

Cabinet Member Reports

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL



Economic Development

As a result of an average annual investment of £450,000 by the Leader's portfolio for the last 10 years, Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) has been able to secure an additional £72m from Europe, UK government agencies and others, to support growth, innovation and productivity improvements in the Buckinghamshire economy.

BBF has provided 2,356 grants to businesses with a total value of over £12m, driving economic growth, efficiency, reducing CO2 emissions and creating over 4,500 new jobs. These investments have ensured Buckinghamshire has a vibrant economy which is currently rated the 4th most productive in the country. Nearly 12,000 businesses in the county are now actively engaged with BBF and in addition almost 1,000 individuals have been helped to start new businesses.

Since 2009, through BBF, business support programmes have been delivered with carbon emission reductions in mind. These programmes have helped businesses with travel planning, adopting low carbon technologies, bringing eco-innovations to market and have also helped farmers and land owners reduce their carbon footprint. Over the last 10 years, through these programmes, more than 1,300 businesses have saved a total of over 800,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions, which is almost the equivalent of planting two brand-new Wendover Woods.

Since the Buckinghamshire LEP's inception in 2012, it has secured £73m worth of Local Growth Funding for investment in Buckinghamshire, which has been matched by £119m of private and commercial investment, resulting in a total investment of £192m across the county for infrastructure, skills, business incubation and digital services. Supported facilities have included: High Wycombe Town Centre Master Plan; new business incubation facilities at Westcott, Silverstone, Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville; a 5G test centre at Westcott; National Centre for Immersive Technologies (National Film and TV School); the Vinson Centre for Entrepreneurship & Innovation at the University of Buckingham; and Pinewood Creates, with new degree and post graduate education programmes for screen crafts at the home of the British Film Industry.

Buckinghamshire LEP successfully bid for Enterprise Zone status for three sites at Aylesbury Woodlands, Westcott and Silverstone. Since 2016, a total of 24,000 m2 of new high-quality employment space has already been delivered, and this will rise to 70,000 m2 by April 2021, making them some of the fastest growing Enterprise Zone locations in the country.

The LEP's Skills Hub is ranked as the best performing in the country by the Careers and Enterprise Company. It has ensured that all 38 secondary state-funded schools in the county are supported by Enterprise Advisors from business, it has made Buckinghamshire the only area in the country to provide enterprise opportunities for all 6th formers, and it has grown

the Buckinghamshire Skills Show to be one of the biggest and best supported careers events in the country, attracting over 3,000 young people in 2019.

Buckinghamshire LEP, along with LEPs in the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, was amongst the first in the country to publish a [Local Industrial Strategy](#) in the summer of 2019. These strategies, which are jointly published with government, set out how our key strategic economic assets including Pinewood, Westcott, Stoke Mandeville and Silverstone can be harnessed to support Buckinghamshire's businesses in their growth ambitions, access new international markets and advance innovation.

England's Economic Heartland

Buckinghamshire County Council was one of the founders of England's Economic Heartland (EEH) in 2015, along with Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire County Councils. Since then, the EEH has championed collaborative working at the regional level with a focus on strategic infrastructure, realising efficiencies through collaboration, and the value of a single voice on issues of strategic importance. In addition, the EEH has advocated the importance of wider strategic infrastructure – digital infrastructure and utilities – and the need to secure investment in support of planned growth.

The EEH is now the Sub-national Transport Body (STB) for the region, providing a powerful voice on strategic transport issues within Westminster, and achieving national recognition as being one of the leading STBs – working alongside government-backed initiatives such as Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Connect.

Over the years, the Council has hosted and developed the EEH Business Unit as a regional resource supporting the work of individual partners, and the development of investment pipelines (such as the Major Road Network investment programme) and new capabilities at the regional level – such as the Regional Evidence Base – that can be used by all the partners to support the region's ambition for sustainable economic growth.

Growth

Buckinghamshire County Council has proactively approached growth in the county, actively influencing major projects over the years to secure the best deal for Buckinghamshire, including: East West Rail, Crossrail, Heathrow Expansion and Western Rail Link to Heathrow. On Heathrow this has included lobbying for the maximum benefit for Bucks residents, including contributions to an Iver bypass. Close working on new public transport links to the airport has seen three new services introduced this year alone, funded by Heathrow. On Luton, BCC has worked with AVDC to ensure changes to flightpaths and limit impacts on north Buckinghamshire and the AONB.

Aylesbury Garden Town is an ambitious proposal to double the size of Aylesbury through the provision of 16,398 new homes by 2033 and is a key location for growth in the UK. To accommodate new development in the town, new transport links, infrastructure and facilities are also needed, and in addition to government funding already secured, BCC have submitted Housing Infrastructure bid proposals worth over £180m.

Working with district, LEP and government colleagues, we have established the new 'interim' Buckinghamshire Growth Board to lead Buckinghamshire's future growth discussions. This will include the creation of a Narrative Document to understand growth in Buckinghamshire over the next 15 years, and discussions with central government about potential funding opportunities for Buckinghamshire. In addition, work continues on developing the Buckinghamshire Strategic Infrastructure Tool (BSIT), a partnership between

public and private sector bodies. The BSIT will deliver an interactive dataset which collates all infrastructure schemes known to be required to support growth across Buckinghamshire to 2033/2036.

HS2 and Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

Buckinghamshire County Council has led the opposition to both HS2 and the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, calling for the cancellation of both schemes. On HS2, we worked through a Judicial Review and chaired 51m (an alliance of Phase 1 local authorities). BCC worked with other stakeholders to deliver a Buckinghamshire Blueprint list of mitigation and secured around £50m for mitigation, and an extra £40m Community Environment Fund for Phase 1. On the Expressway, we continue to work with AVDC to oppose plans and call for the Expressway's cancellation.

Unitary

Following the announcement of a brand new, single council for Buckinghamshire in November 2018, work has proceeded at pace to bring the five councils together, with colleagues from across the councils collaborating on key areas of work. Delivering the new Council continues to make good progress, and with less than one month until vesting day, we remain confident we will have everything necessary in place for the new Council on 1 April 2020. Highlights over the past year of delivering the unitary programme include: appointing a really strong senior team that will put our exciting new organisation in the best possible position as we go live and for the future, agreeing a new logo for the council following design work from a team of officers drawn from the existing councils, and agreeing proposals on Localism, including devolution, Community Boards and Council Access Points.

Brexit

As requested by government, and building upon our robust preparations for Brexit, Buckinghamshire County Council, working in close partnership with the District Councils, prepared extensively for the possibility of a no deal Brexit in the lead up to 29 March, 12 April and 31 October 2019, working with partners across the voluntary, private and public sectors, as coordinated by the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum.

In addition to undertaking resilience preparations, BCC has supported the roll-out of the EU Settlement Scheme in Buckinghamshire with support provided by Libraries and Registrars services, including an ID verification system. In 2019, in partnership with the District Councils and Buckinghamshire Business First, BCC agreed an innovative Brexit Voucher programme to boost local Small and Medium Enterprise productivity and readiness in preparation for Brexit. The programme was a success with a marked change in business behaviour with businesses working to consider Brexit seriously and evaluate potential outcomes, processes and procedures and the overall resilience of their organisations.

Health and Wellbeing Board (March 2015 to September 2019)

In 2016, the Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board underwent a governance review which invited key providers, including the Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and District Councillors as members of the Board, an approach that is now standard practice across all Health and Wellbeing Boards nationally.

In light of the announcement in June 2017 of Buckinghamshire as one of the first wave of Integrated Care Systems in the country, the Board jointly hosted a Health and Social Care Integration [Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Integration Roadmap to 2020](#) which set

the future direction for integration in Buckinghamshire and the basis for the Integrated Care Partnership.

The Board received recognition in the 2019 LGA report, [What a Difference a Place Makes](#) and was included as one of the 22 effective Boards in the country making good progress on integrating health and care, improving wellbeing and tackling the wider determinants of health.

Broadband

In 2013, Buckinghamshire County Council partnered with Hertfordshire County Council in the Connected Counties Programme, and has since delivered 50,000 superfast broadband connections to businesses and residents across Bucks. In 2013, before the programme began, less than 69% of premises in the county could get superfast broadband, and we aimed to get this up to 95% by December 2019. As part of a joint effort, Buckinghamshire LEP has also invested over £5m into broadband alongside BCC and today the figure is over 96%. We continue to work directly with businesses, residents, central government and suppliers to understand how we can rollout even further and ensure that our residents and businesses have some of the best connectivity in the country.

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

DEPUTY LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION



Transport Strategy

- **Local Transport Plan 4** was created in 2016 and looks ahead to 2036 outlining a high-level approach to future transport in Buckinghamshire.
- **Development of policies and strategies** such as Freight Strategy, Aylesbury Transport Strategy, Highways Development Management Guidance, Getting to School Strategy amongst others.
- **£180m+ Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid** submitted and pending.
- **£13m** of income generated through S106 and modelling has generated **£20k - £40k** per annum over the past 5 years.
- Models have been developed to support the assessment of Local Plans and key developments within the county, ensuring appropriate transport solutions.
- **Simply Walk** has seen an increase in the number of walkers and volunteers by over 60% between 2011 and 2019.
- **School Crossing Patrollers** helped 75,000 children and adults to cross the roads safely at 55 school crossing sites over the past five years.
- 56 Buckinghamshire schools with **School Travel Plans** have Mode Shift STARS awards.
- In the last 10 years, **over 20,000 Bucks children have received Bikeability Cycle Training.**
- **Creation of green ways and cycle routes** such as Waddesdon Greenway (a 4km off-road route with approx. 75,000 users in the first year).
 - [A413 Wendover Cycleway and Network Improvements](#) – Improvements to routes in the Wendover area are being investigated, and will help to link the existing Amber Way (from Aylesbury Garden Town) to the proposed Misbourne Greenway.
 - **Aylesbury Garden Town Cycling and Walking Network** – A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan has been produced for Aylesbury Garden Town, recommending improvements to the walking and cycling networks in and around the town and nearby settlements. The recommended improvements will be implemented on an ongoing basis as and when funding becomes available.
 - **Haydon Hill Link / Emerald Way Improvements** - A river crossing at Haydon Hill Park, to join Aylesbury's Emerald Way (Gemstone Cycle Network) with the beginning of the Waddesdon Greenway at Aylesbury Vale Parkway Station .
 - **Misbourne Greenway** – An off-road route between Wendover and Uxbridge, forming the southern half of the 'Buckinghamshire Greenway' vision. A section of the route is due to be delivered by March 2021.
 - **Haddenham to Thame** – A traffic-free route connecting Haddenham and Thame is being investigated in conjunction with Sustrans and Oxfordshire County Council.
 - **Cycle Parking Improvements** – Improvements are to be made to the cycle parking facilities at Princes Risborough, High Wycombe and Aylesbury Railway

- Stations, in partnership with Chiltern Railways and the Aylesbury Garden Town programme.
- **High Wycombe Cycling and Walking Network** - A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is being developed to enable a strategic, long term approach to improving walking and cycling networks in and around the town and nearby settlements.
 - **Pinewood to Heathrow** – A walking and cycling route between Pinewood Studios and Heathrow, via Iver Heath, Iver High Street and Richings Park. The first section of the route along Pinewood Road has been delivered by Pinewood Studios.
 - **A412 Denham Cycleway** - A feasibility study has been conducted looking at a link along the A412 corridor to connect Denham Railway Station with existing walking and cycling infrastructure in Hertfordshire.
 - [A4 Taplow Station Sustainable Travel Scheme](#) – A cycleway is being delivered to connect Taplow Station to the Mill Lane development site, the Bishop Centre and Slough Train Station.
- Alongside this, Buckinghamshire County Council is progressing background work for the following schemes that will help to deliver the ‘Buckinghamshire Greenway’ vision:
 - **Buckingham Cycling and Walking Network** – The [A413 Sustainable Travel Scheme](#) has been delivered, and a future network has been identified through the Buckingham Transport Strategy, including a town network and connecting routes to Milton Keynes, Silverstone and Brackley.
 - **Aylesbury Vale Greenway** – A largely traffic-free walking and cycling route extending the Waddesdon Greenway from Aylesbury Garden Town to Waddesdon, Quainton, Calvert, Steeple Claydon and Buckingham
 - **Grand Union Canal Triangle** – A circular canal-side route between Aylesbury Garden Town, Tring and Wendover. Phase 1 of this scheme, between Aylesbury Town Centre and Arla Dairy at Woodlands, has been delivered in partnership with the Canal and River Trust.
 - **Haddenham to Aylesbury** – A route connecting Haddenham and Aylesbury via the existing Pebble Way (Gemstone Cycle Network) in Stone.
 - **High Wycombe to Bourne End** – An off-road route linking High Wycombe and Bourne End.
 - **Beaconsfield Cycling and Walking Network** – A proposed future network has been developed in partnership with Sustrans and Beaconsfield Cycle Paths Action Group.

East West Rail

- Continued to be the champion for East West Railway as a transformational project that will benefit the residents and businesses of Buckinghamshire, with the delivery of Phase 2 now able to start after it received government approval in February 2020.
- Provide the leadership for the East West Rail Consortium of local authorities and ensured that the strength of the local voice is heard throughout the project’s development and delivery
- Helped ensure the East West Rail project was adopted by the Government of the day as a national project.



- Worked with the EWR Alliance (and more recently the East West Railway Company) to de-risk the development and delivery of the project – pioneering the concept of ‘Work in Kind’ as a way of valuing the contribution of local partners
- Supported the delivery of East West Rail Phase 1 (between Oxford and Bicester), and continue to work with the Government, and East West Railway Company to ensure Phase 2 (Bicester to Bletchley, Milton Keynes and Bedford, with the link to Aylesbury) is delivered at the earliest opportunity following its approval by Government in February 2020.

Highways Development Management

- Highways DM respond to approximately **3,000** planning applications a year
- Highways DM manage all highway works associated with development proposals and undertake in excess of **2,500 highway inspections** a year
- In October 2014 an external audit was undertaken of the Highways DM team, due to ongoing performance issues with only 21% of planning applications being responded to within the prescribed 21 day time period. In QT3 of this financial year the team responded to **91% of planning applications within 21 days**, this goes to highlight the significant improvements that have taken place over the last 5 years in this area.
- The Highways DM team has increased from 13 members of staff in 2014 to 25 in 2020, this formed part of a successful **grow your own approach** supported by an investment to save MTFP business case.
- The Highways DM team now generate **£1.1m in income** each year, which means the team are nearly cost neutral despite delivering a statutory service.
- Last financial year the Highways DM team oversaw the construction of **£10.1m of highway improvements** undertaken by developers and negotiated **£10m worth of highway mitigation as part of East West Rail** and secured **£4.15m towards Highways and Transportation Infrastructure through S106 Planning Agreements**.

Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB)

- **Major Schemes**
 - Over 217 separate carriageway surfacing schemes were included in the £25.7M capital programme of carriageway and other asset improvements. In addition 11 footway, 29 drainage schemes, 350 streetlight column replacements and 2,400 LED conversions formed part of this 2019/20 programme.
 - The HS2 funded resurfacing of the Wendover bypass, using ultra low noise surfacing material was completed in October 2019 and has proved quieter than expected with noise levels reduced by 5.2 dB (decibels).
 - The £4.5M resurfacing of the Stoke Hammond bypass, which took eight weeks to complete in 2018, used approx. 25,000 tonnes of surfacing material, and covered 140,000 square metres of road - the equivalent area of 13 football pitches.
- **Network Management**
 - At the start of winter season over 10,000 tonnes of salt is stocked ready to service the fleet of 27 spreading vehicles.
 - Priority Defects started to decline as the Plane and Patch and longer-term improvement programmes in 2018 and 2019 started to have a positive impact.



Just 552 Category 1 defects were found upon inspection between April 2019 – Dec 2019 compared to 3564 Category 1 defects in the same period in 2018, a decrease of over 3000.

- Almost 13 million m² of highway verge, formed the rural and urban grass cutting programme.

- **Network Strategy and Safety**

- In November 2019 TfB was the overall winner of the Institute of Asset Management (IAM) Global Award - "Improving Customer Service through Collaboration".
- An additional £4.89M has been awarded to TfB since 2015/16, when the DfT incentivised a proportion of its funding. BCC is currently a Band 3 authority, the highest achieving band.
- TfB maintains a Gold Performance award standard in recognition of the way it manages its street information database, the Street Gazetteer.
- In 2013, we implemented a Traffic Management Permit scheme for road space booking to avoid any potential issues caused by unnecessary or badly controlled roadworks. Approximately 40,000 permit requests to work on traffic sensitive streets, come to TfB each year.
- The network safety team was successful in receiving a Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation 2019 award for its on-line winter driving workshop.

- **In the past five years:**

- 26 engineering schemes have been installed to reduce casualties at high risk locations
- 18,000 students have attended performances of Safe Drive Stay Alive
- 600 older driver assessments have been delivered.
- We've recorded an overall reduction of 47% in the number of people fatally injured on public roads in Buckinghamshire.

MARK SHAW

DEPUTY LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION

CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS



Adult Learning

Our Adult Learning Team, the main provider of part-time learning courses for our post 18 population continues to deliver high quality education, as reported in their November 2019 Ofsted inspection. Currently, we support 1,752 learners on community funded programmes; 980 learners on adult skills funded programmes; and 134 apprentices on standards-based programmes at levels 2 to 5. Courses are delivered in 170 venues across the county.

Inspectors praised for the positive impact it has had on the learners, as well as the hard work of the leaders, managers and tutors in tailoring opportunities to their needs and supporting lifelong education, personal development and wellbeing.

Inspectors reported, "Learners develop positive relationships through their participation on adult learning programmes. Single parents and newcomers to the county value the social networks they create on family learning courses. As a result, many learners progress together as groups onto new courses."

The report also highlighted that learners with high needs have excelled in newly developed internship programmes with the local hospital and a large hotel chain, also gaining personal confidence and becoming valuable members of the workforce thanks to the support from the team.

The diligence and attentiveness of staff also received great praise as inspectors found that "Tutors plan and deliver the curriculum in a logical order to enable learners and apprentices to build their knowledge and skills so that they can retain and apply them."

"Tutors react well to the different starting points and experiences of their learners. They design activities that respond to the issues that learners confront in their wider lives."

The service is delighted that the fantastic opportunities and experiences offered by Buckinghamshire Adult Learning have been recognised in the inspection and I look forward to hearing more about the great work of the staff in the future and hope that learners continue to thrive from the programme in years to come.

Early Education

Early education from age two has long-lasting benefits for children, and helps to promote a child's physical, emotional, cognitive and social development. However, the evidence shows that on average disadvantaged families are less likely to make use of formal childcare provision than more advantaged families. That is why the government introduced 15 hours of funded early education for the most disadvantaged 2-year-olds in September 2013.

Eligibility includes children from low income working families and children with a disability or special educational need. In addition, the overall aim is to the early years attainment gap and is intended to better prepare disadvantaged children for the start of formal schooling.

I am delighted to report that during the Autumn Term 2019, the percentage of eligible two year olds benefitting from early education in Buckinghamshire was 86% compared to 68% nationally. The Early Years team have worked incredibly hard to achieve this fantastic result.

We will continue to raise awareness of the early education entitlement to ensure that as many two year olds in Buckinghamshire benefit from accessing an early education place.

Strong and Improving Educational Performance

For the first time ever, disadvantaged pupils in Buckinghamshire outperform similar pupils nationally for the Key Attainment 8 measure. Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils has been an area of focus for several years and this hard work in schools across the county is now reflected in the performance of our children in GCSE results. The gap between our pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers has also closed and work continues to maintain this trend. In looking at another vulnerable group, the Year 1 phonics for children who have a first language other than English has also improved and is now above results for similar pupils nationally.

The overall performance of pupils achieving a 'good level of development' in our Early Years settings have remained above national levels across the last five years, maintaining a differential since 2015 despite a rising national picture.

Our children still perform well at the end of their infant education and across the last three years they have performed above or in line with those across the country in reading, writing and maths. This continues to the end of the primary phase where, once again, we have remained above national figures since 2016.

In addition, the final figures for GCSE outcomes have been published by the DfE this month (February) and show that our 37 secondary schools are achieving very highly. In the key measure of Attainment 8, Buckinghamshire, with an average figure of 55.1 point, was significantly above the national average of 46.8. This places the authority, by a large margin, first amongst our statistical neighbours and fifth overall nationally.

The results remain strong when we look at types of schools, our selective schools, with an average of 74.4 points outperform the national average for selective schools. In the same way, our upper schools also outperform similar schools across the country. This shows that no matter which type of school our pupils attend, the average attainment is better in Buckinghamshire than nationally.

Pupils also make better progress within the county than nationally with our progress measure being published at 0.16 which is significantly above the national average.

This success is replicated for sixth forms where we can see Buckinghamshire outperforming all of our statistical neighbours for A level results. Pupils scored, on average, a B- for their A levels, but we also had a high number of high performing students, in a measure looking at the percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better, Buckinghamshire came third out of all authorities nationally.

This is result of excellent teaching in schools and a fantastic conclusion for the school careers of students in Buckinghamshire. Outcomes like this do not happen in isolation and are due to highly effective education for learners from their time in nurseries through to their secondary education.

Overall, our results are very pleasing and we will strive to improve these further by supporting settings and schools through our Side by Side Project.

Ofsted results

The quality of early years providers and schools in Buckinghamshire has been recognised by Ofsted over the last few years. Latest figures show that the percentage rated good or better increasing to over 98% and 90% respectively. This remains significantly above national statistics but we are not complacent and are keen to support improvements in those settings and schools that are not yet good.

Special Education Needs and Disabilities

The service now has 4671 children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with over 645 new plans being issued between April and December 2019. Buckinghamshire continues to be above the national average and above our statistical neighbours for the number of EHCPs. In light of this persistence growth, the service has recently recruited 10 new EHCCs that will join the service in April 2020.

During the last year, the team has worked incredibly hard to improve the service and address the significant backlog of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Whilst there is still a way to go, the restructure of the service in September 2019 that brought together Educational Psychologists, Specialist Teachers and Education, Health and Care Co-ordinators (EHCCs) has created a more consistent and effective approach to the way we work with families and settings across Buckinghamshire.

Our overall performance against delivering EHCPs within statutory timescales has risen from a very low base of 13.1% in April 2019 to meet the target of 40% by the end of December. Even though this remained below the national average of 60%, we know that our in-month performance has been above national averages since October 2019, with a peak of 92% in November. We are determined and committed to provide Buckinghamshire families with the support they require.

It is obvious that the outstanding achievements as reported here could not have happened without the dedicated efforts of a strong and committed team. Since I have been Cabinet Member for Education, I have been impressed by the commitment of all in the department from Director to Heads of Service. Heads to team members to do their utmost to improve outcomes for all the children in Buckinghamshire. As we move into a Unitary Authority we are taking an education department that ranks high in National ratings but is not complacent. There is a will and energy in the service to go from strength to strength and contribute to the goal of making Buckinghamshire the best place to live, work and raise a family.

**ANITA CRANMER
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT



Protecting our Environment & Fighting Climate Change

Strategic Flood Management

- Development and publication of a **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy** for Buckinghamshire (2017) and a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for European River Regulations (2018).
- Responses to **major planning applications has increased by between 40-60% each year** since 2015, and the ambitious team has taken on work from District Councils relating to minor planning and a selective number of sustainable drainage retrofit projects in schools and communities.
- Flood Management Officers investigating flood incidents across the county have produced **25 formal flood investigation reports since 2014**. The team works in partnership with organisations including the Environment Agency, water companies and town and parish councils to deliver projects and initiatives such as the Marlow Flood Alleviation Scheme. The team also identifies areas most at risk of flooding, undertakes feasibility studies within funding from central Government and manages an asset register for flood risk structures.
- The team respond on drainage and flooding matters to large infrastructure projects such as Heathrow; HS2; East West Rail; Western Rail Link to Heathrow.
- The Flood Management Team have **capital programme with £4m funding from within the County Council and £4m additional funding from central Government**, subject to business case approval. Over the last 10 years, previous capital schemes have protected 375 properties from flooding in Buckinghamshire.



Energy & Resources

- Between 2013 and 2015, **£1m was invested in improving insulation (wall, loft and pipe work) at over 150 schools** with over 370 individual measures installed.
- Energy efficiency projects have resulted in **savings of over £1m per year in energy costs and over £200k per year is generated through renewable subsidies**.
- Solar PV systems are installed in 16 sites and biomass boilers in 11 sites, including the Green Park swimming pool.
- There has been a **53% reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions** between 2009/10 and 2018/19.
- Following a motion on Climate Change at Council in September 2019, **an audit of the carbon emissions for the new Buckinghamshire Council is currently underway**. The audit will provide a new carbon emissions baseline and identify measure to continue the emissions reduction work which has been so successful at the County Council.

Creating Greener, Cleaner Spaces

Buckinghamshire's Country Parks

- Buckinghamshire's Country Parks have **bucked the national trend** for parks and green spaces of cuts and neglect and continue to go from strength to strength with levels of innovation and customer engagement which are un-rivalled.
- A **self-funding policy for Country Parks was introduced in 1999** and the Country Parks are now provided at no cost to the County Council; in fact they are now a **net contributor** to the Councils budget supporting other key services.
- The design, submission and implementation of a **£3.1m Heritage Lottery Fund restoration plan for the historic Langley Park estate** saw significant improvements to the Brownian landscaped park and gardens at Langley Park Country Park. Langley Park House was re-opened by the Marriott Group as a **luxury hotel** in June 2019 and has received very positive customer feedback.
- **Visitor numbers topped 1 million in 2018** and continue to meet this amazing level year on year coupled with over **90% customer satisfaction for the last 5 years**.
- The efforts of the operational team, numerous volunteers and contractors over this period has seen, after a devastating woodland fire in 1976, the **restoration and continued management of a 50acre lowland heath** which received the accolade of the being best heathland in Buckinghamshire following the Natural England's biannual assessment in 2018.
- Black Park also suffered significant tree loss during storms in 1987 and 1990. Since that time, there has been a **significant commitment to reforestation**.
- With an extensive history of filming including Carry On and Hammer House of Horror, Black Park Country Park continues to be **one of the most significant filming locations in the UK** attracting feature films such as James Bond, Harry Potter, Cinderella and Captain America along with television series such as Silent Witness and Midsomer Murders to name but a few – the parks varied woodland landscapes providing beautiful backdrops to some of the largest film franchises ever produced.
- In 2009 partnership with Forest Adventure Limited saw the introduction of **Go Ape activities at Black Park** and now the site offers the broadest range of Go Ape activities of any site across the country with high ropes, Segways, bike hire and a tree-top nets adventure.
- More recently we have re-introduced of a **comprehensive programme of events and activities promoting care and enjoyment of the Countryside** including Tots Go Wild activities under the Forest Schools initiative attracting the next generation of visitors.
- 2018 saw the establishment of the now highly successful **Black Park Shed, part of the national 'Men in Sheds' mental health initiative** – initial membership of 8 members once a week has now grown to a membership of 38 members meeting 4 days per week.

Aylesbury Garden Town (AGT)

The AGT Project will encourage Aylesbury to become an **attractive and welcoming place to live, work and invest**, and to be an **exemplar innovator in health and wellbeing, public service and sustainable travel**. The delivery of AGT has created funding opportunities from the government, mostly recently receiving the Garden Town Capacity Fund 2019/2020 of £460k. The basis of this allocation had been the performance to progress the programme and the recognition of Aylesbury to be one of the higher performing Garden Towns.

Local Plans and Minerals and Waste Plan

In the last 5 years the Strategic Planning & Infrastructure team have **responded to over 30 local plans at their different levels of engagement and over 30 national consultations** which includes proposed changes to national planning policy and major infrastructure projects. In addition to this portfolio of work the team have reviewed over 50 local neighbourhood plans. One of the team's biggest achievements is the **completion and adoption of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan in August 2019**. Work began in 2014 on a replacement Minerals and Waste Local Plan and included three public consultations and consultations with key stakeholders, town/parish council, government bodies, neighbouring authorities and industry. The MWLP sets out a number of strategic policies for the County's Minerals and Waste, site allocations to meet the County's future needs for minerals, The minerals safeguarding area, preferred area locations of waste management facilities, and Development Management Policies for the assessment of planning applications

Buckinghamshire Strategic Infrastructure Tool (BSIT)

BSIT is a core work stream of the newly established Buckinghamshire Growth Board - a partnership between public and private sector bodies with an interest in geographic area of the four district authorities of Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe, Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire, and the County authority for Buckinghamshire. The BSIT will provide **an interactive dataset which collates all infrastructure schemes that are known to be required to support growth across Buckinghamshire to 2033/2036**. It is expected to have the BSIT complete in the spring, in time for the new unitary authority.

Definitive Maps, Local Land Charges & Rights of Way

As well as **maintaining and protecting 3300km of Public Rights of Way**, the team have developed an **interactive mapping tool** to report issues and short the extent of Rights of Way. The **Buckinghamshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan** has recently been consulted upon and will assist in meeting present and future user needs. This will help to continue the improvements to the Rights of Way Network which over the last 20 years has seen 5000 structures improved to aid accessibility; half were stiles which were either removed or replaced with user-friendly gates.

The Rights of Way Team were active in managing the foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreaks of 2001 and 2007. The team worked alongside animal welfare colleagues from Trading Standards to close areas and public paths to prevent transmission of the disease to Buckinghamshire farms and livestock. This helped ensure there were no cases on farms in Buckinghamshire in either of the FMD outbreaks. Bill Chapple (Deputy Leader in 2001) also appeared on Newsnight with Jeremy Paxman to debate the action needed to manage the outbreak.

In 1992 Wendover Parish Council became the first Parish in the Country (and Buckinghamshire!) to take on maintenance and improvement tasks on their rights of way network under a **Parish Paths Partnership agreement**. These agreements were supported by Buckinghamshire County Council through funding from the then Countryside Commission which was working towards a millennium project for an accessible rights of way network across the country for the year 2000.

Archaeology & Ecology

The Environment Team of professional archaeologists and ecologists maintains the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record and Natural Environment Record Centres.

Achievements of the team include:

- Successful launch of new data searches system for the environmental record centre – **reducing turnaround times for data requests from 10 days to 2 hours.**
- 179 sites brought forward to a Local Wildlife Site Selection Panel, with **46 sites receiving the Local Wildlife Site designation**
- **Over 833,000 new wildlife records** added to our database in the past five years, which now exceeds **2.6million in total.**
- Ecology advice has been given on 613 planning applications, and Archaeology advice given on 3,159 planning applications. Advice has also been given on 444 Countryside Stewardship applications.
- **Surveyed 447 orchard sites** within the proposed Expressway corridor, 126 sites are still existing orchards
- Holding outreach events with the public, including 8 training days for volunteer recorders, community digs, 5 Annual Recorders' Seminars, 5 events with schools, Bio blitzes, site open days, guided walks, presentations etc.
- **450 archaeological fieldwork projects** have taken place in the past five years

Planning & Enforcement

As well as participating in the highly successful **S.C.R.A.P Fly-tipping campaign** which continues to combat the illegal disposal of waste, the Enforcement team have secured over 650 convictions and cautions since 2010 related to fly tipping. The team have also moved on 119 unauthorised encampments since 2015, 26 of which required a Court Order to be issued.

The Planning team have processed 172 Full Planning applications since 2015 for a broad range of land uses, including 7 new schools, the Energy from Waste (EfW) facility at Greatmoor, three new quarries, the A355 Relief Road as well as children's homes.

Planning Enforcement has dealt with 155 unique cases since 2015 including issuing 16 Enforcement Notice against breaches of planning control, 42 Planning Contravention Notice, 11 Stop Notice and 12 Temporary Stop Notices. This makes us one of the most active Planning Authorities in Buckinghamshire for enforcing against breaches of planning control. The team also monitors 52 Minerals and Waste sites (including quarries) in Buckinghamshire for compliance with planning conditions which is unique function undertaken by the County Council

Waste Management –

Some major achievements have been made in Waste Management in addition to managing 250,000 tonnes of waste each year.

- **2010-13** - Waste Management helped deliver fundamental changes to the way waste was collected in Buckinghamshire. New fortnightly collections of residual waste were introduced and the first separate food waste collections started too. The large In-vessel Composting facility was decommissioned and reduced the costs of composting garden waste.
- **2014-16** - Although the project first started in 2005 new Energy from Waste facility. This period saw a new access road and the facility commissioned as the largest single grate facility in the UK As part of the project a new waste transfer station was built near Wycombe and a new access road to reduce waste vehicle movements in the North of the county.
- **2016-18** - The Waste Partnership, jointly lead by Buckinghamshire County Council delivered a successful Food Waste Recycling campaign which saw over 1500 extra tonnes of food recycled in the County.

A new online permit system was also introduced at the Household Recycling Centres to speed up the process for residents, make enforcement easier and reduce management costs.

Behind the scenes work also lead to significant savings on new disposal contracts to add to the millions saved by Greatmoor Energy from Waste Facility.

- **2019-onwards** - The team scoped, tested consulted on and delivered a huge change to Buckinghamshire's Household Recycling Centre service. The changes will reduce the cost of the service whilst maintaining the high satisfaction residents have with the service.

The team has also started commissioning a variety of multi-million pound contracts for waste management services.

Waste Management in numbers:

£20million saved in the last 5 years through new infrastructure, contract negotiations and service changes

40,000 homes powered by energy created at Greatmoor Energy from Waste facility

0.2% waste sent to landfill in 2018-19

10,000 visitors to Greatmoor and its outreach events since 2016

98% satisfaction at Household Recycling Centres in 2019

40,000 people reached every month with positive waste reduction messages

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

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



The Community Engagement and Public Health portfolio focuses on working with residents and partners to keep communities safe, well and thriving. When Buckinghamshire Council was founded in 1889 residents could not expect to live beyond 60 years of age whereas today people live for more than 80 years. Some of the main issues people faced were insanitary living conditions and deaths from infectious diseases. Many things have changed for the better since then. The main causes of death and disability now are long term conditions such as cancer and heart disease driven by the different way we live our lives now and the environments in which we live.

Over the council's long history we have seen the responsibility for public health first located in local councils, then move to the NHS in 1974, but back again in 2013 giving Buckinghamshire County Council the power and the responsibility to improve our resident's health.

We know that the places and communities we live in affect our health profoundly. Living in safe strong and resilient communities, with good friends to rely on keeps us happy, healthy and independent. This is a key priority for my portfolio. We work with communities and a wide range of partners in pursuit of this goal.

We undertake a number of programmes that promote community connections and self-reliance. Our Street Association programme has been rolled out in 6 pilot areas so far including Hughenden, Quarrendon and Walton Court in Aylesbury, Chesham, Burnham and Princes Risborough. Working closely with our Thames Valley Police, Trading Standards and Neighbourhood Watch partners, Street Association members are provided with opportunities to improve their awareness of community safety issues through a range of targeted workshops such as scam and exploitation awareness. Members have been able to make 49 referrals to Trading Standards in relation to scams and 500 referrals to the Prevention Matters service in relation to neighbours who are in need of support.

We now have 369 Street Members in 267 streets across Bucks and 95 local businesses backing the initiative. 453 residents have attended community safety workshops including scam and domestic abuse workshops. Feedback from Street Association members is that the scheme has helped to improve connectedness in their communities, with neighbours getting to know one another, offering support, and feeling confident to identify signs of vulnerability and signpost to relevant services.

Our programme to protect people from scams helps keep our residents safe. We have provided support to over 2,500 victims of scams to prevent them from being re-victimised. We undertake a wide range of interventions including deploying doorstep cameras and phone call blockers and recruiting people as "Friends Against Scams" so that they know the

signs of scams to look out for and can support people around them not to become victims. Social isolation of the victim is a common factor to many scams and we call on a network of volunteers to put them in touch with community groups in their local area.

Keeping people mentally and physically healthy helps them achieve their goals in life, contributes to Buckinghamshire's economic success and helps reduce the need for services from a wide range of partners. With this common purpose we have delivered successful multiagency strategies and programmes to address some of the key determinants of health including physical activity, healthy eating and strategies to tackle drug and alcohol misuse.

We have recommissioned and driven performance improvements in services such as substance misuse and NHS health checks. We have delivered over 91,000 health checks to residents since 2013 which help detect risk factors and early signs of heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes and give advice how to avoid developing these illnesses. A new improved adult substance misuse service (One Recovery Bucks) commenced in October 2017. Since the start of the service the percentage of clients who successfully complete treatment and do not re-present within 6 months of completing treatment, has improved across all types of substances with the biggest improvement in alcohol rising from 26% to 39%.

We have commissioned an innovative integrated lifestyle service "Live Well Stay Well" which offers 24 hour access to healthy lifestyle information and delivers services digitally, via telephone or face to face. This service has a single digital front door which is co-commissioned with primary care and also offers access to NHS services such as mental health support via Healthy Minds and diabetes prevention programmes. In the first year of operation there were over 24,000 visitors to the interactive website.

Partnership working with communities, the NHS and local government was also key to the success of our Active Bucks campaign to get inactive people more physically active. This won the Royal Society of Public Health award in 2018 in recognition of our innovative approach. Over the course of the programme 257 activities targeting inactive people of all ages were set up across Buckinghamshire with short term funding, with the aim that activities should try to be self-sustaining. Overall 64% of the activities were sustained beyond the end of the programme and the project was successful at engaging adults and children who were inactive.

In 2019, partners including local government, local NHS organisations, Police, Fire and the Department for Work and Pensions agreed to a 'Shared Approach to Prevention'. This included agreement to a shared set of prevention priorities and principles to make joint working more successful. Partners have received training in techniques to help residents make healthy changes to their lives and this year all partners are working together to tackle social isolation as this is a key driver both for poorer health and use of partner's services. Partnership working is vital to ensure the best use of resources and the best experience for our residents and, is increasingly important in an era of diminishing resources and growing demand.

The future success of our county depends on our children and young people getting the best start in life. The first 1,000 days are particularly important and the services we commission reflect this. We recommissioned the Health Visiting and School Nursing service which is now performing well on delivering the mandatory child development reviews, support to pregnant women and support and advice on maternal mental health, breastfeeding, parenting and child health. It is mandatory to offer the child development reviews, but

optional for parents take up the offer. Since the recommissioned service started the services has improved the uptake of development reviews across the majority of checks, with the largest increase in the 2 – 2 ½ year check from 60% to 80%. Breastfeeding support is also contributing to 57% of mothers in Buckinghamshire still breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks, compared with 48% nationally.

The service also has a successful targeted team working with vulnerable first time young mothers under 20 from pregnancy through to their child's second birthday. 363 mothers have been engaged with this programme so far and the programme is demonstrating very positive outcomes with:

- 97% of babies this year born at full term
- 70% of clients initiated breastfeeding
- 100% children fully immunised at age 1
- 100% of children within meeting their milestones at age 2 for social and emotional development
- 36% of clients returning to employment, education or training by the time their child is 2

We also support the wellbeing of older children with our school nursing service and through our Personal, Social and Health and Economic Education (PSHE) offer and annual mental wellbeing conference for schools which regularly attracts more than 90 participants from more than 50 schools. The Public Health lead for PSHE has engaged more than 70% of primary and 80% of secondary schools to help them to prepare to deliver the mandatory PSHE. Local PSHE forum meetings, termly newsletters, a professionals page on schoolsweb are offered to schools. This input is proving invaluable with many schools giving very positive feedback, including those who have recently been OFSTED inspected and have been able to provide good evidence of their offer in relation to PSHE.

What does the future hold?

Many things will influence our health in the future. Our residents are living longer and our population is ageing. We want to ensure that the extra years are lived in good health. The chances of ageing well are increased by having healthy behaviours in mid-life, having a good level of education, strong social connections and living in environments that support us to age healthily and are age friendly.

The health of our young people is also vitally important and we need to continue to support them to develop well, achieve well at school and fulfil their dreams. The observed national adverse trends in young people's mental health mean it continues to be important to provide initiatives that increase young people's resilience and mental wellbeing and protect them from harm. Although smoking rates and rates of drinking in young people have fallen, rates of unhealthy weight are continuing to increase, risking their health as adults. For the sake of both adults and children we need to ensure the environments in Buckinghamshire make healthy choices the easy choices.

Based on current trends social isolation and loneliness will continue to impact our mental and physical health in both young people and adults. We need to continue to support community connections, and provide opportunities and spaces for cultural and leisure pursuits and places to meet and make friends.

Housing and infrastructure growth offers opportunities to improve health if done well, and create environments that work for all ages and abilities to promote healthy living. Climate change however poses a significant threat to our health through a wide range of mechanisms. The most direct impacts include hotter temperatures which increase the risk

of disease and death. There are also harmful effects on physical and mental health due to extreme weather events. We have the opportunity now to act to reduce global heating and design our housing and neighbourhoods to mitigate the impacts of the climate change and help protect our health.

Improving the health and happiness of our communities and residents is a whole council endeavour, working closely with residents and partners and I feel confident that the Council will rise to the challenge. As we look forward to our future I would also like to thank all those who have helped us in the past to keep Buckinghamshire healthy.

GARETH WILLIAMS
CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC HEALTH

CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES



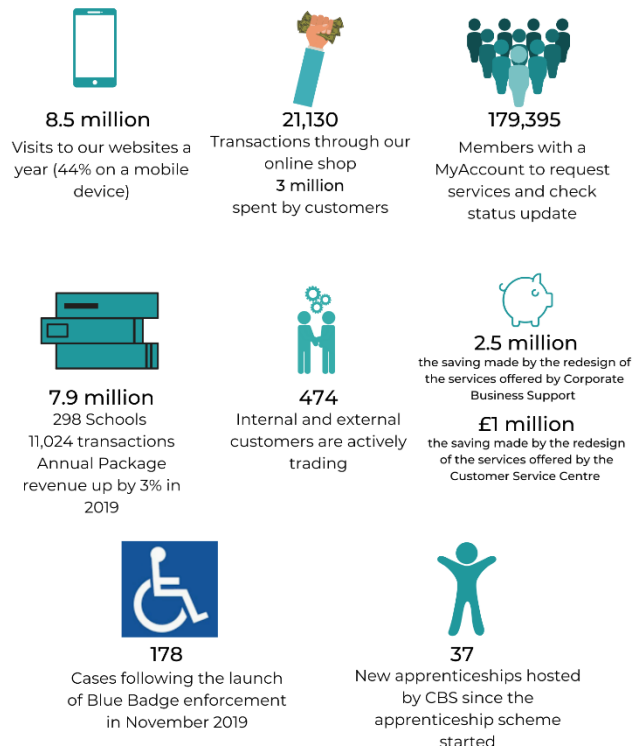
Customer and Digital

There have been many changes in how customers interact with Buckinghamshire County Council over the years. Back in the launch of the authority communications and information for residents would have been printed in the local newspapers or displayed on noticeboards in community areas. In February 1998 Buckinghamshire County Council launched its first website which is continually improving as technology evolves and now has 2.8 million visits per year.

In February 2006 the Customer Contact Centre was opened providing a central place for customer telephone calls to come into the Council. Since the launch of the centre our customers' expectations have remained high and in a world where customers expect speedy response, online Contact Us Forms have replaced white mail for the majority of our customers. The customer service centre currently answers 6500 Contact Us Forms each year with many being answered within 24 hours. This is a great reduction from the 26,000 we were handling in 2015 and demonstrates the trend in customers self-serving on the website.

The use of webchat has seen a steady growth and for many of our customers and has proven to be an effective way of keeping people on digital channels and enable our advisors to deal with multiple customer interactions at once. Buckinghamshire County Council launched webchat in October 2013 and volumes have steadily increased. We currently serve around 600 customers per month via webchat.

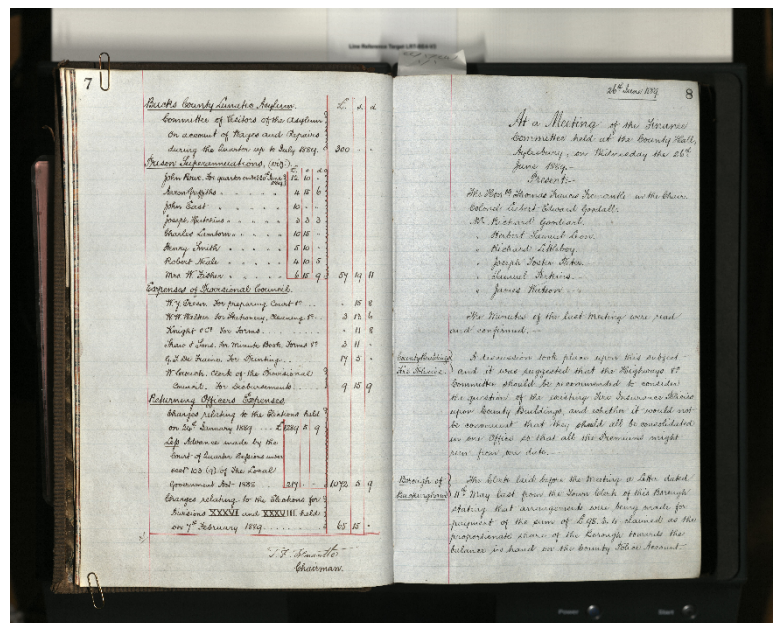
For many customers the ability to phone and speak to a trained advisor is very important and telephony contact trends have levelled and we speak with 168,000 customers per year. Back in 1889 the use of the telephone was in its infancy and very few households would have owned a telephone; over the years we have seen a telephony revolution from public phone boxes to static home phones to a community where owning a mobile phone and being able to contact people immediately is now the norm. It is however still important to be able to provide our customers with the option to have that face to face contact at our



offices, although now the number of visitors to the offices are much smaller in volume the evolving use of digital technology.

Finance

This photograph is from the Finance Committee held on 26th June 1889 where the expenses of the Provisional Buckinghamshire County Council (the equivalent of today's Shadow Authority) are recorded – circa £36. Directly below it are the costs for the first election of County Councillors for the new County Council, a whopping £1,137 pounds! As we head to 1st April when the new Buckinghamshire Council is formed it is heartening to know that we have history on our side, and there is every reason to hope that the new authority will be at least, if not more successful than its predecessor authorities.



Over the last 5-years we have seen our main government grant reduce from £62m to zero and achieved just under £100m savings / additional income and just under £200m over the last 10-years. We have achieved overall underspends in 9 of the last 10 years.

Back in the day manual records were kept for managing the budget and the same goes for treasury management where we would get the balance from the bank on a daily basis and manage cash flow accordingly, all manual processes.

Whilst Finance staff may still be seen with a calculator, they now depend on systems like SAP to, for example, raise 13,500 purchase orders and process 45,500 invoices and credit notes per year, along with 10,000 non-purchasing related payments, 20,000 purchase card transactions and raising 24,000 customer invoices.

Property and Assets

One Public Estate (OPE)

The One Public Estate (OPE) programme is an established national programme delivered in partnership by the LGA and the Office of Government Property (OGP) within the Cabinet Office. It provides practical and technical support and funding to councils to deliver ambitious property-focused programmes in collaboration with central government and other public sector partners.

One Public Estate began in 2013 with just twelve areas, but today it is working with more than 300 councils on projects transforming local communities and public services right across the country. Buckinghamshire County Council was welcomed into the Partnership in 2016 and has since been awarded a total of £630,000 which has contributed funding to a number of projects across Buckinghamshire such as:

1. The Winslow Centre - Redevelopment of a former school to provide a Community Facility including library, medical centre and sports facilities and provision of housing and Extra Care.

2. Wycombe Hospital – Options appraisal for the site currently occupied by the Wycombe Hospital including partial development for housing.
3. Buckingham Hub - Feasibility and master planning for the site at Verney Close which is currently occupied by the library, day centre and Knowledge Centre. Outcome will include improved community facilities and housing.
4. Stoke Mandeville Hospital Redevelopment - Options appraisal for the site currently occupied by Stoke Mandeville Hospital including partial development or relocation to a new site.
5. North Bucks Health & Wellbeing Hub - Preparation of an Outline Business Case for the proposed new medical centre at Lace Hill in Buckingham.
6. Bourne End hub - Feasibility and options appraisal for the Wakeman Road site including GP surgery, library and community centre.

Since we submitted our expression of Interest, the Buckinghamshire Public Estates Partnership has been meeting to strengthen relationships, cement the Partnership ethos and to identify opportunities for closer co-operation and working together. The partnership includes:

- Buckinghamshire County Council (Lead Authority)
- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Wycombe District Council
- Chiltern & South Bucks District Council
- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Thames Valley CCG
- Thames Valley Police
- NHS Property Services
- Southern & Central Ambulance Service
- Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Going forward, this partnership approach will underpin how we engage within an asset management context, providing comprehensive oversight of the public estate. Ensuring the best and efficient use of OPE capacity funding, identifying additional and alternate funding sources, whilst delivering our key project outputs will add further integrity to the partnership. Above all, the knowledge hub and key contacts constructed through this collaboration, will allow best practice and lessons learned to be shared.

Old County Offices

As Buckinghamshire County Council undergoes its transformation into The Buckinghamshire Council, Old County Offices are also undergoing a transformation. The offices have stood empty, half demolished for a number of years, but things are now happening to rescue this lovely building and give it a new lease of life.



In September, our cabinet agreed a budget to develop conversion plans to change the building from offices into much needed new homes. Over the last few months the building has been a hive of activity, £280,000 has been spent on essential asbestos removal, soil surveys are ongoing and our newly appointed design team have been busy.

The team, who have substantial experience of working on similar buildings, have produced some exciting plans for 49 dwellings, including basement flats and some stunning penthouse apartments. At present we are pushing to achieve planning consent by summer 2020, with a project completion date of December 2021.

We look forward to sharing the designs with you all in the near future and eventually showing you around the unique and exciting new homes.

School Expansion

Over the past 5 years a significant schools expansion programme has been undertaken by Buckinghamshire County Council comprising 56 school projects to meet demand, primarily in the primary school sector. Some example projects which have been funded by S106 and Basic Need Grants include:

- Greenridge Primary – £13 million (S106) primary school and nursery.
- Aylesbury Satellite School (St Michael’s) - £22.5 million secondary school on the former Quarrendon School site in Aylesbury.
- Daws Hill Primary School - £6.5 million primary school and nursery on the former RAF Daws Hill site at High Wycombe.

HR and OD

Wellbeing – Time to Change

In support of Mental Health, in 2018 Rachael Shimmin and Lead Mental Health Member Champion, Cabinet Member Noel Brown, signed the Time to Change Employer Pledge on behalf of BCC. Signing the employer pledge demonstrates that Buckinghamshire County Council are sincerely committed to changing the conversation around mental health and ending the stigma that still surrounds it. The County Council action plan was credited by national Time to Change as being exemplary and was fast-tracked through the approval process.

Since the pledge was signed, over 10 employees and two Councillors have signed up to become Time to Change Champions. Champions have shared very honest and moving accounts of their experiences of mental health problems. This really is what Time to Change is all about – people with lived experiences talking about them openly and honestly, and in so doing, normalising the conversation and encouraging others to speak up and ask for help when they need it.

Bucks has formed a ‘time to change’ hub (funded by Public Health), which has brought together a number of local organisations to progress the movement more holistically across our region and will support other local businesses and voluntary organisations to become Time to Change employers. BCC’s action plan has been shared with the Councils Time to Change Partnership Group.



Resourcing

We have revolutionised the way in which recruit and we are seen as market Leaders within Local government. We have attended job shows showcasing the jobs and opportunities within Buckinghamshire.



382

uniquely designed posts



16,326

interactions with our content across the 4 platforms

At the Milton Keynes Jobs Fair held on the 13th and 14th September the Resourcing team collected over 200 candidates’ details / CVs and met a very

promising pool of candidates, whose details have been passed onto the relevant service managers. At the Fair the Resourcing Branding Team, won the Social Media award at MK Jobs. The organisers measured the all of the exhibitors' engagement on social media and the award was given to the exhibitor with the most engagement and the best quality posts. It is a great achievement as we were up against 60 other exhibitors including companies such as McDonalds, Vodafone, Costa and the NHS.

At the Bucks Skills Show on 18 and 19 October we worked hard to inspire the next generation of employees. HR&OD colleagues and apprentices from Resources chatted with hundreds of young people and their parents/caregivers at this very successful and incredibly busy event. The show aims to help inspire the next generation by showcasing the myriad industries within Buckinghamshire, and the rewarding careers they offer. The emphasis is on providing an interactive careers experience where young people can discover different industry sectors for themselves and ask questions about career pathways.

Workplace Heroes

The Annual Workplace Heroes Awards were introduced to give us the opportunity to recognise the hard work and successes of colleagues over the previous year. Over the years there have been so many examples and stories of where colleagues 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.

The last ever awards as Buckinghamshire County Council and our biggest yet took place on the 25th February 2020.

This year we also introduced a new category Volunteer of the Year, to recognise colleagues who give their skills and time outside of work and/or using their employer supported volunteering days to give something back. As well as receiving a Workplace Hero Award, the winner of the Volunteer of Year category is also invited to attend the Royal Garden Party next summer in the grounds of Buckingham Palace.

ICT

Fifteen months ago we started a major improvement programme to refresh our infrastructure and ensure we have a modern, fit-for-purpose platform not only to support the County, but also to better enable working with the districts in our transformation to a unitary authority.

We maintain two datacentres, at Walton Street and Amersham, hosting the 300+ servers that make up our IT provision. Along with all our business applications, we host 30m+ documents, taking up 20TB of data storage – the equivalent of approx. 1.2 billion pages of Word documents. Technology moves on fast though, and we are already on the journey of moving our systems to the cloud.

The County's IT department supports some 3,800 staff working at approximately 150 locations across Buckinghamshire, providing them with a range of IT. The department also provides network connectivity to some 100 schools across the County, providing more than 2,000 staff and 20,000+ pupils with access to the internet and email.

We have moved on from the days of pen and paper to a world in which no department can function without basic services like email: IT support the infrastructure that delivers over 100,000 emails daily, a number that demonstrates how much of our interactions rely on it.

Having said that, people still use the phone – our contact centre accepts an average 27,500 calls per month.

And like every other public or private sector organisation in the world, we have been trying to move some of that traffic to the web, in order to deliver more efficient services to our residents. And although there's fewer pens involved, paper is not yet gone: our staff print approximately 13m pages every year.

Our Children's Social Care system has over 2,500 open referrals, while our Electronic Document Records Management Systems (EDRMS) stores approximately 2.5m documents, with an average of more than 2,000 documents added each day.

Our national address gazetteer holds 37.5m addresses, and each week we get on average 4,000 address modifications for Buckinghamshire. Our reporting system produces 276 management information and business intelligence reports every day. Our Geographic Information System holds masses of spatial information, including 800 different types of spatial data ranging from census to school catchments to species habitats to historic environment to bus stops.

Our staff are able to work pretty much everywhere; with 3,500 laptops and 2,000 smartphones they can work in the office and at home. All staff can initiate or join audio conference calls – and with the latest laptops being rolled out, they can join video calls as well, making it possible for them to attend meetings without the need to travel.

Working with the districts and our partners at the Bucks NHS Trust and CCG, we have already joined up our networks and are looking to implement one new single joined up network for the whole of Buckinghamshire. This will provide improved connectivity to all our offices and schools, save money, but it will also enable our staff to work across all locations more seamlessly, with a simple Wi-Fi network that staff devices connect automatically, irrespective of which organisations building they are.

JOHN CHILVER
CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Better Lives Strategy

Demand for adult social care services nationally is increasing and Buckinghamshire is no different. In early 2018, a diagnostic on our services showed that we could support more people to live independently, that we were not making the best use of services already in communities and that we were spending more than we could afford.

As a result we created a model which fundamentally changes the way we do things. Traditionally we have provided services to people that help us to look after them. The new model sets out our intention to change this approach so that we focus on the support that people need to help them live the life they want to lead. This was explained in our Better Lives Strategy which we launched in April 2018.

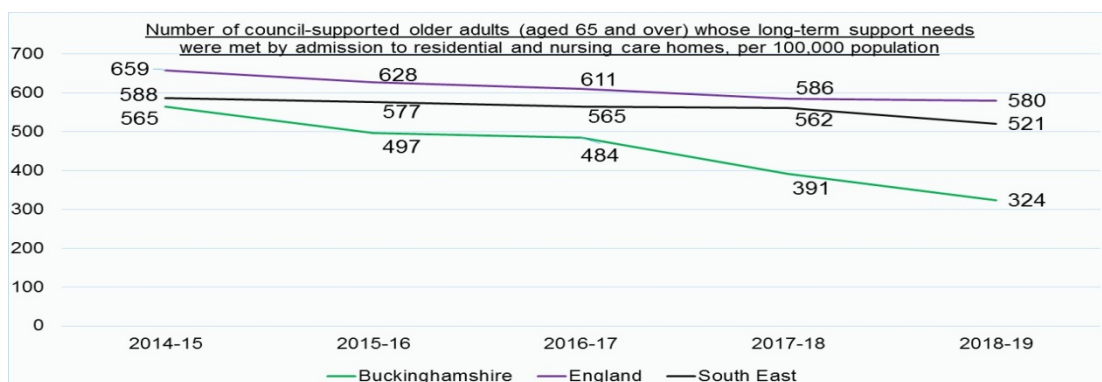


The Strategy describes three Tiers of support:

- Living Independently: making it easier for people to take care of themselves and stay independent
- Regaining independence: short term support which helps people regain skills and control over their lives
- Living with support: working with people to help them achieve the goals they want and have the best quality of life

Although it is a long term programme of change, we have already seen some significant improvements:

- Changed our information and advice, and our early help team so more people find the information they need at the earliest point. The proportion of people helped this way has increased from 59% to over 70%
- Delivered over £8.6m savings and demonstrated additional avoided costs of a further £5.3m
- Seen our care home admissions bucking the national and local trends



Transforming Quality

Delivering high quality services to our communities can only be achieved through a skilled and resilient workforce. Over the past two years we have implemented a new focus on recruitment and supporting our hard working staff deliver the Better Lives ambition.

In November 2018 we introduced a framework to provide us with a comprehensive overview of quality of practice which set out how we will improve our services. This includes focused development of our front line staff; regular and effective auditing of case files; and reviewing and revising systems, policies and practices which impede best practice.

We have introduced a new Workforce Development Plan and have been successful with innovative recruitment campaigns such as 'Refer a friend scheme' and 'Try before you apply'. This new recruitment approach which enabled us to recruit 15 Qualified Social Workers, 3 Adult Safeguarding Practitioners, 3 Best Interest Assessor and 21 Social Work Assistants. As a result it has been possible to reduce the number of agency workers employed.

We have streamlined processes and documentation to give practitioners more time with people in the community, which is valued by both. The Better Lives strategy requires embedding a strengths-based approach to practice and staff have a structured programme of training and development to help them in transforming their practice. Although a culture change on this scale will take time, we are seeing more people being helped to live fulfilled lives.

Thrift Farm

Thrift Farm has been supporting adults with learning difficulties for over 40 years but in January 2019 the Council took the difficult decision to potentially close the farm unless a new provider could be found. After consultation and a review of business proposals, a new provider was identified and in February 2020 the running of the farm was transferred to a joint venture between Kids Play Childcare and Mead Open Farm. The new company will use their combined expertise and experience to create a sustainable future for Thrift Farm and is a fantastic result for all concerned.



Dignity in Care Awards

It is important to remember that care is provided by a wide range of organisations and individuals and our annual Dignity in Care awards are a way in which we as a Council can recognise the excellent services and support that there is in Buckinghamshire. The Awards celebrate outstanding examples of how dignity and respect are demonstrated across Buckinghamshire. They celebrate individuals, teams and organisations that have gone above and beyond to support people in a way that promotes dignity, respect and wellbeing.

The 2019 awards were the most successful to date, with over 70 nominations. Winners came not just from care providers but from right across



the community, including a wonderful 11 year old who was recognised for his contribution to 'Generation Link'. Eduard Deak volunteers in care homes and encourages others in his school to do the same, befriending older people and bridging what is often a barrier between generations. The stories behind the awards are inspirational and really highlight the genuine care and commitment there is for the wellbeing of the people of Buckinghamshire.

Access all areas

According to NHS research, around 1,200 people with a learning disability die each year from preventable illness. Staying healthy is important to everyone but getting the information you need is not always easy, especially if you have a learning disability or autism.

To help, the Council instigated annual 'Access All Areas' events. The events bring together the wide range of support and services available for people with a learning disability and autism to help them stay as fit and healthy as possible.

So far, each event has attracted over 250 people, who get advice and information on everything from annual health checks to cooking skills. Those attending also have the opportunity to try out healthy food and meals, accessible sport, drama and yoga. We also make sure there is a 'chill out space' made sure the event was easy for everyone to enjoy.

Extra Care

Hughenden Gardens Extra Care Retirement Village in High Wycombe opened in May 2018. The housing complex was developed in partnership with the Extra Care Charitable Trust (ECCT), the provider of the village, and Wycombe District Council which provided the land in return for affordable housing. The site comprises of 260 one and two bedroom apartments available either as rental, shared ownership or privately owned.

In a first for Buckinghamshire County Council, nomination rights were reserved for 55 of the rental properties and the last property is just about to be allocated.

Extra Care offers a more independent alternative for individuals who may otherwise need residential care or who are receiving high cost care packages in the community, but who are struggling with their current accommodation. Although the primary focus is the better outcomes for residents, the approach will additionally achieve savings for the authority which can be used to support more people with care needs.

LIN HAZELL
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**CABINET MEMBER
FOR
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**



Increasing placement sufficiency for looked after children

During the last two years, the service has been working hard to improve our placement sufficiency for Buckinghamshire's looked after children by creating more local and in-house fostering and residential options. Whilst this reduces our reliance on external and more costly independent providers, it also means that more of our most vulnerable children keep some continuity in their lives, such as their school/college arrangements and their friendship groups.

Given the historical lack of local, in-house residential places and the over reliance on external providers, Cabinet approved a business case to create up to an additional twenty residential places for children in Buckinghamshire. Following that decision, the service has worked closely with property services to identify suitable properties and in July 2018, following purchase and extensive refurbishment, our first new children's home (the Elms) was opened. The home, located in Aylesbury has residential facilities for up to five children and young people with educational and behavioural difficulties. At its first Ofsted inspection in March 2019, the home was judged to be 'Good' and inspectors gave positive feedback across all aspects, including the experiences and progress of the children and young people, how well they are helped and protected and the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Following the successful opening of our first home, in March 2019, the second of our new children's homes (Wenlock House) opened. This home is also located in Aylesbury and has residential facilities for up to five children and young people with educational and behavioural difficulties. As with the Elms, the service was pleased that at its first inspection in September 2019, a rating of 'Good' was achieved. Inspectors reported that 'children are happy, settled and have begun to make progress' and highlighted how well children are helped and protected as 'staff provide a safe and nurturing environment.'

In December 2019, following an extensive period of searches to identify a suitable property, the service purchased what will be its third new children's home. This home is located in High Wycombe and the plan is that this will also accommodate five children; the type of need this home will cater for is being developed. We anticipate that the home will open in late Spring 2021, following the full renovation and furnishing of the property, Ofsted registration process and the recruitment of staff.

Originally, the service had planned to open the fourth new home towards the end of 2021; however, the success of our residential staff in caring for high needs and complex young people has meant that it has not been possible to consistently achieve the desired 80% occupancy levels, as set out in the original business case, without compromising the quality of care offered and the OFSTED registration. In addition, the high level of support given to our in-house foster carers has enabled them to care for more complex children and young

people has to some extent decreased demand for local children's home placements. In light of this, the service has decided to pause the development of the last residential home. Current indications are that this will not impact upon external residential placements and cost at this moment in time. This decision will be revisited in early 2021.

In addition to the development of our in-house residential provision, since April 2018 the service has also increased the number of children placed within internal foster care by 28% and now over 150 children benefit from being placed with these carers. During the same period, the service has also seen an 11% decrease in the number of children placed with external, independent fostering agencies, which is also very pleasing. We have an amazing group of foster carers who help us look after these children, but we still need more like them to come forward and become foster carers.

Despite this growth, there is still a need for more people to help provide safe and loving homes for children in need. A series of fostering events will outline information about the fostering assessment process and training available, and answer any other questions people may have. The next will be held at New County Offices in Walton Street, Aylesbury, on Thursday 19 March (7 - 8.30pm), followed by a session at Amersham High School on 23 April, with more throughout 2020. A full list of events can be found [here](#).

The Family Support Service

The Family Support Service, which has been running since September 2019, replaces the previous network of children's centres with a broader area based and integrated support service which shifts the focus of support towards 'whole family' solutions.

Sixteen new Family Centres offer universal sessions for parents with young children but also cater for families with children of all ages – 0-19 or up to 2five for those who have children with Special Educational Needs or a disability. Importantly, the new Family Support Service gives more help to those families in greatest need. The service is up and running and even though it is still early days, I am confident we are on the right path and we are already working with over 1100 children from 350 families, and with them are designing bespoke programmes at all of our Family Centres, based on what local people need the most.

Through the Council, health practitioners and other experts, the new Family Support Service now provides extra, direct support to vulnerable children, young people and their families with more complex needs but who do not meet the threshold for social care intervention. Skilled family workers give hands-on support to those families, aiming to help them to solve their problems before they get worse.

Where families need an extended period of support, Family Support Service staff can work with partners to develop a team around the family to support them and to develop an agreed plan to help them achieve their goals.

Timetables of activities on at the family centres can be seen online via the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website www.bucksfamilyinfo.org.

Celebration events

During the last year, the service has hosted two celebration events. The first, to recognise and celebrate the personal, academic and sporting achievements of the county's looked after children and young people leaving care. The children and young people, ranging in age from babies to young adults, were nominated by professionals working with them in a

number of categories, including overcoming difficult circumstances, coping admirably with change and for achievements within education, training or sport.

At the event the audience listened to speeches by two Buckinghamshire care leavers and one of Buckinghamshire's foster carers. One care leaver, now in her early twenties, explained how her difficult childhood had diminished her self-belief, making her think she was not good enough. However, with the support of her foster parents and the team around her, she found herself in a more positive place, regained her confidence and has turned her life around. She achieved a 2:1 degree in Law and French from a London University and is planning her journey to becoming a qualified French teacher.

Outside there was a host of different activities for the guests to take part in, all based on an 'around the world theme'. Additional fun was had on the bouncy castles, crazy golf and a penalty shoot-out for football lovers. Each child and young person was presented with an individual certificate of achievement. We are incredibly grateful to a number of local businesses and organisations for their generous sponsorships towards the event.

The second event was held to recognise the huge commitment from our carers to children in their care. With surprise entertainment, tasty food and an array of well-deserved awards and certificates, the event was a fantastic occasion for carers to take the spotlight. Foster carers invest so much time, love and effort to caring for young people and the fostering awards evening is just a small way of showing appreciation for all the fantastic commitment from our carers day in, day out. Without this brilliant group of carers, many children's lives just would not be the same. We are extremely proud of everything our carers do to change children's lives for the better and would like to personally thank each and every one of them.

Ofsted monitoring visits

Since the 'Inadequate' Ofsted inspection in November 2017, Ofsted has completed four monitoring visits, with the most recent occurring in October 2019. A common theme that featured in each monitoring visit letter is the leadership's team clear and well informed understanding of what needs to improve and that plans in place to improve practice are sound.

During the first two monitoring visits, whilst issues in relation to the quality and consistency of practice remained, inspectors reported 'encouraging signs of early improvement' and that the authority has 'worked determinedly to deliver improvements across the service.' This position had further improved when inspectors returned for the third monitoring visit in May 2019, reporting 'steady progress' to improve children's services, with most children 'receiving helpful support when they are first referred to children's social care'. The report also noted that 'substantial improvements' have been made to areas of the service which had previously fallen short. It added that "the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) provides a mostly effective response to children's need'. This was another encouraging report for the service and confirmed that our work to improve children's services in Buckinghamshire was proceeding well.

In October 2019, Ofsted returned to complete the fourth monitoring visit and reported that the service is continuing to make improvement to services for children in care. Specifically, the report notes that the Council's political leaders are 'committed corporate parents' who have 'ensured that there is the financial and political focus needed to support service improvement'; and that the leadership team 'has an accurate understanding of the quality of services, and improvement activity is appropriately targeted'. Whilst this progress is being

made, inspectors noted areas for further improvement, including some remaining poor practice which continues to have a negative impact on the quality of services to children in care; and challenges in recruiting social workers and managers and continued high staff turnover impacting on implementation of basic practice standards. Inspectors recognised the significant ongoing challenges we are facing recruiting social workers and how this is hindering our improvement plans. Nevertheless we know we still have more to do to deliver the services that children in Buckinghamshire deserve. We are determined to continue our efforts to make the improvements highlighted in the monitoring letter.

The last couple of years have been a challenging period of time for the service given the outcome of the 2017 Ofsted inspection. As the Cabinet Member since 2017, I was pleased with the service's immediate response and remedial action taken, the cross-party support from fellow councillors, coupled with the outcome of the Department for Education appointed commissioner's review in July 2018 which found that Children's Services should remain within the control of the County Council. Since then, Ofsted has carried out four monitoring visits which have confirmed the self-assessment of the service and our continuous improvements, despite the pace of progress being hindered by the recruitment challenges we face. The investment in improving the service demonstrates the political commitment to securing better outcomes for the children and young people of Buckinghamshire.

Looking forward, I am sure the new authority will continue to have high aspirations for the children and young people of Buckinghamshire and provide them with the best opportunities possible. I am grateful to all of our staff for their hard work and commitment to our improvement journey.

WARREN WHYTE
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES