

MADT Activity Update; Marlborough Area Board: 21st June, 2011

The Development Trust’s main focus since October 2010 has been to work solidly on fulfilling the MaVCAP commission to prepare a new Marlborough Area Plan. There are 6 phases- **Phase 1** is complete (**Review and Audit the existing 2004 MCAP**) and a copy of this report is attached to the Agenda. **Phase 2 (Public Consultation)** is in full flow and the Trust has been collecting feedback from members of the public, voluntary organisations, businesses, business groups and Parish Councils.

Although information collection is focussed on the completion of surveys at the dedicated website www.marlborougharea.org under 9 separate themes, the Trust recognises that web based involvement is not accessible to all, so has organised workshops for clusters of parishes at St John’s School, twice at Aldbourne Memorial Hall and also at the Kennet Valley Hall. Although the quality of input at these events has been engaging, the low number of attendees has been surprising. There is a further opportunity for people in the area to contribute their views at an event to be held in the Town Hall in Marlborough in July.

The intention is to collate all the responses from the consultation into a Draft Marlborough Area Plan (MAP) for September of this year, which in turn will go public for a further opportunity for everyone to contribute. Given the enormous significance the Localism Bill will have for all of us in rural communities, it is important that the MAP reflects the priorities our community area wants to see focussed on by the local authority in the future.

Whilst our primary focus has been on the Marlborough Area Plan, MADT has initiated a number of other projects principally aimed at supporting the local economy. This development programme over the next 12 months includes the following areas:

1. **Building Business Awareness:** setting up new Directory Services as part of www.marlborougharea.org; these Services will allow any Marlborough Area organisation to have an on-line presence. Individual ‘Directories’ are being developed under various topics such as: *Local Business; Local Groups & Societies; Visitor Attractions; Places to Stay; Places to Eat; Meeting Facilities.*
2. Monitoring of **Broadband Performance** in the Area. Working with an external network performance company, MADT is now undertaking a monitoring programme to determine the real performance of the broadband services we receive. We are seeking as many volunteers as possible to take part in this programme: individuals at home, businesses etc., i.e. anyone who uses broadband in the Area.
3. Investigating options for deploying a **Community WiFi** system in Marlborough. An initial scoping study is being undertaken to canvas views from interested parties, identify technical options that would allow a very flexible deployment approach, conduct preliminary discussion with suppliers to identify possibilities and report on a recommended way forward with costing/funding options.

We hope all MAB partners will be keen to support these projects.

Martin Cook
Chairman
Marlborough Area Development Trust