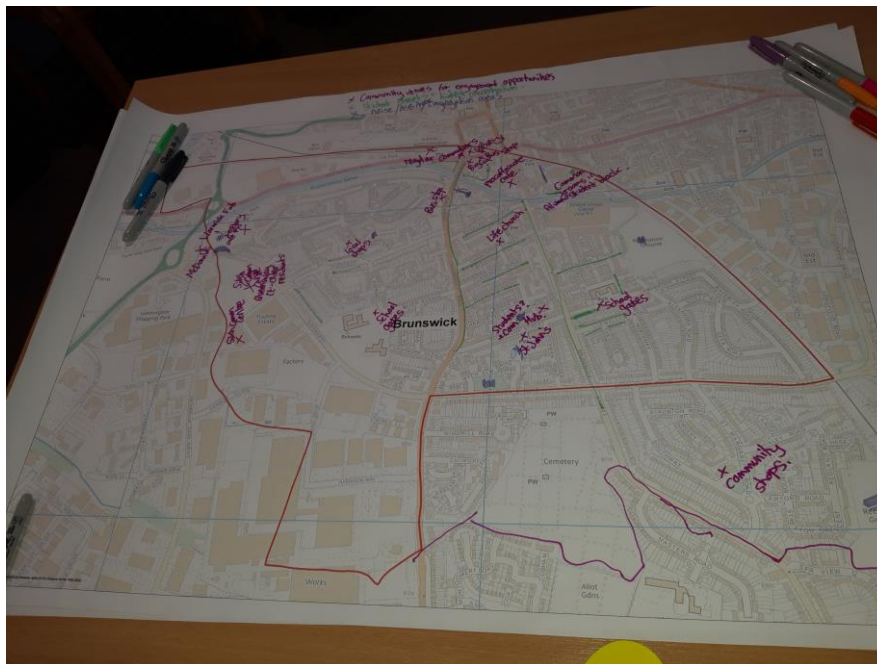


Community Engagement for the Student Housing Strategy

Report

13th December 2018



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Community
Consultants

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Glossary

ASB – Anti-social behaviour

HMO – House in Multiple Occupation

PBSA – Purpose-built student accommodation

UoW – University of Warwick

WDC – Warwick District Council

Acknowledgements

WSA Community Consultants would like to thank everyone who participated in this community engagement consultation. We would want to thank all individuals and organisations who contributed so honestly to this process. We very much appreciate you taking the time to participate and feed in your views.

1. Executive summary

This report is a summary of the findings of a community engagement consultation commissioned by Warwick District Council (WDC) on the support services that different sections of the community would like to see to ensure community cohesion. The results of this work will feed into the District Council's Student Housing Strategy.

1.1. Background

There will be an estimated increase of 360 University of Warwick (UoW) students to be housed in the private rented sector in Royal Leamington Spa over the next three years. Following concerns about the impact of increasing student numbers in certain areas of the town, WDC resolved to develop a Student Housing Strategy. As part of this undertaking an independent external housing market analysis was conducted, and it was suggested that WDC consult with people in areas with high student numbers about the support services that all sections of the community need to help maintain a cohesive community.

1.2. Positive views about living in Leamington

There is a range of positive aspects of living in Leamington as a mixed community of university students and settled residents. A majority of both students and the wider community is reported to like living in the town.

1.3. Safety

An overwhelming majority of both communities found Leamington a safe place to live as it is a quiet residential area, but concerns were raised about street lighting and bus routes at night.

1.4. Involvement in community activities & community cohesion

Most students we talked to said they were not aware of community activities and were not engaged in such activities. The two most frequent reasons given for not engaging were their lack of information about activities and being very busy with their studies. Settled residents seemed to be more engaged with their neighbours than students, but mainly not with their student neighbours. Our findings suggest that two separate communities and social settings have emerged in Leamington with little interaction between the two.

1.5. Communication & information

Many students feel that they are not adequately informed about community affairs in Leamington. They would welcome more information from the council and the university about public services. Another problem for students concerning information about local activities is the channels through which information is currently shared; they would prefer being informed via social media rather than emails and post. Some members of the wider community also said they felt they weren't adequately informed about community affairs, nor had a say in local issues.

1.6. Concerns with regard to housing

Many residents are concerned about the number of family homes being turned into HMOs for a range of reasons: the thriving student housing market has increased rents; there is a lack of parking spaces; and there is pressure on local resources, services and facilities. HMOs are often rented out on a short-term basis which

contributes to the transient nature of the population and the loss of a community ethos. Both students and settled residents are concerned about the activities of landlords in Leamington and their accountability to the community. Many residents are upset by the imbalance created in the community by the disproportionate number of students living in certain areas of the town.

1.7. Noise & anti-social behaviour

Many members of the wider community are disturbed by the night-time noise generated by student parties in residential areas of Leamington and students walking home from nights out or walking to nightclubs from their homes in large groups. Two distinct views emerged from our analysis concerning student noise and anti-social behaviour: some people said this is an issue of student numbers within specific neighbourhoods, while others said that the problem is the specific behaviour of certain students and numbers of students do not necessarily matter.

1.8. Public transport

Even though most students are happy about having good transport links to the university from Leamington, many are upset about the roads and the buses getting congested at peak times, especially during exam season. And this is clearly a problem for the wider community too, as many of the buses students use are regular local routes.

1.9. Local economy & businesses

The local businesses we consulted view students as a boost to the local economy, bringing in revenues. Even if students do not spend much money at a time, they are stable and returning customers. However, concerns were raised about the fairness of discounts offered to students, but not to local young people and low-waged residents and that some businesses cater specifically for students rather than the wider community.

1.10. Mapping opportunities & recommendations

Through this engagement we picked up on a number of positive initiatives that could be further developed, discussed and potentially extended. In addition to these opportunities, we propose the following recommendations around the priority areas identified by the engagement process:

1. WDC to lead on establishing an accreditation system or Kitemark award for landlords that would measure a range of factors and be an incentive for good landlords to demonstrate they are meeting all the agreed criteria.
2. WDC to establish a quarterly forum to take forward these key actions and have an ongoing platform for communication. This should include members of the wider community, students, councillors and council officers, representatives of UoW and Warwick Student Union, landlords and the community and voluntary sector.
3. The University of Warwick to fund a Housing Outreach Officer based in Leamington to ensure students are well informed and can exercise their rights and support the monitoring of activities of landlords in Leamington.
4. Communication by WDC and UoW should be further developed with both students and members of the wider community.

2. Introduction

In July 2018, WSA Community Consultants was commissioned by WDC to undertake community engagement in areas of Royal Leamington Spa¹ with high concentrations of university student residents. The engagement activities have focused on the support services that all groups, including students and the wider community, would like to see to ensure community cohesion. The results of this work will feed into the Student Housing Strategy of WDC and specifically the following aim of the strategy:

- To ensure that the necessary support services are in place for the whole community to ensure community cohesion and integration across all the generations.

2.1. Background

Following concerns about the impact of increasing student numbers in certain areas of Leamington (particularly in the south of the town), and the transient nature of the student population, WDC resolved to develop a Student Housing Strategy to assess and respond to these issues and set out a vision for the district concerning student housing over the long term. As part of this undertaking an independent external housing market analyst investigated current student housing trends in Leamington in early 2018 and assessed the potential impact of any growth in student numbers at UoW on the wider community.

The analysis showed that nearly 3% of households in Warwick District were headed by a full-time student in 2011 compared with 1.8% across England & Wales².

Student households as a percentage of total population by 2011 output area (per Student Household Reference Persons (HRP)):



Source: 2011 census

1 For the sake of brevity, in this report we will refer to Royal Leamington Spa as Leamington.

2 Item 03 – Executive Report on the Student Housing Strategy.

UoW data shows that there has been a steady increase in the number of students living in Warwick District over the past eight years, specifically in Leamington.

University of Warwick Student Housing Supply and Demand

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2020/21	Change from 2017/18 to 2020/21
Full-time students	19,200	20,000	21,500	22,800	1,300
University beds	6,400	6,500	6,800	7,200	400
Nomination agreements	600	500	1,100	1,100	-
Residual	12,200	13,000	13,600	14,500	900

Source: Executive Report on the Student Housing Strategy, calculated using UoW and other data

Based on these trends, there will be an estimated increase of 900 UoW students to be housed in the private sector over the next three years, and around 360 of these students will live in Leamington³. As part of the independent housing analysis, it was proposed that WDC ‘consult with people in areas with high student numbers about the support services that all sections of the community need to help maintain a cohesive community.’ Following on this recommendation, WSA Community Consultants was commissioned to carry out this consultation between August and December 2018.

This report sets out our approach to undertaking the community engagement, the fieldwork we carried out and the key findings of our work. We have also made some recommendations for WDC’s consideration around the priority areas identified by the engagement. The results of this work will feed into the District Council’s Student Housing Strategy.

³ Item 03 – Executive Report on the Student Housing Strategy.

3. Methodology

3.1. Our engagement approach

Due to our overall inclusive and participatory approach we developed a community engagement plan, instead of a traditional one-way consultation process (see Appendix 1). This offered as many opportunities as possible for local residents (students as well as the wider community) not only to share their views about community cohesion, but also to reflect on and shape the process itself.

In order to reach a wide range of residents from local communities, we developed a multifaceted fieldwork process that applied a variety of engagement tools and methods. This approach helped us capture the variety of views and needs represented in the community and understand what services were required to cater for these demands. This approach also supported working across the various sections of the community to facilitate an exchange of different perspectives and needs.

It is important to note that our work did not aim to be statistically significant. It was a qualitative community engagement process with the primary aim of engaging with as wide a range of residents and stakeholders as possible and grasp the variety of views and needs that exist in those areas of Leamington with high concentrations of university student residents.

3.2. Scoping and mapping the engagement

Before finalising the engagement plan, we consulted a number of stakeholders working in Leamington to understand what support services are available for local communities around cohesion and integration and where the potential gaps are in the provision of such services. In total, we talked to 17 stakeholders representing a range of local community centres, charities and voluntary organisations, local residents' associations, churches, UoW, Warwick Student Union, as well as councillors from WDC and Royal Leamington Spa Town Council. Most of these conversations took place in August 2018 with a few taking place in September 2018 or later in cases when August wasn't possible.

Building on these conversations, we held and facilitated a scoping workshop on 6th September 2018 in the Brunswick Hub to help focus the engagement process through a wider discussion with stakeholders. Twenty-four stakeholders participated in this workshop, some of whom we had previously spoken with individually, while some were new to the process. In small groups participants discussed the priorities identified through the one-on-one conversations, hence providing different perspectives on these issues. The workshop also identified opportunities (e.g., venues, events, activities) to engage different sections of the community and agreed specific issues and questions for the community engagement to address.

In addition to the broader scoping event, we held a separate focus group session later in the process in which we discussed the issues that had emerged from the engagement with three UoW officers and three representatives of Warwick Student Union.

Due to the recent changes to ward boundaries in Warwick District – and based on feedback we received from stakeholders in the scoping process and having consulted with WDC – we agreed to extend the geographical remit of the engagement to south Leamington in general and certain central areas on the town (Newbold ward in particular). According to current ward boundaries, we focused our work on Brunswick, Whitnash, Leam, Sydenham, Newbold and Clarendon.

Current ward boundaries in Royal Leamington Spa as of December 2018



Source: Warwick District Council, 2018

Based on these scoping activities, we revised the engagement plan and started to engage with the student and the wider community in early October 2018. We publicised the different engagement activities through a range of channels: local media, voluntary/community organisations, residents' associations, community centres, churches, councillors, UoW, Warwick Student Union, among others.

In total, including stakeholders, university students, members of the wider community, secondary school students, local businesses, landlords and estate agents, we engaged with 260 people who live and/or work in Leamington. The figures are summarised in the table below.

Total number of people who participated in the community engagement process between August–December 2018

Scoping workshop participants	24
Wider community	115
Student community	49
Stakeholder interviews	20
Campion secondary school students	12
Local businesses	17
Landlords and estate agents	6
University of Warwick & Warwick Student Union focus group participants	6
Feedback focus group participants	11
Total	260

3.3. Engagement with students

In total we engaged with 49 UoW students living in Leamington at the time of the engagement: 37 participated in individual interviews, 7 filled in an online survey we circulated and in total 5 attended two focus group sessions. We conducted the individual interviews at various locations: at students' rented accommodation through door knocking, at a Student Welcome event in the Brunswick Hub on the 12th October and at the University of Warwick campus.

Most student respondents lived in Brunswick or Clarendon Wards (21 and 13 students, respectively). Forty-four were living in privately rented accommodation at the time of the engagement and 5 lived in purpose-built student accommodation units. Twenty-four have been living in Leamington for less than 1 year at the time, 22 for 1–3 years and 2 students for more than 3 years. Details of the number of students participating in the engagement, the ward they lived in and the method through which we engaged with them is presented in the table below.

Full number of students participating in the engagement

Ward of residence	In person, one-on-one engagement	Online survey data	Focus Groups engagement	Total
Brunswick	16	1	4	21
Clarendon	9	3	1	13
Leam	3	1	0	4
Newbold	1	1	0	2
Sydenham	2	1	0	3
Milverton	1	0	0	1
No ward data	5	0	0	5
Total	37	7	5	49

3.4. Engagement with the wider community

Throughout the engagement we spoke with 115 members of the wider Leamington community in total. We engaged with them in person through door knocking, street consultation and three drop-in sessions that we held in different locations in the town (the Westbury Centre and the Brunswick Hub), at different parts of the day over the course of the engagement. In addition to these one-on-one conversations, we ran an online survey that 55 residents completed.

Due to the nature of certain engagement methods we used, we were unable to collect data on the ward where respondents lived in drop-in sessions and group meetings. We only have ward-level data concerning the residents who filled in the online survey or with whom we conducted one-on-one interviews. These figures are presented in the table below.

Number of settled residents participating in an interview or the online survey, by ward:

Ward of residence	In person, one-on-one engagement	Online survey data	Total
Brunswick	19	16	35
Clarendon	2	0	2
Leam	8	20	28
Newbold	1	4	5
Sydenham	0	1	1
Whitnash	4	14	18
Total	34	55	89

In addition to the 32 individual interviews and the 55 residents who completed the online survey, we attended and talked with participants of regular local activities: a Women's Group session (11 people) and a Men's Group session (10 people) at the Sikh Community Centre, and a playgroup session in the Life Community Church (5 people). Through these group methods we spoke with 26 residents in total. We also reviewed 6 written complaints directly forwarded to us by members of the wider Leamington community who live near houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) that house a large number of students.

To assess the views of a younger generation of residents we conducted a focus group session in the Campion secondary school where we spoke with 12 students who live in Leamington with their families.

In addition, we talked with landlords and estate agents who operate in Leamington and let accommodation to UoW students exclusively or alongside other residents. Besides conducting one-on-one interviews with these landlords and estate agents in person or via phone, we also looked at online reviews to compare their perspective with that of the tenants in their properties.

We also reached out to local businesses, specifically to those that operate in areas of Leamington frequented by university students. In total we talked with 17 business owners and employees.

After we closed the data collection phase on the 15th November 2018, we conducted an interim analysis of the data which, in our commitment to be transparent and work with the community to shape and test recommendations, we then discussed at a focus group session. We invited a cross-section of the community including representation from the wider community, the student community, local landlords, the UoW, the Town Council and Warwick Student Union. The aim of this focus group session was to receive feedback from participants on our initial findings, discuss in more detail some of issues that had emerged from the engagement and get a range of perspectives on the emerging recommendations.

4. Thematic analysis and findings

In this section we present the key findings of the community engagement broken down by themes that emerged from our analysis of the data collected throughout the process.

4.1. Positive views about living in a mixed community

There is a wide range of positive aspects of living in Leamington as a mixed community of university students and settled residents. The majority of both the student and the wider community reported to like living in Leamington. Settled residents highlighted specifically: the nice and friendly people who live in the town and the mixed nature of the community; the fact that everything they need, for example shops and schools, are within walking distance; the good range of facilities available in Leamington, such as cafes and shops; and the overall 'nice and lovely' outlook and green areas of the town.

Many residents we engaged with specifically mentioned the mixed nature of the town as something they liked about Leamington – to live together with people of different ethnic backgrounds, with different religions, of different ages. Some highlighted that they liked having students around in particular as they bring vibrancy, 'a sense of freshness and optimism' (local pastor) to the town, they make it a 'young, learning and enquiring' place (local vicar). Some local young people highlighted that university students 'bring more life into the town' and as a result of having students in Leamington, there are more things to do for young adults, including more nightclubs to go to, more venues are putting on live music and there are more events on offer.

Students also highlighted the good transport links to the university and that there are plenty of things to do in terms of socialising in Leamington, for example bars and cafes, as compared to living on campus or other towns nearby. Some of them also appreciate having been able to exit the 'campus bubble', but still live around their friends and other students.

'The big bonus to living in the south [of Leamington] is the public transport. It is also more convenient for supermarket options and convenience.' (UoW student)

4.2. Safety

An overwhelming majority of both communities found Leamington a safe place to live at as it is a quiet residential area. However, some (including secondary school students, some elderly residents and a few of the university students) pointed out that street lamps going off by midnight makes it feel less safe to walk home later in the evening or at night.

University students highlighted that at night, buses do not necessarily stop in the areas where students tend to live. They would feel safer if the buses went into these areas as well. Some also noted that there seems to be a greater presence of police and community wardens in the north of Leamington, around the nightclubs, while they would be needed more in the south of the town (where students are walking

home after a night out). They also said that they would feel safer if they saw police patrolling rather than merely responding to issues that occur.

4.3. Involvement in community activities & community cohesion

Most members of the wider community we engaged with felt that they are part of the community. About half said they were aware of community activities in Leamington; however, a much smaller number reported actually getting involved in such activities. Those who do get involved mostly engage in volunteering, going to church services and activities, and attending events and activities in local community centres such as the Westbury Centre, the Sikh Community Centre and the Brunswick Hub. Most students we talked with said they were not aware of community activities and not engaged in such activities. The two most frequent reasons for their lack of engagement were their lack of information about activities and being very busy with their studies. Nevertheless, some of the stakeholders we spoke with, particularly from local churches and voluntary and community organisations, reported that they have students amongst their members and volunteers, some of whom form strong relationships with members of the wider community.

We also asked people specifically about relationships with their neighbours. Settled residents seem to be more engaged with their neighbours than students, but mainly not with their student neighbours. Some also highlighted the transient nature of the student community as a difficulty for the wider community for a number of reasons. Some residents noted that students have no investment in the local area as they would shortly be moving on. Others highlighted that the presence of ‘an unstable, transitory population’ creates a sense of a loss of community with the streets hollowing out in the summer vacation period. In addition, some said they find it wearing to having new people as neighbours and having to build relationships year on year. Nevertheless, many residents do have a friendly relationship with their student neighbours and are happy to support their integration into the community.

Many students also said they felt they were part of the community in Leamington, but clearly less so than members of the wider community; some pointed out that they feel being part of the student community rather than the overall Leamington community. Some students shared with us that they feel intimidated by not being welcomed by the wider community – one or two had experienced instances of hostility towards students specifically or heard rumours of such hostility. It resulted in one student saying, ‘we would rather live in purpose-built blocks if we can get them.’

All in all, our findings suggest that two separate communities and social settings seem to emerge in Leamington with little interaction between the two. A member of the wider community pointed out in the online survey that:

‘The problem is the bigger houses are not being bought by families because they can’t afford them and before long, we will become a community of retired people and students which won’t be good.’

Some see this disconnect as a ‘natural’ result of generational, and hence lifestyle, differences that ‘there is nothing to do about’. ‘If they only stay a year, then maybe

there is no point in relationship building' (Campion School student). Some, however, hold the view that

'There will be even more students in the future, as there are more now than there ever were, that is the way it is. So, we have to find a way to make it work, we need to engage with them' (settled resident)

Others, in contrast, view this divide as a result of (misguided) perceptions of either community, that could (and should) be changed by proactive actions to build relationships between these two – currently separate – worlds. As a secondary school student put it, 'It is a two-way street – students need to be saying hi and introducing themselves and residents need to help them settle in.'

According to a member of the wider community:

'part of the problem is perception. Both positive and negative. There is a perception that students are noisy and messy – this is just a small percentage that can give the rest a bad name. Another perception is that they are "good for the town and the economy". This is also true but not for the areas in which they live.'

4.4. Communication & information

A general issue for students concerning their involvement in community activities is that they feel they are not adequately informed about community affairs in Leamington. Almost all students we engaged with said they do not have a say in local affairs.

Warwick Student Union is an important source of information for students; however, many pointed out that most of this information comes in a large welcome pack at the beginning of the year, when they are particularly overwhelmed with starting their studies and living independently (most of them for the first time). Therefore, many do not even look at this information. Also, in a focus group discussion, students agreed that UoW could do more to find out what opportunities are available locally and share it with students. They pointed out that there are 250 societies on campus and many of these would like to link up into the community, but do not know what the available options are.

Others said they would welcome more information from WDC and UoW about local affairs, e.g. public services. One student commented in the online survey that councillors should engage more with students directly. They suggested a forum specifically for students and settled residents living in south Leamington, involving the Student Union to build cohesion.

Another problem for students with regard to information about local activities is the channels through which information is currently shared: mostly via email and post. They pointed out that using social media, and Facebook in particular, is the best way to keep students informed as in this way they could easily find out who else is going to a specific event – they are more likely to attend a community event if people they know are going. A specific suggestion for setting up a 'Warwick Students Living in the Local Community' Facebook page was also made.

Some members of the wider community also said they felt not being adequately informed about community affairs and not having a say or not being listened to, but these feelings were clearly more prevalent among students than the wider community.

4.5. Concerns with regard to housing

One of the key themes emerging from the community engagement is residents' concerns about housing in Leamington. Some of these concerns were also shared by students, while some affect only specific sections of the Leamington community.

A considerable section of the settled community expressed concerns about the number of family homes being turned into HMOs for a range of reasons. Some argued that due to the significant and uncontrolled increase in the number of students at the UoW – and especially the number of students who live in Leamington – the student housing market is thriving, which has considerably increased rents. These trends make it increasingly difficult for many residents to find housing or continue to live in Leamington. Certain sections of the community are particularly vulnerable to these tendencies, such as young adults and people on low wages. Some parents are also worried that their children will not be able to afford to move into their own place in Leamington when they grow up.

'Myself and my friends have all graduated from university a few years ago, but due to unaffordable housing for us at the salaries we earn, we can't think about moving out of our parents' houses.'

Many residents expressed resentment about expensive student accommodation units being built in Leamington and felt that 'locals are forgotten'. Some also pointed out the increasing level of homelessness in Leamington that they associated with the ever more pressing lack of affordable housing⁴ in the town. Students from the Champion School, who live locally with their families highlighted that due to the influx of university students to Leamington, they sense that there are fewer opportunities, such as part-time jobs and affordable or shared housing, for local young people.

In addition to the issue of affordability, many highlighted that the proliferation of HMOs necessarily results in a range of other problems: lack of parking spaces and intermittent pressure on local resources, services and facilities (including retail, social and health care). Furthermore, HMOs are often rented out on a short-term basis which contributes to the transient nature of the population and the loss of community discussed above.

Many cited a lack of effective control mechanisms on the part of WDC around planning, licensing and service delivery by landlords. There was a feeling that the council could do more to enforce its existing powers and policies as the root of these issues – captured by the following comment made by a resident:

'You want to support us? The first service we require is full implementation of the District Council's own rules and regulations – includes 10% rule,

⁴ In this report we use the term 'affordable housing' to mean accommodation affordable for low-income populations, including social rent, affordable rent, intermediate rent, affordable home ownership and shared ownership.

enforcement of regulations on landlords and enforcement of all noise abatement laws. If this is provided the needs for other services will be greatly reduced.'

Another issue that both settled and student residents mentioned as an ongoing problem is disposal of rubbish. Members of the wider community are concerned about the amount of waste generated in HMOs and the fact that many students seem not to be aware of the local refuse collection system. This apparently results in students not putting the waste out on the right days or leaving piles of rubbish in front of the houses for days. Also, many students leave behind household items outside their accommodation when they move out at the end of the year. The wider community is upset by the unkempt look rubbish left outside gives to their neighbourhood and the foxes and rats it attracts to their streets.

Some of the students we talked to are confused about refuse collections. Some said they do not receive enough information on the service from WDC or UoW. Others see the existing system as inefficient and difficult to follow; for example they find it strange that there are no bins provided in the north of the town and they have to leave their rubbish in bags in the front of their houses. Some also complained about landlords not tackling waste left behind by previous tenants which leaves them starting their tenancy with rubbish already piling up at their house.

The responsibility of UoW as a key driver and beneficiary of increasing student numbers in Leamington and its involvement in the solution 'financially, morally, and practically' was also highlighted by some of the residents who participated in the engagement. This was reinforced by UoW which was clear it wants to be a good neighbour and build on current work to address any issues with WDC and the community.

Another key theme that emerged from the engagement is how landlords deliver their services in Leamington. Both the wider and the student community expressed serious concerns with regard to landlords taking advantage of students who are in an especially vulnerable position as a result of the exceptionally high demand for housing in the town. Both students and the wider community expressed concerns with landlords increasing rent prices significantly, while in many cases providing substandard services and conditions for their tenants. Key concerns included a lack of basic property maintenance, not providing adequate information to student tenants about rubbish collection and recycling, failing to manage waste collection on their property and not responding to neighbours' complaints concerning parking, rubbish or the anti-social behaviour (ASB) of their tenants. Nevertheless, it was also acknowledged that there are some good landlords in Leamington too, who provide high-quality services to students and are sensitive and responsive to community relations as well.

Many residents feel that landlords are not being held accountable for issues in connection with their housing and residents are not informed about the results of the complaints they make about landlords. It was also highlighted that students are not aware of their rights concerning tenancies and do not possess the knowledge and skills to enforce these rights in practice.

A further concern many residents raised in the engagement was the imbalance in the Leamington community created by the disproportionately high number of students living in certain areas of the town. Many residents feel that the situation has reached a saturation point that should be resolved by appropriate planning by WDC so that HMOs and the student population are distributed more equally across all areas on Leamington, including the north of the town.

4.6. Noise & anti-social behaviour

Noise and anti-social behaviour was another recurrent theme in the engagement as many members of the wider community are disturbed by the night noise generated by student parties in residential areas of Leamington. This has been a recurring issue for many years with parties often going on until 4–5am. In addition to the parties there are also noise issues of students walking home from a night out or walking to nightclubs from their homes in large groups. Through our community engagement period, six complaints submitted to WDC were forwarded to us for information by residents about such issues.

Two distinct views emerged from our analysis concerning student noise and ASB: some of the people we engaged with said this is an issue of student numbers within specific neighbourhoods. Others said that the problem is the specific behaviour of certain students and the numbers of students do not necessarily matter.

4.7. Public transport

Even though most students are happy about having good transport links to UoW from Leamington, many are upset about the roads and the buses getting congested at peak times, especially during exam season. And this is clearly a problem for the wider community too, as most of the buses students use are regular local routes.

4.8. Local economy & businesses

It was a recurring argument throughout the engagement that students boost the local economy and bring revenue to local businesses. This view was confirmed by our engagement with the local business community. The overwhelming majority of businesses we spoke with said that even if students do not spend much money at a time, they are stable and returning customers who sometimes bring their families and friends as well, specifically so in the case of coffee shops and restaurants.

Many local businesses offer 10–20% discounts to students, which shows that there is indeed a conscious targeting of students as customers in the local economy. However, some members of the wider community find this unfair towards other local young people and low-waged residents. In addition, some settled residents, and some businesses too, feel that many cater specifically for students rather than the wider community, an example for this is the increase of cafés in specific areas, such as Warwick street in Clarendon ward.

5. Mapping opportunities

In undertaking the community engagement work we encountered a number of very positive initiatives that could be further developed, discussed and potentially extended. We wanted to share these and suggest they are built on as they are all currently in place:

- In 2018, Warwick Student Union began an information campaign for students on moving out (including an animation video). This could be taken forward and extended to other areas of information as well.
- Myton Church runs a monthly lunch for UoW students and young adults living in Leamington to eat together as a way of building community and understanding, as well as positively influencing young adults. This could be built on and duplicated.
- All Saints' Parish Church has been running the Nightlight Service for some ten years now, providing free hot drinks for passers-by around the church on Friday nights and a friendly conversation for anyone who needs it. This service is highly appreciated by students, workers of the nightlife economy as well as first contact officers like police and street marshals. It would be good to explore, through partnership approaches, if this service could be extended to other nights of the week and areas of town where students tend to enjoy a night out.
- Warwick Student Union has already started to address the challenges around public transport in Leamington due to the increased number of students (i.e. liaising with Stagecoach). It should be taken forward, potentially with the involvement of WDC.
- Warwick Student Union has developed a scheme for collecting reusable items at the end of the academic year and ensuring they are reused or recycled. We suggest taking this scheme forward, potentially by giving or selling these items to incoming students or donating them to local charities/community groups.

5.1. Additional opportunities are:

- WDC to promote local community facilities, for example the new leisure centre, to students.
- There are already some links between the UoW and Warwick Student Union and local community groups but there is potential for further exploration of how to link specific student societies to local community groups that share similar interests.
- It would also be beneficial to host Leamington residents, especially children and families on the UoW campus and involve them in ongoing activities (e.g., sports, arts, dance, dementia group, drama group) as outreach.

6. Recommendations

Based on the above findings, we propose the following recommendations around the priority areas identified by the engagement process. We have four key recommendations from this process and feel that if these are implemented, they will make a significant difference.

1. WDC to lead on establishing an accreditation system or Kitemark award for landlords that would measure a range of factors and be an incentive for good landlords to demonstrate they are meeting all the agreed criteria. The criteria should be developed in partnership with the Landlords Forum and the wider community and is likely to include standards of housing, the provision of bins and waste collection, the level of information provided for tenants and the relationships landlords maintain with neighbours. WDC could set up the system, work with the Landlord Forum to engage landlords in it and monitor the performance of each landlord. This would positively reward good landlords and, having interviewed landlords as part of this process, we felt there was some clear good practice to share. Individual accreditations and performance indicators could be publicised on the WDC website. Based on the Kitemark standards, WDC should consider providing written guidance specifically for student landlords and estate agents, preferably available online.

2. WDC to take responsibility, in the first instance, for the establishment and provision of a regular specific forum. The focus of this would be to continue to have some of the discussions highlighted through this community engagement process by bringing together a wide range of stakeholders. This should include members of the wider community, students, councillors and council officers, representatives of UoW and Warwick Student Union, landlords and the community and voluntary sector. Such a forum would be most effective if it were convened at least on a quarterly basis and it would be useful for it to be facilitated independently to help ease potential tensions and negative dynamics. It would need to be focused and have a clear brief and action plan where progress around issues can be agreed and measured.

3. We recommend that UoW funds a suitably qualified and experienced Housing Outreach Officer who would work for the Student Union and be based in Leamington. This could be a similar initiative to the one funded in Coventry by the university already. The role would ensure students were well informed about available local services, safety regulations, procedures and community activities. The officer could also ensure that students are aware of their rights and responsibilities concerning landlords and housing in general and support them in exercising these rights. The officer could contribute to data collection about the activities of landlords in Leamington and be authorised to enable the inspection of privately owned properties to identify substandard properties and any environmental issues. The role could also include encouraging landlords to be accredited by the Kitemark scheme.

4. Communication should be revised and developed with students as well as members of the wider community. For students this could include the Student Union updating the information they provide to students on renting and landlords; building on current work to ensure that information about living in Leamington is drip fed to students throughout the year, via social media. The Student Union should also consider setting up and managing a specific 'Warwick Students Living in the Local Community' Facebook page. For the wider community both WDC and UoW should consider establishing a central point of contact for residents who have complaints or issues concerning UoW students. WDC could provide and publicise guidance for residents on how to make enquiries and complaints concerning issues caused by students. The South Leamington Area Residents Group has already put together useful advice around this that could be the basis of such guidance with the group's permission. WDC could also provide more information to local residents on HMO planning and licensing, for example regulations and consequences of regulations being breached, in an accessible manner.

7. Appendix 1: Fieldwork plan

Date	Engagement
August	Stakeholder interviews via phone and in person
6 th September	10.30am–1.00pm: Scoping workshop
2 nd October	11.30am–1.30pm: Street consultation around the town hall 1.30–4.00pm: Street consultation & door knocking in Brunswick
11 th October	11.00am–2.00pm: Consultation with students at UoW 3.00pm: School gates consultation at St Patrick's Catholic Primary School 4.00–5.00pm: Outreach consultation at the Brunswick Hub
12 th October	am: Consultation with estate agents 11.00am–1.00pm: Drop-in at the Westbury Centre 2.00–3.00pm: Group discussion with 3 rd year students at Union Leamington 4.00–6.00pm: Student welcome event at the Brunswick Hub
17 th October	am: Attend group meetings at the Sikh Community Centre 12.30–2.30pm: Drop-in at the Brunswick Hub 3.30–5.00pm: Coffee shop consultation in Temperance cafe
19 th October	The residents' and students' surveys go online
23 rd October	am: Focus group with Champion School students am–pm: Street consultation in Newbold 3.00–4.00pm: Focus group at Warwick University with 3 rd year students
30 th October	11.30am–2pm: Consultation with local businesses 2.30pm: Interview with local landlord (Dr Singh) 5.30–7.00pm: Evening drop-in session at the Brunswick Hub
November	Consultation with local estate agents
6 th November	3.00–5.00pm: Consultation with landlords
27 th November	10.15–11.15am: Focus Group with UoW stakeholders 11.30am–1.30pm: Feedback Focus Group

8. Appendix 2: Online survey questions

Leamington community cohesion Resident survey

1. How long have you lived in Leamington?

- Less than 3 years
- Between 3 and 6 years
- Between 7 and 10 years
- Over 10 years

2. What is your street name and postcode? (we will use this information to identify the ward in which you live only)

3. On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high) how much do you like living in this area? (Please explain your rating)

4. Are there many students living in your neighbourhood?

- Yes, on my street
- Yes, nearby
- No
- I don't know

5. If yes, how does this affect the neighbourhood? (Please tick as many as applicable)

- It brings vibrancy
- It is refreshing for the area
- It is good for business
- It creates a mixed community
- It creates issues with rubbish collection
- Late night noise/anti-social behaviour
- Public transport is congested
- Lack of car parking

- Other (please specify):

6. How aware are you of opportunities to get involved or network with your local community?

- I don't know anything about local community activities
- I am aware, but I have never been involved
- I occasionally get involved with the community
- I often engage in community activities

Tell us more about how you have been involved in your community or how you'd like to become involved in the future:

7. What, if anything, do you think is needed to improve the area?

8. What ideas do you have about how to help build relationships, and address any concerns, with the student community in Learnington?

9. Please use this box to share any other relevant information:

10. Your gender:

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify):

11. Your age:

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to say

12. Your ethnic background:

- Arab
- Asian / British / English / Irish / Scottish / Welsh
- Asian / Bangladeshi
- Asian / Chinese
- Asian / Indian
- Asian / Pakistani
- Black British / English / Irish / Scottish / Welsh
- Black / African
- Black / Caribbean
- White / British
- White / English
- White / Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- White / Irish
- White / Scottish
- White / Welsh
- Mixed / White and Asian
- Mixed / White and Black African
- Mixed / White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed / White and Chinese
- Prefer not to say
- Other ethnic group:

13. Do you consider yourself disabled?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

14. Your sexual orientation:

- Heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Thank you for taking the time to answer this survey!

Leamington community cohesion Student survey

1. How long have you lived in Leamington?
 - Less than a year
 - Between 1 and 3 years
 - More than 3 years
2. What is your street name and postcode? (we will use this information to identify the ward in which you live)
3. On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high) how much do you like living in this area? (Please explain your rating)
4. What kind of accommodation do you live in?
 - I live at home with my family
 - I rent a room from a friend
 - I rent a house, apartment or room directly from a private landlord
 - I arranged my accommodation through Warwick University Accommodation service
 - Other (please specify):
5. How many people do you live with?

- I live on my own
- I live with my family
- I live with other students (please specify how many)
- Other

6. On a scale of 1(low) to 10 (high) how satisfied are you with the quality of your housing? (Please specify your rating)

7. Why did you choose to live in Leamington? (please tick as many as applicable)

- It is my home town
- Affordability
- Social life (bars, pubs, cafes etc.)
- I prefer living in a residential area to staying on campus
- It is close to campus
- Other (please specify):

8. How aware are you of opportunities to get involved or network with your local community?

- I don't know anything about local community activities
- I am aware, but I have never been involved
- I occasionally get involved with the community
- I often engage in community activities

Tell us more about how you have been involved in your community or how you'd like to become involved in the future:

9. How often do you have contact with your neighbours?

- Daily
- About once a week
- Once or twice a month
- Irregularly

- I don't know my neighbours

Please tell us a bit more about this:

10. When you first moved in, how much did you understand about each of these issues:

	Nothing or not much	A little	A lot
Parking			
Rubbish/refuse			
Bills			
Getting involved in the local community			

Other (please specify)

11. What ideas do you have about how students could be more prepared about these issues? (Is there information that would have helped you settle in?)

12. Have you experienced difficulties with any of the following? (please tick as many as applicable)

- Landlord
- Rubbish
- Anti-social behaviour
- Complaints from neighbours
- Safety
- Hate crimes
- Harassment
- Other (please specify):

If you ticked any of these issues, please tell us a little bit more about your experience:

13. What ideas do you have about how to help build relationships with the community in Leamington? (Are there any services or support that would help?)

14. Please use this box to share any other relevant information:

15. Your gender:

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify):

16. Your age:

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to say

17. Your ethnic background:

- Arab
- Asian / British / English / Irish / Scottish / Welsh
- Asian / Bangladeshi
- Asian / Chinese
- Asian / Indian
- Asian / Pakistani
- Black British / English / Irish / Scottish / Welsh
- Black / African
- Black / Caribbean
- White / British

- White / English
- White / Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- White / Irish
- White / Scottish
- White / Welsh
- Mixed / White and Asian
- Mixed / White and Black African
- Mixed / White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed / White and Chinese
- Prefer not to say
- Other ethnic group:

18. Do you consider yourself disabled?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

19. Your sexual orientation:

- Heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Thank you for taking the time to answer this survey!