



Council agenda

Date: Wednesday 27 April 2022

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: Buckinghamshire Council, Gateway Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF

Membership:

Z Mohammed (Chairman), D Dhillon (Vice-Chairman), S Adoh, A Alam, M Angell, D Anthony, K Ashman, M Ayub, R Bagge, M Baldwin, D Barnes, S Barrett, P Bass, K Bates, A Baughan, J Baum, P Birchley, D Blamires, A Bond, M Bracken, C Branston, S Broadbent, N Brown, S Bowles, P Brazier, T Broom, T Butcher, M Caffrey, R Carington, D Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Q Chaudhry, S Chhokar, J Chilver, A Christensen, L Clarke OBE, A Collingwood, M Collins, P Cooper, C Cornell, A Cranmer, E Culverhouse, I Darby, T Dixon, M Dormer, P Drayton, T Egleton, C Etholen, P Fealey, M Flys, R Gaffney, M Fayyaz, R Gaster, E Gemmell, P Gomm, D Goss, T Green, P Griffin, S Guy, G Hall, G Harris, M Harker OBE, C Harriss, D Hayday, O Hayday, C Heap, T Hogg, G Hollis, T Hunter-Watts, A Hussain, I Hussain, M Hussain JP, M Hussain, M Hussain, N Hussain, T Hussain, P Irwin, Cllr C Jackson, S James, D Johncock, C Jones, J Jordan, S Kayani, P Kelly, R Khan, D King, M Knight, S Lambert, J MacBean, Cllr A Macpherson, I Macpherson, F Mahon, N Marshall, P Martin, R Matthews, Dr W Matthews, H Mordue, S Morgan, N Naylor, J Ng, R Newcombe, C Oliver, A Osibogun, A Poland-Goodyer, C Poll, S Raja, W Raja, N Rana, M Rand, S Rouse, J Rush, G Sandy, G Smith, L Smith BEM, M Smith, N Southworth, B Stanier Bt, M Stannard, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, L Sullivan, D Summers, M Tett, N Thomas, D Thompson, D Town, J Towns, A Turner, M Turner, P Turner, G Wadhwa, A Waite, H Wallace, L Walsh, M Walsh, J Ward, J Wassell, J Waters, D Watson, A Wheelhouse, W Whyte, G Williams, S Wilson, M Winn, A Wood and K Wood

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If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Ian Hunt - democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk on 01494 421208, email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.



Council minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 23 February 2022 in Buckinghamshire Council, Gateway Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF, commencing at 4.00 pm and concluding at 7.31 pm.

Members present

Z Mohammed, D Dhillon, S Adoh, D Anthony, K Ashman, R Bagge, K Bates, A Baughan, J Baum, P Birchley, D Blamires, A Bond, M Bracken, C Branston, S Broadbent, N Brown, S Bowles, P Brazier, T Broom, T Butcher, M Caffrey, R Carington, D Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Q Chaudhry, J Chilver, A Christensen, P Cooper, C Cornell, A Cranmer, E Culverhouse, I Darby, T Dixon, M Dormer, P Drayton, T Egleton, P Fealey, M Fayyaz, E Gemmell, P Gomm, D Goss, S Guy, G Hall, G Harris, M Harker OBE, C Harriss, O Hayday, C Heap, T Hogg, G Hollis, I Hussain, M Hussain JP, M Hussain, T Hussain, P Irwin, Cllr C Jackson, C Jones, J Jordan, P Kelly, R Khan, D King, M Knight, S Lambert, Cllr A Macpherson, I Macpherson, F Mahon, N Marshall, P Martin, Dr W Matthews, H Mordue, S Morgan, N Naylor, J Ng, R Newcombe, A Osibogun, A Poland-Goodyer, C Poll, W Raja, M Rand, S Rouse, G Sandy, G Smith, L Smith BEM, M Smith, B Stanier Bt, M Stannard, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, D Summers, M Tett, D Thompson, D Town, J Towns, A Turner, M Turner, A Waite, H Wallace, M Walsh, J Wassell, J Waters, A Wheelhouse, W Whyte, S Wilson, M Winn and A Wood

Agenda Item

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors A Alam, M Ayub, M Baldwin, D Barnes, P Bass, S Chhokar, A Collingwood, M Collins, C Etholen, M Flys, R Gaffney, R Gaster, T Green, P Griffin, D Hayday, T Hunter-Watts, A Hussain, Maz Hussain, N Hussain, S James, D Johncock, S Kayani, J MacBean, R Matthews, C Oliver, Sarfaraz Raja, N Rana, J Rush, N Southworth, L Sullivan, N Thomas, P Turner, G Wadhwa, L Walsh, J Ward, D Watson, G Williams and K Wood. Apologies had also been received from the Lord Lieutenant (Lady Howe) and the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire (Mr George Anson).

2 Minutes

Following clarification that motions took effect from the date at which they were passed, it was

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest. The Chairman clarified that any payment of, or liability to pay, council tax did not create a disclosable pecuniary interest as defined in the national rules; hence being a council tax payer did not mean that Members would need a dispensation to take part in the business of setting the council tax or precept or local arrangements for council tax support (Agenda item 7).

4 Chairman's Update

The Chairman welcomed Members of the Council to the meeting. The Chairman thanked and recognised the hard work of all officers, contractors and Members who were involved in helping to minimise the disruption caused by the recent storms and who had gone above and beyond to help residents and keep vital services running.

The Chairman reported that the Council had been very active in tree planting over the past year and had planted many trees, both as part of the Queen's Green Canopy and the Buckinghamshire Council Tree Planting initiative. The Chairman looked forward to many more trees being planted over the coming months and years and advised that he would be planting a tree at one of the Council's civic venues on 11 March to recognise the 70th day of HM The Queen's 70th Anniversary of service. The Chairman wished HM The Queen a speedy recovery from her recent illness.

The Chairman paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of the Children's Services team and Cabinet Member for the positive Ofsted report, moving from inadequate to requiring improvement to be good.

Members of the Council were thanked for their gift donations at the last full Council meeting which supported vulnerable and young people, these were very much appreciated by Inspire Bucks. Members of the Council were also thanked for their Easter Egg donations to support the Florence Nightingale Charity.

5 Petitions

There were none.

6 Chief Financial Officer's Statutory Report

The Chairman welcomed Mr R Ambrose, the Council's Section 151 Officer to the meeting. Mr Ambrose presented his report, highlighting that the Medium Term Financial Plan had been subject to frequent and rigorous challenge and review during its development, including the public meetings of the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry group held in January 2022.

Members were informed that the budget proposals recommended by the Cabinet

were robust and sustainable. Although there continued to be uncertainty beyond 2022/23, a three-year budgeting process had been undertaken, in line with the timeframes of the government's Spending Review announced in October 2021. This medium-term financial planning process ensured that the annual budget for 2022/23 had been developed within the context of longer-term sustainability. This enabled risks and issues to be considered over a longer time period and to develop prudent estimates in order to understand the extent of the budgeting challenge ahead. In addition, the multi-year process allowed for the development of longer-term savings proposals, to ensure that the full benefits of becoming a Unitary Council could be realised.

The opening position on General Fund reserves (unallocated) for financial year 2022/23 was forecast to be £47.1m. This balance represents 6.6% of the gross operating budget (excluding the Dedicated Schools Grant). Earmarked reserves were sufficient to cover all expected commitments against them, including approximately £10.4m for the cost of transformation as the new Council further developed its future operating model.

Following a concern raised around the ability of the Council to cope with significant risks to the budget, particularly around school transport for children with Special Educational Needs, Mr Ambrose explained that whilst there were a range of uncertainties including potential covid impact, complexity of needs changing, increased demand on services and lack of clarity on Government funding from 2023/24, for what was known at the present time the budget was robust.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

0 2022/23 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme

The Chairman invited Councillor M Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire Council, to introduce the report to Members on the proposed 2022/23 revenue budget and capital programme for Buckinghamshire Council. It was noted that the Council Tax Resolution (Appendix 4) was found in the supplementary agenda pack.

The following key points were highlighted:

- Councillor Tett thanked all those who had helped shape the budget, this included majority members of the Portfolio Challenge groups, Cabinet Members, the cross-party Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Group, the Chief Executive and her Senior Leadership Team as well as the Section 151 Officer.
- The budget had been prepared in a time of uncertainty, with the effects of Covid still present and the unexpected Omicron variant that appeared last December having further impacted Council services and finances. Areas of uncertainty which would have far reaching budgetary implications included social and economic recovery; the Levelling Up White Paper; uncertainties around social care, both in volume and complexity and the potential instability in the provider market; levels of commuting and the effect on parking income, and future office working styles. There were further uncertainties around inflation, and energy costs.

- The Council had to respond to these changes and support residents as they occurred. This would involve a significant focus on retraining and new skills to enable people to transition into jobs in new growth sectors of the economy.
- Part of the uncertainty from Covid meant that just a one-year Revenue budget had been produced for 2021/22. A four-year Capital Budget had, however been produced. This year a return to a three-year Revenue budget was proposed to give greater certainty to services, residents and community and voluntary groups. The overall revenue budget, with each Portfolios element expanded, could be found in **Appendix 1**, whilst the overall Capital Programme could be seen in **Appendix 2**.
- Details of all proposed budget changes could be found in **Appendix 3**.
- The Council had only been given a one-year financial settlement by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This brought significant risk as it was suspected that one of the key reasons for a single year settlement was the prospect of a reform of the financing of local government.
- Whilst Covid had disrupted some services, the Council had delivered a number of key achievements. Councillor Tett highlighted the new Chilterns Lifestyle Centre, £100m Road and pavement investment programme, launch of the Climate Change Strategy with 550,000 trees being planted, statement of intent to move to electric waste vehicles, new EV charging points, excellent flytipping enforcement, welcoming some of the Afghan refugees and the Helping Hand programme which supported financially challenged residents.
- Many Councils had seen income streams decrease significantly and incur vast expenditure. Councillor Tett acknowledged a number of other local authorities had been issued a section 114 notice, highlighting the importance of prudent and wise spending of tax payers money.
- Adults and Children's Social Care remained the two biggest areas of expenditure, representing approximately 60% of all non-school service expenditure. Whilst central Government claimed costs for Adults Social Care, including the social care precepts, would be 'cost neutral', there were areas that remained to be discussed. This included the impact of the removal of the ability of the care sector to cross subsidise between bulk purchases by Councils and self-funders as well as the ability of Councils to meet the 'Fair Cost of Care' which was expected to be higher than the rates Councils currently pay.
- To mitigate risks, cautious contingencies had been proposed. Within the budget there were proposals for near £44m of efficiencies and savings, along with some increased income from charges which would be very challenging to deliver.
- Due to the pressures of increased expenditure a small amount of unallocated General Fund Reserves would be used to balance the budget in 2023/24, although it was anticipated this would be a one off occurrence. General Fund reserves were forecast to be £47m (2022/23) then £45.6m for 2023/24 and 2024/25 respectively.
- Over £524m would be spent over the next four years through an ambitious Capital Programme. The Council was committed to clearing every drain annually, commencing the regeneration of town centres, providing affordable housing, purchasing more energy efficient waste vehicles and working on the provision of a new Household Recycling Site in the north of the county.

- Within the budget there was a commitment to strategic projects such as the Ring Roads around Aylesbury, the Abbey barn scheme and the Aylesbury Eastern Link Road, amongst others.
- The Basic Council tax increase proposed was 1.99% despite general inflation in excess of 5%, in addition to which the Council would be accepting the Government's proposal to raise a Social Care precept of 2%. After 2022/23 the budget assumed that the Social Care precept would be capped at no more than 1%. Both of these taxes equated to an extra £1.23p per week for an average Band D Council tax payer. The recently announced Council Tax Rebate would help with the rising energy costs for those residents paying council tax in properties up to and including Band D. A discretionary fund was expected to target people in need who were above or below the eligibility.

Councillor Tett commended the budget to Council and moved the recommendations as per the report. This was seconded by Councillor S Bowles.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, the Chairman then invited Councillor Lambert, as Leader of the Alliance Group (main opposition group) to comment on the budget proposals. The following main points were noted:

- Mr Lambert thanked the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Group for their work in scrutinising the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme in addition to thanking officers across services for their efforts throughout the various challenges of the past year.
- That savings identified in the unitary business case were not yet being realised, and whilst the budget was balanced for 2022/23, reserves would be required for 2023/24.
- A concern was raised that decisions were being made by a small number of Members and that the proposed budget did not reflect all Members' priorities.
- That Community Boards were key for local engagement and there was disappointment that the Boards funding had been reduced during the current financial year and within the proposed revenue budget for 2022/23 onwards. This affected the ability to fund important community projects and the Council's relationship with partners.
- That the Better Lives Strategy did not match with the Government intention to allow private paying residents access to the same rates paid by the local authority, and that as a result the Council would require a significant amount of additional expertise on the care market. The budget did not include an allowance to employ a number of additional procurement specialists.
- That more should be done to transfer assets to town and parish councils under covenants to improve areas such as playing pitches and outdoor gyms which improve health and wellbeing, thus reducing burden on public health spend. Further, expedited devolution would enable the removal of 'special expenses' lines within the budget.
- VCS organisations were key to delivering key aspects of support to residents and should have a good level of consistent grants throughout the revenue budget period.

- That additional investment was required within the Childrens' and Education portfolio on targeted support to reduce the attainment gap within Buckinghamshire.
- That climate change should have been a line item included within every portfolio's budget.
- That additional work was required to ensure adequate infrastructure was in place across Buckinghamshire for high level EV charging.
- Further detail should have been contained in the budget around the Household Recycling Centre plans in Buckingham and Princes Risborough.
- The Buckinghamshire Local Plan required stability in the workforce producing it and more should have been included within the budget around planning recruitment and 'grow your own' schemes.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Lambert for his comments and invited Councillor Wilson to speak on behalf of the IMPACT Alliance grouping. The following main points were noted:

- Councillor Wilson thanked the Officers for their hard work on the budget.
- Concern was expressed that the budget had been presented prior to a new Corporate Plan being produced. Further concern was that 40% of the Councils performance KPIs for the latest quarter were amber or red rated, of which 75% were red.
- That Cabinet Members had promised to deliver strategies that had indeterminate delivery dates and opportunities to achieve savings were being delayed. Councillor Wilson used the example of repurposing or fully leveraging council owned properties needing to be expedited.
- Better Buckinghamshire savings should be delivered and then delivered again. Where a service achieved a saving in year 1, it should not be presumed that these services continually receive the same budget year on year.
- That special expenses should not be labelled 'special' indefinitely and removing these would free up headroom for vital services.
- That Adult and Childrens Social Care was moving in the right direction and the Social Work Academy was an excellent initiative which could be developed further.
- With so many community organisations reliant on Council funding, Community Board and Voluntary Sector Grant, cuts could have significant consequences for children, communities and the environment.
- Concerns were raised that EV charging funding levels bore no resemblance to the scale of the requirement; that funding was inadequate for the local plan if there were to be significant changes in the upcoming White Paper; and around the modelling presumptions for the uptake of green waste collection in High Wycombe.
- That a more urgent approach to Climate Change was required. Members and residents required education, cross portfolio working was key, brown before green was needed for developments, vehicle emissions needed to be minimised through better transport policies and tighter roadwork windows and a reduction in food use should be encouraged. The Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy needed to be costed and funded correctly.

At the conclusion, the Chairman thanked Councillor Wilson for his comments.

The Chairman then opened up debate on the budget and invited questions and comments from Members. The following issues were highlighted and responded to by the Leader or Cabinet Members:

- Playing pitches and devolution of assets to town and parish councils.
- The importance of meaningful well paid jobs and access to training for residents across Buckinghamshire.
- Special expenses and the High Wycombe Governance review of the unparished area.
- EV charging points and the allocated £200k per annum contained within the budget.
- The large percentage increases of Aylesbury and Amersham Town Councils precept levels respectively.
- The new Domestic Abuse Act, its importance to vulnerable families and its budget implications.
- Investments in roads and pavements.
- Community Boards and their important roles in supporting the Council's localism agenda, including what they could achieve on the budgets proposed.
- The heavy traffic congestion in Aylesbury and importance of the link roads.
- £12m electricity grid re-enforcement works commencing this coming year in and around Aylesbury
- Pockets of deprivation within Buckinghamshire.
- Children's Services continuing to improve on their 'needs requirement to be good' Ofsted rating.
- The significant capital investment in growing school place capacity.
- The proposed household recycling centre in the North of the county to support the housing growth in the area.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their questions and comments and reminded members that there was a legal requirement for a recorded vote to be taken on the budget. The Chairman also informed Members that he intended to take a recorded vote, en bloc, for all of the budget recommendations.

The vote was recorded as follows:

FOR (78): Councillors Adoh, Anthony, Ashman, Bagge, Baum, Birchley, Blamires, Bond, Bowles, Bracken, Branston, Brazier, Broadbent, Broom, Brown, Butcher, Caffrey, Carington, Carroll, B Chapple, S Chapple, Chaudry, Chilver, Cornell, Cranmer, Culverhouse, Dhillon, Dormer, Egleton, Gomm, Goss, Hall, Harker, G Harris, C Harriss, Heap, Hogg, Mahboob Hussain, Irwin, Jackson, Jones, Jordan, Kelly, King, A Macpherson, I Macpherson, Mahon, Marshall, Martin, W Matthews, Mohammed, Mordue, Naylor, Newcombe, Ng, Osibogun, Poll, Rand, Rouse, Sandy, L Smith, Stanier, Stannard, Strachan, Summers, Tett, Thompson, Town, Towns, A Turner, M Turner, Waite, Wallace, M Walsh, Waters, Whyte, Winn and A Wood.

AGAINST (21): Councillors Baughan, Christensen, Cooper, Dixon, Drayton, Fayyaz, Gemmell, Guy, I Hussain, Majid Hussain, T Hussain, Khan, Knight, Lambert, Morgan, Poland-Goodyer, W Raja, G Smith, M Smith, Wassell and Wilson

ABSTENTIONS (4): Councillors Cllrs Bates, O Hayday, Stuchbury and Wheelhouse

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme (Appendices 1-3) be approved.**
- (2) That the Council Tax Resolution (Appendix 4) be approved.**
- (3) That the ‘Special Expenses’ budgets, precepts and associated services for Aylesbury Town, High Wycombe Town and West Wycombe Church Yard (Appendices 5 & 6) be approved.**
- (4) That Cabinet be delegated authority to make decisions to add up to £100m to the capital programme, to be funded by Prudential Borrowing.**
- (5) That the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy (Appendix 7) be approved.**
- (6) That authority be delegated to the Leader, in consultation with the s.151 Officer, to make any technical changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme as required from legislation concerning the £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme, together with any changes required to implement any new discretionary schemes linked to the discretionary funding allocated**

Note: Councillors I Darby, P Fealey and G Hollis left the meeting prior to the recorded vote taking place.

8 Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23

Councillor T Butcher, Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property and Assets introduced Buckinghamshire Council’s Treasury Management Strategy 2022-23, which was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that it was a requirement for each local authority to approve a Treasury Management Strategy by 1 April each year. This strategy had been developed in line with the CIPFA code of practice.

Following a competitive tendering process, Link Treasury Services Limited (Link) were appointed as the Council’s treasury advisor with effect from 1 August 2021. This appointment had resulted in the Treasury Management Strategy being presented in an alternative way to that which Members may have been used to in the past. Changes to the Treasury Management Survey included introducing the definition of specified and non-specified investments. Specified investments were those with a high level of credit quality and subject to a maturity limit of one year or had less than a year left to run to maturity if originally they were classified as being nonspecified investments solely due to the maturity period exceeding one year. Nonspecified investments were those with less high credit quality, may be for periods in excess of one year, and/or are more complex instruments which require greater consideration by Members and officers before being authorised for use.

The Council had also determined that it would only use approved counterparties from the UK and from countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of AA- from Fitch (or equivalent), previously the minimum sovereign credit rating was AA. The cash limit for AA+, AA and AA- sovereign rated foreign countries is £10m per country. The cash limit for AAA sovereign rated countries is £20m per country. In addition, no more than a total of £40m will be placed with any non-UK countries at any time.

The Strategy had been discussed at length by the Audit and Governance Committee and recommended on to Council for approval.

Members raised questions around exchange rate fluctuations; investments in other local authorities; and investments in countries with known political or human rights issues. Councillor Butcher advised that there was no exchange rate exposure for any of the Council's investments, that any investment in local authorities came with a Government guarantee and there had been no cases of local authorities having not repaid loans. If a section 114 notice had been issued against a local authority any investment opportunity would be referred to the Councils section 151 Officer. Assurance was given that there was no investment exposure to Russia, Hong Kong or Qatar as the Council's policy is to invest only in AAA rated sovereign rated countries.

Councillor Butcher moved the recommendation to approve the Treasury Management Strategy. This was seconded by Councillor Newcombe.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Treasury Management Strategy 2022-23 be approved.**
- (2) That the operational boundary for external borrowing, the authorised limit for external borrowing, the maturity structure of borrowing and the upper limit for principal sums invested for longer than 365 days be approved.**

9 Capital and Investment Strategy ¹

Councillor J Chilver, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property and Assets introduced the draft Capital and Investment Strategy 2022/23, attached as Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that the council was required to approve its capital and investment strategy on an annual basis and that it had been developed in line with the CIPFA and MHCLG guidance.

The Capital and Investment Strategy provided the framework within which to deliver the Council's Corporate Plan objectives through the effective investment of its limited capital resources. As well as the Councils immediate statutory responsibilities, the strategy also reflected the important role that it had to play in the regeneration and growth, affordable housing and climate change agendas, especially in the context of a post-Covid recovery and the significant housing growth

in the area.

Members raised questions around demographic change and growth assumptions; repurposing of the Council's property estate; consistency in using wording from the Council's Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy across all Council strategies; Community Infrastructure Levy funds from developments in the former Wycombe district area; and the Council's stance on providing social housing.

Councillor Chilver advised that demographic change and housing growth figures were based on the latest data supplied to the Council and was used to calculate school places, amongst other areas. This data needed to be included as much of the funding received for housing growth was covered by the Government Housing Infrastructure fund. Whilst the overall total may not be as predicted, there were significant demographic changes in areas such as the older population requiring additional support for care and in areas such as the disabled facilities grant.

A report on the Council's Estates Strategy would be presented to Cabinet in the Summer, this would set out the Council's plans on property rationalisation. The pace of delivery was constrained as there was a need to collect data and evidence on office usage post-covid and pilot projects were due to be rolled out in certain office spaces as part of the Work Smart Strategy. The Estates Strategy would also integrate with the Town Centre Regeneration Strategies. Councillor Chilver advised that the Council had successfully let vacant office space at Easton Street, High Wycombe, 66 High Street, Aylesbury, KGVH House, Amersham and Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe offices.

Councillor Chilver reported that reference was made within the Strategy to the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy, with the strategy detailing how mitigations would be delivered including, building rationalisation, energy efficiencies in buildings, using electric vehicles, solar car ports and the tree planting initiative.

CIL contributions in the former Wycombe district area were included in the capital budget as a source of income, although unlike S106 agreements these were not guaranteed and the Council had to bid for it. Town and Parish Councils also received an element of CIL and this was included within the strategy.

In relation to affordable housing, Councillor Chilver advised that the Council was working on achieving the right balance of providing affordable properties and key worker housing whilst delivering capital receipts on property holdings. A significant amount was included in the capital budget for delivery of housing on Council land and a number of projects were in the pipeline. A position paper on affordable housing would be presented to Cabinet in the coming months.

Councillor Chilver moved the recommendation to approve the Capital and Investment Strategy. This was seconded by Councillor Newcombe.

RESOLVED –

That the Capital and Investment Strategy 2022-23, detailed at Appendix 1, be approved.

10 Report on Public Sector Audit Appointment (PSAA)

Council received a report, similar to one that had been considered by the Audit and Governance Committee on 25 January 2022, that set out proposals for appointing the external auditor to the Council for the accounts for the five-year period from 2023/24. The current auditor, Grant Thornton, had been appointed as external auditors of the new unitary authority by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) until the end of 2022/23. The auditor appointed at the end of the procurement process would undertake the statutory audit of accounts and Value for Money assessment of the Council in each financial year, in accordance with all relevant codes of practice and guidance. The appointed auditor would also be responsible for investigating questions raised by electors and had powers and responsibilities in relation to Public Interest Reports and statutory recommendations.

The Council had a choice of the way that it appointed its external auditors, via the following options:

- (i) Option 1: National Auditor Appointment Scheme - opt into the arrangements offered by PSAA – benefits, that were explained at Section 3 of the report.
- (ii) Option 2: Own procurement arrangement following the procedures in the Act – Challenges, that were detailed in Section 4 of the report.
- (iii) Option 3: To act jointly with other authorities to procure an auditor following the procedures in the Act – the challenges were the same as for Option 2, detailed in Section 4 of the report.

Following consideration of the report by the Audit and Governance Committee, their recommendation to full Council was that Option 1 should be approved.

Councillor R Newcombe, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, moved the recommendation to approve the appointment of the external auditors (Option 1). This was seconded by Councillor D Goss.

RESOLVED –

That the Council opt into the arrangements offered by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of External Auditors from April 2023 (Option 1), as endorsed by the Audit and Governance Committee on 25 January 2022.

11 New Statement of Licensing Policy under the Gambling Act 2005

Council received a report, similar to one considered by the Licensing Committee on 2 February 2022. In accordance with the Gambling Act 2005 the Buckinghamshire Council, in its role as Licensing Authority, was responsible for regulating certain premises-based gambling activities within the Council's area. The Council carried out this function by granting premises licence and permits and receiving notices and registrations for gambling-based activities. The Council was also responsible for the

associated enforcement activity to ensure compliance under the Act. The Council's full functions under the Act were shown in Section 8 of the draft Policy, Appendix 1 to the Council report.

The predominant gambling activities regulated by Buckinghamshire Council related to betting shops, adult gaming centres, bingo premises, gaming and gaming machines and registering small society lotteries. The Council shared responsibility for regulating gambling activities with the Gambling Commission. The Gambling Commission are the national regulator for gambling and were responsible for issuing operator licences and personal licences (where required), regulating online gambling and the National Lottery, and issuing guidance to local licensing authorities.

Under section 349 of the Act, the Council was required to prepare and publish a Statement of Licensing Policy, ('Policy'), which set out its approach to the consideration and determination of applications made under the Act and any subsequent necessary compliance and enforcement action. As with the Licensing Act 2003, the way the Council performed its duties under the Act was guided by prescribed objectives. For the purposes of regulating gambling activities these objectives were:

- (i) preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime.
- (ii) ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.
- (iii) protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

The Council's licensing service was currently operating under separate legacy policies and fees, reflecting the four former District Council areas. Under the terms of the transitional legislation, Buckinghamshire Council had two years to prepare and publish a new single policy under the Act and align service provision. The deadline for publication and implementation of the new Policy was no later than 1 April 2022. The new Policy must be published at least four weeks before it is effective, the deadline for publication of the Policy was therefore 4 March 2022.

Following a five-week period of public consultation, a new Policy had been drafted and approved by the Licensing Committee with a recommendation that it now be adopted by the Council.

Councillor N Naylor, Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services, moved the recommendation that the Statement of Licensing Policy for Buckinghamshire Council under the Gambling Act 2005, be approved and adopted. This was seconded by Councillor H Wallace, Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

RESOLVED –

That the Statement of Licensing Policy for Buckinghamshire Council under the Gambling Act 2005, be APPROVED and ADOPTED, to take effect from 1 April 2022.

12 Report for information - Key Decisions Report

Full Council received for information a list of decisions taken by Cabinet Members since the last Council meeting.

13 Date of Next Meeting

4pm, Wednesday 27 April 2022.

¹ Please note that the following correction was made to the Capital and Investment Strategy subsequent to the Council meeting. Paragraph 2.2.1 in the strategy (page 272 of the agenda) is replaced with the following paragraph:

“The population of Buckinghamshire has grown on average by 0.7% each year for the last two decades. In real terms, there were 68,740 more people in the county in 2020 than there were at the turn of the millennium. Population in the county is expected to continue to grow for the next two decades and the Council needs to take account of these changes in planning its future service provision. The Council in partnership with other agencies, the Local Enterprise Partnership, in particular, has responsibility for facilitating the infrastructure to promote economic growth. The latest available ONS data predicts that the population will rise from 545,925 in 2020 to 567,303 by 2033 (Source: ONS 2018 MYE Sub National Population Projections). Analysis of current planning permissions and local plan sites indicate housing growth of up to 32,000 additional dwellings in Buckinghamshire between 2020 to 2033 which, if delivered to expected timeframes, would lead to population increases well beyond those currently predicted by the ONS. This level of development not only has implications for new infrastructure but also for the wear and tear on existing infrastructure.”

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Report to Full Council

Date:	27 April 2022
Title:	Corporate Plan Refresh 2022
Relevant councillor(s):	Councillor Martin Tett – Leader of the Council
Author and/or contact officer:	Gail Hudson, Senior Policy Officer
Ward(s) affected:	None specific
Recommendations:	For Members to adopt the refreshed Corporate Plan for the period 2020 to 2025.
Reason for decision:	To reflect changes in priorities and ensure we are working to an updated plan.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Buckinghamshire Council's Corporate Plan sets out what the Council wants to achieve and how we will do it, addressing the challenges we face and harnessing opportunities as they present themselves.
- 1.2 A light-touch review of the Corporate Plan has been undertaken to reflect key developments since the drafting of the current plan which was adopted by Council on February 2020, in particular the impact of the pandemic.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 A light-touch review of the Corporate Plan has been undertaken to reflect key events and changes in priorities since the drafting of the plan in 2019/20.
- 2.2 The revised plan reflects the impact of the pandemic on the Council's priorities, together with other key developments such as new national legislation.
- 2.3 The refreshed corporate plan is attached in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 Following approval, the refreshed corporate plan would be published on our website.

2.5 The plan is intended to cover the period until 2025, in accordance with the current Council term, and will continue to be subject to an annual refresh.

3. Other options considered

3.1 Do nothing - if the corporate plan was not refreshed it may be deemed out of date.

4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 Identified priorities have been checked to ensure they are currently funded and included within the MTFP. There are no additional financial implications known at this stage.

5. Corporate implications

5.1 The Corporate Plan is a council's main strategic business planning document, establishing a golden thread between the Council's priorities, as set out by elected Members, and the activities which will be undertaken to deliver the organisation's agreed outcomes. As a public document, the Corporate Plan also helps communicate to staff, partners and residents, a clear concise narrative of strategic intent.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

6.1 The refreshed corporate plan has been shared with the Chairmen of Select Committees and their feedback has been incorporated within the plan.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

7.1 Underpinning the plan are a number of strategies and policies which will be subject to appropriate consultation and engagement with members, partners and our residents. Relevant communications will also be developed to support these as they come forward.

8. Next steps and review

8.1 Approval of the plan and publication following Council.

9. Background papers

9.1 Current Corporate Plan <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/corporate-plans-and-priorities/corporate-plan/>

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please contact the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone or email gail.hudson@buckinghamshire.gov.uk



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

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Corporate Plan

2020 - 2025

Version refreshed February 2022



Appendix

Introduction

Our corporate plan outlines our ambitions and priorities for Buckinghamshire Council, a brand-new organisation bringing together the best of the previous five councils to create positive changes for local people, communities, visitors, and businesses.

Our original plan was developed over many months in consultation with the public, our partners and our staff and was published in April 2020.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic will leave a social and economic legacy long after it has ended and as such, we have reviewed the plan to reflect key events and changes in priorities since the plan was drafted in 2019/20.

Our vision for Buckinghamshire has not changed and remains one where growth will be carefully planned and managed, so that all our residents benefit. This includes well-designed, more affordable homes in thriving communities; providing excellent education opportunities for our young people, developing a skilled workforce with access to great job opportunities in highly productive sectors; and a world-class physical and digital infrastructure to support our businesses to flourish.

We also want to play our part in tackling climate change by planting over 500,000 trees, increasing recycling and improving our environment.

We are committed to making Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work, and do business. We want our county to be a place everyone can be proud of, with excellent services, thriving businesses and outstanding public spaces for everyone. We want our residents, regardless of background, to have access to great opportunities, living healthy, successful lives and ageing well with independence. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way we live, work and think and presents a number of challenges in ensuring we continue to protect and support people who are vulnerable and in need; whilst meeting the extra service demands produced from the Covid pandemic. While we do this, we will continue to lay the foundations for what is best for Buckinghamshire in the longer term.

We will need to continue to adapt to achieve this, building on some of the positive changes we have already made as well as increasing resilience, agility and the skills required to be able to manage ongoing challenges. We remain focused on the importance of a local approach and will continue to engage with local communities and offering opportunities for our residents, business, and partners to influence new approaches to their local places and services.



Buckinghamshire’s Strategic Vision for 2050 will help us deliver a lot of these ambitions and delivering on this will not only benefit the residents of Buckinghamshire but also the economy.

This refreshed plan provides the building blocks to our success and sets out the Council’s strategic priorities and how we can achieve these. It will be used to inform cabinet portfolio priorities, service, and team planning – setting out the challenges and vital opportunities we will focus on to support the county to recover, build resilience and reset.

Supporting this plan will be a number of strategies and policies which will detail how we will deliver our ambitions and priorities. Underneath each of these there will be details about how we evaluate success against set policies and where appropriate use of benchmarking to ensure we measure success and best practise.

Demand for our services rises each year due to changes in our population, but new pressures from the pandemic have added to this. We are down on income compared to pre-pandemic levels with reduced levels of income from council tax, business rates and parking charges for example. However, income is slowly recovering.

During this challenging time, we have also seen great strengths and opportunities for the future. All over the county, people have stepped up to help those in need and look out for their family, friends, and neighbours. The public sector and community services have worked more closely together than ever before to find ways to continue supporting those that rely on them, thinking innovatively

through the challenges. Some of the new ways of doing things have proven to work well and have demonstrated how we can make improvements to the way we deliver our services. Our staff are our greatest asset, and it is important that we acknowledge and thank them for their ongoing hard work, dedication, and resilience.

The next few years will undoubtedly be a challenging time for Buckinghamshire, but there are also exciting and unique opportunities available to us to improve the services we provide and accelerate the county’s success and prosperity in the future, such as devolution from central government. We must continue to attract investment into the county and seek to maintain valued universal services that make a big difference to quality of life for our residents. By seizing opportunities available to us now and working on our ongoing commitments, such as our objective to achieve net carbon zero for Buckinghamshire by 2050, we can avoid over burdening future generations that make Buckinghamshire their home and ensuring that current residents benefit from positive changes in the years to come.



Martin Tett
Leader



Rachael Shimmin
Chief Executive



Buckinghamshire in numbers

In 2022



551,560

population in January 2022



£413,924

average house price
(December 2021)



£1,310pcm

average rent for a two-bed property
(January 2022)



171

parish and town councils



31%

of the county is designated green belt
(England average 12.5%)



£18.4 billion

size of Buckinghamshire economy national
output (Buckinghamshire LEP 2019)



One third

of working residents travels outside of the
county for work



236 schools



On the horizon...



564,319

population in 2030
(Source: ONS projections)



450

state pension age citizens per
1,000 working age citizens by
2040 (from 320 per 1,000 in 2020)

In the next decade (2022-2032):



19%

increase in 65+ year olds



38.4%

increase in 85+ year olds



4.3%

decrease in children

Moving forward together: valuing partnerships

Achieving the best outcomes for our communities requires joined-up thinking. Working collaboratively with partners to make the most of collective resources, skills, ideas, and talents will be critical to achieve the key priorities which we set out later in this plan.

Most of our public sector partners work across the same geography and serve the same population. This provides great opportunities to join up and improve services.

Buckinghamshire Council will also be a leader in developing relationships at a regional, national, and international level. Championing the county's voice on a big stage, we will work creatively to develop the local economy, support businesses, and bring in investment and funding.

We are committed to partnership working, focusing on shared priorities, and encouraging collaboration, sharing intelligence, and driving change and tackling key issues in a more co-ordinated way.

Buckinghamshire Growth Board

The Buckinghamshire Growth Board is an established board which has been engaging with key partners for over a year, developing the Strategic Vision and producing the Recovery & Growth Proposal. Partners include the Local Enterprise Partnership, NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, and other local public sector partners, all of whom have a shared ambition and work programme to deliver innovative, sustainable, and appropriate growth at pace.

Since supporting the recovery and growth proposal in November 2020, Buckinghamshire Council, through the Buckinghamshire Growth Board, have been progressing discussions with central government to develop partnerships and secure investment and devolution opportunities.

Whilst there is no current precedent, the proposals aim to build upon the ambitions outlined in the Recovery and Growth proposal and provide Buckinghamshire with the tools to locally drive economic recovery and growth, which in turn will drive national growth. The proposal includes the supply of affordable and appropriately designed new housing, and the delivery of necessary supporting infrastructure such as digital communications, energy,

roads, schools and hospital beds. We want Buckinghamshire to remain a forward thinking and dynamic economy without sacrificing the assets which already make it a great place to live.

Following the transition to a unitary authority, we have the advantage of strong local alignment and the most coterminous county structure in England as all our key partner organisations share our county geography. Utilising our economic assets and governance strengths with a combination of direct project investment, broader investment funds, and specific freedoms and flexibilities that would enable us to deliver services more efficiently and effectively. We will work with our partners to:

- Invest in our places.
- Mobilise our high-tech sector assets.
- Create an accelerated skills delivery system.
- Enhance physical and digital connectivity.
- Deliver public service efficiency improvements, including a first-class integrated health and social care campus
- Increase our overall contribution to HM Treasury.

Local Enterprise Partnership and businesses

Our business community includes major international companies and large numbers of small and medium enterprises. By working closely with partners, including Buckinghamshire Business First and Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and through the Buckinghamshire Business Group, we support new businesses to grow and existing businesses to thrive - creating more local jobs and wider economic benefits to our communities.

Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership is a business-led 'partnership of equals' between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in Buckinghamshire.

Integrated Care Partnership and health partners

This brings together the expertise of health and care professionals to look after people's physical, social, and mental health needs. By working closely with partners across the Integrated Care Partnership, including Buckinghamshire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, FedBucks, Medicas, and South-Central

Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, we will achieve our vision of everyone living happier and healthier lives.



Town and parish councils, and local MPs

There are 171 town councils, parish councils and parish meetings in Buckinghamshire, collectively known as local councils. There are 5 MPs for the area. The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (BMKALC) is an independent member organisation which provides support to these councils on procedures and statutory regulations. Local councils can take on the management of services through devolution agreements with the council, allowing them to set their own priorities according to local needs.

Voluntary and community sector

Buckinghamshire has a vibrant not for profit sector with invaluable insight into the needs of our communities. The sector is at the heart of the community, delivering key services with experience in building relationships and social connections. They are vital in strengthening and supporting our communities. Volunteers are a huge asset, and we must ensure that voluntary capacity is used effectively and safely.



Buckinghamshire Cultural Partnership

Buckinghamshire Cultural Partnership brings together senior leaders from key cultural organisations, Buckinghamshire Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership, and higher

education organisations. It plays a strategic leadership and development role for culture, positioning culture at the heart of strategic agendas throughout the county.

Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge to show our support to those who serve, or have served, in the armed forces, as well as their families. It recognises the sacrifice they have made and ensures they are treated fairly.

We are committed to ensuring that the Armed Forces community does not face disadvantage in the provision of services compared to other residents. As an employer, we recognise the range of unique skills and experiences that reservists and veterans can bring to our organisation.

Schools, colleges, universities and lifelong learning

The Buckinghamshire Skills Hub promotes and optimises links between the business community and education/training providers to enable young people and adults to develop the skills and qualifications they need to progress in the workplace, at whatever stage of their career they are in. Skills development is central to creating the conditions for sustained

innovation, excellence, and growth for our Buckinghamshire businesses, particularly in priority sectors as described in our [Local Industrial Strategy](#).



Credit: Buckinghamshire College Group

Police, fire and rescue

The Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel examine and review how the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) carries out their responsibilities of ensuring that Thames Valley Police runs effectively. The panel also supports the PCC in their work and provides reports and recommendations on the Police and Crime Plan, Annual Report and some proposals made by the PCC.

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is a publicly accountable body managing Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue

Service on behalf of the communities it serves. The Authority meets four times a year to discuss budgets, financial arrangements, insurance and financial plans, and to make recommendations to the Fire Authority for decision.

Housing providers

There are four main registered providers which were formed to take on the local housing stock across Buckinghamshire. The council works closely with them on developing new-build affordable housing, either in partnership with private developers or by developing their own sites. These providers allocate social housing tenancies in accordance with the Bucks Home Choice Allocations Scheme, advertising available tenancies on a central website.

Natural Environment Partnership

The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership includes individuals, businesses, and organisations with an interest in driving positive change in the local natural environment. They work alongside the Local Enterprise Partnership, LEAP and Health and Wellbeing Board to embed natural environment in growth, economic and health strategies, and develop interventions and programmes for delivery.

Our key priorities - a summary

We want to make Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work and do business.

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Our key priorities are:

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

Our key priorities are for our residents, employees, businesses, service users and councillors. Customer focus is integral to each of the priorities.





Strengthening our communities

Life expectancy in Buckinghamshire



(one of the highest in South East England)

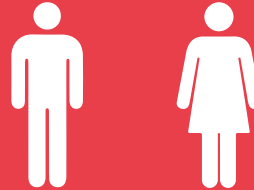


Children and young people meeting recommended levels of physical activity

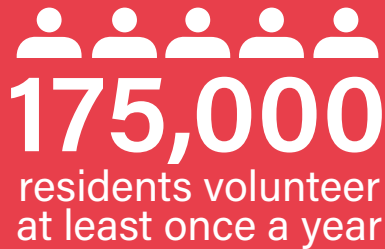
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Life expectancy gap

6.5 year | 6.4 year



life expectancy gap between most and least deprived



Strengthening our communities

People in Buckinghamshire are living longer and healthier, with health outcomes better than the national average. We have strong communities and a thriving, dedicated not for profit sector

Buckinghamshire is a healthy and inclusive place to live, work and visit, but we have a number of challenges. These include building more affordable homes now and for future generations, providing extra help and support for an increasingly older population and improving the health of people who live in the more deprived areas of Buckinghamshire. We also face the challenge of supporting our communities and residents to recover safely from the coronavirus pandemic.



We want:

- Our residents to live independent, fulfilling lives, within strong, healthy, inclusive, and resilient communities.
- To support existing business communities, especially our small to medium enterprises (SMEs), to grow and flourish.
- To improve health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on reducing any gap in health outcomes.
- To work more with town and parish councils, giving them the responsibility for services and assets where it makes sense to do so, and helping communities to help themselves.
- To facilitate a 'catch up programme' for our young people, from the lost educational achievement which occurred during the coronavirus pandemic, particularly focusing on those most disadvantaged.

Working with partners, we will:

- Enable and promote healthier lifestyles, wellbeing and quality of life for people in Buckinghamshire.
- Review our Leisure Strategy and seek to invest in our facilities where appropriate.
- Tackle health inequalities, including the impact of Covid-19, through cultural, leisure and learning opportunities, by developing clear plans to reduce health inequalities.
- Encourage localism through our Community Boards, the devolution programme and working with local councils and voluntary community groups.
- Ensure we are keeping our residents regularly informed.
- Provide the affordable homes our growing communities need, including key workers.
- Continue our commitment to equality and inclusion, through engagement with ethnic minority communities including regular engagement with faith leaders and partnership events, celebrating the diversity within our communities.
- Maintain commitment to the armed forces and armed forces covenant and recognising Buckinghamshire's proud and historic links to the armed forces.



Protecting the vulnerable



518 children with a Child Protection Plan on 31 March 2021 (446 as at 31 March 2015)



26 children were adopted (2020/21)

1,918

applications for homelessness assistance (2020/21)

33% of care users do not have as much social contact as they would like (2020/21)



58/1,000 crimes people (67 per 1,000 for Thames Valley)

68% were satisfied with the care and support they received - only 3% were unsatisfied (64% England average) With 67% of people using Adult Social Care services say that they had either adequate or as much social contact as they would like (2020/21)



Budget for adult social care has increased by **23.2%** since 2015



357 children in foster care (March 2021)

Protecting the vulnerable

While most people in Buckinghamshire live independent and healthy lives, some need extra support and protection. We know that the number of children and adults who need this extra help is increasing. There are also rising numbers of people with mental health difficulties, special educational needs, disabilities, and complex needs.

We want to give everyone the best chances in life, so that – together with their families and carers - they are resilient and can identify their own solutions. We will continue to work with our partners and communities to innovate and improve our offer, helping people recover from illness sooner, promoting fostering and adoption reducing social isolation and loneliness, and supporting our most vulnerable residents.

Our goal is to reduce inequalities and give everyone the support and skills they need to live independent, happy, and fulfilling lives.



We want:

- Children, adults, and families to feel safe and supported to live independent lives.
- Our older, disabled, and vulnerable people to receive the right support, at the right time.

Working with partners, we will:


- Develop Helping Hand programme to tackle food and financial insecurity in local communities, administering government winter grants to vulnerable residents.
- Work with the police, PCC and partners to help prevent crime, reduce the fear of crime and understand the issues around 'female insecurity' and adopting a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse.
- Provide care for all those who are unable to help themselves, working with the NHS to give residents the choice and support to stay in their own home should they wish to.
- Make sure children and adults, particularly those that are vulnerable, are healthy, safe and protected from harm and continue to improve the services we provide, including delivering the Happier, Healthier Lives strategy.
- Work with residents, partners and stakeholders to virtually eliminate rough sleeping, and reduce homelessness, addressing the root causes of both.
- Work in partnership with the NHS and voluntary groups to reduce problems such as drug abuse, alcoholism, and unhealthy lifestyles. Aligning services with the NHS where this benefits residents.
- Work with our partners to understand and prepare implementation of the Government's new social care reforms and the Health and Care Act, which sets out the Integrated Care System to ensure it best suits the needs of our residents.
- Encourage children in school to adopt healthy lifestyles and encourage them to exercise more, eat a healthy diet and spend more time with their friends and less on the internet.



Improving our environment

 **1,990 miles**
of publicly maintained
carriageway


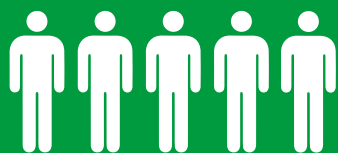
 **3.35 billion**
vehicle miles travelled (2020)

 **34%**
reduction in
Buckinghamshire's
CO2 emissions
(from 2005 to 2019)

 **1.3 million**
country park visitors
(projected) in 2021/22

 **51.2%**
of waste is recycled
(2020/21)

 **2,130 miles**
of public Rights of Way

 Bus passenger numbers have
returned to
 **67.5%**
of pre-Covid levels

Improving our environment

Buckinghamshire is a beautiful county, and our stunning natural and historic landscape is valued by all. Over a quarter of our county is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a third is covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt.

Protection of the county's beautiful countryside, including areas of outstanding natural beauty and green belt will be achieved through the 'Brown before Green' principle. We know we must deliver more homes and associated infrastructure for our growing population. By managing growth sensibly and responsibly (including identifying appropriate surplus public sector property and actively developing this for market, affordable housing and key worker housing), we can protect and enhance our natural environment and the benefits it brings. Aylesbury Garden Town is an exciting example: putting green spaces and natural environments at the heart of future development.



We want:

- To address climate change, improve our environment and create economic opportunities for clean growth.
- To reduce our county's environmental impact by promoting sustainability and reducing waste.
- To improve air quality and people's health, by reducing emissions and encouraging green transport options.

Working with partners, we will:

- Take action to reduce our carbon emissions including planting over 500,000 trees, including 240 trees planted by schools and care homes for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and creation of new woodland.
- Facilitate the increased use of electric vehicles (including within our own fleet) and aim to double the number of electric charging points across the county. Encourage recovery and use of the public bus network.
- Increase recycling and energy recovery rates and continue to deliver recycling initiatives, including regular Love Food, Hate Waste campaigns through the year.
- Enhance and protect our green spaces and high-quality environment, through a zero-tolerance policy towards fly-tipping and litter, a no-nonsense approach to planning enforcement, and taking action on flood prevention.
- Encourage 'green growth' by promoting well-designed homes and introducing higher, more energy efficient standards for all new developments.
- Continue to manage and mitigate the impact of national infrastructure schemes such as HS2 and East West Rail, on Buckinghamshire's residents, businesses and special environment.
- Progress our ambition to be net carbon zero by 2050 (and potentially earlier) by delivering the key actions set out in our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy.

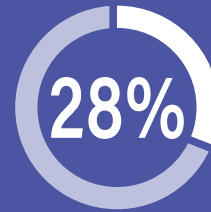


Increasing prosperity



45%

of residents educated to degree level or above



of vacant jobs not filled due to lack of skills (25% national average)



88.8%

of pupils attend good or outstanding schools



Value of exports from Buckinghamshire



77.5%

of residents in employment (South East average 78.3%)



5.4%

aged 16 or over have no qualifications (South East average 4.9%)

Increasing prosperity

Buckinghamshire is a prosperous county and a successful place to do business, contributing £18 billion to the UK economy and ranked as the fourth most productive area in England.

The county has low unemployment, higher than average household incomes, and boasts world leading sectors. From Pinewood Studios in the south to Silverstone in the north, Buckinghamshire is a great success story. We are also well placed to take advantage of emerging opportunities because of our proximity to London and Heathrow, and our location in the middle of a leading economic area with global strengths in science, technology and high-value manufacturing.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted this and the national trend shows that high levels of productivity and growth are beginning to slow, and levels of unemployment are rising. Our High Streets have been badly affected and are still facing challenges, including the change in retail habits with increased online demand and falling footfall in Town Centres. Action is needed now to ensure our economy remains fit for the future.



We want:

- To encourage sustainable economic growth, working with our partners to maximise opportunities and boost productivity.
- To continue to attract high quality jobs and investment in skills, innovation, and connectivity, keeping Buckinghamshire one of the best places to do business.
- Growth to benefit both new and existing communities, preserving the character of our environment while delivering everything we need to prosper.

Working with partners, we will:

- Provide a clear and consistent vision for Buckinghamshire through longer term strategic planning and a new Buckinghamshire Local Plan.
- Continue our commitment to working proactively and in partnership to produce and deliver regeneration plans for Aylesbury, High Wycombe and other town centres.
- Maximise capital and revenue opportunities in our property estate to support the provision of affordable key worker housing, to support the economy and other council services.
- Enable residents to be successful in their chosen career by encouraging skills development and lifelong learning.
- Support the business community, especially SMEs, to grow and flourish including through promotion of high streets and Enterprise Zones.
- Deliver at least £100m investment in Buckinghamshire's roads and pavements; including gully emptying and investing £2.7m in our drainage programme in 22/23 and in alignment with the rigorous, data driven approach set out in our highways asset management policy.
- Continue to deliver the infrastructure that Buckinghamshire needs ahead of planned growth, including improving connectivity, increasing sustainability, attracting investment in the economic prosperity of the County and tackling congestion.

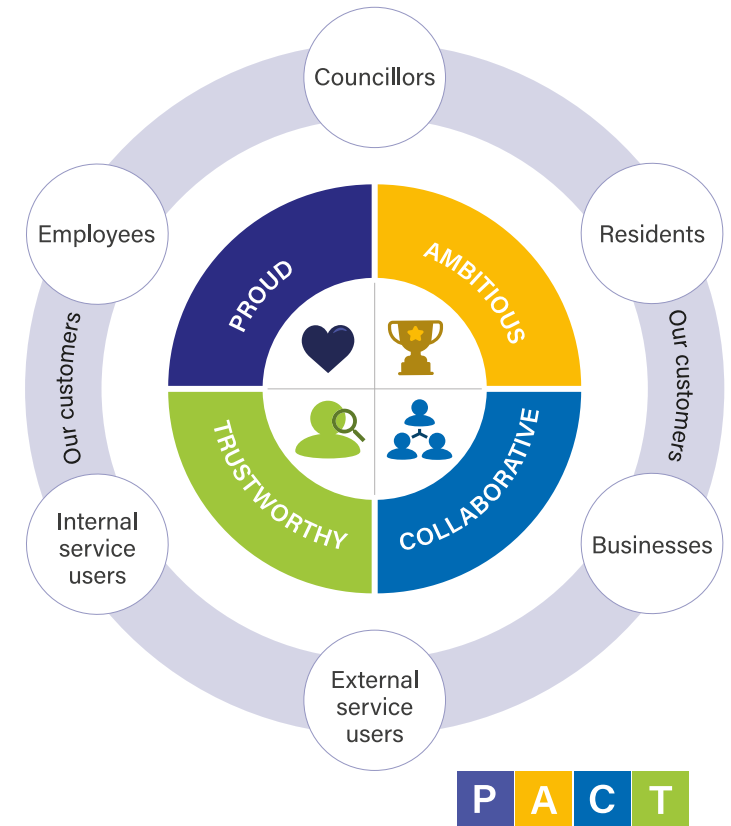
Our people

Everything we want to achieve for Buckinghamshire depends on having the right people in place. We need to retain, recruit, and develop talented and committed staff to provide the best services for our residents and businesses. To support this, Buckinghamshire Council has developed a set of values in consultation with our staff.

Our values are: Proud, Ambitious, Collaborative, Trustworthy (PACT). These values underpin how we work and show our commitment – our PACT – to do our very best for our residents, service users and businesses. They are at the heart of everything we do.

Similarly, where services are provided through partners or external organisations, we will work with them to make sure these values are carried through in delivering services on our behalf.

We are already transforming our services and will continue to do so through our Better Buckinghamshire Programme, not only making savings but redesigning services and service delivery to suit our residents' needs. It is our people who deliver these services, and our improvements are focused on making the most of people's skills and experience, so we can take full advantage of the opportunities created by the new council. Everyone needs to be performing at their best to take the organisation on the next stage of its journey.



The financial challenge

We will ensure that Buckinghamshire Council is financially fit, efficient, and responsive to change. We will maintain robust financial planning, scrutinise budgets closely and be prudent in managing risks. As a new unitary authority, we have already achieved significant savings and will strive to achieve more.

Like all local authorities, we face challenging financial circumstances. There are more people turning to the council for support, but the resources available to help them have not increased to match the demand. We have to be realistic and focus on greater efficiency and value for money.

However, we are still ambitious to keep investing in our communities, sustaining the vital services on which our most vulnerable residents rely. We will manage our assets to create long term benefits and additional income, reducing our dependency on the taxpayer and protecting front line services.

£1.278bn

2022/23
Buckinghamshire
Council budget (gross)

£524m

2022/23 to 2025/26 - spending on providing or improving buildings, roads and other infrastructure (capital budget)
£38.5m for economic growth and regeneration
£136.4m for schools and school improvement projects
£117.9m for strategic highways and maintenance
£129.4m for strategic transport and infrastructure
£24.8m for waste
£21.8m for housing and homelessness

£561m

Schools
Funded by specific grants.



£217m

Adult Social Care
Includes additional investment to address continued increases in demand, cost, and complexity of social care services.



£78m

Children's Social Care
Includes additional investment for care services and children in care, plus preventative services.



£71m

Highways and transport
Includes roads, footpaths, street lighting, repairing potholes, parking and transportation.

£169m

Finance, resources, property and assets
Includes customer services, ICT, finance, property, housing benefit, HR, legal.



£19m

Planning, regeneration and economic growth
Includes development management, strategic planning and local planning, economic growth and regeneration, and enforcement.



£38m

Climate change and environment
Includes waste collection and disposals, recycling, flood prevention and street clearing.



£21m

Education
Includes Special Educational Needs, school improvement and early years services.



£11m

Culture and leisure
Includes leisure centres, libraries, museums, parks and play areas.



£16m

Housing, homelessness and regulatory services
includes Trading Standards, Registrars and Environmental Health.



£22m

Public Health
Giving residents tools and information to lead healthier lives. Funded by specific grants.



£10m

Communities, localities and strategic partnerships
Includes community boards, community safety, community grants and localities and strategic partnerships.



£44m

Borrowing costs, contingencies to manage high risks service costs, and other corporate costs.



How we will spend the 2022/23 budget

Your council, your way

Residents are at the very heart of what we do. There are lots of different ways for people to get involved, shaping the council's knowledge, plans and policies and keeping up to date on news and views.

Getting involved: community boards

Community boards enable a focus on local solutions. There are 16 boards across the county. They bring together councillors and local communities to help solve local issues, take local decisions, and influence local service design and delivery.

Neighbourhood plans

We continue to work with town and parish councils to develop and deliver Neighbourhood Plans and produce regular local planning updates for local councils.

Our five local Planning Committees continue to meet regularly.

Inform, consult, and involve

We believe engagement should be meaningful, timely, inclusive, and direct. We want local people to help shape any proposals that affect the services they use or the areas where they live and work. We want to hear the voices of those most affected. It is important to us that

local people - including the young, community groups, businesses, partners, and staff - are involved, working together on developing and testing solutions and services. We are constantly looking to develop and improve on this.

Councillors and committees

Being democratically accountable and having good governance is essential to any council.

Our website helps you find your local councillor and see which meetings are coming up and decisions that are being taken. To make sure the council is open and transparent, agendas and minutes of meetings are available online, with many meetings being filmed or in public.

Customer focused

We must have a strong customer focus with services that are easy for everyone to access and we continue to improve our user experience with a commitment to return calls, keep customers updated on progress and to escalate queries when needed. We are improving our website content to improve accessibility and availability of information in high traffic areas, such as Planning, School Admissions and Home to School Transport. We are also developing our Digital Strategy focussing on improving resident's interaction with council through digital channels.



We want our residents to have a choice of how they engage with the council, including in places local to them. We know that some people would like to 'self-serve' online, but others will still value talking to us face to face. To support this, we have developed a Customer Experience Framework which we call 'Customer First.'

Key to Customer First are our three promises to our customers about the experience they should expect:

1. Easy for you to get in touch with us, easy to get what you need.
2. Helpful and that we aim to get things right first time.
3. Fair and honest in our approach so that we're clear about what we can and can't offer, and the reasons why.

Supporting this we have described the behaviours that we expect from our staff and those we request of our customers. To track the Customer Experience that residents, services users and businesses receive we will publish performance metrics to show how we are doing.

We are also developing our Digital Strategy focusing on improving residents' interaction with the council through digital channels.

Our equalities commitment

Buckinghamshire Council is committed to equality of opportunity, fostering good relations, and eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

We recognise, respect, and celebrate the fact that our staff and the people we serve are all from different backgrounds, whether this is our age, disability, race, family setting, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or belief. We will work with our partners to promote equality, celebrate diversity, improve social inclusion and mobility, and ensure fairness for everyone.

How to contact us

- Most information about our services can be found on this [website](#).
- However, you can also [contact us](#) directly.
- Follow us on social media: [@BucksCouncil](#)





Report to Council

Date:	27 April 2022
Title:	Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy
Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Nick Naylor Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services
Contact officer:	Nigel Dicker (Service Director – Housing and Regulatory Services) / Michael Veryard (Head of Housing)
Ward(s) affected:	None specific
Recommendations:	1. That the Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy 2022-2025 be adopted
Reason for decision:	The recommended option will ensure that the Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy is in place in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Transitional Arrangements No.2 Regulations 2008.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires the Council to publish a Homelessness Strategy. As part of the creation of the Unitary authority, the Transitional Arrangements No.2 Regulations 2008 required a new Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy to be in place by 1/4/2022. Following delays arising from the pandemic and service restructure, work has now been undertaken to develop a new Homelessness Strategy for adoption by the Council. Following a draft strategy being reported to Cabinet on 15th February 2022 and a subsequent public consultation exercise, a final version of the Homelessness Strategy has now been agreed by the Council Leader in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services. This Strategy is now being brought forward to Council for adoption. The

Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has been updated and notified of the timetable for adopting the Strategy by the end of April 2022.

2. Content of report

2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires the Council to publish a Homelessness Strategy document every five years. The overarching purpose of this document is to set down the Council's strategy for preventing homelessness wherever possible and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support is available for people who are (or may become) homeless.

2.2 On vesting day (1/4/2020), the three existing Homelessness Strategies in Buckinghamshire were carried forward from the former District Councils to the new authority:

- Aylesbury Vale Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022
- Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Housing Strategy 2018-2021 (Affordable Housing and Homelessness)
- Wycombe Area Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2014-19

These three strategies have remained in place to date underpinned by Action Plans and quarterly Homelessness forum meetings involving key internal and external stakeholders.

2.3 The Transitional Arrangements No.2 Regulations 2008 required that Buckinghamshire Council had a new single Homelessness Strategy in place by 1/4/2022 (two years after vesting day).

2.4 The impacts of both the Covid pandemic and the subsequent restructuring of the Housing Service during 2021 resulted in a delay in undertaking the review and development of the Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy. In October 2021, the Council appointed an external specialist housing consultant, Housing Quality Network, to support the development of the new strategy including:

- Reviewing the existing Homelessness Strategies carried forward from the District Councils
- Reviewing levels of homelessness in Buckinghamshire and current and future trends
- Undertaking consultation workshops with Members and key internal and external stakeholders (including Council Homelessness Officers)
- Drafting a Strategy document for consideration

- 2.5 As part of the above a series of stakeholder events were held during November and December 2021 comprising:
- Two sessions with external stakeholders, agencies and partners in the north and south of Buckinghamshire
 - One session with internal Council stakeholders and services outside of the housing service (e.g. social care)
 - One session with Council Homelessness Officers
 - One session with Members

2.6 A draft Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy document was drafted for consideration and reported to Cabinet on 15th February 2022 ahead of a public consultation exercise. Cabinet resolved:

- (1) That the draft Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy be noted.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council to make any final amendments to the draft Strategy (following feedback from Members and the completion of the public consultation exercise), and to agree the final version of the Strategy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services.
- (3) That the final version of the Homelessness Strategy, as agreed by the Leader of the Council, be submitted to full Council for consideration and adoption.

Although this meant that adoption of the Homelessness Strategy would be after 1st April 2022, the Council has updated the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the progress of the new Homelessness Strategy and the timetable for adoption by the end of April 2022.

2.7 Following the Cabinet resolution on 15th February 2022, a public consultation took place between 21st February 2022 to 21st March 2022. Consultees had the opportunity to view the draft Strategy document and Evidence Base and to answer a series of questions to obtain their views and feedback. Consultees could respond via the Council's on-line portal or via other means including e-mail and telephone. The consultation generated a total of 28 responses. Those who responded showed a very high and consistent level of support for the draft strategy and the priorities within it. For each of the priorities set down in the draft strategy, the level of responses which either strongly agreed or agreed with the priority were as follows:

Priority	Number (and %) of respondents who strongly agreed	Number (and %) of respondents who agreed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide advice, information and support on housing and related issues to enable those at risk of becoming homeless to take steps to remain in their accommodation where feasible and appropriate, or to undertake a planned move if required 	24 (85.71%)	3 (10.71%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify those at risk of becoming homeless at the earliest possible stage, and to intervene proactively to prevent them becoming homeless 	24 (85.71%)	4 (14.29%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a household does become homeless, to support them to find appropriate alternative accommodation as quickly as possible 	25 (89.29%)	3 (10.71%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent anyone having to sleep rough 	24 (85.71%)	1 (3.57%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maximise the supply of affordable rented accommodation 	21 (75%)	5 (17.86%)

2.8 Following the completion of the public consultation exercise, the Council has reviewed the draft Strategy document that was reported to Cabinet and made a small number of amendments and additions to the draft Strategy document. No changes have been made to the key themes and priorities. A small number of areas have been expanded to provide clarification in response to feedback and a small number of additional actions have been included in the Action Plan to provide more details and reflect comments made by those who responded to the consultation. This final version of the Buckinghamshire Homelessness Strategy has been agreed by the Council Leader in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services.

2.9 A copy of the Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy 2022-2025 is in the appendices. The document comprises the following sections:

- A strategy document setting out key findings and the high level priorities and action plan going forward (**Appendix 1**)
- An evidence base showing the current position including key information on housing and homelessness in Buckinghamshire and emerging themes and challenges. This document also includes a summary of the stakeholder

consultation exercise that took place to support preparation of the strategy
(Appendix 2)

- 2.10 The Strategy has been assembled to provide an overview of the current and future homelessness situation in Buckinghamshire and high level priorities and actions for the next three years 2022 – 2025. When the strategy is adopted, the Council will move forward in updating and revising its existing Homelessness Service Operational Action Plans which will sit beneath the Strategy and set down the detail of how the Council and its partners will operationally deliver the priorities in the strategy. These existing Action Plans are already used by the Council and its partner agencies (via the quarterly Homelessness Forum meetings) to monitor how the Council is meeting its strategic homelessness commitments and this will continue going forward under the new strategy. The Strategy has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment which can be found in Appendix 3.
- 2.11 The Council and its partners will be able to continue to influence and adapt the overall Strategy going forward. The Council will review the high level priorities and action plan in the Homelessness Strategy on an annual basis in regular consultation with key stakeholders and partner agencies. This will be done via the Council's regular Homelessness Forum meetings and other engagement. This will allow us to regularly re-visit the Strategy document and, where necessary, bring forward any amendments or changes to the document for consideration in response to the wider homelessness situation. This will ensure that the Strategy remains fit for purpose and will give the Council the flexibility to identify any amendments to priorities that may be needed to reflect changes in local and national circumstances over the next few years.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 The Council could have continued with the existing Homelessness Strategies which were carried forward from the former District Councils and then look to adopt a new Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy at a later date. However, as stated in Paragraph 2.3, this would not meet the requirement of the Transitional Arrangements No.2 Regulations 2008 which require that Buckinghamshire Council has a new single Homelessness Strategy in place by 1/4/2022. Therefore, delaying the adoption of a new Homelessness Strategy to a later date could leave the Council open to challenge going forward because it may be deemed not to have a current Homelessness Strategy in place. As well as the potential reputational damage arising from this, there is also the risk of legal challenge as the Council is required (under s1(5) on the Homelessness Act 2002) to have regard to its Homelessness Strategy when exercising its functions.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 The Legal context implications of the options under consideration are set down within the report (including Paragraph 3.1 above)
- 4.2 There are no specific financial implications linked to this report. The report deals with the adoption of the new Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy and setting high level priorities and actions going forward. The report is not seeking any financial commitments at this stage.
- 4.3 The Financial implications of the Strategy are not yet quantified; the Strategy will set out direction of travel and high level priorities, which will then be later formalised into a more detailed, costed action plans. There are existing, uncommitted Capital budgets in the MTFP, totalling £4.8m, which are earmarked for the delivery of the affordable housing and homelessness strategies. There is no growth (additional funding) set aside in the MTFP for additional activity on homelessness. However, there is flexibility in the use of the annual Homelessness Prevention Grant (currently £1.6m), and opportunity to bid to the Rough Sleepers Grant and other grant opportunities which arise ad hoc, to fund activity which delivers the strategy.

5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 The Buckinghamshire Homelessness Strategy will directly contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Plan priority for “Protecting the Vulnerable”.
- 5.2 The Strategy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 A virtual Member Workshop event on the development of the Homelessness Strategy was held on 16th December 2021 and the contributions to this workshop and been fed into the drafting of the Strategy document. A Member Development Workshop on Housing on 21st March 2022 included a presentation and discussion on the Homelessness Strategy and all Members had the opportunity to make submissions to the public consultation.
- 6.2 The Community Boards were advised of the consultation on the draft Homelessness Strategy document.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 As stated in the report, the draft Strategy document will be subject to a public consultation exercise.

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 The Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy will be formally adopted by the Council.

9. Background papers

- 9.1 None.

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team.

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Buckinghamshire Council – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 – 2025

(Amendments to version reported to Cabinet on 15/2/22 are highlighted in yellow)

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Foreword

Buckinghamshire is an attractive area with high employment, and high housing costs. The availability of good quality affordable accommodation to rent and to buy is key to preventing homelessness. A stable home makes it easier to secure and sustain employment, and to manage physical and mental health. As a new local authority, we have set four key priorities, one of which is to reduce homelessness. This strategy will make a significant contribution to reducing homelessness across Buckinghamshire, as well as supporting our key priorities: to strengthen our communities, protect vulnerable households, improve the environment and increase prosperity.

This strategy represents the first single homelessness strategy document for the Buckinghamshire Council following its creation from 1st April 2020. The strategy has been drafted following on from the intensive work undertaken by the Council in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Government's 'Everyone In' initiative during 2020/21 required all local authorities to take urgent action to house rough sleepers, and those at risk of rough sleeping, in order to protect people's health and reduce wider transmission of Covid-19. This required 'self-contained' rooms with minimal sharing of facilities to enable people to practise social distancing and self-isolate, as appropriate. Partnership working between local authorities, voluntary-sector organisations and partners within the localities supported rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping into the most appropriate type of accommodation available. Over 300 individuals were accommodated across Buckinghamshire during the "Everybody In" initiative. As a result of this work under 'Everybody In', the Council and its partners has supported the majority of these persons to subsequently move on to alternate accommodation, including supported housing and private rented accommodation. Providing both this immediate and longer term accommodation is a key part of an overall response evidenced to have prevented deaths and hospital admissions among those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In September 2020, there was further allocations to local authorities to pay for immediate support to ensure that vulnerable people supported during the pandemic did not return to the streets. To date, the Council has moved clients on to a wide range of accommodation options.

As well as the options that were already in place pre-pandemic, the Council has successfully bid for funding from the Government's NSAP (Next Steps Accommodation Programme), RSAP (Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme), RSI 4 (Rough Sleeper Initiative 4) and the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme in order to deliver new and additional accommodation. This includes the Ardenham House scheme in Aylesbury which provides 9 self-contained units for medium/high support needs clients opened in April 2021 and was a project delivered by Hightown Housing Association and supported with funding from NSAP.

Within Buckinghamshire, our already strong history of working with our stakeholders (the many voluntary and charitable sector organisations who deliver vital services, including our housing association partners) enabled this pandemic response to house our most vulnerable to operate as smoothly as possible. This has built upon the strong foundations of our regularly held Rough Sleeper core group meetings in High Wycombe and our two Homelessness Forums, which operate in the North and the South of the county. The Homelessness Forums allows regular policy and performance updates from the Council to be shared with stakeholders and partnership agencies. This sits alongside regular monitoring, intervention and scrutiny as part of the Rough Sleepers Initiative and demonstrates the Council's commitment to and participation in measures to prevent homelessness wherever possible and relieve homelessness where necessary to do so. **This has meant that in the annual rough sleeper counts since November 2017 the snapshot of the amount of people sleeping rough across the county had dropped from 36 in 2017 to less than 5 in November 2021**

In 2020/21, the first full year of operation for the new authority, around 2,000 households approached us for help. This number was no doubt reduced because of the impact of Covid and some of the temporary safety nets which were put in place. The Covid legislation that initially delayed evictions (except in the most severe cases of antisocial behaviour) and was later amended to require landlords to provide 6 months' notice prior to evicting households, had an impact on these figures. These factors may have a bearing on an increase in evictions in future months following to end of the safety net measures and associated support needs which will be required.

Of those households who approached the Council for assistance during 2020/21, we were able to prevent over half becoming homeless, through interventions with landlords, assistance with debt and arrears, and mediation to allow people to remain in their homes for longer. We were able to 'relieve' homelessness with a planned move to alternative accommodation for around a third of households. The numbers who became statutorily homeless and were owed a main duty under the legislation were, therefore, relatively small. But the impact of homelessness affects a much greater number of people: families, friends and others in the community who work to offer support. It also negatively impacts on other public services, particularly the health and criminal justice services. Homelessness adversely affects employment, education and the quality of life for the residents of Buckinghamshire.

This Homelessness Strategy builds on strong foundations put into place by the former local authorities who came together to form the new Buckinghamshire Council. It will reflect the wider shared priorities and goals that will come forward within the forthcoming planned Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy This forthcoming strategy will act as guide for potential investment and a framework for housing project management, meeting locally identified accommodation needs, including the addressing wider support needs that contribute to individual experiences of homelessness. It is aligned to various health and wellbeing priorities, at a national, and local level, because good housing is a closely linked healthy communities.

The Homelessness Strategy and the future Housing Strategy will also feed into the construction of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan which must be produced by April 2025. One of the central functions of the Local Plan is to ensure an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing development but must also recognise that any new housing development is consistent with the Green Belt and other environmental objectives of the Plan.

The Homelessness Strategy also builds on the strong partnership history with stakeholders and partner agencies, who have provided valuable contribution to this during its consultation process. Working together with our partners we can successfully prevent homelessness for many households, and ensure that necessary support is in place for those households who do face losing their home. We will also identify suitable options and work with partner agencies to support our most vulnerable residents and address their support needs appropriately. This includes effective joint working across different Council service areas such as Housing and Social Care. One example of this is the Council receiving funding to employ a Housing Occupational Therapist to work within the Housing Team to assist with timely adaptations and plans for changes to accommodation to assist those with health and disability needs (potentially averting a potential homelessness situation at a later date to accommodation no longer being suitable to occupy)

1. Introduction

It is a statutory requirement that every local authority has a strategy for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping. This strategy has been drawn up from a robust evidence base, which looks at patterns and trends in homelessness, the personal and structural factors that lead to people becoming homeless, and the effectiveness of different interventions in preventing homelessness. The evidence base is published alongside this draft strategy.

This strategy has been developed to reflect and conform to statutory requirements, including the updated Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018.

The Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) sets the statutory framework for the Council's homelessness duties. The ethos of the HRA is to:

- Prevent more people from becoming homeless in the first place by identifying people at risk and intervening earlier;
- Intervene rapidly if a homelessness crisis occurs, so it is brief and non-recurrent; and
- Help more people to recover from and exit homelessness by getting them back on their feet.

This strategy reflects the requirements of the HRA and the recognised need to continue to intervene at the earliest possible stage to prevent homelessness.

This strategy also recognises the government's ongoing commitment to ending rough sleeping with 2022 marking the end of the criminalisation of rough sleeping, with the repeal of the Vagrancy Act 1824. The Government announced in February 2022 that it would be developing and publishing a new national rough sleeping strategy. The Council will monitor this and ensure that the Council's Homelessness Strategy reflects the Government's priorities going forward as and when the national strategy is published.

2. Key challenges

In order to prevent homelessness effectively, the strategy needs to tackle the root causes. These are many and often complex; ranging from financial issues and employment challenges to broader lifestyle issues, which might impact on tenancy sustainment. The Council and its partners are working to ensure that everyone in Buckinghamshire has secure and affordable housing, access to employment, and support where needed.

The evidence base highlights some key challenges including:

- The number of people, particularly young people, being asked to leave by family and friends. Many of these have never held a tenancy in their own right;
- The number of households with debt and financial challenges affecting their ability to pay their current rent;
- The number of households threatened with homelessness when their private sector tenancy is ended;
- The number of people threatened with homelessness as a result of a relationship breakdown, many involving domestic abuse;
- Encouraging those threatened with homelessness to make early contact with the service in order to resolve the situation and prevent homelessness;
- Increasing the proportion of households where homelessness can be prevented either by retaining the existing tenancy or making a planned move;
- To virtually eliminate rough sleeping
- Continuing to manage temporary accommodation tightly; minimise the use of B&B type accommodation; and ensure move-on from temporary accommodation at the earliest possible opportunity to affordable, sustainable, settled accommodation; and
- Ensuring appropriate support is available for vulnerable households (including continuing to ensure consistent and appropriate support for mental health needs across the Buckinghamshire area)

3. What the data review is telling us

As noted above, in 2020/21, almost 2,000 households approached the Council for advice and support in relation to homelessness. The Council had a statutory duty to assist (i.e. to prevent and/or relieve homelessness) in over 90% of cases. Homelessness was successfully prevented in over half of these cases, meaning that the household was able to remain in the existing accommodation with support and/or intervention from the Council. Around one third of cases were supported to make a planned move to alternative accommodation, generally either a private sector let or social housing (including supported housing).

The majority of those where a housing duty applied were single people without children. The HRA requires the Council to prevent and relieve homelessness for this group and there is no test of vulnerability or other threshold criteria at this stage. The next largest group were single parents. Not surprisingly, most of the heads of households were aged 25 – 44. Just under one third were in work; around one third were unemployed. One in ten were unable to work due to a disability.

The main reasons people became homeless were:

- Friends/family no longer willing to accommodate
- Ending of private sector tenancy
- Non-violent relationship breakdown
- Domestic abuse
- End of social rented tenancy
- Other reasons included leaving an institution (prison, hospital etc) harassment and eviction from supported housing

In many cases, there are underlying reasons for homelessness; often these include debt, ill-health, or another vulnerability.

Most households threatened with becoming homeless live either in the private rented sector, or with family or friends. A smaller number live in social rented housing, are homeless on leaving an institution, or have no fixed abode. Some will have been rough sleeping.

Many households threatened with homelessness have a support need. The main reasons for needing support include:

- Mental health
- Physical health and disability
- Domestic abuse
- Offending history
- Repeat homelessness
- Drug/Alcohol dependency
- History of rough sleeping
- Learning disability
- Those aged 18-25 requiring support to manage independently

4. Vision and Priorities

Our vision is:

That everyone has a secure and affordable place to live; advice and support is available for those threatened with homelessness; effective early intervention means that no-one becomes homeless or has to sleep rough

Our priorities are:

- To provide advice, information and support on housing and related issues to enable those at risk of becoming homeless to take steps to remain in their accommodation where feasible and appropriate, or to undertake a planned move if required
- To identify those at risk of becoming homeless at the earliest possible stage, and to intervene proactively to prevent them becoming homeless
- Where a household does become homeless, to support them to find appropriate alternative accommodation as quickly as possible
- To prevent anyone having to sleep rough
- To maximise the supply of affordable rented accommodation

In addition to these priorities, there are two cross-cutting themes to which we will continue to address with associated plans and ideas. These are:

- Making best use of resources
- Partnership working

In delivering the above priorities, we will always be focussed on ensuring that the services provided are appropriate and consistent across the Buckinghamshire area, but ensure the individual needs of different areas are recognised.

5. How we will measure success

These will be refreshed once the new strategy has been adopted; measures may include (but are not limited to):

- To continue to increase the proportion of people for whom homelessness can be prevented each year. As the proportion of achievement is already high, the year-on-year increase may be 1 – 2%
- To continue to increase the proportion of households where homelessness can be relieved each year. Again, the proportion is already high so the year-on-year increase may be 1 – 2%
- To continue to refer to complimentary priorities within the proposed housing strategy and local plan
- To virtually eliminate rough sleeping and support anyone who finds themselves at risk of rough sleeping.
- To minimise accommodating homeless families in B&B accommodation and where this is unavoidable to ensure that placements are for no longer than 6 weeks
- To minimise the amount of time in temporary accommodation for those with disabilities and requiring adaptations
- To continue developing effective joint working between the Council's Housing and Childrens' Services including joint protocols and considering joint measures to ensure young people can manage tenancies.
- To continue working towards improving outcomes for our young people in care, ensuring they are best equipped and able to manage their tenancies.
- To ensure that victims of domestic abuse are able to access safe accommodation and ensure that all those in the refuge as a result of domestic abuse achieve a planned move to long-term accommodation within an agreed timescale.

6. Action plan

Key to the delivery of this strategy is the collaborative work across the council and its partners. We are committed to maintaining and building on existing partnership working to support people to stay in their properties, or to find lasting and affordable housing options.

The strategy will be underpinned with an action plan which will be flexible and respond to emerging needs, trends and policy changes. The three-year strategy below is therefore more detailed for year one and indicative thereafter. Although significant progress has been made in bringing the former District Council homelessness services together within the Housing Service re-structure, the action plan recognises a need for a Year 1 of ‘consolidation,’ where we ensure that services are consistent across the Buckinghamshire Council area, while still being sensitive to individual needs in different locations. We will continue to ensure that the Council and its partners are achieving a ‘one door’ service, where a household will be given the same service regardless of the first point of contact.

We will build on this with a Year 2 of ‘foundation’ where we ensure effective working practices, including awareness, information-sharing and shared risk assessments. This will ensure that by Year 3 of the action plan we can begin to ‘innovate’ from a consolidated position of strong foundations.

This can be summarised as below:

Year 1 (2022/23) – Consolidation

Year 2 (2023/24) – Foundation

Year 3 (2024/25) - Innovate

The following high level action plan is split into priority areas with each specific action linked to Year 1, 2 or 3 for delivery.

Priority One: To provide advice, information and support on housing and related issues to enable those at risk of becoming homeless to take steps to remain in their accommodation where feasible and appropriate, or to undertake a planned move if required

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
1.1	Review and develop on-line housing options information by updating signposting and self-delivery systems on the website. Consideration to be given to launching an online Homelessness Triage service	One Council approach; increase customer confidence in ability to resolve own issues	1
1.2	Ensure that there are sufficient other methods of support for people who cannot access service on-line (including physical appointments, telephone and drop in as necessary).	Variety of availability to services	1
1.3	Ensure consistent access to services across the area with appropriate thresholds and eligibility criteria and ensure this learns from the lived experience of households who have used the service.	One Council approach; simpler for customers and partners to understand what's available	1
1.4	Ensure on-line advice includes tailored information for those being asked to leave private rented sector accommodation, with signposting to other services as appropriate	Increase the number of households able to resolve own housing issues and remain in existing accommodation	1
1.5	Continue to raise awareness of mediation services and ensure they are offered at earliest possible opportunity for intervention.	Greater use of mediation could enable more people to remain with family or friends:	1

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
1.6	Continue to work with the DWP to ensure homelessness is prevented and that the Council can intervene and support clients as early as possible. Explore direct rent payments to landlords where there are known financial risk factors.	Increased number of households enabled to remain in existing accommodation	1
1.7	Review the need and develop possible options and expansion for existing tenancy sustainment services.	Increased number of households enabled to remain in existing accommodation	2
1.8	Increase awareness in other frontline services around how to help people with mental health difficulties and experience of trauma ; ensure that appropriate housing officers are trained in mental health issues, personality disorders and behavioural challenges	Empathetic and effective services for those with mental health difficulties	2
1.9	Explore a gap analysis of homelessness prevention education delivered through schools, colleges and youth services (including working with social care and education service to analyse what information and advice is provided)	Earlier intervention leading to reduced numbers becoming threatened with homelessness. Improved knowledge and awareness	3
1.10	Develop longer-term monitoring of outcomes to identify and respond to repeat homelessness	Establish baseline for repeat homelessness if possible then set target to reduce	2
1.11	Roll out the financial inclusion partnerships money advice campaign 'Back on Track' to the whole of Buckinghamshire	Increase the number of households able to resolve own issues and remain in existing accommodation	1

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
1.12	Continue to work with services for children and young people to review options for early education around financial issues, especially for young people, including tailored advice for those leaving care.	Establish good financial habits and awareness to prevent people getting into difficulties that affect rent/mortgage payments	3/2

Priority two: To identify those at risk of becoming homeless at the earliest possible stage, and to intervene proactively to prevent them becoming homeless

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
2.1	Develop agreed indicators of early signs of potential homelessness to promote and encourage early referrals to service	Short set of agreed indicators used by all relevant agencies/partners	1
2.2	With registered providers and other partners, develop a 'tenancy ready' approach which incentivises those who have not had a previous tenancy, or whose previous tenancy failed, to undertake appropriate preparatory work for their tenancy;	Fewer tenancies failing in first 2 years	2
2.3	Continue to work with health partners to maximise impact of self-referral services, befriending, social prescribing and other initiatives in support of homelessness prevention.	Support created for households with low level mental health issues including isolation	2
2.4	Review the hospital discharge process and consider new protocol for homeless	Support for those leaving hospital	1

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
	patients, and review provision of shared step-down beds		
2.5	Review data sharing process with partner agencies	Agreed criteria for risk of homelessness and support needs, used by all relevant agencies/partners	2
2.6	Continue to work with partners to develop and implement a 'tell us once' referral pathway for victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse, including exploring a Safeguarding Information Sharing Agreement	Improved service for victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse (linked to the Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy)	2
2.7	Ensure housing officers are trained and aware of the potential complexities of dealing with domestic violence and abuse in LGBTQ+ communities, with male victims, minority ethnic groups and other minoritized communities	Improved service for victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse (linked to the Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy)	2
2.8	Together with the Community Safety department team and in line with the Domestic Abuse Strategy, conduct a comprehensive needs analysis of housing options for survivors of domestic violence and abuse Ensure a wide range of safe accommodation options are available to victims, survivors and their children. (this may include refuges, sanctuary schemes and specialist accommodation as required)	Improved service for victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse (linked to the Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy)	2

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
2.9	Encourage landlords to contact the Council at an earlier stage. Consider improving options for direct contact and discussion. Continue to negotiate with landlords to secure retention of the tenancy wherever possible	Preventing homelessness for more households where private sector tenancy is coming to an end	1
2.10	Improve application and review process of the Council's Homelessness Prevention Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments to help address rent arrears as soon as practicable, both for housing officers and partner agencies.	Preventing homelessness for more households where private sector tenancy is coming to an end	1
2.11	Continuing to work with mental health services to identify clients at risk of becoming homeless	Preventing homelessness for more people with mental health issues	2
2.12	Review eligibility criteria for rent deposit schemes to maximise their impact	More people able to access private rented sector	3
2.13	Ensure that 'Duty to Refer' policy is fully understood and implemented by all statutory agencies	Earlier notice where people are likely to be homeless	1
2.14	Explore and develop links with probation and prison resettlement teams to enable engagement with ex-offenders at risk of becoming homeless.	Improved service for ex-offenders	2
2.15	Continue to work with partnership agencies to enable accommodation for offenders to be sourced prior to release	Improved service for ex-offenders	1
2.16	Investigate further options for emergency accommodation on release from prison or other institution for both	Improved service for ex-offenders	2

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
	male and female medium to high risk ex-offenders		
2.17	Work with prisons to encourage an initial assessment of housing options when people first go into prison, including options for retaining a tenancy where appropriate	Improved service for ex-offenders	3 -
2.18	Continue to work with armed forces champion and ensure clear information is available for those who have served in the armed forces. Make every effort to identify applicants who are serving, or have served in the armed forces at an early stage)	Continue to supports our commitment in the armed services covenant and ensure service personnel and their families can access all available homelessness and housing services	3
2.19	Continue to operate and follow shared protocols between Housing and Children's Services. Continue to improve partnership working between Housing and Children's Services to ensure a clear understanding of the responsibilities of both services both internally and with partners	Better understanding for officers and partners of respective roles. Improved joined up services	2
2.20	Continue to operate close and effective joint working between the Housing Service and Adult Social Care teams within the council to improve joint working, provide staff training. Explore shared protocols where this will improve the service to clients and identify potential homelessness as early as possible.	Better understanding for officers and partners of respective roles. Improved joined up services	2

Priority three: Where a household does become homeless, to support them to find appropriate alternative accommodation as quickly as possible

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
3.1	Continue to work proactively with registered partners and agencies to find effective ways to prevent homelessness. To intervene and support clients as early as possible including signposting to independent legal advice and advocacy where appropriate .	Fewer households becoming homeless	On-going
3.2	Where homelessness cannot be prevented, work proactively to relieve homelessness within the timescales set by law.	Homelessness relieved wherever possible	On-going
3.3	Ensure an supply of appropriate emergency and temporary accommodation; ensure that those in emergency and temporary accommodation are supported to find a permanent home as quickly as possible	Able to house those requiring emergency and temporary accommodation while moving people on quickly	On-going
3.4	Minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and other temporary accommodation with shared facilities. Where it is unavoidable, limit its provision to emergency and short term stays only.	Self-contained emergency and temporary accommodation wherever possible	On-going

Priority four: To prevent anyone having to sleep rough

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
4.1	To work to prevent rough sleeping, by proactive intervention and supporting those most at risk	Virtually eliminate rough sleeping by early learning and quick assessment;	Ongoing
4.2	Continue to work with partners: - to sustain and build on the arrangements already in place, from initial outreach through a variety of support services to finding accommodation and preparing people for employment and- to sustain and build on the arrangements for identifying and working with rough sleepers to provide increased, flexible emergency beds and accommodation offer.	Virtually eliminate rough sleeping by early learning and quick assessment; assist ex-rough sleepers to obtain appropriate accommodation as quickly as possible with support as required	On-going
4.3	Provide an emergency accommodation offer for those at risk of rough sleeping during periods of severe weather including Severe Weather Emergency Protocol	Virtually eliminate rough sleeping by early learning and quick assessment; assist ex-rough sleepers to obtain appropriate accommodation as quickly as possible with support as required	Ongoing
4.4	Deliver the Housing First initiative to provide supported accommodation for rough	Clear understanding of costs and benefits and long-term plan for taking forward if agreed	1

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
	sleepers; review after six full months of operation		
4.5	Provide a variety of support services for rough sleepers, including assistance to find longer term accommodation and prepare individuals for training and employment	Clear understanding of costs and benefits and long-term plan for taking forward if agreed	3
4.6	Review accommodation options for ex-rough sleepers, including whether additional provision is needed for those with high and complex needs, and whether there is a requirement for additional long-term supported accommodation for this group	Appropriate accommodation for wide range of needs; no-one returns to sleeping rough	3

Priority five: To maximise the supply of affordable rented accommodation

(Note – Some aspects of the actions below are linked to the development and delivery of the Council’s wider Housing Strategy and Local Plan)

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
5.1	Explore ways to access more privately rented accommodation at an affordable rent and to accept tenants on benefits more widely, including options for incentives to encourage existing private landlords to work with us	Increased supply of accessible and affordable private rented accommodation for clients	2
5.2	Re-establish the private landlords forum	Engagement with a wider range of private landlords and increased supply of accessible and affordable private rented accommodation for clients	1

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
5.3	Work with registered providers and other local agencies to increase supply of affordable rented accommodation; consider whether any existing stock can be used more effectively	Increased supply of social housing/affordable rented housing for clients	2
5.4	Continue to work with partner agencies and environmental health departments to ensure that provided accommodation are appropriately licensed, safe and free from disrepair	Increased supply of social housing/affordable rented housing for clients	1
5.5	Research the feasibility of a social lettings agency and review current and potential options to increase the supply of affordable rented housing and support clients to access private rented accommodation.	Increased supply of affordable rented housing	2
5.5	To explore additional one bedroom accommodation need within Buckinghamshire	Increased supply of affordable housing	2
5.6	To explore provision for large families with registered providers and private landlords	Increased supply of affordable housing	3

Cross-cutting theme 1: Partnership working

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
6.1	Continue work of two homelessness forums (North and South); continue to share data to monitor trends and outcomes; work with partners to flex services in response to changing need	Greater understanding of underlying causes of homelessness and current trends	On-going
6.2	Provide partners with an updated database of contacts within the housing service following restructure and any new appointments.	Partners find it easier to contact the person they need	1
6.3	Participate in exploring potential new protocols with Registered Providers; could cover a range of areas including early warning of rent arrears and anti-social behaviour, as well as potential evictions and also consider a possible asset management strategy to reflect local needs	Reduced number of households evicted from social housing	2
6.4	Review options to work with credit unions to help households to achieve financial stability	Fewer households getting into debt	2
6.5	Improve our working in partnership with appropriate agencies who can supply furniture packs etc to enable people to set up home	Tenancies established more quickly	1
6.6	Contribute to cross-service training to ensure a better shared understanding of	Greater understanding across the Council and partners	1

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
	different services and the contributions made to preventing and tackling homelessness		
6.7	Ensure all staff (Council and stakeholders) are trained in any information-sharing policies and procedures	Ensure information-sharing protocols are understood and used	1
6.8	Extend information-sharing protocols and shared risk assessments to all appropriate partners	Wider range of partners involved	3
6.9	Develop innovative solutions with partner agencies in the employment and charitable sectors to support clients to access volunteering and employment opportunities.	Active engagement with wide range of partners and clients supported to access employment opportunities to help them sustain themselves going forward	2

Cross-cutting theme 2: Make best use of resources

Ref	Action	Target/outcome	Year
7.1	Ensure that Discretionary Hardship payments continue to prevent or relieve homelessness where appropriate	Fewer households becoming homeless	1
7.2	Continue to maximise external funding, exploring opportunities to bid for funding as they become available	Maintain external funding at current levels where possible	On-going

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Evidence base for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy

Buckinghamshire Council

JANUARY 2022

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1 Introduction

This evidence base has been prepared by HQN for Buckinghamshire Council, following DLUHC guidance. The Council is required by law to have a homelessness strategy which should be reviewed at least every five years. As a new council, Buckinghamshire is required to adopt a new strategy by April 2022.

The evidence base sets out the current position. It begins with some basic information about Buckinghamshire and its population, and a summary of key strategies and plans that the homelessness strategy should reflect. It then looks briefly at the overall housing market, supply and affordability. The section on homelessness sets out the legislative background, the national picture, some information on the impact of the pandemic, and the latest figures for Buckinghamshire. The evidence base concludes with emerging themes and challenges which will need to be taken forward into the new strategy.

2 Buckinghamshire and its population

Buckinghamshire is a new unitary authority, bringing together services previously run by the four district councils (South Buckinghamshire, Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe, Chilterns) and Buckinghamshire County Council. The authority covers an area stretching from Greater London and Berkshire to the south, Oxfordshire to the West, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire to the north and east. The area has a number of market towns, including Aylesbury, Buckingham and High Wycombe. Over a quarter of the area falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a further third is covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The area has low unemployment and higher than average incomes, with strong links to London and the Oxford to Cambridge arc. This also results in higher than average house prices and rents.

According to the 2014 mid-year estimates, Buckinghamshire had a slightly higher than average proportion of 5 – 19 year olds when compared to England; 18.8% compared to 17.7%. There is a lower proportion of adults aged 20 – 39, 23.2% compared to 27%. This will include those who go away for higher education and may also include younger people moving to larger urban areas/cities for work. The Corporate Plan 2020 – 2023 (see below) states that 50% of young people go to university, 95% of these outside the area, many of whom do not return. There is also a higher proportion of adults aged 40 – 59, 28.9% compared to 26.7%, suggesting either that some of those who have moved away return or others in this age group are attracted to Buckinghamshire because of the lifestyle it offers. The number of older people living in Buckinghamshire is expected to increase in line with averages for England as a whole: a 23% increase in those aged 65+ and a 42% increase in those aged 85+.

On the whole, these differences are not significant from a homelessness perspective. In theory the slightly lower proportion of the population in the 20 – 39 age group could result in a lower number of homelessness approaches, but this is balanced out by the high cost of housing in the area relative to wages/salaries. Although the number and proportion of older

people is expected to increase, very few homelessness approaches come from this age group (both in Buckinghamshire and in England as a whole).

3 Corporate Plan 2020/23

The Corporate Plan puts some emphasis on partnership working, both across public sector bodies and with wider stakeholders. The Buckinghamshire Growth Board will work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and other public sector bodies to deliver innovative, sustainable and appropriate growth. This includes 50,000 new homes by 2036.

The key priorities are:

- Strengthening our communities, including delivery of new homes
- Protecting the vulnerable, including work to reduce homelessness, tackle drug and alcohol addiction etc
- Improving the environment, including work to tackle climate change
- Increasing prosperity – range of actions from skills development to innovation to promoting tourism.

£21m is spent on communities, which includes work to prevent homelessness.

4 Local Plan

The Council will be drawing up a new Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, reflecting recent changes in planning law and proposals in the recent White Paper: Planning for the Future. The proposed plan for Chiltern and South Bucks was formally withdrawn to allow time for further work. The Wycombe District Local Plan was adopted in 2019; it identifies a need for 13,200 new homes up to 2033, or around 550 new homes a year. These will mainly be built in Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Bourne End. Around half will be on brownfield sites. This includes provision of affordable housing and housing to meet the needs of older people. The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan was adopted in 2021. This identifies a need for 22,475 new homes to be delivered up to 2033, or 1,405 new homes each year. These numbers meet the objectively assessed need for the previous Vale of Aylesbury district and also provide additional homes to meet need arising in other districts of what is now the Buckinghamshire Council area.

The lack of affordable housing is a key driver of homelessness; being able to meet objectively assessed need with the delivery of new homes is a key part of preventing homelessness. Much will depend on the agreed numbers and tenure mix of the affordable housing element, as well as the potential for new properties available to let at market rents.

5 Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing board for Buckinghamshire carried out a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in 2016. This highlighted a number of areas relevant to homelessness, including:

- Alcohol abuse
- Drug abuse
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Physical and sensory disability
- Older people.

6 Domestic violence and abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 aims to raise awareness and understanding of domestic violence and abuse (DVA), improve the effectiveness of the justice system and strengthen support for victims of abuse. Local authorities are required to have a strategy for preventing and tackling DVA.

From a homelessness perspective, eligible victims of domestic abuse are automatically considered a priority under homelessness legislation, and where a new tenancy is offered to someone moving as a result of domestic abuse, a lifetime tenancy should be offered if one was held previously.

Buckinghamshire Council has a strong Local Partnership Board working to prevent and tackle DVA. The 2021 Annual Report from the Director of Public Health highlights awareness raising, education and training and the provision of good quality support and advocacy services. The case studies include work with perpetrators to tackle their behaviours. The report prioritises a number of areas moving forwards:

- County-wide participation in the national campaign to raise awareness of DVA
- Bystander training to tackle harmful attitudes, language and behaviour
- Increasing diversity within the DVA champions scheme
- High-quality shared training for key stakeholders and front-line staff
- The development of a DVA referral pathway
- Evidence-based commissioning of services to tackle perpetrators.

Buckinghamshire Council has recently adopted a new strategy to tackle DVA (Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021 – 2024, agreed by Cabinet on 7 December 2021). The Homelessness Strategy should support the aims of the DA strategy; implementing the DA strategy should help to reduce the number of people who become homeless as a result of DVA.

The priorities in the DA strategy are:

- Early intervention and prevention
- Effective services that meet the needs of victims and their families
- Tackling perpetrators to reduce reoffending
- Supporting professionals to make a difference.

A number of actions are laid out under each priority. Almost all the actions are relevant to the homelessness strategy, a few of the key ones include:

- A 'tell us once' referral pathway and a safeguarding information sharing agreement
- Understanding the uniqueness and potential complexities of LGBTQ+ communities, male victims, minority ethnic groups and other minoritized communities
- Ensure a wide range of safe accommodation options are available to victims, survivors and their children. This may include refuges, sanctuary schemes and specialist accommodation as required
- Conduct a comprehensive needs analysis of housing
- Ensure victims of DVA are treated as high priority need for housing .

7 Housing market areas

A report commissioned by the previous Councils from ORS and Atkins, published in 2015, looked at the Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas for what is now the new County, and neighbouring authorities. The report identified four distinct housing markets: Aylesbury Town, High Wycombe/Amersham, Milton Keynes and Slough/Maidenhead. These areas also correlate to the *broad market rental areas* as defined by ONS. However, only Milton Keynes met the threshold for *travel to work* to be identified as a *strategic housing market area*, the others should be considered as local housing market areas or sub-markets. Strong links were identified between what was then the South Bucks area and the Reading and Slough housing market area.

From a homelessness perspective, it is sufficient to note that there are different housing markets in the area. In practical terms, long-term homelessness is best prevented if households can remain within areas where they have support from family or friends, and where children can remain within the same school and friendship group. This has to be balanced with the shortage of accommodation overall. The question of affordability is also complex: some areas may have slightly lower rents but if this reduces access to public transport and local facilities, the overall cost of living may be similar or even higher.

8 Affordable housing supply

Like many councils, Buckinghamshire is reliant upon its housing association partners (Registered Providers or RPs) to deliver new affordable homes. These will include homes purchased under S106 agreements with developers, those funded through the National Affordable Housing Programme through Homes England and those funded by the RPs themselves.

The figures below show the supply of new social housing delivered in 2020/21, broken down by the previous local authority areas (Chilterns and South Bucks amalgamated).

Table 1 – supply of new affordable homes

	C&SB	WYC	AV	BC Total
Social Rent	0	25	23	48
Affordable Rent	12	20	262	294
Intermediate	14	17	129	160
Total	26	62	414	502

Source: Bucks Council

NB: These figures include both new builds and acquisitions/purchases. The 14 intermediate properties shown under C&SB were built by South Bucks Council and sold to a private company. They are managed by an RP.

9 Affordability

The following tables give the local housing allowance rates for the two largest BMRA (Broad Market Rental Areas) in Buckinghamshire – Aylesbury BMRA and Chiltern BMRA. Overall, there are 8 BMRA's covering parts of Buckinghamshire. The figures are provided for the Aylesbury and Chiltern areas below to illustrate that affordability issues that exist generally with local housing allowance rates in Buckinghamshire.

Table 2 – local housing allowance rates for benefit calculations

	Aylesbury Weekly figure	Aylesbury Monthly equivalent	Chilterns Weekly figure	Chilterns Monthly equivalent
Single room rate	78.59	340.56	89.75	388.92
1 bed	155.34	673.14	172.60	747.93
2 bed	184.11	797.81	224.38	972.31
3 bed	241.64	1,047.11	287.67	1,246.57
4+ bed	322.19	1,396.16	379.73	1,645.50

Source: Gov.uk website, rates for 2021/22

Table 3 – private sector rents

	Mean	LQ	Median	UQ
Single room	580	550	575	600
1 bed	769	695	750	825
2 bed	975	850	900	1,075
3 bed	1,294	1,100	1,250	1,425
4+ bed	2,084	1,475	1,850	2,400

Source: ONS private rental market statistics to April 21

It is clear from the figures above that even the cheapest single room is unaffordable for anyone on benefits, including working households on low incomes. A 1 bed flat is potentially more affordable: the lower quartile market rent is above the LHA rate for Aylesbury Vale but below that for Chilterns. The LHA rate for Chilterns is also below the median market rent. It should be noted however that the LHA rate is higher for Chilterns precisely because rents are higher and it may not be possible to secure any property at the lower quartile or median rates. The figure should also be treated with some caution as the ONS figures are to April 2021 and rents may have risen since then.

There is a similar pattern for 2 and 3 beds. The LHA rate for 2 and 3 beds in Aylesbury is below even the lower quartile market rent, meaning this would be unaffordable. The Chilterns LHA rate for 2 beds is above both the lower quartile and the median rate, so in theory is more affordable, with similar caveats to above. For 3 beds the Chilterns LHA rate is above the lower quartile market rent but below the median, meaning affordability is worsening. For four beds, nothing is affordable in Aylesbury, but a lower quartile market rent is below LHA rates in Chilterns, if a property can be found at the lower quartile rate.

This pattern is not unusual across southern England. The government policy of freezing LHA rates between 2016 and 2020 saw an increasing gap between LHA rates and market rents. Although LHA rates have increased in 2021, this does little to address the underlying gap.

10 Choice based lettings

The current Buckinghamshire choice based lettings (CBL) policy has been in place since 2019, although the four local authorities have been operating a common allocations policy and process for some time. As with most CBL schemes, only those with an evidenced housing need may join the housing register. Local connection criteria also apply, and there are exclusions for those with a history of arrears or anti-social behaviour. Those with higher incomes or who have significant assets are also excluded. Restrictions do not apply to those for whom a statutory homelessness duty has been accepted.

Applicants for whom a main duty has been accepted under homelessness legislation (ie it has not been possible to prevent or relieve homelessness, they are homeless, not intentionally so and in priority need) are placed in Band D. Applicants for whom a prevention or relief duty applies are placed in Band E. This banding was changed last year to try and secure better outcomes for those for whom a statutory homelessness duty was accepted. Procedures have been put into place to guard against perverse outcomes eg households not complying with activities to relieve homelessness in the hope that they will be placed in Band D.

Outcomes should be closely monitored but at this stage it is not recommended to amend the banding again.

The figures below are for 2020/21. The low number of lettings in Band A reflects the relatively low numbers placed in this band, which is intended for more urgent cases. The high number of lettings in Band D indicates that a reasonable number of households for whom a statutory homelessness duty has been accepted are being allocated social housing (Band D is not

exclusively for homeless households but they do make up a significant proportion of this band).

Table 4 – CBL lettings by band

A	118
B	572
C	138
D	397
E	97

Lettings by bed size obviously reflect stock availability, which is a combination of stock profile and turnover rates, rather than demand.

Table 5 – CBL lettings by bed size

Studio	12
1 Bed	499
2 Bed	553
3 Bed	225
4 Bed	32
5 Bed	1

11 Tenancy strategy

The four local authorities produced a joint tenancy strategy in 2013. Work was carried out to update this in 2018 but any revisions to the strategy were held pending the formation of the new Council.

The current strategy expects Registered Providers to use fixed term tenancies with a minimum tenancy period of five years, following a one-year introductory tenancy. Tenancies should be renewed if there have been no major changes in the household or breaches of the tenancy conditions. Where the tenancy is not being renewed, the RP is expected to work with the tenant to find an appropriate housing solution; both the tenant and the Council should be given at least six months' notice, to prevent the tenant becoming homeless. The tenancy strategy does not state the grounds on which a tenancy could be ended, leaving this up to RPs to determine. The strategy also states that life-time tenancies should be considered where appropriate.

When reviewing the tenancy strategy, Bucks should ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to prevent a tenant becoming homeless when a tenancy is not renewed. Bucks will also want to be reassured that wherever practical, steps are taken to move tenants on from property which no longer meets their needs eg an adapted property where no-one in the household requires those adaptations, or a property which is being under-occupied.

12 Homelessness – legislative background

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 introduced significant legislative changes into how local authorities responded to homelessness. Whilst the legislation reflected the way working practices were evolving to emphasise the prevention of homelessness, the new duties brought significant additional work and financial pressures. Prior to the HRA, a statutory duty to a homelessness household only crystallised where they were shown to be at risk of becoming homeless in the next 28 days, priority need (either because there were children in the household or because of a significant need that would make finding accommodation more difficult) and not intentionally homeless. Although the statutory duty was to procure accommodation, the majority of households where a statutory duty was accepted went into social rented housing.

Since the HRA, the duty to initially prevent homelessness where possible applies to all households, regardless of intentionality or priority need. The prevention duty focuses on keeping people in their existing homes or facilitating a planned move where this is not possible. If homelessness cannot be prevented, there is a duty to relieve homelessness by supporting the household to find alternative accommodation. A significant number of homeless households now go into the private rented sector, although social rented housing and in particular supported housing also play key roles.

The HRA also introduced a 'duty to refer' for specified public sector bodies to refer clients who are at risk of becoming homeless. The specified bodies include prisons, probation, job centres, social services and hospitals.

13 National homelessness trends before the pandemic

Statutory homelessness began to rise in 2010/11; prior to that there had been consistent reductions since 2003/4 when work to prevent homelessness was first introduced. The rise in homelessness was attributed to a number of things, chiefly the reduction in the amount of social housing available and benefit restrictions which made accessing the private rented sector more difficult for those on low incomes. The rise in the number of statutory homeless households led to a greater number of these going into temporary accommodation (TA); often bed and breakfast, sometimes remaining there for a number of years (particularly in London). The number of households in temporary accommodation in England almost doubled between 1998 and 2002. Numbers continued to rise until mid-2004 when they stabilised and began to fall slowly. By 2011 they were almost back to 1998 levels but beginning to rise again. They have continued to rise – by mid-2021 there were 96,600 households in TA in England.

The number of rough sleepers also grew significantly from 2010, gradually levelling off by 2019. A number of core cities saw significant increases though, and there were concerns about EU migrants with no recourse to public funds. MHCLG responded with targeted funding and programmes to tackle rough sleeping. Housing First schemes were developed which prioritised giving someone a stable home alongside tackling the problems that had led them to sleep rough.

Welfare benefit changes have also impacted on homelessness over the past three to four years. From 2018, those aged under 35 were only eligible for the shared room rate of the local housing allowance (used to calculate housing benefit); previously the restriction had applied to those under 25.

An ICF report for MHCLG on the initial implementation of the new HRA powers and their impact published in March 2020 highlighted that the majority of local authorities had commissioned new services from third parties in response to the legislation. This may in part reflect significant reductions in some services in the preceding years: a WPI report for St Mungo's and Homeless Link estimated that between 2008/9 and 2017/18 spending on single homelessness reduced by 50%, almost entirely due to changes in funding for Supporting People activities.

The ICF report also noted that the majority of local authorities felt that the lack of affordable housing was the biggest barrier to resolving homelessness.

Finally, in 2020 the Ministry of Justice established homelessness prevention task forces to find accommodation for those leaving prison to prevent them ending up rough sleeping. There is some early evidence that this is leading to significantly more homelessness approaches from those with an offending history.

Table 6 below shows the reason for loss of last settled accommodation for those households for whom a statutory duty was accepted by the local authority. Figures are shown for 2015, 2016 and 2017, prior to the introduction of the HRA. Because they show only households where the statutory duty applied, these will be mainly families with dependent children or households with a support need or other barrier to finding their own housing.

Table 6 – reason for loss of last settled accommodation – statutory homelessness acceptances, England, shown as percentage of all acceptances

	2015	2016	2017
Parents no longer willing to accommodate	15	15	14
Other family/friend no longer willing to accommodate	12	12	12
Violent relationship breakdown	12	11	12
Non-violent relationship breakdown	5	5	6
Mortgage arrears	1	1	1
Rent arrears	3	3	3
Loss of AST	30	32	28
Loss of other rented/tied	6	7	6

	2015	2016	2017
Other	16	16	18

Source: Gov.uk statistics

Around 30% of all acceptances were due to loss of an assured shorthold tenancy, generally a private sector tenancy. Parents, other family or friends no longer willing to accommodate was the reason for more than a quarter of homelessness acceptances. Violent relationship breakdown/domestic abuse was the next largest group. These reasons for loss of last settled accommodation had been consistent since 2010.

Table 7 below shows the reason households were awarded priority status in line with the legislation. Not surprisingly, the vast majority were households with dependent children; a smaller number were households where someone was pregnant. Mental health issues accounted for around 10% of applications, with physical disability slightly lower. The low number of households awarded priority status due to domestic violence/abuse reflects the fact that many of these applications will have included a family with children.

Table 7 – reason for priority need where statutory duty accepted, England, shown as percentage of all acceptances

	2015	2016	2017
Household with dependent children	68	68	66
Household member pregnant	7	6	7
Old Age	2	1	1
Physical disability	7	7	8
Mental health	9	9	10
Young person	2	2	2
Domestic violence	2	2	2
Other	4	3	3
Homeless in emergency	0	0	1

Source: Gov.uk statistics

These tables are included to paint a picture of the national trends prior to the HRA.

14 National picture 2020/21

During 20/21 the number of households owed a prevention duty dropped by 20% on the previous year. It is somewhat surprising that it didn't drop by a greater amount during the pandemic; however, there were significant rises in approaches from rough sleepers, from single households who are likely to have been 'sofa surfing' prior to the pandemic and from those suffering domestic abuse.

The number of households owed a prevention duty because of the ending of an AST dropped by over 50%, reflecting legislation which was put into place to prevent evictions in the short term. The number of households owed a relief duty went up slightly, by 6%, this may reflect difficulties in persuading friends and family to continue to offer accommodation in the short-term. The number of households with children at risk of becoming homeless because of domestic abuse rose by 14% , representing a fifth of all households with children at risk of becoming homeless.

The number of households assessed as rough sleeping went up by almost 40%, reflecting the drive to get people off the streets under the '*Everyone In*' initiative. The number of households owed a prevention or relief duty with a support need due to an offending history also increased, by 26%; this may also reflect the '*Everyone In*' campaign where people were accommodated to prevent them sleeping rough.

Households whose lead applicant is black were over-represented, making up almost 10% of total households owed a duty; it is estimated that these households comprise only 3.5% of the population. This may reflect the disproportionate impact that Covid is known to have had on BME households. The number of households where the lead applicant was unemployed also rose by 18%, again reflecting increased unemployment during the pandemic.

The majority of households with children where the prevention duty ended were able to secure a new tenancy for six months or more. A third of these were able to remain in their existing accommodation. The number of households in temporary accommodation increased by 14% when compared to the previous year; the number of single households in temporary accommodation increased by 46% (this figure includes those housed under '*Everyone In*').

A similar number of main homelessness duty decisions were made in 20/21 as in the previous year, with a slight drop in the number of main duty accepted decisions. This is likely to reflect the additional work that was done with households during the pandemic under the prevention and relief duties.

For households with children owed a prevention duty, the main reasons for loss of last settled accommodation were:

- Ending of AST
- Family and friends no longer willing to accommodate
- Domestic abuse.

It is noted that these were the main reasons for loss of last settled accommodation prior to the HRA and to the pandemic.

For households with children owed the relief duty it was:

- Domestic abuse
- Family and friends no longer willing to accommodate
- Other/not known.

For households with children owed a prevention duty, accommodation at time of application was:

- Private rented sector
- Living with family
- Social rented.

For households with children owed the relief duty, the top 3 were as above; there were also smaller but significant numbers living with friends and having no fixed abode.

For households with children the main reasons for support needs were:

- Domestic abuse
- Mental health
- Physical health/disability.

For households with children, the main accommodation outcomes were:

- Private rented sector
- Social housing
- Family/friends
- For the relief duty, a significant number not known.

Taken together, these figures suggest a number of things. Where domestic abuse was not a factor, more households were enabled to remain in their existing accommodation, allowing the prevention duty to be ended. It is not surprising that many of those unable to remain in their existing accommodation were those suffering domestic abuse and those where friends and family were no longer willing to accommodate. The shift towards greater use of the private rented sector reflects on-going trends prior to the pandemic; it may also reflect the increasing reduction in the number of social housing lettings year on year.

For single households, main reasons for homelessness are:

- Family/friends no longer able to accommodate
- Other/not known
- Ending of assured shorthold tenancy (generally private sector rent)
- Relationship breakdown (non-violent relationship breakdown accounts for a larger proportion of applications for single households than violent relationship breakdown).

The majority of single households were living with family/friends at time of application. Smaller numbers were in privately rented or social rented housing. For single households, the picture on support needs is quite different; the main support needs were:

- Mental health
- History of rough sleeping
- Physical health
- Drug and alcohol
- Offending.

The majority of households with children where there is a support need have only one support need, but up to a third of single households have two or three support needs.

2020/21 national figures also show a large increase in applications from households with a history of offending; as noted above this may be due to the work of the new Homelessness Prevention Task Forces established by the Ministry of Justice.

In terms of accommodation outcomes, single households are more likely to go into supported housing or a hostel.

In addition to the '*Everyone In*' campaign referred to above, legislative changes in response to the pandemic included restrictions on evictions from rented accommodation, lengthened notice periods for landlords, and restrictions on bailiff activities. Lenders were also required to offer mortgage holidays or reduced payments in appropriate cases.

15 Previous homelessness strategies

Chiltern and South Bucks Councils developed a joint housing and homelessness strategy 2018 – 2021. This identified the cost of housing in the area as a key challenge, leading to higher numbers of people seeking help from the shared housing service. Limited land availability and high costs also restrict the number of affordable new homes bought forward. Amongst the key challenges identified was implementing the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act and developing more temporary accommodation options to reduce the use of B&B and also reduce the cost to the council. The strategy also noted the problem of other local authorities using accommodation in the area for 'out of area' placement of homeless households; because they are often making payments to landlords for accommodating a homeless client, this can increase the expectations of landlords when housing a homeless client from Bucks Council. The strategy also predicted a significant increase in demand for temporary accommodation (TA) as a result of the HRA. The strategy includes a TA framework, a clear and transparent process for securing and allocating TA.

Wycombe's previous homelessness strategy covered 2014/2019. Priorities include:

- Increased options to prevent homelessness
- Improvements to existing TA
- Disposal of less appropriate TA, proceeds to be invested in new TA
- Closer working with private landlords; integrating relevant services
- Actions to tackle rough sleeping
- Better quality self-serve housing advice
- Investigating the feasibility of a social lettings agency
- Targeting services for particular client groups where appropriate.

Aylesbury Vale housing and homelessness strategy runs 2019 – 2022. Key achievements from the previous strategy (2014 – 2017) include:

- Delivery of 1200 new affordable homes (to March 2018)
- Revised nomination agreements to improve nominations for vulnerable households
- A building resilience project to seek out those at risk of homelessness at earliest opportunity
- Funding awards to local partners to encourage innovation and support work on winter emergency provision/severe weather emergency provision
- Hosting workshops by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance to build new accreditation scheme
- Increased engagement with partners including a quarterly homelessness prevention forum.

The key objectives for the new strategy are:

- Prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping
- Continue to facilitate and maximise the supply of affordable housing
- Respond to the on-going challenges of welfare reform
- Contribute to the improvement of health and wellbeing services for those at risk of becoming homeless.

Not surprisingly, the three strategies have a good deal in common, with some differences of emphasis, which reflect both the varied geography of the areas, and differing levels and types of need. They also reflect the different times when the strategies were developed, with different local and national priorities at the time.

Areas to be carried forward into the new strategy might include:

- Maximising supply of affordable housing
- Ensuring appropriate supply of TA to match need and ensure value for money
- Increased options to prevent homelessness
- Improved access to the private rented sector
- High-quality self-serve housing advice
- Investigating the feasibility of a local lettings agency
- Preventing rough sleeping
- Responding to legislative change on domestic abuse
- Continuing engagement with partners.

16 Buckinghamshire homelessness stats 2020/21

The information below is for the financial year 2020/21, the first year that Buckinghamshire operated as the new unitary authority. The total number of households who were assessed under the legislation was 1,918, and a duty was owed to the vast majority: 1,767 (92%).

For most cases, only the prevention duty applied: 1,038 cases (54%). Of these, only a very small number (24) approached because of the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy.

The relief duty applied to 729 households (38%). A further 151 households (8%) were found not to be threatened with homelessness.

16.1 Reason for approach

The tables below give the reasons for clients approaching the service, broken down by year. This shows the main reasons people become at risk of homelessness.

Table 8 – reason for loss of last settled accommodation

Reason	Prevention numbers	Prevention %age	Relief numbers	Relief %age
Other	348	20	225	
Family/friends no longer willing to accommodate	223	13	205	12
End of private rented tenancy – AST	170	7	25	1
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent breakdown)	90	5	59	1
End of social rented	66	4	7	1
Domestic abuse	64	4	103	6
End of private tenancy – not AST	25	1	18	1
Left institution with no accommodation available	23	1	41	1
Non-racially motivated/other motivated violence or harassment	21	1	20	1
Eviction from supported housing	8	1	26	1
Required to leave home office accommodation	-	-	-	-
Total				

Source: MHCLG live tables

These figures are largely in line with the national picture. Approaches due to domestic abuse is perhaps slightly lower than might be expected, and given the period covered, ending of an assured shorthold tenancy may be slightly higher. Similarly, ending of social rented tenancies is higher than would be expected for this particular year, though may reflect the trend towards an increasingly harder line being taken by Registered Providers towards rent arrears. These differences are not significant but should continue to be closely monitored.

16.2 Accommodation at time of application

Table 9 – accommodation at time of application for those for whom a duty is owed

	Prevention Nos	Prevention &age	Relief Nos	Relief %age
Private rented sector	358	20	43	2
Living with family	253	14	96	5
No fixed abode	-	-	192	11
Social rented	193	11	43	2
Living with friends	74	4	65	4
Homeless leaving an Institution	34	2	72	4
Rough sleeping	-	-	76	4
Owner occupier (including shared ownership)	16	1	3	-
Temporary accommodation	9	1	35	2
NASS	-	-	-	-
Refuge	7	1	29	2
Other/Not known	94	5	75	4

Source: MHCLG live tables

Again, this is largely in line with the national picture. The fact that the majority of households living in social rented housing have their homelessness prevented suggests that local authority interventions are effective.

16.3 Household type

Table 10 – type of household owed a duty

	Prevention duty	Relief duty
Single parent with dependent children (male)	22	2
Single parent with dependent children (female)	281	92
Single parent with dependent children (other/n/k)	1	0
Single adult (male)	308	424
Single adult (female)	214	153
Single adult (other/n/k)	4	1
Couple with dependent children	126	16
Couple/two adults no children	67	37
Three or more adults with dependent children	7	3
Three or more adults no children	8	1

Source: MHCLG live tables.

The most common household type owed both the prevention and relief duties is single men, followed by single women. This is likely to reflect the increased emphasis on tackling rough sleeping and the more limited opportunities for sofa surfing during the pandemic. Female single parents with dependent children are the next largest group, again this is in line with the national picture.

16.4 Employment status

Table 11 – employment status of main adult owed a duty (2018/19)

	Numbers	% age
Registered unemployed	589	33
Not working due to long term illness or disability	185	10
Working full-time	276	16
Working part-time	198	11
Not seeking work/at home	122	7
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	91	5
Retired	31	2
Student/training	22	1
Other	177	10
Not known	76	4

Source: MHCLG live tables

A third of all households owed a duty were headed by someone who was unemployed. Just under a third were headed by someone working full or part time.

16.5 Age

Table 12 – age of main adult owed a duty (2018/19)

Age	Numbers	% age
16/17	8	1
18 – 24	315	18
25 – 34	597	34
35 – 44	429	24
45 – 54	254	14
55 – 64	122	7
65 – 74	34	2
75+	8	1

Source: MHCLG live tables

The age profile is largely in line with the national picture – the majority of households owed a duty were headed by someone aged 25 – 34. The numbers who are aged 65+ are small.

16.6 Duty to refer

Table 13 – households assessed as a result of referral, including ‘duty to refer’

	Numbers	%age
Total households assessed as a result of a referral	333	100
Household referred under ‘duty to refer’	182	55
Adult secure estate (prison)	13	4
Youth secure estate	-	-
National probation service	44	13
Community rehabilitation company	13	4
Hospital A&E urgent treatment centre or in-patient care	16	5
Mental health in-patient care	12	4
Job Centre Plus	16	5
Adult social services	14	4
Children’s social services	16	5
Other/not known	38	11
Referrals from agencies not subject to ‘duty to refer’	151	45

Source: MHCLG live tables

The duty to refer is an important part of the HRA, enabling local authorities to begin work to prevent homelessness at the earliest possible stage. Table 13 looks both at the total number of households assessed as a result of a referral, and the source of those referrals. 17% of all households assessed were as a result of a referral. This is relatively high, which may be down to two factors. A significant number of referrals came from agencies not subject to the legislative duty, which is very encouraging – Buckinghamshire is clearly getting the message out to stakeholders that it is actively seeking referrals. It also suggests that referral mechanisms are working.

The sources of referral are widely spread, with the probation service accounting for 13% of referrals, and the remainder evenly spread across other stakeholders. The majority of referrals not subject to the duty are coming from voluntary sector agencies, including RPs.

16.7 Ethnicity

Table 14 – ethnicity of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty

	Numbers	%age
White	1,259	71
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	144	8
Asian/Asian British	194	11
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	79	4
Other ethnic groups	29	2
Not known	62	3

Source: MHCLG live tables

This table again reflects the national picture, where black/African/Caribbean/black British households are over-represented. They make up 8% of households owed a duty, compared to 3.5% of the population (Census 2011 figures, I'll see if I can find something more up to date). While the percentage of Asian/Asian British households is higher at 11%, this is more in line with the population figure of 8% (same source, ditto).

16.8 Nationality

Table 15 – nationality of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty

	Numbers	%age
UK	1,590	90
non-EEA	80	4
A8, A2 and Croatia	47	3
Other EEA	39	2
Ireland	750	

Source: MHCLG live tables

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of households owed a duty were UK nationals.

16.9 Sexual identification

Table 16 – sexual identification of main applicants owed a duty

	Numbers	% age
Heterosexual	1,479	84
Homosexual (lesbian/gay)	20	1
Other	102	6
Prefer not to say	166	9

Source: MHCLG live tables

The number identifying as homosexual is low – around half of the UK-wide figure. It is likely that some lesbian/gay applicants may have chosen ‘other’ or ‘prefer not to say’; this is not particularly significant but the homelessness strategy must reflect the needs of all applicants, regardless of sexual orientation.

16.10 Support needs

Table 17 – Support needs of applicants owed prevention or relief duty

Support need	Numbers	%age
History of mental health problems	634	36
Physical health and disability	390	22
At risk of/experienced domestic abuse	356	20
Offending history	316	18
History of repeat homelessness	312	18
Drug dependency	156	9
History of rough sleeping	204	12
Alcohol dependency	119	7
Learning disability	215	12
18-25 requiring support to manage independently	75	4
Access to education employment or training	43	2
At risk of/experienced non-domestic abuse	87	5
At risk of/experienced sexual exploitation	105	6
Old age	22	1
Care leaver 21+	22	1
Care leaver 18 - 20	19	1
16/17 year olds	15	1
Young parent requiring support	7	1
Former asylum seeker	13	1
Served in HM forces	32	2

Source: MHCLG live tables

Again, these are largely in line with the national picture. The repeat homelessness figure is not untypical; in developing the strategy we will look at ways to reduce this. We will also examine support available to those with mental health needs; nationally we have seen increasing pressure on homelessness services arising from cuts to community mental health services and long waiting times to access treatment.

17 Temporary accommodation

The previous district councils had prioritised increasing the supply of temporary accommodation (TA) following the introduction of the HRA. This reflected both the additional households who may need access to TA and the longer length of time they may spend occupying it.

The table below shows the number of temporary accommodation schemes units which are mainly self-contained accommodation and are owned/managed by the Council or a Registered Provider partner. Placements are subject to availability and the needs of the household concerned. These figures do not include specialist TA for those who have been sleeping rough.

Accommodation Type	Number of units	Former Legacy District Council area	Provider
Bedsits	33	Wycombe	Bucks Council
	9	Chiltern	Paradigm Housing
	15	Aylesbury Vale	Bromford Housing
1 Bedroom	60	Aylesbury Vale	Bromford Housing
	3	South Bucks	Bucks Housing Association (leased from Bucks Council)
	2	South Bucks	Buck Housing Association
	11	Chiltern	Paradigm
2 Bedroom	1	Wycombe	Bucks Council
	1	Wycombe	Home Group
	9	South Bucks	Bucks Housing Association (leased from Bucks Council)
	1	South Bucks	Bucks Housing Association

Accommodation Type	Number of units	Former Legacy District Council area	Provider
3 Bedroom	1	Wycombe	Bucks Council
	2	South Bucks	Bucks Housing Association (leased from Bucks Council)
	2	Wycombe	Bucks Housing Association
4 Bedroom	1	Wycombe	Buckinghamshire Council
Other	46 (varying sizes)	Wycombe	Red Kite – Contractual agreement to use stock as TA
	Variable	Aylesbury Vale	Rent Connect – Securing private sector tenancies
	27 (varying sizes)	Chiltern/South Bucks	Paradigm – Private Sector Leasing Schemes

In addition to the above, the Council also has a number of third party private temporary accommodation providers who it will procure accommodation from on a case by case basis when required due to pressures on availability or the specific needs of the client. These are predominantly located in the Wycombe and Slough areas and include self-contained and stand-alone units (ie no shared facilities etc).

18 Rough sleeping

The legacy District Councils had a strong track record of tackling rough sleeping supported by the RSI (Rough Sleeper Initiative) and working in a multi-agency environment with stakeholders in the statutory and voluntary sector. The commencement of the new authority coincided with the onset of the Covid emergency and the Government's "Everybody In" instruction. The Council's successful implementation of "Everybody In" locally was underpinned by the existing rough sleeper working arrangements and stakeholder partnerships that were already in place in Bucks at that time. This included working with Public Health to pro-actively roll out vaccinations to clients and working with partners to

support clients within the accommodation on a day-to-day basis, including drug and alcohol services to support safe use within accommodation.

As a result, the Council was able to accommodate over 300 verified rough sleepers during the Covid emergency period, the vast majority of these in bed and breakfast units across Buckinghamshire, mainly in High Wycombe with some provision in Aylesbury. In Aylesbury, an agreement was also reached with a local hotel to provide rooms during the pandemic. Many of these households have moved on from emergency accommodation with the majority moving on to alternate accommodation, including supported housing and private rented accommodation. The Council is taking a measured approach to the end of '*Everybody In*', providing short-term emergency accommodation for those who are engaged with support and actively looking for somewhere to live. It is likely that a small number of people will return to sleeping rough, but the outreach programme will continue to work with these to support and encourage them to find a home.

The Council has successfully bid for funding from the Government's NSAP (Next Steps Accommodation Programme), RSAP (Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme), RSI 4 (Rough Sleeper Initiative 4) and the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme in order to deliver new and additional accommodation. The Council will continue to deliver a comprehensive outreach and support service for rough sleepers in the post "*Everybody In*" environment. This includes:

- A range of measures to identify those at risk of sleeping rough at the earliest possible stage. Measures in place include landlord mediation; funding is also available to reduce benefit shortfalls, reduce rent arrears and support a planned move to alternative accommodation. The measures are supported by internal and external stakeholders including Connection Support, One Recovery Bucks, Oasis drug and alcohol outreach, P3 support, Wycombe Homeless Connection and Aylesbury Homeless Action
- The '*Blue Light*' project which draws on public health funding to target those with a history of problem drinking and substance misuse, providing support and recovery work. Again a range of internal and external stakeholders are involved including One Recovery Bucks, Buckinghamshire Council (Housing, Community Safety and Social Care), Public Health, Thames Valley Police, Probation, Mental Health Service, Ambulance Service
- A scheme for ex-offenders, funded through DLUHC and MOJ, which employs two support officers to help people find appropriate accommodation, with some financial assistance as required
- Tenancy sustainment measures for ex-rough sleepers to support them in their new accommodation; these include specialist mental health and drug and alcohol support workers. Partners include Connection Support, Bucks MIND
- 11 units of accommodation provided under the Rough sleeper accommodation programme, in partnership with Wycombe YMCA
- A programme to enable those housed in hotels and emergency accommodation to move on, with one-to-one support and access to funding as required. Partners include Connection Support, Aylesbury Homeless Action Group, Wycombe Homeless Connection etc.

- Measures to minimise the time people spend sleeping rough, including expansion of the outreach service, increased and flexible provision of emergency beds, a seven day accommodation offer for verified rough sleepers and expanded provision of specialist mental health and drug and alcohol support
- A skills and education hub will open in 2022 to provide bespoke practical education and training to support people into employment.

Accommodation options for ex-rough sleepers include:

- Supported housing schemes mainly in Aylesbury and High Wycombe; generally these are low support with some providing medium/higher support
- Non-supported housing: a small number of units provided for move-on by Harrow Churches and Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust
- Social housing – although demand for one beds is high and there are long wait times
- Temporary Accommodation (under the Statutory Homelessness Duty, only for those with a priority need who are not intentionally homeless)
- Private rented sector – Wycombe Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme is aimed at single people including ex-rough sleepers; Aylesbury Homeless Action Group support ex rough sleepers into PRS accommodation; council officers will also work with private landlords to secure accommodation for this group
- Support to EU/EEA Nationals not eligible for public funds: Connection Support have funding from central government to work with this group.

The move to the new Council has also supported the development of further joint working arrangements between the housing and social care services. This includes the introduction of dedicated complex case officers in the new housing service structure, cross-service complex case panels (to review and monitor challenging cases) and the ongoing work with children's services to support care leavers and other vulnerable young people and their families. These joint working arrangements support the early identification of potential rough sleepers or single person homelessness and help to ensure that appropriate preventative measures are put in place.

Winter provision – measures are in place across the Council area, working with RSI partners. There are slightly different conditions attached to placements; it would be helpful to align these if possible although the differences are not sufficiently material to give rise to any legal challenges. The report for the South area includes a risk assessment which could usefully be extended to the North. Provision in both areas is contingent upon people being sufficiently engaged with support services. Accommodation is being block booked ahead of time to ensure sufficient provision.

19 Mortgage repossession

Mortgage repossession has not been a significant factor in homelessness for more than a decade, largely due to historically low interest rates. During the pandemic temporary measures were put in place which further reduced the number of cases. This has started to rise again in 2021 although numbers are still very small.

Mortgage repossession cases 2021 – first three quarters

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total
Mortgage claims	4	17	28	49
Mortgage outright	-	4	3	7
Mortgage warrants	1	1	8	10

It is important to continue to monitor the figures and to continue work to prevent homelessness through repossession but it is unlikely to be a significant factor unless interest rates rise considerably.

20 Looking ahead

The evidence base captures current statistics and trends; it's also important to consider what is changing in the wider context and the impact this might have. This has been done at a detailed level, mainly as part of the consultation (more information below). It is tricky to do at a wider level, partly because the longer-term impacts of the pandemic remain uncertain. While it seems likely that more people will continue to work from home, at least some of the time, this is likely to be less the case for those in lower-paid and insecure employment. Some landlords are beginning to look at design and lettings criteria to facilitate home working but the intense pressure on social housing means that routine under-occupation (to allow for a bedroom to be used as a home office, for example) is less likely.

The pandemic has increased the pace of channel shift for customers, with more people accessing information on-line. This is reflected in the strategy, which prioritises reviewing and strengthening this information. During the life of the strategy, it is likely that artificial intelligence (AI) will begin to be used in homelessness, but it is unlikely that it will have been widely adopted. The role of AI is certainly something that will need to be considered when the post-2025 strategy is being drawn up.

21 Consultation

DLUHC guidance on developing a homelessness strategy requires that they are developed with, and have the support of, other local authority departments, and relevant external partners. To ensure this engagement and to maximise commitment to delivering the new strategy, a number of consultation events were held. These are listed below, together with a brief summary of the outcomes.

Local authorities should also consider the best way to get the views of service users, who may have very different experiences and circumstances. In view of this and the difficulties of organising consultation events with Covid restrictions in place, the strategy has relied on the views put forward by third sector organisations supporting homeless households.

21.1 Stakeholder forums

There are two stakeholder forums for Buckinghamshire which meet regularly to discuss issues relating to homelessness and to monitor actions from previous actions plans. Attendees include those from third sector organisations and RPs. A consultation session was held with each forum. During the three-hour workshops, participants were asked to identify what was in place to support particular client groups or to address causes of homelessness, where there were gaps, and priorities for addressing these.

The strengths of current services include:

- Strong partnership working in many areas and for many different client groups, including protocols for sharing information
- Services which are able to develop and respond as needs change
- Strong focus on tackling financial exclusion with new partnerships being rolled out across the whole local authority area.

Key priorities which emerged from the sessions included:

- Earlier identification of those at risk of becoming homeless, ranging from survivors of domestic violence and abuse to those leaving prison
- More housing which is affordable and easier to access for those on low incomes; more options for people to retain tenancy where feasible
- More support services which are able to work with households for a longer period of time to ensure the tenancy is sustained
- Joined up services for those with multiple needs; navigators to support them to find appropriate services
- Training/awareness sessions around particular topics such as responding to people with mental health needs
- Reviewing thresholds for access to some services, so that people don't have to be in crisis before they can get help

- More focus on financial education/literacy, eg in schools
- Better monitoring of repeat homelessness
- A contact list for the housing and homelessness services to make it easier for external partners to contact the right person.

Organisations were also asked about what they would like to see in the new strategy, and how their organisation could contribute. These 'wants' and 'offers' are picked up in the strategy itself.

21.2 Internal stakeholder forum

This session was equally well-attended, with representation from most services, including adult care services, children's services, community safety, and housing benefit. Some of those attending had particular interests in certain client groups, such as those leaving the military, and gypsies, Romany gypsies, and travellers.

During the three-hour workshops, participants were asked to identify how their services contributed to preventing and tackling homelessness, any areas where services could be improved, and priorities for addressing these.

The strengths of current services include:

- Preventing and tackling homelessness is a key corporate priority
- Strong partnership working with a shared understanding of the causes of homelessness.

Key priorities which emerged from the session included:

- Developing a better understanding of 'intentional' homelessness where other factors, such as drug and alcohol abuse, are involved
- Greater emphasis on tenancy sustainment from all services
- More suitable accommodation options for various client groups.

There were specific references to those leaving prison, leaving the armed forces, and the gypsy, Romany and traveller communities.

21.3 Elected members

A workshop was held to give members the opportunity to input into the strategy at an early stage; members will obviously be responsible for signing off the draft strategy. Preventing and tackling homelessness has already been agreed as a corporate priority for the new council, and those who attended the workshop were keen to understand the ways in which the council could have real impact.

After a short presentation, there was an open discussion in smaller groups. Some of the priorities which emerged from this include:

- The need for more affordable housing, and easier access to the private rented sector
- Support to tackle some of the underlying causes of homelessness, such as debt, addiction, and mental health problems
- Support for some particular groups, such as those sleeping rough, survivors of domestic abuse, and those leaving the armed force.

Members were asked about priorities, but generally felt at this stage they had too little information to make informed decisions. They wanted the strategy to be deliverable, and to build on the many examples of good practice already in place. They also indicated that the strategy should meet a wide range of different needs and circumstances, focusing on actions that would make a real difference.

22 Key challenges to be addressed in the new strategy

This evidence base has highlighted some key challenges to be taken forward and addressed in the new strategy. These include:

- The number of people, particularly young people, being asked to leave by family and friends. Many of these have never held a tenancy in their own right
- The number of households with debt and financial challenges affecting their ability to pay their current rent
- The number of households threatened with homelessness when their private sector tenancy is ended
- The number of people threatened with homelessness as a result of a relationship breakdown, many involving domestic abuse
- Encouraging those threatened with homelessness to make early contact with the service in order to resolve the situation and prevent homelessness
- Increasing the proportion of households where homelessness can be prevented either by retaining the existing tenancy or making a planned move
- Virtually eliminating rough sleeping
- Continuing to manage temporary accommodation tightly; minimise the use of B&B type accommodation; and ensure move-on from temporary accommodation at the earliest possible opportunity to affordable, sustainable, settled accommodation
- Ensuring appropriate support is available for vulnerable households, with a particular focus on mental health needs.

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Any project that requires consultation will automatically require an EqIA.

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



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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Part A (Initial assessment) - Section 1 - Background

Proposal/Brief Title: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2025

OneDrive link to report/policy: **Strategy attached**

Related policies: Existing Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe and Chiltern&South Bucks Homelessness Strategies which are being replaced by this strategy.

Date: 04/04/2022

Type of strategy, policy, project or service:

Please tick one of the following:

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

This assessment was created by:

Name: Michael Veryard

Job Title: Head of Housing

Email address: Michael.Veryard@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

The drafting, agreement and adoption of the Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2025 to replace the Council's existing Homelessness Strategies which were carried forward to the unitary from the former District Councils.

What outcomes do we want to achieve?

The adoption of the Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy 2022-2025

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

Please explain your answer: The Homelessness service is a statutory duty and the development and adoption of the strategy does not impact on the BAU service delivery

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



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Please explain your answer: The Homelessness service is a statutory duty and the development and adoption of the strategy does not impact on the BAU service delivery

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

Please explain your answer: The proposals will see Buckinghamshire Council adopt a new Homelessness Strategy to replace the existing Homelessness Strategies that were carried forward from the District Councils

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

Please explain your answer: The Council has a statutory duty to provide homelessness advice and support to those persons who require it. The delivery of this advice and support is unaffected by the strategy. The strategy does set down the Council's higher level direction of travel for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping across Bucks and this guide what wider work and service are developed going forward.

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

Please explain your answer: The strategy will not generally impact on the day to day delivery of the BAU homelessness service that is delivered by officers. There will be potential adjustments to service processes and the support that is provided to clients as part of the work to meet the priorities set down in the strategy

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

Please explain your answer: No specific training required for the adoption of the strategy

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

Please explain your answer: A series of stakeholder engagement sessions were undertaken to get input into the strategy development. Sessions were undertaken with external stakeholders and partners (2 x sessions), housing officers, other (non-Housing) service areas in the Council and Members. The initial draft strategy document took account of the input from these sessions. This draft document was then subject to a 4-week public consultation period (21/2/22 to 21/3/22) and the final version has taken account of the feedback from this consultation exercise.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Section 2 - Impacts

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

Age*

Positive Y	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: The strategy will ensure that the Council’s statutory homelessness services continue remain fully accessible to persons with protected characteristics and support the delivery of targeted and appropriate support services where required.

For younger people, those aged under 18 are covered by other statutory duties. The duty to prevent homelessness applies to those over 18. Many of these are being asked to leave by family and friends; the new strategy seeks to enable young people to remain in their existing accommodation, with housing officers being able to negotiate with parents/friends and mediate where required. Younger people who have been in the care of the local authority are considered vulnerable and where homelessness cannot be prevented it is more likely that a statutory duty will be accepted, leading to the provision of accommodation.

Those aged under 35 are only eligible for the Single Room Rate for Housing benefit and may therefore find it more difficult to access affordable accommodation. Private sector rents in Bucks are generally higher than the maximum level of Housing Benefit, although it is possible to source accommodation which is affordable to those on benefits. Housing officers will complete an affordability assessment with clients before suggesting they look for accommodation in the private rented sector; they will not suggest solutions which are unaffordable. Some short-term additional financial support may be available but only in a small number of cases.

Older people are also considered vulnerable and it is more likely that the Council will accept a duty to provide accommodation. Relatively few older people become homeless and there is a reasonable supply of social housing aimed at older people, meaning they are more likely to be rehoused.

Disability*

Positive Y	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: The strategy will ensure that the Council’s statutory homelessness services continue remain fully accessible to persons with protected characteristics and support the delivery of targeted and appropriate support services where required.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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The duty to prevent homelessness applies to everyone, including those with a disability. An assessment of support needs will be carried out as part of the homelessness application. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, those with a disability may be considered vulnerable and therefore it is more likely that a duty to provide accommodation will be accepted.

Data analysis of a sample of applications indicates that 36% of applicants owed a prevention or relief duty under the legislation require support with mental health needs and 22% physical health needs. This does suggest that those with disability may be more likely to become homeless. This may be around accommodation becoming unsuitable as a condition deteriorates, or it may be as a result of harassment. As with national figures, there are a significant number of people sleeping rough who have experienced mental ill-health. Work to prevent homelessness includes support for those with a disability to remain in their existing accommodation. The strategy includes actions to improve access to mental health services for those who need them. It also includes an action to create a database of adapted properties suitable for meeting the needs of those with physical disabilities.

Pregnancy & maternity*

Positive Y Negative Unclear None

Details: The strategy will ensure that the Council’s statutory homelessness services continue remain fully accessible to persons with protected characteristics and support the delivery of targeted and appropriate support services where required.

As with all groups, the priority will be to maintain existing accommodation wherever possible. Where the existing accommodation is unsuitable because of pregnancy or a recent birth, housing officers will help to support a planned move to more suitable accommodation. If homelessness cannot be prevented, it is more likely that a duty to provide accommodation will be accepted for those who are pregnant or have recently given birth.

Race & Ethnicity*

Positive Y Negative Unclear None

Details: The strategy will ensure that the Council’s statutory homelessness services continue remain fully accessible to persons with protected characteristics and support the delivery of targeted and appropriate support services where required.

An analysis of ethnicity of those approaching the service is included in the main evidence base. 71% of customers are White British, 11% Asian or Asian British, 8%



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British. There are no changes in the proposed strategy which would have a differential impact on different ethnic groups. There is no evidence to suggest that those who are not White British are more likely to become homeless or to experience more difficulty in obtaining accommodation. Housing officers are sensitive to any potential discrimination on the part of landlords when seeking to negotiate for a family to remain in their existing accommodation.

Marriage & Civil Partnership*

Positive **Y** Negative Unclear None

Details: The strategy will ensure that the Council’s statutory homelessness services continue remain fully accessible to persons with protected characteristics and support the delivery of targeted and appropriate support services where required.

When customers approach for support with preventing homelessness, they define the household for themselves. Couples living together are treated with the same status, regardless of whether or not they are married or in a civil partnership. As with all customers, the first priority will be to prevent homelessness wherever possible. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, couples with children will be a priority need, and it is more likely that a duty to provide accommodation will be accepted. This will apply regardless of whether the couple are married or in a civil partnership and reflects national legislation rather than local policy.

Religion & Belief*

Positive Negative Unclear None **Y**

Details: The strategy will ensure that the Council’s statutory homelessness services continue remain fully accessible to persons with protected characteristics and support the delivery of targeted and appropriate support services where required.

Again, the priority will be to maintain existing accommodation wherever possible, and to be sensitive to any potential discrimination or harassment on the part of landlords or neighbours. There are no proposals in the strategy which would have a differential impact on those with religious beliefs. This information is not currently monitored.

Sex*

Positive **Y** Negative Unclear None



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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Details: The strategy will ensure that the Council’s statutory homelessness services continue remain fully accessible to persons with protected characteristics and support the delivery of targeted and appropriate support services where required.

Prevention services are offered to all, regardless of sex/gender. Decisions on what statutory duty to accept are also made regardless of gender. There are no proposals in the strategy which would have a differential impact on different genders. We will continue to monitor this information to ensure this remains the case.

Sexual Orientation*

Positive **Y** Negative Unclear None

Details: The strategy will ensure that the Council’s statutory homelessness services continue remain fully accessible to persons with protected characteristics and support the delivery of targeted and appropriate support services where required.

As with other groups, prevention is at the heart of the service, and we would seek to maintain the existing accommodation wherever suitable, remaining sensitive to any potential discrimination or harassment.

There are no proposals in the strategy which would have a differential impact in terms of sexuality. The main evidence base includes a breakdown of applicants by sexuality. There are relatively low numbers self-identifying as lesbian or gay and a relatively high number who prefer not to say. While it is reasonable for people to decide they don’t want to disclose their sexuality, it is important to ensure that customers have confidence in the service and feel confident that they can share their sexuality where they wish to do so without fear of any discrimination or differential treatment.

Gender Reassignment*

Positive Negative Unclear None **Y**

Details: There are no specific provisions in the strategy for those who have transitioned to a different gender to the gender assigned at birth. Customers are able to state their preferred gender and how they would like to be addressed.

Gender identity

Positive Negative Unclear None **Y**

Details: The strategy will ensure that the Council’s statutory homelessness services continue remain fully accessible to persons needing the Council’s assistance and will



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

provide appropriate support. Customers are able to state their preferred gender identity and how they would like to be addressed.

Carers

Positive **Y** Negative Unclear None

Details: Carers will continue to be able to access the support and assistance that they need should they become homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Rural isolation

Positive **Y** Negative Unclear None

Details: Homelessness services will continue to be assessable remotely and via a range of methods.

Single parent families

Positive **Y** Negative Unclear None

Details: Single parent families will continue to be able to access the full range of homelessness support that is required

Poverty (social & economic deprivation)

Positive **Y** Negative Unclear None

Details: The single homelessness strategy will include the continued targeting of homelessness service at specific groups with social and economic deprivation, including rough sleepers.

Military families / veterans

Positive **Y** Negative Unclear None

Details: The single homelessness strategy will ensure continued work between the service and the armed forces champion and ensure that the service is fully accessible to those who've served in the armed forces

Section 3 – Is a full assessment required?

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

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



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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- Yes
 No
 ~~Not required at this time~~

Explain your answer:

The strategy does not affect the day to day operation of the Council's BAU homelessness service because this has to be delivered in line with the specific statutory requirements of Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996 and the Council cannot alter or amend any aspects of these statutory requirements. The homelessness service has full regard to compliance with the PSED (Public Sector Equality Duty) when delivering the service and managing cases. Existing homelessness strategies are already in place to support the delivery of the service. The purpose of this proposal is to replace and consolidate the existing strategies into a single Council Homelessness Strategy which sets the wider framework for delivering homelessness prevention and support services going forward in Bucks. This will ensure positive outcomes for clients wherever possible including those with protected characteristics etc.

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

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

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

Officer completing this assessment: **Michael Veryard** Date: **04/04/22**

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

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

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

Next review Date: (Please insert Date)

If required please complete part B (full assessment)

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

Not Applicable

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Council

Date:	27 April 2022
Title:	Electoral Review of Buckinghamshire – Pattern of Wards
Lead Member:	Councillor Broom, Chairman – Standards and General Purposes Committee
Author and/or contact officer:	Nick Graham, Service Director – Legal & Democratic Services
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	<p>(1) To approve the final submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on a future pattern of wards for Buckinghamshire Council based on the draft submission at Appendix 1 from the Standards & General Purposes Committee</p> <p>(2) For the avoidance of doubt, thereafter to delegate to the Standards & General Purposes Committee the responsibility for agreeing with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England the detail of the precise location of boundaries arising from the Council’s proposal, consistent with achieving the overall terms of the final submission; and</p> <p>(3) To ask the Standards & General Purposes Committee to report back to Council with any recommendations arising from any response or proposal from the Commission which would otherwise be inconsistent with the Council’s submission.</p>
Reason for decision:	To enable the Council to formally respond to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

1. Background

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has held a [consultation](#) on the second stage of the electoral review of Buckinghamshire Council.

The LGBCE is seeking views on a pattern of wards that should apply from the 2025 local election.

- 1.2 This follows the previous consultation on 'council size' by the LGBCE. The Commission is minded to recommend a membership of 98 councillors. Proposals are therefore being sought on a pattern of wards equivalent (so far as possible) to that number. As the 'council size' was determined at an earlier stage of the Commission's process, this question cannot be re-opened now.
- 1.3 The consultation ran until the 4 April. The LGBCE confirmed that it would be willing for Full Council formally to approve a submission at its scheduled meeting on 27 April. However, the Commission wished to receive a draft proposal by the end of 4 April and as delegated by Council, a draft submission was made to the Commission by the Standards & General Purposes Committee on 30 March. The draft submission is included as Appendix 1 to this report. The Committee has recommended Council to endorse the draft submission as the Council's formal submission.
- 1.4 This is on the understanding, as the draft submission says, that the details of certain boundaries to achieve the overall aim of the proposal will need to be finessed with the Commission.
- 1.5 In arriving at a draft submission, the Committee was supported by a cross-party Electoral Review Working Group of the Committee. This met twice, once online (24 February) and once in person (3 March) to work up the broad set of draft proposals for consideration by the Committee. The draft proposal was agreed by Committee on 17 March. Prior to this, the Commission was invited to deliver briefings to all Buckinghamshire Councillors, and to parish and town councils, on the statutory criteria for a review. These took place on 28 February and 7 March for this Council, and 2 March and 9 March for parish and town councils.
- 1.6 The next formal phase of the review will be the consultation by the Commission on its proposed way forward.
- 1.7 If Recommendation 2 is approved by Council, the Committee would intend that the Electoral Review Working Group would continue throughout the next phases of the review to advise the Committee.

2. Pattern of wards - criteria

- 2.1 In arriving at its draft submission, the Committee had regard to the LGBCE's published guidance on [How to propose a pattern of wards](#). The three statutory criteria for determining a pattern of wards are:
 - i) **Delivering electoral equality for local voters** – ensuring that each local councillor represents roughly the same number of electors so that the value of a vote is the same regardless of where a person lives in the local authority area. Given the total forecast electorate of 443,064 by 2027, the average number of electors per councillor, for this review, is 1 councillor per 4,521

electors. The Committee has therefore sought to keep within +/- 10% of that notional figure.

- ii) **Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities** – establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, maintain local ties and where boundaries are easily identifiable.
- iii) **Promoting effective and convenient local government** – ensuring that the new wards can be represented effectively by their elected representative(s), allows the authority to conduct its business effectively; and adequately reflects the electoral cycle of the council.

3. Proposal and rationale

- 3.1 The Committee has proposed a pattern of 50 wards based, largely, on two-member representation for each ward, achieving 98 councillors overall. The draft submission is at Appendix 1. This gives a list of proposed wards and their names together with maps showing them, plus the underlying electorate data. The Committee considered the proposal to provide a sound basis, reflecting the balance of the statutory criteria.
- 3.2 The Committee was mindful that ‘one size’ does not fit all. As a new unitary authority, it is important that the pattern of wards supports communities and provides the best possible reflection of community identity and effective government. This has resulted in a proposal that includes a mix of one- and two-member representation per ward.
- 3.3 In certain cases, the existing ward structures were in any event not sustainable, due to projected development, as the 2027 forecast electorate, published by the Commission demonstrates. As such, the proposals include several suggested changes to boundaries, having regard to community identity and effective governance. These are marked accordingly in the Annex to this report.
- 3.4 The review represents an opportunity to provide a stable basis for electoral representation following a period of considerable structural change in local governance across Buckinghamshire. In framing its proposals, the Committee has not thought it necessary to disregard existing ward arrangements where these already reflect good community identity. Equally it did not simply follow existing structures as an easy rule.
- 3.5 Rather, each ward has been proposed based on the best balance of the three statutory criteria. That said, the Committee is aware that there are a small number of areas where further detailed work on certain boundaries is potentially necessary to achieve better community identity. The Committee has asked the Electoral Review Working Group to consider these further with a view to working them up in more detail in the next phases of the review, alongside the Commission.
- 3.6 The Committee has been mindful that Buckinghamshire is also a member-led authority which sees its democratic relationship with the electorate and local

communities as pivotal to Buckinghamshire's future. This perspective has been important from the commencement of the Council last year: for example as expressed through our 16 innovative community boards, which provide action-based local forums where Buckinghamshire councillors meet regularly with parish and town councils, community groups and local stakeholders to identify key local priorities.

- 3.7 The Committee considers it important that the wards have sufficient member resilience to sustain this community-based approach. As such, the Committee believes the proposals are consistent with sustaining the existing momentum and provide an effective means of contributing to local governance.
- 3.8 The Committee has also been mindful that the Council's experience of multi-member wards, since the inception of the Council, has been broadly positive, with certain geographies and community dynamics particularly benefitting from this collaborative approach, regardless of political affiliation. As such, having reviewed the basis of the wards and the communities within them, the Committee has felt it right to continue this, where appropriate, based on consolidating community identity and governance.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 If Council endorses the proposed pattern of wards, and the approach outlined in this report, then the submission at Appendix 1 will formally be sent to the Commission.
- 4.2 Thereafter, during April, May and June, the LGBCE will consider all submissions, undertake any research on the ground in Buckinghamshire and potentially undertake further localised consultation before determining its own proposal. The Committee believes it will be important for the Council to continue to liaise closely with the Commission during that phase, hence the inclusion of Recommendation 2.
- 4.3 From 5 July to 12 September 2022, the LGBCE will commence consultation on its proposal during which this Council will be able to comment and work constructively with the Commission. The final report from the Commission, outlining its recommendation to Parliament, will be issued on 29 November 2022.
- 4.4 It would therefore be the Committee's intention that the cross-party Electoral Review Working Group should continue to play a key role in all the remaining phases of the review.
- 4.5 The pattern of wards would not become effective until the 2025 Buckinghamshire elections.

Glenn Watson

Subject: Buckinghamshire Electoral Review - Draft Submission (Buckinghamshire Council)

Dear Richard and Jonathan

I am writing to send you the Council's **draft submission** in response to your consultation on a pattern of wards for Buckinghamshire.

I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to submit a draft proposal, and to allow our formal submission to follow on from our scheduled Full Council meeting on 27 April formally. I also wanted to thank you again for your briefings to our members, which were well-received.

The draft proposals were worked up by a cross-party Electoral Review Working Group, which I chaired. They were then approved at the Council's Standards and General Purposes Committee on 17 March, which I also chair. The Committee has recommended the proposals to Full Council as the basis for our submission. As you will see from the outline attached, we have been mindful of the statutory criteria (electoral equality, community identity and effective local government). We consider that the proposals provide a strong balance of these. We will articulate the rationale and evidence more fully for you in our formal submission. For now, we hope our draft gives you a clear sense of the Council's approach.

The proposal:

Our proposal follows your recommendation for 'council size' and would achieve 98 councillors. We would do this through a pattern of 50 wards, two with one-member and 48 with two-member representation. As these are draft proposals, you will see that there are still a few points we wish to review ourselves; and we would also welcome the opportunity to do so with you. 96% of our ward proposals are currently within tolerance: five wards are only marginally above/below, two slightly more so, and we are revisiting those.

Please find attached:

1. Draft submission – with our outline rationale
2. Annex 1 – proposed wards: highlighting changes and equality/variance
3. Annex 2 – spreadsheet corresponding changes and electoral data
4. Annex 3 – PDF map of proposed wards. An interactive, layered version [is here](#).

Way forward:

We will submit a fuller articulation after our Full Council meeting on 27 April. If you have any queries, or you wish to discuss the draft proposals with us, then myself and my supporting officers would be very happy to discuss them with you.

With regards

Cllr Thomas Broom
Chairman of the Standards & General Purposes Committee and of its Electoral Review Working Group

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Buckinghamshire Council
Electoral Review 2022
DRAFT Response to Consultation on Pattern of Wards

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is undertaking an electoral review of Buckinghamshire Council. This submission is the Council's **draft** response to the Commission's consultation on the **pattern of wards** to apply from the 2025 council elections.
2. Our response has taken into account the Commission's [published criteria](#) for achieving a pattern of wards:
 - Electoral equality
 - Community identity
 - Effective local government
3. We have taken into account the Commission's recommendation of 98 councillors as the target 'council size'. As such, we have followed the councillor-electors ratio of one councillor per 4,521 electors, based on the projected 2027 electorate published by the Commission.

Our draft proposal

A pattern of 50 wards – comprising two one-member and 48 two-member wards. The list of proposed wards and their names is attached at **Annex 1**.

Annex 2 items the changes and the variances. **Annex 3** maps the proposals in PDF. An interactive version is [here](#).

4. The Council has been very mindful that 'one size' does not fit all. It has been important to us, in recommending a pattern of wards, that our recommendations should involve a pattern of representation suited to our communities.
5. In framing our proposals, we have not simply followed existing structures as an easy rule. We have sought to ensure our proposals reflect, and promote, community identity. Neither have we have we thought it necessary simply to disregard existing ward arrangements if there have been good reasons to build on them.
6. In our view, the review represents an opportunity to provide a stable basis for electoral representation after a period of considerable structural change for Buckinghamshire's local governance. As a new unitary authority, it is important that the pattern of wards meets the needs of our communities and provides the best possible reflection of community identity and effective government.
7. We are a member-led authority which sees our democratic relationship with the electorate and local communities as pivotal to Buckinghamshire's future. This perspective has been important to us from the outset; for example as expressed through our 16 innovative community boards, which provide action-based local forums where

our elected members meet regularly with parish and town councils, community groups and local stakeholders to identify key local priorities.

8. Our proposals are consistent with sustaining this effective, community-based commitment to local governance.
9. The proposals were worked up by a cross-party Electoral Review Working Group of the Standards & General Purposes Committee of Buckinghamshire Council. The Group met twice over February and March, making a recommendation to the Committee on 17 March, which was approved, with no votes against. With the agreement of the Commission, our Full Council will formally consider the proposal on 27 April, for final submission.

Draft proposals – further work

10. This is the Council's draft submission, which gives the broad proposal that the Council wishes to make. We are conscious that several areas still require attention, and we will work on these prior to Full Council and would also value working closely with the Commission.
11. We are conscious that the areas around Wycombe and Aylesbury require additional attention to ensure a sound balance of the three criteria: for example, while the draft proposals around Wycombe provide good electoral equality, we would like to explore the potential for increasing yet further the degree of community identity.
12. Also, while 96% our ward proposals achieve electoral equality within +/- 10% of the target figure, seven wards require further attention, five of these only marginally so. Our draft proposal for Aston Clinton and Weston Turville reflects community identity but requires further work to bring a better balance of electoral variance.
13. Our Electoral Review Working Group will continue to meet to explore further options for these areas. We would particularly value working closely with the Commission during its own fact-finding phase to explore those options. We would welcome such dialogue now, following our submission and throughout the next formal consultation period.
14. We will articulate our submission further. However, we wanted the Commission to see, in draft form, the direction of the Council's thinking and aspiration.

Cllr Thomas Broom
Chairman of the Standards and General Purposes Committee and its Electoral Review Working Group.

March 2022

Annex 1 DRAFT Warding Proposals, Buckinghamshire Council

Key:

- **Summary:** A council membership of 98 councillors. 50 wards (48 with two-member representation; 2 with one-member representation).
- **Red lettering:** Variance above/below 10% of the average 'electors per councillor' ratio (4,521). Further work needed.
- **Yellow highlight:** Ward with some changes to boundary/name. These can be cross-checked with Annex 2 (spreadsheet of electoral data) which itemises what the specific changes are.

	Proposed ward/name	Electorate 2027	No. of Cllrs	Variance
1.	Abbey	9679	2	7%
2.	Amersham & Chesham Bois	8243	2	-9%
3.	Aston Clinton & Weston Turville	10640	2	18%
4.	Aylesbury East	8632	2	-5%
5.	Aylesbury North	8492	2	-6%
6.	Aylesbury North West	10038	2	11%
7.	Aylesbury South East	9235	2	2%
8.	Aylesbury South West	9155	2	1%
9.	Aylesbury West	8089	2	-11%
10.	Beaconsfield	9330	2	3%
11.	Bernwood	9860	2	9%
12.	Bierton & Wing	10322	2	14%
13.	Booker, Cressex & Castlefield	9157	2	1%
14.	Buckingham East	9731	2	8%
15.	Buckingham West	9390	2	4%
16.	Chalfont St Giles	8792	2	-3%
17.	Chalfont St Peter	8505	2	-6%
18.	Chesham	8274	2	-8%
19.	Chess Valley	8508	2	-6%
20.	Chiltern Ridges	8536	2	-6%
21.	Chiltern Villages	9192	2	2%
22.	Cliveden	8100	2	-10%
23.	Denham & Wexham	8896	2	-2%
24.	Downley	8792	2	-3%
25.	Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches	8748	2	-3%
26.	Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South East	8632	2	-5%
27.	Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley	8213	2	-9%
28.	Great Brickhill	9967	2	10%
29.	Great Missenden	8240	2	-9%
30.	Grendon Underwood	9814	2	9%

	Proposed ward/name	Electorate 2027	No. of Cllrs	Variance
31.	Hazlemere	7916	2	-12%
32.	Iver	9306	2	3%
33.	Ivinghoe	8947	2	-1%
34.	Little Chalfont & Amersham Common	8333	2	-8%
35.	Marlow	8819	2	-2%
36.	Penn Wood & Old Amersham	8803	2	-3%
37.	Ridgeway East	8910	2	-1%
38.	Ridgeway West	8572	2	-5%
39.	Ryemead & Micklefield	9567	2	6%
40.	Stoke Poges	4389	1	-3%
41.	Stone & Waddesdon	10050	2	11%
42.	Terriers & Amersham Hill	9308	2	3%
43.	The Risboroughs	9420	2	4%
44.	The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor	9354	2	3%
45.	Totteridge & Bowerdean	8411	2	-7%
46.	Tylers Green & Loudwater	8792	2	-3%
47.	Watermead & Buckingham Park	4619	1	2%
48.	Wendover Halton & Stoke Mandeville	9647	2	7%
49.	West Wycombe	8638	2	-4%
50.	Winslow	10061	2	11%
	Grand Total	443064		

			Yellow = change	Yellow = where a polling district has had streets moved this is shown as a formula in this cell to show what change has been made	red = variance (+/- 10%)	Orange = Polling District Change	
Polling	Parish	Parish ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2027	variance check	Ward Change	Notes
WA			Abbey	1376			
WB			Abbey	3044			
WC			Abbey	2737			
WD			Abbey	1834			
WF2			Abbey	688			
			Abbey Total	9679	7%		
CB	Amersham	Amersham on the Hill	Amersham & Chesham Bois	3962			
CL	Amersham	Weedon Hill	Amersham & Chesham Bois	1809			
CLA	Chesham Bois		Amersham & Chesham Bois	2472			
			Amersham & Chesham Bois Total	8243	-9%		
AAT	Aston Clinton		Aston Clinton & Weston Turville	4712			
AAV	Buckland		Aston Clinton & Weston Turville	647			
AAX	Drayton Beauchamp		Aston Clinton & Weston Turville	126			
ABH	Weston Turville		Aston Clinton & Weston Turville	5156			
			Aston Clinton & Weston Turville Total	10640	18%		
AAA	Aylesbury Town	Bedgrove	Aylesbury East	2644			
AAB	Aylesbury Town	Bedgrove	Aylesbury East	2422			
AAL	Aylesbury Town	Oakfield	Aylesbury East	3422			
BEC	Provis Wharf	Aylesbury Oakfield ward	Aylesbury East	144			
			Aylesbury East Total	8632	-5%		
AAC	Aylesbury Town	Central	Aylesbury North	1978			
AAD	Aylesbury Town	Central	Aylesbury North	1629			
AAF	Aylesbury Town	Elmhurst	Aylesbury North	2683			
AAG	Aylesbury Town	Elmhurst	Aylesbury North	2203			
			Aylesbury North Total	8492	-6%		
AAH	Aylesbury Town	Gatehouse	Aylesbury North West	6391			
AAN	Aylesbury Town	Quarrendon	Aylesbury North West	1967			
AAO	Aylesbury Town	Quarrendon	Aylesbury North West	1675			
BEE	Quarrendon No 3	Aylesbury Quarrendon ward	Aylesbury North West	5			
			Aylesbury North West Total	10038	11%		
AAJ	Aylesbury Town	Mandeville & Elm Farm	Aylesbury South East	2352			
AAK	Aylesbury Town	Mandeville & Elm Farm	Aylesbury South East	2990			
AAR	Aylesbury Town	Walton	Aylesbury South East	1887			
ABB	Stoke Mandeville	Stoke Grange	Aylesbury South East	1034			
				971			Part of ABD to ABC (Athens, Atlanta, Rome, Sydney, Beethoven, Elgar mews, Brubeck Road, Ravel Lane, Brahms Lane, & Mozart End + 469 electors)
ABC	Stoke Mandeville	Stoke Leys	Aylesbury South East				
			Aylesbury South East Total	9235	2%		
AAI	Aylesbury Town	Hawkslade	Aylesbury South West	2304			
				2677			Plus Briskman Way, Jakeman Way, Dixon Close, Hinds Way, Drake Close, Bond Close, Burrell Close & Chapman Close (+378)
AAP	Aylesbury Town	Southcourt	Aylesbury South West				
AAQ	Aylesbury Town	Southcourt	Aylesbury South West	2639			
ABA	Stoke Mandeville	Hawkslade	Aylesbury South West	1536			
			Aylesbury South West Total	9155	1%		
			Aylesbury West	3161			Minus Briskman Way, Jakeman Way, Dixon Close, Hinds Way, Drake Close, Bond Close, Burrell Close & Chapman Close (-378)
AAM	Aylesbury Town	Oxford Road	Aylesbury West	1335			
AAS	Aylesbury Town	Walton Court	Aylesbury West	3593			
AAW	Coldharbour		Aylesbury West	8089	-11%		
			Aylesbury West Total	8089			
SA	Beaconsfield	North	Beaconsfield	2083			
SBC	Beaconsfield	Central	Beaconsfield	2380			
SB	Beaconsfield	South East	Beaconsfield	898			GX to Beaconsfield
SC	Beaconsfield	West	Beaconsfield	3969			
			Beaconsfield Total	9330	3%		
BBF	Aston Sandford		Bernwood	43			
BBV	Chearsley		Bernwood	457			
BCS	Haddenham		Bernwood	5348			
BDI	Long Crendon		Bernwood	2054			
BEG	Shabbington		Bernwood	453			
BBK	Bishopstone	Stone Bishopstone and Hartwell	Bernwood	253			Stone & Waddesdon to Bernwood
BCB	Cuddington		Bernwood	527			Stone & Waddesdon to Bernwood
BCD	Dinton with Ford & Upton		Bernwood	548			Stone & Waddesdon to Bernwood
BCL	Dinton with Ford & Upton		Bernwood	179			Stone & Waddesdon to Bernwood
			Bernwood Total	9860	9%		
BBJ	Bierton	Bierton with Broughton	Bierton & Wing	1254			AC & Bierton to Bierton & Wing
BBS	Broughton Hamlet	Bierton with Broughton	Bierton & Wing	48			AC & Bierton to Bierton & Wing
BCX	Hulcott		Bierton & Wing	104			AC & Bierton to Bierton & Wing
BDB	Kingsbrook		Bierton & Wing	2684			AC & Bierton to Bierton & Wing
AAE	Aylesbury Town	Coppice Way	Bierton & Wing	976			Aylesbury North to Bierton & Wing
BBE	Aston Abbotts		Bierton & Wing	339			Wing to Bierton & Wing
BBZ	Creslow		Bierton & Wing	13			Wing to Bierton & Wing
BCA	Cublington		Bierton & Wing	303			Wing to Bierton & Wing
BFC	Whitchurch		Bierton & Wing	866			Wing to Bierton & Wing
BFD	Wing		Bierton & Wing	2339			Wing to Bierton & Wing
BFE	Wingrave with Rowsham		Bierton & Wing	1396			Wing to Bierton & Wing
			Bierton & Wing Total	10322	14%		
WA2			Booker, Cressex & Castlefield	28			
WE			Booker, Cressex & Castlefield	1388			
WF			Booker, Cressex & Castlefield	1037			
WL			Booker, Cressex & Castlefield	3961			
WM			Booker, Cressex & Castlefield	2743			Spearing Rd, Grenfell Av to West Wycombe (-773)
			Booker, Cressex & Castlefield Total	9157	1%		
BBC	Akeley		Buckingham East	408			
BBN	Buckingham Town	Highlands & Watchcroft	Buckingham East	362			
BBO	Buckingham Town	North	Buckingham East	5120			
BCM	Foscott		Buckingham East	32			
BDE	Leckhampstead		Buckingham East	173			
BDF	Lillingstone Dayrell		Buckingham East	77			
BDG	Lillingstone Lovell		Buckingham East	114			
BDK	Maids Moreton		Buckingham East	955			
BEO	Stowe		Buckingham East	250			
BEQ	Thornborough		Buckingham East	535			
BBI	Biddlesden		Buckingham East	108			Buckingham West to Buckingham East
BEF	Radclyve Cum Chackmore		Buckingham East	207			Buckingham West to Buckingham East
BEH	Shalstone		Buckingham East	98			Buckingham West to Buckingham East
BET	Turweston		Buckingham East	168			Buckingham West to Buckingham East
BEX	Water Stratford		Buckingham East	116			Buckingham West to Buckingham East
BEZ	Westbury		Buckingham East	393			Buckingham West to Buckingham East
BBH	Beachampton		Buckingham East	133			Winslow to Buckingham East
BDQ	Nash		Buckingham East	387			Winslow to Buckingham East
BER	Thornton		Buckingham East	94			Winslow to Buckingham East
			Buckingham East Total	9731	8%		

Polling	Parish	Parish ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2027	variance check	Ward Change	Notes
BBG	Barton Hartshorn		Buckingham West	70			
BBM	Buckingham Town	Fishers Field	Buckingham West	137			
BBQ	Buckingham Town	South	Buckingham West	6381			
BBX	Chetwode		Buckingham West	60			
BCN	Gawcott with Lenborough		Buckingham West	685			
BCU	Hillesden		Buckingham West	176			
BEB	Preston Bissett		Buckingham West	263			
BES	Tingewick		Buckingham West	1051			
BEA	Poundon		Buckingham West	102			Grendon Underwood to Buckingham West
BEU	Twyford		Buckingham West	466			Grendon Underwood to Buckingham West
			Buckingham West Total	9390	4%		
CK	Chalfont St Giles	Chalfont St Giles	Chalfont St Giles	4170			
CKA	Chalfont St Giles	Jordans	Chalfont St Giles	564			
CU	Coleshill		Chalfont St Giles	478			
CX	Seer Green		Chalfont St Giles	1819			
CN	Chalfont St Peter	Gold Hill	Chalfont St Giles	1761			
			Chalfont St Giles Total	8792	-3%		
CH	Chalfont St Peter	Central	Chalfont St Peter	4748			Plus half of Austenwood (+1007)
CJ	Chalfont St Peter	Chalfont Common	Chalfont St Peter	3758			
			Chalfont St Peter Total	8505	-6%		
CE	Ashley Green	Ashley Green	Chesham	526			
CEA	Ashley Green	Whelpley Hill	Chesham	306			
CP	Chesham	Hilltop	Chesham	1428			
CT	Chesham	Newtown	Chesham	2003			
			Chesham Total	2397			Plus Farriers Way, Hillside, Hivings Hill, Portabello Close, Shelley Road, Valley View
CW	Chesham	Ridgeway	Chesham				
CZ	Chesham	Vale	Chesham	1614			
			Chesham Total	8274	-8%		
CEB	Chenies		Chess Valley	216			
CPA	Chesham	Townsend	Chess Valley	1471			
CPB	Chesham	Townsend	Chess Valley	872			
CY	Chesham	St Mary's	Chess Valley	1412			
CYA	Chesham	Waterside	Chess Valley	2711			
CEC	Latimer & Ley Hill	Ley Hill	Chess Valley	565			
CED	Latimer & Ley Hill	Latimer	Chess Valley	278			
CR1	Little Chalfont	Little Chalfont North East	Chess Valley	983			
			Chess Valley Total	8508	-6%		
CG	Chartridge	Chartridge	Chiltern Ridges	878			
CM	Chartridge	Bellingdon	Chiltern Ridges	562			
			Chiltern Ridges Total	1428			Minus Farriers Way, Hillside, Hivings Hill, Portabello Close, Shelley Road, Valley View. (-
CD	Chesham	Asheridge Vale	Chiltern Ridges				
CDA	Chesham	Lowndes	Chiltern Ridges	2349			
CMA	Cholesbury Cum St Leonards		Chiltern Ridges	375			
CMB	Cholesbury Cum St Leonards		Chiltern Ridges	457			
CGA	Great Missenden	Ballinger & South Heath	Chiltern Ridges	1024			
CSB	Little Missenden	Hyde Heath	Chiltern Ridges	865			
CMC	The Lee		Chiltern Ridges	599			
			Chiltern Ridges Total	8536	-6%		
RP	Fawley (Parish Meeting)		Chiltern Villages	180			
RF	Great Marlow		Chiltern Villages	311			
RI	Great Marlow		Chiltern Villages	431			
RJ	Great Marlow		Chiltern Villages	427			
RN	Hambleden	Hambleden North	Chiltern Villages	662			
RO	Hambleden	Hambleden South	Chiltern Villages	469			
RM	Ibstone		Chiltern Villages	205			
RA	Lane End		Chiltern Villages	2936			
RG	Marlow Bottom		Chiltern Villages	2605			
RH	Medmenham	Danesfield	Chiltern Villages	453			
RR	Medmenham	Medmenham Village	Chiltern Villages	271			
RQ	Turville		Chiltern Villages	242			
			Chiltern Villages Total	9192	2%		
SEB	Burnham	Burnham Lent Rise	Cliveden	3622			
SED	Dorney		Cliveden	607			
SET	Taplow		Cliveden	1925			
			Cliveden Total	1945			Both sides of the High street brought together (-30)
SDA	Burnham	Burnham Church	Cliveden				
			Cliveden Total	8100	-10%		
SJ	Denham		Denham & Wexham	1246			Denham to Denham & Wexham
SJA	Denham		Denham & Wexham	1343			Denham to Denham & Wexham
SJHD	Denham		Denham & Wexham	561			Denham to Denham & Wexham
SK	Denham		Denham & Wexham	2852			Denham to Denham & Wexham
SIT	Wexham	The Orchards	Denham & Wexham	287			Stoke Poges & Wexham to Denham & Wexham
SWG	Wexham	George Green & Middle Green	Denham & Wexham	1011			Stoke Poges & Wexham to Denham & Wexham
SWS	Wexham	Wexham Street	Denham & Wexham	531			Stoke Poges & Wexham to Denham & Wexham
SWF	Fulmer		Denham & Wexham	469			Denham to Denham & Wexham
SKA	Denham		Denham & Wexham	595			Denham to Denham & Wexham
			Denham & Wexham Total	8896	-2%		
RD	Downley		Downley	1608			
RE	Downley		Downley	2287			
WI			Downley	2953			
WJ			Downley	1945			
			Downley Total	8792	-3%		
SD	Burnham	Burnham Beeches	Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches	4148			Both sides of the High street brought together (+30)
SFN	Farnham	Farnham Royal North	Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches	3417			
SFC	Farnham	Farnham Royal South	Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches	1182			
			Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches Total	8748	-3%		
BC	Chepping Wycombe	Flackwell Heath	Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South East	4702			
BD	Little Marlow		Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South East	790			
BE	Little Marlow		Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South East	456			
BG	Marlow Town	Marlow South East	Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South East	2684			
			Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South Ea	8632	-5%		
SFH	Hedgerley		Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley	703			Gerrards Cross to Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley
CF	Chalfont St Peter	Austenwood	Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley	968			Minus half of Austenwood (-
SGE	Gerrards Cross	Gerrards Cross East	Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley	943			Gerrards Cross to Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley
SGN	Gerrards Cross	Gerrards Cross North	Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley	2729			Gerrards Cross to Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley
SGS	Gerrards Cross	Gerrards Cross South	Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley	2869			Gerrards Cross to Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley
			Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley Total	8213	-9%		
BCG	Dunton		Great Brickhill	78			
BGP	Great Brickhill		Great Brickhill	737			
BCV	Hoggeston		Great Brickhill	77			
BCW	Hogshaw		Great Brickhill	58			
BDS	Newton Longville		Great Brickhill	2844			
BDU	North Marston		Great Brickhill	588			
BDW	Oving		Great Brickhill	391			
BDY	Pitchcott		Great Brickhill	45			
BED	Quainton		Great Brickhill	1283			
BEJ	Soulbury		Great Brickhill	699			
BEL	Stewkley		Great Brickhill	1576			
BEM	Stoke Hammond		Great Brickhill	1591			
			Great Brickhill Total	9967	10%		
CO	Great Missenden	Great Missenden	Great Missenden	1847			
CV	Great Missenden	Prestwood & Heath End	Great Missenden	4594			
CVA	Great Missenden	Prestwood & Heath End	Great Missenden	677			
CS	Little Missenden	Little Kingshill & Little Missenden	Great Missenden	1122			
			Great Missenden Total	8240	-9%		
BCI	Edgcott		Grendon Underwood	207			

Polling	Parish	Parish ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2027	variance check	Ward Change	Notes
BCY	Ickford		Grendon Underwood	717		Bernwood to Grendon Underwood	
BFH	Worminghall		Grendon Underwood	478		Bernwood to Grendon Underwood	
BBL	Boarstall		Grendon Underwood	107			
BBR	Brill		Grendon Underwood	965			
BBT	Calvert Green		Grendon Underwood	814			
BBU	Charndon		Grendon Underwood	250			
BBY	Chilton		Grendon Underwood	242			
BCE	Dorton		Grendon Underwood	119			
BCH	East Claydon		Grendon Underwood	323			
BCR	Grendon Underwood		Grendon Underwood	935			
BDD	Kingswood		Grendon Underwood	82			
BDJ	Ludgershall		Grendon Underwood	336			
BDL	Marsh Gibbon		Grendon Underwood	859			
BDO	Middle Claydon		Grendon Underwood	118			
BDV	Oakley		Grendon Underwood	904			
BEK	Steeple Claydon		Grendon Underwood	2207			
BFG	Woodham		Grendon Underwood	38			
BFI	Wotton Underwood		Grendon Underwood	115			
			Grendon Underwood Total	9814	9%		
RK	Hazlemere	Hazlemere North	Hazlemere	4198			
RL	Hazlemere	Hazlemere South	Hazlemere	3718			
			Hazlemere Total	7916	-12%		
SIR	Iver	Iver Village & Richings Park	Iver	1924			
SIV	Iver	Iver Village & Richings Park	Iver	2675			
SV	Iver	Iver Heath	Iver	3923			
SIS	Iver	Shredding Green	Iver	497		Stoke Poges & Wexham to Iver	
SVW	Iver	Wood Lane	Iver	288		Stoke Poges & Wexham to Iver	
			Iver Total	9306	3%		
BBW	Cheddington		Ivinghoe	1503			
BCC	Edlesborough	Dagnall	Ivinghoe	415			
BCJ	Edlesborough	Edlesborough	Ivinghoe	1560			
BDT	Edlesborough	Northall ward	Ivinghoe	387			
BCZ	Ivinghoe	Ivinghoe	Ivinghoe	560			
BDA	Ivinghoe	Ivinghoe Aston	Ivinghoe	244			
BDM	Marsworth		Ivinghoe	641			
BDN	Mentmore		Ivinghoe	333			
BDZ	Pitstone		Ivinghoe	2824			
BEI	Slapton		Ivinghoe	479			
			Ivinghoe Total	8947	-1%		
CA	Amersham	Amersham Common	Little Chalfont & Amersham Common	2155			
CC1	Amersham	Amersham Common West	Little Chalfont & Amersham Common	1674			
CKB	Little Chalfont	Little Chalfont South	Little Chalfont & Amersham Common	1136			
CR	Little Chalfont	Little Chalfont	Little Chalfont & Amersham Common	3368			
			Little Chalfont & Amersham Common Total	8333	-8%		
BF	Marlow Town	Marlow South	Marlow	1671			
BJ	Marlow Town	Marlow North & West	Marlow	1493			
BK	Marlow Town	Marlow North & West	Marlow	2557			
BL	Marlow Town	Marlow North & West	Marlow	2162			
BM	Marlow Town	Marlow North & West	Marlow	936			
			Marlow Total	8819	-2%		
CC	Amersham	Amersham Town	Penn Wood & Old Amersham	2141			
CQ	Little Missenden	Holmer Green	Penn Wood & Old Amersham	3395			
CUA	Penn	Penn	Penn Wood & Old Amersham	700			
CUB	Penn	Penn	Penn Wood & Old Amersham	1869			
CUC	Penn	Penn Street & Winchmore Hill	Penn Wood & Old Amersham	515			
CUD	Penn	Penn Street & Winchmore Hill	Penn Wood & Old Amersham	184			
			Penn Wood & Old Amersham Total	8803	-3%		
KA	Ellesborough		Ridgeway East	676			
AI	Great & Little Hampden		Ridgeway East	262			
KB	Great & Little Kimble-Cum-Marsh		Ridgeway East	1044			
AE	Hughenden	Naphill & Walters Ash	Ridgeway East	2437			
AF	Hughenden	Hughenden Valley	Ridgeway East	1542			
AG	Hughenden	Great Kingshill	Ridgeway East	1315			
AH	Hughenden	Widmer End	Ridgeway East	1634			
			Ridgeway East Total	8910	-1%		
AA	Bledlow cum Saunderton	Bledlow	Ridgeway West	713			
AB	Bledlow cum Saunderton	Bledlow Ridge	Ridgeway West	831			
AD	Bledlow cum Saunderton	Saunderton	Ridgeway West	632			
AC	Bradenham		Ridgeway West	307			
AJ	Lacey Green	Lacey Green and Loosley Row	Ridgeway West	1385			
AK	Lacey Green	Speen	Ridgeway West	542			
AN	Radnage		Ridgeway West	568			
AL	Stokenchurch	Stokenchurch	Ridgeway West	3593			
			Ridgeway West Total	8572	-5%		
WK			Ryemead & Micklefield	2530			
WK1			Ryemead & Micklefield	2202			
WN			Ryemead & Micklefield	2387			
WO			Ryemead & Micklefield	2447			
			Ryemead & Micklefield Total	9567	6%		
SFS	Farnham	Farnham Royal South	Stoke Poges	376		Stoke Poges & Wexham to Stoke Poges	
SS	Stoke Poges		Stoke Poges	4013		Stoke Poges & Wexham to Stoke Poges	
			Stoke Poges Total	4389	-3%		1 Member
BBD	Ashendon		Stone & Waddesdon	204			
AAU	Berryfields		Stone & Waddesdon	5755			
BCK	Fleet Marston		Stone & Waddesdon	41			
BDR	Nether Winchendon		Stone & Waddesdon	127			
BEN	Stone Bishopstone & Hartwell		Stone & Waddesdon	1909			
BEV	Upper Winchendon		Stone & Waddesdon	79			
BEW	Waddesdon		Stone & Waddesdon	1562			
BFA	Westcott		Stone & Waddesdon	374			
			Stone & Waddesdon Total	10050	11%		
WG2			Terriers & Amersham Hill	517			
WH2			Terriers & Amersham Hill	290			
WS			Terriers & Amersham Hill	1461			
WT			Terriers & Amersham Hill	877			
WU			Terriers & Amersham Hill	4541			
WV			Terriers & Amersham Hill	1623			
			Terriers & Amersham Hill Total	9308	3%		
BDC	Kingsey		The Risboroughs	127		Bernwood to The Risboroughs	
KC	Longwick-Cum-Ilmer		The Risboroughs	1527			
KD	Princes Risborough Town		The Risboroughs	1617			
KE	Princes Risborough Town		The Risboroughs	6149			
			The Risboroughs Total	9420	4%		
BB	Hedsor (Parish Meeting)		The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor	98			
BA	Wooburn & Bourne End	Bourne End	The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor	4936			
BH	Wooburn & Bourne End	Wooburn Green	The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor	3045			
BI	Wooburn & Bourne End	Wooburn Town	The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor	1274			
			The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor Total	9354	3%		
WG			Totteridge & Bowerdean	1401			
WH			Totteridge & Bowerdean	2041			
WW			Totteridge & Bowerdean	2290			
WX			Totteridge & Bowerdean	2679			
			Totteridge & Bowerdean Total	8411	-7%		
WO2			Tylers Green & Loudwater	1854			
RS	Chepping Wycombe	Loudwater	Tylers Green & Loudwater	3365			
RT	Chepping Wycombe	Tylers Green	Tylers Green & Loudwater	3572			
			Tylers Green & Loudwater Total	8792	-3%		
AAZ	Bierton	Oldhams Meadow	Watermead & Buckingham Park	353		Aylesbury North to Watermead & Buckingham Park	
BBP	Buckingham Park		Watermead & Buckingham Park	1888		Wing to Watermead & Buckingham Park	
BCT	Hardwick		Watermead & Buckingham Park	253		Wing to Watermead & Buckingham Park	

Polling	Parish	Parish ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2027	variance check	Ward Change	Notes
ABE	Watermead		Watermead & Buckingham Park	1802		Wing to Watermead & Buckingham Park	
ABF	Weedon		Watermead & Buckingham Park	8		Wing to Watermead & Buckingham Park	
BEY	Weedon		Watermead & Buckingham Park	316		Wing to Watermead & Buckingham Park	
			Watermead & Buckingham Park Total	4619	2%		1 Member
AAY	Halton		Wendover Halton & Stoke Mandeville	913			
ABD	Stoke Mandeville	Stoke Mandeville Village	Wendover Halton & Stoke Mandeville	2522		Part of ABD to ADC (-469)	
ABG	Wendover		Wendover Halton & Stoke Mandeville	6212			
			Wendover Halton & Stoke Mandeville Total	9647	7%		
RB	Piddington & Wheeler End		West Wycombe	496			
AM	Stokenchurch	Beacons Bottom	West Wycombe	578			
RC	West Wycombe		West Wycombe	1061			
WE2			West Wycombe	801			
WP			West Wycombe	2209			
WQ			West Wycombe	2259		Spearing Rd, Grenfell Av to West Wycombe (+773)	
WR			West Wycombe	1234			
			West Wycombe Total	8638	-4%		
BCF	Drayton Parslow		Winslow	560		Great Brickhill to Winslow	
BDP	Mursley		Winslow	579		Great Brickhill to Winslow	
BEP	Swanbourne		Winslow	344		Great Brickhill to Winslow	
BBA	Addington		Winslow	125			
BBB	Adstock		Winslow	313			
BCO	Granborough		Winslow	494			
BCQ	Great Horwood		Winslow	1022			
BDH	Little Horwood		Winslow	412			
BDX	Padbury		Winslow	728			
BFB	Whaddon		Winslow	893			
BFF	Winslow		Winslow	4592			
			Winslow Total	10061	11%		
			Grand Total	443064			

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Report to Full Council

Date:	27 April 2022
Title:	Review of the Constitution
Lead Member:	Councillor Broom, Chairman – Standards and General Purposes Committee
Author and/or contact officer:	Nick Graham Service Director Legal and Democratic Services nick.graham@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Ward(s) affected:	none specific
Recommendations:	<p>Council is asked to resolve:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To adopt the recommended proposals for changes to the Constitution detailed in Appendix 1. 2. That the Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to determine the final amendments in relation to any in principle proposals which are adopted with the approval of the Constitution Members Working Group. 3. That the Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to amend the Constitution with the adopted proposals and the final amendments of in principle proposals together with any associated necessary incidental amendments.
Reason for decision:	To update the Constitution to allow better and more transparent decision-making.

Content of report

- 1.1 Under s9P Local Government Act 2000 the Council is required to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution containing the standing orders of the Council and such other information as is required or is desirable. On 27 February 2020 Buckinghamshire Council Shadow Authority adopted the Buckinghamshire Council Constitution to have effect from 1 April 2020. The constitution was reviewed in April 2021.

- 1.2 Oversight of the Constitution is shared between the Audit and Governance Committee (in relation to decision making, the Contract Procedure Rules and the Financial Procedure Rules) and the Standards and General Purposes Committee (ethics and standards and the operation of the Code of Conduct).
- 1.3 The power to change the Constitution is reserved to full Council via recommendation from the Standards and General Purposes Committee. The Monitoring Officer also has delegated authority to make amendments to ensure the Council conducts itself lawfully, and minor amendments where appropriate.
- 1.4 A Constitution Members Working Group consisting of the Chairmen and Vice-chairmen of both the Audit and Governance Committee and the Standards and General Purposes Committee has met a number of times to consider proposed changes and provide initial comments to help inform the review of the Constitution as required by full Council. Feedback from appropriate members and officers to the proposals has also been obtained.
- 1.5 The proposals for changes to the Constitution in Appendix 1 were presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 22 March 2022. The proposals were approved without amendment and referred to Standards and General Purposes Committee.
- 1.6 On 14 April 2022 the Standards and General Purposes Committee considered the proposals and resolved to recommend to full Council that the Constitution be updated as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.7 Comments made in relation to the proposals have been incorporated into Appendix 1 attached to this report.
- 1.8 Council will note that within Appendix 1 the changes are set out in principle to allow drafting of the proposed changes to take account of member feedback, further legal input or ensure other affected parts of the Constitution can be amended accordingly. The Standards and General Purposes Committee therefore also resolved to recommend that full Council delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to determine the final wording of the in principle proposals and any associated/incidental amendments with the approval of the Constitution Working Group, and to then change the Constitution accordingly together with any other necessary incidental amendments.

Other options considered

- 1.9 The proposed changes are considered desirable to allow the Council to operate more effectively, however amendments could also be delayed to allow greater feedback on the proposed changes.

Legal and financial implications

1.10 None except as set out in the body of the report.

Corporate implications

1.11 The effectiveness of the Constitution is central to the operation of the Council as a whole and supports transparency, governance and good decision making. Reviews to ensure the Constitution is fit for purpose and effective should be undertaken regularly.

Consultation and communication

1.12 The Constitution will be updated on the Council's website and will be communicated to members and officers when appropriate to ensure the correct procedures are being used.

Next steps and review

Finalise drafting where appropriate and update the Constitution.

Background papers

None

Your questions and views (for key decisions)

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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Report to Council 27 April 2022

Appendix 1

Amendments to the Constitution

Area of the Constitution	Proposed Change	Reasons
General	Ensure that, other than for the Leader of the Council, where only one Member is nominated they are merely appointed and no election is required.	If only one person is proposed for the position of Chairman then they should be appointed unopposed. (NB: Vice Chairman are appointed by the Chairman.)
	Ensure that a Member cannot nominate themselves for roles on Committee/as Leader.	To ensure any nominations have the sufficient support of the meeting
	Ensure that the role of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Committee is made explicit, including the extent of their discretion in approving agendas, running meetings, etc and as appropriate.	To ensure clarity for those running meetings.
	Strengthen provisions in the Constitution to requiring officers to share information with local Members about issues impacting their areas.	To ensure better communication with Members.
Full Council Rules of Procedure	Ensure the wording is clear that only those items listed for the AGM meeting are considered at that meeting.	The AGM has a prescribed agenda in the Constitution and should be adhered to. This would not affect the ability for the Council to

		call an urgent/Exceptional meeting where required for urgent business.
	Ensure that the wording is clear that the Chairman of the Council can add or subtract to items of business proposed for Ordinary Meetings of the Council.	To ensure flexibility to deal with Council business.
	Make provision for a process to deal with Motions deferred from Council to be dealt with by another body, including how the body should address the Motion, and arrangements for reporting back to Council.	To provide more clarity around how such Motions are dealt with by the body to which they are referred.
Cabinet Rules of Procedure	To provide greater clarity in the Constitution that Members are permitted to ask one question of Cabinet / Cabinet Members.	Currently the provisions are slightly unclear and refer to 'a Question' and 'Questions'.
Planning	Extend the right of Call in to 'Permission in Principle' planning applications.	These are currently only dealt with by officers.
	Planning Site visits – to consider changes for those Councillors who work and cannot attend pre-arranged group visits.	
	To provide for draft recommendations of planning officers on planning applications to be shared with local Members.	This will assist Members to determine whether they should consider making a request for Call In of any planning applications.
Scrutiny	To change the timing of when questions should be received from 5 days before a meeting to 3 days before a meeting to ensure that Members and members of the public could have sight of the agenda before submitting their question.	The agenda is published 5 days before the meeting. This change would enable questions that relate to the agenda items.

Licensing	To make provision in the Licensing Committee Terms of Reference that this Committee can deal with Street Consents.	
Community Boards	To provide a comprehensive Terms of Reference for Community Boards to include provision for membership.	
Changes made by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers	In compliance with the statutory requirements set out under sections 36 – 41 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Buckinghamshire Council has a Channel Panel in place for its Area, and has regard to the Channel duty guidance 2020 and is committed to complying with the requirements within it.	Each local authority is required to have a Channel Panel as a means of addressing radicalisation and extremism and to comply with the Government’s legislation, including compliance with the Prevent Duty.

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Report to Council

Date:	27 th April 2022
Title:	Select Committee Annual Report 2021/22
Relevant councillor(s):	All
Author and/or contact officer:	Councillors Ralph Bagge, Patricia Birchley, David Carroll, Bill Chapple OBE, Mimi Harker OBE and Jane MacBean Contact Officer – Kelly Sutherland, Scrutiny Manager
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	For Members to note the Annual Report of the Select Committees 2021/22

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The role of the scrutiny function is to provide an independent cross-party challenge to decision-makers for public accountability and to improve outcomes for Buckinghamshire’s residents.
- 1.2 Each year the Chairmen of the Select Committees produce an annual report reflecting the work and outcomes achieved by their Committee over the past year.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 Over the past two years, the work of each of the Select Committee’s has been dominated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on council services and those of our key partners and plans for post-covid recovery.
- 2.2 A number of key pieces of work and achievements have been made across all 6 Select Committees and the annual report focusses on these.
- 2.3 The 2021/22 Annual report is attached at Appendix 1.

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Annual Scrutiny Report 2021-22



Foreword

As Chairmen of the Select Committees, we are delighted to present our Annual Report for 2021/22. We would like to pay tribute to all Buckinghamshire Council officers and staff working within our partner organisations for their continued dedication, resilience and hard work throughout yet another challenging year.

Our Select Committees are cross-party and non-political with the overall aim to improve services and outcomes for residents by holding decision-makers to account. This report summarises the main issues which have been reviewed and challenged throughout the year and highlights some of the key achievements. We have completed a number of in-depth pieces of work – a rapid review of the council’s 16 community boards (due to be presented to Cabinet in May) and a rapid review of member engagement in planning which led to 6 recommendations being made to Cabinet. Scrutiny of the council’s budget took place across three full days in January and resulted in 12 recommendations being made to Cabinet. There are also a number of ongoing inquiries which are due to be reported to Cabinet in the Summer – primary care network development, social worker recruitment and retention and a review of pollution in Buckinghamshire’s rivers and chalk streams.

We would like to thank all Councillors who have participated in scrutiny over the year, Cabinet for their continued support of scrutiny and all officers, co-opted Members, partners and members of the public who have contributed their time and expertise to our meetings and in-depth reviews.



Cllr Patricia Birchley,
Chairman, Children’s & Education
Select Committee



Cllr Mimi Harker,
Chairman, Communities &
Localism Select Committee



Cllr Ralph Bagge,
Chairman, Finance &
Resources Select
Committee



Cllr David Carroll, Chairman,
Growth, Infrastructure & Housing
Select Committee



Cllr Jane MacBean, Chairman,
Health & Adult Social Care Select
Committee



Cllr Bill Chapple OBE,
Chairman, Transport,
Environment &
Climate Change Select
Committee

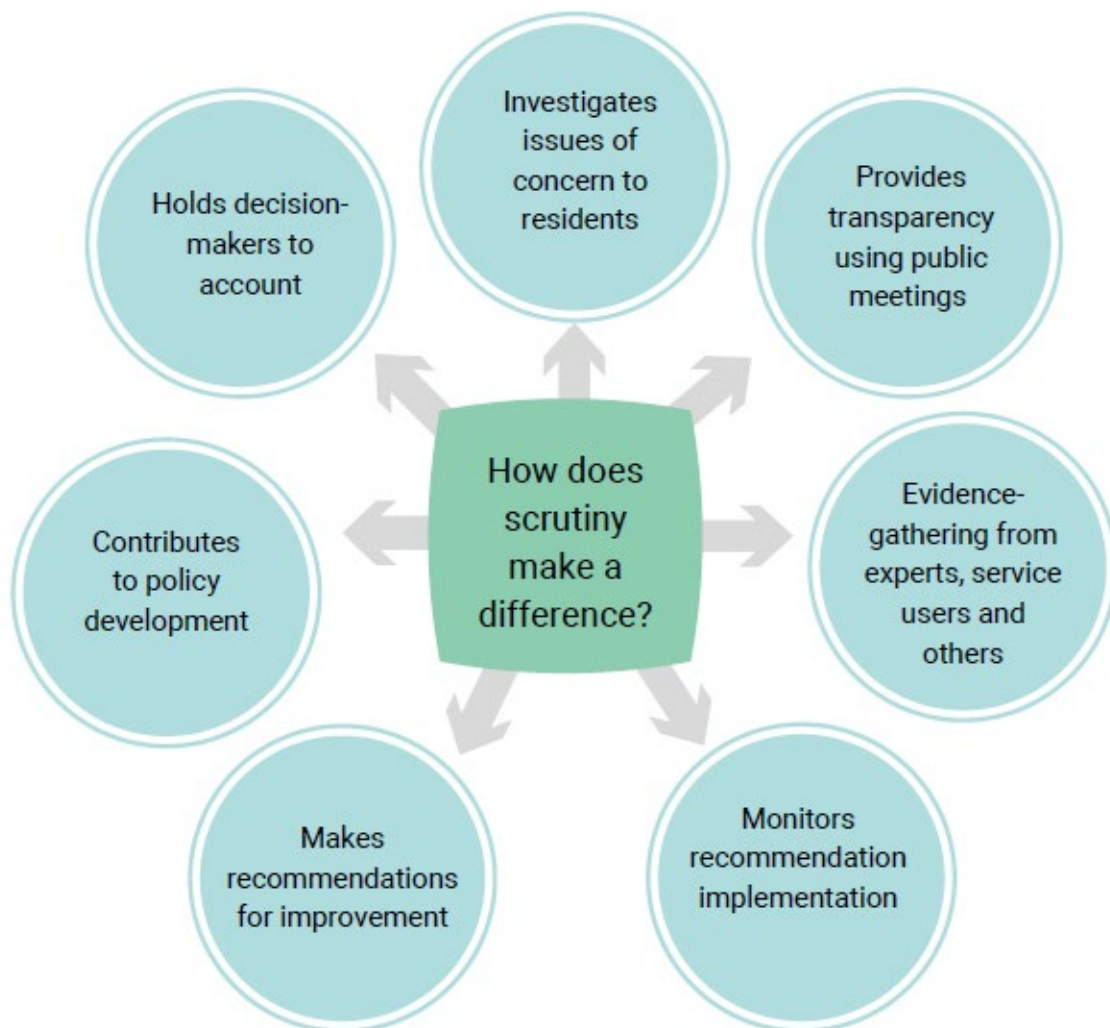
What is scrutiny?

Scrutiny is an important part of local democracy and provides the legal power for Councillors to look into issues of concern for residents, holding decision-makers to account for the decisions they are making.

Although scrutiny cannot make decisions, it makes recommendations for improvement to decision-makers. Within the Council, this is the Cabinet, but as scrutiny can look at services provided by other organisations, it often makes recommendations for partners.

There are also specific powers for scrutiny to hold the NHS to account within health scrutiny.

Scrutiny at Buckinghamshire Council is carried out by six Select Committees. Each Select Committee has a different area of responsibility and each examines local services across the public sector. The Committees are made up of elected Councillors who are not part of the Council's Cabinet, together with co-opted representatives from relevant local organisations.



Children's & Education Select Committee

Many children who come into the Council's care or who receive other support services are presenting with increasingly complex needs and it is vital that the Council can respond with appropriate services in a timely way. The Children's and Education Select Committee has an important role to play in scrutinising children's social care and education provision for both young adults and children. These are areas that were impacted significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic and the demands on services have increased significantly in both numbers and complexity. During the year the services have undergone two Ofsted inspections with significant improvements seen in service provision across the services.

Topics the committee has focussed on

In the past year the Committee has considered a variety of key topics including the following:

- Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services 2021
- Emotional Health in Schools
- Closing the Attainment Gap in Buckinghamshire schools
- Special Educational Needs Improvement Programme
- Fostering, Adoption and Guardianship Orders
- Social Worker Recruitment and Retention



Ofsted Inspection

In March 2022 the Committee received a report from the Director of Social Care regarding the recent Ofsted inspection of the service which had been held between 29th November and 17th December 2021. Ofsted had conducted their reinspection of services relating to children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The inspection had covered the overall effectiveness of the service; the experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection and the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families.

The committee congratulated the service on their extensive work which moved the service rating from "inadequate" to "requires improvement to be good". As a result of the Ofsted inspection, the Committee had immediately set up a rapid review group to look at one aspect of the service in depth: social worker recruitment and retention.

Social Worker Recruitment and Retention

The Committee set up a rapid review group of four councillors led by Councillor Mark Dormer, to look at this issue in depth. Meetings were held in quick succession over a period of 8 weeks and included focus group meetings with social workers and their managers, the Director of Children's Services and representatives from the finance and human resources department. The group also took into account research gathered on the national picture which confirms that social worker recruitment and retention is a complex problem with many inter-related factors involved. The review group intend to report their findings to the June 2022 committee.

Communities & Localism Select Committee

The Communities and Localism Select Committee holds decision makers to account for improving outcomes and services for Buckinghamshire. This Select Committee has responsibility for scrutinising the Communities and Culture and Leisure portfolios and the Regulatory aspects of the Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory portfolio, which makes for wide-ranging and varied agendas.

Issues the committee has focussed on

In the past year the Committee has considered and provided feedback on a number of significant issues including the following:

- Leisure Facilities Strategy
- Youth Engagement with Community Boards
- Devolution
- Community Support 'Helping Hands' Service
- Buckinghamshire Culture
- Domestic Abuse

Community Boards Rapid Review

The Select Committee has commissioned a rapid review of the Council's 16 Community Boards to understand both the challenges and the successes of their first two years of operation. This in-depth piece of work has been undertaken by a cross-party review group, who have then identified areas for recommendation and refocus as the Community Boards emerge from working reactively in response to the emergency of the Covid-19 pandemic, into a time of working more proactively on wider engagement and embedding the Community Boards as a means of inspiring and enriching local communities.

As part of the review process, the Chairman has attended a number of Community Board meetings and the review group has met with a variety of different stakeholders including separate sessions with Community Board Chairmen, Community Board Co-ordinators, Town and Parish Council representatives, Council officers and Community Groups who have received funding from the Community Boards. In addition to the feedback gained during these discussions, every Buckinghamshire Councillor sits on at least one Community Board, so the review group members have also been able to draw on their own experiences. Whilst it was not possible to engage with every single stakeholder (there are 171 Town and Parish Councils alone) all 16 Community Boards were represented across the two days of evidence gathering that the review group held in March.

The review group's report and recommendations will be considered at the Communities and Localism Select Committee at its April meeting before being presented to Cabinet shortly afterwards in May.



**Community
Boards**



Finance & Resources Select Committee

This Committee considers the Council's overall financial strategy, as well as the portfolios of Property and Assets and Resources. The work programme is often driven by the findings of the annual Budget Scrutiny process.

Key areas of work during 2021/22

- Customer First – the customer experience framework for the Council
- Work Smart Programme
- AVE and Consilio Business Plans
- Better Buckinghamshire Programme
- Overall Property Strategy
- Progress made on the previous year's Budget Scrutiny recommendations



Buckinghamshire Council @BucksCouncil · Jan 7

We want you to #HaveYourSay! Our Budget Scrutiny process begins Monday, so if you have questions about our budget, let us know, and we'll ask them in our sessions. Email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk with your questions!



Budget Scrutiny Inquiry

This year's Inquiry was undertaken in January and is a major focus of the Select Committee's annual Work Programme. Meetings were held on 10th, 11th and 13th January 2022 and the Leader of the Council, each Cabinet Member, Corporate Directors and Service Directors were questioned on their draft budget proposals. This year the Inquiry Group was presented with the task of challenging a budget that was recovering from the pandemic. The Inquiry returned to being held in person and was webcast live. Questions from the public were received via email and social media and were put to the Cabinet Members.

Following the Inquiry, the Committee met to discuss, consider and develop their key findings and recommendations.

The Inquiry report contained **12 recommendations**. As a result, changes were made which included:

- Reviewing the Corporate Plan.
- Producing a timetable of key strategies which are under development across the Council with target dates for key milestones.
- Delivering the Estates Strategy at greater pace.
- Greater visibility given to contingencies contained with the budget.
- Review of legacy special expenses.

"I always feel that the budget we discuss today is far better for the cross-party scrutiny that takes place. We are often listed by the LGA as an absolute exemplar in the way in which scrutiny of budgets should take place."
Cllr Martin Tett (Full Council on 23 February)
Leader of Buckinghamshire Council

This has been another extraordinary year which has been challenging for all of us in local Government and the Inquiry Group recognise how difficult a task it has been to put a budget together in the context of an ongoing global pandemic, including the recent Omicron variant of Covid-19. We appreciate the efforts of Cabinet and officers at a time when there are gross uncertainties around economic recovery, future Government funding, significant increases in demand and a potential change in Government focus linked to the 'levelling up' agenda.

Cllr Ralph Bagge (Forward in Scrutiny Inquiry Report)
Chairman of the Finances & Resources Select Committee

Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee

The Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee scrutinises a number of portfolios that have a crucial role in 'place shaping' for Buckinghamshire now and in the future, namely Planning and Regeneration, Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services and the Leaders' portfolio, which has responsibility for economic development and national infrastructure projects.

Key Areas of Work during 2021/22

The Select Committee has considered the following important topics during the past 12 months:

- Strategic Vision for Buckinghamshire
- Supporting Buckinghamshire's High Streets
- Buckinghamshire Local Plan
- Planning Enforcement
- S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy
- Digital Infrastructure
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
- Town Centre Regeneration



Member Engagement in Planning Rapid Review

In October 2021, the Select Committee decided to undertake a review of Member Engagement in Planning. As part of a service improvement programme, the Planning and Environment service had identified a need to ensure that members are well-supported to deal with enquiries from residents in connection with planning matters. Buckinghamshire Council has 147 elected members and the Planning service are dealing with circa 13,000 planning applications and 1,650 enforcement enquiries per annum. This generates a significant amount of queries/liason between planning officers and members, therefore it is important that member engagement is meaningful and can resolve issues at an early stage.

It made sense for Select Committee members to undertake this piece of work, in order to deliver genuine member insight. The cross-party review group agreed to look into the issues that were causing difficulties for both members and officers and subsequently presented their report, which included 6 recommendations to Cabinet on 1st March 2022, where it was very well-received. The recommendations including provision of a Member Planning Handbook and access, training for members on using the GIS online maps, political awareness training for Planning staff and a review of new Member Planning Surgeries to assess their effectiveness were all accepted.

"This is a great example of where Scrutiny adds some tremendous value."
Cllr Martin Tett (Cabinet on 1 March)
Leader of Buckinghamshire Council

Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee

The Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee holds health and social care decision-makers to account and acts as a critical friend to the health and social care sector. Part of the Select Committee's work is around challenging proposals for health and social care service change to ensure the best possible outcomes for Buckinghamshire residents. This has continued to be an incredibly challenging year for the council's adult social care services and health partners.

The Committee comprises 15 councillors and a representative from Healthwatch Bucks, who sits on the committee as a non-voting Member.

“At Healthwatch Bucks, we value the pro-active role that the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee plays in improving health and social care outcomes and services for Bucks residents. As a co-opted member, we contribute by ensuring the voices of people using Bucks health and social care services are heard, considered and acted upon.”

Zoe McIntosh, Chief Executive, Healthwatch Bucks

Key issues looked at during 2021-22

The Committee has reviewed and challenged key areas including:

- Obesity – reviewing the development of a whole system approach;
- Winter Planning – system resilience through Winter and the ongoing pandemic;
- Refreshed Adult Social Care's Better Lives Strategy;
- Performance of South Central Ambulance Service;
- Support for Carers – building on the HASC inquiry findings from 2018;
- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust's community hubs proposal;
- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust's clinical strategy – ongoing development;
- Director of Public Health's annual report on Domestic Violence and Abuse.



Key achievements

- In June, a group of HASC Members prepared a statement for inclusion in the Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust’s annual quality account. Whilst the HASC response acknowledged the key achievements and highlights for the Hospital Trust, it also focussed on areas of concern and areas of improvement, including re-admission rates, pressure ulcers and sepsis. We were particularly pleased to read about the many initiatives being undertaken by the Trust to help support staff, but staff wellbeing remains a concern across the health and social care sector and the Committee will be reviewing this in conjunction with recruitment and retention plans. The Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust’s Quality Account 2020-21 can be found via this link –



[Quality account 2020-2021 - Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust \(buckshealthcare.nhs.uk\)](https://buckshealthcare.nhs.uk)

- In November, the Committee prepared a formal response to the consultation on the future of healthcare services in Buckingham. The response focussed on three main areas – the process, the plans outlined in the consultation briefing paper and next steps.

Other areas of work

- At its September meeting, the Committee agreed a scoping document to undertake an inquiry into primary care network development across Buckinghamshire. The inquiry group comprises 6 Members from the Committee who started undertaking evidence gathering meetings in January. The aim is to produce the draft report with recommendations for the June Committee meeting.
- Buckinghamshire is part of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS). Terms of reference for a joint health scrutiny committee have been agreed by the 5 local authorities within the ICS footprint. Last year, Committee Members submitted a response to the “NHS Integrated Care – next steps” consultation which would see ICS’s given more of a legal footing. The plans for the BOB ICS have been delayed until July 2022 so the joint committee will be meeting later in the year.
- The Committee has set-up a small working group to review and feedback on Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust’s Clinical Strategy.



4 ICP local key priorities:

**Hospital discharge;
Admission avoidance;
Mental health;**

Health inequalities with a focus on cardiovascular disease.

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care System (ICS) currently has three Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) delivering improved services to patients.



Health and social care integration

Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee

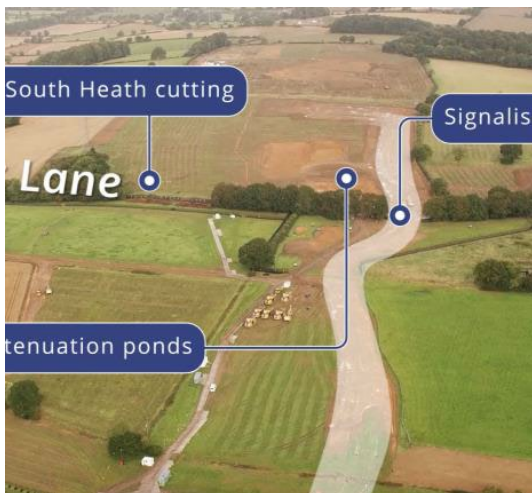
The Select Committee has a wide remit covering transport, environment and climate change topics. Some of these issues cut across a variety of council portfolios but the Select Committees can undertake joint pieces of work to ensure that the Council takes a co-ordinated approach. Climate change and environmental concerns are high on the agenda for residents and the Select Committee regularly features questions from members of the public.

Topics considered this year

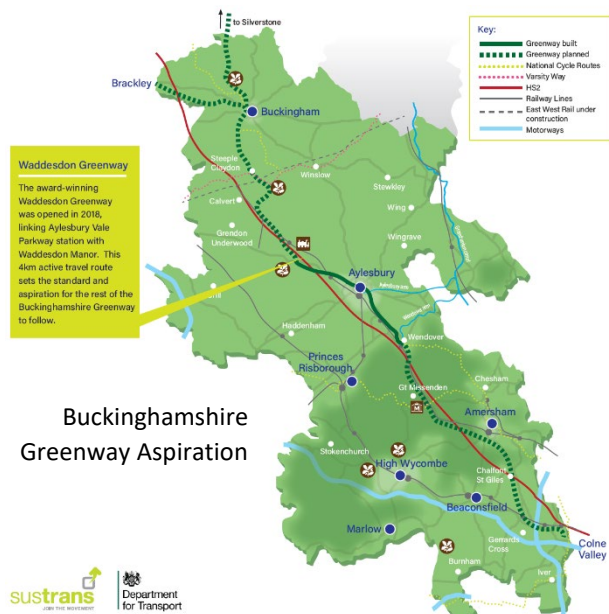
- Home to School Transport
- Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy
- Corporate Carbon Reduction
- Fly Tipping
- Bus Service Improvement Plan
- Procurement of Buckinghamshire Highways Contract
- East West Rail
- HS2 Ltd
- Integrated Household Waste Recycling Centre Contract
- Sustainable Transport

Achievements

- Frequent engagement by members of the public with questions on agenda items.
- Held HS2 Ltd to account in March 2022 regarding latest works and public engagement. Officers from HS2 Ltd attended a meeting and provided information on the latest works, including public engagement, and environmental impact on the project. Overhead drone footage of the project was also shown to the Committee. Members took the opportunity to robustly question HS2 representatives and requested further information outside the meeting. The Chairman also wrote a follow up letter to HS2 Ltd.
- East West Rail were questioned in January 2022 when they attended the Select Committee to discuss their work in Buckinghamshire.
- Commenced inquiry into pollution in Buckinghamshire’s rivers and chalk streams.



Screenshot of HS2 drone footage presented to Committee in March 2022



Climate Change and Air Quality

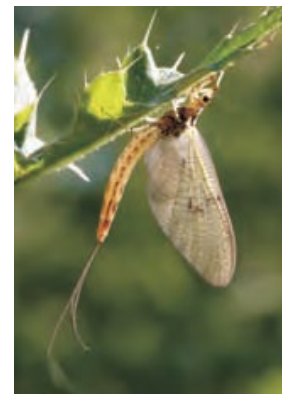
The Select Committee scrutinised the Strategy when it was published and have had regular updates from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and the Head of Climate Change and Environment. The Select Committee will have a more detailed review of the Strategy later in 2022.

Opportunities for Cycling and Pedestrians

The Committee heard about the Council's aspirations to create the Buckinghamshire Greenway which would deliver benefits in terms of public health and reducing congestion on the roads and associated emissions.

Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams

In January 2022, the Committee agreed to carry out a review of pollution in Buckinghamshire's rivers and chalk streams. The working group have heard from a variety of external organisations and the voluntary sector to gather evidence. This will culminate in a final in person session with the water utility companies and the Environment Agency.



Promoting Scrutiny

Following an internal service review as part of the 'Better Buckinghamshire' programme, the scrutiny function is supported by a dedicated Scrutiny Team. The team work closely with Business Managers and Service Directors in each of the Council's directorates to identify priority areas of work to be scrutinised by the Select Committees and to promote the benefits of engaging with Select Committees.

Going forward, the team will continue to raise awareness of scrutiny in the new Council and with partner agencies and will look to provide a voice for Buckinghamshire residents.

Public Engagement

The Council welcomes the public's involvement in scrutiny because public services are provided to help improve local lives. There are a number of ways in which anyone who lives, works or studies in Buckinghamshire can get involved in the work of scrutiny at the Council.

Get informed

Watch a webcast

The Select Committees are webcast and can be watched live or up to six months after the meeting on the Council's website. Between 24 June 2021 and 24 March 2022, the Select Committees have had a total of 3,203 webcast views (including Budget Scrutiny Inquiry meetings).

Get involved

Contribute to an inquiry

Scrutiny work is improved by the involvement of local people. To have your say on any current scrutiny inquiry, please email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Ask a public question

Public questions are an opportunity for the public to ask questions on agenda items that have an impact on their local community or the county as a whole. For more information, visit the Council's website: www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/council-and-democracy



Report to Council

Date:	27 April 2022
Title:	Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee
Relevant councillor(s):	Cllr Richard Newcombe
Author and/or contact officer:	Maggie Gibb, Head of Business Assurance (& Chief Auditor)
Ward(s) affected:	N/A
Recommendations:	Council is asked to note the content of this report
Reason for decision:	N/A

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This annual report has been prepared to inform Buckinghamshire Council of the work carried out by the Council's Audit and Governance Committee during the 2021/22 financial year. The content and presentation of this report meets the requirements of the CIPFA Audit Committees Guidance 2018 to report to full Council on a regular basis on the Committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 The Audit Committee is a key part in the Council's governance framework to provide an independent oversight on the effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk, financial management, and internal control arrangements.
- 2.2 The Audit and Governance Committee has met six times during the year:

1. 22 June 2021
2. 28 July 2021
3. 29 September 2021

3. 30 November 2021

4. 25 January 2022

5. 22 March 2022

- 2.3 At each meeting we have reviewed our Forward Work Programme ensuring the work mirrors the level of risks and priorities of the Council. Any actions raised during previous Committee meetings are reviewed for completeness.
- 2.4 Throughout the year, the Committee has continued to receive valued professional reports, support and advice from Corporate Finance, Treasury Management, Risk Management, Procurement, Internal Audit and from our External Auditors.
- 2.5 The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for approving and monitoring the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Money Laundering Policy.
- 2.6 One of the committee's key responsibilities is to approve the Council's Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement.
- 2.7 These items were originally due to be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in November 2021, however due to a combination of factors including staffing issues and being the first year of a unitary authority resulting in additional work around verifying opening balances, they have been delayed. The Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement will be presented to the committee for approval in May 2022.
- 2.8 Only 9% of authorities across the country completed their accounts by the due date.
- 2.9 There have been increased requirements put on external auditors by the Financial Reporting Council in recent years following some failures within both the public and private sector which has compounded the delay.
- 2.10 The Committee approved the terms of reference for Internal Audit (Internal Audit Charter), the Business Assurance Strategy including the Annual Internal Audit Plan, and the Counter Fraud Plan.
- 2.11 Priorities have been reviewed regularly, and the plan has remained fluid to allow for assurance activity to take place in the highest risk areas. The Audit Manager has continued leading on the assurance arrangements over the Covid-19 grants received by Buckinghamshire Council, and the Investigations Team have assisted with the controls over the payments of business grants.
- 2.12 The Audit and Governance Committee has received updates on the work of the Counter Fraud/Investigations team, including details of successful outcomes, prosecutions and recoveries.

- 2.13 The Risk Management Group is a sub-group of the Audit and Governance Committee and has met seven times during the financial year. The group review the strategic and key directorate risks facing the authority and the internal controls and governance in place to manage those risks to demonstrate how risk management is embedded within Services.
- 2.14 The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for approving the Risk Management Strategy, and the Risk Management Group monitors the effective implementation of the strategy.
- 2.15 During 2021/22 the Audit and Governance Committee considered a motion relating the Climate Change risk management which had been referred by Full Council. It was agreed by the committee that the Council has already acknowledged the importance of climate change and that the Strategic Risk Register already reflects the risks to the Council's responsibilities associated with climate change. The risk register will continue to be regularly updated by directorates and the Corporate Management Team as the risks change and evolve, and as controls and countermeasures can be improved.
- 2.16 The Audit and Governance Committee undertook the scrutiny role for the development of future Treasury Management strategy prior to its presentation to Council for approval. It also received mid-term and annual reports on the extent of compliance with the approved Treasury Management strategy and an analysis of the performance against the targets set. During the year it recommended the Treasury Management strategy and performance monitoring reports for Council approval.
- 2.17 The Audit and Governance Committee has continued to review the Council's Constitution.
- 2.18 At the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee on 22 March 2022, a report was presented following CIPFA's External Quality Assessment of Conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The report concluded that the Council's Internal Audit function fully conformed with the standards, and the CIPFA representative stated the following at the meeting:
"In my opinion you have a very good Internal Audit service that has done extremely well in getting itself set up, putting in place appropriate policies and procedures for a new Unitary authority, and at the same time having to support the Council through the issues of the pandemic. I have to say that for a newly formed Internal Audit service, it is one of the best I have seen in a long, long time".

- 2.19 The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee would like to thank members and officers who have supported the work of this Committee by presenting, discussing, challenging, and debating solutions to the governance, risk, financial, and control environment of the Council.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 N/A.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 There is regular review of financial risks through the Risk Management Group and the Audit and Governance Committee also considered the value for money conclusions of the external auditors.

5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 None

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 N/A

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 N/A

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 N/A

9. Background papers

- 9.1 [Audit and Governance Committee agendas.](#)

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.



Cabinet Member report – Leader

Councillor Martin Tett

Helping Hand for Ukraine

It is heartening to see so many people offering to open their homes to a refugee from Ukraine, with Buckinghamshire receiving a vast number of expressions of interests from residents across the County.

The Council has formed a local strategic partnership to be in the best possible position across the whole of Buckinghamshire to co-ordinate a strong response to whatever scenario presents. It means we have representatives from education, health, safeguarding, fire, police, housing associations and the voluntary sector aligned to support arrivals as best we can. Matching sponsors with Ukrainian families is currently being co-ordinated through charities and other channels.

As a Council, we have a lot of experience from our Afghan resettlement programme and recognise the trauma that these families will likely have been through. Targeted wrap around support will be critical to ensuring that refugees are facilitated to set up a new life here in Buckinghamshire.

We are currently aware of around 859 refugees stating Buckinghamshire as their destination on their visa applications (data correct as of 12/04). The Council is helping practically with administering housing, welfare checks and DBS checks for sponsors who have found guests they would like to stay with them as well as administering the government grant to sponsors. Housing checks are already taking place and a welcome pack has been produced. This has been sent to sponsors along with a translated version for the Ukrainian families.

I'm sure we're all proud of the tremendous efforts made by our staff, and our partners, to mobilise our local response at such a rapid pace. In less than four weeks of the launch of the national scheme, our environmental health service has undertaken 282 home checks, children's and adults social care have together completed 313 safeguarding checks, and the Probation Service have carried out a further 530 checks. Over 100 of the Council's staff have come forward to take on sponsor liaison roles, in addition to their day jobs, and are already in contact with sponsor households in preparation for arrivals. I know that they have received very positive feedback from sponsors in appreciation of their work

We are encouraging community groups that are offering support to people arriving from Ukraine to add their information to the [Bucks Online Directory](#) – please can I ask you all to promote this in your local areas. As the Ukrainian guests begin to arrive, Members will have a key role to play in helping to welcome them and connect them into the local community groups which are being set up.

We know that there are a number of issues with the national scheme that need to be resolved, including, in particular, the support for individuals arriving on the Ukraine Family Visa scheme, as well as the development of a rematching process in the event that a sponsor arrangement is not successful. I recently had the opportunity to speak directly to Lord Harrington on the situation and to pass on some of the issues we have been facing. He promised to look at how things could be made easier and was keen to receive suggestions on where the process can be improved.

As the situation continues to evolve and change, the latest position on the Homes for Ukraine scheme will be updated at the Council meeting.

Social Care Funding

As the Adult Social Care Spokesperson for the County Councils Network (CCN), I remain concerned that the Adult Social Care charging reform proposals are likely to have a serious impact on the care sector across the country, widening the funding gap that we are currently facing and creating additional uncertainty about future funding periods.

The CCN has released a new [independent report](#) by healthcare market specialists LaingBuisson. This concluded that the government's proposed allocation 'seriously underestimates' the amount of new funding required and could cause a 'severe sustainability risk' to care homes across the country.

Devolution and Recovery Deal

Government published the Levelling Up white paper in early February which sets out a proposed framework for devolution to local areas. The first wave of new county deal areas was confirmed which does not include Buckinghamshire, but we continue to work with our partners to set out our devolution proposals to government as our Strategic Vision remains clear and consistent.

It has become apparent through the white paper announcements that the Oxford to Cambridge Arc for growth no longer has a formal basis in government policy approach and government ambitions for a planning policy framework for this region are not being progressed. Buckinghamshire withdrew its support for the Ox-Cam Arc governance structures in 2020 so this shift in government approach is welcomed.

Buckinghamshire Growth Board

Growth Board local partners met in February to consider reactions to the levelling up white paper and consider our strategic approach. The Board's Strategic Vision for Buckinghamshire, which sets out our ambitions for the county, is currently with partner organisations for endorsement and is due to be adopted by the Board at its next meeting in May.

Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee

The Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee met on 17 February. The agenda included an update on digital infrastructure, the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, town centre regeneration and the final report of the member engagement in planning review group.

The digital infrastructure item provided a detailed update on the status of broadband roll out contracts and details of the government's new Project Gigabit which seeks to deliver gigabit capable broadband to areas that would otherwise be left behind from commercial broadband roll out programmes.

Buckinghamshire is part of a regional procurement by government which covers Hertfordshire and part of Berkshire and will have an anticipated contract commencement date of Spring 2023.

Skills and Employment

The Economic Growth and Regeneration Team continue to monitor employment levels across the county. Covid and lockdowns caused many employers to lay people off due to business closures. This has prompted many people to reconsider the sector they work in or re-evaluate the skills they have.

The Council recently hosted our first Jobs and Apprentice Fair in Chesham, led by Cllr Joe Baum and the Chesham and Villages Community Board. It provided a platform for employers to promote their vacancies and careers, support agencies to promote their employment support services and for residents to think about various vacancies and careers they could get into, with over 35 employers in attendance and over 700 attendees over the course of the event. Further jobs fairs are being considered in other parts of the county where there is a particular need for such support.

Support to Buckinghamshire Businesses

The Council has continued to support local businesses negatively impacted by Covid and has paid £3.2 million to 866 businesses under the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant (OHLG). The main benefactors of this grant are restaurants, cafes, and public houses. The grant application process closed on 18 March and all payments have now been processed prior to the year-end deadline.

The Additional Restrictions Grant has seen over £22 million re-invested to support recovery of vital businesses across Buckinghamshire. Nearly £1million allocated for activities that help recovery of our town centres has been invested across Buckinghamshire town centres. We have worked with a range of partners including Community Boards. The funding helped deliver planters, temporary road closures to enable cafes and restaurants to provide outside seating, public art, place promotion materials, welcome back ambassadors and many other activities.

The [Covid Additional Relief Fund \(CARF\) application](#) process is live. This is mainly for secondary hospitality businesses which were not eligible for the expanded retail relief. A link to apply for CARF has been sent to ratepayers who have previously expressed hardship due to COVID restrictions and Bucks Business First will also help to signpost local businesses.

Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (BLEP)

The LEP board agreed at its February meeting to develop a multi-year business plan utilising organisational reserves with the fundamental aim of driving forward economic growth in the county. The detailed plan and budget will be brought before the board at its next meeting.

Secondly, the LEP partnered with Bucks Skills Hub to produce the second annual Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report. Both organisations are leading the way nationally in terms of their thinking around training and skills and addressing any sort of skills gaps as they emerge. A key focus outlined in the report for the current year will be green skills provision to facilitate the transition to a net zero economy. Complementing this report, the Buckinghamshire Skills Show took place at the Westcott Venture Park bringing together thousands of young people and over a hundred businesses.

Finally, The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Levelling Up White Paper confirmed the continued role of LEPs in developing and leading local economic strategy.

Strategic Finance

At our last Council meeting, members agreed the proposed Budget, however since then additional pressures or risks have been identified. These include:

- Inflationary pressures – global economic upheaval is impacting on supply-chains and has pushed inflation up to 6.2% with expectations of this increasing further by the end of the year.
- Social care demand – recent months forecasting has highlighted additional pressures particularly in external placement costs.
- Ukraine response – recent Government announcements on the ‘Homes for Ukraine’ visa scheme has provided some funding although this may not fully cover the additional costs likely to be incurred.
- Adult social care reforms – it is looking increasingly likely that the financial implications arising from the introduction of the reforms will far exceed the funding provided.
- Finance Reform / Levelling-Up Agenda – a consultation is expected shortly but there is emerging evidence to suggest that funding will be reallocated from the south-east to the midlands / north.

Cabinet is keeping financial pressures under constant review.

Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)

Work progresses apace on the new Kingsbrook Secondary School. Despite all the ongoing challenges due to covid, supply chain issues and escalating costs, the school is still due to open in September and is currently under budget. This is thanks to the excellent work of our Education and Property teams, and their construction partners Morgan Sindall and Mace.

The Council have helped facilitate discussions with HS2 and developers in the South West of Aylesbury to help enable the delivery of the South West Link Road (running south of the A418). This is still a few years away, but the constructive dialogue with all parties is helping co-ordinate a very complicated infrastructure arrangement in the area where HS2, South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR), the South West Link Road, the new Stoke Mandeville Relief Road, and the Princes Risborough railway line all meet.

The South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) is progressing, and the Highways Infrastructure Projects Team are battling with the same supply chain pressures and associated escalating costs. These issues are proving enormously challenging and have caused a slight delay to the project whilst we review internally to ensure the council is getting value for money.

The planning application for the Woodlands development was agreed by Strategic Sites Committee on 7th April, this includes the provision of the Eastern Link Road.

The claim for judicial review of the decision on the Hampden Fields development (brought by the Hampden Fields Action Group) has been dismissed. Officers will continue working with the developers of the site to ensure that infrastructure is brought forward in a timely manner, including the development of the Southern Link Road.

HS2/East West Rail

The construction of HS2 continues to raise significant challenges for residents, communities and for Buckinghamshire Council. Despite the challenges we continue to work with HS2 Ltd and its contractors to ensure disruption is minimised as far as reasonably practicable. The following year sees the start of the mass haul of material along the route of the line although it is hoped that as

much traffic as possible is kept on dedicated newly constructed haul roads and kept off the public highway.

I recently met with Sir Mark Worthington, Independent Construction Commissioner and discussed the poor engagement of HS2 with both Buckinghamshire Council and residents, S17 applications, unsympathetic and inappropriate design of structures such as bridges, road repairs and failure to follow the Code of Construction Practice in relation to gritting. The visit was well received with highways repairs being the top issue discussed. Sir Mark also met with Cllrs Peter Martin, Kelly Gates, Frank Mahon, and Mark Sloane to go through a number of issues relating to the HS2 construction works and to visit a property affected by the works. A subsequent visit has been requested for Sir Mark to visit Stoke Mandeville and Wendover.

The slow responses from HS2 Ltd and EWRA to address damage to the highway continues to be an issue. We have escalated this with Ministers and continue to hold both infrastructure projects to account to ensure that the Buckinghamshire taxpayer does not foot the cost of road repairs caused as a result of their HGVs on our network.

Princes Risborough Southern Road Link

Cabinet considered and agreed to the report on this scheme on 9th November on Princes Risborough Southern Road Link. A pre-planning public consultation was undertaken between 19th November – 12th December. It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted in April 2022, subject to due diligence checks and any amendments to the existing design, in particular around resident's accesses. Contact with impacted landowners has been undertaken and the Council has engaged with our surveyors, Carter Jonas, to commence land negotiations, and will undertake land referencing work in preparation for any potential CPO. The Sumitomo land has been purchased by the Council using delegated powers from the 9th November Cabinet Report and is a key acquisition to enable this project to progress.

Enterprise Zone update

Over the last two to three years, the Enterprise Zone programme has provided 55% of all of the new commercial floor space in the county.

Silverstone Park has welcomed a new investor into the enterprise zone taking occupancy of a unit with the aim of becoming a leading global electric vehicle company.

And finally, at Westcott Park, the Satellite Applications Catapult, in partnership with Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, has announced its expansion at Westcott Venture Park due to a £5.7m investment in new facilities. The new 'Building 4000' is set to house an in-orbit servicing and manufacturing facility alongside the expansion of the healthy and agri living labs.

England Economic Heartland (EEH)

EEH, along with the East West Mainline Partnership, are leading a programme of activity to refresh and update the strategic narrative for East West Rail between Oxford and Cambridge, including the link to Aylesbury. The purpose of the work will be to reinforce the need for investment of East West Rail, including the link to Aylesbury, in full.

The section of East West Rail between Oxford and Bletchley via Winslow is currently under construction and expected to be operational by 2025. It is expected that funding to continue development and delivery of the next phase of East West Rail to Cambridge will be confirmed by DfT, pending internal decisions within government. However, a number of recent government policy

announcements, alongside the general squeeze on public sector spending, have led to the need for a locally determined refresh of the already-strong rationale for delivery of East West Rail in full.

The first phase of EEH's active travel strategy has been published. It includes a literature review of local, regional, and national policy, and an assessment of the opportunities and challenges for active travel in the region. Phase two of the strategy will consider how the vision set out in phase one can be achieved.

Naomi Green has been appointed EEH's new managing director. Naomi worked in both the government's Cities and Local Growth Unit and the Department for Transport before joining EEH in September 2018 as the head of technical programme.

LGA's People and Places Board

LGA's People and Places Board met for the 5th time in mid-March. Discussions centred around the levelling up agenda and devolution.

South East Strategic Leaders (SESL)

During their conference in December 2021, Leaders discussed the Government's proposals for integrating health and social care with the Chief Executive of NHS Clinical Commissioners and the President of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services.

Leaders discussed the roles for strategic authorities in facilitating economic growth and supporting people into employment with representatives of the CBI and the Learning and Work Institute. They also considered what devolution and levelling up mean for the wider South East.

In their March meeting, SESL further developed their understanding of the Government's agendas and priorities for levelling up and devolution. They considered how these might best be progressed in the wider South East, whilst supporting the agendas across the country. The Leaders were joined in that discussion by a senior member of the Government's Cabinet Office team and Levelling Up Taskforce.

Leaders also took a deeper look at the implications for strategic authorities of the Government's proposed changes to social care costs, caps, and funding. The Director of Integration from the Department of Health and Social Care participated in the meeting to explain the Government's intentions and hear local views and suggestions.

During that meeting, Leaders shared ideas regarding the evolving situation in Ukraine and people seeking refuge in the UK. SESL remains keen to explore how central and local government can work together to best support refugees, and recently arranged a meeting with Lord Harrington to discuss the situation and pass on our ideas for how things can improve.



Cabinet Member report – Climate Change & Environment

Councillor Peter Strachan

Groundwater Resilience and Community Engagement (GRACE)– Outline Business Case Approved

GRACE has received formal approval of its Business Case by the Environment Agency. The project team were the first of the 25 innovation and resilience projects being funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), to reach this significant milestone. This approves the remaining £6.7 million of funding over the five years of the project. The next key milestone is the engagement contract which will lead to the work beginning on the ground with the 10 pilot communities later in the year, which will use innovative techniques to improve resilience against flooding for communities in Buckinghamshire.

Decarbonisation of the Council's Fleet

£578,000 has been secured from Defra's Air Quality Grant to renovate a 10 year old Dennis Eagle 26 tonne Refuse Collection Vehicle to become fully electric. The money also covers tools for the workshop in Pembroke Road to service the vehicle and five years' worth of replacement parts. The successful bid was a result of collaboration by teams across the Council in Climate Response Team, Waste and Environmental Health. As a result of using the electric refuse vehicle, over 10 tonnes of greenhouse gas, 69 kg of oxides of nitrogen (NOx), and half a kilo of particulate matter emissions will be saved per year – contributing to the achievement of net zero carbon targets and better air quality. We have also secured Workplace Charging Scheme grants for two fleet charge points that will support new electric vehicles for Children's Services.

Tree Planting

As part of our ambition to plant 543,000 trees, 3,450 trees have been planted at Billet Field and the site is now registered on the UK Land Carbon Registry. The volunteer day that was rearranged due to Storm Eunice attracted good media attention, including YouTube video coverage by Bucks Radio. We are registering this project on the Queen's Green Canopy map. Other projects that have occurred this planting season that contribute towards our target include 586 trees planted with funding from the Local Authority Treescapes Fund grant, and 168 other Queens Green Canopy trees planted on Council land (e.g., school sites). This brings the current total up to 4204.



In the next couple of months, we will be submitting our Local Authority Treescapes Fund post-planting claim for the projects delivered by our partners at Transition Town Marlow,

Buckland Parish Council, Chiltern Rangers C.I.C., Sue Ryder Prayer Fellowship, Haddenham Parish Council, and Transport for Buckinghamshire.

We have requested over 1,000 trees from HS2 to give away to community groups and it's understood that these will be with us shortly.

Domestic Energy Projects

Further to the progress being made to improve the energy efficiency of low income homes that have poor energy performance under the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme, the Council is supporting a group-buying scheme called Solar Together Buckinghamshire. This will help homeowners and small businesses interested in installing solar PV and battery storage (with an option for an electric vehicle charging point). Pre-approved installers will compete (via a reverse auction process in Summer 2022) to have their offer presented to registrants who will then be able to make an informed decision to select a high-quality installation at a competitive price. Solar Together programmes operating elsewhere have secured average savings of more than 30% last year.

Local Heritage List

Over 2000 candidate sites have now been nominated for inclusion in our Local Heritage List. The list seeks to identify and celebrate locally significant assets and nominations so far include clocktowers, road signs, post boxes, bridges and lamp posts, as well as historic buildings and archaeological sites. Maintaining a local heritage list is a proven way to protect the heritage of Buckinghamshire, and we have seen planning decisions made by the council to protect those buildings on the list being supported by independent planning inspectors. We have recently had a push for more volunteers to help this compile this list which is a unique opportunity to help preserve and protect some of the most important and iconic assets around the county.

Fly-Tipping Enforcement Update:

'Fly-Tipping remains a significant problem in Buckinghamshire and the Council continues to take a robust and zero tolerance approach.

Since March 2020, 159 cases have been investigated and were found to comprise 79 (49.7%) household waste (which could have been disposed for free at the Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HRC)), 67 (42.1%) trade waste (chargeable status unchanged at HRC site), and 13 included some element of chargeable item(s) (8.2% only). 110 of the cases (68.8%) involved waste brought into Bucks from elsewhere, while 50 were Bucks-produced waste (31.2%).

Buckinghamshire Council has successfully secured £50,000 in external funding from DEFRA with which will target the cross border "imports" of waste which is fly-tipped in Bucks.

A notable recent case involved joint-working between Bucks and LB Hillingdon officers and saw an offender who fly-tipped in both areas imprisoned for 21 months at a case heard at Aylesbury Crown Court. This case shows that the Council has correctly identified a major issue here and will continue to do what is necessary to target offenders.'

Big Bucks Tidy Up

The 21/22 Big Bucks Tidy Up programme has been completed and saw waste teams work with Community Boards and key stakeholders across Buckinghamshire to deliver a number of litter picking, street cleansing and fly tipping activities. These activities helped to support an 87% increase in litter and street cleansing tonnage collected across all of Buckinghamshire compared with the previous year. During the BBTU programme service requests for litter picking and street cleansing reduced by 50% reflecting the impact of additional street cleansing activities.

Waste Prevention and Behaviour Change update

The Waste Prevention Team continue to work with community groups and national partners to reduce waste across Buckinghamshire. In recent months the team have supported national campaigns like Food Waste Action Week, The Great British Spring Clean and the SCRAP Fly-tipping campaign. They have also launched the nine month partnership with Kitche ‘the food waste prevention app’ which will enable Buckinghamshire residents to track their food waste at home and reduce it through helpful tips, recipe ideas and regular reminders of what they have at home when shopping on the go.

Work continues to support local community groups who are delivering projects like Repair Cafes, Library of Things, Scrap Stores and more. All of which help local residents reduce waste.

Garden Waste Harmonisation

On 29 March 2022 Cabinet approved a Garden Waste report which will harmonise garden waste services across Buckinghamshire by introducing an Opt-in’ garden waste charged service for Wycombe area residents and harmonise the operational arrangements for the garden waste service; for example, the length of time there is a winter service suspension.

Buckinghamshire currently has an imbalanced garden waste service, particularly in terms of charges; all Wycombe area residents receive a free garden waste bin collection, whereas all other areas, residents have to Opt-In and pay for their garden waste collections. This decision will ensure a fair and balanced service to all Buckinghamshire residents. Charges will start on 4 July 2022, ahead of this a comprehensive communication plan will be delivered to ensure all impacted residents are aware of the introduction of charges.



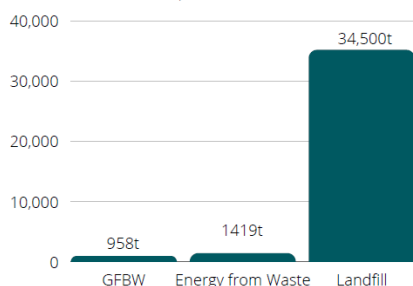
Carbon Impact of the Green, Food, Bulky and Wood (GFBW) contract Year 1

Carbon impact of the GFBW contract Year 1

An infographic showing the Global Warming Potential (GWP) of the Green, Food, Bulky and Wood (GFBW) Waste Contract

GFBW & alternative treatment

Total GWP generated by GFBW compared to alternative treatments, all of which produce more CO₂e



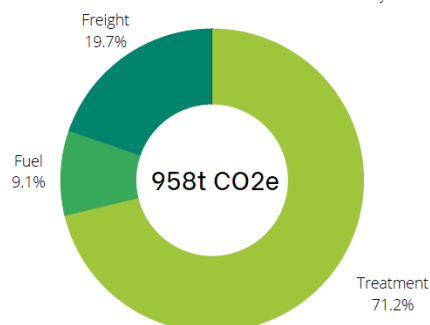
Where waste goes?

100%

All waste from GFBW contract is treated in Buckinghamshire or neighbouring Counties (within 25miles of border)

Global Warming Potential in 2021-22

Total GWP for the contract broken down into activity.



5 year contract

FCC Recycling (UK) Limited was awarded a 5 year contract for the transfer, management & treatment of the Council's Green, Food, Bulky and Wood Waste which commenced on 1st Feb 2021.





Cabinet Member report – Communities

Councillor Steve Bowles

Armed Forces

The Civilian-Military Partnership board has held its fourth meeting since being reconvened in July 2021. Working with our partners in Fire, DWP, and NHS, the monthly drop-in centre at Marlow fire station has been going from strength to strength for the past six months helping the most vulnerable members of the armed force community access veteran-specific help services. The Government passed the Armed Forces Act in December which incorporates the armed forces covenant into law to help prevent disadvantages faced by the armed forces community due to the unique nature of military service. We have reviewed council policies and refreshed our armed forces council webpages to prepare us for the new statutory duty to have due regard for the principles of the armed forces covenant.

Community Boards

The last couple of months have seen increased engagement with communities in Community Boards – we've had our first successful community event in Amersham in February, and a big event in Marlow at Higginson Park on 2 April which saw a whole host of partners involved and live broadcasting of the board's Proud of Bucks winners. The council's first Job and Apprenticeship Fair was a huge success for the Chesham Community Board who worked with local councillors and partners with 800 local residents coming along to hear from the council as well as a number of other fantastic employers in Bucks. There will be a community event in every Board area throughout the spring and summer and will be a great opportunity for the Boards and colleagues to engage with our residents and community partners.

The Community Board function is currently undergoing changes following Member recommendations on improvements to the operational functionality of the Boards and funding process; this is being aligned with changes to the management and team structure following a Better Buckinghamshire review, which will come into place during April. These changes will see staged improvements to the project application and funding process and a more focused management structure with improved support across the Community Board area.

Prevent

In December 2021 the Home Office informed us via a letter that it has been decided that Buckinghamshire would cease to be a Prevent priority area from 31 March 2023. The Prevent Local Delivery will fund the two core posts in Buckinghamshire Council for 2022/23 but will not be providing additional funding for posts or projects and there will be no future central government funding for Prevent.

In February 2022 we received confirmation that we will receive £167,069 of funding in this final year. Whilst this is disappointing, we are committed to continuing to work in this area to protect our residents from extremism and terrorism. The statutory requirements of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 remain in place, whether we receive Home Office funding or not. We will use the two remaining posts to develop a new way of delivering these duties in the next 12 months. After which time all future management of Prevent will be subsumed within the Community Safety Service function. We will continue to safeguard our communities, working closely with Thames Valley Police and other key partners. The Channel function will remain unchanged, and our residents should not see any difference in the quality of service that they receive in this area.

Household Support Fund

The previously awarded Government Household Support Fund (£2,399,190.54) has been successfully fully utilised through the Helping Hand service by the fund deadline of 31 March 2022. This fund has enabled food, energy and other essential household bill support to be provided to financially vulnerable households through a number of approaches including holiday food voucher support for eligible students/young people, (63%), direct support from the Helping hand team (8%) and through various schemes delivered through the Voluntary and Community Sector including food banks and crisis grant scheme (22%). Following the announcement of an extension to the Household Support Fund, the Council has recently been notified that it will receive a further (£2,399,190.54). The framework for the new fund requires that at least one third of the fund must be used to support families and at least one third used to support pensioners. A delivery plan for the fund is currently being developed. This extension to the fund must be fully utilised by the 30 September 2022.



Cabinet Member report – Culture and Leisure

Councillor Clive Harriss

WhizzFizzFest

Ticket sales launched at the end of March for the WhizzFizzFest event taking place on 2 July. The programme will feature a wide variety of family arts activities, performances and hands-on experiences as well as the return of the school's parade. This year we are also planning a new touring element to visit libraries throughout the county. Further details can be found on the website [here](#).

Paralympic Heritage Flame Lighting



Working with partners, we were proud to organise the Heritage Flame Lighting ceremony for the Beijing Winter Paralympics at Stoke Mandeville Stadium (birthplace of the Paralympics) on 28 February. As well as social media coverage, footage of the event was featured as part of official proceedings in Beijing.

Credited to: Roger Bool on behalf of WheelPower

Chilterns Lifestyle Centre

We were delighted to officially open and welcome the very first customers into the new Chilterns Lifestyle Centre on 6 December, the culmination of much work during all the challenges of the past two years. The centre is proving to be extremely popular with residents; from the opening to the end of February there were nearly 200,000 visits, with figures increasing month on month. The Chilterns Lifestyle Centre has always been about bringing together a range of community facilities and the new library in the centre is also proving to be exceptionally popular. Since opening, our library team have welcomed 947 new first-time members, issued 20,943 books and seen 28,411 visitors. The co-location is clearly having a positive impact; as one family told us, “we never used the old library, now we use it every week after swimming lessons, it’s so convenient”.

We are now focused on Phase 2 of the project, which involves the demolition of the old Chiltern Pools, Drake Hall, nursery and youth centre to create a new car park for the centre. Demolition work

began on 21 March and the car park will be established in phases over the coming months. The initial phase, which includes disabled car parking spaces, should be complete by this summer.

The wider picture for the recovery of leisure across all our leisure sites has continued to be positive, with January always being a key month for leisure centre use and new membership sales. This uplift in memberships and levels of use at the start of the year has seen overall attendances since reopening last year exceed 2 million visits (figures to the end of February).

Country Parks, Parks and Play Areas

Despite a slight dip in visitor numbers since the exceptional highs of 2020/21 (1.76million), numbers have remained elevated over the last twelve months, with a predicted 1.4million visits to the Country Parks by the end of the financial year (40% higher than pre-COVID levels).



Due to high winds caused by Storm Eunice, our Country Parks closed on Friday 18 February. Black Park was most severely impacted, with over 50 mature trees being directly affected by the winds – most notably a number of the mature Scots pine trees which provide significant landscape value to Black Park were either uprooted or splintered. The sites were made safe over the weekend of 19/20 February by the Country Parks team, but the specialist clear up work continues with contractors when they are available.

Our dedicated volunteers have collected over 316 bags of rubbish from the parks as part of our ‘Adopt a Patch’ scheme. A month-long anti-litter campaign began on 28th March linked to the Keep Britain Tidy - Great British Spring Clean.

Work is now complete on the new Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) in Calvert Green Park. A full reworking of the play facilities saw outdated equipment replaced with a co-ordinated play area on the village green, which was officially opened with local Buckinghamshire Council members and Parish Councillors on 24 February.



Other play area improvement works in progress include Bridge Street Skatepark, Cottesloe Park and Walton Court Park, Haydon Hill Park play area and Desborough Recreation Ground.

Wendover Community Library Hub

Buckinghamshire Libraries have successfully secured £310,000 from the Arts Council England Libraries Improvement Fund. When including match funding from Buckinghamshire Council, Wendover Parish Council, Wendover Community Library Trust and others, the total value of this scheme is just over £500,000. The scheme will transform Wendover Community Library into an inclusive, multi-use community hub that offers a single point of contact for local services in Wendover and provides facilities for a range of social, educational, health and cultural activities that promote community cohesion and wellbeing. In addition, the project will further support the engagement of community volunteers.

The investment seeks to make the library more appealing, more user-friendly and raise its profile. More specifically, the adoption of new technologies will facilitate a more than doubling of the hours of access, as well as increase digital inclusion. The creation of additional and better community spaces and increased hours of access are expected to attract significantly more community groups and support a wider range of uses, with the increase in commercial hires generating additional income that will make the library more sustainable. Service delivery is expanded to span health and wellbeing, culture, digital inclusion and education.

Library events

Libraries are central in all our communities and we have a great opportunity and honour of bringing residents and readers together in celebrating Her Majesty’s historic reign. Over the next couple of

months, we will be working with our community groups and volunteers to plan a series of exciting activities in our branches that will engage and excite our customers in the Jubilee celebrations. We will host countywide activities and local activities to ensure we maximise involvement and impact. Planned activities include:

- **Big Jubilee Read:** delivering a reading for pleasure Commonwealth literature campaign to celebrate the Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee connecting a broad audience of readers of all levels of confidence and ability through the sharing of great reads by celebrated authors from the Commonwealth.
- **Touring Exhibition:** working in collaboration with Archives/Local Studies we will be touring a pull up exhibition around our libraries showing images of how previous Royal celebrations and Jubilees have been celebrated in the county.
- **Memory bags:** to generate conversations between those living with dementia, their families and carers, two royalty themed memory bags with historic artefacts, games, and books will be available to borrow free of charge.
- **Poets in Residence:** Poetry Workshops with families, children and adults themed on the Queens Canopy in Libraries.
- **Reminiscence group activities for dementia friendly groups**
- **Creative writing:** working with local school children to create a story book.

The Library Jubilee offer will attract a wide audience offering inclusive activities promoting reading, culture and support for participation for everyone in our communities.

Community-supported libraries have also run a variety of events in recent months, such as Christmas-themed crafts events for children which included making and decorating pencil potholders and other Christmassy items like snowflakes. Wendover Community Library had a visit from Santa himself and also took part in the Wendover Christmas trail. Bourne End Community Library stayed open for an evening of mulled wine served by the Women's Institute and hosted charity stalls which were very popular. Some libraries such as Iver Heath Community Library also held their regular Storytime sessions but with a Christmas theme. Artist Amy Beckwith visited Micklefield Community Library for a 'Paint Your Own' workshop - she even painted a robin with the opportunity for customers to watch the process.

Discover Bucks Museum

We were delighted to support the official opening of the new Discover Bucks Galleries at the Discover Bucks Museum in Aylesbury, which launched on 2 April. These brand new galleries tell the story of Bucks people and landscapes from 200 million years ago to today, featuring star objects from the Museum collections, including fossils revealing the prehistoric creatures that swam in Jurassic seas and giant Woolly mammoths that lived here during the Ice Age; the largest hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins ever found; a spectacular costume case; an extraordinary piano; the work of artists past and present, including portraits, landscapes and the magnificent Stowe statues of Saxon gods - and much more!

The Tourism Summit

The Tourism Summit held in March this year was an opportunity for Buckinghamshire's leisure and tourism related businesses to come together to share their experiences during Covid. The conference provided discussion, inspiration and information on how to improve business prospects as we emerge from lockdowns and travel and leisure restrictions. Bucks Business First shared the support and programmes they have in place to respond to challenges faced by this sector. We continue to work with Partners and the sector itself to ensure they are providing a decent offer to visitors to Buckinghamshire and supporting the visitor economy to go from strength to strength.



Cabinet Member report – Education and Children’s Services

Councillor Anita Cranmer

Inspecting Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) Re-inspection

As reported to Cabinet last month, in December 2021 Ofsted conducted their re-inspection of Children’s Services following the November 2017 ‘Inadequate’ judgement.

We are pleased that the service has moved from an ‘Inadequate’ rating to ‘requires improvement to be good’. This reflects the considerable improvements and progress made within the service despite the ongoing Covid-19 challenges.

This outcome is testament to the hard work, dedication and skill of our colleagues across the Council and partner agencies. This has been a real joint effort, and we are pleased that Ofsted have acknowledged our progress in providing an effective service to keep young people safe.

The service is currently in the process of developing a Post Inspection Action Plan in response to the Ofsted recommendations and will submit this to Ofsted prior to the Wednesday 25 May 2022 deadline.

An independently chaired Board will continue to meet every two months. The Board will maintain oversight of the progress being made against the Ofsted recommendations and other improvements required across the service. John Coughlan, CBE, will continue to be the Independent Chair.

You can read the full report [here.](#)

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection

A local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inspection took place between 28 February and 11 March 2022. This inspection was completed by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The inspection found a number of strengths across the local area, despite the ongoing Covid-19 challenges. It recognises the considerable activity that is happening as part of our SEND improvement programme and confirms that our self-evaluation accurately reflects our progress.

As a result of the inspection findings, the local area is required to submit a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to address significant areas of weakness. These relate to the provision of specific health services for children and young people with SEND. The local authority and the area’s clinical commissioning group (CCG) are jointly responsible for submitting the written statement to Ofsted.

We will, of course, focus our efforts on improving the areas of significant weakness identified, while continuing with our broader improvement journey across organisations to ensure the support children with SEND receive in Buckinghamshire is high quality and effective.

The full report is due to be published on Friday 29 April 2022.

School Inspections

Since the start of the new school year in September 2021, schools have seen the resumption of regular Ofsted inspections. So far, 24 schools being visited. Of these, 18 were primary schools, five were secondary schools and one special school. There has been a change in the methodology for the selection of schools for inspection to now routinely visit those with an 'outstanding' grade. Some of these schools have not had an inspection in well over ten years.

Overall, our schools have performed well in inspections. Of the 17 schools whose outcomes have been published, one has improved their judgment, 10 have maintained their judgement and sadly, two have shown a decline.

Where inspections have been challenging this academic year, a theme of safeguarding is a thread that has been identified in the reports, which is mirrored in feedback across the south east. This is something that we are working proactively with school leaders to address and have provided training and support for all schools as well as bespoke work in schools where this is identified as a vulnerability.

The evolution of the Early Help Offer

The Buckinghamshire Partnership Early Help Strategy has been reviewed and refreshed, as it is now three years since we published our first strategy document. The emphasis within the refreshed strategy for 2022-25 is focused on two broad areas. Firstly, strengthening the partnership offer and oversight, as we look to expand and streamline access to our increasingly broad early help offer across the county. Secondly, ensuring the offer responds effectively to emerging issues, including minimising the long-term impact of the pandemic on our children, young people, and families in Buckinghamshire.

Early help maintained its service offer with some adaptations, throughout the different stages of the pandemic and, as with all Children's Service areas, demand has never been higher. Services have been fully operational for some months now and we are re-establishing the wide range of activities led by the Family Support Service, partner agencies and community groups in our network of Family Centres. Family Centres were acknowledged by Ofsted during the recent inspection, as key support hubs within communities and we continue to develop locally based programmes. We are also keen to develop these sites into Family Hubs, in line with the national model, so that they become community access points for a wide range of services and support at a locality level.

The Family Support Service is also launching for the first time, a Participation Strategy for Young People. This strategy describes a new approach to engaging all young people, building their interest and participation in local democracy, working alongside officers so that we can develop and design practice, policy, and strategy, enabling the Council to benefit from listening to and acting upon the views and wishes of young people in the recruitment of staff, service improvement and policy development.



Cabinet Member report – Finance, Resources, Property and Assets

Councillor John Chilver

Customer Experience Update

Change of Address – Customer Triage of Services

Customer Improvement, in collaboration with colleagues in Revenues, have developed a customer-focused change of address process. If a resident notifies Buckinghamshire Council of an address change, the expectation should be that they only have to tell us once. This process brings us towards achieving that ambition.

When a customer completes a change of address form for Council Tax, the process captures the address change details to notify waste services, licensing, and the blue badge team. It also provides signposting towards electoral roll, schools admissions, parking permits, and the housing register at Bucks Home Choice.

We plan to develop this further, providing confirmation for other services such as client transport and libraries. We also plan to use the facility to generate revenue, showcasing the wide range of leisure services and other tangible products we can offer our residents.

Customer Feedback Loops

Giving and understanding feedback shouldn't be hard, and better experiences can be created when the voice of the resident facilitates change. To that end, we are piloting the use of feedback loops within requests raised on Fix My Street and from Household Waste Services.

We will be using this to capture the mood of our residents, to gauge if they are happy with the speed and professionalism of our service delivery, and communication through the journey.

Our plan is to add this feedback into the performance metrics which will be available to service areas in easy to interpret performance dashboards, providing "at a glance" metrics and a deeper dive into the data as needed.

Once trialled with these two service areas, we plan to develop this across other customer facing functions.

Kickstart Scheme Success

We have now completed the recruitment phase for the Kickstart Scheme, and our final number of placements will be 45.

To date, 11 participants have concluded their placements with us and we have achieved the following successful conversion rates:

- Two participants have now left the scheme and have moved onto roles with external employers.
- Five participants have secured full-time fixed-term roles at the Council.

- Two participants have moved into full-time permanent roles at the Council.
- One participant is moving into an apprenticeship at the Council.
- Only one participant has concluded their placement with no further employment. This is due to personal circumstances.

Nationally the recruitment phase of the kickstart scheme has now ended and we are now focussing on those Kickstarters who are still on placement with us and we are helping them identify their next career move. As our Kickstarters come to the end of their placements, we have also been requesting feedback from them and their managers. Here are some comments we have received so far:

From Kickstart employees:

"My time at Buckinghamshire Council has been one of the best, most life-changing experiences of my life. Feeling a part of something greater and the level of support I received has been unmatched. Having the opportunity to grow and evolve into a more employable person could not have been possible at any other workplace. It was a perfect taster of life in the professional world as a student this was invaluable to me. I am really grateful for the opportunities presented to me in this placement. I have gained the utmost respect for everyone who puts their unstinting effort into making Buckinghamshire Council, not only a beautiful place to work, but a pillar of support for all the communities within Buckinghamshire."

"I really appreciated my time in the Kickstart Scheme and am excited for my follow-on role within the Council. I was able to learn on the job and was supported the entire way, making it a comfortable place to earn money and transferable office skills at the same time."

Recent Lettings

Rental income from our property estate is important to supporting the delivery of our corporate priorities both financially and also from a regeneration perspective. Recent letting activity includes:

- Vale Retail Park, Aylesbury - the Letting of Unit 5 Vale Retail Park to Bensons-for-Beds completed in December with the tenant opening on 25th February. This replaces the store shared with Harvey's at Aylesbury Retail Park when the two became standalone companies in 2020 and enhances the improving retail offering at Vale Retail Park.
- Abbey Place, High Wycombe - The Council completed the acquisition of Abbey Place, High Wycombe, a 9,600 sq ft office in December 2021. The property is available to let and forms a strategic part of the Council's regeneration plans around the station in High Wycombe.
- Green Park Activity Centre, Aston Clinton – The Council has completed the letting of Green Park Activity Centre to Kingswood, a national provider of outdoor education and activity centres, following the departure of the previous operator. Kingswood will embark on an ambitious investment programme into the activity centre over the coming years to improve and expand the current offering to a create a fun, challenging and safe environment for young people in Buckinghamshire and beyond.
- 66 High Street, Aylesbury - NES Holdings (UK) completed works to the second floor and occupied at the end of March. The Department of Works and Pensions also completed works on the ground and first floor with the Job Centre on the ground floor and opened at the end of March.
- The Exchange, Aylesbury - A Sri Lankan restaurant, Herali, completed its fit-out of Unit 2, Long Lion and opened in early April. Unit 1 should also be open in early summer with the remaining unit in The Exchange opening late summer.

One Public Estate – Phase 9 Funding round

Buckinghamshire Public Estate Partnership has been awarded another £370,000 for projects in Buckinghamshire. The funds will facilitate the Health On The High Street programme which will aim to look at the potential to provide Health Services in Buckinghamshire Council owned property in towns across the County, and we will continue to work collaboratively with our health partners on these schemes.

Community Centres – Aylesbury

Community Centre bookings have been gradually increasing as customer confidence grows, with some Centres returning close to Pre-Covid hiring levels. The team has been working in partnership with the NHS and have hosted drop-in vaccine clinics at the Southcourt and Alfred Rose Centres.

Capital Projects

Working collaboratively with other Portfolios including Education, Culture and Leisure and Planning and Regeneration, we have continued to deliver against our significant and substantial capital programme.

Since the last report we have completed works at Holmer Green and Amersham Schools. We continue to progress works at the Kingsbrook Secondary (new Secondary School with SEN provision); Chiltern Hills Academy (major expansion works); and Misbourne Schools (major expansion and sports hall works). Further projects are now at the early stages of procurement development; these include Kingsbrook Primary B, Green Ridge Primary Phase 2, and Cottesloe Major Expansion.



The Chilterns Lifestyle Centre building was officially opened by the Leader of the Council in December 2021. Phase 2 of the project has commenced on site which will see the demolition of the old leisure centre and ancillary buildings, and the completion of external works including car parks, hard and soft landscaping, and external play areas, which is anticipated to complete in November 2022.



Works have also completed on the regeneration of the Brunel Shed, a Grade 2 Listed redundant railway shed, and extension on adjacent land for commercial rent, and on Desborough Road Temporary Housing scheme which provides 58 self-contained low energy, good quality temporary accommodation units in High Wycombe.



Cabinet Member report – Health and Wellbeing

Councillor Angela Macpherson

Local Improvements in Adult Social Care

Adult social care's Care Act 2014 duties are underpinned by prevention and intervening early. However, as a result of the pandemic the service is experiencing unprecedented demand. This has meant that the Early Resolution and Safeguarding Service has had to review and reshape the way it responds to vulnerable residents, to keep them safe and to undertake assessments in a timely way.

One of the new developments is our Community Cafes. These are located across the county in our seven day opportunities centres and provide timely, face-to-face appointments for residents. There are 60 community café appointments available each week, with the most northerly in Buckingham and the most southerly in Burnham. In addition, Community Cafes provide the opportunity for residents to speak with other multi-agency professionals, such as One Recovery Bucks, Occupational Therapy and Connection Support. Changing the way we work, meeting residents closer to home, has halved waiting times to see a social care professional from 4-6 weeks to two weeks.

Although the waiting time for allocation to a worker for a social care or carer assessment remains over four weeks, our triage approach, which offers residents an initial discussion by phone call or face-to-face meeting within two weeks, has been welcomed by residents at a time when, because of the impact of Covid, they have reported difficulty in accessing support. Phone calls and the community cafes have also been useful in sharing other sources of support such as from the voluntary and community sector, which people may access whilst waiting for a social care assessment.

These changes to services are one of the ways in which we are delivering on the ambition set out in our Better Lives Strategy, which was refreshed in January this year.

Social Care Reforms

Since my last Cabinet Member report to council, the Government has published two White Papers of particular relevance to adult social care. The first, *People at the Heart of Care* published in early December, set out the much-awaited social care reforms. These include an £86,000 cap on the cost that any individual needs to pay for their Care Act eligible personal care costs, and more generous capital limits. In addition, the Government will be enacting S18(3) of the Care Act 2014, which means that from October 2023, people who fund their own care can ask the council to assess their needs and arrange care for them at the rate that the council usually pays for that type of care. Our modelling shows that there will be significant financial implications both in terms of demand for services, and therefore the workforce to manage that demand.

The second White Paper, *Joining up Care for People Places and Populations*, was published in February. It sets out the Government's ambition for improving the way in which health and social care organisations work together. The mechanisms for achieving this include encouraging more pooled or aligned budgets across health and social care; supporting organisations to reach a much higher level of digital maturity to improve information sharing; and making it much easier for people working in health or social care to move around the sector by creating integrated skills passports, which will enable health and care staff to transfer their skills and knowledge between the NHS, public health and social care. The White Paper builds on the Health and Care Bill currently going through Parliament.

Cardiovascular Disease in Faith Communities

Cardiovascular disease is one of the most significant causes of preventable death in Buckinghamshire and is more common in people living in deprived areas and certain ethnic groups. To try to reduce the risk, the council's public health team is working with faith communities in High Wycombe in spring this year to pilot a new approach to designing tailored blood pressure interventions.

The first pilot will be in High Wycombe. Initially information will be gathered through WISE Mosque to understanding the extent to which members of the Mosque "know their numbers" for blood pressure and know what to do about it. Two members of the Mosque will be trained to undertake blood pressure readings, provide advice and have a short conversation with people. They will then hold weekly sessions over four weeks during prayers for any adult to have their blood pressure taken.

This will then be used by the community and the public health team to design together an appropriate intervention to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease in the community.

High Wycombe community board have helped to facilitate the early work with WISE and Karima and local GPs are involved and keen to support this work. A similar pilot is being scoped in Aylesbury, which it is anticipated will happen in the autumn.

Named Worker Approach

Adult Social Care in Buckinghamshire are working towards implementing a named worker model across the Long-term and Review teams located in the North, East, South, and Central localities within the county. The aim is to improve resident outcomes in line with the Care Act duties and principles by taking a proactive, relationship-based, person-centred approach to social care practice. A Named Worker is a dedicated worker and coordinator who will be a voice of challenge and advocacy for the person they support, a trusted support network for people and their families, and someone who will work towards making the best future a reality for the individual. The benefit for residents of Buckinghamshire is that they will be able to have a single point of contact who will support the individual to access the right support at the right time and achieve Better Lives outcomes. In addition, practitioners will be given the opportunity to build relationships with residents and engage in meaningful social work practice to help people flourish and support them within their communities.

Increasing Diversity in the Public Health Workforce

The Public Health team has been successful in securing funding from the Health Education England for a social mobility project. The council has been selected as an intervention site which will enable us to develop, pilot and evaluate career support for non-clinical, core public health careers within local authority public health teams.

The project will provide opportunities to people from ethnic minority groups affected by inequalities to develop a career in public health. It is hoped that the project will also widen participation and encourage a diverse workforce, more representative of the communities they serve.

There are two phases to the project. Phase 1 (2022-2023) will involve conducting research and developing, with ethnic minority groups, a proven approach which will be piloted in Phase 2.

Platinum Jubilee Planning

As part of the planning for the celebrations in June of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the adult social care service has created and shared an activity pack specifically designed for care homes. The pack includes lots of ideas for ways to commemorate the special occasion, including creative makes, baking and decoration ideas, intergenerational projects, ideas for choirs and longer-term projects such as tree planting and establishing wildflower meadows.



Cabinet Member report – Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services

Councillor Nick Naylor

Registration Service

The Registration Service has now returned to business as usual across all its activities, Covid easements allowing for death registrations by phone rather than face-to-face ended on 24 March 2022.

There has been high demand for ceremony bookings (weddings and civil partnerships) with diaries across the summer months now being extremely busy. Some ceremony venues in Buckinghamshire are now fully booked in the main season. The Council's ceremony rooms are proving to be popular, with an increase in bookings, as the service sees a trend towards smaller and less costly ceremonies.

Changes made to how citizenship ceremonies are carried out have been very successful. The ceremonies now take place in the 'Oculus' with both the Chairman of the Council and the Lord Lieutenant or a Deputy Lieutenant attending to give speeches, which add to the celebratory atmosphere. Feedback from customers has been excellent.

Coroner's Service

Due to Covid restrictions and availability of specialist colleagues, several longer inquests involving a jury had to be rescheduled from 20/21 and moved into 2022. These have now been completed and all inquests may now be scheduled as usual.

The Court has now been fitted with a new audio visual system, which allows for remote attendance by family, witnesses and expert witnesses as well as others not legally required to be present. The system also provides for digital audio recordings of inquest hearings and their safe storage.

On 1st January the service entered into a five year contract with Bucks Healthcare Trust for the provision of mortuary and pathology services. Through partnership working, this contract brings service resilience and efficiencies in terms of resourcing and charging arrangements.

Gypsy and Traveller Service (GTS) Update

Unauthorised encampments across the last three years show a steady decline – 38 encampments in 19/20, 18 encampments in 20/21 and 13 encampments in 21/22, 21/22 has now risen to 14 as we approach the end of the current year.

Although unauthorised encampments can arrive at any time of the year, the main bulk of the numbers are generally seasonal, between the months of Spring – Autumn. With Covid-19 restrictions now being close to ending we are returning to what is described as the "new normal", we continue to deal with every encampment on its own merit and provide a robust, but proportionate approach.

Trading Standards

Illicit Tobacco and Alcohol – Over the last year, the Service has used funding from HMRC to conduct test purchasing and use tobacco detection dogs to locate hidden tobacco. As a result, there are a number of ongoing investigations into the supply of both illicit tobacco and alcohol. These products have been found to be counterfeit, non-duty paid, missing clear health warnings in English or combinations of all of these. These investigations often involve working with the Council's Licensing team and recently the combined evidence provided by the two services saw an appeal against a Licence Revocation refused, with the Council being awarded costs.

Vaping – Since the start of 2022 the Service has seen a significant increase in complaints about vapes being sold to under age (under 18) customers and is following these up with test purchases, advice to retailers and investigations where appropriate.

Fraud – In February, guilty pleas to fraudulent trading, aggressive practices and breaching professional diligence were entered, following a home improvement fraud investigation by the service, which involved households in Buckinghamshire and the Thames Valley. We await sentencing and there will be a press release at that point.

Fraud/Scams – the service is part of a new 'Multi Agency Approach to Fraud' to amplify and increase the effectiveness of our efforts to raise awareness and prevent and investigate fraud. Partners include Buckinghamshire's Community Safety team and Thames Valley Police. Over time we hope to also engage with third sector partners that also do work in this space.

The service continues to put out a steady stream of warnings related to the latest scams. As well as long term ones (such as 'HMRC' and 'Microsoft') this year the information has included scams that follow storm damage to people's homes and gardens, ongoing Covid issues (vaccine, testing, isolation etc.) and more recently Ukraine related scams.

Advice to Businesses – The service is assisting relevant businesses to get ready for new legislation for 2022 relating to calorie labelling of foods consumed outside the home and the placement and promotion for sale of food considered high in fat, salt, and sugar. One aspect of this has included working closely with one of our Primary Authority Partners, the Association of Convenience Stores, to produce guidance for their 30,000+ members across the country. Recently we have also been advising businesses on how to stay compliant and safe in the face of some ingredient shortages linked to the war in Ukraine.

Housing

Member Development Briefings on the workings of Council's Housing Service and Homelessness Strategy took place on 21st March 2022.

1209 social housing tenancies were let via the Bucks Home Choice scheme, as at 31st January 2022. There are approximately 4,800 applications currently registered for rehousing via the scheme (including applications pending an assessment). The current estimate of new affordable housing delivered during 2021/22 is an additional 387 rented properties and 153 shared ownership properties.

The Council is continuing to deliver a strong DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant) programme, which provides adaptations in the home. Currently, we are administering 479 DFG applications.

Public consultation on the Council's new Homelessness Strategy closed on 21st March 2022 and the responses are being reviewed ahead of finalising the strategy for presentation to full Council for adoption.

The results of the national annual rough sleeper estimate 2021 were published in February 2022. Buckinghamshire recorded less than five rough sleepers on the night that the estimate was undertaken. Five rough sleepers were recorded in the previous year's count. Although the annual rough sleeper estimate for Buckinghamshire remained low, we have seen a significant number of rough sleepers verified during the winter period and they have been accommodated and supported under the Council's winter homelessness provisions (which were also operated in response to the Omicron variant). These provisions came to an end in March 2022 and the Housing Service and its partners are working to support rough sleepers and place them in sustainable longer term accommodation.

The Council has submitted a bid to DLUHC for funding under the RSI 5 (Rough Sleeping Initiative 5) to support services over the three year 2022-2025 period. We are awaiting the decision on this bid.

Environmental Health

A premises licence application consultation was received by the Environmental Health Team for a shisha lounge and bar establishment in New Denham. This business had previously been the subject of numerous high profile complaints and extensive investigations by a number of agencies, including Environmental Health, for breaches of smoke control, noise nuisance, licensing and planning legislation, which resulted in a successful prosecution in October 2021.

A licensing hearing was held on 8th March 2022 at which the applicant substantially changed the application to that of a restaurant, closing the shisha area and altering the nature of the business entirely. The Licensing Panel was disappointed with the late submission of the substantial amendments to the application, which responsible bodies and interested parties had not been able to consider in any detail. The Panel noted that the Police and the Fire Authority had been given no opportunity to consider the revised application and provide any response to the new proposals. The application was refused.

Officers in the Commercial Team continue to make progress towards the Food Standards Agency 'Recovery Roadmap' targets for food premises inspections. The team has seen a significant increase in the number of events being organised this year, including those for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and they are working with organisers and agencies to ensure that events are run safely.

The Strategic Environmental Protection Team, in collaboration with the Climate Change Team and Waste Services has been awarded £578k of funding to renovate a 10-year old Dennis Eagle 26 tonne Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) to include an electric powertrain (and other items required for five years' worth of maintenance). The upcycled electric RCV (eRCV) will operate in the north of the County, frequently travelling through Air Quality Management Areas, covering around 412 miles each week.

In addition, Buckinghamshire Council as part of a working group with Spelthorne Council and Ricardo Energy and Environment has received £91,273 to continue with an air pollution sensor trial utilising existing multi-pollutant sensors, and to purchase and trial new electronic diffusion tubes. The diffusion tubes will be utilised by Community Boards and local schools to monitor the impact of campaigns to reduce air pollution carried out during the year, in particular Clean Air Day in June 2022. This activity is intended to improve knowledge and information about air quality in Buckinghamshire

and to help people understand what steps they may take to help reduce their exposure to air pollution.

Housing and Domestic Team officers have been supporting the Afghan resettlement programme and are currently working on the many home visits for the Ukrainian sponsorship scheme. Both programmes require advisory visits to homes to provide safety guidance to help sponsors prepare for the safe arrival of refugees. Both programmes have been stood up in a short time and the service has responded well, showing a high level of commitment and flexibility in the face of an urgent need. As of 6th April, officers had carried out 247 advisory home visits for the Ukrainian visa scheme.

Licensing

The new Licensing Act Policy was approved by Full Council on the 24th November 2021 and implemented on the 7th March 2022. The Policy harmonises requirements for alcohol and entertainment licensing across the Buckinghamshire Council area. Information on the new Policy and on alcohol and entertainment licensing can be found at <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/business/business-licences-and-permits/alcohol-and-entertainment-licences/>

The new Gambling Act Policy Statement was approved by Full Council on the 23rd February 2022 and will be implemented from the 1st April 2022. The Policy harmonises requirements for the licensing of gambling premises and activities across the Buckinghamshire Council area. The service has worked hard to harmonise customer experience and application processes as policies are harmonised and is continuing to focus on digital improvement and system changes to support this. Under transitional arrangements both of these policies had to be in place for the new council by 1st April 2022 and their delivery was a Cabinet Member priority in year one and year two. The Service has worked very hard to deliver against these priorities alongside business-as-usual activities. In addition, the new Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy changes which were implemented in September 2021 are bedding in well and the Service has recently had a positive internal audit of the new systems and processes that were put in place to support the delivery of the service.

Cemeteries and Crematoria

The cremator replacement project at Chilterns Crematorium continues with work scheduled to commence in July 2022. This is a significant capital improvement project for the Chilterns Crematorium site which will see all three of the existing aged cremators replaced alongside the continuing operation of the service as well as refurbishment works to the smaller Hampden Chapel, waiting rooms and some staff areas.

Penn Road Cemetery in Hazlemere is due to open in April 2022 with a formal opening ceremony to be arranged in late April/early May. The cemetery will operate as part of a combined burial provision alongside High Wycombe Cemetery serving primarily the residents of the unparished area of High Wycombe.

We have successfully recruited several new team members into the Cemeteries Service, including a new Cemeteries Manager, and will be working to improve capacity and resilience across the Buckinghamshire Council area, as well as harmonising customer experience, where appropriate, over the coming months.



Cabinet Member report – Planning and Regeneration

Councillor Gareth Williams

Enforcement Update

The team now has an established and embedded approach to dealing with alleged breaches of planning control in a consistent way across the Council area. The team continues to focus on delivering efficient and effective solutions to resolve breaches of planning control and to remedy planning harm.

The stabilised management team has enabled early decision making and helped with case progression which, in turn, is improving the overall service delivery. These working practices, combined with our no-nonsense approach to planning enforcement case management, has resulted in a further increase in formal actions taken and a significant increase in case resolutions. In 2021/22, the team issued 141 formal notices. This includes 49 Breach of Condition Notices, two Listed Building Enforcement Notices, three Temporary Stop Notices, three Section 215 (untidy land) notices and 85 Planning Enforcement Notices. The increase in the number of Planning Enforcement Notices issued is the second consecutive year of increased formal action taken since becoming a unitary authority and is more than double that of the combined action taken by legacy authorities in the year prior to Unitary.

In addition to the formal action taken, our improved case management and quicker decision making has contributed to a reduction in the overall caseload. Whilst the team received 1950 new reports in FY21-22, the team closed 2683 cases in 2021/22 following a program of data cleansing and regular case reviews.

In other work, the team have continued to roll out a programme of increased monitoring inspections of our authorised Waste and Minerals sites, undertaking a total number of 46 chargeable visits. This is set to more than double to 96 visits in 22/23. Increased site presence is providing the authority with a greater practical understanding of operational realities of our consented Minerals and Waste sites, which in turn improves our understanding of waste management capacity and aggregate resource within the County.

Brownfield Calls for Sites

The first call for brownfield sites consultation ran from 16 February to 6 April 2021. We received 275 site submissions which we are assessing for their suitability, availability and achievability for development. Whilst this remains subject to the outcome of our assessment, the overall capacity of the sites submitted for potential identification for residential use is approximately 4,900 homes. A second call for brownfield sites was launched on 6 December 2021. This will remain open for as long as possible. Thus far, an additional 47 sites have been submitted for assessment.

Chiltern Special Area of Conservation (SAC):

The Chiltern Beechwoods SAC is made up of nine constituent Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSI). There is evidence of significant recreational pressures on the SAC arising from a Zone of Influence (Zoi) of 12.6km from Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI and 1.7km for Tring Woodlands SSSI. These Zones of Influence extend into Buckinghamshire. This matter has arisen as a result of evidence produced in the preparation of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (DBC). The evidence gathered by DBC concludes that the integrity of the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, particularly at Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI is being harmed as a result of public access and disturbance. The evidence can be found on Dacorum Borough Council's website.

Natural England (NE) in its advice to Buckinghamshire Council and other neighbouring authorities stated that there could be a serious potential conflict between the plans for any new housing development in the area around the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC and conservation objectives for the protected features there.

The Council will shortly begin work on a mitigation strategy. This could take six months to get it in place. This will assist smaller scale schemes to proceed where they are not in the exclusion zone. Natural England is advising that a more strategic form of mitigation for larger developments such as Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space may be required – this could take longer to get into place.

While strategies are put in place, Planning Officers will continue to work on those applications which are unable to be determined or decided for reasons relating to the Habitat Regulations Assessment, to ensure that delays are kept to a minimum. More information can be found on our Frequently Asked Questions page.

Local Plan update

Whilst the details of the government's proposed planning reforms continue to be awaited, we conducted an Attitudes Survey consultation as part of the 'Discovery and Exploration' phase of the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. This closed on 11 February 2022 and attracted a total of 3,439 responses, which is a very healthy response rate at this early stage in the plan's preparation. These responses are currently being analysed.

Neighbourhood Plans

Buckinghamshire Council takes a proactive and positive approach to neighbourhood planning, providing advice and support to those communities interested in producing Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders or Community Right to Build Orders as part of our "duty to support". It was because of this positive approach that a new neighbourhood planning coordinator post was created and filled in October 2021. There are currently:

- 30 'made' Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) in Buckinghamshire, Stewkley NDP (December 2021) and Denham NDP (January 2022) being the most recent plans to be 'made' after a hiatus due to the pandemic in early 2020
- 38 NDPs are in progress (including four reviews of 'made' plans)
- 64 parishes in Buckinghamshire have a designated neighbourhood area (40% of the parishes in Buckinghamshire).

A further six new plans and two modified plans are forecast to be 'made' in 2022. A new Neighbourhood Planning webpage includes a list of plans and has a map to show the geographical coverage of neighbourhood plans in Buckinghamshire. We regularly meet with the Town and Parish

Council to ensure that they are aware of the relevant contact details for our Neighbourhood Plans officer and to help offer assistance with any Neighbourhood Plans issues.

Beaconsfield Relief Road

The new Beaconsfield relief road opened on 5 April. The relief road has been a long-term aspiration to improve north-south connectivity in Buckinghamshire by easing the heavy congestion on the A355 corridor and London End roundabout making this new section of road a key strategic scheme. It will also provide a more suitable route for HS2 construction traffic.

The relief road will connect to the existing road network through a new junction at Maxwell Road at the northern end, and with the Pyebush Roundabout and the A40 at the southern end. The scheme has been delivered in two parts by Buckinghamshire Council working with developer Inland Homes. The northern section of the road from Maxwell Road to Minerva Way was designed and constructed by Buckinghamshire Council and the connecting southern section from Minerva Way to Pyebush Roundabout has been provided by Inland Homes as part of their Wilton Park housing development.

The completed road is the result of public and private funding coming together to deliver a key piece of local infrastructure. Working together, Buckinghamshire Council and the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership secured funding to deliver the northern section through the Government's Local Growth Deal and Housing Infrastructure Fund. Developer Inland Homes has financed the connecting southern section as part of its planning obligations for their Wilton Park development.

Aylesbury Garden Town

Work on the commission to develop deliverable propositions for regeneration of the Town Centre continues. Detailed work on the financial assumptions for this work and requirements for further studies are being identified by officers. Options will be shared with stakeholders, including local Councillors, once proposals have been reviewed and deemed to be robust. Announcement of the capacity funding used to support the Garden Town programme of work is still awaited from Homes England and therefore detailed proposals for the future work programme remain to be confirmed.

Community based activity supported by the Garden Town programme has seen success in recent months through the Play Streets pilot in Fairford Leys, community based growing projects and enhancement projects at the rail and bus stations.

Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework

The purpose of the Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework is to outline a high-level approach to regeneration across all our towns and villages. It will assist in the delivery of agreed programmes of place shaping that help define both physical and social regeneration that drives better social and economic outcomes in our Places. It will be the first of its kind in Buckinghamshire with an articulated vision of resilience, infrastructure, relevance and a strong future of town centres in Buckinghamshire.



Cabinet Member report – Transport

Councillor Steve Broadbent

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)

Following last year's successful bid for government funding, we are working on two exciting DRT pilot schemes in Aylesbury and High Wycombe. DRT is flexible, it doesn't follow a fixed route like a traditional bus service and passengers are able to travel by picking a boarding point and destination via an app, website or phone. This gives direct links to destinations that would normally require a change of buses and allow us to serve areas where demand isn't high enough for a regular bus route. A tender process is taking place and we hope to start operating in Summer 2022. Further information will follow in due course.

New Capita ONE software live

Following a 19-month implementation project, Client Transport went live with Capita ONE on 1st February 2022. Capita ONE is the administration system used by Children's Services to manage education records and Client Transport are now using the Transport module within ONE. The key benefits of implementing the Capita ONE Transport module include holding a single client record and improved service resilience and data security and integrity. This is a key milestone in the Client Transport improvement journey and a major achievement by the team.

Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

The Government have announced BSIP funding and have awarded funding to 31 authorities only. Forty authorities will receive no funding at this stage and, unfortunately, Buckinghamshire is one of those. I will be writing to the minister to express dismay at the funding decision and will also seek feedback from DfT. We have to continue developing an Enhanced Partnership with bus companies. We are continuing to promote bus services to help tackle climate change and residents are encouraged to try the bus again if they can.

Minibus Driver receives award



Sakhy Badshah put his safeguarding training into practice and acted fast to get eight pupils on board his Buckinghamshire Council school transport service to Wingrave Church of England School to safety when their vehicle's engine caught fire. He received a 'Proud of Bucks' award for his actions which were commended by Janet Lee, Assistant Head Teacher.

Rights of Way Update - Work to remove and replace the Berry Hill Footbridge in Taplow continues. This large timber footbridge was closed to the general public in May 2021 after suffering unforeseen

structural deterioration and was then demolished on health and safety grounds in December 2021 in close collaboration with the Environment Agency. Subject to design and approvals, the new footbridge is planned to be installed by the end of Autumn 2022 to enable this Right of Way to reopen.

Volunteer path surveyors have nearly completed the annual condition survey of the Rights of Way network, which samples 5% of the network. The results so far indicate that 74.6% of the paths walked were easy to use, 93% of structures were accessible and 93% of direction signage at roadside was in place. Any defects found from the survey are recorded for action and prioritised of repair as necessary.

Over the past financial year, the Rights of Way Operations Team capital works programme has delivered improvement works to repair and replace bridges and resurface paths in the parishes of Marlow (along the Thames Path National Trail), Wing, Amersham, Buckland, Bledlow, Chesham, Chartridge, Haddenham, Pitstone, and Westcott. Rail and step works have been undertaken in Halton and Hambleden parishes.

Celebrating the Queen's Jubilee

To help communities celebrate the occasion of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on Thursday 2nd June 2022 guidance for holding a street party has been issued. The fee for residents and communities wanting a temporary road closure for a Jubilee street party has been waived. The deadline for applications is: 6th May 2022. Further guidance is given on our website [here](#).



In this Jubilee Year, we are also promoting the Bernwood Jubilee Way – a 61-mile trail cutting across 27 parishes in the north of Buckinghamshire. This important foundation route was originally developed for the Golden Jubilee in 2002 and links together sections of the Rights of Way network to give access to the forgotten ancient forest of Bernwood. Work has begun to survey the path and install new signage in time for a relaunch for the coming celebrations in the Summer.

'Recycled Plastic Road' trial

Plans are progressing to trial the use of recycled plastic in road surfacing materials at two sites this summer- one a heavily used main A road and the other a more minor local road. We will lay this innovative material alongside standard materials to see how it performs on these two different roads. This approach will allow us to tease out any issues with installation and we will monitor its performance annually in direct comparison with the adjacent traditional materials. Similar products are being installed elsewhere in the country (including through the ADEPT Live Labs programme). Another innovation this year will be the increased use of lower temperature "warm mix" asphalt which delivers carbon reduction benefits over previous hot mix asphalt methods.

Gully Cleaning

This programme has remained a constant challenge and focus throughout the year. Despite the significant resourcing difficulties posed by HGV driver shortage, to date over 70,800 gullies have been cleansed at least once. Follow up repair work has been undertaken, with over 650 gully covers being unstuck and over 350 replaced. The additional investment in drainage has enabled a programme of further investigation, ditch clearance, high pressure jetting, CCTV surveys and repair work to damaged gullies and drainage systems. The long-term benefits of this work are anticipated to reduce localised flooding of the carriageway and the subsequent safety risks caused to road users, reduce

flood damage to property in certain areas and prevent unnecessary deterioration of the road surface. All gullies within Buckinghamshire will be cleansed again in the next year.

Capital Programme for 2021/22

As part of the “£100m Investing in your roads” four year programme £32.4m was delivered on this busy schedule of works in 2021/22. Road markings have been refreshed at 49 sites consisting of a mixture of strategic routes and local area choices, led by the LAT’s. Safety barriers, complex ITS upgrades, network improvement sites and 23 drainage schemes have also been completed. TfB and its supply chain have been extremely busy delivering 28 footway schemes alongside 34 surfacing sites, 26 surface dressing sites, 16 sites treated with micro asphalt and 77 sites repaired under plane and patch. During 2022/23 there will be a further investment of £31.5m in the roads across the county under this programme.

HS2 and East West Rail

Buckinghamshire Council remains committed to holding HS2 and EWR to account for the impact that these schemes as their construction are having on our special environment and on our residents and businesses.

The date for the Judicial Review on Buckinghamshire council’s appeals against six HS2 lorry route decisions has been confirmed as 8th – 9th June 2022. The lorry routes the Judicial Review relates to are:

- Brackley Road
- Wendover Green Tunnel
- Small Dean Lane, Wendover to the Strategic Road Network
- Small Dean Viaduct, Wendover to the Strategic Road Network
- Chiltern Tunnel North Portal to the Strategic Road Network, and
- Three worksites at Little Missenden, Chesham and the North Portal to the Strategic Road Network

Second Tranche of HS2 Road Safety Fund (RSF)

The second tranche of the HS2 Road Safety Fund is now open for applications from or supported by Parish Councils. Applicants wishing to apply will need to do so by 31st May 2022.

£1.6m is being made available in 2022 from Buckinghamshire’s £3.95m share of the HS2 Road Safety Fund. This funding was allocated by the Department for Transport in recognition of the likely disruption to communities that are not used to the volume and impact of heavy traffic associated with major construction works such as the HS2 project.

The funds are expected to be in high demand so schemes to be funded will be carefully selected to benefit the communities that have been most significantly impacted by HS2 construction and to maximise the long-term road safety benefits across the county.

You can find more information, including fund criteria and guidance for applicants [here](#). Queries should be sent to hs2roadsafetyfund@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Extension of e-scooter trials

The Government have allowed an extension of the e-scooter trials taking place across England to November 2022 and Buckinghamshire Council has agreed to continue to participate in these trials. These have proven a success so far with over 120,000 rides having taken place so far across our three locations: Aylesbury, Princes Risborough and High Wycombe. The extension of the trials will enable additional user and safety data to be collected for the Department for Transport, helping to

understand the uptake, user demographics, carbon impacts and the suitability of e-scooters as a new transport mode and their future legalisation.

Emergency Active Travel Fund Schemes

The first tranche of the Department for Transport's 'Emergency' Active Travel Fund (ATF) was announced during the pandemic, primarily focussed on introducing temporary or trial schemes (encouraging reallocation of road space during a time when there were fewer vehicles on the roads) to enable more local journeys to be made on foot or by bike.

Two of the trial schemes (Southcourt, Aylesbury and Trinity Road, Marlow) have recently been out to statutory consultation and are now being made permanent, with all works scheduled to be completed by the end of April 2022.

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Notices of Motion

Date: 27 April 2022

Notice of Motion – Food Poverty

Proposer: Councillor Melanie Smith

Seconder: Councillor Robin Stuchbury

This Council believes that no family or child living in a fair society should rely on food banks to offset low income and economic hardship. These views are shared throughout the local authority and elected members.

Council calls on Cabinet to use its influence with national government to gain additional funding to implement the 14 recommendations of the National Food Strategy of July 2021, and to urgently establish a task and finish group with a cross-portfolio brief and including cross party members to analyse the current situation and to make recommendations of action to mitigate any worsening of circumstances for our residents.

As part of the task and finish group Cabinet should ensure:

- that a named cabinet member is assigned to lead on this study
- the cabinet member receives the support and resources to complete the task
- the cabinet member provides regular updates to all members on progress
- the group produce a report detailing their findings and making recommendations for action
- the report is completed in 3 months including recommendations for action and details of costings
- the report is disseminated to all members
- as part of the follow up, local members are consulted about the next steps

Notice of Motion – Mobilise community investments to tackle climate change

Proposer: Councillor Steven Lambert

Seconder: Councillors Ed Gemmell / Stuart Wilson

Full Council notes:

1. That this council noted that climate change is a global emergency following a Motion to Council.
2. The motion committed the Council to achieve net zero carbon impact by 2050.
3. The council has been progressing a package of low carbon opportunities arising from the Carbon Audit report, such as tree planting and reviewing carbon emissions among other things.
4. A new low risk model called Community Municipal Investments [CMI] has been developed by Leeds University and Abundance Investments platform with UK Government and EU support. This concept had the support of several local authorities including Bristol City Council.
5. This model of green bonds with a local authority guarantee is proven to mobilise local and other investment and channels local savings into local projects with low risk and a modest return to investors and after the first issue further calls can be automated.
6. This Council notes that the Local Government Association presents it as a model for mobilising widespread private investment to decarbonise localities.

Full Council believes:

1. That offering local savers and other ethical investors a way to support the County's journey to carbon neutrality mobilises community engagement in the process of change, attracts significant sums for named projects, and should be developed.
2. That offering security and a modest rate of interest through municipal bonds is an established way to develop local infrastructure.
3. That CMIs can help us amass funds on a regular basis develop a series of practical projects for a low carbon transition now in partnership with others which will be popular with local savers. This mobilises capital that could otherwise leave the County.
4. The Cabinet should prioritise CMIs as part of the package of investments that will create positive economic opportunities and carbon neutrality while building community wealth.
6. Buckinghamshire should join the other pioneering Councils of CMI in developing local opportunities for local investors.

Full Council resolves:

1. To call on the Leader and Cabinet to begin development of Community Municipal Investments for the County.
2. That the Council promotes CMI as a way residents and institutions can be engaged and actively involved in contributing to a zero carbon city.
3. Requests Officers to identify carbon saving projects suited to CMI investment in conjunction with local government, business and community partners in Buckinghamshire.



Leader Decisions Taken

Information on decisions taken by the Leader since the last full Council agenda. For an up-to-date list of decisions taken and forthcoming decisions, please refer to the Council's website – <https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/>

3 Mar 2022

EC03.22 - The Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2022-2027

The Leader AGREED:

That the local authority adopts the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, agreed and commended to Buckinghamshire Council by the Agreed Syllabus Conference of Buckinghamshire SACRE on 6th December 2021, for all Buckinghamshire maintained schools including Voluntary Controlled schools for 2022-2027.

4 Mar 2022

EC02.22 - 2023/24 Admission Arrangements

The Leader AGREED the determined admission arrangements for admission in September 2023.

These arrangements shall include:

- 1. The coordinated scheme for primary and secondary admissions in Buckinghamshire, for admission from September 2023, as set out in Appendix 1.**
- 2. The 2023 determined admission rules for community and voluntary-controlled primary schools as set out in Appendix 2. This includes the admission rules for schools, nursery classes and nursery schools and the Published Admission Number and catchment area for each school.**
- 3. The 2023 determined admission rules for community and voluntary-controlled secondary schools as set out in Appendix 3. This includes the proposed Admission Number and catchment area for each school and sixth form admission arrangements.**
- 4. The proposed relevant area for school admission arrangements from September 2024, as set out in Appendix 4.**

4 Mar 2022

TR09.22 - A355 Amersham Road – Proposed 50mph Speed Limit

The Leader AGREED to:

- a) **consider the objections, feedback and support received during Statutory Consultation, as detailed in this report.**
- b) **authorise the making and introduction of the Traffic Regulation Order as set out in the report, for the introduction of a 50mph speed limit on A355 Amersham Road, Beaconsfield.**
- c) **authorise the Traffic Regulation Order to be brought into operation.**
- d) **approve that consultees and responders are informed of the decision.**

7 Mar 2022

L02.22 - Changes to Council Tax Reduction Policy for the Energy Rebate

The Leader:

APPROVED the changes made to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in Appendix A to comply with the revised Council Tax (Demand Notices and Reduction Schemes) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2022.

This decision is being taken under the 'special urgency' provisions of the constitution. In order to comply with statute, the decision needs to be in force by 11 March 2022.

10 Mar 2022

TR11.22 - Active Travel Statutory Consultations Marlow and Southcourt

The Leader:

- a. **AUTHORISED the permanent implementation of the Emergency Active Travel Fund trial schemes and related aspects as outlined in this report.**
- b. **AGREED to implement the Emergency Active Travel fund trial schemes in this report, that the Leader of the Council authorises the making of the relevant Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for each scheme.**
- c. **AGREED That responders to the Statutory Consultation be informed of the Decision.**

17 Mar 2022

HR02.22 - Cemetery Rules & Regulations – Penn Road Cemetery, Hazlemere and High Wycombe Cemetery

The Leader:

- a) **APPROVED** the proposed rules and regulations for both High Wycombe Cemetery and Penn Road cemetery.
- b) **APPROVED** the revocation of the current rules and regulations in place for High Wycombe Cemetery.

21 Mar 2022

HR01.22 - Registration Service fees 2023-2025

The Leader APPROVED an inflationary uplift of 3% to the non-statutory fees chargeable for ceremonies and associated activities for 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years

23 Mar 2022

TR12.22 - Extension of the e-scooter trials until November 2022

The Leader AGREED:

To extend the end date for the e-scooter trials in Buckinghamshire taking place in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Princes Risborough until November 2022.

To confirm the change from Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to permanent Traffic Regulation Order until the trial finishes.

25 Mar 2022

TR10.22 - A413 Amersham Road Gap Closure

The Leader AGREED to:

- a) **consider the Objections and Feedback received at Statutory Consultation**
- b) **approve the making of the Traffic Regulation Order as set out in the report, for the closure of the central reserve on A413 Amersham Road, Gerrards Cross.**
- c) **inform responders to the Statutory Consultation of the Decision as well as implement the traffic regulation order and associated works.**

25 Mar 2022

HW02.22 - Choice and Charging Policies

That the Leader AGREED to approve the updated Choice and Charging Policies for Residential and Non-Residential.

28 Mar 2022

HR03.22 - Buckinghamshire Council Housing Allocations Scheme

The Leader AGREED:

That Buckinghamshire Council formally adopts the Bucks Home Choice Allocations Scheme as the Council's housing allocations scheme (under section 166A of Housing Act 1996)

28 Mar 2022

TR03.22 - Disabled Parking Bays in Residential Areas (from November 2021 consultation)

The Leader:

- a. **APPROVED the making of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) as outlined in this report**
- b. **AGREED that responders to the Statutory Consultation be informed of the Decision**
- c. **AGREED that the TRO be made as advertised during the statutory consultation.**

31 Mar 2022

TR13.22 - Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2022-23

The Leader:

1. **AGREED the annual Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2022-23 as set out in Appendix 1, having considered consultation findings.**
2. **AGREED the annual fee for Council organised transport element for post-16 SEND students to be set at £927 for the 2022-23 academic year, and the reduced fee for demonstrated financial hardship to be set at £618 for the 2022-23 academic year; both to be applied on a pro-rata basis according to the number of days travelled.**

31 Mar 2022

TR07.22 - TRO Project Phase 2 Scheme (from November 2021 consultation)

The Leader:

A. APPROVED the making of the orders as advertised during the Statutory Consultation and detailed in Appendix 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9, SUBJECT TO the following conditions:

- a. school permits being valid as dispensation in Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe pay and display bays,
- b. that "School Permits" condition of use for all school permit locations be valid for dropping off or collecting children attending a school based within a permit holder parking area. The vehicle may park during school term time only, Monday- Friday, 08.00 - 16.00 for a maximum period of 1 hour with no return 2 hours
- c. in "The Buckinghamshire Council (Prohibition of Waiting, Loading and Stopping) and (On-Street Parking Places) (AMENDMENT 002) Order 2022" Schedule 4 column 4 the period of validity for visitor voucher be updated to read "From date of purchase for 12 months or until end of day on date first used within the original 12 month period."

Orders

- The Buckinghamshire Council (Prohibition of Waiting, Loading and Stopping) and (On-Street Parking Places) (AMENDMENT 002) Order 2022
- The Buckinghamshire Council (Traffic Movement) (AMENDMENT 001) Order 2022 (including amendments to schedules 2)
- The Buckinghamshire Council (Speed Limit) (AMENDMENT 001) Order 2022 (including amendments to schedules 2)

B. AGREED that responders to the Statutory Consultation be informed of the Decision

11 Apr 2022

L03.22 - Helping Hand Energy Bill Rebate

The Leader:

APPROVED the Council Tax Energy rebate discretionary scheme proposals as set out in Section 2 with the full scheme set out in Appendix B.

This decision is being taken under 'General Exception' provisions of the constitution as it has not had the requisite 28 days' notice on the forward plan

For further information please contact Ian Hunt on 01494 421208

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