

Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

19 May 2022

Executive Response to the Final Report of the Area Boards Task Group

Purpose of the report

1. To present the response of the Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, Broadband, Digital, Licensing, Staffing, Communities and Area Boards to the Final Report of the Area Boards Task Group.

Background

2. On 22 March 2022 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee endorsed the Final Report of the Task Group.
3. The Committee resolved to refer the following Task Group's recommendations to the relevant Cabinet member for response at the Committee's next meeting on 19 May 2022.
4. When the committee considered the final report positive feedback was received for Draft Proposal 12 within the report, with the opinion expressed that that capital money should not go towards towns and parish councils and that the revenue option would be positive as there are instances when towns and parish council support groups for older and younger people.
5. It was also suggested that Draft Proposal 12, Option B be tightened to stress that revenue grants for towns and parish councils cannot be used for capital purposes.
6. Further praise was also given to Draft Proposal 15, which would change the matched funding level from £1,000 to £500 for all grants.

Executive response to the Task Group's recommendations

That the Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, Broadband, Digital, Licensing, Staffing, Communities and Area Boards;

7. Recommendation 1 – consider the offers from members of the task group to provide informal feedback and input, on:
 - a. the Area Board Handbook,

- b. the role of the Area Board Lead Councillor (for local priority) – including the possibility of the Lead Councillor engaging with the feedback process (*Recommendation 4 refers*); and
- c. amendments to the grant application form - especially with regards to “Community Value” criteria and supporting monitoring;
- d. development of a “crib sheet” for area boards to support their consideration of grants applications.

This would not be as formal meetings of the task group, nor would suggestions be endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as changes would be implemented by 1 April 2022.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Offer was accepted and further input from the task group was included in the revised Councillors Handbook. All other recommendations are being followed up.
Action			Success criteria
Members of the task group were issued the draft handbook on 8 April 2022, with an opportunity to provide comments. The role of the Lead Councillor is within the Local Priority report. The online grant application form is currently being updated and a ‘crib sheet’ is currently under development with Cllr Wallis.			
Target date		Implementation date	
All actions complete by end of May 2022.		End of May 2022	

8. **Recommendation 2** – give due care and attention to a programme of communication (and, if required, training) to Wiltshire Councillors and partners linked to the Area Board on the proposed changes, including specific communication to Town and Parish Councils on any changes to funding. This would ensure a good understanding of the proposed changes and allow time for everyone to prepare.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Complete acceptance and understanding that full communications internally and with partners is needed.
Action			Success criteria
Preparing a briefing paper for Councillors and Towns and Parishes. There will be a recorded presentation of new Area Board arrangements. An Area Board Chairs meeting will be scheduled after full council on 17 th May to ensure Chairs are clear. Consideration of future training under review.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of June 2022		End of June 2022	

Draft Proposal 1 – Setting of local priorities and Area Board workplan

9. **Recommendation 3** – ensure that within the process of setting local priorities consideration is given to clearly defining the outcomes to be achieved, as this

would facilitate the proposed annual reviews of delivery on the local priorities (in the proposed Community Engagement Manager's report) and ensure priorities are achievable.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. Officers are encouraged to work with their boards in an outcomes focused manner.
Action			Success criteria
Local priority report tweaked to reflect this.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of April 2022		End of April 2022	

10. **Recommendation 4** – ensure that flexibility remains for Area Boards to set local priorities that are truly meaningful to their area, especially for smaller boards who may only have four local priorities (paragraph 23 refers).

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. Area Board retain this flexibility, however, there are mandatory priorities around young people and older, vulnerable adults due to revenue funding streams.
Action			Success criteria
This is reflected within the Area Board Handbook.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of April 2022		End of April 2022	

Draft Proposal 2 – Appointment of Lead Councillor

11. **Recommendation 5** – consider expanding the role of the Lead Councillor to include monitoring feedback for those grant applications (in consultation with the local councillor) that related to the Local Priority the Lead Councillor has responsibility for, to ensure that relevant feedback on progress and outcomes is provided to the Area Board.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. The relevant section of the local priority report regarding Councillor lead roles has been updated to reflect this.
Action			Success criteria
Local priority report updated to reflect recommendation.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of April 2022		End of April 2022	

Draft Proposal 3 – Annual progress report

12. **Recommendation 6** – ensure all Area Boards are aware that local priorities can be selected, reviewed and amended throughout the year (and are not

linked to the financial year). This would ensure that local priorities remain relevant and linked to current needs.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. The relevant section of the local priority report has been updated to reflect this.
Action			Success criteria
Local priority report updated to reflect recommendation.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of April 2022		End of April 2022	

13. **Recommendation 7** – ensure that under “progress on previous year priorities”, relevant grants and their impact are listed. Instances where feedback has not been provided by applicants should be highlighted.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. The relevant section of the local priority report has been updated to reflect this.
Action			Success criteria
Local priority report updated to reflect recommendation.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of April 2022		End of April 2022	

14. **Recommendation 8** – include the proposed annual progress reports (or highlights of / key points) at meetings of the Area Board Chairs to enable progress and successes to be shared and for all Area Boards Chairs to become more aware of each other’s activities and approaches.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. The relevant section of the local priority report has been updated to reflect this.
Action			Success criteria
Local priority report updated to reflect recommendation.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of April 2022		End of April 2022	

Draft Proposal 4 – increased role and promotion of forward work plan

15. **Recommendation 9** – consider offering additional training to councillors on the data available to them, including Wiltshire Intelligence - Bringing Evidence Together and include references to, and reminders of, relevant data at the Area Boards pre-meetings. This would ensure councillors have the most relevant and up-to-date information available to them when setting (or reviewing) their local priorities.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. Early discussions have taken place with Public Health on how to deliver this.
Action			Success criteria

Ongoing dialogue with Public Health to establish training opportunities.	
Target date	Implementation date
September 2022	September 2022

Draft Proposal 6 – Establishing working groups

16. **Recommendation 10** – consider further the impact this could have on the Community Engagement Managers, if they are the Wiltshire Council Officer assigned to the working group(s) and expected to attend all meetings.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. An operational matter to be picked up by Line Manager.
Action			Success criteria
Line Manager aware of concerns flagged by task group and will monitor and manage accordingly. Community Engagement Managers encouraged to discuss capacity and role with their respective boards.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of May 2022		End of May 2022	

17. **Recommendation 11** – ensure, if the intention remains for a Wiltshire Council Officer to be appointed to each working group, that each Area Board understands the importance of giving due consideration to the number of working groups it may set at any one time to ensure the workload remains manageable.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. Whilst Officers should be appointed to each group, it is not necessary for them to always attend or provide administrative support to each working group. An operational matter to be picked up by Line Manager.
Action			Success criteria
Line Manager aware of concerns flagged by task group and will monitor and manage accordingly. Community Engagement Managers to discuss capacity and role with their respective boards.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of May 2022		End of May 2022	

Draft Proposal 7 – Councillor Leads

18. **Recommendation 12** – consider further whether the role of working group Chair should “default” to the relevant Councillor Lead as this may not reflect the intentions of the Area Boards regarding partnership working with community groups and partners.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. Terms of reference document updated to reflect this wording change.
Action			Success criteria
Working groups terms of reference document updated to reflect this wording change.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of April 2022		End of April 2022	

Draft Proposal 8 – Terms of Reference (working groups)

19. **Recommendation 13** – consider clarifying the proposal to address the following points:
- who would agree the terms of reference?
 - who would complete the table?
 - are the generic Terms of Reference a starting point to build upon (i.e. what is in the generic Terms of Reference must be included but can be added to)?

This would ensure that the Terms of Reference for the working groups have a core commonality (enabling efficient reporting and monitoring) but also the flexibility to be very specific to each working group's purpose.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	(a) The Area board agrees the terms of reference. (b) The Community Engagement Manager in conjunction with the area board members would complete the table (c) The ToR are set as standard and are fixed, however, the table gives the groups complete and wide scope to ensure they are locally tailored.
Action			Success criteria
No action required			
Target date		Implementation date	
N/A		N/A	

20. **Recommendation 14** – consider giving Area Boards more flexibility in setting the frequency of meetings for working groups. This would ensure that the frequency is specific to the working groups' purpose. Area Boards would need to be mindful of Recommendation 10 (impact on Community Engagement Managers' workload).

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. Area Boards do have that flexibility regarding working group meetings.
Action			Success criteria

Amend wording on terms of reference document to reflect this.	
Target date	Implementation date
End of April 2022	End of April 2022

Draft Proposal 9 – New grants criteria

21. **Recommendation 15** – note that the task group supports this proposal as the intention is to make the process simpler and clearer for applicants.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted
Action			Success criteria
N/A			
Target date		Implementation date	
N/A		N/A	

Draft Proposal 10 – change of funding stream name

22. **Recommendation 16** – note that the task group had no objection to the proposed change of name for the funding stream from “Health and Wellbeing” to ‘Older and Vulnerable adults’, to provide more clarity on what the funding is intended for.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted
Action			Success criteria
N/A			
Target date		Implementation date	
N/A		N/A	

Draft Proposal 11 – funding allocations

23. **Recommendation 17** – consider further investigation of basing the funding allocation for “Health and Wellbeing” (or “Older and Vulnerable adults”) on a set number of criteria, including consultation with Area Boards on the proposed “algorithm” to allocate the funding.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Agreed. There will be further investigation into algorithm options, however, for this financial year there will not be an immediate change.
Action			Success criteria
Further review of funding algorithm in due course.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of December 2022		End of December 2022	

Draft Proposal 12 – Town and Parish Councils funding

24. **Recommendation 18** – note that the task group concluded that Option B would retain more flexibility for the Area Boards to meet their communities' needs.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Agreed and accepted. Option B has been confirmed.
Action			Success criteria
All grant funding documentation updated to reflect B as preferred option.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of April 2022		End of April 2022	

25. **Recommendation 19** – consider including additional wording to the proposal, if Option B is chosen, to ensure that town and parish councils considered other funding streams either before, or match funding as part of, a grant application to the Area Board. This would further leverage on investments.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee also recommended that the wording be amended to clarify that the revenue funding granted to town and parish councils cannot be used for capital purposes.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. Wording has been tweaked in criteria to reflect this as well as additional clarity through website information and grant system changes.
Action			Success criteria
Updates to grant funding criteria document, Area Board webpage and Area Board grant funding system.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of May 2022		End of May 2022	

Draft Proposal 13 – delivering to Business Plan and Local Priorities

26. **Recommendation 20** – consider a more holistic review of the Application Form to ensure that it automates as much of the monitoring process as possible, including the addition of “Community Value” evaluation for Area Boards (directly based on information provided on the application form), but bearing in mind that the proposal may be quite restrictive for some smaller or more focused projects. This would facilitate the monitoring of the impact of grants.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. Officers have met with relevant OS Task group members to review this further. Grant system changes are being
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			implemented to automate the information being received from the applicant to support improved monitoring and reporting.
Action			Success criteria
Grant system changes to automate monitoring and reporting to be implemented.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of May 2022		End of May 2022	

Draft Proposal 14 – introducing an escalation method

27. **Recommendation 21** – consider how the escalation process will be recorded and monitored, to provide evidence if changes are required, and ensure it is clear that an Area Board cannot approve a grant which was assessed as not meeting the criteria by the “escalation panel”.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed. Annual review by Leader will take place on the work of the assessment panel. Amendments have been made to documentation that the decision of the panel is final.
Action			Success criteria
Amendments to grant assessment panel documentation to reflect recommendation.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of March 2023		End of March 2023	

28. **Recommendation 22** – consider changing the name to “assessment panel”, or wording that would better reflect the purpose of the proposed method.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Agreed and accepted.
Action			Success criteria
All paperwork updated to reflect this name change.			
Target date		Implementation date	
End of April 2022		End of April 2022	

Draft Proposal 15 – Change of matched funding level from £1,000 to £500 for all grants

29. **Recommendation 23** – note the task group was minded to support the proposal as it could see this would, to an extent, simplify the process for applicants and potentially enhance leverage.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed.
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Action		Success criteria
N/A		
Target date	Implementation date	
N/A	N/A	

Draft Proposal 16 - Clarification that funds cannot be transferred

30. **Recommendation 24** – note the task group’s support for this proposal.

Executive response	11.05.22	ACCEPTED	Accepted and agreed
Action		Success criteria	
N/A			
Target date	Implementation date		
N/A	N/A		

31. Following the OS task group process, the Area Board arrangements were updated and a Cabinet Member intention to make a decision was issued from the Leader on 27 April. No comments or representations were received by 6 May, and the confirmed implementation of the changes was issued on 6 May to come into effect on 16 May 2022.

Proposal

32. To note the executive response to the Final Report of the **Area Boards Task Group**.

Cllr Ashley O’Neill, Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, Broadband, Digital, Licensing, Staffing, Communities and Area Boards

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