

NOTE: Text below highlighted in bold italics has been either previously considered by the Wiltshire Council Implementation Executive or is the subject of statutory requirements

INTRODUCTION

1. This hand book is a mixture of rules and guidance to provide a framework for the work of the area boards whilst allowing for local variations. The role, powers and delegations to area boards are formally defined in Wiltshire Council's Constitution.

Context

2. The proposals for the unitary Wiltshire Council expressed a commitment to develop new local governance arrangements across the County. The area boards are an element of these arrangements as a new form of local executive.

Aim

3. The aim of the area boards is, together with partners, to drive the development of resilient communities across Wiltshire's community areas. This is the aim of Wiltshire Council and the Local Agreement for Wiltshire which is shared by all partners in the County.

Purpose

4. The purpose of the area board is to be the mechanism within the community where, working inclusively with others, elected unitary members can make and be accountable for local decisions as part of Wiltshire Council's Constitutional arrangements for effective local governance.

Objectives

5. Objective 1: Shaping Local Services

To work with local service providers to determine how services are provided to meet local priorities and how they are coordinated with other services to tackle local issues.

6. Objective 2: Addressing Local Issues

To deliver the community plan for building a more sustainable community and to identify any issues in the area and agree on how these will be

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addressed with the engagement of the local community and key local groups, including the community area partnership, the voluntary sector and town and parish councils.

7. Objective 3: Building Local Leadership and Local Engagement

To create a visible and effective form of local executive with a leadership style that is inclusive of all sectors of the community.

Outcomes

8. Impact

Evidence that the area boards are making a real difference across the community area and that there is an effective dialogue about local priorities, service provision and improvement. Public perception of the impact of area boards will rely on local people knowing about the achievement of success. Effective communication and publicity is essential to let people know and understand this way of working. The impact of the area boards will chiefly be measured through local perception and levels of satisfaction in the area which is measured annually. The work of the area board should demonstrate a measurable improvement in the area in accordance with the community plan.

9. Influence

Indication that the area board is representative of the wider community and effectively includes local people in local decisions. Local awareness that the community knows the area board is the place to come to have an influence if there are any issues in their area. The area board should have a strategic view and should be able to show demonstrable progress towards the achievement of the community plan. The opportunity for a more joined-up approach across public sector agencies towards having greater influence through local consultation can be explored with area boards taking a lead on coordinating more meaningful and influential input. The influence that people feel that they have through area boards will be measured through an annual survey of local perception and satisfaction levels.

Outputs

10. Working Together

- Build a close working relationship with the community area partnership and other partners, including the local Neighbourhood Policing Team of the Wiltshire Police, Health, Fire and Rescue

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Services, Town and Parish Councils, Housing Associations, service user groups and the voluntary and community sector

11. Tackling Local Issues and Priorities

- Hold a state of the community area debate or local event to identify priorities, issues and problems and how these might be addressed. (In areas where the area board covers more than one community area, the area board will need to decide with the community area partnerships and other interested parties if there should be a state of the community area debate in each community area, or just one for the community areas covered by the area board)
- Compile a local area assessment linked to the community area plan to feed into service planning and budget setting processes of the Council
- Identify local challenges or difficult cross-cutting issues
- Award local grants for local projects which could take the form of a participatory budgeting event

12. Ensuring Transparency and Visibility

- Regular reports and publicity in all local media including advance publication of agendas for meetings of the area board
- Records of each meeting including attendance figures and evidence of inclusivity (which implies having a good knowledge of the population and demographics in the area to identify those who do not attend)
- Contribute to case studies and anecdotal evidence of local problem-solving and other projects and achievements promoted by the area board
- Evidence of effective chairing and facilitation
- An objective annual evaluation of progress and performance

Performance Management

13. The performance of the area boards will be measured in the following ways and open to inspection and scrutiny by key inspectorates such as the Audit Commission and Comprehensive Area Assessment. Both public services providers and area boards need to work in harmony whereby services contribute to the performance of area boards and area boards contribute to the performance of services, particularly where everybody has to work within tight budgets, statutory priorities and resource constraints.

14. Local Agreement for Wiltshire

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- Build resilient communities with high social capital through people feeling socially included, enabling communities to build skills, abilities, knowledge and confidence to take effective action and play leading roles in the development of their communities, enhancing their quality of life
 - Supporting people's lives to be able to live independently, supporting families and people to make informed choices and reducing the causes of mortality for all ages
 - Improve affordable housing
 - Building a positive and sustainable environment for economic growth
 - Communities that feel safe and are safe
 - Tackling climate change and ensuring a high quality natural environment
 - Working together to achieve these ambitions through the 'family of partnerships' and area boards
 - Use of good evidence such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, community profiles and surveys to make informed decisions
15. National Performance Indicators (baseline surveys for benchmarking are being established at the national and regional levels by the Department for Communities and Local Government)
- % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
 - % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
 - % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
 - % level of civic participation in the local area
 - % level of overall/general satisfaction with local area
 - % level of participation in regular volunteering
 - Evidence of an environment for a thriving voluntary and community sector
16. Local Performance Indicators
- % level of satisfaction of people who have participated in an area board
 - % level of trust and satisfaction with the Council and its partners in the community area
 - Measures of performance at a community area level in the annual 'Place Survey' which will be carried out across Wiltshire and benchmarked against other local authorities
17. Evaluation and Review: Meetings and Process
- Attendance levels at the meetings of the area board

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- Level of local engagement with the area board through question time, written questions and petitions etc
- Level of achievement against the priorities and projects identified in the community area plan
- Assessment of the scope and quality of area board decision making
- Assessment of the quality, scope and local relevance of the reports, presentations, papers and issues presented to the area board
- Assessment and feedback from those who have presented reports, made presentations and invited decisions from the area board

18. Evaluation and Review: Outcomes

- % residents who feel that local decision making is transparent
- % of residents who are aware of at least one decision made by the area board that has improved life in the community area over the past year
- % of residents who know how to hold the services provided by the local authorities to account
- Local public satisfaction ratings with the performance of the local authorities and service provision for the area
- Successful local improvements achieved through the area board
- What does success look like – this will include anecdotal evidence plus quantitative feedback through mechanisms such as the People's Voice panel (disaggregated to community area level)

Determining Priorities

19. The community area plan and any supporting action plans will be updated annually through feedback from events such as the state of the community area debate, consultation and research. Area boards will need to determine priorities because not everything will be immediately deliverable and priorities may also conflict or compete. The Police and community safety partnerships use a business model called the national intelligence model to determine priorities and this model can be adapted for the use of the area boards. The national intelligence model (NIM) provides a mechanism by which intelligence and information is collated, evaluated, analysed and disseminated to relevant audiences in order to set priorities and direction.

20. In order to set the strategic priorities, a strategic assessment is carried out. This involves analysis of all relevant issues to examine what performance is like for each, how the issue is likely to change over time, how existing strategies may be affecting the issue, and how the issues interact with national, regional and local priorities and plans. Political,

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economic, social, technological, environmental, legal and organisational matters are identified and an assessment is made of how these factors will impact on the issues in the coming years.

21. A prioritisation matrix is often used to capture findings of the assessment of each issue and to weigh up the threats they pose in terms of impact on communities and risks to the objectives of the organisation. From this matrix the key priorities, or 'control strategy', for the next year are identified. Recommendations for action to improve performance, gather information and impact on the priority issues are made and these form an action plan for the next year, which is reviewed every 6 months. In the short-term, area boards could adhere to the principles of NIM to produce a strategic assessment, drawing on any analytical work carried out to date in the community area to inform the report. However, in the longer-term, training would be required to carry out a detailed analysis using this model and this would need to be discussed with the Police who run a National Intelligence Analyst training course.

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REPRESENTATION

22. The area board represents the interests of the local community. It is made up of unitary councillors who have been elected to represent the community and also representatives of organisations who are in a position to make decisions about resources and services provided in the community area. Initially, the term area board means the core unitary members, but, as the area boards develop in each area, membership and representation would form an area board which is unique to serve the specific needs and identity of the area.

Membership and Representation

23. The core members are the unitary councillors representing the divisions covered by the area board, served by a community area manager and democratic service support from a qualified officer.
24. The area board consists of voting members who are the unitary councillors and non-voting members who include town and parish representatives and a representative from the community area partnership. There is no intention to devalue the role of the community area partnerships by replicating the same membership as those partnerships and the area board needs to be aware therefore of who is on the community area partnership. Suggested non-voting representatives from other organisations, who will attend the area board as and when appropriate, are people who are able to make policy, budget or resourcing decisions or who have a representative role on behalf of the wider community. The idea is for the area boards to be able to be as flexible as possible, but not to duplicate the membership or work of the community area partnership. The area boards should not become an exclusive body and may also wish to invite members of the local community to attend. In order to address specific issues, the board may decide to invite other representatives to join them on a standing, regular basis or on a one-off basis:
- Elected representatives from town and parish councils in the area or, depending on local preferences, from clusters of parishes
 - Local Neighbourhood Policing Team Inspector (and/or a local Sergeant nominated as a designated deputy in order to maximise attendance by the Wiltshire Police – other organisations might want to consider a similar deputising role)
 - Appropriate manager from the Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - An appropriate local officer, with executive powers, from the Primary Care Trust
 - Housing Officer or officer from the local Housing Association

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- Representative from the local community area partnership/s
 - Member of the Council's cabinet
 - Corporate or Service Director of Wiltshire Council with the corporate brief to support the work of the area board
 - Representatives from specific local groups such as the community area young people's issues group (CAYPIG - who might want to send two representatives to support each other), minority ethnic groups, older people's groups, sports groups, School Councils, governors etc
 - Representatives from specific service user groups eg partnership boards (in adult social services partnership boards have been, or are being formed for people with physical impairment, older people, people with learning disabilities, mental health service users),
 - Representatives from the voluntary sector and local user groups and other groups who have a strong presence in the local area eg the military, colleges, local businesses, Chamber of Commerce etc
25. Local service managers from the Council who have been given delegated powers to work with the area board will attend as and when required.

Appointment of Members

26. ***The unitary councillors are appointed members of the area board upon being elected to the Council.*** Other members are appointed by their respective organisations and groups to be a member of the area board.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

27. ***The Chair and Vice-Chair will be selected from and nominated by the core membership of unitary Councillors and elected by the unitary councillors on an annual basis at a meeting of the area board.*** This election will be conducted in public each year by the unitary councillors. Only elected members will be able to nominate or propose the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Role of the Chair

28. The Chair will agree the agenda, lead the meeting, ensure that priorities are agreed and that progress is reported back. The Chair will ensure that all present have a fair and equal opportunity to participate and that members of the area board:
- Attend all appropriate meetings and work together constructively

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- Action matters allocated to them promptly and properly and are able to report back at subsequent meetings
 - Support and manage the expectations of the local community as regards what can and what cannot be achieved
 - Encourage and help build inclusive community engagement in identifying and tackling local issues
29. With advice from the community area manager and democratic services support, the Chair will ensure that meetings are conducted as efficiently and effectively as possible and will, at all times, act reasonably. S/he will have full power to conduct the meeting in the way that s/he considers to be most expedient and creatively and will decide upon any points of procedure subject to any statutory requirements. The decision of the Chair on any procedural issues will be final.

Voting and Tests of Opinion

30. ***Each unitary Councillor member of the area board has a vote. In the event of equality of votes, the Chair will have a casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Chair chooses to exercise a casting vote.*** It will be subject to the discretion of the Chair to decide if the decision or issue should be open to an indication of support or non-support from all representatives on the area board who are in attendance. It will be up to the Chair to decide which decisions or issues need to be subject to a wider test of public opinion.
31. The Chair will conduct the test of opinion, or gauge the 'mood' of the meeting, by show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by affirmation of the meeting. At larger meetings, the Chair as advised by the community area manager and the democratic services officer, may decide to use other forms of indicating an opinion, for example, using the Council's electronic handset system to show graphically what people's opinions and perceptions are on specific issues. If the electronic handsets are used, some advance preparation will be required. Immediately after this test is taken, any member at the meeting can require that their individual view be recorded in the minutes. All tests of opinion will be recorded and open to public scrutiny.

Role of the Cabinet Member on the Area Board

32. ***A member of the Council's Cabinet will attend area boards across the County on a rotating basis. Cabinet members attending the area board will not have voting rights. A unitary Councillor who is a member of the area board because it covers their local constituency, who also happens to be a Cabinet member, will have a vote as a standing member of the area board.***

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33. *At the beginning of the year, the Cabinet will notify each area board of the dates on which the portfolio holders will attend area meetings. This will enable the area boards to plan ahead and raise issues relevant to that portfolio at the meeting. There may also be occasions when the portfolio holder needs to attend an area board, because an urgent or unforeseen situation has arisen locally and this will have to be negotiated on an ad hoc basis with the individual portfolio holder.*
34. *The purpose of the attendance of a Cabinet member and/or a Cabinet portfolio holder at the area board is to provide:*
- *a strong connection between the local executive, which is the area board, and the executive of the Council, which is the Cabinet*
 - *a mechanism for referring matters to the Cabinet for review in cases where local action has failed to resolve an issue*
 - *a means for portfolio holders to assess the local impact of the strategic policies for which they are responsible*
 - *an opportunity for non-executive members and local communities to discuss and influence strategic policy*
35. *The Cabinet may also want to consult area boards on an area of policy development or on decisions which will have an impact on the community and in this case, a Cabinet member may put a request to an area board to attend and discuss the issue. The benefit of a Cabinet member attending all the area boards on a rotating basis is that they will develop a good understanding of issues across the whole County.*

Exempt Information

36. The community area manager and support from democratic services will advise the Chair on any information which should be exempt. There will not be a 'part 2' exemption process at the area board. The following categories of information are exempt from being in the public domain should they arise at an area board:
- Any Information relating to a named individual
 - Discussion of legal matters relating to any organisation

Declaration of Interest

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37. ***In line with the Code of Conduct of Wiltshire Council, Members of the area board must declare any interest that they might have in an issue or decision at the outset of the meeting. This may be a personal or prejudicial interest and will determine whether the member may stay in the meeting and vote.***
38. Any member of the public invited to vote on an issue or decision, would be expected to declare any personal or professional interest. The Chair will be advised by officers of the Council if the personal or professional interest makes it inappropriate for that member of the public to vote on the issue or decision. For people attending an area board who are not subject to a code of conduct, appropriate standards of behaviour are expected and these will be posted up on the wall or seats.

Quorum

39. The area board will be quorate if 25% or more voting members attend a meeting. In the event that the meeting is not quorate, those present can discuss items on the agenda and report their findings to the next meeting for consideration.

AUTHORITY

Delegated Power

40. The schemes of delegation are specified in the Council's Constitution. Delegation to area boards operates on several levels. The Leader and Cabinet of the Council will decide on powers and responsibilities that are to be directly delegated to area boards. These powers currently include conducting participatory budgeting events; allocating funding for local projects; calling the Council's services to account for local performance in the community area; and the implementation of the local area agreement and sustainable community strategy at the community area level.
41. Officers and Cabinet members attending the area board will be able to exercise delegated authority to advise and reach decisions with the area board about local service provision, addressing local priorities and problem-solving in the community area. This may also involve explaining why specific decisions have been made, particularly where there is a conflicting view within the community, or difficult choices have had to be made.
42. Area boards are expected to work within the budget and policy framework set by the Council, but where there are challenges to this framework, representations can be made to Cabinet to present the case for change or review of policy. On an annual basis, the area board will feed the priorities for the community area into the Council's budget-setting and service planning processes and also into the Wiltshire Assembly.
43. ***The area boards will provide grant funding towards the core running costs of the community area partnerships and this funding will be governed by a simple service level agreement to determine how this core funding is used and what activities are deemed to be eligible.*** Each year, the community area partnership will be expected to put a bid in to the area board for its operating costs and a service level agreement will be made with them to deliver the following, as a minimum:
 - To establish a partnership, steering group and thematic groups, as necessary
 - To engage stakeholders within the community and to maintain a contacts register of key organisations and volunteers

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- To consult widely on a range of socio-economic issues including holding regular public engagement events
- To prepare and regularly review an assessment or plan of the major economic, social and environmental issues facing the community area, together with an action plan for addressing the identified issues
- To work with the community area manager to feed issues from the partnership to the area board for consideration, or to host joint meetings of the board and the partnership where appropriate
- To champion local issues and help with the project planning and delivery of priority projects, including fundraising where appropriate
- To contribute to the services and activities provided by the Wiltshire Forum of Community Area Partnerships (WFCAP), including attendance by members at relevant networking and training events

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RESOURCES

Budget

44. For 2009/10, a budget of £1 million will be allocated for use across Wiltshire's 20 community areas to support local projects and community area partnerships. This budget will be allocated through the 17 area boards. An equity model has been developed to allocate the funding on the basis of several factors, including the size and density of the population in the community area covered by the area board and levels of deprivation. A percentage of the budget will be ring-fenced as core funding for the community area partnership, but this will be subject to a bid to the area board before being awarded.

Participatory Budgeting

45. Two participatory budgeting trials are taking place in Wiltshire; in the Calne and Salisbury community areas. The outcomes from these trials will further inform how this process could be rolled out across the rest of the County.
46. As the Participatory Budgeting Unit advises, in principle, participatory budgeting directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending and priorities for a defined public budget. Participatory budgeting processes can be defined by geographical area or by theme. This means engaging residents and community groups representative of all parts of the community to discuss and vote on spending priorities, make spending proposals and vote on them, as well as giving local people a role in the scrutiny and monitoring of the process and results to inform subsequent participatory budgeting decisions on an annual or repeatable basis. Approaches can take a number of forms:
- Spending parts of specific grant pots
 - Devolved mainstream Council budgets
 - Setting local authority wide priorities, agreeing projects and spend around an annual revenue budget-setting process
 - Agreeing wider local area agreement, local strategic partnership priorities and spending
47. Each year, the Council consults on its budget priorities with local communities. In future, the area boards will have a role in organising and bringing together local views and local people to contribute to this consultation on the budget.

Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 Work

48. The government is considering new ways of funding infrastructure projects for the future through a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is a charge which local authorities will be empowered, but not required, to levy on most types of new development in their areas. Local authorities would be responsible for deciding what is appropriate for their areas and this will be an opportunity for the area board to have an influence over the provision of services in the area eg schools, health centres, flood defences, play spaces and open spaces. Charges would be based on a simple formula. An up-to-date Development Plan for the area is required before a Community Infrastructure Levy could be charged. It is proposed that the Local Development Framework includes a policy to support the development of wider projects within the community in order for the area boards to exercise this power.
49. It has also been proposed that area boards should have an influence over the allocation of section 106 money. A task group of the Spatial Planning Working Group is looking at the issue of infrastructure planning. It is clear that the use of planning gains is not a means of securing a share of the profits from a development for the community and that this cannot just be a wish list from the community. However, the area board could have an influence in helping to shape the initial bid for 106 work where there is major development in the community area and financial or physical gains are sought for the reasonable benefit of the community.

Transfer of Community Assets

50. *Under Construction*

Support from Community Area Managers

51. ***A full-time community area manager will support the area board and will be dedicated to work in the community area/s covered by the board. S/he will make connections with the relevant service providers who need to report to area boards and ensure that they are fully briefed in advance of coming to an area board.***
52. Wherever possible, the community area manager will provide early notice to service managers (and partner agencies) of issues that emerge within the community (before they become before the area board). This will enable service teams to respond with early advice that may resolve the issue before it escalates.
53. Community area managers will assist frontline service personnel (and partner agencies) to undertake local consultation and engagement

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activities within the community, organise, attend and facilitate such community engagement events and help distribute service information through the local community networks that will exist at area level.

54. Where they have been provided with the necessary information, community area managers will help to explain issues facing frontline and partner services (such as forward programmes, schedules of works, targets, performance etc) to members, partners and the wider community.
55. Community area managers will consult with service personnel before releasing any research or consultation findings that may present the service in a less than favourable light. This will ensure that background and contextual information can be included with the results to ensure that a fair and balanced view of the issue is presented to the community.
56. The community area managers will assist frontline services and partners to recruit volunteers and to identify those individuals and organisations that may be able to assist in the provision of services – flood wardens, first responders, traffic census staff, polling and canvass staff, sports coaches, neighbourhood watch coordinators etc.
57. The community area managers will notify frontline and partner services of funding opportunities that may exist at area level to support local projects.
58. The community area managers will notify frontline and partner services of opportunities to promote their services to the community – such as public events, publications, media events etc.
59. When speakers are invited to make a presentation or discuss an issue with an area board, the community area manager will need to receive a final copy of any presentation or slides at least 8 working days before the meeting and would seek to work closely with the presenter to facilitate the presentation, suggest changes and include contextual information. It is the community area manager's responsibility to ensure that any external or internal speakers are fully briefed about what the area board will expect from them.

Support from Democratic Services

60. ***A democratic services officer will support the area board on a part-time basis. This officer will help to construct agendas, convene meetings, ensure that the details of agendas and meetings are well publicised in advance, and will keep records and minutes of meetings and events. The democratic services officers will be a resource shared across several area boards.***

Support from Local Officers

61. The area boards will be supported by the Council's corporate services, including policy, research, intelligence, information technology, communications, consultation, equalities and diversity, human resources, training and development, performance, procurement, finance and legal services. A corporate or service director will be assigned to support each area board.
62. The area governance arrangements are based on a collaborative and mutually supportive approach. It is in the interest of all parties that the council, its services and those of its partners are presented in a positive way across Wiltshire. The area boards will not find it easy to succeed if they are perceived by service managers as merely a mechanism by which they are continually held to account in public for local problems (although there may be occasions when this is appropriate).
63. Local service officers require sufficient delegated powers to have the capacity to attend and respond to area board meetings which will meet at least quarterly, or as frequently as monthly and to the sub groups of community area partnerships which will be on a specific theme and likely to run for a period of time on a project management basis. It is not likely that local service officers would have to attend every meeting.
64. Local officers need to be sufficiently skilled and/or supported to present information as interactively and creatively as possible and to facilitate inclusive decision-making processes or the identification of options and priorities on specific service-related issues. They need to be able to:
 - take part in state of the community area debates, citizens' days and participatory budgeting events as required
 - to assist the community area partnerships in arriving at realistic and evidence-based priorities in the community area plans
 - to respond to decisions of area boards concerning how the priorities in the community area plans should be taken forward and to state these standards and agreements in a Wiltshire Community Charter, which will identify and allow for any local variations
 - to assist in responding promptly to community 'calls for action', petitions and local scrutiny as and when required
 - to work closely with the community area managers to examine community area surveys, profiles and other local intelligence in

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order to establish and account for the wider context and any background explanation to any findings

- To provide training materials, induction, briefings, information and regular updates to enable the Community Area Manager to have a reasonable and up-to-date understanding of the services provided in their area and a good working relationship with key service personnel operating in the area.
- to advise the area boards on the criteria and appropriateness of local grant applications and allocations insofar as they relate to service provision and strategic priorities
- to assist in putting together bids for local funding as and where this is appropriate and draws on their area of expertise
- to work with the community area manager and/or elected members to troubleshoot and/or anticipate problems within the community area and work out a strategy to address these issues or provide early warning of them
- To seek greater integration locally, with the work of other agencies by contributing to workshops and briefings (eg neighbourhood policing, fire, health) wherever possible

RELATIONSHIPS

65. The area boards are the main local mechanism for the Council to extend and meet its statutory duty to involve local people, to make decision-making as transparent and open as possible and to provide access to information about the community area. There are many different partnerships, groups, organisations and other parties with which the area board will need to work.

Area Boards and Community Area Partnerships

66. The area boards are legally constituted entities under the Council's Constitution. The area board is supported by community area partnership/s in the local area. The area boards and community area partnerships share a mutual interest in reaching out and drawing in the voices of the wider community. One of the roles of the community area partnership is promote more inclusive and wider engagement. The area board needs to recognise, support and maximise the potential and contribution of the local community area partnership/s in its area to engage local people by encouraging greater participation in events, deliberations and different forms of consultation.
67. Community area partnerships are independent entities who define their legal status, purpose and membership in their own separate terms of reference which are not part of the Council's Constitution. In its support for the Wiltshire Forum for Community Area Partnerships, the Council encourages the development of consistent terms of reference across the community area partnerships, whilst also allowing for diversity in terms of identity and local flavour.
68. The community area plan is a key means for the community area partnership to communicate its priorities and issues to the area board, provided it has been developed in a way which meets the Council's standards of inclusiveness, equality, diversity, consultation and research. The development of the community area plan would also ideally take into account guiding strategic frameworks such as the Sustainable Community Strategy for Wiltshire, the Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire and other strategic planning documents of the Council and its partners which are relevant to the local area.
69. ***The area boards will hold a ring-fenced budget to provide funding to the community area partnership/s in the area it covers. In some instances, the area board may cover more than one community area.*** Community area partnerships will submit a bid each year to the area board for funding which will be awarded subject to an agreement

between each party as to what this funding will provide for the local community. Additional funding will be available from the area board for local community projects.

70. The funding for the community area partnerships will include a fixed sum for each community area partnership to secure public liability insurance. The Wiltshire Forum for Community Area Partnerships offers to facilitate the securing of insurance for the community area partnerships across the County provided that the partnerships are constituted as a form of recognised entity and that the insurance risks are fully assessed. Each community area partnership needs to assess its risk
71. In preparation for when the area boards become fully functional in June 2009, a Community Charter will be developed to further clarify the relationship between area boards, community area partnerships and service providers.

Area Boards and Other Boards and Partnerships

72. There are many other boards and substantive partnerships in Wiltshire which the area board will need to be aware of and be able to relate to on specific issues. Some of these boards and structures are still emerging. Each area board will be provided with a map of the boards and partnerships across all service areas and an indication of how they fit together; this map will need to be kept up to date by the Council. Excluding any boards established specifically for the transition to the new Council and the transformation of services, these boards and partnerships cover:

- Wiltshire Assembly
- Coordinating Bodies Group
- Police Authority
- Joint Commissioning
- Health and Social Care
- Transport
- Culture
- Economic Regeneration
- Housing
- Environment
- Education and Lifelong Learning
- Community Safety
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Young People's Issues
- Equality and Diversity
- Planning and Development Control

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73. These boards and partnerships differ from the community area partnerships as they are usually made up of representatives from organisations delivering public or voluntary services. There will be guiding strategies and frameworks which will be of relevance and interest to area boards where they have a specific impact on the community area/s covered by the area board. The map will provide the area board with the bigger picture of the strategic framework within which it is operating. Key strategies include:
- Local Agreement Wiltshire (including the Local Area Agreement)
 - Local Area Agreement
 - Sustainable Community Strategy
 - Local Development Framework
 - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
 - Community Area Plans
 - Service Plans
74. Area boards may wish to enter into dialogue with some of these partnerships and boards, but more importantly, these partnerships and boards should look in the first instance to the area boards as their chief mechanism for engaging and consulting with local communities in Wiltshire. For some of these boards which include service users in their membership, the issue will be to engage their service users more in the wider community, local governance and decision-making, through working with the area board and the community area partnerships.
75. The area boards need to ensure that engagement is as inclusive as possible and meet the requirements of equality and diversity impact assessments and other risk assessments.

Area Boards and Town and Parish Councils

76. ***All town and parish councils in the area covered by the area board will be invited to send a representative to attend the area board;*** this representative should be an elected town or parish councillor. When any events are being held by the area board, all members of town and parish councils will be invited to attend. Town and parish councillors can ask the area board to put an item on its agenda for discussion. Some research might be required to ascertain if the issue is common to other town and parish councils in the area, so that it can be addressed in one go. Representatives attending the area board are expected to provide a link between the area board and their respective town or parish council, to bring forward information and take back decisions from the area board.
77. The agendas for the area board will be sent to the clerk and chair of the town and parish councils 10 working days in advance of any meeting of

the area board. Since town and parish councils meet at different frequencies, it may not always be possible for feedback in time for an area board on some issues. The area board and town and parish councils in the area will need to work together to ensure effective communication and provide advance notice of the programme of meetings scheduled throughout the year and come to an agreement about how this process could best work so that issues relevant to particular town and parish councils or cluster can be raised throughout the year, once they have had time to discuss them. Dates and agendas of the area board meetings need to be publicised as well in advance as possible in order to enable town and parish councils to consider the issues.

78. Town and parish councils are a key mechanism for the Council, through the area board, to meet its duty to involve and also to promote democracy in Wiltshire. Where public services have been delegated by the Council to a town or parish council, the area board may want someone from the town or parish council to attend to discuss service provision just as it would with any other provider of public services. Where town or parish plans exist, or are being developed, they will be a valuable tool to highlight local priorities, alongside the community area plan, and to gauge progression in addressing those issues.
79. Town and parish councils are also expected to adhere to the values and behaviour of an area board which includes sharing a sound understanding of and commitment to the goal of 'resilient communities' and the three priorities of high quality, value for money, customer focused services; local, open, honest decision-making; and working together to support Wiltshire's communities.

Area Boards and Local Challenge

80. A significant role for the area boards is to exercise local challenge of services delivered by the council, its partners and other agencies. However, this challenge must be made with the understanding that some of these organisations have no legal power to delegate decisions to local areas. For example, the Primary Care Trust Board does not have the legal authority to delegate National Health Service decisions.
81. Where possible, the area board will exercise a local challenge by inviting the appropriate representatives, including representatives from the Council, to make submissions and be questioned at meetings of the board with a view to achieving awareness, influence and improvements in services. It will report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate body which, in the case of the Council, will be the relevant executive cabinet member and service director. A formal response will be given to the area board within 28 days for further consideration.

82. If the board remains dissatisfied then a referral to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council is possible, setting out the action taken to date and the reasons, with evidence, for the decision to refer. It will be for the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to decide what action, if any, to take and to report back as appropriate to the area board. The fact that an area board simply does not agree with the decision/response of a cabinet member and/or service director will not be acceptable grounds for referral.
83. Provided it is not 'ultra vires', should the issue under 'local challenge' be cross-cutting or have implications for the budget or policy framework of the Council, or contractual/agreement implications for the partner or agency then the matter can be referred early with the available evidence, first to the Cabinet member, then to the service director and, then if required, on to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a review. Again it will be for the committee to determine how to respond to the request and the level of action it intends to take.
84. Within the remit of local challenge will be the formal process of local petitions and calls for action by local councillors. These will, in the first instance, be received by the area board and a view taken which will accompany the petition or call for action during its formal consideration by the Council, and Overview and Scrutiny in the case of calls for action. The process for handling these formal mechanisms is set out in the Constitution.

Area Boards and Petitions

85. A petition is a written request for consideration of a particular matter or to take a specific course of action. It can lend weight to a particular viewpoint and demonstrate that a view is shared by others. Petitions can be co-ordinated by individuals or by local organisations. Government will place a statutory duty on local authorities to respond to all local petitions. The statutory duty covers all those who live, study or work within the local authority boundary, including those under the age of 18 years. Petitions may cover any local matter relating to any function or quality of service the local authority or its partners provide, through the Local Area Agreement or other partnership arrangement, and which affect the people who live, work or study in the area, except licensing and planning matters.
86. Petitions must contain a call for action, and must be clear to which local authority the petition relates. In addition, signatories are required to record their name, residential, work or study address, the date they signed the petition, and their email-address for electronic petitions. Wiltshire Council reserves the right to use this information to check the

validity of petitions. If the petition attracts significant local support, it should be able to trigger a public debate in the full council. Local authorities should set their own thresholds for triggering debates but these should at most be 5% of the local population.

87. The response should be proportionate to the seriousness of the issue or the level of support for the petition – but should always be substantive. Reactions can also cover reviews of policy, hold a public meeting, run a public consultation or gather more views on the issue.
88. Petitioners can appeal if they are not satisfied with their response. Overview and Scrutiny Committees can assess the appeals. If they judge that the local authority's response was not adequate, they will trigger a debate of the full council. They could also recommend that the local authority send a more detailed response to petitioners. A full council debate would be guaranteed if a large number of people sign a petition, and any petition could end up being debated if the local authority did not respond to adequately initially.

Area Boards and the Councillor Call for Action Process

89. The councillor call for action is a process for all councillors to act on behalf of residents to resolve a local issue of concern, acting as a last resort for residents who cannot get issues resolved through any other means. The call allows referral to the relevant area board and/or Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The power to initiate a call rests with the local councillor who determines:
 - which issues to champion and/or take forward as a call for action
 - when to reject an issue; If a councillor decides not to refer a matter, no further action is taken under a call for action
90. The call for action may cover any local matter relating to any function or quality of service the local authority or its partners provide and which affect the councillor's division. If the issue represents a significant and genuine concern or a persistent problem affecting individuals within the wider community, it can appear as a call for action if the matter cannot be resolved through other channels. The call for action is an avenue of last resort. Concerns can be identified as a result of information from individuals, community groups or the councillor's own observations. The possible courses of action are:
 - A councillor who is unable to resolve local issue initiates a call for action to the respective area board by completing the appropriate request form

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- The area board will consider the request. The form will state the nature of issue, reasons for call, documentation of actions taken and possible solutions. The area board will endorse or reject the call for action. The area board will state its reasons if the call is rejected.
- If the call is endorsed, the area board would first of all seek to resolve the issue locally, but if this is not possible for any reason, the call for action will be referred to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to determine whether or not to hold a scrutiny inquiry into the matter. The Committee will consider the details presented on the request form. If the request is declined, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will state its reasons
- If the request is not declined, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the issue and publish its report and recommendations. The committee will request, in writing, the requirement that the executive or other appropriate body consider the report; respond and publish the response within 28 days of receipt.

Area Boards and Public Service Providers

91. The overarching aim is to create an environment that promotes speedy, timely and informed decision-making. The responsible officers for public services provided by the Council in the community area/s covered by the area board will be invited to attend events and meetings where there is a relevance to that service: these Council service providers will not have to attend every meeting, but will be sent a forward programme to determine which meetings they will need to attend. The Council will nominate frontline officers who provide local services in the community area and who will be able to be called to attend an area board to discuss the provision of that service. It is suggested that local representatives from the Police, Fire and Rescue and Health services are standing members of the area board because of the wider links and connections which can be made.
92. None of these service providers will have voting rights but will attend the area board to provide professional advice on their services and to take on board, where there is an evidence base, any priorities or issues which need to be resolved in the local area or which the community area partnership could be supported to resolve. They will either offer solutions through the use of their delegated powers to make decisions about the service provision in the area, or will take back the issue to shape future policy or services. Their role is to bring specialist expert advice and to provide decision-makers with options and to maintain an impartiality.

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93. These service providers may also wish to ask the area board if they could sound out with them and the community area partnership and also the wider community if appropriate, issues around consultation on their service, future direction and structuring of the service, or shaping decisions and policies about the service which will have an impact on the local area. Service providers represent their specific service rather than being expected to represent the whole Council. The area boards are part of the Council's local governance structure and in working with public service providers, members of the area board are expected to adhere to the values and behaviour which have been agreed as being the way in which the Council aims to operate:

- Sharing a sound understanding of and commitment to the goal of 'resilient communities' and the three priorities of high quality, low cost, customer focused services; local, open, honest decision-making; and working together to support Wiltshire's communities
- Showing mutual respect, honesty, candour and openness to challenge
- Treating people in all services with respect and avoiding behaviour which may be experienced as threatening or aggressive
- Practising innovation and delegation, not 'command and control'
- Valuing diversity, equality and inclusiveness in the County

WAYS OF WORKING

Principles for Service Design

94. In future, the Council's performance will be measured against key elements of community leadership, local people's sense of place and quality of life and how much they feel involved in decisions made in and for their community. More deliberative styles of engagement will be introduced to complement representative democracy. More transfers of public assets to communities will be made possible, with a greater emphasis on social enterprise and shared influence and power for local communities eg through acts such as the Community Empowerment, Housing and Economic Regeneration Bill
95. All services will be subject to the following duties in future and the area boards, working with more inclusive community area partnerships, will be instrumental in helping to carry out the following duties:
- to respond to petitions which will provide evidence as to where inspections should be triggered
 - to promote democratic understanding and participation
 - frontline officers will be empowered to further empower users and residents
 - to involve local people in local service design and decision-making
 - to develop further participatory budgeting approaches
 - councillors have the right to call for action locally
 - services have the right to respond to local priorities
96. In future, all consultation for and on behalf of the Council and, where possible, its partners, should be conducted through the area boards who will also involve the community partnerships and the wider community networks that will exist.
97. Members and representatives on area boards and local service officers will need to be familiar with the Council's Corporate Plan, the Local Agreement for Wiltshire (LAW) and be able to assess the implications of these aims and targets for particular community areas, and set in place appropriate schemes and projects to implement these plans, where these aims and targets are relevant to local circumstances. It is also important that performance management and reporting systems are also put in place.
98. In Wiltshire, there is a track record of sharing and disseminating best practice through case studies, video conferences and other forms of communication and the expectation is that local service officers continue

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sharing this work as a Community Empowerment Champion Authority by contributing to best practice case studies, research and conferences, or material for conferences as required.

Structure

99. Community areas to be used as the units from which service areas, operational delivery and locality teams are constructed It will often be the case that a single member of staff will cover several community areas, but the number of areas must not be so great that the officer is not continuously up-to-date and authoritative on all current issues to do with their service in each community area.
100. Local service structures to be designed to enable sufficient staff to be in regular contact with area boards and community area partnerships and to respond to requests for advice and action.
101. From 2009/2010 onwards, service and budget planning cycles to link in with and take into account community planning cycles in respect of the priorities and issues identified by the area boards and through the community area plans.
102. Service priorities and plans to take into account local priorities, issues and concerns identified by the area boards in their work with the community area partnerships, through state of the community area debates and community area plans.

Equality and Inclusion

103. Wiltshire Council is committed to meeting its statutory duties to promote inclusion and involvement in the democratic processes within all communities and ensuring that no one is disadvantaged through a lack of opportunity for involvement or through discrimination in the development of local governance arrangements. These duties are:
 - promote equality of opportunity
 - promote good community relations
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
 - promote participation and involvement of disabled people
 - promote human rights
104. To enable members and representatives on area boards to carry out the above duties effectively, Wiltshire County will provide training and awareness-raising about matters of equality and diversity to help ensure that matters related to diversity and equality in the local community are reflected in the work of the area board. Community area managers will

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also support the area boards in carrying out risk and impact assessments.

Accountability

105. Job descriptions, appointments, targets, work plans and appraisals for local officers to include specific role, capacity and skills to work with area boards, the community area managers and other support staff.
106. List of contact posts, names, e mail and telephone numbers to be provided by the service director for local services in each community area.
107. Local performance and financial information on local service provision to be available through the Business Management Programme (BMP) system to the area boards (accessed by the community area manager or other support staff) on a community area basis, where it makes sense to record and disaggregate data to this level.
108. Working with area boards, service providers will contribute to the production of a Wiltshire Community Charter as an agreement between the Council, service providers and the community, indicating overall standards of service delivery, scope for local variation and showing how local people can get involved and hold services to account.
109. Area boards will operate in line with the hand book, the Council's Constitution and the Community Charter and also within agreed Council policy and budget constraints. Community Area Partnerships will continue to operate according to their existing Terms of Reference. Any major disputes between service providers and the area boards will be examined by Cabinet. Overview and Scrutiny may decide to examine any issue or review performance at any time.

Running Meetings and Events

110. *Ways of operating – leaving leaflet on chairs about conduct – deadlines for receipt of information for area boards, getting the minutes out – publishing the minutes on the local web*

Investigating and Deliberating Issues

- 111.

Working with Adult Social Services

- 112.

Working with Children and Families Service

113.

Working with Environmental Services

114.

Working with Housing Services and Associations

115.

Working with the Sports and Leisure Services

116.

Working with Researchers, People's Voice and Tomorrow's Voice

117.

Working with Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Community Safety Partnerships

118.

Working with Licensing Committee

119.

Working with Regulatory Services

120.

Working with the Primary Care Trust

121.

Working with the Emergency Services

122.

Working with the Voluntary Sector

123.

Working with the Compact

124.

Glossary

CONSULTATION DRAFT