

County Council



Cabinet Member Reports

11a. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

May Council Debate

In recent years, the County Council has extended the AGM in May to hold an Annual Debate on the priorities for Buckinghamshire, drawing in external speakers to give us different perspectives on the key issues and challenges we are tackling. This has provided an important opportunity for the engagement of all Members of the Council in shaping the Council's priorities.

This year, we are on the brink of a set of major national reforms which are intended to lead to radical changes in both the shape and purpose of local government. These include the funding arrangements for local government, the devolution of new responsibilities as part of the transfer of Business Rates, Health and Social Care integration, the Growth agenda and the role of the Council in Education. Each of these individually has significant implications for the County Council. Taken together, they will potentially fundamentally change the landscape of the local public sector.

The Council undertook a review of the Strategic Plan in 2015 and refocused it around 3 clear themes:

- Safeguarding Our Vulnerable
- Creating Opportunities and Building Self Reliance
- Keeping Buckinghamshire Thriving and Attractive

Given the reform agenda, we may need to revisit the Strategic Plan again during the year ahead to ensure it is fit for purpose to hand over to the new Council in May 2017. The next AGM Annual Debate on 26 May 2016 will be an opportunity to start a discussion with Members on the implications of these reforms for the Council's future priorities. The agenda is currently being developed and will be circulated to all Members in advance.

High Speed 2 Update

Assurances

The Council appeared before the House of Commons Select Committee on 20 January 2016 and again on 3 February 2016 and has subsequently received a number of Assurances from HS2 Ltd:

- Mitigation for the Steeple Claydon and Calvert areas including:
 - £1 million for additional local mitigation and community use
 - removal of the spoil tip and relocation of rail sidings
 - review the proposed increased car parking provision at the IMD
 - surfaced cycleways

- HS2 has agreed to assess 71 listed road junctions and construction routes up and down the county where the Council has either capacity or safety concerns. Where HS2 construction traffic is assessed to have an impact on those junctions then HS2 Ltd will pay for appropriate mitigation, such as temporary junction widening and improvements to junctions with signals, ahead of the main civil engineering works.
- A further contribution of £480,000 has been secured for safety measures along the A4010 (Risborough-Aylesbury road) and A4129 (Risborough-Thame road) where these are to be used as a HS2 construction route.
- The Council also expressed concern that the Stoke Mandeville Bypass between the B4443 Lower Road and the A4010 Risborough Road will worsen traffic along the B4443 Lower Road and the Aylesbury Gyratory. HS2 Ltd has now agreed to fund BCC £150,000 toward the cost of the Council undertaking transport modelling to establish the design of an extension to the Bypass.
- HS2 Ltd will contribute the full cost of bridging the Aylesbury to Marylebone railway line.
- HS2 Ltd has agreed to fund £470,000 for a walking and cycling route along the realigned A4010 Stoke Mandeville Bypass.
- The Council asked HS2 Ltd to provide an underpass on the Risborough to Aylesbury line and to secure the Network Rail approvals, which would then allow the Council to construct a road, as part of an around Aylesbury network, in the future.
- The Council asked for funding towards additional CCTV cameras to link to its Automated Traffic Information System (ATIS) to help monitor and manage congestion in urban areas. HS2 Ltd has agreed to make available funding of £300,000.
- The Council requested public access to land in south west Aylesbury in order to meet its aspiration of an Aylesbury Linear Park. A financial contribution of £500,000 has been offered by HS2 Ltd.

Two major issues dominated the eleventh-hour negotiations and were particularly tough to reach agreement on:

- The Council expressed concern regarding the impacts on Iver village, not only from HS2 but also from other major transport schemes in the area, making even worse the existing Heavy Goods Vehicle congestion. HS2 eventually agreed it would work with the other transport projects and each would make a 'proportionate contribution' towards mitigation measures. These would be based on a 'Transport Appraisal' to be funded by HS2. The County Council believes that an Iver Relief Road may provide the solution and HS2 Ltd has offered to meet up to £1,420,000 of future potential costs.
- Local communities in Great Missenden and Prestwood expressed their concerns to the Council about the proposal to provide a haul road for construction traffic from the Link Road roundabout on the A413. The Council asked that an alternative haul road be provided further north. HS2 Ltd has agreed to this, subject to the Council securing the necessary consents and that any alternative proposal does not increase the cost, add time or be more environmentally damaging.

HS2 Summit

On 24 March the County Council held an HS2 summit at Green Park. This was well attended by over 100 residents and Councillors. HS2 Ltd staff gave presentations on project design and construction and scheme developments, community engagement and next steps. There was a lengthy question and answer session at the end.

HS2 Bill

The Bill had its Third Reading in the House of Commons on 23 March where MPs voted by 399 to 42 in favour of the project proceeding. The Third Reading in the House of Commons was followed by the First Reading in the House of Lords; the Second Reading was held on 14 April. The period for petitioning closed on 18 April and the County Council submitted a further petition.

Community Events

Community events were held on 5, 7, 12 and 21 April for the HS2 team to discuss the Council's petition points and progress to date on the assurances received.

Hillingdon Outdoor Activity Centre

For those residents living in the vicinity of Hillingdon Outdoor Activity Centre (HOAC), HS2 Ltd and the Centre held pre-planning application information days to explain their plans for a potential relocation to New Denham Quarry. The first meeting was held on the 19 March and the second on 9 April at Denham Community Centre. Discussions continue between the Council, HS2 Ltd, Summerleaze and the trustees of the Centre.

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance

The first part of 2016 has seen the Alliance initiative gather further momentum locally and recognition nationally.

Meetings of the Alliance leaders now include representatives from 8 Local Transport Authorities (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Milton Keynes, Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton Borough and Cambridgeshire) and 4 Local Enterprise Partnerships (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and SEMLEP).

In February we saw the first meeting of the newly established Strategic Transport Forum. The Forum is chaired by the Leader of Northamptonshire County Council – Cllr Jim Harker: the County Council's representative on the Forum is the Cabinet Member for Transport.

In addition to an elected member from each of the Local Transport Authorities and a Board representative from the Local Enterprise Partnerships, Forum membership includes representatives from the Department for Transport, Highways England, Network Rail, public transport operators, the Civil Engineering Contractors Association, and the Transport Systems Catapult. Meetings of the Forum are held in public, with the next meeting scheduled for Friday 13th May.

The initial priority for the Forum is to build on the evidence base that already exists to develop an overarching transport strategy for the Heartland area. This will enable the Forum to engage with the work that begins this autumn on shaping the future investment strategies for both Highways England and Network Rail. Both organisations work within 5-year investment programmes: with the content of the current 5-year programmes already fixed, the work this autumn will be looking to shape national

decisions on investment priorities for the period 2019-2024. At the same time the availability of an overarching transport strategy will help support future bids to national funding schemes, such as the 'Large Local Major Schemes'.

In March we received public support from our delivery partners for the Alliance initiative (Ringway Jacobs for Buckinghamshire). Their commitment to work as part of the Alliance approach reflects an original aim of the Alliance: to realise efficiencies and savings in the delivery of investment. Our partners' commitment extends to the provision of a senior individual to support the Alliance work.

Since the turn of the year as the Alliance Leaders we have been looking to influence the work of the (shadow) National Infrastructure Commission. Our response to the recent consultation on the structure and governance of the Commission supported the proposal that it should be required to liaise with sub-national groupings of local authorities (such as the Strategic Alliance).

Amongst the announcements made at the time of the Budget in March was a letter from the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Commission to undertake a piece of work focused on the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor. This was driven by Government recognition that the area is a single, knowledge-intensive cluster that competes on the global stage. The Commission has been asked to look at infrastructure requirements and begin to look at the business case for investments that support economic growth.

The timeframe for the Commission is to have an interim report to Government towards the end of this year, with a final report presented in autumn 2017.

Also of interest is the fact that, as a separate piece of work, the Commission has been asked to look at what is required to enable the UK to become a world leader in 5G infrastructure. For our knowledge-based economy, the issue of digital infrastructure is also of considerable interest.

The fact that the Commission has been asked to look at what is in effect the Heartland area is significant. However it serves to emphasise the importance of having the Strategic Alliance as a means of ensuring that we are able to influence and shape a conversation that is of national significance.

As the Alliance Leaders we had already begun to look at developing a broader strategic infrastructure plan for the Heartland area: the involvement of the National Infrastructure Commission makes such work all the more important.

At the start of the year, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act placed on the statute books the ability of local partners to put forward proposals to establish a Sub-national Transport Body. Government ministers have emphasised that they see Sub-national Transport Bodies as enabling local partners to 'develop transport plans for their areas' and 'tackle issues that are currently decided in Whitehall rather than by local councils, relating to, for instance longer distance road and rail networks or systems that cross geographical areas such as integrated ticketing systems'.

It is clear that this framework offers the Alliance partners an opportunity to realise some of the key aims that gave rise to the original initiative. With that in mind as Alliance leaders we are starting to explore the potential of putting forward a proposal based on the Heartland area.

Buckinghamshire's Growth Agenda

The County Council has been very active working with Buckinghamshire Districts on managing the growth of Buckinghamshire through their respective Local Plan processes and planning applications as a statutory consultee. At a strategic planning level, Members and officers of the County Council have input to the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation, the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation, the Princes Risborough Town Plan Consultation and the County report to assess the Green Belt. As part of the duty to co-operate Members and officers have also input to the Milton Keynes Local Plan consultation on strategic directions of growth and their preferred site allocations, provided input to the Slough Local Plan consultation and the Luton Local Plan consultation.

The County Council is working alongside the Districts with the Local Enterprise Partnership to identify infrastructure investment priorities for Local Growth funding, the Health and Wellbeing board on health outcomes and the Local Nature Partnership on green infrastructure priorities for investment and spatial planning. Key issues for the County Council include safeguarding and maintaining the Buckinghamshire Green Belt, consolidating housing and employment growth around strategic settlements, strengthening connectivity to strategic rail and road networks including north-south connectivity and the M40 corridor, managing flood risk, managing pressure on the County's education system and the road network, meeting the needs of the ageing population in order to plan for health outcomes and models of service provision in the future.

The county is expecting growth of circa. 50,000 additional households in the next twenty years and is working on preferred sites and options for housing and employment growth through the District Local Plan processes over the next twelve to eighteen months. The County Council is considering the implications of the associated population growth to understand and plan for potential pressure on services, including waste, energy, water, flood risk management, minerals and waste, transport, roads, schools, health and social care services.

Buckinghamshire is also gearing up for significant national infrastructure investment over the next twenty years and is working with the Economic Heart of England Strategic Alliance to identify and secure critical infrastructure investment. The County Council has worked with the Districts on mitigating the impact of nationally significant infrastructure projects including HS2 and the M4 Smart Motorway proposal, continues to actively champion the East-West Rail project and work with the Districts on mitigating the impact of the proposed Western Rail Link to Heathrow. The County Council has also input to national consultations around changes to the English planning system, the structure and operation of the new National Infrastructure Commission, the DCLG consultation on the proposed changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy and the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

Broadband Update

Contract 1 - the rollout in Buckinghamshire continues to progress, with 44,841 homes and businesses accessing fibre broadband. The fibre rollout is now 100% complete in Bucks with fewer than 400 premises in the queue to be commissioned. BT are preparing structures (cabinets and other fibre infrastructure) to be 'ready for service' so that premises can place orders to subscribe to superfast and faster broadband. Areas that have been enabled thus far are detailed here - www.connectedcounties.org/check-availability.

The project is currently working with BT and BDUK to bring the deployment aspect of contract 1 to a close. The good news is that based on deliverables to date BT have delivered 64,393 premises, which is **64** premises above the target of 64,329 set out in the project's Implementation Plan. Confirmation is awaited on how many of those premises are superfast (>24Mbps) to assess coverage.

The project has seen capital savings based on supplier underspend to date. BT are contributing their underspend to what, according to spend profile, the local body would usually be paying. As a result, funding remains in the local bodies' account. Once the figure has crystallised, expected by mid-May, work will focus on how it can be utilised.

In terms of completion, one cabinet (Aylesbury 98 – 169 premises) was not completed before the 31 March 2016 deadline and another structure (Lillingstone Dayrell v2 – 46 premises) remains partially complete, which means that 215 premises will not access superfast broadband in this contract period. Although this does not affect the contractual target of premises passed with superfast broadband, it will mean residents will have to wait longer for service to reach them. The project is working with BT and BDUK to include the structures into contract 2.

Contract 2 - Some delays have been experienced with BT on the clarification questions part of the evaluation, due to recent identification of Herts postcodes in the proposal. The corrections needed impact on the financial model, technology and premises numbers being proposed.

The current proposal is providing fibre infrastructure to just over 9,500 premises with 7,160 of those set to achieve superfast broadband speeds of 24Mbps, and 6,759 estimated to achieve more than 30Mbps as part of recently agreed EU requirements. This is expected to be revised upwards when BT corrects the data issues.

Take-up – Monthly take-up data confirms that this has now increased to 28.83% across the project as a whole. The trend continues to show a positive upward trajectory and demand stimulation activity is now increasingly targeted to accelerate this figure with more focus on the areas with lower take-up.

Demand stimulation/communications – the project continues to focus on this aspect as provides an opportunity to influence take-up and to generate of clawback funds. Activities include website refinements; issuing the Connected Counties newsletter; targeted leaflet drops; Bucks Business First member e-shots; direct correspondence; cabinet stickers; and promotional work in newly 'live' locations.

Basic Broadband Satellite Scheme – The scheme enables homes/business who currently receive less than 2 Mbps the opportunity to access a subsidised satellite broadband connection. The scheme is accessible via the Connected Counties website (<http://www.connectedcounties.org/basic-broadband-satellite-scheme-faqs>) and uses a self-certification form.

Integration of Health and Social Care

Integrated health and social care should offer three main benefits: better outcomes for service users and patients; making limited resources go further; improving people's experience of health, care and support. These have been policy aspirations for many years, but a transformed policy and financial climate demand new ways of achieving

them. The NHS and social care face unprecedented productivity and efficiency challenges. Changes will be necessary to make resources go further across organisational boundaries as well as within them.

Earlier this year, the Government issued the NHS Planning Guidance 2016/17 – 2020/21. The main thrust of this document is the requirement for NHS and Local Authority systems to produce a Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP), which is meant to be the local blueprint for accelerating the NHS implementation of the ‘NHS 5 Year Forward View’. The STP will be an ‘umbrella plan’, holding underneath it a number of different specific delivery plans, some of which will necessarily be on different geographical footprints. The footprint for the ‘umbrella plan’ is Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire (BOB). The integration of health and social care is a key plank for the delivery of the STP.

For 2016/17, the implementation of the Better Care Fund (BCF) is the key funding mechanism for expediting the integration of health and social care. A key deliverable is that every area must have an agreed plan by March 2017 for better integrating health and social care. Full implementation of this plan should be achieved by 2020.

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

11b. CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING

Domiciliary Care Contracts

New contracts for care provided in people's own homes have been awarded and came into effect on 1st April 2016. We currently provide 15,000 hours of home care each week to some of the most vulnerable adults in the county. This is done through a mix of fixed and short-term contracts with many providers. With the new contracts there will be four main providers delivering care split across nine areas across the county.

The new contracts will be delivered by: Clece Care services, Prime Care, Simply Together and Westminster Homecare.

With fewer providers and through the introduction of specialist equipment that can, for example, make it possible for a single carer to manage personal care safely where previously two carers would be needed, we estimate savings could be as much as £1.5 million per year. These savings also take into account the costs of the National Living Wage which came into effect in April.

We wrote to service-users to let them know who their care provider would be from 1st April 2016 and to reassure them that they will continue to receive their service. Where there was a change of provider, introductions to the new company and carers took place. Guidance was also provided to service users who requested a Direct Payment.

Buckinghamshire Care UK Skills for Care Award

Buckinghamshire Care Human Resources team has secured a national award in the category of "Best Recruitment initiative" at the Skills for Care Accolades. The award recognises the achievements of organisations which are committed to boosting skills and knowledge within the adult social care workforce.

The 'Best Recruitment Initiative' category was based on the number of innovative recruitment initiatives we have in place to attract great people with the right skills and values in a sector that we all know often faces challenges in appointing and retaining staff.

For Buckinghamshire Care to deliver award winning services means that they need to attract great people to join them, flourish and make a positive impact. The part recruitment plays in this is crucial, as is raising awareness of the important part social care plays in society.

Adult Social Care Local Account

Each year Local Authorities are required to produce a "Local Account" which keeps our residents informed about key priorities within Adult Social Care & Public Health and how these help improve the lives of vulnerable adults in Buckinghamshire.

Our Local Account is produced with the involvement of service users, carers, voluntary sector partners, partnership board representatives and elected councillors.

This year, as well as providing information on key performance areas of adult social care, there was a focus on life stories and experiences from people who use our services, or who work with the Council as volunteers or members of our partner organisations. Our report shows that nearly 9,000 adults were helped with care and

support over the last year, which includes 6,193 people over the age of 65. During the year the care management teams completed over 18,500 assessments and reviews.

The review shows that, for 2014/15 the biggest cost to the Council in caring for adults was for placing people in care homes at £52.8 million, with the next largest spend being for looking after people in their own home costing £44 million.

As well as information on the key performance areas of adult social care, this year's review has a focus on life stories and experiences from people who work with the council as volunteers or partner organisations.

Fremantle - Care Quality Commission Rating

The Heights care home which is part of the Fremantle Trust has been rated as 'outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). This is the first care establishment in Buckinghamshire to do so.

An 'outstanding' rating from the Care Quality Commission is a real achievement and has been given to just 24 out of 1,668 care establishments nationally since April 2014.

National Summary ratings	CQC	Quantity of Assessments By Jan 2016	% Total
Outstanding		24	1.4%
Good		1081	64.8%
Needs Improvement		442	26.5%
Inadequate		121	7.3%
TOTAL		1668	100%

The Heights is a 75 bed residential and nursing home that also supports people with dementia. Buckinghamshire County Council has commissioned fifty block beds from this service, half of which are residential and half nursing.

The manager and staff at The Heights have all shown their commitment to supporting vulnerable older people with the highest standards of care and this is a tremendous accolade to the sustained improvements that The Heights have made in recent years. The Heights manager, Blesson Thomas, acknowledged the support provided by officers within the council's Quality in Care Team stating *'From the bottom of my heart I would express my gratitude and thanks for the support the Quality in Care team has shown us over the years'*

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

11c. CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Department for Education (DfE)

After a significant delay, we have finally received the formal letter from the Minister following the Ingson audits in January. The Minister said he recognises we have made significant improvements to our children's social care services and that our overarching commitment to providing an improved service is showing clear signs of progress. The DfE plans to visit again for a further review in early summer. The Minister's decision is good news and I want to thank staff for their continued commitment and hard work. We can all look forward now to focusing on continuing on our improvement journey and supporting children and families.

Vision Strapline

'Together...Keeping Children Safe'

This is the new vision strapline that key agencies working with children and young people in Buckinghamshire have signed up to. This is a significant step forward in all agencies coming together as a single service united by a common sense of purpose. The strapline summarises our shared vision for children and young people:

Children and young people are safe, happy and healthy, feel valued and value others, are treated fairly, have lives filled with learning, thrive and are able to enjoy life and spend quality time with family and friends.

Journey of the Child

Colleagues in Social Care have developed a narrative around 'what is the journey of the child' in Buckinghamshire. Whilst this was a complicated task it helps explain how all the teams and partners work together to keep children safe. The visual image of this journey is a roundabout showing that every child's journey is different and the many 'roads' families can take into and out of social care. A safeguarding training session for Members took place on the 7th April which explained this in further detail. Additional briefings and work shadowing opportunities are also available for Councillors.

Care Leaver's Protocol

The Aftercare Team is continuing to work closely with the 4 District Councils in reviewing the Leaving Care Housing Protocol to refresh and take into account the key changes to the housing register, housing and social care legislation and the transition to adulthood.

The Protocol is aimed at addressing the housing needs of Care Leavers so that they can leave care in a planned manner. It recognises the individual's circumstances, the diverse needs of the young people and the need for supported accommodation post 18 to prepare them for independence and their own tenancy. Reviewing the Protocol with the 4 District Councils has given us an up-to-date insight into the different roles and responsibilities of the services that Housing and Social Care offer to young people and a continued willingness to work together for the benefit of the young person to achieve positive outcomes.

Improvements

There has been an increase in activity across the thresholds (Children in Need, Child Protection and Children in Care) however it is pleasing to note that despite this there

has been improved performance. We still have work to do but this is good to see. In other good news, permanent homes have been found for 33 children and another 17 of our Looked after Children are going to university. These are extremely positive signs which will continue to help children long term.

CSE Awareness Day

Sexual Exploitation Awareness Raising Day was the 18th March 2016. There was significant press coverage on the work being undertaken by the Council and across partnerships in regards to exploitation.

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

11d. CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC HEALTH

Trading Standards

The joint Trading Standards team from Buckinghamshire and Surrey has won two silver awards for efficiency. In the national Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise 2016 awards, the team picked up the two awards for the work they did in merging Buckinghamshire's and Surrey's Trading Standards operation a year ago, harnessing their collective expertise to give consumers stronger safeguards and businesses a better service.

Judges said the joint service's success in the Remodelling Local Services category had demonstrated a relentless drive to redesign service delivery to meet the needs of residents and businesses.

They also praised the team - in the Working Together category - for their dedication and commitment to working as partners in trying something new to make a meaningful difference to residents and businesses.

New Buckinghamshire Coroner

Mr Crispin Butler has succeeded Mr Richard Hulett as the new Coroner of Buckinghamshire. Crispin was Assistant Coroner for 15 years, and a local solicitor since 1993.

Richard Hulett had been Buckinghamshire's Coroner for 25 years and he estimated he had touched the deaths of more than 30,000 people in the county. He had overseen the move to centralise the service on one site, at the old Beaconsfield Magistrates Court - the location was Causton police station for many an episode of television's Midsomer Murders.

But inquests are not just about recording a verdict on someone's death; the Coroner also presides over Treasure finds. Today, Coroner, court and administration are in one place, which has created greater efficiency in dealing with cases.

Crispin took up his role on 1st April 2015.

Buckinghamshire Sexual and Reproductive Services – Sexual Health Contract

Buckinghamshire County Council has recently tendered for local sexual health services and the contract has been awarded to Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust and Terrence Higgins Trust. The overall service will be known as bSHaw which stands for Buckinghamshire Sexual Health and Wellbeing and takes effect from 1st April 2016 until 31st March 2021.

Following the transfer of Public Health responsibilities from the NHS to the County Council, the Council is now responsible for commissioning services for the testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and specialist contraception services. The new contract will improve these services in a number of ways including better integration between sexual health and contraceptive services and a more seamless service between specialist and community sexual health services.

Active Bucks

Following the community engagement phase of Active Bucks, a wide range of activities have now been commissioned to deliver what physical activity opportunities residents told us they wanted.

Active Bucks LAF-funded physical activity

Activities chosen by each Local Area Forum for their local area will start from the beginning of May and run for a period of 6 months. Activities will target inactive and low-active residents of all ages, and include: Community Group Walks; Yoga & Pilates; Walking Netball; Baseball & Softball; Gentle Exercise; Multi-Sports; Dance and Walking Football.

Active Bucks Green Space Projects

Two green space projects have been commissioned that will use a range of different activities and green spaces (parks; woodland; lakes; playing fields; accessible countryside etc) across Buckinghamshire to get more residents regularly active. The 2 green space projects are:

Structured Physical Activity

- to include a range of instructor-led weekly sport and physical activity opportunities, including Rounders; Buggy Fit and Orienteering

Physical Activity by Stealth

- to include a range of opportunities that utilise wider activities/motivators to engage residents but that involves physical activity as a key component, including photography walks; Live Action Role Play (LARP); and Bushcraft

Active Bucks campaign

A supporting campaign will launch in the summer, to engage inactive and low active residents in all the local activities that are taking place across the county, including those detailed above. Offering a 'free first session' and 'bring a friend for free' vouchers to inspire residents to try something new. Residents will be able to search for activities local to them, register for their free voucher to attend, and receive updates about activity sessions that they might like to try throughout the campaign. The campaign will have a phased start from June 2016, with a countywide launch by the end of July, and finish in September 2017.

MARTIN PHILLIPS
CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

11e. CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

A Partnership – Buckinghamshire County Council and Schools working together to develop a co-ordinated approach to Year 6/7 transition

The transition between primary and secondary school is widely regarded as an important crossroad in a young person's educational journey. The Council recognises that a larger school environment, combined with changes in a young person's peer group and related concerns about social acceptance, can have a significant impact on a young person's self-esteem as well as their academic performance at this key time. A supportive transitions process is essential to ensure that all young people and their families receive the necessary information, help and assistance to enable them to make a positive and successful start to their time in secondary school.

The Education Team has worked with a group of Primary and Secondary Headteachers to review, consolidate and enhance practice already happening within Buckinghamshire; and has produced a Transitions Guidance Paper for all schools to help them develop a transition process that supports pupils' academic and pastoral needs.

Recommendations include:

- Increasing the number of transition days from one to two (from 2016/7), enabling pupils to have an enhanced experience of their new school before they start in September.
- All secondary schools offering "outreach experiences" to Year 5 and 6 pupils from their feeder schools, such as sporting events or science days.
- Focusing on pupils' pastoral well-being over the transition period by introducing a buddy or mentor system for all Year 7s.
- Offering more information and support to parents, including a Parents' Evening in July to answer any questions or concerns before the September start date.
- A comprehensive information-sharing process between primary and secondary schools to identify pupils who may need additional support over this period.

This transitions guidance will be in place for this year's transition process, and will be reviewed and updated in September.

Secondary Allocations for 2016

Nearly 80% of pupils were allocated their first choice on secondary school offer day.

Figures published on 1st March show that more and more young people across Buckinghamshire are getting their first choice secondary school.

National offer day revealed that 76.95% of Buckinghamshire's youngsters were allocated their first choice secondary school. This is up nearly 3% on last year's figures.

In all, there were 5,895 applications from residents for places, compared with 5,813 the year before. As happens every year, a small number were not allocated a preferred school at this stage, but the Council's Admissions and Transport Team will continue to work closely with those families affected.

Buckinghamshire County Council has in excess of 6000 secondary school places available in the county this year and fewer than 5900 residents seeking a place. We actually accommodated over 790 non-Buckinghamshire children, whilst 563 Buckinghamshire children successfully applied for schools outside Buckinghamshire.

As decisions from parents are received, any places that are refused will be re-offered to children on the waiting lists in later allocation rounds.

Applications from out-of-county hopefuls did increase by about 570, such is the attraction of a Buckinghamshire education. The Council had to refuse 1361 out-area applications in the first round but would hope over time that more can be offered. However we would of course expect their own Borough or County Council to find places for those children if this does not happen.

Youth Voice March 2016

Young people from across Buckinghamshire came together on the evening of Thursday 3rd March to discuss, explore and debate the issue of bullying. Prior to the event the youth service surveyed a broad range of young people to gain feedback how they are affected by bullying and what changes they would like to make. All of the feedback was shared on the night and was used to inform the discussions.

Using a range of methods the young people explored how bullying seriously impacts upon the lives of young people and their families. Young people were given a chance to ask questions with a professional panel including the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board, Youth Offending Service, Schools and the County Council's Policy and Equalities Manager.

The young people made pledges to changes that they would commit to and the panel have agreed to run a project programme to support Children and Young people and their families to improve their confidence and resilience.

Model United Nations Conference 22 April 2016

On 22 April 2016, the 8th countywide annual Model United Nations (MUN) event will take place in Aylesbury, where 11 secondary schools (including one Independent, six Grammar and four Non Selective) with a total of approximately 100 students will debate the topic Freedom of Movement. As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I will be opening the conference. On the day we will be pleased to have the Rt Hon John Bercow, MP for Buckingham and Speaker of the House of Commons, give a short address to the students.

The Bucks MUN model is unique when it comes to how students work together. In traditional MUNs the country delegations will be made up of students from the same school. The Bucks model sees country delegations comprise students from different schools who have never met before, taking part in the MUN programme and having to work together to represent their country with very limited time to research and prepare their position and policies. By using this model, the Bucks model helps deliver linking young people, teachers, schools and communities. It supports schools to meet their community cohesion duty and supports fundamental British Values.

Benefits and Impacts

The feedback from the assessments and the comments from the students in all of our previous events show that the Bucks MUN programme has been overall very

successful in achieving its aims and objectives. The students clearly improved their knowledge and understanding of the United Nations and worked together as global citizens to debate and resolve complex but topical issues.

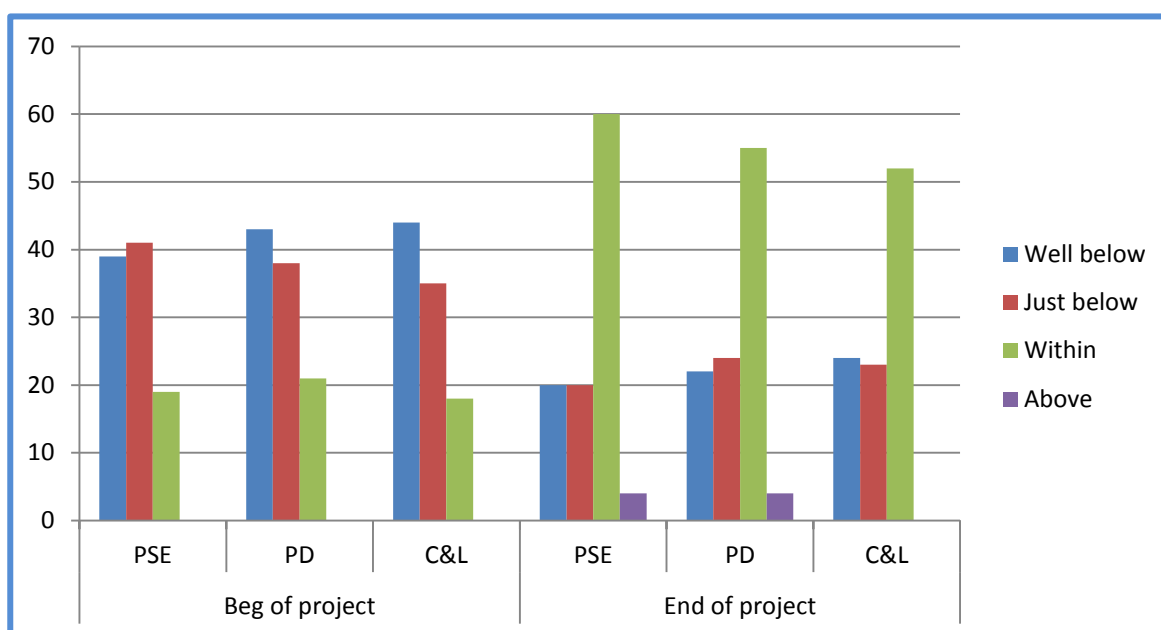
The evaluation demonstrated that this project had positive impacts on a wide range of key skills, helping them prepare for adult life. For example, the project had a great impact on improving their Public Speaking Skills, Partnership Working and understanding of Equality and Social Justice amongst others things. All students reported that taking part in MUN had improved their understanding of World Affairs and that they now had a better understanding of the political world they live in. They became more likely to take part in political activities and felt more confident that they would be able to make a difference in their local community.

Buckinghamshire Learning Trust Early Years' Service

Home Learning Matters Project February 2015 – March 2016

Home Learning Matters is a project to support early years' settings and children's centres to work with families with children 0-5 years identified as at greatest risk of underachievement, in particular 2 year olds whose families are eligible for early education funding. The aims and objectives of this project are based upon the most recent research evidence into the long term effects of a child's experience during the early years of life.

At the end of the project we analysed results across the settings, comparing the stage of development for the target group against expected stage for the age group. In all prime areas of learning, (personal, social & emotional [PSE] physical development [PD] and communication & language [C&L]), there had been a significant shift from the majority of children performing below or significantly below age-expected stage of development, to the majority performing within or even above expected. This is an average 35% increase in number of children performing at age-expected levels. It demonstrates accelerated progress which has closed the gap between this group of disadvantaged two year olds and their peers.



Due to the success of the project in terms of enhanced practitioners' knowledge and skills and outcomes for children, Home learning Matters (HLM) will continue to be provided through the Early Years' Training Programme. We intend to work with the practitioners involved in the HLM project to co-deliver and provide peer to peer support.

ZAHIR MOHAMMED
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

11f. CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION

Capital Maintenance Programme (CMP)

2015/16 Programme

At end of March 2016, 335 of the 338 schemes on the final construction programme had been completed within the year. Ringway Jacobs and Transport for Buckinghamshire are extremely pleased with this outcome. As well as excellent progress against the programme, it is also pleasing to note that, in general, quality of work has been markedly higher through the year.

Whilst there will always be issues to address, the key is effective supervision, early identification of problems, effective mitigation and honest assessment and communication. These will be key drivers in our ambition of further improvements in both quality and overall programme delivery in 2016/17.

Areas for further attention in 2016/17 are:

- Communication, both internally between teams and externally with Members and wider stakeholder audience;
- Efficiency and collaboration, where possible, making further progress in combining multiple works within traffic management set-ups;
- Safety, and in particular combatting the problems of road-worker abuse, which is regrettably becoming more commonplace both on our Contract and throughout our wider countryside operations. This may result in trialling more substantial 'gated' road closures in certain locations to give our gatemen additional protection;
- Quality and efficiency of ironwork replacement and road marking operations after surfacing, where improvements can still be made.

Rolling Programme

The three schemes which were not completed at the end of March will be carried out in April as part of our move to a rolling programme of prioritised work. Such a programme provides advantages through:

- Facilitating a more steady design period, looking more than 1 year ahead and enabling investigative work to inform more cost-effective solutions;
- Removing ineffective peaks and troughs from annual programmes;
- Allowing greater flexibility within the programme to move schemes around where conflict with other works may arise.

We are grateful to our Members who have actively engaged and supported the move to a rolling 4-year programme. Most importantly this has allowed us to demonstrate to the Department of Transport (DfT) that we have an effective and efficient asset strategy, meeting the DfT criteria, which will protect funding for future years.

2016/17 Programme

Budgets have returned to historical norms for 2016/17 after the additional £10m in the previous year. A draft programme of 243 schemes countywide has been developed in conjunction with Members. Letters have now been issued to each Member confirming details.

Members are asked to bear in mind that the programme is a rolling programme and, although the current intention is to complete all 243 schemes on the programme within

the financial year, there will be change and fluctuation as designs are completed and prices for each scheme confirmed. Any schemes from the base programme that may not be completed in-year will form the priorities for 2017/18.

Current intentions are as follows:

Conventional resurfacing	32 schemes, to be delivered June 2016 to October 2016
Surface dressing	33 schemes, to be delivered May 2016 to June 2016
Micro-surfacing	73 schemes, to be delivered July 2016 to October 2016
Targeted Patching	15 schemes, to be delivered April 2016 to June 2016
Plane and Patch	To be delivered May 2016 to November 2016, in areas where Members did not receive treatment in 2015.

In addition, footway schemes and jointing programmes will be delivered in the year.

East West Rail

The East West Rail (EWR) Consortium continues to press the case for completion of the western section (Bicester to Bedford and Milton Keynes to Aylesbury and beyond via Princes Risborough) within this Parliament (by 2020).

Whilst the overall national railway infrastructure delivery programme continues to look very tight in terms of funding and capacity, the economic case for EWR continues to be strong.

The next key milestone for Network Rail's programme, known as "GRIP 3", is the completion by December 2016 of the current design work to inform costed options for the Department for Transport (DfT) and others to consider and confirm funding. It will be at this point that more informed decisions on the funding and associated programme dates for EWR can be considered and taken by DfT. In the meantime the next stage of public consultation for the EWR Transport & Works Act proposals is anticipated to be held in Autumn 2016.

Bikeability

We have recently been notified by the Department for Transport (DfT) that BCC has been awarded £64,000 for cycle training to cover the period April – August 2016 under the same grant terms and conditions as the 2015/16 funding grant.

This means from 01 April to 31 August 2016, 1600 children across the County will receive Bikeability Cycle Training.

The DfT is currently finalising arrangements for the longer term allocations covering the period to 2020 and we will be invited to bid for further funding within the next few weeks once all planned changes have been confirmed. We do believe there will be new opportunities within the new updated scheme allowing more children to receive cycle training.

Aylesbury East

Aylesbury Woodlands

In an exciting departure from our normal approach, the Council's Regeneration and Infrastructure team has recently partnered with Buckinghamshire Advantage – the infrastructure delivery arm of Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP) – in seeking outline planning approval for a major development site at Aylesbury Woodlands. Planning was submitted in March 2016 and will likely be determined during Summer 2016.

Aylesbury Woodlands is proposed to be a mixed use development including 1,100 new homes, green infrastructure and circa 4,500 new jobs. It forms part of our wider Aylesbury regeneration strategy, which includes the currently under construction Stocklake Link Road, and is integral to the recently secured Enterprise Zone.

The application key documents can be viewed at <http://aylesburywoodlands.co.uk/consultation-documents/>

Stocklake Link Road (urban)

Construction of the new Stocklake Link Road urban section began in January 2016 and is progressing well. Phase 1 (the new link road) will be complete by the end of May and Phase 2 (the conversion of the existing road into a service road for residents' parking, new public realm and access into local industry) is due to complete later in the year.

Aylesbury MP, David Lidington, visited the Stocklake site during March, hosted by Richard Harrington, Chief Executive of the BTVLEP, which is funding the scheme, and the Cabinet Member for Transportation, Mark Shaw, as well as officers of the County Council.

For more information please visit <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/aylesburyeast>

Kingsbrook Development

Barratt Homes, as part of their Kingsbrook development which will see the creation of 2500 new homes and local facilities, will be providing four key pieces of highway infrastructure including:

1. A new signalised junction at Oakfield Road, due to be complete in early Summer 2016 following Phase 1 works to the urban section of Stocklake Link Road;
2. Stocklake Link Road rural section which will be completed in early Summer 2016 and initially only opened to works traffic accessing the development site;
3. A new signalised junction on the A418, north of Bierton village at Hulcott which will be constructed later in the development phasing, likely late 2016 / early 2017;
4. The new Eastern Link Road northern section from the A418 at Bierton to the Grand Union Canal (GUC), due to complete by January 2021.

Aylesbury Woodlands (see above) will deliver the new Eastern Link Road southern section from the GUC to the A41 Tring Road, currently programmed to complete and opened in full by January 2021.

Together these key pieces of highway infrastructure, with their associated consented and proposed development, are collectively referred to as the Aylesbury East growth area.

Buckinghamshire County Council Sustainable Travel Good Practice Published By Government

Two of Buckinghamshire County Council's sustainable travel projects have been published as good practice by Government.

[Public Health England: Road injury prevention - Resources to support schools to promote safe active travel](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-injury-prevention-resources-to-support-schools)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-injury-prevention-resources-to-support-schools>

Page 13 includes a case study from Long Crendon School, highlighting the work of its Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) in supporting the School Travel Plan. Long Crendon has achieved a Gold status for its travel plan (through the national 'STARS' accreditation scheme) and was also the winner of the STARS School of the Region in 2014.

[DfT: Case studies that illustrate examples of good practice when developing new cycling infrastructure](https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/speed-management-measures-station-road-beaconsfield) (published alongside the draft Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/speed-management-measures-station-road-beaconsfield>

This relates to the High Street section of our Beaconsfield Cycle Scheme. This scheme was implemented in 2014 as part of the wider 'Access to Stations' DfT Local Sustainable Transport Fund project, in partnership with Sustrans.

It is great to get some positive recognition for some of the excellent work delivered in Buckinghamshire.

Establishment of Combined Transport Services Team

On 1st April the Council's new Client & Public Transport Unit came into operation under Andrew Bluck, reporting to the Director of Transport Services. The unit comprises the Client and Public Transport Teams brought back in-house respectively from Amey and Ringway Jacobs, along with the existing Transport, Economy, Environment Business Unit's Fleet Management Team.

There should be no negative impact on those receiving these services, with the same team members in place conducting their business largely as before. However, appropriate mechanisms are being put in place to ensure that the Council's transport commissioners benefit from simplified procedures.

Bringing the three teams together forms part of the Supported Transport Programme, the aims of which are:

- to reduce the cost of Council-funded transport;
- to remodel the services and the way they are delivered to better meet the needs of the County and to be financially sustainable into the future.

Devolution

The Council has been actively embracing a devolution strategy for a number of years. Devolution of some transportation services to Parishes was explored and commenced back in 2006. During this exploratory period, 2006 – 2015, a variety of tasks was passed to Parish Councils, but these agreements were a little ad hoc and not for a standard range of services or even at a standard rate.

In 2014 it was proposed that a pilot was run to test which transport services could be devolved to all Parishes, and discussions took place regarding the value of these services. On completion of this pilot and after discussions around the finances, a package was put together which included:

- Grass cutting;
- Hedging;
- Siding out;
- Minor maintenance;
- Annual Rights of Way clearance.

Budgets were finalised and after many meetings and discussions with parishes, 44 Parishes signed up for four years in April 2015 with a total budget for year 1 of £364,123.

There was positive feedback from both the Parish Councils and residents during the first year of tranche 1, and complaints around the services that had been devolved reduced considerably. Following the success of the first tranche, a second tranche was launched in April 2016 and a further 41 parishes have now signed up. In total this now means that 50% of all Buckinghamshire Parishes have Devolution agreements to deliver defined transport services with a total annual budget of £452,703 for the next three years.

We will continue to explore the possibility of Devolution model for other services as there is an active interest from a number of Parishes for this.

MARK SHAW
CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION

11g. CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Big Community Energy Switch Summary

Buckinghamshire County Council, in collaboration with iChoosr, took part in the Big Community Switch (BCS) project. The Council engaged with residents aiming to influence suppliers to provide a better market rate for domestic energy costs. This was a collaborative piece of work involving several Council teams, Local Area Forums, Parish Councils and Community Energy Champions, covering three auctions in a one year period – February 2015, October 2015 and February 2016.

The Council promoted the scheme through standard communication channels. In light of the recent budget freeze, the February 2016 auction had a full digital communication approach, saving resources and maximizing the Council's revenue from the three auctions. An estimated amount of £5000 was generated across the three auctions from referral fees payed by independent energy suppliers that took part in the BCS competition.

Data released by iChoosr showed a good performance from the Council. In terms of registrations the Council ranked highly among other local authorities such as Essex and the East Riding of Yorkshire.

The switch demonstrated to be advantageous to residents offering a realised savings of £287.55 (on average) for new registered residents, and £311.03 (in average) for post auction residents, giving them an alternative to save on their energy bill. A breakdown of savings for each auction is described below:

New registrations					Post Auction registrations			
Auction	No. of new regs	Average realised saving	No. of new regs that switched	Switching Rate	No. of previous regs	Average realised saving	No. of previous regs that switched	Switching rate for previous regs
Feb-15	769	£290.10	310	40%	21	Not available	9	43%
Oct-15	142	£257.36	58	41%	118	£353.08	28	24%
Feb-16	184	£315.20	76	41%	83	£268.97	21	25%
Average (3 auctions)	365	£287.55	148	41%	74	£311.03	19	31%

It is recommended that a collective switch supported by the Council be rolled out annually. There is mutual interest between the Council and residents who may be actively seeking to switch again on an annual basis. Schemes such as collective switching can help the Council address fuel poverty and facilitate more residents to register and save on their energy bills.

Planning Enforcement – Summary of Action and Outcomes over the Last Year

The County Council's planning enforcement function has been very busy over the last 12 months as highlighted by the following figures:

- 45 cases of unauthorised waste management/disposal have been investigated

- 16 matters successfully resolved without formal action
- 4 Enforcement Notices issued
- 3 Stop Notices issued
- 1 Temporary Stop Notice issued
- 3 Planning Contravention Notices issued

Action by the enforcement section prompted two planning applications seeking to regularise the unauthorised developments. Both were subsequently refused by the Development Control Committee resulting in two appeals – both yet to be determined.

Two prosecutions following enforcement action carried out during the previous twelve months were also successful; one of which resulted in a fine of £12,500. The Council recovered its costs in both cases. The Council has also recovered some £40,000 following the forced sale of land following an earlier prosecution. The planning enforcement officer also assisted the Police in gaining access to a site using Rights of Entry under the Town and Country Planning Act. This enabled the Police to secure three convictions for other offences, resulting in custodial sentences of five to seven years.

Fly-tipping Success in the News

The excellent work of the fly-tipping enforcement team has been making the news again. The team's work in tracking down and prosecuting fly-tippers was featured on the BBC's Caught Red Handed programme. The programme featured where the team has worked proactively with local residents in identifying problem sites and securing prosecutions via both witnessed incidents and camera evidence. This has provided great positive coverage of the Council and our stance on protecting our special environment.

For anyone who missed it, the programme is on iPlayer catch-up and it can be watched online at (starts at 14:40):

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b07569m1/caught-red-handed-series-4-episode-17>

The 500th successful prosecution of a fly-tipper in Buckinghamshire has also been covered in an excellent article in Buckinghamshire Life. The article highlights that as a result of significantly decreased levels of fly-tipping due to the proactive enforcement campaign. This has saved the local authorities over £3m in clearance and disposal costs. Buckinghamshire now convicts ten times more fly-tipping offenders than the average across England.

<http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/launch.aspx?eid=2d6f3bd5-778b-453d-bea1-a62ca49e91ed>

Strategic Flood Management Team – Response to Recent Flooding Incidents

Flooding occurred widely across the north of Buckinghamshire on 9/10th March 2016 following heavy rainfall onto already saturated catchments. The Strategic Flood Management Team has a duty under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) to investigate significant flood events. Following the recent flooding event the team is now undertaking two formal investigations into events at Buckingham and Leckhampstead, both areas in which significant impacts have been identified.

In Buckingham, initial findings suggest that six properties were affected by floodwater, including four residential properties. However, of the 86 properties previously fitted with property level flood protection products as part of the Buckingham Property Level Flood protection scheme (2010), only three reported internal property flooding.

At Leckhampstead, two properties at Church End were affected by floodwater overtopping the River Leck, with one suffering considerable flood damage within the main building. Initial investigations indicate that residents within the village were proactive in deploying their own sandbags and flood boards, which may have mitigated the potential property impacts. In addition, access to the village was cut off for a number of hours, with fast-flowing floodwater of at least one metre in depth across the key access bridge and main street.

The team will work with its partners to analyse the cause of the flooding, the mechanisms and the responses to it. The investigation reports will include recommendations to be undertaken by a range of stakeholders that may help to manage flooding in the future. It is intended that the reports also provide an evidence base to inform funding bids for monies to help manage flood risk, and to guide planners on areas where development might cause concern. Indeed, the Leckhampstead investigation has already begun to inform proactive flood risk management by the Council. The team is preparing a bid for funding to undertake a feasibility study on the River Leck catchment to investigate a range of measures for management of river and surface floodwater: working with natural processes, structural measures, and community resilience measures. Should a project be viable, we will aim to work with partners and the local community to identify best practice for approaching natural flood management alongside more traditional techniques.

Discussions with Fire Service to Deploy Temporary Flood Defences – The Willows, Aylesbury

The Strategic Flood Management team met with Bucks & Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service (BMKFRS) in March to discuss the possibility of using them to deploy temporary flood defences at the Willows. It is pleasing to report that the Fire and Rescue Service is keen to provide this service as they see it as a preventative measure which will hopefully avoid them having to rescue and pump out residents on the estate.

The new procedure with the BMKFRS will take a few weeks to agree, during which time water level recorders are being installed, trigger levels will be set and some training/trial runs will be undertaken. The water level recorders which are being installed will automatically send an alarm to the BMKFRS when the water level reaches a trigger point.

Following agreement by all parties on the steering group, the trash screen was removed on Tuesday 5th April. This will remove some of the flooding risk as there have been some near misses due to the trash screen getting blocked. This step highlights that the County Council is listening to local residents and the steering group's concerns and responding accordingly. The Strategic Flood Management Team is working with the Environment Agency to look at the options for longer term solutions to address the flood risk in this area.

Greatmoor Energy from Waste (EFW) Programme Update

On 31st December 2015, a major milestone was reached with the first fire of waste at the EFW facility at Greatmoor. This meant that the first of Buckinghamshire's

household waste, which was delivered over the proceeding weeks, was being burnt and processed, instead of being landfilled.

Since then this Hot Commissioning testing process has been proceeding apace ensuring that the incineration process and other systems work efficiently and effectively. Alongside this, building service works have been progressing, albeit with some delays. Nevertheless on 11th April, another significant milestone was passed when the Hot Commissioning Completion Certificate was issued. This means the EFW has entered its final testing phase – a 30-day trial run followed by a final inspection, which, assuming all goes well, should see the facility becoming fully operational around the end of May.

The EFW facility becoming operational will mark the end of a process that has been some 10 years in the making. This includes initial feasibility work which started around 2005, the procurement phase which ran from 2007 to 2013 and then the final construction and commissioning phase.

For further information on progress there are regular updates on the County Council website and on FCC's website 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>

Country Parks

Events' Programme

Following the huge success of last year's programme, the Country Parks' events' programme for the new season has just been produced. With regular events and activities including "Simply Walk" and "Parkrun" for the more active, to the monthly Duck Pond artisan food and craft market, there is something for everyone. The Lord Chamberlain's Men return with their production of Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing, and Immersion Theatre will be bringing their adaptation of The Wizard of Oz to Langley Park.

There are events for the whole family throughout the year and right up to Christmas! Copies of the current programme have been circulated or can be downloaded using the link

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/3875565/Country-Parks-2016-Events-Programme.pdf>

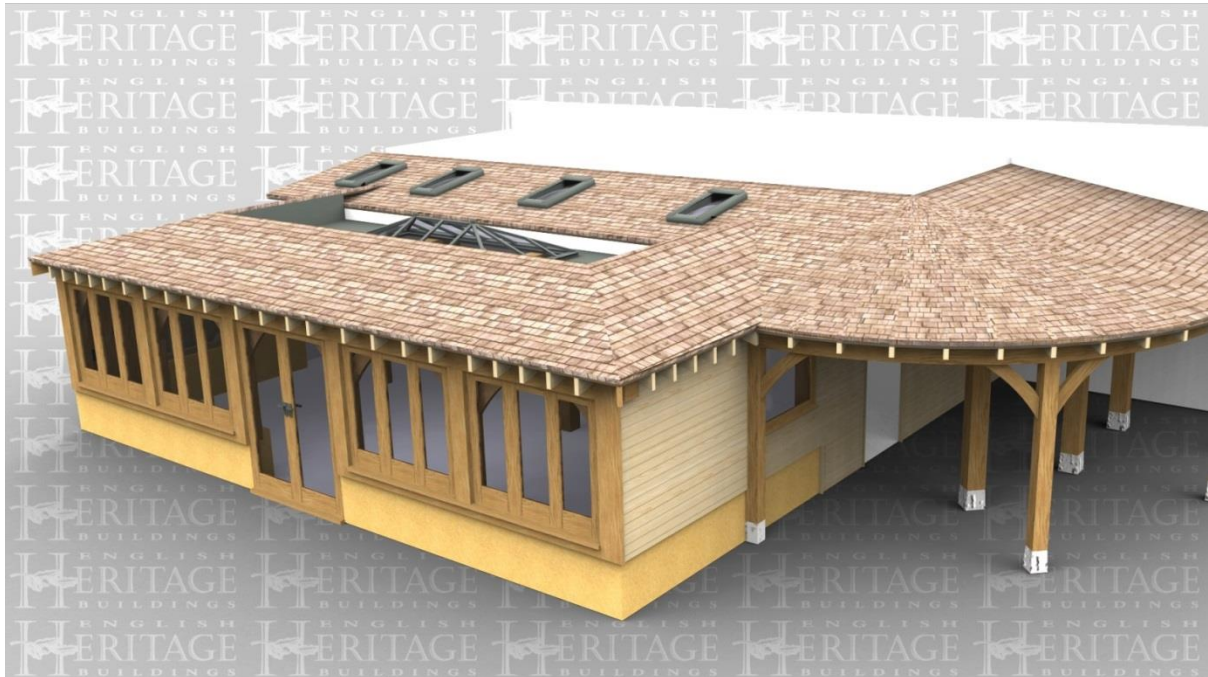
In accordance with the self-financing principles of the Country Parks the events' leaflet has been funded by selling advertising space to a small number of on-site partners and local suppliers who have an affiliation with the Country Parks.

Langley Park Team Room

Following the opening of the Heritage Lottery-funded new facilities in Langley Park in July 2010, it soon became apparent that the small catering facilities were hugely popular with the loyal patrons of Langley Park and that visitors frequented the tea room in all weathers. Unfortunately the original design had a limited number of under-cover seats and very soon the enquiries began about whether additional wet weather seating was possible. Following a short consultation, the opportunity for a design and build contract was commissioned.

On Monday 11th April, English Heritage Buildings started work on site to construct a timber framed extension to the existing building. There is a seven week building phase

and the new facilities are due to be open in time for the late May Bank Holiday weekend on 27th May. This extension has been funded from residual capital from the Langley Park Heritage Lottery project that saw over £3.1m spent on restoring the Grade 2 Registered Historic Parkland at Langley Park.



Black Park Car Park

The Country Parks service has been experiencing continued levels of growth equating to over 5% year on year for the last 5 years. Black Park, the busiest of the four sites, has seen exponential growth with the introduction of Go Ape's tree top adventure, tree top juniors and off-road Segways, complimented by the excellent catering facilities provided by San Remo Catering. This has led to visitor numbers increasing from 481,895 visitors in 2010/11 to 594,625 visitors in 2015/16. This has resulted in the car park facilities regularly being at capacity and unable to meet customer demand and as a result we are about to commence works on an extension to the existing parking area.

The current car park has a designed capacity of approximately 450 spaces, although this is difficult to achieve as the car park has a natural unbound surface and the spaces are not individually marked. The new extension has a designed capacity of an additional 100 spaces and has the ability to generate an additional £50k per annum based on current charging rates. This £165k project has been funded from development funds provided by the Leader of the Council approximately four years ago.

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

11h. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

South East Region Memorandum of Co-operation for Managing the Demand and Supply of Children's Social Workers

Buckinghamshire County Council has signed the South East Region Memorandum of Co-operation for Managing the Demand and Supply of Children's Social Workers. This is also endorsed by the LGA, ADCS, Solace and Learning Together.

The context is focused on attraction, recruitment and retention to fill social worker vacancies and leadership roles; to manage agency and permanent worker supply; and demand and the costs associated with this.

All Local Authority signatories to the Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) agree to adopt the following protocols:

1. Adopt a common minimum standard for referencing to help prevent 'recycling' of poor quality permanent and agency workers
2. Use end of placement reviews with adequate information passed back to the agency workers and the agency supplier to determine any development requirements or to cease placing the worker to help to address quality issues
3. To work towards fully implementing the terms of this MoC via all their suppliers, ie main contractor and any 2nd tier suppliers
4. Proactively use their agency supply chain as a pipeline for the supply of permanent workers, in addition to direct recruitment. All LA's acknowledge that working as an interim helps to build experience and enhances productivity
5. Ensure that permanent and agency workers are clear from the outset of the MoC and how it is being adopted by all signatory Las and their agency suppliers. LA's and suppliers will provide standardised information on the MoC during recruitment and at induction
6. LA's and all their suppliers (whether providing permanent or temporary supply of workers) to refrain from aggressive 'headhunting' from within those LA's that have adopted the MoC, unless for a promotional role. Some rules of engagement will be developed in discussion with LA's for this purpose

Within 6 months, the following protocols will also be considered with a view to finalising the second phase of the Memorandum of Co-operation.

7. Work towards comparable pay rates across the region for agency social workers
8. Develop a policy designed to discourage children's social workers from moving from permanent to agency contracts. Any children's social worker leaving a permanent contract would not be employed on an agency contract by another authority in the region on an agency contract within 6 or 12 months (period to be agreed). This would not apply to permanent staff moving to permanent roles in other authorities within the region
9. Develop a regional approach to workforce planning for social workers to forecast and then help to plan to meet future demand

Launch of Careers Website

A new careers website went live in January 2016 and is performing strongly. Candidates are being asked to 'rethink their tomorrow' and choose Buckinghamshire County Council. (Link: <http://jobs.buckscc.gov.uk/>)

In the fiercely competitive and candidate-driven market we are operating in, we need to stand out. We are positioning ourselves as a much less typical Local Authority. It's about changing perspectives on the Council as a whole and attracting those who wouldn't normally go for a job here by showing the possibilities (both personally and professionally). It's about provoking inspiration and change. Asking candidates to 'rethink their tomorrow' will attract candidates who are proactive, who want change and are willing to work for it collaboratively.

We carried out extensive market research with current employees across the organisation and worked in close partnership with our advertising agency TMP – winner of Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's 2015 Recruitment Advertising Agency of the Year – to develop an employer brand of which we are really proud. In the first months of going live, the website has increased pages viewed in one visit from 2 to 8 and increased time spent on website from 2 mins to 5 mins which indicates increased engagement.

The ultimate goal is to increase applicants and numbers recruited. This is dependent on effectively promoting the website via advertising, social channels, google promotion and other digital marketing activity. This activity began in February once the website had been fully tested in the live environment. It is therefore early days to see any impact on numbers. The benchmark figure is 8 applicants per vacancy which is consistent across Jan to Mar 2015 and same period in 2016.

Providing a new platform to drive candidates to – the new brand will form the DNA of future recruitment campaigns, ensuring that we are recruiting the right people with the right values.

On the buses, a digital journey.....

Five years ago, administration of concessionary bus passes passed from lower to upper tier authorities. Before handing over to Buckinghamshire County Council, the District Councils end-dated the majority of their passes (43,377) at 31 March 2011 which were then all renewed with the same expiry date of 31 March 2016. This represented 41% of total concessionary bus passes in circulation.

Aware we would not be able to handle that volume of renewals manually, two automated options were implemented. Residents could apply online or through an automated telephone renewal service. Both systems had already been used successfully in other local authorities.

With the introduction of new automated systems there are inevitably teething problems however, following extensive testing, and with some trepidation, we went live on 27 January 2016. We closely monitored and used feedback from customers to make adjustments.

To raise awareness of the new renewal process with residents an intensive publicity campaign was launched. Moving to a digital self-service solution doesn't come without

risk and there was concern that some of our residents would find it difficult to access self-service. However, when we asked employees and partner organisations to support the transition to the new self-service process, we were met with enthusiasm and support. People didn't need their own computer or telephone as friends, family and neighbours could assist. From bus drivers to school children helping grandparents there has been a community approach. A large number of residents are engaging directly with the self-service routes and mostly having a positive experience. What is really important is that customer service remains good. Issues were looked into, resolved quickly and people kept informed. Providing an explanation as to what went wrong was appreciated by customers and we received positive feedback as a result.

Of course an online system is only as good as its data. Moving from manual to system based renewal has meant that where data didn't match, for example date of birth and post code, manual adjustments have been required and additional calls handled to deal with queries. However now we have a digital system data will self-cleanse as part of the renewal process. At the time of writing we have issued 26,024 cards since the new system went live. Additionally we know that 11,000 have not been used on a bus in the last 9 months. As the bus ticketing systems are computerised and will not accept a pass that has expired, we negotiated a grace period to the end of April during which time an expired pass can still be renewed rather than a new application having to be completed.

The advice to anyone who has not had their replacement pass yet is to call the team on 01494 586539 to check. The pass can be put on order immediately if necessary and they are currently being received within 4 -5 days.

**JOHN CHILVER
CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**