

# **Community Board – North West Chilterns**

## **Economic Regeneration**

### **Briefing Report**

#### **Purpose of the report**

A sub group meeting on 6 August 2020 agreed that the purpose of the group was to recommend ways which Buckinghamshire Council could adopt to sustain and encourage the development of town centres and village communities for the benefit of residents and visitors. Town centres have faced challenges as a result of the growth of on-line shopping (this is a national trend) and villages due to economic pressure on social amenities (such as community centres) and businesses (such as pubs and small shops). In many cases the sale of premises in which these businesses operate to developers outweighs their value as businesses.

The sub group will cooperate with existing local organisations to formulate ways in which Buckinghamshire Council can intervene to the benefit of the whole community.

#### **Priority Objectives**

A first priority is to assist businesses to recover from the COVID19 pandemic. For many small businesses the pandemic has been catastrophic. The sub group will consider how Buckinghamshire Council can safely bring people back to shopping centres in high streets, villages and towns.

A second objective is to encourage diverse businesses to set up and expand in the community. Priority would be given to customer facing businesses and those that will provide employment to local people.

#### **Progress to date**

The sub group has held one meeting when:

- A Chairman was elected.
- Priority objectives were agreed.
- A discussion paper was issued.
- Some feedback to that paper has been received.

#### **Actions going forward**

- To establish periodic regular meetings (probably monthly).
- To bring in stakeholders – for example Bucks Business First, Community Impact Bucks and internal officers such as Jacqueline Ford who have experience in high street, town and village regeneration.
- Engagement with businesses (including community assets) within the North West Chilterns area.
- Possible consultation with local residents.
- To outline some possible strategies for achieving the objectives.
- To estimate costs and timescales for achieving the objectives.

**Teif Jones**

**Chair of the subgroup**

**30 September 2020**