



Buckinghamshire County Council
Select Committee
Environment, Transport and Locality Services

Date: Tuesday 4 March 2014
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall, Aylesbury

AGENDA

9.30 am Pre-meeting Discussion

This session is for members of the Committee only. It is to allow the members time to discuss lines of questioning, areas for discussion and what needs to be achieved during the meeting.

10.00 am Formal Meeting Begins

Agenda Item	Time	Page No
1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP	10.00am	
2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To disclose any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests.		
3 MINUTES Of the meeting held on 4 February 2014 to be confirmed as a correct record		1 - 26



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

This is an opportunity for members of the public to put a question or raise an issue of concern, related to Environment, Transport and Locality Services.

Where possible, the relevant organisation to which the question/issue is directed will be present to give a verbal response. The member of public will be invited to speak for up to four minutes on their issue. A maximum of 30 minutes is set aside for the Public Questions slot in total (including responses and any Committee discussion). This may be extended with the Chairman's discretion.

For full guidance on Public Questions, including how to register a request to speak during this slot, please follow this link:

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/about-your-council/scrutiny/get-involved/>

5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

For the Chairman of the Committee to provide an update to the Committee on recent scrutiny related activity.

6 UPDATE ON THE GREEN DEAL

10.10am 27 - 30

Members will receive an update on the Green Deal Together Community Interest Company; the company set up so that the Council can use the Government's National Green Deal scheme to support local people to make home improvements which help save money and energy.

This follows the information paper requested by the committee and considered at their meeting on 25th September.

Alex Day, Senior Sustainability Officer

Papers:

- Green Deal update

- 7 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEPS) 10.30am 31 - 40**
 Members will examine the role and responsibilities of Local Enterprise Partnerships and the structure and boundaries in Buckinghamshire.
- Martin Tett, Leader**
Stephen Walford, Senior Manager PLACE
- Papers:
- Information paper - LEP
 - LEP Options Paper
- Members are asked to consider the options and agree the next steps.
- 8 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SCHEMES IN BUCKS 11.25am 41 - 50**
 Members will discuss the work that Community Impact Bucks have carried out on behalf of the Council in relation to community transport. They will consider the role that community transport plays, key challenges, examples of where schemes have been successful and further development opportunities.
- Paul O'Hare, Community Impact Bucks**
Angie Sarchet, Community and Cohesion Manager
- Papers:**
 Community Transport Hub summary
- Links:**
- **Community Car Scheme Toolkit:**
<http://tinyurl.com/ggutsjo>
 - **Community Bus Toolkit:**
<http://tinyurl.com/pu2gzxh>
- 9 PAPERS FOR INFORMATION 51 - 52**
 The following paper is for information;
- Letter to the Cabinet Member for Environment – Committee recommendations regarding 'Fracking'
- 10 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 12.15pm 53 - 54**
 For Members to discuss the Committee's work programme and proposals for future items.
- 11 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING 12.25pm**
 The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 8 April 2014 in Mezzanine 2, County Offices, Aylesbury at 10.00am. There will be a pre-meeting for Committee Members at 9.30am.

Future meeting dates for 2014

Tuesday 13 May

Tuesday 17 June

Tuesday 2 September

Tuesday 14 October

Tuesday 18 November

Purpose of the committee

The Environment, Transport and Locality Services Select Committee shall carry out scrutiny functions for all policies and services relating to environment, transport and locality services, including: Environmental sustainability; Planning & development; Transportation; Road maintenance; Locality services; Community cohesion; Countryside services; Waste, recycling and treatment; Trading standards; Resilience (emergency planning); Voluntary & community sector; Drugs and alcohol issues; and Crime and disorder and crime and disorder reduction partnerships (community safety partnerships).

In accordance with the BCC Constitution, the Environment, Transport and Locality Services Select Committee shall also sit as the designated Crime and Disorder Committee and will hold the countywide Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (known as the Safer Bucks Partnership) to account for the decisions it takes and to take part in joint reviews with District Councils of District Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

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If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Sharon Griffin or Maureen Keyworth on 01296 383691 / 3603; Fax No 01296 382538; Email sgriffin@buckscc.gov.uk / mkeyworth@buckscc.gov.uk

Members

Mr W Bendyshe-Brown
Mr T Butcher
Mr D Carroll (VC)
Mr W Chapple OBE
Mr D Dhillon

Mr P Gomm
Mr S Lambert
Mr M Tett
Mr W Whyte (C)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE





Buckinghamshire County Council
Select Committee
Environment, Transport and Locality Services

Minutes

ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND LOCALITY SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND LOCALITY SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2014, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.40 AM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr T Butcher, Mr D Dhillon, Mr P Gomm, Mr S Lambert and Mr W Whyte (Chairman)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr R Cook, Ms S Griffin (Secretary), Mr L Hannington, Mr K Hills, Dr J Nethercoat, Mr S Rooney and Ms K Wager

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence were received from Bill Bendyshe-Brown, Bill Chapple and David Carroll.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 6 December 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Environmental Green Deal

A meeting to discuss the EU bids and funding with relevant officers has been re-scheduled for the 20 February 2014.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



An email has been received from Stephen Walford advising that the full bid made for EU funding is the same funding referred to for the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Customer Focus Project

The project is ongoing.

Chairman's Report

Cabinet met on the 3 February to discuss the Budget Scrutiny recommendations.

Waste and Recycling update

Stephen Boddy has provided the following update to Committee Members;

The research mentions nearly 2000 customers were surveyed. What percentage of this figure are visitors to Bucks waste sites and was the survey conducted at particular sites on particular days? The exact percentage of customers can be reported back to the Committee

Response: *All customers were surveyed whilst at one of our 10 HWRC's. Surveys were carried on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday in October / November 2013 in half day sessions over a range to dates due to resourcing / weather. On average a total of approximately 190 customers were questioned at each site. Over the same period each our sites saw between 900 and 2500 customers at each site over a three day period with up to 977 on any one day. Approximately 10% of customers were therefore surveyed on average over a full 'weekend' of sessions.*

Members of the Committee agreed that they would like attend the workshops. An invitation and further details are to be circulated to Committee members in January 2014.

Response: An invitation will be sent our shortly to tie in with completion of the Options modelling work which is delayed whilst completing tasks required of the Project Board and incorporating data collected from the above survey – my apologies.

The community skip schemes run by some the District Councils are coming to an end. Is there going to be a review on the affect this could have on HWRC sites? The focus of this project is on household waste services but this issue can be taken away and looked into. If the service is taken away by the District Council this might encourage individuals to bring the waste to HWRCs.

Response: AVDC Officers have confirmed that provision of community skips by Aylesbury Vale was withdrawn as part of the rollout of their kerbside recycling scheme from April 2012 with resident being encouraged to recycle more at the door. The WAAP project tonnage figures include HWRC data in the financial year April 2012 – March 2013 and we will continue to monitor variations in tonnages through this and our other contracts.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December were agreed as a correct record

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Robin Stuchbury to the meeting.

Mr Stuchbury explained that he had formally submitted several questions which he wanted to raise under Public Questions.

The questions submitted were as follows:

- Further information is needed on the policy and actions to be put in the public domain for public consultation. Any actions need to be in the public domain.
- There needs to be a discussion about the economic impact on property.
- Will the Council be making a decision to be a 'pro fracking' or 'anti fracking' Council' and will the choice be explained to the public?
- What is the Council's opinion on the Government offering money to Councils to undertake fracking prior to a full consultation
- If fracking take place under people's homes will they have the right to object and if there is an impact on their property how will they be compensated
- Will the fracking harm the water table and fresh water aquifer we drink from
- The decision made by the County Council needs to be 'open' for public scrutiny – Government have chosen the decision

Mr Stuchbury thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to speak at the meeting.

The Chairman explained that Lester Hannington, Lead Officer for Waste and Minerals Planning is attending the meeting today to give an update on hydraulic fracking (agenda item 8) during which the questions raised by Mr Stuchbury should be addressed.

6 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman gave the following update.

The report from the TfB inquiry was presented at the Cabinet meeting in January. The recommendations in the report were accepted in the majority by Cabinet which reflects on the detailed of the work done by the Committee during the inquiry. An update on the progress will be given at the meeting today.

An audit report into TfB was presented to the Regulatory and Audit Committee on the 28 January 2014. The report took place in spring 2013 and was quite detailed. The report identified similar issues to those raised by the Environment, Transport and Locality Select Committee. KPIs are also dealt with in the report.

A meeting took place with Members of the Committee, County Council and TfB prior to Christmas. A further meeting is scheduled for the 13 February.

2014 is a very busy year for the ETL Committee. Future work will look at the environment, locality services (libraries, trading standards etc) as well as other areas of transport.

The ELT Committee is also the designated Crime and Disorder Committee. A statutory update will be given before July.

7 TRANSPORT FOR BUCKS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Chairman welcomed Sean Rooney, Senior Manager, Place, Bob Cook, Interim Highways Manager, Kim Hills, Head of Highways and Transportation and Dr Joe Nethercoat to the meeting.

Mr Cook began the update by explaining that part of his responsibility is the delivery of the improvement plan at a good achievable pace and to make sure the correct actions are embedded in the service.

Mr Cook took Members through the TfB Improvement Plan update on progress, during which the following key points were highlighted.

Sections 1-4 of the report explain the background, details, progress of the Improvement Plan and progress with the Service, the strategic objectives and direction of the contract.

The seven key themes of the Improvement Plan as follows;

Theme A – Architecture, roles and structure

Theme I – innovation/transformation

Theme P – progress

Theme S – strategy

Theme C – customer focus

Theme E – ETL Inquiry report issues

Theme U – Audit report issues

The early focus of the work was defining the strategic objectives for the contract and setting the direction of where the service wants to move in terms of improvement. Work has also taken place on the organisational structure within TfB.

The Local Area Technician (LATs) service has been re-organised. The new structure and operating methods were implemented from the 2 January 2014 following consultation with Members. Consultation is currently taking place with employees on the proposals for a wider reorganisation of TfB. The restructure will better align services with the client and create a more client facing approach to the organisational structure.

Good progress has been made with the Customer Focus Project. One large piece of work undertaken is an independent Customer Journey mapping exercise. This exercise was carried

out by an external consultant and is now nearing completion. A workshop took place last week at a senior level and actions are being planned to take the findings forward.

KPIs and benchmarking are part of the current focus. There were actions from a recent audit report in terms of quality assurance and bringing more innovations to the contract. It is hoped that the management information section of work will be completed by the next financial year.

Work on reviewing key policy areas has also begun. A prioritised list of key policy areas which require reviewing and updating has been prepared. A draft of the new Safety and Inspection Policy has been completed. The aim is for the new policy to be submitted as a Cabinet Member decision in March.

Appendix A is a snapshot of the current status of the TfB Improvement Plan and detailed actions. The plan is a live document which is updated constantly. Thirteen further tasks have been completed since the report was written.

Section 4, Appendix C give some evidence of the service improving with extracts from recent emails, phone calls and tweets regarding the TfB Service.

During discussions, the following points made and questions asked;

The Chairman thanked Mr Cook for the very useful and helpful report in showing the progression made. One minor observation is that the Environment, Transport and Locality Services Select Committee felt they very much informed the start of the McCabe review which is not reflected in the report.

The audit report into TfB was not that recent. It was spring 2013 but throughout the inquiry the details and draft reports were not shared with the Committee.

The report is very encouraging. Paragraph 2 on page 25 of the report advises that Member representation on the Strategic Board will be increased. How many members are currently on the Strategic Board, what is the proposed increase in membership and when will this take place. At the moment the membership of the Strategic Board includes the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation. This will increase to two Members of the Authority. The decision has been delegated by Cabinet to Councillor Blake for consideration. It is hoped the new arrangements will be in place by the next meeting of the Strategic Board on the 10 March 2014.

Page 24 refers to the new structure of the Local Area Technicians (LATs) following consultation with Members. The understanding is that in December Members were briefed about the proposed changes to the LAT service. What did the Member consultation comprise of? One concern is the split of responsibility along the A41 which is a strategic road and clarification of which LATs are responsible. Proposals were put together within TfB which were then discussed at Senior Management and with Councillor Blake. The concept was shared at the TfB Members conference on the 4 December. The

briefing in this instance was seen to be the consultation with Members. If major issues had emerged from the conference TfB would have gone back and made the changes.

Mr Hills explained that he joined the organisation as Head of Highways and Transportation within TfB on 2nd December 2013 and was led to believe there had been discussions prior to the Conference on the 4th December in particular with the Cabinet Member. The new arrangements for LATs were implemented from 2nd January. An update report has been requested for May/June. The progression and contract arrangements will be monitored and will be subject to review. One of the changes that came into effect was most Members now only having to work with two LATs.

As the Authority is Member led, how will Members be included in the consultation on the proposal about the wider reorganisation to improve customer service and clarify roles? Mr Hills explained that the formal 45 day consultation period with employees started week commencing 27 January 2014. Obtaining Members views on the proposals would clearly be looked at. Discussions have taken place with the Cabinet Member but this can be expanded out to receive further feedback.

There have been some recent changes to TfB whereby different parts of the Service area such as road safety are being lost. This could increase further complaints and the affect the running of TfB. It is felt that there is not enough communication from TfB to keep Members updated and informed. Mr Hills explained that it is about engagement with Members of the Authority, parishes and members of the public to fully understand how the proposed changes to services are being taken forward and to receive feedback and respond and react to that. Mr Hills added if Members have any concerns about the changes and particular parts of the business he would be keen to hear about this now to allow any issues to be taken into account going forward.

On page 29 of the report there is a statement about the Strategic Client carrying out regular monitoring of the quality of the works. Has this process changed since the report from the ETL Select Committee as there was found to be problems with the Strategic Monitoring process in 2013 and are there examples of how this process has changed? There is one person who carries out regular checks for the client who is currently employed three days a week. The service is looking to strengthen the post to full time and potentially have an additional post to carry out the same checks. This is independent to the discussion taking place in regard to the overall structure.

A large section of the report deals with complaints, complaints management and a new quick reporting tool (Complaints Records Management system). Is it possible to explain more about the system to give an understanding of what the system looks like and the line of reporting etc. Dr Nethercoat explained that there are two parts to the complaints process. Formal complaints are investigated independently of TfB and Place service. Every complaint that comes in the service is recorded, monitored and progressed through the Councils corporate complaints system.

Under Theme C – Customer Focus, reference to made to high profile correspondence now being subject to additional scrutiny with systems revised to provide improved

tracking and response. Is it possible to define 'high profile correspondence' and the percentage for covering these in terms of complaint handling? A new reporting system has recently been constructed which is based on the existing database structures. The new system gives greater detail on areas of progression and areas of concern etc from which a report is automatically generated. Work is currently taking place with Parish Councils to produce automatic reports which give CRN's for their specific area. It is hoped that the Parishes will take up the possibility of receiving a weekly/monthly automated report on concerns relevant to their area.

How would the new system benefit a member of the public/customer who has a concern about a pothole or a problem with a streetlight? Dr Nethercoat explained that part of the work that has taken place since the update given at the September meeting of the Committee is the Customer Journey Map. There were concerns that some complaints could fall into a 'black hole'. As part of the new intelligence system complaints can be progressed, tracked and dealt with in greater detail and cannot fall into a 'black hole'. One of the aims is to deal with any concerns before they become a complaint and to try and stop failure demand.

The report advises that correspondence turnaround has improved from around 28 days to 70% response in 5 working days and formal complaints have reduced by over 80% since the first recorded centrally (page 29). The complaints data is held within the Authority not by the contractor. The knowledge about how the complaints are resolved, lessons learnt etc is therefore within the County Council not the contractor. Dr Nethercoat explained that stage one complaints are investigated by the Complaints Team and are filtered through for a response from the Head of Highways and Transportation or Senior Manager, Place. If the customer is not content that the complaint has been dealt with this becomes a stage two complaint which is sent to the Service Director, Customer Contact for a response. If the customer is still not satisfied with the investigation carried out this then becomes a stage three complaint which is sent to the Head of Legal Services for further investigation. The number of complaints has reduced as responses have improved. When the process first started a lot of complaints were received as a result of the customer not being contacted or responded to. The nature of the complaints is changing to challenging decisions such as why was the road closed.

How does the work on innovation of transformation fit in with the contractual percentage of reductions to be made each year in terms of promoting innovation? At the moment there is a system called Value Plus in place which is where TfB capture innovations. Any innovations that come out of this new initiative will also be captured in Value Plus and will contribute to this. The Innovation Strategy document has just been received which will go to the Strategic Board in March.

One of the underlying concerns during the inquiry process was the lack of visibility of staff members and an understanding of who does what on a daily basis following significant changes within the County Council and TfB over the last few months. It would be useful to understand the membership of Project Board. A diagram detailing the structure of the TfB Project Teams & Governance will be circulated to Committee Members.

Action: Bob Cook

Compliments were given to the team for listening to, acting upon and implementing requests made by the Environment Select Committee.

The Chairman said that in future reports it would be useful to bear in mind that when the term 'Members being consulted' is used this is referring to the Cabinet Member which is different to Members of the wider Council.

The Chairman gave thanks on behalf of the Committee for the very detailed and candid report and for the work done. He added that he is pleased to see a change in the attitude and a response to some of the long standing concerns on the TfB contract. It is hoped that some of the positive changes which are starting to be seen will filter through the rest of the year and for residents to see improvements.

Any further notes/ information for the Committee can be circulated prior to the next formal review on the 2 September.

Action: Bob Cook

8 BUCKS POSITION ON HYDRAULIC FRACTURING ('FRACKING')

Lester Hannington, Lead Officer for Waste and Minerals Planning Policy was welcomed to the meeting.

Mr Hannington began by explaining that Buckinghamshire County Council is reviewing their existing Minerals and Waste Local Plan with a view to begin work to replace it in 2014. The County Council adopted the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy in November 2012 which provided some overarching policies on where mineral extraction and development should take place.

The 2006 adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan is out of date, and the National Policy Framework has since been published. One key area of work is revisiting the policies, and bringing them up to date, as well as identifying new sites for mineral working and for certain small scale kinds of waste development. The oil and gas industry is one element that needs to be taken into account when the review is carried out and the plan is brought up to date.

There have been a continuing number of developments recently, which are included in statements from Members of the Government, and other reports. There has been a recent announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the autumn statement 2013 of changes to the tax regime in respect of shale gas exploration and production.

There are two exploration licences in the East Midlands in a geological basin known as 'the Gainsborough Trough' which is historically an area of oil and gas extraction, and has been part acquired by a French company, Total.

In January 2014, the Government announced that local Councils where shale gas 'fracking' is allowed will be able to received 100% of Business Rates from the operation (the current rate is

50%). Buckinghamshire County Council is a Mineral Planning Authority and would determine any applications that come forward for shale gas exploration or production. There are no applications at present for determination, no pending applications, and none submitted in the past.

Local residents and communities affected by 'fracking' for exploration or production, are now being offered a compensation scheme which includes at the explorations stage, £100,000 in community benefits per well-site where fracking takes place.

In October 2013, Public Health England published a 'Review of the Potential Public Health Impacts of Exposures to Radioactive and Chemical Pollutants as a result of Shale Gas Extraction'. The review considered various chemicals involved with shale gas exploration using hydraulic fracking and the risks associated. It concluded that the risks are acceptable so long as the practice of exploration by hydraulic fracturing is appropriately regulated.

The clear message is that Government historically continues to rely on the effectiveness of the regulators, which means especially the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive. This is expressed very strongly in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Policy Guidance in respect of hydrocarbons.

The next steps are;

- The Government is to undertake a further round of licensing for onshore oil and gas exploration later this year. The Council should wait for this licensing round and at that time review whether any new licenses may affect Buckinghamshire.
- The Council as Minerals Planning Authority will be developing a new planning policy document 'the Replacement Minerals and Waste Local Plan' (MWLP). This will provide the opportunity to have a robust and up to date policy or policies with which to determine any planning applications for 'fracking' for shale gas that may arise in the future.

During discussions, the following questions were asked and points made.

Does the Council have a positive view on fracking or should it remain neutral, if any application is received before the core strategy is amended what would be the process. When the County Council replaces the existing Minerals and Waste Local Plan, if they put forward a policy which is very negative later in the process there could be problems in terms of the acceptability at the Hearing stage. The inspector will look at the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). If the Replacement Local Plan was found not to be positively worded about development, this would need to be justified in terms of local evidence since polices are supposed to facilitate development.

Has there been any historic drilling or exploratory work in Buckinghamshire? There has been some degree of exploration for conventional oil and gas but none of the exploratory work has shown a commercially viable deposit of oil and gas. This is one of the reasons why some of the areas are shown in the recent Strategic Environmental Assessment, not because they are a strong candidate for future licencing.

Is there any view/inclination about the Core Strategy i.e. will it reflect the NPPF rather than the local policy which would be for the benefit of the county? It is a legal requirement to be consistent with the NPPF. However where there are local considerations they can be taken into account and locally specific policy can be developed. Oil and gas has historically been won through more conventional forms of extraction throughout the world. The use of 'fracking' is not entirely new, because even with conventional oil and gas extraction, a small amount of fracking is often used to make the wells flow slightly better. It remains to be seen whether a local 'slant' can be developed. In developing planning policy, the starting point is always the NPPF, and cannot be deviated from, unless there is a very strong argument to do so.

Is there the intention to consult with members of the public to bring them up to speed on fracking in both rural and urban areas? The intention is to consult with District and Parish Councils and any known individuals who have an interest in fracking to obtain a view on the potential choices, any specific issues, and the direction of travel for the rest of the plan making process. Any specific businesses and individuals/organisations can be added to our database. Ideally some exhibitions will also be held.

There was a very useful policy briefing issued last week from the Local Government Information Unit and irrespective of the for/against fracking issues, a very important point was made. Would the Authority's current policy deal with this satisfactorily or does the timetable for updating the plan and policy need to be addressed more urgently? If fracking was to happen, are we satisfied there are the appropriate safeguards against water contamination on sustainable water, the disposal of waste water and chemicals and the risk of seismic disturbance? What mitigations would be put in place for the inevitable disturbance of local residents and to ensure that benefits flow to the local economy? If an application is submitted for exploration by fracking, first of all the applicant has to notify all of the landowners including agricultural tenants. Residents adjacent to the property are also consulted to give the opportunity to raise objections/give comments to the planning authority. There has been a recent consultation on proposed changes to the planning application regime in terms of oil and gas exploration in January 2014, which would take away the need to notify landowners, but this has yet to be approved. It was only a consultation document. There is also the issue of potential trespass.

In respect of compensation, the UK offshore operators group have voluntarily offered a compensation scheme of £100,000 in community benefits per well-site where fracking takes place. A payment of 1% of revenues at production will also be paid out to communities. Further details on how this will be distributed are awaited.

What do the existing policies deal with in terms of water safety through to mitigations of disturbances of communities? Generically oil and gas exploration is dealt with under Policy 9 of the existing Minerals and Waste Local Plan. There are a number of issues that are dealt with under other policies;

Policy 33 – ground water and flood plains

Policy 30 - Transport

Policy 31 – Restoration

Policy 28 – Amenity impacts such as noise, vibration, dust, fumes, pollution etc

These are the existing policies that are used on a day to day basis by colleagues in the Planning and Advisory Compliance Service for determining applications for mineral extraction of waste developments. The policies are fit for purpose, but the issues will be revisited in bringing forward a new replacement Minerals and Waste Local Plan. There is also a strong reliance from the Government on the regulators, both the Environment Agency and the Health & Safety Executive, who have more detailed involvement in terms of protecting the water environment through dealing with the waste that comes out of the site and how it affects the water table and the integrity of the wells itself. As a Planning Authority, the County Council has the separate role of dealing with other issues such as access, transport, lighting etc.

The Government had an 18 month moratorium in place. In their recent report, they said that the two year delay was disappointing. Is there the sense of speeding up the pressure on Local Authorities to get planning regimes in place so that fracking can move ahead? Yes, in the sense of if the planning policies are less up to date the Authority could be slightly more vulnerable if an application was submitted. There is only one licence at the moment which overlaps slightly with the County Council administrative area. The 14th round of licensing is due, and the overlap with the County Council boundary needs to be looked at. There is clearly a strong push to promote fracking, and the need for the Authority to be in a strong position to respond if any applications are received.

In a further report the Local Government has said ‘it is up to the Local Authority to determine an application based on their Local Development Plan’. What happens if there is not a Local Plan in place before the 14th round starts? There are the existing saved policies from the 2006 plan. New preferred areas for development need to be identified for certain forms of development e.g. sand and gravel. This is more difficult with oil and gas since a key locational issue is about the licence from the Department of Energy and Climate Change which is specific to the area of land. Unless there is a licence on the piece of land, there is no point in applying for planning permission. The Department of Energy and Climate Change are conducting a new round of onshore oil and gas licensing (14th round) later in 2014. This may be a key opportunity to bring policies up to date.

When round 14 starts and licenses being issued what happens in terms of public consultation, how are members of the public consulted to make sure they are aware of planning applications and would there be extra publicity and safeguarding? It is usual for immediate residents to be notified by the Local Authority as part of the process of handling planning applications. It is the responsibility of the applicant to notify landowners and agricultural tenants themselves. The Local Authority would also notify any residents adjacent to the site. The District and Parish Councils will also be notified and made aware.

[Tim Butcher joined the meeting at 11.10am]

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has guidelines around planning concerning oil and gas, and there is a separate planning policy guidance note. If permission is granted, what else is required before exploration could begin? Apart from

the planning permission, potentially a permit from the Environment Agency and drilling consent from the Department of Energy for Climate Change is needed before exploratory works can begin. There is also involvement from the Health and Safety Executive in terms of the integrity of the well. The operator has to appoint an independent well examiner. It is a highly regulated process.

One observation is from the Department of Communities and Local Government revised requirements relating to Planning Applications for onshore oil and gas proposals paper January 2014. The Government view is for minimum regulatory burden on the industry which will need to be looked at carefully if an application is made. A copy of the LGiU update to be circulated with the minutes. At the permissions stage the Local Authority could potentially ask for an Environmental Impact Assessment, as this application could be screened and classed as a Schedule 2 development. The detailed information would be looked at to ensure that relevant policies are satisfied, and that the information provided is sufficient to satisfy the Council planning policies. The key emphasis in the NPPF and the technical guidance on oil and gas, is that the County Council should not be seen to be undermining the regulatory regimes of the regulatory pollution bodies.

Action: Stephen Lambert/Sharon Griffin

The report advises the 'The County Council hopes to begin work on a new planning policy document on minerals and waste later in 2014'. There is concern that the current policies could be seen as a 'light touch planning authority'. Are there a robust set of policies in place now that could deal with any applications, when are we likely to hear the outcome in the 14th round and should the Local Authority commence review of policies in particular those which relate to fracking, sooner rather than later? There is currently no indication at the moment of when the outcome of the 14th round will be announced. Buckinghamshire County Council is not a light touch Authority in that sense. It remains to be seen what amended wording would be acceptable to the inspector when we get to hearings for the submitted Replacement Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

With regard to safety etc, what solid guarantees are there that fracking will not disturb or affect the land structure locally both short and long term? If seismic events are being referred to, in 2012 the Government halted drilling operations in Lancashire as there were minor tremors. The tremors were investigated and further requirements were brought in for the operators to take on board. The Government is now convinced that it is safe enough to allow fracking to resume. Other bodies such as the Royal Society and the Royal Society for Engineering believe that so long as the process is regulated adequately, there shouldn't be any problem. In terms of any impact on stability of the ground or the water environment, fracking takes place at a greater depth than the water table is. The Health & Safety Executive and the Environment Agency are very much involved in the detail of how the process takes place. There the expectation by Government is that the environment should not be harmed if the regulators do their job properly.

A recent report from the United States Environment Protection Agency refers to the risks, the environmental footprints of the sites, fugitive emissions from methane, the aquifer etc. As this is a carbon based emission risk, how does this fit into working with

other Local Authorities on air quality management, what policies are in place to manage fugitive emissions, what would the impact be on our carbon reduction plan and the environmental footprint? The area of the site, i.e. its land-take is the planning matter. However, the use would be temporary for the exploration phase. Emissions to the air of primarily regulated by the Environment Agency, as some venting of gases found does occur. However if the amount of gas was commercially viable, then it could lead to an application for a facility to use this gas commercially.

With regard to the licencing, is this for the equipment to drill but not the sub surface and the footprint? The area is licensed by the Department of Energy and Climate Change. The actual area of the site for drilling purposes especially for the exploration phrase is usually no more than two hectares.

There are very limited opportunities for fracking in Buckinghamshire. If for example, if a seam was found under Aylesbury, how would the policies be managed and how would work take place with other Local Authorities to ensure there was protections in place and ensure there were adequate protections in place, and ensure that carbon emissions were managed? To what level of degree do we work with other Authorities to make sure the best local policies are put on place to safeguard the local environment and the residents? In terms of the plan production, the Authority has 'duty to co-operate' which means work takes place other Local Authorities, both in and out of county, take their views into account, and seek to resolve any difference of opinion. The views of technical bodies also need to be taken into account to see if they can be implemented through the planning policy. If emission standards of the statutory regulators are exceeded, the Council can use this as consideration as a conflict with planning policy to potentially refuse permission.

With regards to safeguards, are these put in place when work starts, by other Local Authorities? In terms of safeguards, for example it is normal to have lighting on the site if there is a facility for drilling but this can be controlled by planning conditions. The issues about water environment would primarily be regulated during the drilling process by Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive.

With regard to the recent flooding and surface water issues (use of water, waste water and the impact on the existing water), would there be three potential decision makers or would the Environment Agency decide on all three? The planning decision made would primarily be by the County Council, in the sense that they need to be convinced that exploratory work is acceptable as a use of land given the existing planning policies. For example, Minerals and Waste Local Plan policy 33, which is about protection from ground water, flood plains and potential flooding. The first line of defence after the licensing by the Department for Energy and Climate Change is planning permission from the County Council. The potential for the effect on ground water would be an issue that would be considered in reaching any planning decision. If planning permission is granted then the company would still need to gain permits from the Environment Agency, and the Health and Safety Executive.

At what point would there be public consultation with the local Members? Local Members would ideally be made aware of any applications before members of the public.

Will Local Members have input in the draft plan? The intention is to have involvement in terms of Member briefing sessions before the consultation stage.

What is the current timescale for the review? There needs to be a revision to the existing Statement of Community Involvement first. Ideally the regulation 18 consultation on the new plan will start in the summer/autumn of 2014.

There has been a lot of media interest about fracking. What are the Authority doing to ensure the facts, knowledge and information reach members of the public? Work is taking place on the BCC website to improve our existing 'Frequently Asked Questions' page on 'Fracking' so as to include further information, and links to other websites i.e. the Department of Energy and Climate Change website. Communication is an important issue. Mr Hannington advised that he is happy for any further questions/queries to be directed to him.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hannington for the very informative update.

Committee Recommendations

The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member;

1. should consider producing a formal communication strategy to ensure clear communication at an early stage of the planning process, such as the latest news relating to the 14th round of licensing;
2. review and develop a clear timetable for the Replacement minerals and Waste Local Plan at the earliest convenience;
3. review the current policy and consider expediting policies relating to 'fracking' in the minerals and waste local plan to ensure that, should the authority receive applications for 'fracking', its policies are clear and robust;
4. that the committee receive an update on the Replacement Minerals and Waste Local Plan at the appropriate time.

9 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee Draft Work Programme for 2014 was discussed during which the following comments were made;

4 March meeting

The 'Green Deal' item will be re-visited.

Information gathering will commence on the Local Enterprise Partnership and the S106 and its role.

8 April meeting

Library services in Buckinghamshire have undergone significant change over the last few years. The Cabinet Member recently announced that the intention is for libraries to have a greater face to face role communication with residents.

The Chairman asked Members if there were any specific items they wished to be added to the work programme.

- As part of the budget setting process there were discussions about the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Equalities and Human Rights part of the service. Should the Committee review how the impact of the removal of ECHR from the CRB contract and services can be addressed.

A report is to be requested for the April meeting to tie in with the update on Libraries

Action: Kama Wager

- The Crime and Disorder Strategy is to be brought forward to the April meeting to give the Committee time to consider this issue as there is a statutory July timeline for the ETL Committee to meet as the Crime and Disorder Committee a minimum of once a year.

A statutory update can be requested from the Community and Safety Partnerships and Police and Crime Panel on their work programmes. Susie Yapp, Trevor Egleton to be invited to the May meeting

Action: Kama Wager

- Does the Youth Offending Service and work with re-settlement process link in with the Police and Crime Panel? Should a written paper to be requested.

Action: Kama Wager

10 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 4 March 2014 in Mezzanine 2, County Offices, Aylesbury. There will be a pre-meeting for Committee Members are 9.30am.

Meeting dates for 2014

Tuesday 8 April

Tuesday 13 May

Tuesday 17 June

Tuesday 2 September

Tuesday 14 October

Tuesday 18 November

CHAIRMAN

Update on Fracking

3 February 2014

Andrew Jones, LGiU Associate

Summary

- On 13 January 2014, David Cameron announced that councils would be able to keep 100 per cent of business rates they collect from shale gas sites. This adds to community benefits already agreed with the extraction industry of £100,000 when a test well is fracked and a further one per cent of revenues if shale gas is discovered.
- The Government has offered considerable support for the exploration and possible development of shale gas, despite the controversy surrounding the associated technique of fracking. Water contamination and seismic disturbances are among the associated environmental risks.
- This briefing deals with what is known so far about shale and oil and gas deposits in the UK, the associated risks and possible benefits, and the regulatory regime governing onshore exploration and development.
- It will be of interest to members and officers in all tiers of local government with an interest in environmental sustainability, local economic development, and planning.

Background

Shale gas is found within certain types of shale beds containing organic material that sometimes breaks down to form natural gas or oil. Unlike conventional sources of gas that are contained in reservoirs trapped between layers of impermeable rock, shale gas is trapped within tiny pore spaces or adsorbed into clay mineral particles. Advances in technology, and increases in the wholesale prices of hydrocarbons have made the production of gas directly from shale beds commercially viable.

Methods for extracting gas and oil trapped in shale advanced in the late 1990s, allowing the permeability of shale to be increased by pumping a mix of water, sand, and chemicals at high pressure down a well in order to fracture the shale. The fractures thus created liberate some of the gas from the pore spaces, allowing it to

flow to a well. This technique is known as hydraulic fracturing, or hydrofracing, or more popularly, as fracking. Horizontal drilling produces wells with very long pay zones, and allows both access to harder-to-reach deposits and drilling in several directions from a single vertical bore. Hydraulic fracturing is not a new technology, and horizontal drilling and fracking are also used in conventional exploration and development.

However, advances in these techniques have unlocked some of the largest natural gas deposits in the world. The Barnett Shale of Texas was the first major natural gas field developed in a shale reservoir rock. Others include the Marcellus Shale in the Appalachians, the Haynesville Shale in Louisiana and the Fayetteville Shale in Arkansas. The extraction of gas from American shale deposits has transformed the USA's energy market. According to [some sources](#), the USA's enormous shale reservoirs hold enough natural gas to serve all of the USA's needs for several decades. Import terminals, built before the shale boom, are now being converted into export facilities for Liquid Natural Gas (LNG).

Shale gas and oil deposits are present in all continents, although exploration and development of shale gas and oil outside of North America is still in the early stages. Energy extraction companies are acquiring shale acreage in a number of countries, including Argentina, Canada, China, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Ukraine, and Australia.

Similarly, drilling for shale gas in the UK is still in the exploration stage. However, the Government has offered considerable support for the further exploration and eventual extraction of gas from shale. In Budget 2013, it promised a new shale gas field allowance and to extend the ring-fence expenditure supplement from six to ten years for shale gas projects. It has established a new [Office of Unconventional Gas and Oil](#) covering the development of shale gas and oil and coal bed methane. In the 2013 Autumn Statement it was announced that the tax rate on a portion of a company's profits would be reduced from 62 to 30 per cent and that companies would receive a tax allowance equal to 75 per cent of capital spent on projects.

On 13 January 2014, David Cameron announced that councils would be able to keep 100 per cent of business rates they collect from shale gas sites. According to the Government, this could be worth up to £1.7 million a year for a typical site. This adds to community benefits already agreed with the extraction industry of £100,000 when a test well is fracked and a further 1 per cent of revenues if shale gas is discovered which, it is claimed, could be worth between £5m-£10m for a typical site over its lifetime.

All of this is in the face of considerable opposition and controversy surrounding fracking. In August 2013, the extraction company Cuadrilla started test drilling for oil at Balcombe in West Sussex, but had to scale back operations after a series of protests in which Caroline Lucas, the Green MP, was arrested. No fracking had yet taken place and more recently the company has announced that extraction can proceed without fracking. Up to date news on sites where shale gas or oil exploration is, or is planned to take place, is available on the site [Frack Off](#), together with lists of local protest groups. A number of countries and state or local jurisdictions, where

they have the requisite powers, have announced bans, or moratoriums of various durations on fracking, including France, South Africa, Bulgaria, Northern Ireland, New York, Pennsylvania, Quebec, Fribourg (Switzerland) and New South Wales.

Opposition to fracking arises from its suspected environmental and health risks, the small, if any, contribution of shale gas to the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions in comparison with renewable sources of energy or nuclear power, and from the disruption it causes for local residents. Among the environmental and health concerns are the risks of water contamination and earthquakes. In the American documentary [Gasland](#) (YouTube trailer link) local residents demonstrate the contamination of drinking water from gases caused by nearby fracking operations by setting fire to the water running from their kitchen taps. In another Caudrilla incident near Blackpool in 2011, earth tremors attributed to fracking in a report commissioned by the company following the incident led to an 18-month ban on further fracking operations. An American study reported in [New Scientist](#) concluded that over 100 small earthquakes were triggered in a single year of fracking-related activities in one region of Ohio. The study was among others that concluded that seismic events were triggered by the way waste water was dealt with in the fracking process.

Geological features that make shale wells more costly to drill is one factor among others that mean the industry will develop more slowly in the UK than in the USA, despite the effect of higher natural gas prices. Unlike in the USA, landowners in the UK do not own mineral rights, so there is less incentive to support development. Local authorities must grant planning consent. The USA has relatively permissive environmental regulations, lower population densities, better tax incentives, infrastructure supply chains and technology. Despite the Government's enthusiasm for shale gas, it could be as long as a decade before production on a significant scale will take place. Exploration and development could take another two years.

Where it is and how much there is

A report for DECC by the British Geological Survey (BGS) on the [Unconventional Hydrocarbon Resources of Britain's Onshore Basins – Shale Gas](#) (pdf file) shows the British shale formations with most gas potential. The diagrams are based on geological maps, where one relevant formation (the Jurassic Lias Subcrop) runs roughly in a forward-leaning 'L' shape from the north east of England down to the south and south west coasts. It includes the Weald Basin, covering parts of East and West Sussex, Kent, and Hampshire. Another is the Bowland Shale, in the Pennine Basin, covering much of Lancashire and Yorkshire. In England, the Weald and Pennine basins are thought to offer the best bets for shale gas recovery. The Central Belt in Scotland is another likely target.

Exploration and development for any oil and gas in the UK can only proceed on the basis of a Petroleum Exploration and Development Licence (PEDL) issued by DECC (see below). A [DECC map](#) shows the onshore licences as of January 2014. It includes areas currently under licence, the PEDL number and the company to which it was awarded. Upper-tier local authority areas are distinguishable in the map under

the grids and coloured patterns showing areas currently under licence. According to DECC, there is not a firm distinction between exploration for shale gas and exploration for other energy resources and it could be the case that for some sites drilled originally for conventional oil and gas there are plans for deeper drills for shale exploration. The company websites listed with the PEDL numbers can yield more information on what the companies are doing. Some more information can be sought through the PEDL numbers on DECC's website. The [Frack Off](#) site also has maps of drilling activity, with the skull-and-crossbone insignia in various colours intended to indicate how dangerous the activity is thought to be.

In estimating reserves, the following terms are commonly used:

- Total Resource, or the estimated total volume of gas physically contained in the rock; one measure of total resources used commonly, including by the British Geological Survey (BGS), is Gas in Place (GIP) which is an estimate of the total amount of gas that is trapped within the shale rock.
- Reserves, or the amount deemed to be technically and commercially recoverable.
- Technically Recoverable Resource (TRR), or the estimated volume of gas possible to extract from the total resource if not constrained by economic considerations (and therefore larger than the reserves estimates).

There is very little certainty about the total amount of shale gas potentially extractable from British sites. In June 2013 the BGS and DECC published a [Bowland Shale Gas Study](#), including a gas-in-place (GIP) resource assessment for the Bowland shale formation. The central estimate of GIP is 37.6 trillion cubic meters (tcm). Warnings are given on the difficulties of estimating how much of this is recoverable, but extrapolations can be made of recoverable resources of 1.8-13.0 tcm by assuming similar recovery rates to those achieved in the USA. However, Cuadrilla has estimated that 5.7 tcm of gas is in the Bowland Shale under Lancashire, and another company, IGas, has estimated 2.9 tcm in the North West, including the Bowland Shale. Both of these estimates are for total resources. It is expected that further exploratory drilling will yield more accurate estimates.

For perspective, DECC's [published figures](#) of a current annual UK gas consumption is 77 billion cubic metres (bcm) and potentially recoverable conventional gas resources of about 1.5 tcm.

In its [April 2013 report](#) (pdf file), the Energy and Climate Change Committee (ECCC) inquiry noted the considerable uncertainty surrounding estimates of shale gas reserves, and the lack of clarity ensuing from inconsistent terminology despite the presence of departmental definitions. In its [response](#) (pdf file) in July 2013, the Government noted that the industry had estimated that it would have to drill 20 to 40 wells over the next 2 years in order to establish the commercial viability of extracting shale gas. ECCC also concluded that it was too early to say whether domestic production of shale gas could result in cheaper gas prices in the UK, and that it would be wrong to assume that prices would come down as a result of domestic or foreign shale gas. Nonetheless, the ECCC agreed with the Government that shale

gas exploration should be encouraged, subject to rigorous regulatory arrangements. .

Shale gas exploration and local communities

There are a number of assessments purporting to demonstrate the economic benefits of shale gas, some, perhaps predictably, produced by the industry itself. In 2011 Cuadrilla published [Regeneris Consulting's economic assessment](#) (pdf file) of the impact of shale gas exploration and production in Lancashire and the UK. This estimated that a single test well operation in Lancashire, in 2011 prices, costs about £10.5 million, about 18 per cent of which flows to Lancashire workers or suppliers. It is estimated that test well activity can support some 250 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs across the UK over a 12 month period, of about 15 per cent of which is taken by Lancashire residents. In the early stages, very few of the specialist supply chain contractors make extensive use of local labour although this would change under a full commercial extraction scenario. At the UK Level, the estimated FTE employment impact peaks at some 5,600 jobs in the period 2016 through to 2019, with a build up in the years from 2013 onwards, if there is a move to commercial extraction. In a bullish report from the [Institute of Directors](#), also sponsored by Cuadrilla, it is indicated that the industry could support up to 74,000 jobs, many in regions with currently high unemployment.

A short paper published by DECC: [Developing Onshore Shale Gas and Oil: Facts about 'Fracking'](#) (pdf file) details the development sequence for shale gas and oil. During the first phase, normally lasting for between 2-6 months, there is exploratory drilling to see if oil or gas can be extracted profitably. This stage might involve seismic surveys, test samples of the shale rock, one or more fracks and flow testing. A pad will be built and a 30m high drilling rig installed. Stage 2, preparing for production, lasts between six months and two years, during which water, chemicals, equipment, and materials will be bought on to the site and waste water carried away for disposal. This appears to be the busiest stage, during which additional wells will be constructed. Production could last for another 20 years. Decommissioning, the final stage, and which includes site restoration, could take place at any time if the site doesn't develop into the next one.

Local Environmental Impacts

It appears to be generally accepted that unconventional gas is an intensive industrial process, generally imposing a larger environmental footprint than conventional gas development. More wells are often needed, and the scale of development can have major implications for local communities, land use and water resources. There are serious hazards including the potential for contamination of surface and groundwater. On the other hand, the Institute of Directors report contains case studies of environmentally successful onshore drilling operations of which [Wytch Farm](#) in Dorset is among the more widely reported.

A 2011 report by the [Tyndall Centre](#) (pdf file) report set out concerns about ground and surface water contamination, possibly affecting the quality of drinking water and wetland habitats. The severity will depend on the importance of the aquifer, the extent and nature of contamination, the concentration of hazardous substances and the connection between groundwater and surface waters.

Groundwaters can become exposed to contamination from shale wells through failures in the wellbore, or through the migration of contaminants from the target fracture formations through subsurface pathways. It is noted that because wellbores are likely to be drilled through several aquifers, the wellbore probably provides the single most likely route for contamination of groundwater – the actual fracking itself takes place deep underground far below aquifers. Much discussion tends to focus on the casing, or protective sheath, around the wellbore, and it is noted that in the USA, standards on casings varies between states. The instances of water contamination in the USA noted above (the flammable tap-water) have been attributed to unsatisfactory well casing construction or cementing. In the USA, an investigation by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on the [impact of fracking on local drinking water](#) is ongoing and due to report in 2014.

Induced seismicity can occur in previously aseismic areas following oil and gas activities. Natural or mining-induced earthquakes in the UK are not uncommon. Following the resumption of fracking activities in December 2012 after the investigation of the Blackpool incident, the Secretary of State announced a new set of requirements for operators. Henceforth, they would have to review the available information on faults in the area and to monitor background seismicity before operations commenced. Seismic monitoring would continue during operations, with these subject to a 'traffic-light' regime. The 'red light' would be applied to Cuadrilla's programme in Lancashire if a seismic event at magnitude 0.5 occurred, which is considered far below a perceptible surface event. Operators would also be required to monitor the growth in the height of the frack away from the borehole, in part to ensure that the fracture would be contained and far away from any aquifers.

Finally, the large water requirement of fracking has been noted by the Tyndall Centre among others as problem particular to fracking given that water resources in many parts of the UK are already under pressure. However, in its [response](#) (pdf file) to a 2011 ECCC inquiry, the Government said that adverse effects on water resources are not expected. Any operator must have a licence to abstract water from the Environment Agency who will assess existing abstraction water levels and licences. Because water abstraction is controlled in the UK, the general expectation is that further water use can be managed sustainably.

Regulatory regime

Exploration for shale gas is covered by the UK regime for all oil and gas exploration and development. A UK Petroleum Exploration and Development Licence (PEDL) allows a company to pursue a range of exploration activities, including exploration and development of unconventional gas, subject to necessary drilling and

development consents and planning permission. DECC has outlined the onshore licensing system on its oil and gas [website](#). DECC publishes drilling activity figures for exploration, appraisal and development wells drilled each year.

After the last (13th) Onshore Licensing Round in 2008 and following the grant of planning permission, consent was given to drill for shale gas exploration in five locations. Of these, consent for fracking of the shale was given to Cuadrilla at two sites at Poulton-le-Flyde. A 14th round of onshore licence applications is expected in 2014

PEDLs allow a company only exclusivity in an area to search for, bore for and get hydrocarbons. They are separate from all other permissions, including:

- Planning permission
- Any need to gain access rights from landowners
- Environmental permits, including for mining waste, from the Environment Agencies
- Health and safety regulations and permits from the HSE
- Consent to drill and frack, from DECC.

Each site is assessed by the Environment Agency (SEPA in Scotland) who regulate discharges to the environment, issue water abstraction licences, and are statutory consultees in the planning process. A permit will also be needed if large quantities of gas are to be flared and for groundwater activities, depending on the local hydrology. HSE monitors shale gas operations from a well integrity and site safety perspective.

As indicated, DECC's consent for all drilling or production operations for oil and gas is given only after planning permission has been obtained. The Minerals Planning Authority (MPA) takes the final decision in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the July 2013 Government guidance, [Planning Practice Guidance for Onshore Oil and Gas](#) (pdf file) which attracted some criticism for limiting the issues that local councils can consider and of being weighted in favour of granting permission. In addition, planning authorities should have a section on mineral extraction in their local plan

In January 2014, following a period of consultation, the Government published its revised proposals for requirements in planning applications for onshore oil and gas (available [here](#)), in which it proposes removing the requirement to serve notice on individual owners and tenants of land where solely underground operations may take place. One reason given for this is that because of the depths that drilling takes place it is often not possible to identify the exact route of any lateral drilling. .

In November 2012, the Government consulted on extending the major infrastructure planning regime to onshore oil and gas extraction developments of over 500 tonnes per day for petroleum and 500,000 cubic metres per day for gas. It concluded that applications for planning permission for onshore oil and gas schemes, including any future planning proposals for shale gas development, should not be included in the regime, but will keep this under review.

Shale Gas and Carbon Reduction

A key argument among environmental groups against shale gas is that it diverts attention and investment from more expensive up-front alternatives such as renewables, and slows the reduction in the reliance on fossil fuels. Attention has also been drawn to the emissions of methane in the production process itself. This has been countered by industry claims that methane leakages can be either captured or flared. The 2013 ECC report recommended that policies on flaring and venting of methane should be reviewed and emissions should be monitored by DECC.

In September 2013 DECC published a report on the [Potential Greenhouse Gas Emissions Associated with Shale Gas Extraction and Use](#). It concluded that local emissions should not be significant if properly regulated, compared to the overall emissions from burning shale gas. The overall carbon footprint was comparable to gas extracted from conventional sources, lower than that of LNG, and, when used for generating electricity, significantly lower than that of coal. Responding to the report, the Secretary of State said that shale gas is a 'bridge' in the transition to low carbon. Onshore production would also contribute to energy security and maintain tax revenues as the North Sea wound down.

Comment

Despite the considerable uncertainties that remain over the benefits and risks of fracking for shale gas, it would appear that a consensus has formed among politicians and experts in favour of shale gas, but with the proviso that rigorous safeguards against its environmental risks are in place and properly implemented and monitored. The consensus has ensured a powerful institutional momentum driving shale exploration and development forward, including through the planning system.

In the face of this powerful presumption in favour, it is unclear how much local discretion is allowed local communities. Nonetheless, local authorities need to satisfy themselves on what sort of resource is being drilled for (shale gas is not the only unconventional source) and the associated techniques being employed, including the chemical mix used in the fracking process. They also need to satisfy themselves on appropriate safeguards against water contamination, unsustainable water use, disposal of waste water and chemicals, and the risks of seismic disturbance. Whatever leverage they possess could be used to commission independent geological surveys, to seek mitigation against the inevitable disturbance for local residents, and ensure that benefits flow to the local economy.

For more information about this, or any other LGiU member briefing, please contact Janet Sillett, Briefings Manager, on janet.sillett@lgiu.org.uk

Related Briefings

[National Infrastructure Plan](#)

[Energy Policy Update: What's Happening to Fuel Prices?](#)

[Planning update autumn 2013](#)

[National Planning Practice Guidance \(NPPG\) website](#)

Think Councillor – ETL Select Committee – Green Deal

Member(s):	ETL Select Committee
Date:	5 th August 2013
Project Briefing:	Green Deal
Issues:	Further information on BCC's involvement with Green Deal and the creation of Green Deal Together Community Interest Company

The Green Deal – The National Perspective

The Green Deal is a Government flagship programme which aims to tackle the energy efficiency of British properties and is a key measure in the Energy Bill. The Government's rationale for the Green Deal is to address barriers to uptake of energy efficiency improvements; uncertainty over what measures to implement and which organisations to trust, as well as access to finance.

The Green Deal provides a framework to enable consumers to access finance to install energy efficiency measures to their homes, community spaces and commercial premises at no upfront cost. Payments for energy efficiency measures would be recouped through consumers' energy bills which will follow the 'golden rule', that is 'the expected financial savings must be equal to or greater than the costs'. The framework involves an innovative financing mechanism that allows any financial obligation to stay with the property rather than the consumer. The Green Deal Finance Company (TGDFC) is a non-for-profit consortia headed by Price Waterhouse-Copper, designed to be a national aggregator to make finance available for Green Deal Providers in order to be make Green Deal finance plans available for consumers.

The Green Deal process involves:

- Completion of a **Green Deal Advice Report** by an accredited assessor
- A choice by the consumer to take the report to any **Green Deal Provider** who will develop a package measures and obtain quotes from **Green Deal Installers**
- A decision by the consumer about whether they want to **self-finance or choose Green Deal finance**
- At this point the Green Deal Provider will also check to see if the consumer is eligible for additional funding through **ECO (Energy Company Obligation)** and secure Green Deal finance
- Installation of agreed measures by **accredited Green Deal installers** overseen by the Green Deal Provider
- Repayment for the finance is through the electricity bill and the **Energy Performance Certificate** for the property will be updated

Green Deal – Role of Local Authorities

The Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has repeatedly emphasised the role of local authorities in delivering the Green Deal locally and the economic benefits which can be achieved alongside improved energy performance. Indeed a new £20 million Green Deal Communities scheme to help local authorities drive street by street delivery of the Green Deal has just been announced. Under new proposals from the Department of Energy and Climate Change, local authorities in England will be able

to bid for funding from a £20 million pot to help households benefit from the Green Deal, targeting streets and areas that could benefit the most

Green Deal is a twenty year programme and it is very early days with a long way still to go, but the statistics show that the market is starting to build. The supply chain is gearing up, with around 1,800 individuals approved to offer Green Deal assessments in over 200 assessor organisations, and around 1,250 accredited Green Deal installer organisations.

With respect to consumer demand over 38,000 households have already had a Green Deal assessment and recent research by DECC indicates that three quarters are taking or want to take action as a result. 47% of households said they either had or were getting energy saving measures installed following their assessment. Awareness of the Green Deal has doubled from November to May.

Green Deal opportunities in Buckinghamshire

The Green Deal has the potential to lever significant value to the Buckinghamshire economy. Without support for local businesses, there is a risk that large PLCs, utilities and major retailers registered as Green Deal Providers may marginalise the smaller independent local assessors/installers, such as plumbers, heating engineers, building repairers based in Buckinghamshire and the wider Thames Valley. Therefore, it is important that the opportunities for local employment, training and skills development and local economic growth are recognised and capitalised on. Indeed, a report by Ngage for Buckinghamshire County Council identified that there are opportunities to gain additional value from the Green Deal for Buckinghamshire's economy through delivering actions that stimulate jobs in the local economy. Indeed it highlighted the opportunity to grow the number of accredited local assessors and installers.

Different delivery models for Green Deal within Buckinghamshire were investigated, with the consortium approach via a Community Interest Company option presented to the Cabinet Member for Environment and agreed as a [key decision](#) on the 14/2/2013. The key decision report highlight the potential local economic development opportunities that this approach could provide. The decision was taken to proceed in principle, subject to sign off by BCC Legal and Finance. This authorisation has subsequently taken place and BCC is now a shareholder of Green Deal Together (Community interest Company).

Green Deal Together Community Interest Company (GDT) and BCC

The company was registered on 1 February 2013. During February and May a share offer was made to Local Authorities with 15¹ founding shareholders taking up the offer. The vision is to be the local Green Deal provider that benefits the whole of the community with the aim of being good for consumers, good for local installers and good for the community at large. The objectives are to establish a local installer network and provide cost effective Green Deal Plans for consumers. GDT is an asset-locked organisation and a proportion of the profit generated will be distributed to local schemes that help tackle climate change and fuel poverty.

¹ The 15 GDT shareholders are; Aylesbury Vale DC, Buckinghamshire CC, Cherwell DC, Chiltern DC, Cotswold DC, London Borough of Ealing, Milton Keynes Council, South Bucks DC, Three Rivers DC, South Oxfordshire DC & Vale of White Horse DC (1 shareholding), Watford Borough Council, West Berkshire Council, West Oxfordshire DC, Wycombe DC and National Energy Foundation.

As a shareholder, BCC has representation on the Board of Directors and also on the Executive Committee. BCC's interest in Green Deal Together is focused on generating a local supply chain that benefits from additional work generated by promotion of Green Deal, as well as encouraging demand in the non-domestic (commercial properties) market for energy efficiency. The Green Deal process for non-domestic properties is anticipated to be finalised towards the end of 2013. The District Councils in Buckinghamshire focus on the domestic market.

Becoming a Provider involves completing a number of legal and regulatory processes, with Directors supporting the Management where possible. The next milestone for GDT will be achieving Green Deal Provider status, which is anticipated end of August 2013, and this will allow them to complete other regulatory actions in order to launch as a Green Deal Provider to customers in Autumn.

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Buckinghamshire County Council
Select Committee

Environment, Transport and Locality Services

Report to the Environment, Transport and Locality Services Select Committee

Title: Local Enterprise Partnerships

Committee date: 4th March 2014

Author: Stephen Walford, Senior Manager – Policy, Planning, Economy & Infrastructure (stwalford@buckscc.gov.uk)

Contact officer: Samuel Dix, Senior Policy, Strategy & Development Officer – Place Service (sdix@buckscc.gov.uk)

1. Headlines

- 1.1. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are the route through which Government provides support to local economic development.
- 1.2. The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the 2013 Spending Round for 2015/15 that £2bn of funds will be available for all 39 LEPs to bid for through the production of Strategic Economic Plans (due 31st March 2014). The Bucks Plan focusses on improved connectivity – in terms of infrastructure (road, rail and broadband), trained workforce and additional business support.
- 1.3. LEPs are responsible for designing the EU investment strategies for the delivery of EU funding in England for 2014-2020 (in Bucks this is €13.9m).
- 1.4. It is not just about money. LEPs will lead a conversation with Government about flexibilities and freedoms needed locally to generate sustainable economic growth.

2. The history and role of LEPs

- 2.1. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) were first proposed in 2009 by the Conservative Party and formally introduced following the 2010 General Election. They were intended to replace Regional Development Agencies yet their formation was optional without any prescribed role or structure other than a) at least half the members to come from the private sector b) the chair to be a business-person. They are



administered by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). A key feature of LEPs was that they were designed to be ‘business led’.

2.2. In the broadest sense the role of LEPs is to promote and deliver economic development by drawing together local authorities and businesses. The government has always encouraged diversity in the approach different LEPs take to reflect local circumstances and opportunities. LEP activities generally involve some or all of the following: setting investment priorities, writing bids or proposals, coordinating local employers and learning agencies, making representations to economic policy-makers, changing local business regulation, and delivering economic priorities like digital infrastructure.

2.3. The profile of LEPs was raised following the 2012 report “No Stone Unturned In Pursuit of Growth” by Lord Heseltine¹. In the report, Lord Heseltine championed the role LEPs could play in the economic recovery of Britain, with a multitude of recommendations for how they could be empowered to deliver this. Most significant for LEPs was the recommendation to create a “Single Local Growth Fund” (see section 3) and the provision of up to £250k each year for capacity funding. The government accepted 81 of the 89 recommendations Lord Heseltine made².

3. LEPs in Buckinghamshire

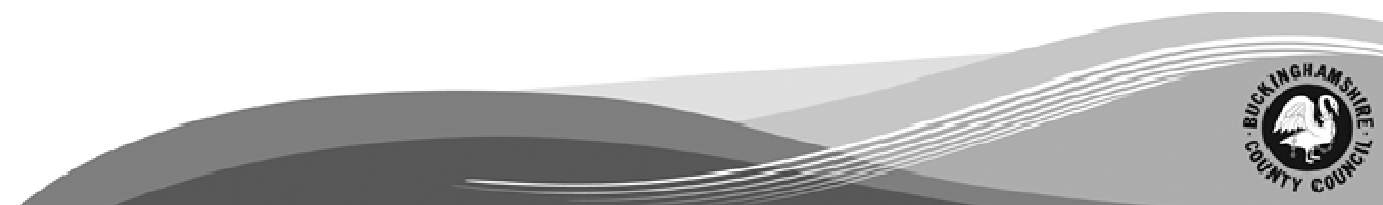
3.1. BIS initially refused to endorse a linked Buckinghamshire and Berkshire ‘Thames Valley’ LEP in 2010. This meant the 3 southern districts in Buckinghamshire were amongst just 7 authorities in the country to not be a member of any partnership. Therefore, in September 2011 the government invited Buckinghamshire to resubmit its proposals. The BCC cabinet approved the application on the 14th November 2011³ on the grounds that it would increase the range of economic development opportunities available to the County and would not be costly to implement due to the existing structures that were in place. The application was successful and by the end of 2011 BTVLEP had become the 39th (and final) LEP with Board membership from all five Buckinghamshire councils and a strong business representation. The Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP is an Aylesbury Businessman and also Chairman of Bucks Business First. (One of Buckinghamshire’s Districts, Aylesbury Vale, was already a member of the South East Midlands LEP when BTVLEP was approved – see 3.8.)

3.2. Buckinghamshire Business First is an independent body with a private sector board that has a grant funding agreement with BCC to deliver economic development support. This arrangement is currently worth £490k plus the secondment of 4 BCC staff members, taking the total value to £670k and is funded from the Leader’s Economic Development budget. Business representation on the BTVLEP Board is drawn from the

¹ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/docs/n/12-1213-no-stone-untuned-in-pursuit-of-growth>

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221902/PU1465_Govt_response_to_Heseltine_review.pdf

³ <http://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=24220&Opt=0>



Board members of BBF. BBF is distinct from the LEP in the same way that the Local Authority members are, however BBF also provides the secretariat function of the LEP and the economic data that informs discussion and decisions.

- 3.3. Buckinghamshire Business First has calculated that over the period April 2012-October 2013, for every £1 that the County invested generated a value of £21.30, from 300 jobs created, 1,600 businesses assisted, £3.3m grants given out to businesses, 220 apprenticeship places, and 1m tonnes of CO2 saved⁴.
- 3.4. BTVLEP's geography is contiguous with the County Council's administrative area. Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP is also allied with the wider grouping of the 'Greater Thames Valley Seven' (GTV7) comprising the LEPs for Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, Enterprise M3, Coast to Capital, Thames Valley Berkshire, and Solent (Parts of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight). The GTV7 have agreed to come together for joint working and lobbying purposes, on areas like an improved broadband coverage and speed required in this part of the country
- 3.5. BTVLEP has also been a prime mover in the creation of 'The 39 LEPs' a lobby group on behalf of all the English LEPs. This has met with senior politicians to press for more central government money to be devolved from Government departments to local LEPs. Bucks LEP has led the refresh of the existing LEP Network to become more led by LEP Chairs, and for the last 9 months has been the route through which stakeholders and Government Departments have engaged with LEP Chairs on LEP Network business.
- 3.6. BTVLEP has delivered the following:
- Eastern Link Road: secured £14m from the Public Works Loan Board to support this development in Aylesbury;
 - High Wycombe Town Centre masterplan: secured £2m from the Public Works Loan Board to support this;
 - Aylesbury Town centre renewal: £2m invested into Aylesbury Town Centre regeneration plans;
 - Handy Cross: £2m to assist this development off Junction 4 of the M40.
 - Hughenden Quarter: £1.4m to assist with access to this development site through the spine road and upper site access road.
 - Broadband: £1.7m added to an £18m superfast broadband programme to deliver vastly increased connection speeds to 91% of the county. More funds are being sought to bump this up to 95% and we're pushing to ensure that all but the most remote areas can be connected to the super-highway;
 - Transport: £8.3m provisionally allocated to the Local Transport Body now flows through the LEP; to improve transport in Bucks with contributions earmarked towards East West Rail;
 - Silverstone: helped MEPC bid for £4m from Growing Places Fund money held by SEMLEP; active on the Cross LEP High Performance Technologies Group that is based out of Silverstone; sit on the cross LEP Masterplan Group; supporting the MIA

⁴ www.bbf.uk.com



and TSB promote the Motorsport Valley Launchpad; providing ongoing support to MEPC through the Local Growth Fund process.

- 3.7. The Board of the BTVLEP meets regularly with senior civil servants from DCLG, BIS and DfT to discuss economic development issues within Buckinghamshire. In November BBF was recognised as the first non-City 'Growth Hub'. This is essentially Government's way of recognising the support provided by BBF to businesses as meeting their national standard. This is significant both due to the support that the Hub will provide to local businesses but also because of the focus Government Ministers have on 'Hubs' which will again raise the profile of BTVLEP.
- 3.8. The north of the County also overlaps with the South-East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP) by virtue of Aylesbury Vale District Council being a member of both LEPs. SEMLEP is the successor in geographic area to the former 'Milton Keynes South Midlands' (MKSM) Housing Growth Sub Region established by the former Labour Government. Buckinghamshire County Council is not a member of SEMLEP but does engage with it in the capacity of Highways Authority and Education Authority for Aylesbury Vale.

4. Funding

- 4.1 The LEP itself is not legally constituted as a formal entity. Therefore the board nominated BCC as the accountable body responsible for holding BTVLEP funds and drawing them down for agreed expenditure. Due diligence in this role is ensured by the Council's S151 officer, who executes BCC's existing statutory duties in this respect.
- 4.2 Amongst the first funding pots the LEPs were eligible for was the Growing Places Fund, the first round of which was worth £4.2m to Buckinghamshire in 2011/12. BTVLEP agreed to direct this towards Handy Cross, Broadband and East-West Rail. A second round of GPF was raised by collecting underspend and resulted in another £2m for Bucks, which the LEP agreed to direct towards Aylesbury Town Centre regeneration and the Hughenden Quarter⁵. All these projects were subject to legal agreements between the LEP, the accountable body (BCC) and other delivery partners (District Councils). More recently the government realigned European Structural Investment Funds (EUSIF) to be distributed on a LEP basis. BTVLEP was allocated €13.9m of EUSIF between 2014 and 2020⁶.
- 4.3 A key aspect of the Growing Places fund is the ability of LEPs to recycle the funds. The £2m for Aylesbury Town Centre regeneration has already been paid back to the LEP and been used to buy the Old Police Station adjoining Old County Offices to do a joint scheme with BCC that will be submitted for planning in March 2014.
- 4.4 As a result of Lord Heseltine's report, LEPs are entitled to bid for a pot of money from the newly-created 'Single Local Growth Fund'. This is worth at least £2bn a year

⁵ <http://www.buckstvlep.co.uk/uploads/downloads/BTVLEP%20Board%20-%2020%20July%202012%20-%20Summary%20Minutes.pdf>

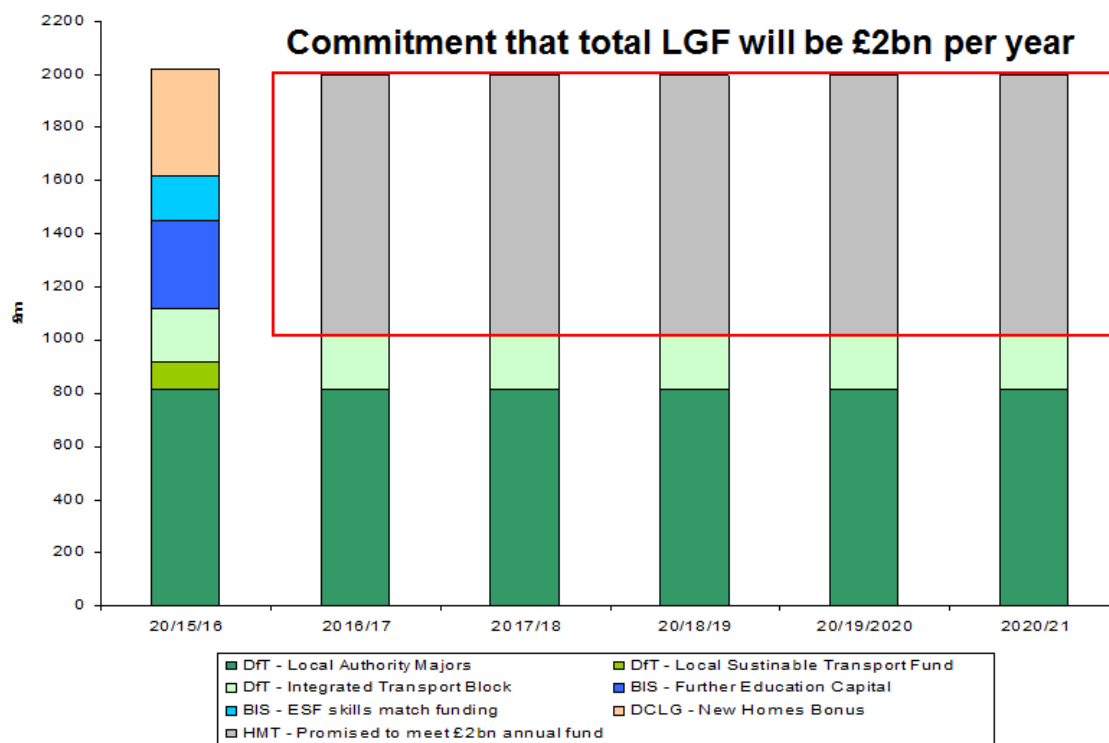
⁶ <http://www.buckstvlep.co.uk/eu-investment-plan>



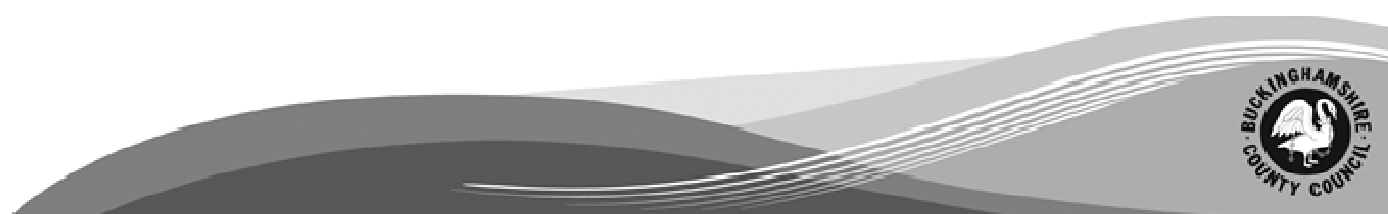
and has been created by pooling existing funding mechanisms either wholly or in part. Notable inclusions within the SLGF for BCC are transport majors funding, the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and 43.7% of integrated transport block funding. The latter previously came directly to BCC and amounted to £2.86m in 2012/13. In the summer of 2013 the government consulted on proposals to incorporate 100% of the New Homes Bonus that County Councils currently receive (20% of the overall pot) into the SLGF. This proposal was met with strong opposition from BCC and the County Councils Network and as a result the autumn statement announced the change would not take effect and would be replaced by an increase in the Housing Revenue Account borrowing limit, part of the Regional Growth Fund and part of Large Sites funding.

4.5 The proposed makeup of the SLGF is shown in Fig. 1 below.

Fig. 1 – Structure of Single Local Growth Fund in 2015/16 (NB. New Homes Bonus portion replaced – see para. 3.3)



4.6 Within the SLGF, certain elements will be allocated by formula whilst others will be allocated competitively; this split is approximately 50:50. Funds allocated formulaically include Further Education Capital, those replacing the New Homes Bonus, and some of the Local Transport Majors pot (including money already allocated to Local Transport Bodies). The remaining portion is competitively allocated and will be determined by the relative strength of each LEP's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). Draft SEPs were



submitted to government in December 2013 with final versions to follow in March 2014. The final funding allocations will be announced in the summer of 2014 with delivery of Strategic Economic Plans commencing in 2015.⁷

4.7 A funding complication arises as a result of AVDC's membership of both Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP and SEMLEP. To date allocated funds based on the AVDC area have been split between the Buckinghamshire LEP and SEMLEP. This has reduced the total 'pot' of money available directly to the Buckinghamshire LEP to invest within Buckinghamshire. In future, given the Government's stated intent to make future funding subject to competitive bidding there is the possibility that the Buckinghamshire LEP will be competing with SEMLEP for funds.

5. Processes

5.1. The LEP has a governance and accountability framework that formalises its structure, purpose and 'rules of engagement'⁸. Decision-making at the LEP is executed through monthly board meetings⁹, the membership of which is nominated by the constituent authorities. BCC is represented on the board by the Leader, with the Deputy Leader the nominated substitute. The private sector representatives are nominated by the Bucks Business First board and are as follows: Ruth Farwell (Buckinghamshire New University), Guy Lachlan (Jones and Cocks), Andrew Smith (Pinewood Studios), Alex Pratt (Serious Brands and chair of BTVLEP) and Michael Garvey (Stupples Chandler Garvey). More details, including board governance and accountability can be found at: <http://buckstvlep.co.uk/about-btv>

5.2. In addition to the board, the LEP has two sub-groups that focus on aspects of the Strategic Economic Plan. The skills sub-group and infrastructure sub-group draw together technical officers from across the 5 Bucks authorities to ensure all plans are suitably aligned and appropriate evidence is shared.

6. LEP Structure

6.1. The diagram below outlines the various roles of the Local Authorities and BBF as partners in the LEP structure.

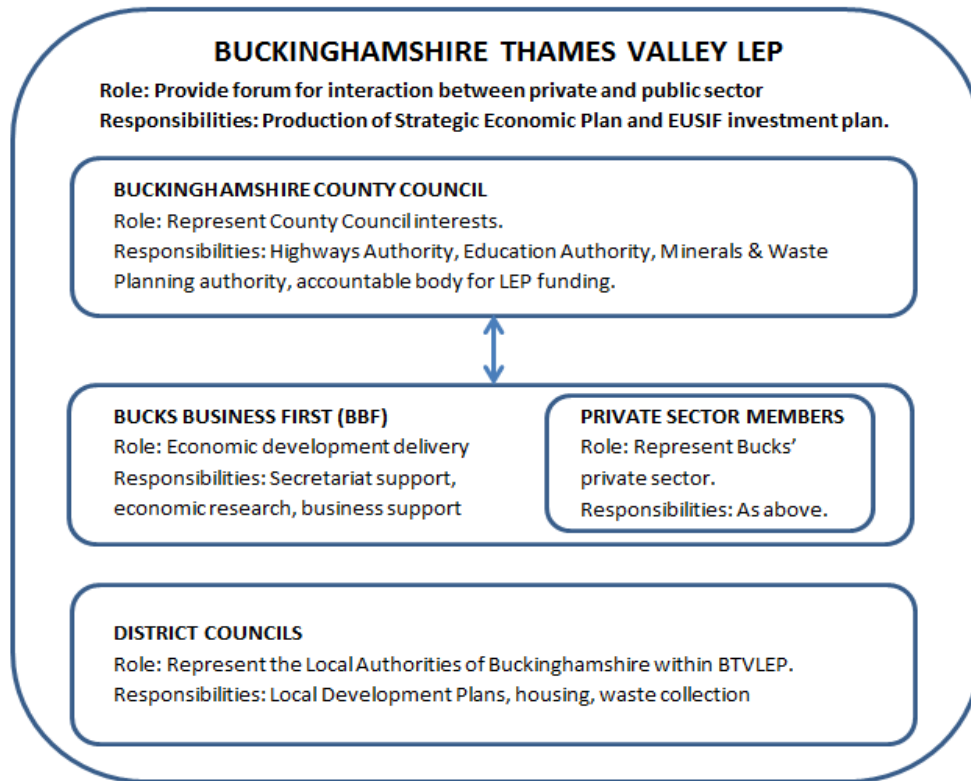
⁷ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/224776/13-1056-growth-deals-initial-guidance-for-local-enterprise-partnerships.pdf

⁸ <http://www.bbf.uk.com/download/129>

⁹ <http://www.buckstvlep.co.uk/interesting-stuff/board-meeting-minutes>

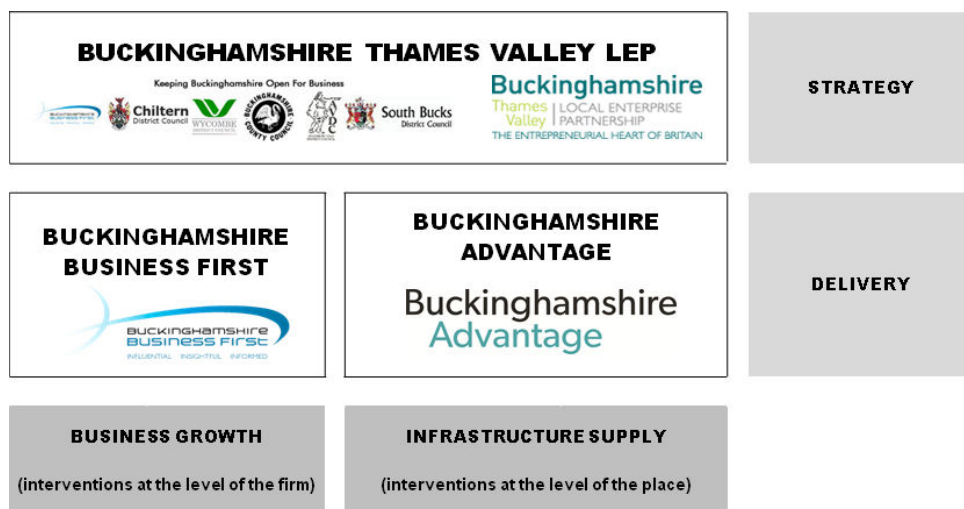


Diagram of the LEP structure, roles and responsibilities



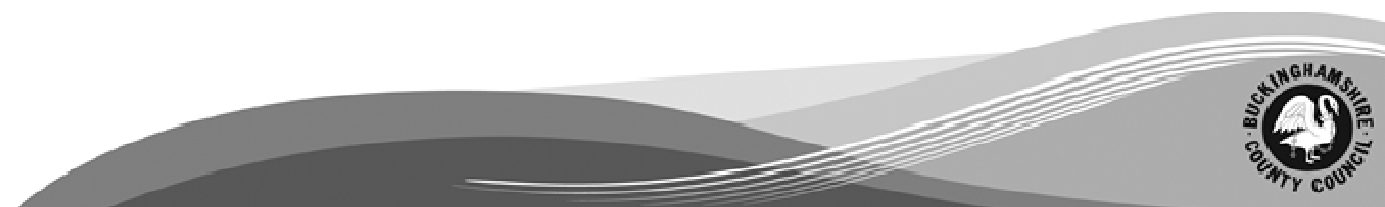
6.2. Future LEP structure

Going forward the LEP will continue to deliver support to business through BBF and Buckinghamshire Advantage (where the County, Districts and BBF are all equal Members), will be formed to aid the delivery of infrastructure projects as required by the partners.



7. Conclusion

- 7.1. LEPs are operating in a competitive environment to maximise economic growth across the country. The Bucks LEP will continue to look to draw in additional government resource to help Buckinghamshire deliver the identified economic development priorities and seek greater public and private alignment and leverage in the process.
- 7.2. The Bucks LEP will continue to raise the profile of Bucks with Government as an area that delivers, returns a positive economic contribution to the Treasury, entrepreneurial and with the appropriate forms of investment, flexibilities and freedoms will continue to be a successful place for business to operate in.





Select Committee

Environment, Transport and Locality Services

Committee Options Paper

Proposal subject	Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)
Committee chairman	Warren Whyte
Officer contact	Kama Wager, Policy Officer (Overview & Scrutiny) supporting the Environment, Transport and Locality Services select committee; Tel: 01296 382615; kwager@buckscc.gov.uk
Background to the item	<p>Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within a local area. The majority of LEPs formed over 2012 following the abolition of Regional Development Agencies. They comprise representatives from businesses and local authorities.</p> <p>The work of LEPs, and their relationship with local authorities and elected members, is an area that has been raised both at recent committee meetings (specifically in relation to transport/infrastructure and the role of LEPs) and at a member conference held in October 2013 (at which the Centre for Public Scrutiny outlined its research on LEPs and local authority scrutiny functions).</p> <p>The committee agreed at its 6th December 2013 meeting that it wished to develop its knowledge and understanding around LEPs and requested an information paper from the BCC service area to be considered at the 4th March 2013 meeting, providing members with an opportunity to ask questions of the Leader and Lead Officer around the role and structure of local LEPs.</p> <p>At the 4th March the committee will have an introduction to LEPs expanding on the information paper, to build their understanding on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The history and role of LEPs • The structure, roles and responsibilities in Buckinghamshire • Funding and processes (introduction). • The Board Membership, executive team, member representation on the boards.

<p>Proposal</p>	<p>This paper outlines options for the committee to consider how to take forward further work on LEPs and agree next steps. Suggested options for the committee could include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the committee agree that members have received sufficient information to understand the role of LEPs locally and that there is no value to be added in carrying out further work at this time. 2. That the committee would like to further develop their knowledge and understanding of LEPs and their role in Buckinghamshire by undertaking a short inquiry examining the role of LEPS in more detail. <p>If option two is supported, then suggested lines of inquiry could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the national context of LEPs including comparisons with other county bases, • To understand roles, responsibilities, achievements and priority setting of local LEPs - (brief outline of set-up arrangements and how they operate). • The opportunities and challenges of overlaps between LEP boundaries/areas. • To understand and examine the ongoing governance of LEPs, and democratic accountability on behalf of local residents. • To understand the challenges; business vs local authority focus, business vs economic development, governance and accountability, capacity, delegation/devolution • To understand the cooperative working between LEPs and local authorities and how this is working in practice in Buckinghamshire • Communication and opportunities for local authorities and elected members to contribute, input and influence LEP work. • To understand the various types of funding that LEPs have available to them and the processes involved. • To understand the funding relationships between local authorities and LEPs and how this relationship could develop. <p>NB: If supported, an outline timetable for option 2 could be as follows: Full scope to be agreed at 8th April 2014 committee meeting with nomination of members for a 1-2 day evidence gathering workshop with key witnesses providing evidence to the committee in April/May with reporting scheduled for June/July 2014.</p>
<p>Potential outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform committee members about the role of LEPs, to improve their knowledge and understanding. • As an organisation, to ask questions around the benefits and challenges presented by overlaps between two LEPs. • To foster cooperative working and influence between the council elected members, and LEPs.



What is the Hub?

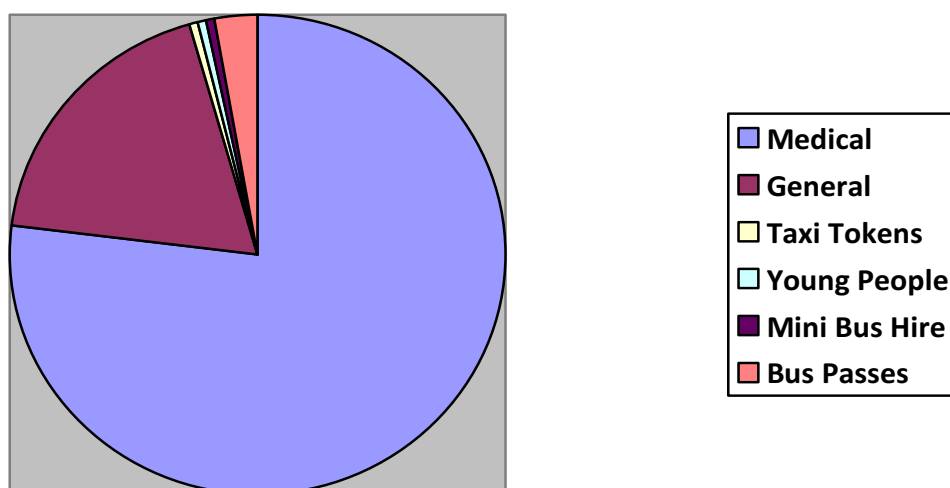
Launched in September 2012 and funded jointly by Buckinghamshire County Council and the Buckinghamshire NHS Trust, the Community Transport Hub is a one stop shop for information, advice and guidance on community transport providers in Buckinghamshire. The Transport hub has the most up to date information for all transport providers across the County from Dial-a-Rides to community car schemes, minibuses for hire and transport schemes for young people. The transport hub can also work with the community to set-up a community car scheme if there are no services in their community. Since its launch the hub has taken 1600 calls with the majority of these calls from older people looking for hospital/health related transport.

What we do?

The Transport Hub works closely with all the community car schemes across the County and has developed a database of the schemes and what they can provide. In partnership with the Community Development team at Community Impact Bucks we also work with the schemes to support them with advice on insurance, volunteer driver recruitment, training, funding and any other needs identified. We operate and run a free phone number for members of the public to call between 9am-4pm Monday-Friday to help them with their transport needs. Once a call is taken we will signpost them to the most relevant service to suit their needs. We continue to update and grow the database and will carry out regular feedback checks on our callers to ensure they have managed to book transport and to measure feedback on the service.

Purpose of the call

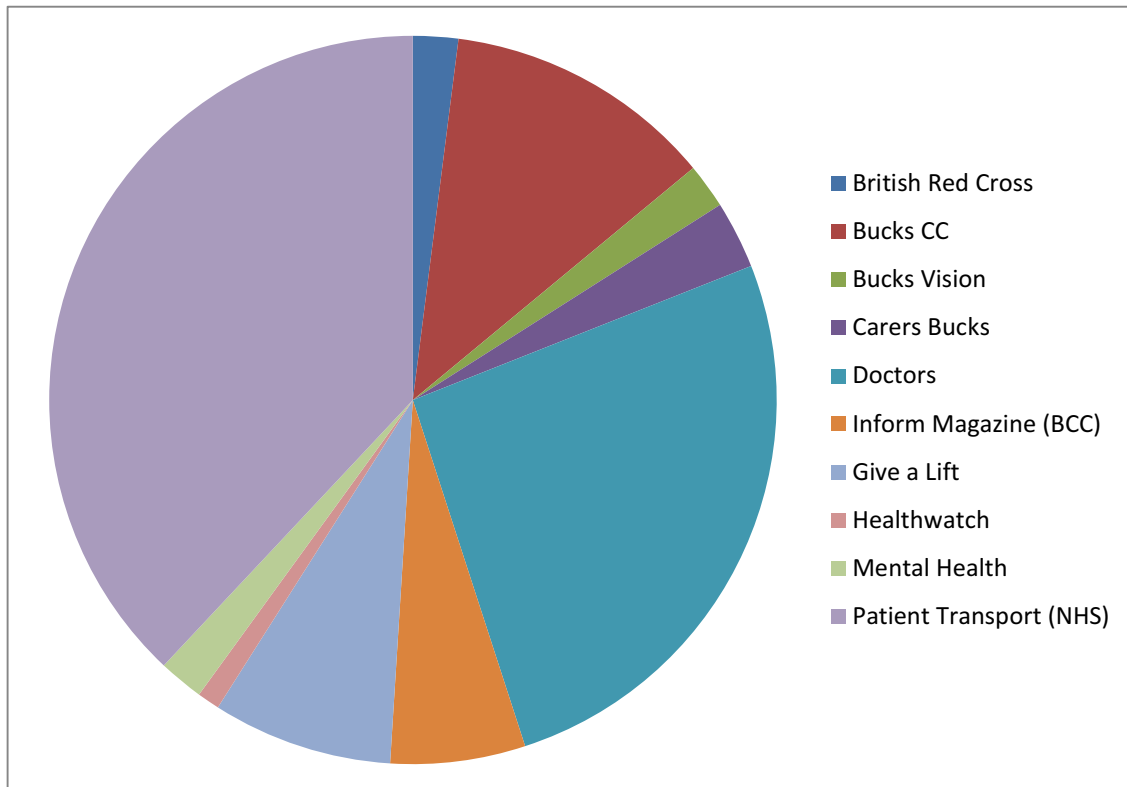
The overwhelming majority of calls are still health related with 80% of callers needing transport to get to a GP or hospital/health related appointment. General calls relate to around 10% from people needing help with shopping or social visits to a friend or relative. These types of calls received by the hub range from local voluntary groups looking to hire a minibus for an outing, advice on obtaining a bus pass and how to claim back travel expenses from the NHS. These callers are signposted to organisations that can assist them.



Who refers a caller to the Hub?

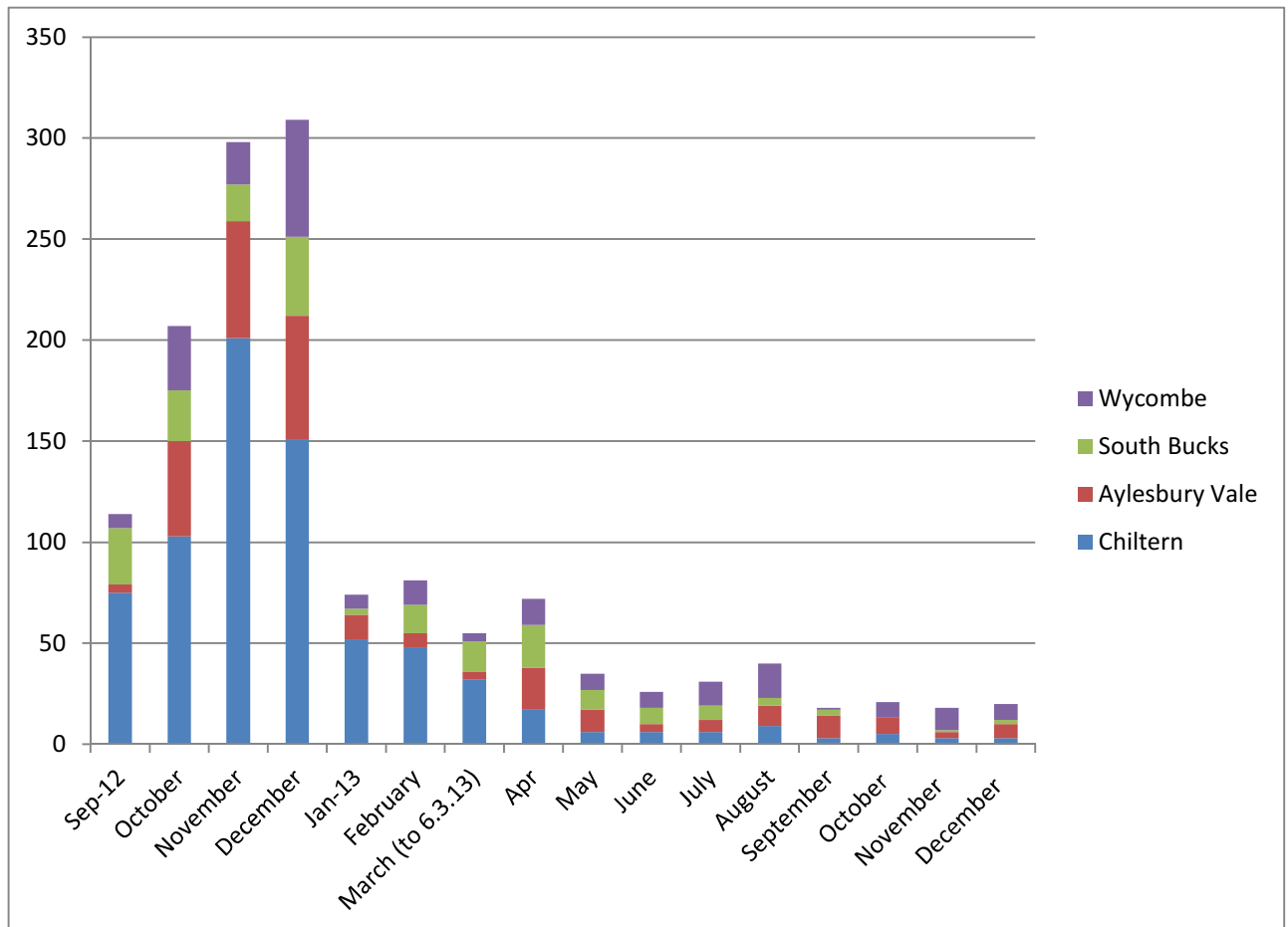
The majority of our calls to the Transport Hub since its inception in 2012 have come from GP surgeries and Patient Transport. In most case the call is made directly from the person needing transport, after that have been told about the hub from one of the services below. Occasionally one of the services listed below would call the hub on behalf of one of their clients. Additionally, more stringent enforcement by the ambulance trust of the medical criteria for eligibility of patient transport has impacted greatly on the demand for alternative transport.

Call Referrals September 2012 – December 2013



Calls received by District

September 2012 – December 2013



Marketing

The transport hub is marketed through our partners, on our website and through leaflet drops to health related providers throughout the county. We also undertake targeted campaigns including BCC Inform magazine and promotion through dedicated publicity events like the 'Give a Lift Week' campaign detailed below. These campaigns generate a marked increase in calls to the hub.

"Give a Lift week"-

The Community Impact Bucks Transport Team arranged a week of publicity around Buckinghamshire to promote Community Transport and encourage communities to look at setting up a scheme in their area. At each location we were joined by a member of Dial-A-Ride or a community car scheme coordinator. We specifically targeted areas where we receive the highest level of calls. We spoke to transport users to identify their needs and gave out information and advice on what schemes are available to them and work of the Transport Hub.

The schedule was:

Monday 14th Oct	Location
AM	Stoke Mandeville Hospital
PM	Stoke Mandeville Hospital
Tuesday 15th Oct	
AM	High Wycombe Hospital
PM	High Wycombe Hospital
Wednesday 16th Oct	
AM	Amersham Hospital
Thursday 17th Oct	
AM	Winslow Centre Café 10 - 2pm
Friday 18th Oct	
AM	Chalfont St Peter Community Hospital 9am - 1pm
Saturday 19th Oct	
AM	Princes Risborough Tesco
Monday 21st Oct	
AM/PM	Wexham Park Hospital

Community Transport Promotional Video

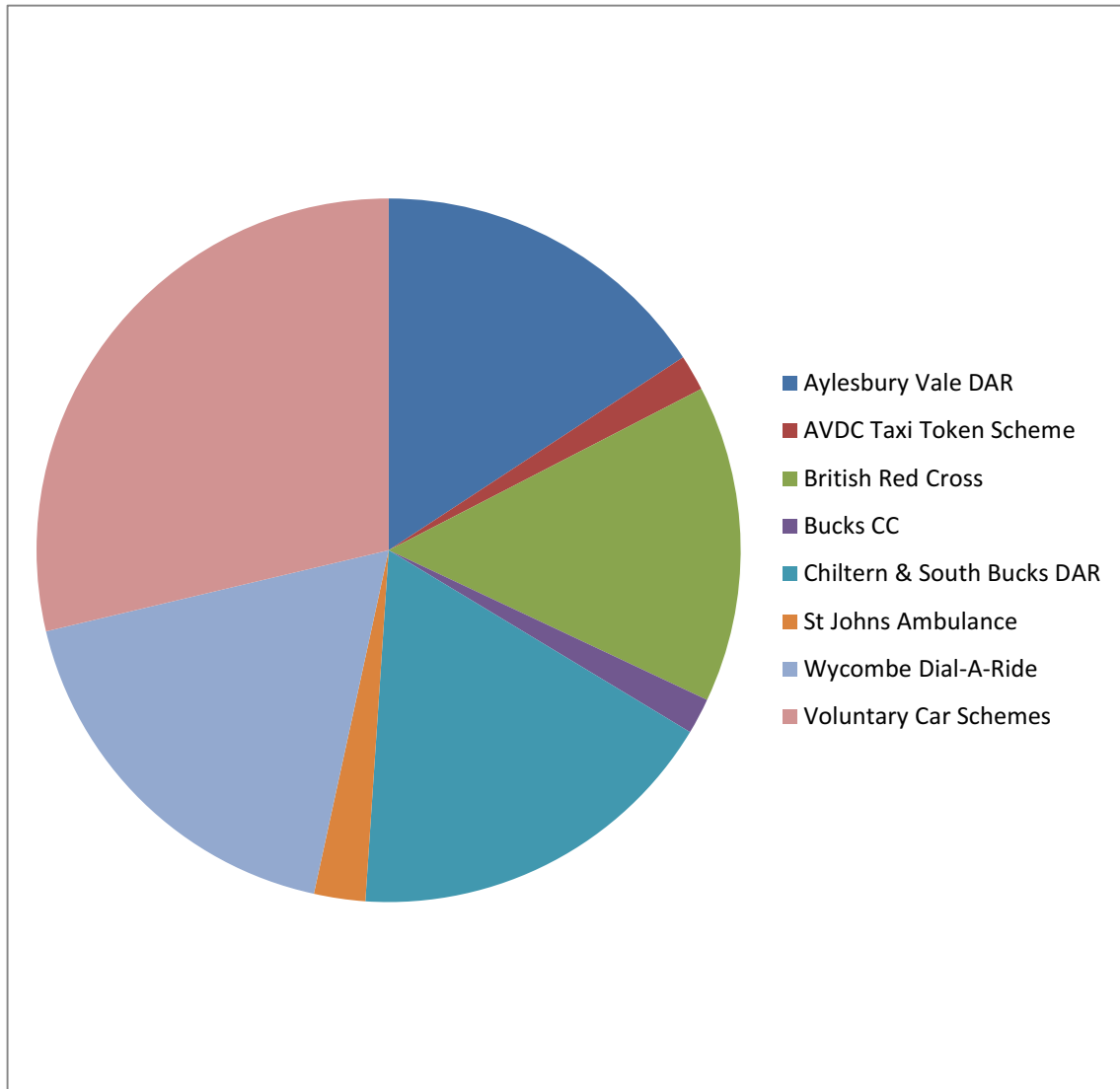
In partnership with Bucks County Council Community Impact Bucks produced a promotional video on community transport. The short film highlights the benefits of running a community transport scheme and the huge difference it makes to those people who use the services and those who volunteer their time.

<http://www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk/pages/community-transport.html>

Services Signposted by the Hub

It is clear from the graphs below the reliance on community car schemes and alternative transport providers are huge, the demand for these services is growing as the gap in public and ambulance transport becomes less available to those people who struggle with using these services. As this demand grows, there is the need for potential users of community transport schemes to be able to access these from one central point; the Community Transport Hub is the way to provide this one central reference point for users.

The hub signposted to the following services in the period 1st July 2013 – 30th December 2013.



Case Studies

1. A call was received from an elderly lady living in High Wycombe. She was extremely isolated and had not been out of her home for over 8 months. She was desperate for someone to pick her up and take her round the shops for a few hours. The hub investigated various options with Age UK, ENRYCH and BCC in touch team but unfortunately they did not provide a service in the High Wycombe area. Wycombe Youth Action arranged for one of their volunteers to pick the lady up and take her into Wycombe with Wycombe Dial-A-Ride. High Wycombe Shop Mobility provided use of a wheelchair. The lady was over the moon to have spent a few hours in the shops.
2. A Community Practice Worker at Bucks Mind contacted the hub looking for transport solutions for one of their clients. The lady was vulnerable and had a fear of male drivers so required a female driver. The hub referred the client to Community Care North Bucks who have female volunteer drivers and also provided some local taxi company numbers whom accept the AVDC Taxi token scheme.

3. A retired gentleman called from Hyde Heath. He was looking for help with transport to High Wycombe Hospital as he required an operation on his hand. He was referred to the Chesham Voluntary Car Scheme who was able to help him. He was very thankful for the advice and has offered to help volunteering when his hand is better.
4. We took a call from a visually impaired lady living alone in Beaconsfield who needed transport to Wexham Park Hospital. She was nervous of using the larger minibus vehicles as she had a fall from one once and hurt her leg. We put her in contact with the Beaconsfield Advisory Centre Transport Scheme who found her a volunteer driver to take her to her appointment. She was move confident going in a smaller vehicle and having the support of the driver to get her into the hospital safely.
5. Nita contacted the Transport hub very distressed as she no longer qualified for hospital transport. She was desperately looking for transport from Chalfont St Peter to Stoke Mandeville hospital to have treatment for cataracts she was very worried on how she would make this journey. Her details were taken by a member of the transport team and contact was made with the Chalfont St Giles Voluntary car scheme. They were happy to assist and sourced a volunteer driver who lived just round the corner from her. He was happy to take her to the hospital and wait the 2 hours she needed for treatment. She was then taken home to recover. The volunteer driver takes Nita to her hospital appointments on a regular basis and they have built up a friendship.
6. We were contacted by an elderly gentlemen living in Marlow who needed to attend the Churchill Hospital in Oxford every day for a 2 week period. He had been quoted a return daily fee of £80 by a local taxi firm. We put him in touch with the Wycombe Dial-A-Ride service and also the Marlow- British Red Cross voluntary Car Pool. He was able to arrange transport between the two services which saved him a considerable amount of money and gave him peace of mind he could attend his appointments.
7. A retired gentleman called from Hyde Heath. He was looking for help with transport to High Wycombe as he required an operation on his hand. He was referred to the Chesham Voluntary Car Scheme who was able to help him. He was very thankful for the advice and has offered to help volunteering when his hand is better.

Conclusion

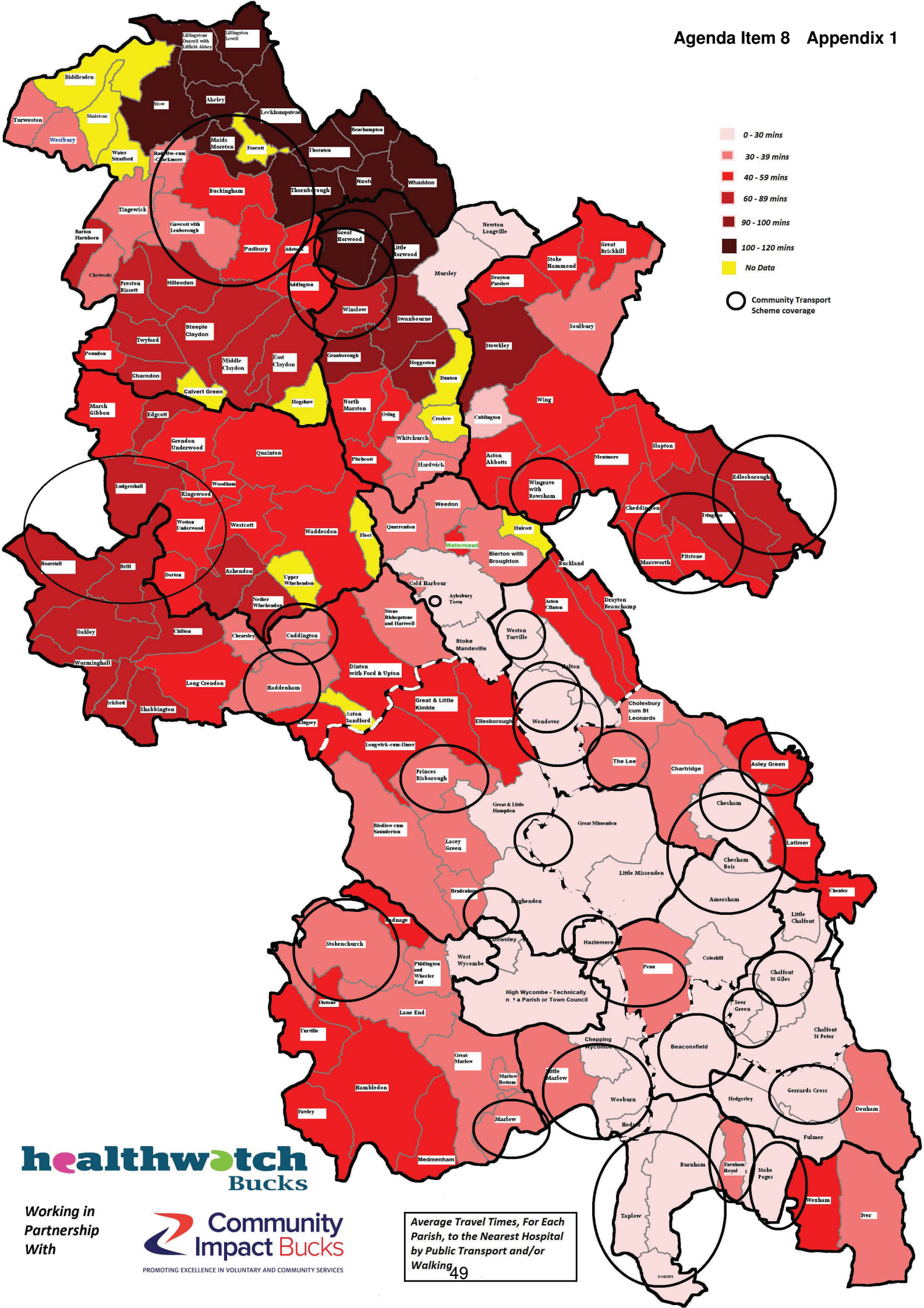
From the calls to the Transport Hub it is clear that the more stringent enforcement of the ambulance transport criteria has had a huge impact on those people accessing these services. This has put a strain on those community transport providers who are now picking up the majority of the calls signposted from the Hub.

As demand for the service continues to be from those people most in need who are accessing transport to health related appointments it is clear that work needs to continue in establishing more community car schemes across the County. Moreover, it is also clear that with the stringent enforcement of ambulance transport criteria, there is a demand for one central hub which is able to provide information on all of the available transport options to those people seeking assistance in getting to health related appointments. We therefore feel that the Community Transport Hub provides a valuable service and has the potential to grow in the future as a real one stop shop for all transport information.

However, to enable this to happen there is the requirement for ongoing resources to support its development. Without the community transport hub many people will simply not know where to turn when faced with finding transport options to get to their hospital or doctors' appointments; as for many traditional public transport is simply not an option (either they are physically unable to use public transport or there is no public transport options within their community). It is also the case that, due to shared services, many people have to travel to a hospital which is not their closest. This increases the anxiety around having to get to the appointment. The Community Transport Hub is able to reduce this anxiety by providing information on the different transport options available; and thus reducing transport issues as a reason for people missing or cancelling their hospital and doctor appointments.

As can be seen from the information presented above, Community Impact Bucks feel that the Community Transport Hub provides a valuable service to the people of Buckinghamshire and would like it to continue. The Hub is currently funded through to the end of May 2014. Further resource is required to ensure that it can continue beyond this point; and hopefully develop and diversify the service that it offers.

January 2014
Diane Rutter, Services Director
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Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Environment, Transport and Locality Services Select Committee

Letter of recommendation from the Environment, Transport and Locality Services Select Committee

Title: Council policy on 'Fracking'

Committee date: 4th February 2014

To: Cabinet Members for Environment and Planning

From: Chairman of ETL Committee

Summary

Due to a significant amount of public and media interest on subject of fracking, questions being raised at Council, and the government's recent drive to promote fracking, the Environment Transport and Locality Services select committee have been building their knowledge on the topic. At its meeting on the 4th February 2014, the committee heard from the Lead Officer for Minerals and Waste Planning, and examined the council's current policy in relation to hydraulic fracturing for oil and gas to consider whether it is fit for purpose.

The Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan consists at present of those policies 'saved' from the Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan adopted in 2006, as well as those contained in the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy adopted in November 2012.

Mineral Planning Authorities (such as Buckinghamshire) are expected to include in their Mineral Local Plans:

- Petroleum Licence Areas on their proposals maps;
- Criteria-based policies for each of the exploration, appraisal and production phases of hydrocarbon extraction. These policies should set clear guidance and criteria for the location and assessment of hydrocarbon extraction within the Petroleum Licence Areas.



The committee heard that the Council as Minerals Planning Authority will be developing a new planning policy document- the 'Replacement Minerals and Waste Local Plan' (RMWLP). This will provide the opportunity to have a robust policy or policies with which to determine any planning applications for 'Fracking' for shale gas that may arise in the future. The committee also heard how the Government is to undertake a further round of licensing for onshore oil and gas exploration later this year, and so the Council should wait for this Licensing round, and at that time review whether any new Licences may affect Buckinghamshire.

However, the committee heard how the situation remains that because of the geology of the County that 'fracking' for shale gas remains unlikely in Buckinghamshire in the near future.

Having examined the current situation the committee would like to pass its comments and recommendations onto the Cabinet Member for their consideration in the preparations for developing the Replacement Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

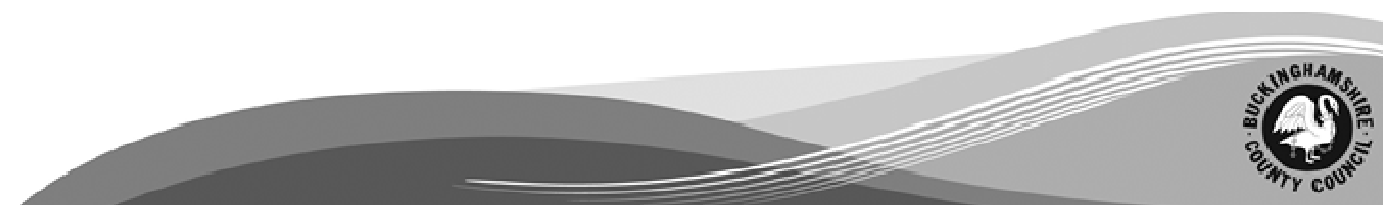
Committee Recommendations

The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member;

1. should consider producing a formal communication strategy to ensure clear communication at an early stage of the planning process, such as the latest news relating to the 14th round of licensing;
2. review and develop a clear timetable for the Replacement minerals and Waste Local Plan at the earliest convenience;
3. review the current policy and consider expediting policies relating to 'fracking' in the minerals and waste local plan to ensure that, should the authority receive applications for 'fracking', its policies are clear and robust;
4. that the committee receive an update on the Replacement Minerals and Waste Local Plan at the appropriate time.

Next Steps

The committee would be welcome your response to the above recommendations at your earliest convenience, briefly outlining whether or not you accept them and any planned activity in relation to them. This letter, along with your response will be published within the papers of the committee's next meeting.



Environment, Transport and Locality Select Committee Proposed Work Programme

Committee	Date	Topic	Description and Purpose	Attendees
Environment, Transport and Locality Services				
	8 April 2014	Library Services in Bucks	For Members to receive a presentation on the current landscape of library services; the key changes, digital inclusion, possible implications and ideas for the future. This will inform whether the committee wish to carry out any further examination of library services.	Martin Phillips Cabinet Member for Community Engagement David Jones Service Delivery Manager
	8 April 2014	Carbon Strategy	For members to receive a briefing on the carbon reduction strategy and the various projects falling within this. This will include LED street lighting programme (an area raised in previous committee meetings) amongst others.	David Sutherland – Sustainability Manger - PLACE
	8 April 2014	Energy Strategy	For members to receive a briefing on the councils new energy strategy. This will cover the options for renewable energy and the social, economic and political benefits of the options.	Rachael Toresen-Owuor Energy Manager Lesley Clarke Cabinet Member
	8 April 2014	Crime and Disorder Responsibilities: remit of the committee and arrangements in Bucks	For Members to receive an information paper on the role of the crime and disorder committee and the arrangements in bucks and an options paper for a topic to consider at the May committee.	Information Paper and Options Paper
	13 May 2014	Food safety and the role of Trading Standards	For members to receive a briefing on the role trading standards plays in influencing national responses, issues and policy, using recent national incidents, particularly the national food scandal and the food law enforcement service plan.	Amanda Poole, Trading Standards Manager Martin Phillips, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement.
	13 May 2014	TfB Complaints and Customer Focus project update.	For members to receive a briefing on the most recent complaints data, identifying trends, areas of improvement, and risk etc. Members will also be updated on the outcomes of the customer focus project.	Joe Nethercoat, senior manager PLACE

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Environment, Transport and Locality Select Committee Proposed Work Programme

Committee	Date	Topic	Description and Purpose	Attendees
	13 May 2014	Crime and disorder statutory update.	For Members to receive a briefing on the key components of the crime and disorder arrangements in Bucks. To include the roles and responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioners and the Panels, the Crime and disorder Committee and the community safety partnerships.	Susie Yapp, Safer Bucks Partnership Manager Trevor Egleton, Police and Crime Panel Chairman.
	17 June 2014	Public Transport Review	For Members to examine the Council's responsibilities for public transport, its policy in relation to subsidised bus services, assessing strategic need and how we meet the needs of local residents and agree scope for a review.	TBC subject to review scope.
	17 th June 2014	Local Area Technicians: review update	For Members to be briefed on the results of the LAT review – 6 month review of the new structure introduced in Jan 2014.	Kim Hills (TfB) Janet Blake, Cabinet Member

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