


Developing a Plan for Sustainable Service Provision in the Rural Community of Billingshurst





Sustainable Communities

Source CPRE

Sustainable Communities are places where:

- ❑ People want to Live and Work, now and in the future
 - ❑ They meet the Diverse needs of Existing and Future Residents.
 - ❑ Are sensitive to their Environment and Contribute to a High Quality of Life
 - ❑ They are Safe and Inclusive
 - ❑ Well Planned, Built and Run
 - ❑ Offer Equality of Opportunity and Good Services for all
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A Question to be asked! SMALL MARKET TOWN or a LARGE VILLAGE?

There is no agreed definition! The OED says:

- A Village is “Smaller than a Town”
- A Town is “Larger than a Village”

My own conurbation: Billingshurst in West Sussex

- Current population c 7500
 - Current proposed Developments will increase this to around c 12000 (and still more availability of development land so What is the limit? 15000/20000)
 - Billingshurst is a Rural Community and using the catchment area of the Secondary School as a criteria, it has 12 surrounding Communities
 - So how is our Community Partnership addressing the question of Sustainability to make Billingshurst a “Strategic Hub” for these Communities
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- **Billingshurst Community Partnership commissioned a Research Study of Billingshurst and its Surrounding Rural Hinterland**
 - **The Study was funded by South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and Horsham District Community Partnership**
 - **The Study has both Local and, Regional Strategic Objectives**



Local Objectives

- Document current **Service Provision** in Billingshurst and its Hinterland, and investigate how this meets the needs of the local Community; taking account of Constraints and the ways Choices are influenced by necessity and/or preference
 - Establish the **Relationship between Services available in Billingshurst and the Rural areas that make up Billingshurst's Hinterland**, and those services and facilities provided in Billingshurst
 - Investigate the **Skills required** in order to make the Community of Billingshurst and its Hinterland Sustainable
 - Assess the **Opportunities presented by various Local Strategies** and Programmes of Work (e.g. Local Area Agreements) for Current and Future Services Provision
 - Provide a **Context in which Proposals can be made to Enhance and Maintain the Vibrancy of Billingshurst and the Surrounding Villages, and meet Local needs**
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Regional and Strategic Objectives

- Use the Billingshurst research to determine whether a 'Model for Sustainable Rural Communities' for looking at Service Demand and Provision can be formulated.
 - In conjunction with key actions in the Regional Economic Strategy this might be used to help inform the delivery of SEEDA's Small Rural Towns Programme and the new Rural Access to Services Programme (RASP).
 - Establish and explore those elements that contribute to a Market Town acting both as a Service Centre and 'Rural Capital' to its surrounding Hinterland.
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Comments from a paper by Trevor Cherrett “The Future is Rural Too”

- Few LDFs go beyond a Conventional Package of Simplistic Solutions
- They have a Rigid Settlement Hierarchy
- Tight Constraints on Development
- Strong support for Land Based Rural Economy
- Little reference to Parish Plans and Village Design Statements
- Little commitment to Community Engagement

(A challenge to a community such as ours in developing our strategy)

SOME CHALLENGES

- ◆ A detailed Understanding of how Local Communities work in terms of Employment, Housing Needs and Travel (to name a few)
- ◆ New Life Style Choices (working from Home)
- ◆ Generate Solutions not respond to Problems
- ◆ Carbon Emission is more related to Social Economic Demographics and Life Style than Location per se
- ◆ Weigh the impact of Carbon Emissions against Economic well-being and Community Cohesion rather than “the Distance to Jobs and Services”
- ◆ Better Analysis of the part Rural Communities play in providing Resources
- ◆ The part Rural Communities can play in Settlement Planning when Housing and Employment Growth runs out of “Brown Field” availability



Sustainable communities 1

Sustainable communities are ones which provide for the main needs of their residents locally, or through good Public Transport links.

In terms of service provision they are defined as having:

- Well-performing Local Schools, Further and Higher Education Institutions, and other opportunities for Lifelong Learning
 - High quality Local Health Care and Social Services, integrated where possible with other services
 - High quality services for Families and Children
 - A good range of Affordable Public, Community, Voluntary and Private Services which are Accessible to the Whole Community
 - Opportunities for Cultural, Leisure, Community, Sport and other activities, including Activities for Children and Young People
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Sustainable Communities 2

- ❑ User-friendly Public and Green Spaces with Facilities for everyone including Children and Older people
 - ❑ Sufficient Range, Diversity, Affordability and Accessibility of Housing within a Balanced Housing Market
 - ❑ A wide range of Jobs and Training Opportunities
 - ❑ Access to Jobs, Key Services and Facilities by Public Transport, Walking and Cycling
 - ❑ An appropriate level of Local Parking Facilities in line with local plans to Manage Road Traffic Demand.
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Sustainable Services

For individual Services to be Sustainable the following are necessary or desired. The service needs:

- To be Financially Viable
 - Delivery to be Managed and Staffed Effectively, by People who have the Right Skills
 - To address Local Needs and Demands
 - To adapt to Meet Needs as they Change
 - To be Accessible to Target Users, with appropriate Public and Community Transport Links in place wherever possible
 - Service Providers need to be Innovative to anticipate and overcome Challenges and Opportunities
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Billingshurst's Service Strengths

Billingshurst provides the services of a small Rural or Market Town.

Its key service strengths include:

- ❑ Education Provision (Excellent Secondary School)
 - ❑ Services for Young People and Families (Child Care Centre)
 - ❑ Quality Community Space
 - ❑ Excellent Sports Facilities. (38 hectare Sports and Leisure Complex and a Swimming Pool)
 - ❑ A good Library
 - ❑ Local Waste Recycling facilities for the surrounding area.
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Billingshurst's Weakness

Its key **Service** weakness:

- Is the depth and range of Retail Provision
 - Which puts it at a disadvantage with Competing Centres and other small Rural Towns in the area
 - Hence its scope is limited to function as a Large Village serving an essentially very local catchment area rather than the 'Market Town'
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Changes that would prompt use, or more frequent use, of Billingshurst for services

(Source: A telephone survey of 300 people)

- Nothing 25%
- Easier Parking 32%
- Better Shopping 31%
- More Restaurants/Cafes/Pubs 8%
- Public Transport 4%

Percentage of Service Users who access services in Billingshurst

- More than 70% Waste Recycling, Library and Information services
- 60-69%, Training & Education Classes, Restaurants, Pubs and Cafes
- 50-59% Post office, Banks
- 40-49% Doctor, Social Clubs and Activities, Activities for Children, Sports and Fitness Activities
- 30-39% Hairdresser, Car Repair, Social Activities for Older People, Childcare
- 20-29% Dentist, Business Services



The Way Forward

5 Strategic Projects:

- “Shop Local” Campaign
- Publicity and Marketing
- Partnership Shop
- Retail Support and Training
- Parking and Transport

(That’s our Challenge –
and a Whole New Story!)
