

AYLESBURY VALE PLAY PARTNERSHIP

AYLESBURY VALE PLAY STRATEGY

2007-2011



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The Strategy has been produced by the **Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership**
 Hosted by Leisure & Cultural Services, Aylesbury Vale District Council,
 66 High Street, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1SD

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership

The Play Strategy has been developed by the Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership with the support of Play England. The Partnership aims to coordinate the delivery of the Strategy and to monitor achievements against targets, which are laid out in a **5 year Action Plan** (Appendix 1). The key objectives for the Strategy are:

- Promoting Play
- Partnership and Participation
- Delivering Play
- Enabling Play

Terms of Reference for the Partnership have been agreed (see Appendix 2). The Steering Group for the Partnership includes representatives from:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Aylesbury Vale Out of School Network
- Bucks Community Action
- Bucks County Council
- Bucks Play Association
- Bucks Playing Fields Association
- County Play Strategy Group
- Early Years Childcare Service
- Forestry Commission
- Play England (in attendance)
- Southcourt and Walton Court Community Project

1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Strategy

The Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy supports the **2006 Buckinghamshire Play and Recreation Policy for Children and Young People**. The Policy covers actions for children and young people 0-19 years. Extracts from the Buckinghamshire Policy are included with this Strategy as they underpin the work in Aylesbury Vale. The Policy states that:

children and young people have the right to equal opportunity for access to safe and stimulating play through a range of structured and informal opportunities, developed through participation.

The purpose of the Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy is to identify how the objectives identified in the Buckinghamshire Policy can be translated into local action to improve opportunities for play for all children across the District. The Strategy seeks to set a direction for the provision of supervised and unsupervised play opportunities over the next five years, by recognising the role it can play within a mixed economy of providers, whilst strengthening key areas of influence.

1.3 Content of the Play Strategy

The Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy sets out the case for why play is important for children and young people and summarises the consultation which has been carried out to establish play needs and wishes. An assessment of current supervised and unsupervised play provision is included contextualised by local standards. The final elements of the Strategy are the 5 year Action Plan which includes targets and delivery agencies, and the Evaluation Plan which explains how progress against the Action Plan will be measured.



2 THE CASE FOR PLAY

2.1 Value and significance of play

The Bucks Play and Recreation Policy sets out the value and significance of play.

Play should encompass a wide range of opportunities, planned and unplanned, that allows freedom to explore and learn through trial, error, and risk taking.

Play is a fundamental right. It is a process and is freely chosen. It is the means by which children and young people explore their world, their roles and their relationships. It can be cooperative, competitive, or solitary; destructive or creative. It can be escapist, imaginative, therapeutic, adventurous, quiet, messy, challenging, structured or spontaneous. Play empowers children, affirms and supports their right to make choices and discover their own solutions. It encourages healthy emotional and physical development.

The role of play in society has changed significantly in recent years as a result of the increasing flexibility in work roles, changes in work patterns and fear of crime. This has led to an increase in child care and the diminution of family organised play and its intrinsic benefits. The provision of facilities for unsupervised play remains as important; its provision being accessible to all and free of charge.

2.2 Contribution of play to wider agendas

Research at national and local level has demonstrated that play can contribute to children's development including learning, social skills, and healthy lifestyles.

It is a natural instinct that needs to be nurtured. Play has both educational and social benefits in that, through it, children learn about complex relationships and more importantly about themselves. It also provides a basis of conceptual understanding that allows them to succeed in formal education. However, play is also important for its own sake. It shouldn't have to have a reason or an end. Play includes, but is more than, recreation. It is not an additional part of a child's life - it is a child's life. **(Bucks Play and Recreation Policy 2006)**

Children and young people can play with their identity and explore their senses. They can experiment with the natural world and natural elements; experience of rough and tumble and interaction with others through play encourages good physical, emotional, mental and social development as well as a sense of well-being and general good health. It involves choice, challenge, and risk which combine to produce a unique learning experience. Play can help develop a child's social skills, help with emotional healing, and enable them to develop respect for other people. Children who have had access to quality play are recognised as having high physical and mental literacy. **(Recreation April 2005)**

Nature, adventure, challenge, and even a little danger are part of the essence of woodland sites and make them ideal places for children to play. Free play is a valuable developmental and learning process for children of all ages. Evidence is growing that limiting children's outdoor play experience is likely to damage their physical, mental, and emotional development, and to leave them less likely to be concerned about the environment. **(Forestry Commission 2006)**

Involving children and young people in developing play spaces and play schemes can greatly increase community cohesion.

'Involving children and young people in the policy making process promotes more mature and responsible behaviour, which can enhance their contribution on other neighbourhood wide issues' (**Getting Serious About Play, DCMS, 2004**)



3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 National Context

The national framework includes a number of moves by government to address children's issues. A new policy framework document '**Change for Children**' requires local authorities to have arrangements in place for Children's Trusts by 2008, with every local authority required to develop and implement a **Children and Young People's Plan**. The Plan for Aylesbury Vale was published in 2007.

As well as having Children's Trusts in place, developing and implementing the Children and Young People's Plan, the new policy framework document **Change for Children** aims for all schools to offer child care from 8am – 6pm by 2010.

The national number of out of school clubs has grown from 500 in 1994 to a current number of 10,000 according to **4Children** (formerly Kids Club Network). At a local level the **Early Years and Childcare Service for Buckinghamshire County Council** has set a target of 50% access by 2008 and 100% by 2010 for those who need it.

Contribution to the planning and development of schemes by the community as a whole improves sustainability and supports the **Children Bill (2004)** which states that local authorities and trusts should identify needs, aspirations, and agree priorities for children and young people locally and that children, young people, their families, and communities should have a say in the outcome goals. The Bill is also responsible for the **Every Child Matters** outcomes that are to be shared across services and embedded in local, regional, and national strategies.

Although supervised play services are not a statutory service, the national inspection agency **Ofsted** has statutory minimum standards that have to be met which are imposed by legislation.

According to the **National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence**, local authorities should provide safe play spaces to encourage children and young people to take part in activities and play games, to reduce obesity in children and young people and to help parents and carers to provide a healthier and more active lifestyle.

3.2 Regional Context

The Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy supports the aims of the **Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership**.

We want all our children and young people to have the best start in life and to be able to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives, and to be able to make a positive contribution to their communities and to society.

The **Buckinghamshire Play and Recreation Policy** was produced in 2006 and aims to set the framework and principles for play across Buckinghamshire. The policy is intended for any organisation that is involved in the planning, management, or delivery of services that provide for children and young people.

Our vision for Buckinghamshire is to enable children and young people to participate in the planning of play facilities and services, in accordance with the United Nations (UN) Convention On The Rights of The Child. Play is an activity in its own right and Buckinghamshire recognises the importance of play development.

The **Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Plan 2007** has been developed by the **Children and Young People's Trust** to prioritise improvements to service and encourages active lifestyles, providing children and young people access to a broad range of services to meet their cultural and sporting needs.

The views of children, young people, parents, and carers have made an essential contribution to the development of this Plan and have influenced its **Local Priorities for Improvement** and the response to the Every Child Matters national targets.

As a result of the consultation the Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Plan has **4 key values**:

- **Tackling underachievement** – raising children and young people's attainment in and out of school
- **Prevention** – services that prevent children and young people from requiring high levels of intervention. In other words preventing problems from arising, and staying safe
- **Active Lifestyles** – providing children and young people with access to a broad range of services to meet their cultural and sporting needs
- **Participation by children and young people** – enabling them to have an active and real involvement in decision making

The **Local Area Agreement** in Buckinghamshire aims to 'reduce inequalities and promote prosperity', while the **Public Service Agreement** focuses on supporting growth in specific areas, in Aylesbury Vale this focus is on Aylesbury.

3.3 Local context

Aylesbury Vale District covers 350 square miles and has a population of approximately 166,000 in 108 parishes over a predominantly rural area. Transport links are poor. Some villages have no commercial bus service and others only twice a week.

The **Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan** has a number of policies which relate to green spaces, both protecting existing green spaces and confirming requirements for the provision of specific facilities such as play areas. The emerging **Aylesbury Vale Local Development Framework** will replace the AVDLP and will also contain policies on play.

One of the major challenges facing Aylesbury Vale is its rapid growth with 8,100 new homes to be built between 2001 and 2011, in addition to the 7000 built in the previous decade. By 2016, the population is expected to rise by 45%, a pattern that is set to continue over the next 15 years. Aylesbury Town is set to grow by a third whilst the remainder will be concentrated at Buckingham, Wendover, Haddenham, and Winslow.

The increasing demand for the provision of supervised and unsupervised play must be included within the planning for the new housing growth. In the design of major

development areas, the provision of green space and recreational facilities such as children's play areas and multi use games areas is an essential component. Pressure will increase on existing sites but enhancements can be sought through S106 funding for off-site provision.

The **Aylesbury Vale Green Infrastructure Group** brings together agencies including the District Council, Bucks County Council, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, and British Waterways. This Group will oversee green infrastructure provision associated with the growth which includes equipped play areas, open space, and areas for natural play.

Along with the increased and enhanced facilities, it is important that opportunities for supervised play are similarly provided, for instance providing the appropriate built facilities to host play development work. An assessment of the formal play provision requirements of the growing population is being prepared as part of the Local Development Framework, to ensure that an appropriate level of provision is provided.

In 2003 AVDC carried out the PPG17 audit of leisure facilities across the District which informed the production of **Supplementary Planning Guidance on Sport and Leisure Facilities** to guide future provision green spaces and play provision. The audit identified a lack of teenage provision in Aylesbury, highlighting a preference for football and basketball facilities.

The **Aylesbury Vale Cultural Strategy 2004** is based on consultation with the local community and audits of facilities. It identifies mechanisms for assessing need and how this may be met, and sets standards for play. Liaison was carried out with all parish and town clerks to produce a qualitative and quantitative assessment of play facilities. This information was cross referenced to direct feedback from the parishes on their specific needs, and the wider strategic issues. Further work was carried out with schools, clubs and community organisations to identify their issues.

AVDC's Green Spaces Strategy 2005 lays out policies for developing parks and open spaces across the Vale, including equipped play areas and natural play. It confirms the Council's commitment to community engagement and consultation in the development of facilities. The Strategy highlights opportunities for play in green spaces and links between play and the environment.

AVDC's Children & Young People's Improvement Plan has been published in 2007 and lays out the actions for children and young people, aged 0-19. The plan includes specific measurable outputs assessed against the Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework and is to be used to consider how services to children and young people can best be delivered across the Vale.

An analysis of **Aylesbury Vale population data** has been carried out, which is shown in Figures 1 to 3. Three priority areas for action were identified through the consultation on the Strategy (see Section 4.4) which are:

- Number of children and young people in the catchment area
- Indices of multiple deprivation
- Area with black and ethnic minority population

Figure 1: wards with the largest numbers of children

The chart shows the wards with the highest numbers of children in the Vale. Of the top fifteen wards, nine are in Aylesbury with the remaining six in rural areas. These figures are based on the 2001 Census and child population figures will have increased significantly since this time, particularly in Aylesbury as the town has continued to grow rapidly.

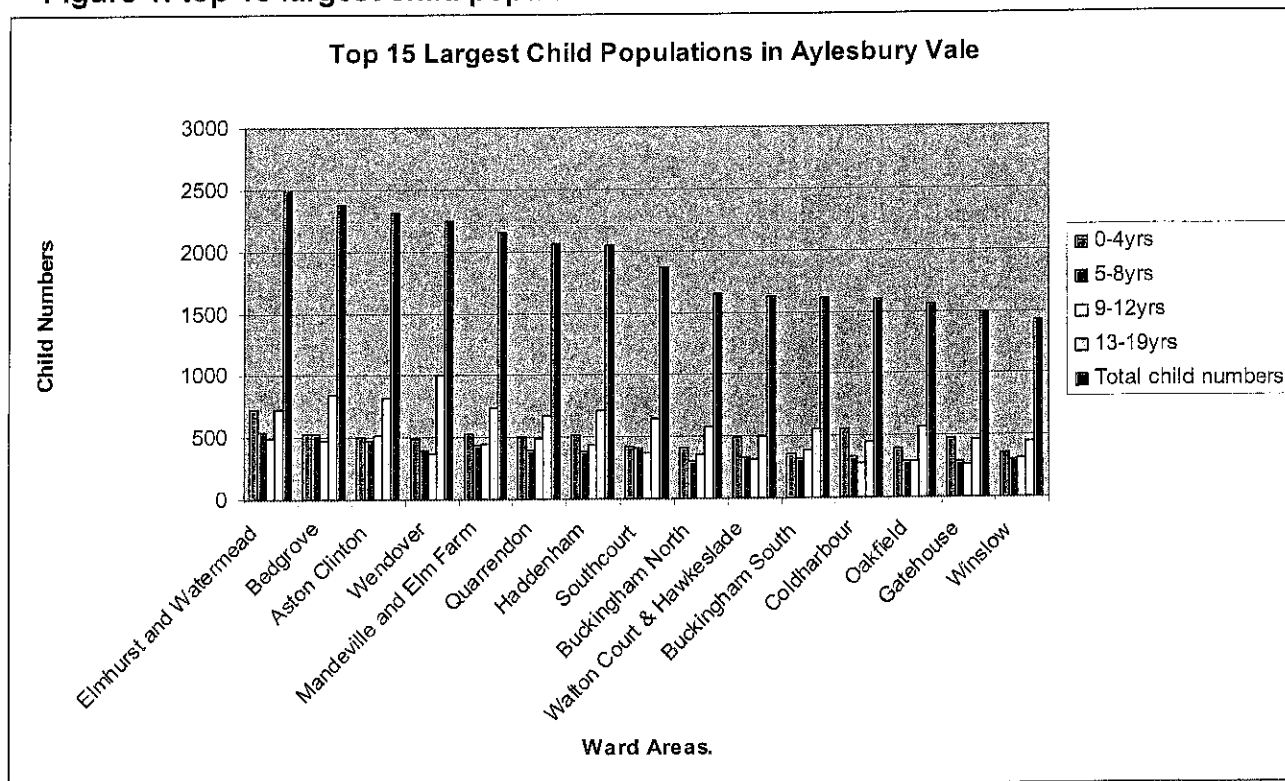
Figure 2: most disadvantaged areas in the Vale

The chart shows the top 15 most disadvantaged areas in the Vale, all are in Aylesbury. The data is taken from Super Output Areas (SOAs), a new national definition. Their statistical application was for the Indices of Deprivation 2004, giving them usage across the local government sector.

Figure 3: correlation of children numbers, disadvantaged areas and black and ethnic minority populations

The map shows the correlation in Aylesbury between three key factors – numbers of children, areas of disadvantage, black and ethnic minority populations, and programmed projects. Aylesbury is the only map shown, as this is the only area in the Vale with significant ethnic minority populations and areas of disadvantage. The map also highlights recent developments in unsupervised play provision and projected new provision.

Figure 1: top 15 largest child populations



Aylesbury wards

- Elmhurst and Watermead
- Bedgrove
- Mandeville and Elm Farm
- Quarrendon
- Southcourt
- Walton Court & Hawkslade
- Coldharbour
- Oakfield
- Gatehouse

Rural wards

- Aston Clinton
- Wendover
- Haddenham
- Buckingham North
- Buckingham South
- Winslow

**Figure 2; top 15 most disadvantaged areas
(Highest is most disadvantaged)**

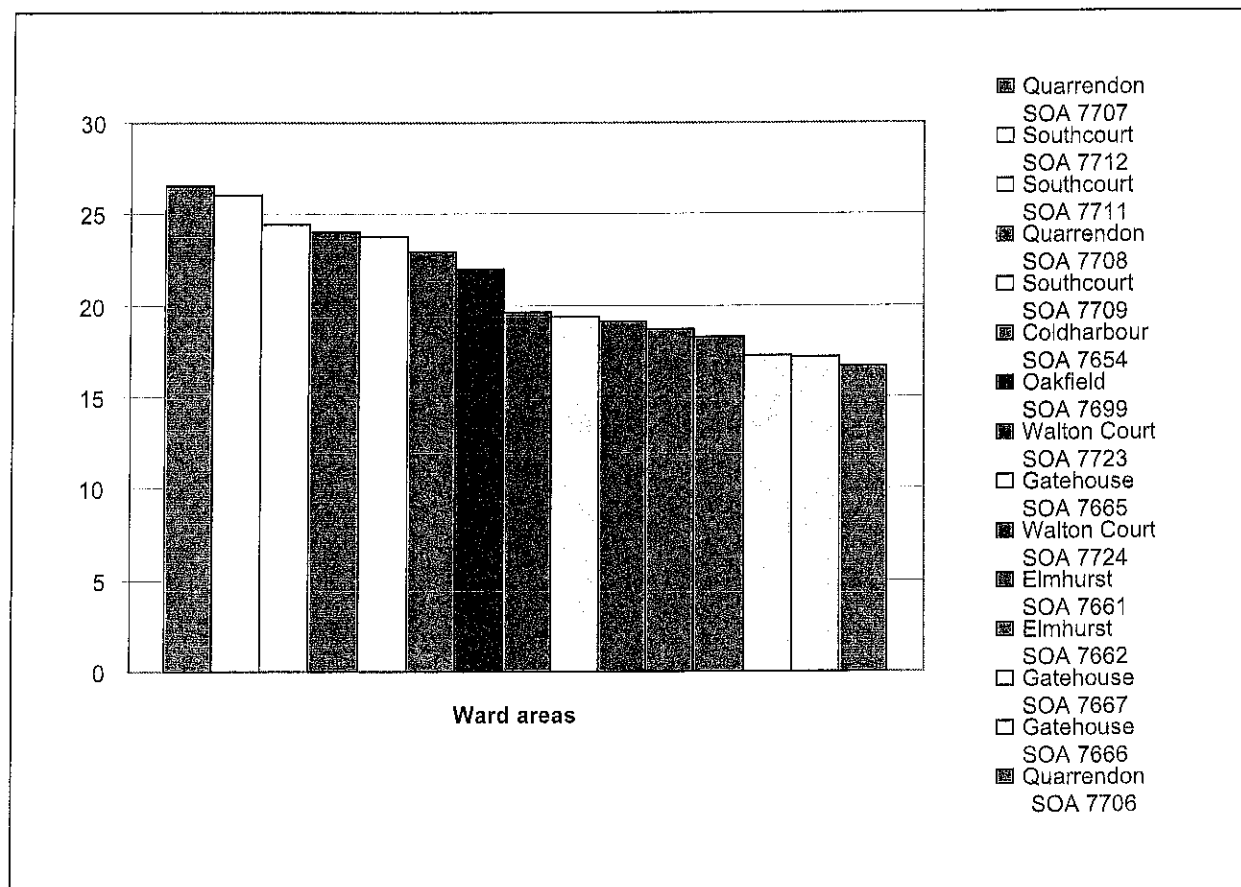
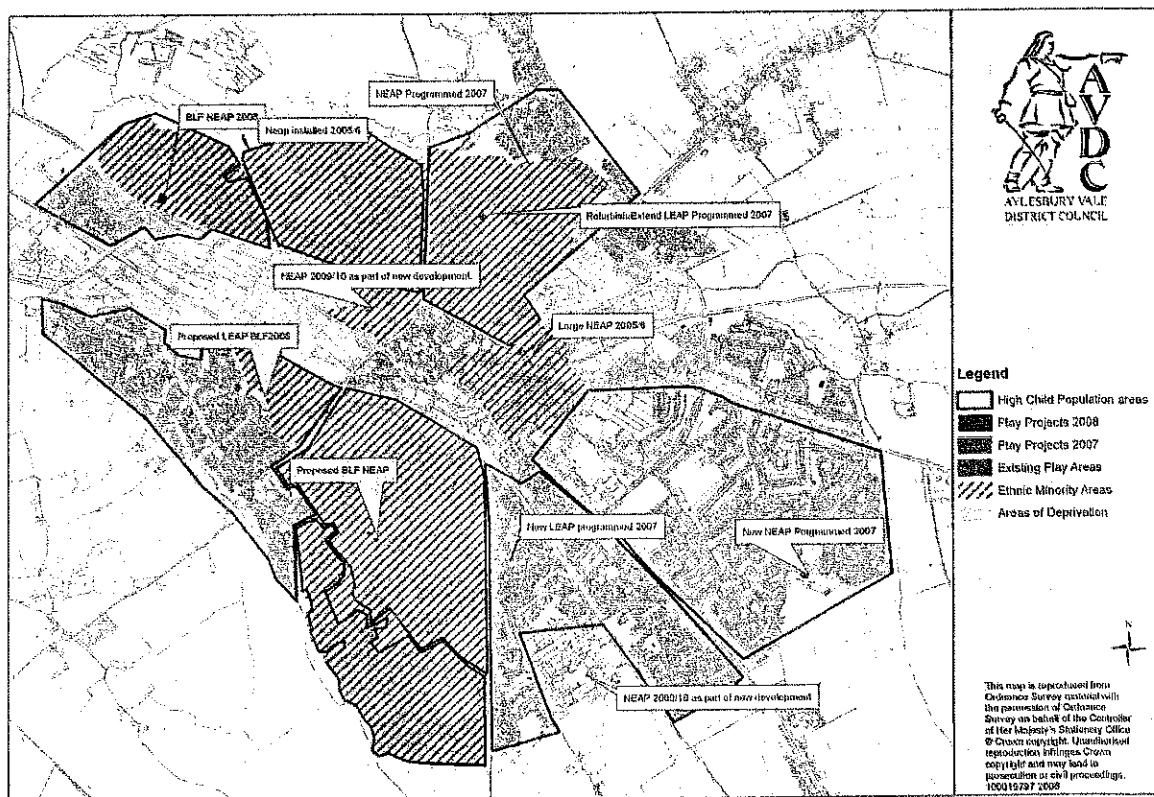


Figure 3: correlation of wards with large child populations, black and ethnic minority populations, and deprived areas



4 REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Consultation methodology

The Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy is based upon a number of consultations carried out during the course of its development and draws upon previous consultations which informed other strategic documents such as the County Play Policy.

The aim of the research was to establish the key needs for play across the Vale. The consultation has included work with children and young people to ensure that their needs and wishes are taken into account in the development of the Action Plan.

See the **Consultation Gazetteer in Appendix 3**. The Gazetteer provides a summary of each consultation showing:

- Title of consultation
- Reference number
- Consultees
- Date
- Methodology
- Number of respondents

The individual reference number e.g. **PC001, PC002**, links the following summary to the Gazetteer.

4.2 Summary of Research and Consultation

Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership Workshop June 2006 (PC001) was organised by the District Council to which play providers and linked organisations from across the District were invited to review the issues for Aylesbury Vale against Every Child Matters outcomes. The workshop identified and prioritised actions to be included in the **Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy**.

Buckinghamshire County Council 2005-2006 (PC002), in the development of the Children and Young Peoples Plan consulted children, parents, carers and staff to establish their needs. 327 children and young people aged 5-19 completed questionnaires and focus groups were held with 47 children and young people to develop findings, at a voluntary youth project, a drop in facility, a school and the County Youth Cabinet residential event.

In 2004, all **6 senior schools** in Aylesbury were visited and face to face interviews were carried out with pupils (**PC003**). The consultation was to establish what type of play and recreation provision they would prefer in parks and open spaces.

Work was carried out with children and parents at **Park Special Needs School** and the **Jonathan Page Play Centre** in 2004 to specifically discuss needs around the provision of formal play areas (**PC004**).

Extensive consultation has been carried out with **schools in Aylesbury in 2007 (PC005)** to gather students' views on play provision in their area. The consultation focused on areas with high levels of minority ethnic groups and multiple deprivation. Pupils from

Ashmead Combined, Mandeville Upper, and Oak Green Schools took part and 635 replies were received.

The **AVDC Parks and Open Spaces Survey (2006) (PC006)** provided data on the needs and wishes of local residents. A face to face survey was carried out with 400 members of the public asking questions such as the top reasons for visiting parks and areas for improvement.

256 questionnaires were completed by children during the first 4 weeks of the District Council's summer holiday programme of activities, **Play around the Parishes 2007 (PC007)**. The questionnaire asked for their views on the project and further play needs.

On National Play Day, August 1st 2007 a **Play in the Park** event was held in Vale Park, Aylesbury and attracted over 1000 children. 97 children were asked their views on the event and their play needs **(PC008)**.

The Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership is working with a local community group, **Future Inspirations, a group of Asian parents**. The group circulated a questionnaire in the Elmhurst area to find out the communities needs and to help the Partnership identify and therefore address, barriers to participation **(PC009)**.

Over the **summer 2006, (PC010)** 500 questionnaires were sent out by AVDC to children and young people who had taken part in **Supervised Play activities**, including play, sports, and arts events. The questionnaire sought to gain their views on play provision in their area and to inform the Play Partnership of the type of play provision preferred.

During **2006 and 2007 Supervised and Unsupervised Play Audits (PC011, PC012)** were undertaken on behalf of the Play Partnership. Each Parish Council was sent a questionnaire to find out more about supervised and unsupervised play provision in their area. To complete the picture Parish Plans (Bucks Community Action) and the AVDC audit of leisure facilities were also reviewed.

AVDC Best Value Review of Parks and Open Spaces (2003) (PC013) delivered a comprehensive review of provision of parks and open spaces by the District Council and compared provision against other local authorities. This included play provision.

Local Needs Surveys **(PC014)** have been carried out through public consultation on Management Plans for major parks and open spaces through schools, local community groups and residents' associations. For instance in developing plans for a new play areas, consultation has been carried out with children through local schools and through the **Prebendal Farm Residents Association** and the **Bedgrove Residents Association**.

Consultation has also been carried out in **Vale Park, Aylesbury (PC015)** to establish the needs of all users including children and young people.

The Strategy also draws upon research carried out by **Aylesbury Vale Youth for Christ on Public Spaces (PC016)** who worked with young people, community leaders, service providers, business leaders and parents to assess current provision for children and young people.

As a partner on the play partnership the **Forestry Commission, Growing Adventure (2007) (PC017)** research confirmed children's appetite for nature and the outdoors and for opportunities for adventure and challenge and identified the value of targeting groups of children that rarely or never visit woodland settings to explore what would encourage them to come and help them to feel confident.

Case Study 1 shows how community consultation informed the delivery of a capital scheme.

Case Study 1

The Three Roads Residents' Group wanted improved play provision for the local young people of the Southcourt estate. Young people often congregated and played football outside the local Methodist Church using the road as the playing area and the Church wall as the goal (smashed church windows were a regular occurrence). The Residents' Group and a Church representative contacted AVDC and Bucks Youth Services to see what could be done.

To engage with young people, the Youth Service erected temporary football goals once a week over the summer holidays on Elm Green, a 2 minute walk from the Church. Some of the adults living around Elm Green were not entirely happy with, fearing it could attract large numbers of young people to the green resulting in vandalism to the play area. Other adults in the community often joined in the football sessions, helping to erect the goals, which resulted in a change of attitude and support from the community.

Sessions were successful and local young people were able to fully express what they wanted to see in the area and what they thought would be successful - two football goals and a basketball square.

"We don't want tarmac for the football area we want to play on grass, it doesn't hurt as much if you fall over"

Work with the Residents' Group enabled further consultation with all the residents of the estate. Three suitable greens where a football/basketball area could be located were identified and with the support of the Residents' Group, AVDC conducted a public consultation for the whole estate resulting in Elm Green becoming the preferred site for the football provision.

The site also housed a children's play area. Refurbishment of the play area was a real priority because the site had been vandalised and misused. To try and keep vandalism to a minimum it was agreed with residents that the football/basketball provision would be installed in the first instance, and that the play area would be refurbished soon after.

Both projects were completed during the summer of 2006 and it has been noticed that incidents of vandalism at the site are to date still at zero.

4.3 Consultation results: key needs

The principle findings of the research have established the key needs for play in Aylesbury Vale

- N1) Children and young people in rural areas want more local activities and play opportunities**
- N2) Families in areas of high ethnicity want free dedicated play provision to address cultural barriers**
- N3) Children like to play in natural play settings e.g. parks, open spaces, countryside, woodland**
- N4) Children like to play in formal play area and natural play settings that are accessible to all and that address barriers to play**
- N5) Older children prefer more adventurous play and opportunities for informal sport that are affordable**
- N6) Older children want a safe place to hang out with their friends**

4.4 Applying the results of the consultation: criteria for action

The findings of the consultation have identified the key needs in the Vale for play. These have been used to establish criteria for prioritising action on play:

- C1) Play should be directed to areas of most need:**
 - provision in target areas with higher numbers of children and young people
 - areas of multiple deprivation
 - areas with high black and ethnic minority populations
 - rural villages
- C2) Capital investment should be allocated to current play area provision to improve condition, achieve DDA compliance and increase play value**
- C3) Play provision should reflect the cultural diversity of the Vale and make play inclusive**
- C4) Play provision should address accessibility and barriers including working in areas with black and ethnic minority populations and in rural areas to address lack of access to transport**
- C5) Play providers should engage and consult with children and young people to determine needs and wishes in order to inform provision**

5 LOCAL PLAY PROVISION

5.1 Unsupervised play

There are a many of opportunities for unsupervised play in green spaces and in equipped play areas within Aylesbury Vale. These sites are managed by a variety of providers including **town and parish councils**, the **District Council**, and organisations such as the **Forestry Commission** and the **National Trust**.

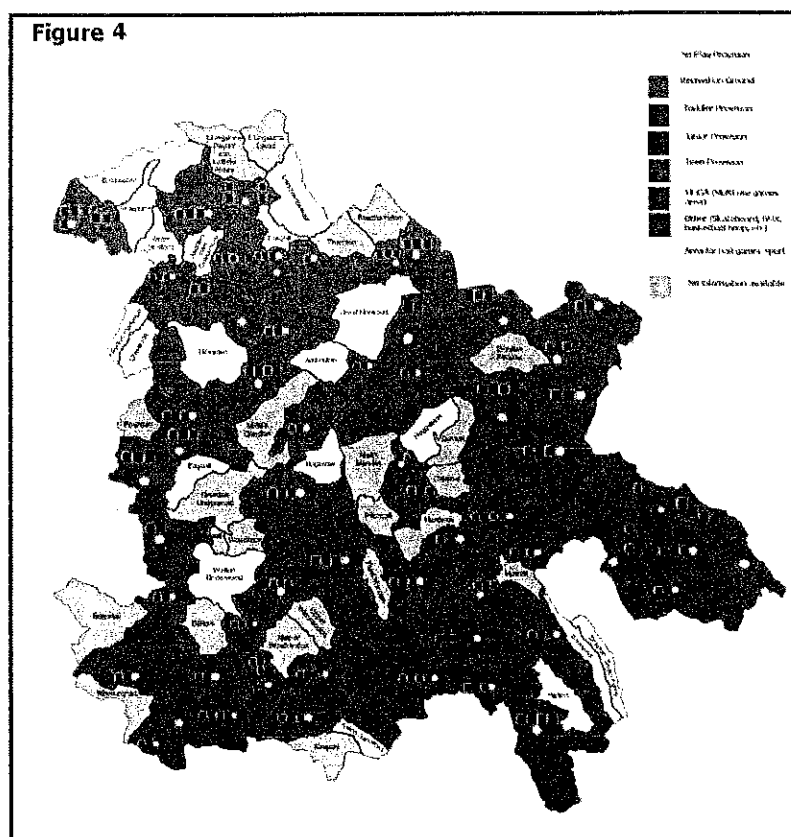
For instance, the Forestry Commission manages the largest accessible green space in Aylesbury Vale, **Wendover Woods**. Within 325 hectares of mixed coniferous and broadleaved woodland, the site includes a large children's play area and offers opportunities for natural play.

The District Council manages 30 junior and toddler play areas, predominantly in Aylesbury, plus teenage provision such as multi use games areas. A 2007 survey with town and parish councils showed 66 have play areas and recreation facilities, of which:

- 59% have provision for toddlers
- 64% have provision for juniors
- 18% have provision for teenagers
- 22% have no provision but stated that they used facilities in neighbouring parishes

In the survey responses, some parish councils stated that activities for older children and teenagers were a priority, whilst others prioritise holiday schemes. Funding for adult help with youth activities was also highlighted.

Figure 4 shows the results of the parish and town council survey of unsupervised play facilities across the District.



5.2 Supervised play

There are a variety of opportunities for children and young people to participate in play development through holiday play schemes and after school clubs. **Bucks Children's Information Service** provides information on activities and services for children 0-14 years and up to 16 if they have special needs. The County Council runs the **Early Years and Childcare Service** and **Sure Start Children's Centres** which support the quality of early years' education and the development of childcare provision under the National Childcare Initiative set by the Sure Start Unit of the DfES.

A review of the current formal play provision has been carried out in 2007. The distribution of provision across the Vale is shown in **Figure 5**. The key play providers are highlighted below.

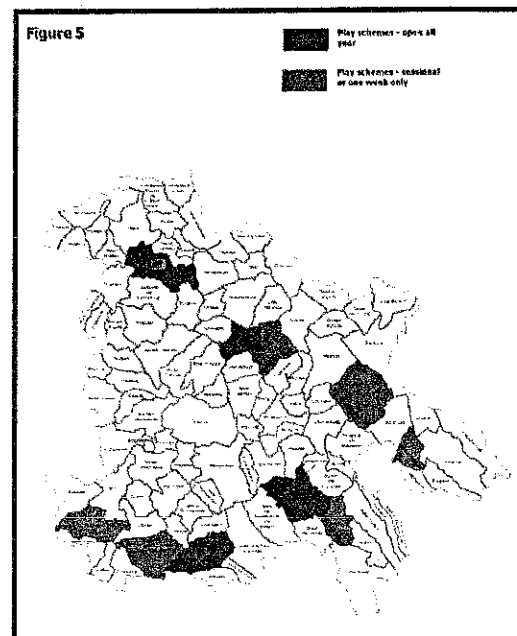
The **Aylesbury Vale District Council Play Service** organises a programme of activities for children and young people, based around play, games, sports and crafts. Activities have traditionally been organised mainly in urban areas but in 2007 a mobile rural project was piloted, **Play around the Parishes**, in partnership with Sure Start Children's Centres. This targeted 19 rural villages where families have no local play provision and proved to be very successful with average attendances of 47 children per session.

The Play Service organises an annual event to celebrate **National Play Day** in partnership with many other local organisations and play providers. The 2007 event in Vale Park, Aylesbury, attracted over 1000 children. The AVDC Play Service supports other Leisure & Cultural Services events such as the annual Roald Dahl Festival and works closely with Aylesbury Vale Out of School Network to deliver community events such as Junior Scrapheap Challenge, Junior Fit Club and Junior Art Attack.

AVDC operates the Jonathan Page Play Centre, a purpose built centre offering after school club and holiday play scheme places for children aged 5 to 13 years old. Children are collected from five local schools on foot and by minibus. Places on schemes are offered at affordable rates or lower for members of the Passport to Leisure Scheme which entitles families receiving benefits to discounts.

The **Aylesbury Vale Out of School Network** is a voluntary organisation which works to improve the quality of play in out of school clubs by training, networking and information sharing. Each year a large community event is organised in partnership with local organisations and out of school groups.

The **Southcourt and Walton Court Community Project** runs a weekly Saturday Club, holiday play scheme and football coaching sessions. The project belongs to the Passport to Leisure scheme and provides services in an area of multiple deprivation.



The **Bucks Play Association** seeks to support the provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure-time occupations for children. It aims to support children who may have need by reason of their youth or social and economic circumstances and to improve the life of these children by promoting their physical, educational, mental and spiritual well-being. Key objectives of the Association are to support the provision of Toy Libraries, the provision of inclusive Youth Clubs such as "PHAB Clubs" and the provision of inclusive Play Schemes such as "Lets Play Together" and other similar schemes and activities.

There are several other **after school clubs and holiday play schemes** in Aylesbury town, Winslow and Haddenham providing play opportunities for school age children, but very few in rural areas.

Case Study 2

Linda was a 10 year old with autism who was frightened of new situations. She joined the after school club at the Jonathan Page Play Centre and her mother agreed to stay until she settled in. Linda would not engage or speak to anyone and would hide in the toilets and refuse to remove her coat. If she became upset or agitated she would sit under a table and cover her head.

At her first session Linda watched some children skipping and it was not long before she was asked by one of the children to join in. She looked to her mother for approval and was soon involved in the game.

After the session she asked when she could come back without her mother and now attends twice a week. She no longer wears her coat and participates in all the activities. She usually waits for the children to talk to her or ask her to join in, but often engages in conversations when there is a member of staff present.

Linda now attends the holiday play scheme and her mother is delighted with Linda's new confidence. She talks about the Play Centre at home and her many new friends.



6 PLAY POLICY STATEMENTS

6.1 Key policy statements

- P1) To agree a consistent set of principles and definitions for play and its value for children's well being and development**
- P2) To underpin quality play, ensuring equitable access for all across the Vale, and reinforce current good practice**
- P3) To take positive action in removing barriers so all children can participate**
- P4) To increase play opportunities for black and ethnic minority communities, for children with disabilities, and those in disadvantaged areas**
- P5) To encourage partnership working between statutory, voluntary, and private organisations**
- P6) To increase delivery of local play opportunities in rural areas**
- P7) To provide links to other strategic outcomes, e.g. Every Child Matters**

The Play Partnership will work toward achieving the following outcomes:

- O1) More children will take part in a wider range of free, inclusive and accessible play experiences in both urban and rural areas.**
- O2) Local communities especially children will have greater involvement in designing, planning and running play projects - encouraging community ownership and increasing community safety.**
- O3) Increased healthy activities and well being, encourage promotion of green spaces in areas of increased housing development**
- O4) More children who experience barriers to free play will be included in mainstream play provision or new play provision will be set up to meet their needs (e.g. girls, children and young people from ethnic religious minorities, children in care, children of refugees and homeless families and those living in rural areas, children with disabilities).**
- O5) Consultation with children and young people will mean they have more choice and control over their play and will increase self esteem and independence.**

7 LOCAL STANDARDS

7.1 Unsupervised play

The **NPFA 6 Acre Standard** is used as the guide to inform the provision of equipped play areas. This includes 0.8 hectares of play space per 1000 population and a hierarchy of equipped play provision:

- Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play within 600m from homes (minimum size of 1000m² with buffer of 30 meters) which can include children's play area, skate park, multi use games area
- Local Equipped Area for Play within 240m from homes (minimum size 400m² with buffer minimum of 20 meters) children's play area
- Local Area for Play within 100m from homes (minimum size 100m² with buffer if 10 meters), toddler provision.
- Further equipped play provision where appropriate to local circumstances.
- No standards for natural play have been set but the Accessible Natural Green Spaces Standard aims for natural elements such as grass mounds, planting and natural materials to be combined with more traditional play designs to create interesting and fun places of play that have strong connectivity to the natural environment and nature.

The NPFA 6 acre standard was adopted by AVDC as part of its Supplementary Planning Guidance on the provision of open space in new housing developments and is recommended as the standard for parish and town councils to adopt.

7.2 Supervised play

Childcare

Any person rewarded for looking after children under 8 years old for more than 2 hours a day and for more than 5 days a year, must register with **Ofsted**. Those working in their own homes must register as childminders, while those working on non-domestic premises must register as day care providers.

Ofsted inspect childcare providers to judge the quality of care offered and the quality of government funded early education for children aged 3 and 4 years.

Inspectors give providers one of four grades: outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate. To help inspectors reach a judgement they consider 'What it is like for a child to be here?' To answer this question, they judge how well childcare providers meet a series of outcomes for children that are set out in law. These are how providers:

- help children to be healthy
- protect them from harm or neglect and help them to stay safe
- help them enjoy what they do and achieve well
- help them make a positive contribution to the childcare provision and the wider community

They also judge how well providers organise their childcare to help promote children's well-being. To do this, they will take into account:

- whether the provider meets the National Standards for the type of care they provide
- whether the provider uses good practice as set out in Birth to Three Matters
- the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage for those providers who are included on their local authority directory to provide free early education for children aged 3 and 4 years

Play providers not requiring registration

Some holiday play activities run for 5 days or less each year and do not require registration with Ofsted. Any play activities where parents stay with their child also do not require registration. For these services standards vary.

The New **Charter for Children's Play** published by the Children's Play Council sets out a vision for play and acts as a catalyst for organisations to examine, review and improve their services, activities and functions in the light of children's play needs. The charter lists principles to support play work and create better play opportunities.



8 THE ACTION PLAN

8.1 Delivery mechanisms

The Action Plan is given in **Appendix 1**.

The Action Plan is based upon the aims for supervised and unsupervised play provision and the criteria for prioritisation. Four key mechanisms for delivering play have been identified, which are:

Delivery mechanisms

- **Promoting Play** – promoting the value of play for child development and creating safer communities
- **Partnership and Participation** – working with a range of public, private and community groups to improve and increase resources available for play provision and services.
- **Delivering Play** – promote health and physical activity in our open spaces, provide quality inclusive play opportunities and to identify the needs of children and young people in regards to local play provision
- **Enabling** – supporting the development of existing or new play facilities or services

8.2 Monitoring and evaluation

The Action Plan identifies targeted actions and shows how these meet objectives, how these can be resourced, timescales and measures for monitoring.

The Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership will review the delivery of the Action Plan on a 6 monthly basis to assess achievements against targets. The Strategy will be updated every year to take into account achievements and changing needs.



9 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: 5 year action plan

Appendix 2: Terms of reference, Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership

Appendix 3: Consultation gazetteer

Appendix 4: References

Appendix 1: Five Year Action Plan

Key Objective	Actions	Target Date	Intended Outcomes	Estimated Costs	Lead Bodies
Section 1 To raise the profile of play and best practice	1.1 Identify and increase partners involved in planning and delivering activities for the annual National Play Day	Annual event	Promotion of play opportunities and involvement of 1000 children at annual event	£3000 pa	AVPP, AVDC, BPA
	1.2 Promote the use of green spaces for play through annual programme of events	Ongoing	Increase use of safe, welcoming well used parks accessible to all whatever their ability or background	£10,000	AVDC, Town Councils, Parish Councils, Forestry Commission
	1.3 Establish baseline data on play areas across the district through survey with play providers	August 2007	Information to guide strategic development of facilities and baseline data for web-based map	Staff/volunteer time	AVDC, Town Councils, Parish Councils, Forestry Commission
	1.4 Produce web based map to show location of play areas	September 2008	Map available on Bucks Maps website	Staff/volunteer time	AVDC/BCC
	1.5 Establish baseline data on play schemes across the district through survey with play providers	August 2007	Information to guide strategic development of play schemes	Staff/volunteer time	BCC Children's Information Service AV Play Strategy
	1.6 Promote information on play providers, holiday play and out of school schemes	Ongoing	Increase in number of long term, available places for children and young people, quality childcare for working parents with school age children, economic wellbeing.	Staff/volunteer time	BCC Children's Information Service, AVPP
	1.7 Provide support to parish councils and voluntary groups on the provision of new play facilities and play development	Ongoing	Improved delivery of facilities	Staff/volunteer time	BCA, AVDC,

	1.8 Promote good practice guides to parish councils, voluntary organisations and community groups	2009 onwards	Increased quality and greater awareness of play opportunities	£1000	AVPP
	1.9 Seek the inclusion of policies on play within strategic documents e.g. Local Development Framework, Children and Young People's Plan	LDF – December 2008 Others documents as appropriate	Raised profile of play with key stakeholders including District, Town, Parish Councillors, Planners and developers	Staff/volunteer time	CYP Trust/ AVDC Youth Development Manager
	1.10 Ensure that play provision is designed into new housing developments	Ongoing	Opportunities for play included in designs for new housing developments in appropriate settings	Staff/volunteer time	AVDC , Bucks CC, Town and Parish Councils, developers
	1.11 Identify and promote links between play and other cultural themes i.e. biodiversity, art, sport, to increase opportunities for inclusion in strategic documents and for funding	Report by March 2008	Increased opportunities for delivery of play across the Vale	Staff/volunteer time	AVPP
	1.12 Promote play areas or opportunities that allow access to natural play	Ongoing	Enriched play environments and landscapes that include outdoor, physical and natural elements	Staff/volunteer time	AVDC, Forestry Commission, National Trust

Section 2. Greater partnership working by establishing networks, consulting monitoring and reviewing	2.1 Establish and support partnerships for play through the Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership.	Ongoing	Provision of support mechanisms for organisations providing play opportunities in Aylesbury Vale District	Staff/volunteer time	AVPP, AVOOSN
	2.2 Establish a formal link between the AVPP and the Children and Young People's Trust by Youth Development Manager sitting on both fora	December 2007	Increased partnership working and coordination of delivery of activities for children and young people	Staff/volunteer time	AVPP/CYPT
	2.3 Participate in the Bucks, Berks and Oxon Parks and Countryside Forum	Ongoing	Greater dissemination of best practice	Staff/volunteer time	AVPP
	2.4 Promote the use of Scrapstores as a source of materials for play schemes	December 2007	Active engagement with sustainable practices; raised awareness of environmental issues with children and young people	Staff/volunteer time	ARCC, AVPP
	2.5 Evaluate current play provision with children and young people to improve services	Ongoing	Increase use of parks and open spaces to encourage children and young people to be healthy and lead active lives	Staff/volunteer time	AVPP, AVDC
	2.6 Evaluate new play area provision through post construction consultation with children and observational studies	Ongoing	Improved delivery of future provision, matching children's needs and wishes	£1000 pa	AVDC, Town and Parish Councils, Forestry Commission

Section 3 Deliver quality play experiences taking into consideration resources, innovation and accessibility	3.1 Align resources to ensure provision is inclusive and targeted i.e. disabled children, children from black and ethnic minority populations, rural communities or age specific	Ongoing	Quality play opportunities are fully inclusive, more special needs, black and ethnic children accessing Play Services	Staff/volunteer time	AVPP
	3.2 Identify need and deliver 100 play sessions in areas with high minority ethnic communities	Ongoing	Accessible, sustainable long term play opportunities and events	£34,000	AVDC, SCWCCP
	3.3 Identify need and deliver 200 play sessions in parishes across the district	Ongoing	Accessible, sustainable long term play opportunities and events	£80,000	AVDC
	3.4 Provide facilities for the whole family, where children, young people and adults can play	Ongoing	Safe and secure play experiences for the whole family	To be confirmed when opportunities arise	AVDC, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Parish and Town Councils
	3.5 Set up project to employ Play/Street Rangers to address barriers to play	May 2011	Increased provision of play across the District	£80,000	AVPP
	3.6 Identify opportunities for natural play, forest adventure, sensory experiences	Sept 2007	Promoting wider play curriculum; appealing to wider 'audience'	To be confirmed when opportunities arise	AVPP, AVDC, Forestry Commission
	3.7 Develop natural play at Wendover Woods	October 2007	Increased opportunities for play	To be confirmed	Forestry Commission, AVPP
	3.8 Enhance 15 play areas through refurbishment and replacement of equipment	December 2011	Increase opportunities for play	£1,200,000	AVDC, Town and Parish Councils

	3.9 Promote facilities and activities to Passport to Leisure Scheme members	Ongoing	Increased take up of scheme and participation in activities	£1000 pa	AVDC
	3.10 Review play areas annually to assess condition, access and identify work programme and need	Annual update	Data to inform strategic planning of play facilities across the Vale and funding opportunities through grant aid and S106	£1000 pa	AVDC, Town Councils, Parish Councils, Forestry Commission, voluntary sector

Section 4 Enable and support the development of quality play experiences through training, support and capacity building	4.1 Ensure access to a comprehensive training programme to meet a range of play needs and evaluate programme	Annual Update	Improved quality of provision and promotion of opportunities	£5000 pa	AVOOSN, EYDCS
	4.2 Provide advice for CRB checking for community groups and provide training in child protection by running workshops and producing information leaflet	July 2008	Raise awareness of and ensure procedures in place for CRB	£1000 pa	EYDCS, AVDC
	4.3 Produce good practice guide on play area provision	July 2009	Improved delivery of facilities, ensure that children's views are taken into account	Staff/volunteer time	AVPP, BCA, AVDC
	4.4 Produce good practice guide to organising events for children and holiday play schemes, through paper and internet based resources	January 2008	Improved delivery of events, ensure that children's views are taken into account	Staff/volunteer time	AVPP, AVDC, BPA
	4.5 Produce best practice guide to consultation on play provision	AVPP guide by July 2009	Children and Young People make a positive contribution by being actively involved. Play provision is child led and freely chosen	Staff time	AVPP CYP Trust (Participation Group) AVDC
	4.6 Train two people to carry out ROSPA inspections	December 2008	Improve quality and health and safety of play areas	£1000	AVDC

Appendix 2: Terms of References Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership (AVPP) is to work in partnership to produce, monitor and evaluate the Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy and seek to improve, influence, increase and sustain play opportunities throughout the Vale.

The Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership Objectives are:

- Promoting Play
- Partnership and participation
- Delivering Play
- Enabling Play

The Play Strategy aims to:

- Define a vision for play in Aylesbury Vale
- Establish needs and priorities through audit, consultation and networking
- Establish targeted actions for 2007-2011
- Identify delivery and maintenance mechanisms
- Identify key stakeholders and resources
- Establish links between other strategies

To achieve this AVPP will:

- Share knowledge and experience
- Engage in local strategic partnership and influence LAA/LDF
- Encourage joint working to maximise resources
- Consult and engage with stakeholders outside the AVPP where appropriate
- Establish and monitor the link between the delivery of the Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy and the Buckinghamshire Play and Recreation Policy for Children and Young People and feed into Bucks CC County Play Steering Group
- Monitor achievements in the Action Plan and produce an Annual Report

MEMBERSHIP

The AVPP has a Steering Group and wider stakeholder groups. The AVPP seeks to represent the views of statutory agencies, voluntary sector, and the general public. In particular it will represent the views of children and young people and will seek opportunities to engage and consult with them to ensure their views inform decision.

The AVPP Steering Group includes:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council Young Peoples Officer, Principal Play Officer and Green Spaces Team
- Aylesbury Vale Out of School Network
- Buckinghamshire Play Association
- Bucks Community Action
- Bucks Playing Fields Association
- Early Years Development and Childcare Service, Buckinghamshire County Council
- Forestry Commission
- Leisure Services, Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Southcourt and Walton Court Community Project

The role of the AVPP Steering Group member is to:

- Attend meetings of the AVPP
- To contribute to the development and progression of the Play Strategy through dialogue and disseminating best practice
- To evaluate and monitor the Play Strategy Action Plan and to recommend updates as required
- To review the wider stakeholder group and recommend changes
- Feedback on meetings/correspondence with the wider stakeholder group
- Disseminate information to the wider stakeholder group
- To keep the profile of Play high

Wider stakeholder group

The wider stakeholder group includes a variety of statutory and voluntary agencies. This list is not definitive and will be updated by the AVPP.

- AVDC Community Safety Team
- AVDC Grants and Voluntary Sector Liaison Officer
- Aylesbury College, Play & Childcare Department
- Aylesbury Vale Association of Local Councils
- Aylesbury Vale Racial Equality Council
- Aylesbury Youth Action
- Buckinghamshire Children's Fund Programme
- Bucks Adult Learning, Senior Tutor for Childcare
- Bucks Children's Fund
- Bucks Children's Information Service
- Bucks Community Action, Community Development Officer
- Children and Young People, Social Care
- Cygnets Pre School Group
- Healthy Living Centre, Aylesbury
- National Childminding Association
- School Improvement Service
- Southcourt and Walton Court Community Project
- Thames Valley Partnership
- Youth and Communities
- Youth and Community Services, Operations Manager
- Youth Cabinet
- Youth Concern
- Youth Focus

MEETINGS

The AVPP will meet on a 6 monthly basis, unless it is agreed by a majority that this frequency should increase or decrease. The Steering Group members can nominate alternative representatives if they are unable to attend the meeting. Agendas and minutes of meetings will be circulated to all Steering Group members. The Secretariat function is to be provided by AVDC. The AVPP will be chaired by Lesley Davies, AVDC's Green Spaces Team Manager and in her absence by Barbara Mitchell, AVDC's Principal Play Officer.

AVPP PHILOSOPHY

At the 2007 inaugural meeting it was agreed that Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership believes that:

Children will have ownership of their play opportunities, through consultation. They will:

- feel free and enjoy their childhoods safely and securely
- grow up at their own pace
- have exciting places to visit
- have fun
- have a say in play provision

Children will have access to local play opportunities. There will be:

- high quality play schemes during holidays providing a varied choice of play activities in the local area
- a variety of play equipment and opportunities in all rural villages
- opportunities for all children, supported by public transport and/ or transport schemes
- opportunities to play with other local children in a safe and secure environment
- access to *interesting* play areas in towns and villages
- access to sports facilities with quality coaches so that they can try a variety of sports

Children will have access to natural areas and creative play:

- including water and sand play, opportunities to include access to natural environments, so that the outdoors becomes stimulating
- gain confidence to enjoy nature and respect their environments, whether urban or rural
- provide exciting play environments with nets, ropes, flexible areas, to encourage imaginative play
- access to green spaces that are peaceful, have a variety of textures and have seating

Children's development will be supported by providing opportunities to:

- build skills and tools for the future
- be healthy, both physically and mentally
- develop social skills e.g. making friends
- experience risk taking, to take chances and learn
- develop physical skills e.g. coordination
- learn to respect and benefit from older people
- have fun

In developing play opportunities the following will be considered:

- lots of different and affordable play experiences
- inclusive opportunities, with no age limits or ability barriers
- indoor areas for 12 to 18 year olds
- unsupervised play opportunities, in environments in which they *feel* safe and secure
- more opportunities for 'casual' play
- dog free playing fields
- better opportunities for small local sports clubs
- big tube slides, large climbing frames, nets or wood
- monitoring and evaluation

These play opportunities will be underpinned by:

- play being seen as a high priority in revision of resources and services for children and young people
- influencing decision-makers
- LAA and LPSA
- the Local Development Framework and Green infrastructure planning
- sufficient resources to deliver and maintain well managed areas for play/services
- Every Child Matters



Appendix 3: Consultation Gazetteer

Title	Ref	Consultees	Date	Methodology	Number of respondents
Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership Workshop	PC001	Play providers	2007	Workshop	25
Buckinghamshire Children and young people's Plan	PC002	Children and young people 5-19 years old	2006	Face to face interviews	374
Senior Schools	PC003	All senior schools in Aylesbury (x6)	2004	Face to face interviews	600
Children's play preferences	PC004	Children Parents	2004	Face to face interviews	60 70
Junior and senior schools survey	PC005	School pupils	2007	Face to face interviews	635
Parks & Open Spaces survey	PC006	General public	2006	Face to face interviews	412
Play Around the Parishes consultation	PC007	Children 3-13 years old	2007	Questionnaire	256
Play in the Park consultation	PC008	Children and families	2007	Questionnaire	97
Elmhurst consultation	PC009	Asian families	2007	Questionnaire	23
Supervised Play, Bucks Play Association	PC010	Children and young people	2006	Questionnaire	500
Supervised Play Audit	PC011	Parish Councils	2007	Questionnaire	70
Unsupervised Play Audit	PC012	Parish Councils	2007	Questionnaire	70
Local Needs Survey	PC013	Residents' Association Children and Young People	2007	Face to face interviews Attendance at Residents' Association meetings	80 40
Parks and Open Spaces Best Value Review	PC014	District Council members Community groups	2005	Workshop	20
Vale Park Concept Plan	PC015	District Council Members Town Council Community groups Special interest groups General public	2004	Workshops Questionnaires	40 60
Public spaces in Aylesbury Vale, Youth for Christ	PC016	Young people Community leaders Service providers Business leaders Parents	2005	Face to face interviews	30
Growing Adventure	PC017	Children and Young People	2006	Information not available	n/a

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership Workshop
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC 001
AUDIENCE	<p>Key stakeholders in play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arts Officer, AVDC ▪ Aylesbury College, Play Department ▪ Aylesbury Out of School Network ▪ Aylesbury Vale Association of Local Councils ▪ Aylesbury Vale District Forum ▪ Aylesbury Vale Racial Equality Council ▪ Aylesbury Youth Action ▪ Bucks Adult Learning ▪ Bucks Children Fund ▪ Bucks Children's Information Service ▪ Bucks Community Action ▪ Bucks Community Matters ▪ Bucks Play Association ▪ Bucks Playing Fields Association ▪ Cheddington Pre School Group ▪ Community Development Officer, AVDC ▪ Community Safety Team, AVDC ▪ Cygnets Pre School Group ▪ Early Years Development and Childcare Service ▪ Head of Housing, AVDC ▪ Healthy Living Centre ▪ Southcourt and Walton Court Community Project ▪ Stone & Fairford Leys Pre School Group ▪ Thames Valley Partnership ▪ Tingewick Pre School Playgroup ▪ Youth and Community Services, Bucks CC ▪ Youth Concern ▪ Youth Focus
DATE	2006
METHODOLOGY	<p>Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviewed issues for Aylesbury Vale against Every Child Matters outcomes ▪ Identified and prioritised actions to be included in the Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy and 5 year action plan
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	25 organisations

KEY FINDINGS	<p>ECM Outcome 'Enjoying and Achieving'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to play opportunities for rural families limited ▪ Limited use of play opportunities by Asian families ▪ Use play to identify community needs, assist in solving problems, provide play resources to assist with problem e.g. Bedgrove Park – children hanging around shops – create teen facilities in Park <p>ECM Outcome 'Staying Safe'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acceptable risk to be built in to enable children and young people to learn their own capabilities and boundaries ▪ Ensure that teen shelters are not too far away from informal supervision so as not to attract undesirables but far enough from formal authorities and parents <p>ECM Outcome 'Making a Positive Contribution'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve confidence and self esteem through employing play rangers and youth workers ▪ Consult with children and young people ▪ Offer a wider range of opportunities for children and young people to become involved ▪ Facilitate and encourage rural and ethnic communities to provide opportunities <p>ECM Outcome 'Being Healthy'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage physical, social and mental well-being ▪ Promote healthy lifestyles and positive role models ▪ Try and change parents' perceptions by signposting them to information
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comments were made by play providers from across the Vale ▪ Workshop looked specifically at play provision
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	<p>Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N6</p> <p>BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 1,2,3,4,5</p>

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Children and Young People's Plan, Bucks County Council
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC 002
AUDIENCE	Children and young people
DATE	2006
METHODOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questionnaires ▪ Focus groups <p>Research carried out at voluntary youth project, drop in facility, school and county Youth Cabinet residential event.</p>
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	<p>Questionnaires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 327 children and young people aged 5-19 <p>Focus groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 47 children and young people aged 5-19
KEY FINDINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children and young people would like more opportunities to exercise ▪ Children and young people would like more affordable sport, leisure and youth facilities ▪ Children and young people would like to keep the environment clean ▪ Younger children would like opportunities to spend more time doing positive things with their parents ▪ Of the Every Child Matters outcomes, children and young people consider 'Staying Safe' as the most important as without this all other outcomes could not be achieved.
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates support for more activities from children and young people ▪ Underlines importance of providing safe areas and activities for play
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	<p>Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N1, N2, N3, N4, N5</p> <p>BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 1,2,3,4,5</p>

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Senior Schools Consultation, AVDC
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC 003
AUDIENCE	Pupils at all senior schools in Aylesbury <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grammar School ▪ Grange School ▪ High School ▪ Mandeville Upper Schools ▪ Quarrendon Upper School ▪ Sir Henry Floyd School
DATE	2004
METHODOLOGY	Face to face interviews
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	600 pupils
KEY FINDINGS	<p>Consultation reinforced the importance of facilities in parks and open spaces for young people</p> <p>Common requests at all schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More seating ▪ Clean toilets ▪ Somewhere in the Park to purchase food and drink ▪ Cycle routes ▪ Spaces to watch wildlife
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates the importance of parks and open spaces to young people
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N3, N4, N5 BLF APPLICATION: PROJECT 3,4,5

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Young children and play preferences, AVDC
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC 004
AUDIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children aged 5-12 ▪ Children with special needs
DATE	2004
METHODOLOGY	Face to face interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jonathan Page Play Centre ▪ Park Junior Special Needs School
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jonathan Page Play Centre 60 ▪ Park Schools 8 children, 70 parents
KEY FINDINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities should be accessible and inclusive ▪ Children's play equipment should be accessible to all or have provision where two or more people can access the same piece of equipment at the same time. ▪ Equipment specifically for people with disabilities not recommended as it could suggest favouritism and could lead to jealous vandalism.
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates the importance of play areas to children ▪ Underlines that play provision must be inclusive ▪ Underlines importance of careful design of play areas and of involvement of children in selection of equipment
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N3, N4, N5 BLF APPLICATION PROJECT, 3,4,5

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Junior and Senior Schools survey, AVDC
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC005
AUDIENCE	Children 5-19 years old <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashmead Combined School, Aylesbury Mandeville Upper School, Aylesbury Oak Green Junior School, Aylesbury
DATE	2007
METHODOLOGY	Face to face interviews
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	635
KEY FINDINGS	<p>Reasons for using parks and open spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% to meet friends 62% to play sports and games 39% to visit play areas <p>Improvements requested to improve parks and open spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67% requested seating, benches and shelters 65% requested multi use games areas 60% requested better play areas 29% requested lighting 30% requested something to do for all ages
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey specifically about play Underlined importance of parks and open spaces to children and young people for play Underlined that children and young people use general open space as well as formal play areas for play
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N2, N3, N4, N5, N6 BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 3,4,5

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Parks & Open Spaces Survey, AVDC
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC006
AUDIENCE	Users and non users of parks and open spaces in Aylesbury Vale
DATE	2006
METHODOLOGY	Face to face interviews Data analysed on a generic and site by site basis
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	412
KEY FINDINGS	<p>Number of people visiting parks and open spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67% of interviews had used Parks in previous 6 months <p>Principal reasons for visiting parks and open spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36% to visit the play area 25% to get fresh air 25% to walk the dog 24% to go for a walk <p>Top improvements requested</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28% more or improve children's play facilities 15% greater cleanliness 14% more seating
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates importance of parks and open spaces to children and young people
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	<p>Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N3, N4</p> <p>BLF APPLICATION: PROJECT 3,4,5</p>

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Play around the Parishes evaluation
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC007
AUDIENCE	Children aged 3-13
DATE	Summer 2007
METHODOLOGY	Questionnaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Play around the Parishes play sessions in rural villages
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	256
KEY FINDINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 99.9% rated their enjoyment as good, very good or excellent 80% want more Play around the Parishes sessions in their area. 3% want transport to local play schemes 12% want help to set up play scheme in their area 40% heard about the Project via the Do-it booklet 44% said that bouncy castles were their favourite activity
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports need for rural play provision
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N1 BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 1

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Play in the Park consultation
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC008
AUDIENCE	Children and families
DATE	1 August 2007
METHODOLOGY	Questionnaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At National Play Day event, Vale Park
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	97
KEY FINDINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% rated their enjoyment as good and above, 41% as excellent 80% wanted more mobile sessions in their area 15% wanted transport to local play schemes 7% wanted help to set up play schemes in their area 34% heard about the event through word of mouth 38% heard about the event via Do-it booklet
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports need for local play provision, particularly in rural areas Enjoyment factor endorses need for continued partnership working to maximise activities.
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N1, N2 BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 1 and 2

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Elmhurst Community Consultation
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC009
AUDIENCE	Elmhurst Asian Community/Families
DATE	May & June 2007
METHODOLOGY	Questionnaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distributed by Elmhurst voluntary group 'Future Inspirations'
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	23
KEY FINDINGS	<p>96% want holiday play schemes of which : 10% for under 5's and 90% all other age groups 95% want community events in the park 73% want swimming for women 90% want exercise classes 78% want activities available in local school or community centre Other needs sewing, cooking, health awareness, yoga, day trips for children.</p>
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supports need for provision in areas of high ethnicity ▪ Supports need to address current barriers to accessing play activity provision
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N2 BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 2

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Supervised Play Activities Survey, Bucks Play Association and AVDC
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC010
AUDIENCE	Children and young people
DATE	2006
METHODOLOGY	Questionnaires <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants in play activities
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	500
KEY FINDINGS	Feedback on activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 78% wanted to see play provision in parishes 79% thought play days and activities were good or excellent
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey specifically about play Demonstrated importance of activities Underlined gap in current provision of play schemes in rural areas
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N1, N3, N4, N5 BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 1,2

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Supervised Play Audit, AVDC
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC011
AUDIENCE	Parish and Town Councils
DATE	2007
METHODOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questionnaires and review of Parish Plans
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	70
KEY FINDINGS	<p>Play provision across the Vale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 11 parishes/towns have 11 play schemes, mostly less than one day per year <p>Reasons why children visit parks and open spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To use play equipment ▪ To meet friends <p>Most popular suggestions to play provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Play rangers ▪ Youth workers to facilitate activities and games
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey specifically in connection with play provision ▪ Underlined gap in current play scheme provision in rural areas ▪ Underlined that most rural areas have access to a children's play area
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	<p>Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N6</p> <p>BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 1,3,4,5</p>

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Unsupervised Play Audit, AVDC
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC012
AUDIENCE	Parish and Town Councils
DATE	2007
METHODOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questionnaires and review of Parish Plans
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	70
KEY FINDINGS	<p>Play provision across the Vale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 50 parishes/towns have toddler provision ▪ 54 parishes/towns have junior provision ▪ 17 parishes/towns have teen provision ▪ 66 parishes/towns have areas for active sport and ball games ▪ Wendover Woods, Forestry Commission main open access site with play provision <p>Reasons why children visit parks and open spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To use play equipment ▪ To meet friends
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey specifically in connection with play provision ▪ Underlined gap in current play scheme provision in rural areas ▪ Underlined that most rural areas have access to a children's play area
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	<p>Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N1, N2</p> <p>BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 1,3,4,5</p>

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Parks and Open Spaces Best Value Review, AVDC
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC013
AUDIENCE	Community groups
DATE	2003
METHODOLOGY	Workshop with user groups
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	20 organisations
KEY FINDINGS	<p>Top uses for parks and open spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informal recreation – seating, somewhere to relax, walking ▪ Nature conservation - trees, meadows, flowers ▪ Children's play areas, including toddler provision ▪ Formal and informal sports
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated importance of parks and open spaces to children and young people for play
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	<p>Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N2, N3, N4, N5</p> <p>BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 3,4,5</p>

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Local Needs Survey
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC014
AUDIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community groups Children and young people Interest groups
DATE	2007
METHODOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Plans on AVDC website for comments Attendance at Residents' Association meetings e.g. Prebendal Farm, Bedgrove
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 children and young people 80 adults
KEY FINDINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for refurbishment/replacement of old play areas Support for activities and facilities for children and teenagers
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underlined importance of parks and open spaces to children and young people for play Underlined that children and young people use general open space as well as formal play areas for play Demonstrated community support for play provision on the Green
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	<p>Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N2, N3, N4, N6</p> <p>BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 3</p>

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Vale Park Concept Plan Consultation, AVDC
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC015
AUDIENCE	<p>Key stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Council Members ▪ Town Council ▪ Community groups ▪ Special interest groups ▪ General public <p>Age of respondents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Under 16 14% ▪ 16 to 24 6% ▪ 35 to 44 14% ▪ 45 to 54 31% ▪ 55 to 64 4% ▪ 65+ 20%
DATE	March & April 2004
METHODOLOGY	<p>Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Council ▪ Town Council ▪ Community & Interest Groups <p>Questionnaire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General public ▪ Available through District Council outlets and the AVDC website ▪ Publicised in the local press ▪ Article in AVDC's magazine District Link which goes to every house in the Vale. ▪ Translation was provided in Gujarati and Urdu.
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	100

KEY FINDINGS	<p>Reasons for using the Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Swimming 16% ▪ To relax 15% ▪ Flowers and plants 12% ▪ Special event 11% ▪ To take a shortcut 11% ▪ Accompany children 10% ▪ Outdoor sport 9% ▪ Walk/dog walking 8% ▪ Each lunch 8% <p>Most important elements in the Park redevelopment, in order of preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Places to relax ▪ Seating ▪ Range of trees and planting ▪ Toilets ▪ Open grass area ▪ Lighting ▪ Environmental improvements ▪ Teenage facilities ▪ Multi use games area
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates importance of parks and open spaces to children for formal and informal play
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	<p>Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key Need N3, N4, N5</p> <p>BLF APPLICATION: PROJECT 3,4,5</p>

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Public spaces in Aylesbury Vale, Youth for Christ
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC016
AUDIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people ▪ Community leaders ▪ Service providers ▪ Business leaders ▪ Parents
DATE	2005
METHODOLOGY	Face to face interviews
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	30
KEY FINDINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to create areas where young people feel safe and welcome ▪ Need to provide activities and opportunities for young people to become actively involved in the local community ▪ Consensus across all ages that young people need a place to be young people. ▪ Noted that young people gather in groups and that this is true for most generations. A number of adults said that they used to do the same when they were teenager. ▪ Most activities are available to young people in the area but they really need to look around to find them. So although the services are good, they could be better advertised and communicated. <p>Comments on local facilities by young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'There should be more public events including those for teenagers, not just adults and younger children.' ▪ 'There is not enough for young people to do.' ▪ 'It is amazing to watch them on skateboards. They really are fantastic, the skill and creativity is wonderful.' ▪ 'Young people need somewhere for them to go and hang out, where they feel comfortable and confident that they can be themselves.' ▪ 'We need more facilities for young people. They say there is nothing for them to do. The

	things that are there for them to do are too expensive.'
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Showed importance of parks and open spaces to children and young people ▪ Underlined that older children need somewhere to go where they feel safe ▪ Organised play activities can provide opportunity to signpost children and young people to information
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N4, N5, N6 BLF APPLICATION: PROJECT 1,2,3,4,5

CONSULTATION GAZETEER

TITLE	Growing Adventure, Forestry Commission
REFERENCE NUMBER	PC017
AUDIENCE	Children and young people Parents
DATE	2006
METHODOLOGY	Investigation into play in natural settings
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	Information not available
KEY FINDINGS	<p>General findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed children's appetite for nature and outdoors Children like challenge and adventure Value of targeting groups of children that rarely or never visit woodland settings to explore that would encourage them to come and feel confident <p>Children and young people comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoyed risk taking Liked outdoor activities <p>Parent's comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor play opportunities priority as worried about the impact of indoor, sedentary lifestyles Addressing safety very important <p>Barriers to accessing sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental constraints Lack of activities (age specific)
RELEVANCE TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research specifically about play Underlined importance of natural play opportunities Stressed importance safe play environments
DOCUMENT REFERENCE	<p>Aylesbury Vale Play Strategy Key need N3, N4, N5, N6</p> <p>BLF APPLICATION PROJECT 3,4,5</p>

Appendix 4: References

- Aylesbury Vale District Council – www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk
Buckinghamshire County Council – www.buckscc.gov.uk
Bucks Community Action – www.bucks-comm-action.org.uk
Bucks County Council/ Bucks Early Years Development and Childcare (2006) - ***Buckinghamshire Play and Recreation Policy for Children and Young People*** (Early Years Bucks CC, Aylesbury)
Bucks Play Association – www.avpa.org.uk
Children's Play Council (2006) - ***Planning for Play***, (National Children's Bureau, London)
DCMS (2004) - ***Getting Serious About Play: a review of children's play***, (DCMS, London)
National Children's Bureau – www.ncb.org.uk
National Institute for Clinical Excellence – www.nice.org.uk
National Playing Fields Association (2001) – ***The Six Acre Standard***, (NPFA, London)
NPFA/ Children's Play Council/ Playlink (2000) - ***Best Play: what provision should do for children***, (NPFA, London)
Play England – www.playengland.org.uk
RoSPA – www.rosaplaysafety.co.uk
The Forestry Commission – www.forestry.gov.uk/england
Tim Gill (2006) – ***Growing Adventure: Final report to the Forestry Commission***, (Forestry Commission, Bristol)

AYLESBURY VALE PLAY PARTNERSHIP

c/o Leisure & Cultural Services, Aylesbury Vale District Council, 66 High Street, Aylesbury,
Bucks, HP20 1SD



Buckinghamshire Playing Fields
Association



The Aylesbury Vale Play Partnership is supported by:



**Aylesbury Vale District Council
Public Art Strategy
2009 - 2014
Research and Recommendations
August 2008**



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- f. Aylesbury Vale Green Spaces Plan
- g. Buckinghamshire County Council Cultural Policy
- h. Aylesbury Vale District Council Corporate Plan

6. National Context

- a. National Planning Policy Guidelines
- b. Government Paper – Living Places
- c. Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

7. Regional Context

- a. Arts Council England - South East
- b. South East Economic Development Agency
- c. Culture South East

8. Cultural Partners in Aylesbury Vale

- a. Aylesbury Vale Arts Council
- b. Buckinghamshire County Museum
- c. Roald Dahl Children's Gallery
- d. Aylesbury Vale Civic Centre
- e. Queens Park Arts Centre
- f. Parish and Town Councils
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- h. Aylesbury Vale Advantage
- i. Aylesbury Vale Creative and Media Diploma Consortium
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

External funding from Arts Council England has enabled the Council to commission this Public Art Strategy for Aylesbury Vale. Arts Council England believes a strategy is essential to maximise the benefits for Aylesbury Vale being selected as one of the Art Council's Place Priority areas and to secure funding for public art from housing and other new developments and from grant aid.

To inform the Strategy a period of consultation took place across the Vale, covering one-to-one and telephone interviews with key stakeholders, council employees and interested parties. An extensive street survey was also conducted to serve as a barometer of public opinion on the subject of public art. The survey revealed that of the 204 street interviews carried out in Aylesbury, Buckingham and Wendover, a considerable majority of respondents lived or worked, or lived and worked in Aylesbury Vale. An overwhelming majority of respondents recognised public art as "a tool through which to make the Vale a more exciting and attractive place to live and work". 96.3% of those interviewed believed that "public art gave Aylesbury a positive image."

Public Art has the ability to strengthen communities through engagement and provide a source of civic pride. It can celebrate and reaffirm identity and generate a sense of place. It can contribute towards the production of high quality architecture and urban design, potentially raising it above the "everyday" to levels of inspiration and wonder. It can assist creative industries to flourish and play a role in the development of the local economy.

With these qualities in mind, the Strategy shows how Public Art can assist the Council to deliver its core aims in strengthening communities, developing the economy and enhancing the environment. Through its audience development programme, the Strategy has a key role to play in contributing towards the National Performance Indicator 11 "Engagement in the Arts". The Strategy has the ability to set Aylesbury apart from other areas, affirming its position as a place where people want to live, work and visit.

The Strategy aims to encourage and support the commissioning of high quality artworks made specifically for the public realm by artists, craftspeople, makers and designers. Work may be temporary or permanent, fixed or free-standing, functional or non-functional. As this Strategy is being written a Masterplan and Public Realm Strategy for Aylesbury town centre is currently underway, commissioned by Aylesbury Vale Advantage. The final Masterplan will be delivered by the 1st May. It is essential that the Public Arts Strategy feeds into the work being done on the Public Realm to ensure that Public Art is intrinsic within future designs for the town centre of Aylesbury.

This strategy is not necessarily about statues or "stand alone" art works. It recommends that an artist be employed at the earliest possible stage in the planning process of a new development. Good practice recognises that bringing an artist into the early stages of a project, working closely with design professionals, architects and planners, is most likely to produce the most cost effective, integrated and exciting results for the enhancement of the public realm. To some extent, evidence of this happening in Aylesbury Vale can already be seen in the public art being commissioned for the Aylesbury Transport Hub. Artists Laura Boswell and Sarah Worthington have worked with designers and engineers to create art works intrinsic to the Hub's infrastructure while at the same time creating exciting and inspiring solutions to design

problems. The Strategy aims to build upon this work. It aims to capture the public interest and to inspire further involvement of artists in new developments to enhance and strengthen Aylesbury's identity and to create a unique sense of place providing a source of civic pride and pleasure for present and future generations. This Strategy offers examples of best practice involving work set within the public realm such as Bristol Harbourside and Sheffield Peace Gardens.

To achieve these aspirations, the Strategy puts forwards the following aims:

- To include public art within the Local Development Framework encouraging the provision of new works of art as part of the development and planning process.
- To secure funding for new work on developments through developer contributions.
- To maximise the benefits that public art can bring to communities through engagement and consultation.
- To use public art in the development of defined public buildings and spaces e.g. new Aylesbury theatre plaza and Stoke Mandeville Stadium.
- To commission the best artists for the work while at the same time encouraging the professional development of local artists wherever possible through mentoring and networking schemes.
- To improve and enhance the public art commissioning process and develop good practice procedures outlined within the Strategy.
- To implement a public art commission within an Affordable Housing scheme at least once a year.
- To explore how public art can provide a sense of identity and unity to the rural area of the Vale.
- To maintain a database of professional artists and to provide continual professional development opportunities for local artists.
- To develop a communication strategy for raising public awareness and engagement in public art in Aylesbury Vale
- To ensure that all new public art is accompanied with a robust and costed maintenance plan and that the responsibility for maintenance is clearly identified.
- To establish a Public Art Steering Group consisting of relevant officers and members plus cultural and growth agenda partners.

The Public Art Steering Group will be the main driver for the delivery of the Strategy. The Group will implement the commissioning process for projects, be responsible for the overall management of projects offering transparency and ensure that wider community consultation and engagement takes place. The Steering Group would also promote positive feedback on public art.

The Strategy covers the whole of Aylesbury Vale District. It seeks to inform the production of other strategic documents including AVDC Arts Development Strategy and provide the vision to lead to an increased provision of public art across the Vale.

2. INTRODUCTION

a. The Brief

Aylesbury Vale District Council appointed Artpoint Trust to carry out research and undertake writing the 'Aylesbury Vale District Public Art Strategy'.

The initiation of this work came through conversation with the Arts Council following their suggestion that future applications for funding would benefit from a Public Art Strategy being in place. This is particularly important also as Aylesbury Vale has several imminent development projects. Public art will provide a useful tool in achieving some of the ambitions that developers, architects and planners have for the public realm, and the new communities that will inhabit them.

It is important that it is published and actioned by Aylesbury Vale District Council, as the planning authority for new developments and the local authority with an arts development function.

The aim of this Strategy is to examine the potential for public art projects in the district, recommend courses of action in commissioning public art and to provide the Council and its partners with a working model of implementation, including best practice, guidelines for commissioning, working with artists and project management.

b. Methodology

Artpoint addressed the brief through:

- A series of internal meetings and telephone interviews with Aylesbury Vale District Council officers from Leisure, Planning, Design, Contracts Management, Green Spaces Management and Arts Development.
- Meetings and telephone interviews with other relevant individuals and organisations, for example Aylesbury Vale Arts Council, local arts organisations, local artists and community groups.
- Knowledge of documents, information and strategies including the Local Plan, Aylesbury Town Centre Study, Aylesbury Vale District Council Cultural Strategy, the Aylesbury Vale Core Strategy, the Buckinghamshire Cultural Policy, and documents associated with regional planning and growth in Aylesbury Vale.
- Conducting a comprehensive public art street survey in Aylesbury Town Centre and elsewhere in the district (including growth and redevelopment areas) to provide an accurate barometer for public feeling and aspirations for Aylesbury Vale.

(Sources in Appendices – Public Art Street Survey and Consultation results (inc. statistical analysis).)

c. Artpoint Trust

Artpoint Trust is the South East regional public art agency, which works to inspire and enable public and private sector organisations to contribute towards a better environment through the commissioning of artists and craftspeople. As an organisation part funded through Arts Council South East, Artpoint plays a strategic role in developing and supporting public art activity across the region.

3. DEFINITIONS OF PUBLIC ART

a. Definition of Public Art for Aylesbury Vale

The Aylesbury Vale Public Art Strategy aims to encourage and support the commissioning of high quality artworks made specifically for the public realm by artists, craftspeople, makers and designers. Within the strategy, public art is defined as works of fine art, craft and photography produced by professional artists or craftspeople and sited in locations which have public access.

Public art may be temporary or permanent, fixed or free standing, functional or non-functional. These works of art may be made or designed by an individual, or as a result of a collaborative process that involves design professionals, architects, planners, professionals, art groups or the local community. Public art also includes artist-in-residence schemes, temporary works, open studio events and artists' exchanges where the focus is on publicly viewable work.

The disciplines covered are wide ranging, they include: sculpture, ceramics, textiles, metalwork, mosaic, street furniture and other types of integrated urban design, landscaping and earthworks, neon, fountains, painting, paving, glass, lettering, photography, etc.. It also includes work that has been specifically commissioned for a site or works sited in public places which were not necessarily created for these locations but always a piece of work that contributes to the environmental improvement of the site.

Whatever the nature of the work, public art almost always benefits from being site specific; created specifically for the site or location drawing on land-use, heritage, history, geography, population or anything else pertinent or unique to the site and its surroundings.

b. Benefits of Public Art

“Artists working in the public realm make an extraordinary contribution to our experience of public life. Artists are communicators, facilitators, problem solvers, inventors and researchers. They take creative risks, have a willingness to experiment and often redefine questions and problems without recourse to set solutions”

Ixia – The think tank for public art practice

The role of public art is recognised widely by planners, developers and government authorities as a key factor in cultural, economic and community regeneration, spearheaded by the government and other agencies. Nationally, the benefits of public art can be witnessed in business and retail developments, housing, healthcare, education and countryside developments.

- Public art enhances the built environment.
- Public art can help create a unique identity for a town. Images of public art are frequently used in the marketing for towns and cities.
- Public art helps to humanize existing public spaces and to make comfortable, relaxing and meaningful places.
- It can help to stimulate debate and discussion within a community and start dialogues.
- Public art is instrumental in helping to create a sense of place for both residents and visitors to a community, and can improve the quality of the environment and people's lives.
- Public art has proved useful in increasing the use of open areas and in reducing vandalism; especially the implementation of community oriented projects that encourage a sense of pride and shared ownership.
- A strong piece or collection of public art can help the economy through increased tourism, acting as a landmark or attraction.
- Public art adds to people's enjoyment of a place and can aid in local orientation.
- Within public and private sector developments, public art can add a distinct character to an area creating a better environment to live in.
- Community oriented public art within new housing and retail developments also serves to integrate a new community/ attraction with existing ones, creating bonds within the area.
- Public art helps to build upon our cultural heritage by producing permanent public art pieces. It can also raise awareness of history by drawing on the heritage of a site or community.
- Involving the local and wider community in a consultation process helps to build up knowledge of needs to be addressed. It also raises community trust and confidence in the local environment and authority.
- Public art in commercial developments can enhance a developer's image and profile locally and nationally.

To achieve these kinds of benefits from a public art programme requires careful planning and management and adequate resources. Commissioning this Strategy is Aylesbury Vale District Council's first step to a rich and integrated arts programme across the district.

SUMMARY

The term 'public art' can cover a multitude of interventions into the public realm, be it permanent or temporary, monument or event. Public art always involves an artist or creative professional engaging with a space or community, creating artworks that reflect and represent the aspirations of a place and has a relationship with its audience.

This Strategy will seek to maximize the benefits public art can bring to the environment, local authority, community and individual. It can support the formation and strengthening of community identity, build on existing heritage, and create dialogue. It can also help to raise awareness and increase the usage of a space or area by enhancing its image.

c. Public Art Examples

Public art is becoming a matter of national and international interest. Many regeneration projects and new housing developments across the country now include a 'Percent for Art' (or equivalent) agreement; a scheme whereby councils encourage developers to dedicate a percentage of the overall budget towards commissioning public artworks for the sites. Public art is increasingly seen as the benchmark of a successful development; acting as it does to integrate and familiarise, and to showcase great urban design.

Public art is essential in the role it plays in creating an image and a sense of civic pride for an area amongst the population. Public art can provide a centre of attraction for an area, raise the area and development's profile and contribute to regeneration, community development, use of public space and tourism.

Below are some exemplars of successful public art projects which showcase one or all of these qualities:

i. Permanent Works

Probably the best known example is Anthony Gormley's 'Angel of the North'. This artwork was the culmination of a twenty year programme run by Gateshead council to introduce art into public spaces. Since its installation this sculpture has become one of the most widely recognised pieces of art in the UK. It has won over 8 awards and is one of the most viewed artworks in the world, achieving an approximate viewing rate of one per second. Aside from the economic benefits of increased tourism, it also serves to create a local identity and completely changes the image of the area, increasing civic pride and encouraging public interaction with artwork and culture.

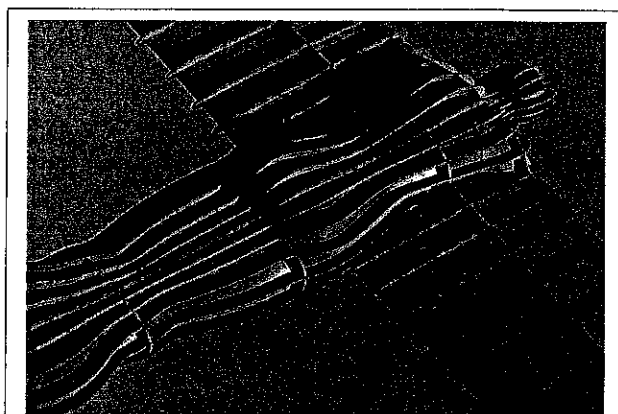


Fig 1: Angel of the North

The artwork initially received criticism for cost, the oxidisation process and the subject matter. However, the town's residents have adopted the work as a regional mascot, especially when Newcastle United fans dressed it in a huge Alan Shearer shirt.

ii. Temporary Commissions

Spitalfields Market in East London has an on-going commitment to supporting and showcasing the arts, through which it aims to celebrate the rich local history and ever-changing nature of the area. The commissions range from sculpture, integrated floor-scapes, signage, projected work and sound-scapes. The project has served to enliven the public space of the area and a number of artworks from Phase One continue to animate the public domain and have been re-sited at locations as diverse as the New Art Centre near Salisbury, the University of East London campus and St George's Hospital, Tooting.

An example of a single, temporary public art commission is Raphael Lozano's 'Under-Scan' in Nottingham city centre. The world's largest video installation, 'Under-Scan' is a large-scale public art installation featuring 1,000 interactive portraits. From November 2005 until March 2006, 'Under-Scan' toured the region, transforming large pedestrian areas in Lincoln, Leicester, Northampton, Derby and Nottingham into a huge shadow play. Sophisticated CCTV systems tracked people's movement through the space and projected a random moving video portrait into their shadow.

The work served to help drive cultural tourism, strategically boost economic development, and to put the East Midlands on the map for hosting internationally significant new visual arts work.



Fig. 2: Spitalfields

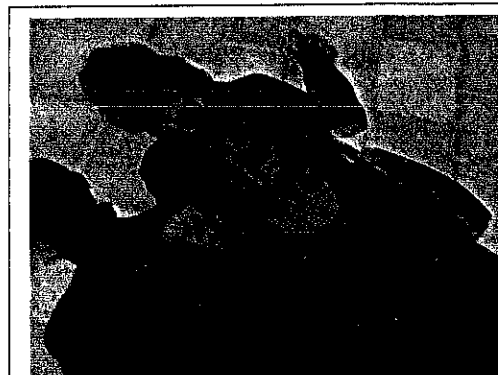


Fig. 3: Under-scan

iii. Periodic Interventions

The Fourth Plinth is in the northwest of Trafalgar Square in central London. Built in 1841, it was originally intended for an equestrian statue but was empty for many years. It is now the location for specially commissioned art works. The programme has run since 1999 and since then the plinth has held the work of Anthony Gormley, Rachael Whiteread and Mark Wallinger. The work is the result of consultation with the public and the piece exhibited (commissioned by the 'Commissioning Group'), is chosen through a public vote.

Since its inception the various works have captured the interest of the public as well as global media attention and The Fourth Plinth has been universally declared a great success.

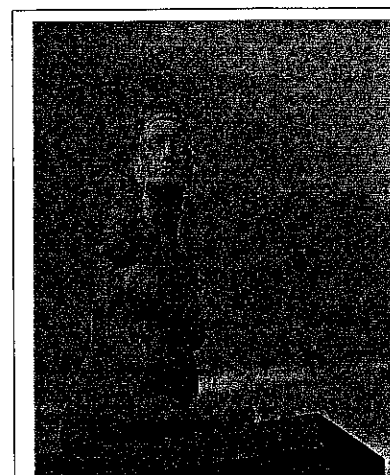


Fig. 4: Fourth Plinth

iv. Public Realm Art Collections

A successful example of a project to create an outdoor art collection of work by different artists is Bristol Harbourside. Developers, Crest Nicholson, appointed



Fig. 5: Bristol Harbourside

Tim Knowles as lead artist. Tim was responsible for a budget of over £1 million to deliver temporary and permanent artworks for the development, which are one of the largest regeneration projects in Europe.

So far six artworks have been completed, with several more in development. The collection has provided the area with a public art trail enhancing culture and enjoyment for residents and visitors alike.

v. Art Integrated into the Public Realm

Some successful examples of this include the Sheffield Peace Gardens where artists Brian Asquith and Tracey Haynes integrated designs including a fountain, stonework, large sculptural bronze works and street furniture.

'Blue Carpet' is another example of artwork integrated into public areas. Although classified as a piece of public art, it is closer to an urban design feature. Commissioned for Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, artist Thomas Heatherwick covered the square in a skin of blue paving tiles. At the points where this skin reaches a building the slabs curve upwards to create the sensation that the tiles are a fabric laid over the area. There are a number of benches that appear to fold up from the carpet surface and beneath the benches are sunken glass-topped boxes holding coloured lights and temporary displays. The work was commissioned in the wake of neighbouring Gateshead's success with the 'Angel of the North', as a sensible solution that would complement the existing buildings and give the city a contemporary icon.

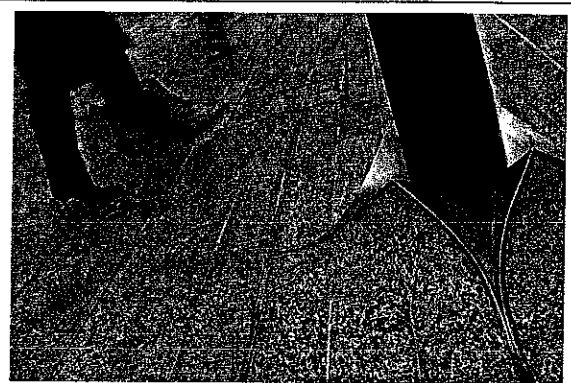


Fig. 6: Blue Carpet

4. CONTEXT OF PUBLIC ART IN AYLESBURY VALE

a. Aylesbury Vale: Context and Demographics

Aylesbury Vale is a large district with a wealth of attractive features and environment. Lying between Milton Keynes (a major regional growth area to the north) and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south, the district covers over 900 square kilometres – over half of the whole of Buckinghamshire. The Vale of Aylesbury is a predominantly rural, agricultural area, although in recent decades with the expansion of commercial, administrative and industrial economies in the area there is now a much wider economic and social base.

Aylesbury Town has a population of around 65,000 (some 40% of the entire district), with over 100 smaller settlements spread through the landscape.

Fast transport links between Aylesbury and London make the southern parts of the district accessible for commuters and provides employment opportunities. Aylesbury Vale is therefore well placed for residents who wish to work outside, as well as inside, its boundaries.

The socio-economic profile of Aylesbury Vale is relatively affluent, but this overall figure masks certain areas of economic and social deprivation. Aylesbury Vale boasts a higher than average proportion of young people and families, with over 60% of the population under 45 years of age.

Aylesbury Vale is culturally diverse. The main town of Aylesbury boasts a strong and flourishing multi-cultural community with 5% of the town classified as Asian (this figure being 50% above the national average) and 2% of Black origin. It is this mix of ethnicities in Aylesbury Vale that contributes to its unique character.

b. Development in Aylesbury Vale

One of the main challenges facing Aylesbury Vale is that of rapid growth. Regional policy identifies Aylesbury Town as a major growth town, requiring it to expand by 16,800 new dwellings from 2006-2026, 40% of which must be affordable. Elsewhere in the district, outside the planned urban area of Aylesbury, the requirement is to provide 4,400 new dwellings over the same period.

Several developments are due to be delivered in the coming years. A new £35 million, 1,200 seat theatre, designed by RHWL Architects, is currently under construction and due for completion in Spring 2010. In addition, the surrounding area is being redeveloped as part of the £100 million Waterside project. Waterside will provide 260,000 sq ft of new retail floor space, new homes, a car park and 1,100 new jobs.

Aylesbury College has spent £30 million on a new building. The facilities are open to the public as well as the College's students. Stoke Mandeville Hospital is also undergoing a transformation with a new four storey building. This more effective use of space has vacated land for the building of homes..

In addition to these retail and service oriented developments there are housing developments currently in progress. In the north of Aylesbury at Weedon Hill, Taylor Woodrow has begun work on an 850 dwelling development on a 48 hectare site.

The site of the old Nestle factory in Aylesbury is providing 136 homes in three and four storey blocks. This development is being managed by Fairview Property Trust.

The largest development in the District is Berryfields, which will eventually house over 3000 new homes on 195 hectares. As well as the new dwellings (which include a number of affordable homes) there will be new community facilities such as shops, housing, schools, green spaces and improved transport. In addition, the Berryfields development lists community arts funding as an important aspect of the development. To the east of Berryfields, the new Buckingham Park development is creating around 1000 new homes with a community centre and green spaces.

By 2011 the population of Aylesbury Town will have increased by one third. This expansion has implications not only on homes and housing but on transport, employment, educational and cultural facilities. This new development raises new possibilities for public art programmes.

Public art has an ability to unify areas, introduce new communities and gel populations together. A social infrastructure is essential when introducing a large influx of residents and jobs into a community. Public art will contribute towards a sense of civic pride, local distinctiveness and a sense of community for both new and existing residents.

c. Public art in Aylesbury Vale

Without an enforceable 'percent for art' policy or similar external funding stream, Aylesbury Vale's recent works of public art have been limited. Opportunities to draw in funding through S106 negotiations have been missed owing to this lack of policy.

i. Current works of public art

Axis, Robert Kilvington Vale Park

This piece, commissioned by Aylesbury Vale Arts Council, arose from the development of the Aqua Vale Swimming and Fitness Centre, creating an opportunity for a focal sculpture. Artist, Robert Kilvington, was selected by a steering group and his initial designs presented as models and drawings. Consultation followed regarding form, material size and site, before the final plans were drawn up. Additionally, an educational program was carried out in local schools over four days.

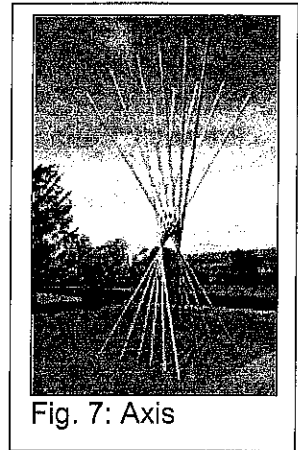


Fig. 7: Axis

Mothshadowmovie, Louise Short

This was a temporary artwork created at a one off event held at Aylesbury Riverside Walk. The temporary projection had a related schools environmental education project where children were given the chance to join in a selection of dynamic outdoor community workshops. This environmentally orientated work aimed at re-establishing a relationship between the surrounding environment and the community.

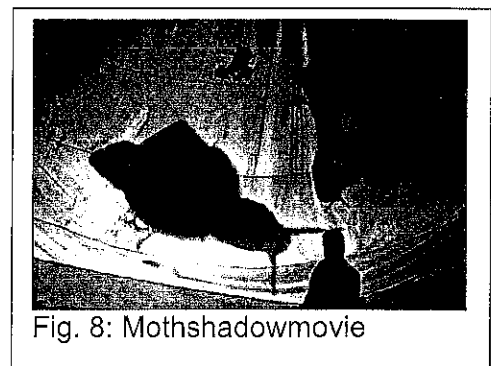


Fig. 8: Mothshadowmovie

Artist Designed Railings, Buckingham Street

These railings were commissioned by Aylesbury Vale District Council as a way of integrating artists' designs into the urban arena.

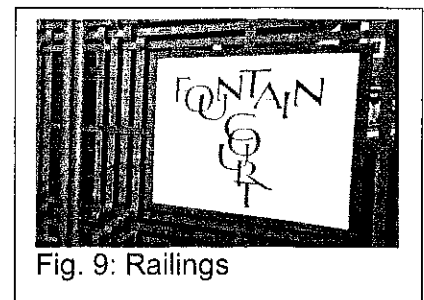


Fig. 9: Railings

Sustrans Cycle path

Sustrans, the national cycle network has managed and installed several smaller sculptures along the cycle routes of Aylesbury Vale as a part of their national programme.

Riverside Walk Sculptures

Winslow Millennium Totem

Buckingham Otters

Buckingham 'Swan Girl'

Traditional Town Centre Sculpture

This type of sculpture adorns the centre of Aylesbury Town and Aylesbury Vale's outlying towns and villages. These include the bronze lions and otters and the imposing statue of John Hampden, Aylesbury's civil war hero and subject of the District Council's logo.

ii. Emerging/ Future public art projects

Transport Hub

Aylesbury Vale District Council is collaborating with Bucks County Council in the regeneration of the Aylesbury Transport Hub by commissioning artists to work alongside architects to integrate public art into the scheme.

Five artists were commissioned to produce concept artworks for the area following an 'Arts Plus' development award from Arts Council South East and the South East England Development Agency, with additional support from the Aylesbury Vale Arts Council. Although unsuccessful in securing the stage two funds, two of the artworks will be realised through sponsorship agreements with developers and manufacturers. These are Laura Boswell's enamel work (which, when completed, will be the longest piece of original enamelled artwork in Europe) and Sarah Worthington's glass work for the public footbridge. These projects are underway and should be in place by 2009.

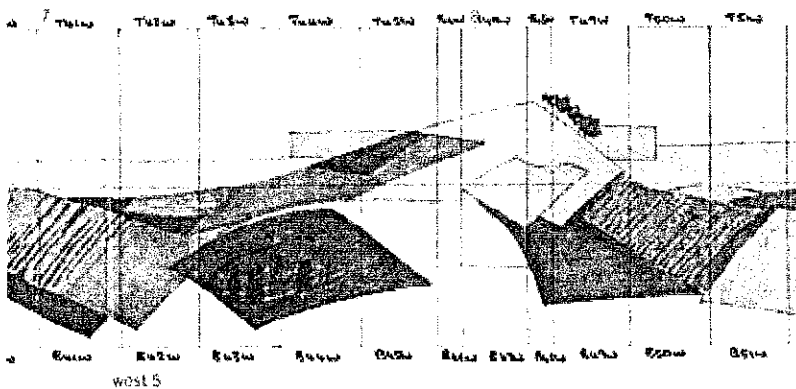


Fig. 10: Part of the enamel panel design for AV Transport Hub Laura Boswell

Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Public Art Program

The Stoke Mandeville Hospital development will shortly be introducing a public art programme alongside the build programme. Willis Newson, a Bristol based arts consultancy, has recently been appointed by Bucks Hospitals NHS Trust to manage a programme of art commissions and procurements for the new wing of the hospital. Their aim is to use artists and artists' groups to design work for a number of identified locations around the hospital. The arts budget for this project is £55,000.

Aylesbury Parkway Rail Extension and Berryfields Development

The Berryfields housing development is the largest development currently scheduled to take place in Aylesbury Vale, and includes the extension of the existing rail link into the development from London to create a new station- 'Aylesbury Parkway'. Berryfields Consortium has also discussed the possibility of public art in some of the main community buildings of the development.

Other Ongoing Arts Activities

Aylesbury Vale is committed to developing arts activities for its residents, aiming to offer a wide range of different arts activities across the region. Current ongoing projects include:

- The Roald Dahl Festival
- Street Dance coaching
- Perfect Village Sunday
- Music in Quiet Places
- Children and young people's holiday activities
- Theatre in the Villages
- Activate
- Urban Beatz

SUMMARY

Aylesbury Vale is a diverse district with a relatively affluent population. The biggest challenge facing Aylesbury Vale is that of growth. With the population set to increase by a third over the coming 20 years it is important that the public art procurement process is reassessed in the region.

Previous public art and art events have been successful. However, opportunities for cultural branding and creative development have been missed due to the lack of a defined funding stream for public art development and the lack of a Strategy.

Whilst there are several opportunities in the future for public art intervention including, the transport hub, Berryfields development rail extension, the Stoke Mandeville public art programme and the ongoing arts activities, it is essential to define a dedicated public art funding stream for future provision.

5. AYLESBURY VALE STRATEGIC AND POLICY CONTEXT

Aylesbury Vale's Policy Objectives and Links with Public Art

Analysis of Aylesbury Vale District Council's strategies and development plans identify key issues which either directly name public art as complementing or assisting to deliver key objectives through implementing public art schemes.

a. Aylesbury Vale Local Plan

The Local Plan sets out policies and proposals for the use of land and buildings. The Plan relates to the whole of the district and covers the period to 2011.

There is a strong environmental theme running through the Plan. Although art and culture is only mentioned in terms of land usage in retail areas of Aylesbury Town itself, there are a number of issues raised that tie into the processes and aims of public art.

The Local Plan is committed to environmental sustainability and to preserving and improving the physical environment: "To protect and enhance the District's environmental heritage in such a condition and to such a degree that the capacity of the environment to perform its various functions is maintained over time at a sufficient level to ensure that future generations are able to enjoy it in equal measure"¹ – this is an objective to which public art can contribute.

The Plan names Aylesbury Town centre as an area in which to locate cultural and leisure provisions.

The Plan also contains specific comments to which this Strategy can contribute for the overall commitment to high quality design within the district. It refers to the need for increased footpaths and cycle routes to maximize the informal space available in Aylesbury Town Centre. It recognises that it is not just the creation of homes and retail developments which will benefit Aylesbury Vale but also the need for leisure space. Both of these aims are greatly improved by the inclusion of public art. Indeed it has been proven that successful public art greatly increases the use of public and leisure areas.

b. Aylesbury Town Centre Study

This study undertaken in 1994 examines the potential for environmental improvements in central Aylesbury. It provides a blueprint which planners may choose to adopt, and in response to one of the proposals the local authority appointed a Town Centre Manager.

The study makes general observations about the central Aylesbury environment, and also acts as a guide to the types of development which may take place in the town in the future. It informs the work of Aylesbury Vale Advantage. It also comments on the lack of green and open space, and suggests that green space should be a priority in future developments.

A strategic approach to environmental planning is one the author strongly endorses and the study identifies the town centre as an area that would benefit from public art in its pre-existing open areas: "the 'Town Centre Management Group' could also usefully examine opportunities to introduce art into the town centre's open areas"².

¹ Aylesbury Vale Local Plan

² Aylesbury Town Centre Study

c. Aylesbury Vale District Council Cultural Strategy, 2002-2007

This Strategy was commissioned by Aylesbury Vale District Council with the purpose of ensuring that a strategic approach to culture would be developed to supply guidance to cultural providers across the district.

Through research and consultation five main issues to be addressed were defined:

- Providing the cultural, transport and economic infrastructure for the growth of Aylesbury Vale District.
- Access to cultural opportunities in the rural areas.
- The development of participation, and the celebration of excellence in cultural activity by young people (and the benefits in terms of crime reduction, educational attainment and future healthy habits that this can bring).
- Maintaining, developing and celebrating the diverse cultural identity and sense of place and history of Aylesbury Vale.
- The lack of equality of opportunity in certain areas of the district and for certain groups.

The Council wishes for everyone in the district to be involved in culture, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status or geographical location.

The Cultural Strategy states that: "The key components of culture in Aylesbury Vale are crucial to the quality of life of people who live and work there. Its parks, its countryside, its leisure facilities, festivals and events, the opportunity it provides for children and adults to take up and learn new activities, its sense of history and heritage – all are part of the fabric of living, without which people's lives would be immeasurably poorer".³

d. Aylesbury Vale Community Plan 2006

This Plan was commissioned due to the unprecedented growth that the district of Aylesbury Vale will be experiencing over the coming years, to make sure that they not only "get it right for new residents" but also allow existing residents to make the most of their communities.

Among the issues and areas for consideration in future development, the following key objectives were identified that have relevance in the arena of public art:

- To develop a blueprint for creating new communities, to include the provision of recreational and cultural facilities, to avoid creating physical barriers between communities, and to ensure that existing communities are able to reap the benefits of new development.
- To ensure that, as the built environment is added to it is in a way which complements and integrates into the existing community.
- Promote safer and stronger communities to increase and strengthen community participation, particularly in areas where the quality of life is below the national average, whether in urban or rural areas.
- Raise the profile of Aylesbury.
- It states that the focus on developing Aylesbury Vale must not lead to the neglect of the rural areas, as the two are interdependent for jobs, services and recreational opportunities.
- For new developments to retain the distinctiveness of Aylesbury and the rural areas, we must ensure the highest quality design and resource efficiency in new developments.

- Green spaces must be planned so that they can be enjoyed by current and future generations. These areas need to enhance the natural environment, and be accessible and attractive to all members of the community.
- Improve first impressions of Aylesbury Town.

e. Local Development Framework – Aylesbury Vale

The Local Development Framework will ultimately replace the current local plan and will set out all planning policies for the district. It is produced as a number of separate documents over a period of time, rather than as one document. Wide ranging consultation is the key to developing the Local Development Framework including general public, stakeholders and professionals. The first document in the LDF will be the core strategy which is anticipated to be adopted in 2010.

Issues identified with a bearing on public art include:

- Developing and promoting the local economy to establish Aylesbury Vale as a vibrant economic centre.
- Achieving safe, active, healthy communities and providing accessible services.
- To encourage a sense of community identity in which all individuals feel able to play a part.
- To increase the profile of the district as a place to visit.
- Promoting the renaissance of Aylesbury town centre.
- Conserving and enhancing the landscape and townscape character of Aylesbury Vale - in particular those areas of designated importance - and in maintaining community identities.
- Promoting communication between ethnic groups.
- Building sustainable extensions to create individual developments with their own character which helps to build strong local community identities.
- Achieving a coherence of design in new developments.

f. Aylesbury Vale Green Spaces Plan 2005-2008

Aylesbury Vale District Council manages approximately 450 hectares of green spaces throughout the Vale. This Plan recognises the need to protect and enhance important sub-regional 'green infrastructure'.

The Plan recognises that the anticipated growth of the district has significant implications for green spaces, as it will bring increased demand for formal and informal recreation. It recommends that in the design of major development areas, Aylesbury Vale District Council can negotiate provision of green space. Whilst acknowledging that pressure will increase on existing sites, it notes that enhancements can be sought for public art through external funding opportunities.

Throughout the document, community involvement in the maintenance and life of the District's green spaces is stated to be of utmost import and names as two of its key objectives:

- Seek to increase opportunities for public art.
- Establish opportunities for community consultation and participation, with consideration to long term sustainability.

g. Buckinghamshire County Council Cultural Policy

This Policy serves to emphasise the importance of culture in improving quality of life and creating stronger and more active communities.

Through consultation with key contacts and institutions throughout the county, BCC has devised the following themes to be addressed in future work:

- Heritage
- Landscape
- Heath and Wellbeing
- Arts and Learning
- Sport and Recreation

The County Council plans on delivering these aims working in partnership with district councils, SE England Cultural Consortium, Arts Council England, Sport England and any interested or appropriate organisations and clubs. The Policy also recognises the need to seek funding from external sources, for example the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Policy identifies how culture enhances quality of life and the specific benefits and influences (both regional and national). There is a need for regular monitoring of the proposed outcomes; producing an evaluation which will then be addressed at the end of the period the Policy covers.

The themes and issues from this overall County Cultural Policy should be expanded upon and addressed through this Public Art Strategy, which may aid in the introduction of public art across the county.

h. Aylesbury Vale District Council Corporate Plan 2008

The council's new 'Corporate Plan', sets out their main priorities for the next three years and how the council will address the main challenges facing the district, working alone and with their partners for the benefit of residents and service users.

The leader of the council, Councillor John Cartwright sums up the Plan by saying:

"It aims to improve the way we live and work. We want everyone in Aylesbury Vale to have a good quality of life with a job, a nice home, leisure facilities, safe communities and the right environment. This strategy brings together all those aims and provides the framework which will help us deliver that vision for local people."⁴

The key aims from this document are:

- Thriving communities- enabling communities across the Vale to be vibrant, safe, diverse and inclusive.
- Quality growth and regeneration- delivering the housing and economic growth of the district.
- A great environment- protecting and enhancing the local environment and promoting the sustainable use of resources.

⁴

Aylesbury Vale District Council Corporate Plan

The key aims for the district are supported by the aim to become a council to be proud of delivering valued services excellently for all of our customers.

A key action of the Plan is to achieve an annual increase in participation in leisure and cultural activities, in particular:

- Engagement in the arts
- Participation in youth activities, as measured by the new National Indicator NI 110

This Strategy can also contribute to the Plan's action of increasing public satisfaction with the local environment, in particular with council managed parks and open spaces.

Public art will be a major component in the council's aims to take the lead in 'place making', especially in terms of the major new growth.

SUMMARY:

Aylesbury Vale District is covered by several plans and policies which all, either directly or indirectly, make note of issues closely related to public art.

These issues include:

The importance of community engagement in the arts
The importance of high quality urban design
Preserving and enhancing the urban and rural environments
Good quality leisure spaces for all to enjoy
The need for public art in pre-existing open spaces
Providing the cultural infrastructure to support the growth of Aylesbury Vale
Increased involvement in the arts, especially by young people
Providing opportunities for all people in Aylesbury Vale
Encouraging a sense of community identity in which all individuals feel able to play a part
Maintaining, developing and celebrating the diverse cultural identity and sense of place and history of Aylesbury Vale
Raise the profile of Aylesbury Vale and improve first impressions of the district
Ensure the strong integration of new developments and promote safer and stronger communities
Promoting cross-cultural interaction
Ensure the protection and enhancement of rural areas

6. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Numerous national policy guidance documents highlight the importance of an integrated approach to the procurement and development of public art. The following documents, policies and agencies have been considered in this Strategy.

a. National Planning Policy Guidance

Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPG) has set out the Government's national policies on different aspects of the planning process. This Public Art Strategy for Aylesbury Vale promotes an integrated approach to design and architecture whereby the commissioning of future works become a part of the planning process, as is advocated in national policy guidance.

PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

'New housing and residential environments should be well designed and should make a significant contribution to promoting an urban renaissance and improving quality of life'.

b. Central Government Paper – 'Living Places'

The Government's report into their vision for public space is detailed in the document: Living Places, Cleaner, Safer, Greener

'The best public realm schemes strive for the highest achievable quality. This does not mean the most expensive solution but does imply an understanding of the principles of good design, a balancing of the sustainable over the quick fix, of quality over quantity: of innovation over the easy option. Quality tends to focus minds on design issues.'

'Living Places, Cleaner, Safer, Greener', Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 10/02

The key areas that affect these issues of quality on public spaces are highlighted. They include regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and quality design.

c. Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

CABE champions well-designed buildings and public space. They run public campaigns, and provide expert, practical advice. They work directly with planners, designers, clients and architects, offering them guidance on projects that will shape all our lives.

CABE encourages policy-makers to create places that are safe, sustainable, beautiful and efficient to run. A critical area of their role is advising central, regional and local government on architecture and urban design. They also help to formulate planning policy and systems that can routinely deliver the best design in our schools, hospitals, homes, town centre developments and public spaces.

7. REGIONAL CONTEXT

The main regional agents in the UK that decide funding and policy potentially affecting this Strategy and public art provision are:

a. Arts Council England, South East (ACE South East)

The Arts Council is the main national development agency for the arts in the UK. ACE distribute public money from the government and the national lottery into the arts in the UK. Between 2006 and 2008 they planned to invest £1.1 billion in the arts in the UK with the aim of getting more art to more people in more places. The Arts Council believes that the arts have the power to change lives and communities and to create opportunities for people throughout the country.

Arts Council England's ambition for 2006–8 is to put the arts at the heart of national life and people at the heart of the arts. They aim for everyone in the country to have the opportunity to develop a varied cultural life, ensuring that quality work reaches a wider range of people as both audiences and participants.

The main priorities for the Arts Council are:

- Taking part in the arts
- Children and young people
- The creative economy
- Vibrant communities
- Internationalism
- Celebrating diversity

Through 'Grants for the Arts' the Arts Council provide funding for individuals and organisations who use the arts in their work. The grants are used to help deliver the aims of the applicant organisations which also deliver the visions for the arts in the UK.

b. South East Economic Development Agency (SEEDA)

SEEDA, as the Regional Development Agency for the South East, is responsible for the sustainable economic development and regeneration of the South East of England – aiming to be the driving force of the UK's economy.

Whilst not having any strategic role in the arts, SEEDA recognise that it is essential to invest to sustain and further develop the region's cultural, environmental and creative asset base. Culture lies at the heart of successful places, successful economies and successful communities.

SEEDA has worked in partnership with ACE South East in funding the 'Arts Plus' project; a series of awards for the 'Art in Public Places Scheme'.

c. Culture South East (CSE)

CSE was commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to champion cultural programming and creative industries in this region. The main issues influencing the cultural sector in the region have been identified as:

- The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- The development of the cultural and creative economy.
- Securing recognition for the contribution the cultural sector can make to place-making.
- Providing evidence of culture's contribution to regional policy.

CSE has undertaken, often in collaboration with other regional agencies, the writing of several strategic and research documents. Public art is addressed directly in their document, 'Living Spaces'. This document provides practical advice and information on how culture can support the development of sustainable communities:

'Good practice sees the involvement of artists and cultural amateurs in planning and design from the outset, helping shape ways in which people will develop their own cultural attachments and commitments to buildings and spaces. Animation of spaces and buildings by artists and performers, and the vibrancy and energy which cultural producers and agencies import into parks, public spaces, streets and the spaces between buildings are an essential ingredient both in developing distinctive places and in creating safer and more welcoming environments. Public art commissions – sculpture, lighting, landscape, furniture – can act as landmarks as well as enhancing the places where they are sited.'⁵

8. CULTURAL PARTNERS IN AYLESBURY VALE

a. Aylesbury Vale Arts Council (AVAC)

Aylesbury Vale Arts Council aims to make the Vale a more stimulating place to live and visit in which the participation in, and appreciation of, the arts flourish. It serves three main objectives:

- To offer financial support to organisations and individuals committed to the development of arts projects for the benefit of people living in Aylesbury Vale.
- To provide information about opportunities to become involved in the arts in the Aylesbury Vale area.
- To provide a forum for discussion of arts related issues and a voice for the arts in the Aylesbury Vale area.

AVAC operates a free membership programme offering members the opportunity to advertise arts events - free of charge and receive news bulletins and news about networking opportunities. It also helps to raise members' awareness of funding opportunities. AVAC commissioned the AXIS sculpture in Vale Park to mark the millennium in Aylesbury.

b. Buckinghamshire County Museum

The award winning County Museum showcases the County's rich heritage alongside a changing programme of exhibitions in the Buckinghamshire Art Gallery.

c. Roald Dahl Children's Gallery

Part of the Buckinghamshire County Museum, this gallery uses the stories of Roald Dahl to provide fun for all ages. The annual Roald Dahl Day and parade is the culmination of months of hard work by young people from around the Vale, creating original and spectacular artwork celebrating the stories of Roald Dahl.

⁵ Living Spaces, Culture Task Group, 2005

d. Aylesbury Vale Civic Centre

The Civic Centre located in Aylesbury Town is open all year, it provides facilities for groups to hire, meet or perform and provides a quality entertainment programme for the residents and visitors of Aylesbury

This venue is due to be replaced by the Aylesbury Waterside Theatre, currently under construction and due for completion in Spring 2010.

e. Queens Park Arts Centre

Open 6 days a week, the Queens Park Arts Centre in Aylesbury Town holds over fifty participatory arts workshops every week. The centre also offers artist residencies, a theatre, exhibition space and an art shop. The organisation flourishes due to the dedication of its workforce of over 50 volunteers.

f. Parish and Town Councils

Aylesbury Vale has 110 parishes in the area. Parishes provide the first tier of local government, in that they provide services at a village or town level. They are independent of district and county councils

g. Sustrans

District and County Councils are working with Sustrans to link, via dedicated cycleways, the main settlements in the district to the main cycle network. A route is being devised between Milton Keynes and Oxford via Winslow. Further linkages are proposed between Aylesbury and Winslow, Aylesbury to Leighton Buzzard and Aylesbury to Thame via Princes Risborough and Buckingham to Winslow.

Sustrans, as an organisation, has a strong history of delivering public art partnerships and has been developing new ways of working with artists which further explore the resources and opportunities the Network offers. 'Art & the Travelling Landscape' is a programme of projects being developed by Sustrans across the UK in partnership with local authorities and others. The projects focus on the opportunities for artists to work along extensive sections of the network to create sequences of artworks as permanent installations.

h. Aylesbury Vale Advantage

Aylesbury Vale Advantage is the Local Delivery Vehicle, a partnership between several local and national agencies that help establish and co-ordinate the growth agenda in the area. Partners include AVDC, Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), The Vale of Aylesbury Primary Care Trust, SEEDA and English Partnerships.

AVA has been active in establishing a framework for action, and developing partnerships and initiatives that will promote the local area, enhance the environment and guide Aylesbury Vale into a new era of prosperity and high quality of life for all residents. All activity is based on carefully planned and sustainable growth.

The government has established six benchmarks to be met by a local delivery vehicle:

- It must be a single purpose vehicle with a set of objectives that support the growth strategy in its area.
- It has powers to assemble land.
- It has powers to capture development values.
- Where necessary it has planning powers. This is not the case with Aylesbury Vale Advantage.
- It has the ability to raise large scale funding.
- It operates with transparency and accountability.

i. Aylesbury Vale Creative and Media Diploma Consortium

This is a group of educational institutions that work together with the local authority to deliver higher education, further learning initiatives and continued professional development in the cultural sector.

j. Community Arts Organisations

Aylesbury Vale has a diverse and flourishing range of arts, cultural, heritage and voluntary organisations, as well as artists groups, individual practitioners, festivals and artists' forums. These groups and individuals will be a great asset in achieving the aims of this strategy district-wide and in providing access into communities. They are also a resource for creating imaginative and appropriate community projects.

These organisations include:

- Soundstudio
- Roald Dahl Children's Gallery
- The Winslow Group
- Visual Images Group
- Queens Park Arts Centre

There are also artists groups across the district who offer workshops and have previously participated in delivering public art projects and community arts workshops, exhibitions, events and festivals. They include:

- Aylesbury Street Festival
- Buckingham Summer Festival
- Buckingham Festival Fortnight
- Roald Dahl Festival

9. RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION

Artpoint conducted a period of consultation in 2008, covering one-to-one and telephone interviews with key stakeholders, council employees and interested parties. An extensive street survey was also conducted to serve as a barometer of public opinion on the subject of public art.

These results have directly fed into a SWOT analysis of current public art provision, processes and perceived issues to overcome in the arena of public and visual art.

Aylesbury Street Survey

During the writing of this Strategy in depth public consultation was undertaken over three days in various locations around the Vale, serving to record public opinion and aspiration for future public art.

This research serves to inform future commissions, and demonstrate the public desire for more public art to make Aylesbury Vale a more vibrant and exciting place to be.

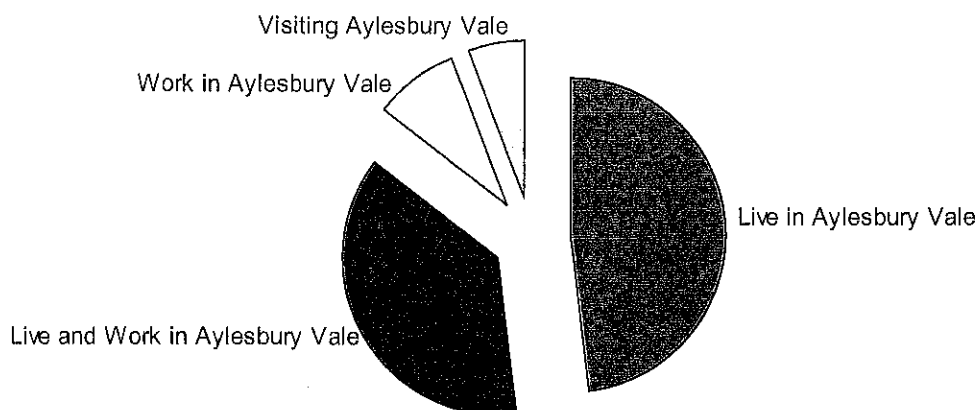
Those consulted, along with being monitored demographically, were asked questions regarding the following:

- Why public art is important to them
- Current projects that they like (locally and nationally)
- How they feel about Urban design in the district
- What future aspirations they had

An example of the questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 3.

a. About the Persons Consulted

Over the 204 interviews it was found that a large proportion of respondents lived, worked or lived and worked in Aylesbury Vale. Visitors for other purposes were in the minority. The following table represents the proportions in each category:



85% of the audience profile for public art in Aylesbury Vale either lived in Aylesbury Vale, with a further 44% of this figure also working in the district.

The following is a table of respondents' age ranges in comparison to the population of Aylesbury Vale⁶

	>19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Census Information	26.5	11.6	16.7	14.9	13.1	17.2
Street Survey results	17.2	19.3	16.1	16.7	15.6	15.1

This sample reflects to a reasonable degree the overall population of Aylesbury Vale with each age group representing the population to within 9%, meaning that the responses gathered can be considered as representative of the whole population.

b. Findings of the Street Survey

i. The Importance of Public Art?

The initial questions in the street survey served to quantify the public's general view of public art and the perceived importance of public art in place making. This exercise aimed to investigate the future role of public art in Aylesbury Vale.

Results were as follows:

		Very important to important	Don't know	Not important to not at all important
CIVIC PRIDE: Helping people feel proud of living in Aylesbury Vale	%	89.6	4.7	5.7
WAYFINDING: Finding your way around Aylesbury Vale	%	69.3	5.2	25.5
URBAN DESIGN: Creating well-designed spaces	%	83.9	9.3	6.8
EXCITEMENT: Generating excitement about being in Aylesbury Vale	%	78.6	9.4	12
LEISURE AND RELAXATION: Providing places for peace and inspiration	%	92	3.6	4.4
EDUCATION: Helping the community learn more about art & culture	%	84.9	4.2	10.9
PLACE-MAKING: Providing attractive places to meet in Aylesbury Vale	%	85.4	5.7	8.9
IMAGE: Giving Aylesbury Vale a positive image	%	96.3	1.6	2.1

⁶ Reference for AV population profile

Especially significant in this survey are the high proportion of positive responses and the low percentage of 'don't know' answers, with only 5.4% of all answers falling into this category. This demonstrates that the public of Aylesbury Vale has a strong opinion on public art with a low level of ambivalence.

In order, the most important issues were:

- Giving Aylesbury Vale a positive image
- Providing places for peace
- Helping people to feel proud of living in Aylesbury Vale
- Providing attractive places to meet in Aylesbury Vale
- Helping the community learn more about art & culture
- Helping to create well designed spaces
- Generating Excitement about being in Aylesbury Vale
- Finding your way around Aylesbury Vale

ii. Public Awareness of Public Art

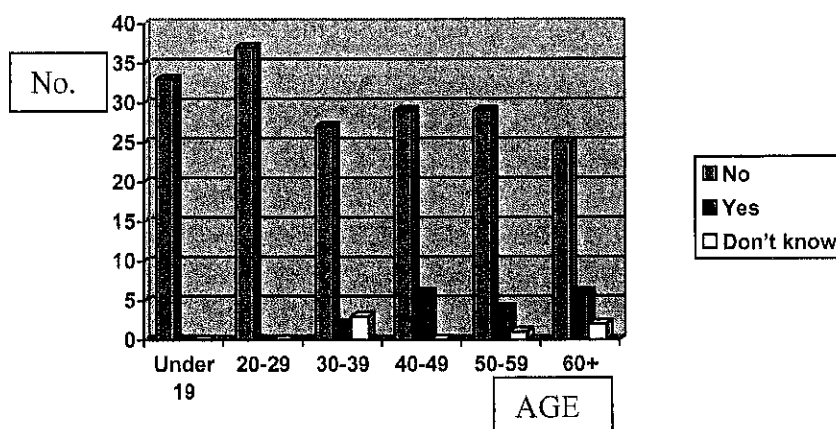
Overall the residents of the Vale show a reasonably good knowledge of public art both locally and nationally.

35% of respondents did not know of any public art in their locality. Those that did showed a wide interpretation of what public art is, naming sculptures, education projects, festivals, museums and galleries as examples.

It was found that while the older population knew more about public art in the Vale, the younger population knew of more public art nationally. Overall no one person had a good overview of all arts activities and existing public art across the district. Most knew what was in their area, with a greater number across the Vale aware of larger projects such as Kingsbury Square and Axis.

This points to a need for a comprehensive website of all public art and cultural activity in the district as a guide and encouragement for people to get involved and show interest in visiting commissions and projects that intrigue them.

iii. Is There Enough Public Art?



During consultation 88.1% of respondents stated that there is not enough public art in the area. With 8.9% stating that they thought there is sufficient and 3% having no opinion.

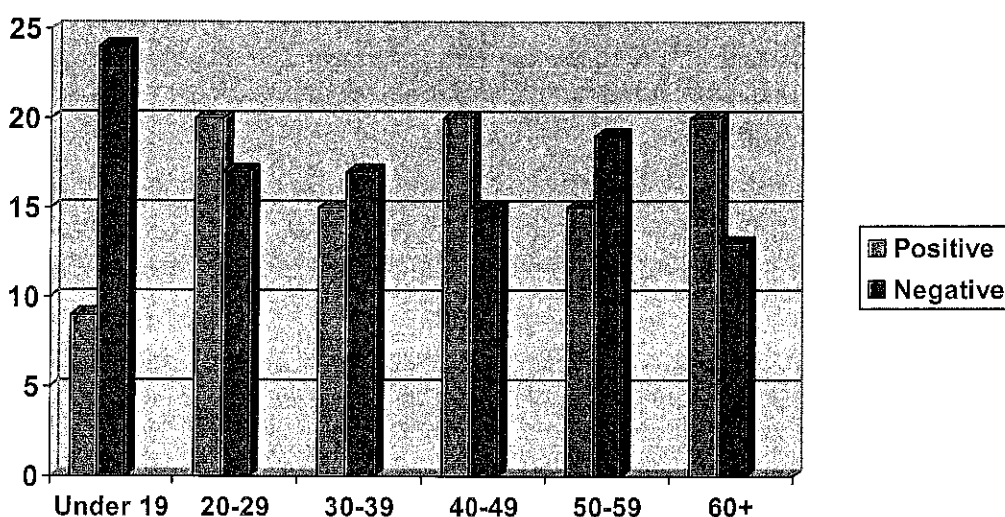
The proportion of younger people answering that there is not currently enough public art points to the younger generation understanding the intrinsic value of public art in creating well designed, well used spaces and strong communities.

Around 75% of the older generations answered that the current provision was not sufficient and cited similar reasons to the younger people. All age groups commented on the importance of public art in adding to the creative enjoyment in Aylesbury Vale.

Without exception, all those who said there was sufficient public art gave the same reason; that public money was better spent elsewhere on more essential services that they felt were currently lacking.

This demonstrates a clear desire for more public art in Aylesbury Vale on the part of the public, with key issues identified as inclusion, consultation, and integration (with regards to new developments). The reservations expressed should also feed future art projects in terms of transparency and disclosure to allay any fear of other services suffering.

iv. Perceptions of Urban Design in Aylesbury Vale



Around half and half of the respondents falling on either side of the urban design debate.

Those who thought that the urban design of the area was good generally said that whilst it was not the best in the world it was not by far the worst, and that it was improving with new development and regeneration around the area.

Public perception on the negative side cited how spread out the area is and how the rural areas can often become cut off, how little unity between the areas, and the 'muddled' nature of the town. Kingsbury Square however was cited on several occasions as an example of high quality design. Many were aware that this could change through careful design in new developments and regeneration projects.

v. How Can Public Art Contribute to Perceptions of the Area?

An important issue with the residents of Aylesbury Vale was that future artworks address certain issues important to them and that they reflect their community.

Heritage was the most important issue to the residents. The wealth of history available should help ensure that Aylesbury retains individuality as it grows. Specific historical areas highlighted included:

- History as a market town
- Historical figures
- Literary heritage, specifically children's literature
- History as a rural district and current standing as one of the largest rural districts in the UK
- Printing history
- Economic history

Education and community engagement was also key in the minds of the public for future artwork. The feeling was overwhelmingly that artwork should begin and end in the community and that young people and residents should be informed, utilised and consulted throughout the process.

The function of any artwork was also to address and represent the community identity of the Vale, and should look particularly at the following areas:

- Growth and aspiration
- Youth and young families
- Racial diversity

Being one of the largest rural districts in the UK meant that public consciousness also focused on the importance of environmental issues being addressed by public art. Artwork should draw on the open nature of the Vale, its geography, its wildlife and natural features and sustainability.

vi. Aspirations for Future Work

Most respondents when asked what kind of works they would like to see simply indicated that they would like to see more of everything.

As well as this, a focus was placed on site specificity in all public art, and the importance of a place and community to the subject, development, design and fabrication of artworks to create works of local relevance.

However, the main forms indicated in order of popularity were:

- Sculpture and permanent commissions
- Education projects
- Temporary works
- New technologies, interactive and new works
- Utilising local artists

Respondents were also asked about preferred locations for public art. Whilst approximately 20% replied that they would like to see work everywhere, several issues came to light:

- Those consulted from rural areas and villages highlighted the issue that funding and activities rarely reach out far enough and that such areas are often forgotten. Residents were keen to ensure that future public arts activities addressed the whole region where possible, although most recognised that many will take place in Aylesbury Town as this is the centre of growth activity.
- Aylesbury Town was the focus of much comment, specifically that this would be the most appropriate arena for public art as it is the main population centre, the area of the most growth, and the main location across the Vale for retail, leisure and employment.

Residential development and growth areas were also suggested as important areas for public art. The current residents of Aylesbury Vale felt that this would support the integration of the new developments into Aylesbury's existing developments. Public art would help provide these new homes and centres with a character that might otherwise be missing, thus preventing them from becoming large faceless and nondescript areas.

10. SWOT ANALYSIS – Based on One-to-One Interviews

This SWOT analysis of current cultural and public art provision was drawn up from the results of a period of internal council and member plus external stakeholder consultation. Through this we can identify the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in Aylesbury Vale District Council's current public art procurement processes and provision.

Consultation was undertaken with council departments including Leisure and Culture, Planning, Green Spaces Management, Town Centre Management, local councillors, arts providers, Aylesbury Vale Arts Council, and artists.

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Aylesbury Vale District Council
Public Art Strategy - Final Draft - August 2008

Place	<p>The architecture of the new theatre, designed to be a statement about the geography of the Vale points towards a more creative approach to urban design with the council.</p> <p>Level of growth: the influx of residents and capital funding and may open up more avenues for public art.</p> <p>Aylesbury Vale is an attractive rural area.</p>	<p>A feeling that the more rural areas outside of Aylesbury Town are overlooked in terms of funding, support and recognition.</p> <p>Not enough exhibition space across the Vale, or other cultural hubs apart from Aylesbury Town, although with all spend going into the new theatre this is unlikely to change in the near future.</p>	<p>The new theatre will have an adjacent public plaza outside. This has been cited for use through performance and events, however there is also a consensus that this could be a prime location for public art.</p> <p>Aylesbury's position as a growth area invites examination of public art as a tool to deliver community development, creating a sense of place and profile raising.</p> <p>However there is considerable opportunity for including public art in AVDC's green spaces. With the growth agenda, there will be a significant increase in the amount of green spaces.</p>	<p>As most growth and development is happening in and around Aylesbury Town there is a concern that this will be the only location for public art provision and activity. This may lead to a further distancing of the Vale's more rural areas.</p>
Council and Partners	<p>Aylesbury Vale Arts Council (AVAC), supported by the District Council, funds community arts, theatre and music events and performances across the Vale. Additionally, AVAC committed extra funding to the Hub project ensuring a higher level of involvement from</p>	<p>There is a lack of knowledge within the council on how to commission public art and which method of raising public art funding should be adopted</p> <p>There is no central site or page on the website with information about all art on offer in</p>	<p>AVDC is receptive to the idea of CPD and training in the area of public art. Interviewees suggested that the use of case studies and site visits to similar areas with good public art provision as the most helpful route.</p> <p>The council has recognised the</p>	<p>Council's ability to change. This Strategy therefore mandates a measured and gentle approach.</p> <p>Mistrust of Public Art and fear that it could damage council reputation.</p>

	<p>local artists.</p> <p>AV has the Queens Park Arts Centre which delivers a strong programme of community visual and performing arts events, course and projects.</p> <p>The Council see public art as a good way of involving the community in their immediate environment and the growth of the Vale in the future.</p> <p>Aylesbury Vale has a dedicated team of arts and leisure officers. Through Art Plus phase one, two pieces are being commissioned for the Transport Hub.</p> <p>Design champions in the council have expressed a desire for more adventurous, statement pieces of art to act as a conversation starter, and serve to redefine the Vale as a more forward thinking adventurous place and getting on the map by being provocative.</p> <p>AVDC is a strong team who are committed to engaging with local communities.</p>	<p>the Vale.</p> <p>Previous projects have seen delegation of responsibility to lower levels in the council where a strong showing from councillors and heads of departments would be preferential.</p> <p>Lack of officer time for developing future programmes.</p> <p>Minimal contributions have been secured through developer contributions to date.</p> <p>There is a fear that public art might not work – the council need to be more adventurous in their approach</p> <p>Aylesbury Vale is conservative in its approach to public art.</p>	<p>need for champions in the district to oversee and advocate for future public art development. It is receptive to the idea of forming a public art Panel.</p> <p>Town Council representatives show a desire to include public art in the Town Centre Masterplan and Public Realm Strategy currently being developed.</p> <p>Aylesbury Town Council feels that by engaging in a partnership with AVDC that seed money could be identified, to instigate more public art projects and find more funding. This is contingent on it being a working partnership.</p> <p>There are strong links with Buckingham Town Council regarding the arts and a willingness to develop opportunities for more arts projects in the town.</p>	<p>Time and staffing were identified as possible issues that may impact on future public art activity specifically the issue of obtaining funding.</p> <p>AVDC is not a big landowner and this could be a possible problem in negotiating funding for public art.</p>
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Artists and Arts Commissioning	<p>AVDC has a successful annual events programme so far with opera, performance and festivals. These events are well attended and enjoyed.</p> <p>Previous activities and commissions show that support for local artists has been a success. Artists feel that they have been encouraged in gaining experience and confidence by working with professionals in different fields.</p> <p>A great strength is the AXIS artwork. Whilst previously a point of contention amongst the public, and receiving complaints initially, it is now a recognised landmark, and is used as a symbol for the Vale in most publicity and tourist information.</p>	<p>Limited amount of public art presence in the district, with very few contemporary large scale commissions.</p> <p>Creative Bucks is now providing start up training and support for artists. There is a feeling that more could be done to provide support for start-up cultural activity specific to the Vale and public art.</p> <p>There is a feeling that a main problem in previous projects has been one of communication, and that artists and people involved have been kept out of the loop when it comes to changes in the brief or funding problems.</p> <p>There is a safe approach when it comes to public art, which is not positive when it comes to challenging the public's perceptions and raising awareness of artistic diversity and creating a unique image.</p> <p>Whilst the various cultural events are well known within the community of the Vale, funding limitations prevent these events from being known</p>	<p>The successes of the Hub in providing professional development for local artists points to an opportunity in the future to continue artists' training and development through mentoring.</p> <p>With the success of the artworks being integrated into the transport hub, this will act as a case study and evidence of successful public art. This will help strengthen future project bids.</p> <p>The Cultural Olympiad for London 2012 will shortly be underway. The council is a partner with Stoke Mandeville Stadium (the birthplace of the Paralympic Games) through Creative Bucks to deliver a community and education arts programme to raise the profile of the centre nationally and internationally. An ambition is to obtain the Cultural Olympiad brand.</p> <p>A pilot project to involve artists in the development of Vale Park proved to be very successful. Artists played a key role in</p>	<p>Nervousness of working with artists.</p> <p>The current concerns over maintenance of existing artworks could influence future decision making</p>
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		<p>outside the Vale. These events could help with tourism and outside interest if appropriately marketed.</p> <p>Lack of guidelines for commissioning public art, and overall arts project development, for example . It is important to factor in long term maintenance at the initial budget stage</p>	<p>providing a variety of mechanisms to engage the public and helped to ensure that the consultation was representative of the local community. This approach should be encouraged for future green space developments and could be used as a model for other public space improvements.</p> <p>Introduction of a consistently good practice model for commissioning and developing public art projects.</p>	
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11. VALUES OF THIS STRATEGY

The strategy aims to support the objectives of Aylesbury Vale District Council and address the concerns of key stakeholders and the public.

There are aspects of Aylesbury Vale District Council's overall vision which artists can particularly respond to and where art can make a critical difference. In this way art is about adding meaning and not just embellishment, and artists working in the area will want to relate to, and articulate, the core values of the district.

These values include:

i. Creating a Distinctive Character and Sense of Place

At present there is a prevailing feeling that Aylesbury Vale, specifically Aylesbury Town, is poorly designed and quite a disparate area. Local business people have commented frequently during consultation that there is a lack of focus for the town centre with the new Waterside development spreading the 'shopping district' even further, there needs to be additional focal points for the town centre. It is therefore important with any art activities that they take this into account and try to assist in the formation or definition of open and well-designed meeting spaces in the district, adding punctuation to the town centre.

The proposed 'Waterside Development' will draw more people to the area. A suggested focus to the scheme is the inclusion of a statue of Ronnie Barker as a landmark.

Working with a community and the specifics of a site or sites and local history, artists can both communicate and reinforce a sense of place. These artworks can provide a uniqueness and also mitigate the impact of big brand retailing and developed housing by reiterating the roots and singularity of a place. This is contingent on artwork being unique and tailored to the site, and not a prefab feature that is just bought in.

The scale of Aylesbury Vale's development and expansion over the coming twenty years should lead to a strategic approach to the implementation of this plan and the ethos of it should be applied as far as possible throughout all of the aspects of Aylesbury Vale's development and improvements.

ii. Inclusion for Residents

A key issue in all Council policies is that of community inclusion and involvement in the process of growth. Aylesbury Vale is experiencing a high level of growth as a major development area in the south-east and it is important that with so many new homes being built, and such a high level of new resident influx, that both the current residents and new residents are consulted on public art and urban design initiatives.

Another key matter with the Vale being such a large rural area is the possible isolation of the smaller outlying rural towns and villages, with most growth and attention falling on the Aylesbury Town area.

These are all issues that public art has the power to address and improve. Successful public projects have a firm grounding in community consultation and education. Projects that originate in this way, involving the community in design and development, lead to a high level of community ownership and respect for the artwork, a reduction in vandalism, and a greater level of community pride. Public artworks act to characterize the area, so it is therefore essential that

artists making artwork include those who use the site regularly in their consultation period, in order that the community is represented.

This Strategy advocates community consultation and involvement in all public art initiatives, and also that measures be taken that residents are involved as much as possible, not just those in Aylesbury Town.

This activity is especially important in Aylesbury Vale as it houses a great range of ethnicities, age ranges, and people of different economical standing. Public art should act to unify and create equality and promote community cohesion across these groups.

iii. High Quality Architecture and Urban Design in Public Places

Public consultation and stakeholder interviews have brought up the issue of urban design in Aylesbury Vale, and the quality of architecture.

Aylesbury town, and other areas originated as rural market towns, and the older architecture is beautiful, and greatly enhances the space. However recent development around the area often has the effect of diluting the character of a space and reducing the overall quality of the look of Aylesbury.

More recent developments and buildings have acted to redress this deficit, most specifically the Kingsbury Square redevelopment and the Waterside theatre; and it is important to see public art as a tool to improve urban design and enhance the landscape and townscape of Aylesbury Vale.

The issue of cultural infrastructure should also be at the centre of the various developments alongside physical infrastructure. So recognizing that it is not just the creation of homes and retail developments which will benefit the locals of Aylesbury Vale but the need for leisure space also, and both of these aims are greatly improved by the inclusion of public art to enhance the environment on a cultural level. .

iv. Evolution of the Existing Creative Community

Aylesbury Vale has already seen success in utilizing artists from the existing strong and thriving cultural community.

As previously mentioned, the second phase Arts Plus application was not successful, however two of the projects proposed by local artists were developed and taken forward through developer and partners sponsorship. As a result of the Arts Plus awards, these two artists and their pieces have been embraced by the council and developer and are in the process of fabrication and installation in their sites. Similarly, a local arts practitioners successfully participated in the development of the masterplan for Vale Park.

Local artists should be involved in arts projects where ever possible, either as the chosen artist or involved in the community outreach and education programme. Artists from the area will be tuned to the needs of the local community and have more knowledge of the area and the district, its history and heritage.

At the same time however it is more important to be selective and maintain the highest standards when choosing an artist to be involved at any point in an arts programme. This will ensure the quality of urban design in the built environment is of the highest value.

AVDC is advised to seek opportunities for local artists through commissioning and professional development.

v. Communicating and Mediating the Process of Change

With public art projects, especially those which are integrated into new housing developments, an important part of the process is to preserve and celebrate a sense of history and create a sense of place. With a new-build on previously non-developed land it is equally important to integrate the development in the existing fabric of the community, and to create a link with the land's history.

It is especially important with a brand new community moving into a brand new development to create a sense of community and this can be achieved by installing a piece of public art which has gone through pertinent public consultation and involvement. It will allow new developments to integrate into existing communities and in promoting healthy and sustainable communities.

vi. Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

Aylesbury Vale is proud of its rural environment, and this can feed into the future a unique vision for Aylesbury Vale culturally, with interpretation through artworks in a variety of different ways. This could draw on the reality of Aylesbury's natural environment, the forest, the hills, the water and also the more high tech companies and urban environment.

Artists could feed into the overall planning of sustainable systems helping to promote a positive image of, for example, public transport.

Artists can also be instrumental in softening the urban environment by bringing aspects of the rural environment in. This is already being done in the Transport Hub commission of Laura Boswell's work on giant enamel sheets. Education projects can also serve to highlight issues of environmentalism and biodiversity, educating the public on sustainability

Among their many roles is the creation of leisure spaces that can be enjoyed by the residents, workforce and visitors alike

vii. Maximising the Impact of Public Art in Housing

There has been much research into the impact of community-based arts projects. Public art's nature and variety can mean that its effects are far reaching from the initial local effect. There have been various studies in recent years aiming to provide a more rigorous evaluation of the contribution of the arts to social inclusion, health, education and community cohesion outcomes. Further case studies that support these findings are referenced in Appendix 2.

The most substantial study '*Use or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts*', (published by Comedia in 1997) collected evidence that suggests that the arts:

- Improve social cohesion
- Support community empowerment and self-determination
- Enhance local image and identity
- Contribute to personal development, imagination and vision
- Improve health and wellbeing

Indicators were developed to assess the social, artistic, economic and educational benefits of the projects. Evidence was gathered which determines that the arts:

- Develop social capital
- Build and develop community cohesion
- Activate social change
- Improve economic performance

'The Role of Arts in Regeneration, Blake Stevenson Ltd., Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, 2000'

Through extensive literature review and four in-depth case studies, this document presented evidence that the arts:

- Improve an area's image
- Attracts economic investment
- Supports community development
- Leads to training and employment
- Support individual's personal development
- Help engage hard to reach people in regeneration programmes

Moreover the Housing Corporation's Involvement Policy for the Housing Association Sector 2004, advises housing associations to explore more innovative approaches to resident participation, and to provide more choice in ways to involve residents. A large number of social housing organisations already use arts and cultural activities as a means of achieving this.

12. TAKING THIS STRATEGY FORWARD IN POLICY AND PRACTICE - AIMS FOR PUBLIC ART IN AYLESBURY VALE

Based on the values in section 11 and on the consultation, the vision and aims of this strategy are:

VISION - developing the local character and distinctiveness by creating a stimulating urban and rural environment and encouraging public participation, ownership and civic pride. AVDC will also seek to provide opportunities for the development and retention of local artists and creative industries.

AIMS -

- a. Seek to secure public art contributions through the planning process** - continue to provide a series of projects to the planning department and deliver public art projects as part of the planning process.
- b. Maximise the benefits that public art can bring to communities** - increase community participation, access and understanding of public art. To make public art truly public by creating opportunities for local people to engage with the creation process as well as access, understand and celebrate existing works in the public realm.
- c. Use public art in the development of public buildings and spaces** - encourage the artistic enhancement of public buildings' high profile public spaces. Opportunities exist in the following initiatives:
 - Town Centre schemes
 - Development of the new theatre in Aylesbury Town Centre
 - Partnership and collaboration with Town and Parish Councils
 - Emerging opportunities such as the Cultural Olympiad
 - Enhancement of the Vale's green spaces
- d. Encourage the development of local artists** - encourage local artists to develop their skills and work in the public realm.
 - Create opportunities for local emerging artists and nationally renowned artists who would not normally have the opportunity to work in the district.
 - Create mentoring opportunities when national or higher profile artists are working on projects.
 - Create a robust database of artists working in the field of public art and a database of local artists.
 - Consider opportunities within public spaces (particularly indoor spaces) for local artists to exhibit/ show their work.
- e. Improve and enhance public art commissioning process and develop good practice procedures** - to deliver Aylesbury Vale District Council's commitment to public art by adopting a "Good Practice" model of working.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

i. Recommendation 1

Mechanisms for Delivering the Public Art Strategy

The Local Plan currently makes no reference to public art, only highlights areas which public art can address and influence such as environmental issues and cultural and leisure provision. It is therefore imperative that the Local Development Framework which will replace this current local plan should encourage the provision of new works of art as part of the development and planning process. It is recommended that AVDC considers how public art can be funded through developer contributions and how this can be formalised.

It is recommended that the council and Aylesbury Vale Advantage encourage developers through negotiation to involve artists in the design elements of new developments. Arts organisations such as Aylesbury Vale Arts Council can assist in this encouragement. Additionally in some cases if the developer's scheme is particularly large or ambitious, they may wish to contribute funds from their overall capital budget to get an appropriately ambitious site-specific art programme with which they can promote their scheme.

The following recommendations have been tailored to Aylesbury Vale, from examination of current processes, internal consultation, and public opinion surveys. It sets out several steps that can be taken to increase the level of public art commissioning.

Public art in Aylesbury Vale is currently undervalued and underrepresented. It is therefore vital that the recommendations of this Strategy do not over promise and under deliver.

These recommendations are therefore designed to build up a solid base of art projects, and demonstrate best practice project management with a mind to educate the council and artists, and advocate for public art procurement becoming embedded into all development activities, and internal capital spend.

ii. Recommendation 2

Establish a Public Art Steering Group

To implement the commissioning process in Aylesbury Vale, it is imperative that the process is owned, adopted and utilised by all potential commissioners, both internal and external. It is therefore suggested that the council establish a Public Art Panel to take on this role.

The panel would be made up of appropriate senior officers from all of the major departments involved in the public art strategy, together with representatives of significant partner organisations from the public/private sector such as Aylesbury Vale Advantage and Aylesbury Vale Arts Council. The panel should also include a Council Member nominated from each relevant committee, in order to ensure that the political implications of the programme are properly considered.

It is envisaged that a Public Art Panel will have a central role, to champion delivery of the Aylesbury Vale Public Art Strategy and the application of the key principles of that Strategy throughout the district whilst ensuring the highest of design standards, creative development and consistency. Its aim is to seek to create conditions in the Vale which raise the standard of

public art as a contribution to the enhancement and animation of the physical environment and the social and economic life of the district.

The remit of the Panel will be to:

- Provide a forum in which stakeholders in public art in Aylesbury Vale may contribute to the generation, development and implementation of the public art strategy and activity.
- Review locally generated projects and budgets with a view to identifying their potential for public art projects.
- Identify at an early stage, potential projects and schemes which may have a public art dimension.
- Determine the route through which local communities may be involved in identified projects, and ensure that every opportunity for such involvement is provided.
- Ensure that the practice for commissioning is adhered to as outlined in this document.
- Ensure that public art practice in the district complies with council policy as a whole.
- Offer support and specialist advice on the commissioning process.
- Advise on potential sites and opportunities for art and provide practical support for effective follow-up action.
- Facilitate the work of artists and consultants engaged to direct and deliver the core arts programme.

The panel would meet to oversee and approve any public art programme over the coming 15 years, maintaining an overview of arts activities in Aylesbury Vale, and making sure that both practical and creative avenues are all accounted for.

Each public art project and its management agency will be required to go through an updating process with the panel. Updating them at key points in the commissioning of the art projects, most specifically after the initial design stage. Evaluation reports will also be addressed to this panel to make any adjustments in the commissioning process. However it is important to understand that the panel is not a selection group, and involvement in the selection of artists and schemes for individual developments is not recommended.

iii. Recommendation 3

Public art in the Theatre Development

Aylesbury Vale is to receive a new £35 million, 1,200-seat theatre, designed by the renowned RHWL Architects due for completion in Spring 2010. There are now plans for a public plaza in front of the theatre.

A programme of community art will be hosted at the theatre, supported by significant section 106 contributions already negotiated from major developments around the town.

Outside of the theatre it is important that this plaza provides a complementary performance space to the new theatre and plays host to both permanent and temporary art installations reflecting the towns theatre, performing and cultural history. It is also recommended that the possibility of a permanent art commission on this site be explored to provide an ambitious statement for the area.

Public and council alike all pointed to the need for more risk taking and statement making during consultation, and this site is perfectly placed at both the centre of Aylesbury town, and at the

centre of the future cultural hub of Aylesbury Vale. The theatre has been designed to reflect the geography of the Vale, and is cutting edge in its design and will be a high priority area with a great level of visibility.

An action like this will raise the profile of public art in Aylesbury Vale, whilst demonstrating to investors, developers and the public Aylesbury Vale's commitment to public art.

iv. Recommendation 4

Public Art Provision through Developer Contributions

The provision of quality visual arts and crafts as part of new developments can bring social, cultural, environmental, educational and economic benefits, both to the new development and the community at large. It can assist in adding local distinctiveness and creating a sense of place. As well as landmark works such as a sculpture, it may be an integrated or functional element of a development e.g. lighting, landscape, floor designs and signage.

Aylesbury Vale District Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions is to be reviewed over the coming 12-18 months in the light of the possible introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It is recommended that the department of Arts Development plus Leisure and Culture propose a percentage of this levy be earmarked for public art provision.

It is strongly recommended that planning processes for developer contributions for public art are discussed prior to the introduction of the CIL and a policy is adopted. Examples of working models of developer contributions are in Appendix 6.

Secured funds could be used by the developer for a public art scheme on their site, or placed in a pooled fund for council initiated public art projects across the district.

This could follow from the Milton Keynes tariff which allocates a proportion of infrastructure funds for each development to public art. This has ensured that Milton Keynes develops culturally alongside its population and physical growth. It has placed Milton Keynes at the forefront of public art practice and development in the UK.

The current Milton Keynes model in their growth areas demands an infrastructure payment of £18,500 per home, and £67 per square metre of commercial floor space. This contribution is then broken down into percentages for each of the different needs for that development, this can include:

- Schools
- Community centres
- Roads and transport
- Policing
- Open green areas
- Affordable housing
- Leisure and culture

This approach ensures that the cultural and social infrastructure develops along with the physical, and that Milton Keynes maintains its reputation as a centre of cultural and artistic activity.

AVDC is advised to look on public art as a tool for integration, social inclusion and place making. It is essential that public art not be disregarded as unimportant, and to recognise that the development of social infrastructure is as important as physical infrastructure needs.

It is also recommended that public art is included to ensure that through growth Aylesbury Vale retains its character, and attracts individuals to live there on the basis of its urban design and image rather than just as its position and current reputation as a commuter town.

Public art will serve to highlight and capitalise on the qualities that makes Aylesbury Vale unique, its landscape, open space, mixed and vibrant community, biodiversity and heritage.

v. Recommendation 5

Using public art effectively in Affordable Housing Schemes

Through conversation with the affordable housing unit in AVDC it was suggested that instead of a percent for art policy on these monies the department would aim to include a piece of public art in one affordable housing scheme a year. The implementation of this will be looked at in the forthcoming Supplementary Planning Documents for the Local Development Framework.

This contribution could then be allocated to a public art project in the chosen development on an annual basis

Public art in affordable housing has been demonstrated in helping the housing sector to increase resident involvement and contribute to the regeneration of declining communities.

'Participation in cultural activities can and does deliver a sense of belonging, trust and civic engagement [and] can not only lead to social regeneration but can be a catalyst for crime reduction and learning'

Culture at the heart of regeneration, DCMS 2004

vi. Recommendation 6

Cultural Olympiad Opportunities

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games are not just about sport. They will offer a unique opportunity for the people of Britain to engage with, and participate in, a major cultural celebration.

After the handover in Beijing in 2008, the UK has commenced its 'Cultural Olympiad', a four year programme of cultural activity to celebrate the Olympic spirit throughout the UK. This programme will showcase British talent and innovation reflecting the key themes of the 2012 games:

- Celebrating welcoming the world.
- Inspiring and involving young people
- Generating a positive legacy.

The Cultural Olympiad will also reflect and support a number of themes. It will:

- Bring together culture and sport
- Encourage Audiences to take part
- Animate and humanise public spaces
- Use culture and sport to raise the issue of environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing
- Honour and share the values of the Olympic and Paralympic games
- Ignite cutting edge collaborations and innovations between communities and the cultural sector
- Enhance learning, skills and personal development of young people by linking with education programmes

Aside from the opening and closing ceremonies, and major projects across the country there is the section of individual regional activity as part of the Accentuate programme with a specific focus on celebrating Aylesbury Vale's unique role in the birth and development of the Paralympic Games.

The organising committee want a programme to feature a mix of projects in which a range of communities take part. Large or small, they are looking for inspirational ideas from all sorts of people, ideas that are surprising and exciting- brand new projects inspired by the 2012 Games.

Successful projects will be awarded the 'Inspire Mark' which recognises that the project has been inspired by London 2012 and reflects the values of the Olympic and Paralympic movements.

Aylesbury Vale has a key opportunity. Stoke Mandeville Hospital was the spiritual home of the Paralympic games. AVDC has already initiated work through the Bucks Arts Partnership to develop pilot projects for this work . It is recommended that AVDC, supports the further development of the community and education participative arts programmes to be run in association with county and regional partners as a four year project leading up to the London 2012 Games.

This will raise the profile of culture in the Vale to a national audience, whilst also educating the community on its significance in this arena, and fostering a sense of pride in the heritage and worldwide significance of the Vale.

Further information can be found on the London 2012 website: www.london2012.com

vii. Recommendation 7

Vale Unified Visual Plan

A significant perceived weakness of Aylesbury Vale is its disparate nature, and residents commented frequently that those not living in the locality of the major population centre can feel isolated, unsupported and forgotten.

One option the council could consider is to undertake the commissioning of an element or elements to lend direct correlation between the villages of the Vale. Identifying the villages and towns as Aylesbury Vale villages and towns, and creating a sense of unified identity across the Vale.

This could create a kind of Aylesbury Vale 'brand' which will allow visitors and locals to identify their town or village as a part of Aylesbury Vale, and thus connected to the other settlements across the Vale. This will create a sense of bonding and will go some way to combat feelings of isolation and neglect.

This can be achieved in a number of ways including:

- Artist and community designed signage
- Artist input into street furniture: benches, railings, bollards, etc.
- Planting
- Smaller integrated landmarks: plaques/ wall based works

This could link to the initiatives promoted by Bucks CC, the Bernwood Project and Whaddon Chase, which celebrate the historic landscapes of the two areas.

viii Recommendation 8

Establish Best Practice Management Processes for Public Art

The core of a successful public art programme lies in the commissioning process, and many difficulties encountered in the public art process stems from inefficient project management, and ill-defined roles for procurement and management of public art.

A clear understanding of the rationale, the outputs, roles, responsibilities and methodology is vital to the success of a project. These are fundamental in the appointment of an artist seeking funding, community interaction and programme management.

AVDC is recommended to adopt the following processes for commissioning and project development, and to recommend that external agencies also follow the same route. This will ensure a continuity of management, and also ensure that the Arts Development officer is aware of what level each project is at from these clearly defined steps. It is recommended that commissioning agencies adopt this standard practice:

Artists

For the purposes of this Strategy the term artist will be used to describe any person or persons who are described as artists, designers and/or makers working in the visual arts, craft and

design disciplines. Those artists and craftspeople involved in different art forms and disciplines may also be involved in public art projects in order to broaden and enrich projects and increase the level of access and inclusion.

The most important aspect of working with an artist on any design, development or project is to write an effective and informative artist's brief. It is essential that said brief clearly outlines the scope of the proposed public art project whilst still leaving space for creative interpretation. There are several different ways of involving artists in the public realm.:

Commissioning Public Art Projects

This includes commissioned work from an initiative that desires an actual physical outcome. Such an outcome can come in the form of a permanent monument or installation, temporary installation or event, a one-off performance, or virtual experience. The list of public art commission outcomes is endless but should always involve artists connecting with the environment or subject matter in an engaging, thoughtful way, linking people with places.

This kind of commission should be site and person specific, responding to the site or area in which it is based and its heritage, and engaging with the people who will inhabit this space.

A well thought out and executed consultation, engagement and education programme will promote a sense of ownership with not only the artwork but the area also. It will allow people to connect with both familiar and unfamiliar sites fostering a sense of civic pride making for healthy and sustainable communities.

Artists' Collaborations in the Public Realm

Artist collaborations can take many forms, but in essence it is an artist, designer or craftsperson working with an individual or group which has a different skill set to themselves. It is the collaboration of these skills and expertise that can result in a better considered and more creative outcome.

Artists are, by their nature, excellent practical and creative problem solvers and there are many different types of collaboration that artists can undertake. Whether it be with planners in the council at master planning phases, with developers and designers at an urban design stage, within a design team, with architects or more domestic collaborations with teachers, scientists, institutions and the public.

The outcomes of these collaborations can be not only artworks but also exhibitions, plan designs, events and publications.

Artist Residency Schemes

This is most commonly where an artist is placed within a community or is hosted by an organisation or institution to undertake research and make works based around their environment and often an objective or theme which is set by the commissioning body. The host may offer the artist a space, or studio, in which to undertake work and this can be on a full or part-time basis.

The most common places to find offering artist residencies are schools and educational facilities, hospitals and churches who recognize the long term benefits of working in this way but

often can take place in more unusual places such as derelict buildings, condemned sites and parks and open spaces.

Working in this way allows the hosts, visitors and workforce to learn more about the creative process and art in general, whilst the artist gets to explore and push their work in new developmental directions.

Working with Artists

Artists' practice and output creatively are crucial to the cultural infrastructure of any community, and public art can stimulate this in a number of ways. Whether it be commissioning local artists, creating local employment or using local industry and skills in fabrication and installation.

A commitment to visual art is not just buying sculptures and monuments but also commissioning artists in the ways previously outlined, in schools, in site specific commissions, and in planning and other collaborations.

It is essential in the sourcing and contracting of artists to employ best practice in order to not only ensure a smooth project, but also to maintain the highest of design standards for Aylesbury Vale.

Artist Selection

A successful call for artists has enabled Aylesbury Vale Arts Council to produce a database of artists and makers in Aylesbury Vale which is regularly updated with new entries.

However it is important to keep the commissioning process as open as possible, therefore not just using the artists' database. There are several ways in which to select an artist for a public commission:

Open Submission

This can be international, national or regional; and can be following advertising which will enable any artist to register interest. The advertisement can be made through many channels including local press, artists' databases and societies, mailing lists, other cultural mailing lists (Buck Arts Partnership etc.), 'a-n magazine', arts hub, Arts Council England job mail out or national advertisement.

Artists would be invited to register their interest. They would then be sent the brief including any details of the site, the context, proposed themes for consideration (if applicable, budget, etc.) They should be asked to submit a statement of interest and a CV, up to 10 images of relevant/ past work by a pre-decided closing date. It should be noted that asking for design/ scheme ideas at this stage would be inappropriate.

A shortlist should then be drawn up and the selected artists asked to submit detailed design proposals, budget breakdowns and sometimes maquettes for an agreed fee to bring to interview. The final decision should be based on these submissions and the strength of the interview (more details on artists criteria can be found below).

The advantages of this approach are that it is great publicity for the commissioning body and their partner/s, and can give the project a high profile. This approach also opens up the field to artists that might have ordinarily not been considered, and provides an opportunity for younger or unknown artists. It is consistent also with equal opportunities practices.

Disadvantages include expense, time (as it is a highly administrative process) and that it occasionally does not always attract an appropriate artist.

Limited Competition

This involves a competition by invitation to a selected few artists who are recommended by expert sources. It requires careful thought about the kind of work required and the artist necessary to deliver it, so detailed research must be undertaken for the compilation of a long-list.

From this list a steering group will choose between three and five artists who will be paid to produce first stage designs proposals to present in an interview situation.

Advantages include that this is a more swift procedure, ensuring that work gets underway quicker than an open submission, and that a range of designs and schemes can be explored without a full commitment. However some artists are unwilling to enter a competitive situation.

Direct Invitation

Where artists are approached directly and are invited to undertake a commission, or this can be artists themselves initiating an idea. More established international artists prefer to operate this way and there are few extra costs unlike the previous two options. This allows the artist to be matched to the site or brief and allows for a closer relationship. This should be done via the quality control of the suggested internal Public Art Panel or carefully constructed Steering Group. Also it needs to be borne in mind that lack of consultation with direct commissioning has often resulted in the problems at a later stage of the process

Purchase of Artwork

This can be direct from the artist, studio or gallery or from an open or limited submission. Again the above caution needs to be applied.

Advertising the commission

The principal publication where commissions are advertised is 'a-n magazine', published monthly, with a wide circulation among practising artists. Advertisements are modestly priced and the copy date is usually the 8th of each month preceding publication. Every advert for an arts commission is also posted on their website. Local papers should also be used and, if the budget allows, a small advertisement in the Guardian (Monday). Use should be made of studio networks, artist-run organisations and membership organisations, all of which would be able to circulate information.

Appointment of Artists

Aylesbury Vale District Council normally appoints artists, or would expect to appoint artists through an open tendering process through the AVAC mailing list and local press, at which point a shortlist would be made and put out to public vote and/or steering group for final decision. This process encourages inclusion for both artists at all levels and the communities.

The steering group or commissioning panel should choose a proposal or artist using a criteria covering:

- Track Record – some experience of previous work in the public realm
- Skills – to enable the production of a high quality artwork
- Communication – an ability to communicate easily with different types of people
- Experience – working with architects, developers, and being involved in collaborative design
- Vision – an ability to envision artwork as an integral part of the design and structure of public and private buildings
- Finance – demonstrating an awareness for financial thresholds in public art projects
- Consultation – experience and understanding of undertaking different methods of consultation, and recognition of its importance
- Education – experience of running workshops for a variety of different groups of people

Artists' Brief

A well-structured and conceived artists' brief will increase the chances of a successful commission. When constructing the artists' brief it is important to:

- Be clear about the commission and what you hope to achieve through it.
- Consult widely with those people who will be affected by it, getting their opinions and views.
- Establish the ownership of the site or sites and whether planning permission will be needed, as any restrictions and permissions must be made clear to the artist from the first step.
- Consider any special requirements that will be required, and any advance preparation the site will need.
- Decide whether the project or artwork will be temporary or permanent.
- Set a realistic budget– including installation costs, related groundwork, landscaping and lighting, maintenance and a contingency sum,
- Set a reasonable timescale, with a contingency for slippage

You must clearly establish the role of the artist/artists. Will they be undertaking a residency, creating work on or off site, be part of a design team, etc.? It is advisable to assume a flexible approach to the ways in which an artist can approach a commission.

You must identify the selection process that will be undertaken, and detail those who will be involved. These people will be your steering group, and it is vital that you get all of the people in authority who will have to approve the design be involved from the outset. This group can include:

- Local authority
- The commissioner
- The funder

- Management team
- Users
- Community

It should not be an unmanageable number, and they must commit to be involved for the whole process. It can also be advantageous having the independent opinion of a public art consultant or artist.

The Brief:

A successful artists' brief should include the following elements:

- The aims and objectives of the commission
- Context of the site and the project, including maps, drawings, requirements, planning conditions, surveys, etc
- A description of the artist's role
- Details of the project team and their roles. This includes any specialist public art consultants, or specialist project management
- Details of the steering group members and their positions
- A description of the site or sites and its conditions (accessibility, impact, safety, financial, etc.)
- Details of any community participation required
- A timetable detailing the main project phases and when they will occur. Put any major dates in this section
- Budget
- Any permissions that are necessary
- Details of the selection process
- Artwork lifecycle requirement, and details of who will be responsible for maintenance
- Details of artist's copyright, and explanation of the ownership of the work
- Any required documentation
- Evaluation strategy
- Decommissioning policy

Payment for Artists

Adequate payment for artists is key in ensuring that the highest of design standards are met. The Arts Council England has published multiple guides regarding the payment of fees for artists and craftspeople. Due to government legislation they cannot advise on actual amounts to pay artists and craftspeople however there are guides available with guidance on this subject.

'a-n magazine' have published a comprehensive guide for paying artists which can be downloaded from their website: www.a-n.co.uk

Artists' Contracts

As with any professional endeavour, artists' contracts should be agreed and in place before any works take place. It is very important that the client and the artist have the chance to discuss and decide upon a mutually acceptable contract.

Detailed information on the legal and practical issues involved with the successful management process of public art commissions can be found on public art South West's website:
www.publicartonline.org.uk

However the basic arts contract should include the following:

- Timetable stages
- Definition of involved parties including names and addresses
- The responsibilities of the commissioner/ design team/ landowner (can include site preparation, planning consents and approvals)
- The delivery of work, installation and insurance requirements (inc. professional indemnity)
- Warranties and repairs
- Artists' fees and method of payments
- Ownership of the artwork
- Risk of loss or damage
- The maintenance agreement including health and safety surveys
- Review and decommissioning policies
- Copyright, reproduction rights, credits and moral rights
- Relocation policy
- Termination of agreement
- Disputes procedure
- The role of the consultant (if applicable)
- Schedule of works
- Confirmation of budget (construction budget if applicable) and the budget holder (if not the artist)

Contract information from publicartonline.org.uk

Public Art Project Budgeting

Although each project will have different elements, emphasis and needs, it is important however to have a skeleton breakdown at the beginning of most projects to assess their feasibility.

A guideline recommendation is that the following amounts are allocated to the following concerns:

Artist's fee for design, fabrication, installation and including a contingency	65%
Engagement	10%
Management - Project Management	15%
Maintenance	10%

However, when budgeting it is important to take the following considerations into mind:

- Advertising and selection costs
- Artist's design fees
- Exhibition costs (if a client wishes to exhibit designs and maquettes for comment or information)
- Artist's commission fee - this should be equivalent to other design professionals involved
- Materials and fabrication costs - the artist's fee and materials budget does not necessarily have to be specified by the client; it can be left to the artist to identify their fee and material costs within the whole budget
- Travelling and workshop expenses

- Insurance/ Public Liability costs
- Installation (site preparation, running electricity, water to site, landscaping, extra labour etc.)
- Transport and security costs
- Professional fees and legal costs
- Consultation costs
- Publicity, documentation and inauguration costs
- Maintenance costs
- VAT
- Contingency
- Evaluation costs
- Documentation

Community Consultation and Engagement

Community consultation is an important part of the commissioning and development of public art. In any project some form of community consultation or engagement is desirable as the commission should not exist as an isolated process. The site or proposed artwork should inform the consultation needed e.g. housing schemes will need a different type of consultation to a corporate commission, theatre or retail scheme.

Ideally consultation seeks input into a project, and not just approval once schemes and artworks have been decided upon, and it is important to see any public art consultation falling within Governmental requirement for community involvement. It is essential that any community involvement in the arts complies with Aylesbury Vale's 'Statement of Community Involvement'.

Consultation by its very nature leads to a wider sense of understanding of the project plus a strong sense of ownership amongst the consulted community. It can create a sense of pride in the surroundings, and boost appreciation of the locality. It also provides opportunities to local people, and develops local skills. Most importantly, though, it provides a means for the community to have greater control over their surroundings.

Through consultation with the public and with key council members, departments and stakeholders, one main issue is that of site specificity, and that any commissioned artwork should have its roots in the community and that community's residents. This firmly paints a case for community involvement in any public art commission.

There are many different ways of getting communities involved in the development of public art but all can be grouped under the following sub-headings:

Information dissemination

This can be a process of keeping communities and the artwork's 'audience' informed of the development of the artwork throughout the process of design, fabrication and delivery. This will allow the public to see how the public art is developing and how this is raising the design profile of the area 'this activity can also raise the profile of Aylesbury Vale as an exciting place to be.

This process of information dissemination can take place through several mediums including websites, local press, newsletters, parish and community centre notice-boards, exhibitions and promotional literature.

Involvement

Community involvement in art development and design can involve artists working directly or indirectly with communities. Direct participation can include:

- Involving the community directly in the concept and/or design and making of the work
- Creating educational workshops which are linked with the commission
- Involve them in identifying artists and/or sites which would benefit from public art thus informing the brief
- Inviting them to give opinions on various short or long-listed designs, allowing them to become involved with the final decision making process

Principles of Consultation

Consultation should be undertaken in some form for every public art commission. The following are a set of guidelines which will aid the commissioning body avoid potential problems and aid in good practice:

- Consultation should begin wherever possible with the artist's brief
- Involving stakeholders can be beneficial for early consultation
- Consultation should be about public input into projects, and not reactionary as a second thought
- Often it is impossible to consult everyone, try to look into the most appropriate groups even if consultation ends up on a smaller scale
- Activity often yields better results than meetings and discussions
- Think of appropriate places to carry out consultation activity, not everyone goes to council offices and community centres
- The commissioned artist may not be the best person to lead the consultation, and any proposed activity during the design stages should be clearly outlined in the artists' brief
- Consultation rarely means the public designing work, rather it should be a means to inform the process and design by the artist
- A variety of consultation techniques should be employed to fit the audience

Documentation and Evaluation

The method of evaluating the outcome of the project should be set out within the brief. The arts officer and/or the project manager should be required to produce a concise report at the completion of every project. This report should provide comment on each of the stages of the commissioning process outlined below. Attempts should also be made to gather comment from the wider community around the artwork and those involved in the commissioning process.

These evaluation reports should be used as a tool through which to monitor the effectiveness of project management processes throughout the district, and should modify those processes if necessary on the basis of the experience gained. Evaluation reports should be archived with the personnel responsible for public art procurement.

Maintenance

An issue approached in both public and internal consultation was that of maintenance of artworks, and the importance of having an appropriate and fully realised maintenance plan and budget to provide for the upkeep of any future public artworks.

It is therefore a central aim of this strategy to provide guidance in drawing up appropriate maintenance schedules for any future public art project.

As a general figure, it is recommended that in the initial budgeting stages that a minimum 10% of the overall figure for the art programme is allocated to maintenance. In addition to this, the issue of maintenance should be addressed by the commissioned artist at the earliest possible stage, in some cases at interview. Once it is known what the final artwork will be you can re-allocate the maintenance amount as appropriate sum. Artworks will vary considerably in their future maintenance costs (however it is advisable that the amount never be less than 10%).

The maintenance schedule should be drawn up in accordance to the local authorities decommissioning policy. This is usually between 15-25 years depending on the needs of the site and commissioners.

Public Art Management Process

Public art projects should be approached in three stages:

- Planning
- Scheme development
- Project delivery

STAGE 1: Planning

Establish your steering group

This group should be established at the inception of a project, and be made up of representatives from all of the scheme's key partners and stakeholders. The purpose of the steering group is to define the project, and to support it through to completion and hand-over. Examples of steering group members can include: architect, developer, planner, public art advisor, community/parish local council, artist/ arts specialist, member of the public, etc.

Develop the project outline

Within the steering group you should define the parameters of the project, and what you hope to achieve by it. You should also define what the project objectives are, this will assist in evaluation later on, and make sure you achieve all your goals. This document should be short and to the point.

STAGE 2: Scheme Development

Project Management

People/ organisations commissioning artwork for the first or second time would be advised to take professional advice. It is often the case that the commissioner's original concept can be enhanced through sharing ideas with an agency/agent. They may also be able to help with sources of funding. There are many regional agencies and freelance public art consultants qualified for this job. The Arts Council, Public Art South West or one of the many creative consultant databases online can provide assistance in finding such organisations.

Develop the Artist's Brief

The project outline will form the basis for the artist's brief. It is essential to clearly define the artist's role, the project objectives, the budget including artist's fees, schedule for delivery and the artist's selection criteria.

Artist's Recruitment and Contracting

Different programmes will need different recruitment processes in order to select the best possible artist for your scheme.

Engagement with People and Place

Artists should be expected to engage with the public and the place throughout the project to inform its outcomes. These engagement processes can include workshops, information sessions, participatory sessions with artists or talks and discussions. This activity need not be undertaken by the main artist, and can be carried out by other artists, possibly locally.

Scheme Design Development

This process should be undertaken post-engagement, in coordination with the steering group. The steering group should be presented the scheme designs at initial and detailed stages to ensure that the pre-determined objectives are being met.

STAGE 3: Delivery

Schedule of Works

The project manager, in coordination with the artist and steering group, should draw up a schedule of works for delivery, and timescales for various activities for the delivery of the project: Design, fabrication, installation, with timescales for each element. This will assist in monitoring the project in these stages.

Permissions

Some projects will require planning permission depending on their final design and location, and all will need consent from the landowner or custodian. The work also needs to be compliant with safety and legal requirements.

Fabrication

Fabrication should be to the highest of standards and undertaken by the artist or a certified professional in the field.

Installation

Depending on the artwork this can be undertaken by the artist, the developer or a contractor under instruction from the artist. Risk assessments must be completed for each stage of installation.

Unveiling

Some kind of ending ceremony is vital to inform the public and generate a sense of excitement about the artwork. This also will assist with public perception. Key stakeholders, those involved in any consultation or education activity, the local community, press and VIPs should be invited to this event.

Documentation

Documentation should be done at every stage of the project from design, consultation, educational activity, fabrication and installation through to unveiling. These images can be used in future as a part of a publication, for information sheets and general publicity in the future.

Handover

The steering group will determine when the artwork is ready for handover, and this is once they are satisfied that the artist has fulfilled all of the objectives, fulfilled the terms of his/her contract and that the budget is balanced. The evaluation should then be written, reviewing the project and making recommendations for the future.

Maintenance

A proportion of the budget should have been allocated to the on-going maintenance of works. The maintenance schedule should be agreed with the landowner or custodial body in advance in terms of long-term care and conservation. The responsibility for this should be handed over once the artwork is in place.

Leadership and Advocacy

The complexity of the backdrop to public art within any local authority is such that there is a need for not only coordination but also leadership and advocacy. Overall responsibility for public art must be allocated to only one department and roles clarified between departments.

Apart from this action at officer level, there is a need for leadership at a more senior member level. This will provide champions at a senior level who can not only advocate for public art, but also identify opportunities for public art at an early stage. It is recommended that these candidates are the chairs of the appropriate committees.

Financial Implications

The financial implications of the proposals made in this Strategy in revenue, managing and administering, and the capital costs of the artworks, are difficult to estimate at this stage.

Implementing the Strategy and public art in general may be funded in three main ways:

- Development agreements – on site provision and contributions towards off site public art
- Partnership and joint working with AVDC and others (including staff support, resources in kind, etc.)
- Externally raised funds and match funding

This Strategy recognises the constraints on local authorities to allocate funds for public art programmes. However it is vital that the authority becomes proactive in the development of programmes, utilising existing budgets where appropriate and securing new opportunities through implementations of various funding schemes such as:

- Community Training and Enabling (CTE), Housing Corporation
- National Lottery
- Arts Council, Grants for Arts
- Trusts and Foundations: Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Clore Duffield Foundation, WA Cadbury Trust, Wates Foundation, Ragdoll Foundation, Ernest Cook Trust. A full list of charitable foundations is available at www.acf.org.uk
- Business Donations and Sponsorship
- Architects' donations

ix. Recommendation 9

Provision of Training for Local Artists

As an outcome of internal and stakeholder consultation, and backed up in the recent Aylesbury Vale cultural services audit, the issue of artist training was mentioned by several, alongside the need for training for key council officers and councillors involved in the procurement process.

Following from the success of local artists working alongside the more established national artist, Steve Geliot, on the Hub project, resulting in two local artists having large-scale works commissioned in the area, it was felt that this practice should be encouraged across all projects.

AVDC is therefore advised to install an artists mentoring programme where ever possible alongside public art programmes.

Mentoring programmes should include:

- One to ones with the mentoring artist
- One to ones with the project manager for the commission
- Site visits during construction and installation
- Group meetings with other mentees
- Attending Steering Group meetings
- Presentation of work at the end of the project

Mentor Responsibilities

The mentoring artist will impart their knowledge, experience and skills to help the mentee develop to their skills

The mentor should:

- Comprehensively engage in the mentoring process through listening and reflection
- Ask questions of the mentee, provide guidance and critical appraisal
- Help the mentee to identify their goals for the programme
- Aid with the creation of the mentee's personal development plan
- Develop the context for the mentee to seek new approaches in their work
- Build the confidence of the mentee to look at new ways of working
- Give advice on how to obtain greater professionalism.
- Encourage the mentee to think laterally in applying artistic ideas to specific contexts and sites

Mentee Responsibilities

The programme should be individually tailored so that each mentee will have the opportunity to develop their skills and understanding within the working practice of public art. Each mentee should:

- Communicate what they hope to gain from the programme and manage these goals
- Seek feedback on the attainment of these goals
- After the initial stages, the mentee will take responsibility for managing the relationship with the mentor
- Ensure commitment and punctuality

Outcomes

Each mentee should produce a personal development plan during the mentoring course.

It is hoped that each artist will gain a level of confidence and understanding that allows the necessary progress to tender for future commissions and develop high quality projects. The programme should aim to provide artists with:

- A unique chance for professional development in response to advice from public art professionals
- The opportunity to build a portfolio of work to show personal development and progression
- Experience of the tendering process, attracting funding and developing site specific works
- Understanding of the design to construction, and logistical process
- The environment to improve presentation skills
- New relationships with artists and arts organisations working in the region

Representing the ideal chance for personal artistic development, successful applicants will shadow artists on a one to one basis gaining first hand experience of the processes that surround public art and the development of site-specific works through to construction and installation of them.

Local artists should be recruited through an open application process through the various artists' mailing lists and through local arts networks.

Funding

Funding for artists mentoring programmes should primarily be sought from within the individual public art programmes. External specific funding applications specifically for the mentoring element should always be applied for as an adjunct to each public art programme.

x. Recommendation 10

Public Art Audit and Public Relations

It is therefore recommended that AVDC updates an audit of current public art provision, and collect information as to the origins and processes of each project. This should also include all current arts activities across the Vale: open studios, art shows, events, festivals and public projects.

This information should then be collated and placed in a high priority place on a page on the AVDC website, linked to various arts organisations networks and galleries in the area. In order to collate this information the council should liaise with all local town and parish councils in the area, as well as local arts organisations, providers and networks.

A media strategy for upcoming public art development needs to be evolved. The issue of transparency is key to the success of projects in the public eye. The press therefore have an intrinsic role to play in the contemporary cultural agenda and in the processes of public participation and information, education and debate.

There are several methods to assist in the development of effective media strategy including:

- Circulation of regular updates and information to the press on the various arts and cultural activities in AV to which information on various public art developments will be added. This will add to the idea that public art is seen as part of the wider cultural agenda, and not just added on as an afterthought.
- Involve the press or someone affiliated with the press, in artist selection, or on selection committees. This can serve to demystify the process for the locals. This action should be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Maximise opportunities for local artists to get involved in the commissioning process, either as artists or artist mentoring schemes.
- Involvement with communities through either connected activity, public voting or exhibitions of possible schemes.

xi. Recommendation 11

Clarifying Ownership and Responsibilities for Existing Works of Art

Maintenance

Artworks in public places act as a symbol of the community in which they are located, and reflect the residents, the workers and the council. It can bring visual quality, interest and identity to places that might otherwise not have them. As with any other feature in the public realm the artwork must be cared for into the long-term future.

A robust maintenance plan is needed to avoid any unexpected or unforeseen costs. It is therefore essential that all future public art has built within it a firm maintenance and decommissioning plan. The following issues must all be taken into account:

Ownership

Identification of those parties who will own the artwork after handover is an essential part of the process, as these parties will hold responsibility for the long-term maintenance of the artwork.

This should be determined within the commissioning process dependant on the type of work it is (for example street furniture could be highways).

Technical Specification

The structure and manufacture of the artwork should be a fundamental part of the commissioning process, and a risk assessment should be undertaken for all artwork. This should ensure suitability for its purpose and inform the technical specification.

Purpose and risks should be outlined in the artists brief with the commissioning process such that it ensures that artist proposals address and meet the needs of the area.

Maintenance Schedules

The artist, to address the issue of long term care, will be required to draw up a draft maintenance plan, and work with the relevant authorities to develop a detailed formal maintenance plan.

This issue should be addressed by both artist and commissioner at the earliest stage and the plan should address material specifications and finishes, structural drawings, schedules with timings and statements from whatever body is undertaking the long term care. It is important that the relevant council maintenance department is consulted throughout the commissioning process.

Finance

Maintenance costs should be minimised by care taken at the commissioning stage. It will be necessary for maintenance costs to be taken from the main commissioning budget, however in many cases it may be possible to take maintenance payments from existing budgets, for

example, artist designed railings may be funded from the highways budget, as the authority would have to care for existent railings, irrespective of artists input or design.

To this end a sum, on average, of 10% of the overall budget should be earmarked for long term care to ensure a long lifespan.

Decommissioning guidance

Artworks will not last forever, and sometimes changes in the circumstances of a site or user may necessitate the decommissioning or relocation of artworks. An artwork should be designed to last a certain amount of time appropriate to the location and nature of the artwork and other objects in its environment.

It is recommended that each artwork is revisited each generation (for example 15-25 years) to ensure that the work is still appropriate to the setting.

This fact should be clearly outlined in every artist's brief, making them aware of the minimum amount of time the artwork has to last, and that their work may be subject to decommissioning after this amount of time.

14. ACTION PLAN

a. Action Plan

Further to this draft being approved the aims and subsequent recommendations should be supported by the following action plan:

Aim	Recommendation	Action	Timescale	Budget
Seek to secure public art contributions through the planning process	Creating Mechanisms for delivery			
	Develop a robust internal procedure within the council and planning			
	Develop Planning CPD days and provide information packs and seminars on the benefits of public art			
	Encourage debate at senior Council level			
	Formalise a mechanism for directing developer contributions to public art			
	Establish a link with new Housing Association Developments and possible match funding			

	Ensure this is communicated throughout the council			
	Integrate public art within the unified visual plan/ LDF for Aylesbury Vale			
Maximise the benefits that public art can bring to Communities	Create opportunities for public art projects within affordable housing schemes			
	Gather information and celebrate existing works of art in the public realm			
Use public art in the development of public buildings and spaces	Use public art in the development of the new theatre			
	Explore opportunities for public art to enhance the Cultural Olympiad programme			
	Use public art in the enhancement and interpretation of parks, open spaces and the wider countryside			
Encourage the development of local artists	Create opportunities and training initiatives for local artists			
Improve and enhance public art commissioning process and develop good practice procedures	Establish a public art Advisory group			
	Establish management procedures and guidelines			
	Clarify ownership and responsibilities of existing works.			

b. Considerations for Implementation

As many of the actions above will require further work there will be a direct impact on the capacity and resources of Aylesbury Vale District Council's Arts Development unit.

This risk of not creating more capacity may lead to these actions not being delivered and future opportunity being lost.

Here follows 3 options for creating that capacity;

Option	Action	Pros/ cons	How funded	Cost
1	A freelancer on an ad-hoc contract to "react" to current projects and support planning, as and when required.	Pro: freelance specialty and new perspective on Aylesbury. Cons: This approach is not necessarily satisfactory in that it is reactive and does not offer potential for strategic approach and a formalised framework.	Arts Service 5% Planning (S106) Some direct developer.	£300 per day
2	To re-contract a Public Art Agency on a flat fee to deliver a set programme of work over a set timescale.	Pros: Production of formal procedures and will fit within regional and national framework. Can work cost effectively solely when needed. Involves existing arts team re. CPD and good working knowledge of internal and external partners Cons: Not sit within the district council as an organisation – opportunity and ownership/ buy in from other departments	Arts Service budget?	
3	To create a part-time temporary post of public art Officer. For maximum efficiency and delivery, 2 days per week to make up the Arts Officer post to essentially a full time role.	Pros: Will fit in to strategic requirements, project delivery, addresses the gap and supports the Arts Service and Planning on a formal basis. (Will eventually become self-funding through financial support through S106) Cons. May be financially restrictive initially	Arts Service Planning (S106) Area Committees	2 days per week (split 50/50 between Arts & Planning) £10,000 (£25,000 Pro Rata)

15. Appendixes

APPENDIX 1 REFERENCES

1. Angel of the North, Gateshead Council: www.gateshead.gov.uk/angel/
2. Spitalfields public art Scheme: www.spitalfields.co.uk/about_art.php
3. Underscan, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer:
www.threecitiescreate.org.uk/_EMDA_Cultural_Quarters/
4. Fourth Plinth, www.london.gov.uk/fourthplinth/
5. Bristol Harbourside, <http://www.bristol-harbourside.co.uk/events.asp>
6. **Sheffield Peace Gardens**
7. <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/out--about/city-centre/city-centre-public-spaces/the-peace-gardens>
8. Blue Carpet, Thomas Heatherwick Studio, www.heatherwick.com
9. **Aylesbury Vale Context and Demographics**
10. All statistics originate from: Aylesbury Vale Local Plan, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Adopted 2004
11. All development information originated from Aylesbury Vale Advantage
www.aylesburyvaleadvantage.co.uk, Aylesbury Vale Vibe www.aylesburyvibe.info
12. Aylesbury Vale Local Plan, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Adopted 2004
13. Aylesbury Town Centre Study – Terence O'Rourke (1995)
14. Aylesbury Vale Cultural Strategy, Aylesbury Vale District Council Housing Health and Leisure Department, 2002
15. Aylesbury Vale Community Plan, Local Strategic Partnership for Aylesbury Vale, 2006
16. Aylesbury Vale Core Strategy, Carter Jonas, 2007
17. Aylesbury Vale Local Development Framework, Aylesbury Vale District Council, under construction
18. Aylesbury Vale Green Spaces Plan, Aylesbury Vale District Council, 2005
19. Buckingham Town Policy, Buckingham Town Council
20. 'A Life Worth Living' Buckinghamshire Cultural Strategy, Buckinghamshire County Council, 2003
21. Aylesbury Vale Corporate Plan, Aylesbury Vale District Council, 2008
22. Planning Policy Guidance, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2006
23. 'Living Places, Cleaner, Safer, Greener', Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2002
24. **Arts Council England, (South East)** www.artscouncil.org.uk
25. South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA), www.seeda.co.uk
26. Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), <http://www.culture.gov.uk/>
27. **Culture South East (CSE)**, www.culturesoutheast.org.uk
28. Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), www.cabe.org.uk
29. Aylesbury Vale Civic Centre, www.aylesburycivic.org
30. Queens Park Arts Centre, www.qpc.org
31. Sustrans, www.sustrans.org.uk
32. Aylesbury Vale Advantage, www.aylesburyvaleadvantage.co.uk

APPENDIX 2

Case Studies of Successful Public Art in Affordable Housing Projects:

These case studies have been chosen to represent a reasonably wide range of diverse projects, including participatory activities, partnerships with local colleges and arts organisations; some delivering physical improvements through artworks, and some community cohesion and consultation during big build and regeneration programmes.

Neighbourhood Watching St Peters Estate, Bethnal Green

Budget: £14,000

To combat falling attendance at residents' meetings mirroring the overall decline of the neighbourhood, Michael Needham proposed that the courtyard be used as a special space for a community screening.

The project transformed the space into a modern amphitheatre, with residents viewing the films from balconies and doorways.

The films screened were uniquely related to the setting, the building and the diversity and interests of the community.

An important element was to involve at least 4 local artists working with the community, producing works from community consultation and involvement. Works produced ranged from video portraits of residents to animation advertising local businesses, drawn and voiced by local children.

The project was a huge success, garnering national attention in 'The Guardian' and 'Vertigo' magazine. 'Neighbourhood Watching' is now a company in its own right. This project has led to a number of local projects in neighbouring blocks, including a mobile bingo project and youth video workshops.

As a direct result of the project, people on the estate communicate with each other more, and have a greater involvement in the residents' association, helping to bring people together in a time of change and uncertainty. It has taught the community new skills, and the committee project management.

Rekendyke Art Trail

South Tyneside

Budget: £18,750

Supported by the SRB Challenge fund, the group, Residents Reviving Rekendyke, proposed running a project that would bring people together, enhance the environment and create a more positive identity. A steering group was formed, representing residents and housing association staff, who developed a proposal to design, create and install the Art Trail.

Residents were involved in selecting a shortlist of artists for the project, from which Malcolm Smith was selected. Smith ran a series of workshops to involve the community in design of the artworks thinking about the area and its history, and enthusiasm was so high that 12 artworks were produced instead of the proposed 4.

This artwork has positively rebranded the area significantly, raised civic pride, and raised its profile through press coverage. The project has led to a number of 'spin-off' projects around the area.

It has led to better community cohesion and communication, and interest in the area itself. There is an increased community presence at meetings, and the community is now more responsive to new ideas.

Pembroke Street Arts Programme

Devonport, Plymouth

Budget: £83,900

Residents of this area found savings in the budget for renewal to fund an arts programme in Pembroke Street. A community arts consultant put together a proposal for weaving artwork into the very fabric of the estate, ensuring a coherent overall design.

Two artists were commissioned to lead the community consultation process in partnership with Plymouth College of Art. A wide section of the community found themselves engaged in discussion with architects, landscape architects, arts officers, design students and professional artists about every aspect of the refurbishment programme. The history of Davenport was chosen as an underpinning theme.

The project created unique metalwork designs for the railings and fencing for each of the 13 blocks of the estate. Including distinctive gates to the car parks, school and utility areas, carved stone works, unusual signs mosaics and other artworks around the site. Residents played a leading role in the design of the art elements and other parts of the refurbishment programme.

Local artists, residents and students have gained employment and new skills from the process, and it has made a huge difference to the community. The estate is now brighter and more cheerful, and there is less vandalism (with the Estate Board now spending next to nothing on vandalism). It has renewed community spirit, boosted confidence in the participants and in the community.

The project directly led to £900,000 more funding for further programmes.

APPENDIX 3
Example of the Street Survey form



Aylesbury Vale (AV) public art Strategy

Public Survey

In your opinion how important is public art in terms of:

	Very Important	Important	Don't know	Not important	Not at all important
CIVIC PRIDE: Helping people feel proud of living in Aylesbury Vale					
WAYFINDING: Finding your way around Aylesbury Vale					
URBAN DESIGN: Creating well-designed spaces					
EXCITEMENT: Generating excitement about being in Aylesbury Vale					
LEISURE AND RELAXATION: Providing places for peace and inspiration					
EDUCATION: Helping the community learn more about art & culture					
PLACE-MAKING: Providing attractive places to meet in Aylesbury Vale					
IMAGE: Giving Aylesbury Vale a positive image					

Q1 What public art or public art projects do you know of in Aylesbury Vale and across the UK?

Aylesbury (Vale Park, Axis Sculpture etc.):

Nationally (sculptures, community projects, digital projects etc.):

Q2 Do you think there is sufficient public art in Aylesbury Vale?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Please give reasons:

Q3 How would you rate the quality of urban design in Aylesbury Vale
(compared to other similar sized districts)

Q4 What do you think future public art projects should say about Aylesbury Vale?
e.g. In terms of history, geography, identity, community, growth, future, etc.

Q5 What kind of public art would you like to see in the future?

Q6 In what locations around the district would you like to see public art?

Additional Comments:

Gender: ☐ M ☐ F Age: ☐ >19 ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60<

Do you:

☐ Live in AV ☐ Work in AV ☐ Live and Work in AV ☐ Visiting AV

Postcode:

(This is to show that we have consulted widely – will NOT be passed on to any other parties)

Please return this questionnaire by email to: katherine.corr@artpoint-trust.org.uk

By post to: Katherine Corr
Artpoint Trust
Oxford
OX1 1QT

By fax to: 01865 248 899

APPENDIX 4

List of Individuals Consulted for the Public Art Strategy.

Andrew Grant	Chief Executive Officer	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr. John Cartwright	Leader of the Council	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Matt Partridge	Head of Leisure & Cultural Services	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Ian Barham	Community Development Team Manager	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Dan Clucas	Arts Officer	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Lesley Davies	Green Spaces Team Manager	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Andy Kirkham	Planning	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Helen Spence	Planning	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Talia Sulman	Town Centre Manager	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Katie Galvin	Community Safety Manager	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Julia Hedger	Housing Development Manager	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Lyndsey Elliot	Arts Officer	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr. David Thompson	Cabinet Member for Leisure	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr. Pam Pierce	Cabinet Member for Community Matters	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr. Ray Ghent	Cllr. Quarrendon Ward	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr. Peter Cooper	Cllr. Wingrave Ward	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Ruth Page	Cultural Development Officer	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr. Stuchbury		Buckingham Town Council
Cllr. Mordue		Buckingham Town Council
Paul Acton	Principal Urban Designer	Aylesbury Town Council
Jonathon Bellars	Landscape Architect	Aylesbury Town Council
Margaret Wagstaffe	Town Clerk	Aylesbury Town Council
Rod Moulding	Clerk	Great Horwood Parish Council
Clerk 2	Clerk	Worminghall Parish Council
Parish Councils		Bucks Association of Parish Councils
Richard Harrington	Managing Director	Aylesbury Vale Advantage
Robert Secret	Chairman	Aylesbury Vale Arts Council
Tlws Johnson		Visual Arts Panel
Annabel Bennet	Acting Director	Queens Park Arts Centre
Nick Fordy		Jacobs Architects
Vicky Hope Walker	Coordinator	Bucks Art Partnership
Robert Kilvington	Artist	Axis
Steve Geliot	Lead Artist	Transport Hub public art Project
Laura Boswell	Artist	Transport Hub public art Project
Stu McLellan	Community Artist	Vale Park public art Project
Roger King		Aylesbury Society

APPENDIX 5

Aylesbury Vale District Council Public Art Strategy Public Opinion Diagnosis

Introduction

This public opinion survey was undertaken by Artpoint in partnership with the writing of Aylesbury Vale District Council's public art Strategy. Its aim is to quantify public opinion of public art and culture in the Vale to inform in part the recommendations and actions suggested in the strategy.

Overall this research aims to understand the public opinion of current public art provision, and public aspirations for future public art programmes and exercises. It aims to measure the community of Aylesbury Vale's engagement as an audience with Public art, their knowledge of public art locally and nationally, and their visions for the future of Aylesbury Vale.

Methodology

The aim of the survey was not only to measure people's opinion of public art, but also to build a profile of the audience for public art in Aylesbury Vale. The survey was prepared in collaboration with the Department for Leisure and Culture, and Artpoint Trust.

The survey contains questions to gauge public perception of public art, but also contained questions recording the demographics of each of those consulted plus their home postcode.

The survey contained quantitative questions concerning general perceptions of public art, and perceived importance. It also contained more open-ended questions allowing the interviewers to collect individual opinions and ideas on the subjects raised.

The interviewers all had professional knowledge of public art which aided them in interpreting the answers of the respondents and image sheets were provided, but were only used as a last resort or if the interviewee needed to be shown examples of differing art projects to elicit a response to a question. However the example sheet was a last resort visual aid and the interviewee's first responses were recorded without this material.

The respondents were not prompted, and no preconceived perception of public art was offered to them, their responses were at all times based on their own opinion of public art.

Locations:

Surveys were taken in several locations around the district. A key component of Aylesbury Vale District Councils current strategy and policy is based around inclusion across the Vale and not just Aylesbury Town. The consultation schedule was planned according to size of population centre, the following suitable locations were chosen:

Location:		Number Interviewed:	
Aylesbury Town:	Bus Terminal/near transport hub	49	
	Market Square		38
	Kingsbury Square	15	
	High Street	13	
Buckingham:	Town Centre	55	
Wendover:	Town Centre	34	
TOTAL:		204	

This schedule covers the main population centres and the main growth areas of Aylesbury Vale. Those consulted included residents, workforce and visitors of Aylesbury Vale.

The survey period ran over three days between March and April 2008.

Appendix 6

Examples of policies: developer contributions for public art

Example 1 Wakefield

Policy Background

The Council has adopted public art commissioning guidelines to ensure there is a co-ordinated and consistent approach to the commissioning, design and maintenance of public art throughout the district. The provision of public art improves and enhances the quality of the environment, particularly in town and city centre developments and within major developments. Well designed, high quality public art has a significant impact on the public's perception and experience of the public realm

The policy justification is set out in Policies R2, and E64 of the Wakefield UDP. Policy E64 sets out the appropriate cases when the Council will require the provision of works of art in public places and as part of major development proposals. In addition, the LDF and the Wakefield City Centre Streetstyle Design Guide both recognise the importance of public art in the renaissance of Wakefield.

Threshold for Obligations

Provision of public art will be encouraged within the following types of development:

- Residential development containing 15 or more dwellings or on sites of greater than 0.5 ha in size
- Commercial development of over 1000m² of industrial, retail, hotel or leisure uses
- Significant public building and community facilities

Developers will be required to comply with the Council's Public Art Commissioning Guidelines. The planning authority will encourage developers to enter into pre-application discussion in relation to public art provision, therefore allowing public art proposals to be submitted upfront with any planning application. Their implementation will be secured through a planning obligation.

Basis of Calculation

The Wakefield City Centre Streetstyle Design Guide indicates that as a general rule the budget for public art commissions within a project should be between 1% and 2% of the total construction costs. This figure is used as a starting point and ensures that there is always a minimum expenditure on public art within a scheme and its value and scale is directly related to the size of the project. Contributions will also be expected towards the long term maintenance of any commissions, this is usually set at 5% of the commissioning budget or £500, whichever is the larger amount.

Example 2 Cherwell DC

Provision for Public Art in Cherwell

It is Cherwell District Council's policy to encourage developers to make suitable provision for Public Art as part of any new development and to include Public Art in any of its own schemes. This policy shall apply to all forms of development and include all proposals by public authorities.

In order to achieve this Cherwell District Council will:

Work to promote and encourage the commissioning of permanent and temporary works by artists for publicly accessible sites;

Work to promote and encourage commissions for new developments and/or the enhancement of existing locations;

Encourage the development of Public Art via developer contributions through Section 106 agreements that are fair and reasonable in light of their development proposals and broadly in line with the Percent for Art principal advocated by Arts Council England. Percent for Art is a mechanism which allocates a percentage of the capital development costs, normally a one percent contribution, based on the total development value of a proposal for an agreed art provision; and

Offer support to developers in selecting, shortlisting and contracting an artist/s, project delivery and consultation and community engagement as part of the process via the Arts & Tourism Unit.

The Council will seek a contribution for art provision in the following ways:

1. **On sites of less than 25 dwellings**, developers will explore artistic additions to the development by seeking to employ local artists and crafts people in the construction of features within the site such as signage, gates and door furniture.
2. **Medium schemes** (25 dwellings or more or 100 sq m footprint commercial) will contribute towards Public Art proposals, medium sized schemes (25-500 dwellings) will include public art as an integral part of the proposal and
3. **Large schemes** (500 + dwellings or 1000 sq m footprint commercial) will also include a public artist as part of the design team.
4. Provision of Public Art will also be required in relation to **public buildings**, schools and sports centres. On other developments or mixed use developments, Public Art will be required on sites of 0.5ha or more.

The provision of Public Art should be an integral part of a development scheme, not an after thought. The Council wishes, therefore, to work in partnership with developers, architects, landscape architects and designers, including artists and arts officers, at an early stage of the development process to identify and work up possibilities for art provision. The artists, where appropriate, should work in consultation with the people who will be affected by the site and the installation and facilitate a sense of meaningful contribution.

Agreeing fees

This will be negotiated in 2 stages, the cost of the provision of the art and the management fee as required.

£150-£200 per dwelling plus a management fee¹ for Arts Development Unit's time (will be negotiated based on expected time needed for each project) or the appointment of a lead artist. This be negotiated on a project by project basis and will vary based on the size of the development and division of responsibilities.

A commuted sum for maintenance will be required where the ownership of artwork is to pass to the Council, this will be costed at 7% of the value of the work of art and will include the costs associated with monitoring, repairs and maintenance over a 12 year period.

On commercial, leisure or other non-residential developments the contribution will be based on £10 per sq ft or 1% of the capital cost of the development.

The total contribution will take into account management fees, interview and design costs, artist's fees, fabrication costs, installation, marketing and maintenance. These costs can be negotiated according to how much the developer can contribute towards costs in kind. Costs in kind will need to be defined in the legal agreement.

Example 3 West Lothian

Contributions to Public Art

This SPG was approved in June 2006 and updated in November 2006. Developers of larger housing and retail schemes, and certain other significant developments are required to provide public art initiatives, or funding towards such schemes, as part of their development in order to enhance the new environments being created.

This SPG applies to residential developments of 10 or more units and retail and certain other developments. The rates of contribution are based upon the following criterion:-

For a residential development of 10 – 49 units = £150 per unit is required.

For more than 50 units = £250 per unit is required.

For retail floor space with a floor area of 500 - 1499sqm, £5 per sqm gross is required (with a maximum contribution of £4995).

For retail floor space with a floor area of 1500 - 4999sqm, £10 per sqm gross is required.

Where the retail floor area is 5000sqm or more, £15 per sqm gross is required.

The SPG also contains examples of where on site provision by the developer will be preferred e.g. within a *Core Development Area* (CDA) identified in the Finalised West Lothian Local Plan 2005.

Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities in England Annual return for the year ended 31 March 2017

Every smaller authority in England with an annual turnover of £6.5 million or less must complete an annual return at the end of each financial year in accordance with proper practices summarising its activities. In this annual return the term 'smaller authority'* includes a Parish Meeting, a Parish Council, a Town Council and an Internal Drainage Board.

The annual return on pages 2 to 4 is made up of three sections:

- Sections 1 and 2 are completed by the smaller authority. **Smaller authorities must approve Section 1 before Section 2.**
- Section 3 is completed by the external auditor.

In addition, the **internal audit report** is completed by the smaller authority's internal audit provider.

Each smaller authority must approve Section 1 and Section 2 in order and in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Completing your annual return

Guidance notes, including a completion checklist, are provided on page 6 and at relevant points in the annual return.

Complete all highlighted sections. Do not leave any highlighted box blank. Incomplete or incorrect returns require additional external auditor work and may incur additional costs.

Send the annual return, together with the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2017, an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements, **your notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights** and any additional information requested, to your external auditor by the due date.

Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed for their work. Unless requested, do not send any original financial records to the external auditor.

Once the external auditor has completed their work, certified annual returns will be returned to the smaller authority for publication and public display of Sections 1, 2 and 3. You must publish and display the annual return, including the external auditor's report, by 30 September 2017.

It should not be necessary for you to contact the external auditor for guidance.

More guidance on completing this annual return is available in the Practitioners' Guide that can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.slcc.co.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Section 1 – Annual governance statement 2016/17

We acknowledge as the members of:

Enter name of
smaller authority here:

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2017, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this smaller authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	Yes		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	Yes		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this smaller authority to conduct its business or on its finances.	Yes		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with proper practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Yes		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this smaller authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	Yes		considered the financial and other risks it faces and has dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	Yes		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Yes		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this smaller authority and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.	Yes		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	NA
			NA
			has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

This annual governance statement is approved by this smaller authority on:

and recorded as minute reference:

Signed by Chair at meeting where approval is given:

Clerk:

*Note: Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response. Describe how this smaller authority will address the weaknesses identified.

Section 2 – Accounting statements 2016/17 for

Enter name of
smaller authority here:

	Year ending		Notes and guidance				
	31 March 2016 £	31 March 2017 £					
1. Balances brought forward	499,798	301,432	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.				
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	565,193	671,567	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs, rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.				
3. (+) Total other receipts	162,567	211,911	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.				
4. (-) Staff costs	-274,383	-300,521	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and employment expenses.				
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	-4,702	-4,702	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the smaller authority's borrowings (if any).				
6. (-) All other payments	-647,041	-591,167	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).				
7. (=) Balances carried forward	301,432	288,520	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6)				
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	288,386	195,754	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.				
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	2,556,426	2,661,382	This cell shows the value of all the property the authority owns. It is made up of its fixed assets and long-term investments.				
10. Total borrowings	60,621	58,624	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).				
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<table><tr><th>Yes</th><th>No</th></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr></table>		Yes	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Council acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.
Yes	No						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2017 the accounting statements in this annual return present fairly the financial position of this smaller authority and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer:

Date

I confirm that these accounting statements were approved by this smaller authority on:

and recorded as minute reference:

Signed by Chair at meeting where approval is given:

Section 3 – External auditor report and certificate

In respect of:

Enter name of
smaller authority here:

1. Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This smaller authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The smaller authority prepares an annual return in accordance with proper practices which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2017; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review the annual return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and does not provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2. 2016/17 External auditor report

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of the annual return, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the smaller authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3. 2016/17 External auditor certificate

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of the annual return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2017.

* We do not certify completion because:

External auditor signature

External auditor name

Date

Note: The NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on 2016/17 accounts in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

Annual internal audit report 2016/17 to

Enter name of
smaller authority here:

Buckingham Town Council

This smaller authority's internal audit, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ended 31 March 2017.

Internal audit has been carried out in accordance with this smaller authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this smaller authority.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose only one of the following		
	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been kept properly throughout the year.	✓		
B. This smaller authority met its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This smaller authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this smaller authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		

K. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this smaller authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed)

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

SJ Pollard for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

[Signature]

Date

7/6/2017

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, internal audit must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Guidance notes on completing the 2016/17 annual return

1. You must apply proper practices for preparing this annual return. Proper practices are found in the Practitioners' Guide* which is updated from time to time and contains everything you should need to prepare successfully for your financial year-end and the subsequent work by the auditor. NALC, SLCC and ADA have helplines if you want to talk through any problem you encounter.
2. Make sure that your annual return is complete (i.e. no empty highlighted boxes), and is properly signed and dated. Avoid making amendments to the completed return. Any amendments must be approved by the smaller authority, properly initialled and explanation provided. Annual returns containing unexplained or unapproved amendments may be returned and incur additional costs.
3. **Smaller authorities must approve Section 1 on page 2 before approving Section 2 on page 3.**
4. Use the checklist provided below. Use a second pair of eyes, perhaps a Councillor or Board Member, to review the annual return for completeness and accuracy before sending it to the external auditor.
5. Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically asked for. Doing so is not helpful. However, you must tell the external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer or Chair.
6. Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation which you send to your external auditor with the annual return covers all your bank accounts. If your smaller authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree your bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (Section 2 on page 3). You must provide an explanation for any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the Practitioners' Guide*.
7. Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on page 3. Do not just send in a copy of your detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include a complete numerical and narrative analysis to support your explanation. There are a number of examples provided in the Practitioners' Guide* to assist you.
8. If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or you do not fully explain variances, this may incur additional costs for which the auditor will make a charge.
9. **You must inform the external auditor of the date set for the commencement of the period for the exercise of public rights.**
10. Make sure that your accounting statements add up and the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2016) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2017).
11. Do not complete Section 3 which is reserved for the external auditor.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Done?
All sections	All highlighted boxes have been completed?	
	All additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , has been provided for the external auditor?	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation is provided?	
Section 2	Smaller authority approval of the accounting statements is confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	
	An explanation of significant variations from last year to this year is provided?	
	Bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2017 agreed to Box 8?	
	An explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 is provided?	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – all disclosures made if a Council is a sole managing trustee? NB: Do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	
Internal Audit report	All highlighted boxes completed by internal audit and explanations provided?	

*Note: The Practitioners' Guide is available from your local NALC, SLCC or ADA representatives or from www.nalc.gov.uk or www.slcc.co.uk or www.ada.org.uk

Buckingham Town Council

Annual Return information

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
1 Balances brought forward	504,843	499,798	301,432
2 (+) Annual Precept	527,259	565,193	671,567
3 (+) Total another receipts	165,041	162,567	211,911
4 (-) Staff costs	-259,249	-274,383	-300,521
5 (-) Loan interest/ capital repayments	-4,702	-4,702	-4,702
6 (-) Total other payments	-433,394	-647,041	-591,167
7 (=) Balances carried forward	499,798	301,432	288,520
8 Total cash & Investments	488,836	288,386	195,754
9 Total Fixed Assets	2,376,673	2,556,426	2,661,382
10 Total Borrowings	63,454	60,621	58,624
Reconciliation of Boxes 7 & 8			
Box 7			
Plus creditors	301,432	288,520	
Less: Debtors (incl VAT)	15,833	58,555	
Box 8			
	-28,879	-151,321	
	288,386		195,754

16/06/2017

Buckinghamshire County Council

Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

Implementing the town and parish
devolved services offer



Buckinghamshire County Council

Workshop Feedback; What would a successful devolution programme look like?

- Clear unchanging definition of the service being devolved
- No additional funding required to run / Concerns that Parishes /towns will be blamed following caps on taxes rather than a unitary
- Clear communication for queries
- Flexibility on funding models
- The new council to provide sufficient technical expertise to advise parishes through the process
- Toolkits provided for each service
- Parishes able to input to specs
- Sustainable –staff and volunteers
- Clear understanding within the new Council as to services that are devolved to ensure no confusion.
- Greater shared learning /working
- A more sensible website with polices /key contacts
- A longer consultation time for parishes

Buckinghamshire County Council

From the Business Case

For parish and town councils

- Opportunities for more devolved accountability, resources and choice

The devolution offer proposal:

Menu of assets and services

Flexible to different needs and ambitions

Transparent formula

Tailored capacity building support

Countywide policies and standards

To
include:

- Commissioned services
- Devolution of statutory services with budgets
- Transfer of local assets

Buckinghamshire County Council

The Devolution Offer proposal

Key considerations:

- Evidence of the benefits to the local community
- Cost neutral overall for Buckinghamshire Council
- Enable more local decision making and budget setting

Buckinghamshire County Council

Potential County Council assets to devolve

- Off street car parks / income from them
- Community library premises
- Youth centres (currently on peppercorn rents)
- Other buildings

Buckinghamshire County Council

Potential County services to devolve

- The current devolved services; offer to continue? Budget to continue?
- Minor road and footpath repairs
- Flytipping enforcement
- Recycling management
- Home care and meals on wheels
- Health and wellbeing services
- Off street car park income
- On street car park income
- Parking enforcement
- Community transport
- Community safety/ neighbourhood watch
- Footpath lighting
- Road closures for special events
- Events Management
- Traffic management (i.e. for litter-picking)
- Dropped kerb licensing
- Gully cleaning
- Tree management (crowning)
- School crossing patrollers
- Other services as requested
- Traffic Regulation Orders, e.g. for parking schemes and speed limit reductions

Buckinghamshire County Council

Potential District assets to transfer

- Play areas
- Sports grounds and pavilions
- Local Parks and open spaces
- Public toilets
- Allotments
- Community Centres
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Town / parish council offices
- Theatres
- Leisure centres

Buckinghamshire County Council

Potential District services to devolve

- Grasscutting and open space maintenance
- Flytipping clearance
- Street cleaning
- Abandoned vehicles
- Off street car parks
- Community safety
- Dog control and fouling
- Management of common land
- Leisure Centre management
- Event and pub licensing
- Table licenses
- PSPO management

Buckinghamshire County Council

Financial Methodology; Principles

- Cost neutral excluding setup and handover costs
- Additional initial investment in the **New Council's** project management and setup costs for **towns and parishes**
- Note Parish Futures on hold but model available
- Case by case negotiation, taking account of assets, costs of each service, and income potential (e.g. car parks)
- Also accounting for reduction of demand e.g. complaints and call centre
- New unitary council to take account of ongoing cost of audit of service provision
- Each service to provide best estimate of cost on parish by parish basis, starting with the pilot councils
- Each commissioner to review end of contract dates, and commissions that may be able to be let to individual parishes and or clusters of parishes

Buckinghamshire County Council

Financial Methodology; Process

- Case by case negotiation, taking account of assets, costs of each service, and income potential (e.g. car parks)
- Also accounting for reduction of demand e.g. complaints and call centre
- Each service to provide best estimate of cost on parish by parish basis, starting with the pilot councils
- Each commissioner to review end of contract dates, and commissions that may be able to be let to individual parishes and or clusters of parishes
- New Council to publish a list of all assets held, with an offer to all local councils to submit a bid to take ownership of any of them, with a deadline for proposals.

Buckinghamshire County Council

Issues for consideration

- High Wycombe
- Special expenses (Aylesbury, West Wycombe, High Wycombe)
- One off opportunity for local councils to raise their precept on the first day of the new unitary council

Buckinghamshire County Council

Timescale

- Pilots to begin April 19 or April 20?
 - Need to have clarity on district budgets and issues
 - Experience is that takes a long time
 - Need to get right first time
 - Parishes have a long decision making process
- Remainder to begin over 4 year period
 - Allows for detailed negotiations with each council

