

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> October 2006</b>
<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>Update on Outcomes of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Evaluation</b>
<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Partnership Working</b>
Link to Corporate Priorities	Partnership Working
Key Decision	NO
Executive Workplan Ref	B251
Public Report	YES

**Summary of Report**

This report updates Members on the progress being made to implement the recommendations identified in the evaluation of the Councils partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. The evaluation took place in early 2006 and Members agreed the evaluation recommendations at a meeting of the Executive held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2006. It was agreed that Officers would update Members on progress being made.

The evaluation of partners and the use of the Partnership Evaluation Tool forms part of a new approach the Council is taking to monitoring its partnership arrangements. It was agreed that the Partnership Development Officer would undertake a review of the Council’s partnerships with both Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and the Citizens Advice Bureau during 2006.

Following an earlier CPA inspection the Council was recognised as being a “good partner to work with,” but also highlighted areas where improvement was required. In particular better management of Service Level Agreements was needed alongside developing a more corporate approach to ensure that the Council is able to demonstrate good value for money through the organisations it funds.

**Officer Recommendations**

**Members note the report and Officers continue to implement the review recommendations in line with Option 1.**

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
NONE	NONE	YES	NONE	NONE

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the progress being made to implement the recommendations made in the evaluation of the Councils partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.
- 1.2 The evaluation of the Councils partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust took place in early 2006. The findings of the evaluation were noted and the following recommendations were agreed by the Executive at a meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

### **E199 - Resolved that**

- (1) The outcomes and recommendations of the review of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust be noted.
  - (2) The development of an action plan that brings together all of the review recommendations and Officers' work to implement them during 2006/07 be approved.
  - (3) An update on the progress of implementing the review recommendations be brought to the Executive in September 2006.
- 1.3 This was the first evaluation of a partnership to take place using the newly developed Partnership Evaluation Tool. This report will highlight how Officers are moving the evaluation recommendations forward.

## **2. Options and Options Appraisal**

### **2.1 Option 1: Members note the report and Officers continue to implement the review recommendations.**

- 2.2 This programme of work forms part of the response to the Audit Commission review on the Councils approach to partnership working and is also identified within the key actions of the Corporate Plan under "Partnership Working."
- 2.3 The Partnership Development Officer has been tasked to evaluate the Councils key partnerships and to subsequently work with officers and partners in implementing the evaluation recommendations. This work is ongoing and will enable the Council to develop a more corporate approach with its main partners.

## **3. Background Information**

- 3.1 Following an earlier CPA inspection the Council was recognised as being a "good partner to work with" but also highlighted areas where improvement was required. In particular better management of Service Level Agreements was needed alongside developing a more corporate approach to ensure that the Council was able to demonstrate good value for money through the organisations it funds.
- 3.2 As a result officers developed a Partnership Evaluation Tool and it was agreed at a meeting of the Executive on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005 that Wiltshire Wildlife Trust be evaluated as a key partner using the new tool.

- 3.3 The Evaluation highlighted that the Council funds Wiltshire Wildlife Trust in three areas of work, Energy Efficiency, Bio-diversity and the World Changers programme.
- 3.4 The total amount of funding provided by the Council to Wiltshire Wildlife Trust in 2005/06 was £27,500.
- 3.5 The evaluation highlighted that the work undertaken by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust as a result of the partnership funding enables the Council to meet a number of key mandatory duties as well supporting some of the Councils discretionary work. The evaluation concluded that although there are number of areas for improvement, overall the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust provides good value for money.
- 3.6 It was highlighted that in order to move the review forward and to achieve greater clarity on the relationship between the Council and the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, a more corporate approach to managing the partnership should be developed. As a result Officers across the Council are continuing to work together to implement the evaluation recommendations and monitor the overall partnership.

#### **4. Implementing the Evaluation Recommendations & managing the Partnership**

- 4.1 Following the evaluation of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Officers responsible for the three areas of funding have produced an implementation plan based on the evaluation recommendations (see appendix 1).
- 4.2 Against each of the recommendations the relevant officer has identified the key actions that should be undertaken to develop and enhance the partnership further. Included in the implementation plan, there is a progress column where officers can update on current developments against the recommendations.
- 4.3 Officers who are responsible for managing the projects with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust meet together to discuss progress against the implementation plan. Alongside this the group will also discuss any issues that might inform the wider partnership arrangements between the Council and the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.
- 4.4 The membership of the officer group should reflect the work related to current Service Level Agreements and include relevant officers from across the Council. This will ensure a corporate view of the partnership can be maintained.
- 4.5 The Partnership Development Officer will continue to play a role in co-ordinating this work.
- 4.6 The Partnership Development Officer has an overview of funding arrangements between the Council and the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and holds copies of all the current Service Level Agreements.

#### **Individual Project Updates**

#### **5. Energy Efficiency**

- 5.1 A new Service Level Agreement is in the process of being drafted and will become a joint agreement between the local authorities and the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. This development is in line with the Wiltshire Compact and the main partners are currently discussing the move towards a three-year agreement rather than one that is signed annually.

5.2 The officer responsible for this area is based within the Housing team and has been working towards the development of a workplan that sets out clear time scales and expectations for the delivery of the service that is required. This area of work forms part of the Councils mandatory requirements to improve energy efficiency.

## **6. Environmental Grants (Bio-diversity projects)**

6.1 At a meeting of the Executive 11<sup>th</sup> May 2005 Members agreed to award the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust £14,392 from the environmental grants budget to support three separate projects associated with Bio-diversity.

6.2 The Senior Regeneration Officer has been working with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust to develop Service Level Agreements for these projects. One of the projects supports the Biological Records Centre and this plays an important role in providing the Council with key environmental characteristics and information relating to planning applications. In 2005/06 the Council was the highest user of this service. The other two projects support the re-building of bio-diversity through the provision of information, support and identifying additional funding streams.

6.3 The evaluation concluded that at an appropriate time consideration is given towards a growth in the level of financial support towards the three bio-diversity projects. This recommendation is based on the impact the projects can have on both the Councils mandatory and social responsibilities. The future size and scope of the bio-diversity projects will be subject to a successful growth bid in the 2007/08 budget.

6.4 Work has been undertaken to raise awareness of the partnership working between the two organisations and the Councils logo is shown as a funding partner on the Biological Records Centre website. This area of work is ongoing and will inform the Service Level Agreements as they are finalised.

## **7. Wiltshire World Changers Programme**

7.1 In line with the evaluation recommendations an interim joint Service Level Agreement between the local authorities and the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust has been signed. This agreement lasts for the 2006/07 financial year and the partners will begin to review the agreement in November 2006 to discuss future provision.

7.2 The evaluation identified that this programme of work has the potential to play a key role in supporting local communities to become more sustainable and provides opportunities for Wiltshire Wildlife to work more closely with the Community Area Partnerships. The future size and nature of the programme will depend on the outcome of an application made to the Big Lottery.

7.3 Officers will assess the level of ongoing financial support for this project once a decision has been made by the Big Lottery and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust have confirmed the impact this will have on delivery. This is expected to happen during December 2006.

7.4 The World Changers programme is beginning to establish itself as a mechanism for supporting a wide range of locally focused sustainability projects. The programme produces newsletters and a website is to be launched in October. This will provide info on current projects and how local communities can get involved. The Council is recognised as a key partner and the logo appears on the relevant literature.

## 8. Community & Environmental Implications

- 8.1 Partnership working offers opportunities for the Council to strengthen communities and service delivery. This in turn can help to ensure that community needs and priorities are addressed in a way that maximises the use of available resources for local people.
- 8.2 Working in partnership brings many benefits such as volunteering opportunities for the local community, added value to Council services and enables the Council to meet its responsibilities under the Wiltshire Compact.

## 9. Risk Analysis

- 9.1 Officers are of the opinion that there are no significant risks to the Council resulting from this report.
- 9.2 It is essential for this work to continue as it contributes to a wider area of work to improve the Councils approach to partnership working. This in turn will reduce the risk of not achieving good value for money from the partnership the Council invests in.

<b>Appendices:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix 1: Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Evaluation implementation Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of North Wiltshire District Council's Partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust – March 2006</li> <li>Review of Service Level Agreements with Partners NWDC, Audit Commission 2004/2005</li> </ul>

### Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
Outcomes of the Review of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust as a Key Partner Using the Partnership Evaluation Tool	Executive 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2006	E199
A Partnership Evaluation Tool	Executive 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2006	E145
Outcomes of Audit Commission Review and the Councils Approach to Partnership Working	Executive 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2005	E127