

Medium Term Financial Plan Budget

Housing, Homelessness & Regulatory Services Portfolio

Budget Scrutiny



Agenda

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- 2. Portfolio Priorities
- 3. Revenue Budget 2021/22
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- 5. Revenue Budget Savings since April 2020
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- 10. Fees and Charges
- 11. Capital Forecast Qtr. 2 2021/22
- 12. Current Capital Programme 2022-26
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 - ii. Chilterns Crematorium Capital Programme
 - iii. Value for Money Benchmarking

Overview of the Portfolio

Cabinet Members: Nick Naylor, Mark Winn (Deputy Cabinet Member, focussing on Homelessness)

Service Director for Neighbourhoods (inc. Licensing Cemeteries & Crematoria): Martin Dickman

Licensing, Cemeteries & Crematoria

- Licensing teams ensure that taxi providers, gambling licenses, alcohol and entertainment premises in Buckinghamshire are appropriately licensed. The Licensing team cover scrap metal, taxi licensing, personal licenses, gambling licenses, licensed animal establishments and licensing and entertainment premises.
- The new Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy for Buckinghamshire, having been adopted by Council in February 2021, will be launched in September this year. Work is underway to develop new Licensing and Gambling Act policies for adoption later on this financial year.
- There are two Committee's for licensing matters: the Statutory Licensing Committee which considers issues under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005; and the non-statutory Licensing Committee which deals with all other regulatory licensing policy matters such as street trading, fee setting, private hire and hackney carriage licensing.
- Crematoria services are provided at both the Chilterns Crematorium, Amersham and the Bierton Crematorium, Aylesbury. In addition, the team manage a number of other cemeteries and memorial gardens across Buckinghamshire:
- Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens, Denham
- Parkside Cemetery, Hedgerley
- Holtspur Cemetery, Beaconsfield
- Shepherds Lane Cemetery, Beaconsfield
- High Wycombe Cemetery
- Great Missenden Cemetery





Unauthorised Encampments

• The Enforcement team deals with gypsy and traveller service (GTS), unauthorised encampments (and fly-tipping, held in a different portfolio). The team balances the welfare needs of the travellers and the rights and freedom of the settled community as well as those of landowners that are affected by any unauthorised encampments.

Overview of the Portfolio

Service Director for Housing, Homelessness & Regulatory Services: Nigel Dicker

Environmental Health

- The Environmental Health service works to help ensure that Buckinghamshire is a safe and healthy place to live and work in, minimising impacts on the environment & supporting businesses to ensure compliance with the law. Our vision is to provide a trusted & approachable service for local communities, businesses & visitors, ensuring Bucks is a safe place to work, live in & visit. The team monitors food safety (including hygiene ratings), regulates health and safety in many business premises, works with the Public Health team, ensures compliance in privately rented residential accommodation and acts against statutory nuisance.
- Recently, Environmental Health teams have been central in providing a flexible response to the pandemic and Covid activities remain a primary focus of the team. From December 2020, new COVID19 'marshals' offered guidance and support to local residents about Coronavirus rules and staying safe during the ongoing pandemic. The marshals were brought in to support Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers and provide more detailed additional help to assist Buckinghamshire businesses. Joint working and visits with TVP also took place, often out of hours.



- Teams carried out spot checks in businesses such as supermarkets, convenience stores and premises providing close contact services such as hairdressing. Some visits were undertaken in partnership with the Health & Safety Executive. Teams are now responding to a high number of enquiries concerning organised public events which were originally planned for earlier in the summer.
- Implementation of transformation work in the Environmental Health service has been under way since May 2021, and new structures are in place, with many new posts appointed to. The service is now moving away from the models delivered by the former district councils to a single county wide service.



142

of these sites achieved Inspection Compliance for 2021

Sites which require environmental permits to conduct business in Buckinghamshire











30th June 2021

Housing & Homelessness

 The Housing & Homelessness Service operates a waiting list and choice based lettings system in Bucks, and works in partnership with Registered Providers and the Third Sector to provide interventions and support to relieve and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. The service also delivers disabled facilities grants. There are currently around 5,000 households on the Bucks Home Choice system, with varying degrees of priority, according to individual circumstances.

Overview of the Portfolio

Trading Standards

Trading Standards operate jointly between Buckinghamshire and Surrey and tackles unfair trading practices, scams, rogue traders and serious organised crime. The service seeks to maintain a fair-trading environment and provides a level playing field for local businesses while improving health and wellbeing of people and communities. The team work with organisations such as the National Food Crime Unit, Thames Valley Police and Office for Product and Safety Standards. Trading Standards also offer training for individuals and businesses to protect from and prevent scams, alongside a number of other initiatives.

Registrars & Coroners

- Registration services cover births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships. We have
 Register Offices in Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Beaconsfield, Amersham and
 Buckingham. As well as four ceremony rooms within Register Offices, our
 registration service licenses other venues in Buckinghamshire to hold ceremonies
 with over 80 venues currently licensed. Having been significantly affected by COVID,
 the registration service has recovered well and birth and death registrations are
 now operating as usual.
- The service also conducts Citizenship ceremonies the final step in the process for people who have been successful in gaining British citizenship. Following enablement's put in place by the Home Office, registrars have been running virtual citizenship ceremonies to ensure citizens can receive their citizenship while remaining safe.
- The Coroner's service is based in Beaconsfield Old Town. The Coroner is a post appointed to by the Council but the Coroner is in fact an independent judicial officer. The Coroner's service investigates deaths reported to it, making whatever enquiries are necessary to establish the cause of a death. Investigation processes can include ordering a post-mortem examination, obtaining witness statements and medical records, or holding an inquest.





1,885 Ceremonies planned for 2021/22



4,612

Births Registered in 2020/21



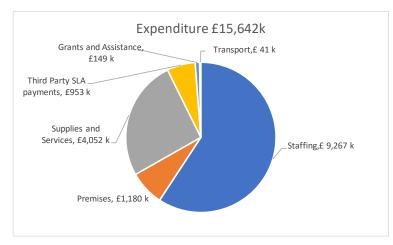
3,817 Deaths Registered in 2020/21

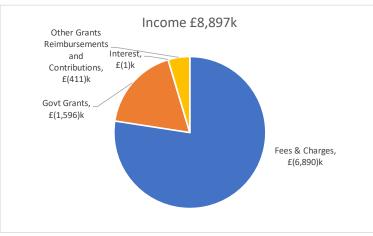
Portfolio Priorities

- Identify surplus public sector land and actively develop this for housing that is affordable
- Require new private developments to include affordable housing for local people and key workers
- Maintain virtual elimination of rough sleeping across Buckinghamshire through an integrated public health and wellbeing approach
- Continue to address housing need by working with partners and stakeholders
- Work with private residential residents to address issues such as debt or personal concerns which risk them becoming homeless
- Introduce a new countywide 'Homelessness Action Team' to lead our work
- Development and implementation of key licensing policies
- Delivery of high quality regulatory services for residents and businesses in Buckinghamshire
- Continue investment in the Council's crematoria and cemeteries to maintain service quality and ensure financial sustainability (includes delivery of the cremator replacement project at Chilterns crematoria)
- Development and implementation of Gypsy & Traveller unauthorised encampments policy
- Increase the number of primary authority partnerships registered with Trading Standards

Revenue Budget 2021-22

The charts and tables below show the current revenue budget for the portfolio, split into different service areas, income and expenditure. For a more detailed breakdown, see Appendix 1 on slide 19.





	2021-22					
	Income £000	Expense £000	Net Budget			
Homelessness	(1,919)	3,724	1,806			
Housing	(687)	2,516	1,829			
Homelessness & Housing TOTAL	(2,606)	6,241	3,635			
Licencing	(1,612)	1,257	(355)			
Cemeteries & Crematoria	(3,329)	2,522	(807)			
Licencing, Cemeteries & Crem TOTAL	(4,942)	3,779	(1,163)			
Coroner		854	854			
Environmental Health	(123)	2,484	2,361			
Registrars & Celebratory Services	(1,226)	1,373	146			
Trading Standards		911	911			
Regulatory Services TOTAL	(1,350)	5,622	4,272			
GRAND TOTAL	(8,897)	15,642	6,744			

Revenue Budget 2021-22 – Quarter 2 Forecast

		•		
	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in
				Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure	15,800	18,700	2,900	4,400
Income	(8,900)	(11,500)	(2,600)	(4,300)
Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Ser	6,900	7,200	300	100

Budget £6.9m, Forecast £7.2m, Var +£0.3m

- £0.1m of pressure on Coroners' service costs due to COVID (this will now be an ongoing cost, included as a *growth item in the MTFP)*
- £0.1m of pressure in Licensing due to COVID-related shortfall on premises income streams (this is expected to recover post-pandemic).
- £0.1m of other pressures in Trading Standards due to COVID-related income loss and unmet income targets on HMO license fees (COVID income loss expected to recover next year; HMO license fee loss to be addressed through fee review)
- The large variance and change in forecast on income (£2.6m more income than budgeted, and the increase by £4.3m since the Qtr 1 report) reflects 2 changes in underlying forecast: (1) Homelessness Government Grant income is now included 'gross', whereas Qtr1 only included part-year grants (2) Temporary Accommodation expenditure and corresponding Housing Benefit Income forecasts have been reviewed and increased to reflect the current estimated position for the year. Temporary Accommodation demand and costs remains a key financial risk for this portfolio, as we await to see if the end of the eviction moratorium and furlough impacts on Temporary Accommodation needs. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

Revenue Budget - savings made since April 2020

The 21-22 budget set out in the previous slide incorporates the following savings which have been made since the Unitary vesting day in April 2020:

Actions and Savings in 2020/21 to 2021/22	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Better Buckinghamshire Unitary Savings		
Neighbourhood Services - Crematoria	0	(233)
Housing & Environmental Health Service Review - staffing savings	0	(200)
TOTAL SAVINGS MADE	-	(433)

Revenue Budget – Proposed Changes

The table below details the proposed budget changes – split into increased income, growth areas, and savings proposals. All changes are cumulative, to be compared to the 2021-22 base budget.

Portfolio Area	Type of Change	Description of Change	Change 2022-23 £000's	Change 2023-24 £000's	Change 2024-25 £000's	
	Increased Income	Bridge Court Temporary Accommodation unit - additional rental income	(150)	(150)	(150)	
Housing &	Growth	Homelessness Temporary Accommodation medium-term impact of COVID risk-cover	100	100	100	
Homelessness		Environmental Health Efficiency Savings	-	-	(200)	
	Savings	Housing Service Efficiency Savings	1	-	(120)	
		Trading Standards contract retender savings	1	(45)	(45)	
	TOTAL CHANGE		(50)	(95)	(415)	
	Savings	Licensing - Software application licenses & review of fees and charges and minimum increase by RPI	(5)	(10)	(15)	
Licencing,	Increased Income	Review of Cemeteries' and Crematoria fees and charges	(86)	(156)	(232)	
Crematoria and Cemetories	Growth	Cemeteries' and Crematoria IT and Contract Cleaning pressures	93	103	108	
	TOTAL CHANGE	<u> </u>	2	(63)	(139)	
	Increased Income	Recovery of Registrars income post-COVID-19	(104)	(274)	(262)	
Regulatory		Additional income from Increase in Registrar's Fees - RPI & uplift	(50)	(50)	(50)	
Services	Growth	Coroners Mortuary Services Contract Price Rise				
	Savings	Savings from Review of Registrar's model			(50)	
	TOTAL CHANGE		(24)	(194)	(232)	
GRAND TOTAL			(72)	(352)	(786)	

 of which:

 Total Savings
 88
 48
 (322)

 Total Growth
 230
 230
 230

 Total Increased Income
 (390)
 (630)
 10
 (694)

Proposed Revenue Budget 2022-2025

The table below shows what the Revenue budget will be after the proposed budget changes.

	2021-22				2022-23		2023-24	2024-25
				Income	Expense	Net	Net	Net
	Income £000	Expense £000	Net Budget	£000	£000	Budget	Budget	Budget
Homelessness	(1,919)	3,724	1,806	(2,069)	3,824	1,756	1,756	1,756
Housing	(687)	2,516	1,829	(737)	2,516	1,779	1,734	1,364
Homelessness & Housing TOTAL	(2,606)	6,241	3,635	(2,806)	6,341	3,535	3,490	3,120
		_						
Licencing	(1,612)	1,257	(355)	(1,617)	1,257	(360)	(365)	(370)
Cemeteries & Crematoria	(3,329)	2,522	(807)	(3,322)	2,522	(800)	(860)	(931)
Licencing, Cemeteries & Crem TOTAL	(4,942)	3,779	(1,163)	(4,940)	3,779	(1,161)	(1,226)	(1,302)
		_						
Coroner		854	854		984	984	984	984
Environmental Health	(123)	2,484	2,361	(123)	2,484	2,361	2,361	2,361
Registrars & Celebratory Services	(1,226)	1,373	146	(1,330)	1,373	42	(128)	(116)
Trading Standards		911	911		911	911	911	911
Regulatory Services TOTAL	(1,350)	5,622	4,272	(1,454)	5,752	4,298	4,128	4,140
GRAND TOTAL	(8,897)	15,642	6,744	(9,199)	15,872	6,672	6,392	5,958
Change in budget compared to baseline				(302)	230	(72)	(352)	(786)
as %				3%	1%	-1%	-5%	-12%

Challenges, Risks and Opportunities

Temporary Accommodation Budget Risks – Temporary accommodation is a risk for many authorities at the moment, and will be an increased budget risk for us next year because:

- Uncertainty on whether Temporary Accommodation requests will increase COVID evictions moratorium recently lifted, and we have had some additional grant from Govt to help with rent arrears for this year only. Unclear what impact on future years will be yet.
- Uncertainty on the level of Govt grant which will be available next year (the past 2 years have seen increased grant levels in response to COVID, but grant announcements for next year will not happen until later in the year); we currently rely on the Homelessness Prevention Grant to subsidise TA expenditure but cannot necessarily bank on this ongoing.
- Move to universal credit system reduces our ability to offset TA-related Housing Benefit overpayment debts in the wider Revs and Bens finances

However, it is difficult to speculate and estimate how much the impact of this could be. As a placeholder, we have added £100k of growth. We are carrying an in-year budget risk on this in 20-21 and keeping close watch.

We also still need to harmonise the approach and methodology for homelessness costs part of Housing Service Transformation, which will require re-basing the homelessness budget, as the current budgets are still set as per legacy authority, with the main risk being around Aylesbury who did not have a base budget for homelessness costs and would instead rely on grant funding to fund the shortfall between temporary accommodation and housing benefit income (Wycombe and Chiltern/South Bucks had both re-based their budgets pre-Unitary, and included a base budget provision for Temporary Accommodation funded from LA funds).

Efficiency Savings challenge- efficiency savings from staffing reductions in Environmental Health & Housing will be reliant on the successful redesign and implementation of systems and processes via the continuous improvement.

Double Running Costs for Saunderton Lodge & Desborough Road. There is likely to be a need to keep Saunderton Lodge open simultaneously with the new Desborough Road site, to facilitate handover and transfer. The current budget for temporary accommodation is only intended to run one of the centres, not both, so there will be a short period of double running which will require funding from a one-off source. The cost (around £80k-£100k) could possibly be met from earmarked maintenance reserves. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

Challenges, Risks and Opportunities

Cross-Portfolio Consultancy & Capitalisation savings. There is £550k of Better Bucks savings target, held under the Leader portfolio, which is earmarked for delivery from a 10% reduction in consultancy spend and increased charge of staffing time to externally-funded capital projects. For Housing & Regulatory portfolio we envisage this will be delivered via a review of recharges to Disabled Facilities Grant.

Licensing Pace of Covid recovery for income streams and Cemeteries & Crematoria increased costs – for Licensing, currently forecasting shortfall in premises income streams across the County; this also includes temporary event notices and street trading licenses. Also pressure on budgets where social distancing measures have had to be put in place for staff and daily cleaning in Cemeteries & Crematoria. Should adverse Covid impacts continue, outturn will in turn be impacted.

Income Opportunity from Webcasts - these were free of charge for Cemeteries & Crematoria whilst Covid restrictions were in place; fees are now being charged, but if further restrictions are reapplied limiting numbers at services then income may be lost.

Activities aligned with addressing climate change – Housing standards enforcement; Affordable Warmth Network; Green Homes Grants; Local Authority Delivery programme for domestic retrofit.

Top 5 Contracts

Supplier Name	Description of service	Review Date	
Buckinghamshire Healthcare	Provision of Coroner Service Body Storage, Mortuary	01/12/2025	
Trust	Provision & Histology	01/12/2023	
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals	Provision of Coronar Sarvisa Taxicalagy sarvisas	01/10/2025	
NHS Foundation Trust	Provision of Coroner Service Toxicology services	01/10/2025	
Locata (Housing Sorvices) Ltd.	Provision of web-based IT system for Housing Register	20/02/2022	
Locata (Housing Services) Ltd	and Homelessness Case Management	29/03/2022	
Rose Project Management	Specialist Project Manager (cremator replacement	01/04/2022	
Limited	project)	01/04/2022	
Arnold Funeral Service Ltd	Provision on funeral director services	31/10/2023	

To note: this list covers Revenue contracts

Fees and Charges

Each year, as part of the MTFP, we review the schedule of Fees and Charges. The majority of Fees & Charges are only amended by an RPI increase, which we have taken Corporately to be 3% (same as last year).

The following fees are proposed to be amended differently:

- Registrar's Fees
 - Will increase by RPI + an additional £25-30 for wedding ceremonies, RPI + £15 for Nationality & Citizenship ceremony fees, and RPI + £10 for booking amendment charges. This has been modelled to generate an additional £50k of income per year to help offset growth pressure in Coroners.
 - This increase would put BC in the upper quartile of LA wedding venue fees for the SE. This is not deemed a risk because most of the bookings are made due to venue not due to price, and the wedding fee structure was due for its triennial review.
 - Wedding Fees need to be published for the following 3 financial years, and as MTFP only covers 1 year, the 3 year fee schedule will be agreed by a separate Key Decision in the next couple of months. 3 year fee schedule will be the proposed 22/23 increase + RPI only increase for 23/24 and 24/25
- Pest Control, Dog Control, and Beauty Registration Fees (tattooing, electrolysis and body piercing) these fees need
 harmonising across the County, and will be agreed via a separate Key Decision.
- House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licenses These fees are contentious and still on legacy basis, and they are due to be reviewed in early 2022/23 with a Key Decision to support changes (delayed due to COVID impact of capacity in the team & service review changes). Proposed we keep the fees the same now, pending the review.
- Some Crematoria and Cemetery fees are proposed to increase by more than RPI following benchmarking review with
 neighbouring authorities. Fees and charges for High Wycombe and Penn Road cemeteries are due for review at High
 Wycombe Town Committee in January 2022 with a view to recommending their approval by Full Council in February
 2022. The recommendation to the Committee will be that all fees and charges will need to increase by RPI, or above RPI
 where the price of the related contract costs charged to the Council has increased following award of contract for
 grounds maintenance.

Capital Forecast Quarter 2 2021-22

	ctuals to ate £000	Total Budget £000's	Forecast Outturn £000's	Forecast Variance £000's	% Slippage	RAG Rating
Housing, Homelessness & Regulator	2,639	13,253	13,273	20	-0.2%	Green

Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Capital: Budget £13.3m, Forecast £13.3m, Var £0.0m:

- Cemeteries and Crematoria £0.4m slippage in relation to an underspend of £0.1m for Wycombe cemetery and slippage of £0.3m due to delays in projects for Great Missenden extension, Parkside and Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens.
- All other Affordable Housing projects and DFG budgets are projecting an overall net overspend of £0.4m.

Current Capital Programme 2022-26

The table below shows the Capital Programme for this Portfolio between 2022 and 2026.

Service Area	Project Group / Project	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's	2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's	MTFP Total £000's
Housing & Regulatory Services	Affordable Housing - S106 Funded	158	474	1,264	1,264	3,159
	Affordable Housing Total	158	474	1,264	1,264	3,159
	Homelessness Mitigation	150	0	0	0	150
	Temporary Accommodation	2,860	0	0	0	2,860
	Homelessness Total	3,010	0	0	0	3,010
	Disabled Facility Grants	3,583	3,583	3,583	3,583	14,334
	Home Renovation Grants	100	0	0	0	100
	Raynes Avenue Park Drainage Replacement	1,052	0	0	0	1,052
	Housing Total	4,735	3,583	3,583	3,583	15,486
Housing & Regulatory Services	Гotal	7,903	4,057	4,847	4,847	21,655
Neighbourhood Services	Cemeteries & Memorial Gardens	600	20	130	380	1,130
	Chiltern & Bierton Crematoria	1,609	120	130	375	2,234
	Cemeteries and Crematoria Total	2,209	140	260	755	3,364
Neighbourhood Services Total		2,209	140	260	755	3,364
Total Expenditure		10,112	4,197	5,107	5,602	25,019

Affordable Housing –S106 funded: this funding is an indicative profile of the use of all the s.106 developer funding we are holding for Affordable Housing. It is currently uncommitted, pending the finalisation of the Housing Strategy, and will be allocated via a Key Decision or Cabinet level Decision.

Temporary Accommodation: This is the Desborough Road development

Chiltern Crematorium: the additional investment programme in Chiltern Crem is set out in Appendix 2, slide 20 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL



Questions



Appendix 1: Breakdown of Revenue Budget

The table below shows the breakdown of the 2021-22 baseline Revenue budget into types of expenditure and income.

	Expenditure							Income					
	Staffing	Premises	Supplies and Services	Third Party SLA payments	Grants and Assistance	Transport	Expense Total	Fees & Charges	Govt Grants	Interest	Other Grants Reimbursement s and Contributions	Income Total	NET total
Housing & Homelessness	3,505	392	2,165	26	149	4	6,241	(1,027)	(1,566)		(13)	(2,606)	3,635
Homelessness	1,677	369	1,529		149	0	3,724	(768)	(1,142)		(9)	(1,919)	1,806
Housing	1,828	23	636	26		4	2,516	(260)	(424)		(4)	(687)	1,829
Regulatory Services	3,928	3	738	927	-	26	5,622	(1,310)	(30)	-	(9)	(1,350)	4,272
Coroner	430		423			1	854						854
Environmental Health	2,220	1	243	17		4	2,484	(84)	(30)		(9)	(123)	2,361
Registrars & Celebratory Services	1,279	2	71			21	1,373	(1,226)				(1,226)	146
Trading Standards				911			911						911
Licencing, Cemetaries & Crematoria	1,834	785	1,149	-	-	11	3,779	(4,552)	-	(1)	(389)	(4,942)	(1,163)
Licencing	1,125	-	128			4	1,257	(1,612)				(1,612)	(355)
Cemetaries & Crematoria	709	785	1,021			7	2,522	(2,940)		(1)	(389)	(3,329)	(807)
Grand Total	9,267	1,180	4,052	953	149	41	15,642	(6,890)	(1,596)	(1)	(411)	(8,897)	6,744

Notes

• Homelessness grant budget of £1.6m is indicative legacy target – this year actual grant income has been £3.0m. Every year grant income is different; grant income is intended to meet 'additionality', meaning increased income is intended to meet increased costs, rather than being used to meet base expenditure.

Appendix 2: Chilterns Crematorium Capital Programme

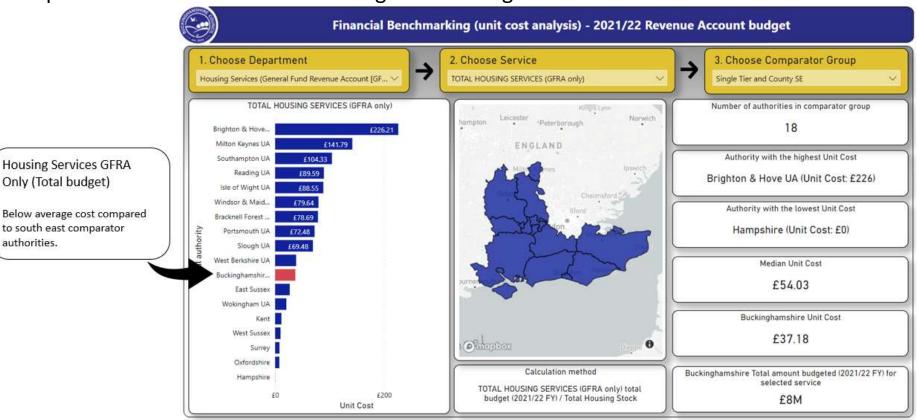
The table below shows the breakdown of additional improvement and refurbishment works for the Chiltern Crematorium, which are being added into the Capital Programme this year:

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
Additional costs for cremator replacement (already approved)	250,000			
Hampden Chapel refurbishment	160,000			
Refurbish Crematory shower and toilet area		25,000		
Refurbish Crematory kitchen and rest room		25,000		
New Kubota BX231 with trailer/snowplough	15,000			
Replace generator	15,000			
Milton Chapel Catafalque	10,000			
Replace Milton Chapel chairs	30,000			
Replace Floral Tribute Stands	10,000			
Update water features			10,000	
Upgrade Book of Rememberance Cabinets			20,000	
Crematorium Signage/Digital displays			25,000	
Chilterns office extension to replace portakabin				300,000
TOTAL	490,000	50,000	55,000	300,000

Net capital cost is nil as to be funded from Crematoria Reserve.

Appendix 3: VfM Benchmarking

The chart below shows that, as a proportion of total housing stock, Buckinghamshire spends below the South East average on Housing Services.



The £8m budget set out in the chart covers both the core housing budget in this portfolio of £6.3m, and some smaller housing benefit budgets within the Finance portfolio.