

County Council



Cabinet Member Reports

7A REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Remembering those who served

This month I joined the Chairman in raising the flag for Armed Forces Day. At the same time, we unveiled a plaque to those staff of Buckinghamshire County Council who served and died in The Great War 1914-1918. Subsequently I accompanied the Chairman and other members to Ypres in Belgium to lay a wreath at the cemetery of Lance Corporal Arthur Ormerod who worked in our Weights and Measures Department and who was killed in the war. Arthur Ormerod was chosen to represent all those staff who died and to whom we owe so much.

Local Government Reorganisation

We would like to thank all residents and organisations for making their views known to the Secretary of State during the period of representations following his minded-to decision to replace all five existing councils with a new unitary council for the whole of Buckinghamshire.

All councils across Buckinghamshire agree that the current configuration of local government in Buckinghamshire is no longer fit for purpose or affordable, and that change is essential.

County Council policy is that one new unitary authority is the best option for Buckinghamshire, simplifying the current local government structure, saving many millions of pounds to invest in frontline services and enabling services to be provided for residents at a truly joined up and local level.

We await the Secretary of State's final decision following his period of reflections and we remain committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all local residents, developing a prosperous and sustainable future for Buckinghamshire.

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance

I previously reported that I was writing to the Secretary of State for Transport setting out the partners' concerns regarding the approach to engagement on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway. The Secretary of State responded by restating his desire to strengthen the working relationship with Buckinghamshire County Council and the Strategic Alliance, and re-emphasising the critical role that the 'connectivity study' has to play in identifying how communities not 'on' the expressway can still benefit from it. I understand that the Secretary of State remains committed to making an announcement on the preferred corridor for the expressway before the summer recess.

In May the Strategic Alliance received confirmation of an increase in the level of funding from the Department for Transport - £1m for 2018/19. Combined with the contributions that individual partners make, this means that the Strategic Alliance is able to take forward an expanded programme of work. This includes work to put in place the regional evidence base that will shape the development of the overarching Transport

Strategy. The additional funding has enabled the EEH Business Unit to recruit a small number of additional staff essential for delivering the work programme.

The June Strategic Transport Forum considered a request from DfT to put forward candidates for 'early entry' into the Major Road Network programme. This new programme will begin in 2020/21 and offers the opportunity for local authorities to secure additional monies to invest in new roads. The Forum agreed to put forward a proposal to dual the proposed Aylesbury Eastern Link Road. This will now be considered by the DfT.

The Strategic Alliance has now received the report commissioned from Bircham Dyson Bell into how the regulatory frameworks for utilities can act as a barrier to the delivery of wider strategic infrastructure. Their report will be published by the Strategic Alliance in July and will be used by the partners to push Government to use the regulatory frameworks to make it easier for much needed investment in wider infrastructure to come forward in a co-ordinated way.

At the same time the Strategic Alliance is promoting the concept of a National Policy Statement for the Heartland. This would reinforce the national importance of the Heartland and help ensure that national support continues beyond individual electoral cycles.

Also in June Hertfordshire officially joined as partners in the Strategic Alliance, giving further credibility to our partnership as being the forum providing leadership on strategic infrastructure issues.

HS2 Update

Civic Event with HS2 Ltd - A 'round table' meeting was hosted by the Chairman of the Council on the evening of 6 June in Judges Lodgings with the Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd, some of his top team, senior contractors and the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet Members of the Council and representatives of the business community in the county.

The purpose of the evening was to establish a constructive, strategic relationship between Bucks and the senior HS2 team, for HS2 to understand the needs of the Bucks business community over the considerable project construction period and to explore opportunities to maximise benefits and minimise impacts. It was a constructive meeting and Councillors very much wanted to see benefits for local young people in terms of possible HS2 apprenticeships and educational opportunities as well as environmental legacies from the project.

Community and Environment Fund (CEF) and the Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF) - Steeple Claydon Methodist Church has been awarded £12,000 from the HS2 CEF for refurbishments. Richings Park Sports Club Ltd has been awarded £39,960 towards a children's play area. £74,000 has been awarded to Wendover Swimming Pool towards refurbishment. £450,000 has been awarded to Wendover Woods to develop recreation. Groundwork, who administers the funds, has published their report on the first year of the HS2 community grants scheme. You can read it [here](#).

High Speed 2 new website - HS2 Ltd has now been given permission by the government to develop its own branded website, separate to the .Gov website, which can be difficult to navigate. The new website is now live: <https://www.hs2.org.uk/>. HS2 Ltd has also developed Commonplace type pages for Buckinghamshire/Oxfordshire with local information and notices. They have also developed some Community

Engagement Plans. Where available, you can find them here: <https://hs2inbucksandoxfordshire.commonplace.is/>

Health and Wellbeing Board update (May meeting)

At the May meeting, the Board considered a detailed analysis report on the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority 3, [Promote good health and wellbeing for everyone from the Health and Wellbeing Board Dashboard](#).

The Board discussion centred on the indicators for school pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and school exclusion rates as well as a focus on adults in contact with secondary mental health services that live in stable and appropriate accommodation. The board welcomed updates from partners on work targeting the indicators and also recognised how the issue of housing is critical to mental health. The board requested a more detailed look at the links between mental health and physical health as a future agenda item. The board will look at the remaining priority areas of the [dashboard](#) at the September meeting as well as a deep dive on NHS Health Checks.

The Board welcomed a [presentation](#) to review the progress of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Sustainability and Transformation Partnership, as well as a focus on the work being carried out locally as part of the Integrated Care System and the aligned adult social care transformation programme, Better Lives. The Board requested more detail on how the public can understand any potential changes and how they are and can continue to help shape future health and care services in Buckinghamshire at the next meeting.

The Board also agreed its [governance arrangements and draft Terms of Reference for 2018/19](#). The Board confirmed that it would review the Terms of Reference annually given the current complexity of the health and care landscape and to ensure the board continued to meet its duty as the system wide forum with democratic accountability for the health and wellbeing of residents in the county.

Brexit

The Council continues to work closely with BBF and BTVLEP to ensure that Brexit analysis informs the development of local strategies and work streams. The Council continues to work with partners across England's Economic Heartland to develop a coordinated approach and vision for our region post-Brexit, and responding to national consultations and calls for evidence on the potential impact of Brexit and the direction government should take on key issues affecting local government.

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

7B DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION

Freight Strategy

I am pleased to announce that Buckinghamshire County Council adopted its Freight Strategy (2018-2036) on 22 June 2018. The Strategy builds the long term policy framework that sets out the Council's position on freight. It achieves this by setting out a range of strategic policies and solutions that will play a part in improving the movement of goods in Buckinghamshire - ensuring the needs of the environment and economy are balanced.

The Freight Strategy (a non-statutory document) was subject to two consultations in its development, receiving over 1650 responses in total. The feedback gave us valuable insight into the views of key stakeholders such as communities, business, and the freight industry and was used to inform the final version of the Freight Strategy. A Freight Strategy Consultation Report has been produced and published on Buckinghamshire's dedicated Freight Webpage, along with the Strategy.

Engagement with elected Members was a key theme throughout the Strategy's development and this approach continued throughout the internal decision making process. This included having the Strategy presented at Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee on 29 May and giving all Members further opportunity to give final comment on the Strategy before a key decision was taken. We hope the engagement around the development of the Strategy has been well-received.

Whilst the work on the document is now complete, we are moving into its implementation phase. Revenue and capital funding necessary for the delivery of the Strategy has been secured through the Medium Term Financial Plan. Putting the Strategy into action will include the appointment of a dedicated Freight Officer who will be responsible for rolling out a programme of freight focus groups throughout the county. The officer responsible has also been tasked with the implementation of a 'Freight Action Plan' that will involve projects to work with the industry and communities who feel unduly affected by inappropriate HGV movements. The purpose of this work is to quantify the need for targeted intervention locally, supported by cost-benefit analysis.

East West Rail

A Transport and Works Act Order for the Western Section Phase Two (from Bicester to Bedford, and Milton Keynes to Aylesbury), will be submitted at the end of July, seeking powers to build the scheme. There is a six week period for statutory and other comments to be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT).

A public inquiry is likely to be held early in 2019, with construction work due to commence later in 2019.

A number of enabling works (such as environmental mitigation ponds, set up of construction compounds, clearance of existing track and related activities) will be delivered ahead of the main works commencing.

The Consortium continues to work with the Alliance to ensure that the impact of construction on local communities is minimised wherever possible.

The East West Railway Company is currently considering preferred routes for the Central Section: they will consult on route options in late 2018/early 2019, with a view to confirming a preferred route in spring 2019.

The Consortium has prepared a draft prospectus which is intended to promote the Consortium's objectives for delivering enhancements to the existing rail links between Cambridge, Ipswich, Norwich and beyond (the Eastern Section). A working group formed from the local authorities in East Anglia has been established and has been tasked with taking forward the plans outlined in the prospectus. The ambition is to enable delivery of some early improvements to the existing infrastructure in order to provide faster journey times and thereby better connectivity between the main stations within the eastern section.

I was voted in as Chairman of the EWR Consortium at the first meeting of the Consortium Strategic Board on 14 June and will represent Consortium interests at the Programme Board, together with the Vice-chair, Councillor Sue Clark from Central Bedfordshire Council.

Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB)

The main operational achievements and challenges of the TfB business in the Quarter April to early July 2018 are listed below in sections 2 to 4. The main managerial achievements in the same period are summarised in Section 1 as follows:

- The Stakeholder Conference in early July attended by over 130 Parishes and Members was the largest held to date. Representatives from Essex and Kent County Council were also in attendance to learn and take back best practice notes to their own organisations. Feedback was positive and engagement impressive.
- A suggestion has been made by a member of the LEP team to conduct a similar conference, but focused on local businesses. This is being considered with BCC.
- Health and Safety – Figures remain very positive and culture good. Incidents are robustly investigated and addressed.
- Members Working Group continues to paying dividends although a refresh is now needed. Bus tour of north of County on 07 June was considered by all to be a positive, informative and educational day.
- The Members Portal has matured and the Parish Portal is about to go live.
- Fix-my-street is now integrated into Customer processes despite some teething problems. Information available through this portal will increase throughout the year.
- The HMEP Review and Future Highways Research Club (FHRC) value for money toolkit have been completed, the results from which have been dovetailed into the service continuous improvement plan. Consideration is being given for the FHRC to present to the Ringway Jacobs board.

Capital Programme

2018/19 Carriageway & Footway Surfacing Programme Overview

Following on from the successful completion of the 2107/18 programme of works, a further £18.65m is being invested in carriageway surfacing treatments, £2.78m on Plane & Patch and finally £1.5m on footways.

Work on the four main headline treatments (surface dressing, micro-surfacing, conventional resurfacing and plane and patch) has already commenced with resurfacing work on Stoke Hammond Bypass and footway structural repairs commencing in August and September respectively.

With actual spend across all programmes up to the end of June 2018 exceeding £5m, the following summarises the year to date position against each of the individual programmes of work:

- **Conventional Resurfacing** – TfB has made an excellent start with this year's programme of works, with eight schemes already completed out of a total of 22. To allow resurfacing work along Stoke Hammond Bypass to commence in the summer, progress on this programme of works will be reduced to maximise the use of available resources. Full completion of this programme of works is expected by the end of November.
- **Stoke Hammond Bypass** - £4.5m will be invested in resurfacing the bypass during the summer. Resurfacing work is planned to commence in August and is expected to be completed at the beginning of October. Carriageway closures will be in operation throughout this period.
- **Surface Dressing** – Over 75% of preparatory patching work has already been completed on the 33 schemes to be delivered as part of this year's programme of works. The headline treatment will be completed in August with the reinstatement of road markings and road studs following closely behind in September.
- **Micro-surfacing** – This year's programme contains work on 54 schemes covering over 90 individual streets across the county. Preparatory patching works have commenced, with the headline treatment programmed for completion by the end of September. Work to reinstate road markings and adjust ironwork will continue into November.
- **Plane and Patch/DfT Pothole Fund** – See operations section.
- **Joint Sealing** – In addition to the £200,000 invested during 2017/18, a further £230,000 has been allocated to this treatment during 2018/19. Phase 1 has already been completed, with 9 roads treated.
- **Footway Structural Repairs** – £1.5m will be invested in footway surfacing during 2018/19. 18 countywide priority schemes have been chosen for delivery, with a further 16 schemes with work in September. Work is expected to commence in September.
- **Preparation for 2019/20 Programme** – Feedback from the annual Member engagement meetings back in January and February has been used in preparing an indicative four year programme of both "local" and "strategic" schemes. This indicative programme will be reviewed at the next round of Member engagement meetings being planned for this October to continue the County's rolling four year carriageway surfacing programme.

2018/19 Capital Delivery Programme – Other Budget Headings

Elsewhere actual spend up to the end of June 2018 exceeded £700,000, following further countywide capital investment associated with street lighting, safety fencing, drainage, network safety, parking, bridges and traffic signals. The following summarises the year to date position against each of the individual programmes of work:

- **Street Lighting** – In excess of £2.5m will be invested in this asset during the course of 2018/19, with over 420 structurally defective columns and over 40 illuminated signs and feeder pillars to be replaced. As part of a countywide Salix funded 'Investment to Save' initiative to reduce future energy consumption and reduce maintenance costs, over 3,200 street lights will be replaced with LED lanterns. Work on all phases of work to commences in July/August.
- **Safety Fencing** – £250,000 to be invested on a total of three countywide schemes, with one of these schemes already completed.

- **Drainage** – Investment in drainage schemes has now been increased to £1m, which will allow us to complete over 30 schemes across the county. Excellent progress has been made since April, with 12 schemes already completed.
- **Network Safety** – Over £300,000 will be invested across 11 countywide network safety schemes, with over 70% of these schemes planned for completion during 2018. A further £879,000 from the DfT Safer Roads allocation will enable a number of safety schemes to be carried out along the A40 between West Wycombe and Stokenchurch, with the majority implemented before the end of this year.
- **Parking** – Successful completion of pay and display schemes in Aylesbury, Amersham and High Wycombe.
- **Bridges** – Throughout 2018/19, in excess of £1m will be invested in improvements to various structures across the county including Marlow Suspension Bridge, Marlow Obelisk, subways, a footbridge in Buckingham and a scheduled monument in Thornborough.
- **Traffic Signals** - £434,000 has been allocated for the upgrade of four traffic signal sites across the county and a further £130,000 for the renewal of rising bollards in Aylesbury and High Wycombe. All schemes currently planned for completion during 2018.

Schemes identified for delivery during 2018/19 are now available to view on the Members' Portal.

Network Management

Road Safety

Casualty reduction schemes

The Network Safety Team implements an annual programme of road safety engineering schemes in order to reduce the number of people injured on Buckinghamshire roads. These locations are identified through collision analysis and investigation to prioritise sites that have the highest incidence of reported injury collisions, both in number and severity. As a result of this analysis, we have identified eight sites to be prioritised within this year's (2018/19) safety scheme budget. These sites will be subject to detailed design and costing before a final programme is known. A scheme from last year's programme has recently been completed in Bourne End.

A4094 Ferry Lane/Hedsor Road, Bourne End

Collision data revealed collisions occurring due to drivers failing to give way on Hedsor Road when approaching Ferry Lane. In order to highlight the priority at the junction and raise awareness of the bend on the A4094, red surfacing was laid under central hatching and under new SLOW markings on the A4094. The Hedsor Road approach was resurfaced with a buff coloured high friction material to highlight the junction and provide a better surface on which to brake. Yellow backed Give way signing was installed at the junction and an advanced give way warning sign.

Casualty Data

Provisional collision/casualty data shows that 2017 (Jan to Dec) has seen a 17% reduction in the number of people injured on Buckinghamshire roads. Data for the first quarter of 2018 (Jan to March) appears to indicate this trend continuing with an 11% reduction in all casualties compared to the same period in 2017, eight fewer killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties and 20 fewer slight casualties than Jan-March 2017.

Road deaths in the first six months of 2018 have also reduced in comparison with the first six months of 2017 (12 in 2017 and 7 in 2018). We are able to report on six months

of fatal collisions as we receive these reports from Thames Valley Police within 48 hours and carry out a site visit with a TVP officer. A notification message is sent upon receipt of the details from TVP to the Cabinet Member and Deputy, together with the Member for the ward in which the collision has occurred.

Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity:

- Approved Driving Instructor Training course delivered (May & June) to raise the standard of tuition across the county in a bid to reduce the number of young driver KSIs.
- Virtual Reality goggles used at Aylesbury College safety event for young drivers in partnership with TVP and Bucks Fire & Rescue. Also used as part of road safety workshop for staff at the TfB Team Together Day at Amersham, and with TfB graduates.
- Healthy Driver speed reduction campaign promoted at Stakeholder conference on 4 July. Posters and resources developed for Parishes to use to help address community concerns with speeding.
- TiSPOL speed reduction campaign supported with exhibition stand at Buckingham in partnership with TVP and Bucks Fire & Rescue. Healthy driver promoted.
- Five Be a Better Biker motorcycle assessment days running throughout the summer. Delivered by Thames Vale Advanced Motorcyclist at Marlow fire station. Classroom and practical element aiming to improve rider skills and reduce the number of biker KSIs.
- Summer drink drive. Event held at Amersham supermarket (4 June) with TVP and Bucks Fire & Rescue promoting morning after campaign. Roadside checks carried out 29 June. 70 drivers stopped for speeding/mobile phones/seatbelts and all breathalysed – all passed.

Critical Junction Project

The Intelligent Transport Systems team is currently implementing a key project combining strategic review, development and resilience of key junctions. This includes reviewing the operation of all key junctions, amending signal timing plans and replacing equipment as required. It involves teams from across TEE as well as TfB. Whilst most key junctions have already had their timing plans reviewed, the first being fully reviewed is Junction 3 of the M40, with the A355 as this is a high speed junction, with considerable potential safety implications in the event of failure.

Street Works

The current very high levels of work taking place on the network by both TfB and utility companies mean the team is being kept very busy trying to co-ordinate and manage works. High demand for water in particular is seeing a large number of leaks and emergency works.

A recent review of the Buckinghamshire Permit Scheme has been undertaken and has concluded that the scheme has been implemented well, with potential for further development. The report itself is currently being reviewed internally and is likely to be published later in the summer, together with any agreed recommendations for next steps.

Parking

A revised policy and implementation plan for parking the “Parking Delivery Plan” has been considered and adopted by Cabinet. This will now form the framework for delivering a number of practical steps to help with the implementation of future parking schemes.

Network Operations

Although winter is a distant memory, the effects on the network have only recently started to subside.

Urgent defects (Category 1) usually run at around 220 per month. They have run at five times this amount up until June 2018. This has placed considerable pressure on resource and budget, and on related services such as claims for damages.

This position has necessitated a continuation of temporary techniques for repairs:

- Where possible and where resources are available, we are continuing to undertake permanent repairs through the excavation of deteriorated areas and the laying of hot, compacted material to ensure a durable and long lasting solution.
- To supplement this and to ensure the increased numbers of required repairs can be addressed, we are also using proprietary cold lay materials, designed specifically to address such problems. These repairs, although not giving the same visual appearance as a fully excavated and sawn repair, are still designed to give the same durability.
- We have accelerated use of jet-patching (a system of defect repair using material injected into the carriageway at high velocity, forming a semi-permanent repair) to assist in arresting the deterioration of defects into more severe potholes.
- Using the principles outlined in our Highway Inspection Policy we are also focussing our efforts where numbers dictate on repairing priority defects on busy main roads rather than cul-de-sacs. This will ensure that the passage of traffic is as safe as we can make it.

As a result, we have been able to maintain a very high completion rate over this testing period. Defects in June have now returned to normal levels. See also Plane and Patch commentary in Section 2.

Other maintenance activities:

Plane and Patch/DfT Pothole Fund – by end June, approximately 62,000sq m of plane and patch has been laid across the county, in all areas, based upon a pro-rata Member split. Works have progressed well through two main supply chain partners, with over 200 individual patches in around 50 different areas programmed. Feedback has been, in the main, positive. The programme has been effective in alleviating the development of many thousands of potential pothole defects. Some highly visible and longstanding areas of concern have been able to be addressed quickly and effectively through this approach. Programme should complete at the end August 2018.

Grass – a story of extremes. Following late finish of winter, temperatures rose sharply and weather stayed wet. April and May were, therefore, periods of extremely rapid growth. Programmes (especially urban) suffered and were three weeks behind at end of May. Rural, although remaining on programme, exhibited some very high and rapid growth, especially of verge located weeds such as cow parsley.

In latter June, the weather has remained hot but with minimal rainfall. As a result, growth has slowed and programmes have caught up.

Gullies – ahead of programme, assisted by lack of need for reactive attendance in the dry spell. Chesham has seen some very good collaborative work with the Town Council to get vehicles clear of streets in advance of gully emptying.

Spray Injection Patching (Jetpatching) – additional machines have been active in the County since April, primarily due to high defect numbers, but also to ensure serviceability and safe passage of various cycle events in the County.

Trees – work has continued in earlier months on priority removal/maintenance programme. Work has now been suspended during nesting season, and will recommence in August. Limbs, etc. which have become a nuisance to buses are being addressed as identified.

The **Maintenance Policy** is currently under review, as is our annual requirement. This review is feeding in intelligence gained from the winter period and may result in some minor change. No significant changes are envisaged.

Highways Development Management Guidance

The Transport Strategy and Highways Development Management teams have been working to develop a Highways Development Management Guidance document. The guidance is intended to help developers create great places and thriving communities - which contribute to the Council's vision for Buckinghamshire. It provides developers with the information they need to prepare successful transport proposals through the existing planning process.

The Guidance contains guidance points relating to four sections of the report, namely; Key Principles; Designing for Transport Inside Developments; Managing Developments Transport Impacts; and Delivering Works on the Highway.

The Highways Development Management Guidance was adopted in July 2018 and will be placed on the Buckinghamshire County Council website.

MARK SHAW
DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION

7C CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Live Well Stay Well

Live Well Stay Well, the new integrated lifestyle service for residents in Buckinghamshire, went live on 1 April 2018. The service offers a single point of contact for residents to access a range of support to

- lose weight
- quit smoking
- get more active
- drink less alcohol
- feel happier, or
- manage their diabetes.



The service also offers outreach NHS health checks and supports families to manage a child's weight, as well as referring residents to support with the emotional challenges of managing a long term condition.

Support is tailored to residents, including online support for all, with more intensive phone or face to face support available for stopping smoking and losing weight. Residents can also be referred or signposted to a range of external services such as physical activity opportunities, diabetes management and alcohol reduction.

Referrals can be made through the website and over 1,600 referrals have already been received in the first two months. The single point of access element of the service has been commissioned in partnership with the Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Visit www.livewellstaywellbucks.co.uk to find out more.

Active Bucks at the International Society for Physical Activity and Health (ISPAH) Congress, October 2018

I am delighted to report that the Public Health team has been invited to speak at the 7th Congress of the International Society for Physical Activity and Health Congress which will be held in London from 15 to 17 October and is co-hosted by Public Health England and Sport England.

The conference is aimed at policymakers, academics and practitioners from across the world and the Council has been invited to speak about our Active Bucks programme, specifically "*Using 'Stealth' in green spaces to engage inactive residents*".

Stealth activities engage with residents who would not be interested in traditional activities, and where physical activity is not their primary reason for taking part. Our programme included activities such as bushcraft, quidditch and wildlife photography. 1112 individuals took part in 46 activities over an 18 month period, 58% of those activities were sustained beyond the end of the programme.

Library Tea Parties for Volunteers

As part of the national celebration Volunteers Week 2018 the Council hosted 5 tea parties to thank all of our library volunteers for their valuable contribution to the service.

On Wednesday 6 June I attended the Amersham tea party and met volunteers who help the library service in a number of different roles, including volunteers from our Community Libraries, Home Library Service and those that help at our branch libraries with computer lessons, family history and children's events. I was also able to thank the volunteers at all five events around the County through a pre-recorded video message that was shown at all of the events.

Events were held throughout the week (1 -7 June) at Amersham, Burnham, Hazlemere, Great Missenden and Buckingham with a total of over 100 volunteers attending an event over the week. As part of the celebrations videos of library volunteers were published on Twitter, allowing our followers to meet a new volunteer each day.

Registration Service Annual Report

The Registration Service is required to complete an Annual Performance Report each April. It provides an overview of the Service's performance against national key performance indicators (KPIs), compliance with various standards and achievements during the year. The report is considered by the General Register Office and feedback provided.

In 2017/18 there was an improvement in performance across the KPIs and performance generally, as well as increases in activity levels in nearly all areas. 99.5% of customers rated the service as Excellent or Good between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018.

Feedback from the General Register Office was complimentary on the delivery of the statutory service, compliance against standards, and on the improvement in performance.

Citizenship Ceremony - 5 June 2018

Citizenship Ceremonies are the final step in the process for people who have been successful in gaining British Citizenship. The celebration of citizenship is normally associated with ornate ceremonial surroundings. However, on 5 June the Ceremony was held at St Mary's School, Aylesbury. This is the first time in Buckinghamshire that a citizenship ceremony has been hosted in a school, following a suggestion from one of the school governors.

The school hall resounded to the affirmation of allegiance to the Queen, and to the voices of 60 pupils from Year 5, who sang the National Anthem. Two pupils, Freya and Andrew, helped the High Sheriff present certificates and commemorative badges.

Regulatory Excellence Award

The Buckinghamshire and Surrey Joint Trading Standards team has won an award for 'Outstanding Achievement for Primary Authority Leadership'. The award was one of seven given for Regulatory Excellence by the Office for Product Safety & Standards (part of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy). The award recognises the service's close work with businesses to help them grow and maintain compliance with legislation which affects their businesses.

Royal Society for Public Health – shortlisted for an award

The 'Eat Out, Eat Well' scheme developed by the Trading Standards and Public Health services has been shortlisted the Royal Society for Public Health in its 'Health on the High Street' category. The scheme encourages food businesses to provide and promote healthier options to customers, through use of healthier catering practices and healthy options for children, and rewards staff training.

There are currently over 220 members of the scheme in Surrey and Buckinghamshire, including an NHS Hospital, leisure centres, National Trust properties, prisons, non-local authority schools, workplace restaurants and chain and independent sandwich bars.

The award winners will be announced in October and the winners of the seven categories (based in England) will also be submitted for consideration for the prestigious Public Health Minister's Award and Public Health England commendations.

Amersham Decides

The Amersham Local Area Forum (LAF) has allocated £9,000 of its 2018/19 budget to the Amersham Decides Community Budgeting Project. Community groups and organisations within the LAF area were invited to submit applications to take part in the project.

Of the 10 applications received, four will now be voted on with each receiving part of the allocated funding:

- Amersham Mobile Museum- a mobile exhibition to reach isolated residents
- Savvy E-Safety- an intergenerational project where students help older people to stay safe online
- Citizens Advice Service- support & advice for the vulnerable & isolated
- Old Amersham Memorial Gardens - creating a conservation area through wildlife and sensory planting.

The voting period opened on 11 June 2018 and closes on 27 July and is open to all residents of the Amersham LAF area to vote for their favourite project. Residents can vote online at www.amershamdecides.co.uk and at a number of locations in the Amersham area.

Integrated Communities Strategy

The Council has responded to the Government's Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper consultation which closed on 5 June.

The majority of the actions in the proposed strategy are government-led national actions or actions to be taken within the five first 'Integration Areas' (Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest). The key focus is on:

- Strengthening leadership to drive integration through policy making/service delivery
- Supporting new migrants and resident communities to integrate
- Education and young people
- Boosting English language
- Places and community
- Increasing economic opportunity
- Addressing barriers to rights and freedoms
- Measuring the success of the strategy.

The Government invites action by local authorities to show leadership by:

- Including an equality objective outlining specific activity to promote integration (already a requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty)

- Selecting a number of priority policies and services and assess whether they exacerbate segregation and could be developed so they actively drive integration.

In addition the Government:

- Is challenging libraries and other community hubs to maximise their contribution to building integrated communities
- Will issue revised guidance on how community groups can bid to take over the running of valued local assets including an online platform
- Will evaluate impact of work to date on the transfer of assets to determine what has worked and how this can be replicated across all communities
- Wants to increase apprenticeships starts from ethnic minorities across local government.

There are no indications yet as to the next steps in relation to the Green Paper.

We have been broadly supportive of the strategy – it is hard not to be – but have raised concerns where we think the proposal is vague or where the costs and impact on local authorities has not been considered. This is particularly in relation to proposals around education and young people.

NOEL BROWN
CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

7D CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

The preparation of the Bucks Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016-2036 (BMWLP) has been progressed through Cabinet and Full Council early in 2018. The Full Council at their meeting in February endorsed the recommendation of the Cabinet to proceed with Pre-submission (Regulation 19) consultation and to submit the draft BMWLP to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (SoS) for Examination.

The six week statutory consultation was undertaken in March/April. This was the last opportunity for the local communities, stakeholders and other interest parties to make representation based on legal compliance for preparing the local plan, conformity with national policy and test of soundness. In total, 43 organisations and individuals have made representation to the BMWLP. These include representation from the district councils, parish councils, minerals and waste industry and landowners. The representation made at this consultation is the focus of the examination in public conducted by the Planning Inspector appointed by the SoS.

The BMWLP was submitted to the SoS on 1 June and Mr Stephen Normington BSc DipTP MRICS MRTPI FIQ FIHE has been appointed to conduct the Examination in Public of the local plan.

The County Council has appointed Mr Ian Kemp as Local Plan Programme Officer to support the Planning Inspector in managing the Examination of the local plan. The role of the Programme Officer is to be the liaison between the Planning Inspector, the County Council and members of the public who have made representation to the local plan and wish to attend the Examination hearing session. The date for the Examination hearing are being organised and are expected to be in late September.

There are dedicated web pages, see the link below, on the Buckinghamshire County Council website providing up to date information on the Local Plan Examination and those interested are advised to check the web pages for the progress of the local plan examination.

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/environment/planning/minerals-and-waste-local-plan/new-local-plan-examination/>

On the conclusion of the Examination in Public of the local plan, the Planning Inspector will submit the Report to the County Council informing them whether the local plan has been found to be "Sound". It is likely that Planning Inspector will recommend some "Modifications" the Draft BMWLP. The County Council will be required to formally consult on the Modification recommended by the Planning Inspector before the local plan is reported to Cabinet and Full Council recommending that the BMWLP 2016-2036 is adopted.

More detail on the BMWLP is available from the Growth, Strategy and Highways team - email mineralswastepolicy@buckscc.gov.uk for more details.

On issues related to the Examination of the Local Plan you can also contact the Local Plan Programme Officer Mr Ian Kemp on email - ikemp@icloud.com

Growth

Local Plans

The draft Vale of Aylesbury local plan, draft Wycombe local plan and the draft Minerals and Waste local plan have all been submitted for their respective Examination in Public in the coming months. We are working with district colleagues to ensure that the Inspectors considering the Plans have written evidence to address the key infrastructure and funding questions they will be asking. Collectively across Buckinghamshire, we are planning for 46,500 homes by 2033 and over 250,000sqm of employment floorspace. Growth on this scale will have an impact on the County's infrastructure and require improvements in transport networks, highway infrastructure, education and health infrastructure, digital connectivity and green infrastructure. In line with the emerging local plans' expectations around growth, the County Council's Minerals and Waste local plan sets out a requirement for 20 million tonnes of aggregate to be supplied from new and existing sand and gravel quarries in the county and to plan for the management of 266,000 tonnes of waste per year.

Growth Funding

The County Council submitted a 'Forward Funding' bid for £204m of transport, education, utilities, green and digital infrastructure to support the growth of Aylesbury Garden Town. The Aylesbury bid was announced as successful in proceeding to stage 2 of assessment, and Homes England has informed us that the next step is to develop a business case for the proposal. We await detailed specifications for this business case work from Homes England.

Buckinghamshire's District Councils, supported by the County Council, submitted five 'Marginal Viability' bids for highways improvements on the A41 Tring Road in Aylesbury (£9.5m), Princes Risborough Expansion Area (£12m), Abbey Barn Lane in High Wycombe (£7.5m), Beaconsfield (£4.5m) and Iver (£10m). These bids all focused on unlocking development proposed in the emerging Local Plans for Buckinghamshire. All except the Iver bid were successful in proceeding to stage 2. Homes England have now been provided with detailed funding and scheme updates. A final funding decision is expected this Summer.

Aylesbury is expected to deliver 15,000 more homes over the Local Plan period, up to 2033 and has achieved Garden Town status. Being a Garden Town brings both funding and a requirement for a co-ordinated, masterplan approach to shape the growth of the whole town and deliver the healthy and vital community ambitions of the County, District and our LEPs.

Heathrow, Luton, Rail and Road Projects

Government has designated the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS). In June MPs voted by 415 to 119 to approve the NPS, making the provision of a Heathrow third runway and associated works Government policy. The Commons vote sets Heathrow as the right location for a new runway to enable the UK to continue to grow as global hub for trade and travel. Heathrow Airport Limited is developing Masterplan options, taking on board the County Council's previous comments to protect the Green Belt and support investment in the Colne Valley Regional Park as the 'Green Gateway' to the UK. Heathrow's preferred option will be the subject of pre application public consultation early in 2019.

Luton Airport is currently consulting on its options to expand from 18 to 38 million passengers per annum by 2050. The consultation closes at the end of August and the

airport owners will then develop their plans for a new terminal and supporting infrastructure. The application will be submitted in early 2020 before a decision by the Secretary of State in 2021.

The County Council has also been consulted by Network Rail on the proposed Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH). The link would serve passengers in the west of England and Wales and as it joins the mainline west of Iver station construction will impact on communities near Richings Park. Moving to roads and the north of the county, Highways England will announce their preferred corridor options for an Oxford to Cambridge Expressway in late summer.

Waste

Provisional recycling performance data has just become available showing that the County Council's overall recycling rate has reached a level of 56.6% for 2017/18. This is 1.2% higher than the previous year 2016/17 and the second highest it has ever been – just 0.4% off the record of 57% set in 2014/15. The overall level of performance in Buckinghamshire is particularly good in the context of national recycling rates. Nationally recycling rates have stagnated over the last couple of years. It is of note that in recent years the recycling performance in Buckinghamshire has consistently been amongst the top 10 best performing authorities in the country.

A possible reason for the increase relates to some waste volumes changing across a number of waste streams, but of particular note was a sharp drop in overall residual household residual waste collected compared to last year. Over the last year together with the district Councils, the County Council has been supporting the waste reduction message, providing digital tools for customers to use to help advise on what waste can be placed in each bin. There are further waste communication campaigns planned throughout 2018/19.

Planning Enforcement Success

Buckinghamshire County Council has successfully defended at Public Inquiry an appeal against an enforcement notice at The Warren, Rowley Lane, Wexham. The upheld enforcement notice issued by BCC has resulted in the cessation of the unauthorised mixed use waste activity and will require the removal of a large amounts of scrap metal, cars and waste from a woodland in the Green Belt over the next few months.

Country Parks and Rights of Way

After a rather slow start to the year with poor weather in April, Country Parks' visitor numbers have begun to recover and the months of May and June have shown increases on last year's figures of 4.9% and 7.8% respectively.

Customer satisfaction with the Country Parks (Trip Adviser) remains in the upper quartile: Black Park 95%; Langley Park 99%; and Denham 81%. We are working with Groundwork South at Denham Country Park to improve the catering offer which is one of the areas of concern in the feedback.

The Country Parks, along with all other countryside areas, are on a high alert following the prolonged dry spell and increased fire risk. To date, there have been two small fires in the Country Parks; one at Thorney Park and one at Back Park – both were attended by the Fire Brigade and were extinguished before any significant damage was caused.

On a positive note, Denham Country Park has been shortlisted as a finalist in the Canals and Rivers Trust's Living Waterways Award scheme for its recent work on improving habitats for water voles and Brown Trout – the project has attracted £50k

from the Environment Agency and has used in excess of 300hrs of staff and volunteer time to improve access to these important river habitats. (A short report detailed below.)

The River Misbourne is a chalk stream which flows through Denham Country Park and is home to one of the last remaining water vole colonies in Buckinghamshire, as well as populations of brown trout.

In 2016, Buckinghamshire County Council Country Parks Team started worked with BBOWT, Bucks CC, Wild Trout Trust and Chilterns Chalk Streams Project and Groundworks South on a river enhancement project for the Misbourne. The project, which was delivered in 2018, used over £50,000 of funding from Environment Agency to deliver river enhancements which addressed failures to meet the Water Framework Directive “good” target status on the river.

Over 300 hours of partner staff and volunteer hours has not only improved access to, and enjoyment of, the river for the public but has provided training in specialist skills which will enable Country Parks staff and volunteers to replicate the improved and increased habitat creation on sections of river elsewhere.

Visitors to Denham Country Park have benefited from the creation of an improved beach access area, providing schools, community groups and families with a valuable educational and recreational resource to engage with the Country Park and the River Misbourne. Through our social media campaigns, news of the new improved facility reached 4,000 people and over 800 school children have benefited from organised river visits since April 2018.

The project has now been selected as a finalist in the Canals and Rivers Trust Living Waterways Awards which take place in September.

The Rights of Way operations team is now entering a peak period of maintenance works; the routine repairs and maintenance works to the rights of way network is now added to with seasonal vegetation clearance works. Work has commenced planning the capital improvement works that was approved in last year’s budget and implementation will commence in earnest in the coming months.

Countryside Stewardship Consultations

This year the county Historic Environment Record (HER) based in the Environment Team in TEE has been consulted on 157 Countryside Stewardship applications covering 15,713 hectares within Buckinghamshire. The Environment team was able to provide added value to 54% of these applications which, as well as resulting in the enhanced management of these sites, they are expected to generate over £13,000 income for Buckinghamshire County Council. Historic Environment Records along with Historic England (who provide detailed advice on Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens) are the only external consultees involved in providing specialist advice to landowners on Countryside Stewardship and other agri-environment grant schemes within England.

**BILL CHAPPLE
CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT**

7E CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

Appointment of Executive Director

I am delighted to announce that Sarah Ashmead has been appointed to the post of Executive Director for Resources and Monitoring Officer on a permanent basis. Sarah brings with her a wealth of experience that will help drive forward improvements across the service. Sarah will be looking to bring the Resources and Assistant Chief Executive's Services teams together on a formal basis, building on the opportunities for more joined up working that has begun over the last few months.

GDPR

The Council uses a range of information from residents to provide services. The use of this information is governed by data protection principles enshrined within legislation. This ensures that appropriate processes, checks and balances are in place to address data privacy, data security and data transparency.

The legal basis for these principles recently changed when the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect on 25 May 2018 (replacing the Data Protection Act 1998). This new regulation strengthens a range of data protection measures and increases the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) enforcing power - including larger financial penalties for serious breaches of this legislation.

To address GDPR the Council has updated policies, processes and standards for how information is governed, and training for our staff. New processes have been put in place to manage how requests to access to personal data are managed. Alongside this, all key information management systems have been assessed to develop a record of the specific information held by the council, how it is used, and any related privacy considerations. Where services are contracted out, new contract Terms and Conditions have been introduced to address the new legal requirements.

Residents can see how the council uses their data within the context of the GDPR through an updated privacy notice on the Council's website, and where required have been asked to 'opt-in' to any promotional activities for Council services (including e-mails and newsletters). Residents will also benefit from a range of new rights and more streamlined timeframes should they request access to their personal information (also now without cost - previously a £10 fee applied).

For Councillors, the new regulation retains the previous responsibilities for all Members to be registered with the Information Commissioners Office (which BCC ensures is in place on Members' behalf). This requires Councillors to use information in line with data protection principles, including only using residents' personal information in the way they intended when they shared it with us. More information on GDPR can be found on the intranet: <https://intranet.bucksc.gov.uk/how-do-i/corporate/general-data-protection-regulation/>

Apprenticeships

Context

The Apprenticeship levy was introduced in April 2017, for organisations with a pay bill in excess of £3 million and there is a mandatory levy 0.5% of staff pay bill which is ring-

fenced to fund apprenticeship training fees (not salary or admin costs). Levy money unspent after 2 years is lost to General Taxation.

- Government target for any public-sector employer in England is to employ an average of 2.3% of their staff headcount as new apprentice starts between April 1 2017 and March 2021.
- For BCC this equates to:
 - Levy contributions £1,067,000 per annum: £421k corporate, £646k schools
 - Apprenticeships starts per annum of 251: 63 corporate, 188 schools
 - BCC corporate has achieved 119% of target through using schools levy which would otherwise have been lost to General taxation.

Challenges

- Inclusion of schools in both the public sector target and the levy has been of significant concern for many LAs, given the limited influence we have over recruitment in schools
- Nationally, in comparison to corporate, schools are performing much worse against targets (average meeting only 18% of target (LGA, 2018)). BCC maintained schools are currently at 18%. This is understandable owing to the lack of relevant teaching Apprenticeship standards – they are in development, were expected Sept 2018, now further delayed)
- Lack of available Apprenticeship Standards (particularly higher level apprenticeships, e.g. Social Worker, Occupational Therapist, Chartered Town Planner)
- Tight restrictions over how the levy can be spent (apprenticeship training and assessment only, **NOT** salaries, travel and management/administration of apprenticeship schemes)
- Managing 20% off-the-job training requirement (which will be audited and Ofsted inspected) in teams which are already working at capacity
- Targets are based on headcount as opposed to FTE (given the large number of part time staff in LAs and schools, this has resulted in challenging targets for schools in particular)

BCC Strategy

In the short term we are currently spending levy money tactically by using the money to develop our own through developing and upskilling existing staff (apprenticeship levy opens up new career development routes to support workforce planning) – this aids retention of talent.

Once the key apprenticeship standards come on line we will use levy money strategically to develop our own Social Workers, Teaching, OT and Town Planners.

Progress

We have started:

- Corporate 75 Apprentices: 21 entry level and 54 upskilling
- Schools 35 Apprentices

Next Steps

- **Corporate**
 - Via HR Business Partners and workforce development groups, embed apprenticeship targets into 3 year plans
 - Incorporate new higher apprenticeships in specialist / technical areas as they become available to replace expensive postgraduate training (e.g. new

- Commercial Procurement & Supply L4 apprenticeship priced at £9K– x1 existing TEE employee started May 2018)
 - Social Worker Apprenticeships are still in development but we're putting in place plans with Children's Services and Adult Social Care to be ready to start enrolling trainees as soon as they go live (2019)
 - Develop options for accredited training in Early Help, Early Years in schools and Residential Childcare, giving opportunity for apprentices to train alongside colleagues from other agencies
 - Link Apprenticeship Strategy to wider skills agenda/strategy and Early Careers framework (in development)
 - Explore commercial/collaboration opportunities with Harrow
- **Schools**
 - HR to consult with wider schools/education leadership team to agree how to allocate apprenticeship training (levy portion) across the next three financial years (to minimise levy sacrifice)

Recruitment and Retention

Staffing at Buckinghamshire County Council is relatively stable, with a voluntary turnover of 12.6% and a balanced ratio of starters and leavers in the past 12 months. A higher proportion of staff move internally to fill vacancies than are recruited from outside the council. However, there are a number of hotspot areas which require concerted effort to reduce vacancy levels.

Like many authorities, social workers within Children's Services remain the most challenging staff group to recruit. The Children's Workforce Development Board meets monthly to discuss improvement work within the service, and has an action plan to focus on the recruitment of temporary and permanent workers.

Educational psychologists are another challenging staff group to recruit and retain. A new Associate Educational Psychologist role is being introduced to oversee the majority of statutory work. This new role will allow our substantive staff greater freedom to focus on more creative work within schools and grow our traded service.

The Council, in common with all employers, is facing an economic context where there continues to be record employment levels - in Buckinghamshire just 1.8% of adults are currently unemployed. To ensure the Council can compete in this challenging job market, work is underway to refresh our employer brand, careers website and our careers-focussed social media channels, with specific focus on hotspot vacancy areas and early careers. This work will increase our engagement and will promote Buckinghamshire county Council as a great place to work.

Preventing Disabled Blue Badge Fraud

Commencing the first week of June the County Council began a pilot to prevent disabled blue badge fraud in Buckinghamshire. The Council is working in partnership with BBFI Ltd who specialise in investigating fraud and theft against the public sector. BBFI have assigned an investigating officer to work one day per week during the pilot to identify blue badge misuse in Buckinghamshire and prepare cases for court. The investigating officer has had training sessions with NSL Ltd who carry out on street parking enforcement on behalf of Transport for Bucks. NSL are feeding intelligence to the investigating officer, an ex-police officer with 35 years' experience. The investigating officer has been out on enforcement exercises on three occasions at the

time of writing and retained 12 badges. Of the badges retained, six are likely to result in cases taken to court and one requires further investigation. Preparation work on the likely court cases is underway. It is surprising to already have so many cases and BBFI say this is more than they would expect to have in a London Borough.

In some instances, and especially where there are disabled children involved, badges have been returned at the scene and the badge holder has been sent a strongly worded warning letter only. The reason for the warning letter and not taking further at this stage is that the Council is mindful of the impact on families who are already in a difficult situation. Badges have also been returned where people have been able to prove that the disabled person has a hospital appointment imminently. This action does not preclude the Council from taking further action after investigation.

Whilst the investigating officer and the enforcement officers have met with some abuse on the street this was not specifically aimed at the activity they were carrying out but was more about anyone in a perceived position of authority. The investigating officer and enforcement officers have had considerable support and cooperation from the police and from store holders in Wycombe. The public are generally supportive of taking a firmer line with those who abuse the disabled blue badge scheme. The focus is currently on High Wycombe before moving to other areas of Buckinghamshire.

Information and Technology Strategy

A new strategy for the Council is currently under development which will set out how we propose to use information and technology to support the Council, Residents and local businesses in this digital age.

The strategy will be launched in September 2018.

Key themes within the strategy will include but are not limited to:

- **Getting the basics right**
 - Ensure that systems are reliable and access is secure and supports modern working practices
 - That technology does what it needs to do and is kept simple
 - We do not hold duplicate information and there is a single version of the truth
- **Connecting Buckinghamshire**
 - High speed broadband to more of the County for residents and business
 - Enabling residents to access technology through training and Internet enabled devices
- **Making Buckinghamshire County Council more accessible**
 - Putting more services on-line
 - Services and information on-line made simpler and of a higher quality
 - Supporting more residents to access our on-line services

N and H Drive Service

During May 2018 the Council experienced poor performance and a lack of accessibility on a number of separate occasions to information held on the N and H drives. The information on the N and H drives is used by Council Officers and Members in support of their daily work activities.

Short term measures have been taken to ensure the stabilisation of the system, which has resulted in a normal service being provided during the month of June. The issues were caused by out of date technology and its capacity being exceeded. Work has started on the replacement of the storage technology and in the short term the workload is being reduced by moving some storage to other technology.

**JOHN CHILVER
CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**

7F CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Front Line Visits

I have undertaken another round of visits to many of our front line teams within Children's Services and to hear directly from them about their ideas, suggestions and concerns. Teams visited include:

- Youth Offending Service
- Children in Need Team
- Safeguarding and Court Team
- Children in Care Team
- Special Education and Disabilities Team
- Early Help Team

Children's Commissioner

Following his appointment in March 2018, our commissioner, John Coughlan has completed his three month review of Children's Services. To summarise the main findings:

- A significant amount of work is required to establish and normalise good social work and child care practice across the organisation.
- Good early progress is being made but unquestionably this engagement needs to be made more systematically and then sustained relentlessly.
- Previous officer leadership had driven a hard and data based approach to performance management which did not take sufficient account of the quality of practice.
- Changes to practice are already being implemented, supported by changes in performance and quality assurance.
- Changes are being driven at pace but nobody should be under any illusions that there are quick fixes as the scale of the necessary improvement is significant.
- A single Council for the County of Buckinghamshire accountable for the entirety of its children's services is by far the safest option for children and, especially in the light of the current progress, has the best and most rapid chances of achieving sustainable high performance.

The Commissioner's recommendation to the Department for Education is that there should be no alternative delivery model in Buckinghamshire. The current direction of travel should be endorsed in terms of the internal leadership's improvement planning. That said, he recommends that some external support should be commissioned. A primacy should be placed on the support and development of front line managers and staff, balancing a firm application of consistent high standards with a systematic range of mechanisms to ensure those managers and staff are closely involved in and own the improvement process.

This is a very pleasing outcome for the service and demonstrates that there has been significant positive change over the last six months.

The link to the report can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/buckinghamshire-county-council-report-on-childrens-social-care>

Ofsted

Following the November 2017 inspection of Children's Social Care, Ofsted has recently conducted a two-day monitoring visit. The focus of this visit was to assess the quality and progress of our work with children and young people on statutory child in need (CIN) plans. Key themes that were explored by inspectors included:

- Thresholds for statutory children in need work
- Recognition, understanding and response to risk - particularly concerning neglect and domestic abuse
- Purposeful, meaningful direct work aligned to core objectives of the CIN plan
- Quality of care plans, and arrangements for regular, rigorous review of progress
- Management oversight and supervision
- Quality assurance arrangements

As part of the inspection, inspectors tracked and audited the individual experiences of six children. In addition to this, they sampled 25 other cases. In all cases, inspectors spoke with the allocated social worker for these children.

Ofsted will publish a letter setting out its findings, detailing the areas of strength and those areas that require further improvement. We anticipate that this will be available at the beginning of August 2018.

Children's Short Break Draft Strategy

Short Breaks describes a range of support to enable disabled children, young people and their families to be able to continue living at home and their carers to maintain their caring role.

We know that our Short Breaks provision is in need of modernisation. A draft Short Breaks Strategy for children has been developed to set out a vision for how short breaks can help disabled children to develop their independence, increase their readiness for becoming an adult, boost their physical and emotional health, enable them to have new experiences, learn, have fun and meet friends as well as helping carers to provide sustainable support for their families.

The strategy will help the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to deliver services in the future which:

- Deliver an offer which enables access to universal services and helping children with disabilities use provision locally. This will help children make friends, help parents build networks of support and allow us to develop provision where children with and without disabilities can interact with each other.
- Deliver a more flexible short breaks offer so we can provide tailored support at the right time to prevent families from falling into crisis.
- Ensure our services represent value for money and that our available resources for short breaks are targeted at those who need support the most, through eligibility criteria and regular reviews.

This is the first Children's Short Breaks Strategy for the Council and it has been developed in partnership with Adult Services, the Clinical Commissioning Group and FACT Bucks (Bucks Parent Carer Forum). Pre-consultation engagement activity has taken place to inform the strategy and following Cabinet approval on 18 June, the next stage is a six week consultation that started on 29 June and runs until 10 August to obtain views from stakeholders on the draft Strategy prior to agreement of the final document in the autumn.

Following this, service users, carers and wider stakeholders will be engaged in developing options for the future service offer. This will result in the production of a draft Short Breaks Service Statement which will then be subject to a further twelve week consultation. The outcome of this consultation will inform future re-commissioning of short breaks provision.

In-house residential provision

Churchill Avenue, Aylesbury

Our long standing children's home within Aylesbury received an Ofsted inspection in December which highlighted a number of areas for concern and, as a result, was given an overall rating of Inadequate. Following this, intense development work was put into place, including working closely with staff to support them to make the changes needed.

The home was then re-inspected in May and has now been re-graded as Good. We continue to build on the improvements which have been made within the home and are now beginning a period of consolidation to make sure that this home can provide the best possible support to our children in care.

The Elms, Aylesbury

As part of our change for children programme, one of the projects seeks to ensure that we can support all of our looked after children to achieve the best possible outcomes. We have recognised a need to place more of our looked after children within Buckinghamshire and have developed a £2 million capital programme to open four new children's homes within the county.

The first of these, the Elms in Aylesbury, has now been completely refurbished and the home received Ofsted registration in mid-July so is able to accept placements. This five bed home will allow us to place more of our children within local authority care and make the most of opportunities for them to get to know our teams and foster carers so that, where appropriate, we can support them towards stepping down from residential care to a more permanent placement.

Early Help

A public consultation on a new model of service delivery was undertaken last year, however, in March 2018 we took a decision to re-consult with the public in recognition of the strength of public feeling.

The Council has commissioned an independent research agency, BMG Research, to support the Council with this consultation work.

Prior to the launch of the public consultation, BMG are carrying out in-depth research with families and partner organisations to help design the detail of the public consultation. This work will ensure that the consultation documents are helpful and clear to the public, and it will allow service users the opportunity to take part in focused

research to ensure that the new service works well for the people currently accessing Early Help services.

The Council's official public consultation process will start in October 2018, and this will give all residents and organisations the chance to have their say about the future Early Help services through a survey and public meetings.

WARREN WHYTE
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

7G CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Appointment of New Director

Following a successful interview process, I am pleased to announce that Gillian Quinton has been appointed as the new Executive Director for the Communities, Health and Adult Social Care department, and the Director of Adult Social Services for the County Council. Gillian has worked for the Council since 2005 and will provide continuity, stability and a focus on the change needed to lead the department in this period of challenge and uncertainty.

Transformation Update: Assistive Technology

Assistive technology has a vital role to play in enabling our ageing population to live independently in their homes, whilst at the same time reducing the cost of the support which is required.

The results of our assistive technology programme are impressive. The number of referrals from health and social care professionals has increased by 70%, from around 20 per week to over 36 a week. Feedback from service users has shown the positive impact this has made on their lives.

The financial aim for the first year of the project was to achieve a breakeven position. However the project actually delivered a net benefit to of £1.5m in the first year.

It gives us a great evidence base to ramp up the programme over the next 12 months. Over the next 12 months our priorities will include increasing the number of people using assistive technology and exploring new technologies by, for example, collaborating with Amazon on its Alexa system.

Adults Short Breaks Draft Strategy

Short Breaks provision describes a range of support to enable people with care and support needs to be able to continue living at home and their carers to maintain their caring role.

We know that the Council's short breaks provision is in need of modernisation. A draft Short Breaks Strategy for Adults has been developed to set out a vision for how short breaks can help vulnerable adults to live more independent lives and also support carers. The draft strategy emphasises the outcomes that a variety of support can deliver, rather than focusing on services that have historically operated separately and without considering how they support the person to live independently at home.

This is the first Adult Short Breaks Strategy for the Council and it has been developed in partnership with Children's Services, the Clinical Commissioning Group, TalkBack and Carers Bucks. Pre-consultation engagement exercises have taken place to inform the strategy development and following Cabinet approval on 18 June and the next stage is a six week consultation (29 June -10 August) to obtain views from stakeholders on the draft Strategy prior to agreement of the final document in the autumn.

Following this, service users, carers and wider stakeholders will be engaged in developing options for the future service offer. This will result in the production of a draft Short Breaks Policy for Adults which will then be subject to a further twelve week consultation. The outcome of this consultation will inform final options for future service delivery and development.

Compliments for Social Care

Social care is one of the most demanding and complex jobs in local government. The public often hears of when Councils have not delivered the highest standards of services but I am delighted to have the opportunity to report that the number of compliments we are receiving for our work is far greater than the number of complaints and is increasing.

In 2016/17, the Council received 78 complaints about adult social care services and 107 compliments. In 2017/18 we received 130 compliments, compared with just 54 complaints.

All people who come into contact with our services are encouraged to provide feedback on our work and we welcome feedback of any kind as it helps us to improve our services. However, I am particularly pleased that people are taking the time to thank our hardworking and dedicated workforce for the difference they are making to the lives of our local residents.

Social Care Workforce

Over the last three months we have recruited six permanent social workers and six permanent social worker assistants. We are currently looking to recruit another four senior social workers. Senior Social workers and Occupational Therapists remain the most challenging staff groups to recruit within CHASC and therefore we have started a large targeted recruitment campaign which focuses on attracting candidates for these posts.

The number of agency workers has remained relatively stable over the last three months and we currently have nine agency social workers on site. An approval process for any additional agency workers has been put in place to ensure Service Director authorisation is gained prior to any new start dates.

'Good' for Reablement

In March this year, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out an inspection of the Council's reablement service and rated it as 'Good'. The report said that 'staff we spoke with were passionate about the work they did. They spoke about how much they enjoyed working with people to help them to regain their independence.'

The CQC inspectors looked at how safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led the service was rating it as 'Good' in all five areas.

Receiving this rating is a result of the commitment of the staff to continually improving our services. The full report can be seen here:
<http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-3782697737>.

Dementia

The positive work around action and awareness raising continues – 24 County Councillors have become Dementia Friends; Wendover CE Junior School has also become one of the first schools in the country to have all 350 of its pupils trained as Dementia Friends. The children have now pledged to raise awareness of dementia and to help someone living with the condition.

Dementia Action Week events took place across the county, such as a Walk The Patch exercise at Tesco in Loudwater, dementia-friendly cinema screenings at care homes and a theatre production at Buckingham Library. Wendover Dementia Action Alliance

received Local Area Forum funding to support a new badge scheme for local businesses and organisations.

The County Council and the Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group will be hosting a Dementia Conference in Aylesbury on 28 September where the views and experiences of people living with dementia will inform the new Joint Commissioning Strategy.

Adult Social Care Funding and the Green Paper

The future funding of Adult Social Care remains a critical issue across the country, with a forecast funding gap of £2bn by 2020. Although the announcement of the delay until the autumn of the Adult Social Care Green Paper has been disappointing for the sector, the link to the NHS Plan is a positive step towards the Government approaching the health and social care system as a whole. As proposals are developed and debated, such as the 'social care premium' proposed in the recently published Parliamentary Committees' report, the Council continues to take all opportunities through its networks to ensure we lobby for the best outcome for residents and the future services they may need.

Occupational Therapy – making a difference to our residents and staff

With the demand for Occupational Therapy increasing year on year, the waiting list in December stood at 630, affecting residents' ability to live independently at home.

The service took a radical new approach, introducing a Triage system with customers then offered either information on local equipment services, a clinical appointment within two weeks, or a home appointment which was put directly into workers' calendars.

The team has embraced this new way of working and as of June, the waiting list is now at zero. Residents now receive a great service, and the team is able to focus fully on promoting the independence of their clients.

**LIN HAZELL
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

7H CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Early Years Commissioning Team – The Meeting the Sufficiency Duties for Early Years Provision

On 20 March 2018, the Buckinghamshire County Council Early Years Commissioning Team won a national award presented by Department for Education for our 'Sufficiency and Market Management'. The award is for the local authority who can best evidence having taken an effective approach to identifying its sufficiency of childcare provision, and developing the local sector's response through impactful market management.

In Buckinghamshire we have worked with our early years providers to prepare for and manage a challenging growth in market demand following the introduction of the extended entitlement for 30 hours for eligible three and four year olds. Our initial forecast in 2017 showed a potential under supply of over 3000 places across the county but, following extensive market management, we are now confident that all eligible families will be able to secure a high quality early education place.

This award recognises the value and importance that the Council places on supporting all our young children to have the best start in life through securing high quality early years provision.

Special Educational Needs and Educational Psychology Service – Delivering the Special Educational Needs Reforms set out within The Children and Families Act 2014

In 2014, The Children and Families Act set out new expectations for all Local Authorities so that children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) were able to access a more joined up offer of support across Education, Health and Social Care. Central to these reforms was the ambition to put children, young people and parents and carers at the centre of service delivery and this meant converting what was previously entitled Statements of Educational Need to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) by the end of March 2018. The new plans include a number of assessments from the relevant services and there is a statutory duty for these assessments to be completed within a 20 week timeline. To ensure the reforms have been fully embedded, Ofsted and the Clinical Quality Commission are inspecting Local Authorities.

An improvement plan was developed to prioritise action so that the SEN team were able to re-focus their work. In parallel, the Educational Psychology service has been supported by two experienced Interim Senior Educational Psychologists. The impact of these changes is now evident with all statements scheduled converted to Education Health and Care Plans at the end of March.

It is also pleasing to note that the backlog of cases that have impeded the ability for the Educational Psychology service to undertake its assessments within the prescribed timeline has now been addressed and based on current performance, we will be in line with national performance by the end of the year.

Ofsted Inspection Results

It is pleasing to note the positive outcomes from Ofsted inspections of schools between October 2017 and March 2018. During this period a total of 31 schools were inspected: 3 schools maintained their current judgements of 'outstanding'; 2 schools moved from 'requires improvement' to 'good'; and 22 schools retained their 'good' rating. The remaining 4 schools retained a 'requires improvement' judgement.

Good news from Buckinghamshire Schools

Spinfield School and **Kingswood School** have both achieved a Gold Sports Mark award

Great Marlow School won the Youth Sports Trust Award for Outstanding Schools

Widmer End School and **Millbrook Combined School** have both been awarded a Nurture Schools Award

Holmer Green Junior School received a Green Flag environmental award

Princes Risborough Primary School has been awarded a silver environmental award

St Peter's CE School achieved a Gold ArtsMark award for championing arts and culture

The Grange achieved a gold award for its work with Looked After Children

Aylesbury Vale Academy, Aylesbury High School, Cottesloe School, John Colet School, The Grange School, Sir Thomas Fremantle School and **The Royal Latin School** all received Bucks Young Carers Awards in recognition of their work in supporting young carers in their schools

Holtspur School is receiving an award for the Best Community Building 2017 for its new pre-school building

Heritage House School has been part of the Seeability project for eyecare support for children with SEND

Marsh Gibbon School was visited by the BBC Children In Need Rickshaw Challenge

Stone CE School made it through to the quarter final of CBBC (Children's BBC) quiz 'Top Class'

Padbury CE School made a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £10,000 to develop an outside play area

Bedgrove Junior School has received a £30,000 grant from William Harding Trust to upgrade computer equipment

Winslow CE School now has a new all-weather outdoor play area funded by a Bucks County Council grant

Overstone School's new library was decorated by HomeBase staff as part of a community action programme

Finally, three Buckinghamshire schools have opened new Early Years provision: Kingfishers Pre-school is now on site at **Mursley CE School**, **John Hampden Infant School** nursery is now open and **Halton School** has opened a new Pre-School.

St Michael's Catholic Satellite School Aylesbury

In order to meet the demand for additional secondary school places in Aylesbury, a proposal was taken forward to open a satellite to St Michael's Catholic School in High Wycombe on the former Quarrendon School site. The Local Authority wished to ensure that any new proposal within Aylesbury town met the local need and the wishes of parents, following discussions with the DfE, a statutory consultation was undertaken to open a satellite to St Michael's Catholic School. During the consultation period a total of 444 responses were received and 99% of those replying were in favour of the proposal.

The planning application for the Satellite was considered by Buckinghamshire County Council's Development Control Committee on 19 March 2018. Development Control Committee unanimously approved the application.

The school is due to open with 120 Year 7 pupils in September 2018 at a temporary site in the former Berton Hill Day Care Centre before moving into its new buildings on the former Quarrendon site in September 2019.

Youth Service

We Do Care Champions

The Youth Service has appointed a group of young people to the role of We Do Care Champions.

We Do Care (the name for the Children in Care Council in Bucks) is made up of children and young people in care or those leaving the care of Buckinghamshire County Council who want to make sure young people have their voices heard.

The Champions work closely with Corporate Parents (the name given to every elected Member and officer) who are responsible for making sure that young people in care have a voice.

The roles also provide the young people with a Level 2 qualification and opportunity to gain valuable work experience. This supports a commitment from Buckinghamshire County Council to support care leavers with training and employment opportunities.

Bucks Inspired Traineeships

The Youth Service's 'bucksinspired' traineeship programme continues to see great success. Our programme includes a level 1 qualification in 'Employability Skills'.

The programme has been a catalyst for vulnerable young people to change their lives. Feedback from our current work experience placements has been extremely positive and it has been wonderful to see the young people grow in confidence as they gain vital employability skills which will support them in the future.

Prior to starting the traineeship one young man had been suffering from anxiety, he rarely left his home, was socially isolated and was at risk of becoming long term NEET. When reflecting on his progress so far, he said "I never thought I would be able to answer a telephone" or "talk to others at work". Each week he is growing in confidence and is enhancing his communication skills. He said that the traineeship programme and his work experience placement has made a huge difference to his life and that he realised for the first time.

**MIKE APPLEYARD
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS**