

F REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community Safety

- A meeting with an Assistant Chief Constable, to discuss issues around Territorial Policing, took place on 2 March.
- A District Audit report on Community Safety showed that Buckinghamshire has made good progress in moving the Community Safety agenda forward in the County area, and that the progress can be maintained.
- A multi-agency conference took place on 13 February looking at unblocking some of the problems that occur when planning for a better quality of life for the people in Buckinghamshire, by integrating community safety into the planning process at the outset.
- The bid to the Home Office for £148,000 to develop initiatives to work with women in domestic violence situations has been successful.

Foot and Mouth Disease

- 1 Buckinghamshire has remained free of Foot and Mouth infection so far. However, there have been some cross border infections from Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire and this has caused restrictions in certain areas close to the border.

Immediate consequences of Foot & Mouth Disease:

- All countryside access sites [including country parks] /picnic sites, etc closed to the public and management/maintenance works put on hold.
- Postponement of schemes under the Millennium Tree Planting Project - 27,000 trees will now be planted in the autumn.
- Tree Planting ceremony arranged for 2 March at Thornborough Community Woodland with John Bercow MP cancelled. A similar event with Cheryl Gillan MP took place 6 April at St Mary's School in Amersham with the help of the Countryside Group.
- A range of projects requiring access to sites put on hold.

- Budget under spent due to FMD

- 2 For the period end of February (at outset of crisis) to end of March costs are as follows for the rights of way team:

Staff Time:	£10,654
Additional Overtime and Mileage	£ 1,500
1 week additional staff manning phones	£ 500
Total	£12,654

- 3 At the moment weekly costs for ROW in April are running at about £3,000 per week (staff time and mileage).
- 4 The Country Parks are losing about £1,300 per day, and in the order of £1,600 per day over Easter.
- 5 The above figures do not include Trading Standards and Emergency Planning.
- 6 Trading Standards, Rights of Way and Emergency Planning Officers have been kept busy monitoring the situation, putting signs out, replacing and changing them. 7,000 'No Entry' signs had been put in place. Animal Health inspectors have been dealing with enquiries from the farming community and issuing animal movement licences where this is permissible. Other staff have been kept busy dealing with the media, up-dating the website and managing the flood of enquiries and complaints from the public usually questioning why some areas or paths are either closed or open depending on their particular interest in the matter.

Food Service Enforcement Plan

- 7 The Cabinet has approved a service plan that sets out the work that Trading Standards Officers will carry out during the next financial year to ensure that legislation relating to food labelling and composition is complied with in the county. The plan outlines the number of enforcement visits they will carry out at trade premises that have been assessed as being high, medium or low risk premises. Food samples will be taken for the purpose of analysis to confirm that

the declared ingredients are present and that the food is wholesome and correctly labelled.

Under Age Sales

- 8 In February the proof of age card, for over 16s, was launched for the Wycombe District at Wycombe Wanderers Football Club. Students from two local schools and Youth Team players from the football club were present to receive their own cards. The proof of age card scheme is now countywide with over 8,000 cards having been distributed. The effectiveness of the scheme has been confirmed through the results of a test-purchasing programme.

Libraries

- Extra £200,000 for the book fund
- Launch of Children's Historic Book Collection on 23 March by Jacqueline Wilson
- Agreement received for People's Network funding
- Agreement received on Library computer system contract
- Re-launch of County Council Information Centre network and database
- Visually Impaired Person's suite launch in County Reference Library
- Completed first phase of County Reserve Stock shelving, so it is now open to the public again

Youth and Community Service

- 9 Additional funding of approximately £100,000 has been allocated to employ an additional four youth workers, whose task will be to recruit volunteers to the service.

Policy Advisory Group

- 10 The Policy Advisory Group has met several times and since the start two new members have been added to the group as the scope of the portfolio has been uncovered. Each member of the group has been allocated an area of the portfolio

to cover:

Cherry Aston - Rights of Way
Mary Baldwin - Culture
Brenda Jennings - ConneXions
Chester Jones - Youth Service Premises
Betty Lay - New Public Library Standards
Francis Robinson - Voluntary Sector
Hugh Wilson - Waste

Europe

- 11 On 6 March at South East England House in Brussels I, together with officers from the Countryside Group, gave a presentation. Topics included general information on the Bucks rural environment and the aims of the County Council and more detailed presentations on the work of the Strategic Initiatives Team and Bernwood Royal Hunting Forest Project.

Production of Health and Safety booklet and Countryside Risk Assessments for Volunteer Use.

- 12 Joint production with NFU/CLA/Ramblers/Chiltern Society of a leaflet for farmers giving advice on how to preserve paths over arable farmland and keep inside the law.

Voluntary Sector

- 13 Initial contact has been made with Buckinghamshire Community Action with a view to closer working across the wide areas covered.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act

14 New Statutory duties and other responsibilities requiring additional finance.

2001/02	£47,000	Finance not as yet identified in budgets
2002/03	£54,200	} Finance earmarked in next three years
2003/04	£107,200	} budgets as growth items (at 2001
2004/05	£143,200	} prices)

MRS M DEWAR

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES