



Report to CHESHAM LOCAL AREA FORUM

Title: LOCAL AREA FORUM BUDGETS 2009/10

To: Chesham Local Area Forum

Date: 16 September 2009

Author Alison Derrick, Area Co-ordinator

&

Contact Officer: 01494 586635
aderrick@buckscc.gov.uk

Recommendation

1. The Chesham Local Area Forum is recommended to:
 - **note** the arrangements for devolved budgets 2009/10 as described in the report
 - **note** the need to establish a Local Area Plan in due course to support the prioritisation of expenditure
 - **advise** LAF members to contact the Area Co-ordinator with proposals for the PAYP and Local Priorities budget.

Background

2. A key element of the Getting Closer to Communities (GC2C) Vision is “genuine and increased influence by residents over local decisions and budgets”. LAFs are central to achieving this (although this is not the only mechanism for working at a more local level). This is included as one of the three key roles of LAFs:
 - Shaping service delivery
 - Taking devolved decisions
 - Agreeing priorities for the LAF local area plan
3. To take forward these objectives, discussions have taken place with Heads of Service and Strategic Directors to identify opportunities for increasing devolved budgets and direct influence over budgets. Proposals for each Portfolio have been signed off by the Cabinet Member.
4. We now have an increased range of decisions, services and budgets that can be influenced within the framework of the 19 community areas and via the LAFs. The table in Appendix A illustrates the range of ways in which Local Area Forums can influence investment in their local areas. This paper focuses on the budgets that are devolved to the LAFs and the proposed arrangements for how decisions are made.

Budgets Devolved to LAFs in 2009-10

5. The devolved budgets for 2009-10 are set out in the table below. N.B. It is anticipated that there will be further budget devolution from a wider range of services in subsequent years.

Service area	County-wide total	Chesham LAF
Transportation local improvements	£500,000	£15,950 #
Positive Activities for Young People	£95,000	£5,000
"Early Years" grant	£95,000	£5,000
Local Priorities budget	£152,000	£8,000
Total	£842,000	£52,000

Because LAFs were not in existence in Chiltern District when the schemes for the Transportation local improvements budget were, the same process was used when working through Chiltern Local Committee in previous years. If this budget had been allocated on the same basis as it has been for LAFs in Wycombe and Aylesbury, the sum devolved would have been £32,873.

General Principles for the Management and Decision-Making of Devolved Budgets

6. All funding must be spent in line with the specific criteria associated with each specific budget.
7. The funding must be spent within the financial year for which it is allocated.
- For 2009-10, in consultation with the LAF Chairman, each Head of Service concerned will take a view in November 2009 on the likelihood of unspent monies being used that year. If there is budget that is unlikely to be spent that year, it will revert back to the service concerned and be allocated to activities that will take place during 2009-10.
 - Whilst it is anticipated that this should not be a problem in future years, the same principle will apply.
8. In terms of formal decision-making, the same approach will be used as for the Local Committee i.e. LAFs will be advising the relevant Head of Service on how to spend the devolved budget who will then implement that advice.
9. To allow for the occasional unforeseen opportunity that requires a swift decision, funding may be agreed in between LAF meetings subject to the approval of the LAF Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Given the relatively late establishment of the Chesham LAF, much of the funding may need to be allocated via this route in 2009-10.

Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP)

10. Information was circulated to Parish and Town Council Clerks on 6 August 2009 encouraging them to promote the availability of this funding. The availability of the

funding has also been promoted via community newsletters and direct to community organisations. An application form was circulated and copies are available from the Area Co-ordinator.

11. This budget must be used to engage young people (age 13-19) in positive activities (open youth club provision is not acceptable unless there is a structured programme). It can be used for a one-off event, equipment or be given to a voluntary organisation. Young people must be consulted on any planned activity.
12. The deadline for the receipt of proposals is the end of September 2009. This is to allow time for the evaluation of proposals, approval and implementation of the activity during this financial year.
13. The LAF can involve its nearest Youth Opportunity Fund panel to get additional money if it wishes. The YOF is young people led so that would also help with consulting young people.
14. The Youth Service will evaluate applications and make recommendations to the LAF.
15. The accountable Officer is the Head of Community and Youth Engagement (from June 2009 the Officer designated to manage the Youth Service).

"Early Years" grant

16. This must be used to fund local nursery provision - specifically ICT improvements, disability access, extended flexible provision for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.
17. Within each category, there are further detailed criteria which must be satisfied. There are also strict criteria for who can qualify for funding which includes registration with BCC Children's Services.
18. The BCC Early Years & Childcare Service will promote the availability of funding, to all eligible organisations, assess all applications for eligibility and evaluate the merit of the application. In the autumn, the Early Years & Childcare Service will evaluate applications and make recommendations to each LAF.
19. The accountable Officer is the Divisional Director, Commissioning and Business Improvement.

Local Priorities Budget

20. This budget can be used for any purpose which supports local community priorities and the well-being of the area identified by the LAF through its local area planning process. Until the Chesham LAF has agreed its priorities, officers will have to rely upon identified common priorities from Town and parish plans, Revitalisation group priorities and other forms of consultation when evaluating proposals.
21. The Lead Area Officer and Area Co-ordinator will evaluate proposals and make recommendations in due course for how this budget may be spent in 2009-10. LAF members who have particular ideas should raise these directly with the Lead Area Officer or Area Co-ordinator.

22. During the next couple of months, the Local Area Co-ordinator will be preparing a local priorities profile based upon parish plans, CHAP priorities etc. In due course the LAF will be able to take a view on its over-arching priorities to shape future expenditure of its devolved budgets.

23. The accountable Officer is the Locality Services Manager.

Transportation Local Improvements Budget

24. This budget is to fund minor transportation improvement schemes. The list of proposed schemes for the Chesham Local Area in 2009-10 was approved in April 2009. These are listed below:

Scheme	Value
Prevent water running off from the highway and eroding car parking area in front of the village hall, Two Dells Lane, Ashley Green	£5,000
Provision of a salt bin, White Hall, Whelpley Hill, Ashley Green	£475
Provision of a salt bin at junction of with Chartridge Lane, The Warren, Chartridge	£475
Provide lighting between parking area and the sports facility, Moor Road, Chesham	£5,000
Refurbishment of verge and kerb, Buckland Common, Cholesbury	£5,000
Total	£15,950

25. The accountable Officer is the Head of Transportation.

Monitoring and future planning arrangements

26. At the end of the year, officers will prepare a review of the work of Chesham Local Area Forum and put forward proposals for the allocation of the next year's budgets. Projects which have benefited from Chesham LAF support will be invited to report on progress to the LAF, either as part of the annual review or at some time during the course of the year.

27. It is anticipated that by next financial year, the Chesham LAF will have agreed its Local Area Plan which will help guide priorities for its devolved budgets.

- Report ends -