

**COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (CAA)**

1. The new CAA framework has now been published by the Audit Commission and the first area assessment of Buckinghamshire will be published in Autumn 2009, alongside organisational assessments of the individual public sector agencies.
2. As part of an LGA/IDEA pilot, the BSP Implementation Group has been developing an area self assessment for the new CAA inspection framework. The self assessment is intended to be a partnership document which sets out a shared understanding of the issues we are tackling in Buckinghamshire and will, in due course, be submitted to the Audit Commission as evidence for the area assessment. It draws on input from partners and from existing assessments and strategy documents.
3. Overall, the self assessment needs to demonstrate that:
  - we understand the challenges facing the county,
  - we have improved outcomes for residents and communities
  - we are taking appropriate action to respond to areas of underperformance or risk
4. A first draft of the self assessment has been circulated to all partners for comments and contributions and a copy is attached. Further drafts will be circulated, with a view to a final version being agreed and submitted to the Audit Commission in May.
5. As part of the discussion about the outcomes for the Sustainable Community Strategies, the Board is asked to review the first draft of the self assessment and in particular, to consider the “areas we are working to improve” identified against each of the key questions (pages 18- 35).

## **Draft CAA Self-Evaluation**

### **Buckinghamshire – ‘*Your place, Your future*’**

#### **Introduction**

This self evaluation has been prepared to provide a robust assessment of the contribution that the five Buckinghamshire Councils, health, Fire, Police and other partner organisations make to supporting and improving the lives of local people.

Across the public, private and voluntary sectors more that £2 billion is collectively invested in Buckinghamshire to improve the quality of live for individuals, families and communities right across the County.

This self evaluation concentrates on what is being achieved for the people of Buckinghamshire and what still needs to be delivered. It outlines the major contributions being made by organisations both individually and collectively. It does not focus on the ‘process’ specifically, but aims to describe the outcomes being achieved in terms of ‘what different is being made on the ground’.

Our commitment, through this self-evaluation, is to describe a County that local people will recognise. The issues, achievements and current action being taken will be clearly described as will the gaps where further work is required.

(All major partners to sign the self-evaluation )

#### **Document Revision History**

<b>Version Ref</b>	<b>Live / Draft</b>	<b>Revision date</b>	<b>What's Changed?</b>	<b>Changes made by</b>
V0.1	Draft	16/03/09	-	-

## **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE STORY OF PLACE**

Buckinghamshire enjoys an enviable position in the South East region. Lying to the west of London, the County is home to 487,000 people living in 188,000 households. 31% live in the two main towns of High Wycombe and Aylesbury. Buckinghamshire is predominantly rural in nature with nearly one quarter either designated Green Belt or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The county has good strategic transport links. The M4, M40 and M25 motorways together with the A40 and A41 trunk roads pass directly through the county. The M1, A1, A5, A34 and A43 are also close by. New roads such as the A41 Aston Clinton Bypass mean that journey times from Aylesbury to north London have now reduced to less than one hour. Travel to work patterns reveal that 38% less people travel into the county, than out. Out commuting for work, shopping and leisure is therefore common which in itself contributes to high levels of traffic congestion at peak times. Buckinghamshire is also well connected to the rail network, with the London Underground system extending into the south of the county. The proximity of both Heathrow and Luton airports is a benefit in terms of travel opportunities for residents, but a concern regarding potential expansion resulting in deterioration of the environment, especially noise pollution. Stansted, Gatwick and London airports are also relatively accessible.

The population is ethnically diverse, with 8% of the population coming from a non-white ethnic background. People from Asian or Asian British backgrounds (including Pakistani) represent the largest ethnic grouping in the county making up 4.6% of the population. Within these communities, there is a higher representation in the younger population. Life expectancy overall is above the national average, being around 79 years for men and 82½ for women, however in some ward areas life expectancy is significantly lower.

Buckinghamshire is an affluent county, with the local economy worth an estimated £10 billion per annum. Average household incomes are 24% higher than the UK average. The county ranks 143rd out of 150 in terms of the government indices of deprivation (where 1 = most deprived). There is relatively low unemployment and the workforce is highly skilled, with a quarter of 16-74 year olds educated to degree level. Although there are large proportions of highly skilled people, 21% of 16-74 year olds don't have any qualifications.

Consequently, with such high levels of relative affluence, the pockets of deprivation that exist particularly in Aylesbury and High Wycombe provide a stark contrast and compare with the deprivation levels of many outer London boroughs. Approximately 12,900 people (2.6% of the total population) live in these areas which in overall terms have higher instances of crime, higher unemployment levels, poorer health and educational attainment levels.

Overall educational attainment is one of the highest in the country, particularly at Grade A\* to C GCSE although this is not reflected across all groups in the county. A selection process operates across Buckinghamshire at secondary level, with approximately 30% achieving a place at one of the County's 13 Grammar Schools. Around XX% progress to higher education.

Health outcomes are better than the national average, such as for mental health, teenage pregnancy, deaths from smoking and early deaths from heart disease. However, figures for road injuries and deaths are higher than the national average. Smoking, Obesity and increasing activity levels are the three major lifestyle challenges identified for the County:

The Voluntary and Community Sector is actively involved in partnership working and service delivery but there is an acknowledged need to build capacity in the sector. Many residents are very active in the community and engaged with community issues. Residents generally have high expectations of public services, particularly in the south of the county.

Looking forward, by 2026, the population is expected to rise to 530,800. Over the next decade, the numbers of older people will increase markedly with a 14% growth in those aged 60 or more, accompanied by a 3% decrease in the under 30s. The predicted demographic shift will increase the number of older people needing support, often with complex health and social care needs. House prices look set to remain high due to limited availability of developable land. Local communities are particularly active and engaged in the south of Buckinghamshire.

Equally, Buckinghamshire cannot be seen in isolation. The Milton Keynes and South Midlands Region is the single largest growth area in the UK, of which North Bucks is a part. The proximity to Oxford, Thames Valley and Milton Keynes sub-regional economies also impacts on the County. So there are key drivers from both a regional perspective, and in working in partnership with neighbouring authorities on various aspects of the priorities.

### **Distinctiveness of district localities**

Whilst there are common issues which are county specific, other priorities play out at district level. These differences need to be taken into account, including through differentiation in target-setting and action-planning in responding to the priorities.

## **Aylesbury Vale District**

The emerging South East Plan suggests an additional 21,500 homes in the area from 2006 to 2026 - 16,800 around Aylesbury town and 4,700 in the rural areas. Almost half of these will be delivered through existing allocations and permissions, leaving 12,400 homes yet to be allocated. In addition 5,390 homes are to be provided in the north east of the district adjacent to Milton Keynes in the same time period. In order to support the increase in population and create sustainable communities, a target of 21,500 additional jobs in the district has also been agreed. In addition to planning for the new communities in the district, this level of growth will have a social, economic and environmental impact on the district's existing communities, which must be managed if we are to retain the high level of satisfaction with the area enjoyed by 88% of residents (2007 residents survey).

### ***The Local economy***

- Unemployment is currently low but many residents commute out of the district to work.
- An additional 21,500 jobs are required to match the planned housing growth to 2026.

- The rural area of the district has high levels of entrepreneurship.
- The Aylesbury Waterside development is underway.
- Whilst the area has good transport links, connectivity will need to be improved to support the future housing and economic growth.
- The full impact of the current national and global economic climate on the local economy has yet to be seen although housing development has already slowed dramatically.

### ***Education and Skills***

- Aylesbury Vale has more highly skilled residents and fewer lower skilled residents than the English average.
- Educational achievement is high but this is not reflected amongst all communities in the district.
- University Centre Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) has been set up to bring together local providers to deliver a range of university level courses, professional and vocational qualifications.

### ***Homes***

- Social housing accounts for 14% of the total number of households in the district.
- Over 4,000 people on the housing register are unable to afford the average weekly cost of renting private properties in the district.
- Property prices and high rents mean that individuals and families find it difficult to remain in their communities.
- The high number of conservation areas and listed buildings in the district helps to maintain our local distinctiveness but can bring challenges for owners in maintaining and adapting their homes.

### ***Environment:***

- Despite the rural nature of the district there is a shortage of accessible green spaces.
- Recycling and composting are increasing but improved facilities are required if we are to meet national targets.
- Carbon emissions are relatively high by South East standards, but average in comparison with similar rural district areas.
- Energy demand may soon outstrip supply in Aylesbury, and upgrades are being sought. Renewable energy solutions will also need to be planned.
- Biodiversity is being maintained and enhanced but this will need to be managed alongside the planned growth.

### ***Safe and strong communities:***

- Crime is low compared with the Thames Valley region although residents rank fear of crime as one of their top priorities.
- There is a relatively low number of incidents, injuries or deaths from fire, although the rate of incidents is higher in vulnerable households so that 8% of all households account for 22% of all fires.
- There is a higher rate of road accidents in the district, on rural roads, and the highest risk group is young car drivers.

### ***Health and wellbeing***

- The health of our residents is generally better and life expectancy in men is higher than the England average.

- Rates of early deaths from heart disease and stroke, and hospital stays due to alcohol are all lower than the England average.
- Residents have healthier lifestyles than the England average but an estimated 1 in 6 adults binge drink and 1 in 5 adults are obese.
- There are significant differences in the health experience across different socio-economic groups in the area. Men in less well off areas can expect to live 3 years less than those in more affluent areas. 3,800 children live in low income households.

## **Chiltern District**

The high quality country-side is of national importance and 72% of Chiltern is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and encompasses rolling farmland with ancient hedgerows, beech woods and chalk streams such as the river Chess and Misbourne. There is also a very significant historic heritage, including 20 conservation areas and about 1,100 listed buildings. 88% of the District lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt so much of the District is environmentally protected which has resulted in more intensive development of the urban areas to protect the countryside.

### ***Residents Priorities***

A large majority of its residents believe that Chiltern is a nice place to live and assign a high priority to conserving the attractive qualities of the District, including its natural and cultural heritage. When asked what were the most important things that make somewhere good to live Chiltern residents' said health services, education provision and low crime levels. In terms of what needs improving residents said road and pavement repairs, activities for teenagers and the level of traffic congestion.

### ***Changing Population Profile***

Chiltern's current population is approximately 90,800 and while this is likely to remain relatively static over the coming 15 years the community is expected to age considerably. The proportion of older people aged over 80 is projected to increase by 42% between 2008 and 2026.

### ***Impact on the Environment***

Chiltern's residents are keen recyclers and for a number of years have topped the table for dry recycling. However the Chiltern District does have a considerable broader impact on the environment in terms of high per capita emissions of carbon dioxide and consumption of gas, electricity and water. In 2004 Chiltern had the 4<sup>th</sup> highest Carbon footprint per capita (tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>) out of all the Local Authorities in England.

### ***Wealth and the Economy***

The residential working population enjoys the highest average annual salary of any rural local authority in the country. The District has a highly qualified and highly paid workforce with jobs concentrated in the higher-end occupations, e.g. managers, professionals. The District has one of the lowest unemployment rates (3.3%) when compared with the South East 4.2 and England 5.2. However 20% of the working population have no qualification or fewer than 5 GCSEs compared to 24% in the South East and 29% in England. Chiltern District has a higher overall volume (91%) of micro-businesses than the county, regional or national averages. An economic recession could be more intense in Chiltern with many residents reliant on London based salaries and businesses predominantly in the small business sector.

### ***Health***

The District's population is relatively healthy by most measures and life expectancy is significantly above the national average. Some key issues around health in the District are the differences in health between the most and least disadvantaged. Good health is not shared equally across the population. There are stark preventable inequalities in health between vulnerable groups and the rest of the population. Life expectancy in Chiltern in the most deprived 20% is 5.4 years less than the most affluent 20% and there is a huge burden of preventable disease. A recent survey identified the District as having the highest proportion, 43.5%, of "new indulgents" in the United Kingdom. "New indulgents" are described as people who earn on average around £54,000 a year, consume more than twice as much wine as the average Briton, visit restaurants more frequently, buy organic food, exercise regularly and don't smoke. These people are generally healthy but with some potentially unhealthy lifestyle traits which may cause concern in the future.

### ***Transport Infrastructure***

The three main settlements in the District all have good rail and road links to London and many people commute to work in the city and city region. However residents have expressed concern about the availability of public transport in the rural parts of Chiltern. Chiltern has high car ownership and the District also has high levels of commuter flows. The District is experiencing increased road traffic which is likely to lead to many of the main roads operating at over capacity and consequently congestion at busy times.

### ***Affordability***

Chiltern's wealth, popularity and limited availability of developable land means its house prices are amongst the highest in the country, leading to issues of affordability for essential workers and those in lower paid employment. Demand for affordable housing in the District is above what can be met in practice.

### ***Pockets of Deprivation***

Chiltern is undoubtedly a pleasant place to live but not everybody benefits as much as they should do, and there is much to be done in tackling the deprivation found in small pockets in the District.

### ***Communities***

Chiltern has cohesive communities with evidence of strong community spirit, active volunteering and community groups. When surveyed residents generally feel Chiltern is an area where people from different backgrounds get on. Chiltern's society is becoming more diverse so it is important that we maintain our cohesive societies and help people to live together.

### ***Development***

Chiltern has a requirement to build 2900 dwellings between 2006 and 2026, this is 145 a year. Following extensive consultation the Council proposes to concentrate new development in the three main settlements of Amersham, Chesham and Chalfont St Peter. This will help conserve the attractive qualities of the District, resist change to the Greenbelt and enable higher levels of affordable housing.

***The key challenges in Chiltern are:***

- Maintaining an exceptionally high quality of life
- Preserving the District's natural and cultural heritage valued by our residents
- Manage development pressures arising from the need to provide more housing
- Maintaining a strong economy, supporting small business and ensuring adequate skills training
- Improve delivery and access to affordable housing
- Meeting the needs of an aging population
- Managing our Districts impact on the environment
- Addressing deprivation and health inequality in parts of the District
- Managing road congestion
- Maintaining strong and cohesive communities

## **South Bucks District**

South Bucks is a small, prosperous, semi-rural District with about 25 small towns and villages of which Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Burnham are the largest. It is bordered by the bigger towns of Maidenhead, Slough, High Wycombe and London (Hillingdon). These centres provide additional local services, retail and leisure facilities and some jobs. Many people living outside the district enjoy the countryside in South Bucks. Close cross border working between the areas is important.

### ***Sustainable Environment***

South Bucks enjoys large areas of attractive countryside and 87% of the District is in the Green Belt. Strong commitment to protecting the Green Belt has resulted in the majority of new housing in the District being built on previously developed land within existing settlements. Further urban intensification could affect the character of existing residential areas. There is strong support for recycling and environmental initiatives. However the carbon footprint of the District is high, with large homes and high levels of car ownership and use.

### ***Health and Well-being***

Residents have high levels of health and well-being however, there are communities who face disadvantage and this can be overlooked. Life expectancy is higher than the average for England, but varies by nearly 9 years across the most to least disadvantaged communities. Rates of deaths from heart disease, strokes, cancer and hospital stays due to alcohol are lower than average. There are nearly 100 smoking-related deaths a year. It is estimated 1 in 6 adults are obese and 1 in 7 adults binge drink. There are 1,200 children living in low income families. It is essential all residents are able to access the services and support they need. This can be difficult in rural areas, particularly as many of the services are placed outside the District and public transport links are poor. This limits access to services and activities for older people, young people and those that are less mobile or do not have access to a car.

### ***Safe Communities***

South Bucks is a safe place to live, but the fear of crime is a very real issue for many residents. Residents have identified the level of crime as important in making somewhere a good place to live and one of the top issues most in need of improving. Burglaries and theft from vehicles are comparatively high and are often a drug related crime that spills over from adjacent towns. Improvements to the impact of traffic and road safety have been identified as areas needing improvement by residents. Over 70



people are killed or seriously injured on roads each year, this is higher than average for England.

### ***Cohesive Communities***

It is important for all generations to have opportunities to be involved in their local communities, through engagement and volunteering. A high number, 82%, of residents agree that South Bucks is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Residents have identified activities for teenagers as needing improving and see parents not taking responsibility for their children and teenagers hanging around on street corners as problems in their local area.

### ***Thriving Economy***

The District is a popular but expensive place to live and work. It has a highly skilled local workforce with more people educated to degree level and more people working as managers or professionals compared with the average for England. There is a balance between the number of local workers and the number of local jobs however about 19,000 people commute in and out of the District. There are several large employers and the Council's focus is on supporting existing business and small businesses. There are high levels of new business formation and retention. A number of companies are in the pharmaceutical, film and media sectors. Unemployment is low at 3.4%. Local house prices are double the national average and increasingly beyond the means of key workers and local people. Demand for affordable housing is high and above what can be met in practice.

By the year 2026 some things will have changed and there will have been many threats to the way of life here in South Bucks, but also many opportunities to improve it. To sustain the very high quality of life for people living and working in the District we will need to ensure economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability and a safe, healthy and cohesive community. The population of South Bucks will change significantly between now and 2026. This will have an impact for the services that public, private and voluntary sector organisations provide, as the number of service users and their needs will change. Requirements for services such as healthcare, housing provision and leisure services are likely to change during this period, particularly for our older residents.

### ***Future projections include:***

- 72,100 people living in the District (compared with 64,300 in 2007);
- 5,400 senior citizens over 80 living in the District (compared with 3,300 in 2007);
- An increase in those aged over 65 and a decrease in those under 20.
- There will be a drop in the working age population;
- Rise in Black and Minority Ethnic population with a higher percentage of young people from this community;
- Increase in foreign and migrant workers at the lower paid end of the market;
- Change in working patterns with an increase in flexible working, part-time working and more home working;
- People working for longer and retiring later.

### ***How will the environment change?***

South Bucks has a requirement to build a minimum of 1880 homes between 2006 and 2026, this is 94 homes a year. The Local Development Framework will set out the best way of delivering this new development in a sustainable way. There will be a

consultation in early 2009 with a number of options put forward on how to deliver this new development whilst meeting the social, economic and environmental needs of the area. We will need to think about the impact this development will have on use of services, community cohesion, traffic congestion and the environment.

### ***Key Challenges facing South Bucks***

- Maintaining an exceptionally high quality of life;
- Preserving and enhancing the green space and natural environment of the District;
- Protecting and enhancing the quality and character of the built environment;
- Sustainable delivery of new development sites and delivery of 94 new homes a year;
- Improving delivery and access to affordable housing, including for an ageing population;
- Increasing the feeling of belonging to the community;
- Meeting the needs of a changing and ageing population;
- Addressing disadvantage and health inequality in parts of the District;
- Improving support and activities for teenagers and young people;
- Reducing acquisitive crime and fear of crime;
- Reducing the District's impact on the environment and helping to tackle the causes and effects of climate change;
- Improving road safety and the adverse impact of traffic;
- Supporting the local economy, whilst maintaining the balance between local workers and local jobs;
- Encouraging the development of workforce skills for tomorrow's economy.

## **Wycombe District**

Wycombe District is still a special place, where its rich heritage and outstanding natural beauty are in harmony with the vibrant modern communities, technology and jobs. The people of the District are fitter, healthier, safer, living longer and enjoying an improved quality of life. Wycombe District has thriving rural and urban economies, drawing on the distinctive strengths of each community. New developments both support and enhance the attractiveness and sustainability of local places. Older industrial areas have been regenerated. We have greater biodiversity, more effective use of rural energy and resources, and carbon dioxide levels have been reduced.

- Marlow - has retained its character and reputation as an attractive, vibrant and accessible place that meets the day-to-day needs of those who live, work and visit the town.
- Princes Risborough - has become the natural centre for the north of the District, still retaining its bustling market town environment, but with improved local facilities and services. The town has seen regeneration and change, securing its long-term vibrancy.
- Rural Areas – rural towns and villages have retained their unique identities while benefiting from improved access to services and better public transport and facilities. Local enterprise continues to be encouraged. and the special character and quality of the countryside maintained and enhanced.

- High Wycombe – the town’s improved transport links and transformed town centre makes it a distinctive place and the centre for jobs, retail and leisure activities in southern Buckinghamshire. Subsequent improvements have been carried out following the successful redevelopment of High Wycombe town centre, and there is now less traffic, better pedestrianisation, and good cycle routes. In addition, parts of the River Wye through central High Wycombe have been opened up and naturalised. The thriving university and new campus facilities, high tech economic growth, and better transport links to the North and South have all strengthened the District’s economy. The M40 is a safer, quieter motorway with improved access to the District and better public transport links to Heathrow and London. There is a good match between local jobs and the local labour supply. The quality of existing homes and the choice of new homes, particularly affordable homes, have improved, whilst protecting the countryside as far as possible. Our premier sporting facility is not only home to professional rugby and football clubs, but is well used by the local community, including the University. This asset helps to maintain the District’s profile nationally and supports our local economy. Our beautiful countryside and open spaces have been enhanced by positively managing the urban areas and enabling people to enjoy their benefits. We are much more environmentally friendly, conserving more of our resources and generating less waste.

### ***A better quality of life***

The standard of living has risen for everyone and the gaps between the most affluent and less well off communities have been narrowed significantly. People have a strong sense of pride in their communities, valuing others’ identities and beliefs, and taking personal and active responsibility for improving their local quality of life. Services have been redesigned to cater for older people who form an increasing part of the District’s population. The skills and experience of older people make a valuable positive contribution to the overall wellbeing of the District, and young people are taking an active role as responsible citizens. People are living active, healthy lifestyles and the fear of crime and actual crime has been dramatically reduced. Wycombe District is a special place. It has a population of over 160,000, which is gradually reducing – with fewer young people and more older people. It is a redominately rural area with most people living in or around the towns of High Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough.

### ***A rich history***

It has a rich and historic landscape sculptured by generations of rural activities, with pre and post industrial revolution manufacturing geared to its rural hinterland, including the once great chair making industry, which is now in decline. It is a patchwork of rural towns, villages and hamlets. Much of our District is environmentally protected, with 71% in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural beauty and 48% covered by the Green Belt. This has resulted in more intensive redevelopment in the urban areas to protect the countryside.

### ***Modern Wycombe***

Modern Wycombe now has a broad-based economy as part of the globally significant Thames Valley economic sub-region. The number of local jobs is expected to grow faster than the local workforce. The regeneration of the District is a key issue. The redevelopment of High Wycombe Town Centre is an important part of this, as the growing “knowledge” economy with its hi tech, financial services, and the pharmaceutical industry all providing high levels of ‘value added’ employment. For example, thanks to

new technology, some businesses are able to employ fewer people, which in turn reduces pressure on the District, such as the need for new homes. There is low unemployment, although this masks considerable local variations and a “skills gap” that needs to be closed. The District is home to London Wasps (Rugby) and Wycombe Wanderers (Football) Clubs, who share a constrained site. This limits the scope of both Clubs ambitions which all partners are working hard to overcome by having a new stadium in the District. Generally a prosperous area, the District has pockets of deprivation in both urban and rural areas.

Wycombe is in a prime location with excellent access to the M25/M40/M4 corridor, good rail links between London and Birmingham and close proximity to Heathrow Airport and London. However, road and public transport services need improving to address congestion and growth. The District is a popular but expensive place to live and work. Local house prices are increasingly beyond the means of key workers and local people. The level of commuting, both in and out of the District, contributes to a worsening transportation situation.

Diverse communities - Wycombe District has a substantial and increasing ethnic minority population, with around 10,000 residents having family ties to Pakistan. People of Black Caribbean origin form the second largest ethnic minority community. The Muslim faith community is the second largest in the South East.

Healthy Communities - The health of people in Wycombe is generally better than the average for England. Life expectancy is higher, although there are health inequalities by area and gender. Over the last 10 years deaths from all causes have decreased and are lower than the average for England. Residents have relatively healthy lifestyles although challenges remain, particularly around smoking and physical activity.

Looking Ahead - This is a pivotal period in the life of Wycombe District and Buckinghamshire. The Government’s Sustainable Communities Plan is resulting in significant growth in the north of the county, with continuing restraint in the south of the county. Further growth is planned in the rest of the Thames Valley. These factors may significantly increase commuter activity in and through the District.

The key challenges are:

- Preserving and enhancing the special character of our built environment and countryside and the environmental quality we all enjoy while being economically strong.
- Preventing the District from either becoming a dormitory area or overheating – striking the best balance we can between jobs and labour supply.
- The need for more homes, including affordable homes.
- The need for a good transport infrastructure, especially between the growth areas of Aylesbury/Milton Keynes and the Wycombe District and the rest of the Thames Valley.
- Improving people’s quality of life in sustainable ways by striking the best balance between the economic, social and environmental challenges that communities face.
- Helping communities become stronger and more inclusive within themselves and between each other, including tackling our pockets of deprivation.
- Meeting the needs of our older generation and children and young people.
- Improving the vibrancy and quality of our town and village centres.
- Providing a new stadium to meet the needs of our Rugby and Football Clubs and the local community.

## **DEVELOPING CAPACITY BETWEEN THE PARTNERS**

This section will focus on how the partners are working together to develop their capacity and skills.

In July 2007, the County Council and the four district councils were accepted by the Government as one of five 'Pathfinder' areas nationally. The formal agreement will see the five councils working much closer together to improve services, save money and reduce the confusion about 'who does what'. The six-year agreement will see the councils examine every area they are responsible for to see if services can be joined together or re-designed to make them more efficient and easier to access. During the first phase of work, the five councils are looking at ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of:

- Customer Services
- Waste Management
- Demand-led transport including concessionary fares
- Purchasing products and services
- All 'back-office' support services
- Working in and with local communities.

Overseeing the progress of the programme is a board of councillors from each of the five Councils. At two-year intervals, the Government will also be monitoring what our Pathfinder achieves. Our experiences will also be shared nationally to help provide ideas for service improvement in other areas. As well as the potential to make financial savings, the Pathfinder also includes challenging existing ways of working to deliver simple efficiency savings without compromising services. For example, for the first time this year the Councils joined together to produce one Council Tax leaflet for each district area rather than two – a simple and effective saving. The five Councils are also working closely with other major public service providers across Buckinghamshire including the Fire and Rescue Service, the Police and the Primary Care Trust to see if there involvement in particular Pathfinder workstreams.

(highlight any issues arising from recent audit reports of the Buckinghamshire partners (County, Districts, Fire, Health, Police))

## HOW WELL DO LOCAL PRIORITIES EXPRESS COMMUNITY NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS?

Priorities we are working to in Buckinghamshire have been developed from a shared evidence base. Through the Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Improvement Partnership (MKOB), we worked with PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) to assess our approach to understanding community need and develop a robust approach to place intelligence, using the following model.

### **Understanding Communities**

Partners collect and present information about communities by geography, by demographic characteristics, and by socio-economic data. Community profiles (published at ward level, parish level, district level and for the 19 local communities level by the 5 Councils) provide analysis of national and local statistics, including census data and residents surveys. We are increasingly developing more sophisticated approaches around segmentation and profiling of communities and customers, combining different geographic and demographic classifications from various sources. For example, we have used Acorn data to develop the 'Bucks 10' as a tool for profiling residents.

### **Data & intelligence**

Partners use a mixture of primary (e.g. local surveys and residents panels) and secondary (e.g. Census and IMD) sources of information and intelligence throughout the year to build our story of place. Partnership protocols are in place to ensure that shared data is robust and reliable. Benchmarking is undertaken to understand where appropriate, for example, we are working with the PWC benchmarking club to develop benchmarking of the national indicator set. The JSNA and the Community Safety Assessment present a partnership analysis of key data sets, and the Bucks Economic and Learning Partnership are currently working to develop an Economic Assessment.

Information on peoples' needs and views are obtained through surveys, focus groups, and community engagement mechanisms. These include a mixture of universal consultations (such as the Place Survey) and engagements which are targeted at particular areas or communities of interest. For example, Chiltern DC holds an annual meeting with local businesses. South Bucks DC have recently used the I-Van, a mobile multi-media ICT studio managed by Bucks Community Action, to engage with seldom heard groups. The Children and Young People's Trust used a variety of methods to consult children and young people on the priorities for the JSNA including a video diary, web based survey and individual interviews. Some services have specific customer panels to generate residents' views, for example Wycombe DC has a Tenants and Leaseholders Group. Individual partners have policies for consulting and communicating with residents and information from consultations is shared through the inter-authority communication group. BCC has an internet based consultation portal and proposals are currently being developed to extend this across BSP. Through the Community Engagement Pathfinder project, we are developing a structured approach to capture intelligence of the area.

### **Capacity & Networks/Collaboration**

We are continuing to develop joint activities around data and intelligence gathering in order to strengthen our shared understanding of place, and to increase our collective capacity and drive out inefficiencies. We have invested in partnership analytical capacity

in both community safety and economic development, and we are setting up a partnership information sharing system (IonBucks). We have undertaken joint procurement, for example the 5 Councils jointly commissioned the place survey and focus groups with seldom heard groups on the review of the sustainable community strategies. The District Councils jointly commissioned a strategic housing market assessment to inform the Local Development Frameworks. We have invested in an observatory licence for Acorn data to improve our shared understanding of need at a household level. AVDC, in collaboration with Bucks CC, Thames Valley Police and the Housing Trust, have commissioned the Institute of Community Cohesion to undertake research with the aim establishing a baseline understanding of the different communities and the current issues they face. We are currently developing the BSP website to provide a partnership portal for information and analysis about communities, with support from MKOB Improvement Partnership funding.

The LSPs play a key role in interpreting the data and intelligence and translating it into priorities. South Bucks Community Cohesion and Inequalities Forum reviews data and consultation results and feeds its analysis back into the LSP for priority building. Chiltern LSP has presentations from revitalisation groups, community appraisals and market town health checks to inform the Community Planning process on geographic area issues. The Local Area Forum/Local Community Partnerships provide a forum for reviewing intelligence at a local level and translating that into local priorities. The BSP has established a sub-group, led by the Fire Service, to review the information held by partners to assess communities at risk, as a basis for agreeing priorities for joint working.

#### **Impact & achievement** (*more examples for this section*)

The family of sustainable community strategies and LAA provide a recent example of the way in which our collective data and intelligence has informed decision making in the area. A shared evidence base was assessed as the basis for reviewing the countywide and district community strategies in 2008/9, and a joint consultation exercise was undertaken on the initial findings. The SCS technical document sets out the evidence base for the priorities at county and district level.

We have strengthened our collective understanding of disadvantage in Buckinghamshire in recent years, including through shared analysis of IMD and Acorn data, and this has translated into a stronger focus on tackling inequalities in the sustainable community strategies and LAA, the plans of thematic partnerships and those of individual organisations. Climate change and affordable housing both emerged as new local priorities during the consultation on the new LAA and partnership targets were developed as a result. The PCT presented the outcomes of the JSNA to each of the LSPs, and led a debate around health inequalities in the county, which has led to the adoption of this as a priority in the Healthy Communities strategy.

The JSNA sets out a clear set of priorities for improving health and wellbeing for adults and children and directly informed the priorities identified in the Children and Young People's Plan and the Healthy Communities Strategy.

#### **Future challenges**

Priorities for improvement include:

- Continue to develop a partnership approach to understanding the needs of seldom heard and new communities – for example around migrant populations.

- Further develop collaboration and joint working, particularly around joint consultation and data analysis, in order to develop our collective capacity and extend our shared evidence base

Areas to add/expand:

- Democratic representation
- Community Safety Assessment...
- Voluntary Sector
- Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGS)
- The Fire Service index of assessing risk



# HOW WELL ARE OUTCOMES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED BEING DELIVERED?

## 1 *How Safe is Buckinghamshire?*

### The Challenges

- Community violence, including domestic violence & abuse
- Anti-social behaviour
- Substance misuse (including alcohol related offending)
- Aspects of Serious acquisitive crime
- Protecting vulnerable groups - Over 95% of all victims in Bucks were aged 65 or over. Older people victims of distraction burglary. Young people as victims of robbery and violent crime. Also, those groups likely to become offenders, i.e. young males (and specifically BME groups).
- Fear of crime - Perception versus reality
- Managing the Media
- Sustaining work on Preventing Violent Extremism agenda
- Maintaining service delivery when premises suffer from vandalism
- Perception of young people by wider community
- Crime levels are high compared with some other counties

### This is what we are proud of:

- Overall crime has reduced - I-Quanta data. Hub progress – reassurance re handling sensitive data between partners. Success LPSA2 burglary.
- Low fires - F&R data. Home safety checks; referrals to agencies impacting on health, substance misuse, repairs, home security.
- Activities to support the PVE agenda
  - Radio Ramadan: project recruited volunteers from Asian, Black and British White communities in High Wycombe and trained them in substance misuse and radio production techniques and interview skills. Volunteers then interviewed people at the radio station, with interviews broadcast over Ramadan. Positive reaction from community.
  - Youth film project: A film exploring how the 2006 anti-terror raids affected young people in High Wycombe was directed, produced and filmed by a group of teenagers who were involved with a BCC Summer Youth Project.
- Work supporting the reduction of crime agenda - Significantly improved intelligence and information flows between partners; Changed focus to greater pro-activity (e.g. spate of theft from motor vehicles – targeted activity to pubs/put signage up almost real-time)
- Reducing the numbers of Killed and Seriously Injured - can demonstrate reduced numbers of Killed and seriously injured, with provisional figures for 2008 showing targets for 2010 already met. KSI data: targets for 2010 = NI.47- 248, NI.46-22. Results 2007 = NI.47-326, NI.46-21. Results prov. 08= NI.47-219, NI.46-18.
- Over 400 “no doorstep selling zones” around the county
- Concerns about alcohol related disorder and local drug dealing are low

### **This is what we are working on to improve:**

- Community violence, including domestic violence and abuse. Plus Substance misuse.
- Research into effective perpetrator programmes with a view to recommissioning.
- Big Lottery funding for working with migrants, travellers, LGBT, asian/African/Caribbean communities proactively engaged from a health and community development perspective with a particular focus to ensure they can access substance misuse services (development of earlier work - being reframed in light of new BL funding) – aiming to recruit volunteers from those communities who would then support work of the DAAT.
- Release of alcohol strategy has led to an extension of services in this area.
- Piloting interventions for young people affected by Domestic Violence, with a view to improving their outcomes
- Robust approach to integrated offender management
- Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPOs) and extending best practice to wider group of offenders: PPO scheme (relaunched scheme to actively engage those not wishing to be engaged)= cross-border issue as figures based on where you live rather than where you offend. – aim is to launch something to address this gap – working up at moment
- Serious acquisitive crime - Joint partnership action plan developed to support improved outcomes in this area.
- Working together to address the things that people say make them feel most unsafe (via NAGS, LAFS, individual projects) - Reassurance strategy to reduce the fear of crime.
- Targeting resources and monitoring effectiveness through better use of intelligence analysis and developing the evidence base
- Detached youth provision for young people in areas without building-based provision.

## ***2. How Healthy and Well Supported are People in Buckinghamshire?***

### **The challenges**

- Tackling disadvantage
  - There are significant pockets of deprivation
  - life expectancy varies by more than 10 years across the county, being worst in our more deprived areas.
  - most deprived populations in Buckinghamshire have relatively poor health outcomes when compared to the rest of the County
- Increases in lifestyles adverse to health:
  - rising prevalence of obesity and impact on cardiovascular disease and diabetes
  - upward trends in alcohol related harm as measured by admissions to hospital

- Widening gap
  - For some conditions inequalities in health appear to be increasing. Some areas in the county are becoming more relatively deprived
- The vulnerability of some population groups to poor health
  - As well as those living in the more deprived areas, those most at risk of poor health are people on low incomes, some minority ethnic groups, travellers and gypsies, homeless people, older people, people with enduring mental health problems, people with learning disabilities, people with physical disabilities, prisoners and offenders, those with low educational attainment and those claiming benefits.
- Demographic change
  - The proportion of people aged 65 and over is increasing and the most significant growth will occur among those aged 85 and over.
  - Growth
- Financial challenges to the PCT and Local Authorities

### **What we are proud of**

- In general, Buckinghamshire has better health than the England average, good educational attainment and a strong economic base.
- The county's population is generally healthy with fewer people suffering from a long-term limiting illness than the national average.
- The Community Health Profile for Buckinghamshire shows that most indicators of health and wellbeing are significantly better than regional and national averages.
- Over the last ten years, deaths from all causes have decreased for men and women, and remain below the averages for England. Early deaths from cancer and from heart disease and stroke have also decreased and remain below the England average.
- Healthy Living Centre
  - 33,000 interactions a year in one of most disadvantaged areas
- Cycle Aylesbury - Stats?
- MEND - Stats?
- Simply Walks (including Walk Wycombe) - Stats?
- Re-Activate Bucks - Stats?

### **What we are working to improve**

Buckinghamshire is performing well on National Indicators for mortality from all causes circulatory disease and cancers but will continue to address gaps between the most disadvantaged.

- This is reflected in mortality rates from circulatory diseases being in the LAA
- The LAA also reflects another priority for the local health economy and includes a target to reduce emergency weighted bed days
- The JSNA identifies the following priorities for Bucks
  - To maintain and improve the health and well-being of our population, we need to develop effective interventions in the following areas:
  - Narrow the gap in the broader determinants of health and improve the opportunities for those experiencing the most difficult circumstances by:
  - A strong, strategic focus on prevention and early intervention:

- Development of Self Directed Care and Increased Involvement in Decision
- Focus on Transitions (moving between key stages in life)
- Family Focus - ensure that services are working together to support the whole family to achieve outcomes
- Maintain robust systems for surveillance and control of infectious diseases
- Improving efficiency and effectiveness to ensure the most effective use of available resources
- The Local partners have developed robust partnerships for developing strategy and action plans in relation to key priorities. Work to maintain effective partnerships continues.

### **3. How well is Adult Social Care meeting people's needs and choices?**

#### **The Challenges<sup>1</sup>**

- Public sector organisations in the County are financially challenged and this is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future. Alongside this is the national driver for public sector organisations to constantly improve service efficiency.
- The proportion of older people is increasing and people are living longer. Currently 75,000 people over the age of 65 live in Buckinghamshire, with 35,000 over the age of 75. Over the next 25 years it is expected that the number of older people will increase by at least 20%, with associated increases in the numbers of people suffering from complex, long-term conditions. In addition, the growth agenda for Buckinghamshire provides uncertainties about the future population size and profile, rendering it difficult to plan for future service demand.
- People's expectations about service delivery are changing. More people wish to be involved in shaping services to meet their own stated outcomes. Services will need to reconsider current service provision to increase choice and control particularly for people with long-term conditions through individualised budgets and direct payments
- It is predicted that the economic downturn is likely result in an increase in the numbers of self-funders who are unable to maintain their own provision and will therefore require social care support.
- Inequalities for some groups, for example vulnerable adults, and in some geographic areas are rising. Those living in more relative deprivation are more likely to suffer from worse health and well-being and are more likely to have poorer lifestyles which result in higher levels of long-term conditions
- Risk factors for long-term conditions such as obesity, smoking, excess alcohol consumption and physical inactivity are increasing in Buckinghamshire. Prevention interventions and a focus on early intervention could improve outcomes for many. Analysis has indicated that lifestyle changes could result in cutting the death rates for the two largest killers, cardio-vascular disease and cancer, by half.

#### **What we are proud of**

- People live longer and have better health outcomes in Buckinghamshire than many other areas of the country.
- Safeguarding: A recent inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection recognised safeguarding adults is given a high profile by partners in Buckinghamshire, the commitment demonstrated by senior management, the investment made and improvements achieved. The safeguarding vulnerable adults board is independently chaired and is well attended by all partners.
- Adult Social Care is very clear about what it needs to achieve for people in Buckinghamshire and how it will go about doing this, as set out in "Because Every Adult Matters" (bEAM). Through bEAM we commission a range of services. This approach is working in practice and having a real impact on people lives. For example, older people are able to stay in their own homes and communities for as long as possible through a range of innovative preventative schemes such as:

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<sup>1</sup> Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Buckinghamshire, 2008

- **Time4You** –providing an individual, one-to-one service for people living in their own homes who need help with activities or hobbies that they would like to pursue. Over 370 people have accessed Time4You, with 146 still using the service.
- **Helping to shop** – aiming to keep people independent in their shopping & choice of goods purchased, this scheme is currently supporting 47, mainly elderly people from across the spectrum of social care services.
- **Rapid Response** – giving people short-term intervention to prevent hospital admissions or discharged to a temporary care placement, with the aim of regaining independence. Of 163 referrals, 79% have been able to achieve this goal.
- **Falls prevention work** is tackling the risk of hospital admission and has reached nearly 450 people with positive feedback from service users who have reported feeling more independent and mobile as a result.
- **Social alarm scheme** - 300 identified residents have been provided with Tunstall lifelines, Alert pendants, smoke alarms and temperature extremes sensors.
- **Building community capacity** pilots in Haddenham (rural Bucks) and Chesham (urban Bucks) to support vulnerable and elderly people to live in their local communities for as long as possible. Joint work between District and County Councils, parishes and the third sector.
- The needs of people at risk of social isolation are recognised and support put into place to help tackle this aspect of living alone:
  - Over 5,000 people have accessed the **InTouch** telephone assessment, advice, information, signposting and review service which helps people with planning care needs and local services. An initial contact is followed up with further calls four times a year to see what additional support may be required. The service has been shown to help alleviate loneliness and prevent a decline in mental and physical health. The service is also able to identify people who have more complex needs, and currently around 10% of InTouch users have been referred for a full social care assessment.
  - Micklefield outreach project for disabled people
  - **Mind befriending** – People with mental health issues are partnered with a trained volunteer befriender with the intention of enabling a self sustaining involvement with a wider social network.
- There is an active and extensive network of forums and action groups for older people whose work provides a vital basis on which the Older People’s Action Plan is based, used by organisations in the planning of services
- Adults and older people are accessing information, advice and services through a range of locally based partnership events and such as senior wellbeing information days, social care surgeries and benefit and debt advisory services:
  - **Local social care surgeries** with councils, police, fire and rescue and highways are held in accessible locations such as supermarkets, British Legion centres and health clinics. 63 Surgeries have resulted in over 230 people accessing further support.
  - Over £2.7m has been secured so far for clients, with 898 customers gaining an average income of £47 per week per person.
- Delivering the **ExtraCare & Supported Housing Strategies** which have resulted in learning disabled clients being given the opportunity to access modern living

- More **carers** than ever receive support from Carers Bucks, the countywide support agency for carers. Carers Voice ensures carers have more say and a direct voice into service and funding priorities. There are many examples of good outcomes achieved for carers through the work of Carers Bucks.
- We have established a track record of success in enabling people to receive **direct payments**, which provides a strong basis for the Self Directed Support and Personalisation work we are developing. Client centred services will empower the individual to identify needs and work with services and other providers to deliver solutions.
- Pioneering research with Oxford Brookes University and this is being used as a basis for policy and good practice around **minimising the risks for self funders** through provision of information and support in making key care choices. Lack of information has been shown to impact on suitability of care purchased and financial repercussions for the individual and their families (may also result in cost implications for the local authority as funding runs out).

### **What we are working on to improve**

- **Planning for future demand** – improving the planning for future demand for support to adults and older people. This will include making effective use of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment research into the wider needs of the people of Buckinghamshire and more detailed needs of people in local areas. This innovative approach has segmented Buckinghamshire into 19 areas in order to get resources, planning and key service decisions “closer to communities”.
- **Improving joint working** – Improving outcomes for adults and older people by better working between services, including implementation of the single assessment
- Further developing **support to enable people to remain independent** for longer including the implementation of Telecare services
- We will maintain a significant focus on **Delayed Transfers of Care** to ensure incidents are reduced, illustrated by the inclusion in the Local Area Agreement.

## **4. How well kept is Buckinghamshire?**

### ***The Challenges***

- Preserving and enhancing the green space and natural environment is a key priority, identified in the BSP consultation as the second most important issue for the county, and is reflected in residents' surveys, Bucks Economic Strategies and Local Transport Plans, and the Regional Economic Strategy and South East Plan.
- Clean streets are the second most important issue for residents (42%) however, only 13% felt it needs improvement. (BMG residents survey 2007)
- Protecting and enhancing the quality and character of the built environment;

### ***What we are proud of***

- The natural environment makes Buckinghamshire a very desirable place to live, particularly as over a quarter of the county sits within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. 79% of residents are satisfied with the local area as a place to live, compared to 25% in England (2006/07 BVPI).
- Public spaces are generally clean, tidy and free from litter and graffiti
- proactive approach to fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles; Councils have worked in partnership to launch a campaign to reduce fly-tipping, through the use of warning signs, CCTV and a 24-hour hotline for reporting offences. Fly-tipping incidents have reduced by a third since 2004 and have successfully convicted over 100 individuals and businesses.
- Community clear ups
- Highways maintenance "gangs" are working in each of the 19 areas to priorities set by local Members and parish councils.

### ***What we are working on to improve***

- public satisfaction with levels of street cleanliness?



## **5. How environmentally sustainable is Buckinghamshire?**

### ***The Challenges***

- Growth in the north of the County a major challenge
- Potential expansion of Luton and Heathrow airports would present a challenge (air quality)
- Bucks carbon emissions are 4% per capita higher than the average South East which in turn is higher than the national average
- Waste and air quality are priorities for residents, as well as light and noise pollution.
- Despite the urban centres of Buckinghamshire being relatively well connected, some of the more rural areas of the county do not have the same access to transport or services. Access to services is an issue for some of the more vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities or older people.
- Energy demand may soon outstrip supply in Aylesbury, and upgrades are being sought. Renewable energy solutions will also need to be planned.
- Biodiversity will need to be managed alongside the planned growth.
- The County has high car ownership and high levels of commuter flows. Congestion. Growth challenges for Aylesbury etc

### ***What we are proud of***

- Our countryside landscape (over a quarter sits within the Chilterns AONB) and work to protect it
- Our Carbon Management Programme developed with the Carbon Trust in 04/05 progresses to its final stages and will have made reductions of 3.8% carbon and we are moving forward with more initiatives to increase this figure as part of the commitment to the BSP Climate Change Action Plan and LAA and NI185
- Aylesbury is a Cycling Demonstration Town.
- School Travel Planning encourages parents away from car school runs (now below 30%).
- County recycling rates are good at over 70% at Household Waste Recycling Centres. County has rates of recycling and composting in the top third of Counties nationally. New HWRC construction commenced Jan 09 in Aston Clinton
- Country Parks Green Flag status
- Sustainability on schools curriculum. Education is an important factor.
- We have an 'excellent' Local Transport Plan
- 2,000 streetlights across the County have been switched off saving 600 tonnes of carbon
- Aylesbury is one of the first Cycling Demonstration Towns

### ***What we are working on to improve***

- reduce carbon emissions in the county
- encourage environmental preservation underpinning economic growth.
- Waste and air quality
- Managing road congestion
- Manage development pressures arising from the need to provide more housing

## ***6. How strong is the Buckinghamshire economy?***

### ***The Challenges***

- Buckinghamshire enjoys high productivity delivered by a highly qualified, well-remunerated and entrepreneurial workforce. The challenges for our economy are to enhance this competitiveness in challenging global economic conditions and to improve the economic performance of our most deprived neighbourhoods.
- Whilst Buckinghamshire has the highest business birth rate of any county council area (82 new firms formed for every 10,000 residents), the county also has the highest rate of business deaths at 70 for every 10,000 residents.
- In the context of the growth agenda, growing business alongside expansion in jobs availability. Continuation of a focus on entrepreneurial start ups alone will not create sufficient jobs for a sustainable economy, particularly in North Bucks as a growth area. There is also a need for a variety of high quality flexible business premises suitable for target businesses. There is also a key challenge to build on the high value manufacturing and innovative businesses to ensure that the county can maintain international levels of competitiveness
- There is relatively low unemployment and the workforce is highly skilled, with a quarter of 16-74 year olds educated to degree level. Although there are large proportions of highly skilled people, 21% of 16-74 year olds don't have any qualifications.

### ***What we are proud of***

- Buckinghamshire has high level of business start-ups, some 30% higher than the UK average. Recent benchmarking work has identified productivity per worker, industrial structure, knowledge economy and qualifications amongst the workforce as areas where Bucks performs strongly compared to the national and regional averages.
- Buckinghamshire has the third highest GVA per capita of any county council area at £22,245, ahead of the figures for Great Britain and the South East
- Over 34 per cent of Buckinghamshire residents hold degree level qualifications, the third highest for a county council area and ahead of both the national and regional level. Only 10 per cent of Buckinghamshire residents hold no qualifications, equalling the figure for the South East as a whole and below that for Great Britain.
- Although unemployment in has been rising in Buckinghamshire over recent months, at 1.8 per cent the county has the third lowest proportion of residents claiming Job Seekers' Allowance of any county council area.
- Earnings in Buckinghamshire are above the regional and national levels, with median earnings for those in full time working standing at £27,795 for those that work in the county and £30,426 for residents. On both measures, Buckinghamshire ranks second of all county council areas. Buckinghamshire has the second highest gross disposable household income of county council areas.

- The Enterprise Hubs in Wycombe and Aylesbury provide a centre of expertise in supporting high growth potential businesses. AVDC is supporting the launch of an innovation centre with investment from SEEDA. University providers in Buckinghamshire continue to develop 'spin-out' activity, for instance, the Centre for Rapid Development Manufacturing (CRDM) a spin out from Bucks New University.
- Response to economic downturn

### **What we are working on to improve**

- Supporting local businesses through the economic recession
- Encouraging the development of workforce skills for tomorrow's economy, and preparing for the upturn.
- Improving the level of basic skills, particularly in areas of disadvantage
- Growing the local economy and developing local jobs to match housing growth, including through developing centres of world class excellence:
  - Film, Television and the creative media sector based around Pinewood Studios
  - Assistive technologies and spinal treatments around Stoke Mandeville
  - Motorsport and related technology around Silverstone. There is also a further motor cluster in Wycombe

## **7. How Strong and Cohesive are local communities in Buckinghamshire?**

### **The challenges**

- Pockets of deprivation located within areas of affluence which means these communities can be easily hidden and isolated. BME communities tend to live in areas of deprivation with poorer quality housing provision and tend to be residentially segregated with comparatively high concentrations in a small number of wards.
- Sizeable increases in migrants particularly from the A8 countries some of whom are professional workers e.g. Dentists and others who are employed within service industries e.g. local eateries, hotels and car cleaning businesses.
- Groups of older BME residents, who came to the county to work in the manufacturing sector, have found themselves without the necessary skills to easily adapt to changing local economic circumstances and are concentrated in the leisure/retail sector e.g. taxi drivers, restaurant workers.
- An extremely diverse Muslim community which has long standing family feuds, caste and other issues which need to be understood by public sector service providers in seeking to improve the take up and satisfaction with services such as Adult Learning and social care services for older people at home and at day care centres and also provision for disabled people.
- Asian communities feel less safe outside during the day and after dark. In the former instance more so than when compared with respondents who were older people and disabled people. In addition people grouped as Asian or 75+ or who are unemployed reported not being treated with respect as very/fairly big problem. This was significantly higher in South Bucks.
- Young people are consistently identified as a local concern and a priority for diversionary activity and youth service provision – however we face a particular challenge in recruiting youth workers.
- South Bucks has the largest Gypsy and Roma Traveller communities and providing services to these groups is more challenging as it is necessary to build relationships and trust.
- NI 1 score not upper quartile, need to improve

### **This is what we are proud of**

- Buckinghamshire' communities enjoy strong community spirit, active volunteering and community groups. % engaged in volunteering
- The Resident's Survey shows that across all groupings, when compared with the Citizenship Survey, Buckinghamshire scores above the national scores.
- Partnership working is increasing across the statutory and voluntary sectors with increasing improvements in sharing of information and good practice.
- Individual services are proactively seeking to ensure services are appropriately tailored to meet need, to ensure people are able to access information about services and to close gaps in opportunity and outcomes.

- the Bucks Black and Minority Ethnic Advisory Group shares good practice and support across the statutory and voluntary sectors and feeds in to the Voluntary Sector representation on the LAA
- A range of techniques and methods have been developed to ensure that the voice of different groups is heard, including for example mystery shopping and consultation with disabled people
- Intergenerational work with young people and older communities
- Participation work very successful – district youth cabinets/YOF
- Wycombe Film Project – successful project looking at issues of diversity identity and culture
- PVE programme
- Strong citizenship focus – lots of people becoming British Citizens
- Work with local communities such as the Healthy Living Centre and specific support for projects such as the OASIS Centre

### **This is what we are working on to improve**

- Knowledge of divisions, tensions and conflict between different communities in Buckinghamshire
- Partnership working for provision to our GRT communities
- Understanding of the barriers faced by disabled communities in accessing services and the local environment
- Building capacity within disadvantaged groups so that they can make their service needs and views known
- Continued focus on tackling key barriers and challenges in promoting greater cohesion between the County's different communities - with particular reference to consulting and engaging BME communities
- community resilience strategy – family and community resilience strands and also parish self help plans.
- Partnership agreement on key priorities (aim for one over arching scheme)
- Empowerment to local community leaders (elected and non-elected) to do the best for their local people.
- Quality and resources provided for generic open access youth work provision

### ***Links***

Case studies report

## ***8. How well is housing need met in Buckinghamshire?***

### **The challenges**

- Exceptionally high average cost of housing. The prosperity of the county has contributed towards its average house price sitting at 151% of the England and Wales average, and 122% of the South East average. There will also be major housing growth in Aylesbury Vale over the next 20 years, which will impact upon employment, transportation and housing across the whole county.
- the average property price is around £335,000, with first-time buyer properties averaging £176,000 (pre credit crunch).

- Property prices and high rents mean that individuals and families find it difficult to remain in their communities. In Aylesbury Vale, over 4,000 people on the housing register are unable to afford the average weekly cost of renting private properties in the district.
- 2% of households are overcrowded and 1% are designated 'unfit'.
- Attracting key workers to the County in light of the above average cost of housing.
- The Impact of the Economic Downturn –Repossessions (already up by 70% nationally), greater homelessness and a need to have a more proactive prevention agenda , greater demand for social housing in a climate where the number of new completions is reducing and putting strain on district level housing services and Supporting People budgets as they impact upon the most vulnerable.
- A fall in developer contributions monies due to a significant downturn in the level house building in the county.
- Increasing the level of affordable housing across the county (NI155)- Baseline- 320 households Target- 539 (target measured annually) and reducing the Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation (NI156)- Quarter 3 outturn- 193 Target- 205 Both housing provision and homelessness have been identified as priorities by residents.
- Meeting the government set housing target of 16,800 new dwellings over the period 2006-2026, of which 40% should be affordable in Aylesbury Vale.
- Buckinghamshire as a county have proposed in the build up to the draft Partial Review that 113 additional gypsy and traveller plots may be needed in the county prior to 2016. If this figure is accepted by SEERA in late 2009 then the challenges will include finding adequate sites that are both sustainable and are acceptable to the wider communities.
- A shortfall in funding from developer contributions led to AVDC, BCC and AVA embracing innovative thinking and providing a £2 million 'loan' to developers. This ensured that junction improvements and an access road for Aylesbury Vale Parkway station were completed in order to meet the agreed Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) deadlines.

### **This is what we are proud of**

- A new county-wide Rural Housing Enabling Partnership will be established in 2009 to help secure improvements in housing in rural areas. This will be funded from the BSP pooled budget. The new partnership will spearhead work to develop local rural housing exception sites and to improve the quality and use of the existing rural housing stock.
- Developing a sub-regional approach to Choice Based Letting (CBL) through "Bucks Home Choice." This will be launched in April 2009
- Agreeing a County Wide Extra Care Housing Strategy.

- Delivered a sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This was jointly commissioned by the four districts and completed during 2008
- The DAAT Housing Scheme for substance mis-users has been up and running since 2007. This was developed through joint working between the DAAT, district councils and Paradigm Housing (registered social landlord) to acquire 20 flats across the county to provide supported accommodation for users coming out of treatment.
- The District Councils Rent Deposit Guarantee Schemes aim to help people who are homeless or in housing need gain access to privately rented accommodation by the council offering the landlord a Deposit Guarantee Bond, for an amount equivalent to one month's rent.
- Effective partnership working with Supporting people and the re-commissioning of services such as floating support. Housing initiatives to support older and vulnerable people include; Affordable warmth/Fuel poverty initiative in the LAA, and close working on private sector housing strategies to offer mix of loans and grants in support of housing conditions and disabled adaptations
- Chiltern in partnership with South Bucks District Council, a £196,000 trailblazer programme bid was successful and will provide enhanced housing/employment advice and support across the areas.
- Wycombe is on track to achieve the Government's Decent Homes standard for council owned properties by December 2010 and is currently above target.
- Wycombe have achieved a significant reduction in homeless people using temporary accommodation when compared with 2007 figures.

### **This is what we are working on to improve**

- A significant reduction in homeless people using temporary accommodation across the county
- The Districts will be using information on household income levels for their Strategic Housing Market Assessment in order to inform their planning for the distribution and placement of affordable housing across the county.
- A joint scrutiny review is in progress between the County and Districts to identify good practice both locally and nationally to ensure that resources are effectively used to bring empty homes back onto the housing market.
- Improve delivery and access to affordable housing
- Sustainable delivery of new development sites and delivery of new homes;
- Improving delivery and access to affordable housing, including for an ageing population;

## **Links**

Empty Homes Scrutiny Review

[Somewhere to Live: Planning for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the South East](#)

Buckinghamshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, July 2008.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

Draft South East Plan, South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA).

## ***9. How well are families supported in Buckinghamshire?***

### **These are the challenges**

- 11,500 children live in low income families (where gross income is 60% below the national average).
- Closing the gap between the more and less advantaged families in Buckinghamshire.
- Improving the outcomes and life chances of families.
- Providing further targeted support to vulnerable families.
- Ensuring interventions with families in Buckinghamshire consider the needs of the whole family.

### **This is what we are proud of**

- The use of key strategies such as the Parenting Strategy (currently being updated) to help create and sustain stronger families.
- The expansion of the Children's Centres programme and extended services through schools – services include family support and outreach work.
- Good performance in Quarter 3 for the number of carers of children supported by respite services, and for the number of carers receiving support for carers services.
- Good use of County Parks in Buckinghamshire, as evidenced by the visitor's database.
- Work being carried out by partners such as the Nexus Community who work with leisure centres in Chiltern and Wycombe to provide exercise programmes and fully integrated health guidance and advice for families.
- Work being carried out by the Youth Prevention Service who work directly with young people at risk from family breakdown for instance by working with partners to provide mentors for young people.
- Initiatives to reach out to families living in rural areas or on low incomes. The Youth Offending Service delivers services in satellite venues, undertake home visits or provide bus services for these families.
- Support to Gypsy Roma Traveller families through the use of a Traveller Outreach Officer and the development of the 'Thames Valley Traveller line'.
- Encouraging safe and sustainable travel for families through work and school travel planning and the use of family discount promotions on buses during the summer period.
- Work to support families who have experienced domestic violence. A drop-in centre in South Bucks offers help and advice to families. Other forms of support include a



12 week 'Freedom' programme for women and a children's therapeutic playgroup for young people witnessed domestic violence.

- Support for Family Learning. The Adult Learning Service offers activities such as family literacy and numeracy workshops to encourage families to learn together.
- Provision of People's Network in public libraries.

### **This is what we are working on to improve**

- Maintaining a focus on the family by working with other services. An example of this is the establishment of a Joint Commissioner whose position is jointly funded and managed between Children & Young People's Services (CYPS) and Adult Social Care (ASC).
- Better information for families, such as the development of a Family Information Service, which will allow families and practitioners access to comprehensive and current information and advice on all family services and activities available in Buckinghamshire.
- Assessing the needs of families – there is a current, widespread consultation to identify the requirements of Buckinghamshire families.
- Reducing health inequalities for families. For example, there is a workstream in the Healthy Communities Strategy which aims to work with partners to increase benefit uptake in low income families.
- Engaging parents with schools through the accreditation of the 'Investors in Families' initiative.
- Ensuring services are accessible – Transportation are working with Education to make sure services being offered through extended schools are accessible to families.

### **links**

[Link to JSNA](#)

[Link to Healthy Communities Strategy](#)

[Link to Family Information Web Page](#)

## ***10. How good is the well-being of Children and Young People in Buckinghamshire?***

### **The challenges for Buckinghamshire:**

- a significant minority of school aged children live in areas classified as either hard-pressed or moderate means. These children are likely to have poorer health, education and social outcomes than those in other areas.
- some minority ethnic groups in Buckinghamshire have worse educational outcomes compared to the national average. The Asian or Asian British Pakistani group (8% of the cohort) is performing significantly below the average and is largely concentrated in areas of disadvantage.
- The outcomes for children and young people leaving the care system are, as nationally, generally poorer than for their peers. These young people are significantly

less likely to achieve well in terms of education outcomes and more likely to be NEET.

### **This is what we are proud of**

- Teenage pregnancy rates are low and falling
- Low rates of Youth offending – (need to get the stats from the YOS)
- 96 schools have achieved Healthy Schools status and 97% of schools are now participating.
- Obesity in under 11's has fallen from 11.4% in March 2007 to 8.54% in March 2008.
- The County Sports Partnership has been targeting under 16's in selected disadvantaged areas resulting in a 50% increase in participation from 2007 to 2008.
- All children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan are allocated to a qualified social worker.
- Adoptions of LAC improved significantly in 2007/8 and ended the year at more than 12%, its highest level this decade and well above SN and the average.
- Buckinghamshire has very few schools in any forms of OFSTED categories
- Buckinghamshire is achieving well above average national attainment standards. 70% of pupils are achieving five or more A\* to C grade GCSEs and 97% are achieving GCSEs at grade A\* to G. The gap for the 20% lowest achievers remains at 35%, which is a smaller gap than nationally.
- Rates of persistent absenteeism are low in Buckinghamshire; the 2011 government target for secondary schools is already achieved. Persistent absence of Children in Care (CiC) declined by 5% last year.
- Low levels of permanent exclusions from school
- Low percentage of surplus school places across the County with an agreed strategic approach to maximise school quality and community cohesion whilst minimising surplus places.
- Overall results for students at A/AS level and equivalent are the second highest of all shire authorities.
- The proportion of 16-19 year olds who are not in Education, Employment or Training has decreased since last year from 3.2% to 2.7%
- Significant progress in implementing a Local Delivery approach to integrated processes with over 150 children and young people having a Common Assessment Framework assessment
- A robust approach established for the commissioning and decommissioning of services to children and young people leading to better quality services delivered more efficiently (eg: Connexions, CAMHS, Client Transport)
- Participation and engagement of children and young people in decision making

### **This is what we are working on to improve**

Based on the evidence set out in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the following 5 priorities have been identified for Buckinghamshire:

- **Closing the Gap** – tackling the divide between poorer children and young people and the rest in terms of outcomes by helping them to achieve at school, be healthy and get help if they need it.
- **Family Focus** – ensuring that services are working together to support the whole family to improve outcomes.

- **Transitions** – supporting children and young people when they need help at key stages in their lives. This could include starting, changing or leaving school, leaving care, divorce or trauma.
- **Early Intervention and Secondary Prevention** – targeting resources to help children, young people and families who are at risk of poor outcomes earlier so problems don't get out of control. This includes access to activities.
- **Involving Children and Young People in decision making** – making sure children and young people have a real say in making decisions about the services that are provided for them.

## **Links**

JSNA

Children and Young People's Response to the JSNA consultation

Children and Young People's Plan

APA Assessment

TellUs 3 Survey

## **WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

This self assessment provides clarity about the main challenges for Buckinghamshire Partners into the future. The new Sustainable Community Strategies set out a challenging agenda for the future development of the county and will be supported by a refreshed Local Area Agreement.

As already mentioned, the work with MKOB and PricewaterhouseCoopers to challenge whether our 'place intelligence' approach was fit for purpose, demonstrated that there was good collaboration between Buckinghamshire local authorities around sharing of data and community planning, which provides confidence that our future plans are challenging and well grounded.

The County benefits from strong partnership working through the Bucks Strategic Partnership (see Audit Commission report by E Henrion) and trust continues to develop through initiatives like the Buckinghamshire Pathfinder and a new approach to developing the new Sustainable Community Strategies as a 'family' of documents.

The area has a good track record of improving outcomes through effective joint performance management arrangements and partners are clear about what they are expected to contribute through clear delivery plans. Outcomes from the LPSA2 agreement were strong and generated close to £9m in reward grant demonstrating the commitment by all partners to improving local outcomes. This provides a sound platform for delivering against the new LAA which is progressing well (need a measure here). In addition, each thematic partnership is agreeing a series of indicators outside of the LAA which spotlight specific local needs.

Partners consistently look for new and better ways to improve delivery structures. For example the Children's Trust is currently being reviewed and there is a current review of the Pathfinder governance structures.

Overall, Buckinghamshire residents are well served by their public service providers. Residents generally rate Buckinghamshire as a good place to live. Outcomes are strong and value for money is proven.