



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

2018-19





FOREWORD

In 2018, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed the decision to create a single new council for Buckinghamshire, combining the current five county and district councils. This change will ensure that we can continue to deliver great services to our residents whilst making huge savings.

This annual report will reflect the achievements of the county council in its 130th year. Whilst we can look back and be proud of what we have achieved, we also look forward with excitement for the years to come. We embrace this opportunity to effect change together, improve services and outcomes for our residents and remain positive about the future of the county.

Whilst some of the financial pressures being faced by local authorities were recognised in the 2018 Autumn Budget, managing the increase in demand for services, including social care and children's services, continues to be a significant challenge. Our services will continue to take action to mitigate these pressures where possible.

Following the disappointing outcome of the Ofsted inspection for children's social care services, regular monitoring visits have taken place which have indicated early signs of improvement. We will continue to embed performance compliance and further develop practice and quality standards throughout the next phase of our improvement journey.

We are committed to delivering the best quality support within adult Social Care. To do this we are redesigning and improving the way that we support people who need care, as well as enabling people to live independently with support from their own family and community networks.

With significant increases in population expected, we also need to plan for development of housing and infrastructure in order to meet future demand. We are working with partners to ensure that all growth is beneficial to our economy and the wellbeing of our community as well as being good for the environment.

Martin Tett
Leader of Buckinghamshire County Council



SAFEGUARDING OUR VULNERABLE

The council aims for all residents to be safe, happy and healthy. Most residents live healthy lives but some need extra support. The council, working closely with its partners, is successful in equipping the most vulnerable children, adults and families with the support and skills they need to do more for themselves and to get back their independence at the earliest opportunity.





SAFEGUARDING OUR VULNERABLE

Pauline has dementia and is unable to communicate. Her nurse, manager and GP all agreed it would be in Pauline's best interest to move to a home closer to her husband, as he is her only visitor, and a move would enable him to visit more frequently. Lewin House was able to offer a bed which ended up roughly £30 a week cheaper. Her husband was really happy with the placement and the fact he could see his wife more often.

Better Lives is a programme that we have introduced that takes a radical new approach to improving the lives of vulnerable adults. By improving the information, advice and guidance and preventative solutions available to people, 61% of people's needs are now resolved at the initial stage of contact. The proportion of people receiving a long term service has reduced from 48% to 33% meaning big improvements in independence, with more people being helped to live in their own homes and communities with less intrusive support packages.

Jane, a mum of three, was referred to the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service. Two of her children have special educational needs and the service contacted Jane to discuss the challenges she was experiencing. It was found that one of her children had stopped taking their medication and Jane had found it very difficult to cope over the past year.

The Family Information Service gave Jane information about respite and its purpose and suggested regular activities for all three children as well as parent support groups for Jane to meet other parents in a similar situation. Jane now finds she has more time to support her children effectively and feels more in control.

CASE STUDIES



SAFEGUARDING OUR VULNERABLE

Achievements this year

27

Special educational needs and disability groups were attended by Family Information outreach officers



students have been trained about online safety and



24

people have attended e-safety drop-in sessions run by those trained students. This project aims to link communities such as schools and older people's homes together.



8 female students attended a trial session in partnership with the RAF to build self confidence and increase physical activity

7,641

referrals made to Children's social care

30

schools participated in the GO GIVERS project with the Citizens Foundation aiming to build up 7-11 year olds' confidence by helping other people and the environment



1,000

young people attended the final celebration event!



2 new homes opened for looked after children allowing us to place more young people within the county

448

children supported by our children with disabilities team



The Early Years Team were awarded a National Honour for their work in forecasting and coping with the huge increase in demand for child care

4,055

children with an Education, Health and Care Plan supported by the service

17

children adopted into loving homes

23%

more foster carers



Hughenden Gardens retirement village opened on 1st May 2018. It supports people aged 55 and over to help them stay independent for longer





CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND BUILDING SELF-RELIANCE

Buckinghamshire residents have the aspiration and opportunities to lead successful and independent lives, taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and supporting each other in their communities. Children should have the best start in life and young people should thrive in Buckinghamshire schools, enabling them to progress to good jobs and training opportunities in the county.





CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND BUILDING SELF-RELIANCE

CASE STUDIES

James, a serving RAF officer, was referred to the school admissions Team by Cllr Bill Bendyshe-Brown, the Council's Armed Forces Champion. James will be returning to Buckinghamshire, where he owns a property and at the same time will be leaving the RAF and becoming a reservist. He wanted his daughter to have a place at the local primary school. We agreed that as a currently serving officer with evidence of his reservist role in the Auxilliary Air Force that he should have the same residence arrangements as a continuously serving officer. As a result, his daughter was offered a place at the local school and the family can look forward to the new phase of their lives back in Buckinghamshire.

Jack came to the Coffee Club at the library for the first time having seen the advertisement in the local paper. He is divorced with two grown-up daughters who live quite a way away. Jack said he was feeling very lonely and that he had come to the library to "break the silence". We gave him details about the Simply Walk group and our 'Learn My Way' basic computer sessions. Jack stayed for the session and enjoyed chatting to other customers and to our volunteers. He now regularly attends many of our events in the library and has made new friends.

Larry was discharged from hospital after having heart and lung problems. He lives with his wife and had a very supportive family. Larry was living downstairs in his house with various equipment, including a frame and wheelchair. He hadn't had any physio in hospital as he had been unwell and unable to get out of bed. Larry was determined to walk again. With a positive attitude and the assistance of Reablement, he was able to live independently again. He was seen a couple months later walking around his home town with a stick.



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND BUILDING SELF-RELIANCE

Achievements this year

The launch of our Side by Side project to support schools as they seek to deliver the very best education for their pupils



14,820

residents received an NHS Healthcheck

Launched KOOH, an online counselling service to support young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health



37

apprentices hosted by Corporate Business Support services since the scheme started



3,922

residents are participating in Active Bucks



5,386

births registered

1,736

ceremonies conducted

3,225

deaths registered



17

care leavers supported at university



90% and 74% of pupils offered their first preference in primary and secondary schools respectively



97%

of Early Years providers have good or outstanding Ofsted judgement



Employment in Bucks is expected to grow by an average of 0.6% per annum to 2028, above the national rate of 0.5% to rank 8th among LEPs

On World Mental Health Day we signed the Time to Change Employer Pledge which encourages people who have experienced mental health challenges to talk about them openly and honestly - helping others to open up and ask for help when they need it



ENSURING BUCKINGHAMSHIRE IS THRIVING AND ATTRACTIVE

Buckinghamshire is growing rapidly and its economy is one of the strongest in the country. As it grows, our challenge is to shape quality places, ensuring they are prosperous, thriving and attractive. We will continue to plan and deliver early interventions with our partners to drive forward and secure good jobs, good road, rail and other essential infrastructure, which will meet the current and future needs of our residents. We will proactively protect and mitigate the impact of development on the county's unique natural environment.





ENSURING BUCKINGHAMSHIRE IS THRIVING AND ATTRACTIVE

CASE STUDIES

The Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP) is recognised as one of the strongest in the country and has been awarded an exceptional rating from government for its performance delivery.

The effective use and management of the Local Growth Fund programme in Buckinghamshire has helped BTVLEP to secure £73m funding. This is being used to support some of Buckinghamshire County Council's priority road improvement schemes in High Wycombe town centre and Aylesbury as well as delivering world-leading new facilities at the National Film and TV School in Beaconsfield and the Silverstone Enterprise Zone. This funding has also helped establish a new centre for entrepreneurship at the University of Buckingham, a ground-breaking 5G test facility at the Westcott Venture Park and a new centre for construction and motor trades at the Buckinghamshire College Group Flackwell Heath site.

Since April 2015, we've devolved services such as urban grass cutting, hedging, weed killing, rights of way clearance, removal of fly posters, approving charity event advertising and cleaning/maintenance of street furniture to town and parish councils. There have been many benefits since the devolution scheme was introduced - local people are much happier: complaints about grass cutting reduced by 50% in the first year; creation of local job opportunities increased through social enterprises and apprenticeships; local councils are working together to provide services, developing positive collaboration and improved efficiencies.

Since November 2018, we have been working with five local councils to deliver a road repair pilot scheme. This empowers these councils to repair local road defects such as minor potholes, kerb defects and footway issues on residential 30mph roads.

Our Country Parks (Black Park, Langley Park and Denham) provide more than 800 acres of green space for residents of Buckinghamshire and the surrounding areas. They offer visitors a wide range of facilities and activities such as: Park Run; Simply Walks; Men in Sheds; conservation volunteering schemes; family friendly workshops; walking, cycling and riding routes; open air film screenings; as well as commercial activities such as Go Ape's tree top adventures, Segways and bike hire and much more. As well as being a popular leisure and environmental location, the Country Parks generated more than £1.4m in 2018/19.



ENSURING BUCKINGHAMSHIRE IS THRIVING AND ATTRACTIVE

Achievements this year

Launched S.C.R.A.P Fly-tipping campaign and have recorded the first decrease in fly-tipping in 6 years - an 11% reduction



95%

superfast broadband coverage for residents and businesses in Buckinghamshire delivered 16 months ahead of schedule

700+

people have been prosecuted for fly-tipping since 2004



£1M+

paid by convicted offenders in fines and costs



reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from our energy use (as of October 2018)

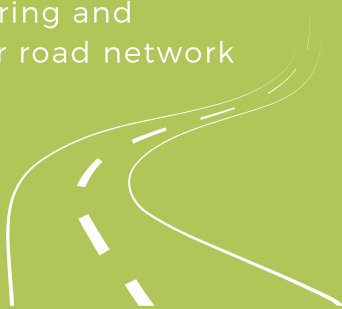
£184M



bid submitted for funding for highways, schools and other infrastructure in order to unlock planned housing in Aylesbury

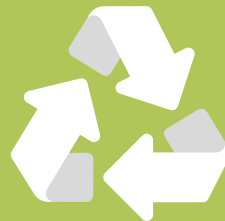
£22M

spent on repairing and resurfacing our road network



63

gritting runs completed



74%

recycling rate at our Household Recycling Centres

5%

only gets put into landfill

£4.4M

funding secured from ADEPT & Department for Transport for innovation on the highway



Producing enough electricity to power

40,000

homes from the Greatmoor energy from waste facility

4,449,089

square yards of grass cut



Over

1,000,000

visitors to our country parks for the third year in a row





ABOUT US

Achievements this year

125



active apprenticeships, making use of new talent and upskilling existing staff



504

children were in our care on 31 March 2019

154

children placed with in house fostering placements

243

care leavers receiving after care support

84%

of qualifying apprentices move into further employment with the council



We are an inclusive employer and this year our median hourly gender pay gap has fallen by 3.6% to 1.8%

225%

increase in engagement on our social media channels



550

officers completed online customer service training during National Customer Service Week



Since March 2018 over 150,000 customers have accessed and used our online forms. 91% of customers have rated the forms four or five stars



Calls answered in under 29 seconds has improved from 40% in March 2018 to 64% in February 2019



In March 2018, we created Brilliant at the Basics, a programme of work that aims to strengthen our existing technology, reduce the number of microsites that have been created by the business, reduce costs and protect the council's reputation, alongside enhancing the customer experience.

This means our customers can interact with us 24 hours a day seven days a week and we have had over 2.5 million visits to our website since March 2018

THE NEXT CHAPTER

We are now moving into the 131st and final year of the county council. From 1 April 2020 the existing five councils in Buckinghamshire will become one brand new authority called Buckinghamshire Council.

The new council will be responsible for all the services that the county and district councils deliver today. This gives us a unique opportunity to look at the way each service is delivered and draw upon the very best of the expertise and knowledge from each council to provide more joined up services which will help to address the challenges we face as a county.

Reorganising local government in Buckinghamshire will involve a great deal of work and whilst 1 April 2020 will not be the end of the transformation journey, there are a number of things that need to be in place prior to this date. This is why it is crucial that all five councils work collaboratively to ensure that the future Buckinghamshire Council has the best possible start.

Our priority during the period of transition is to ensure that services continue without disruption, focusing on the wellbeing of our residents. The reorganisation also gives us a key opportunity to engage and work with partners, voluntary and community sector organisations, businesses, and town and parish councils, making the new council more approachable to residents and partners and allowing local people to feel more involved in decision making for their communities.

We are extremely optimistic that the reorganisation of local government in Bucks will be a catalyst for us to work more efficiently for our residents and provide excellent services which deliver better value for money.