

Bradford on Avon Area Board 16 March 2011

Chairman's Announcements

i) Transport Working Group - meeting to consider priorities and progress with minor capital improvement works

Date and venue to be announced, to be Chaired by Cllr Hewson

ii) Seminar on 'Big Society, Localism and What it Means for You'.

Date and Venue to be announced, to be Chaired by Cllr Hewson

iii) Localism Bill - Proposed Changes to Arrangements Governing the Conduct of Councillors

The Government's Localism Bill, published on 13 December 2010, makes significant changes to the current arrangements governing the conduct of councillors in Wiltshire. The proposals in the Bill include:

- removing the requirement for councils to adopt a national code of conduct for councillors;
- abolishing Standards for England, the national body responsible for overseeing the current standards regime in England;
- introducing new arrangements for the registration and declaration of personal interests, backed by the criminal law;
- giving councils a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors;
- enabling councils to adopt a voluntary code of conduct.

Councils, including unitary, town, parish and city councils will be expected to establish a committee to oversee the council's arrangements for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct.

We will be monitoring the Localism Bill as it proceeds through Parliament. The Bill is expected to become law in the Autumn 2011. Further details on the arrangements will be provided in regulations.

In the meantime the current arrangements for standards, including the local assessment, consideration and determination of complaints under the model code of conduct adopted by councils, will continue to apply. We anticipate that the new arrangements will not come into effect until the Spring 2012.

We will be providing updates on the progress of this legislation to towns, parish and city councils.

If you need any further information on this matter please contact:

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01225 713052 E-mail ian.gibbons@wiltshire.gov.uk; or

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iv) Library Service Review

The Wiltshire Library Service Review has culminated in a decision by cabinet on 25 January to accept the proposals outlined in the Library Service review paper.

A summary of the proposals is available in the document provided tonight which has section for comments that can be completed and returned to the council.

The proposals include inviting members of the community to get involved in volunteering in their libraries and the document has a reply section for those interested to get in touch.

The key points for libraries in this area are:

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- All mobile library stops will continue to operate.
- Bradford library opening hours will be reduced from 46 to 40 hours a week.
- New self service technology will be introduced to the library to improve efficiency and help communities extend library opening hours through support from volunteers, who will be trained and supported by Wiltshire library staff.

v) Outcome of the Leisure Facilities Review

Wiltshire Council's cabinet has considered the results of the extensive consultation exercise undertaken between July and October and approved a refined proposal which shall;

- Retain a strategic view and ensure that the indoor leisure facilities are a key component of the emerging community campus programme.
- Ensure that the indoor leisure facility service in Wiltshire will be enhanced which creates more opportunities for local people to actively pursue a healthy lifestyle.
- Give a clear message about the Council's commitment to providing high quality and efficient local services.

- Deliver a refined proposal that has been directly shaped by local people.

The refined proposals as set out in the report will provide;

- The specification for new leisure facilities in Trowbridge, Melksham, Warminster and Durrington/Amesbury as part of the wider campus development project.
- Improvements to Devizes Leisure Centre, Five Rivers in Salisbury, The Activity Zone in Malmesbury, Marlborough Leisure Centre and Tidworth Leisure Centre as part of the Workplace Transformation Programme.
- For an indoor Bowls facility to be included as part of a Campus facility in Melksham.
- For the provision of a grant of £400K to the Wiltshire School of Gymnastics in Melksham.

The Council has been clear about its proposals to transfer some of the local facilities to the community to manage. The Council will now consider the proposal to transfer these facilities in a wider strategic context to enable it to assess the impact of a potential transfer alongside other council buildings and services. This will enable the Council to consider the practicalities and options for wider campus developments.

Whilst the investigations into campus opportunities are completed, the Council will not be looking to alternative management arrangements for indoor leisure facilities as a single service. The Council's approach is intended to retain community involvement in the campus development project as it is recognised that local input is critical to success.

This refined proposal for leisure acts as a pre-cursor to a report that the Workplace Transformation Team shall present to Cabinet in the early part of 2011. This report will set out the high level principles behind a sustainable and affordable campus development project and consider the financial implications associated with this refined proposal for leisure.

The Council will continue the on-going dialogue which has already been established with local community groups regarding the local management of facilities.

vi) Reducing Child Poverty Strategy Consultation

The Child Poverty Act requires each local authority to produce a child poverty strategy.

The consultation is currently open regarding the content of the Wiltshire Reducing Child Poverty Strategy. The draft strategy includes a suggested strategic objective around geographic approaches (page 16).

The Area Board is invited to contribute its views. The link is set out below:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/healthandsocialcare/childrenyoungpeoplefamilies/reducingchildpovertyconsultation.htm>

Consultation closes on 4 April 2011.

Information has already been sent to a wide distribution including all councillors, the Wiltshire Assembly, thematic partnerships, schools and early years' settings.

vii) Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Local authorities have a duty, under the Childcare Act 2006, to assess the sufficiency of childcare in their area and produce a report. Wiltshire's second report has now been drafted and it is out for consultation on the Wiltshire Council website: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/schoolseducationandlearning/earlyyearsandchildcare/childcaresufficiencyassessment.htm>.

Any comments should be forwarded to the early years team using the response sheet provided on the website by 20 March 2011. The final report will be published on the website before 1 April 2011.

Further information is available from:

Email: earlyyears@wiltshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01225 785674