

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN

Contact: Charles Meakings, 01494 421980,
charles_meakings@wycombe.gov.uk

What is the Commission being asked to do?

To consider the Bucks Infrastructure and Investment Plan, which was submitted to Cabinet on 7 March, 2016, and to identify any issues and projects that the Commission would wish to see promoted as the Plan is implemented, bearing in mind it will evolve over time as existing priorities are met and new ones emerge.

Background

At the last meeting of the Commission (13 January 2016), a report was requested on the Buckinghamshire Infrastructure Investment Plan.

The Leader and Chief Executive have been invited to attend the meeting for this item.

The BIIP underpins the Buckinghamshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) by setting out the key strategic infrastructure investments that Buckinghamshire requires in order to enable sustainable growth to be successfully delivered over the next twenty years. The BIIP will evolve over time as existing investment priorities are met and new ones emerge. It will continue to be shaped through consultation and updated on a regular basis. The BIIP is consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan and the emerging Local Plan. One of the purposes of the BIIP is to act as a bidding document for funding from the Government by the Buckinghamshire (Thames Valley) Local Enterprise Partnership. The BIIP directly contributes to the Regeneration and Infrastructure priority of the Corporate Plan and the themes in the Sustainable Community Strategy for Wycombe District.

The BIIP has been commissioned by the Buckinghamshire (Thames Valley) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), with plan production overseen by Bucks Advantage (BA). The Leader is the Council's representative on the LEP and is the Council's Member on BA, with the Chief executive on the Board of Directors of BA. The BIIP has been prepared in conjunction with the local authorities in Buckinghamshire, including ourselves. A copy of the public summary of the Plan is attached as Appendix "A".

The BIIP has been produced to:

1. Establish clear agreement amongst Buckinghamshire partners about what the infrastructure priorities are in the area and align their respective activities in support of realising some of these schemes;
2. Improve our collective ability to secure funding from central government, under whatever funding government has available to support local growth at any particular time; and

3. Enhance our chances of securing local “betterment” to put towards costs of our infrastructure needs, thereby enhancing our chances of achieving our goals, provided those needs are included within approved local planning policy documentation.

The BIIP defines a set of seven strategic principles to guide investment and ensure growth is delivered sustainably:

1. Integrate with existing policy and support the Local Plan making process, to ensure the investment proposed in this plan is consistent with local land use strategies;
2. Support the delivery of the major national strategic transport infrastructure and local highway improvements we need to accommodate growth;
3. Strengthen economic drivers and key sectors – targeting investment to support the needs of business, particularly ‘high value’ businesses;
4. Protect the environment and the character of settlements – keeping Buckinghamshire a special place;
5. Enable town centre regeneration and support the wider growth agenda – notably the major centres of Aylesbury and High Wycombe as well as smaller towns;
6. Make provision for the appropriate expansion of existing settlements and strategic sites; and
7. Promote SMART growth - to strengthen and future proof our infrastructure.

The BIIP focuses on three major growth themes:

(i) Strategic Transport Infrastructure

The scale of strategic road, rail and air transport investment in or affecting Buckinghamshire has the opportunity to transform the County from schemes such as Heathrow Airport expansion, Crossrail, High Speed 2, East-West Rail, east-West Expressway, Western Rail access to Heathrow and the M25 South West Quadrant Study.

(ii) Productivity Challenge for Buckinghamshire

This has been identified as covering smart growth, including the prioritisation of superfast broadband and other digital technologies, as well as considering how best to promote more sustainable development in Local Plans.

(iii) Growth Corridors and Zones

The opportunity for the southern part of the County to create a corridor for economic regeneration and growth focussed on the M40 and A404, as well as growth at settlements along the Chiltern Railway line, which for Wycombe District could include High Wycombe and Princes Risborough (but not Saunderton).

Cabinet Consideration

Cabinet, at its meeting on 7 March 2016, is being requested to agree:

- (i) That the Buckinghamshire Infrastructure Investment Plan (including the strategic principles and ‘corridor’ framework for infrastructure and growth)

- insofar as it relates to Wycombe District, be endorsed as the basis for joint-working and for consideration in the Local Plan process; and
- (ii) The Council participate in joint-working arrangements to contribute to, and oversee the updating of the Buckinghamshire Infrastructure Investment Plan and the prioritisation process.

The reason for this decision is that the Buckinghamshire Infrastructure Investment Plan (BIIP) supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and the emerging Local Plan and because:

- (1) We can draw on the BIIP to seek funding from government, through the Local Enterprise Partnership to help deliver our own regeneration, growth and infrastructure projects, for example, the infrastructure requirements for the reserve sites; and
- (2) We can utilise the BIIP, together with the Buckinghamshire (Thames Valley) Local Enterprise Partnership's Plan for Sustainable Economic Growth 2012 – 2031 as the policy context for achieving sustainable economic development growth in Wycombe District and to assist with the preparation of the Local Plan.

Next Steps

The BIIP is a living document that will evolve over time and existing priorities are met and new ones emerge. The Council will participate in the joint working arrangements and provide updates as required.

The Council can draw on the BIIP to help progress and shape our implementation activities as set out in the approved Corporate Plan and the emerging Local Plan.

The BIIP will be the starting point for the submission of bids to Government (Local Growth Fund 3) later this year.

The LEP now wishes to undertake the same process for non-transport schemes such as flood mitigation, town centre property development, energy infrastructure and production, digital infrastructure and business incubation to ensure the investment priority list offers a comprehensive list of all current opportunities for Buckinghamshire.

Background Papers

Plan for Sustainable Economic Growth 2012 – 2031
Buckinghamshire Infrastructure Investment Plan.