

The Chesham & Chiltern Villages Local Area Forum

Title:	Update On Local Area Priorities Process
Date:	23 June 2010
Author:	Alison Derrick
Contact officer:	Alison Derrick 01494 586635
Electoral divisions affected:	Chesham North West Chesham East Chess Valley Chiltern Ridges

Summary

This report details the top priority issues for Chesham & Chiltern Villages area as identified at the Local Area Priorities workshop in March 2010 and seeks LAF agreement in terms of those issues that will drive LAF agendas and attract funding from the LAF delegated budgets in 2010/11.

Recommendation

The Chesham & Chiltern Villages Local Area Forum is recommended **to note** the output of the Local Area Prioritisation workshop on 17 March 2010. The Forum is further asked **to agree** the suggested top priorities.

Supporting information

As Forum members will know, one of the roles of LAFs is to oversee the development and delivery of area based Local Area Plans. These will set out the local priorities for the area and will inform and reflect the priorities of the county and district sustainable community strategies.

The purpose of the Local Area Plan is to establish:



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



- a shared understanding of local issues and priorities for improving the quality of life of the area.
- A realistic and achievable plan of action with short and medium term objectives

The Plan will be based on robust evidence and be informed by community aspirations.

Structuring the Plan

The priorities from each workshop are specific to the community, but the 19 community plans adhere to a common format and timescale, in order to ensure that they can be integrated into planning at a county and district level and are therefore effective in bringing change at the local level.

Plans have therefore been organised around the themes of the Sustainable Community Strategies, these being:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Sustainable Environment
- Safe Communities
- Cohesive Communities
- Thriving Economy

Priorities from the workshop

Appendix 1 a-e shows the issues as prioritised at the March workshop.

The top issues under each theme are as follows and it is suggested that the LAF prioritises these for action or referral to appropriate agencies.

Health and Wellbeing

1. Chesham Town has educational attainment and income levels below the County average therefore support for families is needed from the pre-natal stage onwards (eg more support from health visitors)
2. More support is needed for older people to live in their own homes and generally for older people and people with disabilities
3. Access to health services is poor for those who do not have their own transport. Particular concerns about access to services that are now provided from High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville hospitals. Improvements are needed.
4. Elderly people in the rural communities are socially isolated and there is a lack of clear relevant signposting to relevant service provision and information

Cohesive Communities

1. Elderly and infirm are isolated in the villages. More needs to be done to encourage members of the community to support older residents and ensure they have the opportunities to participate in village life, thus helping combat rural isolation.
2. There are weak links with the Asian communities in the area
3. There are few places that young people can gather without being accused of anti social behaviour. Waterside and other youth projects need support
4. Youth provision in rural parishes is patchy and young people have difficulties accessing facilities outside their own parish

Safer Communities

1. Current condition of roads due to poor level of road and gully maintenance means roads are unsafe for users
2. Need to do more to raise awareness of under-age drinking eg via publicity in main shops
3. Vehicle crime, vandalism and ASB in Waterside
4. Speeding - urban and rural roads
5. Emergency service response - swifter response needed for rural areas. Improved knowledge of area is needed. Also response is from Tring (due to HP23 postcode) but referred to Bucks when reach the County boundary - needs to be sorted out.

Sustainable Communities

1. Traffic congestion in Chesham – Chesham already a bottleneck. Road infrastructure could not cope with traffic generated by more development
2. Need for improved public transport particularly for smaller communities. It is virtually non existent for villages and in the evenings – demand responsive transport could be a better solution than the rare timetabled buses
3. Sustainable approach to water use, urban drainages and flood prevention needs to be developed

Thriving Economy

1. There is a lack of affordable, decent housing in the villages, particularly for young families. Also a lack of communication about the development of affordable housing schemes
2. There is a need for a visitor/tourist strategy for Chesham Town. Any such strategy needs to link to the AONB strategy for tourism e.g. cycle routes from town to countryside and work is needed to coordinate a tourism strategy with local accommodation providers
3. There is a need for investment in the revitalisation of the Town Centre. More effort needs to be put into attracting shops to the Town Centre and businesses to the area. Need to ensure the right kind of accommodation is available.

These issues are the highest priorities based on the group consensus and on individual voting. However it is for the Local Area Forum to decide whether it agrees that these are the priority issues for the area that are most in need to LAF support and funding.

The Area Plans are aspirational, but also require actionable first steps, in order to build momentum. Therefore it is suggested that the Area Coordinator and Lead Area Officer work with the LAF to identify some 'quick wins', which may be lower priorities but can be done quickly but with minimal resources.

Proposed Next Steps

A copy of Local Area Planning process attached.

The next step in the process (step 3) is for the Lead Area Officer and Area Co-ordinator (Locality Services) to work with Buckinghamshire County Council Heads of Service, District

Officers and other organisations to identify which actions can be taken forward and by what means.

Resource implications

The Local Priorities budget delegated by Buckinghamshire County Council to the Local Area Forum, and where appropriate, other budgets delegated to the Forum, will be used to commission projects that aim to have a positive impact on the priorities identified via Local Priorities Workshops and agreed by the Local Area Forum.

Local Area planning process:

- 1) Collect issues from existing sources eg. Parish Plans/appraisals, Service Excellence events, Market Town Health Checks etc so as not to reinvent the wheel.
- 2) Bring stakeholders together to prioritise the issues and get a sense of what is happening already

LAF members to discuss and agree top priorities and quick wins

- 3) Check out the reality of getting the priorities addressed with service providers i.e.
 - on the agenda already and so will definitely happen,
 - could take priority over existing things,
 - could take priority over existing things but needs the LAFs/LCPs active involvement to work up,
 - needs escalating to strategic LSP level,
 - community do it for themselves,
 - will not happen.
- 4) Determine actions to address the priorities
- 5) Get a "delivery agreement" signed off by service providers and partners as a commitment to actions
- 6) Monitor progress of planned actions
- 7) Refresh in the light of new intelligence *

* BCA will be working with Bucks CC to carry out parish appraisals in those areas that have not currently got them.

