

**Final Report of the Review of Area Boards Task Group**

**Purpose**

1. To present the conclusions and recommendations of the Review of Area Boards Task Group for endorsement.

**Background**

2. The Task Group was established by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 8 October to review the function and role of Area Boards. The Cabinet Member for Campuses, Area Boards, Libraries, Leisure and Flooding explained that Area Boards had been evolving since their inception in 2009 and he considered it time for a scrutiny exercise to be carried out. The following terms of reference and topics for focus, which had been drawn up in consultation with the Cabinet Member, were noted:

1. The current role and remit of the Area Boards
2. Area Board budgets and grants
3. Local service devolution and management
4. Joint Strategic Assessments (JSA) and community planning/community priorities
5. Contract and commissioning decisions affecting the community area
6. The consultative role of Area Boards in local development
7. The role of the Area Boards in future campus governance
8. Community area partnership arrangements
9. Area Board meeting management
10. Area Board support, promotion and publicity
11. Area Board staffing and management
12. Future service delivery through Area Boards

3. The Task Group agreed to focus on particular areas of concern or interest. 8 of the 12 themes listed above were chosen as priorities and these are expanded upon in the report below.

**Methodology**

4. The Task Group comprised the following membership:

Cllr Ernie Clark  
Cllr Stewart Dobson

Cllr Mary Douglas (Chairman)  
Cllr Jose Green  
Cllr Simon Jacobs  
Cllr David Jenkins  
Cllr Magnus Macdonald  
Cllr Linda Packard

5. The Task Group met on three occasions, receiving evidence from the following witnesses:

Cllr Jonathon Seed	Cabinet Member for Area Boards, Libraries, Leisure and Flooding
Cllr Chris Williams	Portfolio Holder for Area Boards and Libraries
Laurie Bell	Associate Director, Communications and Communities
Steve Milton	Head of Community Governance

6. The following written evidence was considered:

- A brief summary of the responses provided by other stakeholders as part of the Cabinet Member's review of Area Boards. It was reported that the following groups had been consulted:
  - Area board chairs
  - Community Operation Board chairs
  - Key partners; police, health, fire and rescue
  - Voluntary and community groups
  - Community Area Managers
  - Corporate and Associate Directors
  - All managers at Wiltshire Council
  - Cabinet members
- The Task Group wish to express their concern that town and parish councillors were not consulted as part of the Cabinet Member's review and have expressed this in writing to the Cabinet Member.
- Documents outlining Area Boards' current roles and responsibilities, including the briefing documents located on the Council intranet.
- Written answers provided by the Cabinet Member to the Task Group's questions (see Appendix 1).

## **Preamble**

7. The Committee should be aware that the Task Group's review is one element of a wider review of Area Boards being undertaken by the executive and leading officers (a list of other consultees is listed under paragraph 6). The Cabinet Member has reported that any changes to Area Boards resulting from the review are unlikely to be the subject of a formal Cabinet decision, but will instead comprise a series of smaller operational and budgetary changes.

8. Indeed, it should be noted that the Task Group has not had the opportunity to consider and comment on specific, detailed proposals regarding the future of Area Boards. The exercise has consisted of eight Area Board members with individual experiences attempting to highlight the possible risks and opportunities of the review themes put forward by the Cabinet Member (see paragraph 2). The Committee may wish to request further clarity on how and when any decisions regarding changes to Area Boards will be taken and, once specific and detailed proposals are developed, what opportunity there will be for them to be scrutinised (Recommendation 1).
9. The Cabinet Member has emphasised how reduced local government funding requires a major shift in the relationship between the Council and local communities if current services are to be maintained. Reducing funding means that the Council will be decreasingly able to provide non-statutory services directly and communities will increasingly need to do more for themselves, initially with the Council's support. To some extent, the Council's role will move from being a provider of services to an enabler of communities to meet their own needs through greater harnessing of social capital (e.g. volunteers and community-based organisations) and better coordination of resources at a local level. The review of Area Boards has been undertaken in this light.
10. The Task Group agrees that the Cabinet Member's proposed approach of increasing local responsibility, accountability and autonomy as the best way to maintain or improve current service levels in the context of significantly reduced funding. The Task Group also supports the Cabinet Member's view that every community is different and therefore every Area Board must act innovatively and flexibly to meet local needs.

## **Findings**

### **Theme 1: The current role and remit of the Area Boards**

### **Theme 3: Local service devolution and management**

### **Theme 12: Future service delivery through Area Boards**

11. As described above, the Cabinet Member has indicated that the role and remit of Area Boards is likely to expand, with increasing responsibilities for taking decisions and managing or delivering services being devolved to Area Boards. Wiltshire libraries, now run primarily by volunteers with professional support was discussed as an example of how to successfully retain a service despite reduced funding, and CAT-Gs have been discussed as an existing example of Area Boards taking on new responsibilities for service delivery and budget management.
12. The Task Group was particularly interested in the concept of stronger, more resilient communities – one of the four overarching priorities in the Council's Business Plan – and what role Area Boards can play in helping to create them. In the financial context described above, resilient communities are those that actively do more for themselves, with the council acting as an

enabler when necessary, rather than being reliant on council-delivered services. Area boards can provide an opportunity to influence these services and initiate action around issues of local concern. Put simply, the Task Group concluded that Area Boards should function as a means to communities' ends and a forum that helps communities to 'think' and act for themselves (Recommendation 2). An example provided by the Cabinet member of an initiative that demonstrates community resilience was a new flood response scheme: Communities are provided with equipment such as sandbags and warning signage to be deployed by communities as and when required.

13. The Task Group was initially concerned that expanding the role and remit of Area Boards would require an increased number of Area Board meetings. It was reported that consultation feedback suggests there are already too many formal Area Board meetings, however, a greater number of smaller and less-formal meetings, such as CAT-G meetings, may be required as their remit expands. The Task Group concludes that this will increase the need for:
  - a) A focus on maintaining clear and transparent lines of accountability and influence. The Task Group have specific concerns that specific interest groups can have a disproportionate voice, particularly in comparison with town and parish councils who are the only democratically accountable bodies the Area Boards deal with. This will need to be considered further. (Recommendation 3);
  - b) Appropriate officer structures to support an increased number of these meetings (see paragraph 17 below).
14. Devolving services to Area Boards will give them greater flexibility to shape services and take decisions based on the evidence and needs of their communities. However, it also exposes the strengths or weaknesses of the decision makers and leaders in any one locality, which to some extent will determine the effectiveness of the arrangements that result. Local choice and autonomy avoids the weaknesses of a 'one size fits all' approach, but may necessarily also result in a 'postcode lottery' in terms of service quality. The Committee may wish to undertake further work on how performance will be ensured across the county when more services are managed and/or delivered locally (Recommendation 4).
15. The Task Group considered the risk that devolving services to Area Boards meant effectively re-creating the district councils. However, it is noted that under the former two-tier system, strategic direction was shared across five councils which could work against the efficient delivery of shared outcomes and result in duplication and inefficiencies. Wiltshire's new community model is an unitary model with a delineation between local and strategic responsibilities and delivery.
16. The Task Group concludes that there is some confusion amongst both the public and members about the current role and remit of Area Boards. As Area Boards' role and remit expands, the need for public and member clarity on this will only increase. This is discussed further under paragraph 26 below.

## **Officer support structures**

17. The proposed new approach represents a significant culture change in how the Council and communities work together. Any devolvement of decision-making, budget management and service delivery requires a comprehensive review of the support structures in place to ensure that the new arrangements are workable and people in all parts of the county continue to receive good standards of service (Recommendation 5).
18. It is likely that changes to the role of Area Boards will require changes to the role of Community Area Manager (CAM). The Task Group notes that CAMs currently have both administrative and community networking responsibilities. Whatever changes are made to the CAM role, it must be ensured that both of these aspects of their current role continue to be delivered.
19. Expanding Area Board responsibilities makes the role of Area Board members, particularly chairmen, increasingly important. There are undoubtedly more unelected resources in every community to be harnessed and doing so will be critical to success. However, elected member resource at Area Board level is finite, and they will need appropriate training and support to undertake a changing and growing local leadership role effectively (Recommendation 6).
20. As less resource is available for Council-delivery, more resources will need to be directed toward putting in place structures that attract, train, support and coordinate volunteers. The Council will need to focus on this if service quality is to be maintained and risk mitigated as fewer services are delivered by professionals employed directly by the Council. It is already evident that the success of community-led initiatives is particularly dependent on the availability, skills and enthusiasm of community leaders in the locality. As further powers and responsibilities are devolved to Area Boards, it will become increasingly important that potential community leaders are encouraged to step forward and supported to fulfil their potential for the benefit of their community. Young people in particular need to be encouraged and supported to become the community leaders of the future and play an active role in strengthening their communities' resilience (Recommendation 7).
21. The Task Group notes that the proposed approach is based on communities 'governing' their Area Boards. If resilient communities is indeed the aim, it is crucial that the approach is one of communities telling the Area Boards what they need, rather than Area Boards dictating what the voluntary sector does.

## **Theme 2: Area Board budgets and grants**

22. Local needs can be best met by giving Area Boards maximum autonomy, including greater freedom over how to spend their grant allocations. At the inception of Area Boards a range of rules were put in place prohibiting the use of grants to fund certain things, such as maintaining pavements as opposed to

one-off community projects. There now appears to be inconsistent adherence to these rules and yet no increased autonomy on Area Board spending has been formalised. This has led to some confusion over what is and is not permitted. A formal review of the current rules around how Area Boards can spend their grant allocations, with the results being widely disseminated, would remedy this unhelpful ambiguity (Recommendation 8).

23. If Area Boards are to be given greater responsibilities for service delivery and services budgets are devolved, mechanisms will need to be put in place to allow members to genuinely influence how those budgets are apportioned. This will help avoid any sense of new responsibilities being 'dumped on' Area Boards without the opportunity for dialogue about the resources required to meet them (Recommendation 9).
24. The Task Group discussed the current situation whereby officers determine how developer Section 106 contributions from local developments are spent without the requirement for consultation with members. There were mixed views regarding whether giving Area Boards powers to influence how Section 106 contributions are used would provide a more open, transparent and effective method of using the funds. Similarly, there were also mixed views about whether it would be appropriate to devolve affordable housing contributions to Area Boards.

#### **Theme 6: The consultative role of Area Boards in local development**

25. Members concluded that, at present, Area Boards are not always consulted on major planning developments (those at a Strategic Planning level) in their community area. Members considered the benefits of Area Boards becoming planning consultees like parish councils, but acknowledged the potential constitutional issues (member conflicts of interest, the number of members required to be quorate) and the potentially significant drain on Area Board meeting time (Recommendation 10).

#### **Theme 7: The role of the Area Boards in future campus governance**

26. The Task Group is concerned that there is considerable confusion around the meaning of the word 'campus' and the relationship between campuses and Area Boards. Many members, and presumably members of the public, view campuses as purely buildings, whereas 'campus' seems to be used by some in a broader sense to mean 'a campus ethos' or a localised approach to decision making and service delivery. The campus programme represents a major shift in the provision of local services and it is essential that we reach greater clarity around its meaning. It will be crucial that members can clearly articulate to the public the role and remit of Area Boards, the purpose and operation of campuses, and the link between them, if the shift in approach is to be successful (Recommendation 11).
27. The details of potential changes to the role of Area Boards, including their role in governing or interacting with campuses, appear to hinge on how governance arrangements for Corsham campus (as the first campus to come

on stream) develop. It is currently unclear how the lessons from the Corsham campus project will be shared with other Area Boards (see Recommendation 11 e)).

28. The Task Group welcomed a confirmation from the Cabinet Member that campus projects will be commenced, and the required funding made available, at a pace dictated purely by the progress of proposals developed by Community Operations Boards (COBs).

### **Theme 8: Community Area Partnership (CAP) arrangements**

29. There appears to be mixed interpretations of what a Community Area Partnership (CAP) is and does. It is also the case that not all areas have a CAP and where they do exist they differ broadly from place to place in how they operate. The Task Group supports the Cabinet Member's view that the continuance and operation of CAPs is a matter for the relevant Area Boards to determine based on local circumstances and needs. It also notes that in some areas where CAPs have ceased Area Boards have stepped in and filled the gap.

### **Theme 10: Area Board support, promotion and publicity**

30. The Task Group believe that Area Boards could be marketed more imaginatively and would like to submit the following ideas for consideration (Recommendation 12):
  - a) Area Boards holding 'themed community meetings' before their formal meetings. This could encourage greater engagement by separating matters of more interest to the public from the more formal elements of business.
  - b) Placing more emphasis on promoting Area Boards success stories to demonstrate that the public can influence decisions and services. Sharing success stories across community areas and Area Boards will be increasingly important as the Council adopts a more localised model of service delivery. The Task Group notes that tool kits for key initiatives and schemes are being developed to enable Area Boards to deliver these in their communities.
  - c) Encouraging Area Boards to invite groups who have received grant funding back to report what impact the funded scheme had on the community.
31. The Task Group notes that Area boards and community working has been merged with the council's communications team creating the opportunity for a more integrated approach to branding, marketing and communications at local and strategic level.

## **Theme 4: Joint Strategic Assessments (JSA) and community planning / community priorities**

32. The Task Group see the Joint Strategic Assessments as an excellent example of the council enabling the community to come together and agree its priorities.

### **Proposal**

33. The Committee is asked to endorse the Task Group's report and recommendations and refer them to the Cabinet Member for response.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **The Cabinet Member to:**

- 1. Explain how and when any decisions regarding changes to the role and remit of Area Boards will be taken and, once specific and detailed proposals are developed, what opportunity there will be for them to be scrutinised.**
- 2. Make it clear on every occasion that, as building stronger, more resilient communities is the aim, the proposed approach is one of communities telling Area Boards what they need, rather than Area Boards dictating what the voluntary sector does. Area Boards are to function as a means to communities' ends and a forum that helps communities to 'think' and act for themselves.**
- 3. Ensure that clear and transparent lines of accountability are maintained as the remit of Area Boards expands; to ensure that the public understands who is responsible for which decisions and which services. This is particularly important given the likely increase in business being conducted at smaller and less formal local meetings.**
- 4. Detail how performance across the county will be ensured and the risks of a 'postcode lottery' mitigated as further services and budgets are devolved to be managed at a local level.**
- 5. Put in place appropriate officer support structures to enable Area Boards to undertake their changed role effectively. Consideration should be given to how the following will be provided under a more localised model of decision making and service delivery:**
  - Technical and legal support to ensure that decisions are evidence-based and legal**
  - Administrative support to ensure effective governance and openness and transparency of decision making**
  - Community networking support to ensure effective communication between Area Boards and local partners**



6. Offer appropriate training and support to all Area Board members to enable them to understand and undertake their enhanced local leadership role.
  7. Explain how the Council will attract, train, support and coordinate community leaders and volunteers in sufficient numbers to meet the challenges of requiring communities to do more for themselves, whilst maintaining quality across the county and mitigating the risks of a more arms-length model of delivery.
  8. Review the rules stipulating how Area Boards can spend their grant allocations and communicate the results to all Area Boards. As the bodies with the greatest understanding of local needs, Area Boards should be given maximum freedom over how they can spend their grants and this freedom should be made explicit.
  9. Put in place a mechanism to enable Area Board members to understand and genuinely influence how the budgets for those services delegated to them are determined and apportioned across the 20 community areas.
  10. Ensure that in future Area Boards are consistently consulted on major local developments in their community area at the pre-application stage.
  11. Report what steps will be taken to improve member and public understanding of the campus programme and the relationship between Area Boards and campuses, including;
    - a) Clarity around the meaning of the word 'campus' and how we can ensure that it is used more consistently in future;
    - b) What role campuses will play in the more localised model of governance and service delivery proposed;
    - c) What role Area Boards will play in governing or managing campuses;
    - d) Clarity around whether additional powers and responsibilities will be devolved to Area Boards only when their campuses come on stream or whether this will happen in one tranche across all 18 Area Boards;
    - e) How the lessons from the Corsham campus programme in terms of campus governance will be shared with other Area Boards and Community Operations Boards (COBs).
  12. Detail the steps to be taken to market Area Boards more imaginatively as their role and remit expands, and responds to the Task Group's suggestions in this area.
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## **Review of Area Boards Task Group**

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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1            Responses from the Cabinet Member for Campuses, Area Boards, Libraries, Leisure and Flooding to the Task Group's questions

## **Background documents**

None

## Questions from the Review of Area Boards Task Group with responses provided by the Cabinet Member

### 1. The current role and remit of the Area Boards

- a) *What is your definition of “resilient communities” and how will this be measured?*

Resilient communities are characterised as those that come together and by doing so can resolve local issues and manage challenges that they face. They are communities that actively do more for themselves and use public services as an enabler and support, when necessary.

- b) *Would you agree that communities should see Area Boards as a means to their end?*

Area boards provide a focus for raising awareness of public services business and an opportunity to influence future services and delivery. The boards are also a focus for local action. They provide legitimate local democratic representation for communities and structures that facilitate local action. The boards enable communities to raise, discuss and address their own issues and to agree and take forward local priorities. They can also facilitate and encourage action on issues that can remain largely hidden from public view.

- c) *Do you agree that the Council should only do what communities cannot do for themselves?*

Area boards are proactive in initiating action around issues that are causing concern locally. The focus is always to encourage and support communities to manage local issues. The council will enable action and provide financial support, where this is necessary.

- d) *Would you agree that a) there is confusion amongst both members and the public about the current role of Area Boards, and b) The need for clarification will be even greater as Area Boards’ role increases?*

The awareness and understanding of the role of area boards can always be improved. However, communities are now far more informed about the work of the boards and the opportunities that exist to use the boards as an opportunity to influence local decisions and find out more about what’s happening in a local community. CATG is a good example where local communities influence highways services and priorities.

The delegation of services in the future will be accompanied by a communications plan to ensure that we continue to raise awareness and encourage greater engagement.

Area Boards now have extensive communications networks (such as the community websites) and can provide information and communication to ensure local communities are well informed.

e) *Won't an enhanced role require more Area Board meetings?*

A lot of the work in a local community area takes place outside of the area board. If there is a need for more less formal meetings – like CATG meetings - to enable the community to influence service delivery and actions, these can be considered as a good option to engage people and take action or make recommendations to the area board.

## **2. Area Board budgets and grants**

a. *Would you consider devolving affordable housing contributions to Area Boards?*

Planning gain contributions and CIL can be influenced by local communities through the Area Boards as part of the local consultation of the Core Strategy and major housing sites as they come forward – so to some extent this is already happening. The sites for development; including affordable housing must balance county-wide and locally reflecting the overall core strategy.

b. *Would you consider giving Area Boards greater freedom over how to spend their grant allocations? For example, on maintaining pavements rather than on one-off community projects?*

Local flexibility exists already, although the devolved budget was never expected to supplant or change strategic funding or policy decisions of cabinet. If boards start to supplement service budgets, their funds will soon be fully committed leaving little to enable communities to access funding for local projects and priorities – which was always the purpose of devolved budgets. As we move forward and as the campus programme is implemented area boards will have more control over local service budgets, enabling them to shape service budgets to reflect local priorities.

c. *The Task Group is concerned that Area Board members already have limited capacity, particularly Area Board chairmen. How will Area Boards cope with having more responsibilities?*

The delivery of the campus programme is unlocking resources in the community and engaging a wider range of stakeholders and partner organisations who, with the support of the area board are taking a lead on local priorities, future service provision and actions. The council's role is changing to becoming an enabler and facilitator rather than provider. This means using this growth in social capital and new interest in a more effective way to help local councillors achieve more through collaborating with others.

## **3. Local service devolution and management**

- a. *If further services are devolved to Area Boards, will lines of accountability change? Will the public know who is accountable for the delivery of those devolved services?*

It is important that there is a clear distinction between the strategic role of the cabinet and the local operational role of the area board. As the campuses open for business it will be much clearer which services will be the accountability of the area boards. This will be made explicit as the governance arrangements for the Corsham campus is developed.

- b. *Won't devolving more services to 18 different Area Boards result in a 'postcode lottery' in terms of service quality? Will performance be monitored/ or managed centrally?*

Strategic decisions of the council will determine how local flexibility is operated – this is clear with the CATG process (which serves as a good model). However, it was and remains the intention of the council to give the area board's sufficient flexibility to shape services and decisions based on the evidence and needs of a local community. The local accountability of members is at the heart of this approach, enabling them to respond more effectively to local issues. The 'postcode lottery' argument often bolsters a 'one size fits all approach' that imposes uniformity and leaves little room for genuine local flexibility and choice.

- c. *If services are devolved to Area Boards, will the full budgets for delivering those services be devolved? If not, what role will the Area Board have in this budget setting?*

In early discussions around the creation of the campus in Corsham, the council has signalled a willingness to identify operational service budgets within each community area. This will give the provide area boards with the opportunity to influence and ensure budgets are allocated to reflect local needs and priorities.

- d. *If Area Boards are to have more decision-making powers over local services, what officer support will be provided to support members to do this?*

The campus model, envisages a local team approach. This will see frontline service providers working together responding to the local direction of the area board. This means the at community level it is likely that there will be more officer support than at present as well as clearer lines of accountability.

- e. *If the delivery and management of more services is devolved, what officer infrastructure will be put in place to manager them, including coordinating any volunteers?*

This is currently being developed as part of the Corsham campus project and will involve reviewing governance and operational management arrangements. Volunteers will be an integral part of this community-led new

model.

- f. *Devolving further services to Area Boards and communities will require an increased number of volunteers and effective volunteer coordination:*
- i. *How will we attract volunteers in high enough numbers (this is not felt to be happening at present)?*

It is easier to recruit volunteers at local community level based on the frequent contact around the area boards and the campus. People are motivated by their own personal interests and preferences, so presenting opportunities to the right people will encourage and result in sufficient volunteers. We have seen this work in areas such as local footpath groups and there is every reason to believe we can build on this to deliver increased levels of volunteering in other areas. We have also learnt a lot from the recruitment of library volunteers. The council has effective support and management arrangements for volunteers and we can also look at working with organisations like the Wiltshire Volunteer centre, as required.

- ii. *What professional support will Area Boards be given to manage any devolved services and to coordinate/supervise volunteers?*

Volunteers will be working on behalf of their local community, rather than for the council. The council does support the Wiltshire Volunteer Centre managed by DEVELOP and also supports and promotes the Wiltshire Time Credits scheme. This could be used for the future recruitment, training and support for volunteers.

- iii. *The Council has limited experience of managing volunteers. How will we mitigate the risks associated with this?*

The council does have experience of managing volunteers as currently there are almost 700 volunteers supporting the library service. However, risks will need to be assessed on a service by service basis and safeguarding will need to be a key priority. Areas where volunteers can be deployed with minimal risk can be promoted such as the successful Speedwatch scheme - more than 300 people now monitor speeding across the county.

- g. *As our aim is to develop community resilience, how do we avoid crowding out the voluntary sector?*

The opposite is likely to be the case, as the voluntary sector will have an increased role in the future; particularly as public sector resources continue to reduce.

- h. *Giving Area Boards greater powers and responsibilities requires a significant cultural shift. How will we train members for this and share learning across different Area Boards?*

The campus programme provides a key driver for change and the opportunity creating a direct connection between services and local communities. As each area develops its campus, members will have a more central role and this will be supported with new governance and management arrangements and member training.

- i. *By devolving services to Area Boards, do we run the risk of re-creating the district councils?*

Wiltshire has a unitary council and it is responsible and accountable for the strategic policy and direction of major services. However, local communities will have far more say about the local operation and delivery of services where they live. Under the former two tier system, strategic direction was shared across 5 councils which often worked against the efficient delivery of shared outcomes, resulting in duplication and inefficiencies. Wiltshire's new community model is an integrated unitary model with a clear delineation between local and strategic responsibilities and delivery.

## **6. The consultative role of Area Boards in local development**

- a. *What is your view of giving Area Boards a say in major developments that affect their community area (e.g. developments at a Strategic Planning level)?*
- b. *What is your view of making Area Boards planning consultees (like parish councils)?*

There is no need to involve the Area Boards in the local consultation on planning applications – this should remain quite properly the role of parish and town councils. The only exception is in the case of strategic developments, major schemes and core strategy policies, where the boards already have a legitimate consultative role.

- c. *If Area Boards were given a greater consultative role in local developments, how would the constitutional issues (i.e. member conflicts of interest, number required to be quorate) be resolved?*

As b above. Members would still be required to declare their interests in the same way they do now.

## **7. The role of the Area Boards in future campus governance**

- a. *Do you agree that there are widely varying perspectives on, and understanding of, Area Boards' role in managing campuses. Will Area Boards manage campus operations? Will they be in charge of paying campus staff? Will councillors be legally liable for campus operations?*

The area board will be the accountable body locally. However, the day to day operation of the campus will be managed by local people; made up of council staff and community volunteers. The Board will not be involved in the direct line management of staff or volunteers, but it will be there to support their work and make decisions as and when these are needed. The risks

associated with campus buildings and facilities will be the responsibility of the council.

- b. *How can we improve members' understanding of the link between Area Boards and campuses?*

It is clear there is a need for additional information and discussion on the emerging campus programme and how this impacts on area boards. New governance arrangements are currently being developed in Corsham. These will need to be tested, evaluated and be used as a model for other campuses; recognising that the model may not be a one size fits all.

- c. *What is the staffing structure for coordinating activity within a campus? Who will decide this? Will CAMs be based in campuses?*

The staffing structure and appropriate roles to support and help to make a campus successful are currently being developed in Corsham. The role of the Community Area Managers will be reviewed to ensure that the appropriate skills to act as the central point of coordination in a campus linking with all front line services, the local community and the area board are agreed and implemented.

- d. *How do we ensure that the campus programme doesn't end in the Council doing more?*

The campus programme is about communities and empowering local people to do more. The community-led model is an approach that is being developed; where communities take the lead on what they know is best for them local provision improves. This model allows the council to priorities its resources on the services and people who need it most.

- e. *What is your view of bringing the private sector into campuses e.g. vets, surgeries etc?*

This would be the decision of the local community and there is no reason why commercial operations cannot be brought into the campus; Corsham campus has provision for a catering franchise. However, the Campus will be first and foremost a community facility and how it develops will be shaped around local choice.

## **8. Community area partnership arrangements**

*Amongst members there appears to be mixed interpretations of what a Community Area Partnership is and does! Does this need to be remedied?*

Not all areas have a Community Area Partnership (CAP) and where CAPs do exist they differ from place to place and their effectiveness is best assessed locally. In some areas, including Bradford on Avon, Salisbury and Corsham the model has evolved. It is a matter for the area boards to determine future arrangements.



## 10. Area Board support, promotion and publicity

- a. *What is your view of Area Boards holding 'themed community meetings' before their formal meetings (in order to encourage greater public engagement)?*

How area boards manage their local business is largely a matter for them to determine based on their local community needs and preferences. Themed meetings can be very effective, as can activities that are taken out into the community. Meetings are only one way to engage communities – there are many more which can be used and are often very well received by local communities; such as events and activities as well as making full use of all the communication channels

- b. *The Task Group believe that Area Boards could be marketed more imaginatively.*

Area boards and community working has been merged with the council's communications team creating the opportunity for a much more integrated approach to branding, marketing and communications at local and strategic level.

- c. *Do you agree we can be better at promoting Area Board success stories to show that the public can influence decisions and services?*

There is a huge opportunity to communicate the success of area boards and communities working effectively. There is a lot of national interest in the council's model for working locally and within communities there is the opportunity to promote and share best practice and learning. Tool kits for key initiatives and schemes are being collated to enable area boards to deliver these in their communities, as appropriate.

- d. *The Task Group agree that we also need to be honest about the limitations of the public ability to influence.*

There is no reason to deny people the opportunity to influence decisions or future provision, indeed this is at the heart of the democratic process. The council can consider public representations as part of its decision making process. It is important that we are open and honest about the need for feedback and consultation and how this will be used in the decision making process.

## 12. Future service delivery through Area Boards

[ this is covered above]