



Cabinet agenda

Date: Tuesday 5 March 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF

Membership:

M Tett (Leader), S Broadbent (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transport), A Macpherson (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing), T Broom (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment), J Chilver (Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources), A Cranmer (Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services), C Harriss (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure), A Hussain (Cabinet Member for Communities), P Strachan (Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration) and M Winn (Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services)

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2 Minutes	5 - 14

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2024.

3 Declarations of interest

4 Hot Topics

5 Question Time

**Question from Councillor Robin Stuchbury to Councillor Peter Strachan,
Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration**

Buckinghamshire Council's Parish charter set out some broad ambitions around planning. It states that to enable Parish and Town Councils to contribute to the planning process the Council will:-

- adopt a statement of community involvement regarding consultations with Parish and Town Councils on planning issues.
- equip Parish and Town Councils with the knowledge and skills to enable them to share the views of the community they represent
- enable Parish and Town Councils to set up policies for their own local area by preparing neighbourhood plans
- ensure Parish and Town Councils have the right to question and call in an application to a committee or request a Buckinghamshire councillor to do that on their behalf and give them a dedicated speaking slot where they have made representations
- consult Parish and Town councils, when producing the Buckinghamshire Local plan that will replace the current adopted local plan including the mineral waste plan.

These were broad ambitions set out at the onset and formation of Buckinghamshire Council. How does the Council believe they are meeting these aspirations for partnership working and can specific examples be given on what has been achieved in relation to the bullet points above?

6	Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)	15 - 28
7	Select Committee Work Programme For Cabinet to note the Select Committee Work Programme.	29 - 34
8	Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029	35 - 112
9	Buckinghamshire Healthy Ageing Strategy 2023-28	113 - 142
10	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Update	143 - 150
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12	Exclusion of the public (if required) To resolve that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s)	

of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Paragraph 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

13	Confidential Minutes	169 - 170
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15	Date of next meeting 9 April 2024 at 10am	

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Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 22 February 2024 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 3.00 pm and concluding at 4.25 pm.

Members present

S Broadbent, A Macpherson, T Broom, J Chilver, C Harriss, A Hussain, P Strachan, M Winn and J Jordan

Others in attendance

D Barnes, P Martin and R Stuchbury

Apologies

M Tett and A Cranmer

Agenda Item

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Tett, T Broom and A Cranmer. Councillor J Jordan Deputy Member for Environment was in attendance representing the Climate Change and Environment Portfolio.

2 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Hot Topics

The following hot topics were discussed:-

Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

The Deputy Leader referred to the Council meeting on 21 February 2024 where the Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2026/27 and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 had been agreed.

Cabinet Member for Transport

The Cabinet Member reported that due to a prolonged period of incessant rain throughout the late Autumn and Winter months, combined with freezing weather, there had been a significant deterioration in the condition of many roads across Buckinghamshire. There had been more than twice the emergency call outs this year with high ground water and river levels as well as the gully systems reaching full capacity. The crews had cleared 75,000 gullies since April last year. He emphasised that there was an out of hours service if there was an immediate flooding risk and details were on the council website.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/environment/flooding-and-flood-risk-management/>

From a resident perspective, one of the key measures of success was the condition of roads. The MTFP had already proposed a record level of expenditure upon repair and resurfacing of roads with the current £100m+ programme being extended into a further year in order to continue the 'member led' rolling maintenance programme. However as further action was required to address road maintenance the Council resolved to release £5m from the 'mitigating future financial risk' Reserve and added this to the 2024/2025 Revenue for Highways road maintenance.

Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment

The Cabinet Member reported that the Environment Agency had just issued a flood alert for the River Great Ouse and River Ray. She clarified that there were three levels; an alert, a warning and a severe warning. Buckinghamshire were on the bottom tier but further rain was expected over the next few days. The Council were doing what they could to mitigate any flood risks.

5 Question Time

Question from Councillor Robin Stuchbury to Councillor Steven Broadbent, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transport

I would be grateful for a further update from the Cabinet Member to the question I asked at Cabinet in November (link provided below) on drainage issues in Buckingham and children being splashed by oncoming vehicles. The areas that have not been resolved are London Road, Bourton Road and Gawcott Road Buckingham and I would like reassurance that these highway works will be completed shortly.

<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=337&MId=18265&Ver=4>

RESPONSE from Councillor Broadbent

With three named storms already this year and intense rainfall falling onto already saturated ground across the county, our teams have been dealing with unprecedented call-outs for flooding and highways drainage related problems. So far, 2024 has seen us respond to 762 highways emergencies across the county, most of which are related to storms and flooding. As a result, there has been some disruption to our programme of planned highway drainage schemes.

In regards to these specific locations, a works order has been raised for London Road to clear the drainage ditches and we are prioritising our own in-house crew to complete this as soon as we can. Our team did undertake works on Bourton Road, near Badgers Way, but although partially completed some further works are required, specifically a new section of pipe needs to be installed.

The Gawcott Road drainage system requires a CCTV survey and high pressure jetting and this is currently programmed in for the end of March.

6 Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)

The Leader introduced the Forward Plan and commended it to all Members of the Council and the public, as a document that gave forewarning of what reports would be discussing at forthcoming meetings.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

7 Parking Strategy

Due to the arrangements made under legacy authorities, the parking service had historically been delivered through a split operating model - Off Street enforcement was delivered in house; On Street was outsourced. Following a Better Buckinghamshire Service Review an integrated parking service had been created which provided a more effective delivery model and aligned to national standards where parking enforcement for on and off street was delivered by one Council.

As a pre-cursor to the formulation of this strategy an informal review of the Parking Service was undertaken by a Member Working Group at the request of the Cabinet Member for Transport. The purpose of the review was to assess what potential improvements could be made to better serve the residents of Buckinghamshire and to address legacy inconsistencies and outputs from the review have informed the development of this Strategy.

The proposals set out in the report, and in the draft Parking Strategy (Appendix A) set the strategic direction of travel for the service which would support the MTFP process and balance the Parking Account. The strategy would enable the Council to set out its aims and objectives for parking services, within the context of a rapidly changing industry, across Buckinghamshire and highlight the importance and value that parking services could provide for residents and local communities. Not least, to ensure the associated regulatory requirements were appropriately met for the Council, which included compliance, but also how the parking estate would be financially managed to assess car parks as an asset, along with how parking supported the Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5).

Alongside the Parking Strategy there was also a public consultation on on/off-street parking which closed on 18 February 2024. This outlined proposals to make changes to the current parking orders in the whole of the County. A future Leader decision would be made on the outcome of this public consultation. Parking was a key issue for residents and the Council for several reasons; it provided income for an already

stretched budget, it helped with enforcement of car parks and streets across the County included making the roads safer and in addition it helped with town centre regeneration and use of the Council's assets.

The Parking Strategy set out the vision for parking in Buckinghamshire across four themes: Technology & Innovation, Parking Charges, Enforcement, and Parking Assets which were detailed in the report. In terms of technology and innovation the Council were considering joining the National Parking Platform and removing the subsidy for Wycombe RingGo fees. The National Parking Platform (NPP) was a pilot supported and funded by the Department for Transport, which created a platform to provide a better service to customers and at a reduced cost to the Council. It also brought in an element of competition and pricing advantage but also meant that residents could choose their own preferred parking platform. Cameras could also be used to deliver change and there could also be electronic advertising of parking spaces available. In terms of enforcement a benchmarking exercise had been undertaken to assess current performance particularly now patterns of work were back to normal following the pandemic. Last year the team issued 32,000 Fixed Penalty Notices. Town/Parish Councils, and Town Committees could also have more control over the enforcement of an area, such as dedicated patrols including input into what locations were patrolled at which times and on what days, there was the option for the Town/Parish Councils, and Town Committees to fund the cost of a dedicated resource. This would provide the flexibility for extra resources. The Service area would also look to increase the number of Civil Enforcement Officers by a minimum of 10 FTE.

In terms of car park assets and Council owned land it was important that there was a plan to ensure that all the car parks in Buckinghamshire worked well together and also that this was the best use of a Council asset. A financial review of the car parks was underway to determine which ones were best serving the community and which ones were running at a loss. The outcome would determine whether to retain a car park, repurpose, devolve, or dispose of either in full or in part. Some parking bays would be used for EV charging.

The Council had a range of parking payment machines many of which were more than 10 years old. The current annual cost for servicing and repairs was £220k per annum with further expense incurred for cash collection and bank charges. Following COVID, there had been an increase in customers choosing to pay by phone – 79% who previously paid by cash were now using alternative payment methods. It was recommended to transition towards digital payment methods only over time. As machines reached the end of life, they should not be replaced like for like and the Council should continue to and increase promotion of cashless and ultimately digital payment methods. This would not only reduce the costs of delivering the service but would also provide more consistency for customers and reflects societal trends.

The Cabinet Member thanked the Deputy Cabinet Member for Project Delivery, Dominic Barnes for his hard work on the Strategy, including the previous Deputy Cabinet Member David King.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- There was no requirement to consult on the Parking Strategy just changes to the on/off street parking including hours of control required consultation. The consultation took place from 23 January to 18 February 2024. The consultation included stakeholders, residents and town and parish councils.
- A question was asked about the new parking arrangements at Winslow Station as there were no ticket machines at the station and whether parking could be paid for at the same time as purchasing a train ticket. There would be digital methods of payment at Winslow Car Park. An operator for the train line had not yet been chosen so it was difficult to guarantee any payment method currently but they would raise this with them once chosen. Another Member commented that residents might try and park close to the station e.g Greyhound Lane rather than paying. The Cabinet Member for Transport reported that parking prices did influence behaviour in terms of choice but also so did convenience. New fees would be introduced and regularised across the County.
- If machines were not working this could be a loss of income to the Council. The Cabinet Member for Transport reported that the team were out daily repairing machines. When machines were near their end of life parts were very difficult to get hold of. With any new machines suppliers should be able to get machines back on line as soon as possible and they should all be digital/contactless in the future. Residents should still be able to pay on other machines or payment methods including RingGo if a machine was out of order so there should be no loss of income. Charges remained in effect even if a machine or one payment method was out of use. They could also do this via a smart phone or by ringing through to RingGo. Machines were very expensive to replace.
- Reference was made to free parking in order to help businesses in towns and what parish or town councils could do. The Cabinet Member for Transport reported that a number of car parks were free for one hour and there was a local agreement with town and parish councils to pay the fee. If the Town and Parish Council were still interested in this they should contact the Parking Services Team who would provide them with the likely cost and parameters of providing free parking. Bespoke agreements could also be put in place for one off days e.g market day. Any arrangement would need to be cost neutral for the Council. All car parks would have the same number of free days to ensure consistency. The Cabinet Member for Communities reported that this issue should be raised at Community Boards and local members should be kept updated.
- Parking recovery had taken time post-covid and it was important to wait until parking patterns had settled down before any reviews were undertaken.
- Some older residents might need some help in the use of parking apps.
- Reference was made to two problem parking areas; Kingsbury Square Aylesbury and Hampden House Car Park which suffered from anti social behaviour and would be a good example of where regeneration was

required. As a Chairman of a Community Board he was keen to use some of their funding for yellow lines near schools and to make sure they were enforced. Enforcement could only take place if restrictions were in place and the police could only enforce some restrictions e.g parking on verges. Parking teams carried out enforcement around schools regularly. With the new Moving Traffic Offences the Council could now enforce zig zag lines and also technology could be used for this area.

- Parking notifications could be used without incurring charges.

RESOLVED that Cabinet -

- 1. agree the Parking Strategy for Buckinghamshire which sets out the ambitions and vision for parking across Buckinghamshire.**
- 2. note the following which are in motion:**
 - a. Public consultation launched week commencing 15 January 2024 on the Traffic Regulation Order to make amendments to provide a more consistent customer experience by; removing unfunded free parking sessions, updating hours of control, including introducing hours and charges in preparation for the new Winslow Station Car Park, and making On-Street charging amendments.**
 - b. Actions to strengthen the in-house parking team and increase enforcement capacity to drive up parking compliance.**
 - c. In the process of joining the pilot of the National Parking Payment Platform – a pilot funded by the Department for Transport to increase flexibility to customers on how they choose to pay for parking and remove the subsidy for Wycombe RingGo fees.**
 - d. A review of our parking estate, which may result in disposal of non-profit making car parks.**
 - e. Preparation in the making to support transition to a digital strategy for payment for parking, as cash payment machines reach the end of life.**

8 The future of E-scooter and E-bike hire schemes in Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire Council hosted three of the national e-scooter trials (Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Princes Risborough). The Council introduced e-bikes to complement the trial schemes in Aylesbury and High Wycombe in July 2023. In the King's speech on 7th November 2023, it was announced that the government's e-scooter trial period would be extended by a further two years to 31st May 2026. No firm decision had been made by the Government regarding legalisation of e-scooters beyond this point, or beyond the geographic extent of the existing trial areas.

The Council's contract with Zipp Mobility, which operated the service at zero cost to the Council (aside from officer time), was currently set to conclude on 31st May 2024, in line with the former end of the Government's trial period. Options considered to continue, reduce the scope of, or cease the e-scooter and/or ebike hire offer were outlined in the report.

The Council's own trials for e-scooters started in Aylesbury and High Wycombe in

October 2020. A further trial was launched in Princes Risborough in May 2021. Fifty-one thousand people have downloaded the app and there were currently 85 e-scooters in Wycombe, 173 in Aylesbury and 10 in Princes Risborough. E-scooters tended to be used by younger people whilst e-bikes were used by older people. At the moment privately-owned e-scooters were illegal on both roads and in pedestrian areas, including within the designated trial areas; being classed as motor vehicles but not having received clearance by statute for use on roads. Safety features have been added to the rental scheme e-scooters during the trials at the Councils request, including enhanced braking and additional light fittings, which were likely to be absent from privately-owned scooters. In particular, the rental scheme e-scooters were 'geofenced' to operate within specified areas only, and their speed limited to 15.5mph, which private e-scooters were not. The trial zones could not be extended to new areas or towns at present.

Buckinghamshire Council's e-scooter and e-bike scheme was managed at zero cost to the Council by the supplier. If there was any loss the burden was on the supplier.

E-bikes were introduced to the Aylesbury and High Wycombe rental schemes in July 2023. E-bikes were legal to use on the highway, having the same road classification as pedal bicycles. Fifty e-bikes were split between Aylesbury and High Wycombe. However, Zipp Mobility had experienced multiple issues with vandalism and theft and so the security of these was currently being reviewed. Zipp was relaunching the e-bikes in early 2024, with enhanced security features.

Through the Council's own surveys and the DfT's 2022 report it was clear that e-scooters did provide a sustainable travel solution for local journeys. Zipp Mobility had performed well in terms of customer service (customer satisfaction is 83%) and safety record when compared to the national picture. Continuing the scheme meant the Council could continue to offer a sustainable travel option to the local community, helping to reduce congestion and carbon emissions.

It was noted that two local members in Wycombe, Councillors Clarke and Green had some reservations regarding the e-scooter trial and their safety. However the Council had worked closely with the police to educate young people on the safe use of e-scooters in Aylesbury and it would be helpful to have an education event in Wycombe. Reference was made to the fact that Paris had banned rental scooters but not private scooters which was confusing as the rental scooters had better safety control. Copenhagen and Madrid had brought back e-scooters with better controls.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- In terms of the EQIA the service area had liaised with different groups and they had discussions with the supplier about improving features e.g a different coloured bell.
- Concern was raised about the vandalism and theft of the e-bikes and whether anything could be attached to the e-bikes to stop this. The Cabinet

Member for Transport reported that any obstacles could be trip hazards. When a resident had finished using them they were supposed to take a photograph of the bike/scooter and where they had left it. There were also geo locators to see where they could be picked up and also whether any batteries needed replacing. It was important to move units around to ensure ease of access. It was thought that the theft of e-bikes was an organised activity which was not replicated elsewhere.

- The aim of the pilot scheme was to look at the benefits of installing a more permanent scheme.
- E-scooters could be used in any designated area and shared walking and cycle ways. This was shown by a blue sign with a picture of a bike.
- There was also legislation in place to limit the speeds of e-bikes to ensure that they were not modified to increase speed. It was up to the police to enforce this.

RESOLVED that the E-Scooter and E-bike hire schemes continue until May 2026.

9 Sale of Land in High Wycombe to Existing Leaseholder

In September 2022, the Leaseholder signed a Collaboration Agreement (“CA”) with Buckinghamshire Council to investigate the potential to sell surplus land at Wycombe Air Park. In May 2023, the Leaseholder, with financial backing from an investor, approached the Council to acquire a 150-year leasehold interest in the Site. Linked to this were other terms to vary their existing leasehold interest on Wycombe Air Park. In October 2023, the Leaseholder put forward a “best and final unconditional cash offer” to the Council.

The Site was a 13-acre net (18-acre gross) site within WAP. It, along with other buildings on WAP, currently provided hangar space and other employment buildings necessary for the airfield to operate. Feedback from the Leaseholder was that WAP was in a state of gradual decline. This trend was set to continue without a material cash injection.

The Site was identified as a strategic employment site (HW15) within the adopted Wycombe District Local Plan (2019); in addition, there was potentially a further 6-12 acres of land within WAP that was also available for development, it too falling within HW15. The Leaseholder had secured financial backing from an investor (“the funder”) to upgrade WAP. A pre-condition of the funder was that the Leaseholder acquired the Site on a long leasehold basis on a peppercorn rent (150-year term minimum). This would benefit the local economy and employment. The capital receipt had been built into the MTFP.

During discussion it was noted that the local members were very supportive of this proposal.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve:-

1) Buckinghamshire Council (“BC”) selling a long leasehold interest in the Site at

Wycombe Air Park (“WAP”) to the leaseholder (“the principal transaction”). This will generate a capital receipt which is budgeted for in the MTFP.

2) BC simultaneously completing on all associated legal agreements including Deeds of Variation to existing legal agreements between the parties (“related transactions”).

3) Granting delegated authority to the Director of Property Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources, Service Director Legal and Democratic Services and the S151 Officer to progress legal due diligence, obtaining all necessary sign off reports and the carrying out of all necessary due diligence prior to exchange/completion on both the principal and related transactions (“the overall transaction”) on the terms set out in the Heads of Terms (Appendix 1 in the Confidential Appendix).

4) a budget spend on legal and professional fees to progress the transaction, noting that this is to be funded from the Capital Receipt and does not require a budget amendment.

- 10 **Exclusion of the public (if required)**
RESOLVED -

that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Paragraph 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

- 11 **Confidential appendices Sale of Land in High Wycombe to Existing Leaseholder**
The confidential appendix was discussed.
- 12 **Date of next meeting**
25 March 2024 at 1pm

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Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet/Leader forward plan

The local authorities (executive arrangements) (meetings and access to information) (England) regulations 2012

This is a notice of an intention to make a key decision on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council (regulation 9) and an intention to meet in private to consider those items marked as 'private reports' (regulation 5).

A further notice (the 'agenda') will be published no less than five working days before the date of the decision meeting and will be available via the Buckinghamshire Council website ([Cabinet agendas](#) / [Leader decisions](#)).

All reports will be open unless specified otherwise.

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Cabinet 5 March 2024				
Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029 For Cabinet to agree the updated Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029 following the councillor, stakeholder organisation and public consultation exercise	All Wards	Councillor Mark Winn Lisa Michelson		31/1/24

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Update An update on a number of points regarding the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty including the strategy being proposed by the Chiltern Conservation Board regarding their Management Plan.</p>	Amersham & Chesham Bois; Aston Clinton & Bierton; Beaconsfield; Chalfont St Giles; Chesham; Chess Valley; Chiltern Ridges; Chiltern Villages; Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South East; Ivinghoe; Little Chalfont & Amersham Common; Marlow; Penn Wood & Old Amersham; Ridgeway West; Ryemead & Micklefield; Terriers & Amersham Hill; The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor; Totteridge & Bowerdean; Tylers Green & Loudwater; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville	Councillor Thomas Broom Darran Eggleton		2/2/24

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Buckinghamshire Healthy Ageing Strategy 2023-28 To approve the Council's Healthy Ageing Strategy 2023-2028. The Healthy Ageing Strategy sets out how the Council and its partners will work to make Buckinghamshire more age friendly, which is a priority in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This will support Buckinghamshire residents to live healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives for as long as possible, to 'age well'.</p>		<p>Councillor Angela Macpherson</p> <p>Dr Jane O'Grady</p>		23/12/22
<p>Future High Street Fund Scheme Seeking agreement to proceed with a regeneration scheme in High Wycombe, as part of the Future High Street Fund programme</p>	Abbey	<p>Councillor John Chilver</p> <p>John Reed</p>	Part exempt (para 3)	12/1/24
Cabinet 9 April 2024				
<p>All-age Autism Strategy To agree the All-age Autism strategy for Buckinghamshire</p>		<p>Councillor Angela Macpherson</p> <p>Simon Brauner-Cave</p>		13/7/23
<p>Littering Enforcement Strategy - Options Strategy on how to take litter enforcement forward - options paper.</p>		<p>Councillor Thomas Broom</p> <p>Martin Dickman</p>	Part exempt (para 3)	7/9/23
<p>Old County Offices, Aylesbury – Disposal Options for the future of the building known as Old County Offices</p>	Aylesbury North	<p>Councillor John Chilver</p> <p>John Reed</p>	Part exempt (para 3)	10/11/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Sale of Long Leasehold Interest in Wycombe (2) Proposal to sell a long leasehold interest in the Wycombe Area	Chiltern Villages	Councillor John Chilver John Reed	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	12/1/24
South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) Phase 1 Delivery of Phase 1 of the South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR)	Aston Clinton & Bierton; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville	Councillor Steve Broadbent Steve Bambrick	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	12/1/24
Cabinet 7 May 2024				
Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee Annual Report 2023-24 To consider and note the Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee's annual report for the period 2023/24.		Councillor John Chilver Richard Ambrose		22/2/24
Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2024-27 A 3 year strategy to support partners to tackle domestic abuse and violence against women and girls in Buckinghamshire; continuing a focus on supporting victims and survivors, tackling perpetrators through early intervention & prevention		Councillor Arif Hussain Gideon Springer		31/1/24
Leisure Strategy To provide an assessment of indoor sports and leisure facilities, considering future opportunities and demand around this provision.		Councillor Clive Harriss Sophie Payne		26/1/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Strategic Asset Management Plan A new Strategic Asset Management Plan (2023-2028) to ensure the framework and management of the property portfolio is in line with our requirements now and in the future.</p>		Councillor John Chilver John Reed		29/8/23
February 2024 Leader Decisions				
<p>Physical Activity Strategy 2024 - 2029 To approve the Councils physical activity strategy for 2024-29. The physical activity strategy sets out how the Council and its partners will improve the levels of physical activity and opportunities for Buckinghamshire residents.</p>		Councillor Angela Macpherson Dr Jane O'Grady		19/4/23
<p>Supported Living Services Commissioning Regarding the delivery of Supported Living Services in Buckinghamshire from April 2024</p>		Councillor Angela Macpherson, Councillor Mark Winn Lisa Michelson	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	13/12/23
March 2024 Leader Decisions				
<p>Archive Service Policies All encompassing overview statement to include sub-policies that cover all aspects of service delivery for the Archives Service.</p>		Councillor Clive Harriss Sophie Payne		27/11/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Aylesbury cycleway north of Bedgrove Park Early investigative works for a new cycleway linking the Hampden Fields development and the existing Aylesbury cycle network</p>	Aylesbury East; Aylesbury South East	Councillor Steve Broadbent Rebecca Dengler-Jones, Robin Smith		11/10/23
<p>Aylesbury Road, Aston Clinton Parking Scheme Yellow lines to control parking and waiting on London Road and Aylesbury Road, Aston Clinton and at side road junctions to support the Highway Code.</p>	Aston Clinton & Bierton	Councillor Steve Broadbent John Pateman		27/11/23
<p>Buckinghamshire Tobacco Control Strategy 2024-29 To approve the Councils Buckinghamshire Tobacco Control Strategy 2024-29, which sets out how the Council and its partners aim to save lives and improve the health of thousands of people in Buckinghamshire by minimising their exposure to tobacco.</p>		Councillor Angela Macpherson Dr Jane O'Grady		6/7/23
<p>Capital Gateway – adjustments to the Capital Programme Paper for Decision to release 2 Schools Programme capital budgets via the Capital Gateway process, to enable projects to proceed to delivery. Also to add a new project into the Capital Programme</p>	Abbey; Buckingham East; Buckingham West	Councillor John Chilver Dave Skinner		13/2/24

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Castlefield Traffic Calming Measures To enable the implementation of the Castlefield Traffic Calming scheme, High Wycombe.	Booker, Cressex & Castlefield	Councillor Steve Broadbent Kevin Goad		4/1/24
Fleet Trading Account Budget (2024/25) To confirm details of the 2024/25 Fleet Trading Account budget, which is a zero balanced budget and therefore can't be included in the full council decision taken in February for other revenue budgets.		Councillor Steve Broadbent Lindsey Vallis		31/1/24
Determined Admission Arrangements 2025 Primary and Secondary admissions arrangements for Buckinghamshire schools for 2025 entry to be determined by 28 February 2025		Councillor Anita Cranmer Debbie Munday		4/1/24
Hackney carriage fare review Review of current maximum hackney carriage fares.		Councillor Mark Winn Lindsey Vallis		17/10/23
Harmonisation of Pest Control Fees The harmonisation of policy and fees regarding which residents are able to access subsidised pest control treatment.		Councillor Mark Winn Jacqui Bromilow		30/8/22
Improvement works Market Square, Cambridge Street, Kingsbury Aylesbury Improvement works	Aylesbury North	Councillor Peter Strachan Richard Ambrose		2/2/24

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Junction Improvement A41 Aylesbury Early investigation works to improve the A41 / King Edwards Avenue junction, funded by the Housing Infrastructure Fund.</p>	Aylesbury East; Aylesbury South East	Councillor Steve Broadbent Rebecca Dengler-Jones, Robin Smith		11/10/23
<p>Proposed Picasso Place Cycle Crossing, on the Platinum Way Cycle Way A new Raised Cycle Crossing table on the Platinum Way Cycle Way, across Picasso Place is proposed. Currently, the existing cycle users have to rejoin the carriageway from the off road route, which presents hazards to vulnerable users</p>	Aylesbury North West	Councillor Steve Broadbent Simon Glover		17/10/23
<p>Proposed Traffic calming on High Street, Edlesborough Installation of 'build-out' feature within the carriageway to effectively narrow the road to one lane of traffic with northbound traffic giving way. This scheme is to be constructed and paid for by the developer to land north of Good Intent.</p>	Ivinghoe	Councillor Steve Broadbent Joe Bates		23/5/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Reapportionment of Aylesbury Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Project savings Options for the use of savings following re-apportionment of the Aylesbury Housing Infrastructure Fund</p>	<p>Aylesbury East; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury South East; Aylesbury South West; Aylesbury West</p>	<p>Councillor Martin Tett Steve Bambrick</p>	<p>Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)</p>	<p>13/12/23</p>
<p>Review of the Council's Highway Safety Inspection Policy To recommend approval of Buckinghamshire Councils Highways Safety Inspection Policy, updated to improve the efficiency, quantity and quality of highways works and general safety on the highways network</p>		<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Richard Barker</p>		<p>13/2/24</p>
<p>Rosefield Solar Farm Development Consent Order (DCO) This report seeks approval to obtain delegated powers for the Service Director of Planning & Environment to engage in the Development Consent Order process for the Rosefield Solar Farm. The delegation will also include consultation with relevant Cabinet Member(s) on certain key documents submitted to the Council for a formal response.</p>	<p>Buckingham West; Great Brickhill; Grendon Underwood; Stone & Waddesdon; Wing; Winslow</p>	<p>Councillor Peter Strachan Christine Urry</p>		<p>11/10/23</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Sale of surplus land known as The Courtyard, Cressex, High Wycombe</p> <p>A decision is required on accepting one of the offers received as a result of an open market disposal process. The site has been declared surplus to requirements and the decision to sell with result in capital receipt and appropriate levels of affordable housing provision. The site will have been marketed for 4 weeks with the results of the process being presented in a full report to the Leader.</p>	Abbey	Councillor John Chilver John Reed	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	10/11/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan - Affordable Housing - Supplementary Planning Document This Supplementary Planning Document provides affordable housing guidance to the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Policies H1, H2, H6a, H6c, BE2.</p>	Aston Clinton & Bierton; Aylesbury East; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury South East; Aylesbury South West; Aylesbury West; Bernwood; Buckingham East; Buckingham West; Great Brickhill; Grendon Underwood; Ivinghoe; Stone & Waddesdon; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville; Wing; Winslow	Councillor Peter Strachan Charlotte Morris		15/2/23
April 2024 Leader Decisions				
<p>Local Flood Risk Management Strategy An update to the local flood risk management strategy.</p>		Councillor Thomas Broom Colin Walker		27/11/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
May 2024 Leader Decisions				
<p>School Transport Policy - consultation findings and recommendations 2024/2025</p> <p>Post-consultation findings and recommendations on proposed changes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home to School Transport Policy, and - Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2024/25 <p>for adoption from 2024/25</p>		<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent</p> <p>Lindsey Vallis</p>		2/2/24

Individual Leader decisions (in consultation with the Cabinet Member) are not discussed at meetings – a report is presented to the Cabinet Member and the Leader will decide whether to sign the decision.

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this forward plan, please get in touch with the contact officer. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team in good time ahead of the decision deadline date. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk. You can view decisions to be made and decisions taken on the council's website.

The council's definition of a 'key decision' can be seen in part 1 of the council's [constitution](#).

Each item considered will have a report; appendices will be included (as appropriate). Regulation 9(1g) allows that other documents relevant to the item may be submitted to the decision maker. Subject to prohibition or restriction on their disclosure, this information will be published on the website usually five working days before the date of the meeting. Paper copies may be requested using the contact details below.

*The public can be excluded for an item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt (private) information as defined in part I of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972. The relevant paragraph numbers and descriptions are as follows:

Paragraph 1 - Information relating to any individual

Paragraph 2 - Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual

Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Paragraph 4 - Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority

Paragraph 5 - Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings

Paragraph 6 - Information which reveals that the authority proposes:

(a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or

(b) to make an order or direction under any enactment

Paragraph 7 - Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

Part II of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that information falling into paragraphs 1 - 7 above is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Nothing in the regulations authorises or requires a local authority to disclose to the public or make available for public inspection any document or part of a document if, in the opinion of the proper officer, that document or part of a document contains or may contain confidential information. Should you wish to make any representations in relation to any of the items being considered in private, you can do so – in writing – using the contact details below.

Democratic services, Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP19 8FF 01296 382343
democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Select Committee Work Programmes 2023/24

Children’s and Education Select Committee (Chairman: Cllr Julie Ward, Scrutiny officer: Katie Dover)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
7 th March	Pathways to SEND services	To provide a 6 month update on the progress against the recommendations within the Pathways to SEND review group report	John Macilwraith Gareth Drawmer	John Macilwraith Gareth Drawmer
	New attendance duties	To provide the committee with an update on the new attendance duties and the implications for Buckinghamshire.	John Macilwraith Gareth Drawmer	John Macilwraith Gareth Drawmer
	Education Standards Paper	To share with the committee the latest educational outcomes achieved by the children and young people of Buckinghamshire.	John Macilwraith Gareth Drawmer	John Macilwraith Gareth Drawmer

Communities and Localism Select Committee (Chairman: Cllr Steve Bowles, Scrutiny officer: Kelly Sutherland)

Date	Topic	Description and Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
10 April 2024	Asylum and Migration Strategy	The Committee will receive an update on the implementation of the Council's Asylum and Migration Strategy.	Matt Everitt	Cllr Arif Hussain, Matt Everitt
	Leisure Strategy	The Committee will consider the key elements of the proposed Leisure Strategy ahead of it being presented to Cabinet for agreement.	Sophie Payne	Cllr Clive Harriss, Sophie Payne Sue Drummond

Finance and Resources Select Committee (Chairman: Ralph Bagge, Scrutiny officer: Chris Ward)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
18 April 2024	Customer First	To consider a report following the year's activity on the Customer First programme.	Sarah Murphy-Brookman Lloyd Jefferies Andy Hallsworth	John Chilver Tim Butcher

Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee (Chairman: David Carroll, Scrutiny officer: Tom Fowler)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
18 th April 2024	NPPF Update	To update the committee on changes made to the National Planning Policy Framework	Eric Owens/Darran Eggleton	Peter Strachan
	Planning Committee performance	Numbers of applications, type of applications, over-turns, appeals and cost awards	Christine Urry	Peter Strachan
	Local Plan Update	To update the committee on the progress of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan	Darran Eggleton/John Cheston	Peter Strachan

Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (Chairman: Jane MacBean, Scrutiny officer: Liz Wheaton)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Presenters	Contributors
11 April 2024	Development of Primary Care Networks – Annual report	Members will receive an annual report on the development of primary care networks, to include resourcing, staffing and outcomes.	Philippa Baker, Place Director	Anna Markus, Head of Primary Care Integration Bobby Pozzoni-Child, Strategy Manager, Bucks GP Provider Alliance
	Access to NHS Dentists and dental care in Buckinghamshire	Access to NHS dentists and dental care generally has been a concern raised by the Committee. In light of the Integrated Care Board’s new responsibility for commissioning primary care services to include Pharmacy, Optometry and Dentistry, Members will hear from key people involved in commissioning and delivering dentistry. The ICB has also recently published its Primary care strategy as part of its public engagement process which is due to be approved by the Board in May 2024.	TBC	TBC

Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee (Chairman: Bill Chapple OBE, Scrutiny officer: Chris Ward)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
28 March 2024	HS2	To receive an update on the project	Dr Laura Leech	Steve Broadbent Peter Martin HS2 Reps



Report to Cabinet

Date:	5 March 2024
Title:	Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029
Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services
Contact officer:	Lisa Michelson – Service Director
Ward(s) affected:	None specific
Recommendations:	It is recommended that Cabinet note the response to the recent public consultation and approve the proposed amendments (in Appendix 2) to the draft Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029.
Reason for decision:	The housing strategy is a major place strategy for Buckinghamshire. It sets out the Council's priorities for housing as they relate to delivering the Council's statutory duty, increasing the level of affordable housing, and ensuring suitable housing conditions. It is the Council's role as the housing authority to set the strategic direction for Buckinghamshire.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Development of the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy took place in Spring and Summer of 2023. A public and stakeholder consultation on the housing strategy took place between 8 November 2023 and 18 January 2024. This public consultation included an all member briefing and discussion at the 14 December 2023 Growth Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee meeting as well as other targeted engagement.
- 1.2 The responses to the consultation indicated that there is broad agreement of the vision, the three priorities, and the critical success factors.

1.3 One theme, from the comments to the consultation, raised queries around delivery and action plans. These plans are under development and will align to the final strategy once adopted.

1.4 Changes to the housing strategy (detailed in Appendix 2) have been incorporated in the final version for agreement at Cabinet and later at full Council for adoption.

2. Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy

2.1 The Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy has been devised for the five-year period 2024 to 2029. The vision for the housing strategy is:

A strong housing offer that provides affordable, accessible, sustainable and suitable choices are all life stages.

2.2 The three strategic priorities for the housing strategy are:

- Priority One - Understanding the housing needs of our diverse population.
- Priority Two - Better Homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need.
- Priority Three - New Homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate.

2.3 The Critical Success Factors for each of the priorities are:

i) Understanding the housing needs of our diverse population – we will:

- Understand the housing issues and needs.
- Enable the fair, consistent and allocation of tenancies for affordable housing via Bucks Home Choice Register.
- Adopt an effective and proactive approach to address Temporary Accommodation (TA) and homelessness increases in number of placements and costs.
- Identify, specify, and deliver housing options for groups with particular needs.

ii) Better Homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need – we will:

- Ensure that Registered Providers are actively maintaining and improving the quality of their homes.
- Ensure that the Private Rented Sector maintains and improves the quality of rental properties.
- Work to ensure that best use is made of existing social housing.
- Improve the accessibility of new and existing homes.

iii) New Homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate – we will:

- Support and enable Registered Providers to deliver new affordable homes, including for those with special needs.
- Explore the use of local authority assets and resources for the purposes of delivering additional new housing.
Ensure that residential development (including affordable housing) is considered in regeneration strategies, and in brownfield and redevelopment proposals for mixed use developments where appropriate.

2.4 A public consultation on the housing strategy took place between 8 November 2023 and 18 January 2024. The consultation was carried out via [YourVoiceBucks](#) and through the housing strategy consultation.

email: housingconsulteecomments@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

2.5 Responses to the public consultation consisted of the following:

- 161 respondents, of whom 135 were individuals and 26 were responding on behalf of an organisation,
- 69% of respondents were aged 55 or over, while less than 9% were aged 35 or under,
- 73% of the respondents were owner-occupiers, with the majority being members of households who own their homes outright. 6% rented privately and 4% rented from a social landlord,
- 40% of individual respondents were retired and 46% work either full-time or part-time,
- Most individual respondents were White British (although this question had a poor response rate, with a quarter choosing not to answer),
- The number of respondents was too low to enable a breakdown of views by any demographic or geographic categories.

2.6 There was a high rate of approval for the three priorities in the housing strategy.

2.7 In reviewing the responses, a number of themes emerged:

- i) There is a need to prioritise affordable housing delivery in Buckinghamshire. How can more affordable homes be achieved?
- ii) Alongside new house building there is a need to ensure other priority infrastructure is developed such as transport, schools, health services and roads,
- iii) For Priority 3, *New homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate*, there were a number of comments raising climate change issues associated with construction and population growth,

- iv) There are concerns about the need to protect green space from residential development,
- v) The emphasis on the quality of new homes in regards to construction standards, design, and energy efficiency is important.
- vi) The strategy needs to be clear about housing for priority vulnerable groups such as older people and care leavers etc.

2.8 In addition, there were three notable suggestions, for policy change in the strategy, which were raised in the consultation:

- i) *A specific Buckinghamshire affordable housing definition should be devised.*

This was considered but is not recommended.

The National Planning Policy Framework definition of Affordable Housing is a nationally accepted and recognised definition produced by the Government. To adopt a Buckinghamshire specific one would leave the Council vulnerable to legal challenge. Developers and other parties may use a local definition as a means to brand certain housing delivery models as 'affordable' which do not meet the local needs in Buckinghamshire.

- ii) *Buckinghamshire Council should create its own housing development company to develop affordable housing in Buckinghamshire.*

The creation of a new housing development company would represent a reversal of legacy decision-making that stretches back many years and would require a substantial level of capital investment and associated risk. To understand this option, legal advice has been commissioned and will be available in the Spring 2024. A review of this advice and further discussion of this option will take place at this time. In the meanwhile, the strategy does not preclude the Council pursuing the option of creating its own housing development company if that was a decision taken at some point in the future.

- iii) *The target for delivery of 500 new affordable homes per year is not ambitious enough.*

The housing market in Buckinghamshire is challenging and delivery of affordable housing is difficult given financial constraints and other new requirements for quality of new housing build. The Council works with Registered Providers and other developers to push affordable housing delivery volumes as high as possible. While a target of 500 new affordable homes per year is not sufficient to meet all the expected affordable housing needs in Buckinghamshire, this target has been reviewed through engagement with Registered Providers in the county and is assessed as

achievable. However, the target will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated if appropriate.

2.9 The final housing strategy is scheduled to be presented to Full Council on 17 April 2024 for proposed adoption.

3. Other options considered

3.1 **Not to produce a Housing Strategy for Buckinghamshire** – This is not recommended. The strategy supports the Council’s role as setting the strategic direction for housing. The strategy also enables clarity and coordination between the council and delivery partners.

4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 Although there is no legal obligation upon local authorities to produce a housing strategy, it is relevant to the following legislation:

- Housing Act 1996 – legal obligations for the allocation of social housing and assisting households who are potentially or have become homeless.
- Homelessness Act 2002 – a legal obligation to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping review and strategy.
- Housing Act 2004 – improvement of private sector housing conditions.
- Localism Act 2011 – a legal obligation to produce a Tenancy Strategy.
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 – a legal obligation upon local authorities to prevent or relief homelessness.

4.2 Many of the actions within the Housing Strategy will be delivered within the Council’s existing MTFP budgets for Housing. These are:

Expenditure Budgets £k	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Revenue Budget	11,244	10,357	10,357	
Capital Programme Budget	10,824	5,596	5,596	4,066

4.3 The exceptions to this are where affordable housing is delivered by Developers (through s.106 planning requirements) and where Registered Providers are leading on the delivery of affordable housing using their own funding sources.

4.4 A full list of actions with their funding sources is included in Appendix 3.

4a Director of Legal & Democratic Services Comment

The Director has read and noted the report.

4b Section 151 Officer Comment

The Housing Strategy will be delivered within existing MTFP budgets, through the Planning regime, and through partnership working with Registered Providers.

5. Corporate implications

- iv) Property – The housing strategy includes broad content and recommended actions relating the potential use of Council-owned property and assets to support the delivery of affordable housing. Any decisions on assets are not included in the strategy and would be subject to business case development and other governance.
- v) Human Resources – The housing strategy is a strategic document for use with stakeholders and partners, any involvement on this strategy for officers/teams are part of normal business as usual.
- vi) Climate change – The housing strategy sets out priorities for good quality and energy efficient new homes and improving conditions of existing housing stock. The strategy also sets out council expectations which will influence new house building requirements in the local plan and other key council strategies such as the Buckinghamshire Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021.
- vii) Sustainability – The housing strategy sets out priorities for good quality and energy efficient new homes and improving conditions of existing housing stock. The strategy also sets out council expectations which will influence new house building requirements in the local plan and other key council strategies such as the Buckinghamshire Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021.
- viii) Equality – An Equality Assessment has been produced.
- ix) Data – The housing strategy utilises publicly available data.
- x) Value for money – Individual projects, resulting from the strategy, will be considered for ‘value for money’ on a case by case basis e.g. through the development of a business case.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 Two All-Member briefings took place on Monday 6 November and were well-attended by local members. The Housing Strategy was considered at the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee on the 14th of December 2023. Written feedback has been provided to all questions which were posed at these meetings.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

7.1 The draft Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029 has been drawn up from engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and partners. Initially a series of workshops were held in the Autumn of 2022 to explore the priorities and the actions that would sit beneath them. This report contains details of the additional consultation exercises which have taken place between November 2023 and January 2024.

7.2 In addition, a wide range of sources have been used to provide information on housing need and condition in Buckinghamshire, including the Census 2021, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) data, Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) information on earnings.

8. Next steps and review

8.1 The draft Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029 to Full Council for adoption on 17 April.

9. Background papers

9.1 Appendix One: Information on the internal teams and external partner organisations who were consulted and the methods by which they were consulted.

9.2 Appendix Two: Changes which have been made to the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029 post-consultation.

9.3 Appendix Three: Buckinghamshire Council Housing Strategy Actions 2024-2029 – cost implications

9.4 Appendix Four: The Updated Housing Strategy, reflecting the consultation.

9.5 Appendix Five: Analysis of the Consultation results

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team by 5pm on 1 March 2024. This can be done by email to democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

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Appendix One: Information on the internal teams and external partner organisations who were consulted and the methods by which they were consulted.

Internal Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Communication method
Councillors	All-Member Briefing 6 November 2023
Special Needs Accommodation Group	Presentation at meeting, 6 November 2023
Housing JSNA Working Group	Presentation at meeting, 28 November 2023
Regeneration	Email
Environmental Health	Email
Adult Care Services	Email
Children's Services	Email
Public Health	Email
Planning Policy	Email
Community Safety Team	Email
Anti-Social Behaviour Team	Email

External Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Communication method
Growth Board	Email as part of the consultation exercise. Item on the forward plan for the Growth Board in March 2024.
Health and Wellbeing Board	Housing Strategy to be presented a part of an item on updates from the Specialist Accommodation Group.
Members of Housing Development Forum	Email
Members of Housing Management Forum	Email
Parish Councils	Email/Corporate update
Town Councils	Email/ Corporate update
Community Boards	Email/Corporate update

Temporary Housing provision for Winter Warmth	Email
Connections Support	Email
Aylesbury Homeless Action Group	Email
Wycombe Homeless Connection	Email
Wycombe Rent Deposit Scheme	Email
Oasis	Email
Supported Housing YMCA.	Email
Health Watch Bucks	Email
Community Impact Bucks	Email
Opportunity Bucks	Email

Appendix Two: Changes made to the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029 as a result of the public consultation

Page 5 Map	To state that Cressex Business Park is a significant employment area, the largest in the south of Buckinghamshire, and a key employment asset.
Page 9 para 2.4	To rephrase “ <i>which have the protected parts of Buckinghamshire from significant housing and economic growth</i> ”
Page 9 para 2.5	Changes to be made which are more consistent with local planning policy.
Page 10	Changes to be made to a statistic – a minus sign to be inserted instead of a plus sign.
Page 11 Local Plan 1 st para	Addition - the 2023 Vision and Options consultation is now complete, in 2024 we will be consulting on a number of strategies for where and how the plan will meet development needs.
Page 23 1 st priority	An explanation to be inserted on why the target of 500 homes has been chosen.
Page 23 3 rd priority	To refer to affordable housing instead of residential development. Brownfield site prioritisation should not be referred to in this document.
Page 24 1 st bullet point	Should refer to Appendix 1 instead of Appendix 2.
Page 24 4 th bullet point	To also refer to increasing interest rates.
Page 24 last bullet point	Rephrase to : <i>The plan will reflect the level of need across the county, the allocation of sites will be based on an assessment of sites suitable for housing use.</i>
Page 25 7 th bullet	To eliminate duplication in these points.
Page 25 final bullet point	To add “for affordable housing” after commuted sums to be clear it is only those s.106 contributions that are being considered
Appendix 1 page 29	To refer to the scheduled increase in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) has now been increased
Appendix 1 page 29	Changes to be made to statistics in table.
Appendix 1 page 30	For PRS acronym include Private Rented Sector
Appendix 1 page 30	Final para before conclusions – refers to core calculations below – but it is not clear which ones are referred to
Appendix 2 Overall housing supply	To refer to the fact that the majority of homes were built in the former Aylesbury Vale district and give reasons.

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Appendix Three: Buckinghamshire Council Housing Strategy Actions 2024-2029 – cost implications

Please note: Buckinghamshire Council may contribute Section 106 commuted sums as capital contributions to affordable housing projects. However, the amount available in this budget is continuously monitored and there will be no overspend. Under the new Affordable Housing Enabling Framework, capital contributions to affordable housing projects will be allocated through an Affordable Housing Investment Group consisting of a senior officer within the council and two councillors. The funding will be available to registered providers only. Funding will be allocated to a registered provider only if a project meets a prescribed set of eligibility criteria. No additional funding will be available to supplement the original sum which was agreed.

Actions for Priority one – Responding to the needs of our Diverse Population

Action	Cost Implications
We are managing the social housing allocations process through Bucks Home Choice.	Costs are met through existing budgets.
We are providing a homelessness and housing advice service under Part VII of the Housing Act.	Costs are met through existing budgets
We are providing temporary accommodation to homeless households.	Costs are met through existing budgets. A plan to increase the amount of lower cost high quality temporary accommodation is in place. Registered housing providers may contribute resources to provide temporary accommodation.
We are producing an updated Allocations Policy for Buckinghamshire. This will ensure robust processes are in place for delivery of the Bucks Home Choice scheme and allocations process, including clear workflows and regular monitoring and cross checking of applications to ensure consistency of approach and fairness.	Costs are met through existing budgets.
We are meeting with Registered Providers on a regular basis and as part of the Buckinghamshire Housing Management Forum.	Costs are met through existing budgets.
We are working with Registered Partners and private developers to deliver suitable adapted/adaptable dwellings through planning obligations and other opportunities	Costs are met through existing budgets.
We will produce a new Tenancy Strategy including guidelines for registered providers on Affordable Rent levels.	This will be delivered through by the Housing Strategy and Development Team. The Tenancy Strategy is a statement of partnership working with

<u>Action</u>	<u>Cost Implications</u>
	registered providers and will not incur any additional costs for the local authority.
We will develop a Supported Housing Strategy which will include prospective housing delivery for older persons, persons with physical disabilities, and other types of supported housing.	Costs are met through existing budgets.
We will achieve the targets for developing affordable housing options as set out in the <i>Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care Accommodation Market Analysis November 2022</i> .	The capital costs of developing new affordable housing options will be assessed and agreed through developed business cases on a case by case basis. The funding for projects is most likely to be met through developer contributions, Affordable Housing Grant from the government, and registered provider resources (including rental income, reserves and borrowing). The local authority may decide to contribute resources from held Section 106 commuted sum planning contributions in some case.
We will work with Registered Providers and other housing developers to understand the role played by sheltered housing and other accommodation for older people in the area and whether some housing schemes should be remodelled to better meet current needs. Consider innovative new options for specialist housing (for example: extra-care villages with a dementia inclusive design).	The capital costs of developing new affordable housing options will be assessed and agreed through developed business cases on a case by case basis. The funding for projects is most likely to be met through developer contributions, Affordable Housing Grant from the government, and registered provider resources (including rental income, reserves and borrowing). The local authority may decide to contribute resources from held Section 106 commuted sum planning contributions in some case.
With our partners, we will produce a housing options guide for younger people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); ensure appropriate advice and signposting is available to make good choices	The cost of this project will be met through existing staffing budgets and any corporate funds for the production of new corporate publications.
We will explore ways of increasing the number of one bed properties available in the private and social rented sectors which would be suitable for young people, including care leavers under the agreed Pathways Protocol.	Costs are met through existing budgets. Work associated with the development of the Local Plan will have an important impact in achieving this.

Actions for Priority two – Better Homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Cost Implications</u>
We are supporting the Buckinghamshire Council Energy Doctor scheme (funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund).	Costs are met through existing budgets
We are supporting sustainable warmth upgrade grant programmes, such as. Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2), Solar Together, which are being carried out by Buckinghamshire Council.	Costs are met through existing external funding.
Through our work with houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), we are delivering increased levels of safe and secure accommodation for single people	Costs are met through existing budgets.
The Buckinghamshire Disabilities Facilities Grants and Housing Improvement and Adaptations Policy is being updated to ensure that it continues to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and promote the physical and mental health of residents. • Prevent accidents. • Enable residents to live safely at home, as independently as possible, for longer. • Reduce hospital admissions and enable speedy discharge from hospital. • Make best use of adapted and adaptable accommodation. 	Costs are met through existing budgets and existing external DFG funding (including in Capital Programme).
We will work with Registered Providers and other care/support agencies to agree best ways to tackle under-occupation, including incentives where appropriate in order to generate more turnover in family-sized accommodation	Costs will be met by existing budgets.

Actions for Priority three – New Homes: affordable, accessible, and appropriate.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Cost Implications</u>
We are working with Registered Providers to facilitate delivery of new schemes, helping to identify sites and secure funding as appropriate.	The capital costs of developing new affordable housing options will assets and agreed through developed business cases on a case by case

<u>Action</u>	<u>Cost Implications</u>
	basis. The funding for projects is most likely to be met through developer contributions, Affordable Housing Grant from the government, and registered provider resources (including rental income, reserves and borrowing). The local authority may decide to contribute resources from held Section 106 commuted sum planning contributions in some case. These are budgeted for in the Capital Programme, currently unreleased pending Cabinet approval.
We are supporting Registered Providers with funding for garage-site developments.	The capital costs of developing new affordable housing options will assets and agreed through developed business cases on a case by case basis. The funding for projects is most likely to be met through developer contributions, Affordable Housing Grant from the government, and registered provider resources (including rental income, reserves and borrowing). The local authority may decide to contribute resources from held Section 106 commuted sum planning contributions in some case. These are budgeted for in the Capital Programme, currently unreleased pending Cabinet approval.
We are ensuring that housing (including affordable housing) is included in regeneration plans by the Council and partners	Costs of met through existing budgets. Government Affordable Housing Grant can now be used as funding for regeneration schemes.
We will work proactively to ensure that the planning process accelerates delivery of affordable housing applications in acceptable locations	Costs will be met through existing budgets.
We will explore opportunities for 'build to rent' schemes, including the use of institutional investment.	Costs will met through existing budgets.
We will explore opportunities for the Council to deliver more housing utilising its land, property and financial assets, including any potential role for Consilio, the council's property company. (Consilio was set up by South Bucks Council in 2017 as a wholly owned local authority trading company to allow the council to facilitate income generation. It has now transferred to Buckinghamshire Council. It owns a limited number of property assets).	Direct delivery of affordable housing by Buckinghamshire Council is an option which is currently being explored. A comprehensive assessment of the financial implications of this option is being made.
We will identify three council-owned sites to bring forward for new development and complete these developments by 2027. Three new developments completed and let by December 2027	The Property Services Team will oversee the disposal of council-owned sites to achieve best value. The capital receipts from these schemes are included in the MTFP (capital programme funding), and the target makes allowance for the sites being disposed of for affordable housing. The cost of developing these schemes for the market will be offset against the capital receipt.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Cost Implications</u>
We will agree priorities for capital funding (including commuted sums) and implement a list of priorities for section 106 monies to be developed	A new Affordable Housing Enabling Framework is under development and will set out the priorities for capital funding and the process by which registered providers might apply for this funding.

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Housing Strategy Consultation Analysis

First look at results, analysis ongoing

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Prepared by Sue Hinks, Analyst,
Business Intelligence and Community Support

26th January 2024



Appendix

Housing Strategy Consultation Analysis

Introduction

- This will be Buckinghamshire's first countywide Housing Strategy and it shows what Buckinghamshire Council will do to ensure everyone has a suitable, secure and affordable place to live.

The Buckinghamshire draft Housing Strategy sets out

- the housing challenges and opportunities in Buckinghamshire
- our approach to tackling housing needs
- how we will work together with all the partners involved in delivering housing in Buckinghamshire

The strategy includes three equally important draft priorities:

- responding to the needs of our diverse population
- better homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need
- new homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate

Each priority includes:

- what we will do to achieve it
- the challenges Buckinghamshire faces
- actions we are doing now
- proposed actions for up to 2029

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- The Housing Strategy consultation was open between 8th November 2023 and 18th January 2024, seeking views from residents and stakeholders across Buckinghamshire. The original closing date was planned for 15th December 2023, but was extended in the interests of increasing the number of responses.
- There were **161** responses to the consultation, **135** responses were from individuals expressing their own views, **26** were responses expressing the views of an organisation.
- The following slides summarise the results from the main questions around the priorities and actions, together with a summary of the respondent demographics. Analysis will continue over the next two weeks, specifically looking at the free text comments.
- Although extending the closing date increased the number of respondents, unfortunately the number of respondents is still too low to enable the breakdown of views by any demographic or geographical categories.

Housing Strategy Consultation Summary

Response summary

Priority 1: Responding to the needs of our diverse population



73% agree with this priority



47% think these are the right actions to achieve this priority

Priority 2: Better homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need



79% agree with this priority



55% think these are the right actions to achieve this priority

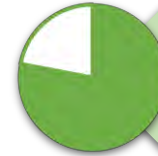
Priority 3: New homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate



66% agree with this priority



48% think these are the right actions to achieve this priority



78% of respondents said the Housing Strategy was 'easy' or 'somewhat easy' to read

Each priority has a free text field where respondents are able to explain the reason for their answers.

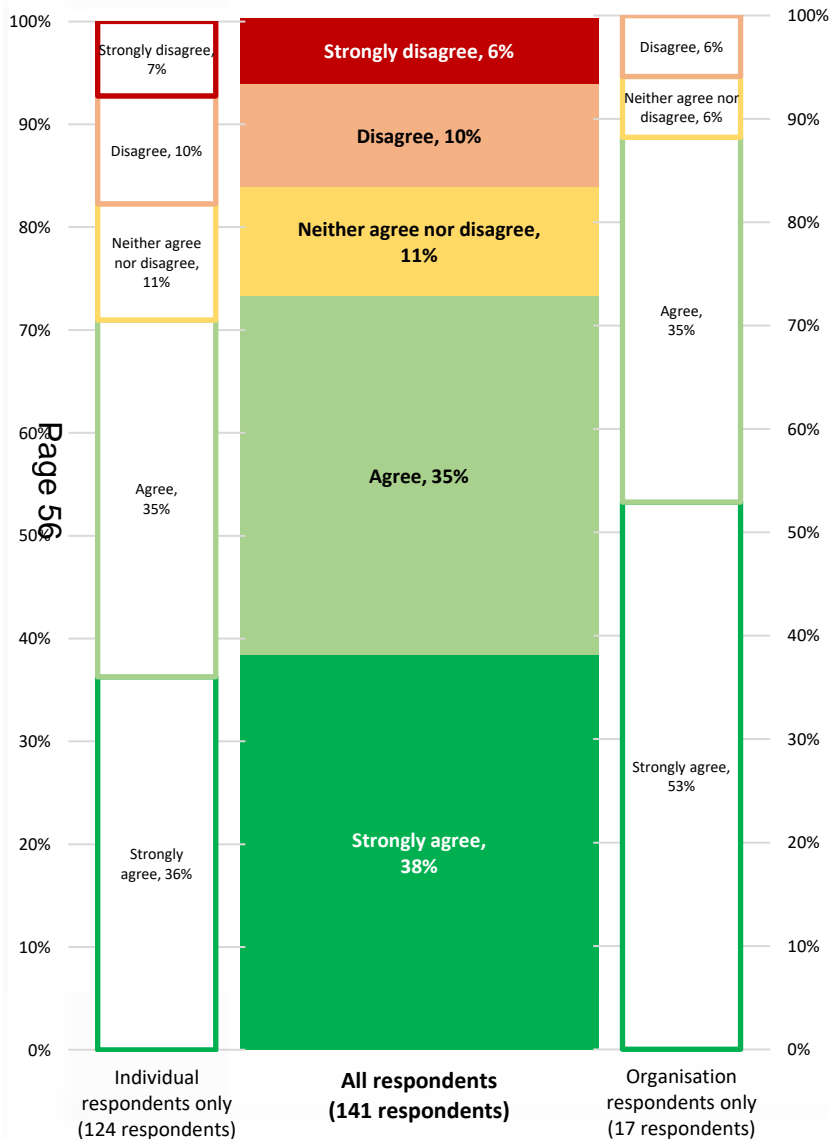
145 respondents made additional comments. There are 458 individual free text comments relating to the priorities and actions and 44 comments relating to the ease of understanding.

These are currently being reviewed and will be summarized in the final analysis.

Priority 1: Responding to the needs of our diverse population

Do you agree or disagree that 'responding to the needs of our diverse population' should be a priority for the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029?

(141 respondents / 88% response rate)



73% of all respondents agree with the priority 'responding to the needs of our diverse population' (103 respondents)

88% of respondents representing an organisation agree with this priority (15 respondents)

Do you think these are the right actions to achieve this priority?

(142 respondents / 88% response rate)

47% of respondents think these are the right actions to achieve the priority (67/142)

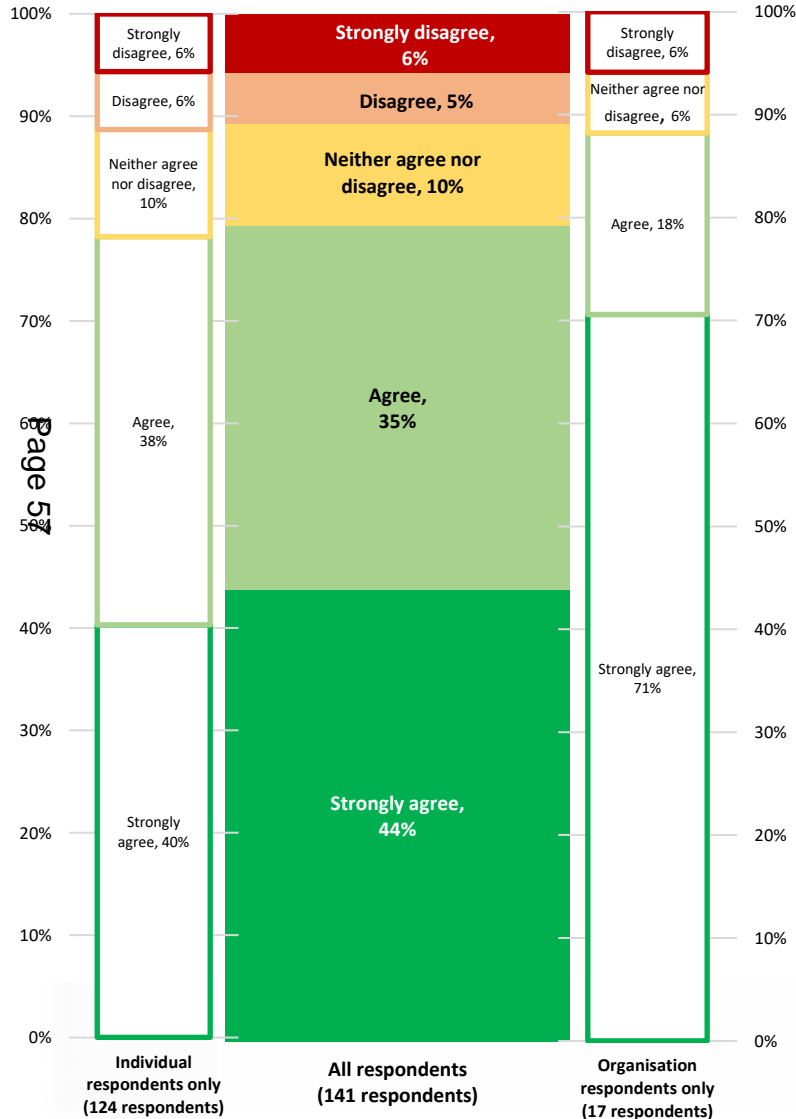
44% of individual respondents (55/125 responses)

71% of respondents on behalf of organisations (12/17 responses)

Priority 2: Better homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need

Do you agree or disagree that 'better homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need' should be a priority for the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029?

(141 responses / 88% response rate)



79% of all respondents agree with the priority 'responding to the needs of our diverse population' (112 respondents)

88% of respondents representing an organisation agree with this priority (15 respondents)

Do you think these are the right actions to achieve this priority?

(140 respondents / 87% response rate)

55% of respondents think these are the right actions to achieve the priority (77/140)

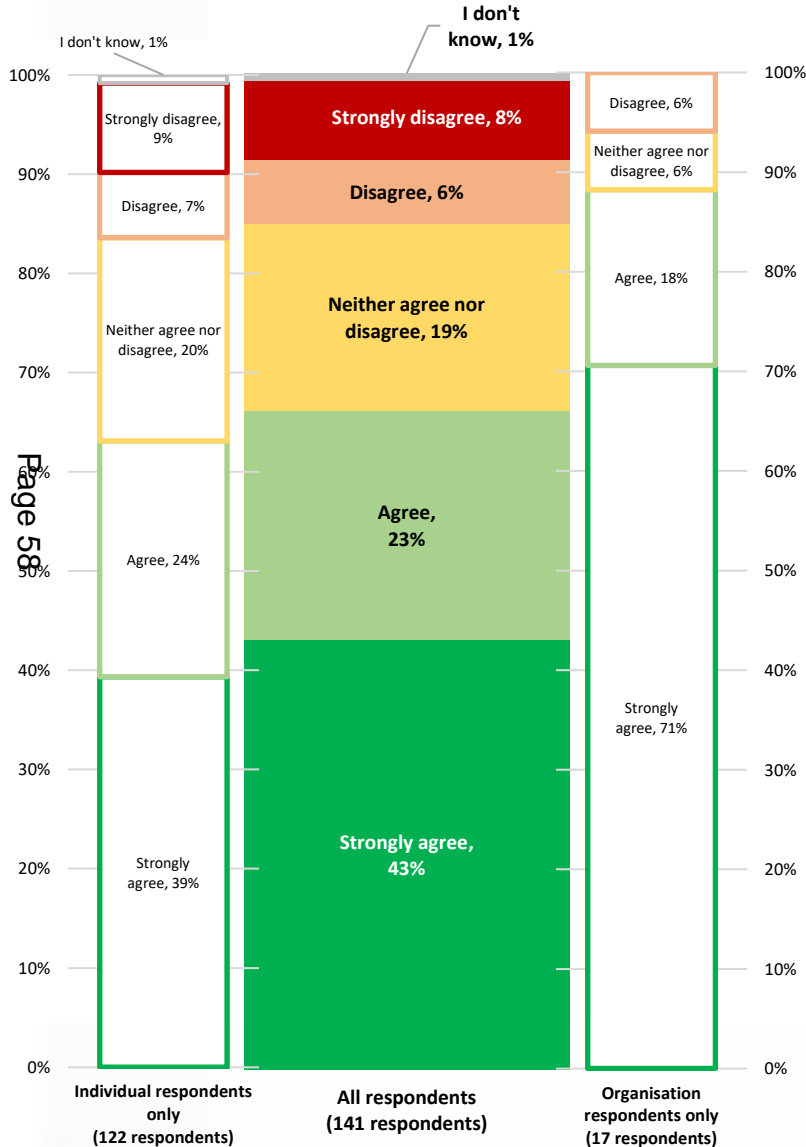
54% of individual respondents (67/123 responses)

59% of respondents on behalf of organisations (10/17 responses)

Priority 3: New homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate

Do you agree or disagree that 'New homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate' should be a priority for the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029?

(139 respondents / 86% response rate)



66% of all respondents agree with the priority 'responding to the needs of our diverse population' (92 respondents)

88% of respondents representing an organisation agree with this priority (15 respondents)

Do you think these are the right actions to achieve this priority?

(137 respondents / 85% response rate)

48% of respondents think these are the right actions to achieve the priority (66/137)

46% of individual respondents (55/120 responses)

65% of respondents on behalf of organisations (11/17 responses)

Housing Strategy Consultation Summary

Respondent demographic summary

Respondents to the Housing Strategy consultation are predominantly of white ethnicity from older age groups. The majority are home-owners with a high proportion of retired people; the most common household type is couples living together. Geographically, there is representation (in small numbers) from all community boards, but the distribution is not proportionate to the population of the county. There are not enough responses to use any of these categories to understand the views of different groups.



69% of respondents aged 55 years and over
Less than **9%** of respondents are under 35 years



White ethnic groups are over-represented.
Asian and black ethnic groups are under-represented in the respondent group

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73% of respondents are home-owners
6% rent privately, **4%** rent from a housing association



21% of respondents have a long-term health condition; **13%** have a disability; **5%** have an impairment.
77% have no disability



69% of respondents live with their partner; **20%** of those also have children or parents living with them.
17% live alone.



40% of respondents are retired.
46% work either full or part time



Respondents are unevenly distributed, geographically.
For example:
High Wycombe is under-represented, Amersham over-represented

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HOUSING STRATEGY 2024 - 2029



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Appendix

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2. The County of Buckinghamshire

3. Council Policy Context

4. Buckinghamshire Council's Housing Offer

5. The Housing Strategy Priorities

6. Delivery

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Appendix Two: Affordable Housing Types, Funding Mechanisms and Delivery

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FOREWORD

Having a home that is safe and secure has major benefits for quality of life. It brings positive outcomes in terms of public health and economic prosperity, and it strengthens our communities. It fits with the corporate objective of Buckinghamshire Council to ensure that the county is the best place to live.



To ensure we fulfil that commitment, we must address the challenges that we face in Buckinghamshire which are highlighted in this strategy, including key issues such as an ageing population and a housing market in which increasing numbers of residents struggle to find an affordable home. To bring about change we need to develop our understanding of the issues our residents face and how we respond to them.

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Therefore, as our population continues to grow, we need a strong housing strategy which identifies not just the issues but solutions and opportunities. We need to face our emerging challenges, so the council and all partners need to take a proactive approach in stimulating the right kind of investment in housing solutions, to create good quality homes and to enhance the vital role housing plays in place shaping.

The Housing Strategy sets out clear priorities for Buckinghamshire which are to enable a strong housing offer that provides affordable, accessible, sustainable, and suitable choices at all life stages. We must work collaboratively and flexibly to adapt to new opportunities and challenges.

I would like to thank everyone who took part in the preparation and consultation for this strategy. All the views of our residents and key partners have proved invaluable. This strategy sets out a framework for the issues we need to tackle and how we aim to do so, and how by taking a partnership approach we can make a real difference to lives in Buckinghamshire.

Mark Winn

Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services



Kite Meadows, Buckinghamshire

OUR VISION IS:

A strong housing offer
that provides affordable,
accessible, sustainable
and suitable choices for
all life stages.

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Images on front cover:

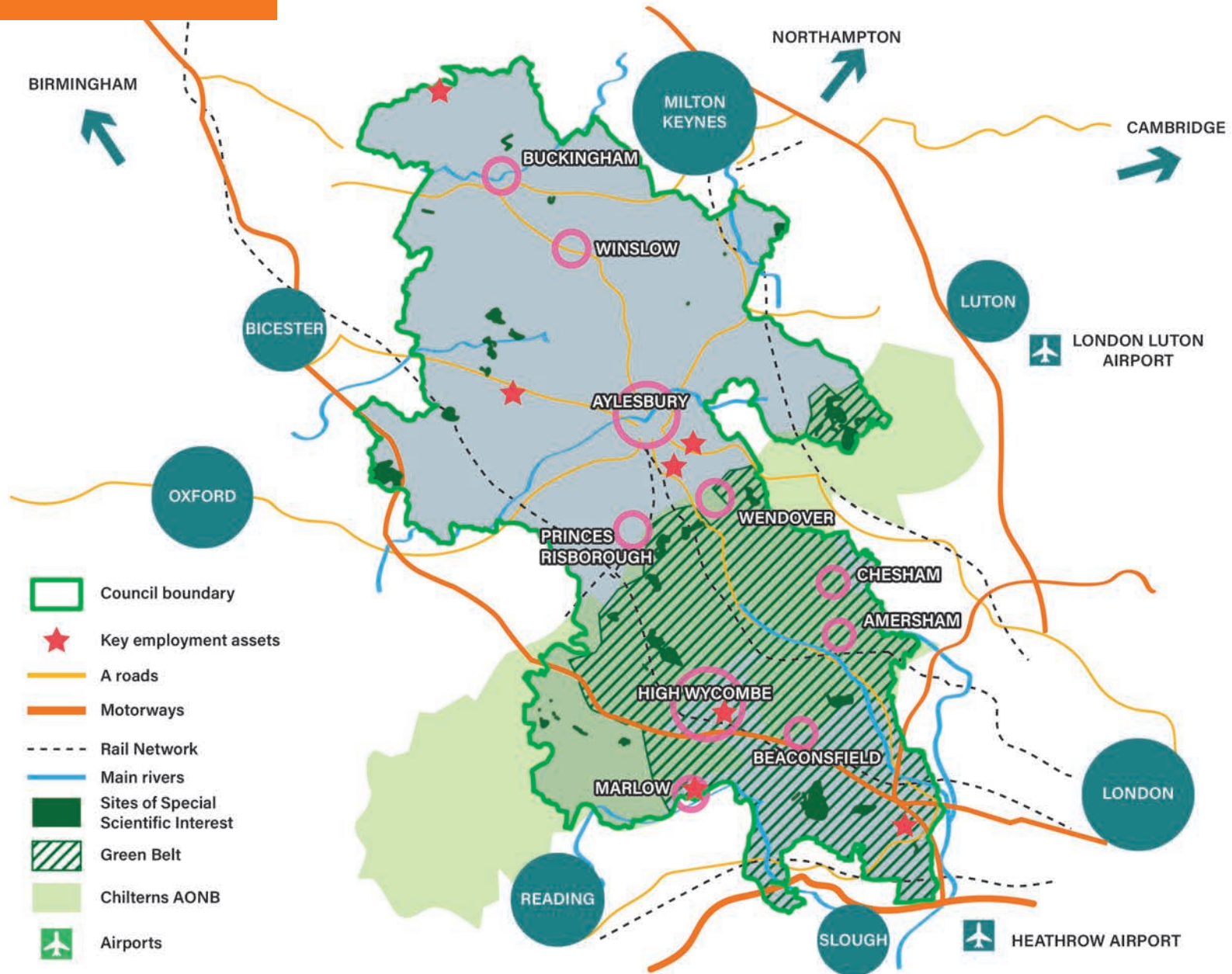
Top right - Queensmead Road, High Wycombe

Bottom right - Aylesbury



Aerial view of High Wycombe

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



THIS IS THE FIRST COUNTYWIDE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The strategy has been developed with the input and support of a wide range of partners and will be delivered through continuing partnership working.

Buckinghamshire Council has clear corporate priorities: to strengthen our communities, protect the vulnerable, improve the environment, and increase prosperity. Housing is vital to delivering these. A secure and affordable place to live provides a foundation for our ability to take part in society – to work, to learn, to be healthy and to develop a sense of community. The strategy sets out how all the partners involved in delivering housing in Buckinghamshire will work together to ensure that the housing offer delivers the housing our residents need.

This Housing Strategy is a vital step to delivering those commitments. It sets out in one place the housing challenges and opportunities and how we are all responding to these.

The Housing Strategy has been developed through the following:

- a) Building on the work to produce the Buckinghamshire Affordable Housing Position Statement which was adopted in May 2022.
- b) Consultation with stakeholder organisations including representatives of statutory organisations and voluntary organisations in Buckinghamshire.
- c) Key Housing data:
 - i) An overview of Buckinghamshire, including the results of the Census 2021 and the indices of multiple deprivation 2019.
 - ii) Housing demand, including homeless statistics, housing register and allocations data, and research into housing needs among special needs groups in Buckinghamshire.
 - iii) Housing conditions, including information from Registered Providers on stock condition and government data on Energy Performance Certificates and fuel poverty.
 - iv) Housing affordability, including earnings data and house price/rental data.
- d) Public and stakeholder consultation.



I. BACKGROUND FOR THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HOUSING STRATEGY

- 1.1. Producing a comprehensive strategy with our partners provides the opportunity to set out our approach to tackling housing needs and to continue to build on Buckinghamshire's reputation as a great place to live and work. The delivery of a housing strategy will improve quality of life, help more people benefit from the opportunities our county has to offer, and contribute towards the achievement of Buckinghamshire Council's corporate objectives.
- 1.2. Buckinghamshire Council has a statutory duty (required by law) to provide certain services: these include managing a housing register, assisting households under homelessness legislation, providing an adaptations service for disabled persons, and compiling data on affordable housing need and supply. The council also undertakes a supporting and enabling role: this includes supporting our Registered Provider partners to develop new affordable homes and to improve their existing homes.
- 1.3. Buckinghamshire Council is not a Registered Provider and does not own or directly manage affordable housing stock. All four of the legacy district councils transferred their housing stock to Registered Providers between 1988 and 2011. Therefore, Buckinghamshire Council plays a role in enabling new affordable housing development and ensuring that Registered Providers and private landlords provide affordable and well maintained housing stock..
- 1.4. The role of the housing strategy is to:
 - I) Ensure a co-ordinated approach for the council and key partners to the housing offer in Buckinghamshire.
 - II) Provide a framework for identifying and agreeing key priorities across the council and partners in order to facilitate delivery and/or allocation of resources.
 - III) Promote the role of housing in delivering wider priorities and objectives including improved health and wellbeing, tackling homelessness, and supporting sustainable economic growth.
 - IV) Ensure that Buckinghamshire Council meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.



1.5. Our Partners and Stakeholders

Organisation:

Role:

Tenants' and Residents' associations,
Community Boards, other organisations

- The organisations who represent the residents of Buckinghamshire and provide comments and feedback on proposals.

Registered Providers who own and/or manage
affordable housing in Buckinghamshire.

- Registered Providers develop a majority of new affordable housing in Buckinghamshire. They are also members of the Buckinghamshire Housing Development Forum and the Buckinghamshire Housing Management Forum.

Statutory organisations: Homes England,
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities, Department for Work and Pensions,
Bucks Health Care Trust, Oxford Health.

- To monitor Buckinghamshire's performance in facilitating the delivery of affordable housing and housing-related support services.

Voluntary organisations:
Citizens Advice Bucks, Helping Hands, Bucks
Mind, Crisis, Aylesbury Homeless Action Group,
Wycombe Connections, Connections Support..

- The organisations who work in partnership with the housing teams to support the delivery of specialist services for households with particular needs.

2. THE COUNTY OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

2.1. Buckinghamshire is a richly diverse, enterprising, and attractive county located in the heart of a growing and innovative region. Boundaries stretch from Greater London in the south to the East Midlands in the north, from Oxfordshire in the west across to Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire in the east. With a population of over half a million people, the county is one of the traditional Home Counties, bringing with it great connections into central London and ready access to international gateways at Heathrow and London Luton Airports. From quintessential rural villages and a backdrop of beautiful countryside to urban based living in our network of diverse towns, Buckinghamshire is a sought-after location.

2.2. Buckinghamshire is a beautiful place to live and work, famous for its natural environment and its quality of life. As a place to raise a family, we benefit from top-performing schools, family friendly communities, and a variety of accessible cultural attractions on our doorstep. Residents of Buckinghamshire enjoy active healthy lifestyles with health and wellbeing better than the English average.

2.3. We are a thriving county, but like many other places within the UK, this creates challenges for people looking for housing. Buckinghamshire has house prices and rents which are higher than the English average. In September 2022, the average house price in the market overall was £420,500 and the average cost of a home within the cheapest 25 per cent of the housing market was £320,000. The average income for an individual in the county is £37,300.

2.4. 50 per cent of Buckinghamshire is either an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in which housing development is restricted.

2.5. Parts of our county are fast-changing demographically, economically and environmentally. It is important that new homes are provided in well-connected sustainable locations. We must ensure that our future housing need is met through a greater proportion of accessible, adaptable, low-carbon and

digitally enabled homes, including a range of tenures, in the right locations. This will be set out in the new Local Plan for Buckinghamshire.

2.6. The Census 2021 has shown the following population and economic trends in the county over the 2011 to 2021 period:

- The population of Buckinghamshire grew from 505,283 in 2011 to 553,078 in 2021, a 10% increase.
- The number of households in Buckinghamshire grew from 200,727 in 2011 to 220,329 in 2021, a 10% increase.
- The number of homes in Buckinghamshire grew from 208,334 in 2011 to 226,612 (including empty homes) in 2021, a 9% increase.
- The number of residents aged 50 and over has increased from 36% of the population in 2011 to 39% of the population in 2021.
- The most frequent types of household in Buckinghamshire are a single household headed by a couple who have dependent children at 20%, a household consisting of a single person aged under 66 at 14%, and a household consisting of a single person aged 66 and over at 12%.
- Managers, directors, senior officials and those in professional occupations made up 41% of the economically active population in 2021, an increase from 35% in 2011. However, 25% of the economically active population were employed in the lower paid sectors of care, leisure, sales and customer services, machine operatives and unskilled occupations.

The population of Buckinghamshire has become substantially more ethnically diverse between 2011 and 2021 with the percentage of 'white British' decreasing from 81.1% to 72.0% over that time period.

The following statistics show how Buckinghamshire compares with the national picture:

Number of residents	Census 2011 - number and %	Census 2021 - number and %	% increase or decrease
England	53,012,456	56,490,045	+6.6%
Buckinghamshire	505,283	553,081	+9.5%

Number of households	Census 2011 - number and %	Census 2021 - number and %	% increase or decrease
England	22,063,368	23,436,086	+6.2%
Buckinghamshire	200,327	220,727	+10.2%

Number of persons aged 65+	Census 2011 - number and %	Census 2021 - number and %	% increase or decrease
England	8,660,529 16.3%	10,401,303 18.4%	+20.1%
Buckinghamshire	84,151 16.6%	103,713 18.7%	+23.2%

The population of Buckinghamshire, in terms of both people and households, grew faster between 2011 and 2021 than in England as a whole. The growth in the number of persons aged 65 and over is particularly significant.

3. COUNCIL POLICY CONTEXT

This Housing Strategy will complement our corporate direction.

[Buckinghamshire Corporate Plan 2020-2025](#) – sets out the following priorities:

- Increasing prosperity
- Strengthening communities
- Improving the environment
- Protecting the vulnerable

The Housing Strategy can contribute to the achievement of all four priorities within the Buckinghamshire Council Corporate Plan 2020-2025.

[The Buckinghamshire Local Plan](#) – The Buckinghamshire Local Plan will aim to deliver sustainable development through meeting the social, economic and environmental needs of Buckinghamshire, better quality places, and comprehensive delivery of all kinds of infrastructure including housing. The Plan will bring benefits for the people who live in Buckinghamshire by making sure there are enough of the right kinds of home and workplaces.

The Housing Strategy will clarify housing priorities to shape proposals.

[Buckinghamshire's Economy: Succeeding as a place, succeeding as a county](#) - Buckinghamshire has a strong £14.6bn economy with the 11th highest GDP per head in the country. There are 34,400 businesses and 281,000 jobs. The county's economy is supported by four key sectors which are Space, Creative and Digital, High Performance Tech, and MedTech.



[Buckinghamshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025](#) contains the following priority which is relevant to the Housing Strategy:

- Improving places and helping communities to support healthy ageing.

The Housing Strategy will include a range of actions to improve health and wellbeing, including accommodation options for older people, improving the conditions, accessibility and energy efficiency of homes, and planning supported homes for people with particular needs. This is also informed by the work through the Learning Improvement Network and the market analysis regarding housing needs in the county (November 2022).

[Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework](#) – A key priority of Buckinghamshire Council is the regeneration of the town centres of Aylesbury, Wycombe and Chesham.

[Opportunity Bucks](#) – Under the Buckinghamshire Levelling Up Framework, 'Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All' seeks to address disparities between Buckinghamshire communities. It provides a framework for bringing together parties to tackle local priorities which will make a difference for local residents. Two relevant priorities within the programme are:

- Standard of living
- Health and wellbeing

The programme focuses upon six wards in High Wycombe, three wards in Aylesbury and one ward in Chesham.

The Housing Strategy will include a range of actions to support the levelling-up framework of Opportunity Bucks.

[Buckinghamshire Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021 -](#) aims to reduce carbon emissions in activities across the county.

Priority 2 within the Housing Strategy, focuses on Better Homes and includes actions to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes in Buckinghamshire, and promote high sustainability in new build homes.

[Buckinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2025](#) – priorities within this strategy are:

- To provide advice, information, and support.
- To identify those at risk of homelessness
- To support households to find alternative accommodation.
- To prevent anyone from sleeping rough.
- To maximise the supply of affordable rented homes.

[Buckinghamshire First Homes Interim Position Statement](#) – First Homes is a government scheme, introduced in 2021, to assist first-time buyers and key workers onto the property ladder. The First Homes Interim Position Statement sets out Buckinghamshire Council's policy on the development of this type of affordable housing which consists of a home priced at a percentage discount from market level.

[Buckinghamshire Council Housing Allocations Policy](#) - Bucks Home Choice is our scheme for allocating affordable housing for rent in Buckinghamshire. The demand for affordable housing exceeds the supply. Therefore the Buckinghamshire Council Housing Allocations Policy sets out priorities for applicants. This enables the affordable homes that become available to be allocated fairly and transparently.

[Buckinghamshire Tenancy Strategy](#) – outlines what Buckinghamshire Council expects from Registered Providers in terms of the delivery of affordable housing, tenancies, rents and allocations.

4. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S HOUSING OFFER

Buckinghamshire Council is responsible for delivering a wide range of housing services:

Housing Strategy and Development

- Meeting the obligations of Buckinghamshire Council under homelessness legislation.
- Enabling an increase in supply of affordable housing so it meets the needs of residents.
- Developing partnerships with developers, Registered Providers, statutory organisations and voluntary organisations.
- Working in partnership with Planning Policy to support the development of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan.

Achievements 2022-2023

- **303** affordable homes for rent completed.
- **196** affordable homes for low-cost home ownership completed.
- **499** total number of affordable homes completed.

Homelessness and Housing Advice

- Meeting the obligations of Buckinghamshire Council under the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018, processing applications for assistance under this legislation.
- Commissioning temporary accommodation for homeless households.
- Assisting households in accessing and maintaining accommodation in the private rented sector.
- Providing an outreach service for Rough Sleepers.
- Working with partners to support persons with mental health issues or who suffer from drug and alcohol abuse.
- Providing a service for clients with complex needs in partnership with Social Care, Adult Care and Children's Services.

Achievements 2022-2023

- **1,386** cases of homelessness prevented.
- **873** cases of homelessness relieved.
- **380** homes in the Buckinghamshire private rented sector scheme.
- **37** households assisted into the private rented sector.

Housing Options

- Meeting the obligations of Buckinghamshire Council under the Housing Act 1996 to operate a social housing allocations policy.
- Administering Bucks Home Choice (Buckinghamshire Council's choice-based lettings system).
- Working in partnership with the Registered Providers of social housing in Buckinghamshire to re-house households via the Bucks Home Choice scheme.

Achievements 2022-2023

- **1,541** affordable homes for rent allocated.
- **38** care leavers assisted.

Housing Standards

- Delivering home adaptations for qualifying people with physical and sensory issues funded through the £4 million Disabled Facilities Grant budget.
- Administering loans for home improvement and energy efficiency grants.

Achievements 2022-2023

- **232** Disabled Facilities Grants completed.
- **£128,000** advanced in Flexible Home Improvement Loan payments.
- **27** 'Better Housing, Better Health' grants for heating and insulation improvements for residents with health conditions which make them vulnerable to the cold completed.

In addition, the Environmental Health teams at the Council monitor conditions in both the social and the private housing sector.

5. THE HOUSING STRATEGY PRIORITIES

- PRIORITY ONE**
Responding to the needs of our diverse population
- PRIORITY TWO**
Better homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need
- PRIORITY THREE**
New homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate

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Longwick, Buckinghamshire

PRIORITY ONE:

Responding to the needs of our diverse population

Buckinghamshire Council will:

Understand and respond to the housing issues and needs.

Enable the fair, consistent, and effective allocation of tenancies for affordable housing via the Bucks Home Choice Register.

Adopt an effective and proactive approach to address the Temporary Accommodation (TA) and homelessness increase in the number of placements and the cost.

Identify, specify, and deliver housing options for groups with particular needs.

Critical Success Factors:

- Housing Strategy Adoption.
- Local Housing Needs Assessment for the Local Plan (Expected 2024).
- Deliver a new Allocations Policy.
- Deliver a new Tenancy Strategy.
- Achieve a 100% compliance with our nomination rights with Registered Providers.
- Ensure applications are processed within three months from submission.
- On average, placements in 'Nightly Paid' accommodation are kept to a set maximum level.
- Maximise 'Substantive Placements' for Temporary Accommodation with a target of 90%+ occupancy.
- Ensure effective 'Move on' options are in place to reduce Temporary Accommodation placement durations.
- Options development for specialised housing solutions for care leavers, key worker persons leaving the Armed Forces, older people, persons with a physical and/or learning disability or mental health needs.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

- The proportion of people living in Buckinghamshire who are aged 65 or over increased as a percentage of the population from 16.6% in 2011 to 18.7% in 2021 – this is in the context of the overall increase in population. The overall number of persons aged 65 and over rose from 84,151 in 2011 to 103,713 in 2021, a 23.2% increase. The proportion of people aged 50 – 65 also increased during the same period.
- The number of older people living in Buckinghamshire is expected to increase in line with averages for England as a whole: a 23% increase in those aged 65+ and a 42% increase in those aged 85+. This means there will be an increase in demand for housing suitable for older people; many of which will not require specialist schemes but may need homes suitable for those with reduced mobility.
- According to the Census 2021, a significant change from 2011 to 2021 is the increased number of those who are retired in Buckinghamshire – the figure almost doubled with the percentage increasing from 13.3% to 21.6%. There was a corresponding drop in the number of people who were in employment.
- Census information shows the growth of the number of older people in Buckinghamshire. This is likely to correspond with an increase in demand for Disabled Facilities Grants to improve the accessibility of accommodation and enable households to remain in their existing accommodation for longer. An increase in demand has also been noted for adapted accommodation among households containing children with disabilities.
- Research has shown that there is a continuing high need for appropriate homes for people with mental health needs, people with learning disabilities and/or autism, and people with physical disabilities. This will likely correspond with an increase in demand for supported housing, independent living, and extra care facilities.



- There are also other groups with a particular housing need including: keyworkers such as in emergency services and health, those leaving the Armed Forces, and adults with special educational needs.
- In line with national trends, the number of households requiring temporary accommodation has significantly increased over the past year.
- There has been an increase in refugee and asylum seeker households with a housing need in Buckinghamshire since April 2022. By early 2023 the numbers who were resident in the county were as follows: 1,607 Ukrainian guests (763 households), 56 Afghan relocated citizens (15 households), 73 unaccompanied asylum seekers aged under 18, and a total of 188 asylum seekers.

The Council already has a strategy in place for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping which was adopted in March 2022 (as stated under section 3). This incorporates a detailed action plan on preventing and tackling homelessness that is currently being delivered covering groups such as rough sleepers, domestic abuse survivors, ex-offenders and persons leaving hospital. Therefore, this Action Plan below does not incorporate specific measures on preventing and tackling homelessness. For further information on these measures please refer to the [Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2025](#).



Sidney Close, Buckinghamshire

OUR ACTION

- We are managing the social housing allocations process through Bucks Home Choice.
- We are providing a homelessness and housing advice service under Part VII of the Housing Act.
- We are providing temporary accommodation to homeless households.
- We are producing an updated Allocations Policy for Buckinghamshire. This will ensure robust processes are in place for the delivery of the Bucks Home Choice scheme and allocations process, including clear workflows and regular monitoring and cross checking of applications to ensure consistency of approach and fairness.
- We are meeting with Registered Providers on a regular basis and as part of the Buckinghamshire Housing Management Forum.
- We are working with Registered Partners and private developers to deliver suitable adapted/adaptable dwellings through planning obligations and other opportunities.
- We will produce a new Tenancy Strategy including guidelines for Registered Providers on Affordable Rent levels.
- We will consider innovative new options for specialist housing (for example, extra-care villages with a dementia inclusive design)..
- We will work with Registered Providers and other housing developers to understand the role played by sheltered housing and other accommodation for older people in the area and whether some housing schemes should be remodelled to better meet current needs. Consider innovative new options for specialist housing (for example, extra-care villages with a dementia inclusive design).
- With our partners, we will produce a housing options guide for younger people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); ensure appropriate advice and signposting is available to make good choices.
- We will explore ways of increasing the number of one bed properties available in the private and social rented sectors which would be suitable for young people, including care leavers under the agreed Pathways Protocol.

PRIORITY TWO: Better Homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need

Buckinghamshire Council will:

Ensure that Registered Providers are actively maintaining and improving the quality of their homes.

Ensure that the Private Rented Sector maintains and improves the quality of rental properties.

Work to ensure that best use is made of existing housing.

Work to ensure that best use is made of existing housing, including empty homes.

Critical Success Factors:

- All Registered Providers have current asset management strategies and investment plans.
- All Registered Providers have a net zero carbon road map in place.
- Enforcement and subsequent remediation of housing condition issues as they emerge, in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy.
- Effective and Enforced Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing through intelligence-led enforcement with key partners.
- Under-occupation strategy for social housing developed.
- Effective Allocations Policy and Tenancy Strategy.
- Disability Facilities Grants Programme Delivery Deliver accessible and adaptable new housing through planning decisions.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

- From 2035, all homes in the Social Rented Sector must meet a specified level of energy efficiency (Energy Performance Certificate Level C). Social landlords in Buckinghamshire are undertaking energy efficiency programmes to achieve this.
- From 2025, compliance with the Future Homes Standard will become mandatory. New homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80 per cent fewer carbon emissions than homes built under 2012 regulations.
- From November 2022, providers of affordable housing are required to provide detailed information on their methods for identifying properties affected by damp and mould, and their strategies for responding to customer complaints for remedying cases of damp and mould.
- Energy prices have increased significantly. The energy price cap (the maximum that an average consumer should have to pay) more than doubled between October 2021 and October 2022.
- Increases in materials and labour costs correspond to increases in costs for the refurbishment of existing stock and new construction.
- The Renters Reform Bill includes the abolition of no fault evictions. Introduced to Parliament in May 2023, it includes new enforcement duties for local authorities.
- The introduction of a new Decent Homes Standard is progressing, which, when introduced, has the potential to have a significant financial implication for all landlords.
- Recent expansions of permitted developed for residential conversions can lead to poor quality developments for example, poor location and lack of amenities, poor standard of conversion, low level of noise insulation etc.



Building energy efficient homes

OUR ACTION

- We are supporting the Buckinghamshire Council Energy Doctor scheme (funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund).
- We are supporting sustainable warmth upgrade grant programmes, such as the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) and Solar Together, which are which are being carried out by Buckinghamshire Council.
- Through our work with houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), we are delivering increased levels of safe and secure accommodation for single people.
- The Buckinghamshire Disabled Facilities Grants and Housing Improvement and Adaptations Policy is being updated to ensure that it continues to achieve the following:
 - Improve and promote the physical and mental health of residents.
 - Prevent accidents.
 - Enable residents to live safely at home, as independently as possible, for longer.
 - Reduce hospital admissions and enable speedy discharge from hospital.
 - Make best use of adapted and adaptable accommodation.
- We will work with Registered Providers and other care/support agencies to agree best ways to tackle under-occupation, including incentives where appropriate in order to generate more turnover in family-sized accommodation.
- With our partners, we will produce a housing options guide for younger people with SEND; ensure appropriate advice and signposting is available to make good choices.
- We will explore ways of increasing the number of one bed properties available in the private and social rented sectors which would be suitable for young people, including care leavers under the agreed Pathways Protocol.



High Wycombe

PRIORITY THREE: New Homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate

Buckinghamshire Council will:

Support and enable Registered Providers in delivering new affordable homes, including for those with special needs.

Explore the use of local authority assets and resources for the purposes of delivering additional new housing.

Ensure that affordable housing is considered in Regeneration Strategies, brownfield and redevelopment proposals for mixed use developments where appropriate.

Critical Success Factors:

- Delivery of Affordable Housing (current target of 500 new affordable homes per year, to be reviewed as appropriate).
- Achieve site targets for Affordable Housing in negotiations with developers in line with council policies and the Local Plan.
- Supporting site identification and funding options/opportunities (for example grants and Section 106 monies) in line with council policies.
- New Temporary Accommodation development.
- Using Section 106 monies to support the development of Affordable Housing.
- Incorporating Council held assets in redevelopment proposals (Target 500 by 2028).
- Consider different delivery vehicles (e.g., Joint Ventures or other collaborative models).
- Local Plan and site policies for residential development that prioritise Section 106 affordable housing requirements and the use of brownfield sites before any development on greenfield sites.
- Working with Homes England including pursuing funding opportunities as they become available.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

- House prices and market rents present affordability challenges to households. House prices and rents are relatively lower in the two major towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe (see Appendix One – Buckinghamshire Housing Context).
- The demand for affordable homes of various types outpaces the annual delivery of new homes and re-lets, in some recent years by a factor of 3:1.
- Increasing cost of living pressures and lack of local affordable housing options corresponds with an increased number of adult children living with parents for longer.
- Private landlords are under new pressures with increasing interest rates and legislation changes, such as the forthcoming Renters Reform Act.
- The new Local Plan will set out the number, size, tenure type and location of new homes in the area, a proportion of which will be affordable. The plan will reflect the level of need across the county, the allocation of sites will be based on an assessment of sites suitable for housing use. The Local Plan will also identify the need for accessible housing under Part M of the building regulations. This action plan therefore focuses on activity which can be delivered ahead of the implementation of the Local Plan, and on activity which will build on the Local Plan once it has been agreed.



Queensmead Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

OUR ACTION

- We are working with Registered Providers to facilitate the delivery of new schemes, helping to identify sites and secure funding as appropriate.
- We are supporting Registered Providers with funding for garage-site developments.
- We are ensuring that housing (including affordable housing) is included in regeneration plans by the Council and partners.
- We will work proactively to ensure that the planning process accelerates delivery of affordable housing applications in acceptable locations.
- We will explore opportunities for 'build to rent' schemes, including the use of institutional investment.
- We will explore opportunities for the council to deliver more housing using its land, property and financial assets.
- We will identify three Council-owned sites to bring forward for new development and complete these developments by 2027.
- We will agree priorities for capital funding (including commuted sums) for affordable housing, and implement a list of priorities for the use of council contributions.



6. DELIVERY

This Housing Strategy, while delivered locally, relies on close partnership working with central Government departments and other agencies such as Homes England. Alongside the actions taken forward in Buckinghamshire, we will also be in dialogue on a number of key issues including:

Planning

- A more workable national planning system in which a well co-ordinated Local Plan can operate.
- The potential for a new Infrastructure Levy to deliver affordable housing development.

Regeneration

- Acknowledgement of regeneration schemes with Buckinghamshire's Registered Providers (Homes England announced that the Affordable Homes Programme for 2021-2026 could contribute to the funding of regeneration schemes).

Sustainability

- Funding for affordable housing stock in Buckinghamshire through further rounds of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- Further legislation on the design and sustainability standards of new housing of all tenures.

Overall Funding

- Funding for affordable housing through the Homes England Affordable Homes Programme from 2026.
- Resources to assist with the implementation of new legislation, including the Renters Reform Bill and the Supported Housing Strategy.

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This strategy will be reviewed annually.

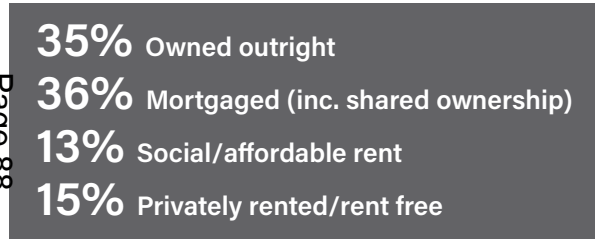
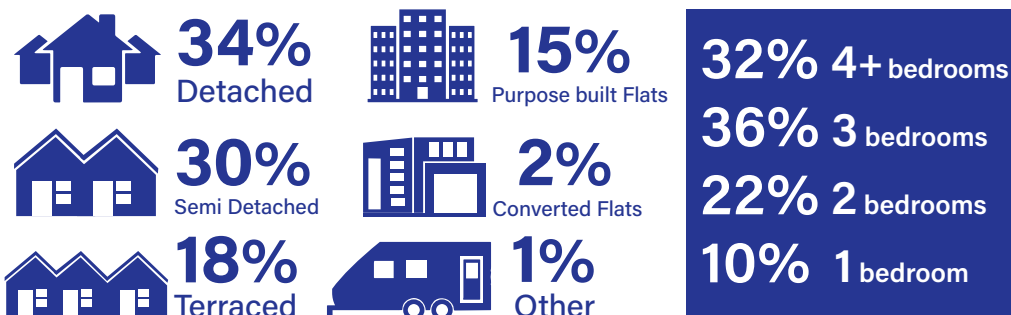
Financial implications

Some of the actions will have financial implications for Buckinghamshire Council. The costs of each project will be considered individually within the context of the financial year in which they are introduced.

Appendix One - Buckinghamshire Housing Context

Dwelling stock

220,328 Occupied Homes in 2021



October 2023 **5,686** homes in Buckinghamshire were classified as empty - of which 2,036 were long term empty (unoccupied for six months or more)

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Housing Supply - Market housing

Buckinghamshire has consistently high house prices and private rents, making the open market largely unaffordable to households in receipt of average incomes, even for homes priced in the at the lowest quarter of the market (lowest quartile).

Median and Lower Quartile house prices for year ending March 2023:

Dwelling type	Median price	Lower Quartile price
All	£420,500	£330,000
Detached	£745,000	£572,500
Semi-detached	£425,000	£379,748
Terraced	£345,000	£307,000
Flat/Maisonette	£230,000	£193,000

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

The following table shows that average lower quartile house prices in Buckinghamshire in March 2023 are considerably higher for both the England and the South East average:

Dwelling type	Buckinghamshire	South East region	England
All	£330,000	£280,000	£190,000
Detached	£572,500	£480,000	£325,000
Semi-detached	£379,748	£340,000	£195,000
Terraced	£307,000	£275,000	£155,000
Flat/Maisonette	£193,000	£171,000	£148,000

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Average monthly private rents in Buckinghamshire October 2022 to September 2023:

Dwelling type	Lower Quartile	Median average	Upper Quartile
Studio	£675	£725	£750
1 bedroom	£804	£895	£975
2 bedroom	£995	£1,150	£1,300
3 bedroom	£1,300	£1,500	£1,750
4+ bedroom	£1,700	£2,100	£2,750

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

The following table shows the variation of average monthly rent levels in locations across the county in March 2023:

Dwelling type	Aylesbury	High Wycombe	Amersham	Chesham
1 bedroom	£895	£1,000	£1,250	£950
2 bedroom	£1,200	£1,380	£1,465	£1,300
3 bedroom	£1,475	£1,450	£2,000	£1,500
4 bedroom	£1,850	£1,900	£2,425	£2,500

Source: Home.co.uk

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the maximum amount of housing-related benefit which can be claimed by tenants renting from a private landlord. LHA rates are based on private market areas being paid by tenants in a Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA). LHA rates have been frozen since April 2020. As private rents have risen, the shortfall between private rents and LHA levels has widened. In December 2023 the government announced that the maximum levels of LHA would be raised from April 2024. No further information has been released on the new maximum levels.

The two biggest BRMAs in Buckinghamshire are Aylesbury Vale BRMA and Chilterns BRMA. The following two tables shows the monthly shortfalls between LHA rates as of February 2024 and average private rents between October 2022 and September 2023:

Aylesbury Vale BRMA (*private rents are usually lower than the county average in this BRMA*)

Size of home	Average monthly rent	Maximum monthly amount of which can be claimed	Monthly Shortfall (market rent minus Local Housing Allowance)
1 bedroom	£895	£673	£222
2 bedroom	£1,150	£798	£352
3 bedroom	£1,500	£1,047	£453
4+ bedroom	£2,100	£1,396	£704

Chilterns BRMA (*private rents are usually higher than the county average in this BRMA*)

Size of home	Average monthly rent	Maximum monthly amount of which can be claimed	Monthly Shortfall (market rent minus Local Housing Allowance)
1 bedroom	£885	£748	£147
2 bedroom	£1,150	£972	£178
3 bedroom	£1,500	£1,247	£253
4+ bedroom	£2,100	£1,646	£454

The following tables show how households on average (50th percentile) and below average (30th percentile) incomes in Buckinghamshire would experience difficulty in affording privately rented homes at both average and lower quartile rents.

Average rent levels October 2022 to September 2023:

Property size	Average monthly rent	Total annual cost	Annual cost as a % of 50th percentile annual income of £38,220	Annual cost as a % of 30th percentile annual income of £32,500
Studio	£725	£8,700	22.8%	26.8%
1 bedroom	£895	£10,740	28.1%	33.0%
2 bedroom	£1,150	£13,800	36.1%	42.5%
3 bedroom	£1,500	£18,000	47.1%	55.4%
4 bedroom	£2,100	£25,200	65.9%	66%

Source of Income Data: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) data for Buckinghamshire April 2023.

Lower Quartile rent levels October 2022 to September 2023:

Property size	Average monthly rent	Total annual cost	Annual cost as a % of 50th percentile annual income of £38,220	Annual cost as a % of 30th percentile annual income of £32,500
Studio	£675	£8,100	21.2%	24.9%
1 bedroom	£804	£9,648	25.2%	29.7%
2 bedroom	£995	£11,940	31.2%	37.0%
3 bedroom	£1,300	£15,600	40.8%	48.0%
4 bedroom	£1,700	£20,400	53.4%	62.8%

Source of Income Data: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) data for Buckinghamshire April 2023.

What percentage of income should be spent on housing costs?

Most affordability calculations work on the basis of a maximum percentage of income which can be spent on housing costs. Using 30% of income (net of tax and NI) is a fairly standard approach and reflects national guidance on affordability assessments in Strategic Housing Market Assessments. Many housing need assessments use 33%. CORE figures show that new social housing tenants paying affordable rents will be spending closer to 40% of their income on their housing cost – and national estimates show that many of those living in the Private Rented Sector are spending more than 50% of their income on housing. It is therefore not straightforward to decide the most appropriate percentage of income to use.

The core calculations above have been done using 30% and 40% of income; it could be argued that spending 30% of income on housing costs is 'comfortably affordable' while 40% is affordable 'at a stretch.'

Conclusions:

- Households with average incomes are likely to have difficulty accessing outright ownership in the market due to affordability issues. Low-cost home ownership products, including shared ownership, play a role in supporting homebuyers.
- Most households in receipt of housing benefit face difficulty in being able to afford to rent a home in the private rented sector because of the shortfalls between the full amount of Local Housing Allowance which can be claimed and the market rents. This applies to households living in all districts of Buckinghamshire. Even households who are working full-time experience difficulty in being able to afford privately rented accommodation if their annual incomes were at or below the Buckinghamshire average.

Housing Supply - Affordable Housing

The following new affordable homes were developed in Buckinghamshire between April 2016 and March 2022. This table distinguishes between Social Rent, which is usually between 50%-60% of Market Rent, and Affordable Rent which can be set up to 80% of Market Rent. The extra rental income generated by Affordable Rent is used by registered providers to develop more affordable homes.

Year	Total affordable homes for rent completed	Affordable Rent	Social Rent
2022-2023	303	264 87.1%	39 12.9%
2021-2022	619	568 91.8%	51 8.2%
2020-2021	341	325 95.3%	16 4.7%
2019-2020	422	388 91.9%	34 8.1%
2018-2019	389	375 96.4%	14 3.6%
2017-2018	333	294 88.3%	39 11.7%
2016-2017	271	251 92.6%	20 7.4%

Source: DLUHC Live Tables on Affordable Housing Supply.

(The variation in annual figures is due to a number of factors including the timing of the completion of developments, the availability of Affordable Housing Grant, variations in the costs of building materials and labour which can affect development timetables).

The total number of lettings of affordable homes (both new build and existing) in Buckinghamshire between April 2016 and March 2023.

Year	Number
April 2022 to March 2023	1,508
April 2021 to March 2022	2,457
April 2020 to March 2021	1,389
April 2019 to March 2020	1,962
April 2018 to March 2019	2,062
April 2017 to March 2018	2,060
April 2016 to March 2017	1,920

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 The total number of homes for low cost home ownership developed in Buckinghamshire between April 2016 and March 2022 was as follows:

	Low Cost Home Ownership
2022-2023	196
2021-2022	161
2020-2021	175
2019-2020	166
2018-2019	238
2017-2018	102
2016-2017	91

Housing Demand - Affordable Housing

Applicants on the housing register, Bucks Home Choice, between 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2023:

Year	1 bedroom required	2 bedroom required	3 bedroom required	3< bedroom required	Bedroom need unspecified	Total
31 March 2023	3,438	1,180	1,007	179	0	5,804
31 March 2022	3,911	1,352	1,164	212	0	6,639
31 March 2021	3,673	1,267	1,052	187	0	6,179
31 March 2020*	2,608	692	770	111	76	4,257
31 March 2019	3,557	876	841	136	14	5,424
31 March 2018	3,439	1,308	925	134	0	5,806
31 March 2017	3,512	1,459	833	170	0	5,974

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* A decrease in numbers because of a reorganisation of the housing register.

Number of households for whom homelessness was **prevented**
(under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 Prevention Duty)

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	% increase or decrease
England	119,890	133,450	140,790	+17.4%
Buckinghamshire	1,042	1,105	1,649	+58.2%

Source: DLUHC Statutory Homelessness in England by financial year 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Number of households for whom homelessness was **relieved**
(under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 Relief Duty)

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	% increase or decrease
England	150,670	144,670	140,790	-6.5%
Buckinghamshire	732	640	762	+4.1%

Source: DLUHC Statutory Homelessness in England by financial year 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Buckinghamshire has seen an increase in the number of cases of homelessness which have been prevented, which is less than the national (England only) trend. However, it has seen a decrease in the number of homeless cases which have been relieved which is substantially more than the national (England only) trend.

The reasons for households becoming homeless between 2020 and 2023 were as follows.

Households whose homelessness was prevented – reasons for homelessness

Reason for homelessness	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
End of privately rented tenancy	195	18.7%	412	37.3%	599	376.3%
Asked to leave by family or friends	225	21.6%	234	21.2%	416	25.2%
Other reason	350	33.6%	165	14.9%	172	10.4%
End of Social Rented Tenancy	66	6.3%	62	5.6%	146	8.9%
Non-violent relationship breakdown	90	8.6%	95	8.6%	103	6.2%
Domestic Abuse	64	6.1%	85	7.7%	101	6.1%
Evicted from Supported Housing	8	0.8%	20	1.8%	46	2.8%
Other violence or harassment	21	2.0%	20	1.8%	33	2.0%
Left an institution including hospital, Armed Forces, local authority care	23	2.2%	12	1.1%	33	2.0%
Total	1,042		1,105		1,649	

Households whose homelessness was relieved – reasons for homelessness

Reason for homelessness	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
End of privately rented tenancy	43	5.9%	64	10.0%	197	25.9%
Asked to leave by family or friends	205	21.6%	182	28.4%	103	13.5%
Other reason	226	30.9%	89	13.9%	83	10.9%
End of Social Rented Tenancy	7	1.0%	8	1.3%	21	2.8%
Non-violent relationship breakdown	60	8.2%	67	10.5%	75	9.8%
Domestic Abuse	104	14.2%	133	20.8%	167	21.9%
Evicted from Supported Housing	26	3.6%	30	4.7%	25	3.3%
Other violence or harassment	20	2.7%	33	5.2%	32	4.2%
Left an institution including hospital, Armed Forces, local authority care	41	5.6%	34	5.3%	59	7.7%
Total	732		640		762	

Further details of the measures undertaken by Buckinghamshire Council to prevent and relieve homelessness are included in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy.

Appendix Two - Affordable Housing Types, Funding Mechanisms and Delivery

1. Definition of Affordable Housing

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. The policies set out in the Framework apply to the preparation of local plans and the decisions on planning applications.

The definition of Affordable Housing, as set out by the government in the NPPF, consists of the following:

Definition of Affordable Housing - Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

(a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions:

(a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a Registered Provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

(b) Starter homes: is as specified in sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used. **The Starter Home Scheme has now been replaced by the First Homes Scheme.**

(c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

(d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

2. What are Registered Providers and Housing Associations?

Housing Associations are not for profit organisations providing affordable housing and which are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. In addition to Housing Associations, there are also Private Registered Providers which are for profit organisations. Local Authorities are sometimes Registered Providers (RP) who hold their own housing stock.

Buckinghamshire Council does not hold housing stock and therefore is not currently registered as a Registered Provider with the Regulator for Social Housing.

The Registered Providers who currently have affordable housing development programmes in Buckinghamshire are: BPHA, Bromford, Fairhive, Hightown, Housing Solutions, Metropolitan Thames Valley, Paradigm, Peabody/Catalyst, Red Kite, Sage, L&Q, and Thrive. In addition, Sovereign will be developing a former council-owned site outside High Wycombe.

The RPs with the biggest development programmes in Buckinghamshire at present are Fairhive, Hightown, Paradigm, Peabody/Catalyst and Red Kite.

All RPs can develop anywhere they wish in the county with some clustering in the north of the county and others in the south. At present is as follows:

- **Both North and South** – Fairhive, Hightown, Paradigm, and Peabody/Catalyst
- **North only** – Bromford, Housing Solutions, Metropolitan Thames Valley, Sage, and Thrive
- **South only** – Red Kite.

3. Types of affordable housing products

3.1. Affordable housing for rent

Affordable Rent housing – ‘Affordable rent’ was introduced by government as a tenure in 2011. For these properties, the Registered Provider may set a rent which, can be up to a maximum of 80% of the market rent in the locality. The Regulator of Social Housing has a rent standard to which all ‘affordable rents’ must conform. Affordable Rents are higher than Social Rents and therefore provide a source of funding for new affordable housing development and an increased rental stream against which the RP can borrow.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 264 new homes for Affordable Rent were constructed in Buckinghamshire.

Social Rent housing – ‘Social rent’ properties have rents set in accordance with a formula prescribed by central government which, for Buckinghamshire are typically 50%-60% of the local market rents (although social rent is not directly linked to market rents). The formula will result in rents that will vary property-to-property as the individual property’s rent is calculated according to the market value of the property, the size of the property and the local income levels in the area

in which the property is located. Social Rents are also covered by the Rent Standard in the same way as Affordable Rents.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 39 new homes for Social Rent were constructed in Buckinghamshire.

3.2. Low-cost home ownership

This is an umbrella term covering a range of schemes that help buyers to purchase a home for less than the market value. The low-cost home ownership products which are most relevant to Buckinghamshire are:

Shared Ownership – A purchase by a household where part of the equity in the property is purchased and the remainder is rented. Rent is determined by calculating a percentage on the unsold equity. Some shared ownership of properties is limited to 80% of the equity, for example in rural areas. Shared Ownership tends to work well in areas of high housing costs, where it reduces deposit requirements and enables households to ‘step’ into the market in stages.

Households, typically:

- Buy a share between 10% and 75% of the home’s full market value.
- Pay rent to the landlord for the share they do not own.
- Usually pay monthly ground rent and service charges, for example towards the maintenance of communal areas.
- Benefit in any increase in values for the property for the owned portion.
- Have options to increase their percentage of equity if desired (staircasing).

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 196 new homes for shared ownership were constructed in Buckinghamshire.

First Homes – A specific kind of discounted market sale housing introduced by the government in 2020. The government stated that First Homes meet the definition of affordable housing for planning purposes and must comprise a minimum of 25 per cent of the affordable housing within the development. A First Homes Interim Position Statement has been drawn up for Buckinghamshire.

A First Home must be:

- Sold at a discount of no less than 30% of market value and no more than 50%, with the actual percentage determined by the local authority.
- Have their initial sale price capped at no more than a government-set maximum. The current cap is £250,000.
- Remain a First Home in perpetuity, with subsequent sales subject to the initial percentage discount.
- Sold only to first time buyers.

No First Homes have yet been developed in Buckinghamshire as of July 2023.

4. Affordable Housing Funding Mechanisms

4.1. Planning-led affordable housing development – Section 106 agreements

Planning obligations under Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, commonly known as Section 106 agreements, are a mechanism which enables on site affordable housing to be delivered or a financial contribution towards affordable housing to be collected.

Local Plans set out target percentages of affordable housing sought from qualifying development. Local Plan policies also set guidelines for affordable housing tenure mix and size.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 403 new affordable homes were constructed through the S106 agreements in Buckinghamshire.

4.2. The Affordable Homes Programme

Homes England is an executive non-departmental public body. It is sponsored by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and provides funds for new affordable housing and aims to accelerate housing delivery.

The Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) is administered by Homes England (outside of Greater London). The current Affordable Homes Programme operates 2021 to 2026.

Buckinghamshire Council works closely with Homes England to monitor the progress and impacts of affordable housing delivery in Buckinghamshire. The council will submit information to support any bids for funding from the AHP for schemes developed by Registered Providers in Buckinghamshire.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 90 new affordable homes in Buckinghamshire were funded through the Affordable Homes Programme, of which 46 were homes for Affordable or Social Rent and 44 were homes for Shared Ownership.

4.3. Use of Council resources

Local authorities can contribute to affordable housing development by providing funds and/or land and assets to Registered Providers including:

- Capital Funding, including use of commuted sums (S106 contributions).
- Transferring council-owned land at low or nil cost to a registered provider for affordable housing development.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 6 new affordable homes in Buckinghamshire were funded through Buckinghamshire Council contributions. These were the last completions of a garage site development programme by Paradigm Housing which began in 2019 and has produced 25 affordable homes. Buckinghamshire Council has contributed capital funding to this development.

4.4. Summary of Affordable Housing Development by product and funding mechanism, April 2022 to March 2023

Affordable Housing Product	Funded by Planning-led development	Funded by the Affordable Homes Programme	Funded by Council contributions	Total
Affordable Rent	235	23	6	264
Social Rent	16	23	0	6
Low-cost home ownership	152	44	0	6
Total	403	90	6	499

4.5. Help to Buy

The government 'Help to Buy' Equity Loan Scheme ended in March 2023 after ten years. This was a scheme subsidised by the government to assist households in accessing the open market; it was not part of any affordable development programme. The total number of homes sold in Buckinghamshire under 'Help to Buy' between April 2013 and March 2023 was 5,039 homes.

Appendix Three - Glossary

Accessible and Adaptable Housing – Construction or modification of housing to enable independent living for persons with disabilities.

Affordable Housing - Social rent, affordable rent and intermediate housing (e.g. shared ownership; below market rent) provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Defined in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Affordable Rent housing – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 3.1.

Build to Rent – Build to Rent refers to purpose-built housing designed and built for market rent rather than sale by property developers. Schemes usually offer longer tenancy agreements and are often professionally managed by the owner or operator. Build to Rent developments are marketed as an attractive option for investors seeking long-term returns.

Decent Homes Standard – First introduced in 2000, the Standard was based on social rented homes being warm and weatherproof with reasonably modern facilities. The Standard is currently (2023) under review with proposals that it be extended to the private rented sector.

Disabled Facilities Grant - Council managed grant programme to help towards the cost of adapting homes for people with disabilities.

Discounted Market Sale – A form of low-cost home ownership that helps people purchase a property below open market value.

Empty Home – A property that is empty for 6 months or more. A long-term empty property is one that is empty for 2 years or more.

Energy Performance Certificate – A property rating for energy efficiency. Ratings range from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient) and are valid for 10 years.

Extra Care Housing – Purpose-built or adapted properties with corresponding additional care provision. Residents are able to live independently with 24-hour access to support services and staff. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre.

First Homes – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 3.2.

Future Homes Standard – New legislation governing building regulations including energy efficiency measures. New build homes will have to meet this standard from 2025.

Homes England – An executive non-departmental public body. It is sponsored by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and provides funds for new affordable housing and aims to accelerate housing delivery.

House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) – Properties let to three or more tenants who form two or more households with shared facilities (e.g., kitchen). Larger houses in multiple occupation, those occupied by five or more people in two or more households who share facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom, must be licensed by the local council.

Housing Associations – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 2.

Local Housing Allowance – Local Housing Allowance is used to calculate the maximum amount people renting from a private landlord can claim in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. This maximum allowance is based on where they live, the number of bedrooms they need and the rent they pay.

Low-cost home ownership – Umbrella term covering a range of schemes that help buyers to purchase a new home for less than the market value.

National Planning Policy Framework – Sets out Government’s economic, environmental and social planning policies for England.

National Planning Policy Guidance – Provides planning practice guidance within the Framework and how planning policies are expected to be applied.

Registered Provider – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 2.

Regulator of Social Housing – The Government’s regulator of the standards applying to affordable housing management and maintenance.

Section 106 agreement – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 4.1.

Shared Ownership – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 3.2.

Social Rent housing – Defined in Appendix 2 section 3.1.

Tenancy Strategy – The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to develop a Tenancy Strategy to guide Registered Providers in allocating their properties.

Under-occupation – A household living in a home with bedrooms surplus to their requirements.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination in the workplace, in the provision of services and in wider society.

The duty requires all public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people

Public bodies demonstrate this due regard in different ways, including producing robust equality impact assessments when considering changes to policies and services.

An EqIA enables us to check the potential impacts on residents and employees of our policies, services and projects. It's an opportunity to challenge how we currently do things.

Carrying out an EqIA should not create extra work; it should be part of your normal service planning process. Most of the information required should already be available to you through other work already undertaken e.g. service user monitoring, analysis of complaints and national research.

The purpose of an EqIA is to *take account* of equality as plans develop, to promote and assist the consideration of equalities issues arising in plans and proposals and to ensure that where possible adverse or disproportionate impacts are minimised and positive impacts are maximised. As such where possible an EqIA should be started at the outset of a project/proposal and continually be developed and reviewed until a final proposal is adopted. An EqIA should be used to ensure decision makers have all the information they need regarding potential impacts to ensure they have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making judgements.

Carrying out EqIAs should be an integral part of policy or service development/change and larger projects may need more than one EqIA if different areas are impacted by the change.

Any project that requires consultation will automatically require an EqIA.

All approved and signed EqIAs are recorded in a central register. Please email your completed draft EqIA to equalities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk. Previous EqIAs can be made available for information upon request. For any questions or if you require support in completing your EqIA please contact Maria Damigos and Natalie Donhou Morley directly.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Part A (Initial assessment) - Section 1 - Background

Proposal/Brief Title: Buckinghamshire Council Housing Strategy 2023-2028

OneDrive link to report/policy: [Buckinghamshire Council Housing Strategy 2024-2029](#)

Related policies:

- Buckinghamshire Corporate Plan 2020-2025
- The forthcoming Buckinghamshire Local Plan
- Buckinghamshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025
- Opportunity Bucks
- Buckinghamshire Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021
- Buckinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2022-2025
- Buckinghamshire First Homes Interim Position Statement
- Buckinghamshire Council Housing Allocations Policy
- Buckinghamshire Tenancy Strategy.

Date: 6 July 2023

Type of strategy, policy, project or service: A new Buckinghamshire-wide strategy

Please tick one of the following:

- Existing
- New or proposed
- Changing, update or revision
- Other (please explain)

This assessment was created by:

Name: [Helen George](#)

Job Title: [Housing Strategy Officer](#)

Email address: helen.george@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

The aims of the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029 are:

- i) [maximise its opportunities and resources to meet housing needs and aspirations, involving the use of council resources and partnership opportunities.](#)



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- ii) ensure a co-ordinated approach to housing activity in Buckinghamshire, linking a suite of policies and strategies to deliver the council's ambitions
- iii) promote the role of housing in delivering corporate priorities and wider objectives including health and wellbeing and sustainable economic growth.
- iv) ensure that Buckinghamshire Council meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and meets a diverse range of housing needs.

What outcomes do we want to achieve?

Priority one – a Home for Everyone: meeting the needs of our diverse population

Buckinghamshire Council will:

- Work with its partners to provide housing options for households with particular needs, including young people, persons leaving the Armed Forces, older people, people with physical disabilities, people with learning disabilities and/or autism, people with mental health issues, people with special educational needs, and key workers.
- Improve the accessibility of new and existing homes.
- Continue to monitor housing needs throughout Buckinghamshire, and produce response to meet housing needs.

Priority two – Better Homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need

Buckinghamshire Council will:

- Continue to work to ensure a high quality, well-managed accommodation in the private rented sector.
- Work to ensure that best use is made of existing housing include empty homes and under-occupied homes.
- Work with registered providers and other partners to improve the sustainability and energy efficiency of homes in Buckinghamshire.

Priority three – New Homes: affordable, accessible, and appropriate

Buckinghamshire Council will:

- Assist registered providers in delivering new affordable homes, helping to identify sites, and securing funding.
- Maximise the use of local authority assets, including land, property and financial assets, to contribute to the delivery of affordable housing, and assist registered provider partners in maximising their assets to deliver more affordable homes.
- Ensure that the delivery of affordable housing is a major part of all regeneration schemes in Buckinghamshire.

Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence? Yes/**No**



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Please explain your answer:

This strategy does not plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence.

Does this proposal plan to reduce a service, activity or presence? Yes/**No**

Please explain your answer:

This strategy does not plan to reduce a service, activity or presence.

Does this proposal plan to introduce, review or change a policy, strategy or procedure?
Yes/No

Please explain your answer:

The housing strategy is a new Buckinghamshire-wide strategy.

Does this proposal affect service users and/or customers, or the wider community? **Yes/No**

Please explain your answer:

Yes, the Housing Strategy is intended to have a positive impact for service users and customers.

Does this proposal affect employees? Yes/**No**

Please explain your answer:

This strategy will not directly affect employees.

Will employees require training to deliver this proposal? Yes/**No**

Please explain your answer:

No, employees will not require training to deliver this proposal.

Has any engagement /consultation been carried out, or is planned in the future? **Yes/No**

Please explain your answer:

Consultation with stakeholder organisations. Workshops took place throughout Autumn 2022 on key housing issues which need to be addressed in Buckinghamshire. Consultees included representatives of statutory organisations, voluntary organisations in Buckinghamshire.

Public and stakeholder consultation to be carried out summer 2023.

Section 2 - Impacts

Please highlight potential impacts (including unintended impacts or consequences) for each protected characteristic*/equality groups below. Where there are negative or positive impacts please give more details of the impact. Where the impacts are unclear please explain why.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Age*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
X			

Details:

The Housing Strategy will contain the following actions related to older people:

- To achieve the targets for developing affordable housing options as set out in the Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care Accommodation Market Analysis November 2022.
- Work with registered provider partners to understand role played by sheltered housing in the area and whether some should be remodelled to better meet current needs.

The Housing Strategy will contain the following actions related to younger people:

- Explore ways of increasing the number of one bed properties available in the private and social rented sectors
- Co-produce a housing options guide for younger people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); ensure appropriate advice and sign-posting is available to make good choices.

Disability*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
X			

Details:

The Housing Strategy will contain the following actions related to physical disability:

- Achieve the targets for developing affordable housing options as set out in the *Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care Accommodation Market Analysis November 2022*
- Carry out a monitoring and evaluation exercise to ensure the adaptations process is efficient and effective, including work delivered through Disabled Facilities Grant

The Housing Strategy will contain actions related to mental health:

- To achieve the targets for developing affordable housing options as set out in the *Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care Accommodation Market Analysis November 2022*.

The Housing Strategy will contain actions related to learning disabilities/autism:

- To achieve the targets for developing affordable housing options as set out in the *Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care Accommodation Market Analysis November 2022*.

Pregnancy & maternity*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
		X	



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Details: - The Housing Strategy aims to increase the availability of good quality affordable homes in Buckinghamshire. A disproportionately high number of households with children headed by a lone parent approach Buckinghamshire Council for assistance under homelessness legislation.

Race & Ethnicity*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
		X	

Details: The Housing Strategy will contain actions related to Race and Ethnicity:

- Buckinghamshire has become substantially more ethnically diverse between 2011 and 2021. A research exercise will be carried out to assess whether this change generates any particular housing needs.

Marriage & Civil Partnership*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
			X

Details: No particular impacts related to Marriage and Civil Partnership have been identified in the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2023-2028.

Religion & Belief*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
			X

Details: No particular impacts related to Religion and Belief have been identified in the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029.

Sex*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
		X	

Details: The Housing Strategy aims to increase the availability of good quality affordable homes in Buckinghamshire.

- A disproportionately high number households with children headed by a lone parent approach Buckinghamshire Council for assistance under homelessness legislation. Lone parents are mostly female.
- A disproportionately high number of single males require assistance with finding suitable and affordable homes.

Sexual Orientation*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
			X

Details: No particular impacts related to Sexual Orientation have been identified in the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029.

Gender Reassignment*



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Positive

Negative

Unclear

None

X

Details: No particular impacts related to Gender Reassignment have been identified in the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029.

Do you anticipate any impacts on military families/veterans in relation to the Armed Forces Act 2021 requirements on local authorities to have due regard to the Armed forces Covenant? Yes

Please explain your answer: The Housing Strategy aims to increase the availability of good quality affordable homes in Buckinghamshire. This will include homes for low cost home ownership. Under government guidelines, military families and veterans must be given priority for low cost home ownership homes.

Are there any other additional groups/impacts that the EqIA should evaluate in relation to the proposal? Yes

Details: The Housing Strategy includes actions to improve the housing options for older people and people with a range of disabilities. It also includes an action to improve housing options for key workers. These could have an indirect beneficial impact upon Carers.

The Housing Strategy contains also actions which aim to improve the supply of affordable housing throughout the county e.g. targeted use of council resources to improve supply which may have a positive impact on those facing rural isolation.

The Housing Strategy aims to increase the availability of good quality affordable homes in Buckinghamshire. The provision of more affordable homes, especially those at the lower Social Rent levels, will benefit households in receipt of lower incomes. The provision of more homes for special needs groups is intended to benefit those who experience social deprivation.

Section 3 – Is a full assessment required?

If you have answered yes to any of the initial assessment questions in section 1 of this EqIA, or have indicated a negative or unclear impact in section 2, it is likely you will need to complete part B of the EqIA form. Should you need guidance as to whether a full EqIA is needed at this time please contact Maria Damigos or Natalie Donhou Morley before continuing.

Following completion of part A, is part B completion required?

X Yes

- No
- Not required at this time

Explain your answer:



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This is major strategy for Buckinghamshire Council so it requires completion of part B.

Have you completed an DPIA for this project/change? Yes/No

(As you are completing an EqIA, you may also require a DPIA - for more information please contact dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

This strategy does not involve any use of personal information.

Part B (Full assessment) - Section 5 – Further information

Will there be an impact on any other functions, services or policies? If so, please provide more detail:

Yes. The Housing Strategy relates to all of the following corporate policies, strategies and position statements:

- Buckinghamshire Corporate Plan 2020-2025
- The forthcoming Buckinghamshire Local Plan
- Buckinghamshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025
- Opportunity Bucks
- Buckinghamshire Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021
- Buckinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2022-2025
- Buckinghamshire First Homes Interim Position Statement
- Buckinghamshire Council Housing Allocations Policy
- Buckinghamshire Tenancy Strategy.

Are there any potential barriers to implementing changes to your service/strategy/policy/project?

The strategy will be implemented by an action plan which will be updated on an annual basis. The methods for overcoming barriers to implementing individual actions will be included in the action plans, and if needed, Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for individual actions.

Section 6 – Information gathering – what do you need to know about your customers and making a judgement about potential impacts on them?

What data do you already have about your service users, or the people your policy or strategy will have an impact on, that is broken down by protected characteristics* and equality groups (non-statutory)?

Once all available data has been gathered, it will be examined to check whether there is evidence of any of the following among the projects in the action plan:

- lower take up/participation rates by disadvantaged groups generally;



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- lower take up/participation by certain groups,
- eligibility criteria which disadvantages certain groups,
- access to services being reduced or denied to people,
- people facing increased difficulty as a result of a policy/practice,
- a policy/practice resulting in reduced benefits for equality groups.

The information sources which will be used for each Protected Characteristic Group are:

Age*: Census 2021, information on housing schemes for older people in Buckinghamshire, Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care Accommodation Market Analysis November 2022.

Disability*: Census 2021, Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care Accommodation Market Analysis November 2022.

Pregnancy and maternity*: Buckinghamshire Council records of applications for assistance under homelessness legislation.

Race*: Census 2021.

Marriage & Civil Partnership*: Census 2021

Religion or belief*: Census 2021

Sex*: Buckinghamshire Council records of applications for assistance under homelessness legislation, Census 2021, Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019.

Sexual orientation*: Not applicable

Gender re-assignment*: Not applicable

Gender identity: Not applicable

Carers: *Further research needs to be carried out into sources of information on housing need among key workers.*

Rural isolation: Census 2021, Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019, Census 2021, Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019.

Single parent families: Census 2021, Buckinghamshire Council records of applications for assistance under homelessness legislation.

Poverty (social & economic deprivation): Census 2021, Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019.

Military families / veterans: Census 2021, Buckinghamshire Council Housing Register.

Do you need any further information broken down by protected characteristic or equality group to inform this EqIA?

Yes

No



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

If yes, list here to help you gather data for the action plan in Section 11

Section 7 – Negative effects, impacts or consequences

Is there any potential for or actual direct or indirect discrimination or a disproportionate effect on a protected group or equality group?

Guidance note: Direct discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic, such as sex or race or an equalities group, such as being a carer. For example, someone is not offered a promotion because they're a woman and the job goes to a less qualified man. Indirect discrimination can happen when there are rules or arrangements that apply to a group of employees or job applicants, but in practice are less fair to a certain protected characteristic.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure at this time

What are the potential negative effects, impacts or consequences and how have, or may, they arise:

Guidance note (delete after completion)

Please state what the potential negative impact (s) are – Section 8 allows you to set out any minimising/mitigating actions.

State what the negative impact(s) are for each group, identified in Section 2. In addition, you should also consider and state potential risks associated with your proposal.

Section 8 – Proposals to remove or minimise negative effects, impacts or consequences

How is it proposed to mitigate or minimise the negative effects, impacts or consequences identified in Section 7?

Guidance Note (delete after completion)

No negative impacts are anticipated.

Section 9 - Other factors to take into consideration:

Guidance note (delete after completion)

This should include balancing or other factors for decision makers to take into consideration such as positive impacts (financial or otherwise), costs and resources



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Section 10 - Conclusion:

This policy is overarching and is based on improving housing options for those groups identified as being of most need of housing.

Delivery of related documents such as the Housing Strategy Action Plan and Housing allocations policy will be instrumental in ensuring that impacts continue to be monitored

Public consultation will be delivered, with questions to consider equality/agreement with the policy aims and objectives, and data collection will be completed to ensure that a broad spectrum of residents have had an opportunity to engage.

Section 11 - Action Planning

Guidance note (delete after completion)

Where the policy or practice would result in unavoidable or potentially unlawful impacts changes should clearly be made where possible and specific actions should be identified and noted in the action plan. The objectives of the policy or practice should be re-examined to find out if there is an alternative way of meeting the desired objectives without the adverse impact, and potentially creating a positive one.

Where impacts are unavoidable the objective of completing the EqIA and the action plan is to demonstrate that impacts have been considered as part of the decision making process to ensure compliance with the PSED. An example to show how this works - where a council decides to close a care home, if they do so without considering the equalities implications (via an EqIA or otherwise) the decision is extremely likely to be quashed by the Courts on a challenge, as per previous case law. This would happen even if it is almost certain that examination of the equalities implications will have little or no impact on the final decision (e.g. due to a lack of resources to pay for the care home) - because the PSED was not part of the decision making process.

A properly completed EqIA should be a full and complete record to show that all equalities implications and the PSED were appropriately considered by the decision maker.

If the adverse impact is potentially unlawful and alternatives cannot be found, the policy or practice may need to be completely redesigned.

Actions to be taken to address negative effects, impacts or consequences and maximise positive impacts	Potential Outcomes	Lead	Timescales
Equality Impact Assessments will be			



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

completed for projects within the action plan			
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Section 12 - Monitoring Arrangements

What are the plans to monitor the actual and/or final impact? (The EqIA will help anticipate likely effect but final impact may only be known after implementation)

The Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029 and its associated action plans will be monitored and revised on an annual basis.

What are the proposals for reviewing and reporting actual impact

Governance of the strategy will be delegated by Buckinghamshire Council’s Cabinet.

Section 13 - Part A and B Sign off – (If Part B has not been completed please complete Section 4)

Officer completing Part A and B assessment: [Helen George](#)

Date: [18 May 2023](#), updated [6 July 2023](#)

Equality advice sought from: [Natalie Donhou Morley & Maria Damigos](#) Date: [05/07/2023](#)
[2023](#)

Service Director sign off: [Lisa Michelson](#) Date: [6 July 2023](#)

CMT sign off (if deemed necessary by Service Director) sign off: (Please insert name) Date:
(Please insert Date)

Next review date: [To be confirmed](#)



Report to Cabinet

Date:	5 th March 2024
Title:	Buckinghamshire Healthy Ageing Strategy 2024-2029
Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Angela Macpherson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
Contact officer:	Dr Jane O’Grady, Director of Public Health and Community Safety
Ward(s) affected:	All wards
Recommendations:	Cabinet is requested to note the contents of the new Buckinghamshire Healthy Ageing Strategy and endorse the actions within it.
Reason for recommendation:	The Buckinghamshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 - 2025 commits to “ <i>improving places and helping communities to support healthy ageing</i> ” – the new Healthy Ageing Strategy will enable the achievement of this commitment.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 In response to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy commitment of ‘improving places and helping communities to support healthy ageing’ a Healthy Ageing Strategy has been developed.
- 1.2 The strategy sets out our commitment to become an ‘age friendly community’ by undertaking improvement actions across the 8 interconnected areas identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) to support older people to live healthy, active and independent lives.
- 1.3 The strategy is supported by a multi-agency Age Friendly Bucks Partnership, chaired by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, and a

network of partners and residents who oversee, inform and help create the strategy and underpinning action plan. It has been informed by resident engagement, and engagement will continue with communities throughout the duration of the strategy.

- 1.4 The strategy and action plan have been circulated to all relevant Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors, who are in agreement with the ambition and underpinning actions.

2. Background and aims of strategy

- 1.1 Population projections suggest that over the next 20 years (2022 to 2042) the population aged 65 years and over in Buckinghamshire will increase by one third (34,944 more people) and the population aged 85 years and older increase by two thirds (10,884 more people). The increase in the older population brings economic and societal opportunities, but these are most likely to be realised if older adults remain well and independent. However, the average number of years of ill health has risen for both men and women in Buckinghamshire and stands at over 15 years.
- 1.2 The aim of this strategy is for Buckinghamshire to become an 'age friendly community', based on the WHO's evidence-based [framework](#) of the 8 interconnected areas that support older people to live healthy, active and independent lives, which are:
 1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
 2. Transport
 3. Housing
 4. Participating in society
 5. Volunteering and employment
 6. Communication and information
 7. Community support for health and wellbeing
 8. Respect and social inclusion [which in Buckinghamshire will run as a golden thread throughout our work rather than being a standalone area]
- 1.3 Given the breadth of this work and to make progress achievable we are prioritising domains in turn rather than tackle all simultaneously.
- 1.4 A multi-agency Age Friendly Bucks Partnership has been established to steer the prioritisation of these domains and oversee and support a system-wide approach to delivery. The members are senior representatives from partners including the Council, NHS and voluntary sector. The Partnership meets quarterly and is chaired by Cllr Macpherson, Deputy Leader of Buckinghamshire Council and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

- 1.5 The Partnership is an umbrella for oversight of age friendly work – informed by several topic-specific strategies and groups, such as the Live Longer Better Alliance and the Physical Activity Strategy which are already working to improve healthy ageing in Buckinghamshire – and ensure emerging issues are not overlooked.
- 1.6 To inform our prioritisation, insight gathering with residents and communities is occurring using electronic, paper and in person tools to maximise engagement. An initial survey ran between 19th June – 17th July 2023 and received 228 responses. 12 of these responses were from Elected Members – and their priorities were similar to the comments received from residents directly. These results have been used to inform the first priority area for the strategy to tackle in year 1 (outdoor spaces and buildings). Engagement will occur throughout the life of the strategy to ensure our work remains informed by and involves our residents. The second priority area for year 1 has been identified via partners and already agreed as a priority for the Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board (participating in society, to tackle social isolation and loneliness).
- 1.7 The actions taken to progress against these priorities will be recorded, monitored and reviewed via the accompanying action plan and associated metrics. As new priorities are agreed in future additional projects will be added to the action plan.
- 1.8 To support our Age Friendly approach, in March 2023 Buckinghamshire successfully joined the UK Network of Age Friendly Communities which is run by the Centre for Ageing Better and affiliated to the WHO's Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities. Being a member of this network provides access to good practice, guidance and advice for our officers to support the successful delivery of a robust and evidence-informed age friendly approach. On reviewing our application, the Centre for Ageing Better complimented us on our draft Healthy Ageing Strategy, our political commitment with our Deputy Leader chairing the Partnership, and the allocation of public health resources to support the work programme.
- 1.9 The strategy is included in Appendix 1. The strategy's action plan will be further developed as we begin to work closely with our partners and communities following the publication of the strategy.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 Do nothing. Whilst it is possible to deliver activities without a strategy the risk is these would be small scale and of limited impact. The greater visibility of a strategy is more likely to unlock the benefits of a system-wide approach. Without this approach valuable opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of our growing population of older residents may be missed, and we may fail to address the concerns residents have taken time to inform us of during engagement

exercises. By not having a strategy the commitment within the Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy will not be fully realised.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications of the strategy. Although currently listed actions relate to new or changed working, those led by Buckinghamshire Council have all been suggested by or agreed with the owning team and relate to one of the three categories listed below. Future projects may also be proposed during the life of the strategy, such as to better meet our duties under the Equality Act, but any associated bids for additional funding would then be subject to the usual value for money assessments.
- a) Improvements in working practice or re-prioritisation which will be driven by the members of the Age Friendly Bucks Partnership by embedding cultural change within their organisations without additional resource required.
 - b) Pieces of work that have been agreed can be delivered by existing staff capacity, such as the healthy ageing in all policies approach.
 - c) Projects which can be funded via the healthy ageing budget from the public health grant, under Office for Health Improvement and Disparities guidance.
- 4.2 There are no direct legal implications for this strategy.

5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 This strategy supports the Corporate Plan, in particular the priority areas of:
- a) Strengthening our communities – by driving improvements for Buckinghamshire to be an age friendly place, where people can live healthy, active, and independent lives, contributing and participating in society for as long as possible.
 - b) Protecting the vulnerable – by supporting those who need the most help, addressing inequalities making sure the right support is available at the right time and addressing factors which can contribute to isolation and loneliness.
 - c) Improving our environment – this strategy will support actions to improve our built environment by supporting high quality, accessible and social public spaces, and by supporting the development of accommodation where people can live safely and comfortably, and which can improve physical and mental health, wellbeing, and social connections.
 - d) Increasing prosperity – by supporting employers to become age friendly, enabling older people to remain in employment for as long they choose and supporting lifelong learning and skills development.
- 5.2 This strategy supports the Opportunity Bucks programme and its ambition to improve opportunities for all. Many of the age friendly themes complement the Opportunity Bucks themes including health and wellbeing (social participation, community support for health and wellbeing), quality of public realm (outdoor spaces and buildings), standard of living (housing) and jobs, careers and skills (volunteering and employment). Feedback from urban residents (Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham) gathered through the programme identified outdoor spaces and buildings as their top concern. These views have informed the year 1 theme for the healthy ageing strategy. A number of our accompanying actions will also be focussed on Opportunity Bucks wards – for instance the use of our healthy place’s toolkit in auditing local areas, and prioritising pavement repairs to improve accessibility for all.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing chaired Partnership meetings in January, May and August 2023 and heard priorities directly from partner organisations and was briefed on the consultation responses.
- 6.2 The initial engagement survey was shared with all Members and promoted via the Leader’s newsletter. There were 12 responses from Elected Members and their insights were analysed separately as well as within the main cohort. Their priorities

were similar to the comments received from residents directly, including the priority area of outdoor spaces and buildings. We will continue to include engagement with elected members in future insight gathering activities.

- 6.3 The final version of the strategy will be published online on the Buckinghamshire Council website and promoted to members once it has been approved by Cabinet.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 The strategy has been shared with and informed by several groups, including the Bucks Older Peoples Action Groups, the Healthy Ageing Collaborative, the Live Longer Better Alliance, Age UK Bucks, Citizen Advice Bucks and Heart of Bucks. NHS and adult social care partners have also fed in through the Age Friendly Bucks Partnership. It was discussed with the VCSE Partnership Board at their quarterly meeting in November 2023.
- 7.2 A core approach of this strategy is to work with residents to gather their insights and experiences and co-create actions and projects with them. Engagement will therefore occur throughout the life of the strategy.
- 7.3 The strategy has been reviewed by the public health communications lead and amendments made to improve the accessibility of the document and suitability for publishing. A specific domain within the age friendly approach is to build positive and accessible communications and campaigns, and challenge negative stereotypes and stigma. A multi-agency communication plan will be developed as discussed and agreed with the public health communications lead.

8a Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment

As there are no direct legal implications of the strategy and the report is primarily intended for information, it was advised that the approval of the Director of Legal is not required.

8b Section 151 Officer comment

The S151 Officer has read and noted the report.

9. Next steps and review

The planned governance pathway of these papers is as follows:

- a) Health and Wellbeing Board on 21st March 2024

The Healthy Ageing Strategy 2024-2029 will be owned and overseen by the Age Friendly Bucks Partnership, who meet quarterly, chaired by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

The Public Health team will lead on the operational oversight and delivery of the strategy and report progress to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Background papers

Appendix 1: Buckinghamshire Healthy Ageing Strategy 2024-29

WHO's Age Friendly Community [framework](#)

Your questions and views (for key decisions)

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report – Lucie Smith, Public Health Principal, via email to lucie.smith@buckinghamshire.gov.uk. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team by 5pm on 1 March 2024. This can be done by email to democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

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Buckinghamshire

HEALTHY AGEING STRATEGY

2024 - 2029



FOREWORD

This strategy is our commitment to Buckinghamshire becoming more age friendly, which is a priority in the Buckinghamshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This means Buckinghamshire will be a place where the natural and built environments plus the approach of our organisations support people to live healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives for as long as possible – to ‘age well’.

The good news is Buckinghamshire residents generally live longer than the national average and stay in better health for longer too. But this good health is not spread evenly across the county. People living in our most deprived areas age faster and are diagnosed with a long-term condition on average 10 years earlier than in our least deprived areas. We want everyone to age well but ageing well doesn't only begin over the age of 65. Health in our middle age strongly influences our chances of staying well in our older years. People who have high blood pressure, are overweight or are physically inactive in mid-life have an increased risk of developing dementia or having a stroke later. Conversely adopting healthy behaviours can help people to maintain the capabilities that enable them to get the most out of life and do the things that they value. This strategy will therefore concentrate on those aged 40 and over to help give all our residents the best chance to age well.

This strategy has been produced by the Age Friendly Bucks Partnership – with representatives from across Buckinghamshire Council, the voluntary and community sector, and local NHS organisations. It has been informed by talking to our residents, which we will continue to do throughout the life of the strategy. We would like to thank everyone who helped to develop this strategy and who is keen to play their part in implementing it, most importantly our residents. Everyone has a role to play.

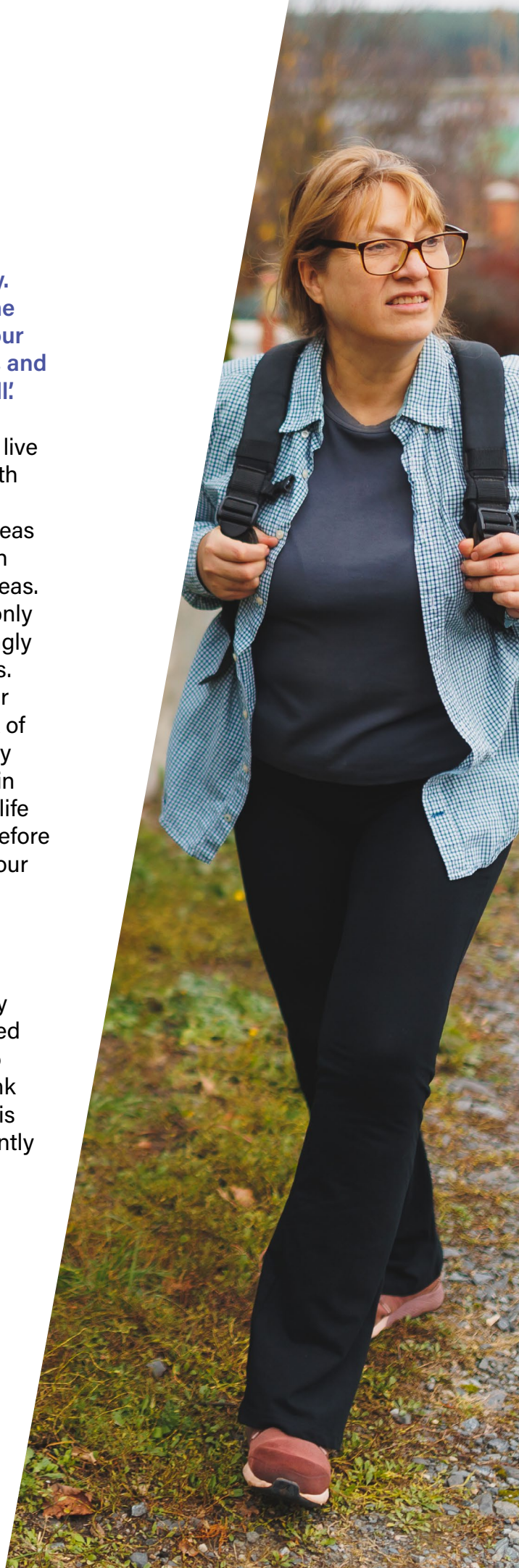
Please help us to implement this strategy and make Buckinghamshire a great place to age well.

Cllr Angela Macpherson

Chair, Age Friendly Bucks Partnership
Deputy Leader, Buckinghamshire Council
Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

Dr Jane O'Grady

Director of Public Health and Community Safety





PURPOSE

Healthy ageing means living a healthy and fulfilling life, being able to participate in activities and contribute to communities, be financially secure and live in suitable homes in safe and thriving communities. With the right policies, environments and support, people can age well and live independent and meaningful lives.

The purpose of this strategy is to create a shared vision for how Buckinghamshire can be a better place for older residents to live healthy and active later lives now and in the future. This strategy and action plan is for everyone who has a role to play in supporting healthy ageing, including residents, communities, the NHS, voluntary sector, and Council.

The actions delivered by this strategy will be created with our residents for our residents. The involvement of older people will be central to the delivery of this strategy's aims and objectives.

For this strategy we are focussing on people who are 40 years of age or older – this includes important years where building healthy behaviours and actions can help residents to enter their older years with greater mental and physical resilience and have better health. Yet some of the actions we take to become more age friendly will also benefit younger people. For example, improving the physical accessibility of our outdoor spaces for those using walking aids will also support people with disabilities of all ages and parents using prams or buggies.

There are three central outcome measures for this strategy which are reported with the overarching Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

1. People over age 65 spending more years of life in good health.
2. More people over age 65 being in work (increasing towards pre-pandemic levels).
3. Fewer adults feeling lonely often or some of the time.

We recognise that these are broad outcome measures that will take time to turn around and also depend on factors outside of local control. Therefore, we will monitor the success of this strategy more closely through progress measures in our action plan.

BACKGROUND



Population projections suggest that over the next 20 years (2022-2042) the total population of Buckinghamshire will increase by 5% (26,132 more people). However, this net result reflects a much larger increase in older age groups, and a slight fall in younger age groups.

The population aged 65 years and over in Buckinghamshire is estimated to increase by 33% (34,944 more people) and the population aged 85 years and older to increase by 66% (10,884 more people) between 2022 and 2042 in Buckinghamshire.¹ This means that the next 20 years, those aged over 65 will increase from being 1 in 5 of our population (2022) to 1 in 4 of our population (2042) (Figure 1).

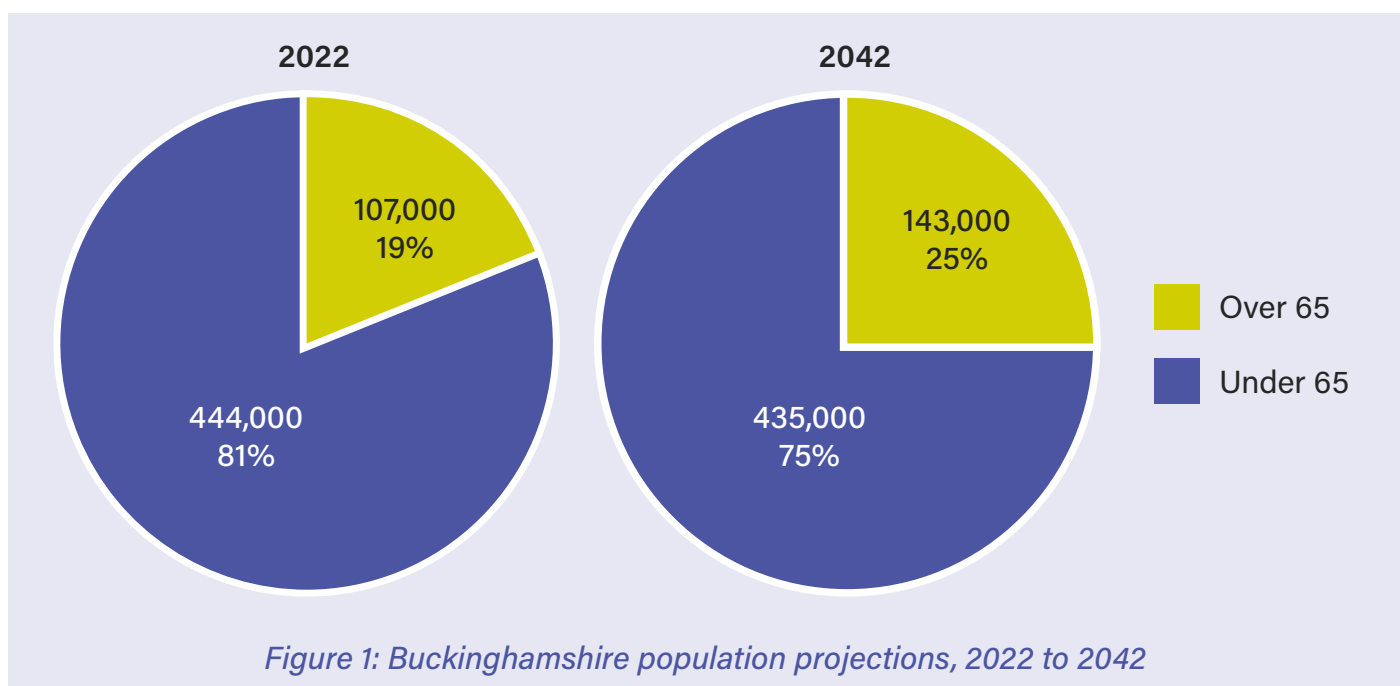


Figure 1: Buckinghamshire population projections, 2022 to 2042

The good news is that people are living longer and the increase in the older population brings economic and societal opportunities. Older workers are vital to public services – 3.4 million key workers are aged over 50.² The age group with the most volunteers is the 65-74 year age group.³

However, these opportunities are most likely to be realised if older adults remain well and independent. Over the past 10 years of data (from 2009-11 to 2018-20⁴) life expectancy (how long people being born might expect to live if current death rates don't change) has risen in both men and women in Buckinghamshire (Table 1). However, healthy life expectancy (the number of years people might expect to live in good health) has instead fallen over this time in men and remained static in women.⁵ Therefore, the number of years of ill health has risen for both men and women in Buckinghamshire, and stands at over 15 years.

		Healthy life expectancy (years)	Total life expectancy (years)	Ill health (years)
Males	2009-11	67.6	80.4	12.8
	2018-20	66.8	81.5	14.7
Females	2009-11	68.6	84.2	15.6
	2018-20	68.6	85.1	16.5

Table 1: Life expectancy at birth in Buckinghamshire, 2009-11 to 2018-20⁶

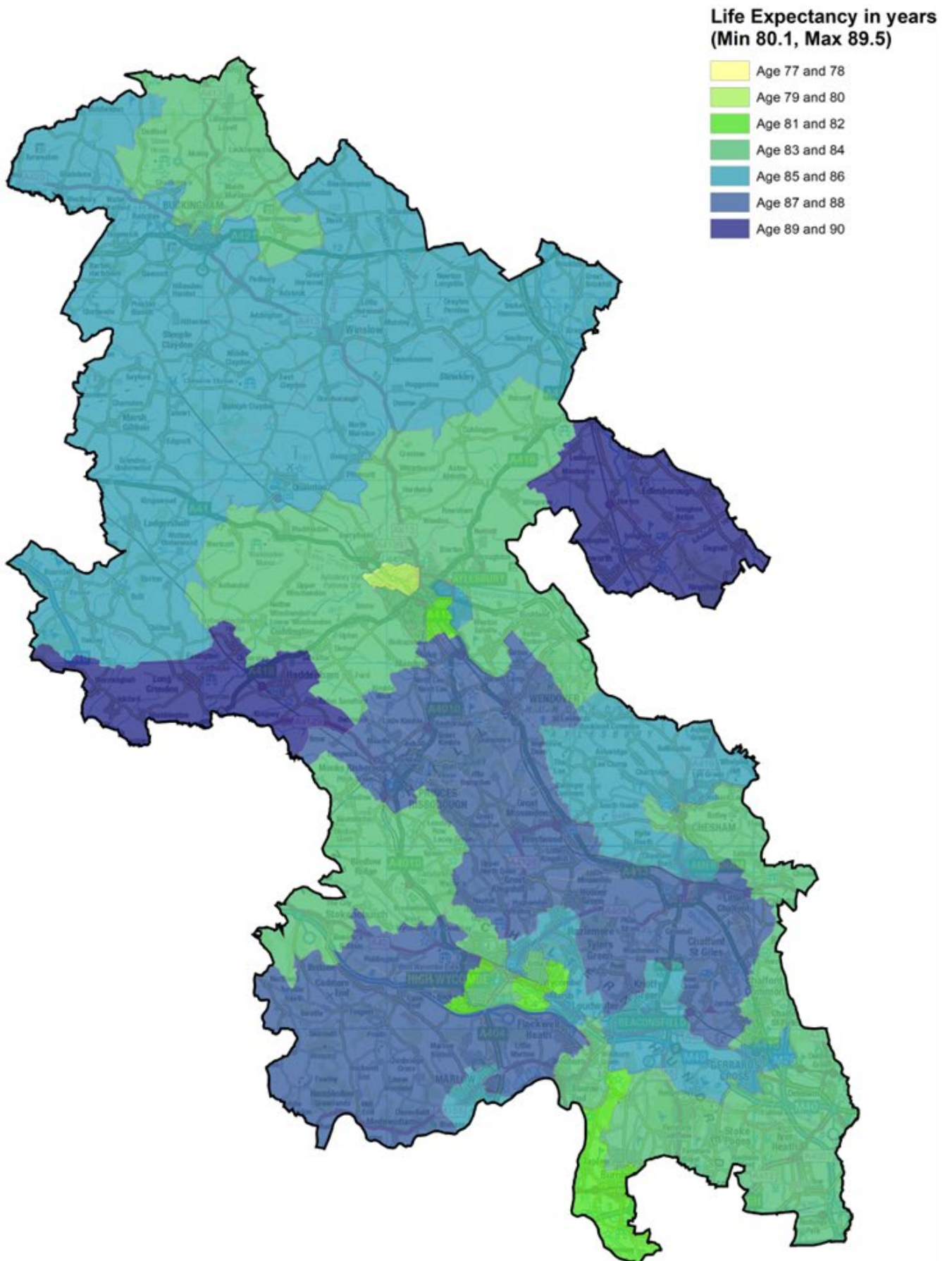
Unfortunately, the data shows significant inequalities. Those living in more deprived areas have a lower life expectancy and experience more years spent in ill health (Figure 2). For women, life expectancy ranges from 80.1 in Aylesbury North West ward to 89.5 in Bernwood ward (covering Haddenham, Long Crendon and nearby villages) – a gap of 9.4 years. For men, life expectancy ranges from 77.3 in the Wycombe ward of Booker, Cressex and Castlefield to 84.4 in Gerrards Cross – a gap of 7.1 years.

Most of the data presented above does not include the Covid pandemic, or only includes its initial period. However, the pandemic has had a variety of negative effects which are likely to impact on older people in particular:

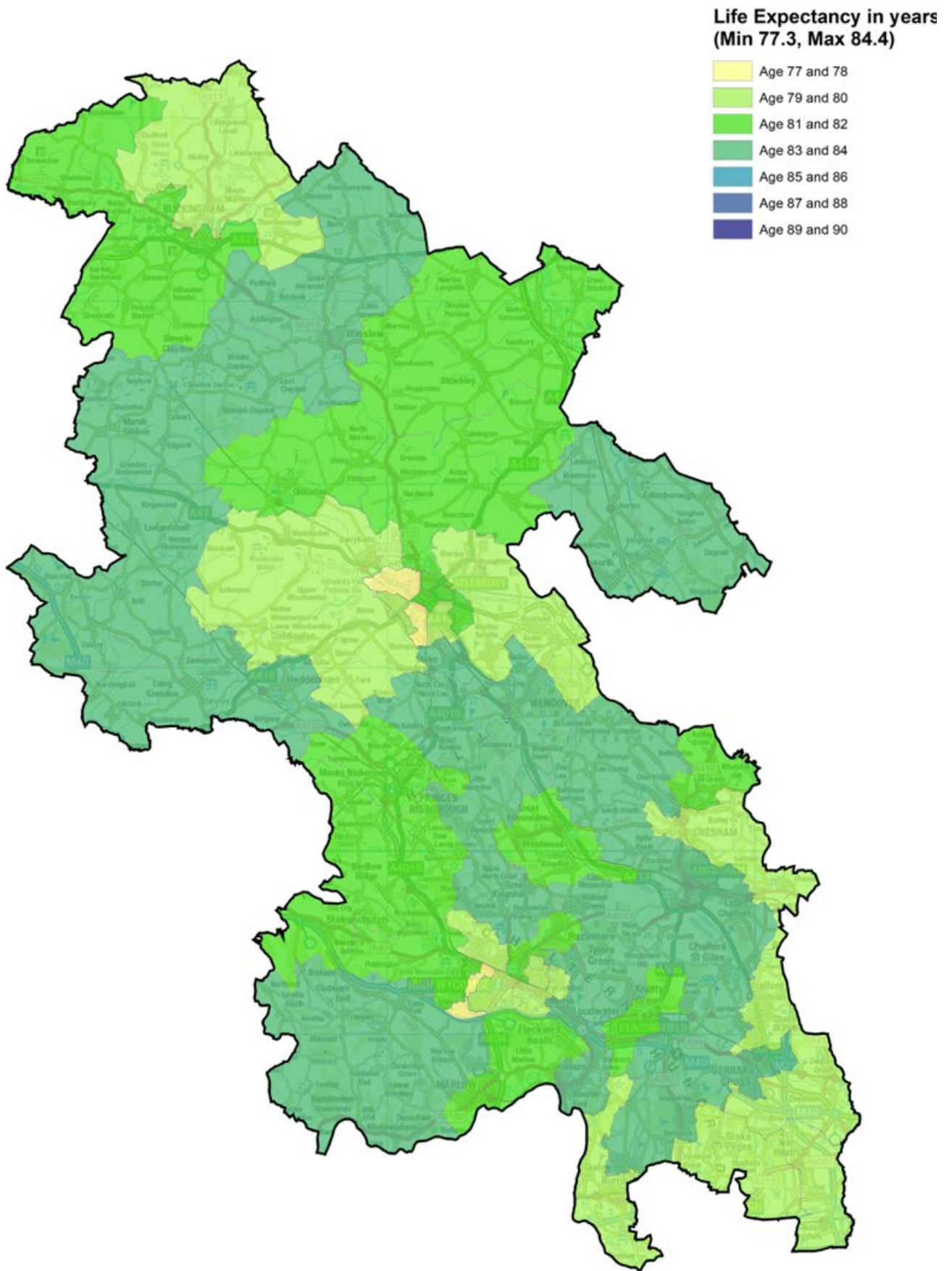
- 1. Physical activity rates reduced**, with the average duration of strength and balance activity in England falling from 126 (2019) to 77 (2020) minutes per week. This type of activity is essential to reduce the risk of falls, support mobility, and retain independence. The proportion of people being inactive worsened with more people doing no activity or less than 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week (32% inactive in 2020 compared to 27% inactive in the previous year).⁷
- 2. Loneliness has increased**, from 18% reporting feeling lonely sometimes or often in Buckinghamshire in 2019/20 to 24% in 2020/21.⁸ This is on a background of rising one-person households across the South East – projected to rise from 46% to 55% of over 65s living alone over the next 20 years.⁹
- 3. Employment of older adults has fallen.** The proportion of people aged 65 and over who were in employment has fallen from an average of 16% in the two years pre-Covid to 13% in 2021/22.¹⁰

Figure 2: Life expectancy at birth across Buckinghamshire by gender, 2016-20¹¹

Female life expectancy (at birth), 2016-20, by wards in Buckinghamshire



Male life expectancy (at birth), 2016-20, by wards in Buckinghamshire





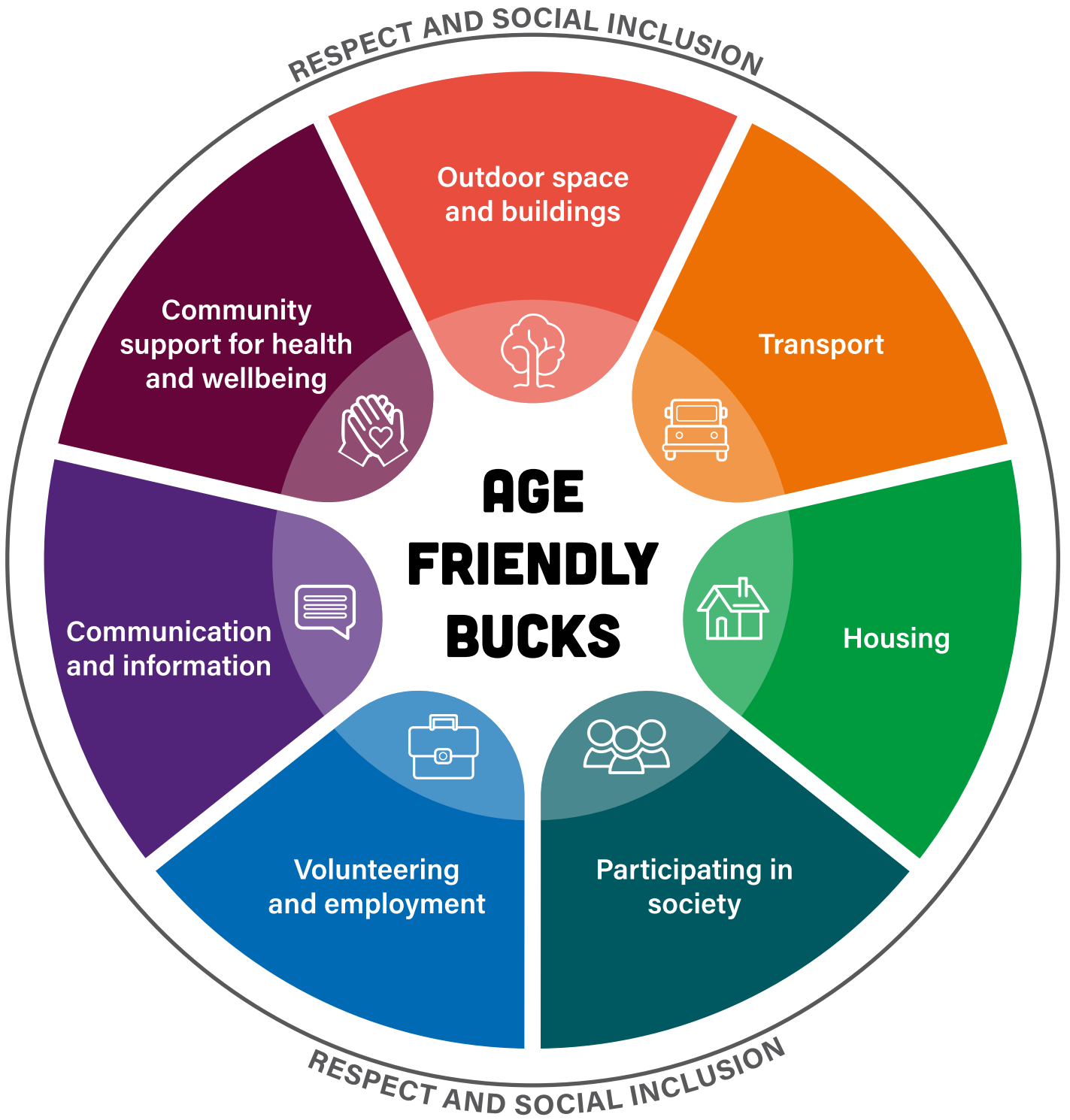
BECOMING MORE AGE FRIENDLY

Age friendly Buckinghamshire is based on the World Health Organization's evidence-based framework of the eight domains that support older people to live healthy and active lives.¹²

The eight domains are interconnected. For example, if people can travel, they can participate in social activities and connect more with friends and family, reducing isolation.

In Buckinghamshire, we will use seven of the domains as our key themes, with the eighth domain of respect and social inclusion running as a golden thread throughout our work (Figure 3)

Figure 3: Age friendly Buckinghamshire



Our aims across the age friendly Buckinghamshire themes:



Outdoor spaces and buildings

We will create high quality, accessible and social public spaces which are safe and help people to move around independently.
e.g. access to local and welcoming warm spaces.



Transport

We will promote accessible, affordable and appropriate travel options allowing people to access services they need.
e.g. age friendly active travel schemes.



Housing

We will support the improvement and development of accommodation for people to live safely and comfortably, and which can improve physical and mental health, wellbeing, and social connections.
e.g. age well design codes used in new build properties.



Participating in society

We will reduce and remove barriers to participation to foster engagement with activities and events which build a sense of belonging.
e.g. access to toilets so people feel confident and able to leave home and engage in activities.



Volunteering and employment

We will explore how to support older adults to continue in or re-enter employment in the face of falling older adult employment rates, as well as how to facilitate volunteering.
e.g. healthy retirement planning.¹³



Communication and information

We will build positive and accessible communications and campaigns, and challenge negative stereotypes and stigma.
e.g. local inclusive communications plan.



Community support for health and wellbeing

We will strengthen the health and wellbeing of communities and support the network of community-based groups.
e.g. libraries acting as a health and wellbeing hub in local communities.



Respect and social inclusion

All age friendly activities across our seven themes must support people from all backgrounds to age well, with respect and dignity.



AREAS FOR ACTION

Given the breadth of this work, to make progress achievable we will prioritise domains in turn rather than tackle all simultaneously.

To inform our prioritisation, and better understand the types of action that might best enable people to age well, we will be talking with residents and communities to hear their views throughout the life of the strategy.

This will concentrate on four key questions which all ask for free text responses to enable an unfiltered insight into residents' views:

1. What would make where you live a great place to age well?
2. What do you think your area does well to support people to age well?
3. What are the challenges to ageing well where you live?
4. What do you think would meet these challenges/better support people to age well?

An initial survey in summer 2023 received 228 responses. Responses were received from adults aged 40 to over 85, with 61-65 year olds the average age group.¹⁴ Four in ten respondents reported that they had a disability, impairment and/or long term health condition. Based on participants' postcodes, six in ten respondents were from rural areas and four in ten were from urban areas (predominantly Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham and therefore closely overlapping with our Opportunity Bucks areas).

Urban and rural participants raised different themes when responding to their local challenges to ageing well. Urban residents concentrated on outdoor spaces and buildings – with accessibility for walking and wheeling being the most important challenge at over 40% of the responses in this theme. Rural residents were concerned with transportation – chiefly bus availability.

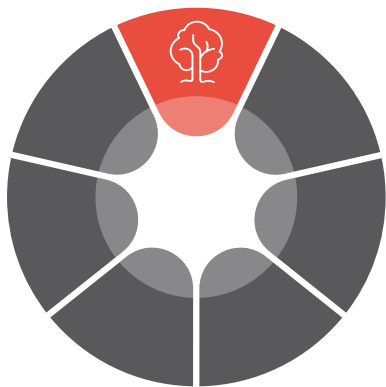
These findings mirror age friendly engagement across the country – in both small and large settings. Banbury, Oxfordshire, reported their most commonly raised themes to be community outdoor spaces, particularly pavement condition, followed by transportation.¹⁵ Age friendly Wales has made ensuring the natural and built environment is safe and age friendly their top priority, with a focus on reducing pavement parking.¹⁶ Research has found that people over the age of 60 represent 20% of the UK population, but only 8% of pedestrian activity, while accounting for 42% of pedestrian fatalities – with the maintenance of pavements, appropriateness of crossing facilities and state of road lighting cited as contributors.¹⁷

In the first year (2024) we will concentrate on two themes:



Participating in society

To tackle social isolation and loneliness which have been raised by local organisations working with older people and follows national recognition of an increase in the risk factors for loneliness among older people since the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁸ Social isolation has therefore already been agreed as a priority for the Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board.¹⁹



Outdoor spaces and buildings

Raised as the top concern for urban residents where we know life expectancy and healthy life expectancy is lower in our county. This theme is fundamental in enabling people to participate in society through the access to local amenities and community venues and the use of green spaces.²⁰

In later years the focus will shift to remaining themes, starting with transportation in year two (2025) as the top current concern for rural residents. Throughout the course of the strategy all areas will be addressed, but their order will be influenced by emerging issues and the changing priorities of our residents and partners.

We know that there is lots of good work already underway by a wide variety of stakeholders. This strategy will seek to build on and enhance this work, rather than duplicate it, when co-creating new actions with residents and partners. During our initial consultation survey there were reports of positive work across all themes, and it is important that we recognise these achievements.



IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

An action plan will underpin the strategy – capturing work and monitoring progress across all themes. The action plan will be reviewed quarterly and amended annually to reflect new priorities and opportunities. As new themes are tackled and projects are agreed extra progress measures will be added to our action plan.

An Age Friendly Bucks Partnership has been established to oversee the development and delivery of the strategy and support a system wide approach to delivery. It will form an umbrella for age friendly work – informed by several topic-specific strategies and groups (such as the Live Longer Better Alliance and the Physical Activity Strategy) already working to improve healthy ageing in Buckinghamshire. The Partnership will ensure emerging issues do not fall between the cracks. Membership includes senior representatives from partners including the Council, NHS, and voluntary sector, and it is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing who is also Deputy Leader of Buckinghamshire Council. This Partnership will report progress into the Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board annually.

A wider network of stakeholders, including residents, will also be established. This network will inform the priorities with insight and experience and will work together to create activities across our priority themes.

REFERENCES

- ¹ These projections use 2018-based estimations – the latest produced at a local authority level by the Office for National Statistics. They therefore do not include the direct impacts of the COVID pandemic, nor any changes to demographic behaviour since the pandemic.
- ² [Office for National Statistics, 2020](#)
- ³ [Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2020](#)
- ⁴ This data includes 2020 so covers the early COVID-19 pandemic. Given the high number of excess deaths due to COVID-19, life expectancy fell in 2020 across the county.
- ⁵ [Productive Healthy Ageing Profile - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)
- ⁶ [Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Profile](#)
- ⁷ [Wider impacts of COVID-19 on physical activity, deconditioning and falls in older adults](#)
- ⁸ [Sport England - Active Lives](#)
- ⁹ [Local authority ageing statistics, household projections for older people - Office for National Statistics](#)
- ¹⁰ [Nomis](#)
- ¹¹ [Local Health - Office for Health Improvement and Disparities - Indicators: maps, data and charts](#)
- ¹² [The WHO Age-friendly Cities Framework](#)
- ¹³ Retirement planning can include helping people to reduce their hours and change careers which may enable them to stay working for longer, as well as facilitating a smoother and healthier transition into retirement.
- ¹⁴ Six responses were received by adults aged 30-40, however the comments they submitted were in alignment with the other 222 responses received and so were included in the analysis.
- ¹⁵ [Age Friendly Banbury Consultation](#)
- ¹⁶ [Age friendly Wales: our strategy for an ageing society](#)
- ¹⁷ Musselwhite, C & Haddad, H: Older people's travel and mobility needs. A reflection of a hierarchical model 10 years on. *Quality in Ageing and Older Adults*, 19(2), 87-105.
- ¹⁸ [Age UK, 2021 - Loneliness and Covid-19](#)
- ¹⁹ The [Health and Wellbeing Board](#) brings together partners from across a range of local organisations to understand and improve the health and wellbeing needs of the Buckinghamshire population, and encourage services to work in a more joined up way.
- ²⁰ [Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors: Research Findings](#)



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination in the workplace, in the provision of services and in wider society.

The duty requires all public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people

Public bodies demonstrate this due regard in different ways, including producing robust equality impact assessments when considering changes to policies and services.

An EqIA enables us to check the potential impacts on residents and employees of our policies, services and projects. It's an opportunity to challenge how we currently do things.

Carrying out an EqIA should not create extra work; it should be part of your normal service planning process. Most of the information required should already be available to you through other work already undertaken e.g. service user monitoring, analysis of complaints and national research.

The purpose of an EqIA is to *take account* of equality as plans develop, to promote and assist the consideration of equalities issues arising in plans and proposals and to ensure that where possible adverse or disproportionate impacts are minimised and positive impacts are maximised. As such where possible an EqIA should be started at the outset of a project/proposal and continually be developed and reviewed until a final proposal is adopted. An EqIA should be used to ensure decision makers have all the information they need regarding potential impacts to ensure they have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making judgements.

Carrying out EqIAs should be an integral part of policy or service development/change and larger projects may need more than one EqIA if different areas are impacted by the change.

Any project that requires consultation will automatically require an EqIA.

All approved and signed EqIAs are recorded in a central register. Please email your completed draft EqIA to equalities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk. Previous EqIAs can be made available for information upon request. For any questions or if you require support in completing your EqIA please contact Maria Damigos and Natalie Donhou Morley directly.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

Part A (Initial assessment) - Section 1 - Background

Proposal/Brief Title: Healthy Ageing Strategy 2024-29

OneDrive link to report/policy:

Related policies:

Date: 14th Aug 2023

Type of strategy, policy, project or service: Healthy Ageing Strategy

Please tick one of the following:

- Existing
- New or proposed
- Changing, update or revision
- Other (please explain)

This assessment was created by:

Name: Lucie Smith

Job Title: Public Health Principal

Email address: lucie.smith@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

The aim of the strategy is to become an 'age friendly community', based on the World Health Organization's (WHO's) evidence-based [framework](#) of the interconnected domains that support older people to live healthy, active and independent lives. The 8 domains of the framework are:

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
2. Transport
3. Housing
4. Participating in society
5. Volunteering and employment
6. Communication and information
7. Community support for health and wellbeing
8. Respect and social inclusion



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

The purpose of this strategy is to create a shared vision for how Buckinghamshire can be a better place for older residents to live healthy and active later lives.

What outcomes do we want to achieve?

The actions delivered by this strategy will be created with our residents for our residents, and the involvement of older people will be central to the delivery of this strategy's aims and objectives.

The overarching measures for this strategy and its action plan are:

- People over the age of 65 spend more years of life in good health
- More people over the age of 65 in work (increasing towards pre-pandemic levels)
- Fewer adults feeling lonely often or some of the time

Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence? No

Please explain your answer:

This strategy is a high-level document, outlining our commitment to become more age friendly in line with the WHO's Framework. It will encourage organisations to consider how they can best facilitate healthy ageing for residents in our communities. There are no plans in this strategy to withdraw services, activity or presence.

Does this proposal plan to reduce a service, activity or presence? No

Please explain your answer:

This strategy is a high-level document, outlining our commitment to become more age friendly in line with the WHO's Framework. It will encourage organisations to consider how they can best facilitate healthy ageing for residents in our communities. There are no plans in this strategy to reduce services, activity or presence.

Does this proposal plan to introduce, review or change a policy, strategy or procedure? Yes

Please explain your answer:

This is the introduction of a new Healthy Ageing Strategy. Over the life of the strategy actions will be developed to facilitate healthy ageing. These actions will include the review of policies and procedures to stimulate change where needed across the 8 domains of the WHO Framework.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

Does this proposal affect service users and/or customers, or the wider community? Yes

Please explain your answer:

The purpose of the strategy is to support residents to age well and have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

Does this proposal affect employees? Yes

Please explain your answer:

Some employees are residents of Buckinghamshire therefore the actions outlined in the strategy will have a positive outcome on their health and wellbeing. Because of the wide range of factors involved in supporting people to age well, employees in teams across the Council may become involved in actions developed through the strategy.

Will employees require training to deliver this proposal? No

Please explain your answer:

There is no universal training required to deliver this overarching strategy. However, some of the accompanying actions may require training to support their delivery, such as to follow national guidance on producing age friendly communications.

Has any engagement /consultation been carried out, or is planned in the future? Yes

Please explain your answer:

The strategy has been informed by a range of partners, including Age UK Bucks, Citizen Advice Bucks, Heart of Bucks, and the Bucks Older People Action Group. This has been through discussions at meetings and opportunities to complete a survey.

Engagement is also occurring directly with elected members and residents. The first cycle took place in June – July 2023 using electronic, paper and verbal engagement channels to collect answers to four insight questions, alongside collection of demographic data. 228 responses were received, and the results have been analysed by being themed into the 8 domains to inform the choosing of the initial strategy priorities. Further analysis of these results will help to shape the more detailed actions that the strategy oversees. Additional cycles of engagement will take place throughout the duration of the Strategy.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

Section 2 - Impacts

Please highlight potential impacts (including unintended impacts or consequences) for each protected characteristic*. Where there are negative or positive impacts please give more details of the impact. Where the impacts are unclear please explain why.

Age*

Positive

Negative

Unclear

None

Details:

In the next 20 years, those aged over 65 will increase from being 1 in 5 of our population (2022) to 1 in 4 of our population (2042).

The purpose of the strategy is to support residents to age well and have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing by using a whole system approach. It focusses on people who are 40 years of age or older – this includes important years where building healthy behaviours and actions can help residents to enter their older years with greater mental and physical resilience and achieve better health outcome. Yet some of the actions we take to become more age friendly will also benefit younger people – such as improved physical accessibility supporting people of all ages with disabilities or new parents using prams and buggies.

Disability*

Positive

Negative

Unclear

None

Details:

Disability-free life expectancy – the number of years on average people can expect to live without a disabling health condition is approx. 67 years for men and 65 years for women in Buckinghamshire, compared to an average life expectancy of 81 (men) and 85 (women).

Actions that support residents to remain independent and active are likely to have a positive impact on people with disabilities, for example by ensuring homes follow age friendly principles it means that they are wheelchair accessible.

Pregnancy & maternity*

Positive (slight)

Negative

Unclear

None

Details:

Although not a key focus of the strategy, by improving physical accessibility for people of all ages with disabilities, it is likely to improve accessibility for new parents using prams and buggies. Otherwise, the strategy is likely to have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

Race & Ethnicity*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details:

The strategy is likely to have a positive impact on race and ethnicity as we seek to understand and address the challenges to ageing well for people from different cultures and backgrounds. This includes working with and alongside the Opportunity Bucks programme to enhance the offer in our more deprived areas where we know life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are lower – these areas tend to have a greater proportion of residents from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Marriage & Civil Partnership*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details:

The strategy is likely to have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic.

Religion & Belief*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	-------------

Details:

The strategy is likely to have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic.

Sex*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details:

The strategy is likely to have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic.

Sexual Orientation*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	-------------

Details:

The strategy is likely to have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic.

Gender Reassignment*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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The strategy is likely to have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic.

Do you anticipate any impacts on military families/veterans in relation to the Armed Forces Act 2021 requirements on local authorities to have due regard to [the Armed forces Covenant](#)? No



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

Please explain your answer:

The strategy is likely to have a neutral impact on these groups.

Are there any other additional groups/impacts that the EqIA should evaluate in relation to the proposal? Yes – positive impacts as outlined below

Carers - Positive

Details: The elements which support an age friendly approach include access to the right information at the right time, as well as community support for health and wellbeing. It is therefore likely the activities developed as part of this strategy will also support older carers (e.g. dementia friendly activities).

Rural isolation - Positive

Details: We will investigate the differences between living in rural and urban environments when analysing our insight responses and planning our actions. Rural isolation is already emerging as an issue in our initial insight gathering, which we will seek to positively address through our participating in society domain work.

Poverty (social & economic deprivation) - Positive

Details: Data shows that those living in more deprived areas are likely to have lower life expectancy and more years spent in ill health. For women life expectancy ranges from 80.1 in Aylesbury North West ward to 89.5 in Bernwood ward which covers Haddenham, Long Crendon and surrounding villages. For men life expectancy ranges from 77.3 in the Wycombe ward of Booker, Cressex and Castlefield ward to 84.4 in Gerrards Cross. We will therefore work with and alongside the Opportunity Bucks programme to enhance the offer in our more deprived areas.

Section 3 – Is a full assessment required?

If you have answered yes to any of the initial assessment questions in section 1 of this EqIA, or have indicated a negative or unclear impact in section 2, it is likely you will need to complete part B of the EqIA form. Should you need guidance as to whether a full EqIA is needed at this time please contact Maria Damigos or Natalie Donhou Morley before continuing.

Following completion of part A, is part B completion required?

- Not required at this time

Explain your answer:

No negative or unclear impacts have been identified.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

Throughout the duration of the strategy, we will continue to assess the equality impacts and ensure that targeted communications are effective, engaging the targeted groups and ensuring that fair access to activity has been provided.

Any specific actions or projects delivered from the strategy will be assessed using an EqIA during development.

Have you completed an DPIA for this project/change? No

(As you are completing an EqIA, you may also require a DPIA - for more information please contact dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

Section 4 – Sign off (Only complete when NOT completing Part B)

Officer completing this assessment: Lucie Smith Date: 21/08/2023

Equality advice sought from: Natalie Donhou Morley Date: 22/08/2023

Service Director sign off: Jane O’Grady Date: 31/08/2023

Next review Date: April 2025

If required please complete part B (full assessment)



Report to Cabinet

Date:	5 March 2024
Title:	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty update
Cabinet Member(s):	Thomas Broom & Peter Strachan
Contact officer:	Darran Eggleton, Head of Planning Policy & Compliance
Ward(s) affected:	Ivinghoe, Aston Clinton & Bierton, Wendover, Halton Stoke Mandeville, Chiltern Ridges, Chesham, Chess Valley, Amersham & Chesham Bois, Little Chalfont & Amersham Common, Chalfont St Giles, Beaconsfield, Penn Wood & Old Amersham, Wooburns & Bourne End, Tyles Green & Loudwater, Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow & Marlow Southeast, Ryemead & Micklefield, Terries & Amersham Hills, Totteridge & Bowerdean, Marlow, Chiltern Villages, Ridgeway West
Recommendations:	Note the contents of the update report and seek comments from Members regarding Chiltern Conservation Boards decision to undertake a 'light-touch' review of their management plan and delay their full review until early 2025.
Reason for recommendation:	The paper sets out a number of points for information only. The paper also seeks members views on the Chiltern Conservation Board's intention to delay the full review of their management plan and undertake a light-touch review at this time.
1. Executive summary	
1.1	This report provides an update on a number of matters relating to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), including a national name change to all AONB's, the Chiltern AONB Boundary review, Chiltern Conservation Board's decision regarding its Protected Area Management Plan, an increased duty on Local

Authorities in light of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, the government's re-commitment to designating a new National Park in the UK and the Chiltern Conservation Boards intention to engage with the Local Authority regarding their next steps and Management Plan review.

2. AONB Name change

- 2.1 In November 2023, the government announced that all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales are becoming National Landscapes.
- 2.2 The new name reflects their national importance; the vital contribution they make to protect the nation from the threats of climate change, nature depletion and the wellbeing crisis, whilst also creating greater understanding and awareness of the work that they do.
- 2.3 Whilst the name 'Chilterns AONB' will continue to exist in law for the time being, we anticipate further legislation at some point in the future to change that to become the 'Chiltern National Landscape'.
- 2.4 It is understood that Defra's intention is to launch and publish the new national landscapes brand by March 2024.

3. Boundary review update

- 3.1 Natural England is leading the process of assessing land around the Chilterns with a view to potentially extending the designated AONB. The project is part of Natural England's wider Designations Programme which was announced by the Government in June 2021.
- 3.2 The boundary review process involves answering three broad technical questions:
 - 1) Does the landscape have sufficient natural beauty to be considered outstanding?
 - 2) Is it desirable to designate this landscape as AONB to conserve and enhance its natural beauty?
 - 3) Where should the boundary be drawn?
- 3.3 Natural England is already working with representatives from all the local authorities that may have land included in the extended AONB. This is being done through the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) which includes at least one technical officer representative from each local authority in the existing and potential extended area. A wider Management Advisory Group (MAG) with more senior officer organisation representatives provides further support to the collaborate process. Eric Owens, Director of Planning & Environment has replaced Steve Bambrick, Corporate Director Planning, Growth and Sustainability as the Buckinghamshire Council representative on the MAG.

- 3.4 It is understood that so far work on the boundary review has focused on addressing Question 1) and has involved gathering and appraising evidence, desk-based studies, and field assessments across numerous sites. The Chiltern Conservation Board report that work has seen significant progress, including a recent stakeholder engagement event with local specialists and has led to steps to identify the proposed boundary changes (Question 3) starting in February 2024.
- 3.5 In the meantime, Officers understand that the informal engagement helped strengthen proposals in advance of a statutory and public consultation on the draft candidate areas, currently scheduled for spring/summer 2024.
- 3.6 The statutory consultation, which we understand will take place in spring/summer 2024, will be open to everyone and give all stakeholders an opportunity to have their say on the proposed boundary changes.
- 3.7 Following the public consultation, a draft legal Order will be submitted by Natural England to the Secretary of State. The current project programme indicates that this is likely to be undertaken by the end of 2024. The Secretary of State may decide to hold a Public Inquiry. The Secretary of State may then decide to confirm the Order with or without modification or may choose not to confirm.

4. Chiltern Conservation Board Management Plan decision

- 4.1 In July 2022 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) wrote to all the partners responsible for producing 'Protected Landscape Management Plans'.
- 4.2 In the case of the Chiltern AONB that is the Chiltern Conservation Board (CCB) and are required to prepare and publish a plan which formulates policy for the management of the Chilterns AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it (a "management plan"). In addition, the CCB are required to review that plan at least every five years (ie. by the end of March 2024).
- 4.3 In the meantime, DEFRA set out in a letter in July 2022 that they recognise the current changing context around AONBs and their Management Plans as well as the size and scale of the implications resulting from the reforms coming as a result of the Landscapes Review. DEFRA has therefore decided to allow an option for Management Plans reviews to be delayed by up to 1 year from the initial review date.
- 4.4 On 19th December 2023 the Chief Executive Officer of the Chiltern Conservation Board wrote to all Local Authorities within the Chiltern AONB setting out that at its meeting in September 2023, the Chiltern Conservation Board resolved to publish, by the end of March 2024, a "light-touch review" comprising a short paper setting out the CCB's objectives for the following year including its intentions for completing the review of the Plan.

4.5 The CCB set out that:

“This will have the effect of enabling the vision, objectives and policies of the existing plan to be carried forward to the end of March 2025 while the details of the review are completed. We will share a draft of that paper with you in the next few weeks. It is the Board’s view that the current Management Plan was prepared on the basis both of robust evidence and of extensive and productive engagement with our stakeholders and communities in and around the AONB, including our local authority partners.”

“It is therefore proposed that the review of the Plan undertaken during 2024-25 will largely roll the content of the Plan forwards to cover the 2024-2029 period, with only limited factual updates where necessary.”

4.6 Subsequently, as soon as there is greater clarity on the future boundaries of the AONB, the CCB proposes to engage with existing and new partners on a completely new Management Plan, in the context of a new long-term vision for the AONB, to be co-created with the new partnership.

4.7 The CCB seeks any observations on their proposals and will seek comments on the “light-tough review” upon its publication. Such comments are sought to be submitted before the end of February ahead of the CCB Board meeting on 14th March. Officers therefore intend to submit ‘officer comments’ by the deadline, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment which will be confirmed following the cabinet meeting on 5th March.

5. Increased duty

5.1 On 26th October 2023, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill achieved royal assent and made extensive changes to the planning system and other matters affecting the functions and responsibilities of Local Authorities.

5.2 With specific reference to the Chilterns AONB and other National Landscapes, Section 245(6) of the Act has the effect of elevating the existing duty of regard that all public bodies must have to the purposes of AONB designation in exercising their functions (section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) to a duty “to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area”. This duty applies to all functions undertaken by all public bodies, including local authorities, relating to, or affecting land in an AONB, and came into effect on 26th December 2023.

5.3 The Planning Department intends to continue to ensure that the increased duty is being met through its development management processes and will continue to consult relevant organisations (ie. CCB, Natural England) on applications in the AONB

as part of the statutory consultations taking their views into account in the overall decision-making process.

6. Potential New National Park

- 6.1 At the end of November, the government announced a package of measures to further support protected landscapes' resilience for nature and for people. The measures included a £10m funding boost for National Landscapes and National Parks and a recommitment to designate a new National Park.
- 6.2 In September 2019, the Glover Review, a wide-ranging review covering functions, purpose, priorities, funding and ongoing support of all the United Kingdom's National Parks and AONB's, recommended to the government that 3 new National Parks should be created in the UK and that these should be in Cotswolds, Devon and the Chilterns.
- 6.3 Following the government announcement, it is anticipated that the Chilterns remain amongst the top 3 likely locations to be explored as a possible contender to become the new National Park.
- 6.4 Members will be aware the designation of a new National Park in the Chiltern AONB will have significant impacts and would likely create a new planning authority although other hybrid models do now exist where planning functions could remain with the local authority.
- 6.5 We await further details on this and will keep members up to date as that process progresses.

7. Chiltern Conservation Board

- 7.1 On 25th January, the Chiltern Conservation Board wrote to the Council setting out that their Chief Executive Officer, Elaine King, considers that now is good time to refresh its partnership with the Chief Executive and Managing Directors of the nine local authorities covered by the Chilterns AONB.
- 7.2 CCB propose to invite all the relevant CEO's or MD's to a meeting the next few weeks to provide an update on the protected landscapes as well as the changes happening regarding future conservation and enhancement of the AONB.
- 7.3 It is proposed that further meeting will occur with appropriate senior officer from each local authority to carry forward work that needs to be done in partnership between the CCB and the relevant authority, including the review of the Chiltern AONB.
- 7.4 Officers intend to engage in the consultation process as set out above and propose to engage with the CCB following their request to meet.

8. Legal and financial implications

8.1 As the content of this report is for information only, there are no immediate direct financial or legal implications.

8.1 With regards the proposed name change to the AONB to Natural Landscapes, we have not yet undertaken an audit of where this name is referenced across the Council's assets, where changes will need to be made, and at what cost. The only cost we can envisage relates to signage and rebranding, however Defra have set out some key targets for the rebrand work. These are:

1. The 'National Landscapes' brand is launched and publicised nationally by March 2024.
2. The rebrand is implemented locally across the majority of the AONB network by March 2024, with recognition that this may be phased to allow for local circumstances.
3. Implementation will include local PR, replacement of selected branded materials and rebranding of the AONB network's online presence.
4. The intellectual property of each National Landscape is protected.

8.2 In addition, we understand that Defra has provided funding to the National Association for AONBs to cover the costs of the central rebranding work and is also making a small amount of funding available for each AONB team to help with the initial transition.

8.3 We consider that the rebranding work would be the responsibility of the Chiltern Conservation Board and therefore it is the CCB that are likely to receive any associated funding.

8.4 With regards the potential for a new National Park in the Chilterns Area, the financial implications of this have not yet been worked through, and we are working on the assumption that, if this does happen, the government will be required to fund the cost of change.

8.5 The Council's MTFP does not have any provision for the cost of change for the name change of AONBs, or the potential that the Chilterns becomes a new National Park. The Council is therefore budgeting for these to be cost neutral within existing budgets, and any costs funded by the Government.

8a Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment

8.6 The Director has read and noted the report.

8b Section 151 Officer comment

8.6 The S151 has read and noted the report.

9. Corporate implications

- 9.1 The AONB update contained in this paper feeds directly into the key priority set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-25 specifically in relation to improving our environment. This key priority sets out that *"Buckinghamshire is a beautiful county, and our stunning natural and historic landscape is valued by all"* and makes specific reference to Buckinghamshire being one third covered by the AONB setting out that we want *"to address climate change, improve our environment and create economic opportunities for clean growth"*.

10. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 10.1 Consultation and views on this paper were sought from the Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration, Peter Strachan and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, Thomas Broom. Both Cabinet members were given a verbal briefing, have seen the content of the draft report and are both supportive of its content.

11. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 11.1 The Communications team have been briefed on the paper and are familiar with its content. At present there is no communication issues to address but officer will review that position as the items detailed in this report progress and transpire accordingly.

12. Next steps and review

- 12.1 Officers will prepare a written response to the Chilterns Conservation Board outlining the Council's support of their proposed actions, will agree the content of that response with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment and send that response to the CCB by their deadline of end of February 2024.

13. Background papers

- 13.1 None.

14. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 14.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please contact the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team by 5pm on 1 March 2024. This can be done by email to democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

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Report to Cabinet

Date:	5th March 2024
Title:	Future High Street Fund Scheme
Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Peter Strachan - Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration Councillor John Chilver - Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources
Contact officer:	John Reed
Ward(s) affected:	Abbey Ward – Councillor Arman Alam, Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE, Councillor Mahboob Husain

Recommendations:

1. To agree to implement the High Wycombe Future High Street Fund Retail Repurposing Scheme, as set out in the Confidential Annex, involving entering into a 'surrender & renewal' Agreement with the tenant, subject to proven structural integrity of the building and conditional upon planning consent for the proposed uses/alterations, enabling the downsizing of the tenant into the ground floor, releasing space to be converted to accommodate the relocation of the Buckinghamshire Archives, and potentially, Discover Bucks Museum's collections storage currently located at Halton, and create office space for existing Council services.
2. To agree to supplementary budget changes set out in the Confidential Annex, increasing the Capital Budget for the Future High Street Scheme from the current budget of £6m to £11.26m, funded from Future High Street Fund Grant, Council match funding, the Capital Receipt from the Tenant Surrender Premium, and new Capital Receipts.
3. To agree to release £8.27m of this amended Capital budget (which excludes the new Capital Receipts), to proceed with the Tenant lease surrender and the creation of the shell unit, to ensure we meet DLUHC's deadlines for spending the grant funding.

4. To delegate to the Director of Property & Assets and the Director of Culture, Sport & Leisure, in agreement with their respective Cabinet Members and the Section 151 Officer, authority to conclude detailed terms for the Agreement with the tenant; to negotiate detailed terms with Discover Bucks Museum linked to their museum storage (if it is agreed that this will be part of the scheme); to appoint a full project planning and design team and solicitors; submit a planning application and enter into appropriate contracts for the proposed conversion works and relocations. This will be up to the value of released budget as set out in the Confidential Annex.

***Reason for recommendation:** the proposed Retail Repurposing project provides a potential fully capital funded solution to the relocation of the Buckinghamshire Archives, as part of an innovative scheme to regenerate an ageing retail store in High Wycombe. The project will also enable the delivery of the budgeted Estates Strategy Revenue Savings from the NCO disposal.*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This paper seeks approval of a new Future High Street 'Retail Repurposing Scheme'. It is being brought forward to ensure the Council maximises the full benefit of the allocated FHS monies. This project will enable a current high street tenant to downsize from their multi-level store in Wycombe town centre, by newly fitting out the ground floor. The Council own the freehold of the building. The tenant will pay to surrender their long leasehold and will enter into a new occupational lease. This will release the first and part second floors for alternative use. The large floorplates are suited to storage use, with one third of the first floor and half of the part second floor capable of being converted to offices. The proposal is to relocate Buckinghamshire Archives from Aylesbury into part of the first floor and, possibly, the relocation of the Discover Bucks Museum's collections storage from Halton. The potential offices being either for operational use or developed speculatively for letting.

2. Background

- 2.1 Future High Street Funding (FHS) of £11.779m was awarded to Buckinghamshire Council in December 2020, to revitalise the 'Old Town' and improve key 'Gateways'. The Council allocated £3.3m of match funding bringing the total value of the programme to circa £15.2m. The FHS programme was for 3 years to March

2024. However, DHLUC have acknowledged that all recipient local authorities have experienced slippage. So, the programme has been extended, in effect, by a year.

- 2.2 The proposed Retail Repurpose scheme was not in the 2020 programme. It has been brought forward to replace original proposed schemes that have since happened without Council intervention, leaving a substantial part of the FHS monies still to be invested. This Retail Repurpose project involves an existing multi-storey store in the town centre, the freehold of which is owned by the Council. The tenant currently has a long lease. In November 2023, DHLUC agreed to a 'Project Adjustment Request' amending the FHS programme to include this Retail Repurposing project.

3. Drivers for Change

- 3.1 The retention of the tenant in the town centre is important from a footfall generator viewpoint. A previous scheme proposed by the tenant for them to sub-divide their space proved financially unviable. The tenant had intended to vacate the property in its entirety, but following discussions with the Council, is willing to downsize into a re-fitted ground floor, on a new occupational lease, vacating the first and part of the second floor. These floorplates are large and deep with windowless external elevations, so are mostly only suitable for storage. In terms of storage requirements:
1. The Council has a need to relocate Buckinghamshire Archives from the Walton Street offices, given (a) the intention to divest the building and (b) to retain National Archives accreditation, which is a commitment within the published Portfolio Priorities for Culture & Leisure.
 2. There is also an opportunity for Discover Bucks Museum's collections storage to relocate from a Council owned former school at Halton, which (a) is poor quality premises; (b) is not large enough to house HS2 archaeological findings and (c) has alternative SEN school use potential (the buildings having formerly been a school).
- 3.2 The Archives Service preserves and makes accessible over 800 years of Buckinghamshire's archival heritage. The current accommodation comprises of six temperature and humidity regulated strong rooms for secure storage, plus public-facing areas where customers come in to view the archives and Local Studies resources in a controlled environment, with oversight from staff.
- 3.3 The condition of the current accommodation and lack of expansion space have been an issue for some years. The space no longer meets service needs in terms of customer delivery, audience engagement and, importantly, for the archives it preserves and makes accessible. The strongrooms that house the archives are at full capacity and do not meet current standards (BS EN 16893:2018 Conservation of

Cultural Heritage and BS 4971:2017, 'Conservation & Care of Archive & Library Collections'). The lack of suitable storage means the Service is unable to meet any future expansion needs and actively limits its ability to collect material reflecting the diversity of the county's residents.

3.4 Current archives accommodation:



3.5 In 2018, the need for the Archives Service to have new premises was identified when it was assessed by The National Archives as part of the accreditation process. Provisional accreditation was granted contingent on progress being made to resolve the problems with the existing accommodation. The Service underwent a review by the National Archives in July 2022, and in November 2022 provisional accreditation was renewed but it was clearly stated that *'this extension would not be repeated if no concrete progress was seen by November 2024.'*

3.6 Unless Buckinghamshire Archives' accommodation needs are addressed, it could become the first archive service to lose its Accreditation in the country and its 'Place of Deposit' status under the Public Records Act, with associated reputational impact, loss of revenue and the withdrawal of collections of international importance.

3.7 The creation of a modern, customer focused and fit-for-purpose home for the collections, customers, and staff, would retain National Archives Accreditation for the long term.

3.8 The Discover Bucks Museum currently stores most of the 130,000 objects in its collections at the museum resource centre in Halton. The collection is varied including archaeology, social history, costume and textiles, fine art, and natural history, with different storage requirements. Due to the buildings being an old primary school, much of the collection is stored in relatively small rooms, with each

room individually maintained to the correct environmental conditions. The design of the building does not lend itself to efficient storage and the utilities bills at Halton are very high. Additionally, the stores are practically at capacity, with little expansion space. This is an issue, as within the next couple of years, the council will be receiving the HS2 archaeological finds from works across the county, which will be added to the existing collection (anticipated to be c.3500 boxes). There is currently a small additional archaeology store at Great Missenden, the contents of which could be brought together with the main collection at the new location.

- 3.9 It should be noted that there is also a Library drivers' base currently at Halton (comprising of a limited stock store and rest room) which would also need to be relocated elsewhere in the county. This move would be linked to the library review over 2024/25.
- 3.10 Both the museum and archives would benefit from newly designed spaces, to minimise running costs and allow improved public access to the collections.
- 3.11 The storage requirements do not use the entire first and part second floors, which have frontages to the north and west elevations. This space can be naturally lit, by the insertion of new windows (subject to planning), making it into potential offices.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 A feasibility study on the potential to convert the space vacated by the tenant has now been completed.
- 4.2 The proposed circa 4000sm 're-purposing' involves the conversion of the first floor into new premises for Buckinghamshire Archives relocating from Walton Street, and potentially Discover Bucks Museum's collections storage relocating from Halton into parts of the first and second floor. The remaining third of the first floor and half of the second floor would be converted to potential offices, either for operational use or for letting.
- 4.3 Some display/exhibition space for the archives and museum will be accommodated to further increase accessibility to the collections. The extent and nature of this display will be determined when floor plans are finalised.
- 4.4 The capital cost of the scheme and the relocations is to be funded by the remaining FHS funds and the Council's committed co-funding, plus a conditional surrender premium to be paid by the tenant (for surrendering their old 99-year lease and taking a new shorter occupational lease of the ground floor only). The makeup of these three funding sources, relative to the estimated capital costs, is set out in the Confidential Annex.
- 4.5 Preliminary layout plans are attached in the Confidential Annex, along with the Summary Capital Cost and Revenue Plans, and a Project Timeline.

5. **Risks**

- 5.1 As a large-scale development proposal, the proposed scheme carries a number of risks:

Planning Permission - there will be a requirement for planning permission. This risk has been mitigated by early engagement with Planning Team although the timing of obtaining full planning consent remains a risk to the programme. To meet programme milestones, a planning application will need to be submitted as soon as possible. To maintain programme momentum, design and development work will be undertaken concurrently with the planning process, so expenditure will hence be at risk.

Tenant Contractual Agreement - Whilst Heads of Terms ('HoTs') had been agreed with the tenant and they are fully engaged with a design team working up their element of the scheme, the deal with them remains 'subject to contract'. The HoTs are now in the tenant's solicitor's hands. A key pre-condition is to secure a temporary store for the tenant during their store closure/re-fit. This is under discussion with a prospective landlord. Other Agreement for Lease terms are set out in the Confidential Annex.

FHS Funding Commitment - For FHS purposes, the Council needed to be legally committed to the scheme by the end of March 2024. This risk has been mitigated by DHLUC confirming (subject to a revised Memorandum of Understanding, pending), an extension to this commitment deadline to end September 2024.

Building Structure – whilst a preliminary structural survey has been carried out, there is still a risk that the structure of the building is not up to the proposed conversion. There is evidence of water ingress from upper floors (which has recently been re-surfaced to prevent this). The structural integrity risk is being assessed by structural engineers, who have commissioned specialist concrete testing. Their report states that there are no major concerns, beyond normal condition of concrete of the age of the building and no deleterious materials have been found. The engineers report provides two options for managing the ongoing condition of the building: (a) a watching brief over an extended period of time to identify any early signs of additional degradation and completing patch repairs as required which is common for building maintenance or (b) more proactive maintenance options, which will be considered as part of the project.

The structural engineers have not confirmed the floor loading capacity of the building, as they are having to re-visit with specialist surveyors to undertake further scanning of an area of floor slab (which initially produced defective results). Hence, there still remains a risk, which will need to be finalised and reported separately.

Fire Requirements – the proposals have been discussed with The National Archives ('TNA'). Their fire safeguarding requirements for archives are rigorous – 4 hr fire resistance and limited adjacencies. TNA are satisfied in principle. Specialist fire strategy consultants form part of the project design team. In terms of fire resistance, there remain some 'unknowns' when it comes to details like depth of concrete cover to the ground floor columns (currently covered by shopfitting). These will be resolved during design development.

Conversion & Relocation Costs – the cost report includes a contingency, but cost escalation is a risk. Detailed design will involve on-going 'value engineering'. The aim is to retain headroom in the budget to fund Archives/Museum's relocation and fit-out costs.

Discover Bucks Museum ('DBM') – Final decisions around the inclusion of DBM in the scheme are subject to the additional information outlined above around building structure and costs. DBM's current high energy costs are expected to reduce by relocating into the scheme, but the new premises will incur a share of running costs (apportioned as 'service charge'), the impact of which is referred to in the Confidential Annex. If DBM's museum storage does not form part of the scheme, it would result in a second large potential office suite and a mothballed part second floor. The revenue implications are set out in the Confidential Annex.

Potential Office Area – the demand for offices, post Covid, has yet to re-stabilise and Wycombe town centre has never been a strong office location (most offices there have been converted to residential). Hence, achieving an occupier for the potential office area is a risk. As a result, alternative uses will also be pursued (healthcare and leisure), as well as the potential to relocate occupiers of Council operational properties in the town centre into the space (see Confidential Annex), which may need DHLUC approval.

State Subsidy Assessment - the Council must satisfy itself that the terms of the tenant's 'surrender & renewal' do not involve any subsidy to them. External advice is being sought on whether the repairs liability ('dilapidations') that the tenant shed, by changing from their full repairing long lease to an internal repairing occupational lease, is fully reflected in the surrender premium they are paying.

HR Implications – Employees of Buckinghamshire Archives will have a new place of work. This is provided for within existing staff contracts. There will be consultation with staff as part of the implementation should the project be approved to proceed, to understand and discuss any specific impacts or concerns around relocation, with consideration of their individual personal circumstances.

6. Other Options considered

- 6.1 For the existing store itself, a 'do nothing' option would involve either leaving the tenant to decide whether to close their store and try to sub-let the ground floor and /or 'mothball' the first and part second floors (i.e., leave them disused). Any sub-letting, if achievable, is likely to be a poor calibre occupier, not enhancing the town centre.
- 6.2 For Buckinghamshire Archives, they could remain at Walton Street until it is divested/redeveloped. This could risk them losing their accreditation, but in the foreseeable future, they would still need to relocate. To acquire land and develop a purpose-built archive store would involve 100% debt funding, the estimated cost of which is set out in the Confidential Annex in comparison to this fully (capital) funded Retail Repurposing opportunity.
- 6.3 For DBM, their storage could remain at Halton, but this would leave expansion issues unresolved and remove the option to explore potential re-use of the premises as a SEN school.
- 6.4 The proposed first floor (and potential part second floor) office areas have the potential for Council operational use. This is explored in some detail in the Confidential Annex.

7. Legal and Financial Implications

- 7.1 Capital Budget Implications: The estimated cost of the total project is £11.26m, the breakdown of which is set out in the Confidential Annex. The project would be fully funded from Future High Streets Grant (£3,732,827), the Council's required Match-Funding for Future High Streets (£2,287,173) (both of which are already budgeted in the Capital Programme), and new Capital Receipts (£5,250,000) not currently included in the MTFP. The funding scenario includes a £10k contingency.
- 7.2 Revenue Budget Implications: the proposed project would enable existing MTFP Revenue savings from the closure of NCO to be realised, will fund the ongoing cost of the Archive, and may deliver new revenue savings of between £80k to £146k for inclusion in future MTFPs. The exact level of savings would be dependent on factors as set out in the Confidential Annex.
- 7.3 The project can only be made cost neutral from a Revenue and Capital perspective if existing Council services are moved into the space, and if new capital receipts are delivered through asset disposals – over and above those in the current Estates Strategy.
- 7.4 Capital Risks:

- i. The project proceeding at pace to ensure that the Future High Street Fund grant funding is contractually committed by September 2024 and fully spent by March 2025. Any unspent funds will be required to be returned to DLUHC.
 - ii. Capital expenditure estimates for Fit out and Removal are initial estimates. They include a 20% contingency but have not yet been market tested.
- 7.5 The current running cost of the Archives for the Council are set out in the Confidential Annex (based on apportioning Revenue and Capital running costs of the square footage occupied by the Archives at Walton Street).
- 7.6 There may be a timing difference between the opening of this site, the disposal of NCO, and the consolidation of other Council services which will lead to short term double Revenue running costs. This will need to be taken into consideration for the next iteration of the MTFP, with some one-off funding to meet the double running costs and unlock the long-term revenue benefits.

7a Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment

- 7.7 The Director has read and approved the report.

7b Section 151 Officer comment

- 7.8 This project presents an opportunity for the Council to reprove an Archive and consolidate our Estate in line with the Estates Strategy, drawing on a significant amount of external funding, whilst living within existing MTFP targets on Revenue and Capital, and possibly delivering additional savings. The main Finance risks are on the Capital delivery: on ensuring the project is on the ground and has committed and spent the Future High Streets grant; ensuring the fit out and removal costs of the archive, museum and offices are in line with the estimates; that the capital receipts will be delivered in full as a key source of capital funding for the project.

8. Corporate Implications

- 8.1 This scheme is part of the Future High Street Fund programme which supports the Regeneration Framework and is consistently referred to throughout the High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy. Any opportunity to activate, animate and celebrate the culture of High Wycombe through the proposed scheme would be a distinct benefit to the town centre. Improving the quality of buildings is recognised in the Regeneration Strategy as important to the town centre. Improving a building in such a prominent location is an effective way to demonstrate positive change within the town.

- 8.2 The scheme would provide an active frontage in the heart of town which could encourage greater footfall, positive outcomes for businesses in the immediate area and offers shoppers an improved experience. High quality office space could help to support growing businesses with a lack of suitable space currently available. These outcomes align to the Corporate Plan priority to 'Increase Prosperity' in Buckinghamshire.
- 8.3 In addition, the scheme would secure long-term suitable accommodation for the Buckinghamshire Archives. This is required to ensure continued accreditation of the archives; is identified within the Culture & Leisure Portfolio Priorities; and was a recommendation from the budget scrutiny inquiry group in 2023 that was agreed by Cabinet. It also supports the corporate plan objective to Strengthen our Communities by promoting and developing our cultural offer; there is also potential for climate change benefit through locating these services in a more modern, energy efficient building.
- 8.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening has been completed and will be kept under review.

9. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

Councillors Lesley Clarke OBE and Tony Green were informed of the Retail Repurposing concept. The Property Board (18th December 2023) and the High Wycombe Regeneration Group (19th December 2023) were provided a high-level overview brief of the FHS programme, and both Boards were broadly supportive. The Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure is supportive of the proposal for the Archives and DBM museum storage.

10. Communication, engagement & further consultation

Internal discussions will continue and negotiations with key stakeholders to finalise details. Subject to the approval of this scheme by Cabinet and agreement with the tenant, we will proactively communicate our plans and timeframes to repurpose the space using Future High Streets Funding to stakeholders and groups within the community. The key message will be the delivery of an innovative scheme using FHS Funding in a space which would have become vacant, preserving a ground floor retail presence in a key location.

11. Next steps and review

- 11.1 Key next steps will include:
- 11.2 Prepare and submit a planning application.
- 11.3 Instruct solicitors to complete legals with the tenant.

- 11.4 Confirm a decision regarding Discover Bucks Museum storage relocation from Halton and if appropriate, agree Heads of Terms.

12. Background papers

- 12.1 None

13. Questions & Views

- 13.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please contact the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team by 5pm on 1 March 2024. This can be done by email to democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination in the workplace, in the provision of services and in wider society.

The duty requires all public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people

Public bodies demonstrate this due regard in different ways, including producing robust equality impact assessments when considering changes to policies and services.

An EqIA enables us to check the potential impacts on residents and employees of our policies, services and projects. It's an opportunity to challenge how we currently do things.

Carrying out an EqIA should not create extra work; it should be part of your normal service planning process. Most of the information required should already be available to you through other work already undertaken e.g. service user monitoring, analysis of complaints and national research.

The purpose of an EqIA is to *take account* of equality as plans develop, to promote and assist the consideration of equalities issues arising in plans and proposals and to ensure that where possible adverse or disproportionate impacts are minimised and positive impacts are maximised. As such where possible an EqIA should be started at the outset of a project/proposal and continually be developed and reviewed until a final proposal is adopted. An EqIA should be used to ensure decision makers have all the information they need regarding potential impacts to ensure they have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making judgements.

Carrying out EqIAs should be an integral part of policy or service development/change and larger projects may need more than one EqIA if different areas are impacted by the change.

Any project that requires consultation will automatically require an EqIA.

All approved and signed EqIAs are recorded in a central register. Please email your completed draft EqIA to equalities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk. Previous EqIAs can be made available for information upon request. For any questions or if you require support in completing your EqIA please contact Maria Damigos and Natalie Donhou Morley directly.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

Part A (Initial assessment) - Section 1 - Background

Proposal/Brief Title: Future High Street Fund – Tesco Repurpose

OneDrive link to report/policy:

Related policies:

Date: 22nd December 2023

Type of strategy, policy, project or service:

Please tick one of the following:

- Existing
- New or proposed
- Changing, update or revision
- Other (please explain)

This assessment was created by:

Name: Ruth Cover

Job Title: Business Strategy Manager

Email address: ruth.cover@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

The Future High Street Fund Programme includes a series of capital projects. This EQIA Screening Questionnaire relates to a project which seeks to repurpose the Tesco store in High Wycombe to convert the first floor for new premises for Buckinghamshire Archives and Discover Bucks Museum storage, and to space for offices to let.

What outcomes do we want to achieve?

The Future High Street Fund Programme seeks to renew and reshape High Wycombe in a way that improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability. This project is part of that programme and shares the intended outcomes, as well as providing a long-term home for Buckinghamshire Archives that must locate from its current location in Walton Street Offices. The plans will also see an improvement to the services offered.

Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence? No

Please explain your answer:

Buckinghamshire Archives will continue to operate from this new location.

Does this proposal plan to reduce a service, activity or presence? No

Please explain your answer:



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

Buckinghamshire Archives will continue to operate from this new location.

Does this proposal plan to introduce, review or change a policy, strategy or procedure? No

Please explain your answer:

This project does not relate to any policy or strategy change, it supports existing strategies including the High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy and Estate Strategy.

Does this proposal affect service users and/or customers, or the wider community? Yes

Please explain your answer:

Buckinghamshire Archives will be moving to a different premises, although it will continue to operate from this new location. A service break will need to take place (likely 6 to 12 months) to allow for the service to move and be reset up, so the service will be unavailable during this time.

The Discover Bucks Museum collections currently stored at the Museum Resource Centre in Halton will also move as part of the above, so will likely be unavailable to access for a period of time yet to be determined. Visits to Halton are only by appointment and visitor numbers are currently very low.

Any more significant moves of council service locations, should they be agreed in principle, would be subject to a full EQIA which would be aligned with development of the proposal and decision making processes.

Does this proposal affect employees? Yes

Please explain your answer:

Employees of Buckinghamshire Archives will have a new place of work, this is provided for within existing staff contracts. There will be consultation with staff to understand and discuss any specific impacts or concerns around relocation, with consideration of their individual personal circumstances and accommodation of reasonable requests for mitigations where possible.

Employees of the Discover Bucks Museum currently based at Halton will be similarly affected.

Any more significant moves of staff location, should they be agreed in principle, would be subject to a full EQIA which would be aligned with development of the proposal and decision making processes.

Will employees require training to deliver this proposal? No

Please explain your answer:

Not applicable.

Has any engagement /consultation been carried out, or is planned in the future? No



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

Please explain your answer:

No consultation will be carried out specifically for this project. However, there will be engagement with staff as part of the implementation should the project be approved to proceed.

Section 2 - Impacts

Please highlight potential impacts (including unintended impacts or consequences) for each protected characteristic*. Where there are negative or positive impacts please give more details of the impact. Where the impacts are unclear please explain why.

Age*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: There are no anticipated negative impact on service users based on age. However, the demographics of current users tend to be 55+ therefore some require additional accessibility requirement (please see disability notes)
It is hoped that by moving the site to the planned facility, wider age groups may be more likely to access the service.

Disability*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: The current facilities at the Walton Street site are very accessible, with the Archives all on the ground floor and with access to disabled/accessible toilets. The facilities are also well situated, in the centre of Aylesbury, in close proximity to the train and bus stations.

The new public facility will be on the 1st floor but is anticipated to have lift access and accessible toilets installed, so no reduction in accessibility is anticipated. The new site will be placed in the Eden shopping centre, which has parking on site (including a number of disabled parking spaces) and is also very close to the bus station. The train station is slightly further away which may require additional transport for those with mobility issues.

Pregnancy & maternity*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: Please see accessibility notes under disability.

Race & Ethnicity*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

Details: There are no anticipated negative impacts based on the proposed changes. The move coincides with a 'push' to encourage more people from diverse backgrounds to access the facilities, and the locality of the new site is one of the most diverse in the county.

Regard will be given to language used in relocation/relaunch materials to ensure they are clear and easy to understand for all users, including those that may have English as a second language.

Marriage & Civil Partnership*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: Not applicable

Religion & Belief*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: Not applicable

Sex*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: Not applicable

Sexual Orientation*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: Not applicable

Gender Reassignment*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: Not applicable

Do you anticipate any impacts on military families/veterans in relation to the Armed Forces Act 2021 requirements on local authorities to have due regard to [the Armed forces Covenant](#)? No

Please explain your answer:

Not applicable.

Are there any other additional groups/impacts that the EqIA should evaluate in relation to the proposal? No.

Details: N/A



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed June 2023

Section 3 – Is a full assessment required?

If you have answered yes to any of the initial assessment questions in section 1 of this EqIA, or have indicated a negative or unclear impact in section 2, it is likely you will need to complete part B of the EqIA form. Should you need guidance as to whether a full EqIA is needed at this time please contact Maria Damigos or Natalie Donhou Morley before continuing.

Following completion of part A, is part B completion required?

Not required at this time

Explain your answer:

Not required at this time – will be reviewed if any of the assumptions based on facilities change (eg lift usage/accessibility).

We are aware that there will likely be a negative impact on users who currently use the Archives Service in person whilst the facility is moved over, however, the online service will remain open and there is consideration as to whether additional support may be provided via Aylesbury library during the closed period.

Keep under review – based on current assumptions.

Have you completed an DPIA for this project/change? Yes/No

(As you are completing an EqIA, you may also require a DPIA - for more information please contact dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

Section 4 – Sign off (Only complete when NOT completing Part B)

Officer completing this assessment: (Please insert Name) Date: (Please insert Date)

Equality advice sought from: (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)

Service Director sign off: (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)

CMT sign off (*if deemed necessary by Service Director*) sign off: (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)

Next review Date: (Please insert Date)

If required please complete part B (full assessment)

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