

Wiltshire Coordinating Group

23 January 2009
Community First Offices, Devizes
2 – 4pm

A G E N D A

1	Welcome and Apologies	
2	Minutes of the last meeting To agree the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2008 as an accurate record and to consider any matters arising	
3	Response to the Economic Downturn George Bright, 'Credit Crunch' Project Leader, to report on the progress of his work	
4	Wiltshire Assembly To discuss the meeting on 26 March 2009	
5	Communications Laurie Bell, Service Director – Policy, Research & Communications, to give an update on initial branding proposals for the Wiltshire Assembly	
6	LPSA – Performance Reward Grant Keith Robinson to give an oral report	
7	“Axis of Influence” Paper attached. To consider how this approach could relate to the work discussed by Matthew Taylor on “egalitarianism, hierarchy, fatalism and individualism”	
8	RIEP Funding Peter Fanshawe, Manager, Wiltshire Children & Young People's Services Partnership, to share some thoughts on proposals regarding Website and common needs assessment	
9	New Equalities Framework	
10	Any matters raised or arising from Partnerships	
11	Date and venue of next meeting to be agreed at this meeting	

Wiltshire Assembly: Combating the Credit Crunch Project Status Report 3 18th January 2009

Progress since last Report

All survey activities envisaged in the project brief have been implemented – since last report questionnaires have been issued to all Community Areas via WFCAP, WPSB Board members and about to go to WCC Service Directors; Citizens' Panel Survey issued to approx. 3,000 residents. Meetings held with Business Link, Salisbury CAB, Community Safety Partnership Delivery & Performance Management Group, Wiltshire Police, WSEP, WACC and GWE; attended launch of Wiltshire Money. Activity statistics received from Wiltshire CABs; voluntary sector questionnaires starting to be returned.

The only significant recent surveys have been the LAs survey by CECSNET and a report published in the Saturday Independent (17th Jan) on increases in acquisitive crime.

Recent Findings

1. Job Losses - The Wiltshire Area Task Force, chaired by Steve Richards of SWRDA, met on 7th January. Reported then and confirmed in subsequent discussions with Jobcentre Plus and business contacts is a significant increase in the number of redundancy decisions being made. In the main these are for relatively small numbers of people but from an increasing number of businesses. The potential 'fall-out' from the position at Honda is being monitored closely - there are businesses in Wiltshire in the supply-chain and staff who commute to work there. There are two other large businesses where there are concerns. In one case WCC (AC) has been directly involved in working to assist the employer. The December JSA claimant figures for December will be published next week but it is believed that January – March is the period when we are likely to see the real impact of the recession on jobs.
2. Business Climate – early returns to the WACC survey indicate a significant downturn in business confidence, which is one of the major reasons for the job losses. The non-food retail sector is gloomy and there are concerns that the next quarterly rent payments will prove too much for some – there are examples of renegotiations of rental terms happening but mainly in the larger retail businesses. Pubs, restaurants and hotels are reporting lower levels of activity on a comparative basis with previous years. There are concerns that manufacturers are running down order books with consequences later.
3. Community Safety Issues – there are concerns that the credit crunch will lead to increases in arson in commercial properties, anti-social behaviour (especially with the increase in empty retail premises), acquisitive crime and family stress related crimes such as domestic violence. Splitz report some increase in calls to them re the latter but not significant problems at this stage. Nationally there are reports of that but there is no data confirming such increases in Wiltshire - this will be monitored with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service.
4. CABx – activity statistics indicate an increase of 17% in demand for CABx services. The largest increase has been advice on employment/unemployment issues. The largest areas of demand are for debt and benefit advice. Critical problem areas where increased pressure is being seen are credit card debts, unsecured loan debts, bankruptcy, council tax arrears, threatened homelessness and private sector rent problems.

Positive Points

1. There are businesses and other organisations that are doing well despite the credit crunch. A prime local example is Apetito which has just had its best quarter's results ever to December.
2. There will be empty retail premises in high streets – there may be opportunities for public services, voluntary sector and others to use them cost-effectively to promote services to residents and assist the 'street scene'.

George Bright

Briefing Note for the Wiltshire Co-ordinating Group

23rd January 2009

Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) 2008 – Performance Reward Grant

1. This note summarises:
 - a. The performance Reward grant expected from the LPSA
 - b. The amount planned to be reinvested in the target areas earning the grant
 - c. The balance that will be available for other initiatives
2. The note describes how the grant might be used.

Background

3. Wiltshire agreed an LPSA with government that ended in March 2008. The government will pay Wiltshire County Council Performance Reward Grant (PRG) for achieving 'stretch' performance in the targets areas.
4. There are two conditions that relate to PRG:
 - Timing - government will pay **half the PRG due at the end of 2008/09 and the balance in 2009/10.**
 - This grant must be spent **50% on capital and 50% on revenue** expenditure.
5. WiSB and the County Council agreed to share PRG received with the target area and the relevant partnership (not necessarily a particular organisation):
 - For 100% achievement, up to £250,000 (spread over 2 years, half revenue, half capital) is available to go back to the target area. The 'target area' will identify what will be achieved with the money to justify the allocation.
 - Achievement between 60% and 99% 'of the stretch' will earn the appropriate proportion of the £250,000. No PRG is received for achievement below 60%.

Performance Reward Grant to be claimed

6. We now have results for most targets and a table giving the details is attached. The PRG to be claimed is expected to total almost £5.4m, and this will be received over two years (£2.7m at in March 2009 and the same in 2009/10). Of this, £1.5m is expected to be reinvested in the target areas (£0.77m a year), leaving a balance of ££3.8m (£1.9m a year) to be allocated.

Process to allocate grant

7. The minutes of the WiSB meeting on 17th March 2008 state:
 - *How will the LPSA performance reward grant (PRG) be distributed? The accountable body for this money is the County Council. It had been agreed that a proportion of PRG would go back to the areas achieving the reward grant (up to £250,000 for 100% of the stretch) and that WiSB would be asked to make recommendations to the County Council on priorities for the use of the balance. The new governance arrangements give the opportunity for advice on this from the Assembly, the Strategy Group and the Accountable Bodies Group, as well as the Thematic Delivery Partnerships.*
8. The grant is payable to the County Council and it is that body that will allocate the grant. A recommendation will be made to the Assembly and thence to the Council.
9. This presents a unique opportunity for us to put additional resources into our Local Agreement for Wiltshire (LAW) – and if we apply the resources at a local level we can build local support and commitment to the LAW. Subject to the

conditions attached to the grant set out in paragraph 4, the suggested approach is that:

- a. The amounts identified for reinvestment in the target areas should be allocated, accordingly, on receipt of a short proposal by the relevant partnership to the Wiltshire Public Service Board, describing the proposal and its intended effect (including its impact on the LAW)
- b. A proposal is made to the Assembly in March that the balance is made available for any initiatives arising from George Bright's report, and bids from the new Area Boards to fund initiatives in the local community which will command local support and contribute to the achievement of the LAW. This is 'one-off' money that will only be available in 2009/10 and 2010/11

This will need to be properly managed but we should minimise the costs of administration to maximise what goes out to areas.

It would be helpful to consider how we could encourage bids from all 20 community areas, with a reasonable spread across the LAW ambitions – some thoughts for consideration:

- a. As we would like to make an allocation to every area that can make a reasonable bid, should we give an *indicative* figure (eg 1/20 of the total: £96k) to help set realistic expectations and avoid wasted effort?
- b. Would Thematic Delivery Partnerships identify where the 'hotspots' are for the different priorities/targets in the LAW/LAA, and translate these into plain-English? This information could then be given to Area Boards to help them in developing bids.
- c. Would Thematic Delivery Partnerships be willing to identify people to work with the Area Board to develop the bids and work with projects?
- d. Would WCG be willing to take a first look at the spread of bids to feed comments to the Wiltshire Public Service Board?

For consideration

Report by: Sharon Britton

Performance Reward Grant to be claimed (50% capital, 50% revenue)	Total PRG to be claimed		50% payable at end 2008/09 and 2009/10	
	total	Reinvest in target	total	Reinvest in target
Target 1: Improve the health and well-being of people in Wiltshire (LPSA Lead: Maggie Rae) [TDP: Health and Wellbeing Board]	232,572	66,666	116,286	33,333
Target 2: Support to prevent hospital admission as a result of a fall (LPSA Lead: Maddy Ferrari) [TDP: Health and Wellbeing Board]	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Target 3: Improve the safety of victims of domestic violence and their children (LPSA Lead: Lynn Gaskin/Hayley Mortimer) [TDP: Community Safety Partnership]	566,895	162,500	283,448	81,250
Target 4: Reduce accidental fires and arson – fires and injuries (LPSA Lead: Alan Harper) [TDP: Community Safety Partnership]	436,073	125,000	218,036	62,500
Target 5: Improve the basic skills of adult learners (LPSA Lead: Sue Watkins/Grant Pearson) [TDP: Wiltshire Strategic Economic Partnership]	610,502	175,000	305,251	87,500
Target 6: Improve school attendance - primary and secondary schools (LPSA Lead: Maxine Gibson) [TDP: Children and Young People's Trust Board]	244,201	70,000	122,100	35,000
Target 7: Reduce the amount of household waste generated (LPSA Lead: Simon Smith/Catherine Dixon) [TDP: Environmental Alliance]	872,146	250,000	436,073	125,000
Target 8: Reduce homelessness among vulnerable young people (LPSA Lead: Sue Nash) [TDP: Housing Partnership]	723,484	207,386	361,742	103,693
Target 9: Management of street scene – litter etc and survey (LPSA Lead: Tracy Carter) [TDP: Community Safety Partnership]	697,717	200,000	348,859	100,000
Target 10: Anti-social behaviour – alcohol related reoffending and survey 'has ASB reduced, got worse, same' (LPSA Lead: Lynn Gaskin) [TDP: Community Safety Partnership]	872,146	250,000	436,073	125,000
Target 11: Improve the educational attainment of looked after children (LPSA Lead: Maxine Gibson) [TDP: Children and Young People's Trust Board]	139,543	40,000	69,772	20,000
Sub total	5,395,279	1,546,552	2,697,640	773,276
	balance	3,848,727	balance	1,924,364
We are awaiting results for Target 12: Reduce % young people aged 16-18 not in Education, Employment or Training (LPSA Lead: Merfyn Williams) [TDP: Wiltshire Strategic Economic Partnership/CYPTB]	Full PRG available: 872,146	Unlikely to achieve - results due Feb 09		

50% payable at end of 2008/09 and 2009/10 (to be used: half capital, half revenue)

Empowering agencies to engage communities

Exploring how public agencies can assess and improve their
openness and ability to respond to community influence

Research conducted by **changes**
for the Community Development Exchange
with support from the National Empowerment Partnership

March 2008

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Empowerment
Partnership

The **Community Development Exchange** (CDX) is the UK-wide membership organisation for community development. We work to ensure that community development is recognised and supported as a powerful way of tackling inequality and achieving social justice. CDX reflects a diverse range of interests in community development across all sectors and fields, and has members from across the UK. Find out more at www.cdx.org.uk

changes is an independent consultancy specialising in community engagement, community development and active citizenship. Based in the West Midlands, changes works across the UK offering expertise in facilitation, training, research, evaluation and consultancy. Find out more at www.changesuk.net

This research has been funded by the **National Empowerment Partnership**.

The researchers would like to thank **Dosti** (Dudley's Community Empowerment Network) and staff from the following agencies who have taken part in the research:

- Dudley Community Partnership
- Dudley Primary Care Trust
- West Midlands Police
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
 - Directorate of the Urban Environment
 - Directorate of Adult, Community & Housing Services
 - Children's Services
 - Community Safety Team
 - Chief Execs Directorate
 - Neighbourhood Management

Find out more about Dosti at: www.dosti.org.uk

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1.0 Introduction

This report describes the results of initial research with representatives of public agencies and includes consideration of early drafts of a new framework to help public agencies explore

- **how open they are to community influence**

in relation to

- **their potential to respond to community influence**

This framework has been given the working title 'Echo'. This reflects the fact that it is a response to the development of the *Axis of Influence*¹, a framework for community networks to assess and increase their capacity to influence public agencies.

1.1 Context

Communities and Local Government, which sets policy on local government, housing, urban regeneration and planning is committed to giving

“local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives.” (Strong and Prosperous Communities, Oct 2006)

National indicators reinforce this:

- NI4 Percentage of people who feel they can **influence** decisions in their locality
- PSA21: Building cohesive, **empowered** and active communities

In 2005, 'changes' was commissioned by the Community Empowerment Network in Dudley (Dosti) to develop a framework for community networks to assess and improve the influence they have on decisions made by agencies and partnerships.

The resultant *Axis of Influence* plots the 'capacity of community networks to influence' against 'how influential they feel'. It is about members of a network plotting how influential the network is and looking at what they can do to make themselves more influential, whilst recognising that there are some things that are outside their control.

During the research, which involved community, voluntary and statutory sector organisations, it became apparent that there was a missing piece to the jigsaw about **how receptive the statutory sector and partnerships are to community influence**. Members of community networks felt that:

¹ The Axis of Influence was researched and developed by changes in association with Dosti 2005-2007. A handbook on the Axis of Influence, written by changes, published by CDX and funded by NEP is available from www.cdx.org.uk

Stakeholders just want to tick boxes and not necessarily listen to what we have to say

...many of them have their own agendas; they have only so much money they can spend and will give to things that they think will be of benefit...

So, there are two sides to influence. One is about communities becoming more influential and the other is about the public sector being more open to influence

*It's not about communities doing more training – it's about service providers learning how to do it. We do need to demonstrate that empowerment and working with communities is worth it and that this makes a difference to achieving targets in health, education and transport for example.
Hazel Blears speech to NEP, 4th March 2008*

1.2 Community empowerment at the heart of empowering agencies

The *Axis of Influence* recognises the link between 'influence' and 'community empowerment', by incorporating the five community empowerment dimensions featured in DiCE² which provide a useful guide to working in ways which are empowering for individuals – in both community and agency and which result in 'empowerment'.

The five dimensions are about communities which are:

- **Confident** – where you work in ways which increase people's skills, knowledge and confidence – and instil in them a belief that they can make a difference
- **Inclusive** – where you work in ways which recognise that discrimination exists, promote equality of opportunity and good relations between groups and challenge inequality and exclusion
- **Organised** – where you work in ways which bring people together around common issues and concerns in organisations and groups that are open, democratic and accountable
- **Cooperative** – where you work in ways which build positive relationships across groups, identify common messages, develop and maintain links to national bodies and promote partnership working
- **Influential** – where you work in ways which encourage and equip communities to take part and influence decisions, services and activities

² DiCE: Dimensions of Community Empowerment: a framework for planning & evaluating community empowerment and community well-being, changes 2008. A guide to the 5 community empowerment dimensions has been produced in a booklet by changes & CDX and funded by NEP. This is available from www.cdx.org.uk

From a public sector perspective, the five community empowerment dimensions respond to issues which you may experience around, for example:

- people not contributing in meetings, not understanding the constraints you are working within or having unrealistic expectations
- 'usual suspects' or the 'same voices' being the only ones you hear, people feeling that others gain favours at their expense or communities feeling hard done by
- not feeling confident that 'representatives' are speaking on behalf of others, initiatives and activities being short-term and fizzling out or 'communities' not agreeing on ways forward
- communities competing with each other, competing demands for your time and resources or duplication of work
- consultation fatigue, getting beyond the targets, having a legitimacy, prioritising what you are doing

Reflecting this, participants in the current research recognise that community empowerment is integral to priorities around community influence and addresses issues, such as:

- Only listening to the loudest voices*
- 'true' engagement / mutual honesty about what is possible*
- Open dialogue and understanding of constraints*
- Representation of community voices*
- Incorporating rights and responsibilities*
- Increasing community expectations to consider bigger wider reaching issues*
- Developing mutually beneficial relationships*
- Do some people have more right to influence than others?*
- How to deal with people's own prejudices*
- How to choose / mediate between conflicting interests*
- Listening to one collective voice*
- Our role in developing groups to have a collective voice*

2.0 The research

With the availability of research funding from the National Empowerment Partnership, Community Development Exchange commissioned **changes** to follow up the *Axis of Influence*, and explore a potential framework to illustrate the role of public agencies in relation to community influence.

The intention was to identify the key essentials of a 'tool' that could be used by public sector agencies to consider how open they are to community influence, how to find evidence of this, how to improve their openness to influence and how to identify and clarify those things that impact on their openness to influence.

The development of this second axis, following on from the community networks *Axis of Influence*, reflects the essential two-way nature of the process. As one public sector respondent said:

...in the end people can only influence if (we) are listening

In terms of the research, the focus broadened from 'statutory' to 'public sector' to include all members of the LSP. It was agreed that we were looking at 'public bodies' i.e. partnerships and single statutory sector bodies, working in:

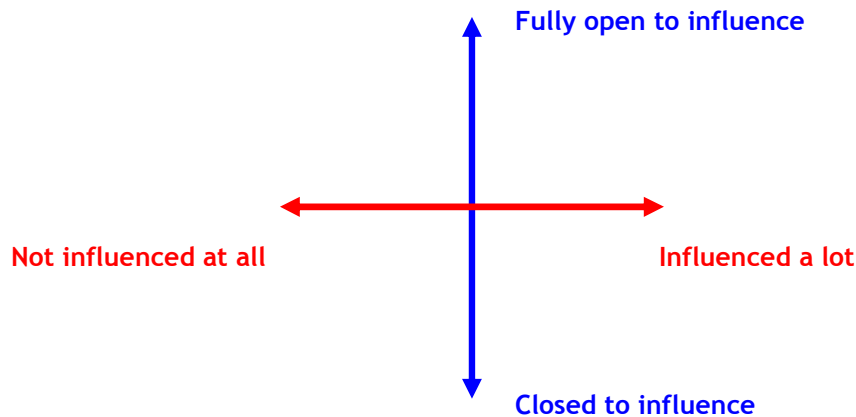
- different fields: health, planning, housing, environmental, PCT
- at different levels: operational influence to strategic influence
- with a different focus of influence: service delivery / strategic planning / consultation

2.1 Who we talked to

The 'Dosti' co-ordinator identified an extensive list of potential participants (an initial 29, with the expectation that some would be unable to take part in the timescale available – January to mid-March 2008). In the event we conducted 10 telephone and face to face interviews – some with two members of the same agency or department, with 14 individuals taking part in total. Nine individuals, including five with no previous input, attended a workshop to 'test out' initial findings.

2.2 What we did

changes had drafted ideas for an initial axis/framework (see below), to be tested out with interviewees. It plotted open/closed to influence against how influenced agencies are/have been.



Interview Questions

- What does community 'influence' mean to you? – to your service?
- Why do you want/need to be influenced by communities?
- Looking at the diagram - What is the difference between being open / closed and being influenced or not? (this question is about mechanisms, dialogue and outcomes)
- From a public agency perspective - what does each of these four extremes 'look like'? i.e. can you describe the experience of:
 - Being closed to community influence
 - Being open to community influence
 - Not being influenced at all by communities
 - Being influenced a lot by communities
- So – what is the experience in each quadrant? What is happening for the public agency – what is happening amongst communities?
- How does 'community empowerment' fit into this?

During the first set of interviews it became clear that the original horizontal axis needed re-defining, from 'how much influence' to 'potential to respond'.

At a later stage, the axis turned 90 degrees to avoid the impression of a hierarchical 'ladder' on the axis which considers 'open to influence'.

Follow-up workshop

Following the interviews, information was extracted to contribute to the development of a continuum, of public agencies' openness to influence.

These were then presented back, in their raw state, to workshop participants, some of whom had been interviewed and some not. The aims of the workshop were to give people the opportunity to:

- find out more about the axis and how the interviews have informed its development
- contribute their own thoughts, ideas and experiences

The reasons people gave for attending the workshop seemed to reflect the views of the people that were interviewed. In general there seemed to be a commitment to being more open to influence, and a desire to start thinking about how it might happen, given the sometimes overwhelming scale of the task!

I'm on a learning curve

Everyone ought to go through this process – it makes you really think

I'm very interested in how we as an organisation can influence change

I am interested in how can we better engage with the community – and wonder if and how this fits into our Community Engagement strategy

I thought it was fascinating when I was interviewed, it rings lots of bells!

By the end of the session those who attended said that they felt:

Enthusiastic – hopeful – proud – inspired – positive about way forward – good – made me want to re-assess my current situation – influential – positive – wish more people could catch my enthusiasm

3.0 Findings

The following findings, based on information from the initial interviews and workshop, are presented as:

- Exploring 'influence' – what does it mean to people
- What do we mean by 'community'
- Why agencies need/want to be influenced

3.1 Exploring 'Influence'

We asked people what influence means to them and received a whole range of responses which reflect the observation that it *'means different things to different people'*, including:

Outcome

- Changing approach
- Changing opinions
- Influencing communities to be able to influence us
- Making a difference
- Having an impact
- Have your say
- Communities can influence a decision / outcome – or they can influence a decision maker
- Causes me to act in a way which I would not otherwise do – not my planned or usual response

Method

- Helping communities to understand how our services work and why they work in the way that they do
- The ability to affect/bring about change
- Process centred around negotiation (shared understanding)
- Dialogue
- Decision making
- Forming relationships
- Promoting
- Being considered
- Listening v action (different)

In addition to being about outcomes or method/approach, 'influence' can take different forms depending on whether it is being used in a sense that is strategic, operational, tactical or personal. It is about power relationships – and is not always a win-win.

3.2 What do we mean by ‘community’

Although it didn't ask this specific question, inevitably the research threw up the question of what we mean by ‘community’.

The following illustrates that there are many different ‘communities’ depending on a whole variety of factors and that consideration needs to be given to the implications of this in the community engagement strategies of statutory sector agencies.

It is also clear, although not surprising, that different agencies have different understandings of ‘community’. The health service, for instance, whilst having a very clear focus on the treatment of individual members of the public at surgeries, hospitals and clinics, also have contact with a whole range of organised groups around different health issues and people experiencing the same condition (e.g. diabetes groups, coronary care, carers) – which would be viewed as ‘communities of interest’.

Local authorities, on the other hand, may have a stronger focus on geographical communities through initiatives like Local Area Agreements, Comprehensive Area Assessments, Ward committees, Area panels etc. although not to the exclusion of communities of interest, such as carers groups, developers, lobbyists, landowners.

The police may transcend the two with, for example: a focus on particular crimes (victims or perpetrators of domestic violence), or on an area experiencing a particularly high rate of burglary.

All agencies may have a recognition of, and particular initiatives focused on, communities of identity: youth diversion programmes, Race Hate incident group, homophobic crime reporting initiatives.

This brief exploration nicely illustrates the complexities of the term ‘community’!

3.3 Why agencies need/want to be influenced:

This question seemed much more straightforward than the one asking people to say what they understand by the term ‘community influence’. Responses were very clear and they illustrate a mixture of statutory requirement and desire (for the benefit of agencies and/or for the benefit of communities):

It is a requirement through the White paper: duty to cooperate with partners and a duty to engage

We have a legal duty to engage

We are public servants

Communities are tax payers

It can be part of 'giving ownership' and increasing respect for facilities, for example, so they don't get ruined

Research shows that the more that people feel engaged in the design and delivery of services, the more satisfied they are likely to be with the council

To be able to provide quality and flexible services that meet community needs

We should be accountable to communities in terms of service delivery

So that people can have some power and influence over their lives

It is important to have a common vision and a shared purpose

While there is a general acceptance that, 'being influenced' in some way by 'the community' is a good thing, it is recognised that there are also some challenges. For example:

- Being influenced can be very threatening and....by its nature it is a challenge
- There are often competing interests over the same issue
- Tensions between elected members, (especially back bench Councillors who can often feel disenfranchised), and participative democracy involving community groups and representatives

4.0 Introduction to the 'echo' framework

The following framework plots:

1. How open statutory agencies are to community influence

This is about the structures, processes, attitudes, skills and cultures that make an agency open to influence by communities

In relation to

2. Their potential to respond to community influence

This is about legal, financial and practical constraints which impact on an agency's potential to respond

The relationship between the two, and the continuum from being closed to being fully open to influence, are demonstrated on the axis overleaf. It's about moving towards being more open with a proviso that public agencies need to be clear about when influence is not possible. Eight intermediate positions are identified between being open and closed to community influence, each with a descriptor and a series of characteristics which explain the detail.

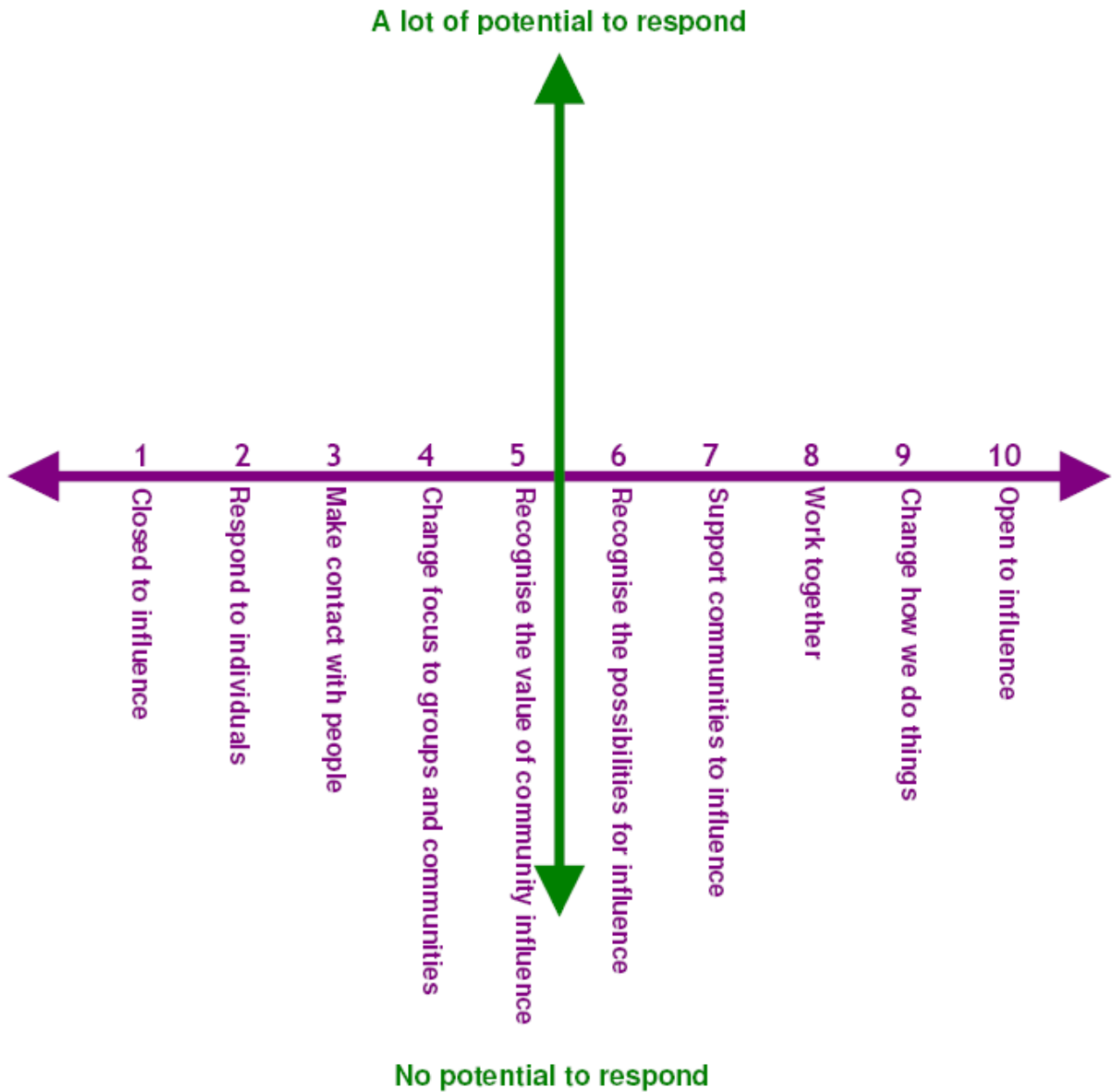
The characteristics and the interpretation of the vertical axis (agencies' 'potential to respond') have all been identified through the research.

The intention is to develop the framework so it is relevant for different public agencies (the language – a move away from 'statutory' is to reflect the relevance to partnerships) working on and with different issues, on different scales at different times. Assessment of position on the axis provides a 'snapshot in time' of the agency's openness to community influence and their potential to respond.

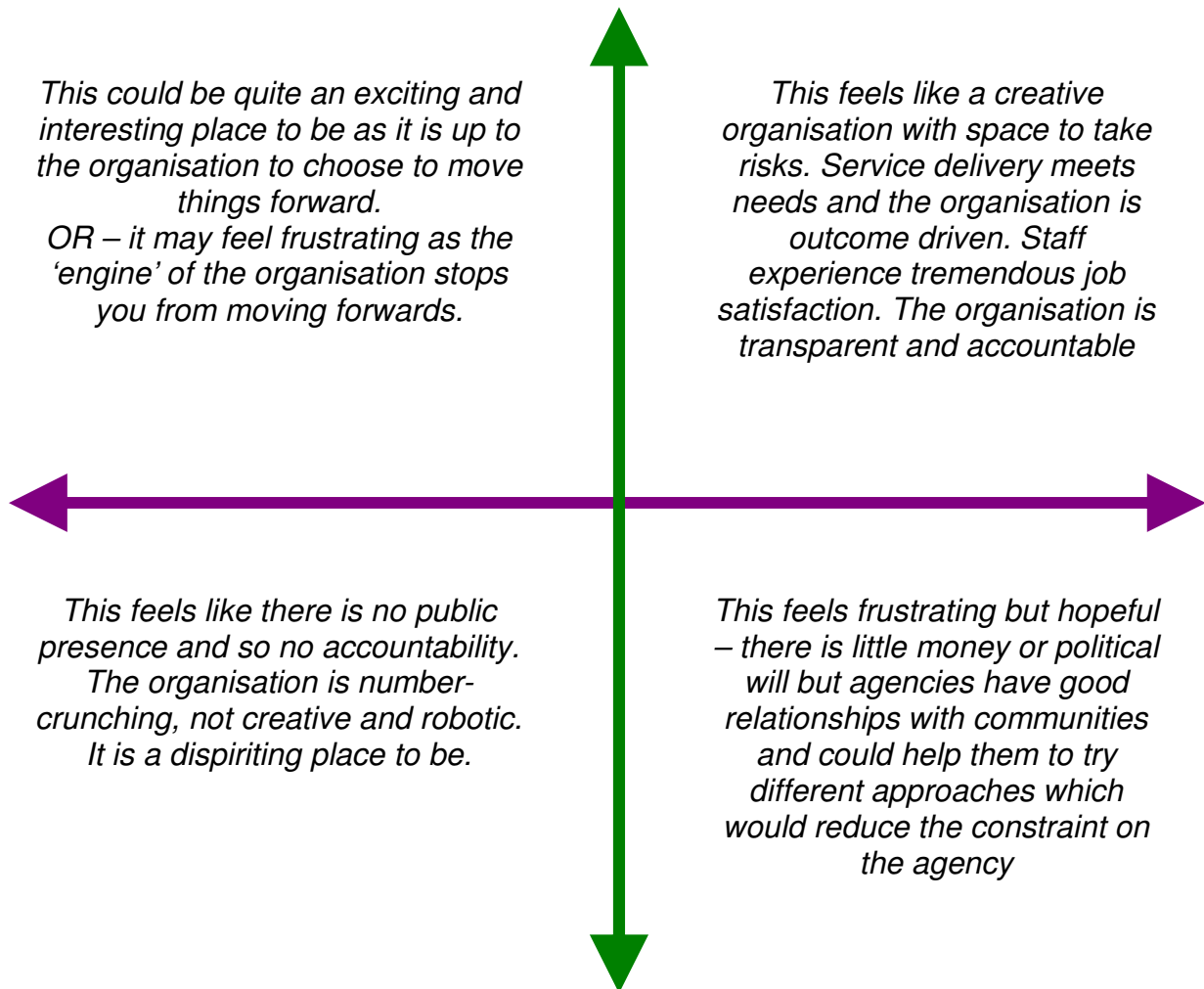
Echo can be used to help:

- prompt discussion about your agency and community influence
- identify your position on the framework
- compare your position with others, with partners
- recognise why things are – or are not – working
- understand and articulate the complexities of community engagement
- identify the things you need to do to be more open to influence
- plan improvement

'echo'



Each quadrant of the axis reveals a different experience for public agencies, for example:



4.1 Horizontal Axis – open or closed to community influence?

The positions and their characteristics

The positions on the horizontal axis, illustrate a shift from doing things **to** communities to doing **with** – encouraging an empowered and engaged community. Individual agencies may well want/need to develop their own sets of additional ‘characteristics’ which make sense to them.

Position 1: Closed to community influence

The following are the characteristics of an organisation that is closed to influence:

- The concept of ‘community influence’ is not on the agenda and/or not understood
- There is a reluctance to be proactive and consultation is likely to be of the ‘tick box’ variety
- There is no real consideration of the implications of actions in a locality and no impact assessments
- Decisions are normally made based on professional knowledge only
- Community engagement is an add-on and only consultants do the consulting
- Bureaucratic structures, budgets, politics, targets and timescales make meaningful engagement very difficult
- Services are bureaucratic and inaccessible and based on ease of delivery
- There is no ‘real’ partnership working and no sharing and engaging with other agencies
- It doesn’t occur that ‘communities’ might have something to offer the process
- The use of technical language and acronyms that can (intentionally or unintentionally) put up barriers to engagement
- Budgets and resources are used (intentionally or unintentionally) to put up barriers to engagement

Position 2: Respond to individuals

The agency reacts to *individual* users and customers and this is appropriate in terms of a ‘customer focussed approach’ and the individualisation of services as outlined in the government’s plan for a new standardised framework for local public service provision. However, the plan also talks about increasing community consultation and involvement. The challenge for service providers and public bodies may be to balance these two and distinguish when consultation needs to be about more than individual views.

At this stage, agencies may:

- recognise and respond to individual needs and demands
- listen mainly to those who shout - ‘we are open to the loudest voices’
- only make decisions based on their own judgements, on what **they** define as ‘need’
- fulfil legal requirements to inform the public and carry out selective consultations
- work with individuals who support what they do
- only build relationships across sectors with individuals

Position 3: Make contact with people

Agencies are more proactive although contact tends to be made on the agency's terms, expecting people to fit into existing structures. This is about public (individual) engagement.

The agency is likely to be visible to the public so that people know about available services and how to make contact. It may:

- Ask people for their views/wish lists
- Hear views and opinions
- Get the message across that people's thoughts are welcome
- Respond to individual customer feedback
- Consider the needs of individuals if it holds meetings (e.g. access, timings etc)

However, it won't necessarily act on these views and the professionals will make decisions based on their expert knowledge only. This may be a case of 'taking people with us' but, only on our terms!

Position 4: Change focus to groups and communities

The agency recognises when it is appropriate to work with 'communities' – shifting its focus from individuals. It understands that there will be competing demands and that services impact on communities, as well as individuals. This is also about recognising that the views of individuals don't necessarily 'represent' the views of others/communities.

The agency is likely to:

- understand what it means by 'community' in a particular context and share this understanding with others
- realise the limitations of working with individuals and actively seek the opinions of organised and constituted groups, offering practical opportunities for people to come together and have a genuine say
- recognise that its activities with one community will have consequences for other communities
- understand why some communities work with it more readily than others and make efforts to reach out and listen to those less frequently heard
- be aware of and listen to communities affected by a particular service or decision

Position 5: Recognise the value of community influence

The agency recognises and acknowledges the value of community influence: improved relationships, community focussed decisions and appropriate and effective services. There is an understanding that community influence can be beneficial to agencies as well as communities and it is viewed as a challenge and an opportunity rather than a threat.

At this position the agency may:

- Understand what is meant by 'community influence'
- Realise that what it is currently doing is not enough – it needs to think about, plan and take action for communities to be able to influence it
- Recognise that community influence can save time and money and that communities can influence things to its advantage
- Actively listen and genuinely want to understand what people are saying – what is important to them
- Know which communities it is talking to, why it is talking to them and implications for communities it is not talking to
- Recognise that community influence can lead to longer term outcomes and sustainable action

Position 6: Recognise the possibilities for community influence

Having recognised the value of community influence, the agency begins to explore possibilities – the broader 'landscape' that the agency operates within: the political landscape, the community landscape, the organisational landscape.

The agency recognises that it has a role to play in encouraging communities to influence.

The agency is aware that its own structures and processes can have a positive or negative impact on 'possibilities for community influence'

The agency is likely to:

- Recognise the relationship between representative and participative democracy: the challenges and opportunities for distinct or complementary ways of connecting with communities
- Understand how communities organise and the time it takes for processes and/or mechanisms to support community influence to be put in place
- Have increasing clarity about how the context – political, social, economic – impact on its potential to respond – and it articulates this so communities know and understand the constraints

Position 7: Support communities to influence

Agencies take a proactive role to support and inform communities so that they meet service providers on an equal footing and are influential on relevant bodies and committees. It is also about ensuring that people in communities have the time and resources to 'represent' more than just their own voice.

This is about playing a key role in bringing people together in groups – either to work on issues identified by themselves or to look at issues raised by public agencies. At this stage, agencies are aware of how to reach different groups and of 'empowering' ways of working. Communities are encouraged to recognise their tremendous lobbying power.

The agency is likely to:

- Bring people together in groups and support them to work together
- Target those communities who are less vocal in getting their voices heard and support them to take part
- Give groups information about the organisation's given priorities, structures and constraints
- Help people to have a collective understanding about how services work and why they work in the way they do
- Find different ways for groups to communicate to help them to take part
- Inform communities about the wider consequences of decisions and actions
- Advocate on behalf of groups
- Have good connections with communities
- Recognise the expertise in communities
- Recognise that professional power can get in the way of genuine dialogue
- Encourage communities to increase their expectations

Position 8: Work together

Agencies create positive alliances with communities, other departments and agencies, and develop intelligence-led approaches which build on existing work. Services are aligned to each other e.g. Neighbourhood policing is aligned to neighbourhood management and there are broad cross-cutting targets across agencies and departments

They have a variety and range of engagement processes, structures and opportunities that are responsive to the ways that communities organise

Senior staff are involved and take a clear leadership role within and across agencies and departments.

Partners can make decisions in the timescale allocated as these are realistic for partners and communities.

Agencies are likely to:

- Have a Community Engagement Strategy
- Work with other agencies to link with communities
- Work with 'communities' affected by what it is doing
- Work with others to investigate issues and decide actions
- Encourage good connections between colleagues in different departments
- Have good connections with key people from other agencies
- Understand the priorities of other agencies and departments and how they relate to it
- Feed back on actions
- Have joint guidelines for working together and realistic expectations of each others contribution
- Have dialogue about the 'non-negotiables'

Position 9: Change how we do things

This is about cultural change, not about individuals. There is willingness and flexibility to change how things are done at all levels of the agency and community engagement is integrated into people's jobs. The agency considers the bigger picture and is involved in effective partnership working with a consistency of vision. It has a commitment to ensure that 'community influence' feeds into the priorities and practice of the agency.

The agency is creative about the way 'targets' are delivered and is willing to challenge national targets and timescales.

Internally:

- Staff are supported to do things in a different way and have the authority to make decisions
- Staff have the relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes to engage with communities and encourage community influence
- Agencies reflect on their work with communities and record evidence of communities 'feeling they can influence decisions' (NI4)
- Agencies have strategies for dealing with competing community demands

Externally, agencies:

- Recognise power differences between communities
- Broker relationships between elected Members and communities who are influencing
- Feed back to communities and follow up on what happens
- Appreciate the time, energy and commitment given by communities
- Test decisions, strategies and plans to check that this is what communities want
- Share good practice

Position 10: Fully open to influence

The characteristics here reflect the outcomes of positions 2 – 9.

- Agencies have constructive relationships with communities and a better understanding of what life is like for different people.
- Staff feel supported by the agency to have dialogue with communities around priorities and possibilities
- Agencies provide the best possible quality services for the greatest number of people
- Agencies are outcome focused
- Service delivery reflects - or is reinforced by - input from communities

Communities experience the value of being engaged with public agencies. They:

- Know the results of their influence
- See the link between their input and the result

- Feel confident that they have been heard
- Understand why things change – or not
- Understand different views and perspectives
- Feel they can influence things
- Know how they can influence things

Community networks have identified the following as their indicators of being influential. The network:

- Is consulted and asked opinions
- Takes part in joint decision making
- Has a formal place on relevant Boards / Partnerships etc.
- Is involved in the process of shaping priorities
- Can identify its contribution
- Is invited to chair/facilitate partnership meetings
- Is encouraged and supported to take part (by other partners)
- Instigates joint discussions about power, boundaries, roles, function of the partnership etc
- Provides feedback which is sought and valued
- Sees desired changes arising from its challenges

4.2 Vertical axis – potential to respond?

A lot of potential to respond



‘Echo’ is flexible enough to be useful to different agencies working with different issues and experiencing different constraints.

The vertical axis is about those constraints that are – or may be - **outside the agency’s control**, whether they be legal, structural, environmental, political, economic.

Through identifying where they are placed on the vertical axis, public agencies will be encouraged to discuss the issues that affect their potential to respond and establish the difference between enduring constraints and those which can be changed with a will to do so!

The research has identified certain factors which impact on agencies’ potential to respond. There will be many others, but examples which give a flavour, include:

No potential to respond

Targets (and performance measures)

Are we ‘Hitting the target but missing the point’?

Issues surrounding targets were recurrent throughout the research. For example:

- Targets may not meet local needs or be based on local priorities
- Public agencies have limited influence over targets
- Can miss the purpose – leading to work which makes little sense for communities – and for agencies!
- Communities do not know how to work ‘with’ agency targets so get frustrated when we can’t do anything
- Targets can be used as a reason for not being open to influence.
- Targets can be creative and offer an opportunity to open up a dialogue with the ‘community’ about what actions and activities would help meet the targets, at the same time as benefiting the ‘community’

Political machinery

Local political structures and cultures can have an impact and there may be issues around:

- Aspects of representative democracy
- A new – or ongoing - Political Party in power
- Local divisions between Political Parties

The law & national rules

National legislation, policy directives and statutory duties can affect agencies potential to respond:

- Legal frameworks and equalities legislation
- Health & safety
- Safety concerns and risk assessment
- Layers of compliance mechanisms
- Finite periods of time for consultation & involvement
- Allocated statutory time periods for some implementation e.g. planning

Ability to influence others

This was a central theme arising from the research, where people talked about their own personal experience of being unable to influence in their own settings:

“when I try to influence and persuade, I get nowhere so, if I can’t, how can communities”

This might be about being unable to influence:

- More senior staff
- Other organisations / departments / partners
- Resource allocation
- The private sector *“whose motivations are different but whose practice impacts on us and the recipients of our services”*

Power differentials

- Local authorities, because of their legal duties, size, staffing and resources may be seen as more powerful than partner agencies and communities which may make them reluctant to respond/take the initiative and be seen to be ‘leading’
- Public agents may perceive some personal risk – ‘sticking their necks out’ – and could be scapegoated when things don’t go to plan

How ‘community’ is defined and understood

This may well affect different agencies’ potential to respond – where communities may be identified by their geographical location – where agencies can legitimately focus their services. Interest-based groups which operate across those geographical boundaries may not be served by, for example neighbourhood based schemes or targets.

Even if an agency has a method for considering different view points there could be an impasse when VCS and third sector priorities are oppositional. (This is more likely to happen where there is no infrastructural development work being done which brings together those groups to be part of the partnership process).

Potential to respond may be increased by:

- Statutory obligations, comments included:
There is a requirement through the White Paper for us to work with communities

Local authorities have a legal duty to engage
We are public servants
Communities are tax payers

- Consensus of view, when the issues identified as priorities by communities coincide with those identified by public agencies

4.3 Further work

There is further work to be done to:

- clarify each of the characteristics and their meaning
- explore application of the framework
- explore potential for a wider audience
- test the framework, further refine and pilot it
- develop case studies

**November
2008**

Wiltshire Equalities Framework Bulletin

Membership of Task & Finish Group

Community First/Youth
Action Wiltshire

Gypsy and Traveler
Community
Representative

Race Equality Action
Group (REAG)

Salisbury District Council
West Wiltshire CAB

West Wiltshire Interfaith
Group

Wiltshire and Swindon
Community Foundation

Wiltshire and Swindon
Men's Sexual Health

Wiltshire and Swindon
Users Network

Wiltshire Centre for
Independent Living
WCIL

Wiltshire County Council

Wiltshire Fire and
Rescue Service

Wiltshire PCT

Wiltshire Police, County
Division

Wiltshire Race Equality
Council WREC

What is this all about?

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission, Wiltshire County Council and Salisbury District Council are funding a project to develop a cohesive framework to represent the six strands of equalities (race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and faith) which will seek to influence policy

and strategy and deliver services appropriate to the need across the County of Wiltshire.

REGENworks have been appointed to work on the project which is due to be completed in April 2009.

So where are we now?

The first stage of this project has been to convene a steering group (known as the Task and Finish Group) to create a cohesive framework for Wiltshire by April 2009. This group has met twice and is currently working across Wiltshire to develop a new way for public services to respond to the needs of groups with an interest in equalities.

The project has identified 7 'outcomes':

- **Forming the Task &**

Finish Group

- **Community and stakeholder consultation**
- **Measuring engagement in the project**
- **Present needs analysis.**
- **An options report**
- **Presentation of options for discussion at workshops in February and March 09**
- **Support in continuing the work beyond this project**

**Produced by REGENworks
for the Task & Finish Group**



What are we asking now?

- What does the framework need to do?
- What are your priority issues?
- What works now and what doesn't?
- Anything else?

A framework for what ?

The purpose of the framework is to:

- establish a set of common principles to guide future policy and service delivery across public and voluntary sectors and to influence business and employment practices
- make recommendations on key priorities for action
- promote and encourage the sharing of knowledge, skills and experience around equalities issues
- set out an efficient and transparent infrastructure for ensuring that the framework is adopted and embedded in future policy and delivery processes
- establish arrangements for ongoing monitoring and review

Who are these people contacting us?

REGENworks is a consultancy based in Bath and they have been appointed to help deliver this project. They work directly to the Task & Finish Group, carrying out the consultation, developing the

ideas for options and reporting to the group at a minimum of once a month.

Anna, Martha and Marion are all working on the project and can be reached

by:

Email: info@regenworks.co.uk

Phone: 01225 465 467

Web: www.regenworks.co.uk

www.equalitiesframeworkwiltshire.org.uk

In order to hear your views and feed them into this process, over the next 2-3 months we will be asking as many people and groups as possible what changes need to happen to make Wiltshire lead the way in

equalities. We have made a start in identifying who needs to be consulted and if you would like to be involved you can find out more about this project by visiting the web address above or contacting

REGENworks.

Wiltshire Co-ordinating Group (WCG)

Minutes of a meeting held at Community First, Devizes on Friday 23 January 2009

Present:

Keith Robinson, (WCG Chairman)	George Bright ('Credit Crunch' Project Leader)
Peter Fanshawe, (C&YP Trust Board)	Simon Smith, (Environment Alliance)
Julian Kirby (Community Safety Partnership)	Margaret West (Stronger, Resilient Communities)
Tim Mason, (Community Safety Partnership)	Sharon Britton, (WCC)
Maggie Rae, (Health & Wellbeing PB)	Laurie Bell, (WCC)
Philippa Read, (Infrastructure Consortium)	Karen Spence (WCC)
Len Turner, (WFCAP)	Stella Milsom (GOSW)
Caroline Lewis (WSEP)	David Maynard (for Niki Lewis)

Linda Watts (WCC) was present to take a note of the meeting.

Apologies were received from: Jim Smith (Children & Young People's Trust Board), Sue Redmond (Community Safety Partnership/Health & Wellbeing PB), Gary Mantle (Environment Alliance), Alan Feist (Environment Alliance/Transport Partnership), Niki Lewis (WCC), John Wraw, (Observer)

Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2008 were agreed.

Matters Arising

Wiltshire Assembly - Keith Robinson reported that four speakers have been identified for the Assembly conference on 26 March.

With regard to partnership' relationship with the Area Boards, some partnerships are yet to have this discussion. The following updates were given at this WCG meeting:

- Peter Fanshawe outlined the implications for the CYPP partnership;
- Julian Kirby advised that priorities for community safety are to be identified within the scope of the Community Safety Board's function;
- Caroline Lewis reported that the link to WSEP will operate through the role of the Chambers of Commerce – this will need to be worked through when the new partnership structure is in place;
- Maggie Rae stated that she has been working with Sue Redmond on giving each of the Area Boards their own health profile, so that they can develop a priority list for their role in health prevention. A single profile exercise is due to be completed in July in time for the first Board meetings. A programme to tackle obesity is taking place in Calne – it is intended that this is a model for activity elsewhere;
- Tim Mason advised that the Environment Alliance has a number of networks where Area Boards will be 'on the agenda'.

Sharon Britton advised that a summary of information from the thematic delivery partnership mapping exercise will be brought to the next meeting of WCG.

Economic Downturn

George Bright updated WCG on progress in relation to his project brief:

- Most of the survey returns should be available within the next week or so;
- Wiltshire is proving itself to be reasonably resilient to the economic downturn so far;
- Employment figures for December show an increase of 1.7% in Wiltshire (South West increase is 2.1% and Great Britain's is 3%). There is an expectation that there will be significant increases reported in March;
- There has been a useful discussion with community safety on the potential impacts;
- The Citizens Advice Bureaux are bearing the brunt of the increase of social issues in Wiltshire and the consequent demand for advice;
- There is an issue for Area Boards in relation to 'street scene' to consider the impact of vacant premises;
- A response is still being sought from Housing;
- Health has put together a package of actions;
- An update from WCG members will be requested at the next WCG meeting; and
- It is intended that the Assembly will receive a cogent analysis with proposals for action.

ACTION: George Bright and Keith Robinson

Wiltshire Assembly Conference: 26 March 2009

David Maynard outlined proposals for the Assembly Conference. Keith Robinson emphasised the need for a strong business presence. The local media is to be invited to the conference.

ACTION: David Maynard and Niki Lewis

Communications

Laurie Bell provided this update to WCG:

- It is proposed that the family of partnerships is 'launched' at the Assembly. The work of partnerships may be expressed by showing a DVD;
- Branding is still being considered – an in house initiative will assist in keeping the cost within reasonable limits. External companies' estimates proved to be too high. Proposals will be circulated to WCG members in advance of the conference; and
- It is intended to draft a press statement about the economic downturn and the response of organisations in the County.

ACTION: Laurie Bell

LPSA Performance Reward Grant (PRG)

Sharon Britton circulated a paper. The size of the PRG reflects the success of partners in tackling a number of stretch targets. She reported that a request has been made to relevant partners for information about how their proposals to use the proportion of PRG to go back to the target areas – to show how this would ‘make a difference’ to LAW priorities. The report shows the proposal to be made to the Assembly on the use of the balance of PRG. This approach was supported. It will be worked up further and launched at the Assembly.

ACTION: Sharon Britton

Margaret West advised that the Area Boards generally need to have an increased awareness of the LAW and LAA.

Thematic partnerships are to use the circulated paper to reflect further on the means of translating LAW/LAA objectives and targets into briefing and engagement at the community area level.

It is proposed that the Thematic Delivery Partnerships identify where the LAW ‘hotspots’ are for different community areas, based on the evidence they have available. Also that accessible information is provided to the Area Boards to help them in developing bids, by making the issues ‘real’ for them.

Thematic Delivery Partnerships agreed to consider the following and report back to the next Coordinating Group meeting in March:

1. How will we explain our parts of the Local Agreement for Wiltshire in a way that will connect with local people?
2. How will we show hotspots/priorities that evidence has identified as a ‘need’ or ‘problem’ for particular community areas?
3. How do we engage with local people and make advice and support available?

The advice from WCG was that the process of approval should ensure that initiatives were likely to make a measurable impact in the local area.

ACTION: WCG Thematic Partnerships representatives

By September, it is intended that propositions may begin to be received ‘in principle’ from Area Boards but it is understood that the preparation process may take more time. After the Assembly meeting has taken place, communication will begin to take place with the Boards. This issue will be programmed on the agenda for the next WCG meeting. The paper provided by Sharon Britton, updated as agreed, will be circulated electronically.

ACTION: Laurie Bell, Niki Lewis, Sharon Britton and Linda Watts

Laurie Bell is to draft a user friendly outline of this proposal.

ACTION: Laurie Bell

Simon Smith suggested that each thematic partnership identifies a contact that will support Area Boards in putting forward proposals. The note of this meeting is to be shared in partnership meetings.

ACTION: WCG Thematic Partnerships representatives

New Equalities Framework

This will be discussed at the next meeting of WCG. In the meantime, David Maynard requested that this information is conveyed to WCG members:

REGENwork consultancy has been commissioned with co-funding from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Wiltshire County Council and Salisbury District Council to develop an Equalities Framework for Wiltshire. A Task & Finish group involving both statutory and voluntary and community sector agencies is organising workshops to explore the options as to how we can develop and deliver equality related work effectively in our county. Attendance and involvement in the workshops is encouraged on one of these dates:

1. 9th February (Mon) 10.30-12.30 Chippenham Town Hall
2. 9th February (Mon) 6.30-8.30 Trowbridge, Bridge House
3. 10th February (Tues) 10.30-12.30 Devizes, Town Hall, Yeovil Room
4. 23rd February (Mon) 10.30-12.30 Salisbury City Hall, Meeting Room
5. 24th February (Tues) 6.30-8.30 Pewsey, Bouverie Hall

For further information please contact Mayur Bhatt, Equality & Diversity Manager at Wiltshire County Council on 01225 718061.

ACTION: WCG Thematic Partnerships representatives

“Axis of Influence”

Philippa Read advocated the framework set out in the circulated paper as being a simple and effective approach. Community First may be submitting an application for funding to support work with the community sector based on this model. It was agreed that it would be a useful model in work with the community area boards and community area partnerships.

Keith Robinson observed that it would be very positive if organisations could collectively sign up to this approach. He indicated that he would propose this concerted approach at the Public Service Board. This action was supported by WCG.

ACTION: Keith Robinson

Tim Mason suggested that the paper could then be discussed with partnerships. This suggestion was also supported by WCG.

ACTION: WCG Thematic Partnerships representatives

The link to the precursor document 'Axis of Influence' will be circulated to WCG members.

ACTION: Linda Watts

RIEP Funding

Peter Fanshawe and Tim Mason reported on their discussion on needs – whether there are common needs where relevant data and information should be disseminated. It was agreed that it is critical that information is held in one 'centre', also identification of what information must be accessible and how good practice examples can be shared. A virtual research group is examining these issues currently.

Laurie Bell will advise the next WCG meeting on the order of cost of setting up a website to share partnership information and experience.

ACTION: Laurie Bell

LAA Refresh

A report on the LAA refresh will be brought to the next meeting for information.

ACTION: Sharon Britton

Date of next meeting – please note change of venue

WCG will meet at 2.30pm on Tuesday 3 March 2009 at Divisional Police Headquarters, Hampton Park West, Melksham SN12 6QQ