

Date of Meeting	21st July 2008			
Title of Report	Community Boards – Development Phase			
Link to Corporate Priorities	Partnership Working			
Public Report	YES			
Summary of Report				
To ask Members to note progress on the Development Phase of the Community Boards project and to nominate 3 Members to represent the Chippenham Area (3) Committee on a Task Group, to help shape Community Boards during the transition period ahead of the formal Vesting Day for the new Authority.				
Officer Recommendations				
It is recommended that				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members note progress on the Development Phase of the Community Boards project. 2. The Chippenham Area (3) Committee nominates 3 Members to sit on a Task Group with other representatives, to develop the new Community Boards using scheduled Chippenham Area (3) Committee meetings as a development forum. 				
Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Contact Officer	Victoria Welsh, Project Manager, Community Boards – Development Phase 01249 706 446 vwelsh@northwiltshire.gov.uk			

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the Development Phase of the Community Boards project and recommends that 3 Members representing the District Council's Chippenham Area (3) Committee are nominated to sit on a Task Group alongside representatives of Wiltshire County Council, Town and Parish Councils, the Chippenham Area Community Partnership (ChAP) and service providers. This Task Group will help to shape new Community Boards during the transition ahead of Vesting Day for the new Authority. The scheduled Chippenham Area (3) Committee meetings will be used as a development forum (alongside its normal business and with no changes to its current constitution and voting rights).

2. Options and Options Appraisal

- 2.1 **Option One.** It is recommended that:
 - 2.1.1 Members of the Chippenham Area (3) Committee note progress on the Development Phase of the Community Boards project.
 - 2.1.2 The Chippenham Area (3) Committee nominates 3 Members to sit on a Task Group with other representatives to work to develop the new Community Boards.
- 2.2 It is intended that Task Groups will be established in all Community Areas involved in the development phase leading to fully operational Community Boards. In this Community area other representatives will include 3 County Councillors, representatives from Town and Parish Councils and Chippenham Area Community Partnership (ChAP). In addition, a request will be made to service providers (Health, Police and Fire Services) to participate.

3. Background

- 3.1.1 A key feature of Wiltshire County Council's unitary bid was a commitment to bring local government and public services closer to the community. This will be achieved by setting up Community Boards in each of Wiltshire's community areas. These Boards will work with local communities and partners to deliver public services shaped around the needs of local people and places.
- 3.1.2 At its meeting on 3 December 2007 Members of the Chippenham Area (3) Committee resolved to support the creation of a Community Board pilot in the Community Area.
- 3.1.3 At the Executive meeting on 17th January 2008 it was resolved that the development phase of Community Boards in North Wiltshire be supported; Area Committees continue until the implementation of Community Boards, and that scheduled Area Committee meetings in 2008/9 be used as development forums for the development phase of the Community Boards.
- 3.1.4 All District and County Council Members were invited to attend a Community Leadership and Governance Seminar in Devizes on Monday, 21st January in Devizes to discuss and develop ideas for improving community area working.

4. Composition and Role of Community Boards

- 4.1.1 Under the new Unitary Authority, Community Boards will comprise the Wiltshire Councillors for the Community Area in question. Community Boards will form part of the Unitary Authority's decision making structure, and will be enshrined in the constitution. Parish and Town Councils, service providers and members of the public will be strongly encouraged to participate at Community Board meetings.

4.1.2 The role of the Community Boards will be to take decisions regarding local services. The Community Boards will be expected to shape Council services in response to local needs and circumstances, and also to ensure that services are coordinated to tackle local 'cross-cutting' issues such as community safety, opportunities for young people and older people, regeneration, and the local environment.

4.1.3 In the longer term, the aspiration is for other key organisations providing public services to the area (such as the Health, Police and Fire services) to be represented on the Community Board, and for them to make executive decisions at these meetings too.

4.1.4 'In a Nutshell' summaries of the roles of Community Boards and Community Area Partnerships are at **Appendices 1 and 2**.

5. Development Phase – Community Boards

5.1.1 A development team has recently been established to work in the 12 areas that will be involved with the development phase (this includes all five of North Wiltshire's Community Areas). The areas were selected following expressions of interest from Area Committees, the local community and Community Area Partnerships. The list of Project Managers and Community Areas is set out at **Appendix 3**.

5.1.2 The primary aim of the project is the development of Community Boards, to include:

- Reviewing the boundaries of the Community Areas following the work of the Boundary Commission.
- Agreeing the powers that will be delegated to Community Area level
- Agreeing how the Community Boards will manage front line services within each Community Area
- Developing new ways of engaging local people and partners in local decisions.
- Agreeing how the Community Boards will hold public service providers to account
- Agreeing how Community Boards will operate in practice
- Agreeing the support needed by elected Members in their new role

5.1.3 Project plans will be developed for each Community Area involved in the development phase, and elements that may be tested are listed at **Appendix 4**.

5.1.4 Key aspects of the project will include:

- Communicating with elected Members, local people and partners
- Engaging local elected Members in the project with a Task Group being formed in each development area, which will examine particular aspects of the project
- Working with the scrutiny task group to review progress
- Working with University of Southampton to test and evaluate new approaches
- Running events and activities in each area to stimulate local participation
- Engaging the Area Committees, Community Area Partnerships and Wiltshire Forum of Community Area Partnerships (WFCAP) and service providers in the discussions at every stage.

5.1.5 Progress will be reported to the Community and Local Governance Workstream Board, the Joint Implementation Executive and the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board on a monthly basis. Progress updates will also be given to this Area Committee.

5.1.6 Members should be aware that with the limited timescales and resources available it will not be possible to test all elements listed at Appendix 4 in all 12 participating

development areas. It is hoped that each pilot area will test out and properly evaluate different elements to ensure that most new governance arrangements are tested ahead of the Community Boards becoming fully operational.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 No constitutional changes will be necessary. Area Committee meetings will continue as scheduled.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There will be little or no cost savings from the proposals in the 2007/8 financial year, as meetings scheduled for 2008/9 will continue be used as development fora.
- 4.2 The costs of the development phase are being calculated, and budgets identified, as part of the planning process. It is understood that any additional costs (beyond those which the District Council would have spent on Area Committees) will be provided by the County Council from the transition and/or other budgets.

5 Human Resource Implications

5. 1 Officers in the Democratic Services Team will, where staffing levels permit, work with the Community Boards - Development Phase Project Manager to implement the programme of development work. Part of the development phase will be to identify how the new Community Boards will need to be supported once they have been launched following Vesting Day.

6. Community and Environmental Implications

- 6.1 The implementation of Community Boards as an effective community forum and base for local decision making as described in the proposal, will serve to ensure that North Wiltshire issues are championed through to appropriate discussion and decision in the new Unitary Authority. By developing in conjunction with local communities and key stakeholders, there is the opportunity to shape the Community Boards so that they work to the best effect for the residents of North Wiltshire.

7. Equality & Diversity Implications

- 7.1 Once operational, the very nature of Community Boards, and the ability of such a forum and decision making body to deliver against the priorities in local communities across the County, puts issues of equality and diversity at it's centre. There will be opportunities for inequalities to be addressed as a result of the stakeholder involvement in the development of Community Boards, and the subsequent decisions and actions that the Boards will make.

Appendices:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 1 - 'In a Nutshell' - Community Area • Appendix 2 - 'In a Nutshell' - Community Area Partnerships • Appendix 3 - List of Pilot Community Board Areas • Appendix 4 - Elements for Testing - Development Phase 	
Background documents used in the preparation of this Report:	One Council for Wiltshire submission	
Previous Decisions Connected with this Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
Chippenham Area (3) Committee	Chippenham Area (3) Committee 3 December 2007	CH42 E52
Executive	Executive 17 th January 2008	

