

County Council



Cabinet Member Reports

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL



Unitary

Following the announcement of a single unitary council for Buckinghamshire, work continues in earnest to bring the five councils together, as colleagues from across the councils collaborate on key areas of work. A brand new council is the opportunity of a lifetime to truly modernise local government, pooling expertise, resources and knowledge to create the best council for our residents. The unitary programme structure is in place and appointments are underway to support the coordination and management of the huge amount of work that will be required to ensure a smooth and successful transition to the new council by 1 April 2020. It is important that our focus over the next year is on becoming one council, one team and making sure there is no disruption of services for residents on day one of the new council. I am pleased to see staff from across the councils already working together on the transition.

The parliamentary process to make this change to the structure of local government is moving forward. The Regulations Order was approved on 22 February and the Structural Changes Order which will implement the proposal for a new single unitary council in Buckinghamshire is progressing through Parliament. This sets out the 'shadow' arrangements that will bring the five councils together to oversee the creation of the new council, and confirms the following details:

- The new council will replace the current five councils – AVDC, BCC, CDC, SBDC and WDC. These councils will cease to exist after 31 March 2020.
- The name of the new council will be 'Buckinghamshire Council'. It will have 147 elected members – three per current county ward.
- Elections for the new council will take place in May 2020, then in May 2025 and every four years after.
- A temporary 'shadow' authority will be formed, with all current county and district councillors having a seat on this body; the Shadow Authority will set the 2020/21 council tax and budget. The Shadow Authority will meet within 14 days of the approval of the Structural Changes Order by Parliament.
- Leadership to oversee the transition to the new council will be through a Shadow Executive comprising of eight district councillors and eight county

councillors plus the Leader of the County Council as its chairman. The Shadow Executive will meet within 7 days of the first meeting of the Shadow Authority.

- An implementation team will be established to manage the smooth transfer of services and staff to the new Council. This will be led by the County Council Chief Executive with a district Chief Executive as deputy.

The County Council recently announced its Shadow Executive nominees and deputies, who have a wealth of experience and skills, geographically as well as across the county services areas, with five of the eight Executive nominees also District Councillors, to ensure a good balance to oversee the transition work. This is a great opportunity to be a part of making history in Buckinghamshire and the County Council is committed to continuing to work together in the best interests of our local residents, businesses, and communities.

Growth

Heathrow Airport

Heathrow have recently consulted on stage two of their airspace change process, and eight of the routes could have some or significant impact on communities across southern Bucks. The Council's position on this remains focused on the principle of minimising the number of people and communities that are 'newly overflowed'. Working with district and LEP colleagues, our joint response to Heathrow re-iterated our 'triple lock' on expansion: investment in local transport infrastructure; evidence that improved options to get to the airport are working; and improving air quality in and around the Ivers.

As a host authority for expansion, the County Council and LEP have also been working to optimise the economic development and skills potential that expansion could bring to Buckinghamshire. Heathrow's next public consultation will be in June 2019. This will be seeking views on their preferred masterplan, including the runway and physical infrastructure changes needed for expansion.

Western Rail Link to Heathrow

Network Rail's planned new rail link from the Great Western mainline to Heathrow would run through the Ivers area. The County Council supports the scheme in principle but has a holding objection to the closure of Hollow Hill Lane. We want to ensure that the community, business and emergency services don't lose the Hollow Hill Lane road link without having replacement road capacity elsewhere in the Ivers.

Aylesbury Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund

Cabinet considered the proposed Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) business case to support Aylesbury Garden Town on 4 February 2019 and delegated the final composition of the bid to be determined in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Resources.

The HIF Business Case was submitted on 22 March 2019 for a total of £183.6m to provide new link roads, schools, electricity grid reinforcements, green infrastructure cycling links and land assembly, making a balanced bid to support the growth of Aylesbury Garden Town. A decision from MHCLG is expected in summer 2019.

Oxford to Cambridge Arc

In March, Government released a document alongside the Spring Statement clarifying the latest position for the development of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and setting out the next steps over the next 12 months. This included:

- **Economic study on economic capacity for the Arc** as well as the constraints and opportunities for possible new settlements and urban extensions.
- **New governance arrangements** across government with the establishment of an inter-ministerial group, inter-departmental board, and a dedicated portfolio team as well as strengthening of local arc governance in formalising the delivery for the Arc.
- A **public engagement exercise** will be launched in summer 2019 to engage with the public and will be used to help inform our future plans for the Arc and ensure they benefit existing and new communities and businesses.

England's Economic Heartland

England's Economic Heartland is specifically referenced in the Arc joint declaration as providing the 'single local voice for strategic infrastructure across the Arc and beyond its boundaries'. Its initial framework for the overarching Transport Strategy will be launched at its annual conference on 16 July at the University of Hertfordshire. The Transport Strategy's vision is to 'connect our people and places with opportunities and services' in a way which improves overall quality of life and results in net environmental gain. Publication of the initial framework will mark the start of a wider engagement with residents, businesses and potential investors before the final version of the Strategy is prepared for publication in summer 2020.

Expressway

Highways England's public consultation on route options for the expressway's 'western section' between Oxford and Milton Keynes is due in the autumn. In parallel to this, England's Economic Heartland has begun a study into how communities not on the expressway itself can still benefit from it.

West Coast Mainline opportunities

A strategic priority for England's Economic Heartland is developing north-south rail services on the Northampton-Milton Keynes-Aylesbury-High Wycombe-Old Oak Common axis – realised through a combination of the opening of East West Rail and the first phase of HS2 releasing capacity on the West Coast Mainline. England's Economic Heartland is taking part in a study and working group with Network Rail which will consider how this can be achieved.

HS2

Update on HS2 Road Safety Fund

In November 2017, Government announced that Buckinghamshire County Council would be allocated £3.95m to be spent on road safety measures. The funding can be used for any measures to improve road safety, including supporting traffic calming, safer junctions or better pedestrian crossings. Authorities must ensure that improvements made leave a lasting legacy of road safety. Buckinghamshire County Council has not yet launched the fund to town and parish councils for bids, as the

official lorry routes that HS2 Ltd contractors will follow have not yet been announced. As soon as the routes are known the fund will be launched.

Community and Environment Fund (CEF) and the Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF)

There have been several further funding announcements:

- £243,103 to Chilterns Conservation Board for 'Chalk, Cherries & Chairs'
- £72,202 to Colne Valley Park CIC for 'The Colne Valley: Open for Business'
- £16,080 to Amersham Museum Ltd for 'Amersham's Mobile Museum'

As of March 2019, £1,337,713 of CEF and BLEF has been allocated to projects within Buckinghamshire.

Health & Wellbeing Board

At the December 2018 meeting, the Board looked at the remaining priority area [Protect from harm](#) and considered a report setting out a revised process for analysis and a reduction in the number of indicators the Board oversees. The Board received detailed analysis on delayed transfers of care and how current challenges are being addressed. The Board also received its annual [briefing on whole system winter planning](#) to seek assurance that the integrated health and care system is resilient throughout the winter. The Board received an update on the [Time to Change Mental Health project](#). This 18-month project provides the opportunity to stimulate a longer term change in attitudes towards mental health.

At the March 2019 meeting, Healthwatch Bucks presented on their achievements in 2018 and [priorities for 2019](#). The Board also received reports from the Director of Public Health on the [Shared Approach to Prevention](#), an update on the Physical Activity Strategy and a presentation outlining future priorities for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. As well as standing items covering the Integrated Care System and Better Care Fund, the Board received an update on EU Exit preparedness. The health and care system has been working proactively on planning, and preparations have been reviewed regionally and assessed to be well developed.

Brexit

Buckinghamshire County Council, working with partners locally, regionally and nationally, is well positioned to address any potential disruption arising from Brexit in Buckinghamshire. BCC's Brexit preparations started in earnest around May 2017, and this has allowed the Council to focus efforts to ensure the preparedness of both the County Council as an organisation, and Buckinghamshire as a place. More information can be found in the March report to Cabinet here:

<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=124&MId=11077&Ver=4>

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**DEPUTY LEADER &
CABINET MEMBER
FOR
TRANSPORTATION**



Highways Update

The team has successfully delivered a £27.2m programme across the county in 2018/19, with the majority of spend being within the carriageway maintenance area. This means that we will be moving only £500k into next year to continue with other priority schemes. Of particular note is the delivery of the £5m Stoke Hammond Bypass resurfacing scheme, where we successfully replaced the running surface of the bypass whilst also completing works to other areas such as safety fencing and drainage. The scheme was delivered in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council to minimise the impact of the works on the travelling public. We commenced the 2019/20 programme in early April and will seek to complete the main capital programme by the end of the summer.

Within the capital programme is the completion of another successful year of SALIX upgrades for our street lighting stock. A further 3,295 lanterns have been replaced, mainly in the outlying areas of the county, lowering both our reactive maintenance requirements and, more importantly, our energy bills. We are working on a three year programme for the remainder of the stock which will see all lanterns upgraded by the end of the period.

Winter has also come to an end and spring is now with us. Many of us will remember the winter as a mild one, however our gritters have been out around 65 times this year, an almost 20% increase on an “average” winter. The majority of activity occurred after Christmas, you will all remember the snow in early January! The lack of “the Beast from the East” this year has also meant that our roads have held together far better, this being a combination of both the levels of investment over the previous years beginning to pay dividends and the lack of prolonged snow conditions. We did, in February, take delivery of a further 1,000 tonnes of rock salt to supplement supplies in the south of the county. All of the gritting runs are completed by the TfB team, combining this activity with their “day jobs”, not surprisingly we had some tired people towards the end of February.

The Plane and Patch programme commenced in the first week of March and saw around £750k spent on 30 individual schemes in March. The overall programme will see £4m spent over a total of 150 schemes and is predicted to run until late summer.

The first of three cycles of routine weed-spraying covering all key footways will take place in April/May (and then again June/July and September). The chemical used will be a non-residual contact herbicide. In addition, removal of mature weeds/self-seeded vegetation growth on footways and channels will be undertaken between late April and September 2019. The above is in addition to our normal treatment of noxious, injurious and invasive weeds in identified locations.

The Road Safety team continue to implement a programme of road safety schemes. Locations of these schemes are identified through collision analysis and investigation in order to prioritise sites. In 2018/19 these sites included: A413 Buckingham Park roundabout, A413 Buckingham Road Aylesbury junction with Bicester Road and B470 Langley Park Road, Iver. Additionally, Road Safety Education Training and Publicity Schemes continue to be targeted at vulnerable groups.

And finally, we have been awarded £4.2m by ADEPT (Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport) and DfT to take forward our proposal to create recycled composite lighting columns, innovative wireless technologies, an Enhanced Central Management System for lighting and energy creation and storage solutions on the public highway. Our work will be focussed on the Fairford Leys area of Aylesbury and will be a test bed for further technology roll-outs across the Garden Town and beyond.

East West Rail

The public inquiry into the Transport and Works Act Order for the Western Section between Oxford and Bedford and Aylesbury and Milton Keynes is expected to conclude in April, with the Inspector's report submitted later this year. The ambition is to see works on site start at the end of the year/early 2020, subject to the Inspector confirming the Order.

The County Council objected to details of the proposal and has reached agreement with East West Rail on Archaeology, Rights of Way and Flooding matters. For Ecology and Highways issues that we cannot resolve, we will be appearing at the Public Inquiry on 9 and 10 April. BCC remains a staunch supporter of East West Rail.

The East West Railway Company is currently analysing responses received during a consultation on route options for the Central Section between Bedford and Cambridge. A preferred route option will be announced later this year. In February the East West Rail Consortium launched its Eastern Prospectus which makes the case for the core East West Rail scheme to be realised at the earliest opportunity – i.e. with direct services from Norwich and Ipswich to Oxford. This work is fully supported by England's Economic Heartland.

MARK SHAW
DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION

**CABINET MEMBER
FOR
PLANNING &
ENVIRONMENT**



Marlow Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Marlow Flood Alleviation Scheme was launched on Friday 8 March. The scheme was opened by Dominic Grieve MP, Sir James Bevan (CEO of Environment Agency) and Bill Chapple OBE (Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment from Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC)). The scheme was originally conceived after the floods in 2003 and it is good to see it being completed.

The scheme will protect 276 properties in Marlow from flooding from the river. The scheme involves a flood wall and bank between Pound Lane and the river is coupled with a flood compensation area upstream of Marlow, which is already attracting wildlife. The area around Gossmore, Firview and Mill Road is also protected with a bank and some flood gates. At both locations, there will be some relief from local groundwater flooding in the vicinity with the provision of pumps.

BCC are been very pleased to have been involved in this project as an active partner and contributor of £1.25m to the project. BCC were instrumental in lobbying politicians and the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to get this project back on the Environment Agencies programme in 2015. We are particularly pleased that the issue of the local groundwater flooding has been addressed through the pumps in the scheme. BCC and our partners Transport for Bucks will have an ongoing involvement in the scheme with the management and maintenance of those pumps and we look forward to continuing to work in a positive way in the future with Environment Agency, Wycombe District and Marlow Town Council and the people of Marlow.

Let's S.C.R.A.P Fly Tipping for Good

Buckinghamshire Waste Partnership (of which Buckinghamshire County Council is a partner) has launched Phase 2 of its S.C.R.A.P campaign to rid the county of fly-tippers and spread the message that if it is your rubbish, it is your responsibility to dispose of it properly. Otherwise fly-tippers face the possibility of a £400 fixed penalty notice or, if court action is taken, typically fines over several thousands of pounds or even a custodial sentence.

S.C.R.A.P stands for Suspect, Check, Refuse, Ask, Paperwork – a helpful five point checklist to help stay on the right side of the law:

- Suspect all waste carriers
- Check with the Environment Agency that the provider taking your waste away is licensed
- Refuse unexpected offers to have waste taken away
- Ask what will happen to your waste
- Paperwork should be obtained – get a full receipt

The S.C.R.A.P campaign not only features useful advice for householders and businesses to thoroughly check who they are using to dispose of waste on their behalf, it also reminds people that they can also play their part by reporting suspicious activity or fly-tipping in progress. All they need to do is go online to <https://www.fixmystreet.buckscc.gov.uk/> and select fly-tipping from the drop down menu.

While we continue with our zero-tolerance approach to bringing fly-tippers to justice, we have just successfully taken our 696th successful prosecution. The big gains are in stopping it from happening in the first place.

For further details about all aspects of the S.C.R.A.P campaign, please visit: <http://www.recycle4bucks.co.uk/fly-tipping/>

New Interactive Archaeology Map On Our Website

The BCC archaeology and IT teams have been busy creating an interactive, online, publicly accessible map, which shows all the historic and archaeological sites and monuments in the county. You can zoom into your area of interest and switch map layers on and off. So if you want to find out more about your local listed buildings, medieval villages, Roman villas or WW2 sites, take a look at the County archaeology pages or follow the link as detailed below:

<http://buckscc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4b37c160dbe54f8e85f9e1b3dec50af9>

Local Wildlife Sites and Community Engagement – Keeping Buckinghamshire Thriving and Attractive

The County Local Wildlife Sites Officer has been working with local schools and communities to deliver positive management of their local wildlife sites. A collaborative project between BCC, Chiltern Rangers and Ash Hill Primary School in High Wycombe, is just one example of how community engagement can benefit Buckinghamshire's natural environment. Local volunteers and school children helped to clear scrub from the species-rich chalk grassland over the winter, allowing wildlife to flourish on the site over spring and summer. The Local Wildlife Sites Officer has developed a management plan for the site and has put it forward for designation as a Local Wildlife Site, which will help to ensure its long term survival.

New Online Tool for Reporting Rights of Way (RoW) Problems

The Rights of Way team has just launched a brand new online tool to report damage and obstructions on Buckinghamshire's 2,000 miles of public footpaths, bridleways and byways. The new online tool will provide a more efficient way for members of the public to report and track issues on the rights of way network. Walkers and horse riders can report items like broken stiles, overgrown vegetation or fallen trees, damaged bridges or path surfaces or even damaged or missing signposts and waymarks.

Reports received can then be prioritised and dealt with as quickly as possible. Not only will the system provide feedback on progress to the customer, it will also say if the problem has already been reported. The system also allows volunteers to sign up to help deal with reported problems. The online tool is part of a wider drive to get defects and damage sorted out so people can make full use of the county's rights of way network.

The introduction of the new facility followed feedback from both the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum and the Bucks Rights of Way Liaison Group, who both suggested keeping customers more up-to-date and informed with progress for rectifying problems.

District Local Plans

Wycombe District Local Plan

After gaining agreements from the Inspector on the modification proposed by the District Council to address the matters raised during the examination hearings, Wycombe have been able to undertake the consultation on it. The consultation on the Proposed Main Modifications to the Submitted Plan took place from 13 February to 27 March 2019.

It also consulted on a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Proposed Main Modifications along with a revised Sustainability Appraisal and revised Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Regulation 19. After viewing the documents to the consultation, the County Council responded with their support to the removal of a site in High Wycombe and no further comments could be made.

If there is no need for further hearing sessions, the Inspector will issue a report with proposed changes that are necessary to make the Wycombe District Local Plan sound. The plan is likely to be adopted by autumn 2019.

Aylesbury Vale Local Plan (VALP)

Since the November update, the District Council has continued to work on the modifications they will be proposing to the submitted VALP. The District Council are required to get agreement from the Inspector on the modifications before these could be consulted on. However, the Inspector has agreed to the lower housing figure than

what was previously recommended (31,539). The housing requirement is now likely to be 30,100.

The District Council is currently preparing the proposed modifications document to the Regulation 19. An updated timetable will soon be published on the website. The District Council expects that the local plan will be adopted in 2019.

Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan

For Chiltern and South Bucks (CSB), there has been a slip in the local plan timetable. The published Local Development Scheme (LDS) had initially anticipated that the Draft Local Plan would be available for consultation in summer 2018; however, the timetable has shifted due to further work being undertaken by the councils on transport and highway matters.

The plan is anticipated to be ready for adoption in summer 2020, which will be a decision for the new Buckinghamshire Council. The Highways Agency has now confirmed that they have lifted their holding objection to the local plan following completion of the traffic modelling on four junctions as requested.

The revised timetable will be soon published through a revised Local Development Scheme.

Summary for Growth Across Buckinghamshire Local Planning Authorities

Overall and collectively across Buckinghamshire, the local authorities are planning for approximately 50,000 homes by 2033/2036 and over 250,000sqm of employment floor space which is based on the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for the county. This includes the increase Aylesbury Vale housing number.

BCC will continue to work with the districts and other stakeholders to ensure that the proposed growth will have a positive impact on the county's infrastructure by requiring improvements and enhancements to our transport networks, highway infrastructure, education and health infrastructure, digital connectivity and green infrastructure.

Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP)

The modifications to the submitted MWLP were considered by the Inspector to be acceptable for consultation. Consultation on the proposed modifications took place over an eight week period from 10 December 2018 to 4 February 2019. Due to a technical error in this consultation, a further consultation on two of the main modifications, MM14 and MM19, was undertaken and finished on 25 March 2019.

The Council submitted the Schedule of Representation received during the two modification consultations to the Inspector at the end of March. The Inspector will now consider the comments received, as well as those made during the consultation undertaken last summer and the hearing session. The Council now await the Inspector's final report into the examination of the MWLP and his recommendation for modifications to the plan.

It is anticipated that the Inspector's report will be received within the next few weeks. Subject to the recommendations, a report will be taken to Cabinet in May or June 2019 and then to the Full Council in July 2019 for adoption.

Aylesbury Garden Town (AGT)

Work on the Masterplan for Aylesbury Garden Town (AGT) continues, with key outputs such as Green Infrastructure, Movement and Town Centre layers being considered by officers. The first draft of the Masterplan document will to be released for consideration and feedback on the 10 April. The final version is expected to go for consideration by the AGT Board at their meeting in July.

A strategic narrative that contains the AGT vision and key ambitions to 2050 is also being produced. The first draft of this was released in January, with a revised version due for consideration in May. Stakeholder events and engagements have been undertaken and will continue as the outputs from the master planners continue to be released over the next few months.

At the end of last year, AGT held an international experience weekend with Dutch Company Witteveen & Bos that looked at walking and cycling around Aylesbury. The teams came up with schemes of how walking and cycling can be improved within Aylesbury. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan that is currently being produced will set out the strategy for walking and cycling improvement across Aylesbury.

Bucks Strategic Infrastructure Plan (BSIP) and Interactive Mapping

While discussion continues around partner (District and LEP) roles and input, BCC will progress with an in-house commission to profile the delivery of our identified strategic schemes to 2033/2036 – in keeping with Local Plan timeframes. Scope is to be decided as part of the tender. BCC are beginning to set the governance for the commission, an early action being to establish the Senior Assurance Board to clear the brief and oversee the subsequent commissioning process.

Understanding the delivery of our combined strategic package will form a key part of discussions under our Modernising Local Government remit and support the establishment of the new Buckinghamshire Council.

Work continues in a separate work stream (the Interactive Map) to plot our strategic schemes. BSIP forms part of the baseline data for this, combined with Local Plan evidence and Asset Management delivery programmes, to provide a comprehensive visual aid to assist BCC decision making around service delivery.

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

**CABINET MEMBER
FOR
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
& PUBLIC HEALTH**



Bucks Domestic Abuse Big Tent Event

A Domestic Abuse Big Tent Event was delivered on 5 February 2019. Tickets for the event were sold out and colleagues from a range of partners attended.

The event was organised by Community Safety at Buckinghamshire County Council (representing the Safer & Stronger Bucks Partnership Board) and was delivered in partnership with representatives of the Bucks Safeguarding Adults Board, Bucks Safeguarding Children's Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure cross-board collaboration. The event was sponsored by the NHS Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Guest speakers included (but were not limited to) Frank Mullane (MBE) speaking about the effect of domestic homicide on relatives, Dr Jane Monckton-Smith speaking about the homicide timeline and Shonagh Dillon from Aurora New Dawn speaking about stalking and coercive control.

Feedback on the event was excellent and the outputs will be used to inform the development of the approach to domestic abuse across Buckinghamshire.

Advertising Standards Authority contract award won by Trading Standards

Buckinghamshire and Surrey's Trading Standards Team were awarded a three year contract to supply enforcement services (known as a 'legal backstop') to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) through National Trading Standards and have been successfully running this since January.

The ASA is the advertising industry's self-regulation body. It deals with complaints about advertisers and considers if they've broken any rules that the industry itself sets, which could be about inappropriate or offensive content or misleading claims in adverts. The ASA resolve the majority of complaints they receive using their own sanctions but they don't have any legal powers if a firm continues to break the rules.

Which is where Trading Standards comes in – Trading Standards does have legal powers to prosecute if laws to protect consumers have been broken. As a last resort

the ASA can refer cases of non-compliant, misleading non-broadcast advertising to Trading Standards, who can use the law to enforce if necessary.

Awarding the contract, the ASA said that Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards was appointed having “demonstrated an excellent understanding of the advertising regulatory landscape and the importance of an effective statutory enforcement power to underpin our work.”

The contract award recognises the excellent professional service and the wider experience and expertise our joint Trading Standards team offers and I’m proud that it’s our joint team who will be behind this nationally important work.

Street Associations shortlisting

The Street Association is gaining momentum with nearly 300 Buckinghamshire residents working in partnership with the County Council to keep their neighbours safe and well.

In recognition of this, the Street Association initiative was shortlisted for an LGC Award in the category of Community Involvement.

Whilst the initiative didn’t win the award for Community Involvement, it was exciting to receive recognition for the achievements to date, including increased referrals to preventative services and greater awareness of cons and scams in local communities. Planning is underway for a summer event to thank all Street Association members for their ongoing commitment to keeping their communities safe and connected.

Wycombe Wanderers - Time to Change Partnership

Buckinghamshire Time to Change Hub is working in partnership with Wycombe Wanderers Football Club to tackle stigma around mental health amongst men. A range of activities are planned for the Wycombe Wanderers v Charlton Athletic match on 9 April 2019 and by working with the Sport & Education Trust and the Football Club we will make more of an impact.

In the lead up to the match itself, a number of things are taking place with the club to raise the profile for both Time to Change and Wycombe Wanderers.

- Deliver a Time to Change talk to the players and staff to raise awareness.
- Spread the Time to Change and Wycombe Wanderers mental health message to fans through numerous media outlets including the press and social media to try and recruit champions.
- Players’ involvement in build up to the Time to Change event.
- Champions to attend training ground for a picture and conversations with staff and players to promote the event.

On the match day itself; before the match, Champions will be outside the ground distributing leaflets and pocket sized conversation starters.

- This will also give fans the opportunity to talk to champions about Time to Change.
- The ground and event will be heavily branded to raise awareness.
- Wycombe Wanderers will be signing the Time to Change Employer Pledge.
- We are having Time to Change branded corner flags and the players will be wearing Time to Change t-shirts during the warm up prior to the game.

Aylesbury Library

The newly refurbished Aylesbury Library was formally relaunched with a community celebration day on Saturday 26 January.

Over 1,500 customers and visitors attended story-telling sessions, demonstrations of the new equipment, coding club events and a special guest appearance from the 'Gruffalo'.

The library has had a complete renovation to include many fantastic new features and a total reworking of the space with brand new furniture throughout.

The new space includes:

- Better computing facilities with more power points for customers using their own devices
- A designated quiet study / learning area
- New self-service technology – so customers can borrow and return books really quickly and easily
- A modernised children's area with a colourful new sensory wall
- Refurbished toilets and a new baby-changing area
- A dementia-friendly layout
- A new exhibition area and a new 'well-being' zone
- Two new meeting rooms
- Lots of new books and longer opening hours!

The response from customers has exceeded expectations:

“looks fantastic, more space, bright and really inviting”

“best place in Aylesbury, it looks so light and bright. Lots of space for people to sit and the children's area is lovely”

“It was a great delight when the newly refurbished library opened again. The space is so much brighter and welcoming.”

Launch of MacMillan Cancer Information point in Buckingham Library

Buckinghamshire Libraries are working in partnership with Macmillan and launched an information point at Buckingham Library on 21 March. The Infopoint will benefit local residents by improving access to information, services and support and will raise awareness, not only for those diagnosed with cancer, but also family, friends and carers. This in turn could lead to quicker diagnosis and more effective signposting to support services and information. To date, library staff have received face to face training from Macmillan to give staff a basic understanding of Macmillan's role in the local community and we will be working with Macmillan to recruit volunteers to support the Macmillan Info Points.

A second Macmillan information point is being launched at High Wycombe Library on 10 April at 10:30am at their community coffee morning.

Diabetes collection at Aylesbury Library

Aylesbury Library has launched a special new collection of books about diabetes, food and mindfulness, funded by Aylesbury Vale Diabetes UK support group.

Diabetes UK local groups offer people living with diabetes a chance to meet, share experiences and gain support from others with the condition.

The collection was officially launched on Saturday 23 March at Aylesbury Library on Walton Street. The launch included interactive quizzes and activities as well as 'Know your Risk' sessions to assess people's risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

Marlow Library

Work is now taking place to design a refurbishment for Marlow Library and to develop the library as a community hub.

Meetings have taken place with the local member and stakeholders The Marlow Society, Marlow Museum, Marlow Chamber of Commerce, Wycombe District Council officers and Marlow Town Council.

A customer engagement exercise was undertaken during December 2018 and January 2019 to help develop a design and over 300 comments have been received.

The most popular suggestions related to creating a comfortable, informal and sociable reception area with coffee facilities, improvements to the children's area, introduction of new meeting rooms and a desire to see more social and cultural events in the library.

Work is taking place to develop an outline design with a space made available for the Marlow Museum and a new Making Marlow Dementia Friendly area.

Marlow Library will be one of three pilot community hubs and so the design for the new library will also include:

- Access to information, advice and support through face to face contact and self-service internet transactions.
- Direct line into the Customer Service Centre
- Officer and partner touchdown areas.
- Meeting rooms for specific service provision and partner use.

NOEL BROWN
CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES



Early Help

On 4 March 2019, Cabinet agreed changes to Children's Services which will introduce a new Family Support Service and Early Help strategy across the county. The recommendations for change were prepared following a recent public consultation, conducted by an independent consultation agency BMG Research. This asked residents and organisations for views on how to deliver early help services to support children and families. The changes will take effect from September 2019.

The new integrated Family Support Service will consist of three area-based family support teams working in partnership with other organisations, particularly schools and health, to improve access to services.

The service will include a network of 16 family centres across the county, which were previously used as children's centres. It will also ensure that a further 19 buildings, which will no longer be used as children's centres, will continue to be used for early years services and community benefit. The Cabinet has also agreed an Early Help Strategy, setting out the ambition of the service and how the Council and its partner organisations will work together.

Other key elements of the changes include:

- (a) A named key worker for each family who will create a team around the family to help them tackle the issues they face. This will help ensure they only need to tell their story once, to their key worker.
- (b) Investment in the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website to ensure there is effective promotion of community activities together with information and guidance for families.
- (c) Open access to stay and play sessions for babies and toddlers at family centres.
- (d) Each school will have a named link family support worker to co-ordinate family support.

This new approach will let us put even greater focus on helping vulnerable children and families at an earlier point in time to avoid the escalation of their problems. I am also pleased we have listened to the views of our residents and that we will be

opening 16 family centres – two more than we has previously proposed. Again, these will help us to get the right professional support to children and families when they need it the most. The changes we are making are absolutely the right thing to do. Supporting our most vulnerable children and families is a priority for us, and these plans will help us to achieve that.

Placement Sufficiency for Looked after Children

This year, we have concentrated on a developing and reinforcing a really clear message to the public regarding the benefits of fostering for Buckinghamshire County Council. This has helped us recruit and approve 14 new households. We hold regular fostering information events for people who want to find out more about fostering (details of all these events can be found [here](#)). We challenged ourselves to achieve 20% growth of in-house fostering placements between April 2018 and 2019 and it is pleasing to report that, to date we have in fact exceeded this target and we currently have 37 more in-house placements than we did in April 2018. This alone has avoided costs of over £5 million, compared to placing with an Independent Fostering Agency.

Our first new home in Aylesbury opened 6 months ago and recently had its first Ofsted inspection with very positive feedback from inspectors on the support given by staff to young people placed at the home. I am delighted with the outcome of this inspection and it is a real credit to the children's home staffing team for the way they managed to achieve this positive outcome in their very first inspection.

Our second new home has now been completely refurbished and is ready to open as soon as the Ofsted registration process is completed. This home will have a welfare bed which will give us provision to make short term placements for those who come into care in an emergency, this will help us keep more young people within the county and find placements which better match their needs. We were pleased to visit the new home recently and meet the team that will operate it, and we were all impressed with how homely it was.

Report into Children's Services in Buckinghamshire following inspection

John Coughlan (Chief Executive, Hampshire County Council), Improvement Adviser for Children's Services in Buckinghamshire has provided the Department for Education (DfE) with the first progress report on the improvement of our children's services. Whilst the report identifies that our improvement journey remains extremely challenging on a number of levels, John reports that progress is just about as well as can be expected in the circumstances. John comments that there is an extremely strong "core" from Chief Executive, to Director of Children's Services and to Assistant Director and in addition, our new heads of service are of high calibre and are settling well and getting to grips with the management group.

John goes on to acknowledge that whilst it is generally too early to define positive outcomes to the partnership work, it is a general positive to note that all of the elements of the package of support, as agreed between Hampshire, Buckinghamshire and the DfE are in hand and have progressed as should be expected by this stage.

Overall, the report accurately reflects the current position and we will continue to work with Hampshire over the coming months.

South East Sector Led Improvement Programme

Buckinghamshire is part of the South East Sector Led Improvement Programme (SESLIP), which is a membership group of all single/upper-tier local authorities in the South East, it aims to:

- Improve outcomes for children and young people across the South East.
- Establish a culture of honest and constructive dialogue and challenge within and between authorities.
- Demonstrate the capacity and capability of the sector to achieve a coherent and consistent self-improving system.

On Friday 22 March 2019, I attended the launch of the 2019-20 improvement plan which focuses on how local authorities can support each other to improve across the region. The proposed priorities for this year's plan include:

- Improving provision for complex looked after children as well as identifying ways in increase in-house foster placements.
- Promoting educational inclusion.
- Sharing and developing new models of social care practice that fit the times.
- Developing the regional quality assurance capacity.
- Building leadership capacity across the region.
- Workforce development.
- Increasing political lobbying to address the funding gap.

As we are facing similar challenges locally, the service and I welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with authorities across the South East on the above priorities to improve outcomes for the families we serve in Buckinghamshire.

Front Line visit

Gareth Williams and I have just visited the Aylesbury Assessment Team. We found the time spent with them to be very informative and useful, hearing about the challenges they face and how they deal with those complex cases.

**WARREN WHYTE
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES



Annual Workplace Heroes 2019

On 26 March, the County Council hosted our penultimate Annual Workplace Hero Awards at Aylesbury's Waterside Theatre, recognising some of our incredible staff and their contributions and achievements over the past 12 months, in what was a heart-warming afternoon.

There were so many examples and stories of where employees have gone above and beyond their role to help the most vulnerable members of our communities and keep our county beautiful and thriving for residents and businesses.

Some of our 2019 winners included:

- Employee of the Year – Marco Dias, who works in the Policy Team, in recognition of driving a highly successful programme of work to support the Council and the county in preparation for Brexit.
- Manager of the Year – Cynthia Tapping, who manages the Stoke Mandeville Hospital Team, for being a kind and compassionate manager, trialling new ways of working and being at the forefront of much of the work in the integration of health and social care.
- Team of the Year – The Steeples Residential Home Team, for their hard work in getting from 'inadequate' to 'good' in the recent Ofsted inspection.
- Apprentice of Year – Brad Smith, who works in Strategic Flood Management, who was recognised for completing some outstanding work including improving our planning application screening process, intercepting all drainage consent applications and negotiating extensions to a consultation; all of which have substantially increased his team's efficiency.

Legal services

The county and district councils in Buckinghamshire have started the process of sharing legal resources from the autumn, part of the first steps to joining up support services for the new Buckinghamshire Council.

Under the plans, the legal team at Wycombe District Council and joint legal service at Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils, will provide some key elements of the County Council's legal work such as property, contracts and employment work from October.

An in-house team at Buckinghamshire County Council will provide its children's and adults services legal work, since this is not replicated at district level, until all legal teams transfer to the new unitary council in April 2020.






Officers from all five district and county councils worked together to develop the plans and will put forward proposals for a fully integrated legal service for the new Council in due course.

Fix My Street

"FixMyStreet Pro by Buckinghamshire County Council with mySociety" has been nominated in the Digital Public Service Innovation category, in this year's Digital Leaders 100. The DL100 2019 finalists will be announced at a reception in London on 11 April. Once announced, the DL100 list is opened up to a combination of a judging process and public vote, which will put the DL100 list and its 10 categories into a final order.

SOCITM

Visits to the BCC website continue to increase dramatically, with over 2.5 million visits to our website since March 2018. In the 12 months since March 2018, we have improved our rating in all areas of performance and are above the industry benchmark for each indicator.

Performance Indicator	Mar-18		Mar-19		BCC 12 month change	Direction
	BCC	Industry benchmark	BCC	Industry benchmark		
Digital Certainty Index	79.5%	78.4%	83.5%	77.9%	4.0%	
Quality Assurance	98.1%	86.9%	99.0%	85.3%	0.9%	
Search Engine Optimisation	78.1%	77.8%	86.2%	78.0%	8.1%	
Accessibility	61.4%	70.0%	92.5%	70.7%	31.1%	
Readability	4.0%		54.0%		50.0%	

In August 2018, SOCITM rated our website as 3* (4* is the maximum). Accessibility was identified as an area of improvement in order to achieve a 4* star rating. The inclusion of alternative text and other fixes has improved accessibility to meet the target of 8/10, meaning the site would now achieve a target of a 4* rating.

Tackling Blue Badge Misuse in Buckinghamshire

As part of a BBC investigation, analysis by the Press Association found 94 out of 152 (62%) local authorities in England did not pursue abuses of the Blue Badge scheme in 2017/18. Since June 2018, the BCC Blue Badge Team have been running a pilot to tackle Blue Badge misuse. To date, a total of 67 badges have been seized by one Enforcement Officer who is patrolling the streets for 4 hours per week.

Cases are prepared for prosecution in partnership with the BCC legal team, and so far a total of six cases have already been successfully prosecuted, with a further 11 cases listed in February and March. A total of £708 in fines and £1766 in costs have been awarded so far.

A PR strategy is being developed to help demonstrate to the public what is being done to tackle misuse in Buckinghamshire. A campaign is also being designed to reach out to all current and prospective new badge holders, to help dispel any myths around the use of a Blue Badge. Warning signs are to be introduced in areas which are known for Blue Badge misuse taking place.

An evaluation of the pilot is now taking place, with a view to developing a longer term plan for the future of Blue Badge enforcement in Buckinghamshire.

Former Police HQ- Japanese Restaurant

The property was acquired in 2014 as a part of the complete Thames Valley Police complex. Demolition of two of the three buildings enabled the creation of Waterside North Car Park. The former Police HQ was kept for redevelopment opportunity. The decision was made to strip out and refurbish the building speculatively before a tenant was secured.

A full lease agreement was signed at the end of January 2019 with the tenant, Noble Restaurant Limited. This has allowed the creation of £95,000 per annum sustainable income stream to support BCC service delivery, improve capital value of the BCC asset.

The use of the property will be an upmarket and modern Japanese fusion restaurant with an ancillary micro-brewery in conjunction with a wine bar and lounge. Currently, the tenants plan to open to the public in May 2019.

Other Property News

Aylesbury Library - Practical completion was achieved on 11 January 2019. The library opened to the public on Thursday 24 January followed by a family day on Saturday 26 January.

One Public Estate (OPE) Funding - Successful OPE Phase 7 funding for £456,000 for project enablement has been secured and the Council is working collaboratively with its strategic partners to bring forward these new feasibility studies in addition to a number of existing projects.

**JOHN CHILVER
CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**

CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING



Dignity In Care Awards

Our Dignity in Care Awards 2019 are being held on 14 May 2019 at the Oculus in Aylesbury.

We have had over 80 nominations this year which all demonstrated the importance of dignity in care amongst providers in Buckinghamshire.

The shortlisting of the entries took place on 19 March where an independent panel consisting of myself, the Service Director (Integrated Commissioning), a volunteer area organiser for Contact the Elderly and a representative from Bucks Older People Action Group met and had the difficult job of choosing the finalists.

The results will be announced at the ceremony in May where we will celebrate these fantastic examples of best practice.

Residential Short Breaks Consultation

Our residential short breaks service is currently located at Seeley's House in Beaconsfield. It offers overnight breaks for up to eight adults with complex needs at any one time. The building in Beaconsfield has a limited life span, is not suitable for renovation and is expensive to maintain. We also have a building in Aylesbury where a day centre is sited which is under-used and offers an affordable opportunity to improve the service offer.

If agreed, the plan is to invest in a new state of the art respite care centre at the Aylesbury Opportunities Centre site. The service would be jointly commissioned in partnership with health, thus ensuring that it is able to accommodate a wider range of adults who need nursing care.

The consultation started on 16 January and following a decision by the Cabinet Member to extend by a further two weeks, closed on 13 March. More information is available on the website under short breaks for adults and an all Member briefing took place on 17 April to provide Members with more detail of the improvement plans.

If a decision is taken to support the recommissioning of provision, the service is keen to involve Members in the implementation stages.

Thrift Farm Consultation

Thrift Farm has been supporting adults with learning difficulties for over 40 years.

It currently provides day opportunities and supported employment to around 64 people – around half of which are Buckinghamshire County Council clients. It aims to support people to develop key skills and engage in meaningful activities.

There are a number of challenges in relation to Thrift Farm including location, health and safety risks and financial viability. As a consequence, the Cabinet agreed, on 4 February 2019, to run an 8-week consultation about the future of Thrift Farm. The consultation opened on Wednesday 13 February and was due to close on 9 April.

Following a great deal of interest from some potential alternative providers, we arranged a Thrift Farm Question and Answer session on 10 April, and extended the period to submit a business case to 23 April 2019.

To make sure we are capturing the views of clients, we arranged for Talkback (advocacy charity) to hold sessions with service users between 11 and 16 March at the Farm. They will work with service users to help them to share their perspective and ideas.

Social Care Workforce

Communities, Health and Adult Social Care (CHASC) has successfully recruited 42 new starters over the last six months including six Social Workers, six Senior Social Workers and one Occupational Therapist.

Senior Social Workers and Occupational Therapists remain the most challenging staff groups to recruit within CHASC and therefore we have continued with a large targeted recruitment campaign which focuses on attracting candidates for these posts.

We have a number of separate initiatives, such as social media campaigns, recommend a friend payment and new try before you apply sessions, in place to support the recruitment of Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Social Care staff across Adult Social Care.

**LIN HAZELL
CABINET MEMBER HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS



Buckinghamshire Learning Trust

On 18 March 2019, the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust (BLT) communicated with all schools in Buckinghamshire that they have now ceased trading. The BLT have been in discussion with the County Council for a few weeks regarding their financial difficulties and we have been working with them to explore options to enable them to remain solvent. The County Council was unfortunately unable to assist BLT to alleviate its financial issues, and it is understood BLT's enquiries with other organisations also failed to produce the necessary financial relief.

By way of background, in 2018, following the 2013 commission of BLT to deliver school improvement services, the government removed that funding. At that point we were therefore forced to transfer those services from the BLT back to the County Council. The five year contract we had with the BLT was also up for renewal in July 2018. We announced in January 2018 that services were going to change.

In April 2018 the following services transferred back to the County Council:

- Specialist Teaching, Learning & Cognition Service
- Early Years Service
- Early Years Workforce Development Service
- Schools Financial Management Advisory Service

In August 2018, School Improvement Services also transferred back. Traded Governor Services had continued to be profitable for the BLT and so these were retained by the Trust although statutory governor functions transferred back to BCC.

From this point, BLT were left with a single statutory service contracted by us – namely Newly Qualified Teacher support for which there was no charge to the local authority, although the BLT charged schools for the provision. We understand that BLT was reliant on traded services and were going to look at expanding their operations elsewhere including a strong area of work in the Middle East. They have not been as successful as they hoped and are therefore now in a position that forces them to go into liquidation.

We know that for some schools this news will come as a great loss as they have bought services from the Trust and these monies are now being held by the administrator. We are currently in discussion with the administrator to look at options for supporting those schools affected by this news. The council also sent out an email to all schools providing a contact email address for schools for queries regarding services that are outstanding. We will continue to communicate and work with schools for those that have Newly Qualified Teachers.

The team are also working closely with BLT administrators and the Adventure Learning Charity on the future use of the Learning Campus, previously occupied by the BLT.

Green Ridge Academy Opening

Green Ridge is a new school in Aylesbury educating primary age pupils from the rapidly growing Berryfields estate. I attended the official opening of the school on Monday 18 March 2019, where The Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher was in attendance. The occasion was marked with a tree planting and the burial of a time capsule.

Aaron Wanford, Head Teacher, is leading the growth of the school from the initial intake of 90 pupils in 2017 to a projected maximum number of 720. The school is going from strength to strength with one of their staff, Cinzia Imbriano, winning the national teaching award for Outstanding New Teacher of the Year last October.

Schools Funding

In February 2019, I agreed the Buckinghamshire schools funding formula following the recommendation by Schools Forum in January. Buckinghamshire is continuing with its policy to progress towards the implementation of the National Funding Formula for schools proposed by the Department for Education (DfE); however, we are not yet in a position to implement the funding rates in full.

Additional funding of £1.3m was allocated by the Education Secretary for the High Needs element of the schools budget. Despite this, high needs budgets, which support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) continue to be under pressure as demand to support children with very complex needs increases.

Buckinghamshire plays an active role in the F40 group of the 42 local authorities who are the lowest funded for the schools budget. F40 is a lobby group that has been established for a number of years and is highly regarded by the DfE. Currently the group is lobbying government for:

- Urgent changes to the National Funding Formula to make it fairer, more easily understood and transparent so that it meets the aspirations for equity set out in early consultations. We seek the removal of the historic inequalities and funding protections in the system and the raising of basic entitlement to ensure the core cost of running a school are met.
- An immediate increase of £2.3 billion per annum in the amount invested in schools to ensure there is sufficient to meet the cost pressures facing all schools, to allow them to operate successfully and to provide quality

education for all children, regardless of where they live. This must be index-linked.

- An immediate injection of £1.5 billion of additional funding to deal with a crisis in High Needs provision across the country. We also seek legislation to allow structural change in the way High Needs is managed by local authorities.

MIKE APPLEYARD
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS