

March 2008

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE WORKSTREAM

1. BACKGROUND

The Community Leadership and Governance (CL&G) Workstream is led by a Workstream Project Board made up of senior representatives of the 5 Councils and is responsible for inter-related legal, constitutional and governance issues. Key project areas are as follows:

- Wiltshire Assembly and other Partnerships
- Community Boards and Community Area Partnerships
- Delegation to Town and Parish Councils
- Member Roles, Elections, Induction and Training
- Constitution and Schemes of Delegation
- Boundary Review
- Parishing of Salisbury City

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This is a covering report for the overarching Project Initiation Document (attached) for the Community Governance & Leadership workstream. The report gives brief updates on the status and progress of each project.

This paper will also address some specific questions that have been raised by the JIT and IE relating to the development phase of the community boards..

3. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The Project Initiation Document outlines the main activities that will be the focus of the CL&G Board and the timetable for development and delivery of the projects. It is a high level project plan for the overall Workstream that has been prepared and agreed by the CL&G Board.

4. PROJECT UPDATES

4.1. Wiltshire Assembly and other Partnerships

The Wiltshire Forum of Community Area Partnerships is currently carrying out a 'Fit for Purpose' evaluation of all Community Area Partnerships in Wiltshire; this will hopefully help to quantify future resource requirements for engaging in the new governance arrangements.

It is also timely as it fits well with the work that has been commissioned by the Wiltshire Improvement Partnership from the Tavistock Institute. The Community Boards/ Community Area Partnerships model will form part of a 'whole system' approach to the partnership framework in Wiltshire.

As the Tavistock Institute's work is completed there may be aspects of partnership development and process that will be continued by the CL&G workstream with the agreement of the Implementation Executive

4.2. Community Boards and Community Area Partnerships

From April 2008 it is proposed to roll-out a development phase to test aspects of the new governance arrangements in a number of locations across the county ahead of the Community Boards becoming fully operational in May 2009.

The outcome of the development phase will be to have a well developed checklist of what it is necessary to have in place for a Community Board and Community Area Partnership to undertake effective local governance.

Proposal for testing during the development phase

Community Engagement Events

- State of the Community Area Debate (annual progress report and visioning event).
- Community Area Assessment (identification of local issues and priorities for action)
- Decision Day (setting budget priorities and allocating project funding for community initiatives, using participatory budgeting techniques)
- Local Challenge (identifying persistent 'sticky issues' and holding failing services to account)

Policy and Process

- Embedding ownership of the Local Area Agreement in our communities, helping to shape it from the 'bottom up'
- Supporting community planning processes at the parish, neighbourhood and community area level; measuring the cost-benefits of different approaches
- The relationship and referral mechanisms between the Community Board and the Community Area Partnership
- The role of Community Area Plans and Strategic Action Plans within the new arrangements
- The role of development trusts in the new governance arrangements
- The role of the Voluntary & Community sector
- Developing a model Community Charter between the statutory authorities and the communities they serve

Service Involvement

- Tracking a service issue through the new 'local' decision making process
- Identifying appropriate Schemes of Delegation for Managers and Members to speed up decision-making processes
- Identifying service constraints and flexibilities for delegated decision-making
- Re-designing frontline services to better address local needs

Community Board 'Constitutions'

- Voting arrangements
- Role of Cabinet members
- Representation from Town & Parish Councils
- Representation from the Community Area Partnership
- Representation from other agencies – Health, Police, Fire etc.

Resource and Support Needs

- Support role required by the Board (and Partnership?) from the post of Community Planner/ Project Manager
- Support role required by the Board from the Democratic Services officer
- Nature of the support required by elected Councillors
- Level of Core Funding for Community Area Partnerships including who holds the money and how it is disbursed
- Level of, and criteria for, Grant Funding for priority community projects, including who holds the money and the process for allocation
- Required support role to the Partnerships through the post of Community Agent
- Requirements of a Training and Development Programme for elected members and other community leaders

Proposed Community Areas for the Development Phase

Discussions with County and District Councillors and with Community Area Partnerships and other stakeholders have taken place regarding which community areas could participate in the development phase for the new governance model:

North Wiltshire

North Wiltshire District Council has consulted with their five Area Committees and taken an executive decision to revise area governance arrangements across the district. Some or all of the five community areas could therefore feature within the development phase subject to resources (Calne, Chippenham, Corsham, Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett).

Kennet

Expressions of interest to participate in the development phase have been received from Tidworth and Pewsey Community Area Partnerships. This would provide the potential for testing out the role of development trusts and the engagement of the MOD within new governance arrangements. This could include an examination of the Coterminosity between military and community area boundaries.

South Wiltshire

Through their nominated CL&G board member, Salisbury District Council has expressed a preference for the Amesbury Community Area and the Salisbury City Community Area to participate in the development phase. Additionally, Tisbury Parish Council is keen to be involved.

West Wiltshire

There has been a long-standing dialogue with Trowbridge Community Area Partnership about developing a Community Board model in the County Town. Warminster Community Area Partnership has also submitted an expression interest to participate which offers the potential to test out approaches in an area with a large rural catchment. West Wiltshire District Council favours the inclusion of all community areas in the Development Phase - so the list could also include Bradford on Avon, Melksham and Westbury.

Those community areas that are not targeted within the development phase will continue to receive support for planned local community engagement activities.

Resources for the Development Phase

It is the intention in the development phase to test out different aspects of the model in a range of different geographical and socio- economic settings – city, market town, large parish, garrison town and deep rural communities. A delivery team of up to 10 Project Managers is currently being recruited which should enable dedicated support to be deployed in up to 10 community areas. The temporary secondment opportunities have been promoted across the 5 Councils and it is anticipated that the delivery team will be recruited during April 2008. The establishment of this dedicated team is seen as being essential to getting these new governance arrangements up and running over the coming year.

Evaluation of Development Phase

Quarterly progress reporting will be instituted over the coming year, with good practice to be shared across community areas. Good project management experience will be a key requirement for each of the Project Managers recruited to this role.

By March 2009 there will be experience and agreement over ‘what works well, where’ and we will be in a position to make clear recommendations for an effective future model of community governance.

Working with Frontline Services as part of the Development Phase

Close working with the Frontline Services Workstream is planned. Exploration of how services can better align themselves to community areas and become accountable to the Community Boards will differ from service to service. There will be greater levels of flexibility and constraints depending on the nature of the service. A number of service areas are already considering what changes they may need to make, the resource and cost implications and the timescales needed for implementation.

Twenty joint meetings will be held, one in each of our community areas, in late May/ June. The events will bring together a range of frontline service managers from the Councils and key partner organisations to discuss the new proposed governance arrangements and the implications for services and to explore in more depth how collaboration between services can bring benefits to individuals and the local community.

4.3. Delegation to Town and Parish Councils

A Project Manager has been appointed with a remit to develop a ‘menu’ of services which Town & Parish Councils can consider for possible delegation to deliver as agents of the Council.

The work will also: support the development of business cases, taking into account factors such as risk, health & safety, cost, procurement and contractual arrangements (current & future); will ensure connections are made to other strategic aims and plans, including the LAA, environmental sustainability etc; and will work with WALC to provide support and advice on how Town & Parish Councils might choose to use available powers.

4.4. Member Roles, Elections, Induction and Training

Member roles

Providing information packs and briefings for potential new unitary councillors, member induction and training programmes will start development in September 2008.

Elections

Led by the Chief Executive of Kennet District Council, with a team of Democratic services representatives from each Council and to report through the Resources Workstream

Constitution and Schemes of Delegation

Work to begin Summer 2008 with consultation with Scrutiny and the Implementation Executive.

4.5. Boundary Review

The Boundary Committee hosted two presentations for County, District and Town & Parish Councils in February, outlining the process they would be undertaking and advising on how views could be submitted as part of the review. This process is the subject of a separate paper on the agenda for the Implementation Executive

4.6. Parishing of Salisbury City

The parishing of Salisbury City has reached its 'second stage consultation with a range of stakeholders.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS AND PROJECTS

The proposal and projects will provide for the greater devolution of decision making to community areas, helping to build stronger and resilient communities. Local issues will increasingly be identified and resolved locally.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

Risks for this workstream are identified in the Project Initiation Document.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs of recruiting a delivery team of up to 10 Project Managers, effectively on 12 month contracts, will be covered by the Transition Programme. Under the terms of the Secondment Protocol, the salaries of staff recruited to these posts will continue to be paid by the current employer and will be topped up, where necessary, through the transition budget. The salary is then re-charged to the transitional budget in full.

There will be other costs during the development phase, such as for running community events, carrying out research etc. These financial costs are detailed in the Project Initiation Document.

8. OPTIONS

Options for testing out different aspects of the new governance arrangements and for trialing these in different parts of the county are discussed fully within the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1. To note the project updates for the Community Leadership and Governance Workstream

9.2. To agree the locations for testing out new community governance arrangements within a Development Phase during 2008/9 (subject to resources):

Calne, Chippenham, Corsham, Malmesbury, Wootton Bassett,
Salisbury City, Amesbury, Tisbury, Tidworth, Pewsey, Trowbridge, Warminster

9.3. To note the proposals for engaging with frontline services from the Council and from other public agencies

9.4. To note the proposals for monitoring and evaluation of the Development Phase.

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Attachments:

Overarching Project Initiation Document for the Community Leadership and Governance Workstream