



## Report to Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Buckinghamshire Healthy Ageing Strategy 2024-2029</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Cllr Angela Macpherson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Dr Jane O’Grady, Director of Public Health and Community Safety
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All wards
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Cabinet is requested to note the contents of the new Buckinghamshire Healthy Ageing Strategy and endorse the actions within it.</b>
<b>Reason for recommendation:</b>	The Buckinghamshire <a href="#">Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 - 2025</a> commits to <i>“improving places and helping communities to support healthy ageing”</i> – the new Healthy Ageing Strategy will enable the achievement of this commitment.

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 In response to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy commitment of ‘improving places and helping communities to support healthy ageing’ a Healthy Ageing Strategy has been developed.
- 1.2 The strategy sets out our commitment to become an ‘age friendly community’ by undertaking improvement actions across the 8 interconnected areas identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) to support older people to live healthy, active and independent lives.
- 1.3 The strategy is supported by a multi-agency Age Friendly Bucks Partnership, chaired by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, and a

network of partners and residents who oversee, inform and help create the strategy and underpinning action plan. It has been informed by resident engagement, and engagement will continue with communities throughout the duration of the strategy.

- 1.4 The strategy and action plan have been circulated to all relevant Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors, who are in agreement with the ambition and underpinning actions.

## **2. Background and aims of strategy**

- 1.1 Population projections suggest that over the next 20 years (2022 to 2042) the population aged 65 years and over in Buckinghamshire will increase by one third (34,944 more people) and the population aged 85 years and older increase by two thirds (10,884 more people). The increase in the older population brings economic and societal opportunities, but these are most likely to be realised if older adults remain well and independent. However, the average number of years of ill health has risen for both men and women in Buckinghamshire and stands at over 15 years.
- 1.2 The aim of this strategy is for Buckinghamshire to become an 'age friendly community', based on the WHO's evidence-based [framework](#) of the 8 interconnected areas that support older people to live healthy, active and independent lives, which are:
  1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
  2. Transport
  3. Housing
  4. Participating in society
  5. Volunteering and employment
  6. Communication and information
  7. Community support for health and wellbeing
  8. Respect and social inclusion [which in Buckinghamshire will run as a golden thread throughout our work rather than being a standalone area]
- 1.3 Given the breadth of this work and to make progress achievable we are prioritising domains in turn rather than tackle all simultaneously.
- 1.4 A multi-agency Age Friendly Bucks Partnership has been established to steer the prioritisation of these domains and oversee and support a system-wide approach to delivery. The members are senior representatives from partners including the Council, NHS and voluntary sector. The Partnership meets quarterly and is chaired by Cllr Macpherson, Deputy Leader of Buckinghamshire Council and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

- 1.5 The Partnership is an umbrella for oversight of age friendly work – informed by several topic-specific strategies and groups, such as the Live Longer Better Alliance and the Physical Activity Strategy which are already working to improve healthy ageing in Buckinghamshire – and ensure emerging issues are not overlooked.
- 1.6 To inform our prioritisation, insight gathering with residents and communities is occurring using electronic, paper and in person tools to maximise engagement. An initial survey ran between 19<sup>th</sup> June – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and received 228 responses. 12 of these responses were from Elected Members – and their priorities were similar to the comments received from residents directly. These results have been used to inform the first priority area for the strategy to tackle in year 1 (outdoor spaces and buildings). Engagement will occur throughout the life of the strategy to ensure our work remains informed by and involves our residents. The second priority area for year 1 has been identified via partners and already agreed as a priority for the Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board (participating in society, to tackle social isolation and loneliness).
- 1.7 The actions taken to progress against these priorities will be recorded, monitored and reviewed via the accompanying action plan and associated metrics. As new priorities are agreed in future additional projects will be added to the action plan.
- 1.8 To support our Age Friendly approach, in March 2023 Buckinghamshire successfully joined the UK Network of Age Friendly Communities which is run by the Centre for Ageing Better and affiliated to the WHO's Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities. Being a member of this network provides access to good practice, guidance and advice for our officers to support the successful delivery of a robust and evidence-informed age friendly approach. On reviewing our application, the Centre for Ageing Better complimented us on our draft Healthy Ageing Strategy, our political commitment with our Deputy Leader chairing the Partnership, and the allocation of public health resources to support the work programme.
- 1.9 The strategy is included in Appendix 1. The strategy's action plan will be further developed as we begin to work closely with our partners and communities following the publication of the strategy.

### **3. Other options considered**

- 3.1 Do nothing. Whilst it is possible to deliver activities without a strategy the risk is these would be small scale and of limited impact. The greater visibility of a strategy is more likely to unlock the benefits of a system-wide approach. Without this approach valuable opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of our growing population of older residents may be missed, and we may fail to address the concerns residents have taken time to inform us of during engagement

exercises. By not having a strategy the commitment within the Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy will not be fully realised.

#### **4. Legal and financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications of the strategy. Although currently listed actions relate to new or changed working, those led by Buckinghamshire Council have all been suggested by or agreed with the owning team and relate to one of the three categories listed below. Future projects may also be proposed during the life of the strategy, such as to better meet our duties under the Equality Act, but any associated bids for additional funding would then be subject to the usual value for money assessments.
- a) Improvements in working practice or re-prioritisation which will be driven by the members of the Age Friendly Bucks Partnership by embedding cultural change within their organisations without additional resource required.
  - b) Pieces of work that have been agreed can be delivered by existing staff capacity, such as the healthy ageing in all policies approach.
  - c) Projects which can be funded via the healthy ageing budget from the public health grant, under Office for Health Improvement and Disparities guidance.
- 4.2 There are no direct legal implications for this strategy.

## **5. Corporate implications**

- 5.1 This strategy supports the Corporate Plan, in particular the priority areas of:
- a) Strengthening our communities – by driving improvements for Buckinghamshire to be an age friendly place, where people can live healthy, active, and independent lives, contributing and participating in society for as long as possible.
  - b) Protecting the vulnerable – by supporting those who need the most help, addressing inequalities making sure the right support is available at the right time and addressing factors which can contribute to isolation and loneliness.
  - c) Improving our environment – this strategy will support actions to improve our built environment by supporting high quality, accessible and social public spaces, and by supporting the development of accommodation where people can live safely and comfortably, and which can improve physical and mental health, wellbeing, and social connections.
  - d) Increasing prosperity – by supporting employers to become age friendly, enabling older people to remain in employment for as long they choose and supporting lifelong learning and skills development.
- 5.2 This strategy supports the Opportunity Bucks programme and its ambition to improve opportunities for all. Many of the age friendly themes complement the Opportunity Bucks themes including health and wellbeing (social participation, community support for health and wellbeing), quality of public realm (outdoor spaces and buildings), standard of living (housing) and jobs, careers and skills (volunteering and employment). Feedback from urban residents (Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham) gathered through the programme identified outdoor spaces and buildings as their top concern. These views have informed the year 1 theme for the healthy ageing strategy. A number of our accompanying actions will also be focussed on Opportunity Bucks wards – for instance the use of our healthy place’s toolkit in auditing local areas, and prioritising pavement repairs to improve accessibility for all.

## **6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views**

- 6.1 The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing chaired Partnership meetings in January, May and August 2023 and heard priorities directly from partner organisations and was briefed on the consultation responses.
- 6.2 The initial engagement survey was shared with all Members and promoted via the Leader’s newsletter. There were 12 responses from Elected Members and their insights were analysed separately as well as within the main cohort. Their priorities

were similar to the comments received from residents directly, including the priority area of outdoor spaces and buildings. We will continue to include engagement with elected members in future insight gathering activities.

- 6.3 The final version of the strategy will be published online on the Buckinghamshire Council website and promoted to members once it has been approved by Cabinet.

## **7. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

- 7.1 The strategy has been shared with and informed by several groups, including the Bucks Older Peoples Action Groups, the Healthy Ageing Collaborative, the Live Longer Better Alliance, Age UK Bucks, Citizen Advice Bucks and Heart of Bucks. NHS and adult social care partners have also fed in through the Age Friendly Bucks Partnership. It was discussed with the VCSE Partnership Board at their quarterly meeting in November 2023.
  - 7.2 A core approach of this strategy is to work with residents to gather their insights and experiences and co-create actions and projects with them. Engagement will therefore occur throughout the life of the strategy.
  - 7.3 The strategy has been reviewed by the public health communications lead and amendments made to improve the accessibility of the document and suitability for publishing. A specific domain within the age friendly approach is to build positive and accessible communications and campaigns, and challenge negative stereotypes and stigma. A multi-agency communication plan will be developed as discussed and agreed with the public health communications lead.
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## **8a Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment**

As there are no direct legal implications of the strategy and the report is primarily intended for information, it was advised that the approval of the Director of Legal is not required.

## **8b Section 151 Officer comment**

The S151 Officer has read and noted the report.

## **9. Next steps and review**

The planned governance pathway of these papers is as follows:

- a) Health and Wellbeing Board on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024

The Healthy Ageing Strategy 2024-2029 will be owned and overseen by the Age Friendly Bucks Partnership, who meet quarterly, chaired by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

The Public Health team will lead on the operational oversight and delivery of the strategy and report progress to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## **Background papers**

Appendix 1: Buckinghamshire Healthy Ageing Strategy 2024-29

WHO's Age Friendly Community [framework](#)

## **Your questions and views (for key decisions)**

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report – Lucie Smith, Public Health Principal, via email to [lucie.smith@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:lucie.smith@buckinghamshire.gov.uk). If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team by 5pm on 1 March 2024. This can be done by email to [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).