

Area Committee Working Group – Draft Terms of Reference

Membership: Lead Member, 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 Conservative.

(Note: The Lead Member may invite Area Chairman or their representatives for consultation purposes on an adhoc basis).

Political proportionality: Advisory Bodies do not have to be politically proportional.

Meetings: As required

Open to the press and Public: Meetings will be held in private unless the public are specifically invited to attend (access to information rules do not apply).
Agendas & Minutes will remain confidential unless the Chairman of the Working Group decides otherwise.
Agendas & Minutes are available to all Councillors, but are not public documents.

Quorum There is no quorum for an Advisory Body.

Decision Making No – the Working Group will where appropriate make recommendations to the Executive and Council.

Terms of Reference

- 1) To consider any legal and constitutional changes necessary to progress the agreed proposals, as attached, and report back to Council.
- 2) To advise the Lead Member on the development and implementation of actions agreed by Council, as appropriate.

Short Term Recommendations (until April 2007)

These recommendations could start to be implemented immediately

- That meetings are made more inclusive and everyone is given an opportunity to debate issues and indicate their opinion. This opinion could be subsequently used to inform District Councillors decisions
- To improve publicity and public awareness of Area Committees
- That communication bulletins are developed jointly between the Democratic Services Policy Team and Community Partnerships Team to promote Area Committees (an example is shown in Appendix 4)
- Seating arrangements and room lay out to be made more inclusive
- That a 12 month schedule of meetings is developed
- That a revised guide to participation in Area Committee is sent to Parish & Town Councils, Community Area Partnerships, Police, Primary Care Trusts and other partners with a view to increasing the participation and the shaping of agendas and debate
- Parish and Town Council and Community Area Partnership representatives are invited to provide updates as a standing item on all Area Committee agendas
- That the Policy and Democratic Services Team and Community Partnership Team continue to work with Wiltshire County Council to develop practical joint working options
- That the Policy and Democratic Services Team and Community Partnerships Team work with Community Area Partnerships to investigate options for further co-operation with Area Committees
- That the Executive considers requests from the Area Committee to devote officer time to projects identified by that Committee
- To introduce a recognised mechanism to inform or refer issues from the Area Committees to Executive to ensure that they are considered
- That officers work with the Police to develop ways of supporting the Neighbourhood Policing agenda
- That officers develop options for seminar/surgery meetings prior to the start of Area Committees where local people could discuss matters with their local Member or officers.

Medium - Long Term Recommendations

Medium-term recommendations require ongoing development and would be subject of a further report to identify the implications for the Council.

- A parallel debate should take place to consider how the frameworks for community engagement and partnership working should be developed further to avoid duplication and improve delivery of outcomes.
- Officers present a report following the publication of the Local Government White Paper in the autumn detailing the implications and possible development options for the Council's democratic arrangements
- Parish/Town Council and local fora are established 1-2 per year to inform the Area Committee schedule of meetings
- To encourage the involvement of hard to reach groups including young people in Area Committees/partnership working
- That a community "call-in" mechanism be developed to allow Area Committees to request a response to issues raised by the local community
- That officers work with the Executive to consider areas for devolution to Area Committees
- Devolution to Area Committees of decision making powers including budget.
- Constitutional Changes