

WEM: RESIDENTS DROP-IN FEEDBACK

WEM delivered a residents drop-in session on Wednesday 18th April 2018 at West End Primary School, between 2.30pm and 8.00pm.

The aim was to enable residents to give their views on priorities for the West End and what they feel is needed locally as part of new WEM plan aimed at improving the area. Secondary aim was gentle profile raising of WEM as it emerges from current change process.

The event was the most basic level of consultation (and introduced as such). It had around 50 people attend and engagement ranging from longer conversations to basic simple questionnaire sheet. Some data was also gathered to help evaluate WEMs communication of the event. The event had been held at the school as a neutral venue devoid of any smaller community politics and because it offered an opportunity to draw in parents at home time.

The results

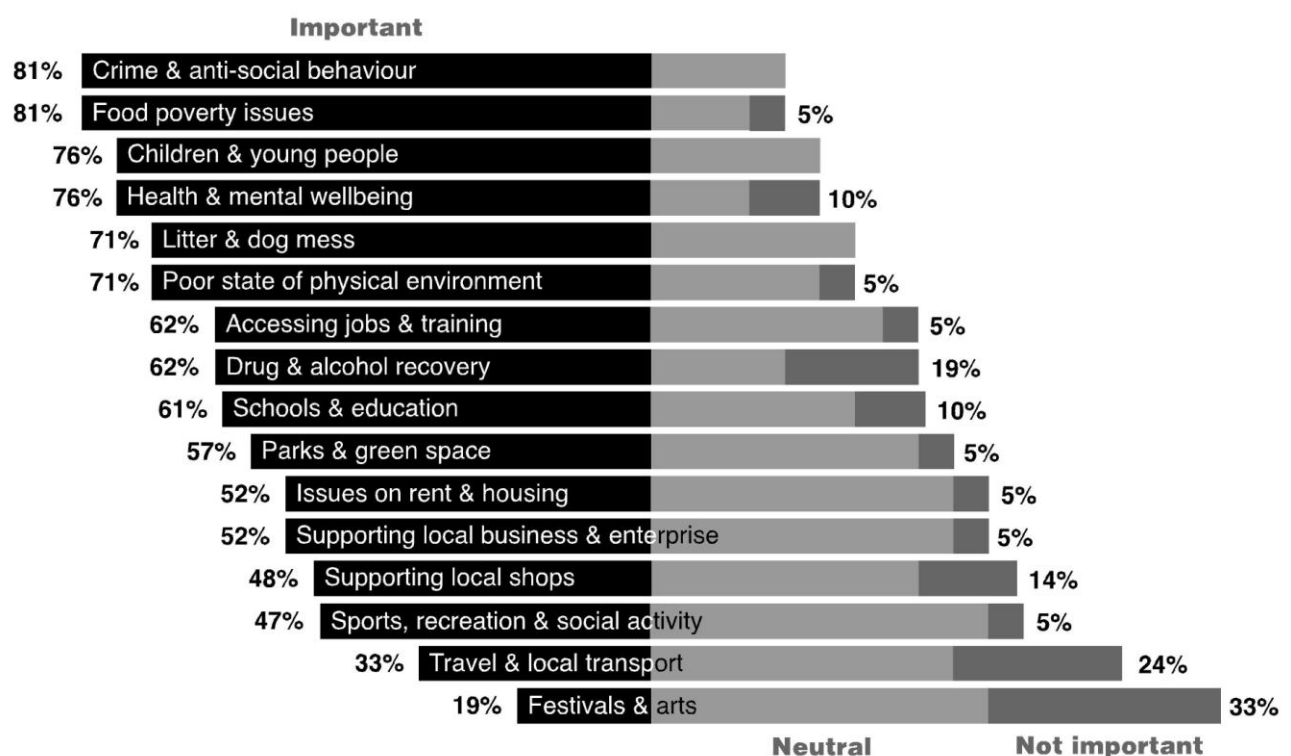


Figure: The topics were offered in a random selection with a sliding scale from important to not important. The results have been ordered and presented here to more easily compare the topics in terms of their overall importance. However one may also note those topics that generated a 'not important' measure rather than just a neutral response. Not all those who attended completed a questionnaire. The headings were summarised from previous WEM activity and local consultation.

Addition topics?

This choice of headings was accompanied by an open box for other topics the participant wanted to add.

The vast majority of additional comments related to topics on the main list and raised many familiar points. We have listed them all here (below) for information but the chart above is most likely a fair summary of the views contributed.

Comments: Green spaces and health

Adding to parks and green spaces. An outdoor gym in Regent Park would provide both for both teenagers and adults and would help with obesity and mental health, we saw this in Scotland in several places, and it had really helped communities. Outdoor Gym in Regent Park. Something other than trampolining for the kids.

Comments: Crime and safety

Open drugs misuse and dealing. Local yards used for heroin use, lots of needles. Needles in public spaces, car damage, vandalism. More police presence, based in West End. More CCTV especially on back alleys, back of co-op. Alley gating, large criminal gangs of young thugs upto 10-20 strong are roaming the West End of Morecambe unchecked by law enforcement, these gangs don't live in the area as a whole, these alleys are all bolt holes and gating them would stop 95% of this behaviour. More concern should be taken of people / teenagers drinking on the promenade. Big problem of people begging on streets.

Comments: Place

Substandard housing. Private landlords being held responsible for condition of their properties. State of roads (deep groove in tarmac on Westminster Road, opposite Chinese restaurant) has seen elderly people stumbling – complained to Council on 18th March but nothing back. No one cleans West End Road, Alhambra needs to be maintained. Put back the Polo Tower. Poor state of roads and pavements. Find it gross as a dog owner that people do not pick it up. I run a shop on Yorkshire Street, this street looks like it should be in bombed Syria, ugly neglected, bad parking, what must or do the people coming to the West End think of the horrible place? It's horrible. The promenade has never looked so good – looking at the future. I find it hard to understand how people can afford to drink every day when they do not work, the pub trade has been deeply affected by supermarkets under cutting prices. Shops shuttered up instead of used as shops.

Comments: Support

Home activities, cooking and cleaning. Activities, literature, music, art, singing, poetry, painting, surrealism. Education and health is or should be a priority. Helping people getting back into recovery and helping people who are on drugs / drinking not just those already in recovery. Food poverty; brought about by high council tax in my case.

Comments: Transport

Bus routes goes in both directions on Westminster Road but cars parked in double yellow lines, road very narrow and gets blocked and bus passengers have to alight in middle of road, more sensible to redirect one direction of bus through Balmoral Road. Children on school time buses are a nightmare.

Comments: Other

Fear across generational boundaries. Supporting the elderly access the electronic / digital world. Role of statutory sector (council and doctors) is engaging with and supporting and working with the voluntary sector. In my view we should use our resources to fuel a growing DIY social movement. Promoting the positive aspects of West End community. The only other very specific additional comment was; improve the seating in the cinema.

Review of the Drop-in

(i) Event went well, attendance was steady and in matching many priorities previously expressed through other processes may be regarded as a reasonable reflection of resident's

views. The session was supported by a number of WEM partnership members who were able to come along. Their participation was vital, not only in dividing up hard work, but more importantly in being the local face of WEM as a community organisation. They immediately negate the barrier of 'them and us' that a member of staff is sometimes labelled with.

(ii) The majority of people appeared to not necessarily be involved with existing community activity and had come to give their views. Some were involved in local groups or had longer standing opinions they wanted to air. A small minority were initially very confrontational but eventually did engage and a few were also brand new to the area and wished to potentially engage in new things. Majority lived in or near to area.

(iii) Almost every conversation had to begin by explaining there was not a million pounds just sat there waiting and that it would be spread across years and many needs. This was time wasting and almost immediately presented a barrier to more important conversations.

(iv) Could consider a crib sheet to help volunteers with the key points during future sessions. Perhaps also offer training for those interested in public consultation activity.

(iv) We asked people to tell us where they heard about the event and this may provide useful information for future activity. Those attending had heard about the event as follows.

28% At or through school
16% WEM email
13% Poster in shop
13% Facebook
9% Word of mouth
9% Passing by
3% Local paper

Remaining 9% did not indicate an answer

Summary

The event went well and appeared to address both aims successfully; gathering views on local priorities and raising profile of WEM after change process.

WEM April 2018