

# Chesham Town Council



## Best Value Performance Plan 2007/08





# CONTENTS

---

	Page
The Mayor's Message and Annual Review	2
Best Value Performance Plan 2007/08 – An Introduction	3
What The Auditors Asked Us To Do	5
What The Government Has Asked Us To Do - Our Performance Plan	6
Public Consultation and Feedback	13
Mission Statement and Aims	16
Chesham Town Council	16
Council Tax 2007/08	17
Our Services, Performance 2006/07, Objectives and Targets for 2007/08	18
Corporate Performance Indicators	18
Allotments	19
Parks, Open Spaces and Playgrounds	21
The Elgiva	24
The Town Hall	27
Sports Pavilions and Playing Fields	30
The Open Air Pool	32
Chesham Cemetery and St. Mary's Church Closed Churchyard	34
Democratic Services and Corporate Management	37
Environmental Performance	40
Best Value Service Review 2006/07	41
Appendices	42
Appendix 1	
Chesham Community Vision	
Appendix 2	
Chesham Town Councillors	
Appendix 3	
Calendar of Meetings 2007/08	
Appendix 4	
Chesham Town Council Structure	
Appendix 5	
Income and Expenditure Plans for 2007/08	



## Mayor's Message and Annual Review

---

Welcome to our Performance Plan for 2007/08. The plan shows what we do and how we have been doing since last year by reviewing our current and past performance. As well as explaining the functions that we provide, the document contains information about our targets for the year ahead enabling you, the reader, to judge whether the Council's services are improving. This year we completed our Allotments service review and you will find the results of this, along with our action plan for improving the service in this Plan.

While the Best Value document reviews each service in detail, the main achievements for the Council in 2006/07 were as follows:

- Increased cinema and theatre attendances at the Elgiva by over 5000 people per year.
- Completed redecoration of the foyer, bar, café, public toilets and auditorium at the Elgiva.
- In partnership with the Friends of Chesham Cemetery, established a wild flower meadow area in the cemetery.
- Carried out structural works to the cemetery chapel.
- Completed the third and final phase of the memorial inspections in the cemetery and St. Mary's churchyard.
- Took on some of Buckinghamshire County Council's highway functions as part of 'Getting Closer to Communities'.
- Applied for Green Flag status as part of the regeneration of Lowndes Park.
- Renovated plots at the Cameron Road allotments and let them to tenants.
- In partnership with the Town Centre Consortium, entered 'Britain in Bloom' competition for the second year running and obtained a silver commendation award.
- Began work on the Meades Water Gardens regeneration as part of the 'Impress the Chess' campaign.
- Took an active role in the highly successful Chesham Heritage Weekend.
- Developed and adopted an Environmental policy.

2007/08 will see continued activity for the Council. Projects envisaged include - the second phase of the regeneration of Meades Water Gardens; a proposed submission of a major Lottery bid to regenerate and upgrade Lowndes Park; a prominent role in the new Neighbourhood Action Groups being set up in regard to local policing; the second phase of the major refurbishment of the Elgiva theatre; development of a new pavilion at Marston Field.

If you wish to comment on any project that has taken place over the last year or have any views or suggestions on proposals planned for 2007/08, please contact our Town Clerk, Bill Richards, on 01494 583824 or e-mail [townclerk@chesham.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@chesham.gov.uk) .

Thank you for your time in reading this Performance Plan. Your views are very important to us as we strive to achieve our objectives, so please help us to help you by sending in your comments, suggestions, queries, complaints and compliments either to your local Town Councillor or the staff at the Town Hall.

**Councillor Mrs M. Molesworth, Town Mayor**

**June 2007**

# Best Value Performance Plan 2007/08 – An Introduction

---

## What is Best Value?

Best Value is part of the Government's modernising agenda. The aim of Best Value is to ensure that service provision is appropriate for the residents of Chesham and that it is provided efficiently, effectively and economically. Best Value is about meeting the needs of local people and providing them with information so that our residents are better informed on the Council's services, enabling them to have a real say on how these services can be improved. Best Value ensures Councils find ways of improving their services by:

- CHALLENGING what they do.
- COMPARING what they do against other service providers.
- CONSULTING with customers.
- Exposing services to outside COMPETITION where appropriate.

## This Year's Performance Plan

The 41 first tier local authorities who have spent more than £500,000 a year since 1999 have a legal duty to achieve best value in everything they do and to publish an Annual Plan. This, our seventh Best Value Performance Plan, is aimed at our principal audience, elected Members, staff, groups and organisations with an interest in Chesham Town Council, and central government. It provides the practitioner with an assessment of the Council's performance, our achievements in the past year and our priorities and targets for the year ahead.

This Plan sets out the Town Council's objectives; the services we provide to achieve our objectives; the cost of these services, including a summary of performance against relevant performance indicators; targets for improving service delivery; our best value review programme; a summary of action plans following these reviews and the auditor's report on last year's plan and our response.

## How Performance is Monitored

The Council acknowledges that Best Value should be Member-led and established a Best Value Review Panel, now the Performance Review Committee, to oversee the application of Best Value by the Council. The Performance Review Committee manages the process of reviewing services and the delivery of continuous improvement in quality and cost through the use of Performance Indicators (PIs).

The Best Value legislation requires the Council to establish 'Local Performance Indicators' which allow a balanced judgement to be made on performance. The Performance Indicators should be 'easy to understand', and the relevant information should be 'easy to collect'. Performance Indicators should measure dimensions such as, '**cost, efficiency, quality, and access**'. Performance Indicators cover such issues as bookings for our facilities, theatre returns, allotment statistics and customer enquiries and satisfaction.

Where variations in service delivery inherently exist in different local Councils, the 41 Town and Parish Councils currently affected by Best Value have discussed at length how they can compare Performance Indicators amongst themselves. In 2004 the production of general corporate health indicators taken from user/customer satisfaction surveys were agreed and put forward for adoption by the 41 Town and Parish Councils. A number of these PIs are already in use by this Council, however a number relating to satisfaction of services have not previously been used and these were included in the 2005 survey and subsequently 2004/05 Performance Plan. Every five years this Council is committed to undertake a major door-to-door satisfaction survey; the next one is due in 2010.

The performance of the Council in the previous year and our actual performance for the current year are displayed against each target set to make improvements easily identifiable. Where there are exceptional variations between the years, these differences are explained so that the reader can understand the performance data for the year in question.

## How Performance is Reported

The Council recognises the importance of managing and measuring performance and has introduced a Performance Management System which enables regular monitoring of the Council's performance. This is achieved through the Council's Performance Review Committee, regular reports to Council and the Town Clerk's management team. The following measures are now in place:

- section heads' regular reports to the Town Clerk
- monthly management team meetings
- regular meetings with the Mayor of the Council
- regular reports to Council and the Performance Review Committee
- monthly information items to Councillors
- establishing public views about our services through consultation
- best value service reviews
- annual staff appraisals

Line managers produce regular reports to the Town Clerk, showing important information about our services, including core Performance Indicators as follows:

- staff sickness
- sectional achievements
- work update
- complaints and compliments
- areas of managerial concern
- budget updates
- outstanding debtors

## What The Auditors Asked Us To Do

---

RSM Robson Rhodes, the Council's independent external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission, is required to complete an audit of the Council's Best Value Performance Plan by 30 June each year. The auditor provides local people with an assessment of whether the Plan is robust, challenging and complies with legislation and guidance.

### **Auditor Recommendations and our Responses from our 2006/07 Plan**

The auditor's opinion of Chesham Town Council's Best Value Performance Plan 2006/07 was that

***“The plan includes those matters prescribed in legislation and statutory guidance and that the arrangements for publishing the plan complied with the requirements of the legislation and statutory guidance.”***

The Council was satisfied to receive this response and will continue to ensure future plans meet the Government's guidance and that service delivery is appropriate for local residents and strives to achieve continuous improvement.

**The auditor's opinions on the Council's Best Value Performance Plan for previous years recommended that specific items were included and these have been incorporated in the 2005/06 plan onwards. The recommendations from 2003/04 suggested that the Council 'Consider extending plans for improvement to cover the forthcoming two years where appropriate.' This has been included again for this year.**

## What The Government Has Asked Us To Do Our Performance Plan

---

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has set out a number of requirements that Best Value Town and Parish Councils (BVTPCs) must fulfil. These requirements are issued under Section 6 of the Local Government Act 1999.

**All Best Value Town and Parish Councils must include the following items in their Performance Plan published by June 2000, and in subsequent years:**

- a) a brief summary of *the council's strategic objectives and priorities for improvement*. This should be drawn from its overall vision and corporate planning processes.**

Our strategic objectives are:

1. To enable residents to enjoy high-quality social, recreational, and cultural facilities within the town and to seek the continuing improvement and development of these facilities in accordance with the desires expressed by the residents.
2. To encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the town.
3. To preserve the unique identity of Chesham and promote its heritage.
4. To ensure that harmony exists between commercial and residential requirements.
5. To consult with and take due regard of all comments received from other statutory bodies, voluntary organisations and individuals, to ensure an improving standard of service that meets with local needs.
6. To represent the views and wishes of the citizens of Chesham.
7. To help create a socially inclusive and caring community, which embraces all its residents equally, seeking to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding, and mutual co-operation.

- b) progress in, and plans for, delivering local and national priorities, including:**

- progress over the past year in *implementing improvement measures* including those identified in best value reviews and audit and inspection recommendations;
- *outcomes from, or impact of, improvement measures* implemented over the past year;
- *plans for improvement over the current year, and where appropriate future years. This should include best value review and inspection programmes for the current year and, if available, future years.*

**What we have done to achieve this:**

**(i) Progressing Audit Recommendations**

There were no issues that needed addressing emanating from last year's audit by RSM Robson Rhodes.

**(ii) Progressing Improvement Measures from last year's Best Value Service Review**

- **Public Sports and Leisure Facilities– Review 2005/06**

**Improvement Measure 1 – Ensure that the Town Council liaises closely with Chiltern District Council in respect to PPG 17 – Study of Open Space, Sport and Recreation – to further sport and leisure priorities within Chesham.**

**Action**

The District Council has now produced its PPG 17 policy incorporating a number of Chesham priorities. The Town Clerk is now a representative on the local Sports and Physical Activity Network (SPAN) to progress service delivery further in Chesham.

**Improvement Measure 2 – Investigate how the Town Council can work with the District Council in negotiating and benefiting directly from developer contributions.**

**Action**

The Council awaits government proposals on a national scheme on developers' contributions being placed into a regional 'pot' and has responded to a government consultation paper on this expressing the view that first tier councils should be involved in the distribution of funds.

**Improvement Measure 3 – Support a proposal to build a full-size synthetic pitch in Chesham.**

**Action**

The Council officers continue to lobby for a synthetic pitch to be built at Chesham High School.

**Improvement Measure 4 – Invest in improved road and other signage, lighting and play space (dependent on budget).**

**Action**

Considerable investment was made in new signage for the Cemetery in 2006/07.

**Improvement Measure 5 – Support the bid by local community association to manage the building and bid for external funding to rebuild Marston Pavilion.**

**Action**

The Council has decided to keep the facility 'in-house' and to bid to Sport England for lottery funding. Marston Pavilion has been demolished and tenders are being drawn up for both brick and modular designs.

**Improvement Measure 6 – Begin process of sharing of specialist equipment and knowledge with Amersham Town Council to improve ground maintenance.**

**Action**

The possibility of a "shadowing day" at Amersham has been discussed with the Parks and Premises Manager.

**Improvement Measure 7 – Consider tiled changing room walls with central drainage outlet and direct access to the outside area for any redevelopment of Marston pavilion.**

**Action**

These features are being considered for the new facility.

**Improvement Measure 8 – Write to football clubs reminding them of their responsibilities to clean changing facilities after use at the Moor and Codmore (and Marston after renovation).**

**Action**

The Codmore teams have been written to. The Moor teams will be contacted and Marston facilities are to be rebuilt.

**Improvement Measure 9 – Begin internal maintenance programme for both Codmore and Marston pavilions.**

**Action**

Maintenance schedules have been reprioritised and external maintenance at Codmore has been conducted as a priority. Internal maintenance for Codmore is scheduled for 2007-08.

**Improvement Measure 10 – Ascertain the number of Chesham cricket teams playing at facilities outside of the town to decide upon need for extra provision.**

**Action**

The audit for this was begun at the end of the financial year as the cricket season started to try and see how many adults participate in clubs located outside of Chesham.

**Improvement Measure 11 – Investigate the development of Chesham Rugby Club facilities in consultation with the District and County Council.**

**Action**

The development of Chesham Rugby Club has been listed as a priority in the SPAN draft plan (see above).

**Improvement Measure 12 – Support the Rugby Club in renegotiation of rental agreement directly with Chesham Park.**

**Action**

A 15-year lease has been agreed between the College and the Rugby Club.

**Improvement Measure 13 – Recommend the Council withdraw from current agreement to let out facilities, in agreement with the Chesham Park and the Rugby Club.**

**Action**

This has been successfully completed.

**Improvement Measure 14 – Work with CVSLA to ensure transparency of decision-making and finances is improved.**

**Action**

As CVSLA have ceased operations, the open air pool is now managed by Chesham Town Council, in consultation with Wycombe Leisure Ltd.

**Improvement Measure 15 – External review body or ‘critical friends’ group be set up to help, advise and scrutinise management arrangement at the outdoor swimming pool.**

**Action**

Currently on hold until a new long term management system has been agreed and implemented.

**Improvement Measure 16 – The matter of contracting out the pool and associated facilities be considered, subject to there being no restrictions previously stipulated in the Sport England grant.**

**Action**

The open air pool is now managed by Chesham Town Council, in consultation with Wycombe Leisure Ltd. The management of the pool from April 2008 will be considered during 2007.

**Improvement Measure 17 – Increase promotion of the CVSLA Centre facilities and investigate possible themed weeks or annual events.**

**Action**

The proposal has been superseded by the demise of CVSLA

**Improvement Measure 18 – CVLSA increase tennis court charges in line with other providers.**

**Action**

The proposal has been superseded by the demise of CVSLA and delayed due to the poor state of the courts.

**Improvement Measure 19 – Make a decision on whether to convert the multi-sports area at the pool to tennis courts.**

**Action**

It has been decided that the multi-sports area will not be converted to tennis courts because of significant community use of the multi-sports area. Quotations have been received for re-surfacing this area.

**(iii) Progressing regional and national priorities**

**a. Regional**

***The Chesham Community Vision.*** The *Chesham Community Vision* was launched in December 2005. As the town's official Market Town Healthcheck, we are working closely to fulfil its priorities as a key partner in its delivery.

The *Chesham Community Vision* has produced its own vision (see Appendix 1) for 2015 which is:

*An active and vibrant working market town with an integrated but varied community where people support one another and can live, work, shop, visit and enjoy themselves in an environment that is constantly cared for and enhanced. A town that...*

- *provides sustainable employment opportunities, housing and business facilities that respect the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in which it is situated.*
- *encourages young and old from all areas to work together to achieve continual improvement to the facilities and future prospects of the town.*
- *promotes a thriving town centre which provides leisure and shopping facilities to meet the needs and wishes of residents and visitors.*
- *has a fully linked transport and communication system providing good services for people to travel within the town and regular connections to London and surrounding towns and villages.*

**In respect of these priorities, the following was achieved;**

*Provides sustainable employment opportunities, housing and business facilities that respect the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in which it is situated.*

**We completed the following in 2006/07:**

Promoted the second 'Business Award' as part of the Mayoral Award Scheme.

Continued providing free administration support for the Town Centre Consortium.

Financially supported the 'Business4Business' Exhibition at the Elgiva.

Contributed to the renewal of the town's 'Fairtrade' status.

Undertook active lobbying of the local Primary Care Trust to press for the building of the proposed 'Healthzone' facilities in Berkhamstead Road.

Responded to the District Council's core strategy of the Local Development Framework.

Adopted an Environmental Policy which includes promoting sustainability in Chesham's businesses, residents and local authorities.

The Chesham Community Vision launched a group to develop a proposal for a combined business enterprise and tourism hub for the town.

**In 2007/08, we will be:**

Implementing the Council's Environmental Policy.

Participating in the 'Business4Business' Networking event.

Contributing to the renewal of the town's 'Fairtrade' status.

Continuing to provide free administration support for the Town Centre Consortium.

Supporting the development of a proposal for a combined business and tourism hub in Chesham, as part of the Chesham Community Vision.

Taking an active role in the Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

*Encourages young and old from all areas to work together to achieve continual improvement to the facilities and future prospects of the town.*

**We completed the following in 2006/07:**

Regular consultation with Chesham Older Persons' Action Group (COPAG) to ascertain priorities for older persons.

Attendance at Chiltern Disability Forum meetings.

Promoted the second Rafe Chiles Young Person's Award.

Continued to support the aims and objectives of the Chesham Community Vision.

Supported the Chesham Youth Council in the development of its underage drinking project.

Encouraged feedback and involvement through four newsletters produced during the year and via the website.

Initiated a consultation audit.

**In 2007/08, we will be:**

Developing a consultation policy.

Continuing our support for the aims and objectives of the Chesham Community Vision.

Continue consultation with local groups, including COPAG and the Chiltern Disability Forum.

Planning for more rapid updating of the Council website.

*Promotes a thriving town centre, which provides leisure and shopping facilities to meet the needs and wishes of residents and visitors.*

**We completed the following in 2006/07:**

Continued our financial support for the Police Community Support Officers in order to make the town centre a safer place to visit.

Devised a charter and took on devolved powers from Buckinghamshire County Council to undertake highway functions including graffiti removal, removing fly-posting and hedge trimming in the town centre.

Supported the 'Chesham in Bloom' scheme, which achieved a silver commendation award as part of Thames and Chilterns in Bloom.

Completed the Conservation and Management Plan for Lowndes Park and re-launched the Friends of Lowndes Park, with a view to regenerating the park through lottery funding.

Obtained £50,000 funding through the Impress the Chess project for the regeneration of Meades Water Gardens. Completed the tree work as part of phase I of the regeneration project.

Erected a 'Welcome to Chesham' sign on the north side of the pedestrian area of the town centre.

Applied for 'Green Flag Status' for Lowndes Park.

Attracted new visitors to the town by becoming a major partner in the Chesham Heritage Weekend, which attracted more than 350 visitors to the town.

The Chesham Community Vision launched an Enterprise Hub Group to develop a proposal for a combined business enterprise and tourism hub.

**In 2007/08, we will be:**

Completing phase II of the Meades Water Gardens regeneration project.

Attracting new visitors to the town by leading on the Chesham Medieval celebrations of the 750th anniversary of the granting of the Charter.

Submitting a major lottery bid for the regeneration of Lowndes Park.

*Has a fully linked transport and communication system providing good services for people to travel within the town and regular connections to London, surrounding towns and villages.*

**We completed the following in 2006/07:**

Worked with the transport group of the Chesham Community Vision on projects including a taxi bus survey and the development of Explorer Walks.

Participated in the Chesham and Amersham Transport Study conducted by Buckinghamshire County Council.

**In 2007/08, we will be:**

Continuing to support the activities of the Transport group of Chesham Community Vision.

**b. National**

**Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).** Nationally, the DCLG is committed to creating sustainable communities through its key drivers listed as:

- **High quality services:** focused on continuous improvement and the delivery of visible results in service delivery and public perceptions;
- **A good physical environment:** clean, safe and environmentally sustainable;
- **A strong economic base:** a good infrastructure, employment and opportunity for all, and a good climate for enterprise and investment;
- **Strong leadership:** reinvigorated local democracy, strong partnerships; and
- **Shared values:** building cohesion and respect across communities.

The Council is strongly committed to the concept of sustainability and empowerment. We gained Quality Town Status in November 2004 with the view to playing a larger part in our community. In September 2006 we took on devolved highway services from Buckinghamshire County Council as part of the 'Getting Closer to Communities' initiative and in 2007-08 we will be looking at the possibility of extending this devolvement from other County Council services. We will continue to work actively with community groups such as the Environmental Group, the Allotments Group, the Impress the Chess Forum, the Friends of Chesham Cemetery and the newly revitalised Friends of Lowndes Park, all of whom assist the Council with recommendations for decisions.

**c) A Brief Summary of Financial Information**

This has been done and is to be found in Appendix 6.

**d) A Brief Statement of Contracts**

The Council certifies, in accordance with Workforce Matters in Local Service Contracts, that there has been no individual contract that involved a transfer of staff during the past year.

## Public Consultation and Feedback

---

Underlying the whole of the Best Value legislation is a general duty to consult the community. In establishing authority-wide objectives and performance measures, the Council will seek the views of local residents, businesses, user groups and other stakeholders on what they think the priorities for the Council should be. The Town Council is the first tier of local government, closest to its community. We fully endorse our duty to consult and the Council will:

- put consultation at the heart of its service delivery
- be clear about what it wishes to consult on, with whom and when
- ensure people know the standard of service they should expect
- be honest and open about what is, and what is not, possible
- encourage people to decide what services they want and how they would like them delivered, within existing constraints
- aim to engage all sections of the community
- make consultation an integral part of improving service delivery
- promote consultation good practice with partners

In 2004/05, Action Groups focusing on the four key themes that emerged from the **Chesham Community Vision** (Economy, Environment, Youth & Community and Transport) were established to explore the issues and challenges highlighted in the emerging vision document. In 2006/07 a further Action Group was established to develop a proposal for a combined business enterprise and tourism hub in the town.

In 2004/05, the Council carried out a **Chesham Residents' Survey** posted to all households in the town. The Council survey is currently repeated every five years, and in 2004/05 received an impressive 10% increase of response compared with the last postal residents' survey carried out in 2000. The purpose of the survey was to find out local residents' views on how the Council is performing, whether the services are effective and what improvements should be made in the future. This survey also focused on residents' satisfaction with the services provided by the Council, in line with recommendations put forward for adoption by the 41 Town and Parish Councils.

Awareness of the Council has increased by 20% with 97% indicating that before they received the survey they were aware of Chesham Town Council. When asked whether the average household (Band D) Council Tax rate represented 'value for money' to help provide the services run by Chesham Town Council, 21% said this was 'very poor' or 'poor', 47% said this was 'in-between' and 33% said it was 'good' or 'very good'. Overall, the Council was highly rated with 92% saying the Council was 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent' and only 8% said they thought the Council was 'poor'.

In November 2004, the Council was awarded **Quality Town Status**, the first in the Chiltern District to receive such accreditation. The scheme was designed by central government to provide a benchmark of standards for parish and town councils and enable them to better represent the communities they serve. One of the criteria to achieve Quality Status is the standard of 'communication' conducted by the Council. The publication of quarterly newsletters to enable better consultation was a key criterion under the standard of 'communication' and was achieved by the Council in 2004/05.

The Council launched its first newsletter, **Town Crier**, as an insert in the community magazine, **Town Talk**, in November 2003. This newsletter is now a regular insert in the popular community magazine that is published twice a year. To achieve the quarterly newsletter publication cycle, in between these publications, the Council now produces its own newsletter twice a year which is distributed door-to-door and produced at no cost to the Council tax payer as it is sponsored by local businesses. The summer edition also incorporates the Council's annual Mayoral review. These newsletters now form a regular channel of communication between the Council and local residents. Launched in 2005, the **Council website**, [www.chesham.gov.uk](http://www.chesham.gov.uk), has a News & Events page that is regularly updated with the latest Council news and community events. Full contact details of all Town Councillors are on the site and committee agendas and minutes, policy documents and Council newsletters are available for download.

The Best Value service review of democratic services and corporate management was carried out over two years, 2003-2005, due to its length and complexity. Completed in March 2005, a number of recommendations were put forward including targeted consultation with specific groups. Regular

engagement with local minority ethnic groups, the voluntary sector, disability groups and the local older persons' action group were all identified as key actions for the Council to start implementing in 2005/06. Whilst most of these have been achieved, work is continuing in all areas. In the 2006/07 Best Value service review, a large consultation exercise took place with our allotments tenants.

Large-scale consultation was undertaken as part of the development of a *Conservation and Landscape Management Plan* for Lowndes Park, which has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is intended to submit a major Lottery bid to regenerate Lowndes Park in Autumn 2007, and consultation will be on-going as part of this process.

In 2007/08 we will be continuing our wide ranging consultation procedures and will also be developing a comprehensive consultation policy. Further consultation will also be undertaken as part of the Best Value service review of Community Buildings.

**Therefore our Commitment is to consult as widely as possible with stakeholders and the general public to ensure that our policies and service reviews are publicly driven and representative of local views.**

**Members** of the Council not represented on the Performance Review Committee also play an important role in Best Value because they bring to Council the views, concerns and ideas of their constituents. Secondly, it is for the Councillors themselves to adopt the Best Value Performance Plan.

The Council allows 15 minutes before the beginning of every meeting of Council for **Public Question Time**. This provides the public with the opportunity to question the Council on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties affecting the town.

The **Annual Town Meeting** in May is another means of consulting the public. This forum enables town issues to be freely debated. Any resolutions that are passed are referred to Council for further consideration.

During 2003/04 the Council held its first '**Local Council Open Surgery**' for members of the public to meet and discuss any issues with Town, District and County Councillors representing Chesham and the surrounding area. Due to its success the Council has committed to continue to hold regular open surgeries (seven per year) to enable members of the public to meet their locally elected representatives and discuss any questions or concerns they have on local services, amenities or community issues. In line with recommendations put forward by the Best Value democratic services and corporate management service review, the summer Council Surgeries are held in the town centre market to raise the profile of the surgeries and encourage greater participation by the public. The success of the summer surgeries in 2006/07 has led to plans for an additional surgery being held in the market in September in 2007/08.

The Council has established and Members participate in **focus groups** to consult with our users on the services we provide. These discussion groups are:

- Allotments Group
- Elgiva Board of Management
- Environmental Group
- Friends of Chesham Cemetery
- Impress the Chess Group
- New Friends of Lowndes Park
- Town Centre Consortium

Finally, the Council communicates and invites feedback via **media releases** to the local press and radio; and through talks by Council officers to local organisations, clubs and societies.

We welcome your views on the contents of this Performance Plan. Comments, queries, complaints and compliments regarding the services we provide can be made by:

**In person** to the Town Hall between the hours of 10am-4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

**Letter** to The Town Clerk, Chesham Town Council, Town Hall, Chesham, HP5 1DS or by writing to your local Town Councillor. A full list of Councillors and their contact details is shown in Appendix 2 at the end of this Plan.

**Telephone** : 01494 774842

**Fax** : 01494 582908

**E-mail** : [townclerk@chesham.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@chesham.gov.uk)

**Website** via the online feedback form : [www.chesham.gov.uk/contacts](http://www.chesham.gov.uk/contacts)

## Mission Statement

---

**To improve the quality of life of the residents of Chesham.**

To achieve this we aim to:

- engage in an open dialogue with the residents to better understand their needs, and in turn explain how we will address these needs within the resources and powers available to the Town Council;
- provide high standard, cost-effective services to help meet the needs and wishes of the residents;
- assist and encourage other bodies to provide such services; and
- promote the best interests of the town for the betterment of the local community.

## Chesham Town Council

---

Chesham Town Council is the parish authority for the town of Chesham. With a population of 20,350 (2001 census), it is the largest parish in Chiltern District. The Town Council supplements the provision of local government services in Chesham and provides a wide range of social and recreational facilities, while promoting the town in its representations to other bodies. Central to meeting our corporate objectives, the Town Council works in partnership with the larger Chiltern District Council, which covers the towns of Chesham, Amersham and surrounding villages. The District Council is responsible for local plans and development control; environmental health and refuse collection. The Town Council also works in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council, which covers the whole of Buckinghamshire except Milton Keynes. The County Council is responsible for education; social services; highways; strategic planning and libraries. Our other partners include: Chesham Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Chesham Society, Town Twinning Association and other agencies and voluntary bodies working together to improve service delivery or resolve local problems.

The Town Council has 19 Town Councillors, elected for a term of four years. The last Town Council elections were held in May 2007. The Chairman of the Council, who also undertakes the office of Town Mayor, is elected annually by the Councillors in May, together with a Deputy Town Mayor.

Town Councillors are unpaid, and with the exception of the Mayor, do not receive any attendance allowance or payments for their duties, which they undertake purely on a voluntary basis.

The Town Council has a committee structure with four main standing committees: Development Control, Performance Review, Policy & Resources and Recreation and the Arts.

Agendas for all meetings are available to the public at least three clear days before the meeting date at the Town Hall, on the Council website and at Chesham Library in Elgiva Lane. Meetings are held at the Town Hall, Chesham and the public is encouraged to attend and may ask questions on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties, or which affect the town, at the beginning of every meeting of Council. A calendar of meetings of the Council and its standing committees from May 2007 to May 2008 is shown in Appendix 3.

The Town Council appoints representatives to the following charitable bodies:

Chesham Town Picture Fund, Francis Trust  
Duke of Bedford's Trust  
John Cheyney's Charity  
Ken Denham Trust  
Rachel Johnson's Eleemosynary  
Milk Hall (John Gaudrey's Charity)  
Weedon's Almshouses Charity Trust

The Town Council awarded donations in 2006/07 to 22 local organisations.

The Town Council employs a team of 16 full-time staff and 11 part-time staff headed by the Town Clerk, Bill Richards. This is supplemented by the use of a number of casual staff. The Town Council's staffing structure is shown in Appendix 4.

## Council Tax 2007/08

The Council Tax paid by Chesham residents includes the spending requirements of Buckinghamshire County Council, Chiltern District Council, Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority and Chesham Town Council. The District Council is the charging authority responsible for collecting your Council Tax on behalf of all five authorities. Chesham Town Council **does not receive** revenue support from Central Government, unlike the District and County Councils although £30,000 is received each year to assist with the Best Value monitoring process. Neither does it receive funding from local businesses and retailers through their Non Domestic Rate. This is collected by the District Council on behalf of the government, reallocated and paid back to the District Council in the form of a grant.

Chesham Town Council is funded by Chesham householders and from the income generated from services such as the Elgiva, letting income from the Town Hall and other fees and charges. Each year, the Town Council calculates the money it needs to raise to provide its services. Then we deduct the income collectable from our activities to leave an amount we require to spend on these services for the year ahead. This sum, called the precept, is the amount the District Council collects on our behalf as a proportion of the total Council Tax paid by Chesham residents. This year, ending 31 March 2008, our precept will be £717,520. Therefore, if you live in an average Band D house, you will be contributing £86.83 (an increase of 3.1%) of your total Council Tax Bill of £1,397.39 to Chesham Town Council in 2007/08.

The net cost of the Town Council's services can be summarised as follows:

Service	Estimate 2007/08 £
Administration and Democratic Services	141,720
Allotments	15,885
Cemetery and Churchyard	50,885
Housing	(6,080)
Parks and Open Spaces	203,355
Sports Pavilions and Pitches	14,640
Open Air Swimming Pool & Leisure Facilities at The Moor	40,280
CCTV	0
The Elgiva	163,890
Town Centre Revitalisation	27,625
Town Hall	44,410
Lowndes Park Toilets	15,380
Capital	0
<b>Net cost of Services</b>	<b>711,990</b>
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	5,530
<b>Precept</b>	<b>717,520</b>

Note: A detailed summary of the Council's net expenditure for 2007/08 is shown in Appendix 6 together with the Renewal and Repairs Programme up to 2008/09.

## Our Services, Performance 2006/07, Objectives and Targets for 2007/08

This section of the Plan explains the Council's aims and objectives, key targets and performance measures for each of the services we provide.

### Corporate Performance Indicators

The following Performance Indicators, shown below, represent a measure of our corporate performance.

Performance Indicator Corporate	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08
Cost of all Town Council services per elector per annum	£43.70	£39.68	£46.96	£40.91	£46.24
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days	95%	97%	95%	94%	95%
Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence	2.0%	0.5%	2.0%	1.0%	2.0%
Percentage attendance by Councillors at meetings of the Council, including standing committees	80.0%	74.8%	80.0%	80.5%	80.0%
Percentage of correspondence dealt with within 7 days	90.0%	90.6%	90.0%	87.1%	90.0%
Percentage of correspondence fully answered within 20 days	95.0%	94.2%	95.0%	93.2%	95.0%
Percentage of e-mails replied to within 2 days	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

#### SUMMARY OF CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SERVICE

We are pleased that again the net precept cost per elector was significantly lower than our target.

A postal survey to all residents in the town was conducted in February 2005 where questions about frequency of visits and levels of satisfaction with Council services were asked. An encouraging 27% response was received with an extremely pleasing 92% indicating that overall, the services provided by the Town Council were 'satisfactory' (47%), 'good' or 'excellent' (45%). Members have expressed the view that the major postal survey should take place every five years. In light of the cost of the surveys to the tax-payer and the likelihood of 'consultation fatigue', no meaningful generic surveys were undertaken for 2006-07. Following this break, a number of surveys are planned for 2007-08 to consult with the public on our services.

Over the last three years limited delegated powers to Committees (which began in 2004-05) has enabled a speedier decision making process and hence a quicker turn-a-round in response times to correspondence. A small percentage of letters remain not 'fully answered' in 20 days because they are subject to determination by Full Council who meet every 6/8 weeks or they are subject to a query from the correspondent themselves.

The remaining pages of this section deal specifically with the services we provide.

## Allotments

### The Council's service objective is:

to provide allotments where a demand exists, in keeping with our statutory obligation.

### The service we provide...

The Council altogether owns 227 plots, spread across Asheridge Road (45 plots); Amersham Road (6 plots) and Cameron Road (176 plots).

Our key targets last year	Did we meet them?
Erect security fencing to the Nalders Road perimeter of the Cameron Road site.	<b>No.</b> It has been determined that this work is not feasible because it would require the loss of several allotments.
Install retaining wall to the bottom of the slope from the car park at Cameron Road site to prevent land slip.	<b>Yes.</b>
Complete renumbering of all allotment plots at both the Cameron Road and Asheridge Road sites.	<b>Yes.</b>
Raise the height of the vehicle gate and side fencing at the Harries Close entrance to the Asheridge Road site including the installation of a high pedestrian gate to deter illegal entry.	<b>Yes.</b>
Renovate plots 101-107 at the Cameron Road site to enable those plots to be let to prospective tenants.	<b>Yes.</b>
Investigate the costs for removal of the corrugated iron fence at newly renovated Cameron Road plots (101-107) and the insertion of terraced barriers.	<b>No.</b> Costs have been received; but the high level of cost involved requires the proposal to be revisited.
Continue to work in partnership with the Allotments Group to improve all three sites.	<b>Ongoing.</b>

## Service Performance and Targets

### Performance indicators for this service are:

Performance Indicator Allotments	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08
Cost to the Council per elector	£0.66	£0.74	£0.93	£1.19	£0.98
Income to the Council per hectare of workable allotment land	£557.86	£621.66	£612.76	£671.81	£778.93
Percentage of uncultivated allotment land	15%	2.5%	2.5%	3.2%	2.5%
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that allotments provided by the Town Council are 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'	N/A	N/A	75%	96%*	90%
Frequency of inspection of allotment plots per annum	2	2	2	2	2
Frequency of management of untenanted plots per annum	4	4	4	4	4

\* taken from 2006/07 Allotment Tenants' Survey.

As well as the above mentioned performance indicators, the Council has a number of performance standards that are monitored by staff. They include:

- monitoring and collecting rent arrears
- maintenance of boundary hedges
- monitoring excessive water consumption caused by leaks and taking corrective action

**SUMMARY OF ALLOTMENTS SERVICE**

The allotments were the subject of this year’s service review (please see page 42) and therefore major works were limited in 2006/07 in case they were contrary to the recommendations of the Best Value panel. However, with all plots fully tenanted and the existence of significant waiting lists, work was undertaken to renovate seven plots at the Cameron Road site that had been unoccupied for a number of years and were in an unworkable condition. All seven plots are now tenanted.

Small quantities of low-grade asbestos previously brought on to the sites by tenants were identified following a review of the sites. To safeguard the health and safety of tenants, all identified asbestos was removed by licensed contractors, at no additional expense to the tenants. The excellent work of the Council’s Parks and Premises team, in liaison with the Allotments Group, continued to raise standards of cultivation across the sites.

**Next year’s key targets for 2007/08**

- Investigate sourcing water butts for reduced-price provision to tenants.
- Consider the provision of toilets, subject to costs.
- Actively engage the Police and Police Community Support Officers to help tackle vandalism on allotments.
- Publicise the Allotments Group website to increase usage.
- Implement small increase in allotment rents.
- Provide disabled plot plus parking bay at Asheridge Road site, subject to the earmarked plot becoming vacant.
- Continue to work in partnership with the Allotments Group to improve all three sites.
- Revisit the proposal to remove the corrugated fence at plots 101-107 and the insertion of terraced barriers due to the excessive costs required for this project.
- Investigate the feasibility of planting thorny hedging at the Cameron Road perimeter of the Cameron Road allotments to improve security and enhance biodiversity.
- Investigate the feasibility of works to increase gate and fence heights at the Cameron Road site.

**TWO YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- ⇒ Investigate the use of thorny hedging at Asheridge Road to improve security and enhance biodiversity.
- ⇒ Increase awareness among young people of the existence of allotments and their purpose in order to reduce vandalism.
- ⇒ Increase publicity of the 50% discount for the over-60s.

## ***Parks, Open Spaces and Playgrounds***

### ***The Council's service objective is:***

to satisfy the requirement to provide good social and recreational facilities.

### ***The service we provide...***

The Council owns, and maintains, jointly with external contractors, approximately 88 acres of Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces at the following 17 locations within Chesham:

- **Lowndes Park** - an area of some 36 acres. The Lower Park was a gift to the town by the Lowndes family in 1953. Its main features include Skottowe's Pond, children's play areas, a skatepark and multi-sports court, a family tree planting scheme and Sovereign Coppice, marking 40 years of Her Majesty's reign. Also the location for the annual Schools of Chesham Carnival and open-air concerts.
- **Meades Water Gardens** - formerly disused watercress beds, 3 acres, laid out in 1979 and awarded a commendation by the Civic Trust in 1980.
- **Chesham Moor** - formerly used as the town's domestic refuse site, now an attractive stretch of common land of some 17 acres alongside the River Chess. Its main features include sports pitches, children's playthings and the Open Air Swimming Pool.
- **Nashleigh Hill Recreation Ground** - a 9.5 acre open space, partly let to a local farmer for grazing cattle. Site also used for circuses and small fun fairs. The park also accommodates a children's play area.
- **Co-op Field** - a sloping 4 acre field, a popular location for tobogganing, with enclosed children's play area.
- **Marston Playing Field** - an 8 acre open space with enclosed children's play area and football pitches.
- **Codmore Playing Field** - a 7 acre open space with enclosed children's play area, football pitches and a cricket wicket.
- **Big Round Green** - an area of woodland leased to the Woodland Trust.
- **Manor Way Island** - a small area of open space in Manor Way.
- **Lye Green** - a small area of common land off Lye Green Road.
- **The Chalk Dell** - a small area of open space off Nashleigh Hill.
- **Batchelors Way** - an enclosed children's play area within an open space owned by Paradigm Housing.
- **Bois Moor Road** - an enclosed children's play area off Bois Moor Road.
- **Gordon Road** - a small children's play area off Gordon Road.
- **Hodds Wood Road** - an enclosed children's play area off Hodds Wood Road.
- **Windsor Road** - an enclosed children's play area within an open space owned by Chiltern District Council but maintained by this Council.
- **Woodland View** - an enclosed children's play area off Woodland View.

<b>Our key targets last year</b>	<b>Did we meet them?</b>
Complete the renovation of the land around the new Lowndes Park public conveniences.	<b>Yes.</b>
Re-fence the outstanding one side of the Bois Moor Road play area.	<b>Yes.</b>
Renew the old wooden fence around the play area at Codmore field.	<b>Partly.</b> Quotations received. Work to be completed by September 2007.
Renew the roof of the bus shelter in Upper Belmont Road.	<b>Yes.</b>
Progress improvements to the River Chess and Meades Water Gardens with the 'Impress the Chess' multi-agency working group.	<b>Yes.</b> Funding obtained for regenerating Meades Water Gardens and the tree work conducted as phase I of the work was completed in March 2007. A guidance leaflet for riparian landowners is being drawn up. 'Joined-up' cleaning operations by the voluntary sector are in progress.

Install new public bench on the Rue de Houilles as part of the Town Twinning initiative.	<b>Yes.</b>
Progress the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant for Lowndes Park.	<b>Yes.</b> Work has continued and the completed application will be submitted in autumn 2007.
Install new litter bin at Windsor Road play area and Meades Water Gardens.	<b>Yes.</b>
Install replacement litter bins – as many as the 2006-07 budget affords, as identified in the 2005-06 Litter Bin Review.	<b>Yes.</b> Eight replacement bins have been installed.
Applying for 'Green Flag Status' for Lowndes Park.	<b>Yes.</b> Application submitted December 2006. Judging took place 10 May 2007.

## Service Performance and Targets

*Performance indicators for this service are:*

<b>Performance Indicator Parks, Open Spaces, Playgrounds</b>	<b>Target 2005/06</b>	<b>Actual 2005/06</b>	<b>Target 2006/07</b>	<b>Actual 2006/07</b>	<b>Target 2007/08</b>
Cost to the Council per elector	£9.86	£8.66	£10.32	£9.34	£10.69
Percentage of play equipment inspected and made safe within 24 hours of reported defect	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of sites visited and inspected weekly	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that parks, open spaces and playground services were 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*N/A
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that the Lowndes Park facilities were 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*75%

\* Because of the difficulty involved in getting an overall response rate because of the diverse facilities provided, surveys will be developed to target facilities individually. The first survey will focus on Lowndes Park.

As well as the above mentioned PI's, the Council has a number of performance standards which are monitored by the Parks and Premises Manager. Some relate to the Council's own Grounds Maintenance staff, others are used to measure the performance of our appointed contractors. They include:

- litter collection and emptying of litter bins in Lowndes Park and all other parks and open spaces.
- special attention to particular problems of litter, vandalism and graffiti in the Council's parks as required.
- maintenance of flower beds and hanging baskets.

**Next year's key targets for 2007/08**

Work with Chiltern District Council to instigate all recommendations of PPG 17 Open Spaces survey.

Renew the old wooden fence around the play area at Codmore Field.

Submit bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the regeneration of Lowndes Park.

Continue to purchase and install new litter bins as phase 2 of the litter bin review, as well as the provision of an additional litter bin at the Nashleigh Hill recreation ground.

Relocate multi-use games area from Woodland View.

Upgrade and replace signage in Lowndes Park.

Support the revitalised 'Friends of Lowndes Park'.

Lobby Buckinghamshire County Council to cut back vegetation adjacent to Lowndes Park at St. Mary's Way.

Use of a survey of park play equipment conducted by the Youth Council to help prioritise play equipment renovation.

Install new play equipment at Marston Field.

Install new play equipment at Woodland View, in consultation with the local residents' association.

**SUMMARY OF PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND PLAYGROUNDS SERVICE**

A major achievement this year was a successful bid for over £50,000 worth of funding for the regeneration of Meades Water Gardens. The initial phase of works has been completed, and the Gardens are already benefiting from substantially increased light levels following these essential tree works.

Lowndes Park has been the focus of significant activity in 2006/07, including an application for Green Flag Status, continued work on the application for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant and the successful revitalisation of the Friends of Lowndes Park, which now has 45 members.

The Thames and Chilterns in Bloom judges praised the Town Council's floral displays, including those at the War Memorial and the town centre hanging baskets and planters.

**TWO YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- ⇒ Review and upgrade signage at all play areas.
- ⇒ Implement programme of gate closure replacement at play areas.

## The Elgiva

### The Council's service objective is:

to ensure a varied programme of entertainment, social and cultural activities is available to all sections of the community.

### The service we provide...

Built in 1998, the Elgiva (which replaced the former 22 year old venue based in Elgiva Lane) is owned and managed by Chesham Town Council. The venue provides a varied and popular range of entertainment including professional and amateur theatre productions, live music and one-nighters as well as a pantomime.

The Elgiva boasts the area's most hi-tech and advanced Dolby Digital Cinema and surround sound. A *What's On* brochure is published three times a year and distributed to over 60,000 homes in the area. The Elgiva also has its own website, [www.elgiva.com](http://www.elgiva.com) providing 24 hour access to cinema and theatre listings. The Elgiva provides a bar and there is also a franchised coffee shop/restaurant. The venue's tiered 300 seat auditorium can be quickly converted to a flat floor suitable for exhibitions, wedding receptions and parties, discos and rock concerts and art and craft fairs. A long stay 'pay and display' car park surrounds The Elgiva and is owned and managed by Chiltern District Council. The car park can accommodate 70 vehicles including 3 spaces for the registered disabled.

Our key targets last year	Did we meet them?
Investigate the installation of suitable blinds for the foyer windows.	<b>No.</b> Scheduled for 2007/08.
To review the current poster sites and seek improvements in overall appearance.	<b>No.</b> Scheduled for 2007/08.
To continue to seek a sponsorship programme in association with the Elgiva Board of Management.	<b>Yes.</b> Actively looking for sponsorship through a Friends group.
To continue to seek financial support for a conservatory in association with the Elgiva Board of Management.	<b>Yes.</b> Currently building up a portfolio of possible sponsors.
To purchase a new intelligent lighting control desk to update the current system, which no longer has technical 'back-up'.	<b>Yes.</b>
To replace the old, original flooring in the foyer area, with a mix of wood and carpet flooring.	<b>No.</b> Scheduled for 2007/08.
To investigate the installation of external lighting to 'light' the front/side of the theatre using energy efficient lighting giving a pleasing effect through the foliage, etc.	<b>No.</b> Scheduled for 2007/08.
To investigate the addition of 'film' to cover the windows, thereby blocking out some sunlight and heat during the Summer months.	<b>Yes.</b> The investigation determined that the addition of 'film' would not be feasible.
To investigate the possibility of adding some form of air-conditioning for the auditorium.	<b>Partly.</b> Quotations are being sought.
Undertake major renovation in summer shut down August 2006.	<b>Yes.</b> Complete redecoration of the foyer, bar, café, public toilets and auditorium completed in August 2006.

## Service Performance and Targets

*Performance indicators for this service are:*

Performance Indicator The Elgiva	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08
Cost to the Council per elector	£9.03	£6.81	£9.34	£6.99	£8.67
Income as a proportion of operating costs	67.1%	74.6%	67.8%	76.1%	71.8%
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that the facilities provided by The Elgiva are 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	96%
Number of patrons attending cinema performances	12,000	7,670	9,000	9,139	9,000
Number of patrons attending theatre performances	30,000	34,226	34,000	38,224	36,000
Average attendance – cinema (matinee)	12%	9%	10%	12%	12%
Average attendance – cinema (evening)	35%	20%	25%	33%	33%
Average attendance – theatre	65%	67%	67%	63%	65%
Number of social functions	20	23	23	20	20
Percentage of concessionary tickets sold – elderly	25%	28%	28%	35%	30%
Percentage of concessionary tickets sold – junior	20%	13%	15%	23%	20%
Percentage of non-concessionary tickets sold	40%	47%	45%	51%	50%
Number of amateur performances staged	75	96	85	128	100
Number of professional performances staged	75	78	80	91	85

### Next year's key targets for 2007/08

Investigate the installation of suitable blinds for the foyer windows.

To review the current poster sites and seek improvements in overall appearance.

To replace the old, original flooring in the foyer area, with a mix of wood and carpet flooring.

To investigate the installation of external lighting to 'light' the front/side of the theatre using energy efficient lighting giving a pleasing effect through the foliage, etc.

To investigate the possibility of adding some form of air-conditioning for the auditorium.

Erect conservatory subject to planning consent being agreed and sufficient external funding being accrued.

Investigate provision of a back-up system for the boiler.

### **SUMMARY OF THE ELGIVA THEATRE SERVICE**

Yet again the Elgiva has continued to improve in its performance, with the figures for cinema and theatre attendances increasing upon last year by nearly 1500 and 4000, respectively, and achieving a record pantomime attendance for Sleeping Beauty and the Beast.

2006/07 was an extremely busy year at the venue, which saw a significant increase in the number of both professional and amateur productions staged, as well as the complete renovation of the public areas of the building in August 2006.

The Board of Management continued to look for sponsorship through a Friends group, as well as building up a portfolio of potential sponsors to support the development of a conservatory.

### **TWO YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- ⇒ Investigate online ticket booking system
- ⇒ Install a new telephone system

## ***The Town Hall***

---

### ***The Council's service objective is:***

to ensure high quality social, recreational and cultural facilities are available to all sections of the community.

### ***The service we provide...***

Opened in 1998, The Town Hall overlooks Lowndes Park and is accessible on foot from the High Street through Baines Walk or by car through Star Yard Car Park, off Blucher Street. The venue boasts a ground floor community hall with seating capacity for 100 and adjoining kitchen facilities. There is full disabled access to the first floor and the Lowndes Room, which can seat up to 60, and has its own private kitchen. The Council Chamber, which is ideal for conferences and training courses can accommodate up to 100 delegates. There is a small meeting room, which can seat eight people. The venue offers a laptop, data projector, delegate microphone hiring facility and, as of 2006, wireless internet connection. The Town Hall is used extensively by a wide range of clubs, societies and community organisations as well as local companies for business meetings, including A.G.M.'s, and training. It is the town's only licensed venue for civil marriages and partnerships. Our first civil marriage took place on 29 June 2002 and our first civil partnership took place on 7 October 2006. The car park is owned and managed by Chiltern District Council and can accommodate 59 vehicles including 3 spaces for the registered disabled.

<b>Our key targets last year</b>	<b>Did we meet them?</b>
Re-carpeting of foyer and Lowndes Room.	<b>Yes.</b> Completed in February 2007.
Conduct review of storage and office facilities (particularly the CCTV room) when the status of CCTV provision in the District is clarified.	<b>No.</b> The review was delayed subject to a decision upon the future of CCTV provision in Chesham. Provision was determined in April 2007.
Develop storage facilities for chairs and tables in Community Hall.	<b>No.</b> A quotation for repairing the existing facilities was in excess of £10,000. Further investigations will be necessary.
Promote opportunities to get married at the Town Hall through advertising on the Buckinghamshire County Council website.	<b>Yes.</b> The Town Hall is now listed as a civil marriage and civil partnership venue on the Buckinghamshire County Council website.
Purchase TV and video for hire by room hirers.	<b>Yes.</b>
Re-order the storage and clear out files within the loft.	<b>Partly.</b> The loft is currently being organised and cleared.
Consider general re-decoration of the whole Town Hall dependent on budget.	<b>Yes.</b> Completed in early January 2007.
Purchase fire proof cabinet for burial records and minutes.	<b>Partly.</b> Quotes obtained.
Installation of wireless modem to facilitate Town Hall bookings.	<b>Yes.</b>
Devise mutually agreeable Performance Indicators with the Little Theatre by the Park Trustees ready for implementation in 2007/08.	<b>Yes.</b>

## Service Performance and Targets

*Performance indicators for this service are:*

Performance Indicator Town Hall & Little Theatre	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08
Cost to the Council per elector	£1.31	£1.25	£1.89	£1.83	£2.05
Income from lettings as a proportion of operating costs	67.5%	67.1%	55.7%	57.3%	56.7%
Percentage of satisfied users taken from questionnaire*	99%	100%	99%	N/A*	99%
Number of lettings for the Community Hall	550	607	600	603	600
Number of lettings for the Lowndes Room	500	584	600	543	575
Number of lettings for the Meeting Room	75	102	100	75**	90
Number of lettings for the Council Chamber	250	310	275	321	300
Number of Council / Committee / Panel sessions granted	90	124	100	43***	48
Number of Council-related sessions granted	---	---	---	144****	145
Number of free-of-charge sessions granted	50	198	*****PI amended	13	15
Number of civil marriage/partnership ceremonies	25	8	15	21	20
Little Theatre – number of theatre lettings*****	---	---	---	---	N/A
Little Theatre – number of class lettings*****	---	---	---	---	N/A
Little Theatre – number of private bookings*****	---	---	---	---	N/A

\* data taken from questionnaire of users following attendance at a function/ booking at Chesham Town Hall. No completed questionnaires were received in 2006/07.

\*\* The Meeting Room is kept free when the Chamber is booked to provide kitchen facilities for the Chamber hirers. Increased hire of the Chamber means that the Meeting Room is less available for hiring than in previous years.

\*\*\* This PI was altered in 2006/07 to include only Council/Committee/Panel sessions granted.

\*\*\*\* This PI was established in 2006/07 to cover Council-related sessions, including any “partnership” meeting held at the Town Hall in which the Town Council takes part.

\*\*\*\*\* This PI was amended in 2006/07 to include only genuine free-of-charge sessions granted to outside bodies, e.g. Town Twinning.

\*\*\*\*\*The Little Theatre PIs are new for 2007/08. Targets will not be set, but performance will be assessed by continued comparison of data.

As well as the PI's listed, the Council has a number of performance standards which are monitored by staff. They include:

- service contracts for the lift, automatic doors and boiler
- weekly fire alarm tests
- analysis of bookings by room

**Next year's key targets for 2007/08**

Conduct review of storage and office facilities.

Complete clearance of the loft.

Purchase fire proof cabinet for burial records and minutes, subject to budget.

Finalise arrangements for storage facilities for chairs and tables in Community Hall.

Investigate replacement of water taps, subject to budget.

Review boiler system, subject to budget.

Liaise with Principal Authorities on advancements in e-government initiatives to ensure Town Hall offers more flexible on-line resources.

**SUMMARY OF THE TOWN HALL**

Amending the PI's to enable differentiation between partnership meetings and complementary use demonstrates the enormous amount of partnership working that the Town Council is involved in, with 144 partnership meetings being held during 2006/07. These meetings only take place when other bookings have already been accommodated.

A major success this year is the increase in civil marriage ceremonies being held. The redecoration of the Town Hall, completed in January 2007, and the addition of wireless modem facilities have contributed to the building's success as a meeting venue.

**TWO YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- ⇒ Re-carpet the Council Chamber, subject to budget
- ⇒ Replace tables in the Council Chamber, subject to budget

## Sports Pavilions and Playing Fields

### The Council's service objective is:

to satisfy the requirement to provide high quality recreation facilities within the town.

### The service we provide...

- **Codmore Playing Field** – This sports ground accommodates two football pitches, an artificial cricket wicket and pavilion that provides modern changing facilities and a small social area which is available for hire for social functions.
- **Marston Playing Field** – This sports ground accommodates two football pitches.
- **The Moor Playing Fields** – The Moor is owned by the Town Council and also managed by the Council on a short-term basis. The playing fields on the lower Moor accommodate four football pitches. The Upper Moor accommodates a floodlit multi court (netball, tennis, five-a-side football, hockey and volleyball), a separate tennis court and a heated outdoor swimming pool.

Our key targets last year	Did we meet them?
Support the bid by local community association to manage the building and bid for external funding to rebuild Marston Pavilion.	<b>No.</b> Decision taken by Council, in agreement with local community association, to keep new facility 'in-house' and to bid to Sport England for lottery funding. Tenders now being drawn up for both brick and modular design.
Begin process of sharing of specialist equipment and knowledge with Amersham Town Council to improve ground maintenance.	<b>Yes.</b> The possibility of a 'shadowing' day at Amersham has been discussed with the Parks and Premises Manager.
Consider tiled changing room walls with central drainage outlet and direct access to the outside area for any redevelopment of Marston pavilion.	<b>No.</b> This will be considered in drawings for the new facility.
Write to football clubs reminding them of their responsibilities to clean changing facilities after use at the Moor and Codmore (and Marston after renovation).	<b>Partly.</b> Codmore teams have been written to.
Begin internal maintenance programme for both Codmore and Marston pavilions.	<b>No.</b> The maintenance schedules have been reprioritised and external maintenance at Codmore conducted first.
Support the Rugby Club in renegotiation of rental agreement directly with Chesham Park.	<b>Yes.</b> A new lease has been agreed between the College and the Rugby Club.
Ascertain the future of the Pavilion on the Moor.	<b>No.</b> The matter was unable to progress while the future management of the Moor Road facilities had not been confirmed.
Recommend the Council withdraw from current agreement to let out facilities, in agreement with the Chesham Park and the Rugby Club.	<b>Yes.</b>

## Service Performance and Targets

Performance indicators for this service are:

Performance Indicator Sports Pavilions, Playing Fields	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08
Cost to the Council per elector.	£0.65	£0.69	£0.86	£0.76	£0.76
Income from lettings as a proportion of operating costs.	40.3%	34.4%	32.2%	29.2%	13.3%
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that Marston Pavilion was 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A*
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that Codmore Pavilion was 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	75%
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that football pitches were 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	75%
Number of lettings for football matches.	85	62	70	44**	50
Number of organisations in total using these facilities.	11	13	13	8**	8

\* There is currently no pavilion at Marston.

\*\* Due to loss of three teams from the previous season (two have folded and one has moved to an alternative venue), a reduced number of friendlies (two teams) and some other organisations using alternative facilities.

### SUMMARY OF THE SPORTS PAVILIONS AND PLAYING FIELDS SERVICE

Plans to develop a new building at Marston have involved significant consultation with the local community and will result in the provision of modern changing room facilities.

The continued drop in football hirings for the second year running reflects a national trend in adult participation levels. As a consequence, participation trends will be analysed to evaluate our pitch provision for the future.

#### Next year's key targets for 2007/08

Ascertain the future of the Pavilion on the Moor.

Build new facility at Marston Field.

Support development of new facility at Marston Field through site enhancements including pitch drainage and car park resurfacing.

Begin internal maintenance programme for Codmore pavilion.

Convert old Codmore tennis courts into informal young persons' recreational area upon proof of need and finances available.

Consider joining WLL Leisure card scheme following a period of monitoring.

Investigate improvements to the condition of the car park at Codmore Playing Field.

Review current participation trends, particularly in regard to cricket and football to evaluate our provision in regard to pitches.

Field husbandry, budget permitting, including end-of-season pitch fertilization, goal mouth repairs, harrowing and aeration.

#### TWO YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN

⇒ Re-examine hiring agreements for football clubs.

Implement programme of gate closure replacement at playing fields.

## The Open Air Pool

### The Council's service objective is:

to satisfy the requirement to provide an open-air swimming facility for the town.

### The service we provide...

Owned by the Town Council and managed in conjunction with Wycombe Leisure Ltd., this facility provides a heated outdoor swimming pool open May to September and adjoining gymnasium and solarium, football pitches, a tennis court and a multi-court. The centre was closed in 1995 for extensive refurbishment and re-opened in 1997. It now provides changing-room facilities for the outside sports pitches as well as a pool hire facility.

#### Our key targets last year

Until April 2007, the open air pool was managed by Chess Valley Sports and Leisure Association (CVSLA). Therefore, it was for the CVSLA Committee to set its targets rather than the Council, so no key targets were set for 2006/07. The Association did agree to a number of improvement measures set out in the 2005/06 Best Value service review for Sports and Leisure. However, progress was limited during 2006/07 whilst the future management of the Moor facilities were determined. These issues have largely been superseded by the demise of CVSLA.

## Service Performance and Targets

### Performance indicators for this service are:

Performance Indicator Chess Valley	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08
Cost to the Council per elector	£2.22	£2.22	£2.39	£2.37	£2.58
Net funding provided to Chess Valley Sports and Leisure Association per swim #	£1.61	£1.80	£1.76	£1.67	--
Net cost per swim *	--	--	--	--	£1.88
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that the outdoor swimming pool was 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'.	98%	94%	N/A	N/A	98%
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that the tennis court and multi court was 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'	96%	100%	N/A	N/A	96%
Number of lettings for tennis court	1800	1577	1800	2091	***1600
Number of lettings for multi-court (includes tennis, netball, football)	540	681	700	**445	***350

# Based on number of swims in a season including those taken by season ticket holders. PI not applicable after 2006/07.

\* PI introduced for 2007/08

\*\* The multi-court was not available for lettings between January and March pending resurfacing.

\*\*\* Targets are lower than in previous years as the courts will be unavailable during repair and resurfacing works for the tennis and multi-court, respectively.

**Next year's key targets for 2007/08**

Resurface the multi-court.

Repair the tennis court surface.

Write to the football clubs that play at the Moor reminding them of cleaning responsibilities.

Ascertain the future management of the Pool and associated facilities.

**SUMMARY OF THE OPEN AIR POOL SERVICE**

It is pleasing to note that the actual cost per elector for 2006/07 is in line with the target figure. CVSLA, who previously managed the Pool, ceased operations on 18 April 2007. Many of the issues concerning the pool and associated facilities raised in previous performance plans have been superseded by the demise of CVSLA. The Town Council has taken over the management of the facility on a short-term basis, and it was a major achievement that the Pool was open for business as usual on 1 May 2007.

**TWO YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Longer-term plans will be developed when the future management of the Pool and its associated facilities have been decided.

## ***Chesham Cemetery and Closed Churchyard***

### ***The Council's service objective is:***

to provide and maintain a local Cemetery and Garden of Remembrance for the town.

### ***The service we provide...***

- **Chesham Cemetery** - owned and managed by the Town Council for and on behalf of the residents of Chesham Town and Chartridge Parish Councils. The Cemetery is situated at the northern end of the town with entrances in Bellingdon Road, Berkhamstead Road and Alma Road. The Cemetery, which will be 150 years old in 2008, caters for all religious persuasions. A small Chapel with a seating capacity of 70 is available and may be hired for a service prior to interment. A Garden of Remembrance and Avenue of Remembrance are also available for the interment of ashes.
- **St. Mary's Closed Churchyard** - maintenance passed to Chesham Town Council by the Parochial Church Council in 1974. The Town Council is responsible for the upkeep of the Churchyard including its grass, walls, fences, gates and trees.

<b>Our key targets last year</b>	<b>Did we meet them?</b>
Subject to approval from the Recreation and Arts Committee, undertake the permanent make-safe procedure to those memorials that failed the safety testing from phase one of the inspections and that have not been repaired by the memorial owners.	<b>Partly.</b> Work will be completed in winter 2007, work schedules permitting.
Carry out structural works to the cemetery chapel to resolve the problems of dampness – the problems as identified by the Surveyors in 2005-06.	<b>Yes.</b> First phase completed. Longer-term work to be implemented within the next 5 years, following recommendations in the Surveyors' report.
Carry out the third and final phase of the memorial safety inspections.	<b>Yes.</b>
Install a new public bench in remembrance of Dr. Baines for his services to the local community.	<b>Yes.</b> Following consultation with Dr. Baines' family, the bench was installed in the High Street in January 2007.
The production of a 'fact sheet' with relevant information regarding the cemetery and St. Mary's Closed Churchyard. The document to be produced by the 'Friends of the Cemetery' for local schools to include in their local history curriculum.	<b>Yes.</b> The fact sheet has been included in the curriculum of one school.
The production of a 'Cemetery Booklet' that provides useful information for all cemetery users, e.g. brief history, site plan, helpful advice for arranging funerals, etc. The booklet will be produced by the Friends Group, with assistance from the Town Council.	<b>Yes.</b>

## Service Performance and Targets

Performance indicators for this service are:

Performance Indicator Chesham Cemetery	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08
Cost to the Council per elector	£2.62	£2.83	£2.89	£3.10	£2.95
Number of complaints received from visitors	0	2	0	2	0
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that the cemetery was 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	87%
Number of waste bins provided /replaced	14	14	15	11*	12
Number of benches provided /replaced	11	11	12	12	13

\* There should be 12 litter bins, but one has been removed and is yet to be replaced. The litter bin budget for 2006/07 was spent on replacement bins classed as essential in the Litter Bin Review on Open Spaces.

Performance Indicator St. Mary's Closed Churchyard	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08
Cost to the Council per elector	£0.12	£0.16	£0.18	£0.18	£0.17
Number of complaints received from visitors	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that the closed churchyard was 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	87%

### Next year's key targets for 2007/08

Completion of the permanent make-safe procedure to those memorials that failed the safety testing from phase one of the inspections and that have not been repaired by the memorial owners.

Investigate computerisation of burial registers and memorials.

Conduct a random, large-scale postal survey on the Cemetery.

Continue process of securing the perimeter of the Cemetery, adjacent to Chalk Hill.

Upgrade all information and signage.

Review policy on out-of-hours burials.

Replace one old litter bin with a vandal-resistant bin.

Following the completion of the existing contract, investigate options for grass cutting including taking the operation in-house.

Redecorate the inside of the Chapel.

### SUMMARY OF THE CEMETERY / CLOSED CHURCHYARD SERVICE

A number of improvements were made to the Cemetery; the structural repairs to the Chapel being a major undertaking. The third and final phase of the memorial safety inspections were also conducted as part of the Council's duty of care to the public.

The newly adopted Environmental Policy confirms the Council's commitment to conserving and promoting biodiversity as part of the management of Chesham's green spaces. In accordance with this, the Council is working with the 'Friends of Chesham Cemetery' to develop a wildflower area.

The Council appreciate the importance of education in safeguarding the Cemetery against acts of vandalism and antisocial behaviour. It is for this reason that we are particularly delighted that one of the local schools has included the Friends' Cemetery fact sheet in its local history curriculum.

**TWO YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- ⇒ Continue the process of securing the perimeter
- ⇒ Work with the 'Friends of Chesham Cemetery' to produce a 150th anniversary booklet
- ⇒ Develop accurate and up-to-date maps of grave spaces in all sections of the cemetery

## ***Democratic Services and Corporate Management***

### ***The Council's service objectives are:***

to provide the necessary and cost effective support to the democratic process and delivery of the Council's services.

to preserve the town's identity and promote its heritage through the Town Mayor's attendance at Civic and local organisations' events.

### ***The service we provide...***

- **Advice and support activities** - administrative support is provided to Members as part of the Council's decision making process. This includes officer time spent on the preparation of agenda items and reports to Council, minutes, and attendance at meetings involving Members.
- **Consultation** - the Town Council is consulted in the planning process and submits comments to Chiltern District Council on all planning applications concerning development within the parish. Residents may attend meetings of the Council's Development Control Committee and may make statements either for or against a particular development. The Council is also consulted on the Local and County Structure Plans and other Plans such as the Local Transport and the Waste Management Plans.
- **Customer services** - the Town Hall is a vital information point for the public; a "one-stop-shop" where information is provided not only about the Town Council's services but also on matters involving the services outside the remit of the Council.
- **Representational issues** - the Town Council aims to be the representative voice of Chesham's residents and lobbies other agencies and organisations on various matters in relation to the services that they provide. Examples include highway issues e.g. traffic calming measures and road safety schemes; London Underground; Thames Valley Police Authority and the Environment Agency. The Council is represented on seven charitable bodies, (see p.16 for details), and on a further 25 organisations and four working panels.
- **Other support services** - the Town Council also supports and promotes the role of the Town Mayor within the local community through, among other things, the Annual Civic, Remembrance and Carol Services and Annual Town Meeting. Other services that the Council supports include:

Town Centre Revitalisation  
Christmas Lights  
War Memorial  
Town Clocks

Finally, the provision of information required by members of the public in the exercise of statutory rights (other than about specific services); completing, submitting and publishing statements of accounts, annual reports and Best Value Performance Plans; treasury management; external audit and external inspections (including Best Value) are all part of the Council's Corporate Management services.

<b>Our key targets last year</b>	<b>Did we meet them?</b>
Increase consultation with 'hard to reach' groups, particularly the minority ethnic community.	<b>No.</b> Existing mechanisms of consultation are currently being audited, prior to the development of a consultation policy.
Engage in the 'Getting Closer to Communities' County Council initiative with a view to devising a Charter and taking on devolved services.	<b>Yes.</b> Agreement signed in September 2006 and devolved services adopted.
Full involvement in the 'Chesham Heritage Weekend' scheduled for September 2006.	<b>Yes.</b> Full involvement, including free provision of Town Hall rooms for displays and performances.

Continue to support the aims and objectives emanating from the 'Chesham Community Vision'.	<b>Yes.</b> Many projects are under development, e.g. Explorer Walks, Youth Taster Event.
Devise a 'whistleblowers' policy for Council employees.	<b>Yes.</b> Adopted on 16 October 2006.
Keep Members and officers abreast of new initiatives forthcoming from the Government's White Paper on possible local government reform.	<b>Yes.</b> White paper produced and duly circulated to Members. Précis of Lyons Report on the future funding of local government circulated March 2007.
Consider response to the opportunities forthcoming from the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Act that allows for town councils to issue fixed penalties for low level anti-social behaviour.	<b>No.</b> Council has agreed to progress this, but is awaiting training opportunities through Chiltern District Council (CDC).
Begin negotiations with the District Council on future CCTV provision within town.	<b>Yes.</b> CDC has agreed to fund all CCTV in Chesham from 1 April 2007.
Continue to support the 'Chesham in Bloom' initiative.	<b>Yes.</b> The initiative was supported by Town Hall, Elgiva and Parks & Premises staff, contributing to the achievement of a Silver Award.
Continue to support the 'Business4Business' exhibition.	<b>Yes.</b> Supported the May 2006 B4B exhibition.
Respond to the District Council's core strategy in respect of the Local Development Framework.	<b>Yes.</b> Response submitted to core strategy in June 2006.
Take cognisance of the recommendations forthcoming from the Council's 'Corporate Governance' audit due out in September 2006.	<b>Yes.</b> Reported to Policy and Resources Committee in October 2006. Response to auditors sent in November. Financial Management risk assessment conducted in March 2007.

## Service Performance and Targets

*Performance indicators for this service are:*

Performance Indicator Democratic Services	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08
Cost to the Council per elector	£8.68	£8.80	£9.13	£7.95	£9.41
Percentage of respondents to survey who were satisfied with the service received when contacting the Council or visiting the Town Hall	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	95%
Percentage of respondents to survey indicating that Chesham Town Council average household Council Tax (Band D) rate per year was 'in-between', 'good' or 'very good' value for money	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	80%
Number of events attended by the Town Mayor or Deputy Mayor	75	105	100	144	120

**Next year's key targets for 2007/08**

Support and participate in the 'Business 4Business' networking event.

Include additional information in Members' Induction Pack for newly elected Members.

Consider the production of a Chesham Town Council five-year plan in light of the recommendations of the 'Chesham Community Vision'.

Provide training for Members, including anti-racism and anti-bullying training.

Extend the devolved services undertaken on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council as part of the 'Getting Closer to Communities' initiative.

**SUMMARY OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT SERVICE**

The Council continues to be heavily involved in the 'Chesham Community Vision', contributing to projects promoting and enhancing business, tourism, the environment, transport, youth and community.

In September 2006, the Town Council took over responsibility for some highway functions from Buckinghamshire County Council. This has enabled the Council to tackle very local tasks, such as removing fly posters and cleaning up graffiti, to rapidly improve the appearance of the town.

The success of the Local Council Open Surgeries held in the market in the summer months of 2006 has led to an increase in the number of summer surgeries for 2007 to further enhance consultation and communication with the public.

In 2006, training on chairmanship skills was offered through the Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils County Training Partnership and undertaken by a number of Members.

**TWO YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- ⇒ Review Member Services in light of the imminent publication of the white paper on neighbourhood government.
- ⇒ Review targeted consultation arrangements with specific groups.

## ***Environmental Performance***

---

### ***The Council's objective is:***

to minimise the negative impacts of the Council's activities on the general environment.

to work towards enhancing and protecting the immediate environs of Chesham.

### **SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE**

The Town Council has a long history of involvement in environmental projects in Chesham, e.g. being the lead partner of 'Impress the Chess' and providing financial support to the Environmental Group. In December 2006, the Town Council adopted an Environmental Policy to provide a framework in which to improve the overall environmental performance of the Council. As a consequence, environmental key targets are being included in the Best Value Performance Plan for the first time.

### **Next year's key targets for 2007/08**

Progress improvements to the River Chess and Meades Water Gardens with the 'Impress the Chess' multi-agency working group.

Develop a strategy for Japanese knotweed control in Chesham, particularly on Council land, in partnership with the Environmental Group and Paradigm Housing.

Continue to work with the Friends of Chesham Cemetery to develop a wildflower area in the Cemetery.

Investigate funding sources for the installation of solar panels at The Elgiva.

Recycle toner cartridges, paper, plastic, cans and bottles from The Elgiva.

Investigate the feasibility of recycling more green waste using contractors.

In partnership with Chiltern District Council, install aluminium foil recycling facilities at the Town Hall.

Formally approach the Local Planning Authority to request that they take environmental issues relevant to Chesham into consideration when making decisions on planning applications.

### **TWO YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- ⇒ Develop pollution incident response plans for the Town Council's properties
- ⇒ Consider extending sustainable procurement, so long as the requirements for value for money and quality are met

## Best Value Service Review 2006/07

---

This year we completed a Best Value Service Review of Allotments. In following the success of the use of an external Challenge Panel in previous years, the review was led by an external Challenge Panel who worked alongside the Council's officers and Members. The Panel consisted of an officer from another Town Council, the Chesham Allotments Group Chairman, a Chesham allotment holder and an independent financial advisor/accountant.

The focus for 2007/08 will be a Best Value review of Community Buildings. It is likely that Government will be removing the legal requirement for the Council to undertake Best Value reviews from 2008/09. A voluntary review of services will be determined by Members.

Copies of all completed service reviews are available from the Town Council.

These are the findings of this year's Allotments review:

### **ALLOTMENTS**

The review looked at the allotments service operated by the Town Council, which consists of 227 plots on three different sites across the town. The Challenge Panel was satisfied with the overall service provision and very positive results were obtained from a survey of tenants, with 96% rating the allotments service as 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'.

In respect of the service, the review made the following recommendations:

Investigate sourcing water butts for reduced-price provision to tenants.
Provide information on toilet types and costs to the Council for consideration of provision.
Publicise the Allotments Group website to increase usage.
Actively engage the Police and Police Community Support Officers to help tackle vandalism on allotments.
Implement small increase in allotment rents.
Investigate the use of thorny hedging at Asheridge Road to improve security and enhance biodiversity.
Increase awareness among young people of the existence of allotments and their purpose in order to reduce vandalism.
Increase publicity of the 50% discount for the over-60s.
Implement works to increase gate and fence heights at Asheridge Road to increase security.
Implement works to improve the condition of the central path at Asheridge Road.
Investigate the provision of dedicated parking for the disabled/elderly at Cameron Road (subject to the outcomes of the experimental road traffic order).

## **Appendices**

# Chesham Community Vision      your town – your future



## VISION STATEMENT – Chesham in 2015

An active and vibrant working market town with an integrated but varied community where people support one another and can live, work, shop, visit and enjoy themselves in an environment that is constantly cared for and enhanced. A town that...

- provides sustainable employment opportunities, housing and business facilities that respect the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in which it is situated.
- encourages young and old from all areas to work together to achieve continual improvement to the facilities and future prospects of the town.
- promotes a thriving town centre which provides leisure and shopping facilities to meet the needs and wishes of residents and visitors.
- has a fully linked transport and communication system providing good services for people to travel within the town and regular connections to London and surrounding towns and villages..

## BACKGROUND

The Chesham Community Vision was launched in early 2004. Over 400 residents from Chesham and surrounding communities plus representatives of more than 40 local businesses, groups and organisations responded to an initial consultation event. Over 3,000 individual responses have been captured as part of this new community-wide appraisal, completed by a broad spectrum of the community including the very young, young people, older persons, minority group representatives plus local retailers and businesses. A good example of the innovative consultation techniques deployed during the project was the 'Lights, Camera, Gab DVD initiative. What has emerged are a range of key trends and issues, challenges and aspirations, that those who live, work, play or visit the town and local area express when they consider the future of this community.

In late 2004 four Action Groups, Environment, Economy, Community & Transport, were created with a remit to build on the evidence from the consultation work and prepare a fresh action plan reflecting the views of the widest possible audience and forming a springboard for projects to be delivered by local community groups. This Vision document summarises the outcome of their work and offers an initial action plan which will guide project teams as they seek solutions to the challenges facing Chesham over the next 10 years.

## HISTORY & HERITAGE

The people of Chesham have a tradition of being independent minded – politically, in religion and in trade. In the 1700s the commercial planting of beechwoods gave impetus to the first industrialisation of this rural town. Leathercraft followed. This together with a brewery gave the town its cachet of 4 B's – Boots, Brushes, Beer and Baptists. The arrival of the Metropolitan Railway in 1889 further boosted the economy. In the 1960s an influx of workers from Pakistan and Bangladesh began the change of the population into today's multicultural diversity.

As we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century our traditional small industries have declined and the change is towards service industries. However, Chesham survives as a market town in a valued Chiltern landscape and still serves a wide rural area.

## KEY VALUES

The key values, challenges and aspirations expressed by the community in and around the town are;

- ◆ A town of character
- ◆ A vibrant social mix
- ◆ A solid community infrastructure
- ◆ Regeneration of the High Street
- ◆ Ensure a sound local economy
- ◆ Best access to services
- ◆ Improved communication with all who live, work, visit and play in Chesham
- ◆ A strong sense of community
- ◆ An integrated community
- ◆ Easy accessibility to green open spaces
- ◆ Better choice of shops
- ◆ Linking of education, training and employment
- ◆ An integrated public transport system



Chesham retains a very strong community identity. The responses to our appraisal from all sectors of the community reflected this and also a clear appreciation of the blend of rural and urban. This unique mix e.g. distinctive town centre, green spaces, variety of small retail units, street market and surviving social fabric was recognised by all who we have consulted, i.e. living, working or visiting the town. Many valued and wished to retain the geographical distinctiveness of Chesham and surrounding communities within the Chilterns. These factors clearly play a major part in the importance of the town to a wide hinterland.

## PARTNERS

This Vision reflects a strong local partnership, the process facilitated by Bucks Community Action and supported by Chesham Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Chesham Community Association, Chesham Society, Chesham Environment Group, Chiltern Racial Equality Council, The Children's Fund, Chesham Town Council, Chiltern District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council

## ENVIRONMENT

Chesham has many attractive landscape features, notably, the River Chess, Lowndes Park and the surrounding woodlands, and an historic built environment that includes the church and old town. These need to be enhanced, protected and publicised. As well as larger schemes to achieve this, such as *Impress the Chess*, Chesham In Bloom and the Lowndes Park project, there are numerous local groups working on environmental projects. An Environment Forum will be set up to identify these groups, co-ordinate their work and to publicise their activities. Furthermore, access to the surrounding countryside needs improving for walkers and cyclists, both local and visiting, so that Chesham can be seen as a tourist centre and a gateway to the Chilterns. The town itself needs to have more to offer to visitors and the utilisation of the Yards off the High Street is one way of achieving this. Chesham has an interesting heritage of trades and professions. Publicity of this by means of the Museum and various publications will further add to the attractiveness of the town to the visitor.



## ECONOMY

Chesham is a work/life town with the majority of residents working within five miles of home and it is this heritage that determines its character. It is not just a dormitory for anywhere else and its High Street is not a clone of a hundred other High Streets throughout the country. Maintaining these elements is essential to maintaining the character of Chesham.

The High Street in Chesham has suffered like those in many other market towns but with the fourth largest population in the County and with its hinterland of the historical Greater Chesham it has strengths to build upon. The need is to upgrade the High Street in terms of environmental and social attractiveness, to extend the range of shops, particularly local and specialist shops, to exploit the street market and to develop other facilities such as restaurants that will attract visitors. There is a need for consistent promotion of the High Street, recognising the convenience, variety, accessibility and expertise that local ownership and control provide.

Although Chesham has a substantial resident population, a really dynamic High Street needs to attract visitors from outside. There are many attractive features to Chesham, but no major attraction to bring people in. The need is to develop a strategy that will build on these lower key attractions to increase the numbers of visitors to the Town and to encourage those visitors to make use of the other facilities available.

It is characteristic of Chesham that people work and live in the town. To maintain this situation, which is highly beneficial in social and environmental terms, there is a need to retain commercial premises in the Town and also to ensure that the people in Chesham have the appropriate education and skills to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century employment.

The economic vision can be captured in these five themes:

- Chesham has always been a working town and the key to maintaining its character is to maintain its economy.
- An essential element in its economy is a vibrant High Street, with an emphasis on local and specialist shops offering service, expertise, convenience and on-the-spot accountability.
- A successful High Street requires a good variety of shops and services in an attractive environment, with consistent promotion of what the Town can offer to increase the flow of visitors.
- It is also important to continue to provide employment within Chesham, to benefit from the major social and environmental benefits that this brings.
- This will require the availability of a suitably skilled and educated workforce and access to suitable commercial premises.

## COMMUNITY

The population of Chesham includes people of all ages and differing ethnic backgrounds. For geographical reasons, many communities are physically separated and the hinterland is even more distant. The community vision has identified four key themes that can address the challenges to this dimension of future Chesham.

- To meet the needs of all groups and communities and to seek integrated facilities that encourage an interaction of all ages and origins across the town and hinterland.
- To understand better the needs of communities in different parts of the town and hinterland, in similar terms. A commitment to community cohesion that can have as an outcome the celebration of similarities and differences across the community. Examples can include projects to celebrate Black and Asian History and support to similar festivals in the future.
- To define better the needs of young people, the elderly and other identifiable groups in terms of facilities, services and learning provision. A community hub in the former Pond Park ward has been identified as a major need.
- To develop an independent town community forum with an ability to draw down its own funding for community wide initiatives.

## TRANSPORT

The transport vision seeks to improve access for all to local amenities, local communities and the nearby larger towns. Transport is restricted by the topography of the area, with traffic being funnelled along the A416 through Chesham. Congestion along this road is a major issue that needs to be addressed. Much appreciated is Chesham station and its direct access to London. It is important to improve access from the estates of the town and surrounding villages to Chesham town centre and the Railway Station. This can be achieved through improved transport facilities including frequent reliable core bus services, demand responsive buses, taxi-buses, cycling and walking.

Other issues include

- The difficulty in accessing health provision and other services within the Chesham area and beyond.
- The lack of a regular bus service to and from the nearby large towns
- The lack of evening and Sunday transport in general and the lack of information on transport
- The lack of a resident, shoppers and visitor parking strategy for the town and environs.

## ACTION PLAN

This first action plan captures the challenges identified during the appraisal and proposed solutions. The steering Group will review and refresh this element of the Vision as projects progress.

Short Term Projects	Medium - Longer Term Projects
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Produce a Rights of Way Development Plan</li><li>• Audit surviving industrial heritage (mills etc.)</li><li>• Create a local Environment Forum</li><li>• Support and enhance the <i>Impress the Chess</i>, Lowndes Park and Chesham In Bloom initiatives.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rights Of Way network improvements (for walkers, riders, cyclists, etc.)</li><li>• Joint / linked projects</li><li>• Seek to develop historic yards</li></ul>
<b>ECONOMY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish a Training and Skills Forum (schools, colleges, employers)</li><li>• Develop a Visitor Strategy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Revitalise the town centre</li><li>• Establish an Enterprise Hub</li><li>• Attract sustainable new businesses</li></ul>
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a community-wide Youth Forum</li><li>• Waterside youth projects</li><li>• Access and Mobility survey (COPAG - Chesham Older Persons Action Group)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrated youth projects</li><li>• Community Cohesion initiatives</li><li>• Pond Park community Hub</li><li>• Access projects</li></ul>
<b>TRANSPORT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce a taxi bus service to feed railway station with through ticketing options.</li><li>• Develop a road freight management strategy.</li><li>• Parking and access strategy.</li><li>• Promote school &amp; workplace travel planning.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve access to local services, communities, amenities and towns</li><li>• Introduce demand responsive local bus services to meet local needs and connections to national networks.</li></ul>

## WHAT NEXT!

Project groups will now develop the solutions proposed in our initial action plan. Why not join them? For further details contact : Francis Gomme, Buckinghamshire Community Action, 01296 421036 email [francis@bucks-comm-action.org.uk](mailto:francis@bucks-comm-action.org.uk)  
Bill Richards, Chesham Town Council, 01494 774842 or our website: [www.cheshamchamber.org/communityvision](http://www.cheshamchamber.org/communityvision)

یہ لیٹر آپ کی درخواست پر اردو میں بھی دستیاب کیا جاسکتا ہے  
برائے مہم بانی اسکے لئے چیشم ٹاؤن کونسل سے رابطہ کیجیے

**FOR A LARGE PRINT  
VERSION OF THIS VISION  
DOCUMENT Contact  
Chesham Town Council**

## Appendix 2

## Chesham Town Councillors

### Asheridge Vale Ward

Michael Brand	Shoe House, 6 Park Road, Chesham, HP5 2JE	Lib.Dem	775239
Chris Spruytenburg	35 Nalders Road, Chesham, HP5 3DQ	Lib.Dem	785160

### Hilltop Ward

Elaine Bamford	352 Berkhamstead Road, Chesham, HP5 3HG	Con	776097
Noel Brown	7 Hospital Hill, Chesham, HP5 1PJ	Con	783164

### Lowndes Ward

Alan Bacon	Windrush, Bellingdon, Chesham, HP5 2XN	Lib.Dem	774870
Christina Michael	126 Lye Green Road, Chesham, HP5 3NH	Lib.Dem	782047

### Newtown Ward

Mohammad Bhatti	16 Lansdowne Road, Chesham, HP5 2BA	Con	784182
Pauline Wilkinson	11 Harding Road, Chesham, HP5 3BB	Con	783498

### Ridgeway

Derek Lacey	32 Overdale Road, Chesham, HP5 2DZ	Ind	771508
Peter Yerrell	35 Birch Way, Chesham, HP5 3JL	Ind	771583

### St. Mary's Ward

Colette Littley	1 Germaines Close, Chesham, HP5 1JJ	Lib.Dem	772230
-----------------	-------------------------------------	---------	--------

### Townsend Ward

Roy Abraham	11 Woodcote Lawns, Chesham, HP5 2LY	Lib.Dem	07821 122654
Merrin Molesworth	107 Hivings Hill, Chesham, HP5 2PJ	Lib.Dem	773381
Gill Walker	Connemara, Botley Lane, Chesham, HP5 1XS	Lib.Dem	07739 330324

### Vale Ward

Mohammad Fayyaz	11 Chalk Hill, Chesham HP5 2DN	Lib Dem	778791
Alison Pirouet	76 Deansway, Chesham, HP5 2PF	Lib.Dem	0795 2433378

### Waterside Ward

Jane Bramwell	Shoe House, 6 Park Road, Chesham, HP5 2JE	Lib.Dem	775239
Justine Fulford	33 Latimer Road, Chesham, HP5 1QQ	Lib.Dem	792478
Francis Holly	8 Bois Moor Road, Chesham, HP5 1SH	Lib.Dem	07956 410908

<b>Key</b>	Con	Conservative
	Lib.Dem	Liberal Democrat
	Ind	Independent

**CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Calendar of Meetings of the Council and Committees**  
**May 2007 to May 2008**

All meetings commence at 7.30 pm except where indicated

**May 2007**

- 14 ANNUAL COUNCIL
- 17 Annual Town Meeting (Thursday)
- 21 Development Control

**June**

- 04 Recreation and the Arts
- 11 Development Control
- 11 Performance Review (8 pm)
- 18 COUNCIL

**July**

- 02 Development Control
- 02 Policy and Resources (8 pm)
- 16 COUNCIL
- 23 Development Control

**August**

- 13 Development Control

**September**

- 03 Development Control
- 03 Recreation and the Arts (8 pm)
- 17 Policy and Resources
- 24 Development Control
- 24 COUNCIL (8 pm)

**October**

- 08 Recreation and the Arts
- 15 Development Control
- 15 Policy and Resources (8 pm)
- 29 COUNCIL

**November**

- 05 Development Control
- 05 Performance Review (8 pm)
- 19 Executive
- 26 Development Control
- 26 Recreation and the Arts (8 pm)

**December**

- 17 Development Control
- 17 Policy and Resources (8 pm)

**January 2008**

- 14 Development Control
- 14 COUNCIL (PRECEPT) (8 pm)
- 21 Performance Review
- 28 Recreation and the Arts

**February**

- 04 Development Control
- 04 Policy and Resources (8 pm)
- 25 Development Control
- 25 COUNCIL (8 pm)

**March**

- 17 Development Control
- 17 Recreation and the Arts (8 pm)

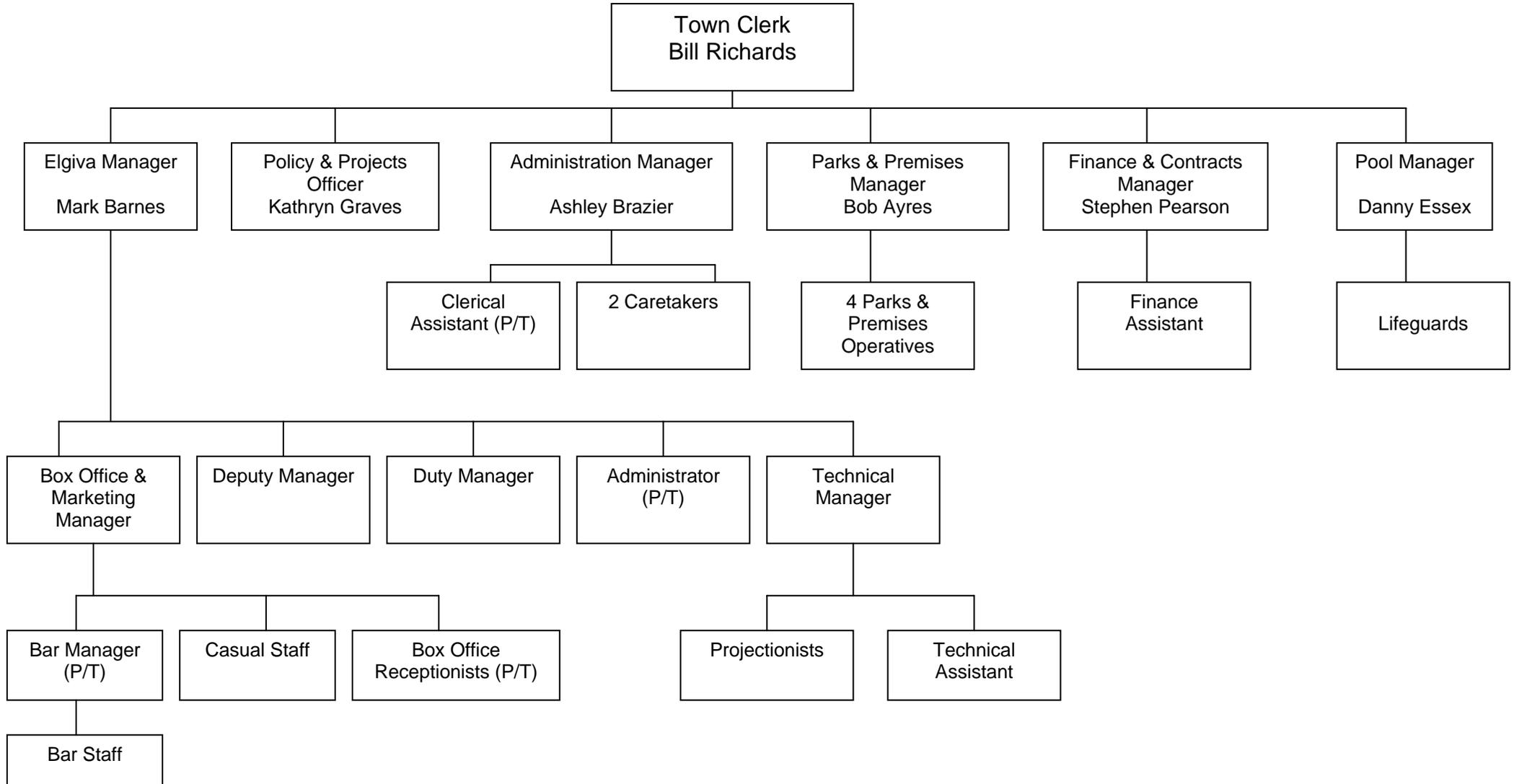
**April**

- 07 Development Control
- 07 Policy and Resources (8 pm)
- 28 Development Control
- 28 Performance Review (8 pm)

**May**

- 12 Development Control
- 12 COUNCIL (8 pm)
- 15 Annual Town Meeting (Thursday)
- 19 ANNUAL COUNCIL

# Chesham Town Council Structure



## Appendix 5

## Net Expenditure for 2006/07

A summary of the projected outturn for 2006/07 against the budget is detailed below. The figures in the Statutory Final Accounts will be adjusted for Capital charges.

Service	Net Budgeted Expenditure £	Net Actual Expenditure £	Explanation of differences over 15%
<b>COST CENTRE</b>			
Central Support Services – recharged to services	0	0	
Civic Activities	8,660	6,974	Donation budget carried over to 2007/08
CCTV	11,335	748	Repairs not required
Cemetery	45,520	48,836	
Closed Churchyard	2,855	2,847	
Interest	(14,500)	(29,681)	Higher interest rates and balances
Housing	(7,400)	(8,167)	
Corporate Management	66,125	51,233	Delayed staff appointment
Democratic Management	77,765	74,033	
Section 137 Expenses	8,135	6,271	Donation budget carried over to 2007/08 and lower internal grants
Moor Multi-sport	37,665	37,345	
Codmore Field	5,360	5,484	
Marston Field	3,725	2,613	Lower pitch maintenance
Community College	4,425	3,858	
Amenities	27,970	26,909	
Open Spaces	132,760	120,288	
Lowndes Park Toilets	17,365	15,055	Increased direct labour work
Agency Work	(3,005)	(2,505)	
Skatepark Noise Abatement	2,635	2,550	
Works Depot – recharged	0	0	
The Elgiva	147,090	110,090	Improved income and lower maintenance
Temperance Hall	(100)	(369)	Insurance recharge
Town Hall	29,750	28,791	
Allotments	14,720	18,710	Increased maintenance
Town Centre Revitalisation	26,005	27,667	
<b>RESERVES</b>			
Staff Sickness	2,000	2,000	
Renewal and Repairs	93,000	93,000	
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>739,820</b>	<b>644,580</b>	
Appropriation from (to) Reserves	(42,820)	52,420	
<b>Precept</b>	<b>697,000</b>	<b>697,000</b>	

## Renewals and Repairs Programme

EXPENDITURE	2006/2007 BUDGET £	2006/2007 REVISED BUDGET* £	2006/2007 ACTUAL £	2007/2008 BUDGET £	2008/2009 BUDGET £
ALLOTMENTS - FENCING				500	500
COMP/OFFICE EQUIP	3,000	2,800	1,661	2,000	2,000
ELGIVA	35,000	35,000	33,200	20,000	20,000
TOWN HALL	20,000	15,000	14,063	10,000	20,000
SWING REPLACEMENT	4,000			4,000	5,000
PLAY EQUIP - GORDON RD (SWING)	8,000				8,000
PLAY EQUIP - ROUNDABOUT (Codmore)	12,200	12,200	4,440		
PLAY EQUIP - MARSTON FIELD	5,000			5,000	
PLAY EQUIP - CO-OP FIELD/PARK	5,000			10,000	
PLAY EQUIP- WOODLAND VIEW					10,000
PLAY EQUIP - FENCING (Windsor Rd /Batchelors Way, Bois Hill and Codmore)	5,500	7,800	11	6,000	6,000
PLAY EQUIP - LOWNDES PARK	5,000				12,000
SEATS/LITTER BINS	4,000	2,790	2,791	4,500	4,500
PATHS - SKOTTOWES POND, LOWNDES PARK (deferred)	7,500				10,000
PATHS - PARK & RED LION ST. GARDENS	5,500			5,500	
GENERAL FENCING (Nash Hill Rec/Bury Lane/Lowndes Park)	2,500	4,800	785	2,000	2,500
INFORMATION BOARDS - ALLOTMENTS		2,000	29		
BUS SHELTERS	250	130	127		
DEPOT MAIN BUILDING	3,750	4,250	4,355	3,500	6,500
HARROWS/LITTER BLOWERS ETC.	3,350			3,000	
TRACTOR	12,000	17,645	17,645	2,700	
MOOR HARDSTANDING				500	500
MARSTON PAVILION	4,500	4,500	4,256	17,000	
CODMORE CAR PARK	5,000			5,000	
CODMORE PAVILION - REDECORATION	2,500	5,000	3,438	2,000	2,000
WAR MEMORIAL	300			300	
CEMETERY LODGES	5,000			5,000	10,000
CEMETERY WALLS/FENCES	7,000	5,000	5,146	7,000	7,000
CEMETERY CHAPEL - CHAIRS	500				2,500
CEMETERY CHAPEL - RENOVATION		12,800	12,803	6,200	
CEMETERY PATHS	2,000			2,000	2,000
ST. MARY'S WALLS/TREES	1,000	4,000	1,000	2,000	
CHRISTMAS LIGHTS	2,000	2,000		2,000	8,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>171,350</b>	<b>137,715</b>	<b>105,750</b>	<b>127,700</b>	<b>139,000</b>

Continued on next page

	<b>2006/2007</b>	<b>2006/2007</b>	<b>2006/2007</b>	<b>2007/2008</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>
	<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>REVISED</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
RENEWALS AND REPAIRS	98,770	186,815	186,815	177,590	146,890
TRANSFER FROM CAPITAL BUDGET		12,640	12,640		
<b>INCOME:</b>					
PRECEPT CONTRIBUTIONS	93,000	93,000	93,000	96,000	100,000
DONATION - CHRISTMAS LIGHTING SCHEME	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
MARSTON PAVILION INSURANCE SETTLEMENT		17,000	17,000		
SALE OF TRACTOR		4,850	4,850		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>192,770</b>	<b>315,305</b>	<b>315,305</b>	<b>274,590</b>	<b>247,890</b>
<b>BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>21,420</b>	<b>177,590</b>	<b>209,555</b>	<b>146,890</b>	<b>108,890</b>

\* Revised to include schemes not completed in 2005/2006 and updated per revised estimates agreed by Council in January 2007.

Note:

Schemes not completed in 2006/2007 will be carried over to 2007/2008.