

County Council



Cabinet Member Reports

7a. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Welcome to the new CEO

I would like to welcome our new Chief Executive Rachael Shimmin OBE who started on the 1st September. Rachael joins us from Durham County Council and has significant experience of services around Children, Adults, Education, Health and Community Safety. She brings a wealth of experience with her and has already been busy meeting with staff, partners and has a good grasp of the key developments within the Country.

Brexit

We still await further news on when article 50 will be invoked and the detail surrounding our leave from the European Union and new international trading relationships. The Prime Minister appears to be taking stock and ensuring decisions are not rushed. We are closely monitoring news from both the Secretary of States; David Davis' Brexit unit and Liam Fox's Department for International Trade.

Although it is early days to assess what the impact of the vote on Brexit will mean to local authorities we know there are uncertainties for Local government particularly relating to EU legislation and how local services are affected. There are changes to fiscal policy and we specifically await news on the 4 year settlements and any devolved responsibilities. The Local Government sector continues to make its voice heard, there are regular briefings and debates within the LGA and I will be attending the Leaders' meeting on 30 September to update and discuss Brexit-related issues. Neil Gibson has also been invited to work with the LGA to review the implications for local government and propose an LGA position. South East Strategic Leaders discussed this issue at its most recent meeting this month.

Health and Wellbeing Board update

Since the last meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board in June, members of the board have been working on the refresh of Buckinghamshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWBS). The coordination of a JHWBS is a statutory duty for all Health and Wellbeing Boards and a joint responsibility for local authorities and clinical commissioning groups. Set out by the Department of Health, their core aim is 'to develop local evidence-based priorities for commissioning which will improve the public's health and reduce inequalities'.

The Health and Wellbeing Board is due to discuss an initial proposal for the 2016-21 strategy at their meeting on 15 September. The proposal follows the same life course approach as the 2013-16. JHWBS aims to increase its potential further through a new emphasis on place and mental health. It sets out a number of priority actions under five key objectives:

1. Ensure every child has the best start in life
2. Keep people healthier for longer and reduce the impact of long term conditions
3. Ensure everyone has good mental health and wellbeing

4. Protect residents from harm
5. Ensure our communities can thrive and Buckinghamshire remains a great place to live

The strategy will also support the ambitions set out by Buckinghamshire health and care system partners implementing the local plans for the NHS Five Year Forward View. It will be delivered along the same timeframes, coordinating action to rebalance health and social care spend to increase support for prevention and early intervention initiatives and create the best conditions in Buckinghamshire for people to live, age and stay well. A draft strategy document will be put out to consultation in October and following action on any feedback will be formally ratified by the Health and Wellbeing Board before the end of the year.

Strategic Plan Refresh

The Council's Strategic Plan is focused around 3 clear themes:

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

Given the recent changes that have taken place nationally, the uncertainty around funding arrangements for local government and the changes in size and profile of our population we need to ensure we remain fit for purpose in our handover to the new Council in May 2017.

Over the last few months we have been evaluating ourselves as well as considering national and local policy changes. We remain focused on revisiting the strategic plan. As well as our debate in the AGM, over the last few months Member briefings have been exploring key policy areas. These will continue, along with discussions at Business Unit Boards throughout September and October to ensure we are on track to identify priorities to be reflected in the next Strategic Plan. Some of the aspects for consideration are: the changing profile of our communities, Health and Social Care Integration, changing landscape of education and SEN and prevention Strategies.

High Speed 2 Update - House of Lords Select Committee

The House of Lords Select Committee has now begun hearing petitioners from the Euston and Camden areas. The draft schedule has now been set out up to the 12 October. Following the completion of hearings from the Euston and Camden areas the Select Committee will continue working North to South. Therefore the County Council is still working towards an appearance in the middle of October but has yet to have this confirmed.

As with other petitioners the County Council will be limited on points it can discuss with the Select Committee due to the ruling on Additional Provisions which is set out below:

'We are likely to hear petitions from the Chilterns area during October, with petitions from the Colne Valley, Ickenham and Ruislip areas following probably in November. In the event, as we see it the very unlikely event, of our receiving an appropriate instruction, we will of course hear all relevant evidence and submissions and also, no doubt, petitions against the additional provision. But if there has been no relevant instruction by then it would be fanciful to suppose that such an instruction might be given at a later date, and it would be a waste of time and resources for us to hear evidence and submissions that would be relevant only in a fanciful contingency.'

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance

Since my last report, the Alliance has been working on a number of key initiatives:

National Infrastructure Commission (NIC): Call for Evidence on the Oxford–Milton Keynes–Cambridge growth corridor. In conjunction with the six LEPs across the area, a joint 24 page response was submitted. The key tasks were:

- a) The funding for the full delivery of East West rail from Oxford to Cambridge. For every year the scheme is not built the economy loses out by some £200m.
- b) Investing in a new East West Expressway to open up areas for housing and better access to employment
- c) Support the need to realise the potential of key transport interchanges as 'hubs' to attract investment
- d) Improving 'first mile/last mile' travel options so people have more choice and flexibility

The response also stressed the importance of investing in skills and re-training to meet identified shortages, particularly in the high growth areas of construction and engineering. The NIC is expected to submit its initial advice to Government later this Autumn. The Chancellor has confirmed that he will make his Autumn statement on 23 November.

The Transport Forum: The Forum continues to lead and develop work on developing an overarching Transport Strategy for the Heartland area. Alongside this, work continues on shaping and developing proposals for a statutory Sub-national Transport body. Both areas of work will continue over the coming months with an agreed Transport Strategy expected by the end of the year.

Alliance: We see the Alliance entering a really crucial phase over the next 12 months or so. As a result, a full-time Communications Executive (seconded from Buckinghamshire County Council) is now in place to improve all aspects of media relations, communications and website activity.

Highways UK: I will be speaking at this year's Highways UK event on 16/17 November in Birmingham, where the Alliance will have a special stand and exhibition. This important conference brings together leading people and organisations involved in planning and delivering roads and other infrastructure across the UK. The next meeting of the Alliance Leaders takes place in September. I will update Members on any significant issues at the Council meeting itself.

Broadband Update

It is recognised that high speed broadband is a modern life essential for every resident and business. Plans are moving forward and we have made progress connecting residents and businesses across Buckinghamshire in areas that commercially providers would otherwise consider uneconomical.

Over the summer Phase 1 saw broadband coverage extend to 90% of premises. Over 45,000 homes and businesses received superfast broadband and the project was delivered on schedule and under budget. There is still more work to do to ensure that every resident and business has access. Phase 2 will see the continuation of the work established by Buckinghamshire County Council and Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP). The LEP and our District colleagues will now be taking this forward.

There has been further investment of £2 million by Aylesbury Vale District Council, Wycombe District Council and Chiltern District Council as well as additional funding by BTVLEP which supports the next phase of the project roll-out. It will start in autumn and should see an additional 11,000 homes and businesses (in areas that are considered not to be commercial viable for fibre broadband) benefiting from superfast broadband. Progress will be monitored through the LEP, something I will be closely following.

National Representation

Whilst the Summer holidays mean a break from attending LGA board meetings, this does not mean the opportunities for national representation diminish. We have been responding to consultations and providing challenge to Governments Select Committees Enquiries. I have been appointed the Chairman of the LGA Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board and look forward to representation Buckinghamshire's voice through this platform.

On the 6th September I met with Nick Gibb, Minister of State for School Standards. The meeting provided the opportunity for us to celebrate the progress of Buckinghamshire schools, highlight how the growth agenda will impact on the need for more school places (including Grammar school places) and for me to understand the new Secretary of State's long term vision of schools. I raised in particular the issue of the serious underfunding of schools within Buckinghamshire (seven of the ten lowest funded secondary schools are in Buckinghamshire).

The Department has recently published a refreshed its departmental plan. Its 3 themes are: safety and well-being, educational excellence everywhere and preparing for adult life. Similar to our priority areas a focal point is social mobility, narrowing the gap. The Minister said that the Government was committed to introducing a Fairer Funding Formula for schools as soon as possible.

Modernising local government in Buckinghamshire

Following the Council's decision in early May to look at options for modernising local government in Buckinghamshire, we have been working hard over the summer to explore all the options available and develop a business case for a new, single unitary council based upon the county boundaries.

We have been engaging with our stakeholders and public about their priorities for the future shape of local government and although it was disappointing not to reach a stage of complete consensus with our Districts, evidence demonstrated that a single unitary would be in the best financial interests of our residents and that a new model of working could bring major devolution to Parish and Town Councils and local communities. I look forward to a full discussion at Council.

Financial Update

The financial position for August indicates an overspend of £5.7m on our service expenditure headings. However, across the Council this pressure is being mitigated through underspends in corporate costs.

The latest forecasting position shows significant challenges within Children's Social Care areas, approximately £5.6m which mainly relates to increase in placements / costs of placements, agency staff spend and difficulty recruiting permanent staff and increased demand on high needs budgets including client transport (SEN). Despite recruitment drives to attract permanent social workers rather than rely on agency staffing, the significant national shortage of social workers is keeping turnover rates

high and making it very difficult to make significant headway. The main area of financial pressure is for taxi transport for our most vulnerable and complex client groups.

Balancing our budgets is our biggest focal point; we must continue to be creative and more innovative along with extremely tight controls on our actions plans to mitigate risks of over spending. I have asked the Chief Executive to have a comprehensive review of spending within key services.

MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

7b. CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING

A New Approach to Social Care

Adult Social Care has come to a crossroads where the pressures of austerity, the requirements of Care Act legislation, an aging population and a pressurised workforce have presented us with real challenges. Our current processes and systems no longer support the holistic, personalised vision set out under the Care Act.

Therefore, we are planning to change the way our front line staff operate. The new operating framework is based on the '3 conversations model'. This is focussed on shifting our practice from 'assessment for services' to one that really focusses on people, their lives, and what will best make a difference. The framework is trying to do 'the right thing' for people – really listen to them, understand what is important, focus on their assets and strengths and find ways to help people live the lives they want to live. But in doing the right thing, it also needs to make a difference to the money. Each of the three conversations contributes to helping us use money better:

- Conversation one – tries to connect people to pre-existing supports in the community instead of assuming that it is paid for 'services' that people want and need;
- Conversation two – responds immediately and dynamically to people in crisis – again not assuming it is services that will fix the problem, but 'sticking to people like glue' for a period to maximise their chances of regaining independence and reducing the need for services;
- Conversation three – for the minority of people who need ongoing support – is something we try not to use, by getting really good at conversations 1 and 2. When we do use it, because we know people well (because you are not allowed to have a conversation 3 without proving you have exhausted conversations 1 and/or 2) plans are much more person centred and effective, always start with assets and strengths of people and communities, and there are much fewer of them than in our current system.

The 'three conversation' principle will be central to the Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care redesign, liberating social work and occupational therapy staff to focus on people and their families, moving away from the current restrictive and institutionalising "assessment for services" outlook to a more preventative approach. We want to understand the lives of those who come to us, what is important to them and what is right for them and their families. Key to this will be the building of relationships, listening to the person and their families, remaining open minded - not sticking to prescribed approaches. Social care staff will explore community groups and preventative services, centring on the assets and strengths of the individual, families, friends, neighbours and the local community.

For staff it will be a responsive, less bureaucratic and proportionate approach that can act rapidly to prevent and resolve crisis situations. It will give greater autonomy for staff to respond to decisions made by the person/family. This will require a culture change all round, recognising and trusting our staff's professional judgement to have ownership of cases and be accountable for decisions. To do this they will need readily available peer support and a comprehensive workforce development programme to strengthen their knowledge base.

By taking this approach we will be able to prevent deterioration much earlier on, providing people with a higher standard of living for longer, and reducing the eventual

cost to the authority. It will give people the freedom and choice that they have the right to expect.

Councils who have been using the '3 conversation' approach have found that they become much better at connecting people to community resources, much more effective in responding quickly to be people in crisis, and can reduce by half the numbers of people who need long term packages of support.

Workforce Strategy

The adult social care sector in Buckinghamshire faces significant challenges around workforce capacity and capability. These challenges arise from two main factors:

- Demand for care and support is increasing, as the population of Buckinghamshire grows and ages;
- Skill levels required for adult social care work are rising, as the work itself becomes more complex.

The Communities, Health and Adult Social Care (CHASC) Workforce Strategy informs the future demand for people and skills and translates it into a set of actions that will develop and build on the existing workforce to meet that demand.

This includes a number of key priorities including:

- Labour demand and supply issues; forecasting and planning;
- Recruitment, reward and retention planning;
- Raising skills, knowledge and competencies;
- Working with external providers e.g. of domiciliary care and residential care
- Working with partners in health and other stakeholders ;
- Integrated workforce planning with Health including joint training under the 'Quality Service Improvement and Redesign' (QSIR) programme being rolled out November 2016 onwards with Buckinghamshire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups and Oxford University Hospital across the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) footprint. The QSIR programme is series of modules designed by NHS Improvement and accredited by the Institute of Healthcare Management. The collective modules have been developed to upskill and enhance quality, service improvement and redesign capabilities for individuals in the organisations across STP footprints;
- Working with Schools/Further Education/Colleges/Bucks New University via the Social Worker Academy;
- Work towards developing a Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) for adult Social Workers in conjunction with ADASS in the South East Region to achieve consistency in pay rates.

Principles underpinning this strategy include:

- Inclusive partnership working;
Close alignment with local and national policy and priorities;
- Prioritisation based on what the evidence says works;
- Utilisation of resources already within the system;
- Realistic ambition.

Although the strategy is about to be formally launched, the action plan which forms part of it is already in progress, for example some of the initiatives which have been started are:

- Bucks County Council/Aylesbury College/Bucks New University 'Social Work Academy' launched June 2016
- 'Assessed and Supported Year in Employment' (ASYE) for newly qualified Social Workers - a programme that gives newly qualified social workers extra support during their first year of employment which aims to help them develop their skills, knowledge and professional confidence
- 'Grow your own' programme for unqualified workers to be supported to become qualified Social Workers or Occupational Therapists
- Research and planning of the Memorandum of Co-operation in the South East Region of Adult Social Care, including agreement of agency 'caps' on social worker pay rates across Local Government
- 'Quality Service Improvement and Redesign' practitioner accreditation towards delivering the programme across health and social care
- Formal network with the residential registered managers in the provider market to help with upskilling of workers and deal with recruitment and retention issues
- Finding work in the health and social care sector for the long term unemployed in conjunction with Job Centre Plus and DWP. Enabling the building of the capacity of unemployed persons to get jobs in the sector.

MIKE APPLEYARD
DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING

7c. CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CLA Celebration Event 2016

This year's Children in Care and Care Leaver's Celebration Event was hosted at ALF Green Park Activity Centre, Aston Clinton on Wednesday 24th August 2016. The event was attended by approximately 100 people ranging from nominated children and young people, their guests and other professionals.

After welcome drinks and a buffet the event was opened by Lin Hazell, Cabinet Member for Children Services and David Johnston, Managing Director for Children's Social Care who presented the children and young people with certificates to recognise their achievements throughout the year in an award ceremony. Children and young people from aged 1 year through to 19 years old were presented with certificates.

The awards covered all categories from: helping others, achievements within education and training, showing a positive attitude and excellent behaviour to achievements in sports and extra-curricular activities, the part they have played in community and participation projects, overcoming difficult circumstances and for coping admirably with change.

The young people were nominated by foster carers, social workers, youth workers, school teaching staff and other significant professionals working with them.

After the awards section of the evening the children and young people and their guests had an opportunity to participate in outdoor activities such as Zip Wire, Archery, Rock Climbing and Football Golf until the event came to an end around 7.30 p.m.

OFSTED Monitoring Visit 16/17th August 2016

Ofsted undertook a Monitoring Visit of Children's Services on 16th and 17th August as part of their new process for monitoring local authorities who have previously been judged to be 'inadequate' following an inspection. The purpose of the visit was to assess progress made since the original inspection. The visit focused on our front door, services for children in need including Children with Disabilities, children subject to a Child Protection Plan, private fostering and the LADO service.

The visit was undertaken by 3 Ofsted inspectors and included tracking 6 children's journeys alongside the worker and sampling children's journey's – sitting alongside workers in the office looking at application of thresholds, management oversight, direct work with children, and quality of assessments and plans etc.

Ofsted will publish a short letter on 16th September 2016.

Youth Service Update August 2016

Besides the Children Looked after Celebration event, there have been lots of other activities taking place to support our young people.

An independent living skills programme delivered in partnership with *Young Carers* proved successful, culminating in a residential experience over the summer. The programme explored what it means to live independently from the family home, the emotional impact of living alone or with friends/partner as well as the practical elements of having your own place (i.e. reading meters, replacing light bulbs etc.), how to deal with landlords, rights and the law, rent, budgeting, personal safety and coping with anti-social behaviour. 8 young people took part in the programme, achieving accreditations in budgeting, basic cookery and safety in the home.

Kids in Sport is a programme delivered in school holidays which aims to broaden opportunities for Looked After children and young people. The activities themselves are externally funded. This summer activities have included water orbing, laser tag, dragon boating, sailing, climbing, zorbing, trampolining, archery, rafted canoeing, and giant swing. All 80 places were filled across the activities.

The Youth Voice Steering group, made up of senior officers, Members and young people met recently to agree their workplan for the year ahead. During the meeting young people gave their views on the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board website, including giving feedback on the name, design, layout, and content of the site. Young people were also involved in a discussion about the challenges and opportunities the Council is facing in regards to meeting the needs of SEND young people.

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

7d. CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC HEALTH

Trading Standards Board

In July, the Board which oversees the Joint Trading Standards Service with Surrey met to discuss progress and performance and budget. The Board includes the relevant Cabinet Members from Buckinghamshire and Surrey.

I am pleased to note that the Service continues to perform well, with a steady stream of enforcement work ongoing which has led to some significant prison sentences and compensation to vulnerable victims. I am also pleased to report that the Service delivered the savings and increased income promised in the business case for 2015/16 and is on track to deliver again in this year.

Primary Authority Partnerships

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards forming a joint service has enabled us to deliver 83 income generating Primary Authority Partnerships and gives us the ability to support 24 “Single Point of Contact” Primary Authority Partnerships which simplifies the situation for businesses enabling them to access Trading Standards, Fire safety, Environmental Health and Welsh legislation advice all through our service. For comparison, as a single service, Buckinghamshire Trading Standards had 6 such partnerships prior to the development of the joint service.

As a result the Joint Service has delivered on the income targets to date set in the business plan for the creation of the joint service and is well on track to deliver the remaining commitments in the business plan.

Primary Authority enables a business to be involved in its own regulation by forming a statutory partnership with a local authority. Being in a Primary Authority partnership helps businesses manage relationships with regulators across the UK, simplify regulatory processes and reduce the cost of compliance. In return the local authority charges the business for time spent on the provision of advice.

The number of staff we can call upon, range of knowledge and experience and the reassurance of a sustainable appropriately resourced service enables us to compete and continue to attract business interest. Our partner businesses include both large and small enterprises who may be located locally or nationally e.g. Coca-Cola Enterprises, Shell, Esso, British Gas, Waitrose and the Association of Convenience Stores.

Encouraging a creative and innovative approach appeals to our business partners and means we engage at their level of need without imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens. It also leads to a diverse and interesting range of services being sourced through us.

Some examples of less traditional activities undertaken are:

- Providing the “Eat Out, Eat Well” scheme throughout a national Gym chain.
- Induction and customer service training
- Mystery shopping
- Developing a regulatory module in an e-learning package
- Working with Ofcom, ASA and other national regulators to secure a consensus view

Healthy Child Programme (0-19yrs) Public Health Nursing Services

We have recently tendered for the public health nursing services (health visiting and School nursing), including the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) service and the contract has been awarded to Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust. The contract will take effect from April 1st 2017 until March 31st 2022.

Following the transfer of Public Health responsibilities from the NHS to the County Council, the final aspect of this, the Healthy Child Programme, public health nursing and FNP 0-5yrs, was novated in October 2015. This allowed for a more integrated public health nursing contract to be tendered which includes school nursing, FNP and health visiting. The new service will allow for a more integrated approach across these services.

Healthy Lifestyles Services Review

As the first stage of recommissioning of lifestyle services, the Public Health Team has conducted a review of the healthy lifestyle services it commissions in Buckinghamshire. Public Health wants to ensure that all its services are based around the needs of the individual, whilst finding more innovative and efficient ways of providing services to residents.

Public Health currently commissions services that focus on individual behaviours and encourage positive lifestyle changes such as healthier eating and smoking cessation. Many of these services are universal and open to anyone that needs them, whilst others are only accessible through referral from a GP or other health professionals. The lifestyle services included in this review are: smoking cessation, adult and child weight management, health trainers, outreach NHS health checks, oral health promotion, nutrition service and training on lifestyle topics.

Currently all these services work independently and each have specific outcomes to achieve. An individual may need to access a number of these services if they have more than one behaviour which they wish to change. This model has been delivered for a number of years and Public Health now has the opportunity to improve services and ensure residents access the support they need in a more holistic way.

The review has provided a thorough understanding of the potential and the limitations of the current services. It has identified opportunities for a new more integrated approach to assist residents to live healthier lives with the appropriate support to make difficult lifestyle changes. Public Health's next steps are to identify the proposed Healthy Lifestyle model of delivery to ensure access to health improvement services is simpler and more co-ordinated.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) assesses the current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of the local community to inform commissioning decisions with the aim of improving the health and wellbeing of the local community and reducing inequalities.

Refreshing the JSNA for 2016-2020 has been a collaborative process and Public Health has led this process, through the JSNA development group comprising representatives from key stakeholders including all Council Portfolios, NHS and District Councils, on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The updated JSNA will be published in two parts on our Health and Wellbeing pages: <http://www.healthandwellbeingbucks.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pageId=2098>.

The first group of JSNA chapters, comprising population, healthy lifestyles and children's sections, was published on 7 September 2016. The second group of chapters, containing wider determinants of health, adults and older people, will be published toward the end of October 2016.

Going forward, the aim of the JSNA development group will be to ensure the JSNA is an innovative, future facing, live resource that is continually updated, rather than refreshed only every five years.

MARTIN PHILLIPS
CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

7e. CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Youth Service Update August 2016

Buckinghamshire Youth, a partnership between the Youth Service, *Action4Youth* and *Adviza* is now live and taking referrals. Youth workers are actively working with all those referred either on a 1:1 basis and preparing them to access group work programmes that begin in September/October. Referrals have been received relating to issues around self-esteem, anger management, social isolation, risk of CSE, appropriate relationships, bereavement, school refusal and others. Feedback so far has been positive with referrers commenting on how quickly referrals have been accepted and work undertaken with young people.

Update from Adult Learning

Adult Learning was delighted when their students achieved GCSE results well above the national average. The students ranged in age from 20 to 67 years old. 31 students were entered for English and 69.4% achieved A*- C (national average 60.2%). One student who achieved A* had earned A* in maths last year and had first come to adult learning several years ago on family learning courses. 59 students took maths with 69.7% achieving A* - C (national average 61%).

For many students this is revisiting subjects they did not manage to achieve at school for a range of reasons but their study now often has to fit around the challenges and pressures of working, caring responsibilities and many other demands. Students come for a range of reasons but many need these qualifications to progress at work or go onto further study.

The Lost Boys - How boys are falling behind in their early years, Save the Children, July 2016

Boys nearly twice as likely as girls to fall behind by the time they start school as charity reveals full extent of gender gap crisis.

Save the Children launched a powerful new report laying bare the potentially devastating and lifelong consequences for boys in England who start school significantly trailing girls in basic early language skills. The gender gap is at its most extreme in St. Helen's, Merseyside, where boys started primary school over 17.3 percentage points behind their female peers. In Richmond upon Thames, the local authority with one of the lowest levels of poverty in England of 5.4% and Buckinghamshire is 9th lowest at 8.8% with the national average at 11%.

Boys are nearly twice as likely as girls to have fallen behind by the time they start school, with the leading children's charity projecting that if the results of the past ten years are repeated then nearly 1 million boys will be at risk over the next decade unless quality early years education is in place across England. The report highlights that last year alone, 80,000 boys in England started reception class struggling to speak a full sentence or follow simple instructions.

The research identifies a silver bullet, in good quality early years education, which has the biggest impact in preventing children from falling behind and therefore closing the early gender gap, giving both boys and girls equal opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The report states that contributing factors identified include children's experiences at home, at nursery and in the community. It also highlighted that boys are less likely to participate in activities such as story-telling and nursery rhymes which both develop language. They are also less likely to learn to stay focused on a task or have the

concentration, motivation and self-confidence to learn. These are crucial in helping children to read and write.

At 1st August 2016, 97% of early years funded provision in Buckinghamshire was judged by Ofsted as good or better which clearly links to these positive results.

Overall Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) standards in Buckinghamshire are high. Results are measured at the end of Reception Year. In 2015 68% of children in Buckinghamshire achieved a good level of development by the end of the EYFS compared with 66% nationally. This placed Buckinghamshire 8th when ranked against Statistical Neighbours (SN) and 44th against all local authorities nationally.

In 2015, the achievement gap between the lowest attaining 20% of children and the mean average was 32.1% nationally. In Buckinghamshire the gap is 26.1% which has narrowed 2.6% points compared to the previous year. Compared to our SN, Buckinghamshire's position has improved from 7th to 6th smallest. The gap was the 22nd smallest nationally.

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

7f. CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION

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). Whilst the overall national railway infrastructure delivery programme continues to look very tight in terms of funding and capacity, the economic case for EWR remains strong. The Consortium is seeking to reinforce this with the new ministerial team at the Department for Transport (DfT) given the heightened emphasis on future UK economic growth prospects.

Progress of particular local note is that the County Council have now secured the land for the site of the new EWR station at Winslow that will provide a key transport gateway to the north of the county when EWR opens.

The next key milestone for Network Rail's programme, known as "GRIP 3", is due for completion by December 2016. This includes further development of the emerging design work to inform costed options. It will be at this point that more informed decisions on the financing and associated programme dates for EWR can be considered and taken by the DfT with input from the Consortium. Latest indications are that the next stage of public consultation for the EWR Transport & Works Act proposals are now likely to be around the turn of this calendar year.

Carriageway Resurfacing

A programme of 241 schemes County wide has been developed in conjunction with Members and work has progressed on all programmes of work associated with this delivery. Current position is as follows:

Conventional resurfacing: 26 schemes on the final work programme. Delivery commenced in June and 6 have been delivered to date (22/08/16). The majority of the programme will be delivered prior to end December 2016 although it is possible, to remain within budget constraints, that a small number may be moved to March 2017. If this is required details will be discussed with affected Members directly.

Surface dressing: 29 schemes on the final programme of work were delivered on the ground between May and July 2016, with the programme complete, including all lining as studding, by 18 July. This is pleasing given the variable weather conditions experienced.

Micro-surfacing: The final programme contains work on 112 individual streets within the county. Preparatory patching work has been ongoing since June with micro-surfacing beginning in July continuing through to November. At 22 August, 37 streets had been completed.

Targeted Patching: 15 schemes have been completed between April and early August.

High Friction Surfacing: 4 priority schemes were undertaken in May 2016. There are no others on the current year programme.

Plane and Patch: work is now ongoing on those roads nominated by Members, predominantly on the 'C' and unclassified road network. Works are due to complete at the end of September.

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 complete 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.

Engagement with Members is expected to commence in September 2016 in connection with those schemes which will progress in 2017/18.

Other Capital Programmes

Drainage: design and build work continues on a number of defined priority schemes identified through members, LAT's or third party notifications where lack of highway drainage provision is identified to be a primary contributor to road safety concerns or to problems of water ingress to property.

Safety Fencing: a programme of work will be progressed between October 2016 and February 2017 to upgrade or replace existing sections of safety fencing which have been identified through survey to be deteriorated or sub-standard.

Structures Maintenance: a programme of bridge and culvert strengthening/replacement has been prepared from inspection information, taking cognisance of requirements of national design and construction standards, and is progressing in specific locations around the County. In addition, design work is nearing completion for upgrade of deteriorated pumping stations which have caused problems over recent years, with upgrade work to be progressed prior to end March 2017.

Street Lighting: a column replacement programme has been developed in two phases, following structural inspection which has identified aged columns which may be at risk of future failure. Phase 1 is due to commence on site in September with both phases completing before end March 2017, equating to around 850 column replacements in total.

Parking/Pay and Display: pre-works consultations and liaisons are now predominantly complete with installation expected in October.

Casualty Reduction: site specific Casualty Reduction initiatives are taking place in line with a programme of work developed and prioritized through accident review.

Rolling Programme

I am grateful to Members who have actively engaged and assisted the move to a rolling 4-year programme of Capital work. Most importantly this has allowed us to demonstrate to DfT that we have an effective asset strategy, meeting the DfT criteria which will protect funding for future years 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.

MARK SHAW
CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION

7g. CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Fly tipping prosecution success continues

On average since April 2010, there has been at least one conviction per week for illegal dumping offences in Buckinghamshire. Contrary to national trends this has resulted in a halving of reported fly tipping incidents and a significant saving to the Buckinghamshire tax payer over the period, principally through reducing removal and disposal costs. Despite a recent small rise in incident numbers these are now falling again principally due to some targeted monitoring and enforcement over the last few months. A summary of the latest cases is as follows:

- Geoffrey John Barlow, 62 years, of Malvern Avenue, Harrow, pleaded guilty at Wycombe Magistrates Court on 20 July 2016 to an offence of failing in his duty of care as a householder regarding waste which was later found dumped illegally completely blocking Shire Lane, Chalfont St Peter, The Magistrates ordered Mr Barlow to pay **£2,370** in fines and costs.
- Constantin Vladeanu, 26 years, of Roxeth Green Avenue, Harrow, pleaded guilty at Wycombe Magistrates Court on 20 July 2016 to an offence of failing in his duty of care regarding waste which was later found fly-tipped at a lay-by parking area on Stony Lane, Little Chalfont, Bucks, making a total to pay of **£1,604**.
- Nathan Jack Willment, 24, of Bank Street, High Wycombe and Steven Paul Carey, also 24, of Home Meadow, Farnham Royal were convicted at Wycombe Magistrates Court on 10 August and 24 August 2016 for fly tipping. The two men were seen fly tipping soil from Mr Willment's van in Allerds Road, Farnham Royal. The Magistrates fined Mr Willment £1,625 and Mr Carey £425. The men were ordered to pay £515 each towards prosecution costs, plus £163 and £43 respectively in victim surcharges.
- Westside Land Ltd, of Chiltern View Nursery, Wendover Road, Weston Turville, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire pleaded "Guilty" at Wycombe Magistrates Court on 8 September 2016 to an offence of failing in its duty of care regarding waste which was later found abandoned in a trailer a lay-by at Frith Hill, Great Missenden on the B485 (the Chesham road). The Magistrates fined Westside Land Ltd £2,250, and ordered the company to pay compensation for the safe removal and disposal of the waste of £16,962. Prosecution costs were ordered to be paid in the sum of £952.99. A victim surcharge of £120 was also levied – making a total to pay of **£20,284.99**.

Energy: Big Community Switch summary

Buckinghamshire County Council will take part in the big community switch (BCS) project in collaboration with IChoosr this year - our energy group buying scheme partner. With the help of Local Area Forums (LAFs), Parish Councils and other organisations we will engage with residents to take part on an auction in which energy suppliers will compete with their best market rates to supply all the residents taking part. The Auction will be held between January and February 2017 and this has previously generated average savings of £287.55 per participating household in Buckinghamshire.

The BCC will adopt a full digital communications approach to promote the scheme, saving resources and maximizing the Council revenue. Referral fees will be paid by the successful energy supplier and the amount will depend on the number of households which switch. I will be asking members to assist in prioritising this.

Flood Risk Prioritisation Project

The Strategic Flood Management team is looking to deliver a refinement of our existing high-level screening of flood risk (at present on a settlement scale), by undertaking a

more detailed GIS-based assessment at a finer spatial scale to better understand the distribution of local flood risk across the county.

The key outcome is to prioritise 'hot spots' of flood risk that may require priority action. The supporting aims of the project are:

- To move towards an 'all sources of flooding' approach and county-wide evidence base to underpin the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- More informed spatial planning and emergency planning
- To identify the potential for Grant-in-Aid funding to support application process
- Promote a more strategic and coordinated approach to working in partnership with the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards, Water Companies and Transport for Bucks to manage the risks identified.

I hope that the project will help provide an evidence base for the County Council to proactively target flood management funds and measures where they will have the greatest benefit. The process will be designed to support options appraisal and provide evidence for investment decisions.

We are currently in discussion with our preferred consultant to help us deliver this work this financial year.

Country Parks

2016 has seen the busiest July and August on record for the Country Parks with visitor numbers topping a quarter of a million visitors in the two month period; this equates to just under a 20% increase on previous highs recorded last year for the same period.

Family events such as Fun in the Park, the Lakeside Fair and the Langley Park Dog Show continue to be a great success and these, coupled with some great new facilities including a new play area at Denham and improved café facilities at both Langley Park and Denham Park, mean that we can expect the upward trend to continue through September and October – as long as the good weather continues!

Natural Environment Partnership update

The Natural Environment Partnership (NEP) is Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes' Local Nature Partnership. It brings together a diverse range of individuals, businesses and organisations to drive positive change for the local natural environment. The NEP promotes the value of the natural environment in decision making at all levels and takes a strategic view to the challenges and opportunities facing nature. The NEP is working alongside the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and the health and wellbeing boards to embed natural environment in growth, economic & health strategies, and develop interventions and programmes for delivery.

The NEP has been assessing the status of the Buckinghamshire environment, how we make use of it and the many benefits it provides, so we can track changes and focus efforts into the future and has just produced a **State of the Buckinghamshire's Environment Report**. The report looks at Buckinghamshire's environmental assets, how we use them and benefit from them, and provides a baseline record of key indicators, with trend data where possible. It's the first time this sort of data has been collected together and presented in this way, and gives a comprehensive overview / baseline of the current status of the Buckinghamshire environment and where some of the focus areas need to be, looking at the county as a whole. The main purposes of the report are: collect a baseline of data; to track the changes as Buckinghamshire grows; identify environmental issues that need attention; and to use the report to raise

awareness of the value of the environment as well as of the work of the NEP. The executive summary is available here <http://www.bucksmknep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/SOE-Executive-Summary.pdf> or the full report is available <http://www.bucksmknep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/State-of-Environment-Full-Report.pdf>

The NEP has also just published a **‘Vision and Principles for the Improvement of Green Infrastructure in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes’**. This document sets out the principles and priorities that the NEP agrees should be adhered to when creating and improving green infrastructure provision in Buckinghamshire, including Milton Keynes. The document sets out what is meant by “green infrastructure”, our collective vision for green infrastructure in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, and the considerations that should be taken into account when planning for green infrastructure, from strategic scales to individual projects. The NEP will use the principles to influence and advocate good practice at all development scales and has incorporated into the NEPs response to all current local plan consultations in the County. An example of it’s latest local plan response is available here <http://www.bucksmknep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/NEP-RESPONSE-8.8.16-Review-of-Wycombe-District-Local-Plan.pdf>

Other projects the NEP is undertaking relate to:

- OneLandscape - a feasibility study that looks at new ways to use existing data about Buckinghamshire’s environment. The project objective is to identify innovative products and associated commercial opportunities based upon geographical areas of interest for Buckinghamshire’s communities and visitors
- Biodiversity Offsetting – development of a countywide approach to deliver improved environmental outcomes and consistency in the evaluation of environmental impacts for developments where compensation for environmental impact cannot be delivered within a development site

Full details of the NEP’s work is available <http://www.bucksmknep.co.uk/>

Household Recycling Centres – changes to Waste Acceptance & Access Policy (WAAP) 2016

As is usual, winter opening times at the Household Recycling Centres come into force on 1st October, and this year the winter opening times will be 9am to 4pm every day. The winter closing times will make the service more cost-effective, as winter evenings are the least popular time for customers to visit their Recycling Centre.

Since 2006, for some visits to the Recycling Centre – for instance when using a commercial vehicle or large trailer –customers are required to obtain a free permit. To make the permit system faster, more convenient and cost-efficient, it will now be fully digital. This means instead of waiting for your permit to arrive in the post, you can immediately present your digital permit code to Recycling Centre staff using your mobile device, or take along a print out if that is more convenient.

Lastly, we will be phasing out the old name 'Household Waste and Recycling Centre' in favour of 'Household Recycling Centre'. This doesn't make any difference to the types of material you can take along, but it does emphasise the most important role of the centres: helping to further improve recycling rates in Buckinghamshire.

Physical signage such as road signs will only be replaced when damaged, so there will be no unnecessary expenditure.

These changes reflect our drive towards efficiency in our waste services, while at the same time making the permit system faster and more convenient for users. The renaming of Household Recycling Centres marks our ongoing commitment to achieving the best environmental outcomes possible in Bucks through recycling, re-using and reducing our overall consumption.

WARREN WHYTE
CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

7h. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

Digital Strategy

The digital strategy was adopted in March and significant progress has been made in the following areas:

- Digital savings: There are 27 digital projects underway expected to save up to £1m in 2016/17.
- Customer experience: Two of our largest transactions (school applications and Transport for Buckinghamshire reporting (TfB) have been redesigned to deliver a high quality customer experience. In addition, the top 25 tasks on the website, which account for half of all user queries are being redesigned over the next six months. The digital tools are delivering important improvements to the customer experience. For example, the new shop is much more reliable so that customers are able to buy a school bus pass at their convenience.
- Channel shift: Customers who can self-serve will be encouraged to do so through new high quality digital services that are easier to use.
- Governance: Effective governance has been put in place to oversee a digital service standard and to ensure new digital projects meet the needs of users, adopt modern technology and have sufficient resources to be improved in response to feedback. An expert 'check and challenge' group comprising residents of the County also inform improvements.

By the end of the financial year, we expect to achieve:

- A clear plan for achieving the digital savings for 2017/18.
- Significant increases in customer satisfaction – particularly amongst mobile users.
- The majority of customers self-serving via digital channels.
- All our high volume digital services to meet the digital service standard or have a plan to do so.

The webpages for schools are so much quicker that they will save parents 3 months a year in waiting for pages to load! We look forward to the new pages being applied across bucksc.gov.uk.

London Borough of Harrow – Shared Services with Buckinghamshire County Council

Phase 1 of the HR shared service with the London Borough of Harrow went live on 1st August 2016. The new arrangement involves Buckinghamshire County Council's management of Harrow HR services, including Employee Relations and Payroll.

Phase 2 of the shared service will involve the transfer of the relevant Harrow staff to Buckinghamshire County Council and is currently scheduled to take place by April 2017. Once fully operational, the HR shared service will give us opportunities to share knowledge, generate new business and find more efficient ways of working. Cumulative savings of around £600k are expected to be shared by the partners after year 3 of the arrangement.

Our ambition is to drive tangible improvements through creating a more resilient shared team and adopting best practices from each organisation. The HR shared service is the next step in an already well-established relationship with Harrow, which has so far included collaboration on Organisational Development and, more recently, the sharing

of Legal Services following the transfer of Buckinghamshire County Council staff to HBPL (Harrow's in-house law team).

BREXIT Implications

At the last Council meeting, Members asked questions about the implications of Brexit on the County Council. The key implications to date are:

- UK credit rating reduced slightly
- Growth forecasts revised down
- Pound fallen sharply (good for exporters but could lead to inflationary pressures – as the UK is a net importer)
- Interest base rate reduced to 0.25% / quantitative easing
- Stock markets are currently performing well but are being kept closely under review

Changes to the Government's fiscal strategy are expected which may include:

- Target of achieving a budget surplus by 2020 scrapped
- The Autumn statement will be critical in terms of potential changes to existing public sector targets (both quantum and timing)
- 4-year funding deal may be reviewed

This situation will be kept under constant review and a report will be made to Members once implications become clear.

Pension Fund Pooling

In 2015 the Government announced that they wanted the 89 Local Government Pension Scheme funds to pool their investments into larger pools in order to achieve savings in investment management costs.

In response to the Government agenda, Project Brunel was set up to explore the options for pooling investment assets across ten Funds. The founding Funds include the Environment Agency Pension Fund, and the Local Government Funds of Avon, Buckinghamshire, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Somerset and Wiltshire. The collective assets of the pool are approximately £23 billion.

The objective of pooling the assets is to achieve savings over the longer term from both lower investment management costs and more effective management of the investment assets. The pool will look to deliver the savings based upon the collective buying power the collaboration initiative will produce. Local accountability will be maintained as each individual fund will remain responsible for strategic decisions including asset allocation. The pooling of assets will only affect the implementation of the investment strategy in terms of manager appointments. A Local Authority Company will be established in which Buckinghamshire County Council as administering authority will own an equal share with the other Brunel founder funds.

A motion to approve these arrangements will be made to Full Council later this year.

HR Operations

There have been a range of Resourcing initiatives to highlight in the first half of 2016/17.

Qualified Social Workers: The national shortage of Social Workers continues to be a key resourcing challenge. Actions taken to address the shortage of social workers include:

- Expansion of 'Grow your Own' Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) recruitment campaign – 3 x assessment dates scheduled for Q2 and 14 NQSW shortlisted at time of report. Career framework in place to support Newly Qualified Social Workers.
- Work has taken place to strengthen relationships with top 6 high performing agencies. This has improved the quality of CV's and reduced number breaching the 48 hour turn-around time. There were zero exceptions at time of report.
- New online assessment & selection technique (Rosie) continues to add value & rigour to the quality of selection decisions and has been used to promote the County Council as an employer of choice.
- The South East Memo of Co-Operation, which commits Buckinghamshire County Council to implementing consistent pay rates across region and improving the referencing process, continues to be implemented and is being successful in managing consistent pay rates. Reading is due to sign up from 1st Sept.
- Reward and Attraction remuneration package finalised and in place for current and new staff in Children's Qualified Social Work (QSW) posts.
- Career progression framework has been refreshed with links to the quality of social work practice.

Updated figures for Q1 (April to June 2016) show that there were 7 new starters in hard-to-fill QSW roles (excluding agency workers) and there were 12 leavers due to resignation. However, due to increased visibility in the market from our digital and social media campaigns, there are 11 new starters either confirmed or in the pipeline for QSW roles from July onwards and 9 in newly qualified roles.

In 2015/16 financial year, there were 63 external new starters in hard-to-fill Qualified Social Worker roles (excluding agency workers). There were 27 leavers in the equivalent period.

The key agency metrics monitoring social worker recruitment are given below:

Metric	Sept 2015 Data	July 2016 Data	Target
% of qualified social workers on an agency contract (includes all agency workers including those covering absence, maternity <u>and</u> perm requirements)	25%	25.08%	20%
Number of qualified agency social workers in permanent posts in C&F (agency workers covering perm posts only)	57	58	27

This data was reported in June as part of the Workforce Development Improvement Plan. The metrics have returned to Sept 2015 levels due to a high number of leavers in CIN & First Response and an increase in agency workers to cover. It is anticipated that this will be a temporary increase and has been addressed by the implementation of the new market supplement for qualified social workers.

Graduate Recruitment: A recent campaign for up to 3 graduates for hard to fill professional TEE roles was successfully concluded in August. A new digital interviewing

tool called Hirevue was used as part of the assessment process. Managers were able to review their prospective candidates on-line and score them, which identified the 12 highest scoring candidates to invite to the assessment centre. Of the candidates assessed, 9 were appointable and 6 accepted offers of employment; 3 for the graduate roles and 3 for other roles.

Grow Our Own Strategy: As reported earlier in the year, Central Government are introducing a new target for all Public Sector Bodies to have 2.3% of their staff on apprenticeship programmes, which equates to an annual target of 63 staff.

Staff Upskilling Programme

BCC currently have 18 staff enrolled on apprenticeship training frameworks. Qualifications include Management, Team Leading, Business & Administration, ICT, Customer Services and AAT.

Apprenticeship Programme

BCC currently have 23 apprentices hosted across the organisation plus 13 placements in recruitment process and a 5 further identified vacancies.

ISO Accreditation for ICT Service

ICT Consultancy recently celebrated gaining the internationally recognised [ISO 20000](#) certification for IT Service Management at a ceremony held at The British Standards Institution's (BSI) offices in Milton Keynes.

This was the culmination of an 18 month journey that called upon the input of colleagues from across all the ICT Consultancy and Operational teams, and included the task of migrating from ICT ISO 9001 certification for Quality Management which the Council's ICT Service has held since 2008.

Being awarded ISO20000 means that we are recognised for adopting IT industry best practice, being able to demonstrate how we are doing this, as well as measuring end-user and customer satisfaction.

As a result, we now have updated mechanisms in place to be able to make continuous improvements to service delivery and quality of service. This is important because it will allow us to improve customer retention by increasing customer confidence and satisfaction, and so ultimately build our credibility as a service provider to external organisations.

Having successfully gained the accreditation, we cannot rest on our laurels, as ICT Consultancy has a three year audit plan in place. Regular internal audits will ensure ongoing maintenance and improvements; BSI will also visit twice a year to ensure we continue to meet the needs of the standard. Any significant failures that are not resolved could result in the certification being withdrawn.

Since being awarded ISO20000, ICT has already successfully concluded its first review which resulted in some positive comments from BSI: "The approach to managing the IT Service Management system shows a good level of maturity that brings effective continual improvement through managed Service Improvement Plans."

Best practice tells us what we could do, ISO tells us what we should do, and so our ongoing mantra is 'say what we do, and do what we say'!

Zero Hours Contracts

A question was raised at the last Council meeting regarding the use of zero hours contracts at the County Council.

Within BCC, zero hours contracts are those where a contractual employment relationship provides for continuity of service for redundancy and sick pay entitlements for the employee, but for which there are no guaranteed hours of work.

There are two groups within BCC where these contracts currently exist:

- Adult Learning Tutors (236 employees)
ZHC are used as there is long-term uncertainty around curriculum programming. Hours of work are agreed at the beginning of each term.
- Deputy/Ceremonies Registrars (12 employees)
ZHC are used as the volume of work is based on the number of ceremonies etc. that the Council is requested to perform and the employees' availability to accept this work.

A paper on zero hours contracts is being presented to Senior Appointments and Bucks Pay Committee (SABPAC) on 29th September for further discussion.

**JOHN CHILVER
CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**