

## **7a. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Lin Hazell, Member for Children's Services, provides an update on the recent Operation Articulate trial and I would like to echo David Johnston's apologies on behalf of the Council. The trial was a very distressing time for these two brave young women that came forward. At the time of these offences (2006) our understanding of child sexual exploitation, training of staff and knowledge around the complexity of this crime, was not as good as it might have been. Our understanding of child sexual exploitation has grown over the years and it was not always identified by agencies and society in the past.

Child sexual exploitation is a despicable and hideous crime which, by its very nature is complex and secretive, and often very difficult to spot. However, this makes us no less determined and we will use everything in our power to protect children and young people in Buckinghamshire.

### **England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance**

Momentum has been maintained over the summer with the Strategic Alliance proposition within the context of wider discussions on the opportunities presented by the devolution debate. Following the discussions at the three County Council Cabinets at the end of May/beginning of June, the three Local Enterprise Partnerships – Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley – considered the principle of the Alliance proposition. All three Partnerships acknowledged the fact that some of the key barriers to realising economic potential require attention on a cross-boundary basis and all three supported the Strategic Alliance.

At its meeting on 17 July the Strategic Alliance partners agreed a more detailed Strategic Transport proposition. This was submitted to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, along the Secretaries of State for Communities and Local Government, Transport and Business, Innovation and Skills at the end of July. The transport proposition sets out a framework that has the potential to transform strategic transport planning and delivery in England. Initial reaction to the document, which has also been shared with the wider transport sector, has been very positive, with many commentators welcoming the vision of the Strategic Alliance. The transport proposition is acting as a focus for on-going discussions with Government and the transport sector.

The publication of the transport proposition has attracted interest from the four Local Transport Authorities to the east of the Strategic Alliance – Milton Keynes, Bedfordshire, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. The three County Council Leaders have met with the Leaders of these authorities and together we have issued an invitation to all four Local Transport Authorities to join the Strategic Transport Forum that is in the process of being established.

Building on the approach used to develop the Strategic Transport proposition, the Alliance partners are now being to explore the issues associated with a number of other strategic pieces of infrastructure – including digital infrastructure, energy and other utilities. A discussion on these issues is planned for the next meeting of the Alliance partners at the end of September.

### **Health and Wellbeing Board**

The last Health and Wellbeing Board meeting held was on 18 June. Among the main agenda items, members considered the challenges of the Mental Health Concordat and the progress being made on Buckinghamshire's Mental Health Urgent Care Pathway

which is now co-ordinated across multiple agencies for anyone requiring mental health urgent care; and a report from Healthwatch setting out their strategic direction, including how the Health and Wellbeing board can utilise their membership on the board and Healthwatch powers to enter and view.

The Board is currently focusing on setting the agenda for 2015/16 as well as its future direction, given its pivotal role in the ambitions for the future health and social care economy in the county. The Board is also preparing for its statutory duty to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2016. A roundtable event was held in July with key stakeholders as part of the Board's initial engagement and consultation on health and wellbeing priorities across the county. The outcome of these discussions was then fed into the Board's development day on 8 September where Board members focused on operation and delivery for the next four years.

The Board next meets in public on 1 October at the Gateway in Aylesbury. The items on the agenda include looking at an overview of the commissioning intentions of the NHS, Social Care and Public Health for 2016/17, a report on planning for Health and Social Care winter pressures and system resilience, and a progress update on health and social care integration and the implementation of the Better Care Fund. All Health and Wellbeing Board meetings are now webcast and can be viewed on the County Council's website.

### **Strategic Plan**

Following the approval of the refreshed Strategic Plan at the last Council meeting, the annual debate focused on key issues in the implementation of the new priorities. We were fortunate to be joined by Tony Travers who gave the keynote speech on the challenges and opportunities facing Local Government. This prompted a good discussion amongst Members about the big issues in delivering each of the three Strategic Plan themes. These issues included:

#### *Safeguarding the vulnerable*

- In the context of increasing levels of demand, encouraging people to help themselves and live independently, through greater signposting and self help tools
- Clear assessment processes and thresholds which enable the Council to define those who are vulnerable and in need of support
- Given the shortage of foster carers in the county, encouraging more Buckinghamshire residents to come forward as foster carers

#### *Creating Opportunities and Building Self-Reliance*

- Encouraging young people to be active in their communities and celebrating this, as well as academic achievements
- Tackling the shortage of skills by promoting vocational pathways for young people, together with stronger links between schools and colleges and the business community, particularly around careers advice services
- Promoting a better understanding of the Council's role in relation to academies and free schools

#### *Keeping Bucks Thriving and Attractive*

- Condition of roads, recognising that this is not unique to Buckinghamshire
- Location of housing development, particularly in the context of Government announcements about the potential for large developments build around stations

- Growth agenda – ensuring that the planned housing growth is matched with the development of infrastructure, employment and public services

Detailed implementation plans for the Strategic Plan are currently being developed by Business Units, in tandem with the development of budget proposals. These implementation plans will be published for decision by Cabinet Members in February 2016.

### **High Speed 2 Update**

Buckinghamshire County Council and other partner organisations presented evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on 15 and 16 July 2015, requesting a fully bored tunnel to be provided under the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

On 21 July the Committee issued a statement saying ‘we are strongly of the view that the case for a long tunnel is not made out for the long tunnel options’. However, the Select Committee stated they believed the case had been made for an extension of the bored tunnel to the northern end of the South Heath green tunnel. The Select Committee was also minded to recommend a southward extension of the currently proposed green tunnel at Wendover, unless HS2 Ltd reported back with a ‘very convincing scheme of further mitigation’. HS2 Ltd will report back to the Committee in September. The full statement can be found at:

[www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/high-speed-rail-london-west-midlands-bill-select-committee-commons/news-parliament-2015/210715-announcement-on-tunnel](http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/high-speed-rail-london-west-midlands-bill-select-committee-commons/news-parliament-2015/210715-announcement-on-tunnel). It is likely that more detail will be forthcoming on this announcement in a further Additional Provision (AP4).

HS2 Ltd published new survey and assessment work on 13 July in an updated Supplementary Environmental Statement (SES) and information on additional areas of land (Additional Provisions 2) that they require for the project. This information was assessed and a further petition was submitted. One of the main new impacts relates to the relocation of the Heathrow Express depot to Langley, which could have severe traffic impacts on South Bucks.

On 10 August the three new members of the Select Committee visited the county to look at the impact on local residents, business and the environment. This was just a half day visit with little notice to the County Council and was not widely advertised. Understandably, the limited nature of the visit was not received well by those residents who had turned out to meet and talk to the Committee members.

The Select Committee recommenced hearing petitioners from The Chilterns on 7 September and the County Council is due to be heard from 13 October.

### **Broadband Update**

#### Connected Counties rollout progress

The Connected Counties programme seeks to ensure countywide fibre connectivity is extended to 90%+ of premises (business and residential). Areas that have been enabled thus far are detailed on the Connected Counties website ([www.connectedcounties.org/rollout](http://www.connectedcounties.org/rollout)). This includes the ability to validate individual phone numbers and addresses and use a variety of maps for visual reference ([www.connectedcounties.org/check-availability](http://www.connectedcounties.org/check-availability)).

The rollout in Bucks is progressing well, with fibre rollout now 75% complete in Bucks and on target to be completed by March 2016. Over 30 locations are still outstanding

and awaiting fibre upgrades, including communities in all four Districts, where demand for superfast broadband remains high from residential and business users. In total over 200 locations serving 45,000 premises will be connected to fibre. In addition, in a small number of locations, other fibre technologies are being used to deliver superfast broadband, including 'fibre to the premises', which brings fibre optic cable directly to the home/business and can offer speeds of 330 Mbps.

Targeted marketing and communications is being used to increase take-up in areas where take-up has been slower. This is important as if take-up is particularly strong, then we will be able to claim monies back, which can be reinvested in extending superfast broadband even further.

Activity is continuing to keep people informed of progress, focusing particularly on the Connected Counties newsletter, website enhancements, placement of cabinet stickers, targeted leaflet distribution, direct correspondence with businesses/Parishes/Councillors and targeted PR. In addition, the team continues to respond to large numbers of enquiries from the general public, MPs and other interested parties.

In relation to the Universal Service Commitment, we are still waiting to hear more detail on the anticipated voucher scheme and the role of local projects. We expect the scheme will be up and running by the end of the year and that this will subsidise satellite broadband.

#### Extending coverage and other activity

Work on the Superfast Extension Programme is underway to formalise arrangements which will enable BT to develop proposals for extended speed and coverage. This will ask that BT models over £4m of District Council, Local Enterprise Partnership and Government funding, subject to specified requirements. It is anticipated that BT will issue proposals later this year, which will then be subject to detailed evaluation. New funding opportunities are being explored, which may enable extended superfast broadband coverage, subject to requirements.

The Government is continuing to explore how it can support broadband extensions through further investment and policy. At present, this is focused on a series of pilots which will determine investment and technology approaches going forward. There is also an emphasis on regulation, technology advancement, convergence between fixed and wireless and encouraging further private sector investment. In addition, broadband has featured prominently in Westminster recently, with many debates taking place on the matter. Most recently, a Select Committee has been asked to evaluate the current Government strategy and how remaining issues can be resolved.

We are continuing to engage actively with broadband suppliers in the marketplace, including Village Networks, Avonline and Virgin Media. Gigaclear are about to commence the building of fibre optic networks in Ludgershall, Kingswood and other areas on the Bucks-Oxfordshire border, which is excellent news for affected communities. We hope this will extend even further to other poorly served villages.

We are seeking to negotiate an extension to the Government's Super Connected City voucher scheme, so that it becomes accessible to businesses in Bucks. If successful, this will allow businesses the opportunity to access up to £3,000 towards the installation of ultrafast broadband (100 Mbps or more). This is the result of lobbying as, to date, Bucks has been unable to benefit from this scheme.

A variety of other activity is continuing, including monitoring extended 4G mobile coverage across the county, ensuring new developments have the best possible broadband provision and local lobbying/influencing continues to challenge Government on its digital infrastructure policy and investment plans.

**MARTIN TETT  
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

## **7b. DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING**

### **New Chairman of the Safeguarding Adults Board**

Sarah Mitchell has been appointed as the new Chairman of Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board, replacing Charles Owen-Conway who retired in August this year. I am grateful to Charles for his contribution during the 6 years that he was Chairman. The Board made great progress under his stewardship.

Sarah has 31 years' of experience working within local and central government and the NHS. She currently works as the Director of Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care (TEASC) for the Local Government Association (LGA). At the LGA Sarah has also led a national improvement programme on behalf of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) working with Directors of Adult Social Care to implement the Care Act, with a particular lead for safeguarding and developing and implementing self-assessment tools for risk and commissioning.

Sarah was previously the Strategic Director of Adult Social Care and Health in Surrey where she also managed the Fire Service. She also worked at the Department of Health as a senior civil servant working directly to Ministers, with the national lead for older people and continuing health care, and managing teams in London and Leeds. Sarah has also been an Inspector with the Social Services Inspectorate.

I am delighted to welcome Sarah to Buckinghamshire. She has also been appointed as Chairman of Oxfordshire's Safeguarding Adults Board which will provide opportunities for shared development for both Boards.

### **Chief Social Worker Visit**

On 2 September 2013, Lyn Romeo was appointed as Chief Social Worker to the Department of Health. Her role is to work collaboratively out of the Office of the Chief Social Worker to:

- support and challenge the profession to ensure that adults get the best possible help from social workers;
- provide independent expert advice to ministers on social work reform and the contribution of social work and social workers to policy implementation more generally;
- provide leadership and work with key leaders in the profession and wider sector to drive forward the improvement and reform programme for social work;
- challenge weak practice to achieve decisive improvements in the quality of social work;
- provide leadership to the network of principal social workers to improve practice and influence national policy making and delivery.

Lyn visited Buckinghamshire County Council on 14 July 2015. She met with a number of front line staff and managers as well as visiting service users at the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Aylesbury Opportunities Day Centre.

Following her visit, Lyn wrote to Buckinghamshire County Council commenting that it was excellent to see the repositioning of good social work practice at the heart of Adult Social Care. Lyn was also impressed with the progress the Council was making with the implementation of the Care Act.

### **Government's Postponement of the Introduction of the Care Cap**

The Department of Health announced on 17 July 2015 that the cap on care costs part of the Care Act 2014, originally planned for introduction in April 2016, will now be postponed until April 2020. Alongside this, the Department of Health also confirmed that the introduction of the requirement for local authorities under the Care Act to arrange care and support for self-funders with eligible needs in care homes will be also be delayed until April 2020. The introduction of a proposed appeals system for care and support will now be considered as part of a wider Government spending review that will begin soon.

Buckinghamshire County Council strongly supports the Care Act 2014, which has brought in very important changes to bring up to date the law and practice of adult social care, putting the person and their wellbeing at the centre of the services they receive.

The Council has brought in wide-ranging changes to ensure that the benefits of the first phase of the Act, which came into force in April this year, are now fully available to everyone receiving adult social care in Buckinghamshire.

However, the Council welcomes the decision by Government to delay the further implementation of the Act. Although we are firmly committed to the principle of the care cap, the Council shared the concern of other authorities and the Local Government Association (which speaks on behalf of local authorities) that the deadline of April 2016 was very ambitious for the introduction of the biggest change in the way social care is paid for since 1948.

As well as the tight deadline for getting new systems working properly, it has become clear that this important change in the way that care is paid for is likely to have far-reaching effects on the care home market that were not fully realised when the Care Act was being drafted, and for which both the Government and local authorities need to be better prepared. One of these effects could be that the cost to local authorities of care home places will significantly increase at a time when more places are needed due to an ageing population.

The delay in the introduction of these parts of the Care Act will allow time for a national conversation on the implications of the cap on care costs that will make sure that central and local government is fully prepared for the wide-ranging changes that will result. It will also give time to make sure that the systems and processes necessary to manage the care costs cap will be fully ready and operational in every authority.

**MIKE APPELYARD  
DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING**

## **7c. CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **Town and Parish Council Devolution Conference**

A new strategy is being proposed for how Buckinghamshire County Council works with and helps build capacity within Town and Parish Councils, both for the delivery of devolved services and to support their wider role in their communities. As traditional public services come under ever increasing pressure, the role of Town and Parish Councils becomes ever more important. It's essential that any such strategy is developed with Town and Parish Councils and to this end a working group is being established with the Town and Parishes and a conference will be hosted on 25 November 2015.

### **Legal Highs**

Legal Highs are an increasing problem across the UK and, sadly, in Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire County Council commissioned the first needs assessment in the UK about legal highs and remains a leading authority in tackling this issue.

On 12 November 2015, supported by Public Health England and several national experts on the subject, Buckinghamshire County Council will be running a significant event on legal highs to improve our insight into the issues and develop our strategy in tackling this issue.

### **Creating a Cultural Trust for Libraries**

Buckinghamshire County Council's Library Service has already been re-modelled significantly in response to reduced budgets, changing demand, technological developments and the recognition of libraries' role as trusted community spaces.

We are proud of our track record in delivering increased efficiency whilst also developing the contribution that our libraries make towards reading and literacy, improved health and wellbeing, digital inclusion and welfare reform.

We are clear as to the financial challenges ahead and during the next two years we will deliver savings in excess of £500,000. In the light of recent government announcements we understand that we will need to find ways of generating further significant savings. This requires us to look critically at adopting a radical and fundamental change to our current delivery model for the Library Service. We have real ambition for our service and we have been actively researching new models of delivery and identifying best practice.

A 'staff mutual' model has been established in York City and Senior Library Managers attended a four day Cabinet Office Workshop on Mutual Success in order to learn more about this model. Additionally Buckinghamshire has met with from colleagues from both York and Devon to learn from their experience. Library staff have also visited a co-operative (Industrial Provident Society) model in Suffolk as well as library trusts in Luton and Peterborough.

An essential part of work is taking forward an options appraisal and engaging with our key stakeholders to identify their priorities for the service. We will engage with staff, customers, partners, elected members and representatives from our community library partners. The options appraisal will be presented to the Communities, Health and Adult Social Care Business Unit Board and One Council Board in December.



## **Active Bucks**

The first phase of the Active Bucks project is now complete. The Active Bucks team has been working across the county since May, engaging over 1500 residents to have their say on what physical activity provision they want to see in their local areas, and developing an understanding of the local physical activity assets.

The results are now being collated, and recommendations will be made by Local Area Forums by the 31 October to allocate the Active Bucks funding to offer opportunities for increased physical activity provision in local communities across the county from the beginning of 2016.

Launch events for the project are being planned across the county, with the first having taken place in Waddesdon on 12 September, and others being planned for spring next year.

## **School Nursing and The Lancaster Model (TLM), web-based questionnaires for school age children health reviews.**

The school nursing service in Buckinghamshire is pioneering the use of The Lancaster Model web-based questionnaires for staged health screening assessments of school children. The assessments take place in reception year and years 6, and 9. The academic year 2014-15 has been the test year in the roll out of the approach.

The TLM method enables identification of individual health and wellbeing needs for children in reception year and year 6 so that school nurses are able to respond by providing information and advice, signposting or referring to other services or further assessment. Each participating school is also provided with an aggregated school based report collating all health and wellbeing information which provides the school with a general overview and enables the school nurses to identify three priorities to inform health promotion activity in the school more efficiently. The information also feeds into countywide health and wellbeing information data collected by the public health team which will provide an overview of the health and wellbeing of children and young people in Bucks to direct county-wide based activity.

There will be an evaluation report of the model for the academic year 2015/16 to review the first year of implementation.

**MARTIN PHILLIPS**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

## **7d. CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION**

### **East West Rail**

The confirmed scope of the East West Rail scheme between Oxford and Bedford, and Princes Risborough via Aylesbury to Milton Keynes is expected to be announced in September ahead of the first round of public consultation. The dates of the consultation exhibitions have now been advised by Network Rail and will include the following locations and dates within Buckinghamshire:

**21 September 2015, 12-8pm**

Elim Church, Princes Risborough

**23 September 2015, 12-8pm**

Rivets Sports & Social Club, Aylesbury

**28 September 2015, 4-8pm**

**29 September, 2015, 12-8pm**

Winslow Public Hall, Winslow

Network Rail will be providing general publicity and an open invitation for Councillors to attend and support EWR consultation exhibitions in their local area. This provides an excellent opportunity for elected members to be involved in EWR and associated community engagement on the opportunities and issues arising from the scheme. This should be of interest for those not only near to the proposed re-opened railway, but also the wider population of Bucks who will be able to benefit from the greater options for rail travel locally and for using the national railway network without necessarily having to go via London.

There has been national media coverage of the challenges faced by Network Rail in delivering the Government's railway investment programme for 2014-19 known as Control Period 5 (CP5). The current position of East West Rail within the programme remains a relatively positive one with its current position unchanged. Points of particular note include:

- The summer review by the Chairman of Network Rail is about how schemes will be delivered, and is not about reducing or cutting the programme.
- The Government remains committed to East West Rail as one of the projects within the National Infrastructure Plan
- Network Rail's planning activity continues to work towards delivering the East West Rail scheme in CP5 - i.e. by March 2019.
- The Consortium awaits the outcome of the Network Rail Chairman's report to the Secretary of State (due to be published in Autumn) to understand what, if any, impact this may have on delivery of East West Rail.

The above is also set out along with more background information on the EWR Consortium web site via <http://www.eastwestrail.org.uk/2015/07/02/work-to-deliver-east-west-rail-western-section-continues/>

In the meantime some key elements of Phase 1 construction are nearing completion. New train services between Oxford Parkway (at Water Eaton) and London Marylebone via a re-modelled Bicester Village (formerly Bicester Town) Station are now scheduled to start from 26 October 2015, and from Oxford by March 2016.

A copy of the latest general EWR project update/newsletter can be found at the EWR website: <http://www.eastwestrail.org.uk/project-progress>

### **Capital Programme Improved Delivery – Timing and Quality**

To date over 120 schemes have been successfully delivered. Minor changes to sequence and programme have occurred as the works have progressed, primarily to accommodate on-site changes or the occasional bout of inclement weather.

The regular annual surfacing works are substantially complete and the benchmarked schemes have just commenced. The implementation of an improved quality process has ensured finishing works (white lines and road studs), are completed soon after the surfacing in the majority of instances.

### **Update re Market Testing Outcome**

The market testing of the enhanced capital programme is complete, and demonstrates Buckinghamshire is receiving value for money. The works have been split into three geographical packages of work and have now commenced on-site, as mentioned above. All work is expected to be complete by the end of November 2015, subject to weather and site conditions.

A further 9 schemes are currently being designed, identified from the 3 year forward programme, and will fully expend the £10m budget. Specific locations and dates will be confirmed during September.

### **Confirm – Member Working Group**

The mobilisation of the new IT system, Confirm, is complete. Handheld devices have been issued to Local Area Technicians and Highway Inspectors. Some teething problems have been encountered, and primarily relate to process changes. These are being resolved as they arise.

The next steps involve the production of member specific dashboards, which will give timely visibility of service delivery. The member customer journey group has been re-established to assist and inform the dashboard development.

### **Open Evenings**

Depot openings have been successfully held at Handy Cross, Amersham and Griffin Lane. These events were reasonably well attended, considering the summer break period, and were used to demonstrate the new systems in a live environment and give the opportunity to respond to service queries.

### **Prep for Winter Season**

The preparation for winter is well underway. Salt needed to return stocks to the required levels has been ordered and is expected to be delivered during October. Salt bins will also be replenished across the county during October.

Two new gritters are currently on order to replace age expired fleet, and will be delivered at the end of October.

The 2015/16 Winter Maintenance Plan is being finalised and is expected to be issued in October. Member and public briefing sessions are also planned for the same time.

**MARK SHAW  
CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION**

## **7e. CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

### **Children in Care and Care Leavers Celebration Event**

On the 27th August I hosted an event which celebrated the achievements of looked after children and young people and care leavers in Buckinghamshire. Not only did Social Workers, Youth Workers, Teachers and Foster Carers nominate the young people for awards but I was very pleased to see they were also there celebrating with them. Over 34 children and young people attended the event with over 50 people celebrating their achievements and success including awards for:

- Showing a positive attitude and excellent behaviour
- Helping others
- Achieving within education and training
- Achieving in sports and extra-curricular activities
- Playing a part in community and participation projects
- Overcoming difficult circumstances
- Coping admirably with change
- Demonstrating increased independence

### **Recruitment and retention**

I am delighted to report that my senior management team are all now permanent. This is critical for our improvement journey as well as reducing our agency bill. The final few Heads of Service that joined us over the summer are in First Response, Children in Need and Quality Standards and Performance. We continue to be successfully growing our own social workers, 11 have completed their training and are already allocated to teams where they will be supported with additional supervision until they have completed a further year in their posts. Another 6 have been identified for sponsorship through Learning and Development. We are moving forward, building permanent and stable teams, as well as reducing the need for agency staff. Our agency bill has reduced to 28% and I am particularly pleased to see First Response, who had predominantly agency staff now in a far more stable position.

### **Improving Children's Social Care Services**

Children's Social Care Services and partners are continuing to work together to ensure that improvements are made to safeguarding services in Buckinghamshire and we are now starting to see the impact of their hard work. Our performance indicators show good progress, particularly in Contact and MASH (the first point of contact with social care where cases are referred, reviewed and then if appropriate allocated to teams) and in child protection.

- The number of contacts progressed to MASH was 194 in July, a significant increase from 57 in April.
- The % of contacts with 'no further action' as the outcome reduced to 14% in July from 31% in April which confirms that the Thresholds for social care are now better understood by partners and that more contacts are being 'stepped down' to early help.
- The average time to complete assessments in July was 37 days against a statutory target of 45.
- 100% of ICPCs in July were held within 15 working days of the Strategy discussion – this is excellent news as it is one of our critical statutory timescales and indicates a timely response to vulnerable children.
- 100% of Child Protection Plans were also reviewed in timescales in July.
- The % of Children Looked After who had their reviews completed on time continues to rise and reached 97% in July.

- The average time to get Initial Health Assessment consent to for looked after children was down to 9.5 days in July. So far in August it is just 2.2 days (target is 5) which is brilliant especially considering the number of children who have come into care this month.

At the Improvement Board meeting in July, the Chair of the Board reported that he was pleased to see the continued improvement month on month and that the pace of improvement is accelerating each month.

### **Operation Articulate**

On 18th May the Operation Articulate trial began at the Old Bailey in London and reached its conclusion on the 24th July. The case centred around investigations into child sexual exploitation (CSE) in the Aylesbury area. 6 of the 11 men on trial at the Old Bailey were found to be guilty of offences relating to two victims, who were aged under 16 at the time when they occurred between January 2006 and December 2012. 4 men were found 'not guilty' and 1 will need to go back for a re-trial as the jury could not come to a decision. Sentencing will begin on 7th September.

We are all appalled by these despicable acts of cruel abuse. These girls have been extremely brave coming forward, to speak to the police and re-live their horrific experiences in court. David Johnston, on behalf of the Council, has apologised to both of victims as we have let them down during that period in their lives. I hope that young people who are worried about themselves or someone they know will have the same courage as these two girls did to come forward. I would like to echo David Johnston's apologies.

There is strong commitment to work together to protect our children. We launched our dedicated multiagency CSE 'Swan Unit' on the 1st July, this holds specialist workers considering not only new referrals but also acting as support for other social workers. We will be running 'lessons learnt' sessions for all staff over the coming months and there will be a Serious Case Review.

We have received considerable media attention, which raises public awareness of the crime and what people should be looking out for. By its nature it can be very secretive and manipulative; victims often do not see themselves as victims. It is essential that we all work together to stamp out this crime.

**LIN HAZELL**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

## **7f. CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

### **Adult Learning GCSE Success Rates for 2014/15**

As pupils across the country received their exam results, it has emerged that GCSE grades A\* to C have risen slightly this year, but top A\* and A grades have edged down. Whilst we await confirmation of results for Buckinghamshire, 115 candidates took either English (40) or Maths (75) GCSE with Adult Learning this summer. For these candidates, Adult Learning offers a second chance as the majority did not obtain these qualifications whilst at school. For some, English is not their first language. There was a 100% pass rate and A\* - C grades were excellent, with 72.5% achieving these grades in English (national rate: 65.4%) and 74.7% in Maths (national rate: 63.3%).

### **Early Education Places for Disadvantaged Two Year Olds**

In June, Buckinghamshire reported take-up of the entitlement for disadvantaged two year olds to receive free early education places to be 78%, or 1229 children. This is an increase of 4.9% from February 2015. Within the South East the average take up is 64% and Buckinghamshire was placed second out of the 19 local authorities. Within statistical neighbours the average take-up was 63% and Buckinghamshire was placed first out of the 11 local authorities.

### **School Buildings' Programme**

#### Misbourne School

A new £3.3m project has handed over at Misbourne School in Great Missenden. The project includes the replacement of the old temporary classrooms with fit-for-purpose accommodation, which includes improved pupil dining and flexible performance/leisure facilities, eight new classrooms, a sixth form area and additional staff accommodation.

#### St Mary's Aylesbury

St Mary's has seen the completion of a £1.8m expansion of the school to take a bulge class of 30 additional children in September 2015, and internal adaptations to make the school fit for purpose. The original school was built to accommodate 350 pupils but now accommodates 420. The new accommodation addresses existing deficiencies at the school, as well as enabling the bulge class to work its way through the school. A new multi-use games/play area has also been provided for outdoor sport. In the longer term, it is envisaged that the school will reorganise its provision for younger children into the new accommodation, and the bulge class will be able to be used for nursery provision should there be a future demand.

#### Learners with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities, Flackwell Heath

The Local Authority, working in partnership with Amersham and Wycombe College, has created a new bespoke unit on the Flackwell Heath Campus that will meet the forecast increase in demand for post 16 education placement. The new building will develop provision for young people with a significant learning disability and attendant other disabilities who have the potential, aspiration and skills to make use of education and training opportunities as part of their sustainable future. The provision will directly support the Government's Preparation for Adulthood transition agenda and, within that, will focus on employability and greater independent living. The new facility will mean that students who would previously have had to access provision outside of the county can now attend a Buckinghamshire facility.

#### Lace Hill Academy

In 2012, as required under government legislation, the County Council held a Competition to find a bidder to run the new primary school that was to open on the Lace

Hill Development of approximately 700 houses on the outskirts of Buckingham Town. All new schools have to open as Academies.

Following the competition, Bourton Meadow Education Trust, which also runs Bourton Meadow and George Grenville Schools in Buckingham, was chosen as the preferred bidder to run the new Lace Hill school. After a 9 month build programme the new Lace Hill Academy opened on 04 September 2015. The new school will initially open with 38 children across nursery, reception, year 1 and year 2, and it will then build up over the following four years to its capacity of 210 children and 26 nursery-aged.

### **Young People and Local Democracy**

The United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP) gives young people a voice, which will be heard and listened to by local and national government, providers of services for young people and other agencies that have an interest in the views and needs of young people. UKYP is nationwide and there are over 400 elected members of youth parliament (MYP's) and deputy members (DMYP's) who represent young people throughout the UK. In Buckinghamshire, young people are standing as candidates for Aylesbury, Chiltern & South Bucks and High Wycombe, with elections to begin in October.

Local Democracy week is 12 to 18 October 2015. The Youth Service and Member Services will be working with Amersham & Wycombe College and County Councillors on a budget simulation exercise on Wednesday 14 October 2015 from 1.30 to 3pm.

The aim of the experience is to enlighten young people about how local democracy works and the role of County Councillors. We are asking for Members to volunteer to take part in this event, as your experience as a Councillor will be vital in helping students gain advice and answer questions. We hope many of you will be interested in sharing your knowledge with the next generation of voters.

### **Buckinghamshire Learning Trust Partnership Bid Success**

The Buckinghamshire Learning Trust, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and the Puzzle Centre, has been awarded the contract by the Autism Education Trust to be the South East Region Early Years' Training Hub.

The hub delivers a training programme for early years' practitioners across the whole of the South East region of England. This is part of the Autism Education Trust's DfE supported programme to ensure that all children and young people with autism receive an education which enables them to engage in society as active citizens, and that their families and the professionals who work with them are informed, supported and equipped to enable this to be achieved.

There are three tiers of training available:

- Tier 1. Making sense of autism – for all early years' practitioners
- Tier 2. Good autism practice - for practitioners working directly with children with autism
- Tier 3. Leading good autism practice - for leaders and managers

Since commencing the training programme in April 2015, eight additional trainers have been inducted and have delivered training. Tier 1 training has been delivered to 352 early years' practitioners in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. This exceeds the target to be reached by March 2016 by 152. Interest is high amongst practitioners to attend further training (tiers 2 and 3) and this has been planned for autumn 2015 and spring

2016. Requests for training are also being received from organisations outside of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

**ZAHIR MOHAMMED**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS**



## **7g. CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **Flood Management**

On 7 February 2014, 79 properties flooded internally on the Willows estate in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. The flood occurred as a result of prolonged heavy rainfall leading to saturated ground and a combination of surface water and fluvial flooding from the nearby Stoke Brook.

The community, County, District and Town Council Members and officers from Buckinghamshire County Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Environment Agency and Thames Water worked in partnership to deliver a community-based solution to tackle the flooding problems. The partners spent time assessing the causes of the flooding and options available, and chose a solution of temporary defences comprising over 700m of temporary flood barrier alongside flap valves on outfalls, a trash screen and pumps. The cost of the assessment and equipment was £340k which was covered by the Government Repair and Renew Grant offered after the 2013/14 flooding. The flood defences provide cost-effective measures that will benefit the whole community. The project was delivered on time and to budget through excellent partnership working. Good partnership working continues with the writing of a plan for the logistics of deploying the equipment and roles of the community and partners during a flood.

A community launch event on 12 September 2015 celebrated this project and showcased the products.

### **Greatmoor Energy from Waste (EfW) Programme Update**

I am pleased to be able to report that the Construction of the Energy from Waste (EFW) facility at Greatmoor continues to proceed well. Cold Commissioning (ensuring the facility is fully working in terms of all processes except the burning of waste) is underway and Hot Commissioning (testing the facility with actual residual waste) is anticipated to occur from October this year.

For further information on progress there are regular updates on the County Council website and on FCC's websites which also includes a live webcam (see following links).  
<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/environment/waste,-recycling-and-treatment/energy-from-waste/>  
<http://fccenvironment.reachtimelapse.co.uk/greatmoor/ie8.php>

Greatmoor EfW is supported by the development of two waste transfer stations (WTS) for the bulking-up of waste from the south of the county and onward delivery to the EFW facility. Construction of the High Heavens WTS is nearing completion and as soon as the EfW moves into the hot commissioning phase, we will see all of the waste in the south of the county going through the WTS.

The London Road WTS, which received planning approval in May, is still subject to three conditions being met before formal planning consent can be issued; these being:

- a. That the Environment Agency (EA) withdraws its objection; FCC is working with the EA to resolve the outstanding issues;
- b. That following referral of the application to the Secretary of State (SoS), that the SoS does not intervene;
- c. That a legal agreement on routing of bulkers is reached. This will be twin tracked with the SoS referral.

Hence formal planning consent is not anticipated before the end of the year. There then remains a high risk of a Judicial Review challenge due to the high profile nature of this application. However I am confident that the Council can demonstrate that the planning application was conducted entirely correctly and as such any grounds for a Judicial Review challenge can be robustly defended.

### **Biowaste Contract Awards**

Waste Management has been undertaking a procurement exercise for new interim Biowaste Contract arrangements, whilst the longer term Biowaste project is embarked upon.

The new interim arrangements will replace existing contracts and agreements for the bulking and treatment of green and food waste from across the county. These arrangements provide the service provisions for food and green waste collected by all the district councils across Buckinghamshire and some household waste recycling centres. There has been good market interest in this opportunity; numerous bid proposals have been returned and we are currently in the evaluation stage. Potentially a single or multiple supplier contracts could be awarded during October - November 2015.

The new contract arrangements will commence during February 2016 until 2018, with flexible annual options (or shorter) to extend for up to a further three years until 2021. This flexible approach will support service needs whilst we move forward with the future long term Biowaste project.

### **Green Deal Together (GDT)**

In May 2013 BCC invested £35k in GDT, a Community Interest Company set up to delivery Green Deal plans – at the time the central policy for improving the energy efficiency of domestic buildings – along with 14 other local authorities in the South East. The Green Deal policy received sustained negative media attention and related funding was sporadic at best. Despite efforts to diversify the business model of GDT away from Green Deal plans, the company continued to make losses throughout its lifetime.

In May 2015 the GDT board (consisting of representatives from each local authority) decided to close the company to ensure that its reserves were sufficient to cover its remaining liabilities. The winding-up process is underway and expected to be concluded in the coming months. We have also requested that a report covering the lessons learnt and reasons for failure comes out of the winding-up process.

### **Energy Strategy**

Following adoption of the Energy Strategy in June 2015, work has progressed well on two of the key themes. The Energy Strategy puts great emphasis on community groups being influential and active in this area, and therefore one of the associated actions is to build capacity in this sector. In order to progress this, we are working with a network of existing community groups with a strong interest in energy to understand the drivers and barriers to greater activity and to agree how these are best addressed. Low Carbon Chilterns Co-operative is leading this piece of work and is due to report back in September 2015 with recommendations for how community energy can be supported in Buckinghamshire.

Other work on the Strategy includes progress to draw up metrics for measuring the progress made against the strategy themes, for example how the average energy efficiency of buildings in the county is changing and the levels of local energy

generation. The initial set of metrics is being prepared for the first progress review of the Energy Strategy in November 2015.

### **M40 Solar Noise Barriers**

Highways England is working in partnership with Wycombe District Council and the M40 Chiltern Environment Group (M4CEG) to deliver a pilot programme of noise barriers incorporating solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. Work is progressing well and Highways England has now accepted six conceptual solar noise barrier designs to take forward.

Detailed designs for the barriers at each of 21 sites being considered will now be developed for March 2016. These will then be publically consulted on with communities along the M40 between Junctions 3 and 8 (Loudwater to Milton Common), with the level of noise reduction which could be achieved at each site being a key consideration. Construction of the first barriers is expected in March 2017.

### **Quarrendon Leas**

A long term project has recently reached fruition on a nationally important heritage site on the northern edge of Aylesbury. Quarrendon Leas is a unique feature, containing over 1,000 years of landscape history and development, including a medieval village and an outstanding Tudor landscaped water garden.

Buckinghamshire County Council led on the creation of Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust, which has just taken ownership of the site. The Trust will now lead a partnership including BCC, AVDC and the local community to develop and implement a management plan to secure the heritage and help develop the site's full potential.

As well as national historical significance the area forms an important part of the green infrastructure for Aylesbury and has great potential for creating a valuable site for access, biodiversity and flood management. Longer term Quarrendon Leas could be a significant visitor attraction, providing visitors with a unique experience of how landscapes and communities change and develop.

### **Local Sites' Project**

An 18 month project to assess critically important sites for wildlife and people has been launched, covering the county and Milton Keynes. With funding from district councils and other partners, the council's BMERC (Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre) has sent out a team of surveyors to collect information on hundreds of sites which have potential as Local Wildlife Sites but have never been surveyed. Local Wildlife Sites is a nationally recognised network promoting local biodiversity but also vitally important as informal greenspace for local communities.

The project contributes towards the local planning process and helps inform the process of selecting appropriate sites for development. Sites which meet defined criteria will be promoted as Wildlife Sites and be added to the existing network of 432 sites which have been promoted in previous years. Many of the sites will not meet the criteria, and restrictions on alternative uses will be reduced.

**WARREN WHYTE  
CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT**

## **7h. CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**

### **Commercialisation & Innovation**

#### **Hackathon**

The Innovation and Commercialisation Team are working with the Transport, Economy and Environment Business Unit to hold a two-day “Hackathon” at Heatherden Hall, Pinewood Studios in October. The concept of hackathons started with computer programmers but has evolved into a way of bringing inspirational speakers, creative people, developers and product managers into a focussed environment that encourages innovative ideas.

Thinking digitally forms an important strand of our Future Shape Vision – so the challenge that will be set to the attendees of the hackathon will be around how digital solutions can be used to enhance our Country Parks.

The event will provide the opportunity for our staff to work with partners, major suppliers and invited businesses from Buckinghamshire to collaborate in a new way. Taking inspiration from organisations such as the NHS, Argos and Facebook that have successfully used hackathons to take innovative ideas and make them a reality.

This link gives an insight into one of the Argos hackathons:

<https://vimeo.com/92166588>

### **Business Services Plus**

#### **Digital Tools Programme**

The Digital Tools programme is well underway, putting into place the technology we need to make our Digital Strategy a reality. We want to make it easier for customers to self-serve, provide a consistent customer service across different channels (phones, email, web chat etc) to match customer expectations and behaviours, help Business Units to trade services and generate income and to create the business intelligence systems we need to make better use of data and customer intelligence.

We have successfully upgraded our telephony platform to CTalk in order to provide a more flexible, modern solution for our customer Contact Centre. The advantages to the system include incorporating telephony, webchat, social media enquiries through one provider, better reporting, ability to grow/shrink business and allowing for homeworking.

We are in the process of implementing our new digital customer platform, which will help increase self-service and reduce unnecessary contact into the Council, and ultimately give customers a single view of interactions and services through the new ‘My Account’ functionality.

The implementation of our new e-commerce system is also underway to support income generation and better customer service.

The new tools will not only significantly improve customer service experience but will transform the way we work and produce efficiency savings.

### **HR Operations**

#### **Social Worker Recruitment**

A national shortage of Social Workers continues to have a massive impact on our ability to attract and retain qualified staff. Since the start of the year we have renewed our effort to attract staff aided by significantly improving our candidate experience, speeding up the recruitment process and developing an enhanced reward package. To date we

have successfully offered 60 permanent employees ranging from Heads of Service to Children & Family Workers including 9 Social Workers from our Romania Campaign. We have 33 new starters between August and September with direct search initiatives and improved new starter processes likely to further increase this number. Finally, 11 Newly Qualified Social Workers from our Front Line and sponsored Open University programme have been placed in identified units for a September start.

Here is a breakdown of New Starters since January.

**January 1 new starter**

- 1 experienced social Worker started in CIN

**February 2 new starters**

- 1 ATM in Permanence
- 1 Newly Qualified in CWD

**March 3 new starters**

- 2 newly qualified in CIN
- 1 experienced Social Worker in CWD

**April 3 new starters**

- 2 experienced Social Workers for FRT and Permanence
- 1 Independent Reviewing Officer

**May 2 new starters**

- Director, Children's Services
- 1 Newly Qualified Social Worker for CIC

**June 8 new starters**

- 1 Conferencing Manager for Child Protection
- 4 experienced Social Workers for CIN and CWD and Fostering
- 2 Independent Reviewing Officers
- 1 Head of Service, FRT and MASH

**July 6 new starters**

- 2 newly qualified in CIN and CIC
- 1 Consultant Social Work Manager
- 3 experienced Social Workers for Fostering FRT and CIN.

**August 6 new starters**

- 2 Heads of Service – CIN and QSP
- 1 Practice Improvement Manager CIN
- 3 experienced Social Workers for CIN.

**September 23 new starters**

- 11 Newly Qualified Social Workers
- 7 Romanian experienced Social Workers
- 5 experienced Social Workers

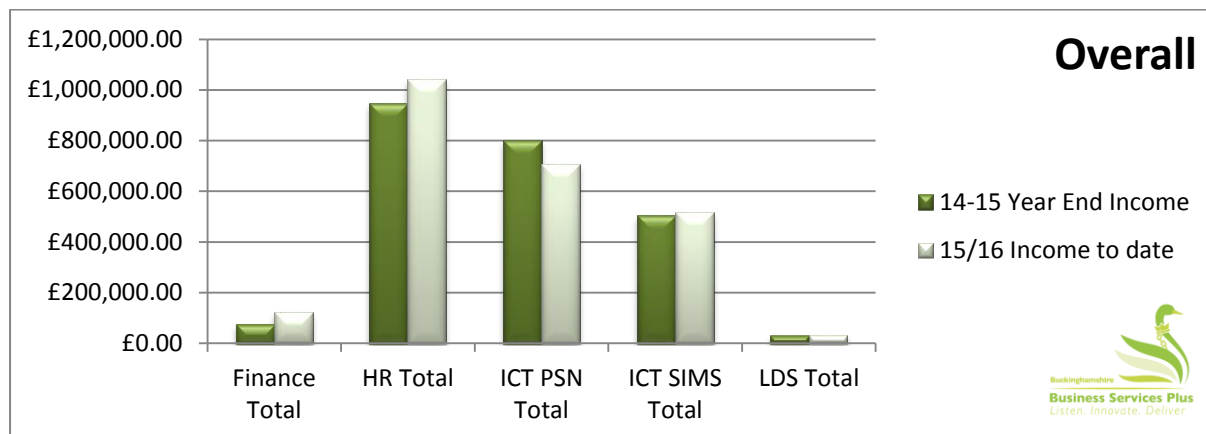
We have 6 further offers out for experienced Social Workers with start dates to be confirmed.

## Commercial

### Schools Buy Back

Business Services Plus provides Schools and Academies with a wide range of professional services across HR, Finance, ICT, Legal Services and Property Management.

To date we have now received a massive £2,476,591 of orders through Traded Services, which is £67,688 above orders received for 2014 / 15.



The products with the biggest increases compared to last year are SIMS (support for the schools management systems) with an additional £47,944, HR Payroll with an additional £34,997 and new Finance packages with an additional £46,803.

The Commercial Team have issued purchase statements, service descriptors and service level agreements to all school and academy customers ahead of the new academic year.

We are currently working with Corporate Business Support to introduce a centralised way of recording billable work that is charged outside of Traded Services to provide a complete picture of income (and recharges) across the Business Unit.

**JOHN CHILVER**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**