

Conference Report

13 May 2008, Salisbury Guildhall

Introduction

This conference was co-hosted by the South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance and the Wiltshire Forum of Community Area Partnerships. The aim of the conference was to involve a wide range of stakeholders in the setting up of new Community Area Partnerships for South Wiltshire. This report constitutes initial feedback on the conference, as requested by participants at the meeting.

The conference was attended by over 100 participants representing a wide range of organisations. There was an excellent turnout by elected councillors from parish and town councils, Salisbury District Council and Wiltshire County Council. A good range of representatives attended from schools and community and voluntary organisations. Other partners from the South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance such as the Police, Fire & Rescue Service, Friends Provident, Churches, Natural England, Wiltshire College and Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust also engaged fully in the conference. All those registering received background information prior to the conference on Community Area Partnerships and Community Area Boards (see Appendix 3).

Most participants evaluated the conference positively, with 72% rating the speakers as good or very good and 88% feeling that the conference met its stated aims.

Outcome & next steps

At the conference, attendees agreed to set up a steering group to take forward the development of Community Area Partnerships in South Wiltshire. Twenty participants volunteered to be part of a steering group for the district (see Appendix 4) and others volunteered to take part in developing Community Partnerships in their area. The next step will be to organise a meeting of this steering group to help develop partnerships across the district. Following the first steering group meeting, the points raised by participants at this conference will be responded to and a further update sent out.

Summary of proceedings

Introduction by Jim Lynch (independent facilitator)

Jim Lynch introduced himself as independent facilitator. Invited by WFCAP to conduct an evaluation of existing partnerships in the rest of Wiltshire. Asked to consider South Wiltshire and how partnerships could be set up in south of county. Came to conclusion South Wiltshire ways and set-up very different from the rest of the county. Suggested bringing all interested parties together to share views, hopes and concerns and work out best way forward for partnerships in South Wiltshire.

Evening co-hosted by South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance and WFCAP. Jim Lynch independently running the session. Speakers are:

- Tim Skelton – Chair of South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance
- Keith Robinson – Chief Executive Wiltshire County Council
- Manjeet Gill – Chief Executive Salisbury District Council
- Len Turner – Chair of WFCAP

Developing Community Area Partnerships in South Wiltshire

Feedback from conference on 13 May 2008

Explained the structure for the evening. Speeches followed by workshops in smaller groups. Then come back together for feedback from workshops. Speakers then have chance to respond to points raised.

Speech by Tim Skelton (Chair of South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance)

Welcomed everyone. Aims of the workshop:

- reinforce the need for partnership working
- consider how to shape partnership arrangements within the unitary authority
- collectively agree key steps for going forward

Discussed elements for successful partnership working - has already been some excellent work done with affordable housing and other projects.

- Listening – has to be inclusive – make it easy for people to access and air their views
- Leadership – need good leadership to be able to influence unitary authority in the future
- Compatibility
- Resources – need resources like project management and communications to make it work
- Growing together – work together and attract new people
- Making a difference

Looked at current situation and organisations - then at new structure with unitary authority and Community Area Partnerships & Area Boards. Looking to the future – need the Area Boards and Community Area Partnerships to work. Know there is going to be a unitary authority - question is how to make sure South Wiltshire has a strong voice within the new authority.

Speech by Keith Robinson (Chief Executive of Wiltshire County Council)

Will be significant changes with unification next year. Have been doing work on partnerships and communities in Wiltshire for some time though - since 1996/1997. Need to look at work that has been done in other parts of the county - decide what aspects will work in South Wiltshire and what aspects South Wiltshire may want to do differently.

Councils that don't have sense of how to create strong communities and work with them will fall behind – want to make sure Wiltshire isn't amongst them. Need to capture individual sense of identity of different communities. Won't work if council has single standard approach for all – got to acknowledge the different community identities to develop relationships with them.

Over last 20 years people have felt loss of control – want to change that . Want local people to feel more in control - want them to feel they can influence and shape things in their community.

At start of community work research was commissioned to identify community areas across the county. South Wilts at the forefront of community work – development of Area Committees - working with partners from different sectors. Some community areas within South Wiltshire easier to define than others. Fairly clear northern area – could strengthen working with army perhaps, but basically comfortable with area identity. Salisbury city well defined area too – will be reflected in new city council. South lacks natural focal point – Downton is possible centre – but not everyone happy with that. Area for the west with Mere, Tisbury and Wilton will need to be discussed. Delaying decisions about community areas until Boundary Committee has defined the electoral unitary council divisions – could influence the community areas.

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Good to have representatives of other Wiltshire partnerships present – can learn from them – but not going to impose their practices on South Wiltshire. No blueprint for how it has to work – can be flexible.

Speech by Manjeet Gill (Chief Executive of Salisbury District Council)

Manjeet very passionate about tonight's theme. Has been involved in work creating unitary authorities and developing community partnerships and delegation of services for 12 years – spent last 4 years in Nottingham. Got to make sure the new structures are integrated for it to work.

Key factors for success:

1. Equal partnership – community and council and public sector have to be equal partners. Major challenge to transform organisations to achieve this. Need to empower all partners – must feel they are really being listened to – have feedback about all suggested actions taken and not taken and the reasons why.
2. Area Partnerships – need ambitious area partnerships who want to shape their area – not just about services.
3. Responsive Local Services – want to work with all service providers to solve community problems. In Nottingham able to solve around 80% of problems this way. Get police and youth services and schools and so on working together – school employment partnerships – delegated services to town and parish councils and alliances between town and parish councils for collective services. Delegate budgets to make it work – Highways problems in Nottingham solved by giving substantial proportion of budget to area partnerships – highways officers then obliged to deal with the area partnership.
4. Performance Information – need to have feedback on performance of the community area and how it compares with other areas. Officers then have the information to improve poor areas – much more differentiated and useful than average figures for all areas put together.

There are real benefits to be derived from partnerships.

Speech by Len Turner (Chair of Wiltshire Forum of Community Area Partnerships)

Have had community planning in the county for a long time – at the forefront of county council thinking – helped shape the One Council bid.

14 existing partnerships in the county, across the 3 other districts. Arose out of Market & Coastal Towns Initiative from South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) – aimed to encourage economic, social, environmental and cultural regeneration of communities across region. Plans for how to promote strong economies and market town communities. Lots of towns in South West region applied for funding – all handled it a bit differently - Wiltshire took into account its rural identity.

Originally partnerships were able to apply for funding directly from separate fund of millions of pounds. Unsettling to have direct funding when not directly elected or accountable, however, so RDA pulling back from that arrangement - independent Market & Coastal Towns Association to be disbanded June this year. RDA acknowledged strong networks in the South West though – will have access to around £20,000 per county and county-wide forum for

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community partnerships to come together.

A lot of partnerships grew out of action groups – Warminster good example of this. Wrote to local bodies inviting them to attend a public meeting. Also nominated representatives for different groups in community such as pensioner, disabled person, teenager – asked them about their experiences in community – good and bad points. Made sure wider community interests included – sports person, shopkeeper, business representative, arts etc. No model or blueprint to work from. Enlisted support of officers from West Wiltshire District Council and county council. Key members of this team are still working together successfully.

Communities full of untapped talent – can harness this. Groups meet regularly on topic basis – e.g. care for the elderly or youth issues. At different times different themes take forefront. People find out what's going on – highlights opportunities and duplication of efforts. For example meeting for those interested in providing travel – had surplus of drivers but shortage of vehicles. Ran a public advertisement – found organisation who had been gifted 3 minibuses but had no drivers – matched them up. Community projects about small things that change lives – making efficient use of what is already within communities.

16 years experience as elected councillor. Understand fears about partnerships as unelected bodies. Fears without foundation though – partnerships don't undermine elected councils. Councillors have to concentrate on statutory duties – partnerships are different.

Example of parish councillor who wanted to build youth shelter for village. Attended partnership meeting and asked partnership to write a letter of support. Partnership can provide powerful support for such initiatives. Project went ahead - parish secured funding, built shelter and won Queen's award.

Lots of work goes into Community Plans – around 2-3 years from start to finish. After that need people with aspirations to carry out projects. Sometimes unwarranted fear that partnerships will take over projects – not true – partnerships facilitate projects - don't have time to do more. For example, approached by group of artists for project to create visual arts facility. Partnership got architect to draw up plans and identified site and funding source, but project never happened because group didn't have aspiration to follow it through – partnership not going to do it for them.

Sometimes form Development Trusts to deliver a project where there is no appropriate body ready and willing to take it forwards. Successful information point and employment agency delivered this way in Tidworth - profits can be fed back into other projects.

Don't know what you will do in South Wiltshire – but happy to help and provide ideas.

Workshops

Split into smaller groups. Asked to consider:

1. Major fears and concerns; and
2. Most significant hopes

in relation to changes and new system.

Feedback

Too much material generated from workshops to discuss at meeting. Decided to limit feedback to two most important points from each group, positive or negative – rest of material to be typed up and distributed later (see Appendix 1 – feedback grouped by theme). In addition, participants were asked to fill in an attendee feedback sheet. This individual feedback is summarised in Appendix 2.

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 Feedback from conference on 13 May 2008

Group	Point 1	Point 2
1	Fear scale of new council – loss of control at local level.	Hope for reduced bureaucracy – more control at local level.
2	Lack of clarity about number and nature of partnerships and quangos now – let alone in future. Hadn't even heard of WFCAP! Need overview.	How can effectiveness be measured?
3	Need clear structure, roles and responsibilities. Need to deal with migrating existing partnerships into new structure. Need some consistency in way all the Community Area Partnerships operate. Also need proper funding, organisation and co-ordination and need Boundary Committee to report back so community areas get sorted ASAP.	Organisations are losing key staff because of the changes – how to deal with that.
4	How to get the right people involved – right calibre of people.	Need to ensure all small areas are represented. Avoid partnerships just being 'talking shops'.
5	If expectations aren't met what will happen then – where should we go?	Hope communities rid themselves of apathy.
6	Fear regarding membership – fear partnerships may be dominated by particular pressure groups or individuals.	Uncertain how it will fit with the democratic process – fear it will compete with democratic process, but hope it will strengthen it.
7	Fear decision making will be carried out too far from local communities – voices watered down by the time they've crossed Salisbury plain.	Hope lobbying on local issues will be strengthened.

Response by Jim Lynch:

'Talking shop' criticism raised frequently, but partnerships are supposed to be places for talking! About participatory democracy - balanced with work of Area Boards. Act as pressure group for action. Want robust local democracy in South Wiltshire – need steering group to set it up.

Response by Len Turner:

Community Partnerships are independent. Rely on council for officer support and funding, but their independence is respected – they are truly of their community. Makes it difficult to be prescriptive about what they do and how they do it. However should have common minimum operating standards to which they all subscribe.

Membership needs to be completely open. Often have fears that unreasonable individuals or groups will hi-jack and dominate partnerships if open to all – but doesn't happen in reality. Such people are unpopular – don't get anywhere – soon give up and go away. Partnerships naturally rid themselves of such people as they mature – seen it happen several times. Partnerships have spirit of working for the community.

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Response by Keith Robinson:

Have been a lot of arguments about whether changes should take place and what is best for Wiltshire - but gone beyond that now. Even those who were against it should recognise that the council is ready to listen and respond to people's concerns – anxious to resolve issues raised tonight.

Issue of achieving right balance between elected representatives, pressure groups, local councillors etc. is a dilemma. Not going to be solved by a policy statement – got to work to achieve balance in practice.

Must avoid remoteness – Area Boards and Community Area Partnerships are part of drive to engage local communities and delegate more decisions and power to local community level . Not going to be talking shops – will be effective organisations where talk leads to action.

Will keep working to achieve greater clarity about new system – improve documents and communications. Will also make sure there is flexibility to deal with different communities with distinct identities.

Response by Tim Skelton:

Changes are going to happen – clock is ticking. Confident that county council is listening to people.

Not a blank slate how partnerships will work – do need some commonality/corporacy for all partnerships.

Need to work out details in smaller group. Need people's help with that.

Response by Manjeet Gill:

Got to move forward from this point onwards – changes are going to happen. Got to look at the best of what we've currently got – and the opportunities to learn from the best others have got. May include taking trips to see other parts of the country.

Won't be easy – will be a challenge. Not a council-led process – got to be equal partners with those from the voluntary sector, parishes, emergency services etc.

Resources to make it happen are there. We have officers to conduct pilot schemes for Area Boards. Now need to form steering group to take things forward from now until end of March 2009 – work out details - next steps. Request for all those willing to be involved in steering group to sign list before leaving (Appendix 4).

List of Appendices

1. Feedback from workshop groups (analysed by theme)
2. Individual attendee feedback
3. Briefing on Community Area Partnerships and Community Area Boards
4. List of volunteers for steering group

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Appendix 1

The words of participants as recorded on flipcharts have been reproduced, grouped by theme. The themes that were raised by the largest number of groups are listed first.

Issues and concerns

Membership/representativeness

- How to identify who should become part of the area partnerships
- Balancing officers/councillors and pressure groups/the public
- Older and hard to reach/vulnerable people – how voice heard? How involved?
- Clear roles and responsibilities – what is the minimum core membership?
- Issue of quality control – who determines membership? Problem of cliques
- Groups representing people must be representative of the communities they represent.
- If 5 elected members on a Board – the task of representation is too great

Relationship with parishes

- Clarity between CAPs/parish councils
- Parish/town councils feel isolated and put to one side - need to ensure continued viability
- Additional workload/pressure on small number of people - parish councils, volunteers etc
- How to integrate different partnerships/parish councils/organisations
- Too much expected of parish councillors. No remuneration so unwilling to 'fill the vacuum'
- JD of a parish clerk – what will it be?

Smaller parishes/villages losing their voice

- Will smaller, rural areas be dominated by larger areas?
- How to ensure smaller communities have a voice on partnerships
- Forming alliances may be the answer but adds to the problem of integration
- Small villages don't feel engaged with partnerships – how will they be engaged?
- How many parishes will be automatically represented on the Board? We would like each parish to be represented or smaller parishes will lose their voice.

Boundary issues

- Where will the CAPs be? Boundary Commission needs expediting!
- No mention of artificial boundaries (bus route links, parish etc) – end up with artificial community
- Community areas
- Communities should be able to form an alliance to create plans and work together regardless of boundaries (ward, parish etc)
- Boundaries – splitting linked communities (eg East Knoyle with Burcombe)

Remoteness of County Hall/Wiltshire unitary too large

- Scale of new authority – too large? Scale vs control?
- Spreading resources too thinly
- New Unitary authority too far removed from 'man in the street'
- Fear unitary remote – Trowbridge long way away
- Decision-making maybe made too far (45 miles) from the community

Development control issues

- Planning done in Trowbridge, not locally
- Less capacity – eg Planning – central decision-making, not local

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- Lack of input by local people into the development control process. Advantage of current area committees is they meet in local areas.
- Where will responsibility for development control lie?
- Planning concern – will the parish council lose authority?

Delegated resources

- Money – need for local control and allocation
- Funding
- Will dedicated responsibility be matched with dedicated facilities and resources?
- RESOURCES!

Accountability

- Who takes responsibility if projects go wrong?
- How can we ensure effectiveness?
- Accountability to whom? For what?
- Issues of accountability – how made accountable? (cf Environment Agency)

Elected representatives

- Democratic deficit – undermining elected reps
- Political involvement
- Deficit of democracy. Currently 250 councillors, 14+ per community area. Boards will have only 5 (out of 98) elected councillors, therefore not good for local democracy.
- An observation – nobody would know which political party a member represents and so the parties wouldn't contribute to the above, therefore this would be better.

Communications

- Communication – poor generally
- Lack of knowledge re unitary – positive marketing required
- Communication of community plans
- Needs 1st class communication and a sense of shared reality

Loss of local knowledge & staff

- Local district council officer knowledge will be lost (local knowledge)
- Staff leaving now!
- Officers/councillors – lose our jobs and roles

Lack of volunteers/apathy

- How to overcome apathy
- Not enough volunteers to make it all happen.
- People not engaged

Consistency

- What is the definition for each 'community body'?
- CAPs need corporate structures and working practices for consistency and continuity
- Clear/consistent way of working

Proper support and coordination

- Properly funded support and infrastructure. CAPs require proper coordination!!
- Both Boards and partnerships need secretarial support – will that be given?

How will CAPs work?

- How to come to a consensus/agreement?
- How will members of the public get items on the agenda of the partnership?

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Duplication

- Duplication
- Overlap and duplication / gaps

Loss of local distinctiveness

- Loss of local distinctiveness and structure
- Cultural differences

Other issues noted by just one group

- Endless talking shops – no action
- Time to make decisions
- Elderly residents – WCC cutbacks – will this continue?
- How many partnerships/community bodies are there overall? Need clarity and definition.
- Are we up to managing the change?
- Cohesion between new CAP and existing partnership – eg Amesbury Town Partnership
- Lesser service
- Less accessibility to public
- How does PCT fit in?
- If parish plans are not to be used/supported there should be an alternative mechanism to put community views/aspirations forward
- If expectations aren't met, where do we go from there?
- Issue of distrust. Hard to trust each other based on a lack of information and a sense of labelling (which may/may not be accurate).
- Need a focus for commitment to enable success
- People may be 'pushed' towards projects which are not from the heart
- If the person who takes the helm lacks personal skills and alienates other members.
- Get lost in detail and lose opportunity
- End up in traditional mode – officer-led
- Nobody knows what the partnership means
- How will the PCT work on behalf of south Wiltshire?
- Layers of bureaucracy
- Resentment in voluntary sector having to take on more? (note – not forced to take on; if it is, should come with a budget)
- Power to make decisions
- Unrealistic expectations
- County takeover

Hopes and aspirations

Reduced bureaucracy

- Less bureaucracy
- Common sense will prevail
- Reduction in staff costs and bureaucracy and quangos
- Simple, effective, workable system
- Common sense
- Reduce processes/bureaucracy
- Reduce number of meetings

Increased role for parish & town councils

- Each parish council to control the amount they get involved with
- Parish councils and community groups to carry some influence!
- Rethink about how parish councils work together and what the future may hold.
- Parish councils have vote on boards
- Empower local councils
- Could make town/parish more empowered – more connections between local councillors and communities

More local control of services

- CAP enables shaping – shift from ‘they’ to ‘us’
- More local control and input
- Less Government and more local responsibility and self sufficiency
- Delegation
- Improved service level focussing on local demand and recognising when improvements have been made/achieved
- Help focus on own community

Action focussed

- More action, less claptrap
- Make it worthwhile to be involved through wins/successes
- Not just a talking shop
- New system to REALLY make a difference to enable Wiltshire to move forward
- Hope to see action (via feedback)
- Speeding of action when decision made

Funding available for local priorities

- Decision-making is genuinely at grass roots – money must follow to support
- Funding (not to be diluted)
- MONEY delegated down
- SWAG (S Wilts Area Grants) – is the funding to be replaced?
- R2 – can the fund be widened to the benefit of the community where they are raised?

Harness skills and enthusiasm in the community

- Partnerships to capture the enthusiasm of volunteers
- Find a way to ensure that partnerships WILL work and engaging people at a local level!
- New system to be made attractive to people of calibre to become involved

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- Good leadership making things happen

Joined-up services locally

- Closer working with the police and hospitals
- Local Govt bodies work together and cross borders - less duplication
- Improved locally coordinated and delivered services!!
- Encourage holistic approach to issues

CAPs to be easily accessible to all

- Openness of membership
- Plain English
- People have easily accessible link in language that people can understand – time and place
- Single point of contact to access services

Enhanced local democracy

- Local democracy
- Enough people to stand for PC
- Could encourage people to engage in local politics

More opportunities for influencing

- Influence
- Local strategic needs are identified by local people. Salisbury tends to be isolated.
- That our right to lobby on local issues will be strengthened

New ways of working

- Opportunity to invent new ways of doing
- Sparks of inspiration turn areas into better places
- Opportunity to do things differently – get out of rut

Reduced cost

- Efficiencies/economies of scale – so reduced cost
- Better support from key strategic partners without extra cost

Other issues noted by just one group

- Hope that our parish plans will be honoured
- Police – neighbourhood teams – seeing benefits already
- Simplicity in governance
- Every community to have a village hall and youth shelter
- Accountability!
- Mechanism to agree competing priorities
- Quality not quantity

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- Clarity about areas/boundaries
- Feedback soon from this meeting
- Relationship with Area Boards
- Retain sufficient DC officer expertise locally
- Use of the Sustainable Communities Act (door into Government)
- Hope it provides an opportunity to move things forward
- Hope we can begin with a system that people believe in
- Above is crucial because this has been imposed on people, they haven't voted on it!
- Hope people can be convinced that they are going to get a better service
- Break through apathy in communities
- Parish councils and clerks to be paid more?
- Provide feedback about progress
- All the recommendations of SDC's Sustainable Rural Communities Review be adopted by the new Wiltshire Unitary Council. This includes Creation of a Rural Affairs cabinet portfolio (and effective scrutiny arrangements).

Appendix 2

Attendee Feedback

We would be grateful for any issues or concerns from your organisation...

Landford villagers have given our community plan steering group a very good feedback and backing for our Parish Plan. How can we as a steering group give them a guarantee that their voices will be heard?

Would like to have list of all Community Area Partnerships in area.

I was concerned, and somewhat surprised, that no mention was made during the seminar about the effects of the Sustainable Communities Act.

Car parking for patients and visitors at the hospital. The Trust acknowledges and appreciates the recent expansion of car parking granted for phase II. Looking to the future, our commissioners are seeking a greater throughput of patients to meet waiting time targets. The effects of even a modest increase in patients and visitors will impact on our ability to meet their parking needs.

Public transport. There are good links from the city centre to the hospital, however access from the many rural communities we serve gives them and us a real transport challenge.

How many groups are there? There appear to be too many!

Focus / Plan / Community / Looking at / No hurry / Review / Consult ... = No action, just words!

Will we be listened to?

There still seems to be a 'them' situation which still makes a barrier between those who know and those that don't.

How much did the meeting cost and who paid for it?

Who will organise the smaller committee? If everyone was happy with the Unitary idea no one would have come to the meeting. Maybe this should concern you!

Clarification of changes to parish councillor/clerk roles, responsibilities and financial liabilities.

Concern that Parish Councils continue to have meaningful influence in Planning issues. We are a very small parish and therefore have less cause to influence wider issues.

Getting the people involved, overcoming apathy.

We have about 2/3 of the money we need to buy the Bemerton Meadows. Wiltshire Wildlife Trust will most probably take on management of it. Mostly, we just need moral support to ensure it happens!

Schools only seemed represented by their Extended Schools Coordinators – were their Governors asked? They are hubs in their communities and help maintain demographic balance so our villages are vibrant – too noisy sometimes for the more elderly residents!

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Please keep us in the loop as we have a good relationship with our communities.

Suggested next steps

1. Digest comments with a sub group representing all groups
2. Communicate to participants
3. Refine steps forward and communicate widely

Terms of Reference)
Scheme of Delegation) Same hymn book then!

All good stuff! As the concept develops, updates and progress meetings please.

Provide more detail about partnerships and how they do and could work.

All the recommendations of SDC's Sustainable Rural Communities Review to be adopted by the new Wiltshire Unitary Council. This includes Creation of a Rural Affairs cabinet portfolio (and effective scrutiny arrangements). This paper is aimed at addressing rural decline in Wiltshire. It is such a massive rural county that this is a particularly important issue for the new authority.

Conference evaluation - comments

Failure to clarify what was on offer – diversity of understanding in audience.

Better explanation of new structure really required.

It would be helpful to have a diagram of projected structures from county down.

We all want better for our communities... we want to retain existing good practice.

I still have no concept of the point of a CAP – not elected, no money – what do they achieve?
How is their effectiveness measured? What power do they have?

Some definition of terms which are used consistently would help.

I am not sure that we made any significant progress in developing partnerships this evening. Many members did not understand the role of the CAPs, so discussion in workshops was very confused.

A lot of talk at the meeting. Seems to have been more of a selling job rather than 'consultation'.

The confusion in the workshop about many aspects of the future organisation will probably be matched by reality when the programme begins.

Len Turner did much to allay fears but many in room had a poor understanding of how the future organisation would work – more education needed.

More specifics, less generality. Great Concern as to how parish councils will make their case for the future. The role of the parish council vs Area Board vs County council is of great concern for the future. The time bomb ticks. Please, please, we need strong decisions as to future roles.

Definition of the word partnership? Lacked clear interpretation.

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There was considerable expression of anxiety about the future and the corresponding hopes were relatively vague.

Very good to give opportunity to air concerns and fears – and to require people to identify hopes and aspirations.

Lack of direction and content – it appears that WCC and SDC may not be organised. Just 11 months to go!

Lots of confusion as to nature of partnerships which hopefully the feedback will demonstrate and lead to further clarification.

Parish plans were not mentioned. Where do they come into this?

To hear some of the 'stakeholders' speak might have given us an idea as to how they see the future and to hear directly from them their concerns.

Is the word 'community' over used?

A precise 'definition' of all partnerships would be useful – ie their brief, remit and successes and make-up. Eg clarity of each of the following: community partnerships, community areas, community plans. How they compare? What overlap is there? How diverse are they? Any duplication?

One other piece of feedback relates to the information sheet describing CAPs and CABs.

The writing style really needs to be a little less bureaucratic-sounding. For instance, the opening sentence on CAPs (in a nutshell) contains 55 words. Phrases like 'evidence base of qualitative and quantitative indicators' and 'initiatives to tackle cross-cutting issues' need translating into Plain English (or leaving out of anything but formal policy documents).

Appendix 3

AREA BOARDS – IN A NUTSHELL

The Area Board will be a formally constituted arm of the new Council for Wiltshire and will have delegated authority assigned to it to act as a local executive arm of the Council. In the longer term, the aspiration is for other key organisations providing public services to the area – such as the Health, Police and Fire services - to be represented on the Board and for them to make executive decisions at these meetings too.

Functions

- To provide a focus for community leadership, local influence and devolved decision-making, through the democratic mandate of elected councillors
- To influence the allocation of resources and delivery of public services in the community area in order to pursue local priorities and issues (to include services provided by the Town and Parish councils as agents under contract to the Council)
- To bring together key service providers and the local community into a coherent cycle, linked to budget and decision-making processes, where:
 - current conditions and future priorities are considered in the round through an annual State of the Community Area Debate;
 - priorities for action to address these issues are published in a Local Area Assessment;
 - budget priorities are set and grants are awarded for local projects, using participatory budgeting techniques, at an annual Decision Day event.
 - persistent sticky issues are identified and failing services are held to account through Local Challenge
- To agree a framework for consultations carried out in the community area on behalf of the Council (and, in the longer term, consultation carried out by other partners); also to provide feedback on major statutory consultations on behalf of the community area
- To allocate core funding for the operation of the Community Area Partnership and project funding for identified community priorities; to develop participatory budgeting processes and to be instrumental in supporting and developing funding applications to external bodies and funding streams
- To provide excellent two-way communications for the community area about public service provision and to the Council and Cabinet about the implementation and effectiveness of policies

Membership

- Elected unitary councillors in the community area (the chair to be selected from and agreed by this group) plus one Cabinet member of the unitary council
- The Board would also have as standing members elected representatives from the Town and Parish Councils in the community area; and the Chair of the Community Area Partnership; and invite representatives of the Police, Fire and Health services at a senior decision-making level as appropriate

COMMUNITY AREA PARTNERSHIPS – IN A NUTSHELL

The Community Area Partnerships have developed over a number of years and aim to be a co-ordinated voice of the community and a key local body for Town and Parish Councils, representatives of businesses, the voluntary sector, local people and community leaders to carry out consultations, to debate local issues and to prioritise community needs. The Community Area Plan and its updates are central to the partnership's activity and remain its mandate for local action and, where relevant, Parish Plans have also been developed and fed into this process. Partnerships are well established across most of the county with the exception of South Wiltshire.

Functions

- To be an open, transparent body with an inclusive terms of reference that represents key stakeholders and local people in a given community area and draws its membership widely from across the statutory and non-statutory sectors
- To identify local issues and priorities through a process of community planning with key service providers and other stakeholders; to publish these findings in a community area plan or charter and to deliver and monitor this action.
- To devise and implement a programme of community engagement, participation and consultation across the community area; to develop an evidence base of qualitative and quantitative indicators of local need.
- To lobby the Area Board for actions and decisions to be made; to work with the Board on initiatives to tackle cross-cutting issues or issues which require a collaborative style of working.
- To host local engagement events such as the State of the Community Area debate jointly with the Area Board.
- To solve local problems directly and/or encourage and support local people in developing local projects to address any problems or issues.
- To develop funding applications to external bodies and funding streams including administering this funding, if necessary through an accountable body, if it is secured.

Membership

The Community Area Partnership will operate with a terms of reference which will include the election of a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer and secretary at its Annual General Meeting. Its administration will be supported by a Community Agent. There will be a standing core membership of volunteers but the partnership is open to anyone from the area who wants to join, including representatives of local organisations and public service delivery bodies. Some partnerships will have established theme groups to deal with different community issues, whose membership will vary according to the issues at hand.

Appendix 4

I wish to be involved in steering the development of Community Area Partnerships in South Wiltshire

List of those signing up at conference on 13 May 2008

Name	Organisation
Wendy Penton-Bright	Amesbury Community Partnership
Chris Cochrane	Bemerton Meadows Group
Trevor Long	Bishopstone Parish Council
Sam Abbott	Extended schools coordinator, Amesbury
Emma Procter	Extended Schools Coordinator, Downton
Merv Quick	Landford Parish Council
Derek Hayes	Laverstock & Ford Parish Council
Lindsey Wood	Mere Parish Council
Deryck Newland	Salisbury Arts Centre
Kate Godfrey	Salisbury CAB
Cllr Paul Clegg	Salisbury District Council
Cllr John King	Salisbury District Council
Cllr Jane Launchbury	Salisbury District Council & Downton Parish Council
Annie Scadden	Salisbury District Council
Ariane Crampton	South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance
Tim Skelton	South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance
Debrah Biggs (resources permitting)	Wessex Community Action
Anthony Brown-Hovelt	Wilton Town Council
Rex Webb	Wiltshire Compact
Cllr Mary Douglas	Wiltshire County Council
Steve Milton	Wiltshire County Council
C Insp Nick Alward (supported by Supt Williams and C Insp Tapper)	Wiltshire Police