

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Place: Council Chamber - Monkton Park, Chippenham, SN15 1ER

Date: Tuesday 22 March 2022

Time: 10.30 am

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 14 March 2022. Additional documents are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.

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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 Area Boards Task Group (Pages 3 - 40)**

10 **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-2022 (Pages 41 - 46)**

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 18 March 2022

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Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

22 March 2022

Final Report of the Area Boards Task Group

Purpose of the report

1. To present the findings and recommendations of the Area Board Task Group for endorsement by the Committee and referral to the Cabinet Member for response.

Background

2. At the Overview and Scrutiny (OS) Management Committee on Tuesday 25 January 2022 a request was received from the Executive to establish a task group to provide Scrutiny input into the council's Area Boards arrangements

Terms of reference

3. The following terms of reference for the task group were endorsed by the OS Management Committee on 25 January 2022.
 - I. To provide Overview and Scrutiny input into a review of:
 - a. The future development and implementation of Area Board local priority setting
 - b. The operation of Area Board working groups
 - c. Area Board grant criteria
 - II. To report findings and recommendations to OS Management Committee on 22 March 2022.

Membership

4. The task group comprised the following membership:

Cllr Richard Britton
Cllr Ross Henning
Cllr Ruth Hopkinson
Cllr Edward Kirk
Cllr Jo Trigg
Cllr Iain Wallis
Cllr Graham Wright (Chair)

Methodology

5. The task group held six meetings and is grateful to the following witnesses who contributed to its work:
Cllr Ashley O'Neill, Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, Broadband, Digital, Licensing, Staffing, Communities and Area Boards
Cllr Allison Bucknell, Portfolio Holder for Area Boards
David Redfern, Director, Leisure, Culture & Communities
Rhys Schell, Specialist Manager, Community Engagement and Governance
6. The task group received information as listed under Appendices for this report or Background documents.
7. The aim of this exercise was to offer Overview and Scrutiny input into an existing review led by the Executive. The task group therefore did not seek additional witnesses or sources of information.
8. The task group's preliminary findings and recommendations have been discussed with the Executive and witnesses.

Evidence and deliberations

9. First of all, the task group questioned the reasons and aims of the review.
10. The task group was reminded that the Area Board model was first introduced in 2009, to support Wiltshire Council's aim to develop stronger, more resilient communities.
11. The Area Boards were created to deliver local democracy, provide a platform for discussions on local issues and offer an opportunity for consultation and engagement between the council, its partners and the wider community.
12. The task group was pleased to note that the overall objectives of the Area Boards remain consistent today and appreciated that, in an operating model more than 12 years old, it is natural that certain elements are subject to review to ensure they are meeting the current needs of local communities.
13. The task group was informed that the review was split into two workstreams:
 - a. one that focussed on updating relevant documentation and policies;
 - b. one focused on the way the Area Boards operate when delivering to local priorities, operating their working groups and investing grant funding.
14. The task group was set up to focus on the second workstream (as shown as b. above) but the committee should also be aware that throughout this exercise there has been interest from both task group members and the Cabinet Member in exploring further overview and scrutiny input in the ongoing review of Area Boards. (*Recommendation 1*)

15. The Cabinet Member has reported that any changes to Area Board resulting from the review are unlikely to be the subject to a full Cabinet decision but will instead be a delegated Cabinet Member decision.
16. The task group understood the reasons for the delegated decision but believed strongly that communication, both to Wiltshire Councillors and partners linked to Area Boards, should be carefully considered to ensure that as much information is available as early as possible to enable everyone to adapt to the proposed changes. (*Recommendation 2*)
17. The task group was invited to comment on 16 draft proposals from the Cabinet Member. For two of the draft proposals the task group was also invited to indicate a preference for one of the options available.

The future development and implementation of Area Board local priority setting

18. Since May 2021 the 18 Area Boards have been requested to select local priorities that are the main focus of the boards' local resource and energy.

Each selected priority should be relatively broad in its nature and be tested against the following questions:

- a. Does it help deliver Wiltshire Council's business plan?
- b. Is there data and evidence to suggest that this is a local issue that needs to be addressed?
- c. Does local opinion and insight from the wider community support this priority?
- d. Is the Area Board best placed to take one or more actions that will help?
- e. Are there associated actions which can deliver desired outcomes within the next 12 - 24 months?

19. The task group was invited to consider five draft proposals linked to local priorities. The aim was for these draft proposals to be a catalyst to further improve co-operation between the Area Boards, services, partners and the voluntary sector, through working to open and transparent priorities.

<p>Draft Proposal 1 – Setting of local priorities and Area Board workplan</p> <p>Each Area Board to have a clear action plan, linked to up to 5 priorities. Under each priority, the plan has a series of tasks / actions.</p> <p>Given the corporate responsibility, the devolved youth model and the revenue funding made available to support these areas, it is expected that each Board will have a priority theme related to young people and adults/ vulnerable people.</p> <p>Boards are also encouraged to consider a priority theme around climate and the environment.</p>
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20. The task group considered the existing Area Board workplans and noted significant differences.

21. It was also observed that, often, outcomes could be more clearly defined, where possible indicating how success would be evaluated. This would facilitate the proposed annual reviews of delivery on the local priorities (in the proposed Community Engagement Manager’s report), as well as align with the suggestion that area boards should select priorities they can realistically make a positive impact upon. (*Recommendation 3*)
22. The task group considered whether having three suggested priority themes could be quite limiting for area boards with four or less councillors (as it was recommended these area boards should only have four local priorities). However, members felt that this would be manageable as long as the wording remained “encouraged to consider a priority theme around climate and the environment”, therefore retaining flexibility. (*Recommendation 4*)

Draft Proposal 2 – Appointment of Lead Councillor
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At least 1 Councillor to be appointed as a ‘lead’ for each local priority. Area Board ‘lead’ role description to be agreed.

23. The task group questioned whether this should be a Lead Councillor or simply a lead. It was felt that, as the Area Board would be accountable for the delivery of its own local priorities, it would be logical for a Councillor to take responsibility for each of the set local priorities.
24. The task group would welcome the opportunity to be involved with the drafting of the definition of the Lead Councillor role, as it could underpin improvements in accountability (*Recommendation 1*).
25. The task group explored the possibility of the Lead Councillor engaging with grant recipients and the local councillor, when the grant(s) are linked to the local priority the councillor has responsibility for, to ensure that relevant feedback on progress and outcomes is provided to the Area Board. (*Recommendation 5*).

Draft Proposal 3 – Annual progress report
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An annual report from the local officer that highlights progress, any new data or evidence that should be considered and a commitment / refresh of priority themes.

26. The task group considered the draft annual progress report (see Appendix 1). Overall, it was welcomed by the task group as a clear and practical approach to supporting Area Boards to select their local priorities, with a couple of additions as follows.
27. It should be made clearer that Area Boards are not under any obligations to set their priorities at a specific time (e.g. March / April) and that a priority may be reviewed and changed more than once a year if circumstances change significantly, including if planned outcomes have been delivered. (*Recommendation 6*)

28. It would be useful to include relevant grants and their impact under “progress on previous year priorities”, and also to highlight instances where feedback has not been provided by the applicant (*Recommendation 7*)
29. Consideration could also be given to the lead councillors engaging with the grant recipients, in consultation with the local Wiltshire Councillor, when this links to the local priority the councillor is responsible for. (*Recommendation 5*)
30. The proposed annual progress report was seen as a valuable opportunity to celebrate progress and success with the local communities, but also between Area Boards. (*Recommendation 8*)

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

Improved information / data / intelligence from across the council to keep priorities up to date and well informed. Role of the forward work plan (FWP) is critical to this.
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31. The discussions highlighted the benefit of councillors being fully aware of available data to identify strengths as well as needs in their area, to help the Area Boards set relevant local priorities (*Recommendation 9*).

Draft Proposal 5 – autonomy to boards to consult on priorities as they wish
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Area Boards empowered to undertake further consultation on priorities e.g. surveys, local priority meetings or workshops.

32. This provided reassurance to the task group that the intentions remained firmly for area board to have autonomy, to be unique and focused on their community.
33. The task group appreciated that there also was an argument for consistency across the council to provide communities, groups, and town and parish councils with a clearer understanding of the role and processes of Area Boards.
34. The task group was informed that the Area Board Handbook was also being revised to include the proposals presented to the task group, as well as reflect any changes in practice since the Area Boards were created in 2009 (when the Handbook was produced).
35. The task group offered its help to provide feedback, as councillors, on the revised Area Board Handbook (*Recommendation 1*).

The operation of Area Board working groups

36. The value of Area Board working groups in driving forward community action was recognised and praised. However, the task group was also informed that there had been varying levels of success due to a number of factors.
37. The three proposals linked to working groups aimed to ensure working groups are focused with a clear remit set by the Area Boards, have the correct resources and powers to deliver their objectives (and ways to monitor and measure this), and take into consideration any existing community groups or activities.

Draft Proposal 6 – Establishing working groups

Recommendation that all Area Boards have a working group linked to each of their respective local priorities (up to five).

The Area Board does not necessarily need to be the lead organisation but should be satisfied that any related working group is advancing the priority in a satisfactory manner and reports into the Area Board model.

The Area Board at the beginning of each year would set the scope/ membership/ purpose/ reporting/ review date of the working group.

This is all set out within the Terms of Reference document. A range of differing remits are available for each working group which the Area Board can choose.

38. When reviewing the draft Terms of Reference for Area Board working groups, the task group expressed concerns over the additional demand this could create for the Community Engagement Managers if they are the officer assigned to the working group, and are expected to attend its meetings. (*Recommendations 10 and 11*)

Draft Proposal 7 – Councillor Leads

The nominated Area Board Lead Councillor is to be involved with (and likely chair) each Area Board working group.

39. The task group felt that this recommendation would benefit from clarification, as the draft Terms of Reference for working groups seem to indicate that the Councillor Lead **would be assigned** the role of Chair of the working group.
40. Although, there was flexibility in the proposed Terms of Reference for working groups (“*the Lead Councillor would be chair unless a more appropriate person as identified within the membership and a vote could then be taken*”), the task group challenged why the position of working group Chair should default to the Lead Councillor. (*Recommendation 12*)

Draft Proposal 8 – Terms of Reference for working groups

Implementation of a generic terms of reference for any working group that boards wish to launch. This would replace existing terms of reference for Area Board working groups (CATG would remain independent from this).

The terms of reference would be agreed and a table completed for each group.

41. The task group felt this proposal would benefit from clarification to address the following points: (*Recommendation 13*)
- who would agree the terms of reference?
 - who would complete the table?
 - can the generic Terms of Reference be added to?
42. The task group also noted that it was advised that working groups do not meet more than quarterly and questioned whether this could limit their productivity

and their ability to maintain a pace of change and progress. (*Recommendation 14*)

Area Board grant criteria

- 43. Each Area Board receives an annual allocation of devolved funding from Wiltshire Council to invest in community-led projects and initiatives. The funding streams being considered and discussed within this review were: community grants, youth funding and health and wellbeing funding.
- 44. The aim of the review was to ensure the investment made through the Area Boards continues to improve and benefit local communities.
- 45. The task group was informed that the following was seen as key to achieving this aim:
 - a. Alignment with Wiltshire Council’s Business Plan and the Area Board’s local priorities,
 - b. Increased match funding and / or funding from other sources to complement funding from Area Boards,
 - c. Clearer grant criteria and a simplified process for applicants,
 - d. A simplified process for escalation of grant applications when needed.

Draft Proposal 9 – New grants criteria

Reduce and re-design the current grants criteria to make it a simple, clear document. Non-essential information to be held on the Area Board webpage.

- 46. The task group felt that aiming to make the process simpler and clearer for applicants would be a positive change. (*Recommendation 15*)

Draft Proposal 10 – change of funding stream name
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Change of funding stream name from ‘Health and Wellbeing’ to ‘Older and Vulnerable adults’ funding.

- 47. The task group understood the aim of this change – to provide more clarity on what the funding is meant for. (*Recommendation 16*)

Draft Proposal 11 – funding allocations
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The funding allocations for capital and youth funding are based on population, deprivation, and sparsity. Currently the ‘Health and Wellbeing’ (subject to above naming) funding is evenly split across all areas.
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Should this funding remain as evenly split or be brought into line with capital and youth funding streams?
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- 48. The task group could see a strong argument for basing the “Health and Wellbeing” (or “Older and Vulnerable adults”) funding on relevant data, likely to include population (over a certain age), deprivation and sparsity, similar to the funding allocations for community grants and youth funding.

49. The task group considered whether there should be a delay on implementing this decision to enable all Area Boards to be prepared for this change, but concluded that this could be better addressed by engaging with Area Boards early when developing the “algorithm” for the allocation of funding.
50. The task group would reserve making a recommendation dependent on the “algorithm” to be used to determine the funding allocation (*Recommendation 17*).

Draft Proposal 12 – Town and Parish Councils funding
<p>Option A Expressly disallow town and parish councils from applying for grant awards, since they have precepting powers and can plan and budget for exceptional expenditure items.</p> <p>Option B Expressly disallow town and parish councils from applying for capital grant awards, since they have precepting powers and can plan and budget for exceptional expenditure items. They are still able to apply for revenue grants (youth/ health and wellbeing).</p>

51. The task group considered both of the options very carefully and concluded that, if one must be chosen, then Option B would retain more flexibility for the Area Boards to meet their communities’ needs. (*Recommendation 18*)
52. The task group completely agreed that town and parish councils have precepting powers, but also felt that there were so many variable circumstances which could make option A difficult – or even unfair – to apply (e.g. size of a town and parish council and precept, unexpected natural events, etc.).
53. The task group strongly believed that as part of the changes proposed, emphasis should be put towards encouraging joint working, collaboration and partnership between town and parish councils and Wiltshire Council (via the Area Boards).
54. Therefore, the task group concluded that option B, if chosen, may also require additional wording 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. (*Recommendation 19*)
55. The task group sought reassurance that the Escalation method (draft proposal 14) would apply to town and parish councils’ grant applications. This was confirmed.
56. The task group focused a significant amount of its work on this proposal and requested further information from officers to understand clearly the pattern of funding awarded to Town and Parish Councils.

57. The task group was concerned that the changes proposed could cause issues for some Town and Parish Councils, especially as they would have already set their precept.
58. The task group thoroughly considered approaches to mitigate the issues this could cause for Town and Parish Councils, including delaying the implementation of the change, but concluded that this would not be practical as it could create more confusion and uncertainty.
59. However, this reinforced the task group's views that these changes should form a considerable part of the communication plan to Area Boards and their partners, and that as much advance notice as possible should be given to Town and Parish Councils. (*Recommendation 2*)
60. Having considered the evidence provided, the task group concluded that there were valid reasons for proposing a change to the guidance but remained concerned this could impact on working relationships between the Area Boards and Town and Parish Councils.

Draft proposal 13 – delivering to Business Plan and Local Priorities

Firm up the requirement for applicants to be able to evidence that their grant award will help deliver directly or indirectly at least two aims of the Wiltshire Council Business Plan and are addressing a local priority of the respective board.

Additional requirement for applicants to demonstrate how their grant will improve health outcomes within our communities. More closely linked with Public Health objectives with additional questions within grant application and asked retrospectively of applicants in feedback survey.
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61. The task group felt that requiring all grant applications to link to two aims of the Wiltshire Council Business Plan, to one local priority of the respective Area Board and to improving health outcomes within the community, could be quite restrictive for some smaller or more focused projects.
62. It was explained that the health outcomes would be included to help ensure applicants considered making their project or event as inclusive as possible.
63. The task group remained concerned that this may lead to either tenuous links to the Business Plan and local priorities (which would likely be reflected in post-event feedback) or to a higher-than-expected number of applications having to be referred through the escalation method as “not meeting criteria”.
64. The task group considered whether “value for money” criteria should be included in the application form as well as being used by Area Boards when reviewing grant applications and suggested the following two ideas:
 - a. the application form could incorporate a check box section which asked applicants to indicate which of the council's priorities (as laid out in the business plan so for example; “we have vibrant and well connected

communities”, “we are safe”, etc) the application would address with a space to explain (briefly) how.

The box for the indicating which of the Area Board’s priorities the application linked to would have to be “free text” as each Area Board will have its own priorities (and the application form is generic).

This could replace a couple of sections already on the form and could even be incorporated into the summary section.

- b. That area boards’ councillors have a brief document (crib sheet), set by each board and in line with its priorities, and the business plan priorities, which gives general “Community Value” criteria and would be used when considering grant applications.

This brief document would be reviewed at the same time as the Area Board reviews its local priorities.

The rationale for this would be to slightly standardise the process, yet maintain flexibility for the Area Boards to meet their area’s needs.

- 65. The task group was informed that there were plans to update the grant application form to align with the findings of the Area Boards review and the changes to processes that would be taken forward. The task group believed this offered an opportunity to add “Community Value” criteria as well as “automate” the process between application – Area Boards decision – feedback. (*Recommendation 20*)

Draft Proposal 14 – introducing an escalation method

Remove the “exceptional circumstances” provision within the criteria and replace it with a mechanism for escalation to the Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture & Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Area Boards. The use of this mechanism is for grant applications that meet the Business Plan links and local priority criteria, but exceed the £5,000 limit per bid and/or are across multiple Area Boards or are submitted by an organisation outside of the voluntary and community sector.
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This mechanism can also be used by Area Board members to refer bids to the Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture & Communities and Cabinet Member for Area Boards to confirm that they meet the criteria. Applications need to be referred a minimum of 2 weeks before an Area Board business meeting.
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- 66. The task group could see the benefits in a single Escalation method, which would allow exceptions whilst providing a formal review of grants focused on criteria, enabling flexibility within a consistent decision-making process.
- 67. The task group appreciated that the current system of “exceptional circumstances” had an element of risk as it was open to interpretation and was reassured that the proposal wanted to avoid creating a limiting process and would still rely on local area knowledge.
- 68. When the task group first considered the proposal, it felt that clarity was needed on the process, including whether an Area Board could still approve a grant

which was confirmed as **not** meeting the criteria, and if there would be an “appeal” process.

69. It was also recognised that there may be some element of “trial and test” to refine the Escalation process, which the task group accepted.
70. The task group believed that attention should be given to how the decisions of the Escalation “panel” would be recorded and monitored, to ensure that the escalation process was working as planned and there was clarity for Area Boards both on the funding process and the escalation process.
(*Recommendation 21*)
71. The task group wondered if the name “escalation method” may be misleading and suggested that terminology such as “assessment panel” may be a closer reflection of its intended purpose (*Recommendation 22*).

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

In practice, where the total project cost is up to £500 applicants can request the full amount.

For projects where the total project cost is over £500 but less than £1,000, the maximum grant that can be applied for is £500.

For projects where the value is in excess of £1,000 up to 50% of the total project cost can be applied for (up to £5,000).

Examples:

- Project A’s total cost is £300. They can apply for £300.
- Project B’s total cost is £800. They can apply for £500 from the board and need to find £300 from other funding sources.
- Project C’s total cost is £5,000. They can apply for up to 50% (£2,500) from the board and need to find the £2,500 from other funding sources.
- Project D’s total cost is £25,000. They can apply for up to £5,000 from the board and need to find the £20,000 from other funding sources.

72. The task group was informed that at present grant applications under £1,000 do not require matched funding.
73. Although the task group understood that the change to match funding level would enable leverage (increasing the potential return of an investment), it was concerned that it could be a barrier to smaller or newer groups.
74. It was clarified that the limit on the number of applications any group could make would remain at two applications per year per Area Board, whichever the funding stream (i.e. two applications overall, not two applications per funding stream).
75. The task group requested and obtained further information on the number of grants this would impact on, and the overall amount involved.

76. The task group was minded to support the proposal in an effort to simplify the process and strengthen leverage. (*Recommendation 23*)

Proposal 16 - Clarification that funds cannot be transferred

Funds cannot be transferred across funding streams e.g. CATG schemes funded by community capital grants.
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77. The task group agreed that this should be made clear to all Area Boards and included in the revised Area Board Handbook. (*Recommendation 24*)

Conclusions

78. The task group welcomed the enthusiasm for collaborative working between Area Boards, as well as between Area Boards and partners, shown by witnesses.
79. It also welcomed the opportunities for sharing good practice and successes the proposals may offer, as well as the opportunities to simplify, yet strengthen, the application process and the monitoring of the impact achieved through grants.
80. The task group believed that the intention of the review was to offer a framework within which there would still be the required flexibility for Area Boards to assess and meet their community's needs.
81. The task group also believed that the proposed consistency of the decision-making process, and simplification of criteria, for grants would provide clarity for all Area Boards whilst ensuring the money available through grant "went as far as possible".
82. The task group felt that timely, targeted and simple communication of the proposed changes would be crucial to support a smoother implementation.

Proposal

83. To endorse the report of the Task Group and refer it to the Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, Broadband, Digital, Licensing, Staffing, Communities and Area Boards for response at the Committee's next meeting.

Recommendations

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

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.

Recommendation 2 – gives 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.

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

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.

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*).

Draft Proposal 2 – Appointment of Lead Councillor

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.

Draft Proposal 3 – Annual progress report

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

Draft Proposal 6 – Establishing working groups

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.

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.

Draft Proposal 7 – Councillor Leads

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.

Draft Proposal 8 – Terms of Reference (working groups)

Recommendation 13 – consider clarifying the proposal to address the following points:

- a. who would agree the terms of reference?
- b. who would complete the table?
- c. 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.

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).

Draft Proposal 9 – New grants criteria

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

Draft Proposal 10 – change of funding stream name

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.

Proposal 11 – funding allocations

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.

Draft Proposal 12 – Town and Parish Councils funding

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

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.

Draft Proposal 13 – delivering to Business Plan and Local Priorities

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.

Draft Proposal 14 – introducing an escalation method

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”.

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

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

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.

Draft Proposal 16 - Clarification that funds cannot be transferred

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

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Area Boards Task Group

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Appendices

It should be noted that all these documents are in Draft form and subject to change.

Appendix 1 – Draft Annual Review of Local Priorities report

Appendix 2 - Draft Terms of Reference for working groups

Appendix 3 - Proposed Area Board Funding and Grants Criteria document

Appendix 4 - Proposed grant information for the website

Appendix 5 - Proposed grant escalation process

Appendix 6 – Proposed grant escalation process - flowchart

Background documents

Area Boards current work plans

Area Boards funding allocations 2021-22

2014 Review of Area Boards task group

[Final Report of the Review of Area Boards Task Group | Wiltshire Council](#)

<COMMUNITY AREA> Area Board

Feb 2022

Annual Review of Local Priorities

1. Purpose of the Report

- I. To report on progress made in addressing the area board priorities selected for 2021/22
- II. To consider any new evidence or information that will help inform the area board in selecting its priorities for 2022/23
- III. To highlight potential priorities for the area board to consider for 2022/23
- IV. To inform the area board of the broad mechanism for delivering these priorities including where appropriate leads, working groups and allocating funding.

2. Introduction

This report has been written by the Community Engagement Manager in consultation with the area board chair. It is provided to help celebrate the success so far and support the area board councillors in setting their priorities for the coming year.

In early 2021, the Community Engagement Manager combined data from the community area “Joint Strategic Needs Assessment” (JSNA) with other sources of data and additional local intelligence. This was used to produce a community area status report that highlighted where further local improvements may be required. In May 2021, this report was shared with local area boards to help inform which priorities it should focus its energy and resources upon.

Given the challenging financial environment both nationally and locally, area boards are encouraged to continue to develop this evidence led approach to its work, so that they can have the greatest impact on the lives of our communities. This includes:

- ✓ Selecting priorities and directing resources to where there is the greatest need and where the area board can make a tangible contribution
- ✓ Being clear on what the area board is trying to achieve and the mechanism for doing so
- ✓ Regularly reviewing and communicating progress against the chosen priorities.

3. Progress on 2021/22 area board priorities

The area board working with its partners and the wider community has focussed its attention over the past year on the priority areas below. Appendix A summarises the progress that has been made so far but some of the key achievements include:

- i. <priority 1 + key achievements>
- ii. <priority 2 + key achievements>
- iii. Etc.

4. The context for agreeing new area board priorities.

The selection of area board priorities should be undertaken using both the evidence available to us, as well as the context within which we are operating. Both are continually changing, and the following is provided to help inform the area board's decision.

- i. The Joint Strategic Needs Analysis was collated 2 years ago in 2020 and although it used the latest information available at the time, some it is now out of date. This is partly due the significant impact COVID-19 has had on issues such as debt, the economy and mental health as well as the release of more up to date data that was not previously available. For the <NAME OF COMMUNITY AREA>, this includes
 - <Insert new data source, relevant link and info here
 - Etc.
- ii. The 2021/22 area board priorities were selected whilst in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. The demands of this public health crisis demonstrated the importance of partnership working with some services struggling to cope and many of our community groups and organisations unable to operate. The focus of our time and resources has been upon coming together and supporting the vulnerable within our communities. As we now emerge from the pandemic, the focus is shifting away from this reactive response and onto the rebuilding of our communities. In particular, the evidence suggests that
 - <List any local concerns such as lack of volunteers, particular support no longer offered etc.>
- iii. The last 2 years has seen a change in the way that people communicate, especially with the shift to more permanent home and remote working. This has allowed a new approach that includes the ability to be more inclusive and a reduction in the need to travel. The area board is encouraged to embrace these opportunities but also mitigate against any local impact upon our communities including <ADD LOCAL ONES e.g., local businesses , non-ICT>
- iv. Wiltshire Council has released its new [business plan](#), outlining its strategy for 2022-2032. It focusses upon the 4 themes of “Empowering People”, “a Resilient Society”, “a Thriving Economy” and “a Sustainable Environment”. In addition,

Wiltshire Council on the 1st February 2022, approved both the [Wiltshire Climate Strategy](#) and [Wiltshire's Natural Environment Plan](#). The area board should be aware of these plans and seek to help deliver them at a local level

- v. **<Name of Community area>** has also seen some local changes that may influence the selection of priorities including:
- **<List any changes such as new local community plan, specific issues arising or new opportunities>**

5. **Agreeing and delivering priorities for 2022/23**

The Community Engagement Manager in consultation with the chairman of the area board has provided a list of possible priorities for consideration. These can be found in appendix B. It is recommended that where an area board has 4 or less councillors, no more than 4 priorities are selected at any one time. Larger boards can select up to 5 if they believe that they have the capacity to deliver on them.

As well as being evidence led, priorities should be selected where the area board believes that it can realistically make a positive impact upon them. To aid the delivery of the chosen priorities, the Community Engagement Manager will support the area board councillors including in the creation and management of an action plan. This plan will include measurable outcomes so that it is clear what is trying to be achieved and what progress is being made.

The key mechanism for delivery is to support the local community to use their own experiences, abilities and passions so that they are empowered to shape and deliver positive change. To achieve this the area board may wish to consider allocating funding where money is required to help deliver the required aims. The area board may also look to set up a local working group to lead on the delivery of a priority, especially where no suitable group already exists.

It is recommended that for each priority selected, an area board councillor takes responsibility for overseeing its delivery and reporting back to the area board on progress. The Community Engagement Manager will support the area board councillors in undertaking this work.

6. **Area Board Lead Councillor Role Description**

Area Boards are invited to appoint lead Councillor(s) representatives for each of the priority themes that they have selected. The following guiding principles are in place for Councillors who take a role as an Area Board lead for a priority theme:

- To be the main Area Board point of contact for local officers, councillors and residents within their respective lead area

- To attend (and usually take the role as chair) relevant working groups of the area board
- To work collaboratively and cooperatively with relevant local partners, community groups, volunteers and outside bodies
- To provide regular updates back to the area board in relation to their lead area
- To diligently and democratically consider any funding applications, ensuring due process is undertaken.

7. Recommendations

- I. The area board is asked to acknowledge the progress update from the 2021/22 local priorities work.
- II. The area board is asked to consider this report along with its appendices and decide upon the priorities it wishes to focus on in the coming year.
- III. The area board is asked to appoint a councillor lead for each of the selected priorities.
- IV. The area board is asked to appoint any required working groups in relation to each priority. Note; any existing externally operated groups may already be in place and should be acknowledged and noted.

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APPENDIX A - Summary of progress made against priorities for 2021/22

Input information from 2021/22 action plan

APPENDIX B – Suggested priorities for 2022/23

The following are some possible priorities for the area board to consider for the coming year

Potential Priority	Key objectives	Additional comments

Area Board Working Group Proposed Terms of Reference

May 2022

1. Purpose

An Area Board working group is an excellent vehicle to drive forward a local priority theme. The board will evaluate a respective priority in relation to the actions required and the existing arrangements in place prior to setting up a new working group.

Where a working group is required the exact purpose is set out by the board via the 'Area Board working group agreement' document (appendix A). Here the board will set out the exact remit, time scales, membership and where applicable budget of the group.

Some example functions of an Area Board working group are set out below in relation to their respective theme. A group could be asked to:

- Research and review key data, intelligence and information related to the specific priority theme, to develop an in-depth understanding of the issue and opportunities.
- Democratically consider issues, projects and initiatives that could be developed and identify risks.
- Engage with the relevant partners to advance objectives, empowering the wider community to lead where appropriate.
- Make informed, transparent and fair funding decisions where a budget has been allocated.
- Provide regular information to the Area Board for review and further guidance.
- Address any conflicts of interest that may arise as part of the local decision making process.

2. Membership

The exact membership of a working group will be set by the Area Board but may include representatives as follows:

- City, town and parish councils
- Voluntary and community sector organisations (regional, countywide and local level)
- Wiltshire Police
- Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Ministry of Defence
- Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG, Healthwatch, Local Health Representatives
- Local businesses, Chambers of Commerce
- Schools
- Housing Associations
- Residents and resident action groups
- Other organisations, agencies and individuals that have a genuine interest in promoting the respective theme issue

The board should consider whether membership is fully representative of the local community, carefully considering the diversity and inclusion of the group. Consideration must

be given where appropriate to the safeguarding procedures that must be followed (set out in 4.)

Roles of all members of the Area Board working group

All members will be required to:

- Agree to the terms of reference as set out within this document
- Take an active part in the development of the working group and its aims.
- Ensure that their organisation is represented by a person of appropriate experience/competency (or his/her appointed deputy) who has full authority within the relevant organisation to speak on behalf of the organisation and contribute fully to all discussions.
- Take responsibility for sharing information relevant to their organisation/stakeholders/sector.
- Contribute any information that may have a bearing on positively achieving agreed objectives.
- Be mindful of the needs of the community area as a whole when providing input or making decisions
- Be open and honest and work collaboratively.
- Work to promote equality and non-discriminatory practices
- Respect all members of the working group and invited representatives.
- Work to ensure high quality safeguarding practices are followed where appropriate.

3. Structure and operation

A working or task and finish group will generally comprise of no more than ten members to keep conversations and actions focussed. If nominal membership of the management group exceeds ten members, attendance at meetings should be sought by those most appropriate to the agenda. Additional attendees can be brought in as required when invited by the Chair.

The Area Board Councillor lead will be assigned the role as Chair of the group, however, should they identify a more appropriate person within the membership to take the role then a vote on the Chair can be taken. Further Area Board Councillors can be appointed to the group as required and as deemed appropriate by the Area Board.

An assigned Wiltshire Council Officer will support each working group. Brief notes with key actions and decisions will be recorded and reported back to the Area Board business meeting. The Councillor lead or the assigned Officer will provide verbal updates to the Area Board business meeting.

Each Area Board will set the specific remit for the working or task and finish groups, with some of the key working principles shown below. Each group will:

Decisions will usually be reached by consensus, however, if necessary, these can be agreed by a vote of all group members.

Groups need to undertake particular consideration when focussing on themes that affect vulnerable or underrepresented groups of people e.g. older people, children, BAME and those with SEND. Getting the correct group membership should enable safe and appropriate engagement with the respective groups to ensure voices are clearly heard.

The frequency, location and format of group meetings and activities should be determined locally, however, it is advised that groups do not meet more than quarterly and complement the timings of the Area Board business meeting.

4. Safeguarding

The Area Board and its working groups have a key role in ensuring the safeguarding of all residents. Effective safeguarding involves organisations working together to prevent the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while ensuring that the views and wishes of an individual are at the heart of decisions that affect them wherever it's possible.

Effective safeguarding is particularly critical when groups are working towards objectives that support children/ young people or vulnerable adults. It is critical that each group minimizes all safeguarding risks and is aware of the relevant local agencies to escalate any concern.

If someone is in immediate danger you should contact the police or call an ambulance immediately on **999**. If you believe a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, neglect or injury, report your concerns to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. Wiltshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (**MASH**) **0300 456 0108** or evenings and weekends **0300 456 0100**. If you are concerned that an adult is at risk of neglect or abuse, please contact Adult Social Care's Advice and Contact Team on **0300 4560111**. Evenings and weekends please contact the Emergency Duty Service on **0300 456 0100**.

When entering into agreements with voluntary and private sector organisations, working groups under the umbrella of the Area Boards need to be assured that the successful individual/organisation has the following in place:

1. Safer recruitment processes, including DBS checks; induction and supervision
2. Identified designated lead(s) for safeguarding with appropriate relevant training
3. Safeguarding policy, allegations management processes and policy; code of conduct policy
4. Child protection (where applicable) and Safeguarding training at the level appropriate to posts and roles.

5. Media Relations

Members of the working or task and finish group may not issue media statements on behalf of the Area Board. Any media statements about the work of the group should be agreed with between the group and Chair of the Area Board.

6. Review

These terms of reference are subject to change and may be reviewed by the Leader on an annual basis.

Appendix A - Area Board working group agreement

Task	Group A	Group B
	Area Board agreed remit	Area Board agreed remit
Name of working group:	<i>Youth partners working group</i>	<i>Low income families and individuals working group</i>
Priority theme it is linked to: e.g., Climate Change, Social isolation and loneliness	<i>Positive activities for young people</i>	<i>Supporting low income families and individuals</i>
Councillor lead(s):	<i>Cllr X</i>	<i>Cllr Y</i>
Assigned Officer lead:	<i>Community Engagement Manager</i>	<i>Community Engagement Manager</i>
Date of set up:	<i>01/05/2022</i>	<i>01/05/2022</i>
Date of review:	<i>15/10/2022</i>	<i>15/10/2022</i>
Specific scope and remit for the working group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the specific objectives? • Any particular data or intelligence the board would like considered/ investigated? • Any partners or other groups it should specifically link with? • Does the group review relevant grant funding applications? • Does the group have authorisation (through delegated authority) to allocate Area Board funding? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review all relevant data and intelligence and keep board updated with relevant information.</i> • <i>Aim to bring partners together bi-annually who work with young people to discuss issues and identify potential project and partnership working opportunities.</i> • <i>Work with the Area Board to hold an in person event, focussed around youth opportunities and employment.</i> • <i>Authorised to confirm spend up to £1k per application. Max of £5k sign off per annum. Any youth funding applications in excess of £1k, a recommendation can be provided to the board.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review all relevant data and intelligence and keep board updated with relevant information.</i> • <i>Aim to identify and develop a school holiday support model between partners for those families on low income.</i> • <i>Annually bring partners together who support low income families to enhance collaborative working.</i> • <i>The group does not review funding applications or have authorised spend.</i>
Proposed membership (up to 10): (not an exhaustive list. Cllr lead and local Officer to expand if appropriate)	<i>Area Board Cllrs x 2 Town & Parish Council x 2 Local environment volunteer x 1 Wiltshire Wildlife Trust x 1 Community group x 1 WC Officer x 1</i>	<i>Area Board Cllrs x 1 Town and Parish x 2 Foodbank rep x 1 Community Group x 1 Supermarket rep x 1 Officer x 1</i>
Any specific safeguarding guidance?	<i>See terms of reference. Must ensure applications meet safeguarding standards.</i>	<i>No</i>
Assigned budget to group?	<i>£5,000</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Any budget restrictions set?	<i>Up to £1,000 per application</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Suggested Area Board Funding and Grants Criteria document

Introductory Guidance

1. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their project with their local Community Engagement Manager (CEM) and their local Wiltshire Councillor before making an application.

2. Applications are invited from voluntary and community sector organisations that can show a need for financial support up to a total of £5,000. Evidence of current financial status supported by bank statements and audited accounts must be made available for inspection upon request.

May need to tweak above wording to include parish councils, further to conversation at task group.

3. Applicants to the Area Board grant funding are encouraged to seek further financial contributions from other sources e.g. local fundraising, regional funders, solar community benefit funds, parish/ town councils or local businesses.

4. For grant applications, where the total project cost is up to £500 applicants can request the full amount. For projects where the total project cost is over £500 but less than £1,000, the maximum grant that can be applied for is £500. For projects where the value is in excess of £1,000 up to 50% of the total project cost can be applied for (up to £5,000).

- Project A's total cost is £300. They can apply for £300.
- Project B's total cost is £800. They can apply for £500 from the board and need to find £300 from other funding sources.
- Project C's total cost is £5,000. They can apply for up to 50% (£2,500) from the board and need to find the £2,500 from other funding sources.
- Project D's total cost is £25,000. They can apply for up to £5,000 from the board and need to find the £20,000 from other funding sources.

5. 'Contributions in kind' either as volunteer time or materials may be costed into your project calculations, based on a maximum of:

a) £50 per day for general volunteers

b) £100 per day where technical or professional advice is provided e.g. architect drawing up plans.

c) A maximum of 25% of the total project costs

6. Applications are for one-off funding and not recurring costs. Projects should not be reliant on Area Board investment to provide sustainability.

7. Applications by an organisation are limited to a maximum of two bids per annum per board.

8. The Assistant Director Leisure, Culture & Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Area Boards can be asked to consider grant applications

that meet the Business Plan links and local priority criteria but exceed the £5,000 limit per bid and/or are across multiple Area Boards or are submitted by an organisation outside of the voluntary and community sector.

9. Area Board members may refer grant bids to the Assistant Director Leisure, Culture & Communities for confirmation that they meet the criteria. Grants need to be referred at least 2 weeks before an Area Board business meeting.

Grant Criteria

1. Applicants must be able to evidence that their grant award will help deliver directly or indirectly at least two aims of the Wiltshire Council Business Plan and are addressing a local priority of the respective board.
2. Applications must be received a minimum of 4 weeks before the Area Board meeting. You can find your local area boards next meeting date on the area boards page.
3. Applications must not be for:
 - a. Political or religious activities
 - b. The sole benefit of an individual
 - c. Projects already receiving funding from Wiltshire Council
 - d. Projects that address a statutory duty and are therefore already delivered or commissioned by the council.
4. If you are asking the Area Board to fund any item that costs over £500, one written quote/estimate must be obtained. This must be from the supplier you intend to use. Where single items cost over £1,000 a minimum of two quotes/estimates must be obtained with an indication of the supplier you intend to use. All quotes must be on headed paper for the supplier used.
5. Applications must show how you plan to cover the future costs of your project by demonstrating its sustainability or setting up a sinking fund.
6. Where the total cost of the project for which you are seeking grant funding of up to £5,000, exceeds £50,000, a Project or Business Plan should be provided including estimates from the suppliers that you intend to use to complete your project. You can upload these documents as part of your application.
7. If your project requires Planning Permission, Building Regulations or any other form of licence or approval, this must be sought before submitting your application. Any grant will be conditional on approvals being received.
8. Applicants must agree in the application that if successful they will acknowledge Wiltshire Council in any publicity about the project, ensure that project documentation is retained for auditing purposes and confirm that all grant monies will be spent on the details set out in the application only.
9. Area Boards make a significant investment each year into local communities. To ensure the investment continues to target the correct projects, we require all successful applicants to complete the project evaluation process. This involves completion of a short survey which will be issued directly to each successful applicant on an annual basis. Failure to do so will prevent you from being eligible to apply for a further grant in the future.
10. Applicants must confirm that grants will be drawn down within 12 months from award and projects started within 3 months of receipt of the grant.

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Location of Area Board funding information

Funding information on Area Board webpage

Types of funding available

Area Board grants are split into the following funding schemes:

- **Community grants** - capital funding to help provide facilities and equipment for projects that are important to the local community. Capital funding can be used to purchase assets or the significant refurbishment of existing assets. Capital items are expected to have a lifespan of at least 5 years.
- **Youth grants** - revenue funding for projects that provide positive activities for young people aged 13-19 or up to 25 years old with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A positive activity can be any educational or recreational leisure-time activity including arts, sports, leisure and informal education and community based which helps young people achieve healthy and safe lifestyle outcomes.
- **Health & wellbeing grants** - revenue funding to support projects that benefit and improve older and vulnerable residents health and wellbeing. Reducing social isolation and loneliness and supporting people to maintain independence at home for as long as possible are key drivers for this funding.
- **Area Board initiatives** – these can only be submitted by Area Board Councillors to enable Area Boards to tackle local projects which have been initiated by the community to meet local priorities. It is not used to fill gaps where there are service shortfalls or where it is possible for the matter to be resolved through use of the community funding scheme.

Application process and feedback

- Speak with your local [Community Engagement Manager \(CEM\)](#) and local [Wiltshire Councillor](#) regarding your project.
- When you are ready to start your application visit the Area Board [online grants portal](#).
- The system guides applicants through the process giving advice and help as you complete the short application form. You can save an application at any stage and return to it later.
- Once submitted, you will be notified via e-mail on next steps or whether further information is required.
- Funding decisions are taken at each Area Board business meeting, which take place 4 times per annum. Applicants are expected to attend to provide an overview of the project and answer any questions from the board.

- Successful applicants are required to accept the terms and conditions of the grant which is received via e-mail. The grant can only be drawn down when all award criteria has been met e.g. matched funding is in place and your project is ready to proceed within three months of receiving your award.
- A project evaluation survey will be issued to each successful applicant. Failure to complete the survey will prevent you from being eligible to apply for a further grant in the future.

Area Board funding criteria document

- Introductory Guidance
- Funding Criteria

Escalation panel/ process

The escalation process is in place for two reasons:

1. Either an application is submitted that:
 - Exceeds the £5,000 threshold
 - Is applying across more than 3 Area Boards
 - Is from an organisation that is not from the voluntary and community sector (asides from T&PC revenue applications which are permitted)
2. Or; Upon receiving the list of grants for consideration, a Member believes that it does not meet the grants criteria and requests for it to be reviewed by the panel.

With regard to point 2, Members must strive to resolve any disagreements locally in the first instance. Raising a grant with the panel should be used as a last resort where local conversations have been unable to resolve differences in opinion. A Member must then directly contact the Assistant Director Leisure, Libraries and Communities with the grant ID number and the rationale as to why they believe the grant does not meet the criteria. Please note, this must be completed at least 2 weeks before the funding application is due to be heard at an Area Board meeting.

In the case of an application being submitted that is outside the criteria as set out in 1, the Community Engagement Manager will filter the relevant application through the escalation process. This will be reviewed on a regular basis (frequency TBC) by the Assistant Director Leisure, Culture & Communities and the Cabinet Member for Area Boards. The main criteria they will review an application against is as follows:

- Does the project directly contribute towards the delivery of the WC Business Plan and tackle at least one of the Area Boards local priorities?
- Is the project locally tailored, focussed and delivered?
- Is there a justifiable rationale as to why the applicant cannot fund the project?

For each application that comes through the panel, a simple recorded decision will be taken with comments (see tables below). The panel has two outcome options:

- A. Permitted to proceed to the Area Board. The panel are content that the above criteria has been demonstrated and the application proceeds to the Area Board for consideration.
- B. Returned to applicant. The panel do not believe the above criteria has been met. The applicant will be advised of this via the Community Engagement Manager to review/ re-consider their application. It does not go to the Area Board for funding consideration.

Example 1

An application from a voluntary organisation looking for £7,500, towards a £50,000 project. They have a comprehensive and robust application. The application provides detailed evidence of why this funding is needed, the other funding sources they have approached and their plans for sustainability. They clearly articulate how the project supports the WC Business Plan and addresses a local priority.

Escalation panel response:

Grant ID number	ABG123
Area Board	XXX
Reason for escalation	Application in excess of the £5,000 limit
Decision	Approved for Area Board consideration
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Clear justification for needing the level of funding- Additional fundraising efforts have been undertaken- Detailed evidence of delivering to the WC Business Plan- Addressing the XX local Area Board priority identified- Project demonstrates sustainability

Example 2

An application from a charity that is looking for £1,000 each from 6 Area Boards towards a £30,000 project. They set out how each project will be individually tailored to the needs of that community. The application sets out detailed evidence of why this funding is needed, the other funding sources they have approached and their plans for sustainability. They clearly articulate how the project supports the WC Business Plan and addresses a local priority.

Escalation panel response

Grant ID number	ABG124
Area Board	XXX
Reason for escalation	Applying across more than 3 Area Boards
Decision	Approved for Area Board consideration
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Demonstrates how the project remains local across each of the 6 community areas using local venues/ volunteers- Additional funding sources have been approached- Detailed evidence of delivering to the WC Business Plan- Addressing the XX local Area Board priority identified- Project articulates how it is addressing health inequalities

Example 3

A project from a town council for a new boiler in the town hall, requesting £5,000 towards a £10,000 project. The council have not raised precept for 2 years. No sinking fund or prepared financial planning is in place to replace the item. No further organisations have been approached for funding. Weak links to the WC Business Plan and local Area Board priorities.

Escalation panel response

Grant ID number	ABG125
Area Board	XXX
Reason for escalation	Application is for a capital project from a parish council
Decision	Returned to applicant
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Insufficient evidence provided of suitable financial planning and precept management.- No evidence of alternative funding streams having been considered.- Limited evidence linking this project to the WC Business Plan and local Area Board priorities.

Example 4

A local Member does not believe that a funding application meets the grants criteria. This grant is due to be heard by the Area Board in 3 weeks and the grants report has been produced. Following conversations with the Community Engagement Manager and the Chair of the Area Board, the Member still believes there is insufficient evidence of meeting a local Area Board priority within the application.

An application from a local community group for £1,500 towards a total project cost of £5,000. The application sets out detailed evidence of why this funding is needed, the other funding sources they have approached and their plans for sustainability. They clearly articulate how the project supports the WC Business Plan, however, there is no evidence of linking the project to an Area Board priority.

Escalation panel response

Grant ID number	ABG126
Area Board	XXX
Reason for escalation	Referred to panel by a local Member within timeframe
Decision	Returned to applicant
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Evidence base for the project- Multiple sources of funding approached- Clear understanding and linkage with the WC Business Plan- Insufficient understanding and contribution to the Area Board priorities

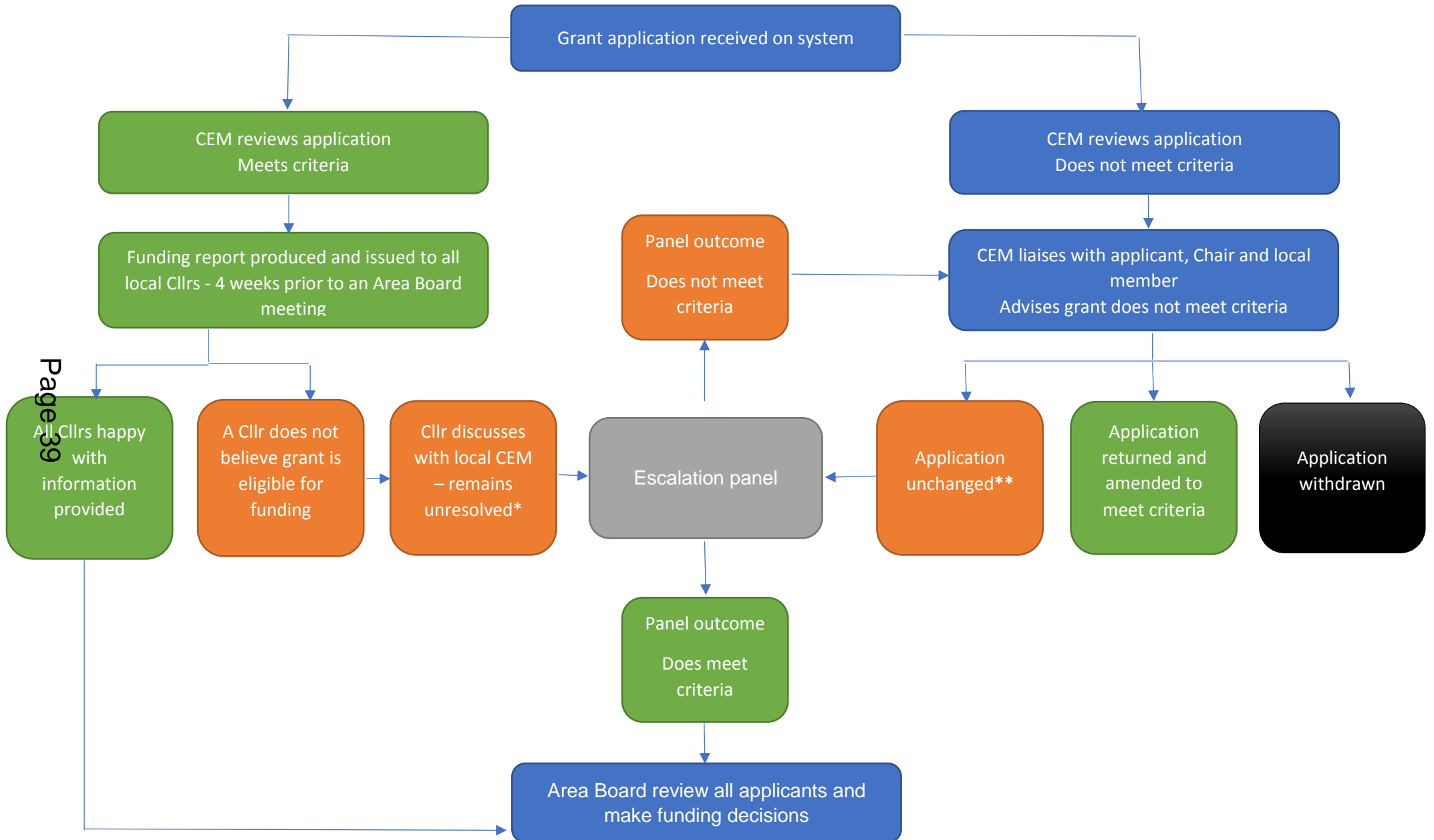
Example 5

A commercial organisation applies for £5,000 towards set up costs which total £100,000. The applicant is able to demonstrate a clear community need for the project and are links strongly to the Wiltshire Council Business Plan. There is comprehensive information about sustainability of the project and have a wide ranging source of funding streams involved. They do not provide any understanding of local Area Board priorities and the project is strongly associated with profit making activities.

Escalation panel response

Grant ID number	ABG126
Area Board	XXX
Reason for escalation	Application is from a commercial organisation
Decision	Returned to applicant
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Evidence base for the project- Multiple sources of funding approached- Clear understanding and linkage with the WC Business Plan- Insufficient understanding and contribution to the Area Board priorities- Project is linked with profit making (commercial) activities.

Draft Area Board Grant Funding Process Proposals



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*Must be escalated at least 2 weeks before an Area Board meeting
 **Only an option to applications that have not already been through the escalation panel previously

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Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny: Annual Report 2021/22



What is overview and scrutiny?

Wiltshire Council is run by councillors elected by the people of Wiltshire. A small number of them form the cabinet (also referred to as the executive) which sets the direction, determines the priorities and takes the important decisions. The councillors in the cabinet hold powerful positions and it is important that they are held to public account for their actions. This is done through a system called Overview and Scrutiny (OS) and is undertaken by the non-executive councillors.

This is common to most local councils. OS ensures that decisions are taken based on good evidence including the views of those with an interest in the matter and are in the best interests of the people of Wiltshire. OS is selective in what it looks at so that it can add value to the most important services provided by the council, its partners and contractors. Wherever possible it helps to shape policy through early discussions as well as scrutinising proposals before they are finally agreed. A list of the matters which will be considered by OS is published in its [forward work programme](#).

How do we do it in Wiltshire?

There is an OS management committee and three specialist select committees covering the following main service areas:

- Health (including the NHS, public health and adult social care)
- Environment (including highways, waste and transportation)
- Children (including education, vulnerable children, youth services and early years)

The management committee, as well as coordinating the work of the select committees, covers internal matters such as finance, performance and staffing. Most of the work is done by small groups of elected members from across the political parties reviewing single specific issues in detail. These groups then report to the select committees and make recommendations for improvement to the cabinet and others as necessary.

Focus

The work programme focuses on the commitments given by the council in its Business Plan 2022-32 and approaches its work in the following way:

- Better outcomes for the people of Wiltshire
- Adding value to the way decisions are reached
- Working constructively with the cabinet
- Challenging positively as a critical friend
- Basing its findings on good evidence
- Learning from others

Councillor Graham Wright, Chairman of the Committee, said:

“ This year Overview and Scrutiny has continued to play a key role in developing council policy and holding decision-makers to account. It has scrutinised 80% of the decisions taken by the council’s Cabinet and submitted 35 recommendations to improve services, with 67% of eligible members taking part in our work.

Following the shift to remote working during the pandemic, we have moved to a hybrid approach, with committee meetings taking place in-person, and task groups and rapid scrutiny exercises using remote meeting technology.

My thanks go to the councillors and co-opted members who lead the function, the scrutiny team that supports our work, plus all those decision-makers, witnesses and members of the public who have engaged with the process.

For the year ahead, Overview and Scrutiny will be focusing on scrutinising the big priorities in the council’s new Business Plan. Like the rest of the council, we will be placing an increasing emphasis on using data to inform our findings. ”

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee



Cllr Graham Wright
Chairman



Cllr Christopher Williams
Vice chairman

Key items we have looked at ...and what we have achieved

Business Plan

- Reviewed the council’s new ten-year business plan, submitting detailed comments from all of the select committees

Financial robustness

- Scrutinised council budget proposals as well as opposition group amendments to ensure that they were sound and reviewed potential impacts on services.

Area Boards

- Provided scrutiny input into proposed changes to how the county’s 18 area boards should function in terms of grant funding criteria, working groups and priority setting.

Health Select Committee

Councillor Johnny Kidney, the Chairman of the Committee, said:

“The last 12 months have once again been dominated by the pandemic. The Health Select Committee has prioritized its focus on Covid-19, reviewing the impact on health and care provision for Wiltshire’s residents.



Cllr Johnny Kidney
Chairman



Cllr Gordon King
Vice chairman

Key items we have looked at ...and what we have achieved

Community diagnostics

- Scrutinised the national diagnostics programme and opportunities for future community-based diagnostic centres within Wiltshire.

Future health and care model

- Reviewed and contributed to the new model being developed across the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) system.

Adult social care

- Considered the ongoing transformation of the service, including rapid scrutiny reviews of grant-funded clubs and housing-related support.

Significant changes are also taking place in response to the recent Health and Care Bills, with Integrated Care Systems (ICS) scheduled to become a statutory requirement from July 2022. The committee will continue to scrutinise this system transformation, with consideration given to the ongoing role of health scrutiny within the new ICS governance model. ”

Children’s Select Committee

Councillor Jon Hubbard, Chairman of the Committee, said:

“Following the local elections in May 2021, the committee has hit the ground running with new members getting to grips with our work, and all of us learning new ways of working during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Cllr Jon Hubbard
Chairman



Cllr Jacqui Lay
Vice chairman

Key items we have looked at ...and what we have achieved

Provision of accommodation for young people at transition time

- Conducted a gap analysis of the council’s provision of accommodation for young people, ensuring that gaps and needs are considered when the council develops its strategies.

Traded Services

- The committee’s Standing Task Group considered the first annual report from the Traded Services Team, ensuring a clear direction for Traded Services and robust future reporting to the committee.

Getting to Outstanding

- Reviewed the council’s intention and strategy for achieving a rating of Outstanding from Ofsted. Ensured the committee remains fully involved with this crucial work through a clear, practical and focused reporting mechanism.

The committee launched a Standing Task Group that allows members to dedicate more time to a number of our annual reports, adding value, through robust overview and scrutiny on topics including Safeguarding, Traded Services, Corporate Parenting Panel, Early Years and Childcare Standards and Performance Monitoring.

Our forward work programme keeps growing and we are looking forward to the opportunities it provides to make positive inputs in the future of Wiltshire’s children’s services. ”

Environment Select Committee

Cllr Jerry Kunkler,
Chairman of the
Committee, said:

“The Committee has continued to focus on areas that are important to our residents, like waste collection, the state of our roads and public transport. Also important to the people of Wiltshire is the climate emergency, and our Climate Emergency Task Group has continued to seek practical solutions to this urgent issue.

The last 18 months have not been easy, but it has shown how Wiltshire can rise to a challenge. The Committee has been keen to see how council services have adopted new ways of working as we emerge from the pandemic. The success of our economic recovery will be seen through our market towns and high streets, which are so important to Wiltshire, and we will be closely monitoring progress over the coming year.

I would like to thank officers and members for their ongoing support.”



Cllr Jerry Kunkler
Chairman



Cllr Bob Jones MBE
Vice chairman

Key items we have looked at ...and what we have achieved

Leisure Service Insourcing

- Scrutinised the process of bringing leisure centres under direct council control and will continue to look at the effect upon services and the outcomes for service users.

Future Bus Strategy - Connect Wiltshire

- Reviewed the development of the county's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), the outcomes of which will continue to be monitored.

Highways

- Considered the effectiveness of the highways service over the last 12 months, looking at road maintenance, drainage and traffic management issues.

Climate Strategy

- The Climate Emergency Task Group following publication of its recommendations, formally responded to the strategy consultation, and commented on early drafts.

How is overview and scrutiny supported?

The council's non-executive councillors lead OS but are supported in their work by a small team of officers. They sit within the Democracy and Governance team, which supports all aspects of the council's democratic decision-making. The team ensures that the councillors have the information and evidence they need and can speak to those people that have a direct responsibility or interest in the matter. This can include making arrangements to hear from service users and going on site visits.

The team also undertakes research and writes reports on behalf of the select committees and task groups.

Looking forward

Covid-19 has placed significant new financial pressures on local authorities, on top of existing demographic challenges and rising costs of care for vulnerable children and adults. In Wiltshire, Overview and Scrutiny will contribute to meeting this challenge by acting as a 'critical friend' to decision-makers, supporting innovation in how the council and its partners deliver services and acting as the voice of the people when important decisions are being made.

In February 2022, the council agreed a new ten-year business plan. OS will be using the plan as a guiding document, working to ensure that all of the priorities agreed in the Plan are achieved. There will be an increasing focus on using data to monitor whether public services are delivering real outcomes for Wiltshire residents.

Since its introduction in 2000, OS has become an integral part of decision-making at the council. We will be working to ensure this remains the case, with all significant executive decisions receiving prior OS input and as many elected representatives as possible contributing to OS's work.

Getting involved

OS welcomes suggestions from councillors and members of the public regarding issues that could be investigated. If you would like to suggest an issue that OS should look into, please contact us via the details at the end of this report.

Members of the public can also get directly involved by attending committee meetings, submitting a question before a meeting or giving notice to make a statement on an item on the agenda.



Want to know more?

Contact Henry Powell, Democracy and
Complaints Manager

Email committee@wiltshire.gov.uk

Visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk

County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8JN

Information about Wiltshire Council services can be made available on request in other languages and formats such as large print and audio.

Please contact the council by telephone **0300 456 0100**, or email customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk