

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL UPDATE 2017

OUR AIMS



**Safeguarding
our vulnerable**



**Creating
opportunities
and building
self-reliance**



**Ensuring
Buckinghamshire
is thriving &
attractive**



**Delivering value
for money**

This Annual Update highlights our key achievements against the three strategic aims and underpinning commitment to deliver value for money.

We have kept delivering vital frontline services to Buckinghamshire's 212,000 households and 528,000 residents, despite unprecedented financial, demographic and demand pressures alongside fundamental policy changes. Essential to our success is working with our partners.

We have made real progress towards working in a radically different way with our customers, partners and providers, but we know there is more to do. The annual update also summarises areas for improvement and focus in 2017 /18.

SAFEGUARDING OUR VULNERABLE



OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016/17

Ofsted have noted the 'steady progress' to improve children's services, which includes improving the timeliness of assessments and ensuring children's views are heard in decision making.

Over 9000 children were supported by children's services and we have introduced 'Mind of My Own', an app that enables children to give their views, wishes and feelings in their Looked After Reviews. This work has led to being nominated for an award.

We designed an interactive 'roundabout' tool with children to enable them to navigate their way through Early Help and Children's Social Care services.

We have improved the recruitment and retention of foster carers so more children could be fostered locally. Throughout the year we have held regular information sessions, including one specifically for people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

The Swan team, a multi agency team of professionals, helped secure 12 convictions related to child sexual exploitation.

There was an 8% increase in adults using our care services who say our services have

made them feel more safe and secure. Over 6,000 people aged over 65 received home care support so they could stay in their own homes.

Buckinghamshire County Council terminated its contract with adults social care provider, Bucks Care, after recognising that the quality of services needing improving. Services have now been brought in-house and focus remains on ensuring high quality care.

1422 people received direct payments (DP) to help them plan their social care. The 'Virtual Wallet' is our new approach to managing DP's more efficiently.

We launched a website to promote men's mental health thisisheadsup.org.

225 people from 53 different agencies signed up to the Bucks Domestic Abuse Champion's Network. Champions help identify the most appropriate agency which ensures people get help and support quickly and early.

A LGBT Domestic Abuse Group improved several issues for LGBT victims to encourage them to report domestic abuse. The group's work was nationally recognised and contributed significantly to the council jumping 59 places in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Consolidate and accelerate the pace of the improvement journey in children's services.

Service transformation with a sharp focus on supporting people to stay involved in their communities and live independently for as long as they wish, and for as long as it is safe to do so.

Health and Social Care integration to strip out duplication and enable improvements.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND BUILDING SELF-RELIANCE



OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016/17

We launched the 'Find My Child a School Place' website to help parents research, locate and evaluate accessing schools. Many of our application processes have been updated and are now available online.

88% of our children attend a good or outstanding school that means almost nine out of every ten children attend a good or outstanding school.

For the September 2018 reception admission, 86.5% of children were offered their preferred school. At Secondary transfer, 87% of children were allocated to their highest preference.

We have developed our Education and Skill Strategy and are consulting schools to build capacity across the school system to support improved outcomes.

71 schools in Buckinghamshire won national acclaim for their work in getting pupils back on their feet. They have achieved accreditation for encouraging children and young people to walk, pedal and scoot to school.

We launched a new and flexible way to brush up on English and/or maths skills. 'Blended Learning' helps people fill in individual skill gaps for free.

There have been 1.3m visits to our libraries and over 1.8m book loans, and Marlow Library won the Marlow FM Hidden Gems Award for "Services To The Community" by public vote.

In 2016, 99% of customers found our registrars service to be good or excellent - quite a feat given the 5500 births and 3500 deaths they register, and the 1700 ceremonies they conduct on average each year.

We have 32,050 local businesses, and have supported small local businesses to work in partnership with us. We have also supported over 100 local projects helping communities address local priorities.

Active Bucks has seen another successful year, offering a range of activities such as boot camps, junior parkruns, bush craft, Quidditch, dog agility and NERF games. With over 3,000 participants in first three months, activity levels increased by 56%.

Our annual sponsored cycle ride took residents on a thrilling 35 mile or a mammoth 75 mile route. Both routes started and finished in Aylesbury and went through the scenic beauty of Chiltern Hills.

We launched a young people's sexual health phone app, 'Dom the Condom'.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Continue the recruitment drive for more teachers and invest in teachers to ensure schools in the county remain amongst the best in the country.

Close the gap between all pupils and the most vulnerable.

Recognise the pressure on our early years providers and support them as they move to extend their offer from providing 15 to 30 hours statutory childcare.

ENSURING BUCKINGHAMSHIRE IS THRIVING AND ATTRACTIVE



OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016/17

The zero tolerance approach to fly-tipping saw 67 convictions last year with offenders paying over £140k at court. A landmark £31000 fine, plus costs, was issued for a waste planning enforcement breach.

This year we have maintained 3199km of roads, 2461km of pathways and fixed over 17,000 dangerous potholes. We also delivered 5.6 miles of new shared footways and cycleways, connecting Winslow and Buckingham.

We recycled, reused or composted 58% of household waste. We have opened our energy from waste plant which treats up to 300,000 tonnes of waste each year and generates 175,000 megawatt hours per annum of electricity – enough energy to power 36,000 homes.

We have generated £28,000 of income per year through new solar PV projects.

Our country parks recorded a million annual visitors and have a record 2750 followers on social media. We generated £895,000 from on-site activities which is being used for the management of the parks.

We lobbied HS2 for a mitigation package for Great Missenden worth £1.25m which includes safety and road improvements.

We have worked with the LEP and successfully received over £20m of government funding for essential infrastructure, including a new South East Aylesbury Link Road. Together we

have successfully promoted three enterprise zones in the north of the county, which will bring business, economic and social benefits to Buckinghamshire.

England's Economic Heartland (EEH), a partnership of nine councils and four Local Enterprise Partnerships who work together to release the economic potential of the geographical area between Oxford and Cambridge, is a finalist in the Excellence in Governance and Scrutiny category. EEH recently secured £625 of government funding to take the partnership forward, and the County Council takes a lead role and hosts the team working on the project.

EEH held their first regional conference in March, which highlighted how the delivery of roads and infrastructure is vital to the area fulfilling its potential and unlocking development.

We gave a helping hand to local small firms and entrepreneurs by converting the disused Victorian Porters' Lodge into usable office and business space.

We adopted LTP4, Aylesbury Transport Strategy and Buckingham Transport Strategy, which provided not only transport policies for the County, but the town strategies set out transport proposals to cater for the planned growth in and around Aylesbury and Buckingham. For Aylesbury, this includes the proposal for a series of "link" roads around the town combined with better walking, cycling and public transport.

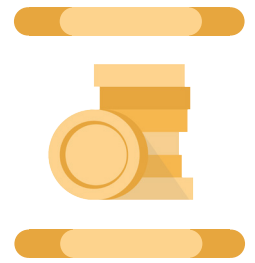
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Escalate progress and use data to drive change with our own assets and across the wider public estate.

Utilise technology to get better value for money out of our highways asset.

Translate scale of growth, as it becomes clear, into integrated investment in infrastructure and ecosystem services.

OUR COMMITMENT TO DELIVER VALUE FOR MONEY



OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016/17

Established an HR shared service with the London Borough of Harrow which produces savings and greater expertise.

Achieved a balanced budget and Medium Term Financial Plan. Ensured resources are targets to our priorities. We have strengthened our income generation and commercialised approach and now generate around £70m in fees and charges every year.

Submitted a comprehensive business case for modernising local government, evidencing the need for change and the benefits of a single unitary council.

Developed a new council website following best practice principles set out by the Government Digital Service.

Buckinghamshire County Council employee Helen Backus was crowned The Guardian's Public Servant of the Year. Helen setup Bucks' Life Skills Centres in Aylesbury and Flackwell Heath in response to a 90% of disabled young people having to leave the county to continue their post-16 education. Five years later the figure is just 10%, with the centres having helped more than 200 young people.

In partnership with our property consultants, Carter Jonas, we have joined Apple, Google and UBS on the shortlist for a national award for a project to make public services more efficient.

Our approach to property has made us a finalist in the Commercialism in the Property Estate MJ Awards.

Established a joint Trading Standards service with Surrey County Council which has won several national awards for efficiency and returned over £400,000 to consumers in 2016/17.

Thrift Farm won the National Farm Attractions Network award for Food and Beverage.

Buckinghamshire County Council employee Yvette Thomas was recognised at the Show Racism the Red Card special 20th Anniversary celebration and Hall of Fame event. Her work includes events where over 1000 children delivered and participated in anti-discrimination workshops.

Representatives from the LGBT Domestic Abuse Task & Finish Group were invited to the Stonewall National Conference in April 2017 as 'inclusion specialists.'

The Council achieved a small underspend in 16/17 overall which helped restore reserves to a more reasonable level.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

We must continue with our programme to manage our resources in the most cost effective way, maximising opportunities to generate income whilst delivering services efficiently.

We must continue to ensure public services are easy to use, responsive to customer needs and provide good value for money.

Continue to plan to ensure Buckinghamshire is best prepared for post-Brexit success.