

Item No. 5

**Tom Bray**  
**47 Endless Street**  
**Salisbury**  
**Wiltshire**  
**SP1 3UH**

**For: All Parish Councils in the Southern Wiltshire Community Area**

## **RENEWING THE COMMUNITY PLAN**

The Southern Community Area Plan expires this year and the Area Board is concerned that if steps are not taken to refresh and renew it, the Community Area will be left without an in-force and actionable Plan.

### **Why this matters**

Even recognising the weaknesses in the way the Community Plan was produced it:

- represents a coherent set of ambitions and aspirations felt by individual communities in our area;
- has been used as an 'evidence base' when making representations to the local authority regarding service delivery;
- has formed the basis of discussions with partner organisations and other agencies;
- Would provide sound basis for our bids for grant funding

The Area Board feels that having a current Community Area Plan – which has been produced in a genuinely bottom-up way – will be of enormous help in soliciting the support and cooperation of Wiltshire Council and other agencies in furthering particular community objectives, setting priorities and reviewing service provision.

Not having a current Plan will inhibit the Board's ability to negotiate with service providers on behalf of individual communities.

## **What the renewed Community Plan would contain**

Your Area Board believes the current plan is weakened by the inclusion of:

- 'nice to have' projects which are unlikely ever to be realised;
- projects which relate solely to an individual parish and which more properly falls within the work of the Parish Council;
- vague, general statements which do not prompt local action.

Instead we feel that a renewed Community Plan ought to be simplified and concentrate on:

1. Issues which are either community area-wide or which affect more than one parish where some degree of inter-parish cooperation is necessary.
2. Issues which individual Parish Councils or other agencies wish to refer to the Area Board as ones where previous efforts have not brought about a resolution;
3. Issues which involve the need for multi-agency coordination.

## **How a new Community Plan could be produced**

Previous versions of the Community Plan were criticised for not having been produced in a completely transparent and democratic way. It is vital that a new plan is genuinely bottom-up. Only then will it have the authority to represent the views of the communities in our Area.

The most appropriate way forward would be the creation of an independent working party or task force made up of representatives from Parish Councils and partner organisations.

The working party would produce a draft of a new Community Area Plan for submission to the Board by:

- setting up tasking groups appropriately composed to work on individual sections of the Plan;
- liaising with Parish Councils about the inclusion of issues (in accordance with the criteria above);
- consulting with communities and community organisations.

Funding for room hire, consultation meetings and so on would be available from the Area Board.

This approach would be very much in line with the preferences expressed at the inaugural meeting for working by parish clusters or themed task groups.

The community plan can be accessed from our website at [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/areaboards](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/areaboards) and go to the Southern Wiltshire page. If you would like us to send you a hard copy of the community plan please contact Tom on the details below.

## **Action**

The Area Board would be grateful if Parish Councils could either place this matter on their next Agenda for discussion or otherwise respond with an agreed position and provide us with feedback as follows:

1. Does your Parish Council feel that a new Community Area Plan should be produced?
2. Does your Parish Council feel that the creation of a Working Party is the best way forward? (If not, please suggest an alternative approach.)
3. Would your Parish Council nominate a person to serve on the Working Party? (If so, please provide a name and contact details.)

Please send your responses before 12<sup>th</sup> October to the Community Area Manager, Tom Bray on [tom.bray@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:tom.bray@wiltshire.gov.uk) or call him on 01722 434252.

Kind regards,

**Richard Britton**

Chairman of Southern Wiltshire Area Board