

Buckingham Local Area Forum

Title: Local Area Priorities Budget Allocation

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Electoral divisions affected: Buckingham North
Buckingham South
Winslow
Grendon Underwood

Summary

1. The Local Priorities Budget may be used for any purpose which supports local community priorities and the well-being of the area identified by the Local Area Forum (LAF) through its local area planning process. Following on from the successful local area priorities ranking process the below listed projects are considered suitable for consideration.

2. Recommendation

Members of the LAF are recommended to consider the funding for the project detailed below.

There is £18,662 available for funding projects in this financial year if the LAF decide to approve the earlier report recommendation on transportation projects. If the LAF chooses not to follow that recommendation, then there is £45,265.27 available for allocation. The below listed eligible project amounts to a funding request of £10,000

Eligible Project:

3. Whaddon Traffic Calming Initiative £10,000

Long standing priorities for the LAF concern speeding on roads throughout the area and the restriction of heavy goods vehicles from inappropriate roads..

The bulk of this report has been compiled from information provided by Whaddon Parish Council and edited by M Grindall.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



On the 27th December 2011, Whaddon Parish Council (WPC) submitted a request to the Transport Delegated Budget Fund, following an informal discussion with the Chairman of the LAF and the Localities and Communities Manager for the area this was not progressed due to the merger of available budgets and a change in the budget allocation process. Following attendance at the Buckingham Local Area Forum meeting on 29th March WPC were asked to resubmit their request for funding to the newly merged budget. This new request from WPC is based on identical, but updated information contained in their earlier request letter dated 27th December 2011, but due to Bucks County Council (BCC) and Local Area Forum (LAF) funding constraints the amount being requested has been reduced from £30,000 to £10,000 (ten thousand pounds). Due to the special circumstances surrounding this request WPC would hope to be awarded the amount requested, but it is understood that this may not be possible and that a lower award may be made.

Before outlining the request, it is prudent to set out the 'background scene' as far as Whaddon Village Traffic Calming (WVTC) is concerned. Whaddon is a community of around 200 homes and some 450 residents, and being linear in form, most of these homes stand alongside or very close to the vehicular rat-run route from North and West Milton Keynes to the A421 and all points beyond, to the West. Accordingly, should this request be successful and it helps fund a traffic calming scheme, then the entire community would benefit substantially, from environmental, health and safety points of view.

To appreciate Whaddon Village traffic problems, it is firstly important to understand the geography of the area which creates the underlying cause, and this is best demonstrated by the below plan which graphically illustrates this community's 'somewhat unique' problem, and how the traffic generated by an ever-growing Milton Keynes impacts on the Bucks CC rural road network that runs directly through Whaddon Village and immediately past the Whaddon First School, Village Playgroup, Church and Chapel. Following some 30 years of year-on-year increases in traffic volumes and with parts of the original Milton Keynes still to complete (1,750 homes approx. in Kingsmead and Tattenhoe), Whaddon Village now faces a further 15-20 years of uncertainty and increased traffic pressure, as an additional 6,500–7,000 homes, together with employment, schools, industry, retail and leisure facilities are constructed at the MK Western Expansion Area (WEA). This is one of the largest new communities currently planned in the UK, and to put this into an understandable context – it equates to a new sustainable community, larger than the size of Buckingham to be built.

One of the longest running and vigorously debated topics within the Whaddon community is *“How can Whaddon best deal with its ongoing MK created traffic problems, which not only creates a serious risk to the health and safety of residents but also impacts on their quality of life and presents an ongoing physical threat not only to the condition of the highway infrastructure, but also to the properties standing within the village's two Conservation Areas?”* The Parish Council together with residents has over recent years explored various solutions, including Vehicular Activated Signs, Community Speed Watch, etc but such measures, although valuable in their own way will not, they believe, begin to properly address the real and specific problems of increasing traffic volumes (including HGV's) and rat-running. Whilst many other villages suffer similar traffic problems, WPC believes that Whaddon, due to its location next to MK and its immediate proximity to minor roads that only serve the West side of the City, has an exceptional case which can only be overcome by 'physically built' traffic calming measures to help provide a permanent solution to the problem.

It is for these reasons that WPC has been campaigning over the last 10 years for a properly planned village traffic calming scheme, which once constructed (alongside other measures proposed - including the agreed diversion of Calverton Lane in 7/8 years time, as part of the Western Expansion Area Development Plan) should help alleviate a problem that will only worsen unless urgent action is taken as soon as possible.

WPC places the 'traffic generation' responsibility on Milton Keynes Partnerships (MKP) as the Planning Authority, and Milton Keynes Council (MKC) as the relevant Highway Authority.

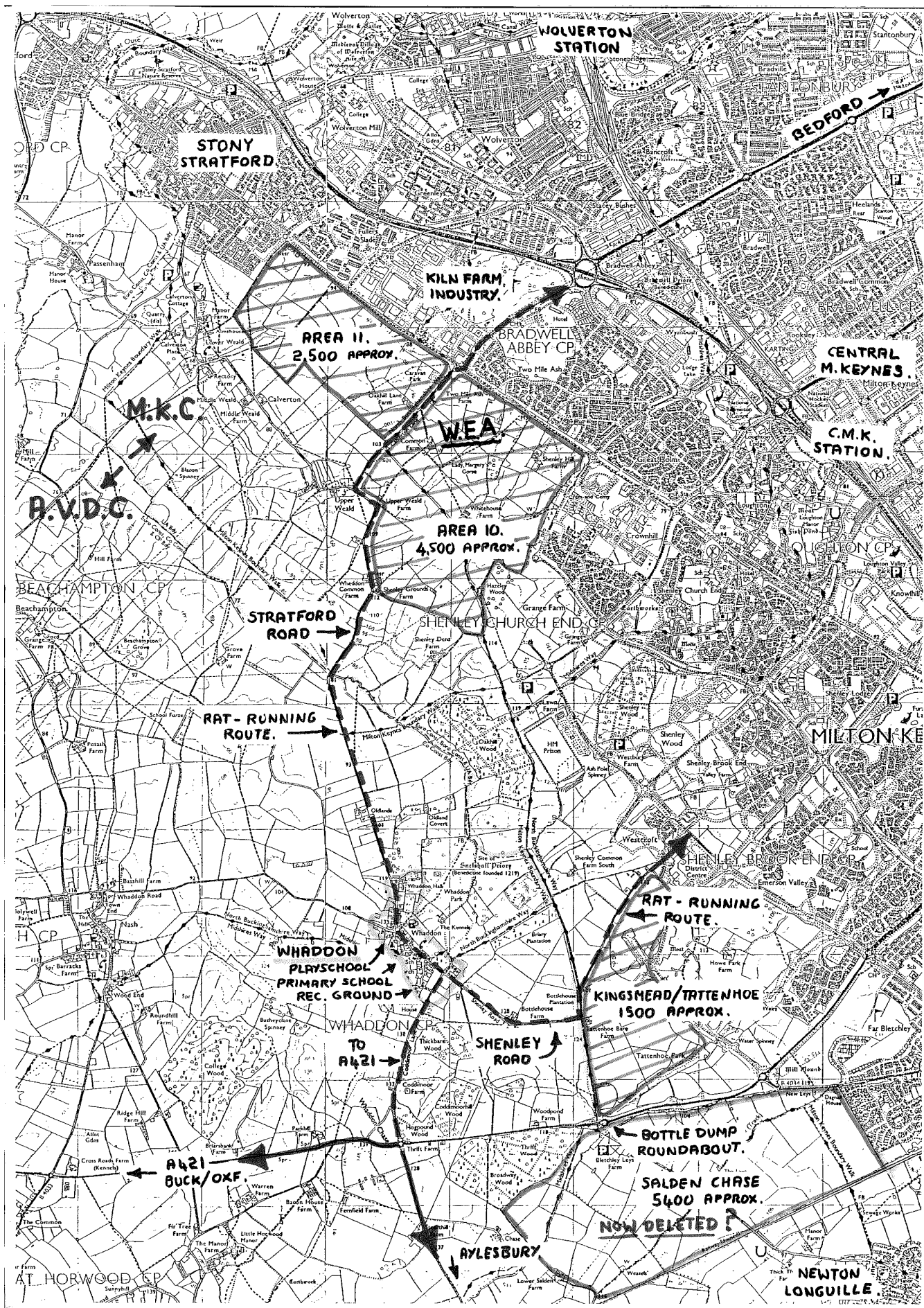
Accordingly the main discussions and negotiations over recent years have been with them, but throughout the process WPC has tried to keep BCC and Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) closely advised, because the affected community and roads lie within their jurisdiction, and accordingly future maintenance costs of these roads will be BCC's responsibility.

As this submission is for a complex scheme, please see below a brief explanation of what has occurred to date and what the objectives are for the immediate future:-

- After several years of consultation, WPC persuaded MKP in 2005 to undertake and monitor (at their expense) Traffic Counts for a period of five years, along the Stratford and Shenley Roads leading through Whaddon village to the A421. The purpose was to create a “trigger point” above which increasing traffic levels would lead to a Traffic Calming Study in Whaddon Village. Neither MKP nor MKC had previously undertaken detailed traffic impact assessments, that would have demonstrated the impact that MK growth would have on the surrounding rural road network. This, in WPC's opinion was a clear and inexcusable failure by all the authorities involved.
- After two years of traffic counts in 2006 and 2007 and by mutual consent, the monitoring exercise was suspended due to the fact that the recession had drastically cut house-building numbers. However, by this time it was clear that a traffic problem did exist, and at MKP's suggestion it was agreed that if AVDC would contribute a similar financial sum, then the remaining three years monitoring budget (approx. £5,000) should be spent undertaking a Whaddon Village Traffic Calming Feasibility Report (WVTCFR). AVDC were persuaded to contribute towards this report because at that time a development of approx. 5,400 homes was planned at Salden Chase, close to Newton Longville. As this site was in AVDC District as opposed to MKC, it was recognised that when developed it would also have an impact on the Whaddon traffic problem. The WVTCFR was accordingly commissioned by Transport for Bucks (TfB) in early 2009. Copies were circulated to all stakeholders, and although accurate costings were not detailed within this report, it was estimated that the approximate cost of implementation could be in the region of £100,000. This document has subsequently been used as evidence when WPC has responded through the consultation process to major MK Expansion Planning Applications, in an attempt to demonstrate that not only should MKP pay for any traffic calming works due to historic growth, but also that the development companies involved in the next phase of the WEA major expansion should contribute towards any traffic calming scheme as the existing traffic problem can only be exacerbated as a direct result of their planned development. The WVTCFR has also proved to be an invaluable document when WPC have responded to MK consultations on the MK Core Strategy, Local Investment Plan, etc – responses supported by BCC.
- WPC and TfB have been directly involved with MKP, MKC, and Gallagher Estates (the master developer of the WEA) in the preparation of the Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP), and following this documents' recent approval not only will construction traffic be banned from routes through Whaddon, but Gallagher Estates will fund some of the “easy win” items from the WVTCFR, which includes, signage, white lining, gateways and new village signs. The permanent, longer term, physical traffic calming measures including highway 'build-outs' will follow once funding sources have been identified and secured, and hopefully after the results of a public consultation confirms acceptance. It remains to be seen whether or not the construction vehicle ban through Whaddon will be successful, because 'policing' the ban will be dependant on the efforts of Whaddon residents providing photographic evidence of any contraventions, and placing such evidence before the developers, enabling them to impose financial penalties on the sub-contractors who choose to ignore carefully placed direction signs.
- In recent years since the emergence of the MK Infrastructure Tariff (approx £20,000 for every new home built), WPC has lobbied both MKP and MKC to set aside funds, derived from its Tariff income from the major housing developments, to assist with Whaddon traffic calming. This has proved difficult because although Tariff monies are essentially designed to help fund community facilities and infrastructure, historically

these funds have only been allocated within the MK designated area. Unfortunately however, worthy infrastructure projects made necessary by MK growth, but outside the MK designated area, have not been considered. WPC have reported that this case has now received support from the MKC Management Board, and the WVTC Scheme has been included within the MK Local Investment Plan (LIP). This document is updated annually, with the next version expected to be published in June 2012. A figure of £70,000 has been provisionally set aside, but as the Tariff normally only funds up to a maximum of 75% of the capital costs of any agreed project. Now that MKC have included the WVTC project within their LIP, and by agreement with MKP, TfB have commissioned Jacobs Consultants to prepare a final Design and Costing Feasibility, at a cost of approximately £10,000, to fully investigate the best and most cost effective traffic calming scheme for Whaddon Village. This latest feasibility, which will also include a necessary Public Consultation exercise on the traffic calming proposals is expected to commence soon, once the cost and details have been presented to MKC/MKP for approval in the next week or so. Further information on the timing and implementation of this next stage of works can be requested from Sian Thomas at TfB.

- Whilst there is general acceptance that a WVTC Scheme is necessary, funding remains the only obstacle. It is highly likely that when the final costings are 'worked through' and finally agreed, there will be a funding shortfall of some £30,000 (the difference between the £100,000 likely costs within the initial report and the £70,000 figure set aside in the MKC LIP). WPC believes that MKC/MKP do not accept full responsibility for the increase in traffic/HGV's and that 'natural organic growth' from adjoining district Authority areas comes into play! It is for this reason that WPC is looking at other funding sources to bridge this gap. Many of the available grants (ie Wren, AV Community Chest, etc) specifically exclude highway works/road improvements and as an earlier request to the Transport Delegated Budget Fund for £30,000 (thirty thousand pounds) was unable to be considered due to budget re-organisation and merging, WPC now seeks from the LPP a contribution of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) which is the subject of this formal submission. Without this additional funding it is unlikely that a full and appropriate traffic calming scheme can be designed and implemented. If this request were successful, then it would help enable the Authorities to move quickly to the formal planning application and consultation stage, hopefully leading to the implementation of a traffic calming scheme before, the major development at the WEA commences, and the expected 20,000 new residents with their 10/12,000 cars move in over the next 15 years. WPC believes, that a 'build-out' based traffic calming scheme would have the necessary impact on the perception and driving habits of rat-running vehicles, deter HGV traffic, and reduce speeds leading to a safer and healthier environment for Whaddon residents and those passing through the area.



STONY STRATFORD

WOLVERTON STATION

BEDFORD

KILN FARM INDUSTRY

AREA II. 2,500 APPROX.

BRADWELL ABBEY CP

CENTRAL M. KEYNES

C.M.K. STATION

M.K.C.

WEA

H.V.D.C.

AREA IO. 4,500 APPROX.

OUGHTON CP

BEACHAMPTON CP

STRATFORD ROAD

SHENLEY CHURCH END CP

MILTON KE

RAT-RUNNING ROUTE

RAT-RUNNING ROUTE

WHADDON CP
WHADDON PRIMARY SCHOOL
REC. GROUND
WHADDON PLAYGROUND

KINGSHEAD/TATTENHOE
1500 APPROX.

SHENLEY ROAD

BOTTLE DUMP ROUNDABOUT

SALDEN CHASE
5400 APPROX.
NOW DELETED

A421 BUCK/OXF.

AYLESBURY

NEWTON LONGVILLE

AT HORWOOD CP

4.Funding Conditions

Where funding for a project is granted; the involvement of the Local Area Forum and Buckinghamshire County Council shall be acknowledged in all communications and in the case of fixed assets by some form of visible notice.

The funds provided must be spent before the 31st March 2013.

Payment from the local priorities budget will be made on submission of the relevant forms where appropriate and proof of expenditure or via invoice also where appropriate.

The funds provided must only be used for the approved project.

5. Report Ends
