

SHADOW EXECUTIVE

Date: Tuesday, 12th November, 2019
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Mezzanine Rooms 1 - 2, Buckinghamshire County Council, Walton Street, HP20 1UA - Aylesbury

Membership: Councillors: M Tett (Chairman), K Wood (Vice-Chairman), S Bowles, B Chapple OBE, J Chilver, A Cranmer, I Darby, T Green, C Harriss, P Hogan, A Macpherson, D Martin, N Naylor, M Shaw, W Whyte, G Williams and F Wilson

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AGENDA

No	Item	Page No
1.	Apologies	
2.	Declarations of interest	
3.	Minutes	3 - 8
	To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2019.	
4.	Question Time	
5.	Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)	9 - 18
6.	Council Tax Reduction Scheme	19 - 50
7.	Main Payscale, Reward, Terms and Conditions	To Follow
8.	Devolution Offer	51 - 78
9.	Wycombe Regeneration Strategy and Outline Business Case for Eastern Quarter	79 - 136

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| 10. | Spending Protocol: Princes Risborough Relief Road | 137 - 144 |
| 11. | Exclusion of Press and Public | |
| 12. | Spending Protocol: Princes Risborough Relief Road | 145 - 160 |
| | To consider confidential appendices | |
| 13. | Date of next meeting | |
- 3 December 2019, Mezzanine Rooms 1 - 2, Buckinghamshire County Council.

SHADOW EXECUTIVE

TUESDAY, 22ND OCTOBER, 2019

Present: Councillor Martin Tett (Chairman)

Councillors K Wood (Vice-Chairman), J Chilver, A Cranmer, I Darby, T Green, C Harriss, P Hogan, D Martin, N Naylor, M Shaw, W Whyte, G Williams, F Wilson, M Appleyard, M Winn and P Irwin

Also in Attendance:

Councillors R Scott and R Stuchbury

1 Apologies

The Leader advised Shadow Executive Members that item 6, Shadow Scrutiny Work Programme had been withdrawn as there was a need to meet with the Chairman of the Shadow Scrutiny Committee to discuss the programme prior to it being brought to a Shadow Executive meeting.

Apologies had been received from S Bowles (M Winn deputising), A Macpherson (P Irwin deputising) and B Chapple (M Appleyard deputising). The Leader advised Members that B Chapple would be off for an extended period due to a broken leg and passed on his best wishes from all Members of the Shadow Executive. The Leader confirmed that D Dhillon would become a lead member of the Shadow Executive and C Harriss would take over B Chapple's Portfolio role as Environment Lead. The Leader would confirm following the meeting if a deputy portfolio lead would be appointed as part of the interim arrangements.

2 Minutes

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2019 were AGREED as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of interest

There were none.

4 Question Time

Question 1 Scrutiny Work Programme

As Chairman of the Shadow Authority, I had intended to ask a question about the proposed Work Programme of the Scrutiny Committee, but I note that agenda item 6 has now been withdrawn.

Turning instead to agenda item 10, Programme Update, I note the volume of work that has been undertaken by the Executive to date and the work that is scheduled for the next five months until vesting date. In particular, para 3.11 refers to 128 critical 'must haves', which need to be implemented by 1 April 2020.

Given that our staff are trying to maintain all existing services in the current District and County Councils and deliver on the implementation programme, do you believe that you have sufficient resources to deliver on this timetable, incorporating what appears to be an extended Scrutiny function?

Response – The transition to the formation of the Buckinghamshire Council on 1 April 2020 is utilising existing resources from across all five existing councils in order to run the Programme Management Office (PMO). Admiration and gratitude is given to all staff working long hours. Progress is discussed on a regular basis with the Chief Executive of the new council and there is confidence that there are the right skills and knowledge in the PMO. There are regular monitoring updates to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the use of internal audit to review the work being done and external resources are being used as critical friends. This is a challenging time for staff as they take on additional work alongside business as usual. The Shadow Executive would like to discuss the scrutiny workload with the Shadow Scrutiny Committee in order to ensure there is the right balance between a focus on delivering the new council and at the same time ensuring legitimate scrutiny takes place.

Question 2 Managing the Council Tax

I would like to ask what plans the Shadow Executive is putting in place to manage the collection of council tax within the new Buckinghamshire Council. Presently, all the council tax is being collected by the four district councils, and is adequately managed in those areas. What work is being undertaken to prepare for the oversight and management of council tax collection within the Buckinghamshire Council, and what preparation is being put in place to ensure that parish and town councils' council tax will be distributed back to those parishes both efficiently and in accordance with best practice? Meanwhile ensuring that there is no delay in parish and town councils receiving their precept in a timely and efficient manner within the new local authority, and enabling them to pay their staff and cover their expenses which they had budgeted for within their precepts.

Response - The process for collecting Council Tax will not change on the 1st of April 2020. The Unitary Authority will continue to use their existing software for the production of bills, receipting income, account reconciliations, and production of management reports. All Councils have discussed the change of legal structure with their current banking providers and no new risks are created by the structural change;

a change of name on existing bank accounts can be achieved. A working group is exploring the harmonisation of the cash receipting system (e.g. processes to receive payments); this should not create any additional risks than current arrangements. Parish Council precepts will not be affected by the move to a Unitary. The Parishes will receive their precepts in instalments as per the arrangement agreed between the former District Councils and the Parishes / Towns. Typically, the precept is split into two advance payments, i.e. April and September.

Question 3 Paying Council Tax by Direct Debit

Many Buckinghamshire residents pay their Council Taxes by direct debit. These taxes are currently paid directly to District Councils and the Direct Debit Guarantee requires that changes in the amount, date or frequency of payments be notified to payers with at least 10 days of notice. If it will be the new Buckinghamshire Council that levies the Council Tax on our county for 2020/21, what plans have been made to ensure that adequate notice is given to residents of the changes in their direct debits or that new Direct Debit agreements are signed?

***Response** - There are no planned changes to Council Tax Direct Debit payment dates. The Banks have confirmed that existing Direct Debit Mandates will remain in place and there is no need to ask residents to sign a new agreement. Residents will be notified of the new instalment amounts in their Council Tax Bills that will be issued in March in the usual way.*

5 Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)

Members considered the 28 Day Notice of executive decisions due to be taken. The Leader advised that the forward plan was under regular review and urged residents to view the forward plan on the website for the latest version.

Members discussed the need for them to receive a report on the transition for local community and voluntary groups. Members highlighted the reliance on the sector to support the delivery of services and that it was also critical for them to understand any changes in order to set their budgets.

The Chief Executive highlighted that she held regular meetings with voluntary sector chief executive's group and there was no intention to destabilise those groups. It was agreed that a paper would be added to a future meeting of the Shadow Executive to give an update on progress, to reassure and recognise the work the sector does and that the current relationships will transfer along with the financial support.

ACTION: R Goodes, PMO Manager

RESOLVED: The Shadow Executive NOTED the forward plan.

6 Scrutiny Work Programme - ITEM WITHDRAWN

7 Consequential Parliamentary Order

Members were asked to consider a report that highlighted certain rights, functions and legislative amendments which needed to be addressed as a consequence of the creation of a unitary council in Buckinghamshire and included in a statutory Order made by the Secretary of State which would come into force on 1 April 2020.

Members were asked to agree the proposed list of matters or to make additions/amendments. Matters included:

- Pension Fund Transfer
- Charter Rights for Markets and Fairs
- Charter Trustees
- Amendment of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003
- Chilterns AONB Conservation Board
- Lords-Lieutenant, Sheriff and Port Authorities
- Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens and Farnham Park

RESOLVED: Members AGREED the following recommendations:

- 1. That matters to be included in a Supplementary Provision and Miscellaneous Amendments Order as a consequence of the Buckinghamshire Structural Changes Order 2019 be noted and submitted to MHCLG.**
- 2. That the Interim Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chief Executive be authorised to submit any further matters that may arise to MHCLG for consideration and take all actions necessary to progress the drafting of the Order.**

8 Branding

Members were asked to consider a report that sought their agreement on the new brand identity for Buckinghamshire Council. This included approval of the logo, the associated colour palette and the font to be used on the new council's assets. It was noted that a separate report known as the New Branding Strategy would be completed at the end of October 2019 which would identify items and assets that would be recommended for rebranding in readiness for or from 1 April 2020.

Members appreciated the work that had gone into the creation of the new branding and the use of in-house resource which had meant costs had been kept to a minimum.

Some Members were disappointed with the blue colour of the proposed logo as they felt it was not very interesting and was reminiscent of the Buckinghamshire County Council agendas. The Branding Lead Officer and Member stated that there had been vast debates on colour choice at the focus groups and feedback had suggested vibrant colours to be more childlike and after testing on various assets it came across better monotone. There was a pallet of colours that could be used for other uses i.e. presentations. The choice of blue also reflected a move away from the colour green which was currently featured across all five existing councils.

The Leader highlighted that the branding was a unification of the various historic councils Buckinghamshire had and combined the swan, trees and rivers that presented both north and south of the county.

A Member requested that there was a clear launch of new branding which explained clearly what it symbolised. It was also requested that the branding be launched to all schools.

ACTION: E Denley, Communications Workstream Deputy Lead

Following questions from Members it was confirmed that a consultation on the new branding had taken place, but was carried out over a short period time in order to hit implementation deadlines. The consultation had included Members, staff and resident focus groups. It was confirmed that staff from all five existing councils had been included in the roadshows that had taken place in the summer.

RESOLVED:

Members APPROVED the proposed logo as the new brand identity for Buckinghamshire Council.

9 Spend Protocol Update

Members were asked to consider a report that sought Member's approval to a general consent which would allow the existing five councils to conduct their current business without referral to the Shadow Executive within specific limits as set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

Members AGREED the general consent as set out at Appendix A in the report.

10 Programme Update

An update was provided to Members on the progress being made with the programme that was establishing the new unitary Buckinghamshire Council. An overview was provided on the confirmation of Portfolio Holders, the further discussions required on the scrutiny work programme and the 128 'must haves' for day one which were regularly reviewed and were making good progress. Future key decisions were highlighted and the communications delivery programme that was regularly reviewed.

The Leader announced the following Tier 2 appointments for the new Buckinghamshire Council, following a nationwide search and rigorous selection process.

- **Sarah Ashmead** had been appointed as the Deputy Chief Executive.
- **Richard Barker** had been appointed as the Corporate Director for Communities.
- **Joe O'Sullivan** had been appointed as the Corporate Director for Resources.
- **Gill Quinton** has been confirmed as the Corporate Director for Adult Services and Health.
- **Ian Thompson** had been appointed as the Corporate Director for Planning, Growth and Sustainability
- **Tolis Vouyioukas** has been confirmed as the Corporate Director Children's Services.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Monitoring Officer role would now transfer to Sarah Ashmead as part of her new role as Deputy Chief Executive. Members

expressed their thanks to Cath Whitehead who had undertaken the role in the transition period.

11 **Date of next meeting**

12 November 2019.

**Shadow Authority
For delivering the Buckinghamshire Council**

**THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS) (MEETINGS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (ENGLAND)
REGULATIONS 2012**

**SHADOW EXECUTIVE
28 Day Notice**

This is a notice of an intention to make a key decision on behalf of the Shadow Authority for the 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 5 working-days before the date of the Shadow Executive meeting and will be available via the [Shadow Authority website](#)

Y = key decision *All reports will be open unless specified otherwise

Report title & summary	Key	Decision maker	*Private report (Y/N) and reason private	Lead Member / Officer(s) & Contact Officer(s)
TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2019				
Princes Risborough Relief Road (Spending Protocol) To consider a report on the HIF funded Southern Road links (Princes Risborough Relief Road Phase 1), revised assessment of costs and risks.	Y	Shadow Executive	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	Lead Member/ Officer(s): Ian Manktelow Contact Officer(s): Ian Manktelow

<p>Wycombe Regeneration Strategy and Outline Business Case for Eastern Quarter Draft Regeneration Strategy looking forward to 2050 for High Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough.</p>	Y	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Peter Wright</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Peter Wright</p>
<p>Council Tax Reduction Scheme Approval of the scheme for Buckinghamshire Council</p>	Y	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Richard Ambrose</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Richard Ambrose</p>
<p>Main Payscale, Reward, Terms and Conditions To consider a report on payscale, reward, terms and conditions</p>	Y	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Sarah Murphy-Brookman</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Sarah Murphy-Brookman</p>
<p>Devolution Offer To consider a proposal for a devolution offer. <i>Item amended 02.10.2019.</i></p>	Y	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Sara Turnbull</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Sara Turnbull</p>
<p>Spending Protocol Items referred to the s151 officer from the five existing councils under the Spending Protocol and referred to the Shadow Executive in accordance with the protocol.</p>	Y	Shadow Executive	Part exempt (para 3)	<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Richard Ambrose</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Richard Ambrose</p>

TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2019

<p>South East Aylesbury Link Road (Spending Protocol) To consider a report on the South East Aylesbury Link Road, revised assessment of costs and risks.</p>	Y	Shadow Executive	Part exempt (para 3)	<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Ian McGowan</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Thomas Fitzpatrick</p>
<p>Organisational Development Strategy Consideration of the proposed OD Strategy including statement on values and behaviours.</p>	Y	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Sarah Murphy-Brookman</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Sarah Murphy-Brookman</p>
<p>New Customer Service Standards To consider the proposed new set of Customer Service Standards to be adopted by Buckinghamshire Council. To include the Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy.</p>	Y	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Maryvonne Hassall, Lloyd Jeffries</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Tracy Eaton</p>
<p>Keeping it Local - Community Boards To consider consultation feedback on community board options and proposals and to make a decision on their possible establishment.</p>	Y	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Sara Turnbull</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Sara Turnbull</p>
<p>VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) Continuing Grants To consider a report on VCS continuing grants</p>	Y	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Elaine Jewell</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Elaine Jewell</p>

Armed Forces Protocol Consideration of an Armed Forces Protocol for Buckinghamshire Council	Y	Shadow Executive		Lead Member/ Officer(s): Catherine Whitehead Contact Officer(s): Lizzie Wright
Scrutiny Work Programme To consider the work programme of the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Y	Shadow Executive		Lead Member/ Officer(s): Kama Wager Contact Officer(s): Kama Wager
Spending Protocol Items referred to the s151 officer from the five existing councils under the Spending Protocol and referred to the Shadow Executive in accordance with the protocol.	Y	Shadow Executive	Part exempt (para 3)	Lead Member/ Officer(s): Richard Ambrose Contact Officer(s): Richard Ambrose
Programme Update To consider a report from the Programme Management Office and Section 151 Officer for the Shadow Authority covering a Programme update, including Implementation Budget and Risk.	N	Shadow Executive		Lead Member/ Officer(s): Rachael Shimmin Contact Officer(s): Roger Goodes
THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER 2019				
Appointment of Statutory Officer (Tier 3) for Buckinghamshire Council Appointment to the role of Statutory Officer for Buckinghamshire Council.	Y	Senior Appointments Sub Committee	Part exempt (para 1, 3)	Lead Member/ Officer(s): Sarah Murphy-Brookman Contact Officer(s): Sarah Murphy-Brookman

TUESDAY 7 JANUARY 2020

<p>Draft Budget 2020/ 2021 To consider the draft budget 2020/2021 for the Buckinghamshire Council.</p>	Y	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Richard Ambrose</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Richard Ambrose</p>
<p>Civic and Ceremonial Proposals To consider proposals for civic arrangements for the Buckinghamshire Council.</p>	Y	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Catherine Whitehead</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Catherine Whitehead</p>
<p>Wycombe Community Governance Review Community Governance Review for High Wycombe.</p>	N	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Catherine Whitehead</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Catherine Whitehead</p>
<p>Kingsbrook Community Governance Review Community Governance Review to consider what changes are needed to the parish arrangements within the Berton with Broughton Parish Council area</p>	N	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Bill Ashton</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Craig Saunders</p>
<p>Local Plans - Transition and a new Local Plan for Buckinghamshire To consider local plans for transition and a new local plan for Buckinghamshire Council.</p>	Y	Shadow Executive		<p>Lead Member/ Officer(s): Neil Gibson</p> <p>Contact Officer(s): Neil Gibson</p>

Spending Protocol Items referred to the s151 officer from the five existing councils under the Spending Protocol and referred to the Shadow Executive in accordance with the protocol.	Y	Shadow Executive	Part exempt (para 3)	Lead Member/ Officer(s): Richard Ambrose Contact Officer(s): Richard Ambrose
Programme Update Highlight report from the Programme Management Office covering the Programme update, Budget and Risk.	N	Shadow Executive		Lead Member/ Officer(s): Rachael Shimmin Contact Officer(s): Roger Goodes
TUESDAY 28 JANUARY 2020				
Members Allowances Consideration of Members Allowances	Y	Shadow Executive		Lead Member/ Officer(s): Catherine Whitehead Contact Officer(s): Mathew Bloxham
Environment and Climate Change Policy Consideration of the approach and ambition towards an Environment and Climate Change Policy for Buckinghamshire Council.	Y	Shadow Executive		Lead Member/ Officer(s): Neil Gibson Contact Officer(s): Penelope Tollitt
Town and Parish Charter To consider the proposed charter and associated support required for delivery	Y	Shadow Executive		Lead Member/ Officer(s): Sara Turnbull Contact Officer(s): Sara Turnbull

Spending Protocol Items referred to the s151 officer from the five existing councils under the Spending Protocol and referred to the Shadow Executive in accordance with the protocol.	Y	Shadow Executive	Part exempt (para 3)	Lead Member/ Officer(s): Richard Ambrose Contact Officer(s): Richard Ambrose
TUESDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2020				
Draft Budget 2020/ 2021 Consideration of the final draft budget 2020/ 2021 for recommendation to the Shadow Authority.	Y	Shadow Executive		Lead Member/ Officer(s): Richard Ambrose Contact Officer(s): Richard Ambrose
Union Facilities Time Agreement Consideration of the proposal on the granting of Trade Union paid Facility Time for the new Council	Y	Shadow Executive		Lead Member/ Officer(s): Sarah Murphy-Brookman Contact Officer(s): Anne Nichols
Spending Protocol Items referred to the s151 officer from the five existing councils under the Spending Protocol and referred to the Shadow Executive in accordance with the protocol.	Y	Shadow Executive	Part exempt (para 3)	Lead Member/ Officer(s): Richard Ambrose Contact Officer(s): Richard Ambrose
TUESDAY 10 MARCH 2020				
Spending Protocol Items referred to the s151 officer from the five existing councils under the Spending Protocol and referred to the Shadow Executive in accordance with the protocol.	Y	Shadow Executive	Part exempt (para 3)	Lead Member/ Officer(s): Rachael Shimmin Contact Officer(s): Roger Goodes

Programme Update Highlight report from the Programme Management Office covering the Programme update, Budget and Risk.	N	Shadow Executive		Lead Member/ Officer(s): Rachael Shimmin Contact Officer(s): Roger Goodes
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The Shadow Authority Constitution defines a ‘key’ decision as any decision taken in relation to a function that is the responsibility of the Shadow Executive and which is likely to:-

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority.”

In determining the meaning of “significant” for these purposes the Shadow Authority will have regard to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 Act and the value of any decision under consideration (e.g. £1 million or above could be regarded as significant but this has to be considered in the context of the particular decision).

As a matter of good practice, this notice may also includes other items, in addition to key decisions, that are to be considered by the Shadow Executive.

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 5 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 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, Programme Management Office, Buckinghamshire County Council, Walton Street, Aylesbury, HP20 1UA
| 01296 674691 | demservices-shadow@buckscc.gov.uk

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Report for:	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SHADOW EXECUTIVE
Meeting Date:	29 October 2019

Title of Report	Harmonisation of Council Tax Reduction Schemes
Shadow Portfolio Holder	Councillor Katrina Wood
Responsible Officer	Richard Ambrose – interim s151 Officer
Officer Contact	Andy Green-01494 421001; andy.green@wycombe.gov.uk
Recommendations	That the Council Tax Reduction scheme, as proposed at the Shadow Executive on 23rd July 2019, is adopted as the new scheme for Buckinghamshire Council commencing 1st April 2020.
Corporate Implications	Financial implications are included in the report.
Options (If any)	Six options have been previously considered as outlined in the report to the Shadow Executive on 23 rd July 2019.
Reason (Executive only)	The scheme as recommended is believed to be as the best fit that balances costs and minimal impact on claimants in line with the defined Principles.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to review the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS), taking into consideration customer feedback as a result of public consultation.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 A harmonised Local Council Tax Reduction scheme was proposed by Shadow Executive in July 2019. Before a local scheme is set Local Authorities are required to consult with its residents. This report summarises the results of the customer feedback, reviews the financial impact of the proposed scheme in line with current CTRS caseloads and recommends that the proposed CTRS scheme is confirmed as the new scheme for Buckinghamshire Council from 1st April 2020.

3. Content of report

- 3.1 Council Tax payers who are on low income can apply for a local Council Tax Reduction to help them with their Council Tax. Entitlement to CTR is based on the circumstances and

income of the claimant's household. Billing Authorities are required to determine the CTRS that operates within their area for working age claimants.

3.2 Currently each of the four Districts has their own CTRS scheme. Whilst these are broadly similar, there are technical differences that need to be changed in order to achieve a single harmonised scheme for Buckinghamshire Council. These changes do not affect pensioners who are protected from changes to Local CTRS schemes in Legislation

3.3 **Principles**

The following principles have been used to arrive at the proposed scheme:

- The same scheme will apply to all working age residents in Buckinghamshire;
- The scheme will be developed by harmonising current schemes i.e. including features that apply to the majority of the current districts where possible;
- The aim is to deliver a scheme that is broadly cost neutral;
- The scheme can be administered using the current Revenues systems;
- The scheme will offer protection to residents classified as vulnerable in the context of the scheme.
- Council Tax payers will be required to make a contribution to their Council Tax (unless they are in a protected group).
- The proposed scheme aims to minimise negative impacts on customers whilst recognising there will be some changes.

3.4 The recommended scheme meets these principles

4. Financial implications

4.1 The aim of the harmonised scheme is to be broadly cost neutral when considered in conjunction with other Revenues and Benefits policies (Discretionary Rate Relief and Council Tax Premiums and Discounts). Based on current estimates cost neutrality is achieved with the proposed CTRS scheme.

4.2 CTRS caseloads fluctuate throughout the year as claimants' entitlement changes due to fluctuations in household income. For this reason the estimated expenditure has been remodelled based on up to date caseload data. The tables below shows a breakdown of the estimated current & modelled CTR scheme awards across Buckinghamshire

Estimated cost of schemes in 2019/20				
	Caseload	Current Expenditure	Plus Discretionary Fund	Total expenditure
AVDC	7,978	8,291,777	200,000	8,491,777
CDC	3,917	3,749,991	50,000	3,799,991
SBDC	2,558	2,908,966	15,000	2,923,966
WDC	7,845	8,278,000	50,000	8,328,000
Total	22,298	23,228,734	315,000	23,543,734

	Proposed scheme
AVDC	8,708,531
CDC	3,893,788
SBDC	2,909,000
WDC	8,539,139
Total	24,050,458
Discretionary fund	305,000
Total	24,355,458
£ increase	811,724
% change	3.4

Constraints of financial modelling

- 4.3 It is important that some of the limitations of the modelling are taking into account when considering the proposed options. The cost of the scheme quoted is indicative and can be affected by a number of issues:
- The Districts do not currently use the same software and the modelling software across systems does not calculate in the same way. The system used by Aylesbury and Wycombe forecasts likely future changes to claimants' Council Tax Reduction. The Chiltern and South Bucks software models are based on today's values.
 - Figures are based on current caseload. Future demand cannot be predicted;
 - Future applications from claimants that do not currently qualify for relief are not included in these figures as it is not possible to calculate who might apply in the future. For example, in South Bucks and Wycombe there may be new claimants who may qualify in the future because the Capital limit has increased.
- 4.4 The existing Districts currently use 3 different software systems to administer Revenues and Benefits. Plans are being drawn up to merge these systems into a single system over the next 2 to 3 years.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Customer consultation is a legal requirement for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme setting process.

6. Other Key Risks

- 6.1 None

7. Dependencies

- 7.1 None

8. Consultation

8.1 The consultation results are attached at Appendix 1.

8.2 In summary 136 responses were received. Feedback was sought on each of the proposals with the majority of respondents supporting all of the proposals, summarised as follows:

Summary of survey questions	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Proposal supported
Q1. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce CTR by £5 for every non-dependent adult in the household	76%	18%	6%	Yes
Q2. Do you agree with earnings disregards that are designed to incentivise people to work	67%	13%	20%	Yes
Q3. Do you agree that earnings disregards should be variable in line with the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme?	60%	21%	19%	Yes
Q4. Do you agree that additional support should apply to low income lone parents with children under 5	60%	27%	13%	Yes
Q5. Do you agree that additional support should apply to low income households with children under 5	47%	38%	15%	No clear majority
Q7. Should vulnerable residents be offered up to 100% CTR?	63%	24%	13%	Yes
Q8. Do you agree that CTR should not be capped at a particular property band?	52%	29%	19%	Yes
Q9. Do you agree that backdating is not allowed	57%	28%	15%	Yes

Funding question - linked to Q5	Increased council tax	Reduced funding for other services	Other	No response
Q6. If extra support was extended to all low income households with children under 5, how should this be funded	31%	25%	26%	18%

8.3 Respondents agreed with the proposed recommendations. There was one question where there was no clear majority - Question 5 asked if there should be additional support for all low income households with children under 5. Less than half (47%) of respondents felt there should be. This is in line with the proposed scheme which recommends extra support for low income lone parents with children under 5, but not low income households with children under 5. This group can still qualify for CTR that will be calculated in accordance with household income levels, however this recommendation means that they will not automatically get 100% relief by virtue of being a low income household with children under 5. Automatic relief was considered in July in the original report to the Shadow Executive. This option was ruled out at that stage based on cost, as the extra cost was estimated at £200,000.

8.4 One of the existing District schemes does currently offer extra support (90%) for this group. It is worth remembering that whilst there may be a negative impact on some customers these could be offset by other changes within the scheme that positively affect the claim. The Discretionary Award scheme is also available to give more help to claimants that need it.

8.5 The majority of respondents support the Council Tax Reduction scheme as proposed, and as such it is recommended that the proposed scheme is adopted for Buckinghamshire Council. As explained above

9. Communications Plan

9.1 None required

10. Equalities Implications

10.1 The Equalities Impact Assessment is attached in Appendix 2.

11. Data Privacy Implications

11.1 Not required – No personal data is disclosed as part of this policy setting process.

12. Next Steps and Key Dates

12.1 With the agreement of the Shadow Executive the Proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme will be adopted as the scheme for the new Authority and will be included in the budget setting papers for approval of Full Council in February 2020.

Background Papers	None
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Council Tax Reduction Consultation

Final Results

30th September 2019

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Executive Summary

Background

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme is to help people on low incomes pay for their council tax.

On 1 April 2020 there will be a new single council for Buckinghamshire, replacing the County Council and four District Councils.

Currently in Buckinghamshire, each District Council has a different Council Tax Reduction Scheme. From April 2020 we want the new Buckinghamshire Council to have one scheme for the whole of the county so that people receive the same level of support with their council tax payments no matter where they live.

The purpose of this consultation was to gain the views of local residents and stakeholders. This consultation ran from 12 August 2019 to 24 September 2019 in the form of an online survey.

The quantitative survey was available on Buckinghamshire County Council's shadow website as an online survey widely advertised through a variety of channels. The Councils helped to ensure that stakeholders were aware of the consultation by promoting it through advertising on District websites, posters, internal communications and communication with external agencies such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Homeless Prevention Forum, Job Centres and Thames Valley Police.

Findings

There were 136 responses to the consultation, including 29 representatives of organisations.

The demographic profile of respondents was generally reflective of the Buckinghamshire population, with younger age groups and non-white ethnic groups slightly under-represented.

District or County Councils, Advice Agencies, Support Organisations and Housing Associations were represented in the respondent group.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the proposals on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, including views on who should be eligible for the scheme, what level of reduction they should receive and if support should be capped or backdated.

In general there was net positive agreement for all the proposals with some stronger than others. The highest levels of agreement were for decreasing non-dependent deduction, the earnings disregard (incentive to work) and maximum support for vulnerable groups.

Introduction

Background

The five county and district councils – Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, Wycombe and South Bucks District Councils - will become one council in April 2020. The five councils have been working together on draft proposals for a new Council Tax Reduction (Support) Scheme (CTRS) for the new Buckinghamshire Council. The scheme helps people on low incomes to pay their council tax and the proposals in the consultation apply to people of working age with a low income.

Views on the Councils' proposals were sought through an online consultation, consisting of a formal quantitative survey. Respondents were asked for their input on the proposals, including:

- Non-dependent deductions
- Earnings disregard
- Protected groups
- Band restrictions
- Backdating
- Level of contribution

Views were sought from residents, with the key target respondent groups being people who are of working age and currently receive support with their council tax bills in Buckinghamshire.

The consultation ran from 12 August 2019 to 24 September 2019.

Promotion of the Consultation

The consultation was communicated and promoted as follows:

- Banners on all District Websites
- Advertising on District email auto responses in Revenues and Benefits
- Internal staff communications (as most live in the District and/or County)
- Posters in District Council reception areas
- Conversations & emails with Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Liaison with Homeless Prevention Forum & officers
- Liaison with DWP (Job Centre Plus)
- Direct emails to Major Preceptors (Bucks Fire & Rescue and Thames Valley Police)

Methodology

Approach

This consultation ran from 12 August 2019 to 24 September 2019, consisting of a formal survey to understand the overall opinions and views of key stakeholders.

The formal survey asked for respondents' opinions on their strength of agreement, or disagreement, with the Councils' proposals for the Council Tax reduction scheme, as well as for any considerations or further comments.

The consultation was open to all stakeholders, through an online survey which was promoted through a range of channels (see the section above). The survey was open to those aged 16 or over.

Differences in opinion by group

Respondents were asked to complete a wide range of ‘classification’ questions in the survey so that the views of different groups of people or organisation could be understood where they are statistically different from other groups.

The categories of demographics that were asked and used to examine difference for residents included: age, ethnicity, gender and socio-economic ACORN category for the area that the respondent lives in.

Respondents were also asked what type of organisation they worked for, if applicable.

Other considerations

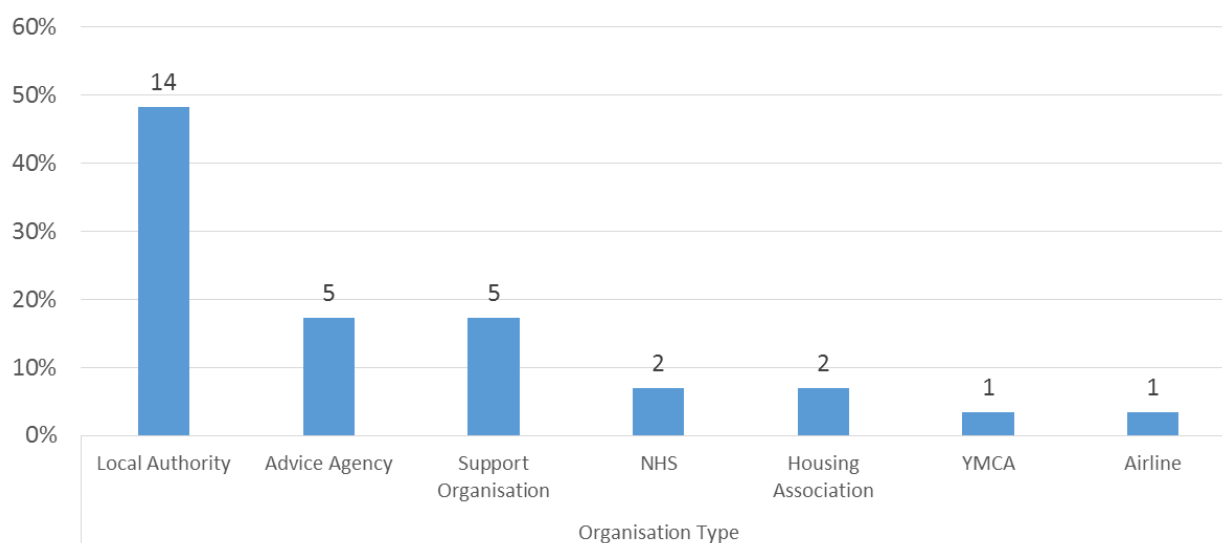
The survey was open to all residents and people representing organisations to respond – participation was self-selecting. This was not a random sample of respondents and the sample was not stratified to reflect the proportions of the people responding according to the make-up of the Buckinghamshire population. Please see the respondents profile section for more information on how the profile of respondents compares to that of the Buckinghamshire population.

Note that respondents may have completed the survey a number of times (participation was anonymous).

Profile of respondents

Organisations

29 (21%) responses were from organisations. Main organisation types that were represented were District or County Councils, Advice Agencies, Support Organisations and Housing Associations. Note some respondents selected multiple organisations.

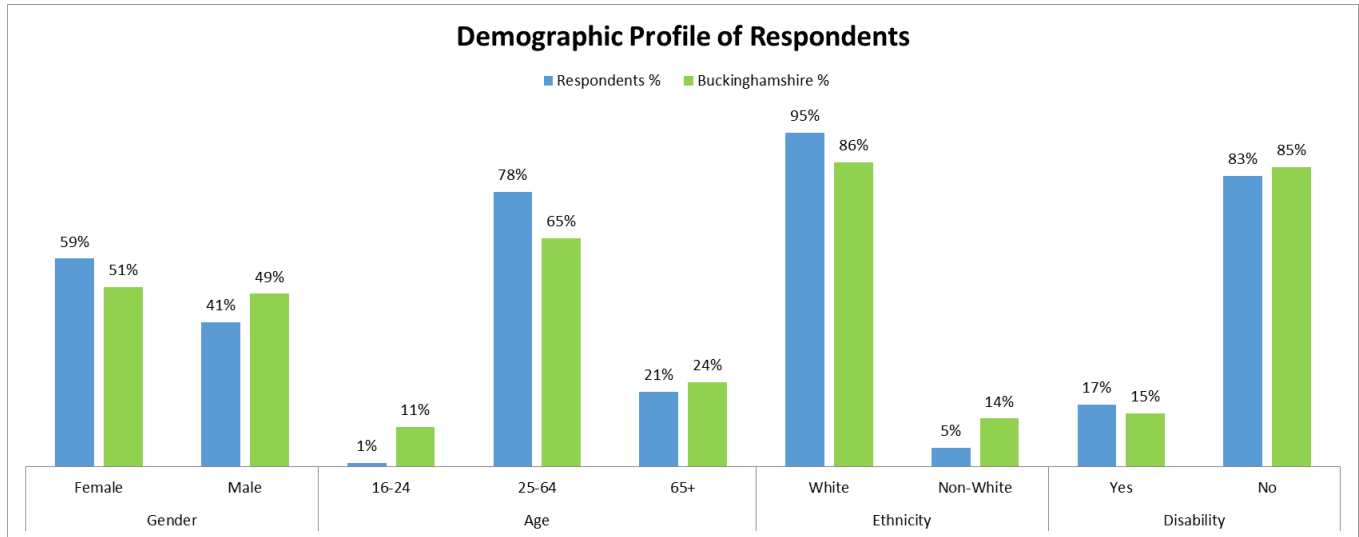


Base: 29 respondents with valid answers to this question

Where possible we have analysed any differences in views between residents and organisations, and any comments or considerations raised by each group.

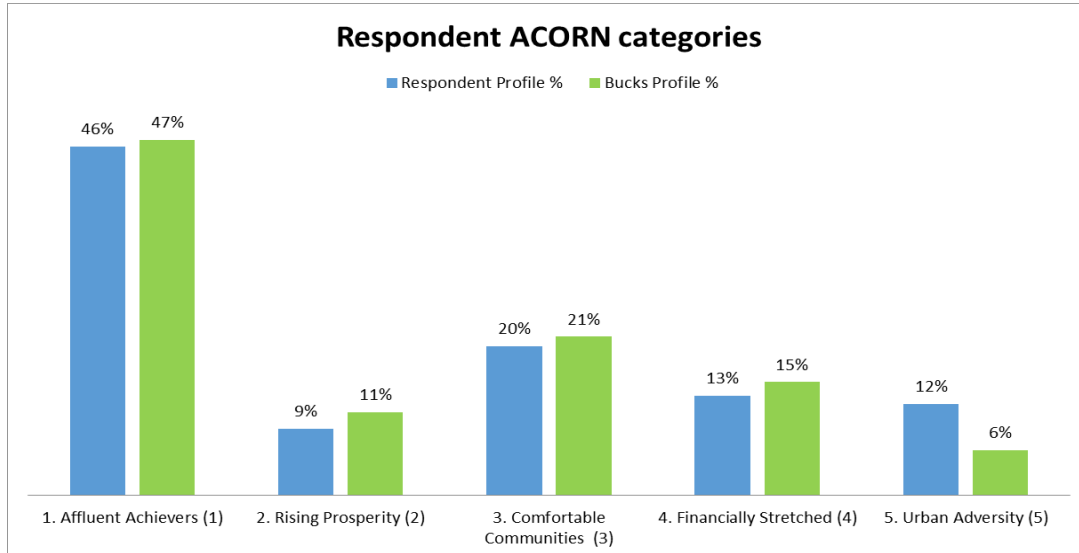
Respondent Profile

136 residents completed the survey. The profile of people responding was broadly similar to the Buckinghamshire profile across a range of other demographic characteristics. Notable statistically significant differences were that younger people and non-white ethnic groups were underrepresented, and those in the 25-64 age band were overrepresented.



Bases: Gender (100), Age (109), Ethnicity (96), Disability (103)

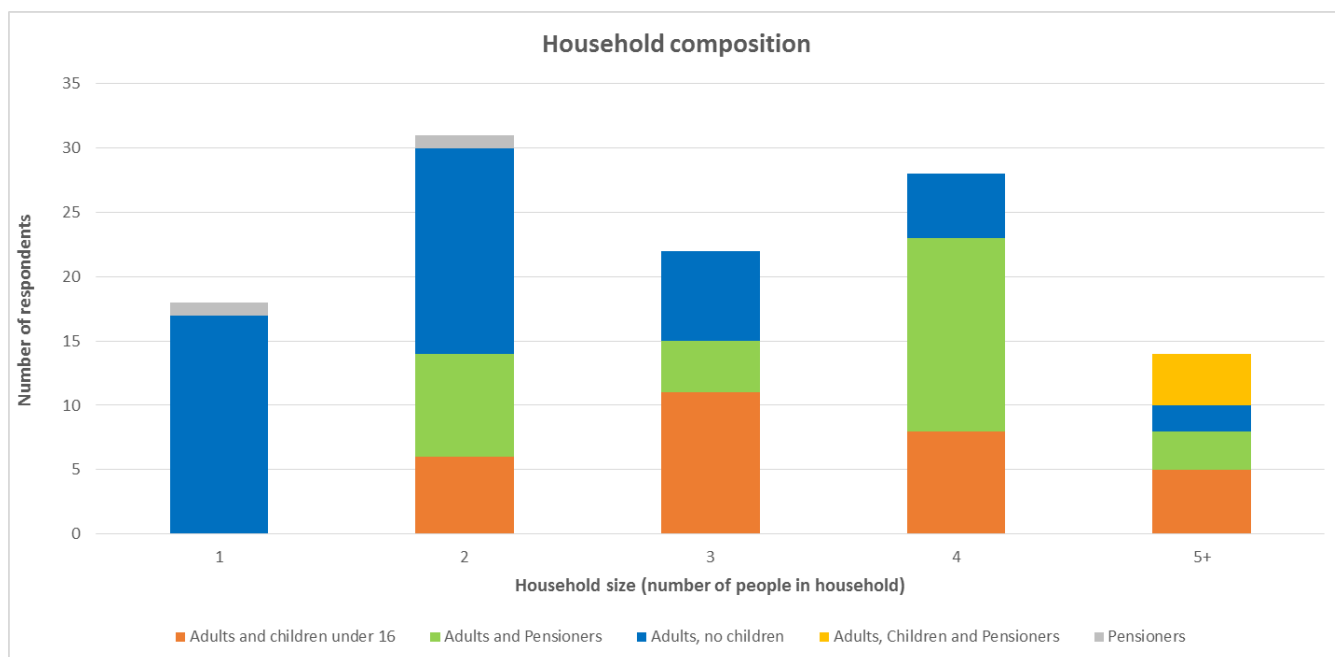
Generally the Acorn profile of respondents is representative of the Buckinghamshire population. The Urban Adversity category is over-represented, with 12% of respondents coming from this Acorn Category, compared with 6% of the Buckinghamshire population. This difference is statistically significant.



Base: 93 respondents who provided a valid postcode

The proportion of people agreeing or disagreeing with the proposals may be different for specific groups of people. Where possible we have analysed whether respondents with different demographic profiles are more likely to agree/disagree with the proposals.

Respondents were also asked questions about their household composition, and 113 gave valid responses.



Base: 113 respondents with valid answers to this question

Respondents were asked whether or not they, or anyone in their household, received Council Tax reduction (support). Only 20 respondents (15%) said that they received this support.

Questionnaire findings

Respondents were provided with an outline of the five Councils’ proposals for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (see context to the consultation above) and asked for their views and opinions regarding the proposals in the following questions.

Non-dependent deduction

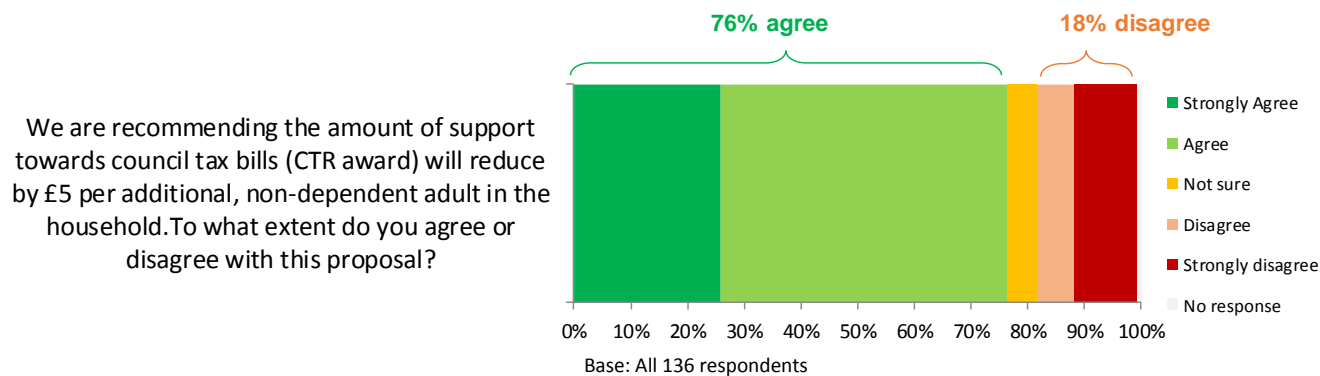
‘Non-dependent deduction’ is where the amount of support (Council Tax Reduction) may be decreased if additional adults (other than the applicant and their partner) live in the household. For example, if adult children or older relatives also live in the home. Currently, the four Buckinghamshire District Councils apply different amounts of non-dependent deduction in this situation.

The five Councils are recommending the amount of support towards council tax bills (CTR award) will reduce by £5 per additional, non-dependent adult in the household.

Respondents were asked to give an opinion on whether they agree, or disagree with this proposal.

76% of respondents agreed with this proposal, with only 18% disagreeing. There were no statistically significant differences in views between different demographic groups.

Q1. We are recommending the amount of support towards council tax bills (CTR award) will reduce by £5 per additional, non-dependent adult in the household. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal??



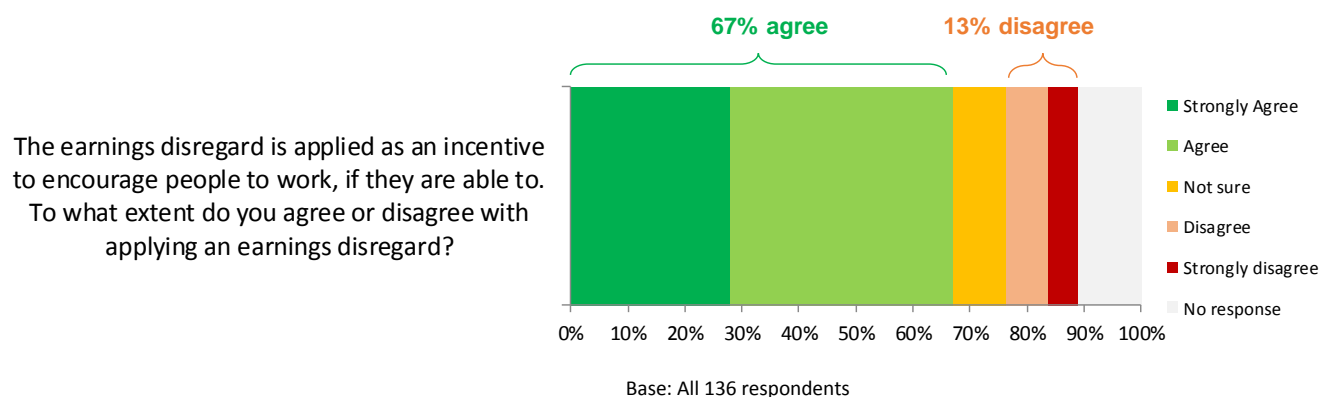
Earnings Disregard

When an applicant is in work, parts of their earnings are disregarded when we assess entitlement to a reduction in council tax. Currently, three different levels of disregard are applied across the four districts in Buckinghamshire.

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed/disagreed with applying an earnings disregard, and for the view on applying a variable rate based on the old council tax benefit scheme.

Fewer people responded to this question. There was however stronger agreement than disagreement, 67% of respondents agreed with the earnings disregard, with only 13% disagreeing. Levels of agreement were not statistically different between demographic groups.

Q2. The earnings disregard is applied as an incentive to encourage people to work, if they are able to. To what extent do you agree or disagree with applying an earnings disregard?



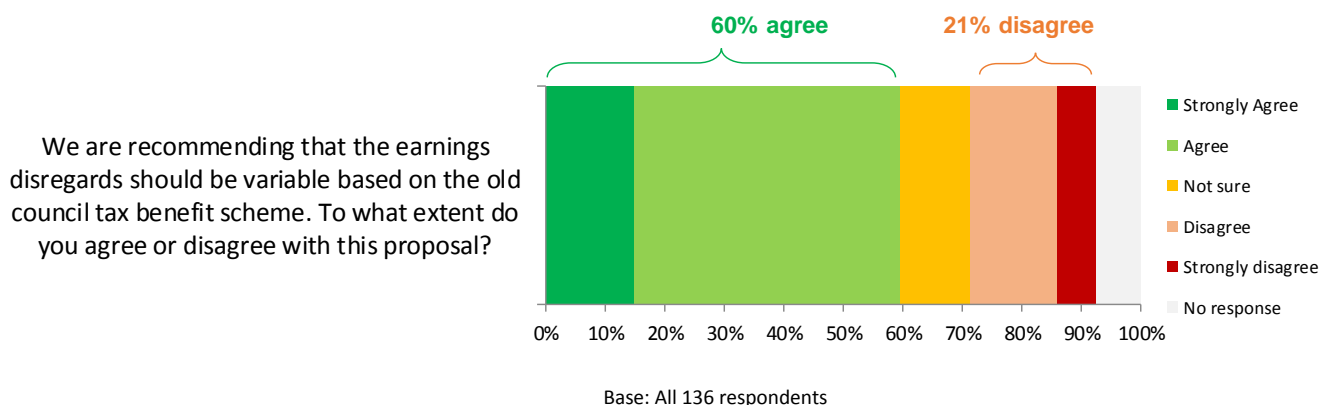
The five Councils are recommending that the earnings disregards should be variable based on the old council tax benefit scheme. The most common disregards are:

- £5 for single people
- £10 for couples
- £20 for carers
- £25 for lone parents

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with earnings disregards being variable.

Again, there was net positive agreement, with 60% agreeing that the earnings disregard should be variable. There were stronger levels of disagreement with this proposal from respondents with disabilities when compared with those without disabilities.

Q3. We are recommending that the earnings disregards should be variable based on the old council tax benefit scheme. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



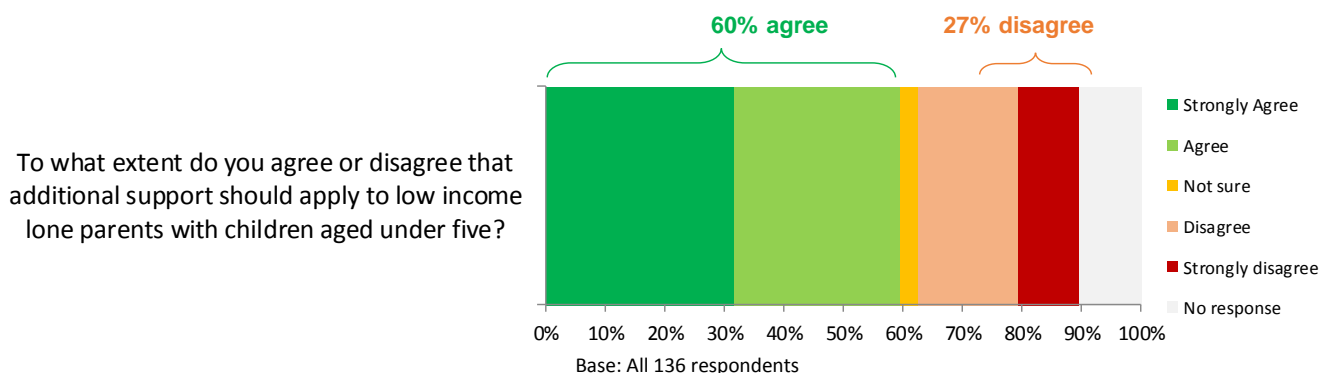
Additional help for low income households with children aged under five

The five Councils are recommending that single parents who are on a low income and have children aged under five can receive maximum council tax support. This means they can receive up to 100% support for their council tax bills (and therefore not have any council tax to pay).

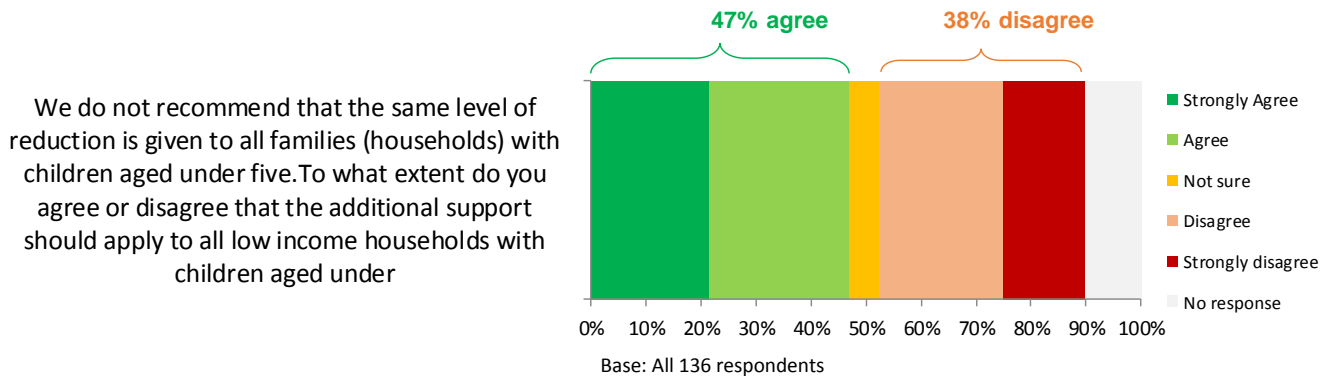
Respondents were asked whether they agreed with this policy, and whether or not the same levels should be applied to all low income households with children under 5. If the support was extended to all these households, it could be funded by increase in council tax or reduction in funding for other council services. Respondents were asked which would be their preferred means of funding, or whether they had any other suggestions, by means of a free text response.

60% of respondents agreed that additional support should be offered to low income lone parents with children under 5. Fewer (47%) agreed that this benefit should be extended to all low income parents with children under 5. **However, there was net positive agreement overall.**

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that additional support should apply to low income lone parents with children aged under five?

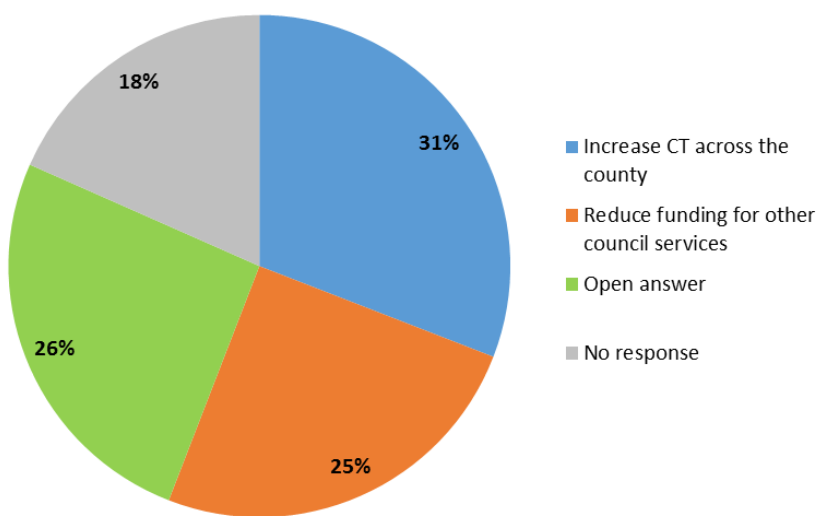


Q5. We do not recommend that the same level of reduction is given to all families (households) with children aged under five. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the additional support should apply to all low income households with children aged under five?



If additional support were to be extended to all low income households with children under 5, respondents believed it should be funded by an increase in council tax (31%), reduced funding for other council services (25%). 26% of respondents thought this could be funded by other means, with suggestions such as reducing inefficiencies and staff salaries in the council, and charging more to those on higher incomes. 12 respondents suggested this reduction should not be offered to low income families at all.

Q6. If the additional support for council tax is extended to all low income households (families and single parents) with children aged under five, how do you think the council should fund this?



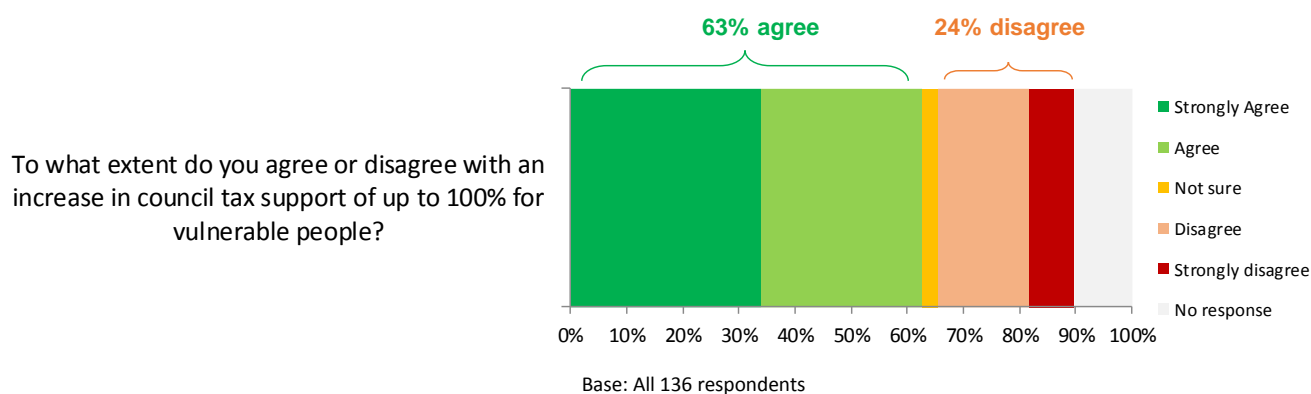
Base: All 136 respondents

Level of Contribution

It is recommended that some of our most vulnerable residents are offered up to 100% council tax support (Council Tax Reduction). For example, this would include applicants who receive a qualifying disability benefit and lone parents with children aged under five. Support for council tax bills (CTR) is a means tested benefit, which means people’s income will be used to calculate the amount of support (CTR) that they receive.

63% agreed and 24% disagreed with an increase in council tax support of up to 100% for vulnerable people. There were no statistically different responses between different demographic groups.

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with an increase in council tax support of up to 100% for vulnerable people?



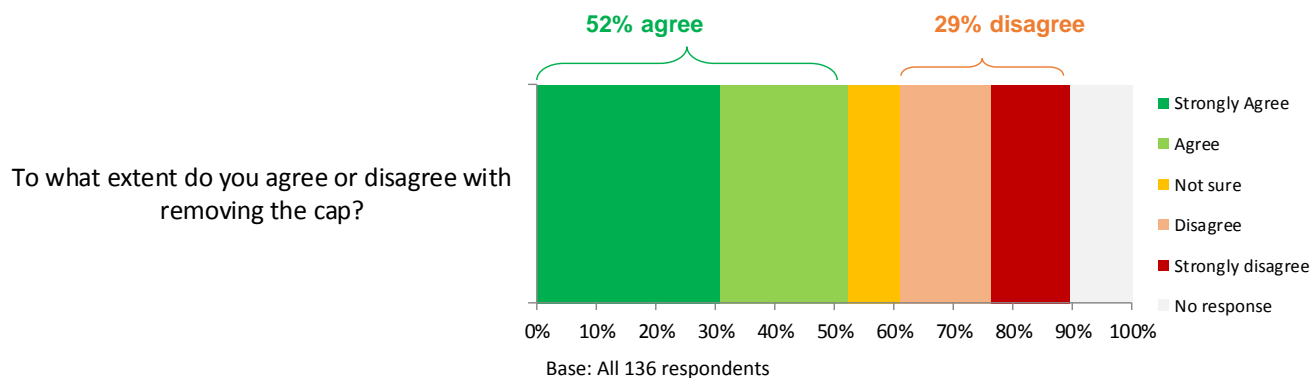
Band Restriction

Respondents were asked for their views on whether the amount of council tax support is capped at a particular council tax property band level (for example band D). If support was limited to a band D property then someone living in a higher banded property (e.g. band E) would have to pay the additional amount of council tax between a band D & E. Currently, only Chiltern District Council apply a cap based on council tax property band levels.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed/disagreed with removing the council tax support cap.

Agreement levels were slightly lower than in previous questions, but still **over half (52%) of respondents agreed that the council tax band cap should be removed.** Respondents from organisations were statistically more likely to agree that the cap should be removed.

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with removing the cap?

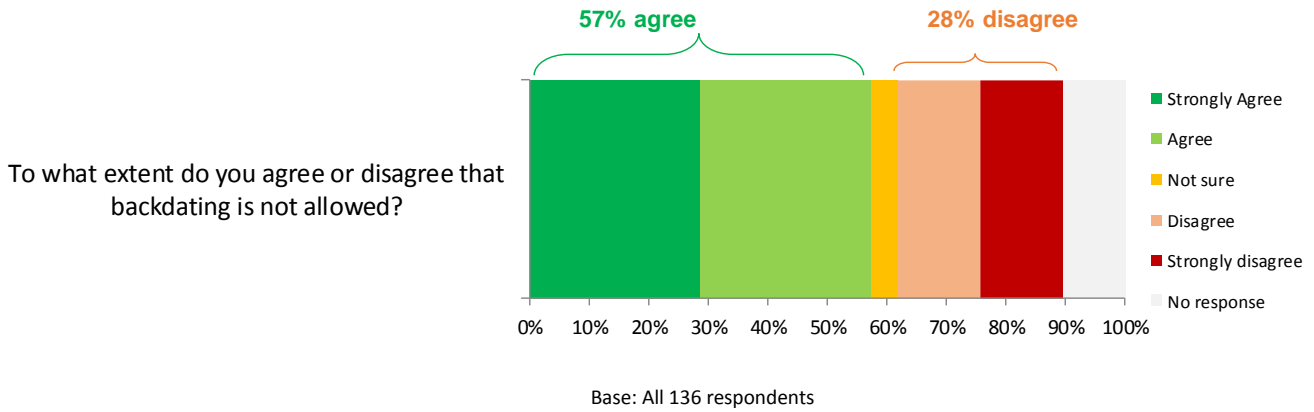


Backdating

Respondents were asked for their views on whether claims should start from the date the application form is received, and that no backdating will be allowed.

57% of respondents agreed and 28% disagreed with allowing backdating of claims. Female respondents were statistically more likely to agree that backdating should not be allowed.

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that backdating is not allowed?



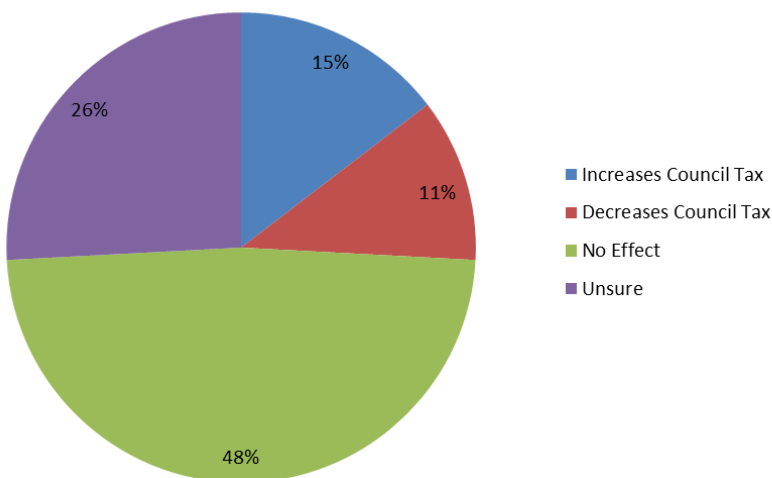
Respondent Comments

Respondents were asked if they had any comments on:

- How do you think the recommended changes will affect your household? (free text)
- Are there any other changes you think we should consider? (free text)
- Are there any other comments you would like to make? (free text)

These questions enabled respondents to let us know their opinions and views in their own words. Respondents raised a range of different issues, so to better understand the key themes, answers to these questions have been categorised into the most common themes that respondents raised.

Of the 89 respondents who responded to the question asking whether the recommended changes would affect their household, most (48%) thought it would have no effect, 15% thought their council tax would increase and 11% thought it would decrease. 26% were unsure how the changes would affect them.

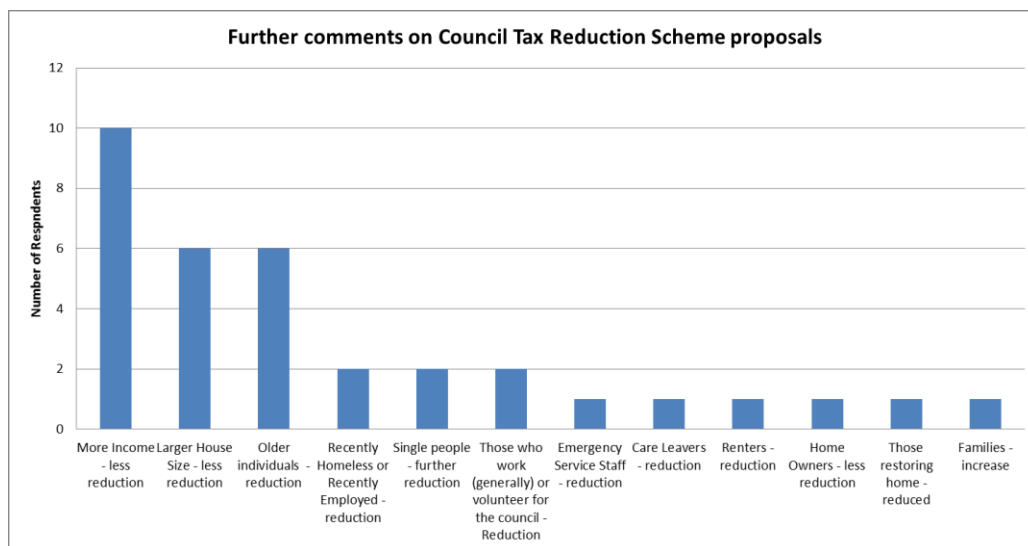


Base: 89 respondents with valid answers to this question

Other suggestions for changes that respondents would like to see considered by the new council included:

- reducing council tax across the whole county
- provide more incentive to work rather than offer reductions
- universal council tax price for all residents
- provide clear communication and administrative support so people are aware who is eligible and how to claim

Other comments that were made are summarised in the chart below. Key themes were that high income earners in large houses should pay more, and groups such as older people, Emergency Services staff, care leavers and renters should receive more support with their council tax.



Base: 34 respondents with valid answers to this question

A selection of verbatim comments from the open response questions are shown below:

- "I'd be willing to pay extra Council Tax if it meant additional support for vulnerable residents."*
- Female, 25-64, Aylesbury
- "Higher income and house values (should) pay more."*
- Female, 25-64
- "There should be no 100% rate (for vulnerable residents), everyone should pay something"*
- Male, 25-64, Buckingham
- "You should consider the size of the houses where people have added to their property"*
- Female, 65+, Slough
- "You should consider elderly people. It's all well and good wanting to help those single parents with their children but what about helping those who are retired and cannot afford to make ends meet. They do not have the option of being able to get work and would be more beneficial in receiving assistance."*
- Female, 25-64

Appendix

Questions

The following questions were asked to all respondents. See questionnaire for full details.

- We are recommending the amount of support towards council tax bills (CTR award) will reduce by £5 per additional, non-dependent adult in the household. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?
- The earnings disregard is applied as an incentive to encourage people to work, if they are able to. To what extent do you agree or disagree with applying an earnings disregard?
- We are recommending that the earnings disregards should be variable based on the old council tax benefit scheme. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree that additional support should apply to low income lone parents with children aged under five?
- We do not recommend that the same level of reduction is given to all families (households) with children aged under five. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the additional support should apply to all low income households with children aged under five?
- If the additional support for council tax is extended to all low income households (families and single parents) with children aged under five, how do you think the council should fund this?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with an increase in council tax support of up to 100% for vulnerable people?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with removing the cap on council tax property band levels?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree that backdating is not allowed?
- How do you think the recommended changes will affect your household? (free text)
- Are there any other changes you think we should consider? (free text)
- Are there any other comments you would like to make? (free text)
- Do you work for any of the following types of organisation?
 - Housing association
 - Advice agency
 - Support organisation
 - Other
- How many children aged under 16 live in your home?
- Including yourself how many adults aged sixteen or over live in your home?
- How many pensioners live in your house?
- What is your full postcode?

- What age band do you fall in?
- What is your gender?
- How would you describe your ethnic origin?
- Do you have a disability?

Sampling

Market Research looks to understand the views and opinions of a population using a sample of the population of interest. The sample (or respondents) views are used to represent the views and opinions of the whole population so that a full Census of opinion (obtaining everyone’s views) is not necessary – which can be impractical.

As the results of quantitative surveys are based on samples, Market Research use statistical information to show the level of tolerance associated with results. The tolerance level is associated with a range of factors including the number of people responding to the survey. The information below provides a guide as to the level of tolerance (or confidence interval) that is generally associated with samples according to the number of people responding (note that other factors may also be taken into account including self-selection and geographic distribution).

The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the "true" value will fall within a specified range. The following illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the "95% confidence interval":

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 responses	6	9	10
200 responses	4	6	7
500 responses	3	4	4
1,000 responses	2	3	3

For example, with a sample size of 1,000 where 70% give a particular answer, the chances are, that 95 out of 100 times in conducting surveys that the "true" value (i.e. the one which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of ±3 percentage points from the survey result (i.e. between 67% and 73%).

NB: Strictly speaking the tolerances shown here apply only to random samples; in practice good quality quota sampling has been found to be as accurate.

Consultation Questionnaire

Online survey can be found via the following link:

<https://shadow.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/consultations/counciltaxreduction/>

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EqIA - Full Equality Impact Assessment

Version 1

Date: 23rd October 2019

Policy or Service to be assessed:

Revenues & Benefits Service – Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

Service and lead officers:

Revenues & Benefits sub-workstream – Andy Green

Officers involved in the EqIA:

Neil Berry & Richard Charters (Chiltern & South Bucks DC); Lorraine Marshall (Aylesbury Vale DC); Andy Green (Wycombe DC)

What are you impact assessing?

Existing

New/proposed

Changing/Update/ revision

Other, please list:

Step 2: Scoping – what are you assessing?

Q1: What is the title of your service/strategy/policy/project?

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) harmonisation

Q2: What is the aim of your service/strategy/policy/project?

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme helps people on low incomes pay for their council tax.

Each District Council currently operates a slightly different scheme and the aim is to have a single scheme in place from 1st April 2020 that is fair and equitable for all Council Taxpayers in the County.

A public consultation exercise has taken place allowing customers and key stakeholders to have the opportunity to comment on the proposed harmonised scheme. The majority of respondents supported the proposed changes.

Protection arrangements will continue for those claimants who are classified by the Council to be vulnerable. This includes Lone Parents with children under 5 and claimants in receipt of qualifying disability benefits including: Personal independence payments, Disability Living Allowance; Attendance Allowance; Employment Support Allowance (Support component), Severe Disablement Allowance, Disabled element of Tax Credits, Incapacity Benefit (or underlying entitlement) or Industrial Disablement Benefit. Claimants in receipt of War Widows or War Disablement pension.)

Pensioners are not affected by these changes

Q3: Who does/will it have an impact on? e.g. public, visitors, staff, members, partners?

Any changes to CTRS may impact on those customers in receipt of CTRS. Any change will also apply to any potential future claimants of CTRS.

Any increase in the cost of the scheme will impact on all council taxpayers as the scheme is funded out of Council Tax revenue

There will be an impact on staff having to implement the changes and to become familiar with the scheme to ensure they are giving correct information and advice to the public.

Local support organisations, such as the CAB, will also need to understand the changes so they can advise their clients accordingly. CAB were invited to participate in the public consultation.

Q4: Are there any potential barriers to implementing changes to your service/strategy/policy/project?

The proposed changes have been the subject of public consultation and ultimately Member approval. The need for the council to deliver a balanced budget is one factor taken into consideration when deciding on the final scheme.

Q5: Who else will be involved in implementing this service/policy service/strategy/policy/project?

The staff of the Revenues & Benefits Service.

Step 3: Information gathering – what do you need to know about your customers?

Q6: 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 equality strand?

Age/Disability

- As June 2019 22,000 households in Buckinghamshire receive some level of CTRS and some of these received full protection. This includes Pensioners and those who are protected because of a disability.
- It is estimated that initially 50% of claimants may be affected by the proposed changes.
- It is estimated that 42% are likely to be better off, and 8% may have to contribute more towards their Council Tax. These claimants will be able to apply for extra support in the form of a Discretionary Award

Gender re-assignment

- There is no published information regarding the number of CTRS claimants who have undergone gender re-assignment and is not relevant in assessing eligibility.

Race

- Race is not relevant in assessing eligibility.

Religion or belief

- We do not record the religion or belief of people claiming CTRS, however this is not relevant when assessing eligibility.

Sex

- Whilst we do record the sex of the person claiming CTRS the proposed changes apply regardless of sex.

Sexual orientation

- We do not record the sexual orientation of people claiming CTRS, however this is not relevant when assessing eligibility.

Pregnancy and maternity

- In some cases we may be aware that someone claiming CTRS is pregnant or on maternity leave by virtue of certain benefits they are claiming however this is not recorded as a separate factor as it is not relevant when assessing eligibility.

Marriage & Civil Partnership

- We do record whether someone claiming CTRS is either married or in a civil partnership and would be able to extract this data, however the proposed changes apply to equally to both couples and single claimants.

Q7: Do you need any further information broken down by equality strand to inform this EqIA?

Yes No

If yes, list here and add actions to gather this data to your action plan at Step 5:

Q8: Is there any potential for direct or indirect discrimination?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, please explain how you are going to change this?

Under the proposed changes, and indeed the existing scheme, customers of working age, who are not protected, will receive less Council Tax Reduction than those of pensionable age, or those with a disability. This could be argued to be positive discrimination on the grounds of age and/or disability, however it is national government policy and is covered by legislation. (The Council Tax Reductions Schemes (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2017).

Step 4: Making a judgement about impact of CTRS

Age:

Claimants of CTRS who have reached state pension credit qualifying age are not affected by any of the proposed changes.

Sexual Orientation:

Regardless of sexual orientation anyone of working age who is not protected will be impacted by these changes.

Religion or belief:

Regardless of religion or belief anyone of working age who is not protected will be impacted by these changes.

Disability:

Claimants of CTRS who due to their disability receive one of the benefits listed in Q3 continue to be protected and will not be impacted by any of these changes.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

Regardless of whether someone is pregnant anyone of working age who is not protected will be impacted by these changes.

Marriage and Civil Partnerships:

Regardless of whether someone is married or in a civil partnership anyone of working age who is not protected will be impacted by these changes.

Sex: Regardless of sex anyone of working age who is not protected will be impacted by these changes. It is likely however that the number of female single parents claiming CTRS significantly outweighs the number of male single parents and consequently there is likely to be a higher number of females affected than there are males.

Race: Race is not relevant in assessing eligibility

Regardless of race anyone of working age who is not protected may be impacted by these changes.

Gender re-assignment:

Regardless of whether someone has undergone gender re-assignment anyone of working age who is not protected will be impacted by these changes.

Step 5: Action planning

Next steps are to report customer feedback from consultation to Shadow Executive in November for a recommendation on the final CTRS scheme to be formally adopted to take effect from 1st April 2020

Conclusion:

The main impact of the proposed changes will be small changes (positive and negative) to the amount of CTRS awarded which impacts on the Council Tax payable. The impact will vary based on current District Council areas. Broadly the impacts are as follows:

Wycombe/South Bucks

- The recommended scheme is very similar to the existing South Bucks/Wycombe schemes.
- A standard £5 non-dependant deduction will create some small variations in award (+ & -). (as opposed to variable rates where non-dependants income has to be established).

Chiltern

- Protected groups will no longer be required to make a contribution towards their Council Tax
- Currently Chiltern have Council Tax Support restricted to a Band D charge. The modelled schemes remove this restriction.

Aylesbury

- The proposed scheme will have a positive impact on protected claimants as they will no longer be required to make a 10% contribution towards their Council Tax.
- A standard £5 non-dependant deduction will create some small variations in award (+ & -). (as opposed to variable rates where non-dependants income has to be established).
- Working age customers will see a 5% increase in Council Tax payable as the amount payable for this group will increase from 15% to 20%
- Households with children under 5 may see an increase as they are no longer categorised as vulnerable (lone parents with children under 5 remain categorised as vulnerable)

Current financial modelling suggests the impacts on existing claimants is likely to be as follows:

Weekly change	More to pay			Less to pay		
	Number	Average weekly change	Average annual change	Number	Average weekly change	Average annual change
<£1.50	557	£0.56	£29.26	8,034	£0.24	£12.66
£1.51 - £5.00	498	£2.19	£113.75	4,322	£2.29	£118.95
£5.01 - £10.00	244	£4.43	£230.23	522	£5.43	£282.23
>£10.00	159	£5.06	262.99	430	£11.94	£620.75

Note: CTRS caseload varies on a daily basis.

The CTRS scheme includes a Discretionary Award fund that will be used to offer extra support to claimants adversely affected by the changes.

Step 5: Improvement plan – what are you going to change?

Expand boxes as necessary

Issue	Action	Performance Target (what difference will it make)	Lead Officers	Achieved
Making people aware of the changes	Ensure any agreed changes to the scheme are publicised	The people likely to be affected by the changes are made aware	Revenues & Benefits sub-workstream	
Answering queries	Ensure Customer service teams are briefed on new schemes	The people affected will be able to find out answers to their questions	Revenues & Benefits sub-workstream	

approved by:

Date:

Review date:

Check with your equality officer for the EqlA signing-off process and for posting the EqlA on the web

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Report for:	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SHADOW EXECUTIVE
Meeting Date:	12 November 2019

Title of Report:	Devolution Offer
Shadow Executive Portfolio Holder:	Martin Tett
Responsible Officer:	Sara Turnbull, Localism Workstream Lead
Officer Contact:	Sara Turnbull, email sturnbull@buckscc.gov.uk
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To agree to set up a three year devolution programme with a phased roll out. In phase 1 will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing legacy service devolution arrangements in place continuing for highways, and for green space in the Wycombe district area; • Support given to local organisations, including town and parish councils, to take on community assets such as community centres, toilets, memorials; and • Place-based pilots. 2. To agree the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy for Buckinghamshire Council as set out in Appendix 1. 3. To provide support to organisations to take up the devolution offer through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online toolkit and guidance. • Dedicated staff to help progress devolution requests. • Technical and specialist advice in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Health and safety ➤ Human resources ➤ Insurance provisions ➤ Contract management 4. To note the implementation next steps are set out in section 4 of this report, including development of a wider service devolution offer for phase 2 & 3 of the programme.
Corporate Implications:	The Devolution Offer has wide-ranging implications for all service areas.

	<p>A small devolution team is proposed to help co-ordinate and drive forward the devolution programme. Phase 1 has particular implications for community services, property and assets and localities.</p> <p>Financial Implications The establishment of a new team to run the devolution programme would require approximately £200,000 per annum for three years: 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.</p> <p>These costs will be met from the unitary programme transformation budget.</p> <p>At the end of this period it, is anticipated that the programme will be well established and integrated into business as usual at minimal cost, within existing budgets.</p> <p>Legal Implications The Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy will enable Buckinghamshire Council to fulfil its legal obligations in regard to the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>A wide range of legal implications will arise from each devolution deal. These will require legal advice and approval prior to transfers.</p>
Options: (If any)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do nothing - The option of having no devolution offer has been considered but is not recommended. A key part of the single business case, as approved by the Secretary of State and as set out in the Structural Changes Order, was to enable greater local control through a devolution offer. 2. Devolution Offer to all from day 1 - A full roll out of devolution in the first year of the new Council's operation is potentially high risk and resource intensive to deliver. Service integration will take a number of years and the diversity of service delivery models presents a complexity to devolution that must be taken into account. 3. Phased Devolution Offer - This is the approach that is recommended and has been developed as set out in this paper, with pilots in phase 1, as well as an invitation to community organisations to submit expressions of interest in community assets prioritised for potential transfer.
Reason: (Executive only)	<p>The recommended approach enables the Shadow Authority to deliver a key part of the intended benefits of the single business case as set out in the Structural Changes Order for the establishment of Buckinghamshire Council.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposed devolution framework to enable local organisations, particularly town and parish councils, to take on greater local control over the running of Buckinghamshire Council's services and assets.
- 1.2 A decision by the Shadow Executive at this point will enable town and parish councils to have clarity on the likely timeline and scope of a devolution programme. In addition to this main report there are two appendices:
 - Appendix 1: Draft Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy
 - Appendix 2: Equalities Impact Assessment

2. Content of Report

Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out a proposed devolution framework to enable local organisations, particularly town and parish councils, to take on greater local control over the running of Buckinghamshire Council's services and assets. The key objective of the programme is to improve outcomes for communities through enabling services to be more tailored to meet local needs.
- 2.2 It is recommended to set up a three year devolution programme with a phased roll out. In phase 1 it is proposed that:
 - the existing legacy service devolution arrangements in place continue for highways, and for green space in the Wycombe district area;
 - that support is given to organisations to take on community assets such as community centres, toilets, memorials; and
 - that place-based pilots are established to test further devolution on a range of assets and services.
- 2.3 In phase 1 the focus will be on developing place-based pilots to transfer a wide-range of community assets and services to organisations in those respective localities. The detail of individual devolution deals will be devolved in partnership with those respective organisations. All of the pilots and devolution deals will be monitored and evaluated to inform consideration of a wider roll out across the county.

Background

- 2.4 A key part of the business case, agreed by Government to set up Buckinghamshire Council, was to provide opportunities for town and parish councils to take on greater responsibilities for running services and assets locally. The Under-Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, stated to the House of Commons in presenting the Structural Change Order that:

“The inclusion in the proposal of community boards and delegation to parish and town councils, where this is wanted, will mean that the arrangements not

only open the door to improved local services but shift power to communities, helping them get involved in decision-making in their local area.”¹

- 2.5 Devolution is about shifting power downwards to increase local control. In local government, devolution is often used to refer to the transfer of powers and/or responsibilities from a principal authority (county and/or district or unitary council) to an organisation, such as town or parish councils or other local community organisation.
- 2.6 On 1 April 2020 all services and assets owned by the respective county and district councils will transfer to Buckinghamshire Council. This provides an opportunity for the new single Council to further devolve services and assets where there is the potential to improve the quality of services.
- 2.7 Devolution is not new in Buckinghamshire. The County Council has already successfully devolved services and buildings in areas such as libraries, youth centres, children’s centres and day care centres. In addition, there is a highways service devolution deal in place with participation of 87 out of the 169 town and parish councils in Buckinghamshire.
- 2.8 The district councils also have a successful track record of devolving in different areas. South Bucks Council has devolved all of its toilets. Wycombe District Council has devolved most of its community centres. In addition, Wycombe District Council also has a service devolution deal in place for its green space management with seven parish councils.

Proposed Devolution Programme Aims & Objectives

- 2.9 The proposed devolution programme objectives are to:
- **Improve outcomes for local communities**—through enabling opportunities for services to be more tailored to meet the diverse needs of communities.
 - **Increase local control over services and assets**—through enabling town and parish councils, in particular as democratically elected bodies, to take decisions on how best to meet local needs.
- 2.10 It is envisaged that wider benefits will arise from the devolution programme such as:
- A more responsive agile service; smaller organisations are often able to respond more quickly than larger ones to make service changes as needed.
 - Opportunities to generate local employment.
 - Increased community involvement and capacity created through volunteering and innovation in service design.

¹ [https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-05-20/debates/E94B17C8-A18D-4E8D-9C05-188C88EF50B2/Buckinghamshire\(StructuralChanges\)Order2019](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-05-20/debates/E94B17C8-A18D-4E8D-9C05-188C88EF50B2/Buckinghamshire(StructuralChanges)Order2019)

- Better value for money overall through a more localised service delivery approach. For example this may lead to increased volunteering, new external funding opportunities, and the potential to make more effective use of local resources and staff to deliver services.

Principles & Programme

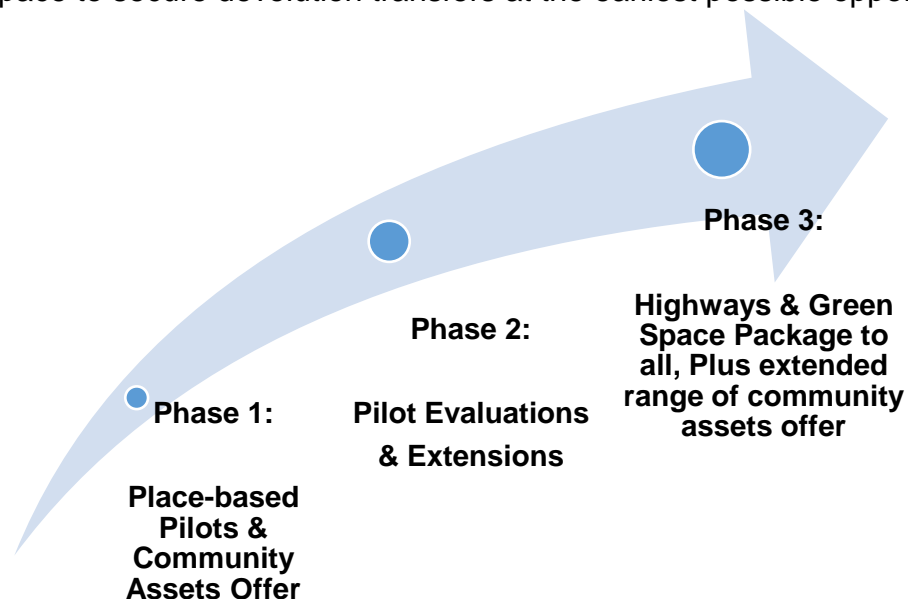
2.11 A phased approach is recommended for a devolution programme to enable the new Buckinghamshire Council to pilot approaches and learn prior to wider roll out.

2.12 In the first phase it is recommended that service areas and assets are prioritised for devolution based on the following principles:

- **Greatest potential for community benefit** and use through local control. In particular, this is based on feedback from town and parish councils, as well as practice elsewhere.
- **Proven model of successful devolution already in Buckinghamshire.**
- **Feasibility for delivery in phase 1**, based on a high-level understanding of potential appetite for areas from town and parishes, and ease for implementation.
- **Potential to be delivered more effectively locally than by a large strategic authority.**

2.13 In developing the overall timeline the following issues have been considered:

- The need to be responsive to those town and parish councils who have already shown a strong interest in further devolution opportunities.
- Recognition of the need for service integration, and further strategic assessments of opportunities and the development of a potential package offer prior to a county-wide roll out of devolution.
- The town and parish council elections taking place in May 2020, and the likelihood that some town and parish councils may wish to wait until after the elections before deciding if they wish to submit an expression of interest in devolution.
- The three phases proposed overlap to reflect the need for a flexible approach with differing start dates of individual transfers. Once established, the devolution team will work at pace to secure devolution transfers at the earliest possible opportunity.



Phase 1 Devolution Offer

2.14 Based on the design principles above, it is recommended to focus efforts in the first year on enabling local organisations across the county with the opportunity to take on specific community assets, continuing with the existing service devolution arrangements in place, and undertaking place-based pilots.

	Offer Title	Description	Who is offer to?
1	Community Assets & Services Transfer Offer	An initial list of Buckinghamshire Council owned 'community assets' will be published which the Council are actively encouraging expressions of interest in. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community Centres/Village Halls ➤ Memorials ➤ Allotments ➤ Toilets 	Open to local organisations (relevant to localities with community assets).
2	Highways Services Devolution Offer	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Urban grass cutting ➤ Weed killing on footpaths ➤ Minor street furniture repairs ➤ Rights of way 	All 169 Town & Parish Councils
3	Wycombe Green Space Service Devolution Offer	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Amenity grass cutting ➤ Seasonal horticultural works e.g. flowerbed and shrub maintenance, weed control. ➤ All street furniture in a locality, including play equipment. 	All parish councils within the Wycombe District (legacy deal from WDC).
4	Place-based Pilots	Place-based conversations on a range of community assets and services. Details to be developed and agreed through a partnership approach with pilot organisations. Likely areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For those pilots not in the Wycombe area this would include all green space maintenance, as per the Wycombe devolution offer. ➤ Other areas such as devolution of assets such as play areas, recreational grounds, urban parks. ➤ Other areas as relevant locally e.g. running markets, events (for families/communities). 	Open invitation to local organisations with ambition, capacity, and interested in taking on a range of community assets and service devolution areas from Buckinghamshire Council.

2.15 It is anticipated that transfers of services and assets to town and parish councils may take up to 12 months to be fully in place, following the start of detailed discussions. From learning of devolution transfers elsewhere, the details of the transfers will require negotiation, information and lead-in time for each respective organisation to sign-off.

2.16 At the end of phase 1 an evaluation is recommended to inform a wider roll out. The timing of anticipated transfers means that this evaluation is likely to take place towards

the end of 2022. An external evaluation partner will be considered to assist with this process.

Phase 2 & 3 Devolution Offer

- 2.17 Following the initial agreement on devolution deals for the phase 1 pilots, other pilots will be considered (phase 2). A service devolution package(s) open to all town and parish councils will be developed in light of learning from the pilots, as well as consideration of the different detailed options for a wider offer (phase 3).
- 2.18 An extended list of potential assets for transfer will also be developed for phases 2 and 3. It is anticipated that urban parks, playground and recreational areas in particular may be considered for devolution more widely alongside the devolution of green space maintenance.

Governance & Process

- 2.19 In order to ensure good governance, transparency, fairness and accountability for decision-making, a devolution policy has been developed as set out in Appendix 1. The key elements of the process proposed are that there are:
- **Clear common criteria** for assessing all requests.
 - **Proportionate governance** in relation to the scale and nature of the asset/service in question. For example, local organisations would not be expected to submit a lengthy business case to transfer a village clock. However, a business case would be required for the potential transfer of all urban parks within a locality.
 - **Decisions on individual transfers to local organisations will be taken in accordance with the Service Devolution & Asset Transfer Policy.** The Cabinet Member will take decisions on any significant transfers (financially and strategically), and officers will take decisions on non-key decisions in accordance with the Council's constitution. For example, decisions on a package for a pilot are envisaged to be signed-off as a key decision by the relevant Cabinet Member. However, a devolution request for an individual toilet or memorial is likely to be an officer decision, following the normal process of consultation.
 - **Consultation with local members and residents on specific devolution deals.** It is proposed that local members and residents are consulted on proposed specific devolution deals as required. Where a business plan is required, it would be expected that the applicant shows evidence of the views of local residents and stakeholders. Buckinghamshire Council officers will consult the respective local member(s) as part of the consideration process.
 - **Consultation with community boards.** Community boards will be consulted on proposed transfer requests prior to a decision. They will also be provided with regular updates on the devolution programme within their respective areas.

Working Together with Town and Parish Councils

2.20 Town and parish councils have attended workshops to help shape this devolution offer. A clear message received was that there is a desire for timely information and support to enable them to take-up these opportunities.

2.21 We are therefore proposing to provide this support by setting up:

- Webpages with a devolution toolkit and guidance.
- A small staff team to provide a central contact and business plan support.
- Technical advice in areas such as:
 - Health and safety
 - Insurance provisions
 - Human resources
 - Contract management
- Detailed information on in-scope assets & services including:
 - Existing cost and contract information
 - Site lists
 - Undertaking assessment surveys of assets as required.

Devolution in Wycombe

2.22 It is noted that there are community governance reviews underway in Aylesbury and Wycombe. In Aylesbury this may reconfigure existing parished areas. In Wycombe this is considering whether to parish any or all of the remaining unparished area within Buckinghamshire. If a decision is taken at the end of the review to establish one or more parishes then it is anticipated that the devolution programme would cover the scope of negotiations on devolution transfers to those parishes. In this scenario, the community board for the area could in this interim period act as lead consultees on the development of a devolution package to go forward for transfer once any new parishes are formed.

2.23 If a decision is taken not to establish any new parished areas then devolution may still be possible through the transfer of assets and/or services to other local organisations that are separate legal entities e.g. community organisations. In addition, all community boards will have a key role in influencing and overseeing how council services are delivered within their area.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 Delivery of Value for Money: It has been shown in numerous national studies that the devolution of assets and services to community organisations can improve the social and economic outputs for those assets and services. Within Buckinghamshire, service devolution in highways has, for example, ensured greater local provision and quality than would otherwise have been possible by the principal council alone.

3.2 As a new transformational programme, there is a need for initial investment to develop the details of the offer, ensure effective co-ordination of the programme, and ensure that this is driven forward successfully. In particular, resource will be required to set-up

the pilots through joint working with those organisations on business plan development and securing mutual agreement on the detail of transfers.

3.3 To minimise set-up costs, all Buckinghamshire Council service areas will be required to provide support within existing resources, this will include:

- Free of charge support to town and parish councils participating in the phase 1 devolution offer in regard to technical support areas such as: human resources, health and safety, financial viability, and insurance advice.
- The preparation of financial, staffing and other required assessments to enable the development of a phase 2 & 3 devolution offer.
- The mapping of assets and services, such as the production of collated locality asset and services maps, such as GIS grass cutting.
- The provision of information on service specifications and costings to enable organisations to put forward informed expressions of interest and business plans.

3.4 The total estimate of the costs is £200,000 per annum for the financial years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. Breakdown of cost estimates provided below:

Item	Description	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Temporary Devolution Team	2 FTEs–Liaison, negotiations, co-ordination, business plan and governance development support free of charge. This also includes potential funding for an independent evaluation	£140,000	£140,000	£140,000
Legal works	Internal budget for Buckinghamshire Council's legal costs for drawing up transfer agreements.	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000
Additional property capacity	It is estimated that additional capacity will be needed to support the internal assessment work required of community assets to enable transfers, including condition and market surveys.	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000
Total		£200,000	£200,000	£200,000

3.5 The costs above are estimates at this stage, and dependent upon levels of interest in this offer from organisations. To ensure sustainability of the devolution programme activity will on the whole be integrated into business as usual within service areas from 2024/25 onwards.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 The individual legal implications of each and every transfer will be considered as part of the decision-making on individual transfers. Legal consideration is built into the process for considering requests as per the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy in Appendix 1.

5. Other Key Risks

5.1 All risks and issues are being considered as part of the workstream management. The key programme risks and mitigations are:

- Organisational capacity to support a devolution offer—Experience of devolution elsewhere shows that there is a need for a range of different services (property, legal, finance, community services) to be involved in each and every transfer. Organisationally this can cause delays if not co-ordinated or driven forward. The key mitigation to this is establishing a small temporary devolution team to drive the deliver the programme.
- Low participation/transfers—Experience elsewhere shows that even when there is initial interest in devolution requests, securing mutual agreements on the details of each transfer package can be challenging. The key mitigation to this is the approach of focusing initially on place-based pilots for learning.

6. Dependencies

- 6.1 Establishing a devolution programme is a corporate initiative and has implications for all unitary programme workstreams, and all future Council service areas. In particular, the Council's new Leadership Team will be involved in providing advice, in accordance with the policy, on how best to maximise opportunities for devolution to benefit communities.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Town and parish councils and all elected members have been engaged in discussions on devolution over a number of years. The County Council engaged town and parish councils in 2016 and 2017 through workshops and discussions as part of the development of the single unitary business case.
- 7.2 During June 2019 five localism workshops, aimed at town and parish councils, were held across the county to seek views of local councillors and clerks. The summary of outputs from these sessions have been recorded in a single document and published here.
- 7.3 Further engagement with town councillors, clerks and county and district members has informed the development of this proposed approach. In particular, input from an informal clerks working group, with Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils (MKBALC) participation, and a county and district councillors working group.
- 7.4 The proposals put forward have also been informed by research on practice elsewhere. In particular, consideration of learning and successes of unitary councils such as Durham, Wiltshire and Cornwall Councils.
- 7.5 The details of individual devolution deals will be a matter of negotiation between Buckinghamshire Council and the respective local organisations. Consultation with local members and residents will take place as part of this process, in accordance with the policy proposed in Appendix 1. It is anticipated that town and parish councils would wish to consult residents on specific devolution proposals as part of their business plan development to provide evidence of local support for transfers.

8. Communications Plan

- 8.1 Details of this devolution offer will be communicated with all town and parish councils, and the not-for-profit sector. Updates will be provided following a Shadow Executive decision on the policy and in particular in the lead-up to vesting day to promote the website toolkit and guidance.

9. Equalities Implications

- 9.1 An equalities impact assessment is set out in Appendix 2. This assessment identifies that the overall policy proposed will have no specific impact in regard to the nine protective equalities characteristics. A key part of decision-making on specific devolution requests will be consideration of the impact on local communities and equalities.

10. Data Privacy Implications

- 10.1 No impact identified.

11. Evaluation and Review

- 11.1 Member oversight of the devolution programme will be critical. Regular reports will be provided to the Cabinet Member portfolio holder and to the Council's relevant scrutiny committee as required. Bi-annual update reports to community boards on implementation process will also be provided.
- 11.2 An evaluation of the place-based pilots will take place in 2022. The details of the evaluation criteria will be developed and agreed as part of the implementation planning. Key success criteria will include:
- Improved service delivery and outcomes for communities;
 - Levels of take-up, participation; and
 - Feedback on the process and relationship.

12. Next Steps

- 12.1 A detailed implementation and communications plan will be developed to deliver this devolution offer. Key outline timings are:

Open invitation to local organisations to participate in place-based pilots.	December 2019
Confirmation of place-based pilots by the Leader of the Shadow Executive.	March 2019
Development of detailed implementation plan, staffing recruitment and resources to support devolution.	Jan-March 2020
Online Devolution Toolkit & Guidance Webpages Live. This includes publication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Template forms• Initial community asset list (phase 1)	March 2020
Phase 1 Start: Start date for expressions of interest in community assets & development of place-based pilot devolution transfer packages.	April 2020
Estimated earliest start date for transfers of devolution to place-based pilots & assets	April 2021
Place-based pilot evaluation	Nov 2021-Jan 2022
Phase 2 Start: Possible pilot extensions	March 2022
Phase 3 Start: Earliest start date for roll out of service packages to all	April 2022

Background papers

None

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Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy

Date Published: November 2019



Draft Service Devolution & Asset Transfer Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Buckinghamshire Council recognises that the devolution of services and assets to local communities, particularly to town and parish councils, can make a significant contribution to enabling them to be stronger, more resilient and sustainable.
- 1.2 We are committed to pro-actively seeking to transfer appropriate community assets and service devolution in order to provide benefits to local communities.
- 1.3 This policy supports the delivery of a devolution programme which aims to:
 - **Improve outcomes for local communities**—through enabling opportunities for services to be more tailored to meet the diverse needs of communities.
 - **Increase local control over services and assets**—through enabling town and parish councils, in particular as democratically elected bodies, to take decisions on how best to meet local needs.
- 1.4 This policy document will be reviewed annually.

2. Scope of this Policy

- 2.1 The scope of this policy document applies to all types of devolution transfer by Buckinghamshire Council - both the devolution of the responsibility for running services and community asset transfer.
- 2.2 Service devolution involves the transfer of the responsibility of running a service from Buckinghamshire Council to another local body.
- 2.3 Community asset transfer involves the transferring of ownership of land, buildings, or other assets from a statutory body to a community organisation in order to achieve a public benefit.
- 2.4 The application of this policy may be triggered by either external requests from local organisations and/or triggered by Buckinghamshire Council through an identification by a service area that an asset is declared 'surplus to requirements'.

3. Types of Transfer Arrangement

- 3.1 The transfer of the responsibility for running a service and/or an asset will broadly be managed through different approaches as set out below. A devolution board will determine the most appropriate arrangement on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration factors such as: applicant preference; and financial and legal considerations. The different types of arrangement are broadly:
- Service Level Agreement - Where a service is devolved, Buckinghamshire Council may set out a service level agreement on the quality standards and activity expected in return for a devolved budget.
 - Freehold Transfer - This is where an asset is permanently transferred to a local organisation, subject to any conditions attached.
 - Long Term Lease - 25 years or more in relation to a building.
 - Short Term Lease or other management arrangement - A lease less than 25 years or a license to occupy or other tenancy agreement.
- 3.2 There is a policy presumption that where an asset is to be transferred this will be offered on the basis of a long term lease or freehold transfer basis, rather than short lease arrangements. This is in order to maximise local control and provide opportunities for the applicant to consider investment in the asset and/or other funding opportunities.
- 3.3 This policy does not set out a preference or hierarchy in regard to the choice of freehold or leasehold transfer in order to enable consideration to be given to the best option on a case-by-case basis, as recommended by the Devolution Board.
- 3.4 Short term lease arrangements may be considered under pilot arrangements, however it is recognised that they may hinder the applicant in planning and investing in a community service without long term certainty.
- 3.5 In regard to freehold transfers, the Council will reserve the right to include conditions on any transfer to protect the future community use of the property. Any conditions will be considered by the Devolution Board on a case-by-case basis.

4. Eligibility and Assessment Criteria

4.1 The following eligibility criteria would apply:

Criteria	Description
a)	<p>This Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy is open to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish or town council. • Unincorporated charitable organisations; • Companies limited by guarantee with charitable status; • Community Interest Companies, limited by guarantee; • Community Benefit Industrial & Provident Society with an asset lock; • Community Interest Company, limited by shares;
b)	<p>Organisations must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be legal entities; • Be non-profit making; • Have community and/or social objectives; and/or • Be located within the boundaries of Buckinghamshire Council area or can demonstrate that they provide services within the area to residents.
c)	<p>All community assets must remain open to the wider public. This does not disqualify special interest proposals or groups. However, evidence must be provided of how the asset will be used in an inclusive way.</p>
d)	<p>Applicants must provide full contact details for the organisation, including someone with the relevant decision-making authority</p>
e)	<p>Applicants must provide supporting evidence where required and complete all sections of required forms.</p>

4.2 Buckinghamshire Council will not consider expressions of interest from organisations which are political or with political affiliations; organisations engaged in supporting candidates for political office; individuals or businesses who intend primarily to run the service or use the asset for commercial gain.

4.3 In addition to the eligibility criteria set out above, the assessment of requests will consider the following criteria areas:

- a) Community benefit
- b) Local control
- c) Sustainability
- d) Governance of legal structure
- e) Financial standing
- f) Maintenance
- g) Commitment

Further details on the assessment criteria are set out in Annex C.

5. Principles

5.1 Buckinghamshire Council is committed to applying the following principles in how it considers devolution requests:

- Being transparent in the process for devolution, including timelines and decision-making, with as much information published online as possible. For example a list of Buckinghamshire Council owned 'community assets' will be published and linked to the community assets national website.¹
- Providing timely information to local organisations to make an initial view on whether they are interested in discussing devolution arrangements.
- Assessing devolution requests fairly through the application of this policy.
- Transferring the budget for running a service when Buckinghamshire Council is requiring ongoing specific quality/activity standards to be met. Where no specific service standards are expected by Buckinghamshire Council it is anticipated that following a transfer of the service/asset that the future costs would be covered by the organisation taking on the service/asset.
- Provide a named contact and respond in a timely manner to all devolution enquiries.

6. The Devolution Transfer Process

Decision-making

6.1 Following consideration of devolution requests, and negotiations, a decision by Buckinghamshire Council and the respective applicant organisation is needed on the sign-off of individual devolution transfers. All such decisions will be taken in accordance with this policy and Buckinghamshire Council's Constitution. Key decisions on significant devolution transfers will be taken by Cabinet and/or Cabinet members. Non-key decisions will be taken by the relevant officers in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

6.2 An advisory Devolution Board will consider all devolution requests and oversee the devolution programme. This will comprise the Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder, and senior officers from within the council (Director of Localities, Property & Assets and other relevant representatives from legal and finance).

¹ <https://www.keepitinthecommunity.org/>

The Board will make recommendations to the relevant decision-maker (officer/member) on the detail of transfer agreement terms and sign-off.

6.3 The Council may need to balance the competing interests of community groups and an assessment will need to be made as to the option that will deliver most sustainable benefit to the local community. Where possible, potential beneficiaries can be brought together in a partnership and this can result in a collective benefit to residents.

6.4 In considering the best terms for a individual devolution transfer a recommendation will be made on the appropriate rental subsidy, if required, below market rental value, in order to maximise the use of the asset for community benefit. Rental subsidies will only apply in relation to assets considered under this policy.

Pre-Application Stage

6.5 As part of Buckinghamshire Council's commitment to supporting the transfer of services and assets, support will be provided to town and parish councils to enable them to consider submitting expressions of interest. In particular this will include:

- Online guidance and information including template expressions of interest form and business plan.
- A list of the community asset sites prioritised for potential transfer in phase 1.
- Provision of information to town and parish councils on the specification of services to help inform the development of proposals.
- A named contact to support organisations to submit expressions of interest, support business plan development, and to keep the applicant updated at all stages of the transfer process.
- A commitment to free of charge technical and specialist support to enable assets to be transferred and or services to be devolved.

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest Submission

6.6 Buckinghamshire Council will then:

- Check that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria to be considered, and notify the applicant accordingly.
- Notify the relevant local member(s) and seek their views.
- If the request is in relation to service devolution, information will be provided to the applicant in regard to service specifications and costs (where possible an estimate of disaggregated costs).
- If the request is in relation to community assets identified as priority in phase 1 of the devolution programme, the following information will be provided to the applicant:

- Estimated costs for maintenance of the asset.
- Estimated market value of the asset (if any).
- Condition survey report.
- If the applicant wishes to then proceed with the transfer request, in light of this information, then the expression of interest will be considered by the Devolution Board.
- The Devolution Board will determine if the application passes the stage 1 assessment and next step options which are:
 - a) Business plan required before decision.
 - b) Business plan not required and decision can be agreed (either as an offer decision or Cabinet Member if a key decision).
 - c) Application rejected.

Stage 2: Business Plan Stage

- 6.7 The Council wishes to ensure that the transfer is successful, as such a business plan will be required where an asset or service request is of value greater than £100,000 and/or for all key decisions.
- 6.8 The Council recognises that completing a business plan will take the applicant time and effort, and will only ask organisations that meet all of the eligibility criteria.
- 6.9 A business plan will not be required to be submitted where a standard package is offered by Buckinghamshire Council.
- 6.10 Where it is agreed to carry out a pilot of a wide-spread devolution of assets and services to a town or parish council, a single business case will be required. This document would be co-developed in partnership.
- 6.11 All business plans will be considered by the Devolution Board prior to a recommendation to the decision-maker (normally the Cabinet Member).
- 6.12 If a business plan is required it is anticipated that supporting evidence will also be requested on the following areas:
- Health & safety arrangements in place
 - Safeguarding arrangements
 - Staffing and/or contractual arrangements
 - Insurance
 - Operational procedures
 - Governance
- 6.13 The Council will consult local member(s) and Community Boards prior to a decision on transfers that require a business plan.

Stage 3: Negotiation and Transfer

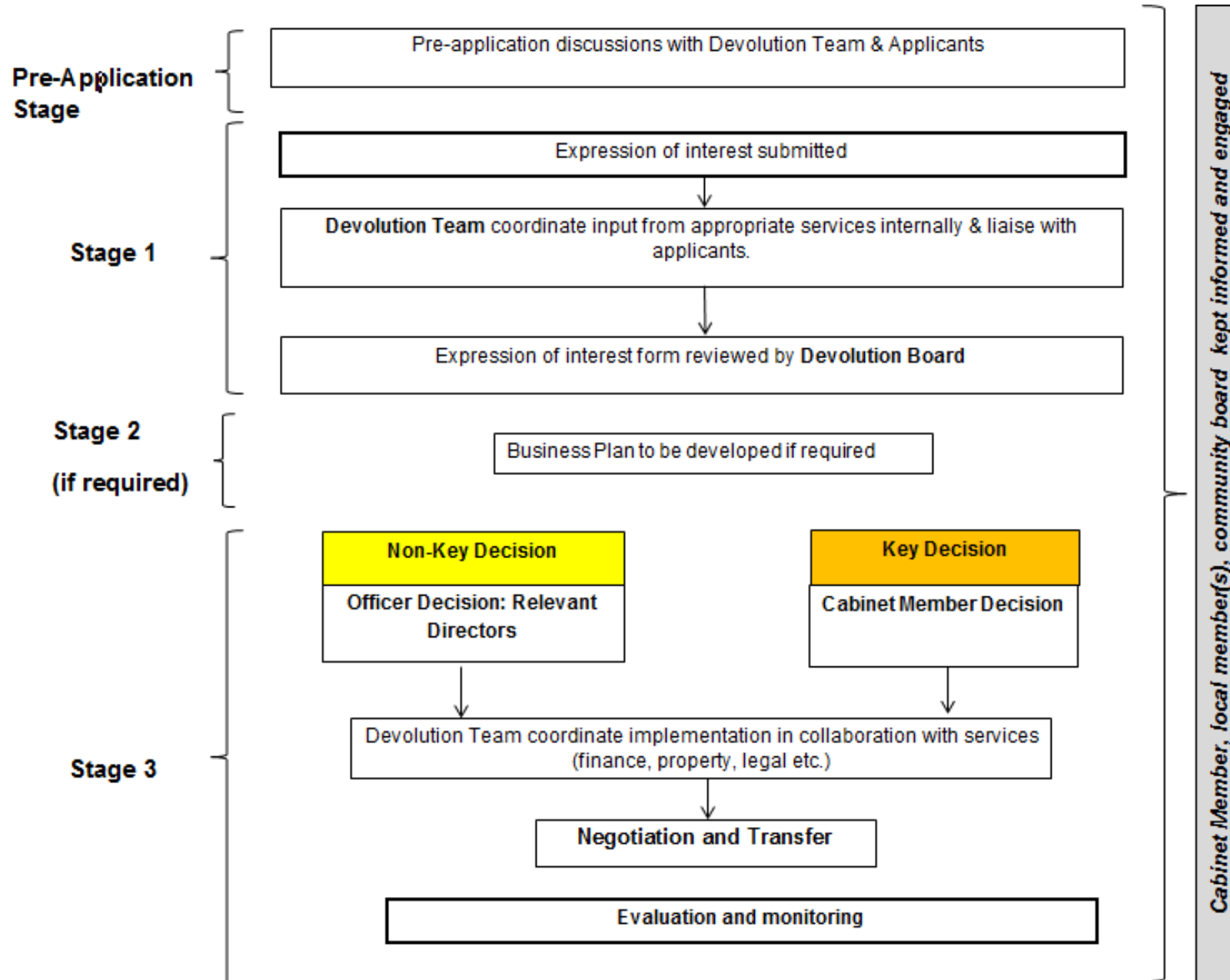
- 6.14 The detail of legal agreements for the transfer of an asset/service will take place following approval of a business plan.
- 6.15 The decision on the sign-off of all transfers will be made in accordance with decision-making rules as set out in Buckinghamshire Council's constitution.

Appeals

- 6.16 All applicants are entitled to appeal against an element of this policy if they feel that a decision has been unfair/and or there has been a breach of this policy.
- 6.17 Appeals shall be made in writing, stating clearly the issue or reference to the part of the policy that has been breached, within 28 days of the decision being made.
- 6.18 The appeal will be managed in line with the Council's stage 2 complaints procedure.

[Note: Following adoption of this Policy, guidance and templates will be developed and published to support organisations to submit expressions of interest]

Annex A: Devolution Process Flowchart



Annex B: Assets out of Scope of Phase 1 Devolution Offer

In phase 1 of Buckinghamshire Council's devolution programme it is proposed that some types of assets are considered out of scope of this policy. This means that Buckinghamshire Council will not consider such requests under this policy.

As a new organisation in the first year of operation the Council will be undertaking a range of strategic asset reviews to inform the best use of those assets for the benefit of all Buckinghamshire's residents.

Some types of assets are best managed strategically and thereby retained by Buckinghamshire Council, just as others are better managed locally.

The following asset areas are out of scope:

- Assets held for investment purposes: both assets that generate a net income for Buckinghamshire Council and those held for future capital, revenue regeneration or corporate realisations.
- Vacant land or buildings that may generate a capital receipt, regeneration, revenue aspirations, or corporate aspirations and which are required to fund the capital programme of Buckinghamshire Council.
- Land held for future development by Buckinghamshire Council or partner schemes, as it would not be financially prudent to devolve land and be required to repurchase it in the future.
- Car parks owned and/or run by Buckinghamshire Council.
- Leisure centres owned and/or run by Buckinghamshire Council.
- Buildings used primarily as delivery sites for Buckinghamshire Council services.
- Potential buildings which may be considered as Community Access Points/Hubs in later years, to ensure maximum potential for building redevelopment/investment.

Annex C: Assessment Criteria

All applicants will be required to complete an Expression of Interest. A Business Plan will also be required at stage 2 in relation to transfer requests over the value threshold of £100,000 for services/assets and in relation to all transfers which require a key decision.

Template forms will be published online as part of a devolution support toolkit. These template forms will include sections to complete in relation to the criteria areas, with an expectation that more detailed information would be provided where a business plan is required.

Assessment Criteria Area	EOI Evidence	Business Plan Evidence
a) Community benefit	Statement of intended community benefit	Strong track record of delivery of community benefit. Evidence of community impact and resident consultation on proposal.
b) Local control	Meet organisational eligibility criteria.	Evidence that residents will be able to have a say in future decisions on the assets/services.
c) Sustainability	Ability to manage service/property.	Clear long term plan for ensuring viability. A risk assessment and how these risks will be mitigated.
d) Governance & legal structure	Meet eligibility criteria.	Settled legal entity with proven ability to manage change.
e) Financial standing	Established record of financial probity.	Established record of financial probity with evidence of long term planning.
f) Maintenance	Ability to manage service/property.	Proven record of managing maintenance issues.
g) Commitment	Willingness to participate in evaluation.	Willingness to participate in evaluation and share learning.

EqIA – Full Equality Impact Assessment

Step 1: Introduction

Policy or Service to be assessed: Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy

Service and lead officer: Sara Turnbull, Localism Workstream Lead

Officers involved in the EqIA:
 Sara Turnbull, Workstream Lead
 Leone Dale, Policy Officer

What are you impact assessing?

- Existing
- New/proposed
- Changing/Update revision

Other, please list: N/A

Step 2: Scoping – what are you assessing?

What is the title of your service/strategy/policy/project?

Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy

What is the aim of your service/strategy/policy/project?

To develop a devolution framework to enable local organisations, particularly town and parish councils, to take on greater local control over the running of Buckinghamshire Council's services and assets.

Appendix 1 to the Shadow Executive Report sets out a draft policy recommended for approval. The purpose of the policy is to enable a fair, transparent governance process for how the new Buckinghamshire Council will consider devolution requests from external organisations.

Who does/will it have an impact on? E.g. public, visitors, staff, members, partners?

Residents

Town and parish councils

Community organisations

Potentially staff in relation to any future service areas which may be devolved.

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

It is anticipated that the policy will enable a range of devolution deals to take place so that services and assets are transferred to local organisations to run.

All devolution transfers will individually be subject to subsequent decisions by officers or Cabinet/Cabinet Member. As part of the expression of interest and business plan (where required) there is an expectation that the applicant would provide details of how the transfer would benefit local residents. The first and foremost assessment criteria for consideration of devolution transfers will be the benefit and consideration of impact on residents. The template forms will include this information as a requirement.

Further EIA screenings and assessments will be required in relation to specific devolution transfers.

The proposed policy is a corporate policy for Buckinghamshire Council and as such will impact on all service areas. In particular property, neighbourhood services, localities, legal and finance.

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

There are no barriers identified to implementing this policy. There are a range of operational challenges to ensure that the wider devolution programme meets stakeholder expectations to deliver at pace. These challenges are mitigated through the proposed approach and investment in establishing a small devolution team to deliver, as set out in the Shadow Executive paper.

Step 3: Information gathering – what do you need to know about your customers?

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 equality strand?	
Age/Disability:	N/A
Gender re-assignment:	N/A
Race:	N/A
Religion or belief:	N/A
Sex:	N/A
Sexual orientation:	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity:	N/A
Marriage & Civil Partnership:	N/A
As a corporate governance policy no specific service users are identified at this stage. As identified above this type of data will be considered as part of specific further EIAs on individual devolution deals as required.	

<p>Do you need any further information broken down by equality strand to inform this EqlA?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>

<p>Is there any potential for direct or indirect discrimination?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Applicants will be expected to provide information on their submission on impact on the community, and the Devolution Board will be required to consider the equalities impact of each transfer as part of the Council’s legal obligations in meeting the requirements of the Equalities Act/public sector duty.</p> <p>The Devolution Board will be looking for evidence of positive impact on communities as the most critical factor in decision-making on transfers.</p>

Step 4: Making a judgement about impacts

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 equality strand?	
Age:	N/A
Disability:	N/A
Gender re-assignment:	N/A

Race:	N/A
Religion or belief:	N/A
Sex:	N/A
Sexual orientation:	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity:	N/A
Marriage & Civil Partnership:	N/A

Conclusion:

As identified above, no specific improvements or actions are identified as it is intended to ensure that as part of the implementation of the policy that the equalities impact of individual devolution transfers are carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. The template expressions of interest form and business plan form will ensure that necessary information is captured to understand the equalities impact.

Step 5: Improvement plan – what are you going to change?

Issue	Action	Performance target (what difference will it make)	Lead Officer	Achieved
Ensuring the impact of devolution deals on residents and equalities is understood.	Ensure template forms cover this information.	Equalities Impact Assessment Screening and assessments will be completed for individual devolution transfer requests.	Sara Turnbull	To include in implementation planning.
Ensuring that devolution deals are agreed where organisations are able to meet legal obligations.	Ensure that as part of the assessment process for devolution deals organisations provide evidence that they can meet their public sector equality duty.	Ensure that all residents and service users are able to access services fairly without discrimination.	As above	As above

Date:	31 October 2019
Next review date:	31 March 2021

Report for:	Formal Shadow Executive
Meeting Date:	12 November 2019

Title of Report:	Regeneration Strategy
Shadow Portfolio Holder	Cllr Nick Naylor
Responsible Officer	Peter Wright, Interim Head of Regeneration and Investment, Wycombe District Council peter.wright@wycombe.gov.uk 01494 421 841
Officer Contact:	Peter Wright, Interim Head of Regeneration and Investment, Wycombe District Council peter.wright@wycombe.gov.uk 01494 421 841
Recommendations:	That the Regeneration Strategy for High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Marlow be approved as a draft to be considered and, in whole or part, be incorporated in a wider strategy by the new Buckinghamshire Council once it comes into being.
Corporate Implications:	Risk: N/A Equalities: N/A Health & Safety: N/A
Options: (If any)	Not to approve the strategy for further consideration.
Reason:	The strategy provides both principles and an outline programme showing how the main settlements within the district can contribute to the stated growth aims for Buckinghamshire.

1. Background

1.1. In September 2018 Inner Circle Consulting were commissioned to produce a Regeneration Strategy, working with officers in the WDC Regeneration and Investment Team. This work is now complete and the resulting strategy is appended to this report for approval. Work comprised:

- The production of a regeneration vision
- The production of a set of investment priorities and programme of projects
- The establishment of an evidence base and appropriate metrics
- The establishment of investment principles and assessment methodology
- An analysis of potential delivery routes and investment partners.

2. Summary of outputs

2.1. Vision

2.1.1. “By 2050, through sustainable growth in High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Marlow we aim to have doubled the size of the local economy, boosted productivity and cemented Buckinghamshire’s reputation as a world class location for business. The greater Wycombe area will be one of the best places in the UK to work and invest in with world leading business productivity and connectivity. Growth will be harnessed to enable businesses and communities to prosper, thrive and enjoy one the highest qualities of life in the country. Complementing all of this, the region will have outstanding sustainability credentials.”

2.2. Principles

2.2.1. The vision will be delivered by achieving 5 principles:

- Better town centres
- Innovative economy
- Protect and preserve the natural environment
- Sustainable homes for all
- Enhancing connectivity

2.3. Growth Areas

2.3.1. The strategy divides proposed interventions into six growth areas:

- High Wycombe town centre
- Innovation Corridor
- Gomm Valley
- Princes Risborough
- Marlow ‘protect and preserve’
- Network Interventions

2.4. Delivery

2.4.1. Within the above growth areas, ‘big moves’ have been identified that comprise 178 projects - taken both from existing plans and new proposals which could be delivered over the next 30 years. For 31 sites, architectural and urban design input has generated specific outputs which have then been analysed using an economic growth tool. This tool uses established methodologies to derive the wider benefit to the economy of a given project; the tool will be available to the Council to use in future as projects and programmes develop.

2.4.2. Key potential delivery partners that could help Buckinghamshire Council to deliver this strategy have been identified and can be found in section 8 of the appendix.

3. Next steps

3.1. Strategic fit

3.1.1. As part of the work leading up to the establishment of the new Buckinghamshire Council approaches to regeneration and economic development are being considered. This report aims to ensure that the work done by Wycombe District Council forms part of the wider regeneration approach which will be developed by the new Council fitting, as it does, within county- and region-wide strategies such as the recently published Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy and the joint central and local government ambitions for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The extent of any commitment to the strategy or any projects within it (outside those already underway) will entirely be a matter for the new Buckinghamshire Council once it comes into being.

3.1.2. This strategy also complements and contributes to the delivery of the Cultural Strategy for Buckinghamshire (by improving the visitor experience and tourism offer) and the emerging Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town and Urban Area (allowing for better north south connectivity, sustainable transport opportunities, bike schemes and electric charging points for example).

3.1.3. Delivering a regeneration programme will also make a positive contribution to the wider determinants of health under the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment by providing new job opportunities, tackling deprivation in High Wycombe, creating safer places ('safer by design'), improving social connectivity, enabling quality homes, improving road safety and providing educational, social and recreational opportunities for young people.

Background Papers	Regeneration Strategy V1.1
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**REGENERATION
STRATEGY**
**HIGH WYCOMBE
PRINCES RISBOROUGH
AND MARLOW**
 Draft V1 September 2019



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FOREWORD

High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Marlow, together with their surrounding areas have to date formed the foundation of the Buckinghamshire economy. This is no small part due to the regeneration efforts of Wycombe District Council which has, directly and indirectly generated over £500m of inward investment over the last fifteen years. These towns now have a clustering of creative, digital and innovative high-tech businesses, complemented by the natural beauty of the surrounding countryside and nationally important heritage sites. It is not surprising then, that the area is an extremely popular place to live, given that it also has first class public and private educational institutions.

However, there are challenges to be faced, particularly in respect of High Wycombe town centre and the need to provide homes for younger people, while encouraging businesses to flourish. If we do not adapt to the demand for lively, vibrant centres in which people can live, work and play then the town will decline, particularly in respect of retail, and it will become a dormitory. Business growth will also suffer more widely if there is not accommodation for those who are likely to work in and start new firms.

This strategy sets out five key regeneration principles, based on extensive consultation with local stakeholders. Ultimately it derives a potential programme of projects generated following a detailed assessment of local capacity. They are focused on geographical growth areas and are themed according to locally strategic “Big Moves” which deliver against the regeneration principles. As a maximum these interventions aim at a target of doubling the size of the economy.

The ambition of this target reflects those for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, together other regional and national policy drivers such as the Local Industrial Strategy and England’s Economic Heartland Outline Transport Strategy.

Wycombe District Council commissioned this strategy so that it could, in part or whole, be combined with those of the other districts and the county council, to create a Buckinghamshire-wide regeneration strategy to be adopted once the new unitary authority comes into being in April 2020.



Cllr Steven Broadbent

Executive Summary

In April 2020 Wycombe District will become part of Buckinghamshire Council, a new unitary authority, combining the four districts of Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe with Buckinghamshire County Council. Given that context, this draft strategy concentrates on the three main settlements within the district: High Wycombe, Princes Risborough, and Marlow. Within these it focuses mainly on High Wycombe as the main driver of the economy and the town for which there are currently a number of issues to be addressed. It is recommended that the principles and outputs of this document be included in a future wider strategy for the new unitary as a whole.

Wycombe District has historically outperformed both regional and the national averages in terms of economic development but still retains some of the most beautiful landscapes in England. The District forms part of England's Economic Heartland, a region stretching from Swindon in the southwest, to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in the midlands. This area is the focus of a great deal of local and central government policy, including the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, which aims at doubling, or even tripling the size of the economy.²

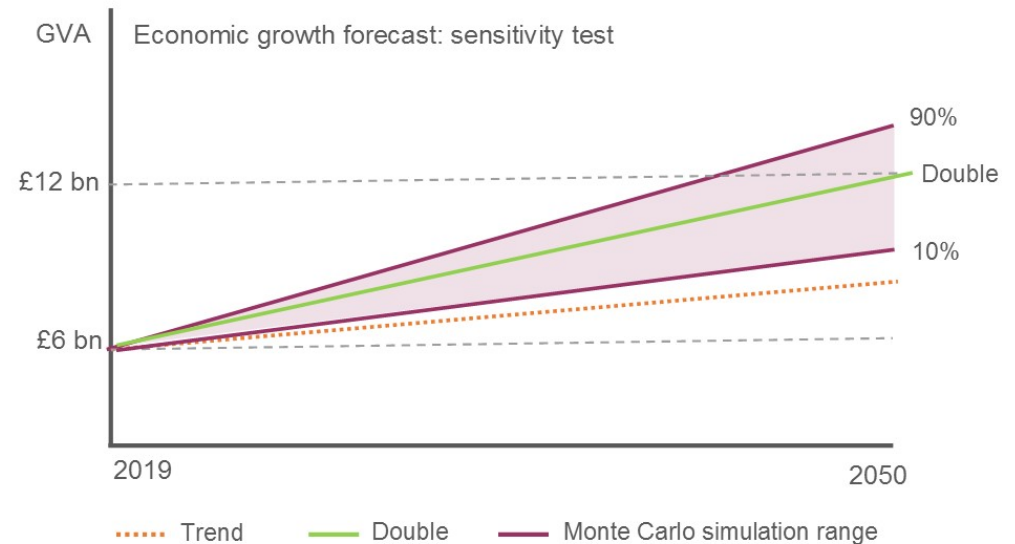
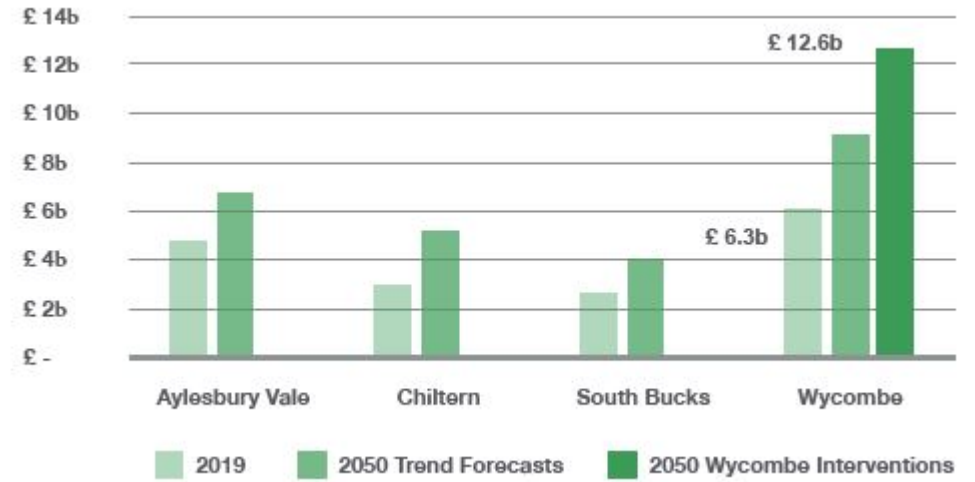
Economic growth of this level will require the transformation of the towns within Buckinghamshire and this strategy sets out principles and practical steps for this change. It also aims to ensure that economic growth enhances the quality of life and opportunity for residents by focusing on sustainability and high quality design.

In order to meet this challenge this strategy has been developed both top-down, and bottom-up. Firstly, top-down by working with stakeholders to develop a vision and secondly bottom-up by generating a programme of projects which have then been analysed, using accepted economic methodologies, so that their individual contributions to an overarching growth aim of doubling GVA from £6bn to £12bn by 2050 can be seen.

¹ Gross Value Added - this is a measure used to measure economic growth

² EEH Outline Transport Strategy

Modelled GVA¹ growth forecasts



The above graphs show modelled forecast data that demonstrates the impact a focussed regeneration programme can have on growing the economy.

Principles

The visioning work has produced five key principles:

1. Better Town Centres

Focusing on the experience economy, town centres will be revitalised by higher densities of residential development, using brownfield sites, thereby creating demand for businesses in the social and cultural markets.

2. Innovative Economy

The existing vibrant creative and digital economy will be encouraged by the better use of current employment land, and by their proximity to thriving town centres. There is huge potential for new innovation sectors, such as those involved in transport.

3. Protect and Improve the Natural Environment

The three towns will benefit from projects to improve walkability, provide sustainable transport and better air quality. They will also benefit by bringing to the fore the green and blue natural assets within and around them.

4. Sustainable homes for all

In order to support growth, housing will be needed for those employed in new businesses, given that average commute work to times are 30 mins [here] for the district. The majority of this new housing will be provided by densifying existing settlements in town centres close to public transport links, and where greenfield sites are used, the highest environmental standards will apply.

5. Enhancing connectivity

High Wycombe in particular benefits from great connectivity, in respect of public transport, the road network and its proximity to Heathrow airport. Increasing residential use of the town centre and walkability will help with current poor 'last mile' connectivity, as will improved cycling/e-cycling facilities. A transport strategy for High Wycombe is currently being produced and will be published in 2020.



Regeneration areas

The regeneration strategy identifies additional growth in jobs, homes and GVA, by focusing on five areas and one wider opportunity. Within these six opportunities are Big Moves; sub-programmes of individual projects grouped around a theme. As a maximum 45,000 jobs, 10,000 homes and £3.5 billion of GVA growth could be achieved, over and above that predicted by existing trends. The six growth opportunities are:

1. High Wycombe Town Centre Growth Area

Within High Wycombe the Big Moves focus on transport, culture and the experience economy. Allowing for sustainable development and an increase sense of identity and civic pride.

2. Innovation Corridor Growth Area

Incorporating the south of High Wycombe, including Cressex Business Park, Handy Cross and Wycombe Air Park, this area builds on one of the key economic areas within Buckinghamshire, and will be designated an Innovation and Enterprise Zone. Over the period of the strategy there is huge potential for efficiency gains and the growth of hi-tech industries.

3. Gomm Valley Growth Area

To the east of High Wycombe the Gomm Valley development has the potential to set new standards in terms of design and sustainability. If successful it will form a model for development in similar contexts both regionally and nationally.

4. Princes Risborough Growth Area

Within the adopted local plan Princes Risborough is due to approximately double in size, in housing terms. There is also capacity for further employment uses in the area around the town. As with Gomm Valley sensitive development combined with investment in the existing settlement could provide a regional or nation example of best practise.

5. Marlow 'Protect and Preserve Area'

Marlow is a thriving town with limited opportunity to accommodate development so the strategy aims to protect and preserve its existing assets, while seeking to provide solutions to the issues it currently faces in terms of transport sustainability.

6. Network Interventions

These apply across the entire region supporting growth and sustainability. Potential exists for a decentralised energy company and for the new authority to form a housing delivery company to ensure an appropriate mix of high quality housing is built in accordance with local needs.

2050 with interventions



2050 Trend

Delivering this strategy

Overall within the identified areas there are eight Big Moves and 178 projects. The programme is comprised of both existing planned projects and potential new activity to deliver the regeneration vision. To ensure that the growth objects are met 31 sites have been analysed to show how they can accommodate the development acquired.

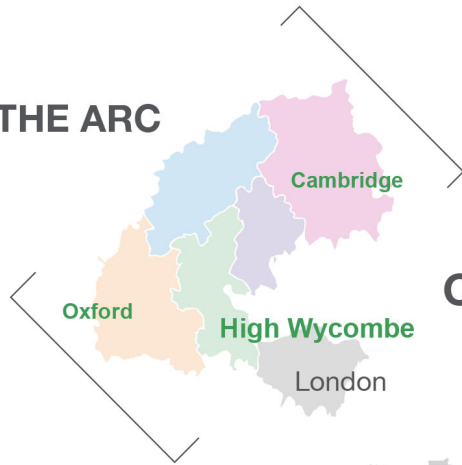
The programme is intended to be flexible, depending on market demand, availability of resources and appetite for risk. Projects can be progressed using a variety of delivery routes. A draft Investment Approach has been developed to sit alongside this strategy to help inform the approach taken by the new Buckinghamshire Council.

This strategy provides the both the principles and the method for the development of High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Marlow for the next thirty years but it is very much a living document, to be adapted as opportunities arise and the regional and national picture changes.

It is hoped that the potentiality of the approach taken to develop these principles and methods can be utilised by those working in regeneration in the new Buckinghamshire Council to deliver the huge benefits to residents that are potentially available.

UNBEATABLE LOCATION AND TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS, WITH RAPID TRAIN SERVICES FROM HIGH WYCOMBE TO LONDON AND OXFORD

THE ARC



HIGH WYCOMBE

The largest town with the Buckinghamshire Council boundary. After Marylebone and Birmingham Moor Street, High Wycombe station is the busiest on the Chiltern Line.

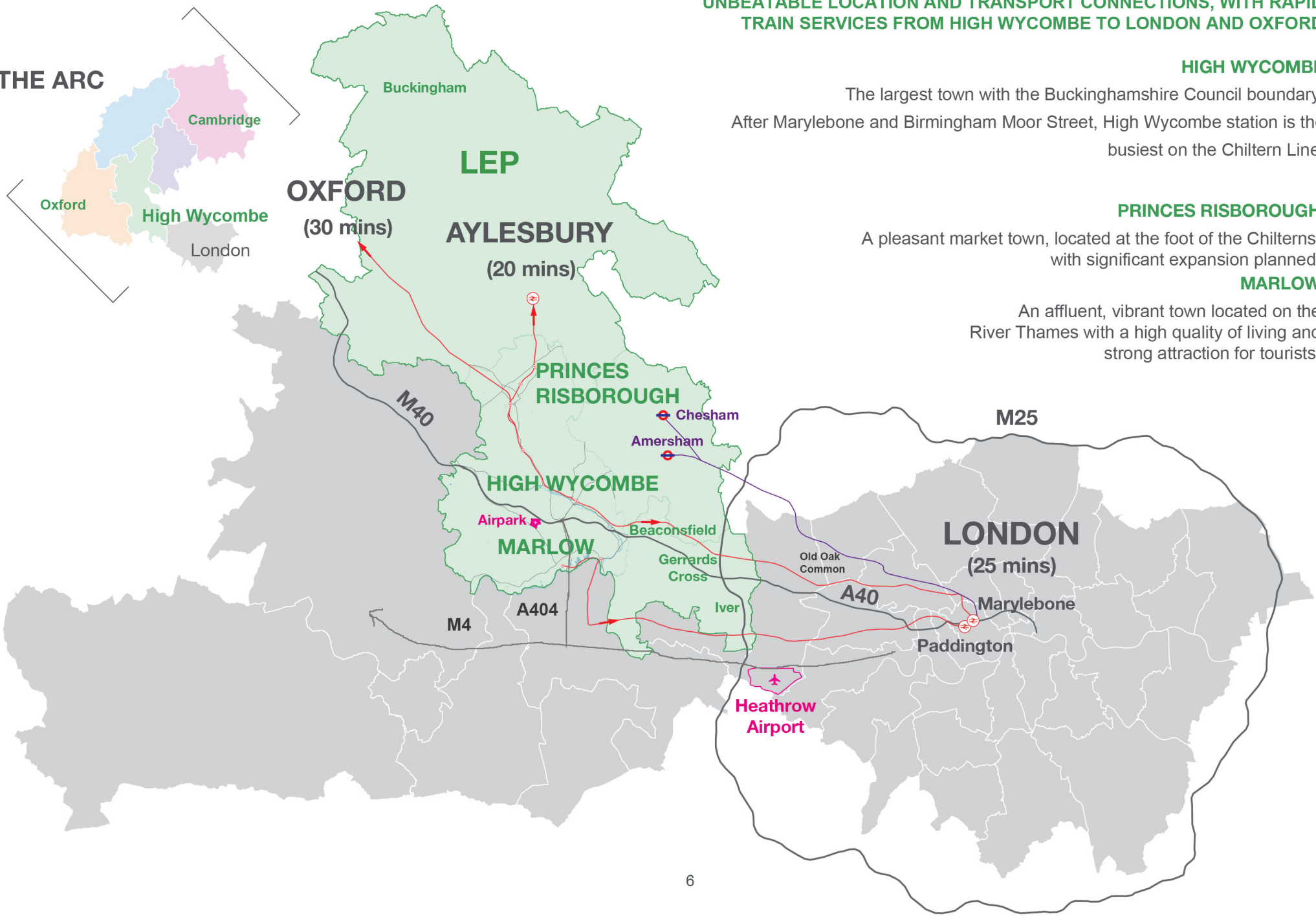
PRINCES RISBOROUGH

A pleasant market town, located at the foot of the Chilterns, with significant expansion planned.

MARLOW

An affluent, vibrant town located on the River Thames with a high quality of living and strong attraction for tourists.

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1 VISION AND PRINCIPLES TO 2050

In order to achieve the vision, this strategy concentrates on delivering five key principles::



These five principles complement and support delivery of the following strategies and plans:

- Local Industrial Strategy for Buckinghamshire (adopted)
- Local Plan for Wycombe (adopted)
- Cultural Strategy for Buckinghamshire (in development)
- Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town and Urban Area (in development) ▪ Corporate Plan for Buckinghamshire Council (in development)

This also supports the strategic business case for Future High Streets Fund work for High Wycombe

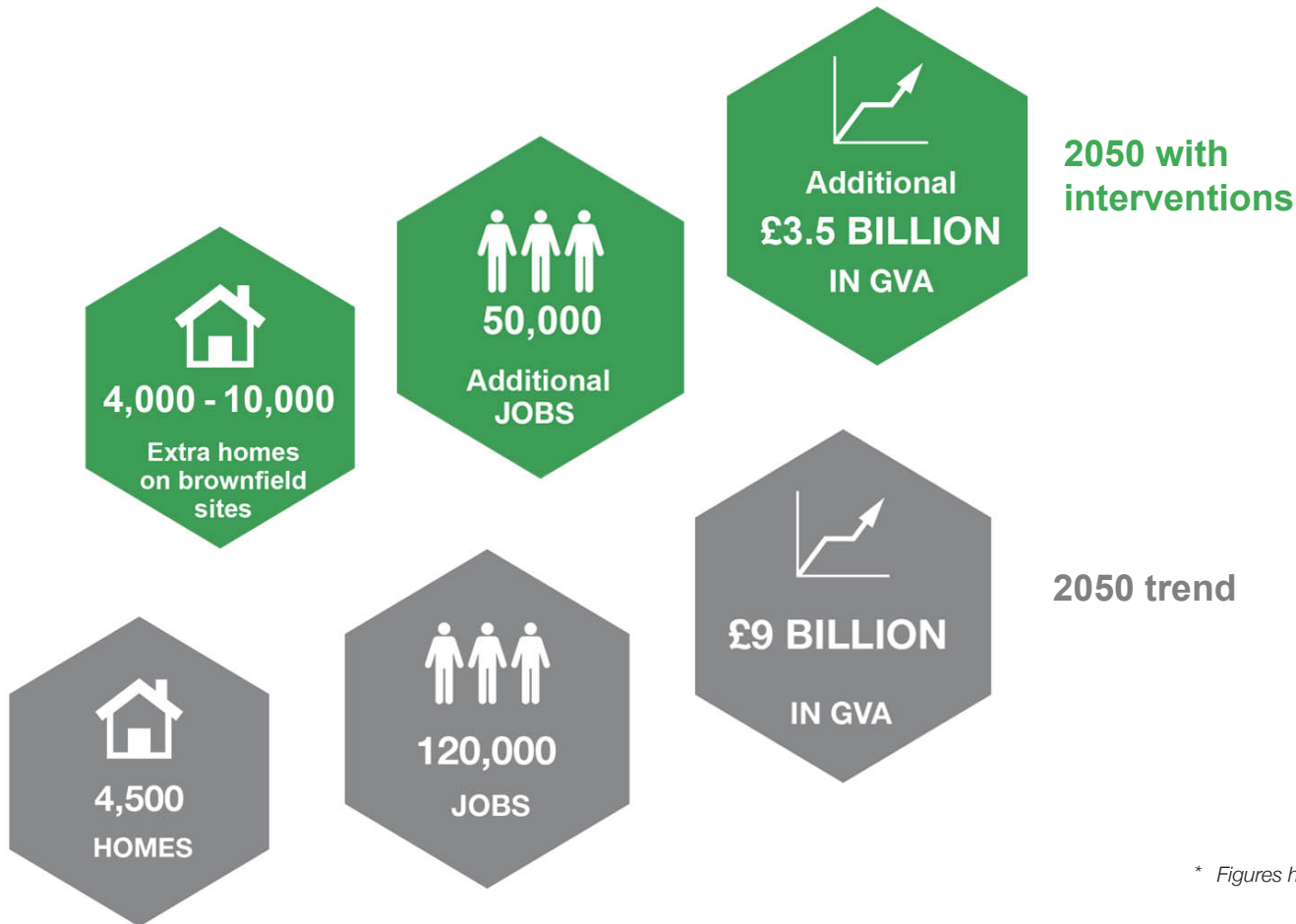


VISION TO 2050

“By 2050, through sustainable growth in High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Marlow we aim to have doubled the size of the local economy, boosted productivity and cemented Buckinghamshire’s reputation as a world class location for business. The greater Wycombe area will be one of the best places in the UK to work and invest in with world leading business productivity and connectivity. Growth will be harnessed to enable businesses and communities to prosper, thrive and enjoy one of the highest qualities of life in the country. Complementing all of this, the region will have outstanding sustainability credentials.”

The regeneration opportunities identified in this strategy can be catalysts for unprecedented levels of investment in the area and deliver up to:

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* Figures have been rounded



1.1 BETTER TOWN CENTRES

The future town centre of High Wycombe will be established and recognised as a key social and cultural area within Buckinghamshire where people live, work and shop and relax.

The towns of High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Marlow will harness the benefits of regeneration and growth to become prosperous, accessible, healthy and safe with opportunity for all.

Each centre will be linked with its surrounding suburbs and include a thriving high street, regular markets, great places to eat, drink and socialise and successful locally owned businesses.

High Wycombe and Princes Risborough town centres will be reinvigorated by boosting the number of people living and working in or close to the centre. This will radically enhance the vitality of the area and drive growth in the town centre economy uses.

In High Wycombe town centre, mixed-use developments that provide retail, office and residential will be encouraged and these developments will enhance the public realm and focus on the “experience economy”. As the area has an ageing demographic it is essential to attract younger, working-age people to enable new businesses to grow; the availability of high quality town centre living is key to achieving this aim.

A people-centric approach will be taken to transform the public realm into thriving spaces of exceptional standard. The rerouting or gradual removal of traffic from selected streets and making a feature of hidden assets such as the River Wye as part of wider regeneration work, greening spaces and positively encouraging cultural activities out of buildings into newly activated streets will deliver a safer, more cohesive and social town centre. Heritage assets such as the Guildhall and Little Market House will be preserved and enhanced where appropriate.

This principle enables us to deliver our Future High Street ambitions to rebalance High Wycombe: the new town and old town; new homes and co-working space; weekday convenience and weekend experience; generation of today and generation of tomorrow; accessibility and linkage; clean and green and financial and community return on investment.



BY **2050**

OUR
AMBITION
IS TO...

- Significantly increase the number of 20-34 year olds living in the area
- Reduce crime to become the safest area within the Thames Valley police force

1.2 INNOVATIVE ECONOMY

High Wycombe and the area around it has an excellent innovative economy and will be a significant contributor to the Oxford- Cambridge Arc. The Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy (2019) identifies Wycombe as a centre for creative and digital industries, with a strong focus being the life sciences, digital, health, med-tech and artificial intelligence. There is also a strong existing base of advanced engineering companies.

Key areas such as Cressex Business Park and the land adjoining the M40 have been identified as key areas of innovative growth in High Wycombe. Through the identified sites and a detailed project and programmes schedule there is scope, with the right approach, to double the economy by 2050, bringing investment and large innovative businesses. This could offer an ideal environment for a test bed for smaller start- up tech focused businesses, adding to the existing cluster of creative SMEs in High Wycombe and the Life Science Innovation Campus at Buckinghamshire New University.

Businesses will be attracted by the availability of space for growth, positive policy environments that support intensification of industrial parks and an excellent town centre which will have a thriving day and night-time economy. High Wycombe also has an Airpark Complex which is a unique and valuable established use for the area and has strong potential for innovative transport technology research. Globe Business Park in Marlow and the Princes Estate in Princes Risborough are also home to innovative businesses that will be supported to contribute to the overall Buckinghamshire economy.

Buckinghamshire boasts excellent grammar schools and a University which can be integrated into the economy and provide a workforce that will be educated and maintained in the area.

High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Marlow will maintain their relevance as contributors to a state-of-the-art economy in Buckinghamshire that will be home to growing industries and businesses and continue to educate the brightest minds in the country.



BY 2050

OUR AMBITION IS TO...

- Significantly enhance the economy to be a key contributor to the Buckinghamshire Economy
- Increase employment opportunities for all

1.3 PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Marlow have unparalleled parks, natural assets and access to the countryside. In order to retain and enhance this high-quality environment for future generations, infrastructure and environmental protection are a focus of this strategy. High Wycombe will be an excellent example of a sustainable community in the future by promoting sustainable building design, reducing carbon emissions and enhancing green space.

Strategies to create compact walkable towns, develop sustainable transport opportunities in our business parks, along with comprehensive measures to reduce transport emissions, will create a community that is healthier, better to live in, attractive to the younger generations and an exemplar of sustainable communities within the UK. Modern building techniques and enhanced green spaces will be key contributors to the improved natural environment of the area.

We will celebrate our unique natural assets such as the River Wye and make blue and green space a key feature of social and cultural life in the town centre.

We will also celebrate our blue and green assets in Marlow with the River Thames and the lakes at Little Marlow.



BY **2050**

OUR
AMBITION
IS TO...

- Reduce carbon emissions to be in the top performing areas in England
- Increase public greenspace in High Wycombe Town Centre

1.4 SUSTAINABLE HOMES FOR ALL

It is essential to prevent the spread of low density, low quality housing into the areas surrounding Buckinghamshire's towns. Where possible, and for the majority of the housing growth within the three main towns, growth will take the form of increased densification prioritising quality and first class placemaking. In situations where development is appropriate on greenfield sites then sustainability, including the highest design standards will be required.

Providing the right housing to the right standards in the right places will have positive social, environmental and economic outcomes. High Wycombe and Princes Risborough are both in an excellent position to provide a range of homes that are affordable, liveable and environmentally friendly for younger and older generations.

The regeneration strategy supports new housing to meet changing needs of needs of the community to play an active role in developing new types and tenures of housing (such as high quality build-to-rent) to attract and retain young professionals, who will in turn drive enterprise growth and revitalise the main urban centre of High Wycombe and contribute to the wider economy of Buckinghamshire.

New homes will set new environment and design standards and will be fully supported by physical and social infrastructure and be concentrated in or linked to transport hubs and town centres, directly supporting the vitality and vibrancy of our towns.



BY **2050**

OUR
AMBITION
IS TO...

- Proactively pursue brownfield land assembly and new delivery vehicles to increase housing provision

- Increase the percentage of private rented housing and innovative tenures such as rent-to-buy
- Be an advocate for all new built homes being carbon neutral

1.5 ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY

High Wycombe has exceptional connectivity to the wider UK at a macro level with fast and reliable access to and from London, the Midlands growth areas, the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and international connections via Heathrow Airport. Exploiting this with new connections and two multi-modal transport super-hubs will cement High Wycombe's place as one of the best-connected areas in the South East. This underlying macro infrastructure is key to the growth of the Buckinghamshire region.

Connectivity at a micro level is currently weaker and can be addressed through improvement in the 'last mile' transport for High Wycombe and improved connectivity to different nodes throughout the town. This will enhance the overall connectivity of residential areas and business hubs and will significantly reduce the reliance on private vehicle transport.

Overall High Wycombe will see a reduction in the amount of traffic congestion, better health and increased desirability for people to live in and conduct business. Improved cycling facilities will also increase the attraction of the towns and surrounding areas for leisure cycling, encouraging increased sustainable tourism.

In addition to this, the strategy will have a focus on ensuring that there is an increase in internet connectivity and strength. Ensuring businesses have access to a high standard of infrastructure will attract and connect the next generation of businesses to High Wycombe and surrounding Buckinghamshire.

A Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area is being developed concurrently with this strategy. This will provide information about the future transportation needs and interventions for the area and how key nodes throughout High Wycombe will be connected by both private and public transport. This is integral to support place-making and regeneration.

The vision for the Transport Strategy is: "By 2050, High Wycombe will be among the best connected and most innovative towns in the London-Oxford-Cambridge 'Golden Triangle', where all journeys, from start to finish, are emission free, seamless, and safe for all residents, businesses and visitors".



BY **2050**

OUR
AMBITION
IS TO...

· Increase the percentage of premises that have access to full fibre broadband service

· Increase the percentage of commuters using both public transportation and active modes of transport

REGENERATION AREAS - BIG MOVES

PRINCES RISBOROUGH GROWTH AREA

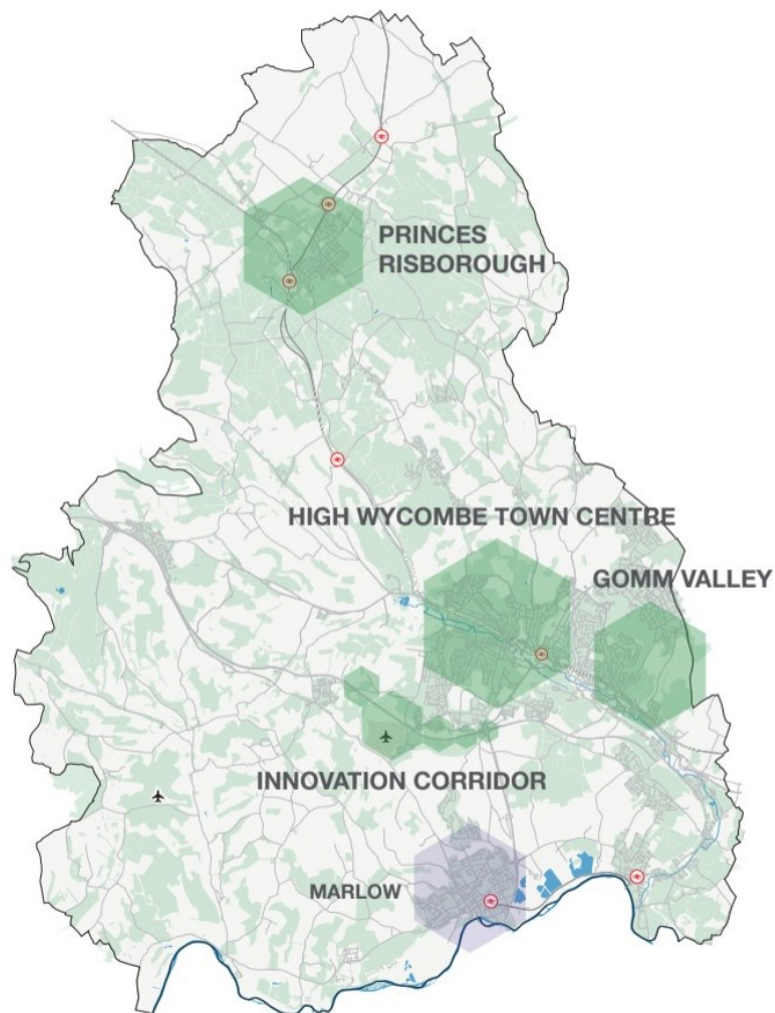
Expansion of Employment Allocations
 Social Infrastructure Integrating Old and New Communities
 Gateway to the Chilterns
 Accelerate Housing Delivery
 Improved Sustainable Transport

HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN CENTRE GROWTH AREA

Eastern Quarter
 Wycombe Central Transport hub
 Cultural Heart of the Chilterns
 Town Centre Gateways
 Desborough Neighbourhood
 Walkable Wycombe
 Gown, Town and White Coat
 Targeting Economic Exclusion

GOMM VALLEY GROWTH AREA

Aspiration:
 Zero Carbon Homes
 Local Eco Sourcing and Construction
 Eco Neighbourhood



INNOVATION CORRIDOR GROWTH AREA

Handy Cross Transport Superhub Innovation and Enterprise
 Increasing Land Use Efficiency
 Infrastructure Financing
 Ensuring Connections between Transport Nodes
 Wellbeing in the Corridor

NETWORK INTERVENTIONS (WIDER OPPORTUNITIES)

Decentralised Energy Company
 Housing Development Company
 Progressive Procurement Framework
 Green and Blue Infrastructure Council sustainably leading the way Internal and external connectivity

MARLOW 'PROTECT AND PRESERVE' AREA

Support Infrastructure and Railway Upgrades
 Waterfront Leisure Opportunities
 High Street Enhancement and Supportive and Sustainable Transport

2 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN CENTRE GROWTH AREA

Desborough Neighbourhood

Walkable Wycombe

Cultural Heart of the Chilterns

High Wycombe Central Transport Hub

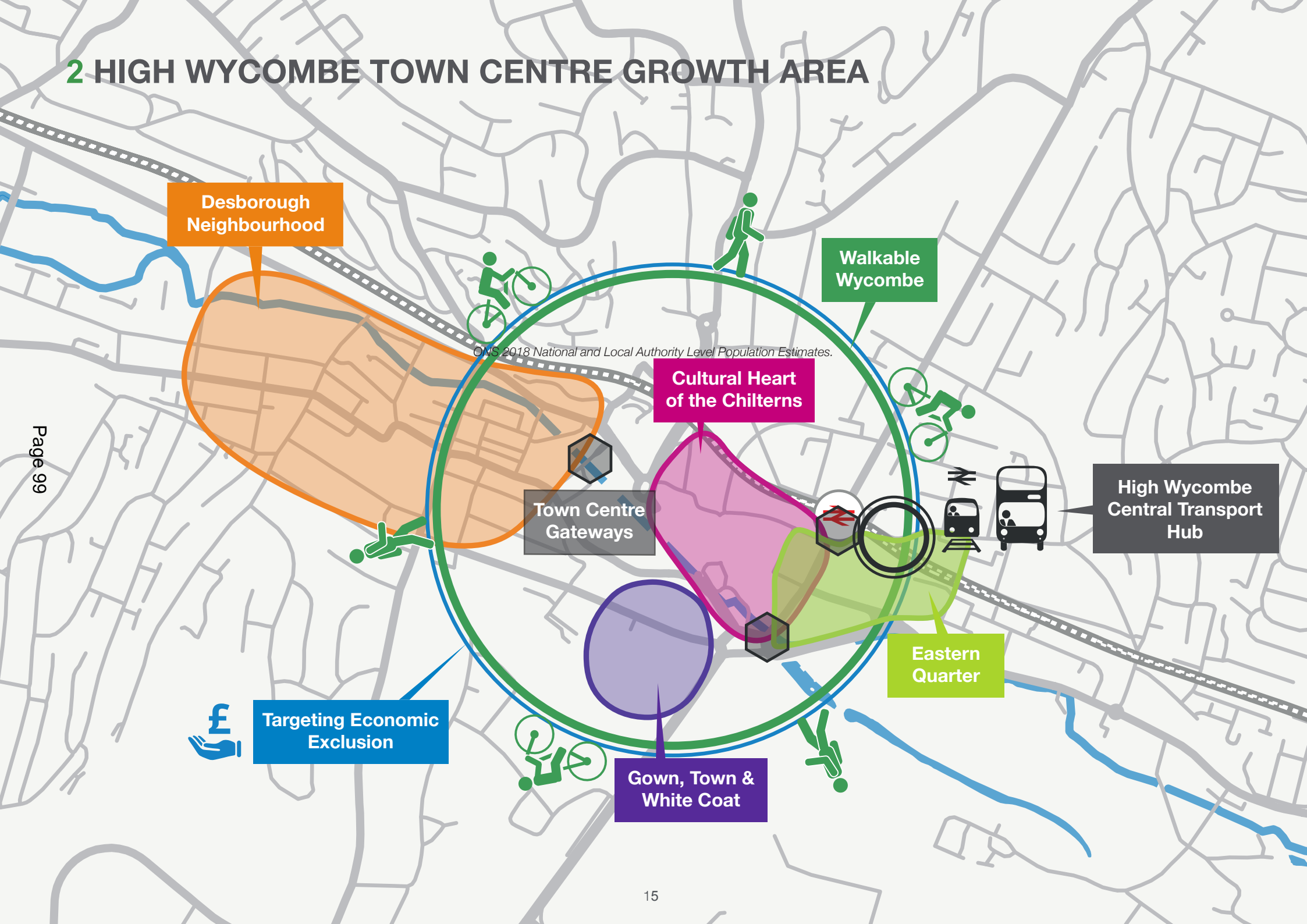
Eastern Quarter

Town Centre Gateways

Gown, Town & White Coat

Targeting Economic Exclusion

ONS 2018 National and Local Authority Level Population Estimates.



2 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN CENTRE GROWTH AREA

POTENTIAL
ADDITIONAL
GROWTH:



A successful High Wycombe Town Centre is essential for the success of this strategy. As the centre of the largest town in Buckinghamshire, it will be at the forefront of boosting the county's economy and achieving the economic objectives of the Buckinghamshire LEP Industrial Strategy. This will be achieved through becoming a renowned business destination of choice for both corporate headquarters and SMEs, offering fast and efficient connections to London, Heathrow and the Arc; a highly skilled workforce; state of the art business spaces; and a culture of innovation.

It will continue to be the best-connected place in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc with a new Central Transport Hub offering rapid train connections to the remainder of Buckinghamshire, London and the midlands, and to Oxford and the Arc. Locally, there will be low emission buses carrying visitors and residents to the remainder of the town and the edge of town Transport Hub at Handy Cross, which will offer rapid transit links to nearby towns in Buckinghamshire. Further afield destinations such as Heathrow will also be targeted with connections from High Wycombe Town Centre and Handy Cross. Improved public transport will result in a decrease in car use.

It will be a highly desirable place to live, successfully mixing an established community of families and retirees with an influx of younger skilled professionals, attracted by the range of homes. It will build upon its historic centre to be renown as the cultural heart of the Chilterns, kick started by Future High Streets Fund inspired projects, combining vibrant town centre living with glorious countryside an accessible walk, bike or quick bus ride away.

The influx of younger, skilled professionals will be attracted by the job prospects, experience economy and will be housed in high quality housing in mixed-use developments throughout the centre with increased choice of tenure including high quality build-to-rent accommodation.

Building on the excellent schools and existing university, there will be a push for increasing synergies between university, industry and the hospital, building on the University's Life Science Innovation Campus. The sharing of research and knowledge will be promoted between the research centres of Buckinghamshire and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

The centre of High Wycombe will be the focus of targeting economic exclusion to enable everyone to share the prosperity of the region and to contribute to the success of the town.

¹ Job figure above is based on site modelling and includes new business employment and construction related jobs required to deliver the regeneration in High Wycombe. This is subject to change and will be recast as schemes come forward for planning and delivery.

2.1 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN CENTRE – BIG MOVES

BIG MOVE 1: EASTERN QUARTER

The Council is developing plans for a well-designed and fully integrated mixed use quarter in the centre of town clustered around the train station and proposed Central Transport Hub. It will combine large format, modern offices suitable for corporate headquarters, attractive mid-rise apartment living and high quality public spaces providing direct sight lines connecting a new station square to the Rye and surrounding countryside.



Notable opportunities include:

- Regenerated Brunel Shed
- Brownfield densification and potential tall building zone
- High quality HQ office spaces
- Build-to-rent housing
- Smart Town Centre - using data analysis and tomorrow's technology to create better town centres
- Hub for electric vehicles *
- Business Marketing and Networking Events
- Space for Buckinghamshire Council hub
- Place brand development for High Wycombe town



BIG MOVE 2: HIGH WYCOMBE CENTRAL TRANSPORT HUB

Develop High Wycombe Station into a compact, multi-mode transport interchange incorporating an enhanced space for bus stops, electric bike hire and electric car charging. More than just a transient zone, it will be a place for commerce and socialising – transforming the gateway to the town experience.

Notable opportunities include:

- Enhanced space for bus stops *
- Express Town Centre bus link - Create bus lanes between out of Town Transport Hub at Handy Cross and the Central Transport Super Hub *
- Bicycle rental scheme Hub *
- Electric Car and Bus Charging Hub *
- High quality public realm



* Link to Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area

2.1 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN CENTRE – BIG MOVES

BIG MOVE 3: CULTURAL HEART OF THE CHILTERN

Curate the High Street and old town offer to provide an intriguing and ever changing leisure destination with museums, theatres, unusual shops and specialty markets, public art, galleries, bars and restaurants. Allow creative reuse of vacant space.

Notable opportunities include:

- Extended pedestrianisation of the town centre
- Creation of garden piazza at Frogmoor
- Relocation of Wycombe Museum into the town centre
- Bringing retail units back into creative use
- Specialist street markets
- Developing and promoting the 'experience' economy reflecting changing trends in town centre usage
- Making more of the town's cultural heritage including Guildhall, Little Market House, The Wheatsheaf and the Brunel Engine Shed
- Place brand development for High Wycombe town



Image 1



BIG MOVE 4: TOWN CENTRE GATEWAYS

Improve first impressions by creating Gateways for a strong sense of arrival when entering west, east and south of the centre through high quality developments, art and branded signage on key routes into town.

Gateways will be connected by improved public realm and sustainable transport links.

Notable opportunities include:

- Eastern Gateway (Train Station area)
- Southern Gateway (Swan and Fire Station area)
- Western Gateway (Oxford Road area)



Image 1: <http://wycombemuseum.org.uk/>

2.1 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN CENTRE – BIG MOVES

BIG MOVE 5: DESBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD

Facilitate the growth of Desborough into a successful, distinctive offbeat arts and maker neighbourhood. Business growth will be led by entrepreneurs, makers and new firms occupying affordable, flexible accommodation, pop-up spaces and creative shopfront renewal. In-fill housing and mixed-use developments with exceptional architecture will attract younger residents and increase vibrancy. Improved green spaces and facilities will bring together communities.



Notable opportunities include:

- Densification of housing and promotion of mixed use developments
- New parks and Community Gardens
- Establish walking and cycling incorporating the River Wye and other blue / green assets to be enjoyed by all
- Start-up and Move-on Schemes - to augment the success of DesBox easy-in easy-out workspace. These will allow new businesses to grow and be retained in the area.



BIG MOVE 6: WALKABLE WYCOMBE

Bring the countryside into town and integrate town centre areas and uses (e.g. the university and museum) through a greener, safer public realm network that makes walking and cycling a pleasure. Ensuring the maximisation of green and blue assets across the town.

Availability of improved pedestrian and cycling facilities will have a beneficial impact on public health and reduce the burden of poor health on social care services.

Notable opportunities include:

- Low Emissions Zone – including the removal of the most polluting vehicles, 20 mph and pedestrianised streets *
- Enhance the public realm - creative street furniture, outdoor events
- Blue and Green links - street trees and planting, River Wye as an asset



* Link to Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area

2.1 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN CENTRE – BIG MOVES

BIG MOVE 7: GOWN, TOWN AND WHITE COAT

A cutting-edge health and care research and skills programme developed by the adjacent University and Hospital to complement the Stoke Mandeville Centre of research excellence.

The presence of the hospital and university in the town centre generates synergies which can be exploited to promote health-based business innovation.

Notable opportunities include:

- Strengthen collaboration between the university, hospital and public health – i.e Life Science centre
- Social Care Centre of Excellence
- Buckinghamshire College group relocation - to create an education cluster



Image 2



BIG MOVE 8: TARGETING ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

Building on previous regeneration activity, in for example the Desborough area, ensure people from the town's most deprived neighbourhoods access jobs and economic opportunities and contribute to the success of the town.

Notable opportunities include:

- Skills matching initiatives, both for new entrants to the employment market and for life long learning
- Futureproofing Eden (The face of retail is changing and the Eden Centre should be futureproofed through enabling an enhanced visitor experience)
- Enhance independent commercial offering within town centre
- Linking local businesses with local students
- Longterm retention of the retail sector as a source of employment



Image 2: <https://www.independent.co.uk/student/into-university/az-uni-colleges/buckinghamshire-new-university-1723487.html>

3 INNOVATION CORRIDOR GROWTH AREA

Wellbeing in the Corridor



Innovation and Enterprise



Floor Space
Densification



Cressex
Business
Park

Handy Cross
Transport
Super
Hub



Connecting the
Nodes



Wycombe Airpark



M40 Corridor



Infrastructure
Financing

3 INNOVATION CORRIDOR GROWTH AREA

POTENTIAL
ADDITIONAL
GROWTH:



The Innovation Corridor contains Handy Cross, Cressex Business Park, Wycombe Airpark and the growth sites adjacent to the M40. It benefits from stand-out local assets such as the University, world-leading businesses, the Airpark, first class connectivity, outstanding skills base and fantastic housing stock for senior management staff.

This area has huge amounts of potential to boost the economy of High Wycombe and will explore designation as an Innovation and Enterprise Zone alongside a financing plan to capture the uplift in land values. These areas will have high quality physical and digital connections to supercharge collaboration and agglomeration.

The Cressex Growth area contains major pharmaceutical company Johnson and Johnson's Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies. We will encourage use of the adjacent land to create a new research and development hub focused on related industries. This clustering of R&D will augment agglomeration effects to maximise knowledge, development and growth.

High Wycombe has limited space for greenfield business parks. Hence the focus of Cressex Business Park will be the efficient use of land through gradual replacement of industrial buildings by modern, high-tech, high density facilities. This will create additional business space to accommodate growth and investment in infrastructure that enhances productivity, augmenting the high-tech engineering base that exists there and the relocation of businesses from the town centre.

Handy Cross will be the location of a new out-of-town transport hub, offering frequent rapid connections into the centre of High Wycombe and other towns and cities throughout the region, and a frequent bus service between all the areas of the innovation corridor.

New infrastructure will be paid for by land value capture mechanisms and a coordinated infrastructure financing strategy. Methods such as design codes, bespoke guidance will be explored where they can boost investment and productivity.

Wellbeing will be promoted across the corridor to create an attractive working environment for employees and residents of the area.

¹ Job figure above is based on site modelling and includes new business employment and construction related jobs required to deliver the regeneration in the Innovation Corridor Growth Area. This is subject to change and will be recast as schemes come forward for planning and delivery.

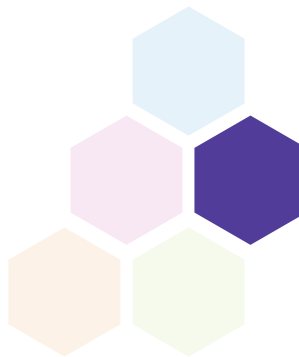
3.1 INNOVATION CORRIDOR – BIG MOVES

BIG MOVE 1: HANDY CROSS TRANSPORT SUPERHUB

This will further build on the Handy Cross development to create a well-positioned multi-mode transport hub. This hub will seamlessly link Handy Cross with High Wycombe Station and other centres that will benefit from express transit.

Notable opportunities include:

- Handy Cross transport hub *
- Electric Car charging centre *
- Electric Cycle hub *



BIG MOVE 2: INNOVATION AND ENTERPRISE

This big move aims to connect and bring together employment areas such as Cressex Business Park, The Airpark, Handy Cross and linked investments such as the University Life Science Innovation Centre. This will increase the size of a single identified innovation area with the support of the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership to create a positive business environment. The aim will be to attract larger employers and facilitate spin-off and supply chain start-ups, leading to agglomeration effects. There will be a focus on green industries and markets targeted by the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy.

Notable opportunities include:

- Enterprise Zone / Innovation Zone - Coordinate business networking and investment support activities including exploration of Enterprise Zone status
- Marketing strategy - Coordinated and inward investment and marketing activities



* Link to Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area

3.1 INNOVATION CORRIDOR – BIG MOVES

BIG MOVE 3: FLOOR SPACE DENSIFICATION

Densification of existing brownfield sites is preferable to greenfield extensions because of the AONB and greenbelt priorities. Densification will be encouraged and achieved through better vertical stacking arrangements that will enhance the efficiency of industrial and commercial units and unlock phased intensification of the industrial parks. There will also be potential for mixed-use activities, servicing and enhanced place making. A design code or masterplan will be explored as part of this big move to set out a clear and efficient regulatory environment for business investment, enabling densification as each site becomes available and supporting sustainable growth and vibrant place making. The Council will explore a high-density demonstration project as part of the early interventions to stimulate market investment.

Notable opportunities include:

- Cressex Business Park Masterplan / revised design code
- Industrial Intensification Demonstration Project



Image 3

BIG MOVE 4: INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING

This is a financial focused big move that would include a comprehensive financing system being established to capture the uplift in land value. This would enable the pooling of funds for investment in transportation and infrastructure enhancements. The system would work in tandem with the masterplan by creating a means to back capture any upfront investment required for infrastructure enhancements (sustainable transport and digital communications) and the demonstration project.

Notable opportunities include:

- Infrastructure Financing and Delivery Strategy



3.1 INNOVATION CORRIDOR – BIG MOVES

BIG MOVE 5: CONNECTING THE NODES

Fast and reliable transport and digital infrastructure links will connect the main nodes of Handy Cross, Airpark and Cressex. This will supercharge collaboration and agglomeration between the businesses within the innovation corridor.

Notable opportunities include:

- Innovation Corridor Express Link *
- Digital Infrastructure
- Electric Bike Scheme *
- Autonomous Vehicle Pilot *



BIG MOVE 6: WELLBEING IN THE CORRIDOR

A focus on the wellbeing of people working within the innovation corridor to ensure a healthy work experience. This will include additional green spaces, after work events, wellbeing classes and leisure opportunities.

Notable opportunities include:

- Improvement of the public realm
- Events and networking
- Leisure offer
- Wellbeing experience



Wycombe Sports Centre

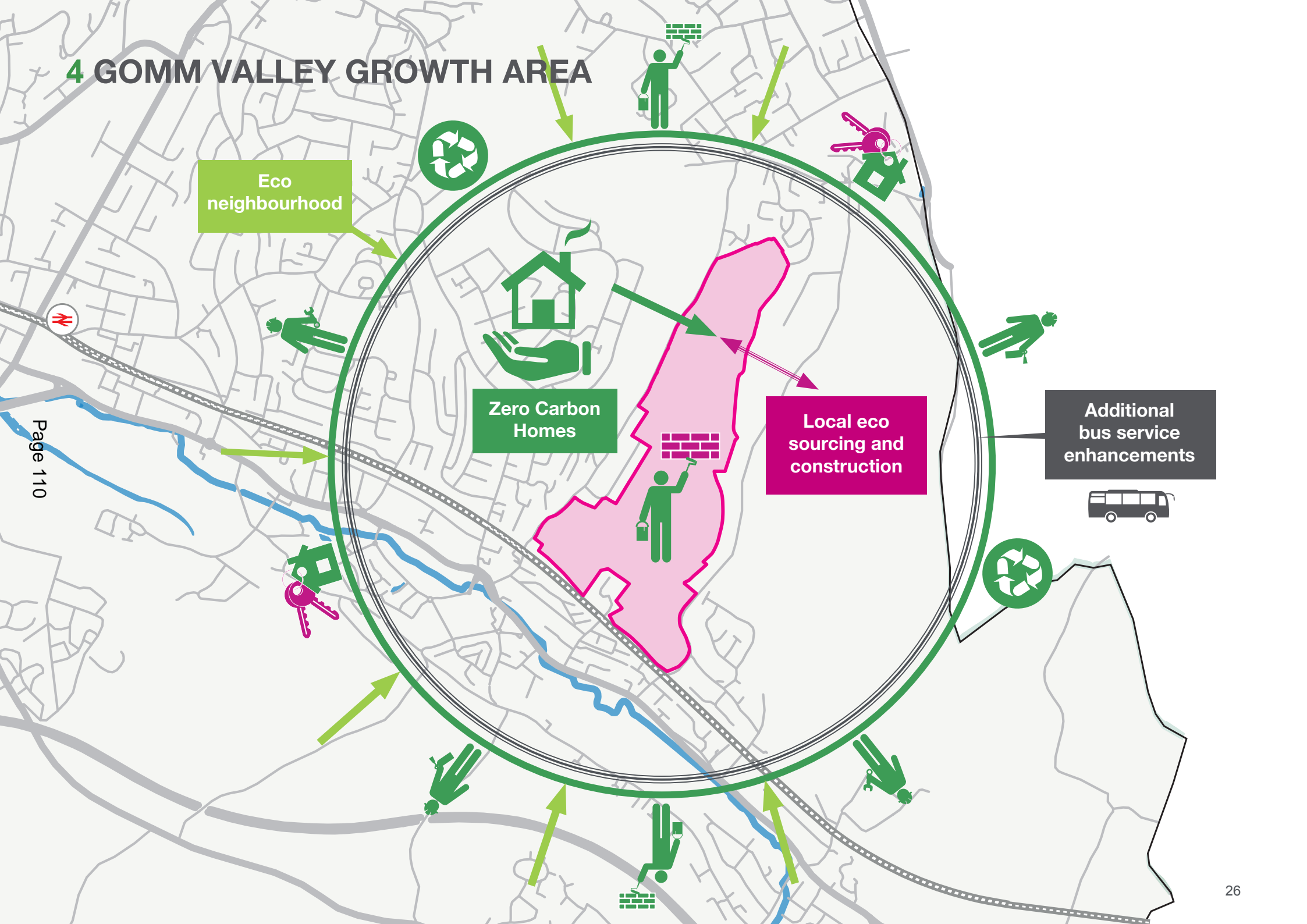


Caterpillar Day Nursery and Little Gym



* Link to Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area

4 GOMM VALLEY GROWTH AREA



4 GOMM VALLEY GROWTH AREA

In accordance with the 'sustainable homes for all' principle, where new development is on greenfield sites, the highest standards of sustainability, design quality and construction innovation will be required.

The development at Gomm Valley has aspirational plans to provide a mixed-use community of new homes, a village square and family park. The development will invest in local bus services, electric vehicles, a car club and cycling.

It has been designated a growth zone to ensure that the high quality environmental and design credentials of the Gomm Valley development are maximised and to ensure that the development can be recognised and promoted as an eco-standard for future developments across the region and nationally. It will also be ensured that the development is connected to High Wycombe town centre through sustainable transport methods.

6.1 GOMM VALLEY ASPIRATIONAL BIG MOVES

Gomm Valley Big Moves ensure that the development at Gomm Valley is of a recognised and exceptional eco-standard and has strong sustainable transport connections.

The Gomm Valley Big Moves consist of the following:

- Zero Carbon Homes
- Local Eco sourcing and construction
- Eco Neighbourhood
- Additional bus service enhancements



Image 4



Image 5



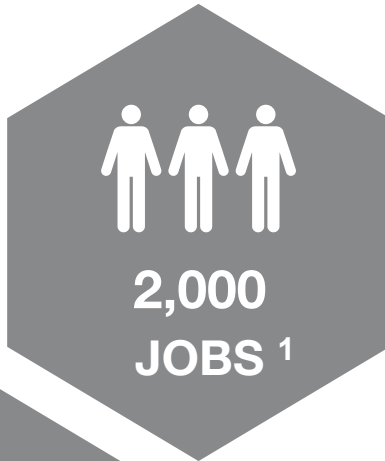
Image 4 and 5: <https://www.gommvalley.com/>

5 PRINCES RISBOROUGH GROWTH AREA



5 PRINCES RISBOROUGH GROWTH AREA

POTENTIAL
ADDITIONAL
GROWTH:



Princes Risborough is a town with big expansion plans that will contribute to housing and economic growth. The area is well connected via local access roads and rail connections and for housing delivery to provide affordable and sustainable housing stock. The area also has a strong offering as it is home to a new range of manufacturing businesses which have relocated from surrounding areas.

The strategy has focused on the strengths of Princes Risborough and will build on the aspects that have made this town successful. Big moves ensure that the town will be able to expand its employment base, be well connected and provide housing for people wanting to work in nearby employment centres such as High Wycombe and Aylesbury.

Princes Risborough is a gateway to the Chilterns and this strategy seeks to exploit and promote this status to enhance quality of life and develop its visitor economy - including Kop Hill Climb, Point to Points and the Phoenix Cycleway.

¹ Job figure above is based on site modelling and includes new business employment and construction related jobs required to deliver the regeneration and growth in the Princes Risborough Growth Area. This is subject to change and will be recast as schemes come forward for planning and delivery.

5 PRINCES RISBOROUGH GROWTH AREA

5.1 PRINCES RISBOROUGH – BIG MOVES

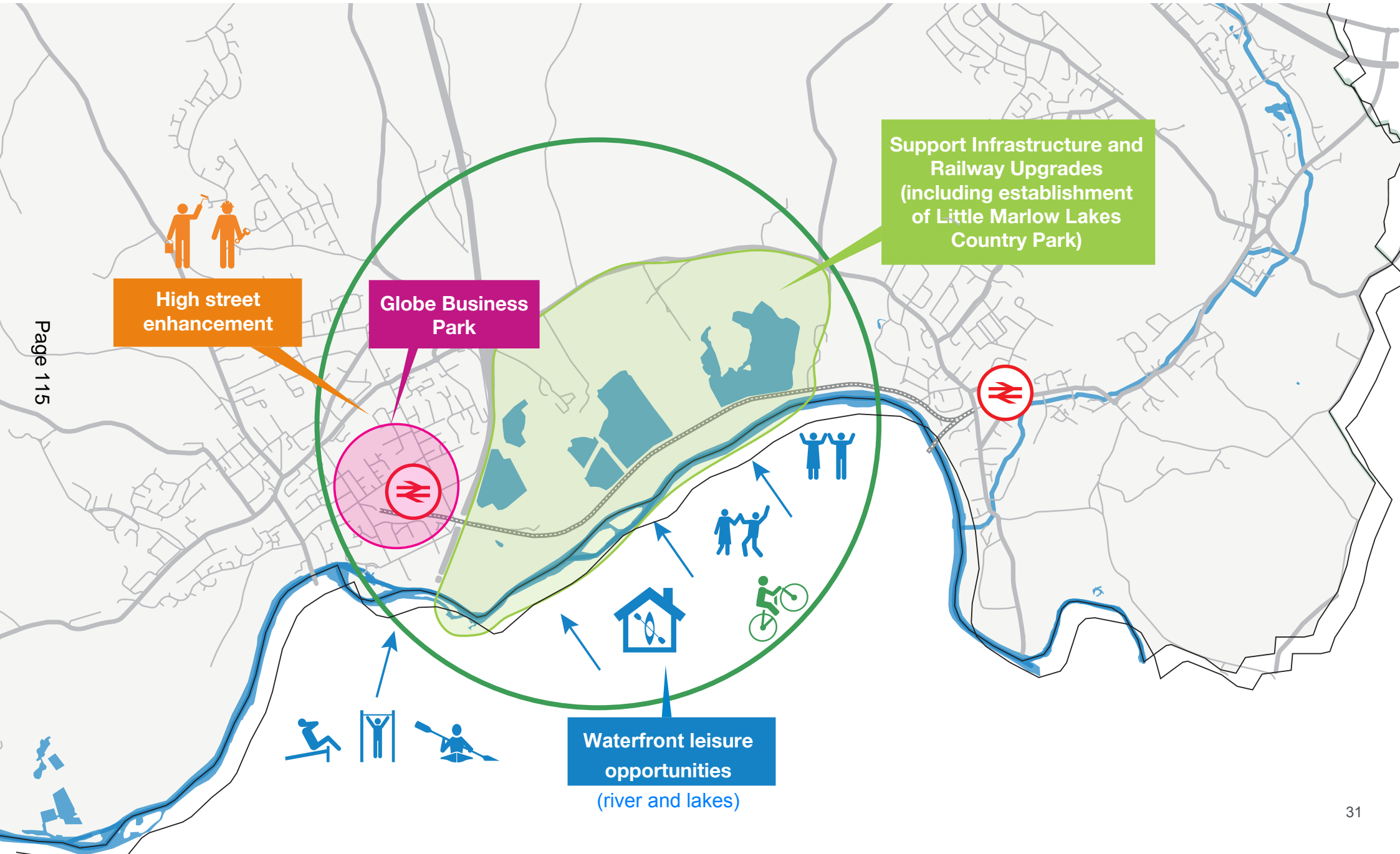
These big moves provide appropriate direction for the future expansion of the area and will ensure growth and development is undertaken in a way that benefits the overall area but remains in keeping with the immediate locality.

Princess Risborough Big Moves consist of the following:

- Development and potential expansion of employment allocations to provide new light industrial and other commercial space
- Social infrastructure integrating old and new communities
- Enhancing connectivity across an expanded town and reinforcing its role as Gateway to the Chilterns for walking and other leisure activities
- Accelerate housing delivery
- Improved sustainable transport
- Town centre redevelopment for retail and leisure
- Town centre public realm improvements
- Brand development to boost tourism economy potential



6 MARLOW 'PROTECT AND PRESERVE' AREA



6 MARLOW 'PROTECT AND PRESERVE' AREA

Marlow is a vibrant town with many assets, being located on the banks of the River Thames. It is a popular area for residents and visitors but has limited opportunity to accommodate development due to the Green Belt, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and an extensive floodplain.

Therefore, the Strategy is pursuing a 'conserve and enhance' approach for the Marlow area with an aim to maintain the character and reputation of Marlow as an attractive, vibrant and accessible place that meets the day-to-day needs of both those who live and work in the town and visitors. The River Thames will continue to attract many visitors and the Globe Business Park will continue to remain as a thriving business centre, with excellent connectivity to the M40, M4 and M25 as part of the wider Thames Valley.

6.1 MARLOW – BIG MOVES

These Big Moves support the 'conserve and enhance' approach to the town, allowing Marlow to continue to be a prime visitor destination, supporting the existing businesses, and allowing residents to have a high quality of life through sustainable transport options, exceptional green spaces and improved access and opportunities to the river.

Marlow Big Moves consist of the following:

- Support Infrastructure and Railway Upgrades
- Little Marlow Country Park
- Waterfront leisure opportunities on the river and neighbouring lakes
- High street enhancement
- Supportive and Sustainable Transport *
- Globe Business Park connectivity



7 NETWORK INTERVENTIONS

In addition to the area-based proposals set out above, Network Interventions are proposed that apply across a wider geography than the three towns making up this Strategy. These interventions will support the envisaged rapid rate of economic, population and housing growth while not only maintaining but improving the quality of life and delivering sustainable development with the aim of reducing carbon emissions.

7.1 NETWORK INTERVENTIONS – BIG MOVES

These Big Moves will build on the area's core strengths to enhance the strong micro and macro connections of the region, focus on larger scale sustainable projects and establish a council owned housing development company to build the urgently needed affordable and specialist housing.

Potential for Network Intervention Big Moves including the following:

- Decentralised Energy Company
- Housing Development Company
- Progressive Procurement Framework
- Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Council sustainably leading the way
- Internal and External Connectivity (Enhanced Fibre connectivity, enhanced internal and external transit connections)

8 DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

A range of opportunities have been identified through the development of this Strategy, that if successfully delivered would significantly boost Buckinghamshire's economic performance - with the potential to double the economic input from this area.

The opportunities set out on the pages that follow have been assessed as having potential for development in the short, medium or long term but are subject to factors such as site constraints, ownership, planning policy and financial viability.

Some opportunity areas will require different levels of public sector intervention in order to bring them forward for development.

We are also aware that there will be market changes over the life of this strategy: new opportunities will arise and others will not materialise at all.

Due to the multifaceted nature of the opportunities the Council would take a bespoke approach to the development of each. This would involve ensuring that a detailed appraisal of each development is undertaken in a manner that best addresses the relevant risks, opportunities, level of control, and available finance both to the project and crucially, the programme at large.

The key delivery approaches available for the Council in driving the programme of opportunities forward could include:

- Support of external sites through the planning process
- Manage property portfolio to provide regeneration benefits
- Site acquisition of stalled or strategically important sites
- Joint venture approaches, including:
 - Development partners
 - Investment partners and
 - Strategic partners
- Self delivery

Below is a list of potential delivery partners:

- Buckinghamshire LEP
- The Eden Centre
- National Rail
- Highways England
- Local Bus Companies
- National Express
- The Development Industry
- High Wycombe BIDCo
- Globe Business Park BIDCo
- Cressex Business Park BIDCo (currently being explored with businesses)
- Buckinghamshire New University
- NHS
- Buckinghamshire College Group
- Red Kite Housing
- Princes Risborough Town Council
- Marlow Town Council
- Institutional and private investors
- Central Government
- Blue Lights (police / fire / ambulance)

8 DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

NEED TO MAKE CLEARER LINKS TO THE ENTRIES FROM TRANSPORT STRATEGY

HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN CENTRE

Area and Big Move	Notable Projects and Activities	Delivery			Who/ Partners	Intervention Level	Related Sites	Ambition Contribution	Suggested Delivery Steps
		1-5 years	6-15 years	16-30 years					
High Wycombe Central Transport Super Hub *	Integrated transport hub at the existing train station *				Eden, National Rail, Eastern Quarter	High	N/A	Enhancing Connectivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include in Eastern Q plan and Transport Plan 2. Agree feasibility fund 3. Set up working group
	Enhanced Express Town Centre Bus link				Highways, Bus companies	High		Enhancing Connectivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include in Eastern Q plan and Transport Plan 2. Agree feasibility fund 3. Set up working group
	(Electric) Bicycle rental scheme *				Bicycle providers, Highways etc.	Medium		Enhancing Connectivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create business case Develop Brief 2. Develop Brief & engage supplier market
	Electric Car and Bus charge hub *				Arrive/ bus companies	High		Enhancing Connectivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create business case Develop Brief 2. Develop Brief & engage supplier market
Eastern Quarter	Brownfield densification Tall Building Zone				Planning	High		Better Town Centres Innovative Economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include in Eastern Q plan and Transport Plan 2. Agree feasibility fund 3. Set up working group
	Promote High Quality HQ office spaces				Council / Development Industry	Medium		Innovative Economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt masterplan 2. Set up delivery structures 3. Engage market

* Link to Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area

Area and Big Move	Notable Projects and Activities	Delivery			Who/ Partners	Intervention Level	Related Sites	Key Ambitions	Suggested Delivery Steps
		1-5 years	6-15 years	16-30 years					
Eastern Quarter	Promote build to rent housing				Development Industry / Dev Co	Medium	Sustainable Homes Better Town Centres	1. Review policy 2. Engage market 3. Business Case for Bucks Dev Co	
	Explore creation of Wycombe as a Smart Town				Council	High	Better Town Centres Innovative Economy	1. Options appraisal & business case 2. Set up delivery group	
	Hub for electric vehicles				Council		Better Town Centres Enhancing Connectivity Protect Natural Environment	1. Create business case & develop brief 2. Public realm design	
	Business and Marketing network events				Easter quarter developers?	Medium	Better Town Centres Innovative Economy	1. Adopt brand guidance 2. Develop marketing strategy and action plan 3. Engage as per strategy "	
	Office space hub for Buckinghamshire Council Hub				Buckinghamshire Council	Low	Innovative Economy	1. Commit to service hub in High Wycombe 2. Create specification for hub 3. Options appraisal for location	
Cultural Heart of the Chilterns	Extend pedestrianisation of the town centre *				Council	High	Better Town Centres	1. Public realm strategy for the Town (Walkable Wycombe) 2. Allocate capital funding	
	Creation of Garden Piazza at Frogmoor				Council / Developer	High	Better Town Centres	1. Design development 2. Allocate capital funding	
	Relocation of Wycombe Museum				Museum / Council	High	Better Town Centres	1. Establish specification 2. Options appraisal for relocation 3. Business Plan	

* Link to Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area

Area and Big Move	Notable Projects and Activities	Delivery			Who/ Partners	Intervention Level	Related Sites	Key Ambitions	Suggested Delivery Steps
		1-5 years	6-15 years	16-30 years					
Cultural Heart of the Chilterns	Promote Experience Economy				HW Bidco	High		Better Town Centres	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create Action Plan 2. Secure funding 3. Take flexible approach to planning applications
Town Centre Gateways	Eastern Gateway				Council	High	23	Better Town Centres	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish land owner partnership 2. Masterplan 3. Delivery key projects
	Southern Gateway				Council	High	8	Better Town Centres	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish land owner partnership 2. Masterplan 3. Delivery key projects
	Western Gateway				Council	High	1	Better Town Centres	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish land owner partnership 2. Masterplan 3. Delivery key projects
Desborough Neighbourhood	Densification of housing and promotion of mixed use developments				Council / Development Industry	High	24	Better Town Centres	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create Desborough Design Guide 2. Integrate within the planning policy framework
	New Park and Community Gardens				Council	High		Enhance Natural Environment Better Town Centres	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create Walkable Wycombe design guide & delivery plan 2. Funding Strategy
	Establish River Wye as an asset				Council / Development Industry	High		Better town Centres Enhance Natural Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure clear strategy for River within the Walkable Wycombe design guide & delivery plan 2. Funding Strategy 3. Ensure developments contribute to making their river a feature, where viable

Area and Big Move	Notable Projects and Activities	Delivery			Who/ Partners	Intervention Level	Related Sites	Key Ambitions	Suggested Delivery Steps
		1-5 years	6-15 years	16-30 years					
Desborough Neighbourhood	Start-up schemes				Council / BID	Medium		Innovative Economy Better Town Centres	1. Define programme 2. Funding Strategy
Walkable Wycombe	Low emissions zone *				Council	High		Protect and Enhance the natural environment	1. Feasibility and options appraisal
	Enhance the public realm				Council	High		Protect and Enhance the natural environment	1. Create Walkable Wycombe design guide & delivery plan 2. Funding Strategy
	Blue and Green links				Council	High		Protect and Enhance the natural environment	1. Feasibility and options appraisal
	Integrate university into town				Buckinghamshire New University	High		Protect and Enhance the natural environment	1. Create Uni, NHS and Council working group 2. Develop Strategy & Delivery Plan 3. Allocate resource
Gown Town and White Coat	Strengthen ties between University and Hospital				NHS/ PCT, Buckinghamshire New University	High	9,10,11,26	Innovative Economy	1. Create Uni, NHS and Council working group 2. Develop Strategy & Delivery Plan 3. Allocate resource
	Social Care Centre of Excellence				NHS/ PCT, Buckinghamshire New University, Buckinghamshire Council	High	9,10,11,26	Innovative Economy	1. Create Uni, NHS and Council working group 2. Develop Strategy & Delivery Plan 3. Allocate resource

* Link to Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area

Area and Big Move	Notable Projects and Activities	Delivery			Who/ Partners	Intervention Level	Related Sites	Key Ambitions	Suggested Delivery Steps
		1-5 years	6-15 years	16-30 years					
Gown Town and White Coat	Buckinghamshire College group relocation				NHS/ PCT, Buckinghamshire New University, Buckinghamshire College group	High	10	Innovative Economy	
Targeting Economic Exclusion	Skills matching initiatives				Red Kite Housing	Medium	N/A	Innovative Economy	
	Futureproofing Eden				Eden	High	N/A	Better Town Centres	
	Enhance independent commercial offer				HW Bidco	High	N/A	Better Town Centres	
	Linking local businesses with local students				Buckinghamshire New University	Medium	N/A	Innovative Economy	

INNOVATION GROWTH CORRIDOR

Area and Big Move	Notable Projects and Activities	Delivery			Who/ Partners	Intervention Level	Related Sites	Key Ambitions	Suggested Delivery Steps
		1-5 years	6-15 years	16-30 years					
Handy Cross Transport Super Hub	Handy Cross Transport Hub *				National Express, bus companies	Medium	N/A	Enhanced Connectivity	1. Establish stakeholder partnership 2. Develop action plan
	Electric Car Charging Hub *					Medium	N/A	Enhanced Connectivity Protecting Natural Environment	1. Create business case Develop Brief 2. Develop Brief & engage supplier market
Innovation and Enterprise	Explore creation of an Enterprise Zone				Buckinghamshire LEP, Buckinghamshire Council	High	N/A	Innovative Economy	1. Create the case for an EZ 2. Apply to government
	Enterprise Marketing Strategy				Council	High	N/A	Innovative Economy	1. Create Marketing Strategy
Floor Space Densification	Cressex Business Park Masterplan				Council	High	N/A	Innovative Economy	1. Develop Master Plan 2. Intergrate within wider planning policy
	Explore Design code/ masterplan				Buckinghamshire Council	High	N/A	Innovative Economy	1. Agree a design code allowing for development which aligns to the strategic need
	Industrial Intensification Demonstration Project				Council	High	N/A	Innovative Economy	1. Prioise location 2. Develop business case
Infrastructure Financing	Financing Mechanism				Council	High	N/A	Enhancing Connectivity Innovative Economy	1. Infratructure needs assessment & delivery plan 2. Financial forecast 3. Create financing strategy
Connecting the nodes	Innovation Corridor Express Link *				Council	Medium	N/A	Enhancing Connectivity	

* Link to Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area

Area and Big Move	Notable Projects and Activities	Delivery			Who/ Partners	Intervention Level	Related Sites	Key Ambitions	Suggested Delivery Steps
		1-5 years	6-15 years	16-30 years					
Connecting the nodes	Digital Infrastructure				Council	Medium	N/A	Enhancing Connectivity	
	Electric Bike Scheme *				Council	High	N/A	Enhancing Connectivity	1. Create business case Develop Brief 2. Develop Brief & engage supplier market
	Autonomous Vehicle Pilot *				Council	High	N/A	Enhancing Connectivity	1. Create business case Develop Brief 2. Develop Brief & engage supplier market
Wellbeing in the Corridor	Improvements of the Public Realm				Council	High	N/A	Better Town Centres	
	Events and Networking				Council	High	N/A	Innovative Economy	
	Leisure offer				Council	Medium	N/A	Innovative Economy	
	Wellbeing experience				Council	Medium	N/A	Innovative Economy	

* Link to Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area

GOMM VALLEY

Area and Big Move	Notable Projects and Activities	Delivery			Who/ Partners	Intervention Level	Related Sites	Key Ambitions	Suggested Delivery Steps
		1-5 years	6-15 years	16-30 years					
Eco-Neighbourhoods	Eco Neighbourhood recognition				Developer	Medium	N/A	Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment	
	Promotion of local standards				Developer	High	N/A	Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment	
	Express Bus route to town centre *				Arriva/ Bus Company	Medium	N/A	Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment	
Local e-sourcing and construction	Sustainable buildings and community guiding framework				Developer	High	N/A	Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment	
Zero Carbon homes	Solar Microgrid				Developer	High	N/A	Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment	
	Community heating				Developer	High	N/A	Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment	

* Link to Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area

PRINCES RISBOROUGH

Area and Big Move	Notable Projects and Activities	Delivery			Who/ Partners	Intervention Level	Related Sites	Key Ambitions	Suggested Delivery Steps
		1-5 years	6-15 years	16-30 years					
Accelerate Housing Delivery	Infrastructure Delivery Plan				Council Council	High	N/A	Sustainable homest	Adopt SPD
	Accelerate Housing delivery				Developers	High	N/A	Sustainable homes	HIF funding to forward fund infrastructure
Town Centre Community Hub Enhancement	Deliver Town Centre Community Hub scheme				PRTC	High	N/A	Better Town Centres	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create Business case 2. Secure gap funding 3. Create brief and appoint developer / contractor partner to secure planning and construct the project
Expansion of employment allocations	Expansion of employment land				Council	High	N/A	Innovative Economy	Local Plan Work with businesses
	Marketing of employment land				PRTC / Council	High	N/A	Innovative Economy	Work with potential developers
Gateway to the Chilterns	Chilterns Trail Network				PRTC	High	N/A	Better Town Centres	
	Improve Wayfinding				PRTC	High	N/A	Better Town Centres	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wayfinding plan for the area 2. Funding Strategy (inc s106 & CIL) 3. Implement projects
Improved Sustainable Transport	Marlow to Princes Risborough Link *				PRTC. MTC	High	N/A	Enhancing Connectivity	
	Electric Bike scheme *				PRTC. MTC	High	N/A	Enhancing Connectivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create business case Develop Brief 2. Develop Brief & engage supplier market

* Link to Transport Strategy for High Wycombe Town Centre and Urban Area

MARLOW

Area and Big Move	Notable Projects and Activities	Delivery			Who/ Partners	Intervention Level	Related Sites	Key Ambitions	Suggested Delivery Steps
		1-5 years	6-15 years	16-30 years					
High Street Enhancement	High Street Improvements				MTC	High	N/A	Better Town Centres	
Support Infrastructure and Railway	Railway upgrade				National Rail, MTC	Medium	N/A	Enhanced Connectivity	
	Support establishment of Little Marlow Country Park				MTC	High	N/A	Protect and Enhance the natural environment	
Supportive and Sustainable transport	Shared bike schemes				MTC	High	N/A	Enhanced Connectivity Protect natural environment	
	Circular Bus route				MTC	High	N/A	Enhanced Connectivity	
	Improved Cycle routes				MTC	High	N/A	Enhanced Connectivity	
	Wayfinding through Marlow				MTC	High	N/A	Enhanced Connectivity	
Waterfront opportunities	Marlow Regatta Annual Event				MTC	High	N/A	Better Town Centres	
	Riverfront restaurants				MTC	High	N/A	Better Town Centres	

NETWORK INTERVENTIONS

Area and Big Move	Notable Projects and Activities	Delivery			Who/ Partners	Intervention Level	Related Sites	Key Ambitions	Suggested Delivery Steps
		1-5 years	6-15 years	16-30 years					
Decentralised energy company	Establishment of a decentralised energy company				BC	High	N/A	Sustainable homes	
Housing Development Company	Establish a housing development company to unlock value from underutilised sites				BC	High	N/A	Sustainable homes	
Progressive Procurement Framework	Establish progressive procurement framework				Council	High	N/A	Innovative Economy	
Green & Blue Infrastructure	Green Blue infrastructure enhancements				Council	High	N/A	Protect and Enhance the natural environment	
Council sustainably leading the way	Council Vehicles - electric fleet				Council	High	N/A	Protect and Enhance the natural environment	
	Carbon Neutral council buildings				Council	High	N/A	Protect and Enhance the natural environment	
Internal and External Connectivity	Fibre Connectivity				Broadband providers, Virgin BT openreach	High	N/A	Enhanced connectivity	
	Imprved express links to Heathrow, Maidenhead, Arc				Bus providers	High	N/A	Enhanced connectivity	

8 DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

8.2 IMMEDIATE PROJECT WINS

There are a number of projects that are classed as immediate wins for the Buckinghamshire Council and the delivery of this strategy and can be implemented within a short timescale and require low budgeting.

Area	Big Move	Project Name	Key Ambition
High Wycombe Town Centre *	High Wycombe Central Transport Hub	Bicycle Rental scheme hub	Enhancing Connectivity
	Eastern Quarter	Tall Building Zone	Innovative Economy
		Business and marketing network events	Innovative Economy
		Office Space Hub for Buckinghamshire Council Departments	Innovative Economy
	Cultural Heart of Chilterns	Promote Experience Economy	Better town centres
	Desborough Neighbourhood	Start-up schemes	Innovative economy
Innovation Growth Corridor	Innovation and Enterprise	Enterprise Marketing Strategy	Innovative economy
	Floor Space Densification	Explore Simplified Planning Zone	Innovative economy
	Infrastructure Funding	Financing Mechanism	Innovative economy
	Connecting the Nodes	Electric bike scheme	Improving connectivity

Area	Big Move	Project Name	Key Ambition
Innovation Growth Corridor	Wellbeing in the Corridor	Improvements to the public realm	Better town centres
		Events and networking **	Innovative economy
		Leisure offer	Innovative economy
		Wellbeing experience	Innovative economy
Gomm Valley	Eco-Neighbourhoods	Eco Neighbourhood Recognition	Protect and enhance the natural environment
		Promotion of local standards	Protect and enhance the natural environment
	Local e-sourcing and Construction	Sustainable buildings and community guiding framework	Protect and enhance the natural environment
Princes Risborough	Accelerate Housing Delivery	Infrastructure Delivery Plan	Sustainable homes
		Accelerate Housing Delivery	Sustainable homes
	Development and potential expansion of Employment Allocations	Marketing of employment land	Innovative economy
	Gateway to Chilterns	Improve wayfinding	Better town centres
		Chilterns Trail Network	Better town centres

Area	Big Move	Project Name	Key Ambition
Princes Risborough	Improve Sustainable Transport	Marlow to Princes Risborough Link	Enhancing connectivity
	High Street Enhancement *	Electric bike scheme	Enhancing connectivity
		High Street Improvements	Better town centres
Marlow	High Street Enhancement *	High Street Improvements	Better town centres
	Supportive and Sustainable Transport	Wayfinding through Marlow	Better town centres
	Waterfront Opportunities	Marlow Regatta Annual Event	Better town centres

* High Street Enhancement is also a key thread for High Wycombe Town Centre and is being taken forward in part through the current Future High Street Fund work.


** Events and Networking has been specifically identified for the Innovation Zone - but work will also continue with partners to deliver business support across Buckinghamshire.


9 MEASURING SUCCESS


More work is required to define the specific metrics that will be used to measure progress - and the targets looking forward to 2050.


This will be developed further once the Corporate Plan for the new Buckinghamshire Council has been adopted to ensure a coordinated approach to measuring growth across Buckinghamshire is achieved. The metrics (and targets) presented below are therefore indicative of what could be used going forward.


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 BETTER TOWN CENTRES	Target	KPI	Baseline	5 year	15 year	30 year
	Increase in the percentage of 20-34 from 16.18% to 25% of the population	Proportion of total population that is between 20-34	16.8%	18%	20%	25%
Reduce crime to become the safest region within the Thames Valley Police Force	Victim based crime recorded (offences per 1,000 population)	47	42	37	30	
Outcome	KPI	Baseline	5 year	15 year	30 year	

 INNOVATIVE ECONOMY	Target	KPI	Baseline	5 year	15 year	30 year
	Significantly enhance the economy to be a key contributor to the Buckinghamshire Economy	Regional GVA	£5.9b	£6.9b	£8.0b	£11.8b
Increase employment by 70%	Number of jobs within the district	99,000	120,079	134,966	170,484	
Outcome	KPI	Baseline	5 year	15 year	30 year	

 PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	<i>Target</i>	<i>KPI</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>5 year</i>	<i>15 year</i>	<i>30 year</i>
	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>KPI</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>5 year</i>	<i>15 year</i>	<i>30 year</i>
	Reduce carbon emissions to be in the top performing 10% of areas in England	Per Capita Emissions	4.3	4.0	3.0	2.0
	Double the amount of public greenspace in High Wycombe Town Centre to 6%	Proportion of Town Centre land that is public greenspace	3%	4%	5%	6%

 SUSTAINABLE HOMES	<i>Target</i>	<i>KPI</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>5 year</i>	<i>15 year</i>	<i>30 year</i>
	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>KPI</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>5 year</i>	<i>15 year</i>	<i>30 year</i>
	Increase the percentage of private rented housing from 17% of the dwelling stock breakdown to 25%	Proportion of total housing stock that is private rented housing	17%	19%	20%	25%
	Increase the housing stock by an additional 10,000 new homes above the Local Plan housing trajectory	Number of homes	0	3,000	6,000	12,000
	Ensuring all new built homes are carbon neutral by 2050	Percentage of new homes being built that are carbon neutral	0%	25%	50%	100%

 ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY	Target	KPI	Baseline	5 year	15 year	30 year
	Double the percentage of commuters using both public transportation and active modes of transport from 21% to 42% of total inward and outward trips	Proportion of trips that are taken in and out of the district	21%	25%	35%	50%
Increase the percentage of premises that have full fibre service access from 1.6% to 35%	Proportion of premises that have full fibre access	1.6%	5%	10%	35%	
Outcome	KPI	Baseline	5 year	15 year	30 year	

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Report for:	Shadow Executive
Meeting Date:	12th November 2019

Title of Report:	Princes Risborough Relief Road Phase 1
Member	Councillor Katrina Wood
Responsible Officer	Penelope Tollitt
Officer Contact:	Ian Manktelow ian.manktelow@wycombe.gov.uk 01494 421579
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the latest projected costs for Princes Risborough Relief Road Phase 1 and support Option 3 which involves progression of the scheme through detailed design and commencing CPO process/land negotiations, funded from the existing Wycombe District Council capital programme funds. 2. To support the release of the funding which forms part of the WDC approved budget. 3. That an update report be brought to the new Buckinghamshire Council in 2020/21 to update on costs and potential section 106 and other income.

<p>Corporate Implications:</p>	<p>S151 WDC February Cabinet approved a budget funded mainly by Housing Infrastructure Fund £12m and s106 Developer Contributions.</p> <p>The estimated cost has increased. This exceeds the existing approved budgets and therefore officers are bringing this to the attention of the Shadow Executive for consideration for inclusion of the additional budget into the Buckinghamshire Council Capital Programme determination process. Detailed work on risk, cash flow and the implications of the timing of expenditure and contributions is underway.</p> <p>The members of Bucks Finance Officers Group have considered the funding position at a high level and consider that further work is required to determine the full cost for all phases and the deliverability of the developer contributions. The report has also been considered by the Housing Growth and Economy Board and Corporate Management Team who recommended a number of changes which have been incorporated into this report. They both recommended Option 3 below as the preferred way forward. Option 3 will require an increase over 2019/20 and 2020/21, this budget is already in the WDC Capital Programme. A report is being considered by Wycombe District Council's Cabinet on 11th November.</p>
<p>Options: (If any)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the new projected cost for submission into the 2020/21 budget setting process 2. Do not support the submission of the new projected cost into the budget setting process. 3. Support progression of the scheme through detailed design and commencing CPO process/land negotiations, funded from the existing Wycombe District Council capital programme funds, but bring a report back to the new authority in 2020/21. <p>Option 1 is desirable as it ensures that the relief Road Phase 1 scheme can progress in a timely manner which is essential to enable the take up of HIF funds, delivery of housing and infrastructure.</p> <p>Option 2 risks failure to deliver the scheme and defaulting on the take up of £12m of HIF funding.</p> <p>Option 3 is the preferred option – it enables the scheme to progress in a timely manner in the early stages, thereby not jeopardising potential take up of HIF funds, whilst allowing further work to be undertaken to provide greater certainty on costs and potential income.</p>

Reason:	Option 3 is the preferred option. It ensures that the Relief Road Phase 1 scheme can progress in a timely manner which is essential to enable take up of HIF funds, delivery of housing and infrastructure. It enables the scheme to progress in a timely manner in the early stages, thereby not jeopardising potential take up of HIF funds, whilst allowing further work to be undertaken to provide greater certainty on costs, programme, risks and potential income.
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks to update on the forecast cost of Phase 1 of the Princes Risborough Relief Road, highlighting where greater cost certainty has been obtained and outlining the main risks. It seeks support for progressing the scheme through detailed design and commencing CPO process/land negotiations. Further updates would then be provided to the new authority in 2020/21 to determine the way forward.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Princes Risborough relief road is a scheme that unlocks a 2,500 home expansion of Princes Risborough that is allocated in the recently adopted Wycombe District Local Plan. It is the largest single housing allocation in the south of Buckinghamshire, playing a critical role in meeting the housing target for Wycombe District and an important contribution to current planned growth in the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Arc.
- 2.2 £12m of Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) money has been secured to help deliver the first phase of the scheme. The HIF bid was based on a cost estimate, using evidence available at the time, with the gap to be funded from developer contributions.
- 2.3 Although there is greater certainty on costs, further work is required both in relation to firming up costs and the likely income stream from developer contributions to cover the funding gap, including further viability work.
- 2.4 Wycombe District Council has set aside a sum to undertake more detailed design work and to commence the CPO process/land negotiations. This will help provide greater certainty whilst ensuring that the project remains on track with Homes England in relation to the HIF funding agreement

Main Report

Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Princes Risborough Expansion Area is the largest housing allocation in the newly adopted Wycombe District Local Plan. It is a significant and strategic allocation not just for the Wycombe District Local Plan but for Buckinghamshire in the context of the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Arc, accounting for over 20% of the housing growth in the Local Plan and around 5% of planned growth in Buckinghamshire up to 2033. It is the largest single housing allocation in the south of Buckinghamshire. The Local Plan makes clear that the infrastructure should be funded by the developers.

- 3.2 Joint working between Wycombe District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council and Bucks Thames Valley LEP identified a relief road was needed to unlock the housing potential of the area. A bid was submitted for funding from the Housing Infrastructure Marginal Viability Fund for Phase 1 of the relief road, recognising the high initial costs associated with this phase affecting early cash flow for the development. The bid was successful and £12m funding was confirmed in July 2019, despite a normal HIF budget ceiling of £10m.
- 3.3 Homes England has clarified that the £12m HIF funding is a recoverable grant (recoverable by WDC), to be recycled on a project that will unlock housing within the locality of Buckinghamshire. Once recovered the funding has the status of a capital grant, i.e. it is non repayable. The maximum recoverable amount is £12m, a viability test will be carried out in December 2020 which could reduce this amount.
- 3.4 The bid was based on a cost estimate using evidence available at the time. Developer contributions were expected to make up the funding gap.
- 3.5 Since the bid, further work has been undertaken to gain greater cost certainty and to ensure the scheme remains on programme to secure the HIF funds and ensure timely housing and infrastructure delivery. This has included a detailed viability assessment and a feasibility study undertaken by Balfour Beatty, including a review of construction costs. This work will continue in the coming months.

Achieving Cost and Delivery Certainty

- 3.6 A range of work areas have been progressing to help bring greater certainty to the costs and delivery of the scheme. These include:
- **Adoption of the Local Plan** – providing a firm policy basis for the expansion area and the relief road, and a clear policy basis for developer contributions to fund the infrastructure;
 - Appointment of consultants to undertake **feasibility** and design work. As referred to above, this has resulted in an **update on construction and related costs**. This includes allowances for inflation and appropriate optimism bias. Work has recently been undertaken to ensure that the correct level of optimism bias is applied. This provides a much firmer basis for scheme costs;
 - **Confirmation that the HIF funding** is secured.
 - Publication of a draft Princes Risborough Expansion Supplementary Planning Document (PRESPD) confirming other wider development costs, a framework for coordinating delivery of development, and an approach to securing **equitable developer contributions**, underpinned by a detailed **viability assessment**. This has included sharing individual viability appraisals with developers, and our expectation of their level of contributions.
 - WDC Cabinet approval to commence **securing of the necessary land** – either by agreement or CPO process.
- 3.7 There are a number of work areas currently being undertaken that will deliver greater certainty:

- Land acquisition costs – following initial advice in the spring, Carter Jonas have been appointed by WDC to provide firmer costs for land acquisition for the route of the road.
- Recovery of cost through s106 agreements – further work is being carried out to accurately assess recovery of costs
- Scenario testing - further work is being carried out.
- Early access to HIF funding – the grant determination agreement has been signed.

Later Phases of the Relief Road

- 3.8 The scheme discussed above is the first phase of the Princes Risborough relief road. Phase 1 formed approximately just under 30% of the original costs of the entire relief road, based on the early feasibility cost that informed the Local Plan and the original HIF bid in 2017. The draft PRESPD sets out 3 phases of development linked to 3 phases of relief road construction which themselves are based on highway capacity.
- 3.9 Phase 2 involves extending the relief road through the main expansion area to connect with the B4009. A total of around 1,200 homes can be built with Phases 1 and 2 complete. Phase 3 completes the relief road and includes the costly re-provision of the Grove Lane under bridge. Phase 3 enables completion of the remaining 1,300 homes.
- 3.10 Given the change in costs in relation to Phase 1 following more detailed feasibility work, it would be prudent to consider undertaking a similar level of work in relation to Phases 2 and 3 to provide an up to date estimate of costs for the whole relief road. This is likely to take a number of months – officers will explore further the time and cost implications of undertaking this additional work.
- 3.11 The draft PRESPD considers all the main infrastructure costs to be secured through section 106 agreements.
- 3.12 As noted above further work is required to gain greater cost certainty in relation to the later phases of the road, particularly Phase 3 which involves replacement of a new railway underbridge.
- 3.13 Further information is included in Appendix A.

Conclusions

- 3.14 This report outlines the latest position of the Princes Risborough Relief Road Phase 1, the actions taken to date to determine greater certainty but also the ongoing actions to increase that certainty over the coming months.
- 3.15 It is considered that further work should be undertaken to increase the level of certainty in relation both to costs, and income, including greater certainty over the costs of later phases of the Relief Road. However it is also important to continue to progress the scheme to remain on programme with the HIF delivery profile and hence not jeopardise the ability to draw down HIF funding.
- 3.16 Work can progress within existing budgets on detailed design and land acquisition/CPO processes and an update on the further work and costs would then be considered prior to committing to proceed with construction and land purchase. It is recommended that consultants continue their understanding of the project and apply their expertise in the field of railway works and undertake the preliminary and detailed design and early

contractor involvement. The current programme would see design and consents work proceeding during 2020 with construction due to start in September 2021. This process includes a preliminary design with associated costs refresh to be completed in March 2020.

- 3.17 It is recommended therefore that further work is undertaken on the scheme and that a report be brought back to the new authority by July 2020 with updated costs, income and cash flow information. Subject to the information provided, an update to the Capital Programme would be recommended at that stage.
- 3.18 This approach will help ensure that the Relief Road Phase 1 scheme can progress in a timely manner which is essential to enable take up of the £12m HIF funds and delivery of around 2,500 homes and associated infrastructure which make a significant contribution towards housing delivery in Buckinghamshire and to the wider Growth Arc.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 This report sets out the financial issues and risks around the Princes Risborough Relief Road Phase 1 scheme. It highlights the revised budget required as a result of a recent feasibility study.
- 4.2 It sets out where recent work on the scheme has provided greater cost certainty and where there is ongoing work, together with the timescales for that work. Different cash flow scenarios have been tested and there are different funding options under consideration if the most likely cash flow scenario is not realised.
- 4.3 The maximum risk to the new Authority is set out, subject to final pricing and phasing of the contract. Any further costs will be reported to the next update. We anticipate these will not exceed the 10% variance that is set out in financial regulations.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 A Grant Funding Agreement has been signed by Wycombe District Council and Homes England. This has been scrutinised by Wycombe's s151 officer and District Lawyer in line with WDC Cabinet delegations.
- 5.2 Initial terms and conditions have been complied with by WDC and signed off by Wycombe's s151 officer and District Lawyer.

6. Other Key Risks

- 6.1 Section 2 of this report focuses on risks and how they are being mitigated.

7. Dependencies

- 7.1 No specific dependencies are identified in relation to the recommendations.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The proposals for the Princes Risborough Expansion Area, including the relief road, have been the subject of extensive public and stakeholder consultation over a number of years.

8.2 The detailed design of the Phase 1 road will be subject to consultation as part of the future planning application process.

9. Communications Plan

9.1 Not required. A Communications Plan is being developed in relation to the delivery of the Phase 1 road.

10. Equalities Impact Assessment

10.1 The Local Plan was subject to an equalities impact assessment.

11. Data Implications

11.1 Data impact protection assessment not required.

12. Next Steps

12.1 Risks will continue to be managed as set out in the report and the cash flow for the scheme will continue to be refined in the light of evidence, and will feed into update reports to the new authority.

Background Papers	Wycombe District Local Plan (2019) Draft Princes Risborough Expansion Supplementary Planning Document (June 2019) Report to Wycombe District Council Cabinet (19 th August 2019) regarding Housing Infrastructure Fund and securing land
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