



Caterham Health Check

29 September 2006

KEY ISSUE

The process of a town 'Healthcheck' is outlined: an update on 'A Better Caterham', the healthcheck underway in Caterham will be given at the committee meeting.

The Healthcheck is a community-led initiative which focuses on the issues of concern by setting up a town partnership involving the key interests in the town and surrounding area. This process is being supported by both Surrey County Council and Tandridge District Council.

SUMMARY

Caterham town has for sometime been the focus for local authorities and other stakeholders sharing a commitment to address issues of concern. Caterham is also one of 12 towns in Surrey which meet SEEDA's criteria for inclusion in the 'Small Rural Towns Programme', a seven year funding programme to support towns as a focus for jobs, key services and other activities for residents and businesses.

A condition for accessing the funding is that the town must have completed a 'Healthcheck'. This identifies a town's strengths and weaknesses and results in a local plan of action, including specific projects. It covers the whole town and its surrounding areas and enables local people to look at a range of issues that affect their quality of life. Resource of £5,000 was pledged from Surrey County Council and Tandridge District Council, as well as officer support and the project started early in 2005. The progress of the specific work in Caterham will be shared with members in the Local Committee in more detail by the community volunteers.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

The committee is asked to

- (i) Note the initiatives in progress and plans for the future
- (ii) Identify with partners any barriers to successful delivery of these initiatives
- (iii) Consider specific actions which the Local Committee can take to encourage and support successful delivery and outcomes with partners
- (iv) Agree that the Local Committee continues to monitor and support this work

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1 Background

- 1.1 Caterham town has for sometime been the focus for local authorities and other stakeholders sharing a concern to address issues of town centre vibrancy, social and community priorities and transport and 'street scene' issues.
- 1.2 Caterham is one of 12 towns in Surrey which meet SEEDA's criteria for inclusion in the 'Small Rural Towns Programme', a seven year funding programme to support towns as a focus for jobs, key services and other activities for residents and businesses.
- 1.3 A condition for accessing the funding is that the town must have completed a 'Healthcheck' which identifies a town's strengths and weaknesses and results in a local plan of action. It covers the whole town and its surrounding areas and enables local people to look at a range of issues that affect their quality of life.

2 The process

- 2.1 A town partnership is set up with community volunteers, representing many of the interests in the town and surrounding area. Worksheets are completed to create a 'snapshot' of the town focusing on four areas covering environment, economy, social and community issues, transport and accessibility.
- 2.2 The views of the community are sought and issues are then identified and prioritised and a 'vision' is developed. This process can take around a year. The resulting action plan is a community vision for the area, which enables funding bids to be made and offers a focus for key organisations in improving and developing the town.

3 Funding opportunities

- 3.1 To bid for SEEDA funding, actions from the plan need to secure 50% match-funding, this funding alone can amount to around £40,000-£50,000.
- 3.2 Eligibility criteria includes projects focusing on SEEDA economic outputs and a demonstration of the benefits to the town. There must also be evidence of an inclusive partnership and a completed 'Healthcheck'.
- 3.3 Examples of SEEDA economic outputs have included creation of new jobs, recycling of brownfield sites, learning opportunities created or new businesses set up.
- 3.4 The process can also lead to bids to other organisations to support the community actions in the plan; it demonstrates a robust basis on which to develop improvements for the area in the four strands of the environment, economy, social and community issues, transport and accessibility.

Benefits of a Healthcheck process

- 3.5 The Healthcheck process is a proven one that gathers community issues in a structured way, underpinning national and local government community and planning strategies.

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- 3.6 Although it provides access to channels of funding which could include the SEEDA small rural towns programme as well as other sources, it also encourages communities to solve community-identified issues themselves, thus harnessing neighbourhood enthusiasm and commitment, often delivered through the creation of an efficient, effective town partnership.

LEAD OFFICER: Lynne Martin, Area Director

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01737 773694
