Wiltshire Council

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Meeting: **Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

Place: **The Kennet Room - County Hall, Trowbridge BA14 8JN**

Date: **Tuesday 17 March 2020**

Time: **10.30 am**

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 9 March 2020. Additional documents are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Kieran Elliott, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line (01225) 718504 or email kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225)713114/713115.

This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

6   **Final Report of the Communications with Councillors Task Group** *(Pages 3 - 18)*

To receive the final report of the task group.

9   **Management Committee Task Groups** *(Pages 19 - 34)*

To receive the rapid scrutiny report on the application and assessment process for the council's Community Facilities Fund

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 16 March 2020

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Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

17 March 2020

Final Report of the Communications with Councillors Task Group

Purpose of the report

1. To present the findings and recommendations of the task group for endorsement by the committee and referral to the Cabinet Member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries for a response.

Background

2. In 2017 the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of OS Management Committee met with the Cabinet Member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries, to discuss a potential scrutiny review, which could consider the Council's internal communications with elected members.

3. On 7 November 2018 a further discussion was had, where some Terms of Reference (below) were put forward. It was agreed that such a scrutiny task group would add value and on 20 November 2018, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) endorsed the establishment of the Communications with Councillors Task Group.

4. This task group links to the Council's Business Plan 2017-27 priority of 'becoming an effective and efficient council' and reports into OSMC, as the scrutiny committee with responsibility for the communications portfolio.

Terms of reference

5. The following terms of reference for the task group were endorsed by OSMC on 20 November 2018.

Terms of Reference

   a) To review Wiltshire councillors' experience and expectation of internal communications from the council across its service areas.

   b) To contribute to the work already underway to develop a new online information portal for Wiltshire councillors.

   c) To make recommendations to ensure that the communications received by Wiltshire councillors take into account their expectations to assist them in undertaking their role as effectively as possible.

Membership

6. The task group comprised the following membership:

- Cllr Trevor Carbin (Chairman)
- Cllr Gavin Grant
- Cllr Ruth Hopkinson
- Cllr Graham Wright

Methodology

7. The task group is grateful to the following witnesses for contributing to the scrutiny review:

Individual	Title / Job Role
Cllr Allison Bucknell	Cabinet Member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries
Libby Johnstone	Democratic Governance Manager – Wiltshire Council
Ian Robinson	Director of Data, Digital and Technology – Wiltshire Council
Tulip Tipper	Senior Occupational Development Trainer – Wiltshire Council
Ceri Tocock	Head of Communications, Events and Marketing – Wiltshire Council
Robin Townsend	Director of Corporate Services

8. Alongside receiving verbal evidence from the individuals above, the task group considered the following information:

- Wiltshire Council: Media Protocol

9. The task group also created a survey for all 98 unitary councillors, asking for their views on internal communications with elected members. The survey was made available from 8 to 30 October 2019. A template of the survey's questions can be found at Appendix 1.

10. Between March 2019 and March 2020 the task group met six times. This report and its preliminary recommendations have been discussed with the executive and senior officers.

Evidence

Media Protocol

11. The task group reviewed the Council's media protocol, which had been drawn up in 2015. This review was partly in response to discussion had at 21 May 2019 Full Council; where Cllr Ian Thorn queried the Council's media protocol.

Councillor Survey

12. To obtain evidence about how the Council communicates with elected members, the task group undertook a survey of all 98 unitary councillors. The survey received 48

responses; which represents just under half of the entire Wiltshire Council membership.

13. The survey ran from 8 to 30 October 2019 and was promoted through two e-mails to the entire Council membership during 8 to 30 October 2019 and a [Briefing Note](), circulated to all members on 10 October 2019.

Survey Key Findings

14. Most respondents reported that they checked their e-mails on a daily basis and a majority reported that they use either The Directory or the intranet to access information, however, many stated that The Directory's information required updating.

The Intranet

15. Despite most respondents reporting that the intranet provided good access to information, some stated that it required improvement, and nobody felt that the intranet's information was 'excellent'. For example, it was cited that information on the intranet could be difficult to find, because the 'search' function did not always work properly.

Hot Wire Alerts

16. Most respondents appreciated the 'Hot Wire' alerts, detailing that they were a timely way of being kept in-the-know and they work well being circulated via e-mail.

Elected Wire

17. As with the 'Hot Wire' alerts, a majority of respondents praised the way that these communications kept members up-to-date and successfully highlighted key issues. Some asked whether the information could be presented in a more eye-catching way, to help grab the reader's attention.

Policy Updates

18. Respondents favoured this form of communication and detailed that it provided useful, relevant and interesting information. A minority highlighted that these updates were too long and perhaps they would benefit from having an 'Executive Summary' at the front.

Briefing Notes

19. This was the form of communication that respondents preferred the most (closely followed by the planning communications), because of the useful information that Briefing Notes contain. Additionally, having the Notes available on the website made it easier for members to find the information at a later date.

Delegated Decisions

20. The majority of comments demonstrated that members find these communiqués difficult to digest. For example, if the division name could be referenced in the subject line and title, or if the decision could only be e-mailed to the relevant division

member(s), then this would help to better filter the information that councillors receive.

Planning Communications

21. A majority of respondents found communication on planning to be good, specifically the weekly list of planning applications that are e-mailed to members. However, others stressed their frustration at the planning portal often being out of action.

Our Community Matters

22. The survey results showed that most respondents felt the 'Our Community Matters' communications were useful.

Social Media

23. A majority of respondents do not follow the Council's social media accounts, however, for those that do follow the accounts, Twitter and Facebook are the most popular with everyone reporting that they find the accounts useful.

Webcasting

24. Just over half of all respondents (51%) do not use the Council's webcasting function and this could be because it is not available for all council committees, with most voting that they would like the functionality to be extended to Area Boards. Of those that use the function, most members tended to use web-casting to catch up on a meeting that they were unable to attend.

Officer Response Times

25. Exactly half of all respondents stated that officers responded within the timeframe set out within the constitution*, whereas the other half felt that officers did not respond within this timeframe.

*The Constitution states that e-mails and telephone calls from Councillors will be acknowledged by Officers within two working days with a substantive response provided within 10 working days and, if this is not possible, an explanation provided within this timeframe as to the reason why and when a response can be expected.

Additional Comments

26. Councillors outlined that, on the whole, access to Wiltshire Council information was good and timely. However, documents could often be too lengthy and sometimes e-mails to shared team-wide mailboxes did not always receive a response.

Suggestions for Improvement

27. The main areas where councillors highlighted improvements could be made were:

- **E-mail subject lines**: these could be better utilised to summarise the information contained, to enable a councillor to more easily distinguish what is/isn't relevant to them
- **Councillor Portal**: as with Briefing Notes, if all communiqués to all councillors could be recorded/stored in one area, then it would enable a member to more easily access information
- **The Directory**: the information contained here requires updating
- **Social Media**: councillor training would be beneficial
- **New policy**: any communications regarding a specific division should always be circulated to the relevant division member, to better enable councillors to represent the public

Digital Hints and Tips

28. The task group attended a bespoke training session on 'Digital Hints and Tips', to learn how to make the most of the Wiltshire Council technology available to them, such as a laptop. This session specifically looked at harnessing the functionality of Skype and Microsoft Outlook, to best support members in their roles.

Councillor Induction Programme: 2021

29. Members provided input into the design of the Councillor Induction Programme for 2021 and discussed the information provided to Councillors when they are deciding to take on their roles.

Conclusions

Media Protocol

30. The task group agreed that the Council's Media Protocol required updating, as it was five years old and referred to outdated internal structure charts. Additionally, the Protocol could benefit from greater clarity around how an individual member could obtain assistance with the media/press. Members felt that implementing such an update would be fairly straightforward.

Councillor Survey

31. The survey's results showed that a majority of members do not fully utilise the technology available to them, such as the web-casting function, using MS Outlook to view others' availability (via their calendar), or making the most of social media to keep up-to-date with real time information. The task group concluded that if technology was better exploited by councillors, they might report an improvement to the council's communications.

32. Alongside this finding, the task group concluded that there were several areas where communication with elected members would benefit from slight amendment. For

example, if emails circulated to all members (e.g. delegated decision notices) listed the division name in the subject line first, then councillors would more easily be able to filter what is/is not relevant to them. Additionally, The Directory required updating; as it was not an accurate record of officer roles and responsibilities.

33. Furthermore, as planning matters could often be contentious, if any information circulated to the relevant parish clerk was also circulated to the relevant division members, members would be better enabled and informed to represent their communities.

34. In line with this, as well as the fact that evidence showed that only half of survey respondents found officers **did** respond within the constitutional timeframe, the task group felt that officers needed to be reminded of Protocol One in the Constitution, specifically paragraph 11.2 which states that: *'Officers should ensure Members are informed as appropriate on matters relating to their local division. This includes representations on local issues, where it appears the Member had not already been informed'*.

Digital Hints and Tips

35. After attending their bespoke Digital Hints and Tips session, task group members felt more confident to make effective decisions on behalf of their communities. As a result, the task group concluded that all councillors would benefit from attending these training sessions; specifically, those around email management and using Skype as a tool to contact officers and check someone's availability.

Cllr Induction Programme

36. Members agreed that it was important for digital information to regularly be updated. Alongside this, they felt that at the induction programme members should be made aware of the digital literacy skills that they would require. If members felt that they did not have the necessary digital skills at induction, this would be an appropriate opportunity for members to attend digital induction sessions, so that they felt confident about making the best use of the Wiltshire Council technology provided to them.

Proposal

37. To endorse the report of the Task Group and refer it to the Cabinet Member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries for response at the Committee's next meeting.

Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries considers implementing the following recommendations:

    i.   Updating the Council's Media Protocol 2015 via:
           a) Including an up-to-date and accurate internal structure chart

   b) **Detailing how an individual councillor can seek assistance for media/press enquiries.**

 ii. **For emails circulated to all Wiltshire Councillors (e.g. delegated decision notices) to have the relevant division title listed first in the email's subject line.**

 iii. **For the Council's Directory to be updated by individual officers and managers to ensure accuracy.**

 iv. **For the planning notification circulated to a Parish Clerk to also be sent to the relevant division member(s) (where appropriate).**

 v. **To encourage all members to attend the Council's Digital Hints and Tips sessions, to learn how to make the most of the technology available to them.**

Cllr Trevor Carbin, Chairman of the Communications with Councillors Task Group

Report author: Natalie Heritage, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 718062, Natalie.Heritage@wiltshire.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 – template of survey questions

Background documents

Links have been provided in the body of the report

The following information is a PDF template of the online survey made available to all Wiltshire unitary councillors from 8 to 30 October 2019.

Due to hyperlinks, the following questions are not readable in an offline format:

- *Q3, Q3A and Q3B*

The first response option of Q3 should read 'Grow'.

Q3A should read: 'How often do you access Grow to obtain internal information?'

Q3B should read: 'How often do you access the Councillors' Intranet Area to obtain internal information?'

Additionally, Q8A and Q9A would only appear if a respondent ticked the 'Other' option in Q8 and Q9.

Communications with Councillors Task Group: Survey

The Communications with Councillors Task Group is currently reviewing Wiltshire Councillors' experiences and expectations of internal correspondence from across all Wiltshire Council service areas. As part of evidence gathering, the Task Group is providing all Wiltshire Councillors with the chance to share their experience through this survey.

The Task Group was established in March 2019 following a request from the Cabinet Member and Director responsible for communications. It was felt that a holistic review of how all service areas at the council communicate information to Cllrs would enhance their ability to represent the public and take effective decisions.

This survey is open for response between 16 October 2019 and 30 October 2019. The survey should take between 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

Q1   What forms of technology do you have access to? (tick all that apply)

☐ Wiltshire Council laptop
☐ Ipad with Wiltshire Council e-mail access
☐ Smartphone with Wiltshire Council email access

Q2 Over an average week how regularly do you use these forms of technology for internal Wiltshire Council communication?

Wiltshire Council laptop

Less than once a week	○
2-3 times per week	○
Daily	○

Ipad with Wiltshire Council e-mail access

Less than once a week	○
2-3 times per week	○
Daily	○

Smartphone with Wiltshire Council email access

Less than once a week	○

2-3 times per week	○
Daily	○

Q3 Do you use any of the following areas to access internal Wiltshire Council information? (tick all that apply)

- ☐ GRwiltshire .sabacloud.com/Saba/Web_spf/SPCTNT62Site/pages/pagelistview/pgcnt000000000037329OW
- ☐ Councillors' Intranet Area
- ☐ Wiltshire Council Directory (accessed from The Wire)
- ☐ None of the above

How often do you access GRwiltshire

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sabacloud .com/Saba/Web_spf/SPCTNT62Site/pages/pagelistview/pgcnt000000000037329OW to obtain internal information?

Every 6-12 months	○
Quarterly	○
Weekly	○

How often do you access the Councillors' Intrathewire.wiltshire.council/index/councillors-area.htmnet Area to obtain internal information?

Every 6-12 months	○
Quarterly	○
Weekly	○

How often do you access The Directory?

Every 6-12 months	○
Quarterly	○
Weekly	○

Q4 How would you rate the clarity of content in the following forms of communication:

Information on the Councillors' Intranet Area

Poor	○
Good	○
Excellent	○

What made your choose your rating?

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Hot Wire Alerts

Poor	○
Good	○
Excellent	○

What made your choose your rating?

Elected Wire

Poor	○
Good	○
Excellent	○

What made your choose your rating?

Policy Updates

Poor	○
Good	○
Excellent	○

What made your choose your rating?

Briefing Notes

Poor	○
Good	○
Excellent	○

What made your choose your rating?

Delegated Decision Notices

Poor	○
Good	○
Excellent	○

What made your choose your rating?

Planning-related Communications

Poor	○
Good	○
Excellent	○

What made your choose your rating?

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Our Community Matters

Poor	○
Good	○
Excellent	○

What made your choose your rating?

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Q5 Do you follow any of the official Wiltshire Council social media accounts?

○ Yes
○ No

Q5a Which Wiltshire Council social media accounts do you follow? (tick all that apply)

☐ Facebook
☐ Twitter
☐ Instagram
☐ YouTube

Q5b Do you follow any other Wiltshire Council accounts, apart from the official accounts, such as the careers account, roads account, etc. Please specify below.

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Q5c Do you find the Council's social media accounts useful?

○ Yes
○ No

Q5d Please state why

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Q6 Do you use the Wiltshire Council webcasting function?

○ Yes

○ No

How regularly do you use the Wiltshire Council webcasting function?

Every 6-12 months	○
Quarterly	○
Weekly	○

Q7b Would you find it beneficial if the webcasting function was extended to Area Boards?

○ Yes

○ No

Q8 What has been your purpose(s) for accessing webcasts? (tick all that apply)

○ To catch-up on a meeting that you were unable to attend

○ To catch-up on the proceedings of a meeting that you attended

○ Research

○ General Interest

○ Other

Q8a Please state

Q9 How would you usually locate contact details for another Wiltshire Councillor? (tick all that apply)

☐ Contacting Customer Services

☐ Wiltshire Council Directory (accessed via The Wire)

☐ MyWiltshire App

☐ Wiltshire Council Website

☐ Search Engine (e.g. Google)

☐ Other

Q9a   Please State

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Q9b   Do you feel that the information available on 'The Directory' could be improved?

○ Yes

○ No

Q10   Are you aware of the Wiltshire Council Member-Officer Protocol?

○ Yes

○ No

Q11   Have you found that Wiltshire Council Officers consistently meet the response period for internal communication with yourself, as detailed in the Protocol? *The Protocol states that e-mails & telephone calls from Cllrs will be acknowledged by Officers within two working days, with a substantive response provided within 10 working days and, if this is not possible, an explanation provided within this timeframe as to the reason why and when the response can be expected.*

○ Yes

○ No

Q12   Do you have any further comments about internal Wiltshire Council correspondence, which would enable you to better represent the public and make effective decisions?

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Thank you for participating in the Communications with Councillors Task Group Survey. Your details will remain anonymous and the Task Group will consider all of the results at their next meeting. The survey's responses will help to infom the Task Group's final report and recommendations, which is due to be received at Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee on 28 January 2020.

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Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

17 March 2020

Proposed Rapid Scrutiny Exercise: Community Facilities Funding

Purpose

1. To consider the establishment of a rapid scrutiny exercise to review the proposed application and assessment process for the council's Community Facilities Fund.

Background

2. On 8 October 2019, Cabinet considered a report on the Community Funding Review for Community Facilities. This report,
   a) Identified those community areas that have not benefitted from capital investment through the community campus and hub programme;
   b) Suggesting a mechanism for identifying how the council might engage with identified community areas to identify potential facility projects that address local priorities; and where council investment could enable communities to develop new or improved community assets;
   c) Recognising that some capital funding should be set aside to support the development of any appropriate facility projects identified by these community areas during this process, subject to further investigation.

3. This was to ensure that,
   a) Community areas that have not benefited from community facility investment can identify potentially develop facility projects, which could improve local provision and support local priorities;
   b) Any future provision within these areas explores the potential to deliver new community facilities, aligned to the principles of the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy;
   c) Additional investment within the proposed community areas compliments future priorities identified through the respective leisure facilities and libraries review.

4. Having debated the proposals, Cabinet resolved to,
   a) Confirm that option three (see paragraph 5 below) is the preferred option and should be pursued by officers as a means of developing new facility development in the seven identified community areas;

b) Confirm the seven community areas where capital investment should be allocated as Amesbury, Bradford on Avon, Chippenham, Marlborough, Southern Wiltshire, Tidworth, Warminster and Trowbridge.

c) Confirm engagement should take place with the seven identified community areas to identify local opportunities suitable for facility development and to better understand local priorities.

d) Recommend a sum of money available for investment to develop community facilities in the seven community areas.

e) Recommend the CLFF model identified in this report be developed as a model to develop community facilities in the seven identified community areas.

f) Approve a mechanism be developed to engage with the seven community areas similar to that suggested in this report.

g) To prioritise projects which align to the principles of Wiltshire Council's Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy and which are underpinned by a collaborative approach ensuring multiple community organisations benefits from investment.

h) Delegate authority to the Director of Communities and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Finance and Procurement to oversee and implement an engagement mechanism and to allocate funding to any appropriate facility projects identified by community areas as part of this process.

i) Invite Overview and Scrutiny to assist in assessing whether the community funding process is effective in delivering social benefits.

5. Option 3 was as follows: "To set aside a sum of capital to support a community-led programme that will see some facility investment in the remaining seven community areas and engage with these communities to understand local priorities for community facilities and any gaps in provision. This approach has commenced in Westbury and would appear to be an appropriate model for investment which requires less capital investment and officer resource while still helping communities contribute to local priorities."

Overview and Scrutiny engagement

6. As outlined in resolution (i) above, following a request from the Leader, Cabinet invited Overview and Scrutiny (OS) to assist in assessing whether the community funding process is effective in delivering social benefits.

7. Since the Cabinet meeting in October, an application and assessment process for groups applying for Community Facilities Funding has been drafted and is ready for review by OS. The draft process includes,
   - Application criteria, including the kinds of projects that will be prioritised and those that will not be considered;
   - Requirements in terms of applying organisations' governance arrangements;
   - Permitted uses of the funding;
   - The governance arrangements for determining applications.

8. Following discussion with the OS Management Committee chairman and vice-chairman, a rapid scrutiny exercise with the following terms of reference is proposed to undertake the scrutiny requested by Cabinet:

   To consider whether the proposed application and assessment process for submissions to Wiltshire Council for Community Facilities funding will be effective in supporting and encouraging applicants to deliver social value/benefits.

9. If the rapid scrutiny exercise is established, an open invitation for non-executive councillors to take part would be circulated and the meeting arranged. As outlined in the Rapid Scrutiny Protocol, there is no need for the resultant recommendations to be endorsed by Committee prior to submission to the Executive, though the findings of the exercise and the Executive response would be brought back to the Committee's next meeting.

Proposal

10. To establish a rapid scrutiny exercise to review the proposed application and assessment process for the council's Community Facilities Fund with the terms of reference included under paragraph 9.

11. To receive the findings of the rapid scrutiny exercise and the Executive response at the Committee's next meeting.

Report author: Henry Powell, Scrutiny Lead, 01225 718052, henry.powell@wiltshire.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1   Report to Cabinet, 8 October 2019: Community Funding Review – Community Facilities

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

Date Tuesday 8 October

Subject:	**Community Funding Review – Community Facilities**
Cabinet Member:	**Cllr Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Economic Development**
Key Decision:	**Key**

Executive Summary

The report identifies those community areas that have not benefitted from capital investment through the community campus and hub programme.

This report provides a suggested mechanism identifying how Wiltshire Council might engage with identified community areas to identify potential facility projects that address local priorities; and where council investment could enable communities to develop new or improved community assets.

To recognise that some capital funding should be set aside to support the development of any appropriate facility projects identified by these community areas during this process, subject to further investigation.

Proposal(s)

To approve the community areas eligible for this process.

To also consider any other substantial community whose local area has not benefited from a campus investment.

To approve a mechanism to engage identified community areas be developed and implemented.

To allocate some capital funding to support communities to develop appropriate facility projects in identified community areas through this mechanism.

To prioritise projects which align to the principles of Wiltshire Council's Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy and which are underpinned by a collaborative approach ensuring multiple community organisations benefits from investment.

Delegate authority to the Director of Communities and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Finance and Procurement to oversee and implement an engagement mechanism and to allocate funding to any appropriate facility projects identified by community areas as part of this process.

Reason for Proposal(s)

To ensure that community areas that have not benefited from community facility investment have the opportunity to identify potentially develop facility projects, which could improve local provision and support local priorities.

To ensure any future provision within the proposed community areas explores the potential to deliver new community facilities, aligned to the principles of the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy passed by Cabinet in November 2017.

To ensure that additional investment within the proposed community areas compliments future priorities identified through the respective leisure facilities and libraries reviews.

Alistair Cunningham OBE
Executive Director Investment & Growth

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

Date Tuesday 8 October

Subject:	**Community Funding Review**
Cabinet Member:	**Cllr Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Economic Development**
Key Decision:	**Key**

Purpose of Report

1. To identify community areas that have not benefitted from capital investment through the community campus and hub programme.

2. To provides a mechanism identifying how Wiltshire Council might engage with identified community areas to identify potential facility projects that address local priorities; and where council investment could enable communities to develop new or improved community assets.

3. To recommend some capital funding be allocated to support communities to develop appropriate facility projects in identified community areas through this mechanism.

Relevance to the council's Business Plan

4. The provision of high-quality fit for purpose community facilities is intrinsic to the council's vision to create stronger communities in Wiltshire.

5. Provision of appropriate local facilities enables communities to improve personal and community wellbeing and allows for the provision of services which protect the vulnerable. Collaborative work on projects of this nature ensures the council works with partners as an innovative and effective council. These are all key priorities within the Wiltshire Council business plan.

6. Community facilities have a key role to play in supporting people to live more active and fulfilled lives, providing sustainable assets for local communities that provide a place, facilities and services that can help to combat isolation and loneliness and increase opportunities for social interaction.

Background

7. The community campus and hub programme was conceived in October 2009 following the merger of the county council and four district councils and was part of the Workplace Transformation Programme, which was set-up to

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rationalise the property estate and provide fit for purpose accommodation for council services.

8. Eleven community areas have benefited from investment as part of the community campus programme. Budget for this programme is fully committed.

9. The following community areas have so far not received any investment through the community campus and hub programme:

- Amesbury
- Bradford on Avon
- Chippenham
- Marlborough
- Southern Wiltshire
- Tidworth
- Trowbridge

While all other community areas have received investment through the campus programme, there are other substantial communities whose local area has not benefited from a campus investment and they may wish to be considered as part of this proposal.

10. The Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy was passed by Cabinet in November 2017, the principles of which could form an integral part of discussions with identified community areas.

11. Work is underway in Westbury to asset transfer the former Westbury Youth Centre in Eden Vale Road to the Westbury Community Project, a registered charity. This work may provide a suitable model to develop and deliver facility projects following discussions with the seven community areas identified above. Further details can be found from paragraphs 13 to 21.

12. An in-depth review of leisure facility and library requirements across the county is due to be commissioned shortly. These reviews will ensure that Wiltshire has the appropriate facility provision to deliver fit for purpose services over the medium to long term. It is imperative that any facility projects identified as part of this proposal be developed in accordance with the findings of these reviews.

A Community Led Model for Success: Westbury

13. Work is underway in Westbury to asset transfer the former Westbury Youth Centre in Eden Vale Road to the Westbury Community Project, a registered charity. This project aims to upgrade the existing building and utilise the facility to co-locate vital services and provide a space for the local community to create additional recreational and social activities that generate increased social capital.

14. Wiltshire Council has identified £100,000 of capital funding through the Community Led Funding Facilities (CLFF) model (Appendix 1 - Community

Led Funding Facilities model), to contribute to the required improvements to this facility which reflects the condition of the building at point of transfer.

15. In the CLFF model utilised in Westbury the community has identified a need and a suitable opportunity to deliver a project that also contributes to Wiltshire Council's own priorities. In addition to funding, Wiltshire Council has provided a wraparound support package to assist the development of the project. This has included:

    - Asset transfer support via Strategic Assets and Facilities Management
    - Building improvement guidance via Strategic Assets and Facilities Management
    - Business case development support via Community Engagement
    - Governance support via Community Engagement
    - Support to identify other suitable community partners via Community Engagement

16. Providing a menu of tools and expertise to local communities allows Wiltshire Council to support projects, improve the chances of communities successfully delivering schemes of work and minimises the risk to the council.

17. The CLFF could provide a suitable model to develop facility projects in other community areas and to unlock existing assets.

18. Any project receiving funding from Wiltshire Council should be assessed against criteria which measures community benefit and need as well as ensuring projects are viable and delivery organisations are credible. The Capital Projects Gateway process (Appendix 2), could be utilised to assess this. Facility projects would be passed through a series of governance and assurance gateways designed to ensure that any project's progress is monitored and assessed through a robust process aligned to Wiltshire Council's Capital Investment Strategy.

19. Facility projects assessed through the Gateway process will require specific documentation to be completed and submitted for review and challenge at various stages. The documentation requirement will ensure that capital expenditure or capital project details and associated business cases are recorded in a consistent manner, so that any scheme can continue with all parties understanding the proposed outcomes and costs.

20. For any capital investment that also includes the transfer of a Wiltshire Council owned asset, the asset should be transferred under the principles of the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy and ensure that there is no conflict between assets that are likely to be transferred to the 20 agreed town councils.

21. Once a project has been approved for funding, as well as governance and assurance gateways, it is recommended recipients complete annual monitoring reports to record progress, detail spend and report against any performance measures.

Investment Options

22. The type of facility that could be invested in could include the following:

22.i   Wiltshire Council owned buildings currently in use – Investigate options for asset transfer and capital investment to ensure building is structurally sound and can be successfully maintained and operated by communities.

22.ii   Wiltshire Council owned buildings currently not in operation – Investigate options for asset transfer and capital investment to utilise buildings that are not currently in use before handing to the community to deliver community benefit and address local priorities.

22.iii Third party owned buildings – Capital investment for third party owned buildings where communities have identified potential investment could support local priorities and deliver community benefit.

Engagement Mechanism

23. It is recommended that presentations be delivered at areas boards for each of the seven community areas above, requesting communities work collaboratively to submit proposals and ideas relating to potential facility development projects.

24. To ensure a broad range of residents and community organisations are engaged in the process and aware of the opportunity, presentations will be followed with press releases, social media promotion, direct mail circulation and use of the Our Community Matters web pages.

25. Communities will be encouraged to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) using a standardised pro-forma template. This approach will ensure a level of consistency in the initial information provided for each project.

26. Local CEMs will be able to provide guidance and advice relating to the submission of EOIs and their content. Where appropriate CEMs might advice that multiple EOIs being developed should be merged and a collaborative approach taken.

27. For this approach to work and to not unnecessarily raise expectations amongst community organisations clear guidance will need to be provided at the beginning of the process. This will need to include:

   - The maximum amount of capital funding available per community area
   - The maximum amount of capital funding available per project
   - The maximum number of projects to be funded per community area
   - The maximum number of projects to be funded across all seven areas
   - The criteria against which projects will be assessed and monitored from EOI through to funding being agreed and ongoing project monitoring
   - The governance requirements organisations need to comply with in to be considered for funding

- That priority will be given to projects working collaboratively to benefit multiple community organisations and a broad range of priorities and residents
- That priority will be given to projects that utilise an asset transfer approach or upgrade an existing facility. New build facilities are unlikely to be in scope.

28. EOIs will be assessed by the local CEM and members from the area board, with any proposals deemed suitable passed to the Director of Communities to work collaboratively with the Directors of Finance and Legal, and with the cabinet member for Communities to approve and agree funding.

29. Projects that are granted funding will then progress through the CLFF model, business cases for each project developed and projects assessed using the Capital Projects Gateway process.

Main considerations for the Council

30. Allocation of a capital funding budget to develop any credible facility projects put forward by identified community areas.

31. Consideration will need to be given to the existing community facility asset base in each of the seven identified community areas to ensure gaps in provision and relevant opportunities are identified.

32. Capital investment should adhere to the principles of the community campus and hub programme with priority given to projects that modernise local community facilities, deliver efficiencies, amalgamate facilities, reduce maintenance costs and allow services and community organisations to operate in partnership from shared spaces to deliver community benefits.

33. Capital investment should be allocated using a needs-based approach to ensure local priorities are met. Where possible funding should be allocated based upon needs identified through local neighbourhood plans or which address the priorities and needs identified through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) process (Appendix 3). Furthermore, priority should also be given to projects that utilise a service devolution and/or asset transfer delivery model.

34. Any projects delivered through new capital investment should reflect and complement the priorities identified as part of the impending leisure and libraries facility review. Need for capital investment in the seven community areas identified in this report should be community led and utilise operating and management models that are driven by local communities.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

35. The proposal to engage community areas to understand local requirements and opportunities is the first stage in this process. It is proposed that, as this work progresses, detailed business cases are developed for any projects

identified as suitable for funding. Opportunities to engage will form an important part of the consultation process for each of these projects.

Safeguarding Implications

36. Priority will be given to projects that utilise a service devolution and/or asset transfer delivery model and as such projects will be community led. Safeguarding support will be provided to these organisations as part of the wraparound support package offered by Wiltshire Council. This will ensure projects adhere to appropriate safeguarding policy and legislation in relation to staff, users, volunteers, apprenticeships and work placements. As part of this appropriate checks will need to be adhered to and training on safeguarding will be implemented as part of the induction process for all staff and volunteers and monitored by Wiltshire Council.

Public Health Implications

37. Enabling communities to benefit from improved facilities and co-located services will help provide opportunities for people to lead healthy active lives, to socialise and reduce isolation and loneliness.

38. Identified projects may be able to further contribute to public health priorities including increased opportunities to be activity or by aiding the improvement of the physical and mental health of the population, which reduces mortality and improves life expectancy.

39. Any projects which receive investment will be required to identify how they are able to contribute to these outcomes and ensure local communities experience the same benefits.

Procurement Implications

40. Projects which receive Wiltshire Council investment will need to comply with relevant procurement regulations and evidence how they will achieve this as part of the application process.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

41. Accessibility will be a key design consideration for all projects receiving investment. All facilities will be designed to be fully accessible, in compliance with current building regulations and Wiltshire Council requirements.

42. All facilities and community spaces will be required to maintain an ongoing equalities assessment.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

43. The localised provision of services for customers, embedded within the community, is seen as a sustainable model, minimising travel distances for customers and helping to reduce carbon emissions.

44. Encouraging communities to identify facility priorities may lead to suggestions relating to existing buildings or sites that are not currently in use allowing the reimagination of these spaces. Re-use of the existing fabric and the design of all elements to make flexible use of the premises and to facilitate changing models of care, will optimise the potential for ongoing effective and sustainable use of the properties.

45. Community organisations delivering facility projects through this process will be encouraged to design and deliver efficient facilities, helping reduce operational costs and the impact on the environment.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

46. Service provision and community engagement has significantly improved in the community areas where Wiltshire Council has invested in improved community facilities. Residents in areas where there has been no investment have yet to benefit from the same quality of provision. There is a risk that provision and investment across the county is not seen as equitable.

47. A potential missed opportunity for communities to come together and for assets to be enhanced, improved and made sustainable for the longer term.

48. A potential missed opportunity for some local facilities that currently sit outside of the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy.

49. A potential missed opportunity for local communities to make an impact against local priorities for limited investment.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

50. Expectations are raised in the seven identified community areas that they will achieve investment at levels similar to the other community areas that have received investment through the community campus and hub programme. Mitigated by making clear the maximum figure available for investment in each community area and, by providing a suggested scope for the type of facility development suitable for consideration as part of this work when first engaging community areas at the beginning of the process.

51. No partner organisations identified/willing to deliver in community areas – Mitigated by promoting this opportunity to a broad range of organisations including town and parish council's, schools, existing community organisations and established partners.

52. Multiple/unrealistic projects are suggested in each community area and community organisations are disgruntled if their projects aren't progressed. Mitigated by setting clear guidance at the beginning of the process and by encouraging collaborative working.

53. Scheme Overspend – Mitigated by maximum budget allocation for overall investment and by setting a maximum grant award for an individual project. All applications for funding to include detailed feasibility studies and business

and sustainability plans. Projects required to identify and secure additional funding and risk sits with third party organisations delivering schemes of work.

54. Savings/Income not realised at expected level – Mitigated by each proposal for funding to identify potential savings to Wiltshire Council over the short, medium and long term.

55. Partner/staffing difficulties in operation of facilities – Mitigated by Wiltshire Council undertaking a due diligence exercise of all organisations at EOI stage. Wraparound support to be provided in areas including governance provided by Wiltshire Council. Expected governance requirements detailed at the start of the process.

56. Planning not obtained – Mitigated by continued early engagement with planning officers on a project by project basis and a full consultation with stakeholders to produce an acceptable scheme.

Financial Implications

57. Allocated capital funding will be required to support the development of facilities in seven community areas.

58. Each scheme of work will have ongoing operational and revenue implications. These costs will become the responsibility of the partner organisations leading on each project.

Legal Implications

59. Consideration will be given to the model of ownership and provision for each project allowing the Council and partners to maximise grant and other capital funding opportunities. This will need to be balanced by the need to ensure standards of service are maintained and reactive to changing needs.

60. Any facility that is likely to transfer to the community, will need to follow the Asset Transfer and Service Devolution policy and comply with all legal processes

61. Legal advice will be sought when required and oversite provided as required.

Workforce Implications

62. This process should be administered by the communities team and there may be a requirement to seek additional staffing support to facilitate this work and to provide ongoing support to each scheme of work across the seven community areas.

63. Additional support will also be required across a range of other internal departments including Strategic Assets and Facilities Management, Legal and Community Engagement.

Options Considered

64. The following options have been considered and are available to the council.

i) Do not provide any additional capital budget to invest in the seven community areas which have so far not benefited from investment in community facilities. This would mean that those communities would be left without the benefit of facility investment through Wiltshire Council.

ii) Deliver a community campus or hub in each community area. Funding for this has ceased and the council is currently reviewing its leisure and libraries stock to ensure that the county has the right facilities in the right places, operated by the most appropriate management model. Significant additional capital investment and officer resource would be required by the council to deliver a campus or hub in the seven identified areas and there is no evidence of strategic need currently.

iii) Set aside a sum of capital to support a community-led programme that will see some facility investment in the remaining seven community areas and engage with these communities to understand local priorities for community facilities and any gaps in provision. This approach has commenced in Westbury and would appear to be an appropriate model for investment which requires less capital investment and officer resource while still helping communities contribute to local priorities.

Conclusions

65. Officers recommend that the appropriate approach would be to deliver option three. Cabinet is therefore asked to:

    i.)   Confirm that option three is the preferred option and should be pursued by officers as a means of developing new facility development in the seven identified community areas.

    ii.)   Confirm the seven community areas where capital investment should be allocated as Amesbury, Bradford on Avon, Chippenham, Marlborough, Southern Wiltshire, Tidworth and Trowbridge.

    iii.)   Confirm engagement should take place with the seven identified community areas to identify local opportunities suitable for facility development and to better understand local priorities.

    iv.)   Recommend a sum of money available for investment to develop community facilities in the seven community areas.

    v.)   Recommend the CLFF model identified in this report be developed as a model to develop community facilities in the seven identified community areas.

    vi.)   Approve a mechanism be developed to engage with the seven community areas similar to that suggested in this report.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Community Led Facilities Funding Model
Appendix 2 – Capital Projects Gateway Process
Appendix 3 – JSNA Demand Overview

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None