



Community Profile for Radstock and Westfield



Local Trust | Big Local



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Introduction

What is Big Local?

Big Local is an exciting opportunity for the residents of Radstock and Westfield to receive an investment of at least £1m over the next 10 years to make a massive and lasting positive difference to their community. It's about bringing together all the local talent, ambitions, skills and energy from individuals, groups and organisations who want to make their area an even better place to live.

The four big outcomes for Big Local are:

1. Communities will be better able to identify local needs and take action in response to them.
2. People will have increased skills and confidence, so that they continue to identify and respond to needs in the future.
3. The community will make a difference to the needs it prioritises.
4. People will feel that their area is an even better place to live.

Radstock and Westfield set up a local steering group in 2012, consisting of local people with an active interest in the community and our area and a representative of each of the local parish councils. The steering group has been responsible for driving forward the Big Local programme, involving and engaging with the communities in our area of benefit and putting together the profile.

What is in the profile?

The Radstock and Westfield community profile is one of the first important steps along the way to develop our community plan. The profile attempts to describe the area as it is now, what is good about our community and what the main issues are and also some visions for the future which local residents have told us about.

We have included some information using maps and statistics but mostly we have tried to include the views and information given to us by local people and these have been collated through consultations, workshops, and other activities and events during 2012 and 2013.

History

Radstock was formerly at the heart of the mining activity within the Somerset Coalfields, with the outlying villages up in the surrounding hillside built to home the miners as close to the pit heads as possible. Housing consisted of small mining cottages and other infill housing. There was also a railway which went through Radstock which was closed in the 1970's.

Radstock and Westfield also relied heavily on manufacturing and printing and packaging industries up until about 5 years ago when the last large manufacturer closed down.

Radstock and Westfield Big Local Area Now

The Radstock and Westfield Big Local area include the outlying villages of Haydon, Writhlington, Tynning and Clandown and are located within the Bath & North East Somerset Local Authority Area.

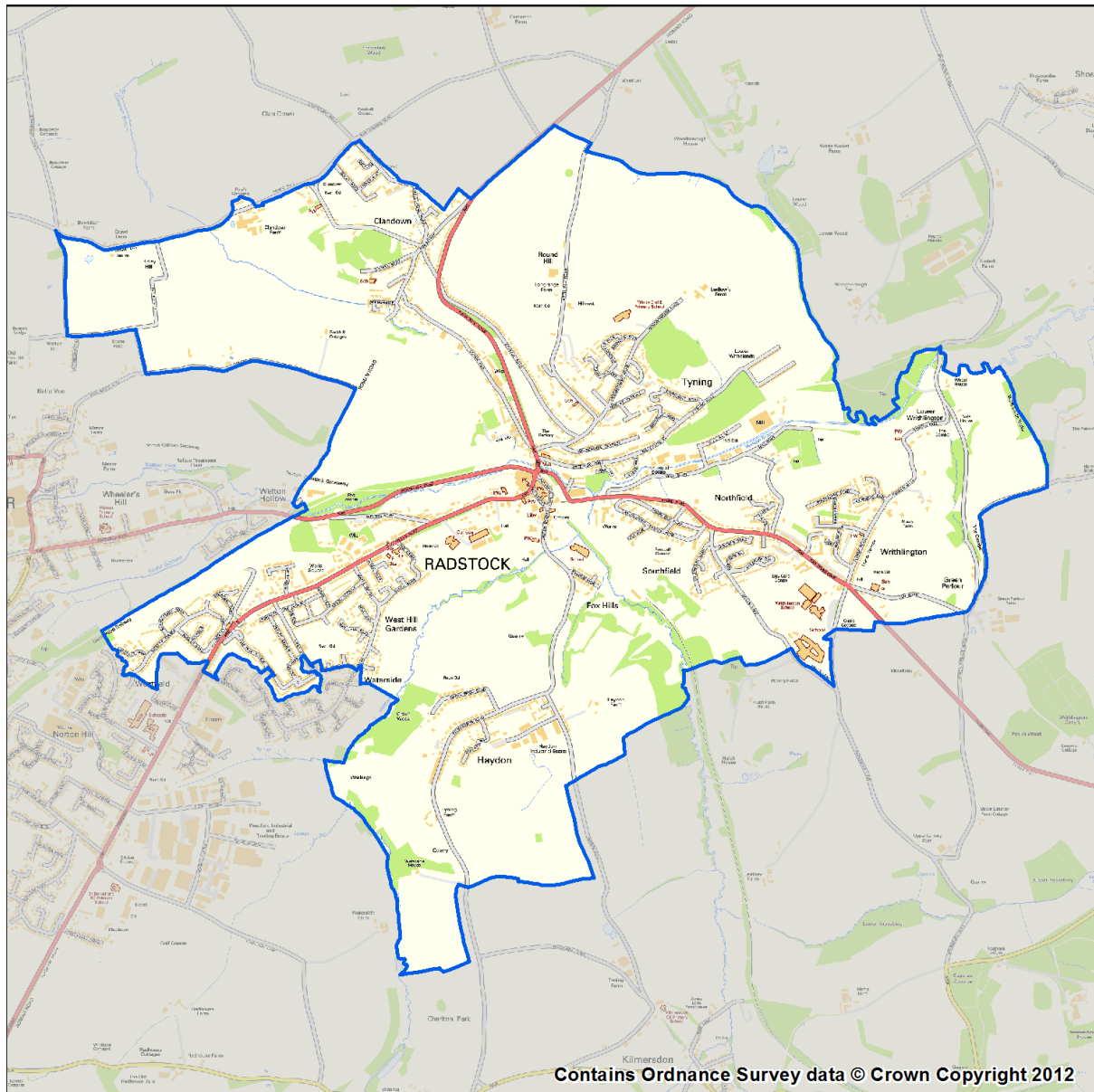
The area of Radstock is described by local people as being at the bottom of a basin, with all the other smaller villages surrounding it up on higher grounds. The town centre is very mixed creating a larger market town although the range and quality of shops are limited and the NNR brownfield site has been out of bounds for over 25 years now, awaiting planning permission.

Westfield has expanded over the years and there is a high level of small developments of new homes within the village boundary and a much larger housing development under construction in what was previously a large manufacturing packaging business. There is also a large industrial estate with a wide range of business activity as well as a large printing business. There is a limited range of shops in the area.

The other villages of Clandown, Writhlington, Haydon and Tynning are more isolated and benefit from very limited direct transport services, community activities and events and little shopping opportunities within their own communities with Haydon and Tynning having no shop at all.

The local population identifies itself as separate small communities, mainly based on the mining settlements, however through our consultations residents recognized that new opportunities and projects need to bring about change and enable the communities to come together with regard to scale and opportunity for new projects and initiatives to benefit themselves and the people in the other Big Local communities.

Map of Big Local Area for Radstock and Westfield



People

The Population of people living in the Radstock and Westfield Big Local area currently stands at 11,474 which have stayed relatively stable over the last 10 years, with only a marginal increase on the previous census data for the area of 11,396. There are no significant shifts in age populations for the area, apart from the 29-49 age range falling to 26.93% and the 50-64 ages increasing from 15.10% to 22.2%.

There was an increase in those indicating their ethnicity as white from 93.9% to 97.93% with only 2.03% of the population indicating that their ethnicity was in any of the other defined ethnic groups.

Housing

There is approximately 18% of social housing in the Radstock and Westfield area and as with all other areas there is a shortage of affordable housing.

B&NES Council Draft Core Strategy document sets out the Council's high level vision for the Somer Valley area, which includes Radstock and Westfield.

"The southern part of the District will become more self-reliant, facilitated by economic-led revitalisation alongside local energy generation. The roles of Midsomer Norton and Radstock Town Centres will be complementary to each other and continue to provide key employment, services and leisure provision for both their communities and those within the Somer Valley.

Midsomer Norton town centre will be the principal centre with an improved public realm well related to the new integrated Town Park. Radstock town centre will continue to provide a focal point for the community and realise the potential of tourism based on its mining heritage, green routes including cycle ways and attractive rural hinterland.

Villages of the Somer Valley will continue to provide for the needs of their local communities."

The Placemaking Plan is being developed by B&NES Council's Planning Department and will set out requirements for developers, focus on creating the conditions for better places and will give detail on how physical development can benefit, enhance and support local communities across the area.

A Placemaking Plan Launch Document has been recently produced which is intended to generate debate and discussion for developing new homes and communities in B&NES. It is the first stage towards the production of an adopted Placemaking Plan and outlines some initial proposals for development at the following sites across the Somer Valley for the future:

- Midsomer Norton:
 - Town Centre
 - South Road Car Park
 - Town Park
 - Welton Packaging Factory
- Radstock:
 - Town Centre Sites
 - Coombend

- Additional Housing in the settlements within the Somer Valley
- Westfield
- Paulton – Old Mills

Employment

There are less people in employment than previously, with a small drop from 65.7% to 58.52% of people in employment now. Unemployment is low in the area, currently showing as 3.72%, however over 24.4% are described as economically inactive. Again in the B&NES Council core strategy document it is expected that along with new housing developments in the area there will be an increase of economic development activity providing more employment for the area.

Crime

The crime rate is cited in 2012 as 29% per 1000 population, with the largest number of crimes being reported as violence, with burglary and offences against vehicles a much lower second and third. The crime rate for both Avon & Somerset area as a whole, and in the local ward itself has declined slightly year on year over the last three years.

Business

There are over 277 local businesses registered in the Big Local area, using information gathered from B&NES Economic Development Team, we know of course that there will be a significant number of extra mini or micro businesses also operating in the local area whose information is not available for us to access.

The biggest employment in the local area is in the manufacturing, motor trade and retail sector, with the Radstock Co-op and a range of other small retailers operating in the Radstock and Westfield high streets. Norton Radstock College is also a large employer in the local area. There is one large manufacturing employer in the area and others operating on the small industrial estates in Haydon, Westfield, Radstock and Clandown who in addition offer a variety and range of services and local employment to the area.

There is a main post office situated within the Cooperative and a Bank in Radstock. There is also a Radstock and Westfield Economic Development Forum which is organised across the Big Local area.

Consultation with businesses in the area has been limited, and responses to our questionnaire have been disappointing. There have been some small businesses who have attended some of our meetings and we have attended the Economic Forum for the area to promote Big Local. There have been other local businesses

who have offered their premises to us to carry out some of our community consultation exercises with the local community.

Other Services

There are Doctor's surgeries at Radstock and Westfield as well as others provided just outside the Big Local Area which some of the residents in the area will be registered with.

There is a Library service which is based in Radstock, which opens 3 days a week plus a Saturday morning. There is a mobile provision being provided at Writhlington once a week.

There are 7 different places of worship which are based across the Radstock and Westfield area. There are no places of worship based in Clandown, Tynning, Haydon or Writhlington.

Transport

There are regular Bus services throughout the Big Local area; including regular services to Midsomer Norton, Bath, Bristol and Wells. In the more rural villages (Haydon, Tynning and Writhlington) services which are offered are less frequent than for those people who live in Radstock and Westfield.

There is a Community transport Dial a Ride scheme with 3 fully accessible mini-busses which covers the whole of the Big Local area and provides a door to door transport to appointments etc., as well as trips and group travel for those people who fit its operating criteria. There is a small membership fee to join the scheme, and then costs for travel are determined by which zone you are travelling to and from.

Schools

The villages of Radstock, Westfield, Tynning and Writhlington each have a primary school with the children from Haydon mainly attending either Radstock or Tynning schools. The schools have below average pupil numbers for a Primary school, apart from Westfield. All of the schools have either a good or outstanding Ofsted rating however Westfield School, the largest with 347 pupils on its register and 12 classes has a "requires improvement" status following its recent inspection.

Writhlington also houses a larger than average Business and Enterprise specialist secondary school with 1557 pupils and which takes in pupils from the catchment areas of the children and young people from the Big Local area. There is also another secondary school just outside of Westfield which also draws its pupils from the area.

Private nursery provision is available at both St Nicholas School in Radstock and at the Academy of Trinity School. There is also provision in Radstock with a B&NES children's centre which offers a wide range of services for children and families.

There is also a successful college, Norton Radstock College, which draws students from within the Big Local area as well as from a large number of other local villages across the North East Somerset area. The college offers a wide variety of opportunities and courses during the daytime and during the evenings at its site in Radstock.

Community Facilities and Groups

An extensive mapping and consultation exercise was undertaken to gather data and information regarding the number of voluntary groups and organisations working and offering services across the big local area. We used a variety of information and other databases in order to contact people to find out what they were offering to residents in the Big Local Area.

Over 107 voluntary groups and community organisations were identified who are offering services, support, venues, and activities for adults, children and young people across the Big Local Area.

We identified 10 community venues across the area, which are offering a variety of activities and venue's for groups and organisations to hire and use for local events and meetings, however some of these venues are in great need of updating, extending and refurbishment to enable them to be fit for purpose for the activities and events being held, and are being run and managed by an ever decreasing number of volunteers.

There are opportunities for children and young people to engage in a wide variety of groups and organisations, however there is a lack of opportunities and projects for older children, specifically the 11-18 year age groups. Radstock youth centre acts as a "hub" for most activities and opportunities offered, however with a drop in funding for the youth centre, the number of evenings open, the range of opportunities being able to be offered and a reduction in staffing are limiting their offer to young people.

Volunteers

This project would not have advanced or achieved such successes without the support of the volunteers on the Big Local Steering Group. Their drive, commitment and enthusiasm will make the Big Local Programme a success to date. Their work and efforts should never be underestimated as we estimate that over 6,660 hours of volunteer time has been given over the last 9 months,

and if paid that would be at least £66,000 in money terms. Support has also been given from the Big Local Rep and Curo.

We have promoted the concept of offering training, supporting and developing a number of Community Champions for the Big Local Area. Despite the Big Local Steering group’s promotion of this opportunity at our various meetings and events over the last six months, only Four Champions came forward.

The critical point for the champions to be involved in the project was in feeding back to us any community issues and local intelligence during the consultation phase of the work, and unfortunately due to the lack of volunteers coming forward this did not happen.

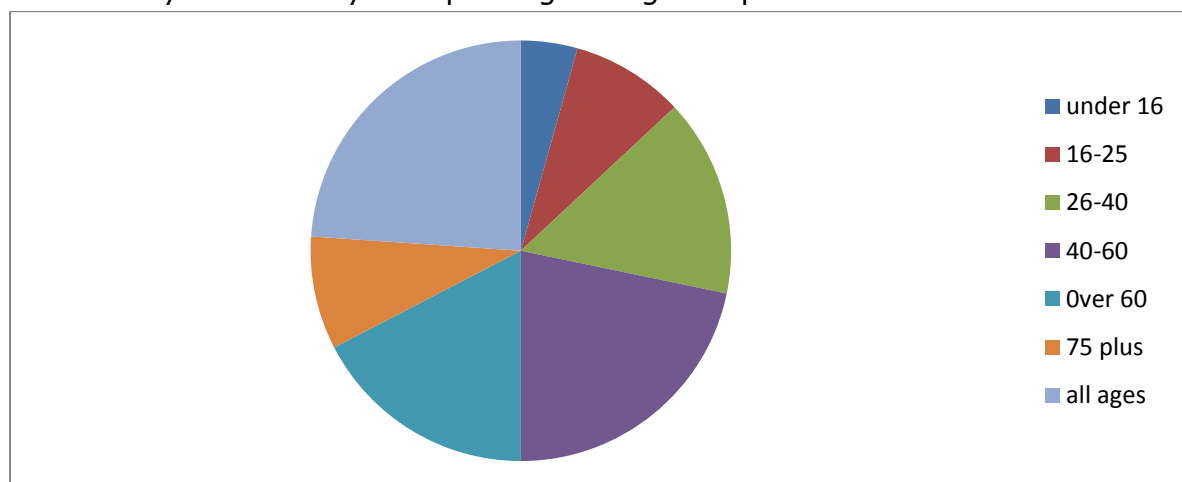
It has therefore been decided not to continue to develop this idea further, and we will look at investing in the training of some volunteer community reporters instead, which has evolved out of the Website and publicity work with the community radio station.

What is next for Radstock and Westfield?

An open consultation meeting was held in March, and 48 people attended most of which were representing groups who offered services in the local area, then residents from the local area and finally those who were both resident and representing a local group.

Over half of the people who attended came from the Radstock and Westfield areas, with the remaining quarters either covering all areas or Westfield, Haydon, Tynning and Clandown areas. The age ranges of people being represented at the meeting, or via their groups or organisations which they were involved are as shown in the chart below.

Community & Voluntary Groups – Age Ranges Represented



From the consultation event, we were given clear messages with regard to what the groups felt were key issues which the steering group needed to listen to and these suggestions were listed up on post it notes and then grouped as part of the evaluation and findings. Here is a list of the most popular suggestions below:

- Be fair with the funding so that it is allocated to benefit all the areas
- Improve Community facilities
- Improved transport
- Projects for children and young people
- Ensure good communication and consultation with people
- Better retail/facilities such as a café/farmers market
- Opportunities for volunteering/volunteer centre for Radstock and Westfield
- Environmental and social projects, gardening, growing, local food production
- Cinema
- Bowling
- Neighbourhood project for visiting the elderly who might be isolated
- Have a Radstock Festival

A draft vision was also circulated at the meeting and was broadly agreed by the group.

From this information gained at this initial event, the Big Local steering group developed a paper based and downloadable community questionnaire and then undertook to consult with people in the area over a 3 month period. A calendar of events was developed and volunteers took the questionnaire to over 17 events during the 3 month period, as well as over 1,000 questionnaires being posted out to residents in the big local area, and to local businesses. In total 2,500 questionnaires were circulated and taken by residents.

There were 3 articles in the local press during the questionnaire consultation period promoting the community to fill in and return the questionnaires which were out in circulation.

A local media campaign was agreed over a three month period with local community radio station, Somer FM who constructed a series of promotional adverts using the Big Local steering group to feature in the adverts directly. The first advert was to promote the questionnaire, the second to promote the value of becoming a local community champion, and the final advert to promote becoming a member of the partnership. There were other features during that period where members of Big Local and the Chief Executive of Curo were invited to go along and they also included promotion of Big Local in their transmissions.

Big Local was also able to take up an opportunity offered by Curo to have a visible presence at a local shop in Westfield, which was currently unoccupied. There were minor works that were required in order for us to be able to move in, and finally the shop was open in July.

Residents from the local community were invited to fill in the questionnaire and ask any questions of the programme, Some volunteers from Big Local offered to support Curo colleagues in opening up the shop every Wednesday, as well as local social enterprise "Coffee and Crumbs" opening up their pop up Café each morning so that refreshments could be offered to those residents coming in.

Big Local questionnaire results

237 completed questionnaires were returned with 37 of them coming from the completion of an online questionnaire. 66% of the respondents were women, and 34% were men and the largest numbers of respondents are in the 26-40 and 40-60 age ranges.

Over 80% of people gave us their postcode, and more than 96% of these postcodes were in the Big Local area. We also received 36% of email addresses on the questionnaires and 32% of people gave us their address.

A series of open questions were asked for respondents to fill in as well as inviting people to rank certain statements in order of importance. The key findings of the questionnaire were as follows:

Facilities for children and young people were highlighted as the most important things to the community, with local and affordable transport coming second and employment and training opportunities third.

On asking people how the money should be used, and providing a list of seven options, plus an "other" option, the highest score was for improving community facilities, with opportunities for young people coming second and jobs and training a close third.

There was an opportunity for people to then add any other comments to the question about any other ideas in which the money could be used, a variety of responses were received, but there were multiple responses for young people's projects, more local activities and events for families and thirdly for a MacDonald's, cinema, bowling, or somewhere to go.

From the results of the questionnaire we can gather that the facilities for children and young people, better transport, improving community facilities, jobs and training with more activities for families are the most important issues to people in the Radstock and Westfield area.

A copy of the full report can be downloaded from the big local website. www.myradstock.org.uk or www.mywestfield.org.uk.

Radstock Youth Partnership Consultation

The Big Local steering group are grateful for this partnership to be willing to share the results of their consultation back in the spring of 2012, as they feel that the report is important to the area.

The consultation questions and approach was agreed by Children and Young People themselves. The consultation was carried out using detached, outreach and centre based approaches and 8 focus groups undertaken at local secondary school. 220 responses were received during the consultation period and the analysis was completed using survey monkey. The results of this consultation were published in May 2012 and here are the key findings from the report:

37.1% of the respondents were boys and 62.9% were girls. The largest number of respondents was in the 12-15 age range which equates to 72.3% of the 220 C&YP who responded. 8.6% were under 12 and 16.2% were aged 16-17, finally there were 2.9% who were aged over 18 years.

Key issues of concern for Children and Young People (C&YP) were reported as the following:

- **Transport**

The cost of transport was listed as a concern and that activities are too far away to access without transport. Transport issues were more important to young women than young men.

- **Feeling unsafe**

A large proportion of C&YP, 71.2%, sometimes feel unsafe in the Radstock and surrounding areas

- **Dark areas/Bad lighting**

66% of C&YP reported that they were particularly concerned about dark areas and bad lighting in the local area and over 34% of them avoided going out after dark. Over 88% of females go out with someone else rather than go out alone.

- **A range of activities for us**

C&YP are keen to engage with a variety of activities, and the variety and range of activities vary dependant on their ages, which does enable activities to

become more targeted dependant on age. They were also keen to engage in practical skills and training such as life skills, but again what is offered needs to be tailored against both gender and age groups.

68% of those YP consulted were also keen to be engaged in having a say about decisions and activities which affect them in the future.

It will be important for this group to have a say about proposals and decisions about how and where the Big Local funding should be directed towards, especially if this group are highlighted to be one of the highest importance issues through other consultations.

The full report can be downloaded from the Big Local website.

People we haven't heard from?

We have maintained a high level of press coverage over the last 6 months since we have been actively engaging and consulting the community, as well as being out and about in our local communities,

Big local have given many opportunities for people to get involved and engaged with the programme via questionnaires, coming to events, seeing us in the media, coming into the shop and hearing about us on the local community radio station.

The development of the draft community plan will be a final opportunity for us to be able to share with those we haven't yet heard from through some local meetings and events to be able to influence the plan, and for us to check that what we have put in the plan is what the community have said that they want

Next Steps:

There are two key pieces of work for the steering group to action:

1. The development and production of a Big Local Community Plan for Radstock and Westfield. Work needs to be undertaken to develop a framework and timetable for the local plan for the area to include the allocation of funding from the Big Local Trust.
2. Partnership development – the steering group need to conclude the planning and recruitment for the partnership as well as developing terms of reference for the group.