

COMMUNITY PLANNING IN THE AMESBURY AREA

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To agree the commissioning of a group to lead on community planning in the Amesbury Area.

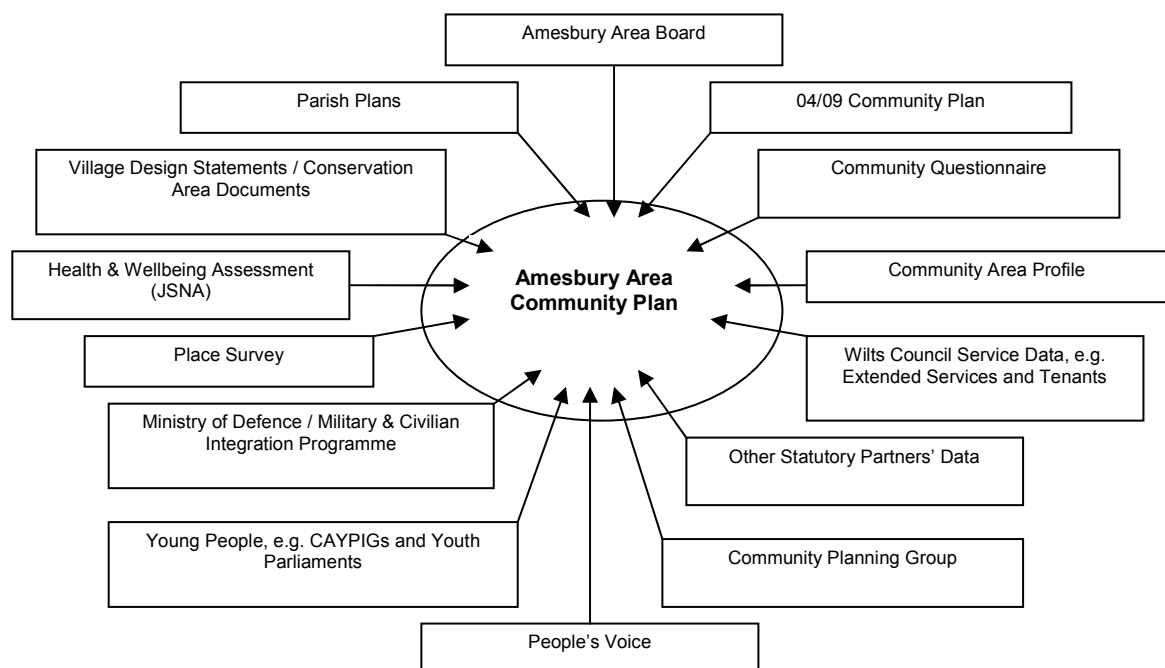
2. Background

- 2.1. The Amesbury Area Board held an informal meeting with parish council representatives on the 10th June 2010 to consider the report attached at [Appendix 1](#). A key proposal in the report at Appendix 1 is that the area board should ensure that its future work is informed by an up to date Community Plan.
- 2.2. Just as with community plans produced by a town or parish group, a community plan is required for the Amesbury Area Board. A community plan for the Area was produced in 2003/2004 but this is now out of date. For example, there is no reference to the economic downturn, the threat to jobs at Porton Down, the Local Development Framework, local government reorganisation or Project Allenby.
- 2.3. The up to date plan will publish the results of what local people want to see, and it will set out priorities for action to improve the quality of life for all in the Amesbury Area.
- 2.4. The plan will provide the evidence base for service and budget planning across the public sector. Without an up to date plan, the area board will find it difficult to press the case for the Amesbury Area or to access available funding, e.g. planning gain funding. Consequently, there is a clear and urgent need to begin the process of producing a new plan.
- 2.5. The up to date plan will:
 - (a) help the board to identify the priorities, needs, concerns and aspirations of all living in the 22 parishes which make up the Amesbury Area
 - (b) influence partners to address local priorities and promote projects that are a direct response to local needs
 - (c) lead to the appropriate action to meet these needs and priorities
 - (d) provide valuable data for attracting external funding for specific projects

- (e) help community groups by showing what is being achieved and how partner organisations can support their work
- (f) stimulate interest and involvement in creating stronger, more resilient communities in this Area

3. Main Considerations

- 3.1. Based on the principle that a community plan should be written *by the community – for the community*, the Amesbury Area Board is asked to agree the commissioning of a small group of community representatives to work on the development of the new plan.
- 3.2. As part of this work, the group will actively consult and involve community representatives from across the Area to ensure the revised plan is fully informed by all. The process will include desktop analysis of existing data, and the running of additional consultation exercises to plug any gaps identified. For example, 7 out of the 22 parishes in the Area have produced a parish plan, an example of which is attached at [Appendix 2](#), and 5 others have compiled information and published this in the form of a 'parish profile', conservation document or demographic audit. Other parishes, without a full parish plan, may wish to consult with residents on their needs and aspirations for the parish using a simple questionnaire, which the Community Planning Group will draft. These parish plans will be important building blocks in the development of the Amesbury Area Community Plan
- 3.3. The Area Board would also like the Community Planning Group to take a role in providing assistance to parish councils and parish groups who may need help and support in producing/updating their parish plan or in carrying out a community questionnaire exercise.
- 3.4. Below is a diagram which, whilst not exhaustive, is intended to illustrate the different elements that the Community Planning Group will need to draw on in updating the Plan:



4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The Area Board's budget is available to fund community planning related activities each year. Combining the funding available in 2010/11 and the funding carried forward from 2009/10 (just over £7,000), this provides the Area Board with a total of just over £17,000 for community planning purposes.
- 4.2. A part-time project officer is needed to support the work of the Community Planning Group, for example to provide secretarial assistance, data gathering, and the co-ordination of consultation events and exercises. The process to recruit this officer is underway, and the board is asked to allocate £7,000 to fund this work over the next 12 months. Members should note that this level of funding is required for 2010/11 to ensure good progress is made with the community plan and is unlikely to be required in future years once the plan is published
- 4.3 In addition to the cost of a project officer, the Community Planning Group will incur other running costs, e.g. meeting/events room hire, printing of consultation material, postage and promotion. The Area Board is asked to agree delegated authority to the Community Area Manager to (in consultation with the Area Board Chairman) release funding as and when required to cover these running costs up to the sum of £5,000 in 2010/11. This £5,000 is part of the £17,000 allocation as detailed in paragraph 4.1 above.
- 4.4 Funding is also available, through the Community Area Grants Scheme for parish/community groups and councils to access financial assistance for the production of parish plans and to help with local projects arising from those plans.

<u>Area Board Allocation for Community Planning in 2010/11</u>	<u>£</u>
Part – time project worker to support the work of the Community Planning Group	7,000
Community Planning Group running costs, i.e. room hire, postage and publicity costs	5,000
Support for projects arising from community planning activities	5,000
<i>NB: this can be supplemented by funding from the Community Area Grants budget</i>	
TOTAL	17,000

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- (a) the Area Board commission a Community Planning Group to lead on community planning in the Amesbury Area
- (b) the Area Board note that its available budget allocation for community planning purposes in 2010/11 is £17,000 (inclusive of £,7000 carried forward from 2009/10).
- (c) the Area Board agree to allocate £7,000 to pay for the cost of a part-time project worker and £5,000 (delegated to the Community Area Manager to allocate in consultation with the Area Board Chairman) for all associated community planning work in support of the Amesbury Area Community Planning Group (AACPG) in 2010/11.
- (d) the Porton, Idmiston and Gomeldon Community Plan be referred to AACPG for consideration and incorporation into the Amesbury Area Community Plan.

Report Author: (Karen Linaker – Amesbury Community Area Manager)
Tel No: 01722 434697 (mobile: 07971 751728)
E-Mail: karen.linaker@wiltshire.gov.uk

COMMUNITY PLANNING IN THE AMESBURY AREA

A DISCUSSION PAPER

Purpose of the Report

1. To assist the board in taking forward a revised approach to community planning in the Amesbury Area.

Context & Background

2. One of the features of Wiltshire Council's local governance arrangements is the role of the community area partnerships. Under this approach, the area boards operate as local multi-agency executive bodies, while the partnerships facilitate community planning, public engagement, consultation and participation – with strong links maintained between the two.
3. In some areas this arrangement works well, in others it has been less successful and in some it has not yet established.
4. The most recent review of the local governance arrangements has revealed some concerns about the operation of this system, including:
 - (a) there is an urgent need to involve a broader cross section of the community in the work of the board.
 - (b) the council should avoid being overly prescriptive and allow arrangements to evolve in ways that best suit each area
 - (c) the legitimate democratic role of parish and town councils needs to be emphasised more clearly
 - (d) community plans need to be robust and representative of the needs of the wider community in order to influence public services in Wiltshire.
5. In the Amesbury Area (as in a number of other areas) there is a need to revise arrangements for community planning. Feedback received from parish and town councils in particular, is that a more flexible model is required, which focuses on facilitating community engagement, participation and networking without adding extra tiers of bureaucracy or setting up new organisations that duplicate the work of parishes and other groups.
6. The hard work of those who have been involved in the Stonehenge Community Area Partnership's (SCAPs) development is very much appreciated by the board. However, the SCAP Chairman is the first to admit that these endeavours have struggled to achieve the 'buy-in' needed to develop effective community networking, or a clear sense of direction in terms of community planning.

7. Having said that, a feature of the Amesbury Area that SCAP has helped to highlight, is the way in which a number of the 22 parishes already work very well in partnership with one another. This Community Area is fortunate to have very strong, active parish councils and a clear history of collaborative working. These qualities are critical to the future success of community planning in this Area.
8. The Amesbury Area Community Plan was produced in 2003/2004 and is now out of date – there is no reference to the economic downturn, the threat to jobs at Porton Down, the Local Development Framework, local government reorganisation or Project Allenby. This is a serious weakness. The Amesbury Area Community Plan provides the evidence base for service and budget planning across the public sector. Without an up-to-date plan, the area board will find it difficult to press the case for the Area or to access available funding (such as Performance Reward Grant and planning gain funding). There is a clear and urgent need to begin the process of producing a new plan.

Proposed Way Forward

9. The proposal is therefore to discontinue efforts to establish a new separate organisation to deliver the community plan, and to move towards a more inclusive and flexible approach, where parish and town councils, partners and the wider community work collaboratively towards the development of a Community Plan for the Amesbury Area.
10. To get the ball rolling, the Area Board will :
 - (a) bring together parish and town councils, partners and community groups over a period of time, through new and better communications, purposeful focused meetings and targeted consultation
 - (b) continue to support towns and parishes to produce or update their own local parish plans
 - (c) provide support, assistance and funding to help parish councils who may wish to form liaison groups, alliances or ad hoc joint arrangements with other parish councils
 - (d) building on some of the content in the 2004-2009 Stonehenge Community Area Plan, working with parish councils, partners and the wider community, and drawing on the research already documented in parish/community plans, other documents and through additional public surveys, produce a Community Plan for the Amesbury Area which addresses the needs and priorities of the area
 - (e) work with town and parish councils and the wider community in implementing the actions in the Amesbury Area Community Plan. This will help to focus the Area Board's activities and help it to direct support to local projects which fit the priorities of the Area

- (f) facilitate meetings to track the progress of the Community Plan and run events in partnership with parishes / parish alliances to maintain wider community engagement in the development of the Plan, ensuring its continued relevance to all living in the Amesbury Area
- (g) ensure that the Community Plan is available online and is kept up-to-date continuously over time to help communicate and facilitate further engagement in the community planning process
- (h) allocate some of the funds remaining from 2009/10 previously ear-marked for SCAP, and funds allocated for CAP development in 2010/11 to fund a part-time project co-ordinator (Community Area Network Development Officer (CAN-DO)) to get the urgent community planning work underway in earnest.

Recommendation

11. The Amesbury Area Board Unitary Councillors are asked to comment on this paper at the 'members' briefing' meeting on the 29th April 2010.
12. Parish and Town Councils are requested to discuss this paper in full with the Unitary Councillors on the 10th June 2010 (5pm), at Antrobus House.

Contact Officer: Karen Linaker, Community Area Manager, 01722 434697