

# **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT**

**BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW**



**2003/05**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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For the Best Value service review of Democratic Services and Corporate Management, Members endorsed the decision to use an external 'Challenge' Panel to work alongside the Council's officers and Members at the commencement of the review. It was considered that such an approach would result in a more rigorous examination of the Council's service.

The Review Panel has met on several occasions between October 2003 and March 2005 and has consisted of the following personnel:

- Bill Richards – Town Clerk, Chesham Town Council
- Mrs Pauline Wilkinson MBE - Councillor, Chesham Town Council
- Irene Brown – Administration Manager, Chesham Town Council
- Sue Butt – Policy and Projects Officer, Chesham Town Council
- Des Knowles – Town Clerk, Amersham Town Council
- Colin Westwood – Town Clerk, Berkhamsted Town Council
- Diane Rutter – Voluntary Action (Chiltern and South Bucks)
- Salva Malik – Chiltern Racial Equality Council
- Trevor Pilling – Wilkins Kennedy & Partners
- Karen Allsop, Policy Support Officer, Chiltern District Council

The service review began in the autumn of 2003 but due to its size and breadth it was resolved by Members of the Council to continue the review into 2004/05.

While not all the Panel members have been able to attend all the meetings, the mixture of service providers, external partners and other local authority providers have played an important role in drawing together a coherent plan to develop 'continuous improvement' for the Democratic Services and Corporate Management service.

## **2. THE CURRENT SERVICE**

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### **i. Definition of Service**

The Council's service objective is twofold:

- (a) To provide the necessary and cost effective support to the democratic process and delivery of the Council's services.
- (b) To preserve the town's identity and promote its heritage through the Town Mayor's attendance at Civic and local organisations' events.

### **ii. What is the Service?**

Democratic Services and Corporate Management encompasses five key service areas.

**(a) Advice and support activities** in the form of administrative support 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.

**(b) 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 such as the Local Transport and the Waste Management Plans. In addition, the Council has taken a lead role in the development of the Market Town Healthcheck, a Countryside Agency initiative.

**(c) 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. The Town Hall also issues travel tokens, garden waste refuse sacks and radar keys on behalf of the District Council.

**(d) Representational issues** – the Town Council is 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, speed limit reviews and road safety schemes; London Underground; Thames Valley Police Authority, Chiltern and South Bucks Primary Care Trust and the Environment Agency. The Council is represented on 12 charitable bodies and local Partnerships such as the Local Strategic Partnership and the Chiltern Race Equality Council.

**(e) 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, Carol Service and the Annual Town Meeting. Other services that the Council supports include:

Town Centre Revitalisation, including CCTV  
Festive (Christmas) Lights  
War Memorial  
Town Clocks  
A Christmas Day Party for the Elderly  
Annual Grant Donation Scheme to organisations such as Chiltern Dial-a-Ride and Citizens Advice Bureau.

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.

### **iii. What are the Specific Aims of the Service?**

- (a) To provide an efficient and cost effective system that empowers Officers and others to instigate the decisions resolved by elected Members for the maximum benefit of the residents of Chesham.
- (b) To accurately represent the views of the residents of Chesham when consulted on issues which affect the town.
- (c) To offer the most effective support and advice to the public and local organisations.

### **iv. Cost and Unit Data**

The separation of the costs for the democratic services and corporate management from other officers' work has been historically non-achievable. However, with a new accounting system we are able to set a performance indicator target for the first time and have accordingly set a target of £8.69 as the cost per elector for 2004/05.

### **v. Information**

The Council enquiries desk is located in the Town Hall and is open 10.00am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. The Council Chamber, where meetings of the Council and Committees take place, is also located in the Town Hall.

### 3. CHALLENGE

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“Challenge” is central to Best Value. The basis consists of:

- Why the service is provided
- What the service provides
- How the service is provided

#### **i. Why the Service is Provided**

Under the current Central Government three-tier local government system in Buckinghamshire, Chesham Town Council has a statutory obligation to operate a core service of functions.

The underlying principle of the service, is to provide and effectively deliver the Council’s democratic remit and corporate management obligations.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
The Challenge Panel acknowledged that the Council had a statutory requirement to provide the democratic services and corporate management function but it was accepted that sections of the service, such as financial management, could be operated by external providers.	<i>A review of financial management procedures was carried out Spring 2004</i>

#### **ii. What the Service Provides**

Looking at the five key areas that make up Democratic Services and Corporate Management, the service consists of:

##### **(a) Advice and Support Activities**

- The Town Clerk provides administrative support to meetings of the Council and Committees and prepares agendas, minutes and reports.
- Section Heads also prepare reports in relation to their specific departmental area.
- The Town Clerk and officers of the Council provide advice and information to Members in relation to their specific area and the Town Clerk produces a Members Bulletin on a regular basis.

##### **(b) Consultation**

- The Council is committed to seeking the views of residents, businesses, user groups and other stakeholders on the services it provides and delivers.
- The Council, along with the other 41 Best Value Local Councils, has made consultation an integral part of improving service delivery

**(c) Customer Services**

- The enquiries desk at the Town Hall is open 10.00am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.
- There is a feedback form on the website and a voicemail service for out of hours.

**(d) Representational Issues**

- The Town Clerk, officers and Members represent the views of Chesham residents to the various outside organisations, groups, agencies and partnerships that operate and deliver services within the town.

**(e) Other Support Services**

- The Town Clerk and officers promote the role of the Town Mayor.
- The Town Clerk and officers support a range of community events and initiatives.
- The Council has a statutory obligation to provide specific corporate management services.

*The Challenge Group's considerations encompassed reviewing whether all the above should continue to be provided by the Town Council and whether other services should be considered.*

**There were none of the above that the Panel felt should be deleted though it was agreed that:**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
The possible outsourcing of the Council's financial operations needed to be reviewed.	<i>A review of financial management procedures was carried out Spring 2004</i>
A formal Complaints Policy should be developed.	<i>A procedure was developed from the National Association of Local Council's (NALC) guidelines and adopted in March 2005</i>

**iii. How the Service is Provided**

**(a) Advice and Support Activities**

Decisions are made at Council and Committee meetings. The current structure of meetings is made up as follows:

- Council
- Development Control
- Executive
- Performance Review
- Policy and Resources
- Recreation and the Arts.

The **Development Control Committee** considers the environmental aspects of developments in the Town and immediate surrounding area. The Committee makes comments and recommendations to Chiltern District Council on all planning applications relating to developments in Chesham and any submissions of Making of Tree Preservation Orders. This Committee also considers transportation matters.

The **Executive Committee** deals with all personnel matters including appointments, gradings and conditions of service. To review the staffing structure and health and safety aspects and to approve essential and casual user car allowances.

The **Performance Review Committee** monitors and appraises the various facilities and services provided by or on behalf of the Council and considers the Best Value reviews on all services undertaken.

The **Policy & Resources Committee** exercises the Council's responsibility in maintaining proper accounting records and controls systems, to oversee the Council's finances and ensure all money due is properly accounted for. To receive reports and co-ordinate the draft Estimates of spending committees in the preparation of the annual budget. To review recommendation by other spending committees. To review the Council's Standing Orders with respect to financial matters. To consider payments of subscriptions, grants and donations. To make recommendations to Chiltern District Council on boundaries, status, powers and duties of the Council and electoral arrangements. To oversee the Council's responsibilities and the making of any objection or order or the authorisation of any notice of legal proceedings.

The **Recreation and the Arts Committee** makes recommendations on provision for maintaining and managing facilities for cultural, leisure and recreational activities for local residents, community and visiting organisations in The Elgiva and rooms at the Town Hall. To recommend fees and charges for the use and lettings of Council managed properties. To make recommendations to provide, maintain and manage allotment land and to recommend fees and charges for the use thereof. To oversee the Council's responsibility concerning its Parks & Open Spaces and associated facilities and its Cemeteries and make recommendations thereof.

The Council operates a scheme of delegated decision making and all decisions are made at Committee unless requested to be ratified at full Council. All accounts for payment and claims upon the Council (pay schedule) are considered by full Council. Fees and charges and precept are considered at Committee and resolved to recommend for adoption by Council. The Council also comments on Regional/ District / County / Police / Fire and other consultation documents where Chesham and its residents are affected.

Working Groups are established on an ad-hoc basis to look in more detail at specific issues or projects. Findings and recommendations are then fed back to the relevant Committee for consideration. These groups are largely run by and

administered by elected Members themselves although Officer input or support is provided when required.

A calendar of meetings is available at the Town Hall or on the Council website and notices of each meeting are posted at the Town Hall and in town noticeboards a week before the meeting.

Residents can attend meetings and are permitted to put questions to the Chairman during the 15 minute period at the beginning of the Council meetings and are allowed a five-minute discussion on their question. Statements can be made through Councillors or the Chairman on planning applications at Development Control meetings.

Reports are researched and prepared by the Town Clerk as well as Section Heads and mostly typed by the Clerical Assistant. Agendas and minutes are prepared by the Town Clerk and typed by the Clerical Assistant along with planning applications and decision notices. All items are photocopied and dispatched by the Clerical Assistant. Minutes and correspondence arising from Committee are dealt with by the Town Clerk or reporting officer.

## **(b) Consultation**

A popular source of consultation is through 'Friends' Groups. Currently there are groups of Friends of Chesham Cemetery, Friends of Lowndes Park and an Environmental Group. An Allotment Group commenced from Autumn 2004. A Board of Management also exists to advise The Elgiva management and the Youth Council reports directly to the Town Council. All of the groups bring to the attention of the Town Council topics they wish to progress and any matters that need our attention. The Chesham Society liaises with the Town Council on matters of mutual interest and submits comments on selected planning applications. The Town Centre Consortium and Chesham Chamber of Trade & Commerce both meet in the Town Hall to monitor and progress town matters, i.e. hanging baskets and planters and the Victorian Late Night Shopping evening and to introduce new ideas to improve the facilities of the town for businesses and residents alike.

The Council set up its own quarterly newsletter in Autumn 2003. The 'Town Crier' newsletter appears in the local 'Town Talk' magazine that is published in the Spring and Autumn of every year. The Winter and Summer editions of the Council newsletters are sponsored by Lennon & Co solicitors and distributed door-to-door.

The Council operates a 'How Can We Serve You Better?' suggestion box where the public is invited to submit suggestions/comments/questions.

A completely redesigned website was launched in January 2005 and includes a feedback form that visitors to the website can use to get in touch with the Council. The introduction of an online 'public forum' will also be investigated for inclusion on the new website to enable residents to vote in online polls and comment on Council issues.

Every five years, the Council undertakes a major postal survey as part of its commitment to Best Value and each year individual service reviews go through their own consultation process with users.

### **(c) Customer Services**

Staff at the Town Hall offer advice to the public on a range of issues since the Town Hall is often 'the first stop' for many local residents. Often this necessitates a phone call from our Officers to the relevant sections of either District or County Council to answer the customer's query. This process also applies to telephone and e-mail enquiries.

The Town Hall and The Elgiva display other public literature from statutory authorities and the voluntary sector for information purposes.

### **(d) Representational Issues**

Members will consider a collective response to consultation papers/questionnaires from other spheres of central and local government and/or other agencies through reports compiled by the Town Clerk.

At the Annual Meeting of the Council, members are nominated to represent the Council on the local charitable bodies and partnerships.

### **(e) Other Support Services**

The Finance and Contracts Manager, supported by the Accounts Assistant, oversees the budgetary control and compliance with the Financial Regulations (subject to Members' approval). Such work also includes the administration of any appropriate internal and external audits and the publishing of a statement of accounts for the financial year.

Other officers' time is spent with assisting with a range of activities on an 'as and when' basis. These include support for the Town Mayor in his ceremonial duties, the production of Best Value statistics and reports and general photocopying and filing.

Members of the Council receive advice and support from officers on a one-to-one basis as queries arise and a Members' Bulletin is sent electronically every 4-6 weeks to all Councillors. The Bulletin provides information on staffing, training and opportunities, Council projects and other related local issues.

### ***The Panel considered the current arrangements.***

- *The Panel looked at and discussed the areas of the service provided and it was acknowledged that unless changes to the three-tier local government structure in Buckinghamshire were made, the only function that could be operated outside of the Council was that of financial systems. Accordingly, it was agreed that the Council's financial management needed further scrutiny.*

- *It was agreed that consultation and engagement with residents was key to enabling the Council to ensure Best Practice in its service provision. The Panel challenged the Council as to whether it was doing enough to engage with all sections of the community it serves and it was agreed that consultation with some specific groups as well as the minority ethnic groups in the town could be improved.*
- *The issue of the Town Hall enquiry desk and main office being used by the public as a 'one-stop-shop' for all local authority provided services was considered as a benefit to the public but a hindrance on officer time. It was agreed that possible solutions should be looked at.*
- *The setting up of the various 'Friends' groups, for instance the Environment Group and the Elgiva Board of Management, was cited by the Panel as an example of good practice and that their expansion should be considered.*
- *The Panel considered the Government's Quality Status initiative and were in agreement that the Council should look to comply with the criteria regarding consultation, namely to ensure four newsletters are produced annually.*
- *It was acknowledged that an extensive review of the Committee structure had been carried out in the last 18 months and rationalised accordingly. It was therefore agreed by the Panel that this area of the service did not require rigorous examination but should still be considered within the context of the service review.*
- *The service provided to Members by officers was considered an integral part of the Democratic Services remit of the Council and it was agreed that the current arrangements should be explored further.*
- *The Panel were of the opinion that the office systems and procedures behind the delivery of the many functions that make up the democratic services and corporate management service area should be investigated further, to ensure the Council was making best use of available resources and achieving continuous improvement.*
- *The investigation of whether services to the public could be improved through partnership working with the principal authorities was an area the Panel felt required further attention.*

**In challenging the service the Panel agreed to:**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
Consider in detail the possible outsourcing of some or all of the financial systems	<i>A review of financial management procedures was carried out Spring 2004</i>
To review consultation, engagement and liaison with the public	<i>The Panel thoroughly reviewed and debated the Council's consultation arrangements at its meetings and made recommendations for adoption</i>
To investigate alternative arrangements to providing information about principal authority services	<i>The installation of an online 'info point' was not deemed viable</i>
Seek compliance with the Government's Quality Status criteria in regard to consultation	<i>Quality Status achieved in September 2004</i>
Consider partnership working with the principal authorities	<i>Principal authorities have now been approached to develop a Charter for future work</i>
To review office procedures and consider how current systems can be improved	<i>A meeting with all administration staff took place in February 2005 and recommendations were put forward for consideration</i>
To consider the decision making process of the Council and review Member services	<i>A comprehensive review of the decision making process was carried out in 2003 and a survey to all elected Members on Member Services was conducted in January 2005</i>

## **4. CONSULT**

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Consultation with service users, partners and the town residents is essential to run an effective service. The process of consulting the public on the Council's discharging of its democratic services and corporate management role, was however, agreed to be somewhat confusing and difficult to separate one from the other.

Individual service reviews each look in detail at how well the Council provides that service and on-going consultation with service users also takes place.

The Panel were therefore in agreement that a targeted approach should be adopted and consultation was split into the following categories for consideration:

### **i) Members**

The Panel were in agreement that key to the effective provision of democratic services, was services to Members. A survey to all elected Members was compiled and considered by the Panel and sent to all elected Members to ascertain current satisfaction of services Members receive and to investigate any areas for improvement.

### **ii) Administration**

The delivery of the Democratic Services and Corporate Management services is largely connected with the administration procedures of the Council. To this end the Panel recommended that a meeting of all officers involved in the delivery of Council administration should be held to look in more detail at areas of customer service, administration and office procedures.

### **iii) Council Surgeries**

The instigation of Members' surgeries was considered and supported for adoption by the Panel. Local Council Open Surgeries began in the Spring of 2004 and are now held bi-monthly in the Town Hall. It was brought to the Panel's attention that attendance at the surgeries continued to be in single figures and it was noted that other Town Councils held their surgeries in the weekend market which had attracted a greater number of visitors and raised the profile of the Council and its engagement with the public. The Panel supported this suggestion and it was agreed that the Council should look to hold some of its surgeries in the town centre market during the summer months instead of the Town Hall.

### **iv) Residents' Survey**

The Council committed itself to carry out another major postal survey with every resident in the town in regard to its services in February 2005. The last such door-to-door survey was carried out by the Council in 2000 and attracted a 17.3% response.

The Panel recommended that the survey be piloted with a sample group before distribution to ensure questions were easy to complete and analyse. A pilot was carried out with the Chesham members' of the District Council's Citizens Panel and the comments and suggestions received were incorporated into the final

survey before it was distributed door-to-door. The survey was also provided in large print form and in Urdu upon request. One of the largest retailers in the High Street also provided an incentive in the form of a prize draw to win vouchers for use in their store.

**v) Newsletters**

The Panel noted that integral to achieving Quality Status for local Councils was showing how it effectively consulted with the public. It was therefore agreed that in achieving Quality Status, the Council should produce four newsletters a year to engage with the public and keep local residents informed of Council activities and services.

**vi) Chesham Community Vision**

A key aspect of democratic services and corporate management is the representation role the Council provides in promoting the town and the interests of the residents of the town. The Panel endorsed the development of the Market Town Health Check, launched in February 2004 as the 'Chesham Community Vision', and considered the Council should take a lead role in the development of the 'Vision' which would feed into the implementation of a Town Plan and long term Council objectives.

**vi) Targeted Consultation with Specific Groups**

The Panel considered in particular how best to attract the views of the traditionally 'hard-to-reach' groups in the town.

It was agreed that the views of elderly persons were extremely important in the consultation process and that their views should be elicited through groups such as Chesham Older Persons Action Group (COPAG).

A general view of a more 'joined-up' consultation arrangement was endorsed by the Panel and in doing so it was recommended that the Council engage representatives of voluntary groups on a regular basis.

It was further considered by the Panel that the Council should establish a more formalised consultation arrangement by engaging with the minority ethnic groups in the town.

Ongoing engagement with the young people in the community was also considered a key area for further consultation.

It was further endorsed by the Panel that the Council should explore how it can consult with disability groups within the town on a more formalised regular basis.

**In considering the consultation process, the Panel agreed:**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMESCALE</b>
Member Services Survey to be compiled	<i>All completed surveys returned by February 2005</i>
Meeting of all administration officers to take place to review office procedures	<i>Meeting with all officers took place in February 2005</i>

Move Council surgeries to a stall in the town centre market	<i>Market stall booked for Summer surgeries during May-July 2005</i>
Residents' Survey to be piloted with a local sample group before full distribution.	<i>Draft Residents' Survey sent to Chesham members of the District Council's Citizens Panel in December 2004 and feedback incorporated in final survey</i>
Produce four newsletters a year in line with Quality Status recommendations	<i>Four newsletters produced annually from Summer 2004</i>
Be lead partner in a Town Plan.	<i>Council has taken a lead role in the Community Vision that was launched in February 2004 which will feed into the development of a Town Plan</i>
Link in with existing minority ethnic groups through the Racial Equality Council	<i>Contact with CREC made and Council representative to attend groups every 6 months starting in May 2005</i>
Engage with Older Persons Action Group (COPAG) on a regular basis	<i>Contact with COPAG made and consultation sessions set up for May and September 2005</i>
Engage representatives of voluntary bodies on a more regular basis	<i>A consultation form will be devised and sent out in April/May 2005 and again in September/October 2005 to local voluntary groups. Interest in attending an open meeting will also be gauged.</i>
Continue supporting the Youth Council and other youth organisations	<i>A youth consultation exercise called 'Lights, Camera, Gab!' took place in February 2005. Support for the Youth Council is ongoing</i>
Explore how disability groups can be engaged in the Council's consultation arrangements	<i>Contact with the District's Disability Forum to be made</i>

## **CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

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### **i. Members**

*13 Questionnaires were returned by elected Members, representing a response rate of 72%. A copy of the Member Services Survey is attached at **appendix 3**.*

1. Just over 70% rated the information that they received from the Council when elected as 'about right', 'informative' and 'easy to understand'. However, a number of suggestions for additional information to include in the induction pack were suggested.

2. 85% said that officer reports were 'well laid out', 'informative', 'well written' and 'easy to understand'.

3. 92% said that the despatch of committee papers 5 clear working days in advance of the meeting was 'about right'.

4. Overwhelmingly, 100% indicated that their most preferred method of receiving committee papers was in hard copy by post.
5. 85% agreed that Council and Committee meetings should continue to begin at 7.30pm with 15% indicating that this time was 'too late' and should be brought forward to 6.30pm.
6. 85% agreed that they were given adequate opportunities to speak and ask questions during meetings.
7. Of those that are a Chairman of a Committee, 100% indicated that they received 'adequate support in preparation for a meeting'.
8. Of those that are a Chairman of a Committee, 75% said they would be interested 'to receive training in Chairman skills' with 25% indicating that they would not be interested.
9. 85% thought they were 'given enough information to make an informed decision' during meetings.
10. In response to the question about whether Members felt they were 'able to make decisions that follow long term plans (Council objectives)', 69% indicated that they could, 16% said they felt they couldn't, and 15% chose not to answer this question.
11. Of those that indicated they felt they weren't able to make decisions that followed long term plans, suggestions for improvement included 'to formulate a work programme for each committee', 'to provide more history, especially for items considered before Councillor was in post' and 'to have more ability'.
12. 69% said that they were 'given adequate training opportunities' to carry out their role as a Town Councillor, with 31% indicating that they felt they weren't given enough training opportunities. A number of suggestions were made as to how training opportunities could be improved and subjects Members should receive training on.

## **ii) Administration**

*A meeting was held with all officers that work in the main Council office. A member of the Panel who has expertise in office and system procedures was also present to provide objective advice. The Elgiva theatre and the Parks & Premises team were invited to submit any issues to the discussion regarding administration and inter-departmental working and were also invited to attend.*

1. Officers agreed that the main office enquiry desk should be opened up at 10.00am, and not before, but should be left to officers' discretion as to when the desk was closed (following official enquiry desk closure time of 4.30pm).

2. The Administration officers were in agreement that the loss of the volunteer help on one day a week had increased their workloads and in particular the number of front desk enquiries they were dealing with.
3. An analysis of the number of calls officers received over the period of one month was carried out and showed that 82% of calls answered in the office were in relation to Council services and 18% of calls received, concerned other local authority services. It was noted that the Clerical Assistant did not have their own telephone but had to share with another officer.
4. An analysis of the number of enquiries received at the front desk was carried out and showed on average, 200 (includes dispensing of travel tokens) separate enquiries a week were received.
5. Some officers did not find the current office layout conducive for working in. In addition, all officers commented on the cold draught in the office caused by the main Town Hall front door opening during the winter and in the summer the hot and uncomfortable conditions due to a lack of cooling system.
6. There was difference of opinion about whether the enquiry desk posed a safety risk to staff due to its low height and no presence of a physical barrier.
7. It was agreed that counting of cash should not be carried out in view of the enquiry desk.
8. It was agreed that there needed to be greater organisation with the current hard copies of files and computer files that are shared access.
9. Officers were in agreement that the Clerical Assistant post should remain a permanent post after the retirement of the current post holder but that the hours should be spread across four days rather than the current three.
10. It was agreed that time could be saved if planning applications could be sent electronically by the District Council to save the inputting of the information twice.
11. It was agreed that communication with the Parks & Premises Manager could be made more productive if he had a compatible PC system with that used by the Town Hall and The Elgiva and also had Internet/e-mail connectivity.
12. Officers were in agreement that they and the Parks & Premises team would benefit from having access to a colour printer and scanner located at the Town Hall.
13. It was agreed that a formalised system of writing to all staff regarding the outcome of Executive Committee decisions regarding spinal point and cost of living increments should be introduced.
14. There was unanimous agreement that a formalised flexitime recording system did not need to be introduced.

### **iii) Council Surgeries**

*6 Council Surgeries have taken place since their instigation in Spring 2004.*

1. The average attendance at each surgery has been 8 people.
2. The issues and topics discussed varied widely, and a number of the issues raised have been in relation to other local authority services.

### **iv) Residents' Survey**

*A total of 2,314 surveys were returned representing a response rate of 27%, and a 10% increase of response in comparison to the residents' survey carried out in 2000. A copy of the Residents' Survey is attached at **appendix 2**. Looking at the specific questions regarding the democratic services and corporate management service function, the results were:*

1. Of those who had contacted the Town Council or visited the Town Hall in the last 12 months, 97% said the Council staff were helpful, 99% said they were courteous/polite and 94% said they were knowledgeable. Of those that responded, 91% said Town Hall staff were able to deal with their query.
2. Overall, 47% rated Chesham Town Council as satisfactory, with 45% rating the Council as Good or Excellent.
3. In considering whether Chesham Town Council average cost per household (Council Tax Band D property) represented good value for money, 20% said that the average cost per household was very poor or poor, 47% indicated their view was in-between and 33% said it was good or very good.

### **v) Achieving Quality Status**

Quality Status was awarded in September 2004.

1. Discussions with the District Council and County Council have ensued regarding the development of a Charter.
2. The Council now produces four newsletters a year, two at no cost to the electorate and two as an insert in a popular local community newsletter.

### **vi) Representation**

The final 'Vision' document including the initial Action Plans are on schedule for completion and submission to the Countryside Agency for May 2005.

### **vii) Targeted Consultation with Specific Groups**

The Chiltern Racial Equality Council has been approached to help set up a suitable ongoing arrangement with consulting the minority ethnic groups within the community. The Racial Equality Council has two groups that meet on a regular

basis that the Council will feed into to engage and consult with the minority ethnic groups within the community regarding services and projects the Council is working on.

To engage on a more formalised basis with the voluntary sector, regular feedback forms will be sent twice a year to voluntary organisations that operate within the town. Interest in holding an open consultation meeting will also be gauged through the feedback forms and set up if enough interest is expressed.

The Council continues to support the Youth Council in its work as well as other youth organisations. A Council led youth consultation event called 'Lights, Camera, Gab!' took place in February 2005 and was set up in conjunction with other partners.

Engagement with Chesham Older Persons Action Group (COPAG) has taken place, and an article regarding the new consultation arrangements went out in the group's January 2005 newsletter. Regular open forum consultation sessions will be held with the group twice a year to discuss Council projects and services and the first two sessions have been set for May 2005 and September 2005.

### **ANALYSIS**

From the results received from the Member Services Survey, elected Members were overall extremely satisfied with the service they currently receive. Some areas for improvement were identified and these were in particular in relation to Member training and development.

In considering the office procedures and administration review, a variety of issues arose that have particular financial implications for the Council. The various improvement measures identified will therefore have to be considered in detail by the Panel and prioritised for phased implementation.

In addition, it was considered necessary for external advice to be sought regarding a risk assessment of the Town Hall enquiry desk and staff safety. The scrutiny of the financial management procedures clearly showed that no added value would be brought to the Council through outsourcing any of the procedures or systems. No improvement measures were therefore identified in this area apart from ongoing review and monitoring.

Following the instigation of bi-monthly Council Surgeries, it has become apparent that more residents could be attracted to attend the surgeries. The best practice model instigated by Berkhamsted Town Council, of holding the surgeries at a stall in the town centre market, was considered appropriate for this Council to adopt to improve attendance and raise the profile of the surgeries.

As a key partner in the Chesham Community Vision (Countryside Agency's Market Town Health Check initiative), it was considered appropriate for the Council to look at how its long term improvement plans can link in with the final Vision document and action plan and establish its key objectives so

that they have a community wide direction.

It is clear from the review of the Council's consultation arrangements that further engagement work should be carried out with the traditionally hard-to-reach groups in the community, in particular, older people, minority ethnic groups, the voluntary sector and young people. The establishment of a more targeted consultation arrangement with these groups has therefore been raised as a key improvement area in this review.

The results received from the Residents' Survey have clearly indicated that overall, local residents are extremely satisfied with the service they receive when contacting the Council or visiting the Town Hall. The high level of customer service provided by staff is clearly appreciated by those that get in touch with their local Council.

## **5. COMPARE**

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The Panel's comparisons with other service providers were undertaken on two levels. The Panel decided to visit three local authorities to compare the services offered at these facilities, particularly in regard to adopting examples of good practice.

Comparison of performance with other local authority providers on this service is particularly difficult due to the intrinsic problems of separating costs from the very different operations across authorities. However, 'Compare' is not only about external comparisons but also comparing in-house performance year-on-year and seeking continuous improvement. The Council operates its own local indicators that form part of the annual Best Value Performance Plan and are listed as **appendix 5**.

### **i) VISIT TO DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

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In Attendance            Cllr. Mrs P.R. Wilkinson and Bill Richards – Chesham Town Council  
Karen Allsop – Policy Support, Chiltern District Council  
Trevor Pilling – Accountant, Wilkins Kennedy & Partners  
Diane Rutter – Voluntary Action (C & SB)  
Des Knowles – Amersham Town Council

#### **Introduction**

Richard Walden, Town Clerk for Dunstable, introduced himself and gave a brief outline of the Town Council's history and Dunstable's demographic profile.

The Town Council was created in 1985 and serves a population of 33,000 though this figure is slightly declining. However, the Town Council is currently leading the fight to oppose the development of many new homes in the town following the recommendations of SERPLAN. The Council's precept for 2002/03 was £950,000 and had a £1.6M expenditure. The town had also received considerable funding from the Government's Single Regeneration Budget in the 1990's. Certain wards suffer from high levels of multiple deprivation and there is a relatively low minority ethnic population (2%). The Council's current political composition is 17 Conservatives and 3 Labour Councillors.

The Town Council funds the Youth Service, a Family Centre, and a third of the operational budget for the Town Centre Manager.

#### **Council Structure**

Dunstable Town Council has a number of Committees but all of them have delegated authority to resolve decisions. If a topic seems particularly controversial, a Councillor has the right to ask for it to be referred to Full Council.

The Town Hall has no staffed reception but Officers are available between 9 am to 5 pm. The Town Council has eight full-time staff working in the Town Hall and,

following an independent staff analysis by consultants, Officers work collectively and not in defined spheres of work. All Officers write their own letters.

### **Engaging the Public**

The Council produces a newsletter four times every year. It also has a fully interactive website that is updated in-house.

A household survey is undertaken annually and is based upon satisfaction and awareness of its services. Nearly the entire Best Value Performance Indicators response rate is about 25%.

The Council also has a Focus Group and targets single families as a hard-to-reach group.

The Annual Public Meeting usually attracts between 150-300 members of the public. A speaker involved with a local pertinent issue is invited to speak. The Council is currently trialling a three-tier Saturday surgery with County, District and Town Council Members.

### **Other Issues**

The Council has embarked on a five-year financial planning procedure to look at the future direction for the Town Council that is underpinned by a 'forecast of need'.

Procurement – most equipment is purchased through Herts Supplies, the service formerly run by Herts County Council but stationery is purchased through Luton Council.

Best Value Reviews – a Union representative is a panel member on all its reviews.

The Council commits £16,000 to a £32,000 grant scheme funded and administered by Beds County Council Social Services.

## **ii) VISIT TO HARPENDEN TOWN COUNCIL**

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### **In Attendance**

Cllr. Mrs P.R. Wilkinson and Bill Richards - Chesham Town Council.

Des Knowles – Amersham Town Council

Trevor Pilling – Accountant, Wilkins Kennedy & Partners

### **Introduction**

Anita Pack, Town Clerk for Harpenden, introduced herself and gave a brief outline of the demographic and socio-economic profile of Harpenden and the Town Council's role within it.

The Town Council serves a population of 30,000. The Council is responsible for nearly 100 hectares of common land, which includes Town Centre grass, various gardens and sports pitches. It also has 15 allotment sites that are managed by

South Harpenden Allotments and Garden Society. Harpenden is one of the 41 Best Value Councils and therefore has a precept of over £500,000. The town has relatively low levels of deprivation across the wards and a low percentage of minority ethnic inhabitants. The Council's current political composition is 12 Conservative and 4 Liberal Democratic Members.

### **Council Structure**

Harpenden Town Council has three main Committees, all with delegated responsibility, plus several community forums and working parties. Full Council meetings are held eight times a year, at which all Councillors are involved in all policy decisions of the Council. The Town Clerk stated she thought her Members like to be considered as 'Enablers'.

There are eight full-time administration staff, and, as well as the Town Clerk, a Deputy Town Clerk and a Town Warden, who is responsible for Risk Assessment. There is also one part-time Receptionist.

The Town Clerk is the Responsible Financial Officer but employs a financial consultant to help with this. This consultant also acts as the Internal Auditor with, apparently, no conflict of interest.

### **Engaging the Public**

The Town Council has a quarterly newsletter that is sent to every household.

The website has been recently updated and is now managed in-house.

Many of the financial resources are placed in answering a public response to the Best Value Performance Plan. A summary and response questionnaire is widely distributed and the first one drawn out receives a £250 voucher from Sainsbury's.

The Council also uses professional market research companies and citizens' panels to ascertain the public's view on a range of Town Council services.

The Youth Council is also important in determining the wishes and aspirations of young people.

### **Other Issues**

The Town Clerk was keen to point out that in the past their Officers' workload was 'top-heavy' in servicing Committees. A basic work-recording sheet was devised and, upon analysis, it was apparent that 54% of all work was undertaken for Council or Committee meetings rather than directly supporting the community. Workloads have been refocused so this figure has been reduced to below 40%.

### **iii) VISIT TO CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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In Attendance            Cllr Mrs P.R. Wilkinson, Bill Richards and Irene Brown -  
Chesham Town Council  
Trevor Pilling - Accountant, Wilkins Kennedy & Partners  
Karen Allsop - Chiltern District Council

#### **Introduction**

The Panel spent some time with Alan Goodrum, Chief Executive at Chiltern District Council, who gave an overview on Chiltern District Council's structure and its engagement with the public.

#### **Council Structure**

Chiltern District Council became a 'modernised' Council with an Executive decision-making Committee two years ago. Its decisions were initially considered by a Scrutiny Committee but this proved unwieldy and now there are 'Overview' Committees for Performance and Resources, Community and Environment and Housing and Planning.

Members all have their own laptop, broadband connection and printer. However, only Executive Members can use the typing pool.

The Council only has three Accountants working for them and the Chief Executive is aware the organisation has a 'key personnel dependency'.

#### **Engaging the Public**

There was an admission from the Chief Executive that more consultation needs to be done with the traditionally 'hard to reach' groups, especially the minority ethnic and young persons groups. However, a Disability Focus Group and liaison with Youth Councils and Elderly Groups has played an important part in consultation.

*The Chiltern Chronicle*, the Council magazine that is distributed four times a year to all households in the District has been well received by residents, who have responded to market research.

The roadshows organised had 'patchy' attendances across the District that may have been due to late advertising. There was general agreement that a two-tier, or even three-tier, approach to future 'roadshows' may be advantageous.

#### **Other Issues**

The amount of queries fielded by Chesham Town Council that had to be referred to Chiltern was discussed. It was agreed that greater training may be required for the switchboard operators in Aylesbury and, indeed, it was accepted that Chesham Town Council should investigate whether it should become part of this switchboard 'filtering' system, to save both an Officer time and to ease public frustration in being directed to the wrong tier of local authority.

Agendas and reports are dispatched to Members only five working days before the meeting, as opposed to ten days at the Town Council.

*The Panel noted a number of examples of good practice from the two Town Councils visited and the principal authority. The Panel was particularly impressed by the way Dunstable Town Council appeared to operate.*

**Following the site visits, the Panel agreed that the Council should:**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMESCALE</b>
Consider delegating limited powers of determination to Committees.	<i>A scheme of delegated decision making to Committees was piloted for 6 months and then agreed for adoption in November 2004.</i>
Begin trying Councillors surgeries at weekends on a trial basis	<i>Bi-monthly council surgeries began in Spring 2004 on Saturdays and are to be repeated in 2005 with summer surgeries taking place in the town centre market</i>
Expand newsletters to four times a year	<i>Implemented Summer 2004</i>
Consider setting up a focus panel to consider Council services	<i>Liaise with Chiltern District Council on using some of its panel members-winter 2005</i>
Consider inviting a guest speaker to the Annual Town Meeting to increase attendance	<i>Bring to Council with a view to inviting guest for 2006 meeting</i>
Investigate whether officers' workloads were too heavily focussed on serving Committees rather than the public.	<i>Review 2006/07</i>

## **6. COMPETE**

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When considering the 'compete' aspect of democratic services and corporate management, this can be defined as to '*show fair competition as a means of securing efficient and effective service*'. The Panel noted that the Council had a statutory obligation to discharge a number of the functions in the service and considered those aspects that could possibly be outsourced or operated externally.

As previously noted, the Council carry out Best Value Reviews of its individual service areas which each look in detail at how service delivery can be delivered efficiently and effectively through competition.

The Panel was in agreement that due to the complexities of the service, the statutory requirements placed on the Council, and the current separation of individual Best Value service reviews, it was only considered viable to investigate the outsourcing of the financial management arrangements.

### **i. Financial Management**

A member of the Panel, Trevor Pilling, who has individual expertise in financial management and is a qualified accountant, met with the Council's Finance & Contracts Manager to discuss the current arrangements. His conclusions were as follows:

*"A meeting was held with the Chesham Town Council financial officers and the whole system of accounting within the Council offices was examined. The department operated on a very efficient basis and the information regarding financial matters of the Council were easily available and kept up-to-date"*

The points discussed were then shared and considered by the Panel. It noted the positive report from the lead Panel member and it was agreed that the only possible procedure that should be investigated for outsourcing was the provision of payroll.

### **ii. Private Operator**

The outsourcing of payroll to an external provider was investigated. The Council uses a specific computerised system and pays 45 different employees per annum with just under half of these as casual posts. The Council also administers the payroll for approximately 20 lifeguards on behalf of the Chess Valley Leisure Association (CVSLA), who manage the outdoor swimming pool.

The comments from Mr Pilling on this matter were as follows:

*"It was examined to see if there was any reason why elements of the financial recording and maintenance of records could possibly be done more economically than if the work was farmed out to independent organisations, particularly with reference to the payroll of the Council employees and the swimming pool lifeguards."*

*After seeking quotations and taking into account the complexity of the number of employees with variable working hours, it was felt that the current system operated by the Council officers was both economic and efficient and that the dedication of the financial officers in doing their work was noteworthy.”*

The Panel was in agreement that the provision of payroll by an external operator would be more time consuming, less flexible and would incur more expenses to the Council.

The other aspect of competing is consideration of whether the Council wishes to compete for other contracts. It was unanimously agreed by the Panel that the Council should investigate the development of a Charter through its newly acquired Quality Status accreditation but that the devolution of services should only be taken on if properly resourced and funded.

### **iii. Procurement**

Procurement (the obtaining of supplies) is an important aspect of corporate management. It was recognised by the Panel that the Council is currently constrained by its financial regulations that lay down strict procedures on purchases and seeking tenders e.g. for purchases and contracts exceeding £2,500, three comparable quotations are required. However it was accepted by the Panel that, as matter of good practice, greater liaison with District and County Council and other agencies should be undertaken to ascertain whether capital and/or maintenance projects could be undertaken jointly, thus saving both partners costs through economies of scale. An example of this could be using the same contractor to do road and path repairs on the County Council’s highways and the Town Council’s cemetery roads at the same time.

A regular review of the Council’s Financial Regulations was also recommended by the Panel.

**In view of the above, the Panel agreed:**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMESCALE</b>
That the option of contracting out the payroll should not be pursued as it would provide a less efficient and effective service.	<i>Continue with current in-house arrangements.</i>
That the Council should explore the devolution of services through the development of a Charter with the principal authorities.	<i>Following the Council’s Quality Status achievement in September 2004, initial discussions have taken place with the principal authorities regarding the development of a Charter and are ongoing.</i>

## 7. THE IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

Having rigorously considered the 4 'C's of Best Value and particularly the main issues pertinent to the Democratic Services and Corporate Management service, the Panel has put forward a number of suggestions for an action plan designed to lead to continuous improvement. All of the below were debated and the Panel decided upon which should be progressed and recommended to Council for adoption.

### Member Services

PROPOSAL	RECOMMEND FOR ADOPTION ?
Offer training in Chairman skills to all Chairman of Committees.	Yes – explore training available including linking in with other authorities
Report items to include reference to long term Council objectives	Yes – upon completion and adoption of Town Plan
Specific topic areas for training to be identified by Members and suitable training sessions to be set up.	Yes
Members' Bulletin to include rolling item on current Member training courses available externally.	Yes
Members' Induction Pack to include additional information as identified in the Member Services survey.	Yes

### Office Procedures

PROPOSAL	RECOMMEND FOR ADOPTION ?
Undertake a complete review of current office layout and consider proposals for a full redesign.	Yes – subject to financial implications
Investigate building the main office out into the alcove to provide a separate reception area and double doors.	Yes – subject to financial implications
Seek quotation on linking in with the main County switchboard	No – investigated and percentage of calls outweigh costs involved
Seek quotations for installation of Microsoft compatible PC or laptop in the Parks Depot.	Yes – laptop considered most suitable option
Investigate bringing back a volunteer helper to the Town Hall office for one day a week	Yes – in liaison with local Voluntary Action
Seek quotations for installing a cooling system in the Town Hall office	Yes – specialist independent advice to be sought in the first instance
Purchase a colour printer and scanner for the Town Hall office	Yes – provision made in 2005/06 budgets
Introduce formal notification to all staff regarding outcome of Executive Committee salary	Yes

increment decisions	
Seek quotations for installation of telephone for Clerical Assistant	Yes – subject to further investigation of likely cost against usage

### Financial Systems

PROPOSAL	RECOMMEND FOR ADOPTION ?
Financial management procedures to remain in-house	Yes
Agree not to out-source payroll to an external private operator	Yes

### Council Surgeries

PROPOSAL	RECOMMEND FOR ADOPTION ?
Move Council Surgeries from the Town Hall to a market stall for the summer months	Yes – 2005 dates booked

### Residents' Survey

PROPOSAL	RECOMMEND FOR ADOPTION ?
Increase the number of door-to-door house surveys (currently once every five years)	Possibly – but decision to be left to Council because of the high costs

### Achieving Quality Status

PROPOSAL	RECOMMEND FOR ADOPTION ?
Instigate four Council newsletters a year	Achieved – Summer 2004
Look at how the development of a Charter can improve service provision for residents	Yes – ongoing and evolving

### Representation

PROPOSAL	RECOMMEND FOR ADOPTION ?
Adoption of the Community Vision document and Action Plans as a Town Plan for the Council	Yes – subject to Council consideration

### Targeted Consultation with Specific Groups

PROPOSAL	RECOMMEND FOR ADOPTION ?
Engagement with existing minority ethnic focus groups in the community	Yes – local Racial Equality Council approached and involved
Engage on a more formalised basis with the voluntary sector through the use of biannual feedback forms	Yes – local Voluntary Action contacted and suitable arrangement agreed

Develop consultation measures with local disability groups	Yes – local District Forum to be contacted for advice
Develop website to include online voting polls and discussion forum.	Yes – following in-house staff training
Engage with Older Persons through establishment of biannual consultation sessions with local older persons action group	Yes – biannual consultation sessions arranged with COPAG

**Other**

<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>RECOMMEND FOR ADOPTION ?</b>
Develop and instigate a Complaints Policy	Yes – adopted by Council in February 2005
Investigate feasibility of setting up an online information point in the Town Hall entrance	Yes – subject to further investigation of feasibility and likely usage

## **8. FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN**

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### **2005/06**

- Explore available Chairman skills courses and offer training to all Chairman of Committees.
- Develop a Town Plan, following the completion of the 'Chesham Community Vision' market town healthcheck appraisal
- Identify specific training and development needs for Members
- Seek quotations for provision of a laptop with e-mail connection for the Parks Depot
- Liaise with local Voluntary Action to develop a job description and find a volunteer helper for the Town Hall office
- Consider installation of a cooling system for the Town Hall office and other community rooms.
- Purchase and install a colour printer and scanner for the Town Hall office
- Consider the installation of a telephone for the Clerical Assistant
- Seek the development of a Charter with the principal authorities
- Engage with existing minority ethnic focus groups in the community
- Engage on a more formalised basis with the voluntary sector through the use of biannual feedback forms
- Develop consultation measures with local disability groups
- Engage with older people through establishment of biannual consultation sessions with local older persons action group
- Develop website to include online voting polls and discussion forum

### **2006/07**

- Undertake a complete review of office layout and usage and investigate proposals for a redesign
- Investigate setting up an online information point in the Town Hall
- Continue the various targeted consultation arrangements with specific groups
- Continue development and implementation of a Charter with the principal authorities
- Approach Council on organising another door-to-door survey
- Begin developing medium and long term strategy for Town Council in light of Chesham Community Vision findings and recommendations
- Review Financial Regulations

### **2007/08**

- Review financial management procedures including provision of payroll
- Review office procedures and administration
- Include additional information in Members' Induction Pack for newly elected Members – as identified in Member Services Survey

**2008/09**

- Review Member Services following Town Council elections in previous year
- Review targeted consultation arrangements with specific groups

**2009/10**

- Undertake a customer satisfaction residents' survey
- Review the Town Plan
- Review Financial Regulations.
- Review all policies in light of next Best Value service review due.

## **APPENDICES**

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1. Review of Committee Structure
2. Chesham Residents' Survey
3. Member Services Survey
4. Website feedback form
5. Corporate Management Performance Indicators

## CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

### Report of the Officers to a meeting of the TOWN COUNCIL

on Monday 3 February 2003

## AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 - REVIEW OF CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Reporting Officer: Bill Richards (01494 583824)

### Summary

1. At the Full Council Meeting held on 28 January 2002, *Minute No. 105*, the Council considered options for streamlining the Committee structure, including the abolition of its Standing Committees. It was resolved that a Panel of Members be appointed to consider the proposals for change and that a further Report be presented. Following the recommendations of the Council Structure Panel, it was resolved at the Full Council Meeting held on 11 March 2002, *Minute No. 113*, that the existing Standing Committees be abolished, except for the Executive Committee dealing specifically with employment related issues, and the appointment of two new Standing Committees - Development Control, to consider planning applications, decision notices and appeal notifications and Performance Review, to consider the Council's Best Value Performance Plans and Service Reviews. It was further resolved that this option be charged for a period of six months commencing on 13 May 2002.
2. At the Full Council Meeting held on 11 November 2002, *Minute No. 171*, the six months trial structure was assessed. It was resolved that a Special Meeting of the Council be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2003 to reconsider the Council's Committee structure for adoption and implementation from March 2003.

### Background Information

3. Members will recall that a report detailing Options for Change was compiled by the previous Town Clerk (attached as **Appendix 1**). Among the three options put forward for consideration, Full Council agreed to adopt Option 2. Option 1 is the Committee structure previously operated by this Council, while Option 3 suggests a further option which involves an amalgamation of previous Committees. These options are not exhaustive, however, and other permutations exist. The Town Clerk has contacted other Larger Best Value Councils to ascertain their respective Committee structures and these are listed in **Appendix 2** for Members' information.

### Detailed Consideration

4. The legal considerations of discharging of Local Authority functions is comprehensively laid out in the previous Town Clerk's report attached to **Appendix 1**. Members should particularly note, however, that the Local Government Act 1972 allows for Committees or Sub-Committees to have delegated (Executive) power to make decisions and spend money on behalf of the Council. Such Committees, or Sub-Committees, can also simply advise or make recommendations to Council to retain the decision making role.

5. Members will be aware of the Government's drive towards modernisation of Local Government and in light of this some Best Value Councils have restructured. Most recent of these has been Dorchester Town Council, which has reduced its Committees from five to three. It should be emphasised that since Town Councils maintain and operate different services, it is difficult to compare "like for like" but it should be noted that of the thirteen Town Councils surveyed, only one has more than four main Committees (**see Appendix 2**).
6. Accepting that the new Town Clerk has had little time to comprehensively review the Committee system and the previous Town Clerk had already undertaken thorough research on this topic, it would appear prudent to give further consideration to the three options listed in the report, particularly Option 3. Option 3 would create three Standing Committees - *Recreation and the Arts Committee*, *Development Control Committee*, and *the Policy and Resources Committee*. Having expressed reservations both about the number of meetings induced by the original seven Standing Committee structure and the expressed concerns over perceived lack of specialist input with the current no committee structure, Members may consider this a suitable alternative.
7. It is proposed that the Recreation and Arts Committee oversee all matters pertaining to the swimming pool, parks, cemeteries, allotments, open spaces, The Elgiva and Town Hall hirings. The Development Control Committee should remain broadly as it is, i.e. to deal specifically with planning applications, decision notices and appeals. The Policy and Resources Committee would be left to deal with all other matters, including finances. Following representations from the Youth Council, Members may feel it appropriate to co-opt a representative on to one or more of these Committees, though legally it should be noted that, other than in matters of management of land, tourism functions and the management of a festival, such representatives would have no vote.
8. It is good practice for a Council to appoint a Committee and then for the Committee to appoint a Sub-Committee. Members may wish to debate the numerical membership of the Committees but it would appear both practical and desirable to retain the current membership of all Councillors for Development Control Committee. It is recommended that the other two Committees shall consist of ten Members with the further recommendation that no Member, other than the Mayor, sit on both Committees. The issue of Sub-Committees should come from the Committees themselves but several Town Clerks have eluded to the fact that the same debate occurs at the Standing Committee to which the Sub-Committee reports. It is therefore recommended that Sub-Committees are kept to a minimum. It may be advantageous, however, to continue the Performance Review Sub-Committee to consider Best Value.
9. Should Members decide to adopt the three Committee structure, a Draft Timetable of Meetings is listed for their information in **Appendix 3**.
10. Terms of Reference for the Council and the three proposed new Committees are listed in **Appendix 4** as well as the Terms of Reference for the two previous structures.
11. A new set of standing orders will be produced for Members' consideration and adoption, following Members' decision on the restructuring to be adopted for the new Council in May.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. that Council adopts the proposed " Three Standing Committee" structure;**
- 2. that the Committees be granted full delegated (Executive ) powers as outlined in the terms of reference;**
- 3. that single issue working parties to be formed as required and dissolved once issue/project completed;**
- 4. that the Performance Review Sub-Committee to consider Best Value be retained;**
- 5. that the terms of reference for the roles and responsibilities of both Council and the Committees be agreed;**
- 6. that Members consider co-opting a Youth Council representative onto the Recreation and the Arts committee;**
- 7. that the Officers be authorised to draw up new standing orders.**

Bill Richards  
Town Clerk

*Publication Date 24.1.03*

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## CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of the TOWN COUNCIL

held on Monday 3 February 2003

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs P.R. Lindsley, Town Mayor, presiding  
Councillor Mrs S.W. Jordan, Deputy Town Mayor.

Councillor	A.K. Bacon	Councillor	D.A. Ponting
"	Mrs J.A. Barratt	"	A.H. Reed
"	Z. Bhatti	"	C.H. Spruytenburg
"	Mrs D.J. Brackley	"	Mrs P.R. Wilkinson
"	N.L. Brown	"	P.W. Yerrell
"	D.J. Lacey		

Officer: Mr W. Richards - Town Clerk

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.A. Cross, Mrs N.H. Downs, M. Fayyaz and A.W. Walters.

#### 225. MINUTES

It was

#### RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 13 January 2003 be confirmed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

#### 226. REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Members considered the report prepared by the Town Clerk following the Council meeting held on 11 November 2002, where it was resolved to reconsider the whole question of the Council's Committee structure for adoption and implementation from March 2003.

It was accepted by Members that the proposed three Committee structure would be an improvement on both the previous seven Committee structure and the current system although Councillor Bacon stated his wish to see the present status quo maintained. Several Members also expressed the view that it would be unfair to expect new Councillors, potentially inexperienced in matters of Local Government, to make immediate decisions on Committee structures. It was proposed that rather than deferring a decision until the Annual Meeting in May, the matter should be resolved now. This was **AGREED.**

*Councillor D.A. Ponting arrived at 7.40 pm*

Members were in full agreement that the Committees should not have delegated powers, save for the Development Control Committee being able to make recommendations to the District Council on planning applications. It was proposed that recommendation 2 of the Town Council's report, namely *that the Committees be granted full delegated (Executive) powers as outlined in the Terms of Reference* be rejected. This was **AGREED.**

Councillor Mrs Jordan stated that she would like to see matters of transportation be considered by the Development Control Committee, as it was by the previous Planning and General Purposes Committee. This was **AGREED**.

Councillor Brown spoke in favour of retaining an Executive Committee to consider Personnel and other matters. This was **AGREED** and the Town Clerk was requested to investigate its previous Member representation and terms and references ready for adoption.

Councillor Brown spoke on the representation of the Committees. He felt that it should not be mandatory for one Councillor to be allowed to sit on either Recreation and Arts Committee or the Policy and Resources Committees but left to Members' discretion. This was **AGREED**.

Councillor Mrs Jordan stated that she believed it was good practice for the Deputy Mayor as well as the Mayor to sit on all the Committees. This was **AGREED**.

Councillor Spruytenburg raised the question of the role of the independent groups such as Friends of Lowndes Park and the Environmental Group under this proposed new structure. It was proposed that the groups continue, report to the appropriate Committee and be used as the basis for working parties as and when required. This was **AGREED**.

The question of the co-opting of a Youth Council representative on to the Recreation and the Arts Committee was discussed. After a lengthy discussion, the Town Mayor, Councillor Mrs Lindsley, moved that a vote be taken on recommendation No.6 of the Town Clerk's report, namely *that the Members consider co-opting a Youth Council representative on to the Recreation and the Arts Committee*. This recommendation was **REJECTED** by 10 votes to 3.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson brought to Members' attention that the first scheduled meeting on the new timetable was the Recreation and the Arts Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> March. Accordingly, the Members representation on the Committees needed to be determined at the next Council meeting. This was **AGREED**.

It was therefore

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Council adopts a "four standing Committee" structure -
  - Development Control Committee
  - Recreation and the Arts Committee
  - Policy and Resources Committee
  - Executive Committee;
2. that single issue working parties to be formed as required and dissolved once the issue/project is completed;
3. that the Performance Review Sub-Committee to consider Best Value be retained;
4. that, subject to the amendments agreed by Members being incorporated, the Terms of Reference of both Council and the Committees be agreed;

5. that the Officers, subject to the amendments being agreed by Members being incorporated, be authorised to draw up new Standing Orders;
6. that the leaders of the four parties submit their nominations for the Committees to the next Council Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2003 in order that the first scheduled Committee can meet on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2003.

227. **DISTRIBUTION OF COUNCIL PAPERS**

The Mayor wished it to be minuted that she was aware of the efforts of the Town Hall staff who had worked late on a Friday afternoon to ensure that Members had their papers promptly and was grateful for their diligence.

228. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

**TOWN MAYOR**

*Publication Date 5 February, 2003*

# Chesham Town Council

Bill Richards  
Town Clerk



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## WIN Waitrose vouchers

January 2005

Dear Householder

### CHESHAM RESIDENTS' SURVEY

This survey has been sent to every household within the town as we want to know what you think about the services the Town Council provides, whether you and members of your household use these services and what you would like us to do to promote Chesham. Your opinions will help us to assess how we are doing and where improvements can be made to provide a better quality of service to you, the residents.

To thank you for your time in completing the survey all returned questionnaires will automatically be entered into a **prize draw** to win one of four sets of Waitrose vouchers to use in their Chesham store. Four lucky winners will be drawn at random and will each win £50 of Waitrose vouchers.

All of the information collected from this survey will be treated in strictest confidence and analysed by a third party.

If you have any specific comments or concerns about any of our services then please forward these directly to the Council at the Town Hall. We are always keen to hear your views.

If you would like a large print version of the survey please contact the Town Hall on tel. 01494 774842 or write to Chesham Town Council, Town Hall, Chesham, HP5 1DS.

اگر آپ یہ سمس سے اردو زبان میں کوہنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم ہر ماہ چشتم ٹاؤن ہال سے رجوع کریں۔

We look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Richards'.

Bill Richards  
Town Clerk



Chesham Town Council, Town Hall, Chesham, Bucks HP5 1DS  
Twinned with Friedrichsdorf Germany; Houilles France; Archena Spain



# Chesham Residents' Survey 2005

## 'having your say about the services Chesham Town Council provides'

Chesham Town Council

*Please complete the questionnaire by putting a tick  in the appropriate box or writing in the space provided. Please leave blank any questions where you have no experience, or no opinion.*

### Parks and Open Spaces

Chesham Town Council owns and manages 10 parks and open spaces throughout the town.

1. On average, how many **times a month** do you or members of your household visit Lowndes Park?

4 or more	2-3	Once	Less often	Never
<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

2. How good are the facilities in Lowndes Park?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Access to the Park	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Aerial runway	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Cricket wicket	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Scented Garden	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Litter bins/Dog waste bins	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Multi-use play court	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Play equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Skateboard Ramps	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Seats	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Skottowes Pond	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Summer concerts on band stand	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Toddlers' play area	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

3. On average, how many **times a month** do you or members of your household visit these parks/play areas?

	4 or more	2-3	Once	Less often	Never
Bois Moor Road	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Chesham Moor	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Codmore Field	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Co-op Field	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Gordon Road	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Hodds Wood Road	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Marston Field	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Nashleigh Hill	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Woodland View	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

4. How good are the facilities at these places?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Bois Moor Road	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Chesham Moor	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Codmore Field	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Co-op Field	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Gordon Road	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Hodds Wood Road	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Marston Field	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Nashleigh Hill	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Woodland View	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

### Sports Pavilions and Playing Fields

The Town Council owns and maintains three pavilions and adjoining playing fields.

5. Which of these places do you or members of your household use for sports? *Tick all that apply.*

Chesham Moor	Codmore Playing Field	Marston Playing Field
Football <input type="radio"/>	Football <input type="radio"/>	Football <input type="radio"/>
(junior)	Cricket <input type="radio"/>	

6. How would you rate the **pitches** at these places?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Chesham Moor Football (junior) Pitch	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Codmore Field Football Pitch	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Codmore Field Cricket Pitch	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Marston Field Football Pitch	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

7. How would you rate the **pavilions** at these places?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Codmore Field	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Marston Field	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

The parks, open spaces, sport pitches and pavilions cost the average household (Council Tax Band D property) £17.96 per year, about £9.17 per elector per year.

8. As **value for money**, is this... (*tick one*)

Very poor	Poor	In between	Good	Very good
<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

### Chesham Open Air Heated Swimming Pool

Chesham Town Council works with Chess Valley Sports & Leisure Association (CVSLA) to provide a heated outdoor swimming pool open May – September and adjoining gymnasium, solarium, tennis court and a multi-court.

9. On average, how many **times a year** do you or members of your household visit the following facilities at the Open Air Pool?

	4 or more	2-3	Once	Never
Gym	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Multi-court	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Outdoor swimming pool	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Solarium	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Tennis court	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

10. How would you rate the facilities available?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Access to the facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
The Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Outdoor swimming pool	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Gym	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Multi-court	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Solarium	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Tennis court	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

The Open Air Pool costs the average household (Council Tax Band D property) £3.84 per year, about £1.96 per elector per year.

11. As **value for money**, is this... (*tick one*)

Very poor	Poor	In between	Good	Very good
<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

### Allotments

Chesham Town Council manages three allotment sites in the town, Asheridge Road, Cameron Road and Amersham Road. This section looks at these three sites.

12. Were you aware that you could rent an allotment from the Town Council? Yes <sub>1</sub> No <sub>2</sub>

13. Do you or a member of your household rent an allotment from the Town Council? (*Tick all that apply*)

- Yes, at Asheridge Road site
- Yes, at Cameron Road site
- Yes, at Amersham Road site
- No  *go to question 15*

14. How would you rate the facilities at the site?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Asheridge Road	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Cameron Road	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Amersham Road	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

### The Town Centre

We would like to know what you think about events that take place in the town as well as the CCTV and hanging baskets/ floral displays and Police Community Support Officers.

15. Have you or any members of your household been to any of the following events in the past 12 months?

*Tick all that apply*

- Victorian late night shopping and switch on of Christmas lights (November 2004)
- Schools of Chesham Carnival (June 2004)
- Summer concerts on the band stand in Lowndes Park (July-August 2004)
- Chesham Festival 'One Town One World' (August 2004)
- The Charter Fair on Chesham Moor (April, June and September 2004)

16. Of those events that you or members of your household attended how would you rate them?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Victorian late night shopping and switch on of Christmas lights	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Schools of Chesham Carnival	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Summer concerts on the band stand in Lowndes Park	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Chesham Festival 'One Town One World'	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
The Charter Fair on Chesham Moor	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

17. What is your view of the:

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
hanging baskets/ floral displays in the Town Centre	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
CCTV In the High Street	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
CCTV In Lowndes Park	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

Police Community Support Officers are going to be introduced in Chesham within the next few months.

18. Do you think that they will help reduce the fear of crime? Yes <sub>1</sub> No <sub>2</sub>

19. Where do you think these officers should patrol?

*(please write in)*

### Community Buildings

The Town Hall is owned and managed by the Town Council and is located in the centre of the town. The Little Theatre by the Park (formerly Temperance Hall) is located next to Lowndes Park and is managed by a group of trustees on behalf of the Council.

20. On average, how many **times a month** do you or members of your household visit these buildings?

	4 or more	2-3	Once	Less often	Never
Town Hall	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Little Theatre by the Park	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

21. How would you rate the facilities available to you when you visit?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Town Hall	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Little Theatre by the Park	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

### The Elgiva

The Elgiva theatre is owned and managed by Chesham Town Council. The venue provides a range of entertainment and is also available for hire for exhibitions and functions.

22. On average, how many **times a year** do you or members of your household visit the following facilities at The Elgiva?

	4 or more	2-3	Once	Never
The Café	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Cinema/Films	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Children's Shows	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Amateur Performances	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Tribute Bands	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Professional Music	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Professional Dance/Opera	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Christmas Pantomime	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Exhibitions	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Private/social function	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

23. How would you rate the facilities at The Elgiva?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Access to the facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
The box office	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Publicity/What's On guide	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
The auditorium (seats, sound, light)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
The Café	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
The Bar	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Website	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
The Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

The Elgiva costs the average household (Council Tax Band D property) £15.03 per year, about £7.67 per elector per year.

24. As **value for money**, is this... *(tick one)*

Very poor	Poor	In between	Good	Very good
<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

### Chesham Cemetery and St Mary's Churchyard

The Town Council provides and manages a cemetery for the town, located along Bellingdon Road, and maintains the churchyard at St Mary's Church.

25. How would you rate the facilities at the Cemetery?

Poor Satisfactory Good Excellent

- Access to the cemetery <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>
- Grass cutting <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>
- Flower Beds <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>
- Shrubs and Trees <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>
- The Chapel <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>
- Seats <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>
- Litter bins <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>

26. How would you rate the facilities at the churchyard at St Mary's Church?

Poor Satisfactory Good Excellent

- Access to the churchyard <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>
- Grass cutting <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>
- Flower Beds <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>
- Shrubs and Trees <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>
- Seats <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>
- Litter bins <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> <sub>4</sub>

### Your Local Council

27. Before you received this questionnaire were you aware of Chesham Town Council? Yes <sub>1</sub> No <sub>2</sub>

28. Have you contacted the Town Council or visited the Town Hall in the past 12 months?

- Yes <sub>1</sub> *go to question 29*
- No <sub>2</sub> *go to question 30*

29. Were the staff:

- Helpful? Yes <sub>1</sub> No <sub>2</sub>
- Courteous/ Polite? <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub>
- Knowledgeable? <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub>
- Able to deal with your query? <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub>

30. How would you rate Chesham Town Council overall?

- Poor <sub>1</sub>
- Satisfactory <sub>2</sub>
- Good <sub>3</sub>
- Excellent <sub>4</sub>

Chesham Town Council in total costs the average household (Council Tax Band D property) £78.48 per year, about £40.33 per elector per year.

31. As **value for money**, is this... (*tick one*)

- Very poor <sub>1</sub>
- Poor <sub>2</sub>
- In between <sub>3</sub>
- Good <sub>4</sub>
- Very good <sub>5</sub>

### About You

Your answers to these questions will allow us to group people's replies and will not be used to identify you after the survey.

Number of people in your household in each age group (*please write in*)

Age	Males	Females	Age	Males	Females
0-4			25-40		
5-11			41-59		
12-18			60-74		
19-24			75+		

Time in Chesham

- Lived in Chesham under 5 years <sub>1</sub>
- Lived in Chesham 5-20 years <sub>2</sub>
- Lived in Chesham over 20 years <sub>3</sub>

Your Postcode (*please write in*)

H	P	5			
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**Thank you for completing this survey.**  
**Please return it in the reply paid envelope.**  
**No stamp is needed.**  
**If you don't have a reply paid envelope,**  
**please send to**  
**QUANTIFY! Ltd, FREEPOST LON 17233,**  
**LONDON, SW14 8YY**  
**You still don't need to use a stamp.**

### WIN Waitrose vouchers

We only need your name and address if you wish to be entered into the prize draw. Please write in your details below to be entered into the prize draw to win one of four sets of £50 of Waitrose vouchers to use in their Chesham store. If the address label on the front is incorrect, please write your correct address here.

Name
Address

The prize draw is not open to Officers and Members of Chesham Town Council or employees of the John Lewis Partnership. Winners will be drawn at random after the closing date and notified by post. Winners of the prize vouchers will be expected to be involved in reasonable publicity regarding their prize.



Chesham Town Council

# Chesham Town Council Member Services Survey

As part of the Democratic Services and Corporate Management Best Value Review that is taking place this year, the Review Panel would like to seek your views on the administrative and support services that are provided to you as Members. Your responses will help the Panel to identify what improvements and changes should be made to ensure an efficient and cost effective service is provided.

Your comments can be given anonymously, unless you specifically want to make your views known, and will be treated in strictest confidence.

**Please complete the survey by placing a  in the appropriate box or writing in the space provided.**

### Induction Information

1. When you were elected to the Town Council in 2003, was the information that you received in your information pack.

	Yes	No
About right	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Was there any information that **was not** included that would be useful to include next time? (please write in below)

### Committee Papers

**All meetings of the Council and Committees are accompanied by an agenda, minutes and associated reports.**

3. Are reports that accompany agenda items:

	Yes	No
Of a good layout	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Well written	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any other comments regarding reports (please write in below)

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4. The Council has a statutory obligation to despatch Committee papers 3 clear working days in advance of a meeting but **normally** despatch papers **5 clear working days** in advance of a meeting. For you, is this:

- |                                    | Yes                      | No                       |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Not enough time before the meeting | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| About right                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To far in advance of the meeting   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 

5. Committee papers are currently despatched as hard copies by post. Is this your most preferred way to receive papers for meetings?

- Yes  (go to question 7)  
No  (go to question 6)
- 

6. What other method of receiving committee papers would you prefer?

- E-mail with committee papers attached   
Website that you could download committee papers from   
Collect from the Town Hall (hard copies)   
Other (please write in) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### Council and Committee Meetings

**Decisions are made at Council and Committee meetings. The current structure of meetings is made up as follows: Council, Development Control, Executive, Performance Review, Policy and Resources, Recreation and the Arts.**

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7. Council and Committee Meetings all begin at 7.30pm. Is this time:

- Too early  (go to question 8)  
Too late  (go to question 8)  
About right  (go to question 9)
- 

8. What would be your preferred **start time** for Council and Committee meetings? (please tick **one**)

- Morning   
Afternoon   
6.00pm   
6.30pm   
7.00pm   
7.30pm   
8.00pm   
8.30pm   
Later than 8.30pm
- 

9. During meetings, do you feel you are given adequate opportunities to speak/ask questions?

- Yes   
No
- 

10. Are you a Chairman of a Committee?

- Yes  (go to question 11)  
No  (go to question 14)
- 

11. As Chairman of a Committee, do you receive adequate support in preparation for a meeting?

- Yes  (go to question 13)  
No  (go to question 12)
-

12. How can we improve the support we give you? (please write in below)

13. Would you be interested to receive training in Chairman skills?

Yes

No

**Decision Making**

14. During meetings, do you feel you are given enough information to make an informed decision?

Yes

No

15. Do you feel you are able to make decisions that follow long term plans (Council objectives)?

Yes  (go to question 17)

No  (go to question 16)

16. What would help you to make planned decisions?

**Training**

17. Are you given adequate training opportunities to carry out your role as a Town Councillor?

Yes  (go to question 19)

No  (go to question 18)

18. How can we improve the training opportunities made available to you? (please write in below)

19. Do you have any suggestions for Member training (please write in below)

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20. Would you like to see a formal Members' Training Programme developed?

Yes

No

**Contact with Officers**

21. Do you feel you receive adequate responses from Officers on a one-to-one basis?

Yes  (go to question 23)

No  (go to question 22)

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22. How can Officers improve their responses to you?

**Provision of Information**

23. Do you feel you receive adequate information in-between Committee meetings?

Yes  (go to question 25)

No  (go to question 24)

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24. How could this be improved? (please write in below)

**Additional Comments**

25. Please write in below if you have any additional comments you would like to make regarding services to Members...

*Thank You*  
*Now please return to the Town Hall by Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2005*  
*A collection box for completed questionnaires will be provided at each Committee Meeting*



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## FEEDBACK FORM

Name:

Contact Address:

Telephone (Daytime):

Telephone (Evening):

Email address:

Comments:

Questions:

Do you require a response?:

(Yes/No)

## **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Performance Indicators below represent a measure of our corporate performance:

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Actual 2003/04</b>	<b>Target 2004/05</b>
Net precept cost of all Town Council services per elector per annum.	£30.89	£43.56
Percentage of respondents to surveys indicating that they are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the services provided by the Town Council.	N/A	80%
Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days.	95%	100%
Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence.	2%	2%
Percentage attendance by Councillors at meetings of the Council, including standing committees.	74.5%	80%
Percentage of correspondence dealt with within 7 days.	83.7%	85%
Percentage of correspondence fully answered within 20 days.	81.3%	90%
Percentage of e-mails replied to within 2 days.	100%	100%