

AREA BOARDS REVIEW 2010: PROGRESS

Recommendation	Actions
People	
<p>1. That Area Boards and Community Area Managers be encouraged to work with Council services, parish councils and partners such as health services, housing associations, schools, voluntary sector organisations and neighbourhood groups to engage with and document the needs, aspirations and stories of people from different walks of life and backgrounds in the area.</p>	<p>Wiltshire Voices multi-agency inclusion programme developed with funding secured from PRG fund, Regional Improvement and Empowerment Partnership and the Regional Targeted Support Fund. First three projects underway in Westbury (Older People in Residential Care), Calne (People with Learning Disabilities) and Tidworth (MOD Dependents)</p>
<p>2. To challenge each Area Board, in order to facilitate the above, to experiment with new ways of broadening public participation during 2010/2011, and prepare a bid for LPSA funding to achieve this.</p>	<p>Each Area Board has been involved with the Wiltshire Voices Programme identifying priority target groups based on Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, community profiles and other local evidence. Equalities and Human Rights training has been delivered for CAMs and Area Board Chairs in pilot areas. Social networking pilots have also been established in Malmesbury, Bradford on Avon and Wootton Bassett and Cricklade with the support of the Young Foundation and IZWE.</p>
<p>3. That the new Community Area Networks should be used for regular consultation to help inform agenda preparation and to gain feedback on the local Forward Plan.</p>	<p>Community Area Networks are now routinely used to consult with local people utilizing improved email templates. Experiments involving online polling have been used in several areas including Westbury.</p>
<p>4. Parish council forums and alliances should be encouraged in each area to discuss and agree items for consideration by the Area Boards.</p>	<p>Trowbridge, Amesbury, Wootton Bassett & Cricklade, Southern Wiltshire, South West Wiltshire, Warminster and Marlborough have established parish forums or similar mechanisms to involve the parish and town councils.</p>
<p>5. Area Boards are encouraged to hold informal or consultative meetings around subjects or themes of particular local concern and to facilitate this new approach the number of informal meetings permitted per Area Board be increased to 4 in any year.</p>	<p>During 2010 all Area Boards experimented with different ways of engaging people through Health and Wellbeing events. In addition, Area Boards are holding targeted consultative meetings during Spring 2011 to initiate a debate around the Localism Bill. A number of other consultative/deliberative meetings were held during 2010.</p>
Powers	
<p>6. That the Area Boards are the main mechanism for consulting communities at local level and to facilitate this, services are requested to provide good notice of consultations in order to give Area Boards adequate time to programme and deliver consultation activity in the locality.</p>	<p>Each Area Board now publishes and keeps under review a forward plan setting out matters to be considered by the Boards. This has greatly improved the coordination of major consultations – car parking, leisure review, etc. However, there are further improvements required to the Council’s consultation documents to make it easier for local people to understand and respond to proposals at local level.</p>

7. That the scheme of delegation to officers be amended to require the use of the decision checklist attached as Appendix 3	Achieved. A series of workshops were held with front line services during 2010. Despite this, the operation of the decision checklist has not been as successful as originally hoped with only a small increase in the number of decisions being referred to the Boards.
8. That Cabinet members be requested to encourage officers to refer matters of only local impact to the Area Boards and town and parish councils so that they can be more fully involved in the decision making process.	The response has been good in some areas. Area Boards are now handling local speeding issues, prioritizing local highways programmes, street lights, youth transport schemes and local bus services (forthcoming).
9. That the Community Issue System (CIS) be reviewed with a view to achieving better response times and greater clarity regarding outcomes delivered	A review of the CIS was completed in 2010 and a number of improvements were introduced. Issue handling processes were also reviewed to ensure that local ward members and parish councils are notified of all issues in their 'patch.'
Partnership	
10. That the revised community area partnership agreement and funding arrangements (Appendix 4) be adopted for 2010/11.	This has proved successful and in 2011 the Wiltshire Forum of Community Area Partnerships (WfCAP) has taken the lead on the annual review of the CAPA.
11. That the Council recognises that partnership arrangements and community planning should best suit local circumstances and that work should continue with WfCAP to negotiate the best solution for that Community Area'.	A range of local approaches have emerged during the year and two CAPs have disbanded.
12. That the Council agrees to negotiate a new three year service level agreement with WfCAP to secure its funding and develop and strengthen the support it provides to partnerships in Wiltshire.	This was achieved and a new Service Level Agreement is now in place.
13. That the Resilient Communities Partnership be invited to develop ways of supporting and strengthening community planning in Wiltshire including commissioning further improvements to the community area profiles.	A bid submitted by WfCAP on behalf of the RCP for an online community planning system was rejected by the Performance Reward Grant Panel. New arrangements to support localism in Wiltshire are included in the 2011/12 Business Plan.
Publicity	
14. That Area Boards be encouraged to develop closer relationships with the local newspapers by providing copy and news stories in order to raise awareness and encourage participation.	Local newspapers and media outlets are now included on distribution lists for the Just a Minute newsletters and the Community Area Network updates. National media coverage was received for the Wiltshire Community Speedwatch Scheme.
15. That Area Boards be encouraged to provide copy for local parish magazines and other community newsletters	Parish and Town councils are now included on distribution lists for the Just a Minute newsletters and the Community Area Network updates.
16. That an Annual Report be produced each year detailing the successes of the Boards involving people who have benefited from the outcomes	An update was prepared for Annual Council in 2010 and this will be repeated in 2011. A number of Area Board case studies have been commissioned and these will be disseminated.

17. That all Area Boards communications be written in plain language avoiding jargon and acronyms.	Community Area Managers have experimented with 'easy read' versions of documents during 2010.
Parishes	
18. That parishes be encouraged to form clusters, forums and alliances within (and across) community areas to share knowledge, experience and concerns and to put forward items for consideration by the Area Boards.	CAMs have held informal 'drop-in' sessions for parish and town councils. The Head of Service attended a WALC Executive meeting to explain the approach and parish forums are now operating in several areas including Amesbury, Marlborough and Trowbridge.
19. That Area Boards communications be sent by email to all parish councillors through the community area network.	CAMs have encouraged Parish and Town councillors to sign up for the Just a Minute newsletters and the Community Area Network updates.
20. That examples of successful collaborations between parish councils and area boards be promoted to demonstrate the successful outcomes that the new arrangements are delivering	A number of Area Board case studies have been commissioned and these will be disseminated widely. A review session for the Community Speedwatch scheme has been organised for participating parish and town councils.
21. That Area Boards are expected to meet at a range of urban and rural venues	This request has been referred to the Boards and is a matter for local discretion.
22. That the Area Boards Handbook is revised to set out more clearly the role, rights and responsibilities of parish representatives upon the Area Boards and that this is circulated as a separate information sheet for parish and town councillors.	The review of the Area Boards Handbook was delayed following the General Election in anticipation of national policy changes as subsequently announced in the Localism Bill.
23. That Community Area Managers will offer to give presentations and host discussions about the local Area Boards for parish and town councils in the area.	This has been delivered with CAMs arranging a variety of events and activities for parish and towns councils including the successful 'tea and talk' sessions in South West Wiltshire and Malmesbury areas.

Some examples of successful Area Board activities and initiatives undertaken during 2010 can be found attached.

Steve Milton

Head of Community Governance

1 March 2011