

John Thomson  
Deputy Leader of the Council

17 April 2009

Mr A Molland

Cabinet Office  
Wiltshire Council  
Bythesea Road  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 8JN

Your ref:  
Our ref: jt/cc

Dear Mr Molland

**Re: Executive Response to the Final Report Recommendations of the Scrutiny Task Group on Area Boards**

The response to each of the recommendations is listed below, taking into account the further points raised at the JOSTB when these recommendations were discussed in February 2009.

1. To request that the IE ensures that each of the frontline services produces a detailed plan outlining how they will work with Area Boards and for this to be submitted to the Corporate Director, Community Services by 31 March 2009 to support the evaluation phase of the Area Boards project.

**Response:** This work is still in progress. Not all detailed plans were submitted by 31 March 2009 and we are chasing up those few who have not yet responded now that all of the Service Directors are in post across the new Council.

2. To recommend to the IE that a trial period be undertaken whereby 3 members is the quorum for an Area Board meeting, to be reviewed after 12 months.

JOSTB members debated this recommendation, which expressed support for the Implementation Executive's decision that Area Boards should have a minimum of four members. It was felt, particularly with reference to Tidworth and Pewsey, that this might not allow the necessary flexibility to achieve arrangements which satisfied local communities. Members agreed to recommend a trial period whereby 3 members is the quorum for an Area Board, to be reviewed after 12 months.

**Response:** Agreed at the IE (paragraph 8 of the report to the IE on 16 March 2009 stated that this arrangement under the selected option 4 should be trialled for a period of one year).

2

Mr A Molland

17 April 2009

3. To congratulate the Project Team on the production of the Area Board Handbook to date and to recommend to the Corporate Director, Community Services that once completed, secondary versions are produced specifically for elected members and the public.

**Response:** Agreed and under development

4. In relation to staffing, to ask the Corporate Director, Community Services to meet with the Chairman of the Area Board Task group to discuss the proposed team structure for the Area Board team and the support network arrangements proposed for the team.

**Response:** The Corporate Director, Community Services is very happy to meet with the Chairman of the Area Board Task Group to discuss the team structure and the community area network arrangements.

5. To request that the Corporate Director, Community Services and the Service Director for Corporate Communications ensure that the evaluation of the project includes development of a consistent approach towards publicising and marketing to ensure maximum public participation.

JOTSB members felt that this recommendation should be targeted at the Service Director for Corporate Communications as well as the Corporate Director for Community Services in order to achieve effective publicity.

**Response:** Agreed and under development

6. To consider the outcome of the evaluation phase of the project at JOSTB on 20 April 2009.

**Response:** The evaluation report on the pilot Area Boards will be going to IE in May 2009

7. To request that the Corporate Director, Economic Development, Planning and Housing ensures that the Statement of Community Involvement provides a policy base for the Area Boards to influence some section 106 agreements before its submission to the IE on 1 April.

This recommendation was changed by the Board to direct responsibility to the Corporate Director for Economic Development, Planning and Housing.

3

Mr A Molland

17 April 2009

**Response:** This policy is currently being developed and I believe will be reported to IE in May 2009 by the Corporate Director for Economic Development, Planning and Housing.

8. To request that the Corporate Director, Community Services works with the Service Director Community Leadership & Governance to develop: a performance framework for measuring the effectiveness of the Area Boards and an agreed approach towards managing the health and safety issues related to hosting public meetings across the county.

This recommendation was amended after discussion to ensure Area Board performance and risk was owned by the Department of Community Services.

**Response:** The performance management framework for Area Boards is under development. Suitable venues will be used across the County to comply with health and safety requirements.

9. To request that the Head of Democratic Services produces a note outlining the mechanics for electing the Chairmen of Area Boards, to be incorporated into the Area Board handbook.

**Response:** The election of the Chairmen of Area Boards will operate as per the Constitution of Wiltshire Council and this can be cross-referenced in the handbook.

10. To request that the Corporate Director, Community Services as part of the Area Board induction programme ensures that a meeting takes place between the Area Board Managers and their respective area members during June 2009.

**Response:** Agreed as part of the induction programme for new members

11. To recommend to the IE that members of the Executive should not be allowed to chair Area Boards.

The JOTSB felt that members of the Executive should not be allowed to chair Area Boards as this would concentrate too much power in the hands of one individual. It was also felt that members of the Executive would be too busy to dedicate the necessary time to chairing an Area Board.

**Response:** This is a decision for the new Council and the Area Boards

4

Mr A Molland

17 April 2009

12. To grant the Area Boards Task Group consent to meet again ahead of the March meeting of the IE.

**Response:** Not applicable for a response from us.

I understand that this response to the recommendations of the Area Boards Task Group will be tabled at the meeting of JOSTB on Monday, 20 April 2009.

Yours sincerely

John Thomson

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Housing

Direct Line: 01225 718577

Fax Number: 01225 713089

Email: [johnthomson@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:johnthomson@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Copies to:

Sue Redmond, Corporate Director Community Services

Julie Martin, Corporate Advisor: Community Leadership and Governance

Niki Lewis, Service Director Community Leadership & Governance

Steve Milton, Area Boards Development Team Leader

Laurie Bell, Service Director Policy, Research & Communications

John Quinton, Head of Democratic & Member Services

Alistair Cunningham, Service Director Economy & Enterprise