

## **STATUTORY AND VOLUNTARY GROUP PARTICIPATION WEXHAM AND IVERS LOCAL AREA FORUM**

### **LAF Membership**

The Wexham and Ivers LAF is a joint forum of the County Council, District Council and Parish Councils. Automatic membership consists of local area County Councillors, District Councillors and Parish Council representatives.

The County Council is also keen that LAFs encourage participation from other organisations - statutory or voluntary which have the interests of the local area at heart and the LAF is encouraged to and may invite other bodies or individuals into membership either in an advisory capacity or as full members.

The County Council has offered some guidance on the operation of LAFs but has left it up to each LAF to determine its own detailed operating arrangements (e.g. frequency of meetings, voting and membership).

No other LAFs in Buckinghamshire presently have voting members outside of County, District and Parish councils, although outside organisations are represented.

### **Role of the LAF**

In determining the makeup of membership it is important to consider the role of the LAF and its membership. They will identify the key local priorities for the area, drawing upon Parish Plans, County and District Strategies, the Local Area Agreement as well as the local knowledge of the LAF members.

These priorities will help shape the issues that the LAF focuses upon and also enable the LAF to act as a consultation forum for the County Council and other bodies. This will aid strategic policy development and local service delivery that meets the needs current and future of the local area.

The LAF will also take decisions on matters including any funding delegated from the County Council, District Council, Parish Councils and other organisations.

### **Decision Taking**

It is expected that decisions will be reached by common agreement amongst the LAF membership. Decision-making by voting will be the rare and last resort.

The LAF will need to be clear in that membership implies participation in reaching consensual agreement and it will need to be clear where formal voting rights are extended.

The LAF will determine its own voting arrangements in this respect and may extend voting rights to representatives of other regularly attending bodies if it chooses.

### **Officer Involvement**

Regular officer support for the meetings will be provided by the County Council's Area Coordinator and Lead Area Officer, supported by a representative of the County Council's Democratic Services, who will provide secretarial support to the Partnership and constitutional advice.

It is anticipated that other officers from the County, District and Parish Councils will attend where requested by the LAF; to present reports or in support of particular agenda items.

County and District Officers attend in an advisory capacity only. In the case of Parish Clerks they are able to participate as full members when formally nominated and attending as representing their respective Parish Council.

### **Statutory and Voluntary Group Participation**

Statutory and Voluntary organisations can by definition represent an area as a whole e.g. Police or VCA, or a particular community or parish e.g. NAGs or Youth Club. Either can be invited as nonvoting participants or as voting members

If formal membership is extended to local community groups, the LAF may need to consider balancing representation so that the LAF is not perceived to be unduly weighted in favour of one parish over another.

To ensure that it can be effective the LAF may also consider having a membership that is representational of a range of community interests.

If membership is not extended to smaller specialised community groups and individuals that exist in each community, the LAF may consider compiling a database of these to consider inviting them to attend and participate as appropriate for specific topics, or to attend workshops/conferences the LAF convenes outside the normal cycle of meetings. This includes setting up a working group to examine a particular issue or to undertake the practical implementation of a project to which appropriate and relevant community groups can be invited to participate

The LAF may also consider whether to have formal representation by young people outside of youth services

Initial potential statutory organisations and voluntary groups for consideration by the LAF membership to be asked to participate as members

- Thames Valley Police – Have already given a commitment to participate in LAFs if asked
- Bucks Fire and Rescue
- PCT – Have already indicated they would like to be copied into agendas and minutes
- Wexham and Stoke Poges NAG
- Iver NAG
- Bucks Community Action /Chiltern and South Bucks VCA – Likely to merge in 2010