Strengthening Community Influence and Local Decision-making

Introduction

1. The proposal for how community influence could be strengthened and local decision making enhanced, formed a significant part of Wiltshire County Councils' recent submission to the Department for Communities and Local Government for unitary status. This paper sets out in more detail how local arrangements can bring about greater community empowerment by establishing a new relationship between a Unitary Council for Wiltshire, Town and Parish Councils, the Voluntary and Community Sector, Community Area Partnerships, local residents and other key service providers.

2. This paper describes, in particular, the proposed governance structure at the community area level, the opportunities for delegating from a menu of services to interested Town and Parish Councils and the Voluntary and Community Sector, and the creation of 20 Community Area Boards in a way that builds on the existing good practice of community leadership and involvement in Wiltshire (Appendix 1)

3. It also draws upon the findings of research carried out by North Wiltshire District Council in 2006 on the effectiveness of area committees. The findings of the research suggested the following improvements:

- A more innovative approach to publicity and improved public awareness to encourage greater participation
- Informal and inclusive style of meetings
- A 12-month schedule of meetings
- Introduction of clear mechanisms to influence Executive decisions
- Lead Officer with Community Area responsibilities working closely with the Policy and Democratic Services Team

Strengthening the role for Wiltshire's 20 Community Areas

4. The County and District Councils, with other partners, have used the 20 community areas as a way of defining and responding to the distinctive local needs and circumstances of the County. These defined community areas have been in existence for over 10 years, and represent a considerable **joint asset** in responding both to local communities, and to the Government's community empowerment agenda. Wiltshire's approach links the community planning process to organisational performance and supports its inclusion agenda. The process is built from the bottom up, based on multi-agency working; the clear understanding of each community's agenda; and the matching of community priorities to corporate priorities. The key concepts driving the Wiltshire approach include:
   - Community area focus
   - Public participation

- Evidence-based decision-making
- Better service outcomes for communities
- Local ownership
- Partnership working at both geographical level and policy level

5. The outcomes have been used to shape services, to encourage local involvement in partnerships and project activity and to provide opportunities for local people to participate in local decision-making. Through community planning, the County Council and its partners have acquired a much clearer understanding of local communities and their needs.   It has also helped to support elected members in their role as community leaders. Most importantly, community planning is driving a renewal of the local democratic process by giving local people the means to shape services in their communities.

Community Area Partnerships

6. There are currently Community Area Partnerships operational in 16 of the 20 community areas mostly covering the north, west and east of the county. The circumstances in Salisbury district are slightly different, with the focus on area committees and parish-level planning processes. Partnerships look different in different areas depending on the local issues at hand but, typically, members include elected councillors from all tiers of government, the police, health, colleges, housing associations, the army, local business, chambers of commerce, civic trusts, other voluntary and community sector interests, and local residents and activists.

7. Some of the Community Area Partnerships operate well; others struggle to find a role. All have issues of poor resourcing and of making a significant impact within their community. **Existing Community Area Partnerships will be invited by the Cabinet to form the new Board for their community area or consider ways by which it can work effectively with the newly constituted boards.** Most partnerships have played a key role in consulting local people, in gathering information and in publishing community area plans. These documents will continue to be important local policy documents and a key consideration for the Community Area Boards.

8. A Wiltshire model for the future recognises that building trust in local government through effective and accountable local community leadership will be the most important feature of One Council for Wiltshire. The current arrangements in our 20 areas vary across the County. We must, in future, create a flexible model building on best practice and experience. What local arrangements will best deliver this agenda? There are a number of possibilities [they're not exclusive], which include:-

- setting up arrangements which allow town and parish councils to influence the delivery of services by others e.g. the parish stewards
- delegating some functions directly to interested town and parish councils
- delegation to voluntary sector bodies, including residents associations
- delegation of decision-making on aspects of local service provision to Community Area Boards
- direct service provision by area service teams, influenced by community views

Local influence for Town & Parish Councils

9. There are a number of service areas where a Town or Parish Council may wish to have more influence than they are currently offered by a service provider. Economies of scale may mean that it is not efficient for the local council to take on the actual delivery of the service; however decisions about that service could be delegated. Examples of this might be about the location and frequency of dealing with litter picking, graffiti cleaning, removal of weeds, mechanical cleaning of drains, etc. It might be about the location of salt bins or the choice of clearing work undertaken on public Rights of Way

10. Ultimately it would be up to each council to decide whether they wished to influence what would be offered to them, according to interest and capacity. It might be that some councils would prefer to have their say by participating in their Community Area Board rather than taking on a direct responsibility for making decisions about a local service. This would remain the prerogative of individual councils.

Delegation to Town & Parish Councils

11. There is clear recognition that the capacity and appetite for taking on local service delivery varies significantly across Wiltshire's 257 Town & Parish Councils. There is no intention to 'push' local councils in this direction or to over burden them with responsibilities that they do not genuinely want to involve themselves with. What a unitary council for Wiltshire would wish to do is avoid the situation where there are numerous operatives working in a locality on closely related lane or street scene improvements, that are employed by different councils and not actively co-ordinating their work programmes or collaborating.

12. There will be a menu of services which town and parish councils would be invited to express an interest in running. Councils would enter into discussions about transition arrangements for timing and funding. Funding would follow any delegation of a service to another council as well as the responsibility for ensuring value for money.

Delegation to Voluntary Sector Bodies

13. There is already a significant amount of direct service delivery commissioned from voluntary sector organisations,

ranging from health and social care to environmental issues. As the sector continues to grow and develop capacity it is envisaged that further opportunities for taking on service provision will be offered. This could include extension of community transport services, provision of support services for the elderly, facilities and activities for young people and community safety activities. Again funding and responsibility for value for money would follow any delegation of a service.

What will be the role of Community Area Boards?

14. At the heart of this model will be a Community Area Board for each community area. (a diagram is attached at the end of this paper) Its purpose would be:

- to provide an opportunity for local elected Members of the Council for Wiltshire, Town and Parish Councils and other stakeholders to debate and lead on important local matters
- to improve local co-ordination between services, for example housing and social care
- to provide a means for local Councillors to influence the development of local services; to advise local service managers; to monitor local performance and to scrutinise local performance and proposals
- to provide one local forum for consultation, used by all public services

- to enable local 'stakeholders' – business, Armed Forces, voluntary groups – to become involved in planning local public services and debating wider local issues
- to strengthen local governance and the role of the local Councillor, providing a single visible forum for local decision making and consultation where the public can attend and contribute their views
- So that local people and organisations can have a single point of focus, and hence:
- know where to sort out any problems for the local community swiftly and efficiently
- know within their community area exactly when local issues are being discussed, and how they can input
- have a place which brings together multiple agendas, drives forward local projects, and enables joined up responses to community 'calls for action'
- understand better who makes local decisions, and the reasons for those decisions
- can make better use of their time and effort through the creation of a simpler system of locality governance which has fewer partnerships and meetings
- give a positive and higher profile for elected members in local community work

we're ready...

Who will be members of the Community Area Boards?

15. The core of the membership will include representatives of the local Town and Parish councils, and Members of the Council for Wiltshire from that community area. Parish Councils in a community area, in discussion with other members of the board would need to agree how they wish to be represented. It may be that all parishes would wish to be members, or that a representative is put forward on behalf of a cluster of parishes. The final decision will rest with themselves.

16. Membership of the Board will vary slightly across community areas to ensure that key stakeholders are included. For example there will be representatives from the Army in community areas with garrison towns, and business representation where appropriate too. Each Board will be encouraged to co-opt representatives of local interests.

17. Service managers will take their lead from the Boards in developing local services within County policies and resources and will attend when they can make a contribution, or when they are specifically requested to be there by the Board. The Primary Care Trust and the Police would be encouraged to attend and other bodies that may want to attend include the local Council for Voluntary Service, residents associations, faith and minority ethnic groups, and representatives of young people, elderly people, and disabled people living in the area, etc. The Board would also encourage members of the public to attend and speak.

18. In addition, all 9 Cabinet Members of the Unitary Council would take responsibility for 2 or 3 community areas. They would attend meetings of the relevant Community Area Boards; would be the first point of contact for references to the Cabinet from the Boards; would attend the annual 'State of the Area' debates and link those to the Council's annual business plan; liaise with the relevant Director who had overview of those areas; and generally promote the well being of those areas.

What will the Community Area Boards do?

19. Broadly the Community Area Boards will be the key local forum, or assembly, responsible for:
    - Co-ordinating local consultation
    - Deciding on how issues raised by residents will be resolved and by whom
    - Agreeing **local** actions and targets associated with the county-wide local area agreement and the sustainable community strategy
    - Better engagement with those who don't often speak up or get involved
    - Managing local expectations about what can and cannot be delivered
    - Supporting communities to deliver the local priorities in their community area plan

- Proactive engagement of hard to reach groups in decision making
- Ensuring special interest groups do not overly dominate the local agenda
- Engaging local people in problem solving
- Ensuring that the public are well-informed about what is going on in the area, including the cost and performance of local public services

What sort of things will be on the agenda?

20. Agendas will make it clear what will be required at the meeting. Each item will be identified for one of 3 considerations: consultation, local scrutiny or for a decision.

21. The Community Area Board's agendas would focus on those issues and services which most interest local people. Evidence from a range of sources (Ipsos MORI/LGA/surveys of town and parish councils, community area plans, etc.) provides a broadly consistent view of what local communities collectively are interested in. The following is a summary and likely to form the basis for agendas:-

- Cleaning up streets, parks and open spaces – litter and litter bins, dog fouling, graffiti, weed control, refuse collection, abandoned vehicles, fly tipping, grass cutting

- Traffic and road safety
- Facilities and activities for teenagers and children
- Road and pavement maintenance, including footway and alley lighting
- Crime and community safety, including anti-social behaviour, and drugs & alcohol abuse
- Public transport
- Health services, especially reconfiguration of services
- Affordable housing, including availability of local residential care and supported housing for elderly and disabled people
- Sports, leisure and cultural facilities
- Range and type of shops available locally
- Planning (development control), particularly a concern of town and parish councils
- Local employment opportunities, especially after a factory closure or the loss of another major local employer

22. In a nutshell, the key wish for local communities is that their immediate environment is clean and well maintained; that when they are out and about, they are safe from the dangers of traffic and street crime; that there are safe play areas for children, and activities and facilities for teenagers; and that the area's character is preserved through appropriate decisions about development. Finding solutions to issues identified in the Community Area Plans

and the Local Area Agreement targets would also be key to shaping the agenda.

23. The Community Area Boards could also have a specific role in the following ways, as set out by service managers in the submission:-

- More formal engagement from the Youth Development Service
- Influencing small arts grants and grants for village halls
- Influencing the opening hours of libraries and leisure centres
- Lead on producing Market Towns Action Plans, the regeneration needs of localities (including Trowbridge, Salisbury and Chippenham), and on town centre management
- Act as a source of information on housing need, and work with local panels for all housing options including residential care
- Identify locations for new parking controls investigations and recommend sites for enforcement action
- Give informed local input into strategic spatial plan making and act as steering groups for particular projects. Also play a role in development control
- Shape adult social care service delivery

- More closely integrate the work of local rights of way groups to ensure a strategic area-wide approach to improving countryside access
- Work closely with the Street Scene Officer and Steward for the area, who would report on the proposed programme of works at annual community area highways meetings and on service performance. The Community Area Board would be invited to recommend priorities for future investigation such as potential safety problem sites, skidding and flooding
- Support pursuit of local waste issues such as location and performance of household recycling centres, collection round performance and dealing with complaints and disputes.

What powers will the Community Area Boards have?

24. The delegation of powers to make decisions locally would need to be underpinned by answering the question, 'what's better for being local', i.e. is there a clear opportunity for tailoring a service to fit local need or preference, whilst still meeting statutory, legal and health & safety requirements, maintaining equity across the county and remaining cost effective by not losing economies of scale in delivery.

25. Even where there is not delegation to the Community Area Board, or directly to Town and Parish Councils, there are also robust schemes of delegation in place for officers to

agree to implement a local preference where appropriate. Enacting these powers through the Community Area Board would enable decisions to be made at Board meetings. In some circumstances it may be that only the members of the body which supplies the finance, and which is the accountable body for the service in question, will make the decision at the Board, after listening to the opinion of others present. To increase accountability it would be necessary to keep a publicly available record of decisions and to require a fuller reason for a decision that goes against the wishes of those at the meeting, who do not have a vote on the issue in question, or which contradicts views expressed through a petition.

How will it be different for local service delivery?

26. Unitary Council service providers will be required to identify the scope for increasing local involvement in decision making, shaping services and ensuring that local needs are met. Boards will not have large delegated budgets, but will be able to influence key service budgets. A number of service areas are considering how they might re-configure their area teams in order to strengthen local involvement in the Community Areas. The following examples for facilities and activities for teenagers, street and lane scene and community safety describe how this can happen across a number of service areas:

FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR TEENAGERS

27. In early 2006, in response to the Cabinet work group, 8 Locality Young People's Groups (LYPIGs) were instituted which brings together decision makers, other stakeholders and young people from across schools, youth development centres and a range of other statutory and voluntary sector providers. These groups are currently constituted across 2 or 3 community areas and consider, influence and shape what should be provided in their locality. Under the proposed new arrangement this would increase to one for each community area.

28. Again in 2006, Central Government provided ring-fenced capital and revenue budgets to enhance facilities and services for teenagers and required that young people be the decision-makers for these budgets. A structure of local and county wide decision making was developed that ensured that LYPIGs determined the bid allocation from their areas whilst the Cabinet work group made final decisions about funding. This process has, to date, seen the allocation of £400k to improve facilities and services across Wiltshire and provided an 'inter-generational' oversight of this allocation.

29. The Education and Inspection Act came into force in January 2007 and lays a new duty on local authorities to secure sufficient educational and recreational activities for teenagers and to both consult with and take heed of young peoples' views. This Act also outlines the need to describe

how young people can "use the processes and channels to hold local authorities to account for its responsiveness under the new duty". It is also a requirement of the Act to ensure that all activities and facilities for teenagers be accessible, promoted and published appropriately to young people and parents and carers.

30. It is intended that the current development of the 8 LYPIGs be built upon and broadened to ensure that one exists in each of the 20 community areas in order to provide for the voice of young people being heard by each of the 20 Community Area Boards. It is also intended that the Boards, through these LYPIGs, have, initially, the *devolved* responsibility for securing that sufficient educational and recreational activities are available within their community area. These activities will include those provided by the local authority, other statutory and voluntary sector providers and those provided by the commercial sector. Future arrangements for a *delegation* of financial responsibility will be considered building upon the best practice identified across the Community Area Boards.

31. Youth Development Co-ordinators in each of the community areas will provide support for each Community Area Board, through the LYPIG, as a requirement of their duty and role.

STREET AND LANE SCENE

Delegation to Parish and Town Councils

32. In respect of the street and lane scene Parish and Town Councils already have powers to undertake a number of activities including the repair and maintenance of public footpaths and bridleways, the provision of litter bins, the maintenance of road side verges and the provision of roadside seats and bus shelters. Where local councils choose to exercise these powers they do so in consultation with the relevant district or the County Council.

33. In addition, some Parish and Town Councils also act as the first point of contact for requests for the provision of salt bins which, with the consent of the County Council, are provided and maintained as part of the winter maintenance service. Parish and Town councils are likely to know the residents and property owners in their areas and some will contact landowners to issue requests for the removal of overhanging trees and hedges. There is an arrangement between WCC and one of the town councils for the precautionary salting of footways as part of the winter maintenance service. WCC provides the salt and notifies the town council when a decision is made to salt the highway network. WCC arranged for the town council employees to obtain training and accreditation for working on the highway and it is these employees that carry out this work.

34. Parish and Town Councils also work with their local county councillors and local divisional highways offices to notify them of problems or requests for services in respect of highway maintenance issues. Many of them engage with their Parish

Steward to identify maintenance works that are required within their council's administrative boundary. Several Parish Councils cut some areas of highway grass to a higher standard and more frequently than WCC. This works particularly well in the more rural communities where the District Councils carry out little or no amenity grass cutting.

35. This work makes a considerable contribution to the maintenance of the street and lane scene in Wiltshire and there is potential for the role of Town and Parish Councils to be developed further. Similar requests for service to those referred to above could also be channelled through the Town and Parish Councils, for example requests from individual residents to plant and maintain highway verges or to erect seats within the highway. Building on the relationships with local residents, Parish and Town councils could initiate contact with landowners over a wider range of potential enforcement issues such as clearing of ditches where there is a right of discharge for the highway or land drainage system.

Consultation with Community Area Boards

36. Community Area Boards would be consulted on the development of the role of the Street Scene Officer for each area in the same way that Parish and Town councils have been involved in the development of the Parish Steward scheme. Working together these officers would provide a comprehensive street scene service resulting in a clean, well cared for and well maintained public environment.

37. In developing programmes of work for street scene services, officers would consult Area Boards, inviting their recommendations of priorities for sites, for example, with potential for flooding or where there are possible road safety problems. A Community Area Board might identify a location where there is a problem with litter or fly tipping or with unlawful parking and request that enforcement activity is built into the programme for their area. In this way they would help to design service delivery that directly addresses the Board's concerns about its environment. In certain circumstances this might identify services where Council policy may need to be reviewed or clarified to enable the Council to provide services which are more responsive to local need.

38. Street Scene Officers and Parish Stewards would report regularly on their performance so that the Community Area Board could scrutinise and provide feedback on the results. The Board would be invited to record its views on the value and quality of the work undertaken. This scrutiny and the feedback arising from this process would assist in shaping future service delivery.

39. Officers would be empowered to take decisions in accordance with the Council's policy and budget framework. If an officer was not empowered to respond to a particular request from a Community Board they would refer that request to the relevant officer for consideration and would ensure that the Board received a detailed response. In certain circumstances there may be a number of proposed schemes within a community area which are all of equal priority, but there may only be sufficient funding to carry out one or two of the schemes in a given financial year. In

these circumstances the views of the Community Area Board would be the deciding factor and the officer attending the relevant Board meeting would be empowered to take the decision having listened to the views.

40. Officers would work closely with the Community Area Boards and frontline councillors to ensure that the Council's budget, policies and service standards are properly understood in respect of street scene services. This should enable the local members and Board members to feel properly supported in influencing decisions and shaping service delivery. This should ensure that there is local flexibility for the delivery of street scene services that are appropriate to each community's needs within the framework of county-wide policies and standards.

Call In of Community Area Board Concerns

41. In the event that a Community Area Board is not satisfied with the response or decision reported by the Street Scene Officer or Parish Steward, the local, frontline councillors would review the officer response and, if necessary, request that the senior officer responsible for the relevant service area, such as street cleansing or highway maintenance, be asked to address the request in more detail. The attendance of officers at meetings and the ability of the Community Area Boards to request detailed explanations of decisions taken should improve access to information and enable the provision of a more transparent and accountable service.

42. However, if the concerns persist, the matter could be referred to the Cabinet Member for the relevant service area with a request

that the decision be reviewed. Such referrals should be infrequent as officers and frontline councillors would be enforcing decisions that are taken in accordance with the Council's budget and policy framework. In the event that the Cabinet Member's decision is not accepted by the Community Area Board and the local frontline councillors, then a request could be forwarded to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for a formal review of the decision.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

43. Local Community Safety activities will link with Wiltshire Police Development of Neighbourhood Policing teams (NPT). Discussions have already taken place between Councils and the Police to explore the roles and responsibilities that existing or developing groups (Community Area Boards) might have in deciding priorities and driving community led teams delivering community safety. Currently these are Police staff only, but there is scope for a range of other disciplines and local authority staff to be utilised within a joint neighbourhood team with Community Area Boards scrutinising and driving the work of the team and its impact on increasing community safety and reducing crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour in the area.

Role of Community Area Boards

44. The Boards would play a key role in informing strategic planning at county level, linking with the Local Area Agreement outcomes, to put in place services and

initiatives which reduce the risk of young people committing anti-social behaviour. These initiatives might include parenting programmes, leisure services, youth street outreach, youth offending services and holiday activity schemes.

45. Community Area Boards will also have a role in suggesting and agreeing local level responses to deal with their local circumstances. They will be consulted on priorities, and have a role in designing and timetabling local activities to respond to these. Boards will play a key role in scrutinising and monitoring performance against anti social behaviour objectives and ensuring that community concerns and the community safety needs of all members of the community are represented.

46. The work of the Community Area Boards will also dovetail with the work of Anti-Social Behaviour Panels. Boards will be able to put concerns in their area forward for consideration. They can support the work of the panels through development of local prevention activities.

Role of Town and Parish Councils

47. Town and Parish Councils would be an integral part of the Community Area Boards and Anti-Social Behaviour Panels and would contribute to decisions in relation to activity and resource allocation to improve community safety and tackle anti-social behaviour in their areas.

Role of Officers

48. Community Safety Officers would ensure that the agreed activities are delivered appropriately and within the resources available. They will also be a first point of contact to call in relevant grant funding and other resources.

Community Calls for Action

49. Community Area Boards would be the conduit for community calls for action where other service areas can be called in for action, e.g. Trading Standards might assist with issues such as under age sales in the area.

Why would local people want to attend a Community Area Board Meeting?

50. There is a challenge in terms of needing to change the style of meetings. The proposal is to consider carefully the language (i.e. jargon busting!) that is used to discuss local issues and the way in which citizens are invited to participate. Some agenda items could be considered by holding simultaneous discussion groups, where a person can choose which group to join according to their interests, coming together to report the discussion to the whole meeting. A more relaxed 'workshop style' approach could be taken to debating issues and voting hand sets could be used to enable everyone to express a preference. Local

people will be able to influence the decision making by their elected representatives.

51. The most important answer to this question is the **relevance** of the agenda to local people. Does the board tackle and resolve issues that are really important to local residents?

What else would the Community Area Boards do?

52. The local boards would not just make decisions but would also respond to consultations; consider any public 'calls for action' which individual councillors have been unable to resolve directly, as described in the Government's White Paper; undertake local scrutiny investigations; and debate local issues. The attendance for these other tasks could be wider, and would need to be flexible depending on the issues under consideration.

How will Community Area Boards be supported?

53. Currently County, District and Town & Parish Councils put both officer time and other resources into supporting Community Area Partnerships, Area Committees and other local community forums and partnerships. The 'One Council for Wiltshire' submission identifies that that there would not be a reduction in overall resources for this work (costing model is attached at Appendix 2). Efficiencies would be made in bringing teams together and implementing resources more effectively and flexibly.

There would be set up and investment costs that would take into account the need for training and staff re-deployment. Population size and geographical location would also be factored into defining the support requirements of each Community Area Board.

54. Funding would be allocated for a Community Area Newsletter and implementing a local communications strategy, as well as resources for consultation and holding local events. Each Community Area Board would have a dedicated Community Planner and support from Democratic Services officers. The Board would also have access to advice on local scrutiny or 'call for action' issues and for bidding for project support and external funding.

55. Officers would be based at an accessible location at least for parts of the week e.g. existing locations such as the library, the town council office, or another council premise. There would be a premium on these staff getting out into the community and working in a mobile way. Home working may be an option if staff live in the area. This style of working will minimise accommodation requirements, but there will be an ICT support cost.

What other support mechanisms could be put in place?

56. Access to good local information and intelligence will support elected members in ensuring they have a good understanding of their local area. An annual 'state of the area' debate would also provide an opportunity for keeping

up with public concerns and for taking stock of the local direction of travel. The use of ICT to improve speedy access to information will be important. The Unitary Council web-site would have a bespoke front end for each Community Area. There would be a link to a local 'neighbourhood- fix –it' web, for quick and easy reporting and feedback for street scene concerns and a web-based 'time bank' for recruiting and 'trading' volunteer support for local projects and activities.

Transitional/ interim arrangements 2007 -2008

57. As already mentioned, the intention of future new arrangements is to build on and strengthen existing local arrangements. Community Area Partnerships would be invited to consider how they could benefit their area by merging with existing forums and forming a Community Area Board or how they could work effectively with it. Community Area Plans and Parish Plans will continue to be key policy documents at the local level. These will be adopted and in due course reviewed by the Community Area Board.

58. There is clear respect for the current Community Area Partnerships and forums, there is no wish to dissipate existing energies and commitment. Any new arrangements would be planned in consultation with existing bodies to ensure the following outcomes are achieved:

- **A clear mandate for increased local influence over services**
- **A strengthened role for elected representatives as community**
- **champions**
- **The requirement of services to work closely with Community Area**
- **Boards**
- **More focused dedicated support and resources**
- **The ability to hold services to account for local delivery**
- **Reduced confusion for local people by creating a single local forum**
- **for conducting local business**

59. There are currently two pilots for increasing local decision making under development in the Malmesbury and Trowbridge Community Areas. As these pilots progress there will be an opportunity to develop ideas further, disseminate learning and build on what works well. Other interested areas might also like to consider how they might strengthen aspects of community involvement and local decision making over the coming months.

60. It is envisaged that discussions will continue in parallel with the Governments' consultation in Wiltshire on our unitary submission, should it proceed.

we're ready...

61. This paper is intended to prompt comment, debate and further questions; suggestions are also welcome. Please contact 01225 713000, or e-mail WhitepaperQA@wiltshire.gov.uk with your comments and responses.
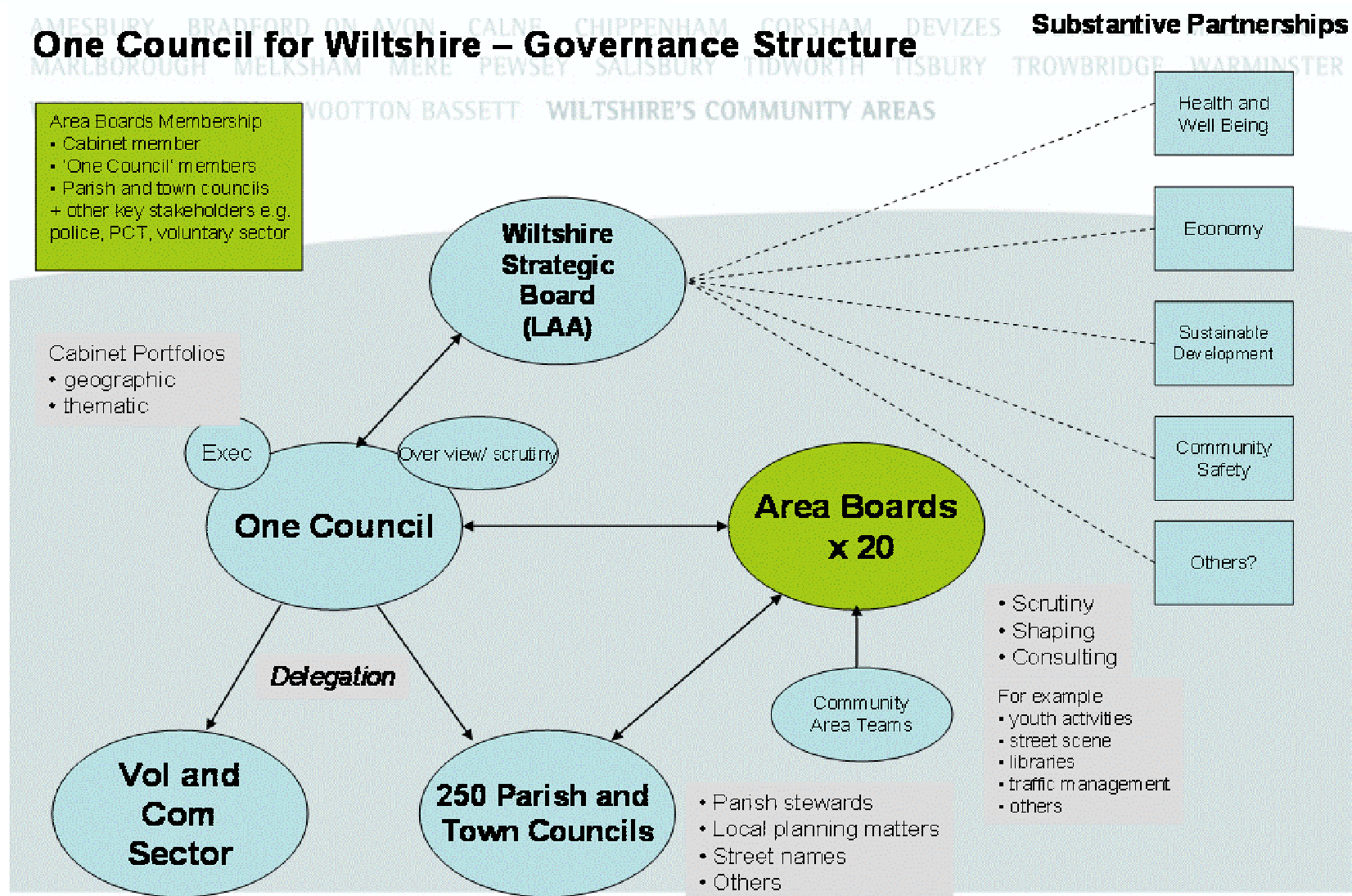
One Council for Wiltshire ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ doesn't it make sense?

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Democratic support

Assumptions:

1. 20 boards meeting 8 times a year
2. Each board receiving 7 days support per meeting (preparation, service and follow up)+ additional 20 days supplementary support per board
3. Based on average salary 21.5k x 1.4 = 30.1k (covering NI, Superannuation and general 'office costs')

Calculation

160 meetings per year x 7days	= 1120 days
20 area boards x 20 days	= 400 days
Total	= 1520 days/11,400 hours

Cost per hour (based on 30.1k p.a.)	= £15.64
Total cost (15.64 x 11,400)	= £178,296
No of FTE	= 5.9FTE (£178,296/ £30,100)

Notes

a) *Depending on the population of an area the level of support may vary between boards*
b) *This level of investment would still enable democratic services to support the new council and deliver the 240k p.a. savings contained in the original submission*

Community Area Planning and Co-ordination

Assumptions

1. 15fte - Based on 0.75fte per community area (this may range from 0.5fte – 1fte depending on area needs)
2. Assumed that the equivalent of a minimum 10fte could be found from current district council resources (2.5fte per district) County Council currently have the equivalent of broadly 5fte
3. No savings in the area of community planning have been built into submission

Calculation

15fte x £42,000 (inc. on costs) = £630,000

Other support costs = 20 x £3000 (based on costs calculated by North Wiltshire inc. venues and special responsibility allowances) = £60,000

Total = £690,000

Current CP establishment across five authorities (based on establishment estimates from five authorities) = c£900,000
This does not include current grants given to area committees or community area partnerships

Note

It would be proposed that the remaining staffing establishment and cash resource would be used as additional CP support and to fund those initiatives highlighted in the main body of the paper e.g. area newsletter, consultation activities, or to pump prime local projects.