

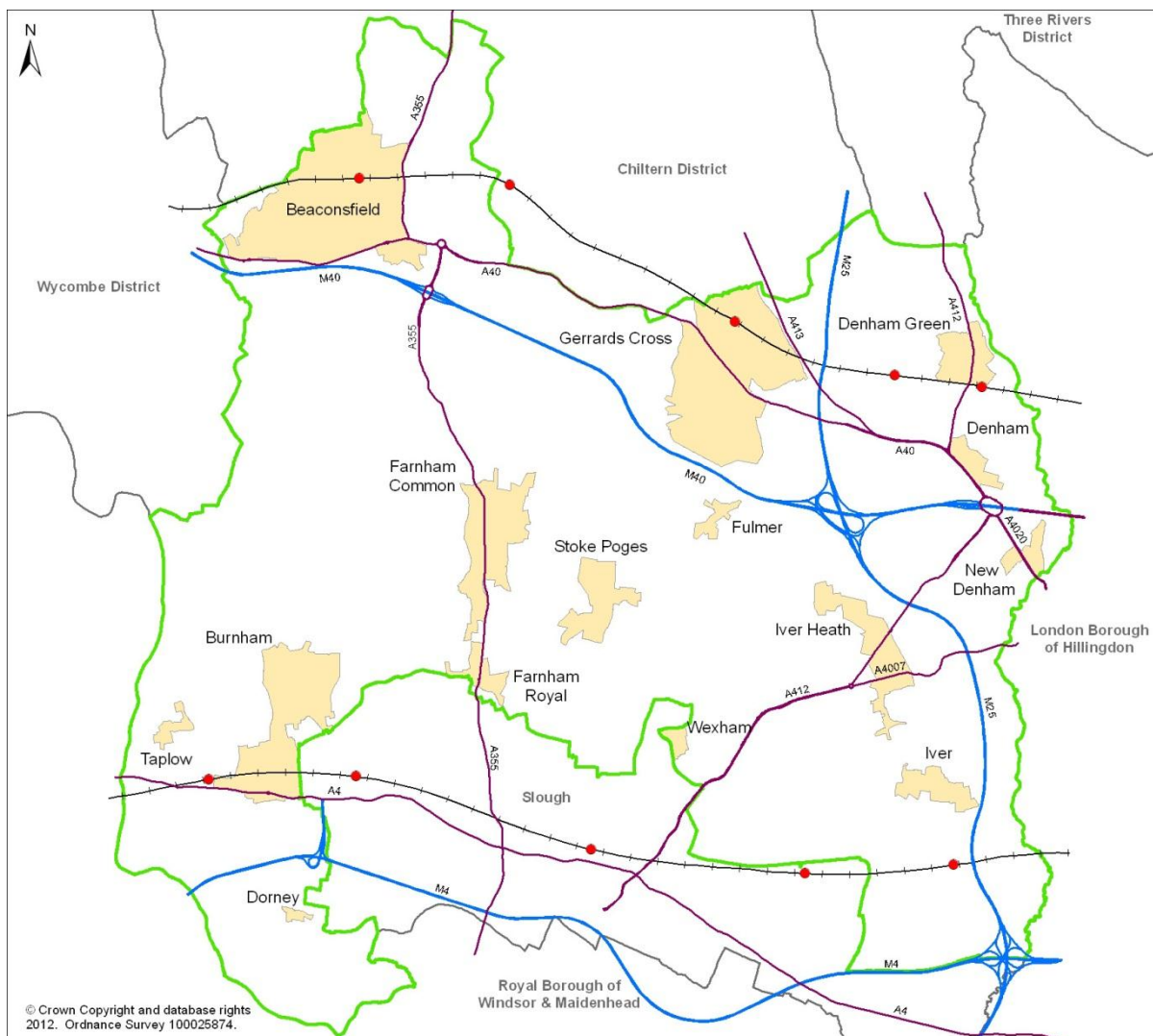


# South Bucks

## District Council

# South Bucks District Council

## Annual Report 2014 / 15



Welcome to our new online Annual Report. This report aims to highlight our major achievements and performance between April 2014 and March 2015.

To find out more about our **vision** for the area and what we are trying to achieve, please see our **joint business plan** with Chiltern District Council:

[Priorities and Performance](#)

The business plan also explains our **performance framework** and links to **service area plans**, actions and targets for the year.

If you would like to read more about our **financial performance**, please click here:

[Statement of Accounts](#)

## Joint Working

Our work with Chiltern District Council continued, to reduce our costs and improve service resilience.

At the end of this performance year, nine service units are operating as shared services, with a further eight units due to be shared by autumn 2015. The remaining three services are planned for review by spring 2016. During 2015/16, nett savings generated will total £1,225,000.

This project includes streamlining processes, making better use of resources including shared, efficient desktop and telephone systems and joint procurement.



You can find out more about this major project here:

[Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee Meetings](#)

## **Achievements.**

### **Housing:**

A review of the Bucks Home Choice allocations scheme was implemented during the year, introducing a stricter local connection and qualification criteria. This emphasised the needs of local people and reduced the number of registered applicants by over 50%. A new Bucks Home Choice website was also rolled out, allowing clients to “self-serve” and obtain tailored housing advice on-line.

### **Crime:**

Burglary and theft from a vehicle in South Bucks both reduced by 36%, year on year.

### **More recycling:**

We rolled out a new waste service this year to residents, enabling much higher rates of recycling – 52% up from 33%. Residual household waste per household went down to 396 kilos from 570 kilos last year.

### **High Speed Rail (HS2):**

- On-going negotiations with HS2 Ltd to achieve best mitigation for the district and the Colne valley
- Hosting of the Select Committee site visit to the district in January 2015
- Preparation of evidence for the Government’s Select Committee appearance.

### **We’ve made it easier to do things on line:**

- Our new, more user friendly website was launched in April 2014.
- Those on the housing wait list can self-serve
- Licensing applications and progress can be viewed
- Electronic claims process introduced for council tax and housing benefits.

### **Did you know?**

- 91% of planning applicants were satisfied or very satisfied with the service
- More than 90% of the 1,381 planning applications registered were processed within guideline time limits
- We collected 98% of domestic council tax and 99% of non-domestic rates
- We received 606 ‘freedom of information’ requests this year and responded to 88% within 20 working days
- 97% of the 872 standard Land Registry searches received were completed within five working days
- The satisfaction rating at the Beacon centre went up to 92%
- 91% of licensing applications were completed online this year, against none the previous year.

## Performance against targets:

This year, we set ourselves 67 targets to achieve. The full table and results can be viewed [here](#).

Of the known results, 80% (52) met, exceeded or were within 10% of target, and 20% (13) failed to get within 9% of target. Seven of these targets which were not met related to housing. An upturn in homelessness put pressure on housing services during the year, impacting on five of these targets. A review of homelessness options is scheduled to take place to tackle this issue.

## Looking forward:

- We will complete the last three shared services reviews and start delivery of projects identified to further streamline processes and improve accessibility
- Consultations are underway for a new local plan to be developed. This will give us a new planning framework to meet development needs
- When the result of the Airports Commission is announced during summer 2015, we will seek to mitigate any impact on the area
- We remain opposed to plans for HS2 that could bring more than a decade of disruption to the district. However, if HS2 does go ahead, we will work to get the best deal possible for South Bucks by continuing negotiations with HS2 Ltd to achieve the best mitigation for the district, including appearing before the Government's HS2 Select Committee with support from expert witnesses
- We will move more processes on line and further improve our website to make it easier to find what you are looking for
- Working with Thames Valley Police, we will identify crime hotspots and use intelligence on crime types throughout the year to reduce crime further
- A full review of homelessness options will be carried out and we will act on any recommendations
- We will work with town and parish councils to develop community participation groups
- We will continue to improve recycling rates.

You can read more about what we are working to achieve during 2015/16 here:

[Service Plan Summaries](#)

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**South Bucks**  
District Council