

GREATER AYLESBURY LOCAL AREA FORUM



DATE:	8 September 2008
TIME:	7.30 pm
LOCATION:	Council Chamber, Gateway Offices Aylesbury Vale District Council

AGENDA

Item		Page No
1	Confirmation of Chairman To confirm the appointment of the Chairman of the Forum.	
2	Appointment of Vice-Chairman The Vice-Chairman to be a District Councillor	
3	Apologies for absence/changes in membership	
4	Declarations of Interest To declare any personal or prejudicial interests	
5	Question Time There will be a 20 minute period for public questions. Members of the public are encouraged to submit their questions in advance of the meeting to facilitate a full answer on the day of the meeting. Questions sent in advance will be dealt with first and verbal questions after.	
6	Report submitted to County Council on the future of locality working in Buckinghamshire To note the report that was agreed at County Council on 10 July 2008	1 - 42
7	Terms of Reference To consider the terms of reference and membership issues	43 - 54
8	Action Notes To confirm the notes of the Workshop Meeting of the Forum held on 14 th July 2008.	55 - 60
9	Key Issues for the Forum To consider Ian Barham's summary note of issues raised at the last meeting.	61 - 62
10	Matters Raised by Aylesbury Town Council Britain In Bloom – Aylesbury Contribution “Cars For Sale” The Queens Park Centre Steve Patrick to introduce.	

11	Petitions None received	
12	Date of Next and Future Meetings The next meeting was provisionally set for Monday 10 November. The Forum is asked to consider this date and to set dates for 2009.	

Democratic Services Contact : Clare Gray, Tel 01296 383610, Email cgray@buckscc.gov.uk
Please contact me if you have any special requirements e.g. hearing loop

7: GETTING CLOSER TO COMMUNITIES

- 1 The first Council Plan of this Administration set out two key aims:
 - How to make Council services better meet the needs of individual residents (as customers/clients); and
 - How to meet the needs and priorities of different communities
- 2 The first of these aims led to the development of the Customer First Programme and the second led to Getting Closer to Communities (GC2C).
- 3 This report summarises the current position with the GC2C Programme and the outcome of the recent consultation on the “Buckinghamshire Locality Strategy”. The GC2C programme is fundamentally about devolving decision making, influence and service delivery to the most appropriate level in the community. Local people will have more say in, and more choice about, local services in their local communities. Through implementing this programme the County Council as an organisation will be more locally focused, - it will think local and act local. It is, I believe, the best way forward for the residents of Buckinghamshire. Should any of our partners wish to join us in customizing their services for local communities they would be most welcome.
- 4 It also seeks Council approval of the Cabinet’s recommendations for taking forward the programme . The **attached** detailed report and Appendices set out the further information and background to this summary about:
 - How GC2C is delivering better outcomes for residents including highlights of achievements to date. This is both by service area and across the 19 local community areas
 - The Review of the Strategy and the organisational requirements for the next stage of delivery, including the formal establishment of Local Area Forums
 - The key issues from the consultation on a partnership approach to locality working.

- 5 Council approved the GC2C Strategy in July 2005. A comprehensive review of the Strategy was undertaken between June and December 2007. As part of the review:
- Discussions were held with all Members of the Council - the “57 Conversations” – about what GC2C should aim to deliver
 - Discussions took place with Members for the 19 local community areas (building on the 57 conversations) about how Local Area Forums (LAFs) would be established in the area
 - A number of new targets were included in the Corporate Plan by Council on 21 February 2008 for the delivery of GC2C
 - Consultation was undertaken on the “Buckinghamshire Locality Strategy” (ie: how the aims of GC2C might be delivered in partnership)
 - Reports have been submitted to the four Local Committees on the proposal to replace them with LAFs
 - An assessment of the “organisational requirements” to deliver GC2C has been undertaken

Key Issues and Recommendations for GC2C

- 6 The review of the Strategy and the 57 Conversations have confirmed that a locality strategy is the right approach and has the potential for the Council, working in partnership, to deliver service improvements to the people of Buckinghamshire at a local level. The foundations and a number of key building blocks are now in place, awareness has been raised, the culture within the Council is beginning to change and we have a clear set of actions in the revised Strategy to move to the next stage of delivering better outcomes for local residents. We also have a budget that supports that delivery.
- The budget approved by the Council for the GC2C programme in February 2008 was £913,000 some of which is transferred from existing budgets.
 - The majority of the budget (£800K) relates to staffing costs (some of which are already in post but others yet to appointed e.g. more area co-ordinators).
 - Other expenditure includes development and rollout of local delivery initiatives including the Needs Assessment methodology,

Service Excellence events, Member newsletters, Residents' Survey, Website improvements, including an enhanced consultation portal for parish councils, changes to internal systems, support to local Councils, costs of LAFs (Democratic Services, rooms, incidentals etc), Communications etc.

- 7 As with other County Council budgets the proposed GC2C budget was scrutinized as part of the MTP process.
- 8 The real difference to local service delivery and quality of life in the 19 areas through GC2C will be through the reshaping of existing Service budgets not simply increasing resources, by devolving budgets for people to make local choices about services . Some work has taken place to identify the Service budgets that can be devolved to the 19 local areas for local decision or consultation on local priorities and further work will be undertaken in this service planning year. The main budgets identified so far by Services are as follows:
 - £500k Transportation Capital devolved to Local Area Forums: the sum currently allocated to Local Committees, will, subject to the Council's decisions, be allocated to the 19 Local Area Forums. Over the years some Parishes Councils have added value by allocating additional funds from their own precepts where schemes are approved in their parish
 - Additional Highways Maintenance Funding: the Council agreed an additional £4.0m for highways maintenance to meet priorities within the 19 local community areas. This will also be allocated locally through the LAFs in 2009/10
 - Other budgets: there have been various commitments to invest in the 19 local community areas e.g. Adult Social Care have designated 19 employees with locality roles; Transportation have appointed Local Area Technicians with vans. Further work is being done on this and we look forward to more service areas devolving services and spend in the future.
- 9 The five Aims of the revised GC2C Strategy are broadly the same as the original aims, but the Objectives have been revised. Following the extensive engagement with all Members and the far reaching implications that this will have for the way in which the Council works it is important that the full Council reaffirms its commitment to the

Strategy,. The leadership aspect of the Organisational Requirements also addresses the Members' role in leading and supporting delivery of GC2C. (*Recommendation 1*).

- 10 A linked issue is whether to change the name "GC2C". This has been discussed previously within the Council and the consultation specifically sought views on a partnership brand. Although there were a few suggestions, and a number of comments were made showing a strong preference for the theme of "communities" or working together. Recognising that further discussions will be taking place in some parts of the County about the implementation of aspects of the programme e.g. Local Area Forums, the Cabinet felt that on balance and after consideration of these matters, it did not want to propose a change in the name for the programme at this stage.

Key Issues from the Consultation - Overview

- 11 It was agreed that we should consult on the Aims and Objectives of GC2C on the basis that better outcomes for residents can only truly be delivered in partnership. The attached detailed report sets out:
- the basis of the consultation, through the Bucks Strategic Partnership and all local councils
 - the comments received from consultees (75 responses at the time of writing)
 - the key issues raised (**Table 3 in the report**) and a suggested response to these (**Table 4 in the report**)
- 12 This consultation has produced a high level of support for the fundamental aims and objectives of the Strategy and an appetite for further discussions about how it would work. Comments have been received, in particular, about Local Area Forums (see further below), local community planning and the co-ordination of community engagement at different levels. Additionally, it is clear that a strategic local public service response is required in order to meet the changing needs of our residents and the expectations on all local partners to work together to assess and meet the needs of different communities through both the LAA and CAA.

- 13 A further issue, however, is the concern that many parish councils, who responded, appear to have about their relationship with the County Council and a strong view that we do not recognise or value the important role that parish councils have. In some cases I am informed that parishes have been told that there are plans that they are to be abolished, which is simply not possible as they are statutory bodies. However I cannot stress enough that the County Council has no wish to reduce the role of, or sideline, Parish Councils. The County Council wants the new arrangements to give parish councils more say and not less, more local influence, more local money and more local decision making. However it is clear that despite the “New Deal” and other initiatives, further work is needed to improve understanding and our working relationship and I as the responsible Cabinet Member will visit local associations of parish and town councils and groups of parishes to talk further about this if they would like to invite me. Due to other diary obligations this might take a while but I am happy to make a commitment to do this to ensure better understanding and awareness of the GC2C programme by parish councils.
- 14 The proposed recommendation to Council for **partnership working on a locality strategy** are set out in *Recommendations 2 and 3*

Key Issues from the Consultation – Local Committees and Local Area Forums

- 15 The views received in response to the Consultation are summarised in Appendices G and H of the detailed report. Without wishing to diminish the importance of any of the comments made from the consultation, the key issue that emerged was the roll out of Local Area Forums (LAFs) in place of the Local Committees. Agreement has been reached with Wycombe District Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council to replace the Local Committees with LAFs in Aylesbury Vale and Local Community Partnerships in the Wycombe District area.
- 16 However, strong comments were received from both Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council, supported by a number of parish councils, to retain the Local Committee structure and not to roll out LAFs (see the analysis in Table 3 of the attached report). Both Councils expressed the wish for further dialogue on a solution that would better meet the needs of their areas. Nevertheless within

Chiltern and South Bucks District areas, if the local county councillors are in agreement that they would like to proceed with establishing a local area forum in their area and they make representations to me as the responsible Cabinet Member I would give it most serious consideration.

- 17 The broad framework for the proposed membership of the Local Area Forums is set out in Appendix F. However because one size does not fit all, it is important to stress that the membership of specific forums can be locally determined by the local County Councillors and the LAF within this broad framework and I have asked that Appendix F be amended to clarify this.
- 18 The proposed recommendations to Council **for Local Committees and Local Area Forums**, are outlined in *Recommendations 5 to 12 below*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the County Council RESOLVES:

- 1 To approve the revised GC2C Strategy and the Organisational Requirements for delivery;**
- 2 To continue discussions with all partners about the development of the Buckinghamshire Locality Strategy as the Local Strategic Partnership approach to:**
 - **Empowering communities**
 - **Delivering better outcomes for residents**
 - **Preparing for the Comprehensive Area Assessment**
 - **Localised delivery of the Local Area Agreement**
- 3 To undertake further work with local councils to develop a better understanding of the relationship with the County Council and how we can support their fundamental role as the most local tier of community representatives;**
- 4 To replace Local Committees with Local Area Forums on a phased basis and to amend the Constitution accordingly;**

- 5 To approve the Terms of Reference, Constitution and Working Arrangements for Local Area Forums;**
- 6 To replace the Local Committees with Local Area Forums in Aylesbury Vale and Local Community Partnerships in Wycombe Districts from 1 September 2008;**
- 7 To defer the replacement of the Local Committees in Chiltern and South Bucks to allow further discussions to take place to try to identify an agreed way forward, but to permit the establishment of one or more LAFs in those Districts where there is support for this;**
- 8 To authorise the Leader and Deputy Leader to make changes to the arrangements for Local Area Forums in Chiltern and South Bucks on the basis of further discussions within those areas;**
- 9 To authorise the Deputy Leader to make minor changes to the terms of reference of Local Area Forums in the light of the operation of the Forums;**
- 10 To request the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to bring forward recommendations for any minor amendments to the Constitution resulting from these decisions, which will then come to full County Council for discussion and approval;**
- 11 To undertake a review of the operation of Local Area Forums and report to the Council on progress in 12 months time, taking into account the results of the Pathfinder Pilots in Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale.**

**DAVID SHAKESPEARE, LEADER
BILL CHAPPLE, DEPUTY LEADER**

Council Meeting - 10 July 2008

The following resolution was passed:

1. To approve the revised GC2C strategy and the Organisational Requirements for delivery.
2. To continue discussions with all partners about the development of the Buckinghamshire Locality Strategy as the Local Strategic Partnership approach to:
 - Empowering communities
 - Delivering better outcomes for residents
 - Preparing for the Comprehensive Area Assessment
 - Localised delivery of the Local Area Agreement
3. To undertake further work with local councils to develop a better understanding of the relationship with the county Council and how we can support their fundamental roles as the most local tier of community representatives.
4. To replace Local Committees with Local Area Forums on a phased basis and to amend the Constitution accordingly.
5. To approve the Terms of Reference, Constitution and Working arrangements for Local Area Forums.
6. To replace the Local Committees with Local Area Forums in Aylesbury Vale and Local Community Partnerships in Wycombe Districts from 1 September 2008.
7. To defer the replacement of the Local Committees in Chiltern and South Bucks to allow further discussions to take place to try to identify an agreed way forward, but to permit the establishment of one or more LAF's in those Districts where there is support for this.
8. To authorise the Leader and Deputy Leader to make changes to the arrangements for Local Area Forums in Chiltern and South Bucks on the basis of further discussions within those areas.
9. To authorise the Deputy Leader to make minor changes to the terms of reference of Local Area Forums, in the light of the operation of the forums, in consultation with those forums.
10. To request the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to bring forward recommendation for any minor amendments to the Constitution resulting from these decisions, which will then come to full County Council for discussion and approval.
11. To undertake a review of the operation of Local Area Forums and report to the Council on progress in 12 months time, taking into account the results of the Pathfinder Pilots in Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale.

GETTING CLOSER TO COMMUNITIES AND CONSULTATION ON THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCALITY STRATEGY

COUNCIL 10 JULY 2008

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BACKGROUND PAPERS*

- Responses Received to the Consultation
- Previous Council Reports on GC2C

* Available on request from Jackie Louch, GC2C Office, (01296 383839)

PART I – INTRODUCTION

1 OVERVIEW: WHAT THIS REPORT COVERS

- 1.1 This report provides the detailed information to support the recommendations to the Council on the future direction of the Getting Closer to Communities Strategy in the light of:
- A comprehensive review of the Strategy, including the views of all Members of the Council
 - An assessment of the organisational requirements for delivery
 - The framework for Local Area Forums as a replacement for Local Committees
 - The Consultation with partners on the development of a “Buckinghamshire Locality Strategy” (which would, in effect, replace GC2C – a different title may be agreed)
- 1.2 **Part II** of the report summarises what GC2C, as our Locality Strategy, is intended to deliver from the perspective of residents, local Members and partners. It also illustrates some of our achievements to date and the ambitions for the future across all Service Areas.
- 1.3 **Part III** of the report sets out the findings from a major review of the Strategy (including the 57 Conversations with all Members of the Council) and deals with the organisational requirements that need to be in place to deliver our Aims. Finally, this section covers the proposals for Local Area Forums.
- 1.4 **Part IV** of the report deals with the consultation on the Buckinghamshire Locality Strategy. It explains the reasons for the consultation, the approach we adopted and the responses we have received. The section ends with an analysis of the key issues from consultees and a response to these.
- 1.5 **Part V** of the report summarises what has gone before and makes recommendations to the Council on the internal changes we need to continue to make and the next steps in developing a partnership approach to locality working. Recommendations on the constitution for Local Area Forums are also included.
- 1.6 A number of **Appendices** are attached to the report to provide further background and detail for Members. These include a Glossary of terms and abbreviations. In addition, **Background Papers** are listed which are available on request.

PART II – DELIVERING BETTER OUTCOMES FOR RESIDENTS

2 WHAT A LOCALITY STRATEGY WILL DELIVER

2.1 The first Council Plan of this Administration set out two key aims:

- How to make Council services better meet the needs of individual residents (as customers/clients); and
- How to meet the needs and priorities of different communities

The first of these aims led to the development of the Customer First Programme and the second led to Getting Closer to Communities (GC2C).

2.2 The GC2C Vision is:

To enable Councils in Buckinghamshire, working in partnership, to achieve:

- *Services tailored to the priorities of 19 local areas*
- *Genuine and increased influence by residents over local decisions and budgets*
- *More accessible and integrated local services*
- *Strengthened local leadership across the three tiers of local government*

2.3 Our residents will have

- Greater and genuine influence over service delivery
- More local involvement in decisions about local issues
- Services that better meet the needs of their area
- Better access to local services
- Action on the ground from all partners that will make a difference to their community

3 ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

3.1 Our work already across Services, across the 19 local community areas and with partners has demonstrated the benefits and the potential of working together at a more local level.

Service Improvements Through Locality Working

3.2 The range of service improvements that have already been made is impressive. Service, corporate and partnership examples of current locality working include:

- Local councils can now request to take on a range of services on behalf of the County Council which means that they have greater flexibility and potential to respond more quickly to some matters that are important locally. We have developed criteria which will enable more parishes to take on services in future years
- Funding has been obtained through the South East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SEIEP) to improve care for older people through building community capacity; this will be piloted in two local community areas
- A Parish loan scheme has been introduced to help reduce carbon emissions through improved energy efficiency within the local community
- Local Access pilots are being established in each of the 19 areas, including in all libraries – larger libraries will have a partner presence
- Adult Social Care drop in surgeries are being held in each local area to help Buckinghamshire residents find out more about the services available to vulnerable adults
- Each Children and Young Peoples Area (CYPLDA) will have a multi-agency local delivery team covering a range of services for vulnerable children and establishing where appropriate pooled budgets
- Youth Cafés, in community areas, are being set up in partnership with district, town and parish councils and Youth for Christ. This is supported by funding from the Youth Opportunities Fund which comes via the County Council and is allocated by panels of young people. The cafés offer support and development opportunities and run out of school activities
- The 19 areas have been used to help to determine the location of children’s centres and extended services for schools
- Area Highways Technicians are assigned to each of the 19 areas
- Highways maintenance “gangs” are working in each of the 19 areas to priorities set by local Members and parish councils. A community “clean up” project is being developed to extend the range of services and agencies involved in these events, to be piloted in the Wycombe area
- Local Transport strategies/partnerships are being developed for each local community area
- An Adult Social Care Co-ordinator has been identified for each area
- The 57 Conversations and the 19 Discussions have engaged all Members of the Council in defining the outcomes of GC2C and what success on the ground would look like
- Profiles have been developed for the 19 areas setting out the take up of key services
- Local cluster meetings have been operating in 14 out of the 19 areas and are now developing into Local Area Forums
- The “speed dating” initiative has built communication networks between county council employees working in each locality; these have developed into the Service Excellence events, which include partners. Informal meetings of frontline employees are being piloted in 2 local areas.
- Additional Area Co-ordinators have been appointed to work with local Members, Services and local stakeholders to address the needs of each area

Examples continued overleaf.....

- A lead Area Officer has been appointed for each area to provide senior management support
 - Environmental enhancement in Denham Green
 - Courts Carnival held in (Southcourt and Walton Court)
 - Work with parishes and Housing Associations to improve parking arrangements in Chiltern area
 - Partnership training for Police Community Support Officers on local authority services and shared premises eg: Farnham library
 - In Aylesbury Vale, Police Community Service Officers will also be attending the Adult Social Care Surgeries.
 - A wide range of children and young people services are working closely with health services on local delivery - “the team around the child”
- 3.3 Further engagement is planned with Services to embed Getting Closer to Communities principles into Service and Business Plans and to provide tailored support from the GC2C Team.

Delivering in the 19 Areas

- 3.4 Action Plans for the 19 local community areas enable us to focus on the needs of each area and achievements at a local level. Highlights for each area are shown in **Appendix A**. Particular priorities for the current year will be reflected in the team’s business plan.
- 3.5 Area Co-ordinators are responsible for the performance monitoring of the 19 area plans, keeping in close communication with local Members.

Progress Overall

- 3.6 A high level summary of the latest position on the GC2C Programme is set out in the table in **Appendix B**
- 3.7 To deliver on this, it is vital that **all Services** set out their current and planned contribution to the 5 Aims of GC2C so that we can demonstrate how services for local communities will change in different areas as a result.

4 OUR AMBITION FOR THE FUTURE

- 4.1 We need to build on the success so far and grasp the potential of GC2C for the benefits of residents, Members, partners and to meet the future agenda for public services.

Meeting the Needs of Residents

- 4.2 For the first time, the 2007 Residents’ survey provided a representative sample for each of the 19 areas. The analysis of the different views held by residents across the county has reinforced the need for a locality approach. For example, there were wide variations in satisfaction for each of the 19 local areas, ranging from 88% satisfaction in Winslow to 58% in The Beeches.

Further analysis of these results is required, but initial research shows that clean streets feeling safe and low levels of crime were important to the majority of areas whereas condition of roads was felt to be the most in need of improvement. Focus Groups have taken place to follow up key topics of concern.

- 4.3 This information is being used in Service Excellence Events and will be presented to each Local Area Forum. Where possible, specific measures will be developed for each of the 19 areas, based upon the Residents' Survey, linked to the new Local Area Agreement and built into the proposed local community plans. This means that we will be better placed to deliver services that meet the particular needs of different localities.

Meeting the Needs of Members

- 4.4 Following the 57 conversations that took place with Members between August and December 2007, a package of support has been agreed and circulated to all Members (**Appendix C**). This will help all Members in their prime role of supporting local residents. Members will have better information about their local areas and more support from Officers across all Services to respond to needs.
- 4.5 The Area Co-ordinator is the first point of contact for local Members in their community leadership role, to provide knowledge of the area and regular updates of developments and issues in the area
- 4.6 A Member induction and development programme is being developed for 2008/09 and beyond, which will focus on the importance of the local Member role and the development of key skills where required.

Meeting the Needs of Partners

- 4.7 We recognise that not all community needs can be met by just the County Council; many issues require the co-operation of a number of different organisations across various sectors. As such, all partners need to work together to meet the increasing expectations and the complex needs of local residents. The vision is that we will have multi agency working to support local delivery and realise efficiencies. There are already a number of good examples of joint working across the County, which are noted in paragraph 3.3 above.
- 4.8 We will need to undertake further work with partners on the opportunities for multi-agency teams/co-location, including:
- Sharing information
 - Sharing processes/systems
 - Co-location
 - Joint project teams
 - Joint management

Meeting the Future Agenda

- 4.9 The extent of locality working, community empowerment and influence on service planning and delivery is becoming increasingly important as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment which will commence in April 2009. The County Council was praised for its vision with regard to its GC2C programme at the last Corporate Performance Assessment inspection and it will be of greater importance for the future.
- 4.10 The need to understand and measure outcomes for local communities is also an important aspect of the new Local Area Agreement framework. Our understanding of local community needs will be the starting point for the LAA, service planning, budgetary processes and central to our performance management. In addition, all authorities will have a new “duty to involve” from April 2009. Ways that authorities will be expected to deliver this is likely to form a key focus in the forthcoming Community Empowerment White Paper expected during the Summer.
- 4.10 Finally, there is a lively national debate about localism and the need for greater devolution between the various tiers of government. The Local Government Association, in particular, is promoting the importance of this approach to delivering better outcomes for people and places.
- 4.11 So, whilst GC2C has been designed to meet the needs of Bucks and our residents, having an effective locality strategy in place also puts us ahead of the game in responding to new national developments.

PART III – REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY

5 REVIEW OF THE GC2C STRATEGY

The Getting Closer to Communities Strategy

- 5.1 The County Council approved the GC2C Strategy in July 2005. The Strategy includes five key Aims for improving the delivery of services to different communities in Buckinghamshire (see further below). This was initially based upon 24 local community areas. The Council agreed to introduce 5 pilot areas to test the approach across the Aims. Following a review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Environment and a further report to the Council in 25 May 2006, it was agreed to extend this to all local community areas.
- 5.2 The Community areas were further refined in late 2006 and boundaries were modified to take in feedback we received. The number of community areas was reduced to 19.
- 5.3 The principle of using the 19 local forums as the basis of community engagement was included in the Pathfinder Agreement signed by the Leaders of the County and District Councils in February 2007.

The Review Process

- 5.4 The Review of the GC2C Strategy took place between June and December 2007 in the light of recent national and local developments including the Buckinghamshire Pathfinder Programme and the comments from the “57 Conversations” with Members. By and large the Aims are unchanged although they have been re-ordered. The Objectives have been revised to reflect a sharper focus on how it will impact on local communities, things that are already in place and new developments. High level Outcomes have also been built into each Aim to signal the importance of making a difference to the residents and communities of Buckinghamshire. We have also included a vision that encapsulates what we want to achieve through the Strategy. The GC2C Board has overseen this work. In addition, from a Member perspective, the Review has been overseen by the Deputy Leader with advice from the Community Leadership Policy Advisory Group.

Key Messages from the 57 Conversations

- 5.5 Between August and December 2007 we undertook individual conversations with all Members of the Council to seek views on progress on the GC2C programme and aspirations for its future. The key messages that resulted from these conversations are outlined below:
- The Vision and Aims of GC2C had been well communicated but Members wanted more evidence of how delivery on the ground had actually been enhanced and improved and, therefore, had achieved the desired outcomes for local communities

- Members appreciated how GC2C can and will support their community leadership roles and there was significant enthusiasm to make it work, despite some tensions around boundaries of specific local community areas
- A strategy for Locality Working was seen as the way forward but Members would like to see more joined up working both from within the Council and with partners to enhance the quality and quantity of delivery in local areas.

5.6 This engagement with Members and the views expressed have been crucial in the revision of the Strategy and the development of the package of support outlined above.

Key Findings from the Strategy Review

5.7 The review concluded that, GC2C is a wide-ranging, forward thinking strategy that has the potential to put Bucks and Members from all councils centre stage in terms of leading national developments on locality working. It is also broadly accepted as the way forward, albeit more evidence of delivery is needed. The Aims can also meet the future agenda for the County Council and our partners, including:

- Comprehensive Area Assessment: focusing on the distinctive needs of different places and communities
- Local Area Agreement: localised targets
- Community empowerment: duty to involve
- Place shaping: creating safer and stronger communities
- Role of Members as community leaders
- Achieving Outstanding Performance: strong communities, customers first

5.8 More importantly, it provides a real opportunity for partners, working together, to deliver service improvements to the residents of Buckinghamshire which reflect the distinctive needs of different communities.

Revised Strategy and Objectives

5.9 The revised Getting Closer to Communities Strategy, which reflects the findings of the review, is attached as **Appendix D**.

Key Communication Messages

5.10 To support the change process required for GC2C, tailored key messages (**Table 1**) have been produced for residents, Members, employees and partners, to be delivered through the new Communications Plan:

TABLE 1: GC2C KEY COMMUNICATION MESSAGES	
Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a difference to you and your community • Giving you genuine influence over service delivery • More local involvement in local issues • Services that better meet the needs of your area • Better access to local services
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping you to support local residents • More support to you as a frontline Member • A local partnership forum to plan for the needs of your area • Redirecting resources to meet greater needs • More delegated resources for local areas
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new way of working, for all of us • A change of culture – “think local, act local” • Time to deliver improvements on the ground • Empowering frontline employees
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together to improve localities through better services • Achieving efficiencies by working together • Local delivery of the Local Area Agreement • Meeting the requirements of the Comprehensive Area Assessment

6 ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DELIVERY

6.1 The Council has already shown clear leadership and foresight in approving the GC2C Strategy, agreeing high level sponsorship by the Deputy Leader of the Council and providing additional resources to achieve the Aims. We are now at a crucial point with the GC2C programme, a number of things are in place, awareness has been raised and we have a clear direction in the revised Strategy to deliver the next phase.

6.2 However, there are significant leadership and cultural challenges to address if we are to deliver across the full range of the GC2C Objectives. Work has taken place on the “organisational requirements” to deliver GC2C. The key areas where we need to take action are as follows:

- **Leadership**... the leadership and commitment required to communicate the vision and create the conditions for success
- **Cultural Change**... how the organisation will need to change to deliver a different way of working, based upon increased community empowerment, a local partnership approach to service delivery and enhanced community leadership.
- **Locality Management**... the skills, knowledge and capacity dedicated to implementing the strategy and locality working; and the new structure that will be put in place

- **Service Area Management**... how services are organised, co-ordinated and delivered through some form of local management structure and how this relates to the 19 areas
- **Multi-Agency Service Delivery**... how service delivery is joined up locally across agency boundaries.

6.3 These issues have been considered in detail by Members and officers in recent months. In addition, the Council retained SOLACE Enterprises to undertake a short 'health check' of the GC2C Strategy and to give us a view about the robustness of our approach, the organisational requirements and risks to delivery. The review confirmed that the Strategy was the right way forward and provided some very helpful pointers, which we are building into our way forward.

Culture Change and Leadership

6.4 Clearly the breadth and depth of change required by GC2C, requires significant leadership from both Members and Officers.

6.5 A key theme is the central role of **Members** in helping to make GC2C work. Subject to the decisions taken by the County Council, the expectation is that that Members will:

- Promote GC2C positively within the Council and with residents, district and local councils and other partners
- Lead and promote Local Area Forums
- Participate in (where possible, multi-agency) ward walks
- Meet regularly with Area Co-ordinators and liaise with Lead Area Officers
- Consider the reallocation of resources between the 19 areas to meet differing needs (based on the Needs Analysis)
- Promote community empowerment of local residents as complementary to traditional engagement with local councils and other local groups

6.6 In parallel, we will implement the package of actions to support Members in their local role as set out above. We will also consider an area based approach to developing Members' community leadership role, meetings skills and community engagement as part of the new induction and development programme.

6.7 We will expect to see **Managers** across the Council:

- Giving frontline employees more freedom to respond to differing local needs
- Mainstreaming, and providing training in, community development and community engagement
- Agreeing locality based targets as part of performance appraisal
- Using need analysis and resident survey data to shape services differently in the 19 areas

- Identifying functions and budgets that can be devolved to the 19 Local Area Forums
- Introducing processes to ensure the provision of timely local information and to respond to the needs of local Members
- Prioritising requests for local information and participating in local management teams
- Raising awareness and promoting the role and contribution of other services and agencies in the context of the needs of the local areas

Performance Management

6.8 We need to embed the GC2C philosophy into performance management. This will involve recognition and reward based upon a locality focus and, ensuring a “golden thread” from the day-to-day work of individual employees through to the five Aims of GC2C and a clear focus on outcomes. We will also need to consider changes to job descriptions, person specifications and the recruitment process. Training and development in locality working and new skills will be required.

6.9 The principles of GC2C are embedded in the Corporate Plan and locality working is reflected in a number of the Council’s Corporate Plan targets (agreed by Council on 21 February 2008). However, we also need to agree performance measures that will demonstrate the success or otherwise of the programme, linked to each Aim. The initial focal point will be towards process and outputs, which will clearly demonstrate the difference GC2C is having on the ground. However we will need to develop more outcome focused measures as the changes are embedded. Suggested performance indicators are in **Table 2** below:

TABLE 2 – GC2C PERFORMANCE MEASURES

AIM	MEASURE
Services That Meet Local Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of Residents satisfied in the 19 areas • % of actions in the 19 Local Action Plans that are delivered • Number of Adult Social Care surgeries held in each of the 19 areas • Number of local road maintenance and environmental improvements in each of the 19 local areas • Number of parish and town councils taking on a package of services
Joined Up Local Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of actions delivered from Service Excellence Events • Parish partnerships working on behalf of each other • Number of (virtual) area teams established
Improved Local Access to Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Access Point in each of the 19 areas • Children’s Centres in each of the 19 areas

Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater use of web services
Enhanced Community Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Area Forum established in each of the 19 areas • Attendance at each of the Forums • Satisfaction with Forums
Community Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI 4: % of people who feel they can influence decisions affecting them • Participatory budgeting pilots in four areas • Number of Local Community Plans in place • Increase in engagement locally eg: turnout at local elections

Structures for Locality Working

- 6.10 In order for Locality working to be effective, we need to focus on five aspects:
- Establishing the right organisational **structures**, both locally (where they can be quite informal) and centrally (where more formality is required)
 - Ensuring that the different **people** involved own the issues and are supported to work together
 - Having the right **processes** in place to make local decisions
 - Embedding a **culture** of locality working
 - Effective **communications** between the locality and the centre.
 - Extensive **community development** work to get people involved and to sustain this.
- 6.11 A revised GC2C Team organisation has been put in place as a central part of this. The number of Area Co-ordinators will increase from September 2008 and over time as the focus shifts to direct local delivery. However, whilst the Area Co-ordinators are at the hub of the local area team, it is essential that local Members, Lead Area Officers and relevant Service Managers are also fully involved.
- 6.12 All Services need to think through how they change and resource to meet the GC2C requirements such as:
- Identify and communicate the key Service contacts for the 19 areas eg: Highways Technicians, Older People's Services Co-ordinators
 - The management networks for each of the 19 areas
 - Devolution of functions and budgets for local decision making
 - Devolution of functions and budgets for delivery by local councils
 - Managing cross service and multi agency teams
 - Process to support local Members
 - Local information needs
- 6.13 It is essential that, as LAFs are introduced and public awareness of GC2C increases, Members and Officers manage expectations for local service improvements - we will never have the resources to meet all requests.

6.14 In addition, we need to consider the following:

- Persuading partners to invest in locality working eg: making a contribution to the devolved budgets for the Local Area Forums
- Joint funding of Officers with partners eg: community development workers
- Redirecting existing Service locality employees to support the work
- Funding the VCS to do some of the work eg: community development
- Capacity building bids eg: against the MKOB Improvement Project

Financial Implications: Budgets

6.15 Additional resources have been agreed through the Budgets for 2007/08 and 2008/09 for the GC2C Team and to support delivery on the ground. The current budget is £913,000.

6.16 However, the real difference to local service delivery and quality of life in the 19 areas through GC2C will be through the **reshaping of existing Service budgets not simply increasing resources**. Some work has taken place to identify the Service budgets that can be devolved to the 19 local areas for local decision or consultation on local priorities and further work will be undertaken in this service planning year. The main budgets identified so far by Services are as follows:

- **£500k Transportation Capital devolved to Local Area Forums:** the sum currently allocated to Local Committees, will, subject to the Council's decisions, be allocated to the 19 Local Area Forums. Over the years some Parishes Councils have added value by allocating additional funds from their own precepts where schemes are approved in their parish
- **Additional Highways Maintenance Funding:** the Council agreed an additional £3.25m for highways maintenance to meet priorities within the 19 local community areas. This will also be allocated locally through the LAFs in 2009/10.
- **Other budgets:** there have been various commitments to invest in the 19 local community areas e.g. Adult Social Care have designated 19 employees with locality roles; Transportation have appointed Local Area Technicians with vans. This process must continue as LAFs begin to operate into 2009.

Changes to Financial Systems

6.17 Work has started to investigate the feasibility of using SAP to provide an analysis of expenditure by the defined 19 (GC2C) geographical areas.

6.18 The approach being considered aims to minimise any changes to the main SAP system and use an additional feature within the system that is currently not used to allow us to set up 19 'business areas' that will relate to each of the specific GC2C areas. All expenditure would then need to be allocated to one of these 19 areas that would allow reports to be produced to show an analysis of spend by geographical area.

- 6.19 To achieve this, a business area code relating to one of the 19 GC2C areas would need to be entered when a transaction is carried out. For instance an invoice for the purchase of street signs could then be assigned to a specific business area and be reported:
- at cost centre level, ie total cost of street signs, and/or
 - at street signs in the Wendover GC2C area.
- 6.20 To ensure that the reports are comprehensive and meaningful there would also be a need to collect data from other systems that have links into SAP. Depending on the data content within each individual system this could either be an actual business area code or for example, in the case of SWIFT could be a client's postcode. In all cases interface programs would need to be amended to incorporate and/or interpret this additional field to match with the GC2C area.
- 6.21 The aim would be to give Members more local financial information which (together with the other data on needs, Residents' satisfaction etc) can raise questions about the relative spend in each of the 19 areas and value for money.

7 LOCAL AREA FORUMS (LAFs)

The Benefits of LAFs

- 7.1 A key feature of the locality strategy is the development of LAFs. The LAFs will build on our history of local decision making and the long tradition of "cluster" meetings held by Members in different parts of the County at a community area level. The current local engagement mechanism of Local Committees based on District boundaries has been in existence since 2000 and has evolved over time. However, their size and structure inhibits true localism and the even more local decision making envisaged by GC2C. Additionally, Local Strategic Partnerships exist and cover the same geographic areas and there is clearly potential to streamline processes, reduce the number of meetings at this level and avoid duplication. A diagram showing the evolution of decision making in Buckinghamshire is attached at **Appendix E**.
- 7.2 Building on the success of the Local Committees, there are a number of benefits to Members and local communities in changing to LAFs. The County Council is using the 19 local areas as building blocks to plan and deliver services, it is, therefore, sensible to base local decision making around the same areas. The LAFs will:
- Provide a targeted local focus for discussion, more responsive to local needs
 - De-centralise decision making based on the 19 areas
 - Enhance the local Member role as the leader in the local community
 - Develop priorities for the local community
 - Co-ordinate policy and service delivery between local partners

Examples from Other Counties

- 7.3 The majority of County Councils have developed or are developing some form of Local or Area Forum as part of their locality working strategy. Whilst some of these are district based (e.g. Lancashire and North Yorkshire) an increasing number are modelling their local area forums on a sub district basis to achieve a more locally based focus to the groups and the discussions (eg: Leicestershire, Cornwall, Cumbria).
- 7.4 Although parish and town councils can be members of area forums/committees, current legislation precludes them from voting on decisions that have financial implications. In most counties, lengths are taken to ensure that parishes feel fully involved with the forums e.g. by custom and practice the appropriate parishes attend the meeting and have rights to speak on issues relating to their local area etc.
- 7.5 Whether area forums are developed at district or sub-district level, county councils are considering the need to make 'membership' numbers manageable. Options here include having parish representatives on area forums rather than all local parishes etc. We are in discussion with BALC to look at ways this might happen in Buckinghamshire.

Outcomes from the 19 Discussions

- 7.6 Between January and March 2008, discussions were held with County Council members in each of the 19 local community areas about the evolution of LAFs. The main points arising from these are summarised below:
- Locality working, with focus on local outcomes, was confirmed as the appropriate direction of travel
 - The existing four Area Committees should be replaced by a LAF in each of the 19 areas
 - The remit of LAFs should be broadened, away from the current focus on Buckinghamshire County Council services and particularly transportation issues
 - We would need to work closely with partner agencies i.e District, Town and Parish Councils, Thames Valley Police, Health, the voluntary sector including faith groups/churches and other local organisations
 - There was support for enhanced public engagement through attendance at and structured opportunities to speak at LAFs
 - We need to confirm the LAF role in influencing service delivery priorities and current budgets and outline links to community planning processes.
 - Clarity was requested on the role of LAFs in influencing strategy and policy issues both locally and countywide
 - We need for a timetable for internal negotiation with services on area based budgeting and decision making.

The Development of LAFs

- 7.7 Proposed terms of reference, constitution and working arrangements for Local Area Forums is attached as **Appendix F**. The views from the 19 discussions have been built into this paper. It will be essential to maintain a dialogue about the development of LAFs. There is no blueprint for LAFs and it is only by working locally that the right approach for the locality will be found over time.
- 7.8 A key aim is that, wherever possible within the necessary countywide framework, LAFs should have the freedom to develop according to local needs and circumstances. This will include:
- Choosing a name for the local community area
 - Deciding who to invite to meetings
 - Deciding when and where to meet
 - Agreeing which of the various roles and local issues to give time to
 - Allocating devolved budgets according to local priorities

PART IV – CONSULTATION ON THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCALITY STRATEGY

8 BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION

Why We Consulted

8.1 The review of the GC2C Strategy concluded that:

- Delivery of the five Aims requires full partnership engagement
- Many partners did not appreciate the breadth of the strategy
- GC2C, as a County Council initiative and brand, was not owned by partners
- The national changes facing all public services in Bucks (principally the Comprehensive Area Assessment) require a locality strategy approach

8.2 Consequently, it was agreed that a full consultation should be undertaken with the widest range of partners prior to a report to Council on the revised Strategy.

Our Approach to Consultation

8.3 The approach adopted for the consultation was as follows:

- Consultation was through the Bucks Strategic Partnership membership (this includes district councils, fire and rescue, health, police, voluntary and community sector etc – full list available on request), plus all local councils
- The consultation was framed on the fundamental premise that better outcomes for residents envisaged by locality working can only be achieved through a comprehensive and partnership approach at all levels
- The consultation also acknowledged that the County Council's approach so far to locality working had not always been seen as one of genuine partnership; and this is something that we wished to change through the consultation
- A key recognition of this is the need to agree a new partnership brand for locality working, with "GC2C" remaining only as a change management brand for the County Council
- To illustrate how each Aim might be delivered in partnership, the consultation paper set out a number of possible partnership actions (recognising that we were not starting from a blank sheet of paper). These were, however, meant to facilitate thinking and were neither prescriptive nor exhaustive

The Consultation

8.4 On 27 February 2008, the County Council began a consultation exercise on the "Buckinghamshire Locality Strategy" (ie: how the aims and objectives of GC2C might be delivered in partnership) through a letter from the Deputy Leader of the Council. The initial deadline of 7 April was extended to the 30

May 2008 following representations to provide a longer period for consideration of the issues involved.

- 8.5 In addition to the consultation letter and papers Officers have attended a range of local and partners meetings and have spoken to individuals, to explain the consultation and answer questions (see below). Where appropriate, Officers have followed up comments to clarify points.

9 RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

Responses Received

- 9.1 In total, 71 responses were received to the Consultation. A full list of the responses is set out in the schedule at **Appendix G**. The schedule summarises the key issues raised by each consultee. (*Copies of the full responses are available in the GC2C Office and will be available at the Council meeting*).
- 9.2 In addition to the formal responses from consultees, the views expressed at various partnership meetings (including the four Local Committees) have been summarised – see **Appendix H**
- 9.3 A reply will be sent to all consultees detailing the outcomes of the consultation and what decisions were made by the Council in the light of the consultation process.

Summary of Key Issues

- 9.4 The key points from the consultation process together with a brief response are summarised in **Table 3** below:

TABLE 3: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCALITY STRATEGY CONSULTATION SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

CONSULTEE	RESPONSE
<p>District Council Leaders: objected strongly to the consultation having taken place; their view is that the Pathfinder Agreement covers the whole of GC2C; that we cannot consult separately; and that there should have been prior consultation on the contents of the consultation paper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leader wrote to the District Leaders in response to this • The Locality Strategy is much wider than the Pathfinder Agreement and requires actions from all stakeholders in Bucks not just the County and District Councils covered by the Pathfinder Agreement • The GC2C Strategy has been public since 2005 so the contents are well known • The whole point of the consultation is to seek views

<p>District Council Leaders: comments were subsequently received seeking further discussion on whether a LAF was required for all 19 areas, seeking a tailored solution for each district area, building on the Level 1 and Level 2 concept of the Pathfinder community engagement pilots and the development of LAFs as multi-agency arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intention is to work within each district area on the application of all aspects of the locality strategy, including the arrangements for LAFs; this will include how LAFs complement the existing more local arrangements, that also need to be multi-agency • The intention is that LAFs will be multi-agency bodies; the County Council has arrangements in place to support the LAFs (as District Councils do with the LSPs) but they will operate as multi agency bodies
<p>Aylesbury Vale District Council: no formal response received; but has accepted the end of Local Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work has started with AVDC on the piloting of LAFs in two areas
<p>Chiltern District Council: wish to retain the Local Committee and do not recognise the local community areas or see a role for LAFs, other than at the district level (ie: the Chiltern Community Partnership); existing community engagement and local community planning arrangements work well</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further discussions will take place in Chiltern (initial meeting already taken place)
<p>South Bucks DC: want to keep the Local Committee as a forum for the 3 tiers to meet together for cross district discussions and to develop a local solution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a real opportunity to strengthen the role of the Local Strategic Partnership. • Ad hoc meetings are of course possible, where required • Further discussions will take place in South Bucks
<p>Wycombe District Council: no formal response received; but has accepted the end of Local Committee as part of the Pathfinder pilot</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work has been underway for many months with WDC and other partners on the community engagement pilot, formally launched on 21 April 2008
<p>Chiltern Community Partnership: support for the overall Aims, but the 19 local areas are not relevant for all services delivered by partners; that LAFs do not reflect natural communities; the value of four local community plans is unclear (given existing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have reassured the LSP that LAFs will be implemented sensitively to meet local needs and to complement existing community planning arrangements • Further discussions will take place locally about the links between LAFs and the Chiltern Revitalisation Groups

arrangements). Further discussions required to clarify what get discussed at different level	(which do not cover the whole of the district)
Local Councils: several parish councils have raised strong concerns about LAFs, the principal issues are listed below:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues have been followed up local councils were possible • We are also working with BALC to try to try to improve our communication of the potential benefits to local councils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some local councils do not support the groupings of parishes and/or electoral division and ward boundaries for the 19 areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deputy Leader has said there will be no changes to the 19 areas (but there is flexibility about which LAF parishes attend)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some feel the LAFs will undermine the role of parishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to explain more clearly how LAFs will support and complement their more local role and extend their influence over local issues • We also need to stress that parish and town councils will be full members of the LAFs, but unable to vote on items of expenditure because of current legislation (although their views will be fully take into account)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are various questions about the constitutional basis of LAFs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These were dealt with directly with the parishes concerned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some local councils see LAFs as just another layer of bureaucracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again, we need to sell the benefits of LAFs and are working with BALC on this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They do not like the fact that local councils cannot vote at LAFs on devolved budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a legal barrier not of our making; we have asked DCLG to change the legislation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some local councils do not support wider membership of the LAF by groups who are not elected or representative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a fundamental point of principle, a broader range of partners needs to be engaged to deal with local concerns; it is also not the case that parish councils are in all cases fully representative of their communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a view that the County Council only wants to work with Quality Parishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is incorrect, we have already agreed (but not yet launched) a local Bucks accredited parish scheme with BALC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is confusion about how the LAFs fit with NAGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working with TVP to try to bring together all the community engagement groups, around a common neighbourhood management agenda, but there is no prospect of NAGs not continuing in some form

<p>Encompass (VCS): support for the Aims and for the thrust of local working in partnership; the locality strategy must be owned by all partners; key role for the VCS and local councils in the 19 local community plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions have already taken place with the Voluntary and Community Sector about their support for delivering the Aims, in particular: community empowerment and community plans
<p>Oxon and Bucks Mental Health Trust: support for the Aims, but needs top level commitment to deliver; more discussion required about the impact for different services, communication is key to this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local health providers have a key role to play in local community planning
<p>Thames Valley Police: support the overall aims, but all partners need to sign up to deliver this; need to work at a neighbourhood level for some issues and establish links with NAGs; need to identify success factors for the 19 areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement has already been reached with TVP about the need to eliminate boundary conflicts between the 19 area and NAGs • Work is also underway on a shared approach to “neighbourhood management”
<p>Bucks Primary Care Trust: agrees with the aims of the strategy, but believe that the detail of how this is achieved requires further discussion and refinement with partners. Happy to input into the 19 areas but would not re-organise provider services around the 19 areas as these are not our “natural working boundaries”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response raises a number of valid points about delivery; further discussion will take place with the PCT and GPs about the application of the strategy to meet shared aims • PCT staff have been engaged in service excellence and in LAFs for health related issues
<p>Bucks and Milton Keynes Fire Authority: agree with the aims of the strategy and will support it. They believe The initiative will rationalise and improve efficiency of community engagement. Communication and engagement strategies will need to reach as broad a spectrum as possible. LAFs should be flexible so that representation is appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response raises a number of key points about the need to ensure the engagement of the broader spectrum of stakeholders and we will have further discussions with FRS about this. FRS staff have been engaged in service excellence and will be engaged in LAFs for relevant issues.

10 ANALYSIS OF THE KEY ISSUES

10.1 As stated above, it is important that specific issues are followed up with consultees where possible (a feature of the consultation process has been to

do this as we have gone along). Without diminishing the importance of any individual views received, **Table 4** provides an analysis of the key issues that it is judged that the County Council needs to take into account in reaching a decision:

TABLE 4: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCALITY STRATEGY CONSULTATION ANALYSIS OF THE KEY ISSUES

KEY ISSUE	ANALYSIS
The Locality Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents have welcomed and supported the overall vision of the Locality Strategy and the need for this approach • Understandably, some comments have been qualified with questions about how it might or should work etc; this will be an essential next stage of development • No suggestions have been received to change the name of GC2C
Aims and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few specific comments have been made • However, the responses (particularly from local councils) have shown a good deal of uncertainty about the detail, about the need for local tailoring of the overall aims and the time that this will take to deliver • Some consultees questioned whether this was a genuine consultation, again local discussion about delivery will be the key to this
Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to the BSP point, it is becoming increasingly clear that some form of locality strategy will be an essential foundation of the local public service response to the CAA and in order to meet the increasing demands and complex needs of our residents. If the current proposals are not the right ones, then we will need positive proposals from partners about what is required; to continue as we are is simply not an option
Local Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key question for the Council from the consultation response is whether to agree that the Local Committees in Chiltern and/or South Bucks should continue, either for a longer period, or in a reduced form • If this approach were to be adopted we would need to think through how this would impact on the roll out of LAFs in these districts (eg: partial roll out of LAFs for those areas that were keen to go ahead, with devolved budgets and more powers, with retained budgets for the Local Committee for the other areas?) • A recommendation on the way forward is set out

	below
Roll Out of Local Area Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many comments received comments related to the roll out of LAFs with extended powers and the replacement of the four Local Committees. • This is disappointing, as one of the aims of the Consultation was to explain the comprehensive nature of GC2C • However, the LAF paper has been updated to reflect comments, which have mostly been about the need for a tailored local approach. Although the intention has always been that the 19 LAFs will roll out across the county (many are already operating in some form), how they roll out will be for local discussion and agreement • In particular, LAFs need to mould to the existing contours of local community engagement and planning, which varies between and within districts • Work will take place with each District Council and local parish and town councils on this (the position in Wycombe is already covered by the Pathfinder pilot).
Local Community Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed views were received about the benefits of 19 local community plans, particularly about how they will relate to existing more local community plans • A key point here is that the intention is to use the 19 local community plans as a formal countywide partnership framework within which local needs can be agreed and will get delivered; this will mean greater support for parish plans, market town appraisals etc – many of which, arguably, are not owned by the agencies that need to address the actions within them • Of equal importance is the aim of setting, where we can, local targets linked to the Local Area Agreement Indicators that reflect the different needs of the 19 local areas • Careful debate will be required at a local level about how the local community plans can add value to existing landscape
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments were received about the need for community engagement to take place at a level below the LAFs. Additionally, there was a view that the County Council should leave community engagement to councils which are closer to the people, or to engage on its services only • On the first point, it is not the intention that the LAFs will be the focal point for all community engagement in the area; rather that the community engagement that has taken place in the area (at various levels, formal and informal) will feed into the work of the LAF

	<p>(local decision making, addressing the key issues for the area and the local community planning process)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the second point, a clear aim of the Locality Strategy is to bring together the three tiers of local government (and relevant partners) to engage with and to empower local people across the wide range of linked issues that concern them. It is not a job for one or other council, it is a requirement upon us all
Pathfinder Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of comments have queried how the Locality Strategy fits with the Pathfinder Agreement • The Locality Strategy requires action from the public, voluntary and community and business sectors in the County through the Bucks Strategic Partnership (BSP), it is not limited to the Pathfinder Agreement

10.2 This analysis is taken forward into the recommendations in Part V of the report.

PART V – RECOMMENDATIONS

11 SUMMARY

11.1 Clearly the purpose of the consultation exercise has been to obtain views and the County Council will need to decide, in the light of the response:

- What changes to make to the actions that are underway to implement GC2C
- How we take forward the aspiration of a partnership approach across Bucks to Locality Working

Conclusions: GC2C

11.2 The review of the Strategy and the 57 Conversations have confirmed that a locality strategy is the right approach and has the potential for the Council, working in partnership, to deliver service improvements to the people of Buckinghamshire at a local level. The evidence of service improvement so far shows the worth of a locality approach and the potential for our residents of going further is clear.

11.3 We are at a tipping point with the GC2C programme, the foundations and a number of key building blocks are now in place, awareness has been raised, the culture within the Council is beginning to change and we have a clear set of actions in the revised Strategy to move to the next stage of delivering better outcomes for local residents. As the report makes clear, we will need resilience, focus and belief to achieve this. Delivering GC2C will take several years and will require patience, risk taking and an acceptance that mistakes are part of the learning process.

11.4 The organisational requirements set out in the report can be summarised as:

- *Leadership at Member and Officer level, throughout the Council*
- *Cultural change to “think local and act local” and empower frontline employees*
- *A sharp focus on outcomes across the 19 local areas*
- *Performance management at all levels*
- *Changes to corporate service and financial planning and to systems and processes to support locality working*
- *A partnership approach to community engagement and empowerment, community planning and local service delivery*
- *Sufficient capacity and the right skills and knowledge to implement the changes and to embed and sustain these throughout the organisation*
- *A step change in communications about local issues*

11.5 If we are successful, over the next 12 months we would expect to see:

- *Local Area Forums rolled out across all 19 local community areas*

- *Issues and decisions directly affecting the local community considered in the 19 areas by key local representatives*
- *Better engagement with local communities and increased resident empowerment*
- *Members with the support they need to carry out their local community leadership role*
- *Visible and stronger local leadership from local elected Members across the three tiers*
- *Services that are planned and delivered by considering the opinions of residents and stakeholders in each local community area through local community planning*
- *Four local community areas having benefited from our participatory budget pilot*
- *More parish and town councils taking on a package of services on behalf of the County Council*
- *Internal changes to service and financial planning processes to support locality working*
- *Visible reporting of performance for each of the 19 local areas so we can see relative needs and views.*

11.6 The recommendation to the Council is to approve the revised Strategy and the organisational requirements so that we can seize the opportunities that are now presented by GC2C.

Conclusions: Buckinghamshire Locality Strategy

11.7 There has been a good response to the consultation on the Buckinghamshire Locality Strategy. The consultation has produced a high level of support for the fundamental aims and objectives of the Strategy and an appetite for further discussions about how it would work. Additionally, it is clear that a strategic local public service response is required in order to meet the changing needs of our residents and the expectations on all local partners to work together to assess and meet the needs of different communities through both the LAA and CAA.

11.8 Significant concerns have, however, been raised by district and local councils in Chiltern and South Bucks about the evolution of local decision making from the Local Committee to LAFs.

11.9 A further issue to address is the concern that many local councils, who responded, appear to have doubts about their relationship with the County and a strong view that we do not recognise or value the important role that local councils have. Despite the “New Deal” initiative, further work is clearly needed to improve understanding and our working relationship.

11.10 Based on the comments received and the analysis set out above the recommendation to Council is:

- To continue discussions with all partners about the development of the Buckinghamshire Locality Strategy as the Local Strategic Partnership approach to CAA etc
- To undertake further work with local councils to develop a better understanding of the relationship with the County Council and how we can support their fundamental role as the most local tier of community representatives
- To replace Local Committees with Local Area Forums, but to defer full implementation in Chiltern and South Bucks to allow time for further discussions within those areas on a local solution

Consideration by the Cabinet

11.11 The Cabinet considered this report at its meeting on 23 June 2008. The key points made at the meeting were as follows:

- A key aim of the strategy is to devolve decision making, influence and service delivery to the most appropriate level. Local people will have more choice about local services in their local communities.
- The arrangements proposed will provide more say for local councils not less.
- It is important that the County Council builds on the foundations for locality working that are already in place. The reaction of some district areas to this is disappointing. A way forward in some areas might be via District Wide Symposiums.
- Inclusion of appropriate wider groups as members of Forums will need to be the subject of local determination. This is entirely consistent with the principles of GC2C about flexibility to meet local needs.
- It is important that clear links are made between the GC2C programme and other local delivery plans e.g. for children's services.
- Some suggestions had been made for possible changes to the name of the programme but there was no consensus and, therefore, no change should be made for the time being

11.12 The Cabinet's recommendations are set out in Section 12 below.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the County Council RESOLVES:

- 1. To approve the revised GC2C Strategy and the Organisational Requirements for delivery**
- 2. To continue discussions with all partners about the development of the Buckinghamshire Locality Strategy as the Local Strategic Partnership approach to:**
 - **Empowering communities**
 - **Delivering better outcomes for residents**
 - **Preparing for the Comprehensive Area Assessment**
 - **Localised delivery of the Local Area Agreement**

- 3. To undertake further work with local councils to develop a better understanding of the relationship with the County Council and how we can support their fundamental role as the most local tier of community representatives.**
- 4. To replace Local Committees with Local Area Forums on a phased basis and to amend the Constitution accordingly.**
- 5. To approve the Terms of Reference, Constitution and Working Arrangements for Local Area Forums.**
- 6. To replace the Local Committees with Local Area Forums in Aylesbury Vale and Local Community Partnerships in Wycombe from 1 September 2008.**
- 7. To defer the replacement of the Local Committees in Chiltern and South Bucks to allow further discussions to take place to try to identify an agreed way forward, but to permit the establishment of one or more LAFs in those Districts where there is support for this.**
- 8. To authorise the Leader and Deputy Leader to make changes to the arrangements for Local Area Forums in Chiltern and South Bucks on the basis of further discussions within those areas.**
- 9. To authorise the Deputy Leader to make minor changes to the terms of reference of Local Area Forums in the light of the operation of the Forums.**
- 10. To request the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to bring forward recommendations for any minor amendments to the Constitution resulting from these decisions, which will then come to full County Council for discussion and approval.**
- 11. To undertake a review of the operation of Local Area Forums and report to the Council on progress in 12 months time, taking into account the results of the Pathfinder Pilots in Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale.**

GETTING CLOSER TO COMMUNITIES AND CONSULTATION ON THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCALITY STRATEGY

REPORT TO COUNCIL 10 JULY 2008

LIST OF APPENDICES AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

APPENDICES

Appendix A	19 Areas Achievements So Far
Appendix B	Update on GC2C Programme
Appendix C	Package of Support for Members
Appendix D	Revised GC2C Strategy
Appendix E	Evolution of Local Decision Making
Appendix F	Local Area Forum Constitution
Appendix G	Consultation Responses
Appendix H	Summary of Key Points from Partner Consultation Meetings
Appendix I	Glossary

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Responses Received to the Consultation
- Previous Council Reports on GC2C

GETTING CLOSER TO COMMUNITIES

LOCAL AREA FORUMS:

DRAFT CONSTITUTION, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

A BACKGROUND

- 1 Local decision-making has been part of the County Council's structure since 2000. At various stages since then, our arrangements have evolved, as learning and confidence in the benefits of this way of working has grown. The former Local Area Committees have played a central role in this evolution. The establishment of Local Area Forums (LAF) is the next stage on this journey and will meet one of the objectives in the Getting Closer to Communities Programme (GC2C).
- 2 The increased focus on locality working is becoming the norm for all local authorities. In developing the framework for LAFs we have had regard to examples from elsewhere and will continue to draw on best practice and innovation where this meets our needs.
- 3 Locality working and community involvement in shaping service planning and delivery is also becoming increasingly important as we prepare for the Comprehensive Area Assessment which will be in place from April 2009. The County Council was praised for its vision with regard to its GC2C programme at the last Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) inspection and it will be of greater importance for the future as we aim to put the needs of different communities in Bucks at the centre of our service planning and delivery. The GC2C Strategy has recently been revised and the five Aims reaffirmed, with some changes to the linked objectives. One of the key proposals for implementation during 2008 is the roll out of Local Area Forums (LAFs) across each of the 19 local areas. This has been embedded in the refresh of the Corporate Plan. The LAFs will also be the "Level 2" forums within the Pathfinder (the Agreement to improve two tier working across the County and District Council in Bucks) Community Engagement pilot for the Wycombe district area (and any other Pathfinder pilots). In Wycombe District LAFs will be known as Local Community Partnerships (LCP); the term LAF is used throughout this document to also apply to LCPs, subject to any local variations agreed as part of the pilot
- 4 The need to understand and measure outcomes for local communities is also an important aspect of the new Local Area Agreement (LAA) framework. Our understanding of local community needs will be the starting point for the LAA, service planning, budgetary processes and central to our performance management.
- 5 The 19 Local Area Forums will replace the 4 District based Local Committees. The County Council is using the 19 local areas as building blocks to plan and deliver services. In addition, with the District Councils and other partners as appropriate, the LAFs will also be used to draw together various forms of

community engagement taking place within the area (ie: the LAFs will have an overview of community engagement for local community planning purposes but will not be the principal means of undertaking this locally). It is, therefore, sensible to base local decision making around the same areas.

B CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP

6. The *****Local Area Forum is a joint forum of the three tiers of local government in Buckinghamshire, the County Council, *****District Council and representatives of the following Parish Councils:

- XXXXX
- XXXXX
- XXXXX

In law, LAFs are unincorporated associations with written constitutions

Membership also comprises the following other partners (to be agreed locally)

- XXXXX
- XXXXX
- XXXXX

C THE PURPOSE OF LOCAL AREA FORUMS

7 The **purpose** of the LAFs is to strengthen local democratic accountability by empowering locally elected Councillors to take decisions, shape and influence service delivery and Council priorities in the local community area. There will be one Local Area Forum for each of the 19 local community areas

8 The **basic principles** governing the operation of the LAFs are as follows:

- Within the agreed corporate framework for LAFs set out in this paper, the freedom and flexibility exists for them to deliver on the needs of the local area
- The operation of the LAFs should be tailored to meet local needs, this may require cross-LAF working (eg: across district boundaries or for the whole of a district) on certain issues
- Success will require effective and tailored local partnerships and an inclusive approach to engagement
- In particular, the operation of the LAF will need to be sensitive and complementary to existing arrangements for local community engagement and community planning (this will require discussion and agreement at the appropriate local level)
- LAFs should focus on consensus building around local needs and identify what can be delivered locally from the list of local aspirations
- Collective ownership of the delivery of local community priorities across the various partners will be essential to achieve credibility with local people and to make things happen
- LAFs will need to operate with a sense of realism about what can be delivered (particularly in the early days) and to manage community expectations

- All BCC Services (and partners where possible) will be expected to devolve functions and budgets for local decision making where this makes sense
- LAFs should encourage local community engagement and participation within and outside meetings, ensuring that all voices are heard.

D FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL AREA FORUMS

9 The GC2C Strategy sets out three broad roles for LAFs:

- **Local Community Planning:** shaping responses to the needs of the local area
- **Empowered Local Decision Making:** within the delegated functions and delegated budgets
- **Influencing and taking action on local issues**

10 Based on these broad roles, the functions of the LAFs are set out in the Table below:

LOCAL AREA FORUMS – FUNCTIONS	
1	<p>Setting Priorities for the Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop, as the basis for collective action, a shared understanding of local issues and priorities for improving the quality of life of the area. • To agree a Local Community Plan for the area, which reflects local priorities, the delivery of County and District Community Plans and the Local Area Agreement within the area. • To oversee the effectiveness of public services within the community area in meeting local needs, informed by residents' feedback, and to recommend changes to service policy as appropriate. • To consult and engage local people and local stakeholders on the priorities and policies of local service providers, including the desired level and range of services and major service developments affecting the area and annual budget proposals. (<i>Note: examples of this would be waste, major development proposals, school closures</i>).
2	<p>Empowered Decision Making with Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To take decisions on matters devolved* from the County Council, District Council and other partner organisations, including town and parish councils. • To take decisions on budgets allocated* by the County Council, District Council and other partners. (<i>*Note: this will be subject to negotiation with Services and partners</i>) • To inform the relevant organisations on changes to the allocation of funding in the local community area to more effectively meet local needs
3.	<p>Taking Action on Community Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To oversee community engagement* in the area, to co-ordinate local consultation events, to promote and extend community empowerment in the area and to ensure feedback on issues raised.

(*Note: this is defined as levels 1 and 2 in the Community Engagement Pathfinder project)

- To refer issues of local concern to the relevant organisation or partnership for attention, to monitor action and negotiate the resolution of issues.
- To undertake a local scrutiny role on service policy, performance or issues of local concern*, including co-option onto local **overview and scrutiny committees** for specific reviews and dealing with **Councillor Calls for Action** and local petitions. (*Note: the local scrutiny function will need to be exercised proportionately and with regard to the programme of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to avoid duplication)

E OPERATIONAL MATTERS

16 Joint Forums

The LAFs will be joint forums of the County Council with the District Councils, local councils and other partners. This is entirely consistent with Pathfinder objectives. The basic principle is equality of voice and participation in the LAFs. However, under present Government legislation, for the Forum to be a properly constituted committee, parish councils and other partners cannot be **formal** members of LAFs for the purpose of voting on the allocation of funding. The County Council is seeking a change in the law to remove this anomaly. (See further below on voting).

A list outlining the specific functions to be included along with the relevant Head of Service and Local Authority is attached as Annex A

17 Membership

Local Authority Membership: all of the County Councillors and District Councillors in the local community area will be invited to attend meetings of the LAF. Representatives of town and parish councils for the area will also attend LAFs (see further below)

Other Members: representatives of police, fire and rescue and health, voluntary and community sector and other key local organisations (eg: local businesses) would also attend the LAFs .

In relation to the attendance of parish and town councils, the County Council is looking at good practice elsewhere and working with Bucks Association of Local Councils (BALC) to develop the arrangements to allocate representatives of local councils to local area forums. One option might be that each Local Area Forum might decide the appropriate number of PC representatives for their area – these then might be nominated by BALC or the Local Area Association.

In keeping with the principle of reflecting local needs, in addition to the suggested core membership. The local county councillors and the LAFs will be able to determine membership of their forum. The LAFs will also be free to invite other partners and stakeholders to meetings as appropriate for specific topics. However they would not necessarily be members of the Committee but (at the Chairman's discretion) might be invited to speak on relevant issues

18 Chairmanship:

In the initial phase, the Chairman will be a County Council Member with the Vice-Chairman normally being a member of the District Council. The intention is to move to rotating chairs in subsequent phases, for example, where a District Council also devolves functions and budgets to the LAFs

19 Voting

The basic premise of the LAFs is to reach consensus on the issues affecting the local area and it is hoped that voting will not be required. However, in the event that voting is required on issues relating to devolved budgets and services. The basic principle is equality of voice and participation in the LAFs. The legal responsibility for monetary allocations devolved by either the County Council or the District Council is devolved to the relevant Head of Service. Therefore, whilst it would be inappropriate for a formal and binding vote to take place in relation to those sums, the Chairman will ensure that the views of the Forum are conveyed to the appropriate Council, who will not normally act against the Forum's wishes

20 Unparished areas

Only a small amount of the County is unparished, the town area of High Wycombe.. However, in the unparished areas in High Wycombe town, the Town Committee will form the core non-County Council membership of the Wycombe Local Community Partnership (LCP) but other members may also be nominated as appropriate by the forum.

21 Public engagement

The LAFs will be open to the press and public. All LAFs will allow a 20 minute period for public questions before the start of each meeting. Members of the public should be encouraged to submit their questions in advance of the meeting to facilitate a full answer. In addition the Forums are encouraged to promote public attendance and engagement eg: allowing members of the public to speak on particular items, present petitions.

22 Support for the LAFs

As these will be joint forums it is proposed to ask partners to share the costs of the Forums (eg: officer support, provision of meeting rooms). Lead Support for the meetings will be provided by the County Council's Lead Area Officer and Area Co-ordinator, supported by a representative of Democratic Services, who will provide secretarial support to the Forum and constitutional advice. The funding of corporate costs (e.g. the cost of advertising meetings, logistic and support consequences for small service areas in the event of having to attend 19 forums) has been included in the approved budget.

23 Frequency of meetings

As a starting point, a 3 monthly cycle of meetings is proposed. Meetings of the LAF would normally be held at a location in the community area. Special or

joint meetings can be called to consider issues of concern outside the normal cycle of meetings

24 **Sub groups**

LAFs are free to establish time limited working groups, but Officer support for these will be limited.

25 **Agenda Management**

This will develop over time. Agendas will need to be set by Co-ordinator in conjunction with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Lead Officer. The basic principle is that the LAF should set an agenda that reflects local priorities and issues of concern. There will be topics that are common to all LAFs, such as devolved budgets. Each LAF may hold an annual “community conference” to help to set the priorities for the local community plan with increased participation by local groups and residents.

Chairs of LAFs may wish to meet from time to time to share experiences and good practice

26 **Reporting of Issues**

Various mechanisms will be required to ensure that the LAFs are connected into the countywide community planning process and that issues discussed by LAFs are reported to the appropriate place. This could include:

- Circulation of Minutes to partners
- Local Community Plan issues being included in the area performance management system
- Attendance of LAF Chairmen at County and District LSP annual conferences
- Annual reports from LAFs

These will be addressed with partners and agreed on a subject by subject basis

F DEVOLVED FUNCTIONS AND BUDGETS

27 It is proposed to adopt the existing arrangements that are in place for the County Council’s Transportation services for LAFs. Under this arrangement the Local Committee advises the Head of Service who then implements the decision. This is the simplest and most effective model which from past experience works effectively. The arrangement will be that the LAF advises the relevant Head of Service, who then implements the decision.

Further detailed guidance will be produced on matters relating to budgets covering, for example:

- Relationship with Financial Regulations
- Policy constraints on decision making
- Arrangements for considering and influencing the annual spend and budget of partners in the area

G LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING

- 28 One of the roles of LAFs will be “Setting Priorities for the Area”. Central to this is the lead role of LAFs in overseeing the development and delivery of area based Local Community Plans. These will set out the local priorities for the community based on parish plans (where they exist), other local community planning information (eg: revitalisation groups in Chiltern), needs assessment and other quantitative and qualitative information from local residents. These will feed into (and reflect) the objectives of the county and district councils and other partners.
- 29 It must be ensured that the local plans fit together with the **county and district sustainable community strategies** and the Local Area Agreement (see the diagram at Annex B). The County and District Councils Policy Officers Group are developing a planning framework for community planning which will form the basis of these arrangements. They will evolve over time across the 19 local community areas.

H LINKS WITH OTHER LOCAL WORKING

- 30 The Pathfinder Joint Improvement Board has agreed to pilot joint community engagement arrangements in the Wycombe Area. In Wycombe District LAFs will be known as a Local Community Partnership for the purposes of the pilot. LAFs in other parts of the County would/will? be running alongside the arrangements in place in Wycombe and there will be the need for agreement about differences of approach to specific items e.g. the composition of the forums to meet different needs and existing local arrangements. The LAFs will also need to take account of the Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAG's) and other community engagement mechanisms. Currently there are many more NAGs than LAFs and this is likely to continue. Thames Valley Police have agreed to work in partnership towards these aims.
- 31 The development of LAFs with broader functions than previous local committees and based on smaller geographic areas will help focus debate on local issues and provide opportunities for there to be ‘something for everyone’ at each meeting. They will also enhance the local Member’s local community leadership role. The change to LAFs does not preclude cross LAF working or specific service areas holding events on a wider geographic basis if that is more relevant. At district level the local strategic partnership will also play a lead role, particularly in bringing together local priorities into a district wide picture. For example:
- Issues which would go to the LAF:
 - Rural Grass Cutting
 - Switching off street lights
 - BCC Green infrastructure plan
 - Travel planning in the community
 - Transportation Delegated budget
 - Issues where a cross LAF meeting might be needed:
 - Chesham and Amersham Transportation Study
 - Bus Strategy

- Issues which would go to the LSP:
 - South East Plan
 - Waste Development Plan
 - Extended Services Programme
 - BCC Green infrastructure plan

I PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 32 A key objective is to provide consistent and prompt follow up or feedback when issues are reported to Services and/or at local area forums. To help address this, a local issue performance management system is being put in place. This will enable us to capture the issues raised in each of the 19 areas (from a variety of sources – LAFs, NAGs, Parishes etc), refer them for action and follow up progress. The Area Coordinators will manage the system for their local area(s).
- 33 The key officers in supporting the Local Area Forums will be the Lead Area Officers and the Area Coordinators. However, it is crucial that all Officers involved with frontline services support local Members and attend meetings. Locality working is a key corporate priority for the Council and all Officers must play their part in delivering our objectives. This will be reinforced via the performance management framework.

J CONSTRAINTS

- 34 LAFs will take time to become established and will require the commitment of all partners to participate, learn and evolve to meet the different needs of the 19 local community areas. Whilst there are clear benefits of working together at a more local level, there are a range of constraints that will need to be borne in mind. These include the following:
- *The additional costs involved in working with 19 LAFs:* the County Council has made additional budget provision in recognition of the wider benefits of locality working
 - *There are some things that it is not appropriate or practical to do 19 times:* this will need to be addressed on a case by case basis
 - *There are some issues where a District wide view is needed:* arrangements for LAFs do not preclude district wide meetings
 - *There is a balance between getting full local representation at LAFs and having so many people around the table that business cannot be conducted effectively:* this will need local discussion, but the LAF is not the only mechanism for bringing together partners to take action on local issues
 - *There are many questions and uncertainties about how LAFs will work:* this is a new way of working, this document provides a framework but not a blueprint; it will be for each area to evolve through experience

K ADDITIONAL RESOURCE/INFORMATION?

- 35 Further guidance will be issued from time to time as our learning grows. There will also be a “*Guide to Local Area Forums*” with more detailed information, which is aimed at Officers supporting LAFs.

ANNEX A: Local Decision Making

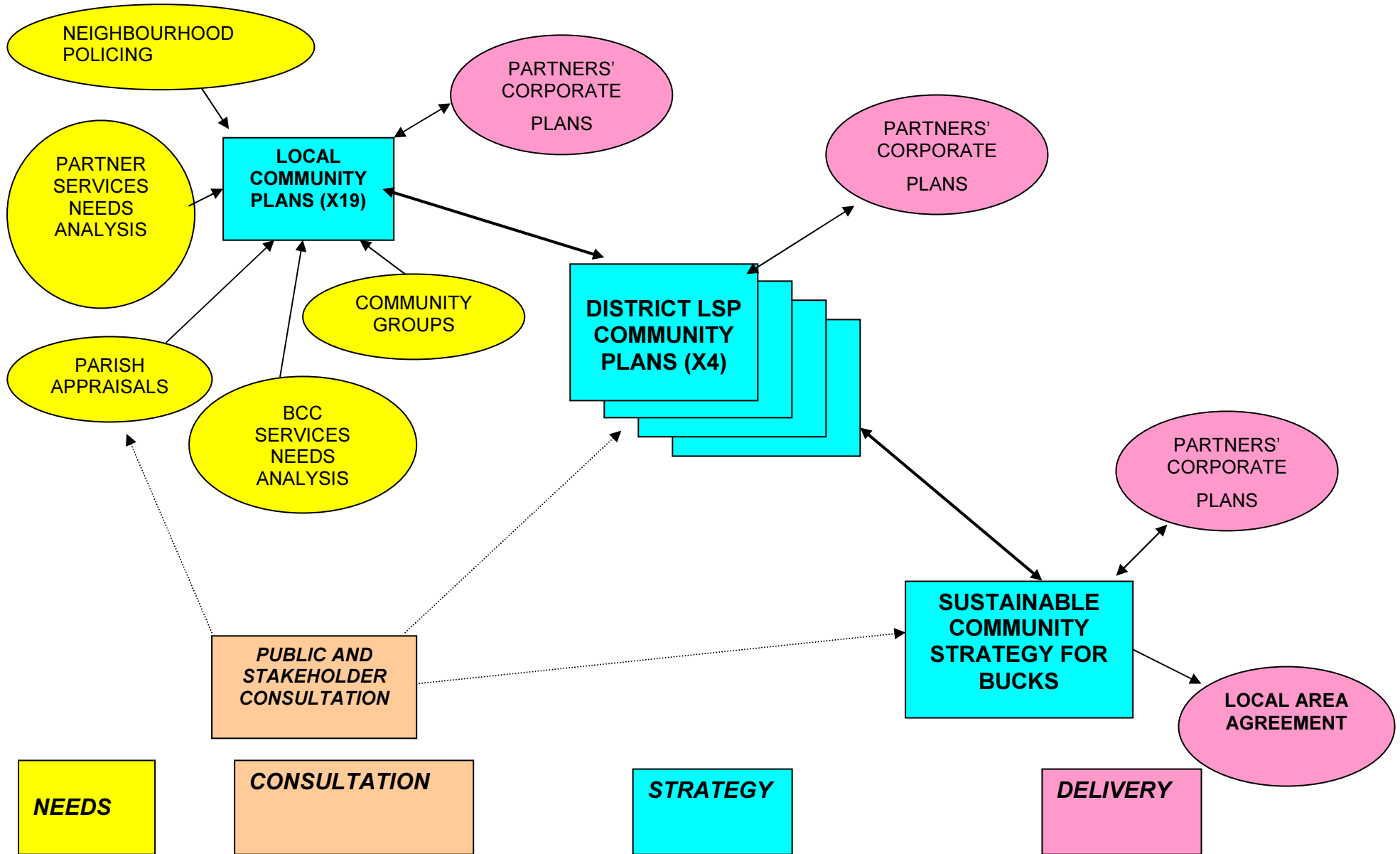
SERVICE	LOCAL DECISION MAKING
Arts/Culture	Consider specific local grants/projects.
Bus Stops/Shelters	Local Area Forums could decide on location of bus stop.
Children's Play Areas	Local decision making with regard to opening hours.
Community Safety (e.g. Domestic Violence, CCTV, anti-social behaviour)	Local decision making with regard to addressing local priorities e.g. CCTV.
Community Planning and Regeneration	Local regeneration schemes, parish planning etc. Develop local community Plans and provide input into the community planning processes
Communications and Council Newspapers	Local Input and focus for publication
Dial a Ride	Consider input from local area forum re local services
Drugs and Substance Misuse	Monitoring/scrutiny could be local consideration.
Early Years and Childcare	Decision making with regard to opening hours, location and development of services.
Environmental Improvements	Input via local forums. Potential for small scale issues to be agreed at local area forum level
Gritting and Snow Clearance	Opportunity here for monitoring and some areas may wish to go above countywide standards of gritting.
Grounds Maintenance	Local decisions with regard to improving beyond minimum standards. Schools have the opportunity to decide on level of service.
Highways	Potential for local decision by local forums and local influence via monitoring and scrutiny and prioritisation of local maintenance schemes.
Household Waste and Recycling Centres	Potential for decision making around opening hours, sites for provision. Also opportunity for local monitoring.
Local History and Archives	Some potential for decision making re local exhibitions and opening times.
Museums	Some potential for decision making re local exhibitions and opening times
Parks, Country	Opportunity for local decision making with regard to improvements above agreed standards. Local scrutiny of services and local inspection via Parishes is a possibility. Consultation re charges
Property	Consultation on local issues
Public Service Points	Decisions locally with regard to opening hours.
Public Transport	Local forums could consider local transport issues and monitoring of transport initiatives.
Residential Homes for Older People	Influence major decisions via forums e.g. closure
Rights of Way and Countryside	Could be considered at local forums

Appendix F

SERVICE	LOCAL DECISION MAKING
Road Safety	Local Community Forums potential for local road safety issues.
Sewers and drains	Could be considered at local community forums
Street Lighting	Local community forums could decide on additional lighting e.g. as part of prioritising local accessibility planning and community safety work. Scrutiny of local service delivery.
Tourist Information	Local decisions with regard to opening hours and location of access points.
Trading Standards and Registration	Some issues may be relevant to input/consultation from local forums e.g. viable location for Registration Outstations, Trading Standards No Door Step Selling Zones and activities to combat the sale of age restricted products. However enforcement decision making could not be devolved.
Traffic Management	Local scrutiny of hotspots with opportunity for local community forum to consider improving and influencing strategic delivery. Local consultation on scheme engineering would be appropriate. Local decision making on prioritising minor local traffic management improvements (funded from the delegated budget).
Transport Planning	Input via local forum and local transport plans
Tree Enquiries, Management & Safety Tree Protection (Planning) Hedgerows	Input from local forums
Voluntary Sector Development	Input from local forum
Waste and recycling	Input from local forum
Youth Offending Service	Input into general issues

LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

53



GREATER AYLESBURY LOCAL AREA FORUM

**NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14TH JULY AT 6.30 PM IN
MEZZANINE ROOMS 1 AND 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY**

PRESENT –

Mary Baldwin (Buckinghamshire County Council) in the Chair;

Bill Chapple (Buckinghamshire County Council/Aylesbury Vale District Council), Chester Jones (Buckinghamshire County Council), Joan Poole (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Steve Kennell (Buckinghamshire County Council/Aylesbury Vale District Council), Diana Amies (AOTRA), Joanna Rose (Weedon Parish Council), Glyn Thomas (Watermead Parish Council), Sue Severn (Watermead Parish Council), Jo Ungar (Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust), Chloe Willetts (Buckinghamshire Council), Jenny Hunt (Stoke Mandeville Parish Council), Andrew Tipping (Stoke Mandeville Parish Council), Steve Patrick (Aylesbury Vale District Council/Aylesbury Town Council), Inspector Bob Gregory (Thames Valley Police), Freda Roberts (Buckinghamshire County Council)

Officers

Ian Barham, Nigel Brooke (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Anne James, Colin Perrotet, Ann-Marie Davies, Madeleine Howe, Paula Buck, Ian Reed, Freda Ackroyd, Gina Bruce, Karen Adamson, Clive Parker (Buckinghamshire County Council)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from David Thompson, Alan Sherwell, Brian Robson, Keith Gray, Neil Gibson, Keith Turner, Jenny Puddefoot, Jenny Bloom, Steve Lambert and Sue Chapple.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chairman, Mary Baldwin, welcomed members to the meeting and explained the suggested format for the evening.

PRESENTATION BY STEVE ORCHARD “WHERE WE ARE NOW AND HOW WE GOT HERE”

Steve Orchard took members through his presentation which focused on the history behind the “Getting Closer to Communities Initiative” and the establishment of the Local Area Forums. Steve gave his view on the potential benefits to residents, members, employees and partners and the opportunities that lie ahead.

PRESENTATION BY NIGEL BROOKE “WHAT GOOD MIGHT LOOK LIKE”

Nigel Brooke’s presentation focused on multi-agency partnership working and democratic engagement between the Parish, Town, District and County Councils. Resident involvement at the local levels is very important in terms of making and influencing decisions and strategy. Consultation was also key. Nigel spoke about the model of engagement and the roles of the Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs), the Greater Aylesbury Local Forum, the Aylesbury Vale Local Strategic Partnership and the Buckinghamshire Strategic Partnership. Nigel also explained the thinking behind Levels 1 and 2.

PRESENTATION “WHO ELSE NEEDS TO BE HERE”

This presentation focused on the importance of partnership working within the Local Area Forum and who should be involved. Useful items and events, to date, were described. The presentation also suggested some things that had not worked so well including early confusion about the role and remit of the Forum; lack of relevant officers attending LAF meetings; poor attendance at earlier meetings; meeting date clashes and also the timing of meetings.

PRESENTATION “KEY ISSUES ALREADY IDENTIFIED”

Anne James and Paula Buck took members through their presentation which outlined issues already identified, the Needs Assessment and issues emanating from the 2007 Residents Survey.

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

An open workshop session was held to explore how the Forum could operate more effectively to develop joint working between 3 tiers of local government in the greater Aylesbury Area and to operate as the link between level 1 community consultation groups including the Neighbourhood Action Groups and the Local Strategic Partnership.

The Forum provided the opportunity for small workshop groups to discuss the key issues for the Greater Aylesbury relating to the following topics

- Education
- Decent & Affordable Housing
- Economic Development
- Services for Young People
- Services for Older People

Bullet Point Issues from the feedback from the Workshops were :-

Education

- North v south-ferrying of children is an issue causing increasing congestion. Need for improved local schools ie at primary level
- Working with Children's Centres
- Do we need to look at different models for the Upper Schools (Super Head and Collegiate ?)
- Local people should benefit from any schools built
- School staff and need for key worker housing
- Changes in 14-19 education is a big challenge
- Child Care-nursery and early years provision
- Lack of funding to resurrect old excellence. Need to get Heads and Chairmen of Governors together to discuss the best way to move forward.

Decent and Affordable Housing

- What does affordable housing mean? (5 times minimum wage @ £5.41 an hour)
- Older versus new market
- Mixed tenure
- Big business moving out of the area
- What can Council's do about affordable housing etc
- Levels of property

Economic Development

- Concern about Aylesbury becoming a dormitory town
- Attempts being made to make the Town more attractive ie floral displays
- Keeping the identity of Aylesbury the place..local businesses
- Plans for a Centre of Excellence; role of the College
- Empty properties, shops etc
- Larger employers working with the Town Council
- Involvement with the Bucks Economic Partnership

Services for Younger People

- Image problem, can be negative
- Is this fair and right ?
- Do all young people want to engage with activities ?
 - Youth cafes developing, Police Community Support Officers, light touch signposting
 - How best to make use of resources and assets
 - Should we review joint working ? Do agencies sometimes inadvertently get in each other's way ?
 - Is type of consultation the best ?
 - Do we make best use of resources ?
 - Transport outside of school hours is a problem. Do we make best use of facilities ie Dial-A-Ride

- Should venues be made available to other agencies at same or less cost?

Services for Older People

- Common issues...urban versus rural ie transport getting to a bus route in rural areas can be difficult
- Getting a GP's surgery can sometimes be very difficult
- Insufficient budget
- Carers' time = 1 hour 15 minutes a day
- A directory of who does what in terms of local authority functions is necessary, particularly in the light of the advent of the contact centre
- Need to promote a local contact point ie pub, village shop etc

FEEDBACK AND PLENARY- IAN BARHAM AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ian Barham led the feedback and plenary session.

As part of the feedback on each of the sessions a number of consistent themes emerged which it was hoped could be considered more fully at future meetings of the forum:-

- Removing Barriers to Partnership Working
 - Future One Stop Shop
 - Forum for Strategic Planning consultation
 - Focus less on ownership – more on quality of services provided
- Celebrating Innovation & Challenging Conventions
 - Schools “Super Head Teachers”
 - Innovative Housing Design
 - Entrepreneur Centre
- Sharing Knowledge
 - Consultation feedback
 - Schools Excellence in Aylesbury
- Maximising Resources
 - Extended Schools programme
 - Transport Services
 - Sharing Buildings
 - Multi Purpose Community Buildings
 - Providing package of support for Key Workers
- Building Communities
 - Inter-generational Working

Developing & Celebrating unique identity of the town
Developing “community link” services

- Celebrating Success
 - Cycle Aylesbury
 - Youth Cafes
 - Visibility of PCSO’s
 - “In Bloom” Initiatives & Awards
 - New Theatre Development

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is now scheduled for Monday 8th September at 7.30 pm at the AVDC Gateway Offices – Steve Patrick (AVDC/ATC Member) to Chair.

Greater Aylesbury Local Area Forum

July 14th

Summary Notes

An open workshop session was held as part of the last meeting the Greater Aylesbury Local Area Forum to explore how the forum could operate more effectively to develop joint working between 3 tiers of local government in the greater Aylesbury Area and to operate as the link between tier 1 community consultation groups including the Neighbourhood Action Groups and the Local Strategic Partnership.

The forum provided the opportunity for small workshop groups to discuss the key issues for the Greater Aylesbury relating to the following topics

- Education
- Decent & Affordable Housing
- Economic Development
- Services for Young People
- Services for Older People

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