



Resilient Communities Partnership

Strategic Plan

2010 – 2013

April 2010



For more information about the Resilient Communities Partnership contact the Partnership Manager at Wiltshire Council.

Telephone: 01225 718627

Email: communitystrategy@wiltshire.gov.uk

Message from the chair of the Resilient Communities Partnership

By its very nature the concept of a resilient community is all encompassing. We have identified the areas that we feel we can add value to and have set them out in this strategic plan.

The composition of the partnership is very broad and we have been fortunate to have a wide range of views and interests represented at our strategic planning workshops.

My aim for the partnership is to build its understanding of what a resilient community is in its wider sense. We will achieve this through having a learning agenda for each meeting. We invite guest speakers and we will help where we can, adopting an advocacy role if necessary.

Having a broad understanding of what we are trying to achieve will help us identify gaps in provision and we are adopting a scrutiny role for projects that are underway. We are also keen to do what we can to 'join up' services to ensure better value for money and greater effectiveness.

Our final role is working with other thematic partnerships. We will respond to their requests in a timely manner and in turn will seek to promote our ideas through their partnerships as appropriate.

I would like to thank the committee for their sterling work in pulling together this plan and for their enthusiasm for the work yet to come. I commend this plan to you.

Rosemary Macdonald

Chief Executive

Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation

Contents

3. **What do we mean when we talk about 'resilient communities'?**
4. **What is the Resilient Communities Partnership (RCP) and where does it fit into the bigger picture?**
6. **The RCP's strategic aims for 2010-2013**
 - build a strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector
 - tackle inequalities to create stronger and more inclusive communities
 - support local involvement in decision-making and delivering solutions
 - develop lively communities through participation in arts and culture
9. **Appendix:**
Wiltshire's family of partnerships

1. What do we mean when we talk about resilient communities?

In Wiltshire we've focused on building resilient communities as our vision for some time.

We believe they will help us tackle the many challenges we face today because local and central government cannot do this alone.

But what do we mean when we talk about 'resilient communities'?

- ▶ Resilient communities are those where we find strong protective social networks and relationships.¹
- ▶ Essentially, it is where people look out for one another and help when needed.

Most often this means people getting involved in their local communities through voluntary activity. Creating opportunities for community participation is therefore a key priority for us. What's more, we recognise the critical role of the **voluntary and community sector** in building resilience.

We know that some communities are better equipped than others to improve their local areas. Poverty, disadvantage, and inequalities can significantly hinder a community's ability to work together to tackle issues. Where this occurs we need to target support for building resilience where it is most needed. **Tackling inequalities** to provide for more inclusive communities is one of our goals.

Supporting the development of resilient communities requires a sharing of power. By this we mean sharing the responsibilities that come with making decisions and delivering activities. It is not about statutory agencies deciding what the issues are in communities and then imposing solutions. Solutions to local issues are more effective when they are developed and owned by local people.

Developing new ways for people to engage in decision-making and participate in their communities in order to define local needs is another key priority for us.

Of course, organisations, especially statutory bodies, have an important role and responsibility in delivering services in a way which complements and enhances local community and individual action. We recognise the value and advantage to be gained by **organisations working more closely together** and basing decisions on evidence and intelligence. We believe the area boards in Wiltshire are proving to be successful in joining up the work of organisations and we will continue to promote this way of working.

Our vision for resilient communities aims to create vibrant and active communities where people have the opportunity to enjoy their leisure time, and strengthen their sense of belonging to a special and distinctive local community through the **arts and culture**. Providing for these opportunities is also an area we have identified as a priority.

¹ 'Capability and Resilience: Beating the Odds' Economic and Social Research Council, 2006

2. What is the Resilient Communities Partnership and where does it fit into the bigger picture?

The Resilient Communities Partnership (RCP) is one of eight thematic delivery partnerships which sit within Wiltshire's 'family of partnerships' under the Wiltshire Assembly.

The family of partnerships forms Wiltshire's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and as such it is where statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and the business sector come together to debate and articulate the ambitions and vision for Wiltshire.

The other thematic delivery partnerships are tasked with overseeing the implementation of priorities in the areas of:

- housing
- economy
- community safety
- children and young people
- health and wellbeing
- transport
- environment

'Building stronger and more resilient communities' is the overall vision which is shared by the members of the Wiltshire Assembly.

The Resilient Communities Partnership therefore has an important role in helping to deliver this vision and members have worked together to identify the specific contributions it can make. It recognises that it must focus its attention on key areas of activity and this strategic plan sets out those areas in more detail.

An analysis of current activity across the family of partnerships enabled the RCP to agree on the following four priorities:

1. Build a strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector
2. Tackle inequalities to create stronger and more inclusive communities
3. Support local involvement in decision-making and implementing priorities
4. Develop lively communities through participation in arts and culture



The RCP recognises that its priorities are also important to the other thematic partnerships and consequently it actively seeks to work with them on these 'cross-cutting' issues.

The members of the RCP represent organisations and agencies with an interest and expertise in its priorities. Not surprisingly, the voluntary and community sector is heavily represented on the partnership and this is regarded as one of its strengths.

Having agreed its strategic priorities for 2010-2013 the RCP now needs to concentrate its efforts on defining appropriate activities which it believes will contribute to Wiltshire's vision for resilient communities and, where appropriate, express these within the Local Agreement for Wiltshire (LAW). It also oversees the delivery of those activities to ensure that they stay on track and deliver their intended results.

Every year the RCP will agree a delivery plan of activities within which it will identify responsibilities, resources, and timescales.

During the year it will regularly monitor progress towards agreed goals in order to manage overall performance.



3. The RCP's strategic aims for 2010-2013

First aim: build a strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector

The voluntary and community sector (VCS) has a key role to play in developing resilient communities. People's involvement in community or voluntary activities helps to create the strong supportive social networks described earlier. It is the existence of these networks, and the services the sector delivers, which create resilience.

The RCP has identified four priority areas for action which will help it to achieve its strategic aim of building a strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector:

Volunteering:

Volunteering is a priority area for action because we recognise that a thriving voluntary and community sector depends on its ability to attract, recruit, train and retain committed volunteers.

Infrastructure support:

In order to develop and thrive, most voluntary organisations and community groups benefit from support to strengthen their structures and provide for their longer term sustainability. That's why one of our priority areas for action is to support the development of excellent quality VCS infrastructure services for the sector.



Influencing strategy:

We believe that the voluntary and community sector deserves a place at the tables where strategic decisions about Wiltshire are made. This requires the sector to work collaboratively and organise itself in order to make its voice heard. We support the sector in this, particularly through the four forums to be developed as part of the infrastructure support service, the Wiltshire Voluntary Sector Assembly (WVSA) and the Wiltshire Assembly (WA).

Relationship with the statutory sector:

The relationship between the statutory and the voluntary and community sector is one which should be characterised by positive joint-working in a transparent and trusting environment. The voluntary and community sector is multilayered, diverse, unique and independent and, as such, has a great deal to offer. We will prioritise measures which help to develop a good relationship between the two sectors and we regard the Compact (with its codes of practice) as a key mechanism for delivering on this.

Second aim: tackle inequalities to create stronger and more inclusive communities

The inequalities which exist in some of our communities represent our biggest challenge to building resilience. Our vision is for stronger and more inclusive communities where we see diversity celebrated, inclusion promoted and disadvantage challenged.

Mapping inequalities

'Knowing' our communities is a prerequisite to action. Providing for an evidenced approach to setting priorities and resourcing activities is a key priority for the Resilient Communities Partnership. In Wiltshire we have a great deal of intelligence within statutory, voluntary and other sectors about inequalities within our communities – our goal is to build on this and see it harnessed by the family of partnerships and area boards.



Respecting diversity

Communities which respect and celebrate diversity are more likely to be ones which exhibit resilience when confronted by threat or adversity. In order to achieve this we will actively support measures which help to make our communities more cohesive and inclusive.

We believe that the creation of a single equalities organisation for the county, within the voluntary sector, has a central role to play in working towards equal chances and better lives for local people.

Challenging disadvantage

Poverty and disadvantage exist in Wiltshire although they are often hidden. The mapping of inequalities will help us to identify where we need to be working to tackle social deprivation and allocate resources appropriately.

Tackling financial exclusion

Financial inclusion is about ensuring everyone has the capability and opportunity to access the financial services and products needed to participate in modern day society.

Through 'Wiltshire Money' we will address the needs of people who are excluded from financial services and products, especially those living in rural areas.

Third aim: support local involvement in decision-making and delivering solutions

Bringing governance to the local level

The establishment of the Wiltshire area boards in 2009 was an innovative step behind which was the goal of bringing governance to a local level.

The area boards are where Wiltshire Council and its elected members work directly with local people on the issues which are relevant locally. In addition to this, they are forums through which other organisations and public service agencies can work with local people and with each other.

We will continue to: promote the area boards to raise awareness of them; demonstrate the added value gained by organisations working more closely together through the area boards; and encourage more people to become involved in local decisions which affect them through the area board process.

Providing for community participation

There is a long and successful history of community planning in Wiltshire. Through the community partnerships local people have

participated in their local communities to develop their own priorities and improvements.

There is an opportunity to build on this history and to develop new ways for people to engage in their communities. We will prioritise measures which provide for wider community participation and deliver more inclusive and evidence-based community planning.

Fourth aim: develop lively communities through participation in arts and culture

We believe that arts and culture make a significant contribution to the development of more resilient communities. The RCP intends to raise the profile of these dimensions of resilience through the Wiltshire family of partnerships.

Our goals in relation to arts and culture in Wiltshire include: promoting the role of arts and culture in relation to the contribution they make to building resilient communities; supporting the development of a strategic plan for arts and culture in the county; encouraging and supporting local community involvement; and recognising the role of the voluntary and community sector in arts development and delivery.

Wiltshire Assembly

The overarching LSP for Wiltshire

Chair: Independent - John Wray, Archdeacon of Wilts

Frequency: 2 times per year - March and October

Role:

Review, deliberation and direction

- Receive key information, issues and consultation research
- Articulate the ambitions and vision for Wiltshire in relation to a wide range of issues
- Forum for debates in which different interests can be heard
- Promote public understanding, involvement and awareness

Members and Officers: Large, wide cross-section of partnerships and agencies; including public, voluntary and community, faith, business and major employers, local authorities (WAC), Community Area Partnerships.

- Formally approve and adopt Wiltshire Community Strategy
- Receive reports from WCG and PSB
- Hold WCG and PSB to account for performance against Community Strategy, and other key strategies and policies
- Set challenges for WCG and PSB
- Forum for State of Wiltshire debate



Strategy and action plans for sign off. Performance reports.

Give direction, ideas and vision for Wiltshire.

Wiltshire Coordinating Group

Strategic Planning and Monitoring of Performance

Chair: Wiltshire Council Chief Executive

Membership: 12-14 small, tightly defined, lead officers (scope for some Members) from thematic and strategic partnerships (including WFCAP)

Frequency: 6 weekly

Accountable to: Assembly and PSB

Role: Coordination and evaluation

- Strategy development - translating vision into strategy
- Production of Community Strategy - on direction from Assembly
- Production and negotiation of LAA - on direction from Assembly
- Recommend actions to PSB to deliver strategies
- Commission research, data gathering, evidence
- Report progress to Assembly on performance against Community Strategy and LAA targets
- Work with different sectors - business, public, voluntary/third sector
- Wiltshire-wide perspective (not organisational)
- LAA driver and oversee monitoring (Wiltshire Council is the accountable body - WCG monitor performance)
- Cross thematic issues focus and geographical focus

Wiltshire Public Service Board

The forum for public sector corporate and financial planning

Chair: Wiltshire Council Leader

Frequency: 6 weekly

Accountable to: Wiltshire Council, own organisations

Role: Authorisation, implementation and commissioning

- Allocation of resources
- Delivery of services and functions
- Delivery of the LAA
- Coordinate corporate and financial plans of public bodies
- Monitor expenditure by public bodies
- Hold WCG and thematic partnerships to account
- Formally approve and secure delivery of the LAA

Members / Chairs: (scope for some officers) who can commit resources

Criteria for membership:

- Size of budget for Wiltshire
- Potential match of organisations' objectives and strategy

Possible members:

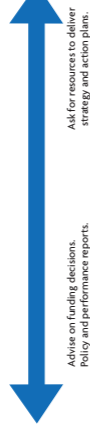
- Wiltshire Council (lead public sector organisation and accountable body for LAA)
- NHS Wiltshire
- Police
- Police Authority
- SWIPA
- Learning and Skills Council
- Fire
- Probation Service

Community Partnerships

WFCAP

Area Boards

Cabier portfolio holder

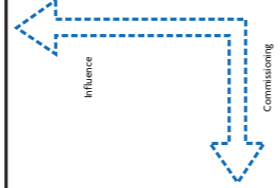


Influence strategy development, geographic, community needs and issues

Ask for resources to deliver strategy and action plan.

Advise on funding decisions. Policy and performance reports.

Influence strategy development, geographic, community needs and issues. Report on performance.



Thematic Delivery Partnerships

Accountable to: WCG and PSB

Draft Membership:

- Housing Partnership
- Environmental Alliance
- Transport Partnership
- Resilient Communities Partnership
- Health and Wellbeing Partnership

Role: Implementation and provision

- Receive funding from a variety of sources
- Deliver and implement plans and priorities
- Deliver and commission services
- Develop and influence strategy in WCG and assembly
- Working within remit
- Funding applications
- Performance monitoring

Wiltshire Council Scrutiny

Scrutinise partnerships holding them to account for performance including safeguarding, learning disability, equality and diversity and rural proofing

