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| Title of Report: | Community Led Planning - Performance Report |
| Report to be considered by: | Executive |
| Date of Meeting: | 31 st March 2011 |
| Forward Plan Ref: | EX2207 |

Purpose of Report: To report on progress of Community Led Planning within the District for the first half of the 2010/11 financial year.

Recommended Action: For Members to note the actions in the report and recommend further actions as necessary.

Reason for decision to be taken: This report forms part of the Council's performance monitoring framework.

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Community Plan Action Plans and updates provided by individual Communities.

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

- CPT1 - Better Roads and Transport
- CPT3 - Affordable Housing
- CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener
- CPT6 - Vibrant Villages
- CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities
- CPT8 - A Healthier Life
- CPT12 - Including Everyone
- CPT13 - Value for Money
- CPT15 - Putting Customers First

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Themes and Outcomes by:

Community Planning enables local communities to take control of projects within their own community and with the mandate of that community.

Community Plans contain projects which support most of the Council Plan Themes and outcomes and also support the Sustainable Community Strategy Themes.

| Portfolio Member Details | |
|---|---|
| Name & Telephone No.: | Councillor Pamela Bale - Tel (0118) 9842980 |
| E-mail Address: | pbale@westberks.gov.uk |
| Date Portfolio Member agreed report: | 25 th January 2011 |

| Contact Officer Details | |
|-------------------------|--|
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Implications

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| Policy: | No implications envisaged. |
| Financial: | Community Plans impact on Capital Programme, Parish Plan Grant Funding and Vibrant Village Grant Funding. |
| Personnel: | Considerable resource is needed to support all aspects of the Community Plan process. |
| Legal: | No implications envisaged |
| Property: | No implications envisaged |
| Risk Management: | Risk of implementation of action plans being unachievable due to lack of resource in communities. |
| Equalities Impact Assessment: | All communities are encouraged to include everyone in their consultation and to think about the impact of their plans on all sections of their communities. |

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| Is this item subject to call-in? | Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box: | | |
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report covers progress with the Parish/Community Plan project for the first six months of the 2010/11 financial year.

2. Number of Communities Involved

- 2.1 There are currently 42 Community Plans that have been endorsed by West Berkshire Council which cover 44 communities within the District. This reflects the fact that 70% of the District now has a Community Plan in place.
- 2.2 At present a further 3 communities have submitted draft plans for consideration by the Council and a further 5 are preparing to refresh plans that were adopted as early as 2003.

3. Parish Plan Grant

- 3.1 During this period Parish Plan Grants helped support 7 communities with approximately £22k of grant being awarded for community schemes. The following schemes having been successful:
- Pangbourne – Disabled access to village hall.
 - Theale – Funding for notice boards and tree planting.
 - Stratfield Mortimer – Young people’s film club (digital media equipment) and playground improvements (see saws and safety surface).
 - Boxford – Handcrafted furniture to enable the church to be used for community meeting space.
 - Ashampstead – Village hall kitchen improvements.
 - East Garston – New boiler in village hall and two marquees for community events.
 - Bucklebury – Partitions to set-up a post office service within the village hall.
- 3.2 In December local communities were notified that there was still £44k of funding available for parish projects which must be spent by the year end. This has generated 10 enquiries from interested parishes.

4. Vibrant Village Grant

- 4.1 Vibrant Village grants are jointly funded with Greenham Common Trust (GCT), typically a 50:50 funding split between the Council and GCT.
- 4.2 In these first six months 15 projects have been funded or part-funded through the Vibrant Village Scheme. This exceeds the Council Plan target of 7 projects to be supported per annum.

The successful projects were:

- Stanford Dingley – Heating system as part of new village hall project.
- Hampstead Norreys Community Shop – Equipment, materials for redecoration, Designated Premises Supervisor’s personal license, First Aid Training.

- Boxford Village Hall – Kitchen as part of purpose built Village Hall project.
- Monkeying Around – Hungerford - Soft play mats and equipment.
- Purley Village Youth Club – Extending the forecourt ground area.
- East Woodhay Cricket Club – Contribution to providing electricity to club house.
- Mortimer Village Partnership – Support for Fun Day expenditure.
- Beech Hill Memorial Hall Committee – Kitchen and fitting out of new memorial hall which is under construction.
- Theale's Future – Venue and speaker costs for two evening talks and costs to facilitate five walks in and around Theale.
- Mortimer Youth Club – Running costs and programme of activities for the next year.
- West Ilsley Tennis Court – Resurfacing of court.
- Aldermaston Concert Centre – Start-up funds and equipment.
- Pangbourne & Whitchurch Sustainability Group – Supporting the work of the 7 sub-groups.
- East Garston – Improving shop security with iron bars on windows and a shutter on door.
- The Downs School – Additional swimming pool changing rooms for the public and local primary schools to use the outdoor pool facilities.

4.3 Vibrant Village applications are now submitted on the same application form and to the same timescales as used for the Greenham Common Trust Reactive Grant Aid. This allows for two bidding rounds a year with the closing date of the next round being 11 February 2011.

4.4 Applications are determined by two West Berkshire Council representatives, Councillors Quentin Webb and Royce Longton, alongside two Greenham Common Trust Members, Gillian Hall and John Robertson.

5. Links to other Funding Streams - Playbuilder and RASP

5.1 Despite fears that funding for Playbuilder might have been withdrawn, the second year of this programme has seen a total of £556k allocated to schemes within the District. These were for play areas in Almond Avenue (Shaw, Newbury), Cromwell Road (Newbury), Fifth Road (Newbury), Fairground Adventure playground (Stratfield Mortimer), Great Shefford multiplay, Hampstead Norreys play area, Seigecross play area (Thatcham), Stockcross recreation ground (Newbury) and Turnham's Farm Recreation Ground (Tilehurst). Playbuilder funds have also been allocated for skate parks at Linear Park (Calcot), Victoria Park (Newbury) and Chieveley.

5.2 Rural Access to Services Programme (RASP) money has also provided £23.5k worth of funding for projects in the District. Awards have been up to £5k at a time. The projects funded during 2010-11 include:

- Beenham - Infrastructure for allotments
- Hampstead Norreys – community shop provision
- Beech Hill - community shop provision
- Chieveley - shop and Post Office improvements.

6. Meet the Expert Evenings & Parish Plan Surgeries

- 6.1 The 1st July – Rural Broadband Meet the Expert event generated much interest from West Berkshire communities. ICT services led the event and described the technology that was available using case studies from across the country. The event helped to identify clusters of communities that might be able to work together to consider improving broadband infrastructure within their parishes.
- 6.2 On 2nd December a second Meet the Expert event was held on Elderly Luncheon Clubs. Within this session Council officers provided advice on food handling legislation, entertainment licensing and guidance on CRB checks to protect vulnerable adults. The Community Council for Berkshire (CCB) also provided fact sheets on village hall usage to assist with running community events. The voluntary sector was also involved in the coordination and participation in this event.
- 6.3 Future Meet the Expert events will be shaped around what communities report as being the key issues. There is likely to be a follow-up workshop on rural broadband initiatives due to the level of interest in this topic.
- 6.4 During this period Parish Plan Surgeries were organised for June, September and November. The next one is scheduled for 1 February to give communities a chance to meet directly with officers to agree the parish plan actions before submitting their Parish Plan.

7. Plans Endorsed During this Period

- 7.1 Seven plans have been endorsed by the Council since April 2010. This exceeds the Council Plan target of three parishes being supported to progress a Community Plan per annum.

8. New Plans

- 8.1 The Council has currently received draft plans from Brightwalton, Beedon and Beenham Parish Plans. The Brightwalton plan is due to be endorsed on 25 January by Individual Decision.
- 8.2 Bucklebury, Yattendon, Lambourn, Hungerford and Pangbourne are all being supported in the refresh process of their original plan.
- 8.3 Peasmore Parish is just commencing work on a plan. Tilehurst Parish Council has also requested a briefing on parish planning. This will take place in April to help them to consider what benefit there may be from producing a plan.

9. Other Initiatives

- 9.1 The next Community Planning Conference will be held jointly with a West Berkshire Partnership (WBP) event on Saturday 5th March. This will provide an opportunity for closer engagement between the WBP and local communities. Richard Benyon MP and Alok Sharma MP have both confirmed their attendance and will speak to communities about the Localism Bill and take part in a Question and Answer session. The remainder of the day will be dedicated to sharing best practice and advice, providing a platform for networking between communities and encouraging public sector agency engagement with community planning.

9.2 The West Berkshire approach to and experience of community planning was shared at a recent ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) and AMT (Action for Market Towns) event to help produce additional guidance for communities to respond to the themes within the Localism Bill 2010.

10. Issues raised by communities

10.1 In compiling this report communities were asked for feedback on what support they required from West Berkshire Council. Where concerns have been raised these have been reported to the relevant service areas and detailed responses have been compiled. In some instances officers have been willing to visit communities to discuss their concerns and consider the way forward.

10.2 One general concern from communities is a wish to understand the impact of the Localism Bill on community planning and how this fits with the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans. A briefing will be given to parishes once further information emerges about how the legislation will work in practice.

11. Summary of Achievements

11.1 Significant activity within parishes is continuing to take place with the individual achievements of local town and parish areas being shown at Appendix A.

11.2 Along with the delivery of actions in existing plans, the continued interest in community planning is demonstrated by the number of communities working on plans for the first time or refreshing existing plans. The numbers refreshing plans gives an indication of the value communities place on the community planning process.

12. Recommendations

12.1 It is recommended that Members consider and note the performance update on community planning and suggest any improvements as necessary.

Appendices

Appendix A – Updates on the Community Plan areas

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:

Officers Consulted: David Lowe, Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager , Corporate Board

Trade Union: N/A