

Local Area Forum Costs

The County Council supports LAFs by:

- meeting the operating costs of LAFs - administration, room hire, publicity, note-taking etc.
- providing officer support to each Local Area Forum through Lead Area Officers (Group Manager or Head of Service level), Localities Managers, Democratic Services Officers and staff from other service areas.
- allocating budgets for the use of each LAF to help fund solutions to local priorities

Forum Meeting costs

Democratic Services (room hire, publicity, DS officer support) costs charged to corporate account.

	Cost	No of mtgs	Average cost per mtg
2008/9	£56,361	30	£1,880
2009/10	£62,925	61	£1,032
2010/11	£90,369	75	£1,205
2011/12	£112,690	66	£1,707

Average cost per meeting changes largely associated with extra workload incurred from meeting rearrangements, and extra administrative services required. There is also some variability on venue provision with this sometimes having to be paid for by BCC and occasionally parish councils able to provide.

Costs incurred by other BCC services are absorbed by the contributing services such as Locality Services, Transport for Buckinghamshire, Adult Social Care (see below).

Other Service Areas

Based on an illustration of officer time incurred at each LAF in the Aylesbury Vale, it is calculated that the LAF Meetings take up some 1,008 BCC officer hours annually, and some 684¹ of other public sector partner officer hours (such as District Council lead offices, PCSOs, Police Inspectors, Fire Service Reps etc).

Using an average Locality Managers hourly rate (some officer attendees will be paid more, some less) of £33 per hour this would equate to a cost of £33,264 to BCC service areas.

Some LAFs also have various sub groups which can absorb further officer time (as much as 34 BCC hours per annum at some LAFs, but typically more in the region of 10 hours per annum, and some have no sub groups). Based on an average of 10hrs for each LAF this would give a total cost of approx £6k.

¹ Note that Aylesbury Vale LAFs are typically better supported by the Police and District Council than other districts and this is likely to be an overestimation of partner staff time.

An estimate of all BCC staff costs including democratic services would therefore come to approx £152k (113k + 33k + 6k).

There is a common misapprehension that the cost of LAFs exceeds £1m p.a.

This is believed to be based upon a misunderstanding that the Locality Services budget = the cost of LAFs.

For clarity, the total Locality Services budget is:

Year	Total Budget	Operational budget	Local Priorities	LINK
2011/12	£1,188m	£597,747	£412,248	£178,311
2010/11	£1,280m	£694,690	£407,113	£178,926

LINK (Local Involvement Networks)- Now renamed Local Health Watch, local community groups which influence local health and social care services.

Overall it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the cost of LAFs and other Localism activities undertaken by the Localities Team using their operational budget.

Partner Contributions to LAFs

	Partner Support
Aylesbury Vale	AVDC quite good – Provide Lead Officer to each LAF and other staff attend for questions and other agenda items when required. Also provide an AVDC newsletter with LAF agenda. TVP good – PCSOs, officer and inspector attend all LAFs. Fire Service attend some LAFs, RAF Halton represented at Wendover.
Chiltern	<i>Christine Gardner to advise CDC are looking to provide officer support</i>
Wycombe	<i>Madeleine Howe to advise WDC recently withdrew officer support for LAFs</i>
South Bucks	<i>Rebecca Carley to advise SBDC provides officer support & often at a high level</i>

None of the District Councils delegate any decision making or budget to the LAFs

Overall

The Localities Team operation budget for 2011/12 was £598k in 2011/12, however a great deal of the team's work is not spent on LAFs but instead on other Localism activities which often link with or are connected with the LAFs. Officer time from other service areas is also incurred at the LAF meetings.

Using data from Democratic Services and from information on staff time required by LAFs in Aylesbury Vale indicates the costs incurred per annum by BCC for the actual LAF meetings amounts to approx £152k.

The 2011/12 Local Priorities delegate budget from BCC to LAFs totalled £412,248.