



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

# Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025

Version refreshed March 2023



## Introduction

Our corporate plan outlines our ambitions and priorities for Buckinghamshire Council. Overall, our aim is to create positive changes for local people, communities, visitors, and businesses. This refresh builds on the original plan from when the council was formed in April 2020 and reflects the ever-changing world around us amidst a period of significant change, challenge, uncertainty and turbulence.

Our vision for Buckinghamshire is one that aims to allow all Buckinghamshire residents to access the opportunity to succeed and thrive. One where growth will be carefully planned and managed, so that all our residents benefit. This includes well-designed, more affordable homes in thriving communities; providing excellent education opportunities for our young people, developing a skilled workforce with access to great job opportunities in highly productive sectors; and a world-class physical and digital infrastructure to support our businesses to flourish.

We also want to play our part in tackling climate change and an example of how we plan to do this includes planting over 500,000 trees, increasing recycling and improving our environment.

We are committed to making Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work, and do business. We want our county to

be a place everyone can be proud of, with excellent services, thriving businesses and outstanding public spaces for everyone. We want our residents, regardless of background, to live healthy, successful lives and age well with independence. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way we live, work and think and presented a number of challenges in ensuring we continue to protect and support people who are vulnerable and in need. This has been further impacted by the recent war in Ukraine and resulting inflation and cost of living pressures. Whilst we deal with these challenges, we will continue to lay the foundations for what is best for Buckinghamshire in the longer term.

We remain focused on the importance of a local approach and will continue to engage with our communities, offering opportunities for our residents, business, and partners to influence new approaches to their local places and services.

[Buckinghamshire's Strategic Vision for 2050](#) will help us deliver a lot of these ambitions and delivering on this will not only benefit the residents of Buckinghamshire but also the economy.

The plan provides the building blocks to our success and sets out the council's strategic priorities and how we can achieve these. It



will be used to inform cabinet portfolio priorities, service, and team planning – setting out the challenges and vital opportunities we will focus on to support the county to build resilience and continue to grow.

A number of strategies and policies underpin this plan including details about how we evaluate our success and how we use benchmarking information to ensure we measure success and best practice.

Demand for our services rises each year. This is due to many predicted changes, such as our population both growing and aging. We also face demand growth from unexpected challenges, such as the current cost of living pressures, supporting Ukrainian refugees and housing asylum seekers. There is also pressure on our income, for example, parking income remains below Covid levels, as do council tax and business rate collections. However, whilst facing these demands and challenges, we are committed to continuing to be a well-run, financially prudent, efficient and value for money council. We will also support our residents when they really need us, especially through the additional cost of living pressures.

During the challenges of the recent years, we have seen how people from across the county have stepped up to help those in need and look out for their family, friends, and neighbours as well as helping refugees temporarily settle in the county. The public sector and community services have worked more closely together than ever before to find ways to continue supporting those that rely on them, thinking innovatively through the challenges.

Some of these new ways of doing things have worked well and have demonstrated how we can make improvements to the way we deliver our services. Our staff are our greatest asset, and it is important that we acknowledge and thank them for their ongoing hard work, dedication, and resilience.

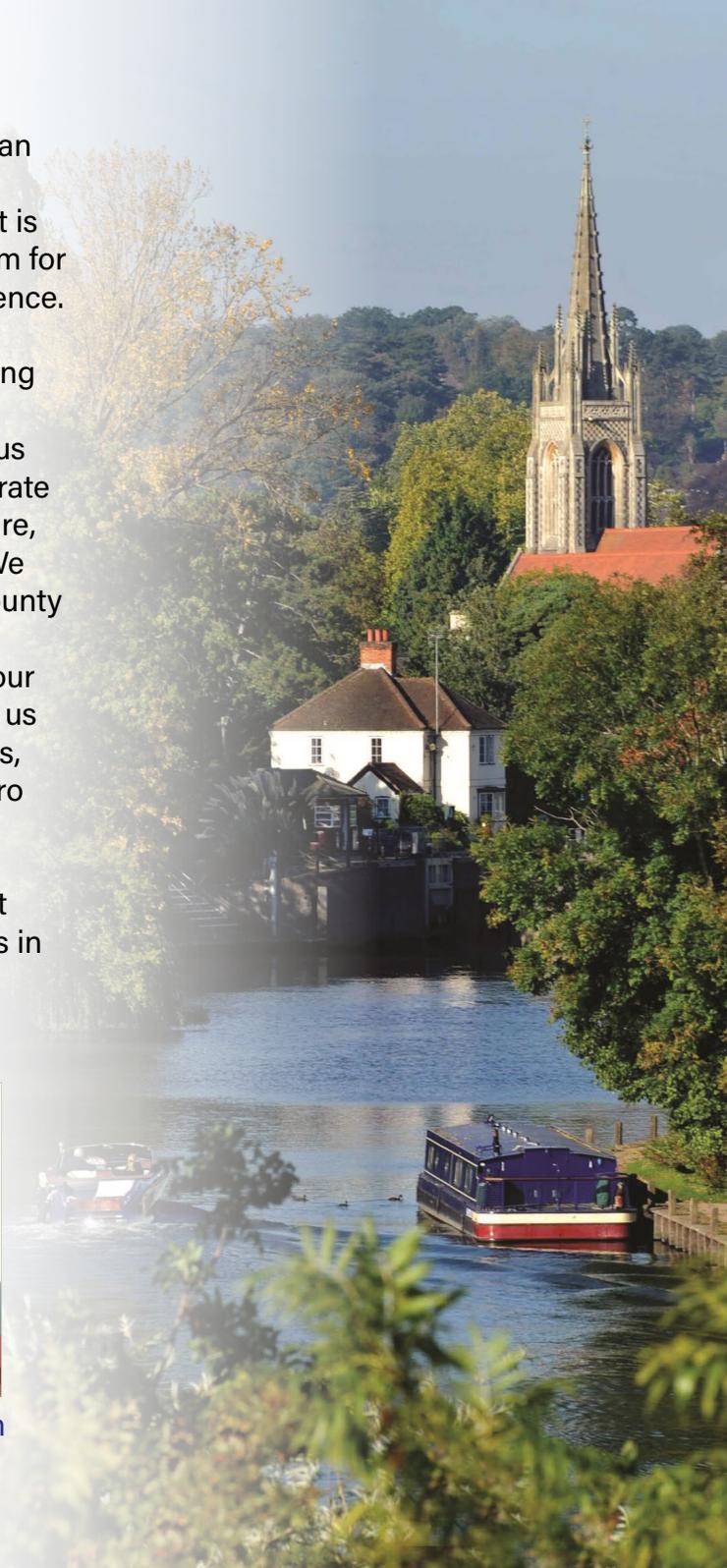
The next few years will continue to be a challenging time for Buckinghamshire, but there are also exciting and unique opportunities available to us to improve the services we provide and accelerate the county's success and prosperity in the future, such as devolution from central government. We must continue to attract investment into the county and seek to maintain valued universal services that make a big difference to quality of life for our residents. By seizing opportunities available to us now and working on our ongoing commitments, such as our objective to achieve net carbon zero for Buckinghamshire by 2050, we can avoid over burdening future generations that make Buckinghamshire their home and ensuring that current residents benefit from positive changes in the years to come.



Martin Tett  
*Leader*



Rachael Shimmin  
*Chief Executive*



# Buckinghamshire in numbers

In 2022



**553,300**

population (as of mid-year 2021)



**£420,500**

average house price  
(December 2022)



**£1,456 pcm**

average rent for a three-bed property  
(October 2021 - September 2022)



**171**

parish and town councils



**32%**

of the county is designated green belt  
(England average 12.5%)



**£18.2 billion**

size of Buckinghamshire economy national  
output (Buckinghamshire LEP 2019)



**237**

schools, pupil referral units and state  
funded nurseries



**£38,600**

average annual gross pay in 2022  
(full time workers)



## On the horizon...



**564,300**

population in 2030  
(Source: ONS projections)



There are currently **302** state  
pension age residents per 1,000  
working age residents, by 2040  
this will rise to **371**

## In the next decade (2023-2033):



**44.3%**

increase in 85+ year olds



**20.8%**

increase in 65+ year olds



**0.3%**

increase in adults (18-64)\*



**5.1%**

decrease in children (0-17)\*

*\* Construction of new dwellings in the county could lead to population changes/ increases beyond those currently predicted by the ONS.*

## Moving forward together: valuing partnerships

Achieving the best outcomes for our communities requires joined-up thinking. Working collaboratively with partners to make the most of collective resources, skills, ideas, and talents will be critical to achieve the key priorities which we set out later in this plan.

Most of our public sector partners work across the same geography and serve the same population. This provides great opportunities to join up and improve services.

Buckinghamshire Council is now a leader in building relationships at a regional, national, and international level, championing the county's voice and representing our residents, businesses and partners on a big stage. We will work creatively and collaboratively to strengthen the local economy, support businesses, and attract investment and funding into the county.

We are committed to partnership working, focusing on shared priorities, and encouraging collaboration, sharing intelligence, and driving change and tackling key issues in a more coordinated way.

## Buckinghamshire Place-Based Growth Board

The Buckinghamshire Place-based Growth Board (previously known as the Buckinghamshire Growth Board) is a board which ensures all partners are aligned to a shared place-based vision and plans to provide the broadest platform from which to address our growth and cohesion priorities. It is the overarching partnership board that provides a single forum which works across the public and private sector in Buckinghamshire to meet the need for joined-up thinking on the economy and growth. It approves the overall vision and strategy for Buckinghamshire to ensure ambitions are agreed, work is undertaken to realise them, and that future economic growth and development aligns with local priorities.

Partners include the Local Enterprise Partnership, NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), and other local public sector partners, all of whom have a shared ambition and work programme to deliver innovative, sustainable, and appropriate growth at pace.

To achieve Buckinghamshire's ambitions, the Place-Based Growth Board oversees the work of four sub-boards, including the Business and Investment Board (previously the LEP Board), the Skills Board, the Place, Housing & Regeneration Board and the Opportunity Bucks Board. Members of the Board also

ensure the alignment of our other strategies and plans to ensure single a narrative to support the growth ambitions of the county.



We want Buckinghamshire to remain a forward thinking and dynamic economy without sacrificing the assets which already make it a great place to live. This new model of governance also aligns Buckinghamshire to the path of national government policy. The model aims to further strengthen the work currently undertaken by partners including supporting and developing our key sectors, providing a strong and independent business voice, taking forward skills delivery and combining this with a wider focus on health and equality, education, place and regeneration.

The Board champions Buckinghamshire and continues to pursue opportunities to secure a devolution deal from government to secure investment and the devolution of

powers. We have the advantage of strong local alignment and the most coterminous county structure in England as all our key partner organisations share our county geography. Utilising our economic assets and governance strengths with a combination of direct project investment, broader investment funds, and specific freedoms and flexibilities that would enable us to deliver services more efficiently and effectively.

We will work with our partners to:

- Invest in our places.
- Mobilise our high-tech sector assets.
- Create an accelerated skills delivery system.
- Enhance physical and digital connectivity.
- Deliver public service efficiency improvements, including a first-class integrated health and social care campus.
- Increase our overall contribution to HM Treasury.

## Local Enterprise Partnership and businesses

Our business community includes major international companies and large numbers of small and medium enterprises. By working closely with partners, in part through the new growth board and also with Buckinghamshire Business First and Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and through the

Buckinghamshire Business Group, we support new businesses to grow and existing businesses to thrive - creating more local jobs and wider economic benefits to our communities.



Working through the new Enterprise and Investment Board the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership is a business-led partnership between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in Buckinghamshire.

## Integrated Care System

This brings together the expertise of health and care professionals in Buckinghamshire to look after people's physical, social, and mental health needs. By working closely with partners across the Integrated Care System, including the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Integrated Care Partnership (with the

Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing as vice chair), Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, FedBucks, Medicas, and South-Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, we will achieve our vision of everyone living happier and healthier lives.

## Town and parish councils, and local MPs

There are 171 town councils, parish councils and parish meetings in Buckinghamshire, collectively known as local councils. There are five MPs for the area. The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (BMKALC) is an independent member organisation which provides support to these councils on procedures and statutory regulations. Buckinghamshire Council has adopted the 'Town and Parish Council Charter' which articulates our commitment to working effectively and collaboratively with town and parish councils and outlines some key areas to help strengthen our relationships.

## Opportunity Bucks

Opportunity Bucks is a programme to improve outcomes for residents who are experiencing significant hardship, a local initiative, in line with the Government's national levelling up agenda. We want to ensure that all residents in the county have the opportunity to succeed,

that nobody gets left behind and we reduce inequality within our communities – we recognise that this is not where we are today and that things will get worse if we don't take action.

The programme is focused on 10 wards throughout Buckinghamshire, where residents are facing most challenges (these areas have been defined based on data including high unemployment, education attainment, higher crime and worst health outcomes). We are working with councillors, partners and residents in these areas to identify challenges and deliver initiatives that will break the cycle of disadvantage, improve health outcomes and grow our economy.

## Asylum, migration and resettlement

Buckinghamshire has welcomed a number of individuals and families from both Afghanistan and Ukraine; many of whom are at very genuine risk to their lives fleeing violence and war.

Working with partners, residents and with valuable support from local community groups we are continuing to ensure these individuals and families are supported to resettle and integrated into Buckinghamshire, including ensuring they are supported to access education, health services and employment.



## Voluntary and community sector

Buckinghamshire has an active not for profit sector with invaluable insight into the needs of our communities. The sector is at the heart of the community, delivering key services with experience in building relationships and social connections. They are vital in strengthening and supporting our communities, which will continue as we deliver our 'Opportunity Bucks' programme. The sector has been a valuable asset during the cost of living pressures, delivering support and advice to residents, asylum seekers and refugees, whilst also being impacted themselves. We continue to work with and support our partners in the voluntary and community sector to assist them in continuing to provide much needed services, building resilience and ensuring that voluntary capacity is used effectively and safely.

## Buckinghamshire Cultural Partnership

Buckinghamshire Cultural Partnership brings together senior leaders from key cultural organisations, Buckinghamshire Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership, and higher education organisations. It plays a strategic leadership and development role for culture, positioning culture at the heart of strategic agendas throughout the county.

## Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge to show our support to those who serve, or have served, in the armed forces, as well as their families. It recognises the sacrifice they have made and ensures they are treated fairly.

We are committed to ensuring that the Armed Forces community does not face disadvantage in the provision of services compared to other residents. As an employer, we recognise the range of unique skills and experiences that reservists and veterans can bring to our organisation.

## Buckinghamshire Swan Envoy Scheme

The Buckinghamshire Swan Envoy Scheme brings together leaders and champions from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, charity sectors, media and business industries who are keen to help inspire Buckinghamshire's communities and businesses to succeed and for younger generations to realise their potential.

Our Swan Envoys care passionately about the future success of Buckinghamshire as a place and support us to promote the county to local, regional, national and international audiences as a great place to live, visit, do business and nurture talent.

## Schools, colleges, universities and lifelong learning

The Buckinghamshire Skills Hub promotes and optimises links between the business community and education/training providers to enable young people and adults to develop the skills and qualifications they need to progress in the workplace, at whatever stage of their career they are in. Skills development is central to creating the conditions for sustained innovation, excellence, and growth for our Buckinghamshire businesses, particularly in priority sectors as described in our [Local Industrial Strategy](#).

## Police, fire and rescue

The Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel examine and review how the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) carries out their responsibilities of ensuring that Thames Valley Police runs effectively. The panel also supports the PCC in their work and provides reports and recommendations on the Police and Crime Plan, Annual Report and some proposals made by the PCC.

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is a publicly accountable body managing Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service on behalf of the communities it serves. The Authority meets four times a year to discuss budgets, financial arrangements, insurance and financial plans, and to make recommendations to the Fire Authority for decision.

## Housing providers

There are approximately 70 Registered Providers with a total combined housing stock of over 29,500 properties across Buckinghamshire. This includes four main registered providers (Paradigm, L&Q, Fairhive and Red Kite) who took on the local housing stock across Buckinghamshire that was previously owned by the former district councils. The council works closely with Registered Providers on developing new-build affordable housing, either in partnership with private developers or by developing their own

sites. These providers allocate social housing tenancies in accordance with the council's Bucks Home Choice Allocations Scheme (advertising available tenancies on a central website). The council will also work with Registered Providers to address and respond to any issues that arise within their social housing stock (e.g. poor housing conditions).

## Natural Environment Partnership

The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (the 'NEP') includes businesses, and organisations across the private, health, education, conservation and public sectors, including the Local Enterprise Partnership, with an interest in driving positive change in the local natural environment. The NEP works collectively to embed natural environment priorities and considerations in growth, economic and health strategies, and to develop and coordinate conservation interventions and programmes for delivery.



## Our key priorities - a summary

**We want to make Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work and do business.**

Our key priorities are:

- Increasing prosperity.
- Strengthening our communities.
- Improving our environment.
- Protecting the vulnerable.

Our key priorities are for our residents, employees, businesses, service users and councillors. Great customer service is integral to each of the priorities.





# Strengthening our communities

## Life expectancy in Buckinghamshire



(one of the highest in South East England)

## Life expectancy gap



life expectancy gap between most and least deprived residents



children and young people meeting recommended levels of physical activity



**61%**  
of adults are obese or overweight

## Strengthening our communities

People in Buckinghamshire live longer and healthier lives than the national average. We have strong communities and a thriving, dedicated not for profit sector.

Buckinghamshire is a healthy and inclusive place to live, work and visit, but we have a number of challenges. These include building more affordable homes now and for future generations, providing extra help and support for an increasingly older population and improving the health of people who live in the more deprived areas of Buckinghamshire. We also face the challenge of supporting our communities and residents to recover safely from the coronavirus pandemic.



## **We want:**

- Our residents to live independent, fulfilling lives, within strong, healthy, inclusive, and resilient communities.
- To support existing business communities, especially our small to medium enterprises (SMEs), to grow and flourish.
- To improve health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on reducing any gap in health outcomes.
- To work more with town and parish councils, giving them the responsibility for services and assets where it makes sense to do so, and helping communities to help themselves.
- To facilitate a 'catch up programme' for our young people, from the lost educational achievement which occurred during the coronavirus pandemic, particularly focusing on those most disadvantaged.
- Tackle health inequalities, including the impact of Covid-19, through cultural, leisure and learning opportunities, by developing clear plans to reduce health inequalities.
- Encourage localism through our Community Boards, the devolution programme and working with local councils and voluntary community groups.
- Ensure we are keeping our residents regularly informed.
- Provide the affordable homes our growing communities need, including homes for key workers.
- Continue our commitment to equality and inclusion, through engagement with ethnic minority communities including regular engagement with faith leaders and partnership events, celebrating the diversity within our communities.
- Maintain commitment to the armed forces and armed forces covenant and recognising Buckinghamshire's proud and historic links to the armed forces.
- Strengthen and ensure there is a more consistent approach across the partnership that supports the early identification of, and response to, emerging problems that children, young people and their families face.

## **Working with partners, we will:**

- Enable and promote physical and mental health and healthier lifestyles, wellbeing and quality of life for people in Buckinghamshire including through our new Better Points initiative which rewards people getting active, and through our Health Libraries pilot which supports people's mental and physical health through activities in their local library.
- Continue to develop our Leisure Strategy and seek to invest in our facilities where appropriate.
- Develop our strategy for Buckinghamshire Libraries to continue providing high-quality services which contribute to key local and national priorities.



# Protecting the vulnerable



**752** children had a Child Protection Plan on 31 March 2022 (575 as at 31 March 2020)



**59.6** crimes per **1,000** people for the period April 2021 – March 2022 (72.4 per 1,000 for Thames Valley)

**4,394**

applications for homelessness assistance in 2022



**23** children were adopted (2021/22)



**66%**

of adult social care clients were satisfied with the care and support they received - only 6% were unsatisfied



Budget for adult social care has increased by

**58.6%** since 2015



**336** children in foster care (March 2022)

**76%** of people using Adult Social Care services saying that they had either adequate or as much social contact as they would like (2021/2022)

## Protecting the vulnerable

While most people in Buckinghamshire live independent and healthy lives, some need extra support and protection. We know that the number of children and adults who need this extra help is increasing. There are also rising numbers of people with mental health difficulties, special educational needs, disabilities, and complex needs.

We want to give everyone the best chances in life, so that – together with their families and carers - they are resilient and can identify their own solutions. We will continue to work with our partners, social care providers and communities to innovate and improve our offer of support to vulnerable residents, including helping people recover from illness sooner, promoting fostering and adoption, and reducing social isolation and loneliness.

Our goal is to reduce inequalities and give everyone the support and skills they need to live independent, happy, and fulfilling lives.



## **We want:**

- Children, adults, and families to feel safe and supported to live independent lives.
- Our older, disabled, and vulnerable people to receive the right support, at the right time.

## **Working with partners, we will:**

- Develop and deliver our offer of support for residents who need it most. This includes help with food, energy and essential household costs; support to stay warm; and coordination of community-based initiatives through our Helping Hand service.
- Work with the police, PCC and partners to help prevent crime, reduce the fear of crime and understand the issues around women's safety and fear of violence and adopting a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse.
- Provide care for all those who are unable to help themselves, working with the NHS to give residents the choice and support to stay in their own home should they wish to.
- Make sure children and adults, particularly those that are vulnerable, are healthy, safe and protected from harm and continue to improve the services we provide, including delivering the Happier, Healthier Lives Strategy.
- Work with residents, partners and stakeholders to virtually eliminate rough sleeping, and reduce homelessness, addressing the root causes of both.
- Work in partnership with the NHS and voluntary groups to reduce problems such as drug abuse, alcoholism, and unhealthy lifestyles. Aligning services with the NHS where this benefits residents.

- Work with our partners to understand and prepare implementation of the Government's new social care reforms and the Health and Care Act, which sets out the Integrated Care System to ensure it best suits the needs of our residents.
- Encourage children in school to adopt healthy lifestyles and encourage them to exercise more, eat a healthy diet and spend more time with their friends and less on the internet, through the Healthy Schools Programme.
- Work with schools to encourage more cycling and walking to schools through the implementation of school travel plans and through working with the community to put in place measures to aid journeys to school which are not made by private car.



# Improving our environment



**49.17%**  
of waste is recycled  
(2022/23)

Aim to facilitate the delivery of

**1,000** 

public electric charging bays  
across the county by 2027 as  
part of our Electric Vehicle  
Action Plan



**70%**

reduction in  
Buckinghamshire  
Council's CO2 emissions  
and we are comfortably  
within our carbon budgets

Around



**2,100 miles**

of publicly maintained carriageway  
in Buckinghamshire



**1.16 million**

country park visitors in 2022/23



**2,146 miles**

of public Rights of Way



In partnership with  
operators, bus passengers  
journeys have recovered to

**85%**

of pre-Covid levels

## Improving our environment

Buckinghamshire is a beautiful county, and our stunning natural and historic landscape is valued by all. Over a quarter of our county is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and approximately a third is covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt.

Protection of the county's beautiful countryside, including areas of outstanding natural beauty and green belt will be achieved through the 'Brown before Green' principle. We know we must deliver more homes and associated infrastructure for our growing population. By managing growth sensibly and responsibly (including identifying appropriate surplus public sector property and actively developing this for market, affordable housing and key worker housing), we can protect and enhance our natural environment and the benefits it brings. Aylesbury Garden Town is an exciting example: putting green spaces and natural environments at the heart of future development.



## We want:

- To address climate change, improve our environment and create economic opportunities for clean growth.
- To reduce our county's environmental impact by promoting sustainability and reducing waste.
- To improve air quality and people's health, by reducing emissions and encouraging green transport options.

## Working with partners, we will:

- Take action to reduce our carbon emissions including planting over 543,000 trees, including a new woodland close to Wing as well as many other smaller sites.
- Facilitate the increased use of electric vehicles (including within our own fleet) and aim to double the number of electric charging points across the county as part of our Electric Vehicle Action Plan.
- Encourage recovery and increased passenger numbers using the public bus network, delivering on our Bus Service Improvement Plan and in the absence of any government funding to continue to work on delivering an Enhanced Partnership Scheme with commercial operators.
- Promote the benefits and improve the attractiveness of walking, cycling and wheeling as a realistic alternative for short local trips through the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Buckinghamshire, continuing to deliver high quality active travel infrastructure, and encouraging and supporting schools with School Travel Plans.
- Increase recycling and energy recovery rates and continue to deliver campaigns including new LitterLotto local project aimed at increasing recycling quality and a food recycling campaign.

- Enhance and protect our green spaces and high-quality environment, through a zero-tolerance policy towards fly-tipping and litter, a no-nonsense approach to planning enforcement, and taking action on flood prevention.
- Encourage 'green growth' by promoting well-designed homes and higher, more energy efficient standards for all new developments.
- Continue to seek to mitigate the impact of HS2 and East West Rail, on Buckinghamshire's residents, businesses and special environment by securing the necessary road repairs and reinstatements, minimising the final landscape and visual impact of the projects and also supporting our communities with finding resolutions to their construction related issues.
- Progress our ambition to be net carbon zero by 2050 (and potentially earlier) by delivering the key actions set out in our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy.



# Increasing prosperity



**47.8%**

of residents aged 16-64 are educated to NVQ4+ (equivalent to Higher Education Certificate/BTEC)



of vacant jobs not filled due to lack of skills (25% national average)



Value of exports (2020)

★ **91.4%** ★

of pupils attend good or outstanding schools in Buckinghamshire (compared to the South East 91.5% and England 87.9%)



**80.1%** of residents in employment (employment rate aged 16-64) compared to the South East average of 78.2%.



**4.8%**

of those aged 16-64 have no qualifications (compared to the South East average of 5.0%).

## Increasing prosperity

Buckinghamshire is a prosperous county and a successful place to do business, contributing £18 billion to the UK economy and ranked as the fourth most productive area in England.

The county has low unemployment, higher than average household incomes, and boasts world leading sectors. From Pinewood Studios in the south to Silverstone in the north, Buckinghamshire is a great success story. We are also well placed to take advantage of emerging opportunities because of our proximity to London and Heathrow, and our location in the middle of a leading economic area with global strengths in science, technology and high-value manufacturing.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted this and the national trend shows that high levels of productivity and growth are beginning to slow, and levels of unemployment are rising. Our high streets have been badly affected and are still facing challenges, including the change in retail habits with increased online demand and falling footfall in town centres. Action is needed now to ensure our economy remains fit for the future.



## **We want:**

- To encourage sustainable economic growth, working with our partners to maximise opportunities and boost productivity.
- To continue to attract high quality jobs and investment in skills, innovation, and connectivity, keeping Buckinghamshire one of the best places to do business.
- Growth to benefit both new and existing communities, preserving the character of our environment while delivering everything we need to prosper.

## **Working with partners, we will:**

- Provide a clear and consistent vision for Buckinghamshire through longer term strategic planning and a new Buckinghamshire Local Plan and Local Transport Plan.
- Continue our commitment to working proactively and in partnership to deliver regeneration plans for Aylesbury, High Wycombe and other town centres.
- Maximise capital and revenue opportunities in our property estate to support the provision of affordable key worker housing, to support the economy and other council services.
- Enable residents to be successful in their chosen career by encouraging skills development providing inclusive opportunities for levelling up and lifelong learning.
- Support the business community, especially SMEs, to grow and flourish including through promotion of high streets and Enterprise Zones.

- Deliver at least £105m investment in Buckinghamshire's roads and pavements; including gully emptying and investing £2m in our drainage programme in 23/24 and in alignment with the rigorous, data driven approach set out in our highways asset management policy.
- Continue to deliver the infrastructure that Buckinghamshire needs where possible ahead of planned growth, including improving connectivity and strategic transport links, increasing sustainability, attracting investment in the economic prosperity of the county and tackling congestion.
- Promote Buckinghamshire, its locations and reputation as a film-friendly county and maximise the economic and social benefits of location filming in Buckinghamshire, through our Film Office.

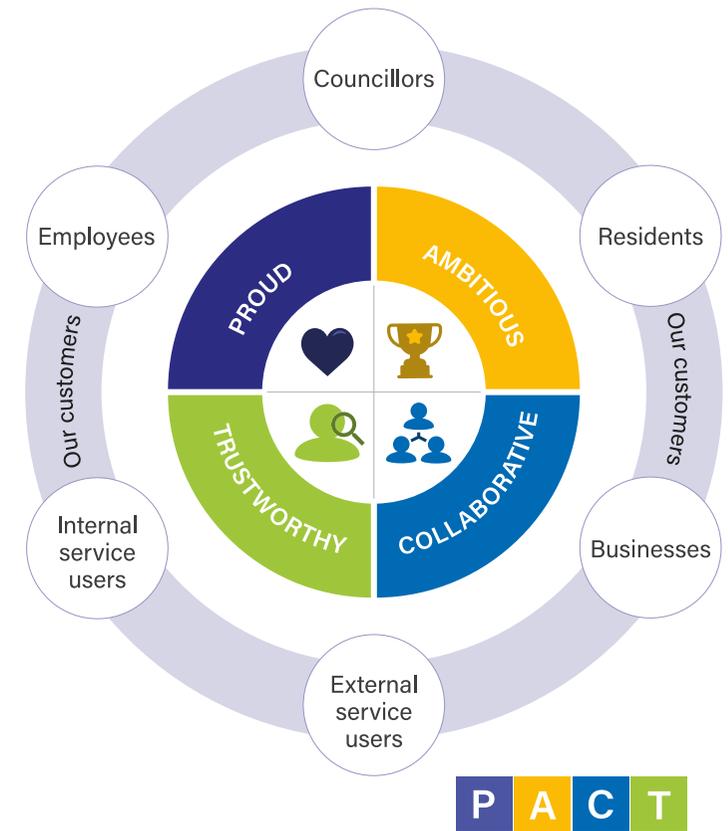
## Our people

Everything we want to achieve for Buckinghamshire depends on having the right people in place who are committed to delivering the best services for Buckinghamshire and providing a great customer service. We want to attract, retain and develop talented and motivated staff to provide the best services for our residents and businesses. To support this, Buckinghamshire Council has developed a set of values in consultation with our staff.

Our values are: Proud, Ambitious, Collaborative, Trustworthy (PACT). These values underpin how we work and show our commitment – our PACT – to do our very best for our residents, service users and businesses. They are there to put customers at the heart of everything we do.

Similarly, where services are provided through partners or external organisations, we will work with them to make sure these values are carried through in delivering services on our behalf.

We are already transforming our services and will continue to do so through our Better Buckinghamshire Programme, not only making savings but redesigning services and service delivery to suit our residents' needs. It is our people who deliver these services, and our improvements are focused on making the most of people's skills and experience, so we can take full advantage of the opportunities created by the new council. Everyone needs to be performing at their best to take the organisation on the next stage of its journey.



## The financial challenge

We will ensure that Buckinghamshire Council is financially fit, efficient, and responsive to change. We will maintain robust financial planning, scrutinise budgets closely and be prudent in managing risks. As a new unitary authority, we have already achieved significant savings and will strive to achieve more.

Like all local authorities, we face challenging financial circumstances. There are more people turning to the council for support, but the resources available to help them have not increased to match the demand. We have to be realistic and focus on greater efficiency and value for money.

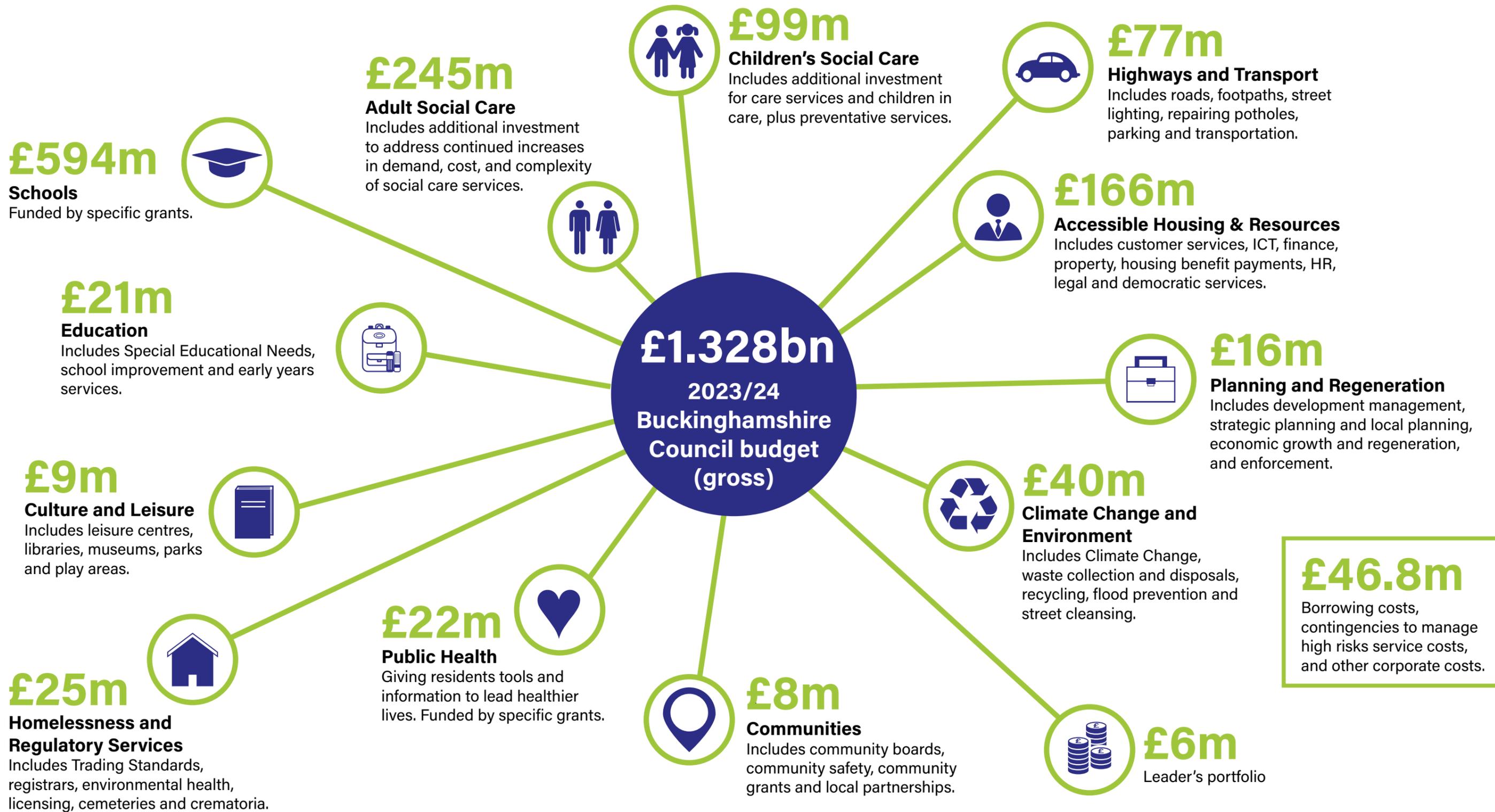
However, we are still ambitious to keep investing in our communities, sustaining the vital services on which our most vulnerable residents rely. We will manage our assets to create long term benefits and additional income, reducing our dependency on the taxpayer and protecting front line services.

# How we will spend the 2023/24 budget

**£501m** 2023/24 to 2026/27- spending on providing or improving buildings, roads and other infrastructure (capital budget)

£33.7m for economic growth and regeneration  
 £142.5m for education and Children's Services  
 £144.7m for transport  
 £91m for strategic transport and infrastructure  
 £7.5m for culture and leisure

£22m for accessible housing and resources  
 £22.4m for homelessness and regulatory services  
 £34.9m for climate change and environment  
 £2.3m for corporate



## Your council, your way

Residents are at the very heart of what we do. There are lots of different ways for people to get involved, shaping the council's knowledge, plans and policies and keeping up to date on news and views.

### Getting involved: Community Boards

There are 16 Community Boards across the county who focus on bringing change and improvement to their local communities. They bring together councillors and local communities to engage with each other to decide how to help solve local issues, take local decisions, and influence local service design and delivery.

### Neighbourhood plans

We continue to provide guidance to town and parish councils to support them to develop and deliver Neighbourhood Plans and produce regular local planning updates for local councils.

Our five local Planning Committees and Strategic Sites Committee continue to meet regularly.

### Inform, consult, and involve

We believe engagement should be meaningful, timely, inclusive, and direct. We want local people to help shape any proposals that affect the services they use or the areas where they live and work. We want to hear the voices of those most affected. It is important to us that local people - including the young, community groups, businesses, partners, and staff - are involved, working together on developing and testing solutions and services. We are constantly looking to develop and improve on this.

### Councillors and committees

Being democratically accountable and having good governance is essential to any council. The council achieves this through rigorous scrutiny of its processes and decisions by both the Audit & Governance Committee and its extensive Select Committee work.

Our website helps you find your local councillor and see which meetings are coming up and decisions that are being taken. To make sure the council is open and transparent, agendas and minutes of meetings are available online, with many meetings being filmed and in public.



## Customer focused

We must have a strong customer focus with services that are easy for everyone to access, and we continue to improve our user experience with a commitment to return calls, keep customers updated on progress and to escalate queries when needed. We are improving our website content to improve accessibility and availability of information in high traffic areas, such as Planning, School Admissions and Home to School Transport. We are also developing our Digital Strategy focussing on improving resident's interaction with council through digital channels.

We want our residents to have a choice of how they engage with the council, including in places local to them. We know that some people would like to 'self-serve' online, but others will still value talking to us face to face. To support this, we have developed a Customer Experience Framework which we call 'Customer First'

Key to Customer First are our three promises to our customers about the experience they should expect:

1. Easy for you to get in touch with us, easy to get what you need.
2. Helpful and that we aim to get things right first time.
3. Fair and honest in our approach so that we're clear about what we can and can't offer, and the reasons why.

Supporting this we have described the behaviours that we expect from our staff and those we request of our customers. To track the Customer Experience that residents, services users and businesses receive we have published our Customer First Annual Report setting out what we have achieved so far and our priorities for the next year.

## Our equalities commitment

Buckinghamshire Council is committed to equality of opportunity, fostering good relations, and eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

We recognise, respect, and celebrate the fact that our staff and the people we serve are all from different backgrounds, whether this is our age, disability, ethnicity, family setting, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or belief. We will work with our partners to promote equality, celebrate diversity, improve social inclusion and mobility, and ensure fairness for everyone.

## How to contact us

- Most information about our services can be found on this [website](#).
- To contact us about this plan use our [online contact form](#).
- Follow us on social media: @BucksCouncil