pilot Activity**

Alongside the core community development platforms, Wellington Town Council may support additional initiatives, pilot projects and partnership activity that respond to identified community need or emerging opportunities.

These activities are intended to complement wider community development priorities and may be tested, adapted or reviewed over time.

Current examples include:

- Together in Tone – community music and wellbeing activity supporting social connection and participation
- environmental and community awareness initiatives linked to sustainability and local engagement
- community events and engagement activity that strengthen belonging, inclusion and community cohesion

Projects and pilot activity will continue to be considered against the wider aims and priorities set out within this Strategy.

## **7. Prevention and Early Intervention**

A key principle within this Strategy is prevention and early intervention.

Prevention is not always highly visible. In practice, it can include:

- accessible local support
- trusted relationships
- community connection
- signposting
- wellbeing activity
- opportunities for participation before problems escalate further

Early examples linked to the Kings Arms Community Hub already demonstrate the value of accessible community-based support, including residents being connected into wellbeing, family, recovery and mental health support through trusted relationships and partnership working.

As wider support systems continue to change, community-based approaches and local partnership coordination are becoming increasingly important in helping residents access support earlier and more easily.

Strengthening community resilience includes improving local connections, reducing barriers to support and enabling organisations and services to work more effectively together where possible.

## **8. Three-Year Delivery Approach**

Community development activity is already taking place across all platforms.

This phased approach reflects the ongoing development of governance, reporting, coordination and long-term sustainability alongside operational delivery.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>What this looks like in practice</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Establish and Stabilise	Strengthening governance, reporting and coordination across existing programmes. Establishing delivery plans, improving partnership working and increasing visibility of activity already taking place through KACH, C2C and BSiL.
<b>Year 2</b>	Strengthen and Coordinate	Building stronger links between platforms, improving resident engagement, strengthening community voice and increasing consistency of delivery, data collection and partnership activity across Wellington.
<b>Year 3</b>	Sustain and Evidence	Embedding successful approaches, strengthening long-term sustainability and improving the ability to evidence community impact, preventative outcomes and resident benefit over time.

## **8.1 Examples Across Platforms**

### **Kings Arms Community Hub (KACH)**

#### **Year 1 – Establish and Stabilise**

Increase visibility of Hub activity, improve data collection and strengthen the Hub's role as an accessible community support and engagement space.

#### **Year 2 – Strengthen and Coordinate**

Increase partnership delivery, resident engagement and coordinated use of the Hub for preventative and community-based support activity.

#### **Year 3 – Sustain and Evidence**

Demonstrate community impact, strengthen sustainability and improve understanding of how the Hub contributes to local wellbeing and early intervention.

### **Cradle to Career (C2C)**

#### **Year 1 – Establish and Stabilise**

Strengthen strand delivery plans, increase visibility of activity already taking place, and improve partnership coordination and community understanding of Cradle to Career priorities.

### **Year 2 – Strengthen and Coordinate**

Strengthen pathways between education, families and community support while improving alignment, consistency and long-term coordination across strands.

### **Year 3 – Sustain and Evidence**

Begin evidencing longer-term educational, wellbeing and relationship-based outcomes linked to the Cradle to Career approach.

## **Best Start in Life (BSiL)**

### **Year 1 – Establish and Stabilise**

Establish Wellington’s role within the Somerset Best Start in Life model and strengthen local partnership coordination for children and families.

### **Year 2 – Strengthen and Coordinate**

Increase accessibility and consistency of local family support, parenting pathways and early years engagement activity.

### **Year 3 – Sustain and Evidence**

Strengthen longer-term pathways supporting school readiness, family wellbeing and early identification of need.

## **9. Community Voice and Ongoing Engagement**

Community development is an ongoing process rather than a fixed programme of activity.

Wellington Town Council will continue to engage with residents, community groups and partners to:

- identify emerging needs
- understand gaps in provision
- strengthen community voice
- shape future priorities and delivery approaches

This approach helps ensure that community development activity remains grounded in local need and community experience.

## **10. Resourcing and Partnership Approach**

Community development activity in Wellington is supported through a combination of:

- Town Council investment
- partnership delivery
- external funding
- volunteer involvement
- grant-funded activity

This blended approach helps maximise resources, strengthen partnership working and support delivery that remains proportionate to the Council's size, role and capacity.

Delivery across community development platforms will continue to evolve in line with:

- available capacity
- partnership commitment
- external funding opportunities
- identified community need

Where appropriate, Wellington Town Council will continue to support the identification and development of external funding opportunities aligned with community priorities.

## **11. Coordination and Accountability**

Community development activity will be overseen through the Community Committee and coordinated operationally through officers, delivery leads and relevant partnerships.

Operational coordination will support:

- partnership working
- delivery planning
- monitoring and reporting
- community engagement
- evidence collection
- funding and sustainability opportunities

This approach is intended to improve coordination, reduce duplication and strengthen accountability across community development activity.

## **12. Review and Updating the Strategy**

This Strategy provides the overarching framework for community development activity between 2026 and 2029.

Supporting delivery plans and annual action priorities will be updated and reported through the Community Committee to ensure activity remains aligned with:

- community need
- available resources
- emerging opportunities
- partnership priorities

The Strategy itself may be refreshed or updated where significant changes in local need, policy or delivery occur.

## **13. Monitoring and Evidence**

Community development activity will be monitored through a proportionate evidence and reporting approach.

Monitoring may include:

- participation and engagement levels
- community feedback
- partnership activity
- volunteer involvement
- examples of resident impact and outcomes
- evidence of improved coordination and access to support

The Council recognises that some preventative and long-term outcomes may take time to evidence fully, particularly within partnership-based programmes.

## **14. Summary**

This Strategy provides Wellington Town Council with a coordinated and realistic framework for community development between 2026 and 2029.

The Strategy focuses on strengthening community connection, improving access to local support and enabling preventative approaches that help residents before problems escalate.

It sets out a structured approach built around a small number of connected community development platforms, partnership working and ongoing community engagement.

The Strategy recognises that community development is long-term work requiring coordination, flexibility and sustainable delivery over time.

Through this approach, Wellington Town Council aims to support a connected, inclusive and resilient community while ensuring activity remains grounded in local need and proportionate to available resources and capacity.