

Managing Delivery

Resourcing, Monitoring and
Accessibility



9 Managing Delivery

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9.1 Monitoring and Performance

9.1.1 Business Planning

An annual Business Planning process will be used to support and apply detail to the delivery of the 10 Year Action Plan. Each Business Plan will be used to ensure that individual activities are captioned in a timely and effective way, identifying clear timescales, targets and accountabilities. It is intended that this business plan will be a rolling plan, which will assist in the profiling of work.

9.1.2 Internal Monitoring

Progress against the Action Plan will be monitored quarterly by the Executive Member with responsibility for this area of work.

9.1.3 Community Accountability

The Central Bedfordshire and Luton Joint Local Access Forum is a partnership of private landowners who use the countryside for business and local people who use the countryside for recreational purposes. The Forum contributes in an advisory capacity to the development of Rights of Way Improvement Plan(s)⁷³ for Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council. It is a key vehicle for local consultation and provides a mechanism for the community to hold the council accountable for delivery of the Action Plan. The Local Access Forum will be provided with regular updates on progress.

9.1.4 Reporting

The council will produce an annual statement to our local communities reporting on performance against our priorities.

⁷³ This Strategy incorporates the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Central Bedfordshire Council for 2013-31

A formal review of performance against the 10 year Action Plan will be undertaken in 2018 to assess the impact of the Action Plan over the first 5 years of delivery. This report will be circulated within the council and to stakeholders. It will be also made available to the public via the Central Bedfordshire Council website.

The council recognises that good quality information about outdoor access and the use of the countryside is of interest to the community. The council will provide updates, when appropriate, about how its performance impacts positively on quality of life through press coverage and via the Central Bedfordshire Council Website.

9.1.5 Revised Action Plan 2018-2023

The 10 year Action Plan will be reviewed and refreshed in 2018. The revised Action Plan 2018-2023 will build on the deliverables from the first five years. This will be made available to the public via the Central Bedfordshire Council website.

9.2 Funding Statement

9.2.1 Funding the 10 Year Action Plan

Many of the deliverables within the action plan require additional resourcing, in terms of staff time or funding, beyond the resources allocated through the core revenue budgets. Additional resourcing will come from a range of sources:

- Other internal sources such as the Local Transport Plan and the Capital Programme.
- External funding sources
- By off setting costs through other means (e.g. the increased use of volunteers or the introduction of additional internal and external chargeable services).
- Planning gain

The resourcing aspiration for the 10 Year Action Plan is to, wherever possible:

- Achieve value for money by leveraging in external funding;
- Develop a portfolio of income sources to increase the level of financial self sustainability and decrease the reliance on local authority funding;
- Adopt a more commercial approach to delivering our responsibilities by identifying opportunities for cost recovery.

9.2.2 Resourcing Tools

Fundraising Strategy

Those familiar with fundraising will appreciate that it is an ever-changing environment. A flexible Fundraising Strategy will be created as part of the business planning process and will be subject to regular review and change to take advantage of new opportunities.

Cost Recovery Methodology

A robust cost recovery methodology is necessary to ensure that chargeable services and commercial activity are not subsidised by other services. This will avoid negative impact on the delivery of council objectives. This methodology and the associated fees and charges should be reviewed annually and applied efficiently to ensure appropriate cost recovery.

CAS 500

This project will assess ways of maximising commercial activity and evaluate the potential of setting up a trading and charitable arm to deliver additional income generation outcomes.

9.2.3 Forms of Income

Grants	Sponsorship
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-repayable funds disbursed by one party (grant makers); often a government department, quango, the EU, a corporation, foundation or trust.• Grants are made to fund specific and time-limited projects and require some level of compliance and reporting.• Countryside grants previously awarded have come from a variety of sources including Growth Area Funding (GAF), Natural England and Landfill Tax (e.g. Wren and Biffa).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A financial donation provided by an organisation, normally corporate, to align itself with a brand, initiative or activity.• Many companies include sponsorship as part of their marketing strategies.• In times of recession, sponsorship is often one of the first forms of expenditure to be cut.
Fees and Charges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 allows Local Authorities to recover the costs of providing discretionary services.• Income from charges should not exceed the cost of providing them (i.e. do not make a profit)• Fees and charges should fully recover the costs of delivering services.• Fees and charges allow the council to provide services that might otherwise not be available to the local community.• Work can be undertaken for internal departments and external organisations and a charge can be levied to cover costs.• Charging does not generate a 'profit' but enables the department to manage resources flexibly; generating unrestricted funds to support core costs.	

Developer Contributions	Trading & Charitable Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given expected development in the area developer contributions will be secured from developments across the whole area. • Developer contributions are likely to be a potential source of funding for the implementation of some actions within this plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Government Act 2003 allows Local Authorities to trade at a profit through a trading company. • The council is assessing the viability of a countryside trading arm to trade more effectively. • A trading arm could be combined with a Charitable Trust to maximise charitable income sources. • Different legal models need to be carefully assessed for viability.

9.2.4 Fundraising Plan

The Fundraising Plan will provide a detailed plan of activity to support the 10 Year Action Plan and rolling business plans. A high-level summary of proposed content is detailed here:

Connecting Spaces

Core Funding: Aims, outcomes and actions for Connecting Spaces largely relate to statutory, health and safety and maintenance issues. There are few direct opportunities to generate external income to support this type of work and these activities should be largely funded through core Local Authority Budgets.

Grants: The exception to this general rule is the Natural England Paths for Communities funding stream, which has been established to develop and enhance the network of Public Rights of Way (PROW) in England. However, the funding stream is in high demand and ceases in May 2014 so Central Bedfordshire can only hope to receive funding for a small number of schemes. Some additional grant funding may be available from other sources for work relating to dog control, seats and signage if it can be incorporated into a wider project.

Fees and Charges: There are a number of chargeable services within Connecting Spaces (e.g. Public Path Orders). Fees will be assessed annually to ensure they appropriately recover the costs of delivering the service. Adopting a more commercial approach to services and identifying additional chargeable services, could provide more financial flexibility, providing unrestricted income which could subsidise the costs of mainstream activities and enable the core budget to be used elsewhere.

Breathing Spaces

Core Funding: A large proportion of spend relating to Breathing Spaces is for maintenance and health and safety work. As with Connecting Spaces there are few opportunities to generate income for this sort of work directly.

Grants: Proactive development of visitor facilities and infrastructure, including visitor centres, interpretation and play equipment could be externally funded using internal match funding to lever in grant monies. The Heritage Lottery Fund, BIG Lottery and Sport England are all possible funding sources for this type of activity. EU funding could be used to support biodiversity and youth activity.

Fees and Charges: Countryside sites offer the potential to offer chargeable/commercial activities on a cost recovery basis; facilitating the generation of income to help sites become financially self-sustaining. The council will undertake site assessments to explore income generation options (to include advertising and franchise opportunities); ensuring options have minimal impact on site character and critical management objectives.

A number of council sites are managed on the basis of a 'hub model' whereby income from the hub site financially sustains a network of local sites without income generating potential.

Trading and Charitable Support: A trading or charitable arm could open up additional opportunities for income generation. Trading of services on countryside sites could legally generate a profit which could be reinvested in the service. There is also potential to develop a programme for charitable donations and a legacy and memorial scheme through the charitable arm. Any income would support the long-term sustainability of sites. These opportunities will be explored through the CAS 500 project.

Healthy Spaces

Grants: There will be opportunities to seek grant funding for the development of formal and natural play on countryside sites. Local Trusts and Foundations, Lottery Programmes and Landfill Tax Credit Schemes (e.g. Wren Buckinghamshire) all offer funding for projects of this nature. EU funding also be accessed to support health and sport initiatives.

Fees and Charges: The use of countryside sites to promote health is a key priority for the council. However, there is demand from private companies to use these sites for commercial gain and we feel it is vital that we seek fees from these organisations to help support the maintenance and management of the sites themselves.

Local Spaces

Core Funding: Work with volunteer groups and Town and Parish Council's needs to be managed largely through the core budget, however, there are opportunities to off-set management costs through the use of volunteers.

Grants: Local communities should be supported to identify and apply for small grants to produce local literature and interpretative materials. Many small grant schemes are not open to application from Local Authorities but can be accessed by small community groups, however, they may need guidance and support in business planning, grant management, budget setting and writing applications.

Larger projects (e.g. Parental Support and E-Learning Website and "Step This Way" Volunteer Training Project) will be subject to council applications to grant funding streams such as Big Lottery.

Sponsorship: There is potential to develop sponsorship and advertising opportunities on council leaflets and on countryside sites and Rights of Way. These will be explored although it is recognised that the economic climate may not be conducive to business engagement on this basis.

Growing Spaces

Developer Contributions: In the past external grants have been available to support the purchase of new land holdings such as Linslade Wood and Rushmere Park (GAF) but these grant schemes no longer exist. Whilst grant opportunities will continue to be monitored it is likely that land purchases will need to stem from developer contributions. There is potential for landholdings to be gifted to the council as part of the developer contribution; however the cost of infrastructure and a commuted sum for site management should be considered alongside the gift. No

new site should be acquired unless a long term business plan is in place which identifies the financial viability of the site.

There are also opportunities to secure funding for the long-term use and management of Mineral and Waste Sites to incorporate different form of public access, including nature trails, permissive paths and open space.

Grants: External grants can and should, be sought to support both infrastructure development and activity programmes using new sites. The use of a Trading and Charitable Arm could be used to attract a wider range of grants, many of which are not available to application by a Local Authority. In the absence of such a vehicle then charitable partners could be sought to support the project and act as lead applicant on grant applications.

Trading and Charitable Support: Any major new sites and facilities should be developed not only to meet green infrastructure requirements but also to generate profit to help financially sustain that site and a number of other local sites using the hub model or other appropriate management model. A trading/ charitable arm would allow for the generation of trading income through:

- Chargeable activities (e.g. boating, fishing, cycle hire)
- New infrastructure and facilities (e.g. car parking, cafes).

Each site should be subject to business planning and financial modelling to balance user needs with income requirements.

9.2.5 Funding Policies

The following policies will underpin the Funding Plan:

OAIP - Policy Statement 20 – Sustainability of New Sites

The council will ensure that any new strategic sites created by the Local Authority must be financially self-sustaining following initial investment and the creation of necessary infrastructure.

OAIP - Policy Statement 21 – Sustainability of Countryside Facilities Developed through Section 106 or CIL

The council will seek a commuted sum to financially sustain the management of any new countryside sites or facilities developed through Section 106 or CIL for a minimum of 20 years.

OAIP - Policy Statement 22 – External Funding Assessments

The council will assess all new projects and work streams for viability of funding through external sources before Local Authority budgets are committed.

OAIP - Policy Statement 23 – Positive Promoted Partnerships

The council will ensure that Connecting Spaces expenditure can be incorporated into wider projects or programmes of work.

The council will actively seek opportunities for cross departmental working to support funding activities, draw down external funding and achieve mutual benefits.

The council will continue to work with partners to secure funding for projects with mutual benefits.

OAIP - Policy Statement 24 – Chargeable Services

The council will base all fees and charges on a robust cost recovery methodology to ensure other services are not negatively affected by their delivery.

9.3 Accessibility Statement

9.3.1 Accessibility and the Law

Central Bedfordshire Council is a Service Provider as specified by the Equality Act 2010 and therefore has the responsibility to ensure that the facilities and services that it provides are accessible to those with disabilities. The Equality Act itself is non-prescriptive and does not specify solutions to access problems and relies upon documents such as the Building Regulations Part M and BS 8300 Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people – Code of Practice; these generally apply to the built environment. There are no definitive standards for accessibility in the countryside environment but there are a number of standards published by various organisations and these can be considered “Best Practice”. It is for the Service Provider to take reasonable steps to deliver the service or make the venue accessible by any or alternative means to fulfil his responsibilities under the Equality Act.

The key words are “alternative means” and “reasonableness”. Solutions maybe delivered by an alternative means as in the case of heron nests for example. Binoculars may be provided to allow people to view the herons but for those with visual and or comprehension impairments these may not be practical. Installing a camera local to the Heron nests and displaying this on a television screen in the Visitors Centre demonstrates delivery of the service by “alternative means” and meeting the needs of those with disabilities.

For the purposes of this project we have used the following publications to provide guidance:-

- Fieldfare Trust - “A Good Practice Guide to Disabled Peoples Access to the Countryside
- Tourism for All - Providing Accessible Visitor Attractions.
- The Countryside Agency - Landscape Access Recreation – On the Right Track.
- The Countryside Agency - Landscape Access Recreation – By all reasonable means.
- British Standard 8300:2009 - Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people – Code of Practice

9.3.2 Accessibility within the OAIP

The OAIP has been designed to ensure that the council:

- Meets relevant legal duties; e.g. the Equality Act, Countryside and Rights of Way Act, Race Relations Act
- Appropriately maintains the physical environment in accordance with the Least Restrictive Access Policy; which includes sites, structures, furniture, rights of way and provision of facilities for disabled people
- Appropriately maintains the intellectual environment; which includes language, labelling, interpretation, accessibility statements, mapping and signage
- Recognises and addresses other potential barriers to users; to be mitigated through staff training, representation of diverse communities, reasonable pricing and better web accessibility through 'Disabled Go'⁷⁴
- Provides resources to promote and support access for all; including core or prioritised funding and appropriate staffing
- Maintains a good understanding of our users and potential users; through research and evidence-gathering, outreach, community profiling, surveys and awareness of the priorities of key local partners
- Provides ways to engage all its users and potential users, promoting a sense of identity and affording opportunities to celebrate diversity. The plan supports community participation in outdoor access and activities plus events which appeal to a wide range of people
- Encourages any people and communities who have not taken advantage of the benefits of the countryside before to get involved – to 'get out' and enjoy its benefits

⁷⁴ 'Disabled Go' is a website www.disabledgo.com detailing access information for a wide array of public sites and facilities including parks and gardens.

10 Glossary

ANGSt	Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard – methodology for determining appropriate levels of greenspace
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – The Chilterns AONB extends into Central Bedfordshire
BRCC	Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CROW	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
CWS	County Wildlife Site
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfT	Department for Transport
FOMV	Forest of Marston Vale – national community forest partially within Central Bedfordshire
GI	Green Infrastructure
GST	The Greensand Trust
HRTC	Houghton Regis Town Council – partner on Houghton Hall HLF Bid
LAF	Local Access Forum – a partnership with land users who act as a consultative body representing local communities
LATP	Local Area Transport Plan – plan providing detailed activity for priority areas within the LTP
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership – ‘Central Bedfordshire Together’ is the name of Central Bedfordshire’s LSP
LTP	Local Transport Plan – framework for investment in transport across Central Bedfordshire
HRTC	Houghton Regis Town Council – partner on Houghton Hall HLF Bid
MENE	Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE)- the national survey on people and the natural environment

NCN	National Cycle Network
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework – planning guidance
NT	National Trust
OAIP	Outdoor Access Improvement Plan
P3	People, Projects, Partnerships – a scheme which involved from the national Parish Paths Partnership established in 1993 which aimed to empower local groups to manage their local Rights of Way Network
PROW	Public Rights of Way – the network of paths, bridleways and
ROW	Rights of Way
S106	Section 106 planning agreements
SPD	Supplementary Planning Documents
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
ST	The Shuttleworth Trust
STC	Sandy Town Council – ‘Partner in Walkers are Welcome’
TCV	The Conservation Volunteers

Conversion Tables

1 Kilometre =	1 Mile =
0.621 Miles	1.609 Kilometres
1 Hectare =	1 Acre =
2.471 Acres	0.405 Hectare

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