

Area Boards and Delegated Decisions

A Checklist for officers

Corporate commitment

The Council has made a corporate commitment to encourage 'open, honest decision making' and it is important that this reflected at all levels within the Council.

Powers of the Area Boards

The Area Boards Handbook sets out very clearly the very significant powers that the Leader has delegated to the Area Boards, as follows:

Decisions involving the discharge of the Council's local executive functions will be made by an Area Board, provided the decision does not:

- *Have a significant impact outside of the area concerned*
- *Impact significantly on the overall resources of the Council*
- *Contradict any policy or service standard set by the Council*
- *Involve the taking of regulatory or quasi-judicial decisions*
- *Relate to the exercise of functions in respect of any particular person, including any individual member of staff*

Powers delegated to officers

The Council also empowers its officers to make local operational decisions to ensure that services remain efficient and responsive at the local level. It would be unnecessary, inappropriate and practically impossible for all of these officer decisions to be made by the Area Boards. However, this means there is an overlap of authority. To ensure that there is public participation in and scrutiny of all council decisions the Cabinet has adopted the following checklist for its officers exercising delegated powers.

Using this checklist

This checklist is provided to help officers to decide when and how to involve local councillors and Area Boards in decisions about local services.

Officers using this checklist may wish to discuss any questions it raises with the Community Area Manager concerned. Contacts can be found on the Council website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/areaboards

If you are in any doubt whether to involve the Area Board, please speak to the Community Area Manager or the Chairman of the Board.

Service Planning

Wiltshire Council believes that local service plans should be developed in partnership with local councillors, parish and town councils, partners and the local people likely to be affected by those plans. This ensures that there is transparency and accountability in the way local services are delivered.

Things to ask...

- ✓ *Do you prepare an annual plan, setting out how you deliver your local service?*
- ✓ *Is it clear in the plan how the service relates to each/any of Wiltshire's 20 community areas?*
- ✓ *Are local councillors consulted about the plan?*
- ✓ *Does the local Area Board wish to consider and adopt the plan?*

Decision Making

Wiltshire Council believes that local people should be involved in and have a say about the decisions that are likely to affect them.

Things to ask...

- ✓ *Does the decision you are considering fall within the powers delegated by the Leader to the Area Board?*
- ✓ *Is the decision likely to have a significant impact on the local community?*
- ✓ *Have local councillors been consulted about the proposed decision?*
- ✓ *Is the local Area Board content for that decision to be exercised by an officer?*

Consultation

Wiltshire Council encourages consultation with local people about the matters that are likely to affect them.

Things to ask...

- ✓ *Are you planning to undertake consultation about your services in the coming year?*
- ✓ *Have you notified local councillors about the consultation?*
- ✓ *Will the Area Board wish to review the outcome of the consultation?*