



Westway Trust Community Research 2019

Summary of Findings

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Over the course of winter 2018/19, the Westway Trust undertook detailed research into the economic, social and environmental characteristics of North Kensington.

The purpose was to establish a detailed understanding of the breadth of services and facilities provided across the area, and the relevance of these to local communities.

Key Messages

- Home to 38,000 residents, and with communities from over 120 countries across the world, North Kensington is one of central London's **most densely populated and multi-cultural places**
- **Aspiration and endeavour** within the local population is strong, but there are **deep-rooted barriers** which are constraining inclusion, wellbeing and prosperity
- There is a significant capacity and resource focused on supporting North Kensington's communities, but there are concerns regarding the coordination of this, and regarding community representation
- The Westway Trust should focus its activities on the areas where need is greatest and where it can deliver the greatest impact and added value
- Six thematic priorities have been identified for immediate focus: 1. isolation, 2. spaces and places for young people, 3. recreation and exercise, 4. economic participation, 5. arts, culture and creativity, and 6. the physical environment
- A long term and committed approach is needed, underpinned by an ethos of openness and collaboration.

Background

The Westway Trust commissioned Hatch Regeneris to undertake detailed research into the current social, economic and environmental characteristics of the area.

The research provides an up to date evidence base to inform the Trust's approaches to strategy development and decision making.

Approach

Research was undertaken over a period of 6 months and included:

- A detailed review of all available data sources and statistics to help to provide an initial 'baseline' of North Kensington. This was structured using the research framework, focusing on community and place
- A programme of consultation with representatives and leaders from across North Kensington's communities. Close to 50 conversations were held to gather evidence, and test and refine findings.

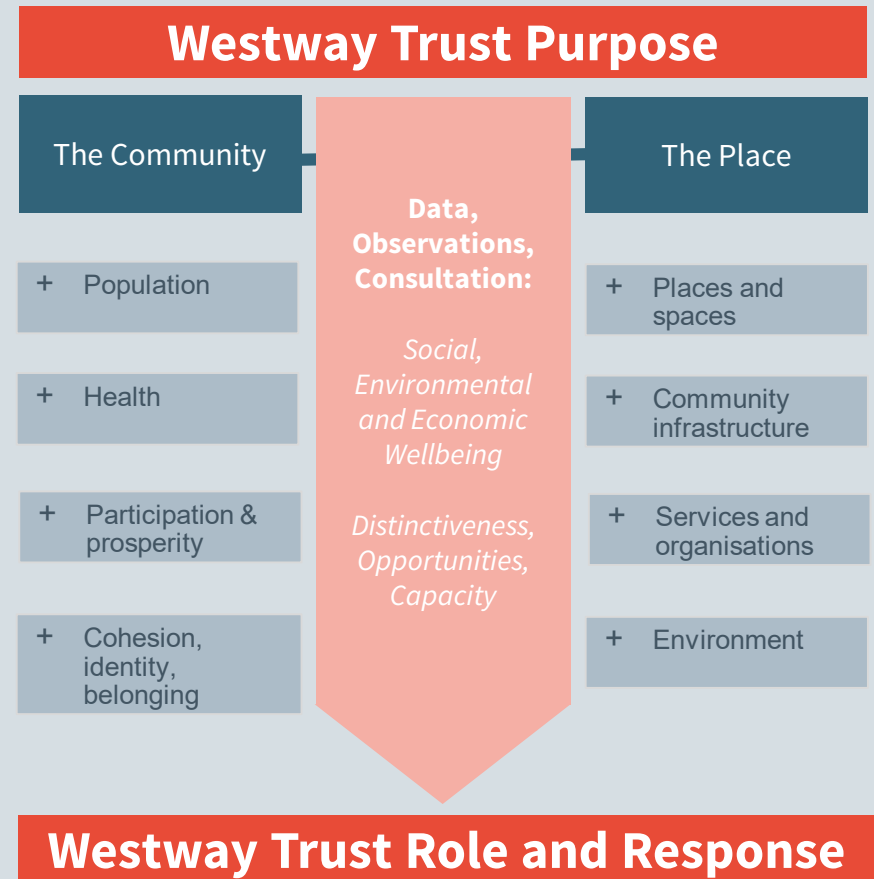


Figure 1. Headline Research Framework

Key Findings

North Kensington's identity as a culturally vibrant part of London is well established.

It is home to over 38,000 residents, of whom over 40% were born outside the UK. It's economic and cultural importance is deeply embedded, with assets such as Portobello Road and the Notting Hill carnival, enjoying international renown.

North Kensington's Communities

The research highlights the significant potential and talent which exists within local communities, but also the deep-rooted barriers which are constraining inclusion, wellbeing and prosperity.

Although these challenges are not atypical compared to similar places in London, they have been brought to the fore, and in some cases, exacerbated by the Grenfell fire, and its aftermath.

Service Delivery Across North Kensington

The number of organisations delivering services in North Kensington is vast, and since the Grenfell tragedy there has been a strong increase in the level of resource and capacity in the area.

While there is a significant amount of resource and focus on tackling challenges, there are concerns regarding the extent to which this is taking place in a coordinated and joined-up way, and regarding the level of community representation / involvement in decision making on the ground.



Overarching challenges of social isolation, distrust and anger



Severe challenges around housing affordability, availability and quality



Gaps in basic skills, and financial and cultural factors acting as barriers to employment



Growing challenges regarding personal financial resilience and debt



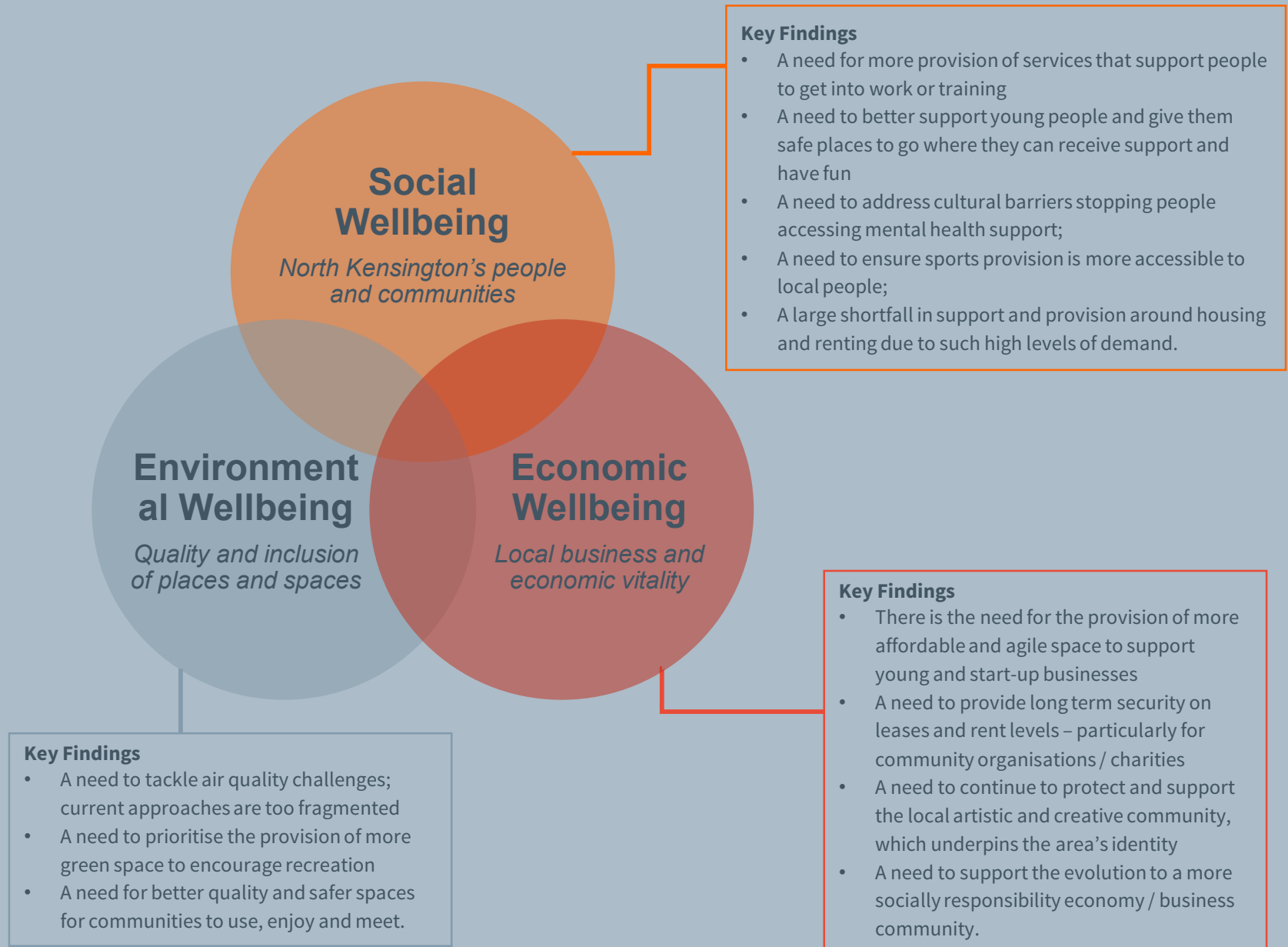
Significant health challenges around exercise, nutrition and mental health



The physical environment, particularly air quality and access to green space.

Figure 2. The Main Challenges Facing North Kensington

Key Findings



It is crucial that the Westway Trust focuses its activities on the areas where need is greatest, and the areas where it can deliver the greatest impact and added value.

Areas for Immediate Focus

Six priority topics for initial focus for the Trust have been identified. These should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure the Trust can remain responsive and agile.

Areas for Wider Collaboration

The research has also highlighted a number of wider concerns and areas of challenge: including mental health, financial resilience, crime and violence, and housing.

While these are no less important than the topics identified above, there are other local partners who are currently better placed to take the lead in responding.

The Trust should remain a proactive partner in all these matters, supporting via space and resource where specific need can be demonstrated.



Figure 4. Six Themes for Priority Focus



1. Isolation

What has the research told us? Social isolation and loneliness is a common issue across North Kensington, especially experienced by the elderly and those from minority communities (particularly for those who speak limited English). Isolation is coupled with distrust and a feeling of being unheard, especially post Grenfell, which has led to distrust in the major institutions in the area.

What role can the Trust play? There needs to be a strong focus on listening, re-building trust and encouraging community cohesion. The Trust's connections and networks across North Kensington mean that it has an important role to play in this.



2. Places and Spaces for Young People



What has the research told us? Young people in the area are at risk of violence, gangs and unemployment due to diminishing youth services support and a lack of space for them to go. There's a need for safe, friendly spaces where they can hang out, have fun and be supported. There is also demand for after school care, and sports provision which can support socialising and stress relief, homework clubs with computer access and nursery care for young children during the day.

What role can the Trust play? The Trust has the space and expertise to help to respond to this latent demand; it also has the connections and resource to play a proactive role in supporting local youth organisations, and providers.

3. Physical Exercise & Recreation



What has the research told us? There are significant health challenges (particularly around mental health and depression) across North Kensington and partners such as the CCG are working hard to respond to these. Recreation and exercise is a further challenge, with a concern that local communities do not have enough access to high quality greenspace, and that local recreation opportunities are too expensive or exclusive.

What role can the Trust play? There are clear opportunities to take a proactive approach to responding to this via management approaches of the Trust's physical estate, and via partnership work with the Westway Sports Centre



4. Economic Participation



What has the research told us? There are deep rooted challenges impacting on the ability of North Kensington residents to fulfil their potential. These include gaps between training and local skills needs, opportunities for work experience (especially for young people), vocational skills training and basic skills training.

What role can the Trust play? The Trust already plays an important role in coordinating and facilitating skills and employment activities, and this should continue to be a key focus. Exploring new ways to use the physical estate to create local employment should be a key area of focus.



5. The Creative Economy, Arts and Culture

What has the research told us? The role of arts, culture and creativity in shaping community cohesion and belonging, and in driving economic prosperity is well established. Cultural and economic diversity has long been ingrained within North Kensington's identity, and will be integral to the future evolution of the area.

What role can the Trust play? The Trust has an important role to play in supporting the development of the local creative and artistic community, and in ensuring access to arts and culture across North Kensington is truly inclusive.



6. Environment: Air Quality, Safety & Greening



What has the research told us? There is a clear need for a cleaner, safer environment, especially around sports facilities and schools. The area suffers from poor air quality, with high levels of particulates; the western edge of the Westway significantly exceeds the national NO2 limit, reaching dangerous levels.

What role can the Trust play? The Trust has an important role to play in responding to these challenges, via its management of the physical estate, and via lobbying government on behalf of local communities.

Next Steps

Over the past 18 months, the Trust has been working to review its ‘purpose’, focus & delivery approaches.

Evidence collected here will underpin and shape this ongoing activity.

Taking the research forward

Via its **voice and influence**, its **space(s)**, and its **resources**, the Trust is uniquely positioned to play a proactive role in responding to the priorities identified.

A long term and committed approach is required, underpinned by an ethos of collaboration and openness.

The Trust must also remain agile: responding to new ideas (and areas of challenge) as and when they emerge.



Figure 4. Tailoring Delivery to Maximise Community Benefit



*Research Undertaken by Hatch Regeneris on
behalf of the Westway Trust*



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