

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

**22 March 2022**

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#### **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.

<b>Draft Proposal 1 – Setting of local priorities and Area Board workplan</b>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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*)

<b>Draft Proposal 2 – Appointment of Lead Councillor</b>
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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.
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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*).

<b>Draft Proposal 3 – Annual progress report</b>
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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.
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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*)

<b>Draft Proposal 4 – increased role and promotion of forward work plan</b>
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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*).

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

<b>Draft Proposal 9 – New grants criteria</b>
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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.
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46. The task group felt that aiming to make the process simpler and clearer for applicants would be a positive change. (*Recommendation 15*)

<b>Draft Proposal 10 – change of funding stream name</b>
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Change of funding stream name from 'Health and Wellbeing' to 'Older and Vulnerable adults' funding.
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47. The task group understood the aim of this change – to provide more clarity on what the funding is meant for. (*Recommendation 16*)

<b>Draft Proposal 11 – funding allocations</b>
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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*).

<b>Draft Proposal 12 – Town and Parish Councils funding</b>
<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.

<b>Draft proposal 13 – delivering to Business Plan and Local Priorities</b>
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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.
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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*)

<b>Draft Proposal 14 – introducing an escalation method</b>
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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*)

<b>Proposal 16 - Clarification that funds cannot be transferred</b>
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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.

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**Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Area Boards Task Group**

Report author: Marie Gondlach, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 713 597,  
[marie.gondlach@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:marie.gondlach@wiltshire.gov.uk)

**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](#)