



Cabinet agenda

Date: Tuesday 10 May 2022

Time: 10.00 am

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

Membership:

M Tett (Leader), Cllr A Macpherson (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing), G Williams (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration), S Bowles (Cabinet Member for Communities), S Broadbent (Cabinet Member for Transport), J Chilver (Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property and Assets), A Cranmer (Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services), C Harriss (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure), N Naylor (Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services) and P Strachan (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment)

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Agenda Item

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Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 29 March 2022 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, HP19 8FF, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 12.15 pm.

Members present

M Tett, Cllr A Macpherson, G Williams, S Bowles, S Broadbent, J Chilver, A Cranmer, C Harriss, N Naylor and P Strachan

Others in attendance

L Clarke OBE, T Green, A Hussain, R Stuchbury, N Thomas, P Turner and K Wood

Agenda Item

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from the Chief Executive, Rachael Shimmin.

2 Minutes

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

3 Declarations of interest

Cllr S Bowles and P Strachan declared a personal interest as Board Members of Aylesbury Vale Estates.

4 Hot Topics

The following topics were raised:-

Leader

The Leader provided an update on the Ukrainian refugee crisis and reported that 2500 Buckinghamshire residents had indicated that they were willing to accommodate refugees. He thanked all the residents for their phenomenal response which was the second highest in the Country. The Council was responsible for checking the suitability of accommodation to see if it was fit for purpose and DBS checks would also need to be undertaken with regard to safeguarding issues for women and children. This was a very resource intensive piece of work and officers were working hard on undertaking checks required by law to enable the families to

be placed as soon as possible.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/how-we-are-supporting-the-afghan-crisis/>

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

The Department of Health and Social Care have published guidance on 'Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund'. This was a result of the White Paper Putting People at the Heart of Care and how authorities calculate market sustainability plans. Some funding had been passported but it was inadequate and therefore she was responding to the consultation on this point.

With regard to the Queens Platinum Jubilee the Council had launched a toolkit which would be issued through Adult Social Care settings and care homes which provided creative ideas on how to celebrate the Jubilee e.g wildflowering planting in care homes and this would be circulated to Members, schools and Parish Councils.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/the-queens-platinum-jubilee/>

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member thanked everyone who had taken part in the questionnaire survey of the Local Plan; of which 3439 responses had been received on the discovery and exploration phase. There was also the Brownfield Call for sites where 275 submissions had been made between 16 February and 6 April 2021 which would be space for 4,900 homes. The Council needed 54,000 new homes so therefore it would be helpful to find further brownfield sites in the area. A second call for sites started in December and the Council have had another 47 sites put forward.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/call-for-brownfield-sites/>

Cabinet Member for Transport

The consultation for Moving Traffic Offences would end on 4 April 2022 and further comments were welcomed.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/news/views-invited-on-new-traffic-offences-enforcement-powers/>

Cabinet Member for Communities

The Household Support Grant of £2.4 million had now been fully committed through a number of channels such as holiday food, voluntary sector funding, community support scheme and the Helping Hand Grants Scheme administered through the Heart of Bucks. The Council were waiting for the Spring Statement which they were hoping would refer to the doubling of the Household Support Grant of £500 million being available.

For the Easter holiday each eligible pupil, who receive free school meals, early years pupil premium or two year old free funded education place should receive a £60 digital food voucher via their schools or early years settings and this additional funding represented the increase in energy and fuel costs. The Leader referred to

the Spring statement and the two initiatives one funding available for those not on the £150 rebate on council tax e.g those who were perhaps in a larger house but income poor and also people in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) and it was good to see that the Government had given the Council some flexibility about these two areas. The Council were hoping to get an extra £2million for the Household Support Grant and no guidance had been issued yet on how it was to be dispensed but it was hoped that this could be used for the Helping Hands Programme which had made an excellent job of supporting those most in need. There were lots of people in Buckinghamshire who were struggling particularly in areas of deprivation. <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/housing-and-benefits/support-with-food-bills-and-finances/>

Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

The Cabinet Member referred to two White Papers; 'Opportunity for All' and the SEND review 'Right Support Right Place Right Time'. The first White Paper referred to lengthening of the school day and extra tuition including the academisation of all schools and these proposals were being considered by the Council. The second White Paper was being considered which provided some additional funding. The implications of this on the Council would be submitted in a future report.

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

The Cabinet Member referred to the delay of the skate park in Buckingham which was due to the Environment Agency carrying out a study into flooding as it was near a flood plain. He also commented that museums and galleries were opening up and there was an exciting programme of summer events.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/culture-and-tourism/museums-and-galleries/>

5 Question Time

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

"Delivering on a development agreement (15/01218/AOP) to construct a cycleway within Buckingham

The above-mentioned planning application and development agreement included a Section 106 agreement to deliver a cycleway serving the new Saint Rumbold's Fields development on Tingewick Road, Buckingham. The cycleway, with a footpath alongside, could be provided along the Scenic Walk and the Railway Walk (map attached to the S106 agreement) and would enable the young people from this development to safely access the secondary schools and primary school within Buckingham. A cycleway would also assist local people in lowering their carbon footprint by reducing the number of journeys by vehicle. Can the Cabinet Member please update me on the progress that has been made to deliver the cycleway?"

RESPONSE from Councillor Broadbent

"Thank you for your question regarding the creation of a walking and cycling link,

which relates to a development site titled 'Land North of A421, Tingewick Road, Buckingham'. Your question touches on two matters, a Section 106 contribution and an element of the Section 278 works, which together contribute to the link that you describe. I understand that you have discussed this matter with officers and this response therefore confirms the current position.

To provide context, the creation of this walking and cycling link, referred to as the Railway Walk, is an identified cycle route proposal within the Buckingham Transport Strategy (Outline Cycling Strategy). The Transport Strategy, published and adopted in 2017 following local engagement and consultation, outlines a prioritised range of transport improvements required in response to local growth in Buckingham. This includes measures to enable sustainable and active travel. The Council is now working to deliver these improvements.

The Buckingham Transport Strategy proposes that the Railway Walk, which is an existing informal walking route that follows the alignment of the disused railway line, is upgraded through surfacing works and the creation of a public bridleway, so as to secure walking and cycling rights in perpetuity. Developer funding (Section 106 contribution) and developer-led works (Section 268 works) have since been secured through the 'Land North of A421, Tingewick Road' site to support this link.

Section 106 – Sustainable Transport Contribution.

The Section 106 agreement for this site includes a 'Sustainable Transport Contribution' that is *'to be applied for the purpose of constructing a 3 metre wide pedestrian route with street lighting along the route shown by the blue shading on Plan 1'*. The route to be delivered follows the alignment of the discussed railway line between the Tingewick Road (to the north west) and the A421 (to the south east). The Council is responsible for the delivery of this route.

The Section 106 agreement (see Eighth Schedule) explains that the Contribution is to be paid by the developer to the Council in 3 instalments, linked to specific dwelling occupation levels. To date, the Council has received the 1st instalment, with the 2nd and 3rd instalments payments requested and due imminently.

Buckinghamshire Council is responsible for ensuring Section 106 contributions are spent in accordance with the purposes and terms on which they are secured. The development and delivery of Section 106 funded transport schemes is managed through a yearly programme, whereby the Council works with partners to progress schemes across Buckinghamshire. The scheme development and delivery process includes engagement with Local Members, Parish & Town Councils and Community Boards.

It is necessary for the Council to prioritise the schemes that it develops and delivers each year. This prioritisation is influenced by factors such as:

- Limited Council officer resource and any capacity constraints of delivery partners
- The funding that has been received towards a project, in the context of the

total amount due. For example, where larger contributions are paid in incremental instalments over a longer time period.

- Expenditure deadlines or funding clawbacks linked to any unspent Section 106 contributions, as specified in Section 106 agreements. These are typically 10 years.
- Alignment with key strategic, policy or local area priorities.

In light of the above factors, the Council has not yet progressed the delivery of the Railway Walk scheme. However, the benefits offered by the delivery of the scheme are recognised and officers are currently undertaking engagement with local members to discuss opportunities for active travel infrastructure in the Buckingham area and confirm local priorities. This information will be considered when prioritising developer-funded schemes for future year delivery.

Section 278 works – Saint Rumbold’s Park

Your question also mentions the provision of a footway/cycleway link within the development site itself, through Saint Rumbold’s Park. This link would provide access to and from the development site and the Railway Walk. This link is within the ‘red line boundary’ of the site and forms part of the Section 278 works that are to be delivered by, the developer. This link is to be constructed as part of Phase 3 of the development site.

The provision of this footway/cycleway link was secured through Condition 20 of the Outline Planning Permission, reference 15/01218/AOP. Condition 20 was approved through the reserved matters application, secured through Condition 1 of the reserved matters application (reference 17/04668/ADP), which states:

- *Condition 1: the construction of any work commencing on St Rumbolds Park full details of the design specifications and method of construction for the pedestrian/cycle link through St Rumbolds Park and timing to implement the works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details*
- *Reason: To ensure the remaining details required by condition 20 of the outline planning permission are satisfactory and are carried out*

The Council is responsible for ensuring that Conditions are met before they are discharged. Based on the information that has been provided by the developer, the Council has agreed that Condition 1 has been met. However, prior to the construction of the link, the Council is currently investigating whether a variation to the surfacing material that is currently proposed (Breedon Gravel has planning consent) can be made. It is hoped that a hard surfaced pathway can be achieved so as to maximise the opportunity for active travel connectivity between the site and the Railway Walk, once it is delivered.

I understand officers have informed you of the current position, as discussions are currently taking pace with the developer and archaeology team, and will provide a further update once available.”

Question from Councillor Tony Green to Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

“The report states that residents residing in the former Wycombe area receive a free garden waste collection service for their first bin or bags. This is not a factual statement as the service is not “free”. Wycombe District Council decided many years ago that green waste collection would be funded, like other waste collection, out of the general fund rather than as a separate charge to users. This meant that the cost was collected from residents through their council tax, meaning that those residents in lower band properties, which were more likely to generate less green waste, paid less whereas those in higher band properties, which were likely to generate more green waste, paid more. This is the general principle of council tax.

The annual charge that is being proposed is, by comparison, a regressive tax as the same charge is levied onto everyone who uses the service irrespective of income or the amount that they use the service.

I believe that a fairer method of charging for green waste collection, if the decision is made not to continue funding it from the general fund, is to charge by usage. This means that a resident with a small garden who uses their green bins four or five times a year will pay less than a resident with a large garden who might use their bin 20 times a year.

Given that stickers are being supplied to residents who opt into the scheme, it would be relatively easy to have a unique bar-code on each sticker, identifying the property. When the bin is put out for collection, the contractor would scan the bar-code and register the collection. This would enable the resident to be billed for the number of collections that they utilise.

This seems to me to be a much fairer way of charging. Would you agree?”

Response from Councillor Strachan

“Garden waste charges have been in place across the Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks collection areas for a number of years and have operated on a simple basis where one payment is made to opt-in to the service and however much waste is produced by the resident and placed in the bin will be removed.

Furthermore, it would not be usual process to charge all residents for a service which is not used universally. The green waste kerbside collection is used by an average of about 35% of households so it is fairer to charge at the point of use rather than via council tax.

A 'pay as you use' method would be very difficult and costly to set up, implement and bill resident who use the system. The current charge of £50 per annum per bin equates to about £1.08 per week and this income would almost certainly be nowhere near enough to cover operational costs for a pay as you go system. So, this

is not supported.”

Question from Councillors Lesley Clarke and Arif Hussain to Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

“The Cabinet is aware that the Wycombe District Council legacy area has never charged for green waste and this cost would cause another expense, considering that last year Band D Council tax precept was levelled up to bring it in line with the other 3 legacy councils. Something called equalisation!

Would the Cabinet therefore consider implementing the charges for Green Waste over a 5-year period, with the yearly amount being £10 for the first year, increasing incrementally by £10 per annum, bringing the total at the end of the fifth year to £50, the now proposed charge for the green waste collection across Buckinghamshire? And for this to be to **ALL** legacy council areas showing this to be a unified cost across the Buckinghamshire Unitary Council area?

This would show that the “equalisation” charge from a Unitary Council does acknowledge the increase in costs for some but shows a promised eventual savings to **ALL** its residents in the long term. We are concerned that likely backlash may well see residents of the former Wycombe area requesting this Council remove their green bin, which would lead to extra costs for this Council, notwithstanding, of course, the extra storage costs of the green bins returned to the Council. Further the decrease in the green waste collection will, we believe, have a knock-on effect not only on the Council’s recycling rates, but also on the composting of this collected green waste, of which this Council does receive an income? It may too, see an increase in fly tipping, which is something we believe that no one would wish to see?

We believe in considering to levy this charge in this way the Council will keep to its green credentials, albeit on an incremental basis, and helps **ALL** Buckinghamshire local residents to keep using this service and not see them using the grey bin for green waste, or indeed taking it to the waste recycling sites themselves, which would, after all, increase the carbon footprint that the Council is trying desperately to reduce in its pursuance of net zero?

Thank you for listening.”

Response from Councillor Strachan

"Thank you for the question. To confirm - the charge will be opt-in and not compulsory - residents can still access household recycling centres for free disposal or make use of discounted compost bins the Council offers. Having a starting charge increasing annually is not the method by which other areas introduced charging and under the current circumstance doesn't seem logical to reduce the charges across the county.

The notion of a variable charge based on households implies that charges could be

raised significantly if household income increases. Currently charges are pegged to contract (or in house) service costs. This method is transparent and fairer for all Council taxpayers than a more variable approach.

Also by having a £10 starting charge in year 1 for all residents in the County would cost the Council at least £1.8M in lost income.

To confirm the council receives no income from composting garden waste, it is a substantial cost to the Council to have its green waste treated and turned into compost. The cost, however, is much more acceptable from the environmental perspective than options such as landfill or incineration.

Garden waste charges have been in place across the Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks collection areas for a number of years. There is no evidence to suggest fly-tipping of garden waste happens more in these areas than the Wycombe area (where the collections are free). Garden waste is not a common material to be fly-tipped, and if it does occur it is usually a commercial fly tip of garden waste produced by a professional gardeners or companies.

All Household Recycling Centres accept garden waste free of charge and it remains one of the most popular items to be brought to the sites, irrespective of whether an area charges for kerbside collection or not.”

Question from Councillor Katrina Wood to Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

“As an elected member for an area in the former Wycombe District Council area you will not be surprised that I am disappointed to see the paper on waste charges coming forward to Cabinet today. Whilst I do understand the reasons it does not mean that I approve of yet another move that disadvantages Wycombe residents. Firstly, the Council tax harmonisation which adversely affected them, now the introduction of the charging for green waste and finally also in the same paper the alignment of collections over December and January to a far longer length of time than existing.

Other colleagues will be covering the introduction of green waste charges to Wycombe residents so I will concentrate on the reduction in service that is also being proposed in this paper.

Although collection rates drop in December and January it does not mean that there is no Green Waste being produced for collection. The only time it isn't is if we have snow for that period! It is also easy to say residents can take the waste to a HWC but that is not easy for everyone to do. Many don't drive or have disabilities that prevent them lifting heavy bags. Also with the increased costs in petrol it is another burden to residents.

Please could the Cabinet member explain the following.

The assumed take up of paid for waste collection in the former Wycombe area is only expected to be 32.5% of households, and at the moment the waste company are collecting 100% of properties in January. You will not be saving on salaries or operational costs, so why could the alignment not have been at 4 weeks which is nearer halfway between the two existing options rather than 6. Also please explain what will happen to the existing 1000 tonnes of garden waste collected in Southern Buckinghamshire in January, accepting that it will be slightly less if only around 32% of Wycombe residents will be having Green Waste collected but remembering that figure includes Chiltern and South Bucks reduced numbers as they already pay for their collections.

Surely this will be a false saving as that 1000 tonnes will have to go somewhere and at some time so more rounds will be needed in February to clear the backlog as vehicles will be fuller quicker and need to be emptied more often.

I would urge Cabinet to reconsider this option and reduce the winter shutdown period to 4 weeks and reduce the number of collections to 48 per annum rather than 46 as recommended.”

Response from Councillor Strachan

The alignment to 6 weeks has been set at the period to enable resources to be used on higher priority services during that period such as Recycling.

In the north they have been operating with an 8 week suspension period for over 8 years and that has worked well with very few complaints about that policy and no issues about the amount of garden waste that is then collected when the service is restarted. In fact, the Green waste volume does not return to spring levels historically until March and April. Those residents that might have more garden waste have the option to take it to their nearest HRC and there has never been the need for extra rounds in February to collect heavy bins.

To confirm - a further suspension period in the South will allow the Contractor to deploy its workforce more efficiently during a busy period of refuse collection which could well accrue further savings for the Council.”

6 Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)

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

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

7 Succeeding as a Place: Achieving our Shared Vision for Buckinghamshire to 2050

The Buckinghamshire Strategic Vision for 2050 had been developed by the Buckinghamshire Growth Board with input from partner organisations and other key stakeholders including the Local Enterprise Board, Bucks Business First, Healthcare

Trust, Clinical Commissioning Group and the Voluntary and Community Sector. The Growth Board had approved the most recent draft with minor changes at its December 2021 meeting and it was now ready for endorsement by its partner boards, including Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet.

The Strategic Vision was a multi-purpose document that set out the key priorities and objectives partners (including the Council) would take forward. The Strategic Vision was influential in guiding emerging strategies and played a core function in the deliverables of the Growth Board partners. It also established our identity and sets out the aspirations to Buckinghamshire's residents and businesses, as well as regionally and nationally.

The content of The Strategic Vision was written in conjunction with Buckinghamshire's Recovery and Growth Proposal looking closely at how the objectives aligned in delivering a Buckinghamshire that facilitates placemaking and economic growth. The Strategic Vision for Buckinghamshire would:

- **Express our shared ambition and focus** by setting the commitment and direction to improve the economic, environmental and social health of Buckinghamshire.
- **Tell the compelling narrative for Buckinghamshire** by using our single voice to make clear our willingness to engage and deliver sustainable and ambitious clean growth. Setting out what our priorities are and where we wish to go.
- **Set the strategic direction and overarching guidance** that has previously been absent to enable the shared 2050 goal to be achieved in all future plans, strategies, and frameworks.
- **Establish our identity** nationally and in the context of the wider South East region by bringing together our successes, future opportunities, and challenges.

Members discussed the vision and commented as follows:

- Reference was made to 2.4 of the report with regard to expressing the Council's shared ambition and focus. A suggestion was made here to refer to physical and mental health rather than social health as this had a different connotation.
- The document referred to the environmental ambition to be carbon neutral by 2050 which was ambitious but deliverable.
- This was an exciting document as the Council was aiming to provide over 200,000 jobs and therefore skills training had been incorporated into the document. Good jobs were the key to moving people out of deprivation and improved health and wellbeing.
- Vibrant and connected places would underpin this vision which was supported by national infrastructure such as East West Rail and it was important to focus on inward investment and increased prosperity.
- Another area of focus was digital connectivity as Buckinghamshire was below the national average and employees who worked from home needed to be supported.
- Buckinghamshire faced a number of challenges and significant improvements

needed to be made including areas of deprivation and affordable housing. The Cabinet Member for Education and Children's services commented that there were 124,000 children in Buckinghamshire and 7,000 children received free school meals which showed that the County was not as affluent as it appeared.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report.

RESOLVED –

That the Buckinghamshire Growth Board's Strategic Vision to 2050 be endorsed.

8 Aligning charges and harmonising operational arrangements for garden waste collections in Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire Council became a unitary authority on 1 April 2020 and at that point inherited different arrangements for the charging for garden waste services from the four district councils. The current arrangements were for residents residing in the former Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks areas to have an 'Opt In' service where participating residents were charged for the collection of their garden waste, whereas residents residing in the former Wycombe area were not charged separately for garden waste collection service for their first bin or bags.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property and Assets informed Members that chargeable garden waste services were an important way to reduce costs and prioritise essential Council services. Chargeable garden waste services delivered significant savings for the Council and currently generated a gross annual income of circa £2.6m. Aligning charges was estimated to generate an additional gross income of between £900,000 and £1.1m annually. This income had been calculated using the annual subscription fee of £50. If a free service was given across Buckinghamshire it would cost the Council over £8 million in the first year and this would impact on frontline services.

Four options were presented in the Cabinet report, with option 1 the recommended option, which was to introduce a chargeable Opt in kerbside garden waste collection service in the former Wycombe District Council area from July 2022.

In addition to harmonisation of charges across Buckinghamshire the report recommended harmonising the operational arrangements for garden waste services to provide the same standard of service to participating residents. This included:

- (i) Introducing stickers in the former South Bucks District area to determine which residents were eligible for their garden container(s) to be emptied.
- (ii) For additional subscriptions to be charged at the same rate and expire at the same time as first subscriptions regardless of when payment was made for any additional subscription(s).
- (iii) Aligning the Garden Waste suspension period to 6 weeks for the winter period.

The Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 provided powers that local authorities had the discretion to charge for collection and disposal of certain wastes. Paragraph 4 of Schedule 1 of these regulations set out that a council may charge for the collection (but not the disposal) of household garden waste.

Cabinet had previously heard questions from Ward Members, Councillors Tony Green, Lesley Clarke OBE and Katrina Wood in the Written Questions item at the start of the meeting and considered this information as part of their deliberations.

Cabinet Members raised the following during discussion:

- Cabinet Members recognised that whilst this policy change would have a potential impact on Wycombe residents, the current charging arrangements discriminate against Chiltern, South Bucks and Aylesbury residents. The introduction of a charge would treat residents across the whole of the Council's area as equal. As the Council was now unitary it was important to have policy harmonisation. The Leader emphasised the fact that most residents had good access to a Household Waste Recycling Centre which could be used as an alternative to paying the collection charge.
- Reference was made to Councillor Green's question and charging different rates depending on use, which could also be applied to those with disabilities. However, this would be very complex and costly to administer. The proposed recommendations were the best solution.
- A Cabinet Member welcomed the fact that there would be a robust communications campaign after the decision had been taken to ensure that there was sufficient notice of the changes, procedures for opting into the service were advertised and alternatives to treating garden waste either at home or at HRCs were set out for residents to act on in good time. Communications across Buckinghamshire could now be harmonised on waste issues.
- An operational question was raised regarding the stickers and clarity regarding subscription. The Service Director for Neighbourhood Services reported that South Bucks residents would get a new sticker sent to them to put on their bins.
- The cost of the service was very reasonable. However if they needed to use the Household Waste Recycling Service this was a good alternative and customers had given 100% satisfaction rate with the service provided at these sites.
- Only 35% of the population used this service and it would be unfair to charge all residents if they did not need this collection service.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That to provide equity across all areas of Buckinghamshire, it be agreed for the Council to harmonise Garden Waste charges across all of Buckinghamshire by introducing 'Opt In' charging from July 2022 for the Wycombe area.**

- (2) **That the operational arrangements for Garden Waste collection services across all of Buckinghamshire be harmonised, as detailed in the Cabinet report.**

9 Proposed Littering Enforcement Policy

Buckinghamshire Council as a unitary authority required a litter enforcement policy in order to undertake Litter Enforcement activities. The legacy Waste Collection Authorities (legacy District Councils) had the legal duties and responsibilities to deal with littering under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. It was for the relevant legacy authorities to consider priorities, investment, disinvestment in service areas including enforcement against Littering. The legacy Buckinghamshire County Council as Waste Disposal Authority had been funded by the legacy District Councils to undertake investigations into Fly-Tipping but didn't have the resources and/or duty to tackle littering.

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment who explained that currently there were no adopted littering powers in Buckinghamshire. Littering tended to be a crime which self-perpetuated – often the more people saw it the more they were willing to contribute to the problem. Conversely, the more reduce litter and littering was reduced, the less likely it was that people would do it. Furthermore, littering and fly-tipping were contiguous and tended to link with each other.

As a unitary, Buckinghamshire Council had both waste collection and waste disposal tools available including the legal duties, responsibilities and powers. It was therefore proposed that the Council utilise these available tools and agree arrangements to undertake and enforce littering. The Council could utilise a low-level enforcement response and make use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for littering. In the first year of the implementation of the Litter Enforcement policy it would focus on discovery, communication campaigns, education and some Enforcement activity.

Members discussed the report and commented:

- In terms of the process for a Fixed Penalty Notice this would be similar to flytipping and they were looking at enforcement options such as CCTV, dashcams and possibly the use of enforcement officers. With this option it would have to be the owner of the vehicle who would be criminally responsible. It would be too expensive for the Council to go down the civil route. Warnings would be issued first.
- The cost of £70,000 was proportionate which would pay for one officer and a communication plan. It was also important to use education to change behaviour. This could be reviewed later to see if more resources could be utilised.
- It was also important to combine this with litter picking campaigns, particularly with schools and communities as this encouraged good behaviour. Officers were also looking at the verges of A roads which were particularly bad. A Cabinet Member emphasised the importance of road safety and traffic

- management when litter picking in rural areas or by fast roads.
- Littering was anti-social behaviour and there should be no discount for an early fine. Under 17s would be given a formal warning and parents would be engaged to change their behaviour.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the draft Enforcement Policy against Littering (Appendix A to the Cabinet report) be approved.**
- (2) That the utilisation of powers to serve Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) in response to littering offences be approved.**
- (3) That a maximum fine of £150.00 be adopted and approved, and that it should not be discounted for early payment.**
- (4) That the level of resources to initially be deployed be approved as the 'Silver Package', as described in Buckinghamshire Council Littering Proposal Tiers at Appendix B to the Cabinet report.**

10 Buckinghamshire Council Companies Governance

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property and Assets introduced the report and informed Cabinet Members that Buckinghamshire Council had a number of mainly property based subsidiary companies and limited liability partnerships in place (Buckinghamshire Advantage, Consilio Property Ltd, London Road Business Park Management Ltd and Aylesbury Vale Estates). It was timely to review overall all governance arrangements to ensure continued visibility and reinforce best practise to deliver statutory arrangements.

An audit report on Nottingham City Council's arrangements relating to its company, Robin Hood Energy, had stressed the need to ensure that "sufficient checks and balances were in place and in particular that risks were appropriately recognised and managed, that there was an effective scrutiny function and that challenge of political priorities by both members and officers was seen as a positive. This provided an important message that all councils establishing commercial entities should be alive to what is referred to as "institutional blindness". The Council was also aware that external auditors, such as Grant Thornton, had issued public interest reports where local authority companies had performed poorly and where it was found that governance arrangements were not adequate.

Buckinghamshire Council was committed to maintaining strong and robust governance to ensure that decisions were taken in the best interests of the communities it served. As part of this commitment, the Council constantly reviewed its governance arrangements alongside learning best practice with other authorities to ensure the Council continues to meet its statutory obligations in the best way.

Oversight of the Council's companies and limited liability partnerships was currently in place with visibility of Board Minutes and supporting papers being sent to the relevant Cabinet Members, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Property & Assets, and senior officers: Director for Property and Assets, Head of Legal and

Democratic Services, Section 151 officer, and Head of Finance. Business plans of subsidiaries were scrutinised by Cabinet and the Finance and Resources Select Committee. Finance officers regularly attend board meetings of Consilio Property Ltd and Buckinghamshire Advantage.

Section 3 of the Cabinet report detailed the financial implications of the proposals, which were to seek to strengthen and consolidate the financial monitoring undertaken in terms of the Council's subsidiary companies and limited liability partnerships. Key financial monitoring information would be brought together for the Shareholder Committee. This would provide a regular snapshot of the financial performance of each company and the group to support wider decision making. It would also help to raise early concerns about the financial position of any of the subsidiary companies/limited liability partnerships and where necessary discuss and agree appropriate actions. The proposal for a shareholder committee was consistent with the best practice advice in the recent Local Authorities Companies Review Guidance.

Members discussed that proposed arrangements and welcomed the report which provided robust governance, particularly due to some high profile cases such as Nottingham City Council referred to above which unfortunately went into liquidation. It was important to have a clear audit trail of decision making.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the creation of a Shareholder / Member Committee, as detailed in the Cabinet report be approved, to ensure that companies and limited liability partnerships act in the interests of the Council as shareholder, Member and/or lender and contribute to the Council's objectives.**
- (2) That the draft Terms of Reference be noted, and authority be delegated to the Service Director – Property and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property and assets to approve the final Terms of Reference.**
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Service Director – Property and Assets, in consultation with the Shareholder / Member Committee, to agree final terms and enter into each Memorandum of Agreement with the relevant company and/or Limited Liability Partnership.**
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Service Director – Property and Assets, in consultation with the Shareholder / Member Committee to approve final terms and arrange to enter into any Service Level Agreements where corporate functions provide support services to the relevant company and/or Limited Liability Partnership.**

11 Q3 Budget Monitoring Report 2021-22

The report set out the overview of the financial Revenue and Capital outturn position for Buckinghamshire Council for the financial year 2021/22 as at quarter 3. The Executive Summary highlighted a number of issues including:

- That the local government settlement in February 2022 had for the 4th

consecutive year been only for one year. This was due to the Government's intention to reform local government funding and their 'Levelling Up' agenda. There was, therefore, high risk around future funding levels with changes expected from FY 2023/24.

- That in-year pressures in Portfolio budgets had been managed and successfully mitigated, meaning that an element of the corporate contingency budget was no longer required. A contribution to an earmarked reserve was proposed which could be released, if necessary, in future years. This aligned to the Select Committee's view (budget scrutiny task & finish group) on risk and whether the level of contingencies for pressures such as inflation were sufficient.
- That the proposed transfer to reserves would help to mitigate against heightened risks around political uncertainty, global turbulence, inflationary pressures (currently exceeding 5%), social care reform and market sustainability, and the ongoing impact of Covid-19.
- That inflation would impact across revenue and capital in both the direct supply of goods and services. For each 1% change in inflation, the estimated cost was £4.6m annually in revenue and £5.2m across the 4 year capital programme. The revenue budgets for 2022/23 contained contingencies that would provide an element of mitigation, however, consideration would need to be given as to how to further mitigate the impact, and this might have implications for borrowing, cashflow or the scale and scope of projects.

The Appendix provided further detail for each Portfolio and information about performance relating to overdue debts and late payments of commercial debt.

At the end of Q3, an overall favourable variance of £0.9m was forecast after allowing for £6.8m of corporate mitigations. This was a favourable movement of £0.9m since Q2 where a balanced budget position had been reported. The favourable variance comprised:

- £5.9m adverse variance on Portfolio budgets (£4.8m adverse at Q2). This represented 1.4% of the Total Portfolio budgets.
- £4.2m favourable variance on Corporate Contingencies, after a proposed transfer to earmarked reserves of £6.2m (£2.8m Q2).
- £1.9m favourable variation relating to Covid Sales Fees and Charges compensation scheme (£0.9m at Q2). £1.2m of this related to the claim for the current year, as eligible pressures were higher than budgeted for, leading to the additional compensation. A further £0.7m related to the previous year, as further scrutiny had enabled the identification of more compensation than had been identified at financial year end.
- £0.7m favourable variation on Corporate Budgets, principally capital financing costs (£1.1m at Q2).

Section 3 of the report detailed information on savings targets. £13.2m of savings had been incorporated into the approved 2021-22 revenue budgets and it was forward there would be shortfall of £0.5m (£0.6m at Q2), which had been taken into account within Portfolio forecasts.

Section 4 of the report detailed information on:

- **Covid grant funding** – total new grant allocations for FY21/22 not including corporate grants totalled c. £62.7m. Excluding Business Support Grants the total amount carried forward to FY21/22 from the previous financial year totalled c.£15.3m. 16 COVID grants were currently open (excluding corporate grants).
- **The Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF)** which provided funding to local authorities to help reduce the spread of coronavirus and supported local public health. Buckinghamshire was expected to benefit from £15.9m of this spread over three financial years.

Members were informed that capital slippage had increased between Q2 and Q3 from 7.9% (£14.8m) to 11.7% (£22.5m). This was now exceeding the Council's target of 10% of budgets and could further increase in the final quarter of the year. As part of the MTFP process, the profile of capital expenditure had been reviewed and challenged to ensure that realistic budgets based on achievable timescales were set. An explanation was provided of specific circumstances impacting on capital projects.

Cabinet Members discussed the Q3 budget monitoring report and commented:

- Whilst some services were overspent others had a surplus but there were a range of pressures impacting on all services which were not forecastable and also the Ukrainian crisis.
- There needed to be adequate contingencies to cover the high end cost of care, particularly residential and nursing care.
- Children services had to pay high costs for placements with external providers; this could relate to seven or eight complex cases. Agency costs have also risen.

RESOLVED –

- (1) **That the current forecast outturn for the financial year 2021/22 and the associated risks and opportunities, be noted.**
- (2) **That the principle to transfer unused contingencies at year end, currently forecast at £6.2m, to an earmarked reserve be approved. The reserve will be used to mitigate the potential impact of Local Government fund reform, and heightening risks around the financial implications associated with inflation, Adult Social Care reforms and the ongoing impact of Covid-19.**

12 Q3 Performance Report 2021-22

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property and Assets introduced the report which comprised the following two items:

- The performance report, which provided details of the key performance measures reported through the corporate performance framework for 2021/22. The report also includes several indicators without targets for this year, that were being monitored to establish a baseline level of performance and monitor trends. Commentary was provided for each indicator explaining what was being measured, explaining the narrative behind each outturn and detailing improvement actions.

- The performance scorecard, which provided information on four key elements of performance for the Council covering Finance, Customer Service, Performance and Human Resources indicators. These were arranged in four quadrants.

Within the performance report and performance scorecard, outturns that were performing at or better than target are classified as Green, those that were within 5% of the target were Amber and those that were more than 5% of the target were Red. At the end of Quarter 3, 90 indicators had outturns reported with a Red, Amber or Green status. Of these, 62 were Green (69%), 12 were Amber (13%) and 16 were Red (18%).

This was an improved position on Quarter 2 where 53 indicators were reported as Green (63%), 7 were Amber (8%) and 24 were Red (29%).

Cabinet Members then provided comprehensive explanations for the performance marked as red where performance was more than 5% off the target for each of their portfolio's, these were as follows:

Leader

- **Unemployment Claimant Rate** – the indicator measured the unemployment claimant count in Buckinghamshire and the result was 68% of the national rate against a target of 55%, that was a slight improvement on Q1 and Q2. The report included information on the initiatives underway (both nationally led and locally led) to help move people off the claimant count and into work. There was a shortage of labour at the moment in particular social workers and planners for local government, film industry and the hospitality sector.
- **Strategic Infrastructure projects: % profiled spend achieved** – the target was 75% against the current value of 56.35%. Some of the slippage related to the South East Aylesbury Link Road although Phase 1 was now progressing well with planning permission granted and the detailed design complete. However, delays to the CPO, SRO and the Public Open Space Inquiry had led to a reduced profile of expenditure for Phase 2, although the team was working hard to progress matters to assist in delivering this phase.

Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

- **% of waste collected for recycling, reuse, composting or anaerobic digestion from household sources (household collection and Household Recycling Centres)** – target of 60% against a current value of 49.85%. As previously reported, some disruption with kerbside collections due to driver shortages and the continued suspension of separate food waste collections meant food was mixed with residual waste in most of the South of the administrative area which impacted on the overall recycling rate.
- **Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)** – the current value was 138.35 kgs of non-recyclable household refuse produced per dwelling against a target of 125 kgs. This was likely attributable to the driver shortages and suspension of separate food waste collections. Information was provided on 'waste

behaviour change' campaigns being undertaken to educate people and reduce non-recyclable waste generated. It was noted that landfill was less than 1%.

Cabinet Member for Communities

- **% of total climate change spend across all Community Boards compared to profiled spend** – Community Boards had a target to spend 15% of their annual budget on initiatives to tackle climate change. At the end of Q3, £260,043 (44.45%) had been allocated to Community Board environmental projects out of the total budget for these types of projects of £585,000. It was anticipated that this position would improve by year end as a number of projects were in the pipeline.
- **% of total economic recovery spend across all Community Boards compared to profiled spend** – Community Boards had a target to spend 15% of their annual budget on initiatives to aid economic recovery. For Q3, £105,126 (17.97%) had been allocated to Community Board economic recovery projects out of the total budget, for these types of projects of £585,000. Based on projects in the pipeline, this position was expected to improve by year end. Community Boards had been sent a menu of ideas for funding.

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

There were no indicators for this portfolio area marked as red where performance was more than 5% off the target. He informed Members that the Discover Bucks Museum would be opening on 2 April 2022.

Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

- **% of assessments completed in 45 working days** – target was 84% – achieving this target had been impacted by a 34% rise in the number of children and families assessed between April-December 2021, compared to the same period last year. In response to this, capacity within the service had been increased leading to improved performance during Q3. During Q3 (October to December 2021) the percentage of children's assessments completed within 45 working days had been 74% (1,570 assessments). This is an improvement of seven percentage points (66%) since Q2 (July to September 2021).
- **% of children with Initial Child Protection Conferences completed within 15 working days of the strategy discussion** – the target was 85% against a current value of 61% (34% in Q2). Between April and December 2021, there had been a 59% rise in the number of children subject to an ICPC compared to the same period last year with a particular spike in Q2 (July to September 2021). Capacity within the service had been increased leading to improved performance during Q3, including 75% completed on time during December 2021. The service continues to review out of time cases and monitor safety plans and was satisfied that those children were safe.

Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property and Assets

There were no indicators for this portfolio area marked as red where performance was more than 5% off the target. There had been a slippage in capital spend but this was closely monitored. There had been an improvement in average waiting times for

customer services which was now 'green' due to hard work by the service area.

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

- **% of successful drug treatment completions of those in treatment** – performance was reported for Q2 as data was reported in arrears. Performance was 14.3% against a target of 15.2%, which was benchmarked against the South East of England. It was anticipated that recruitment would help the service to increase successful completions / performance.
- **% of births that receive a face-to-face New Birth Visit within 14 days by a health visitor in the quarter** – this was a target of 90% with a current value of 69.9% (79% in Q2). The proportion of visits had decreased due to staff shortages within the Aylesbury and Wycombe teams. In addition, capacity had been reduced due to responding to an increase in the proportion of the health visiting caseload who are seen on the UPP (Universal Partnership Plus) pathway (safeguarding/vulnerable families) in the period. This data represented visits from health visitors and does not include the visits from a midwife, which mothers would also receive post birth. Information was provided on improvement actions being taken to improve future performance.

Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services

- **Number of applicants with/expecting children who have been in non-self contained Bed & Breakfast accommodation for longer than 6 weeks** – there was one family affected against a target of 0. The service had unexpectedly experienced reduced capacity during the quarter, which had resulted in this family not being moved within the indicator timeframe. They had now been allocated accommodation. Measures and staff were now in place to mitigate this in the future.
- **Number of households living in temporary accommodation for over 12 months** – the current value was 86 (78 in Q2) against a target of 32. This was an increase from Q1 and Q2. Numbers had increased due to a change in how they were recorded and the target may need to be reviewed. In addition, there were a number of people needed one bedroom or three/four bedroom accommodation where demands for this type of accommodation were high.
- **% of homelessness decisions taking over 56 days** – the target was 40% but the current value was 50.7% (52% in Q2, 57.7% in Q1). The focus of the housing service was to try and prevent people from becoming homeless, and due to the current number of cases or approaches to the service, timescales for making homelessness decisions have slipped. This had been challenging and would continue to be, as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities expected further temporary accommodation to be offered to those at risk of rough sleeping due to the colder weather and the Omicron variant. The work required to get people into safety had an impact on the time it took to make full duty decisions.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

- **% of enforcement appeals allowed** – the current value was 28.5% (25% in Q2) and the target 20%. Cabinet Members noted that the results were affected by

low numbers of appeals. In the last quarter, 2 out of 7 appeals had been allowed. The 12 month rolling appeal performance was 19.4% of appeals allowed (3.5 out of 18). New team managers were in place working on the backlog.

Cabinet Member for Transport

- **% of gullies cleaned against the cyclical gully programme** – the target was 64% against a current value of 60%. The last quarter had continued to be a challenge in terms of the difficulties in delivering this programme due to the effect that Covid-19 and HGV driver shortages had on productivity. The additional supply chain commissioned from September had increased output throughout October and November, although during the shorter work month of December, there were a greater number of driver and operator absence issues. Extreme weather had also impacted on the service.
- **% eligible clients who are provided with transport before the required start date, or no later than 15 working days from the date the transport assessment was completed (SEND), or all information was received to provide transport (Mainstream)** – this had a target of 95% against a current value of 84% (74% in Q2). This reflected the seasonal pattern of school transport provision and nature of the workload at different times of the year. Further development work was underway to amend the 15 working days to start from when the transport assessment was completed for Special Educational Needs and Disability clients so that measures were under the Service areas control. Changes in software due in summer 2022 would also provide better information for team workflows which would help improve operational performance.

RESOLVED –

- (1) **That the Council's performance for the Quarter 3 period 2021-22 be noted.**
- (2) **That the actions being taken to improve performance, where required, be noted.**

14 Confidential Minutes

The Confidential Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 March 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

15 Date of next meeting

Members were informed that 12 April 2022 Cabinet meeting may be cancelled and would be informed shortly. The following meeting was 10 May 2022.

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Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet/Leader forward plan

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

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

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

All reports will be open unless specified otherwise.

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Cabinet 10 May 2022				
Affordable Housing Position Statement To consider the interim position statement on affordable housing prepared by a member led task and finish group.		Councillor Nick Naylor Nigel Dicker	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	7/12/21

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Business Improvement District (BID) Ballots: High Wycombe Town Centre (HWBIDCo) and Cressex Business Park BID</p> <p>To confirm support for two business-led proposals and resulting ballot arrangements to establish a third five-year term for HWBIDCo covering High Wycombe Town Centre and to create a new Business Improvement District (BID) on Cressex Business Park.</p>	Abbey	Councillor Gareth Williams Jacqueline Ford		14/3/22
<p>Community Board Rapid Review</p> <p>The Select Committee was keen to undertake a cross party Rapid Review to gain a better understanding of both the challenges and the successes of the Community Boards during their first two years of operation. This report outlines their key findings and recommendations to Cabinet</p>		Councillor Mimi Harker OBE Kelly Sutherland		8/4/22
<p>Early Help Partnership Strategy 2022 - 2025</p> <p>The purpose of this strategy is to present what we know about the need for early help, why it is important and what action will be taken to make progress and deliver our vision for children, young people and families in Buckinghamshire. It is jointly produced and owned by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board and all its member organisations and sets out what we are already doing and plan to develop together in Buckinghamshire to ensure that children and their families get early help when they need it.</p>		Councillor Anita Cranmer Richard Nash		8/4/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Helping Hand – Household Support Grant Helping Hand – Household Support Grant		Councillor Steve Bowles Gill Harding		4/4/22
Moving Traffic Offences To seek approval to proceed with an application to Dft for powers to enforce moving traffic offences.		Councillor Steve Broadbent Richard Barker		17/1/22
Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-25 Buckinghamshire’s first Participation Strategy for Young People. Co-produced with young people and The Care Leaders, a social enterprise led by experts by experience. The strategy brings together all areas of engagement and participation for young people and promotes new ways of ensuring their voices are heard and have genuine impact on services, practice and policy.		Councillor Anita Cranmer Richard Nash		8/4/22
Cabinet 7 June 2022				
Buckinghamshire Levelling Up Framework Buckinghamshire Levelling Up Framework		Councillor Martin Tett Sarah Ashmead		24/3/22
Budget Monitoring Outturn 2021/22 For information		Councillor John Chilver Richard Ambrose		24/3/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Land at Stoke Mandeville Seeking authorisation to submit an outline planning application for a residential development of 92 units including 30% affordable housing, a new link road between Booker Park School and Lower Road and a sports pitch for both community and school use.</p>	Aylesbury South East; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville	Councillor John Chilver John Reed	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	14/3/22
<p>Policy Harmonisation To note the policies and charges that have been harmonised since 1 April 2020 and the policies that are expected to be reviewed before the end of March 2023</p>		Councillor Martin Tett Hannah Thynne		24/3/22
<p>Q4 Performance Report 2021-22 For information</p>		Councillor John Chilver Matthew Everitt		24/3/22
<p>Town & Parish Charter To agree the Town and Parish charter</p>		Councillor Steve Bowles Hannah Thynne		22/4/22
<p>Woodlands potential acquisition strategy Exploring options for bringing forward the woodlands development.</p>	Aston Clinton & Bierton	Councillor John Chilver John Reed	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	17/1/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Cabinet 12 July 2022				
<p>Aylesbury Garden Town HIF & HIF Programme Board Annual Report</p> <p>The annual report to Cabinet regarding the progress of the Aylesbury HIF programme and the associated projects.</p>		<p>Councillor Martin Tett</p> <p>Robin Smith</p>	<p>Part exempt (para 3)</p>	<p>12/11/21</p>
<p>Biodiversity Net Gain</p> <p>The report provides an overview of the new requirement to provide biodiversity net gain as part of the planning system, introduces the Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document for adoption, and sets out a proposal for Buckinghamshire Council to run a Biodiversity Net Gain scheme.</p>		<p>Councillor Peter Strachan</p> <p>Simon Meecham, Edward Barlow</p>		<p>15/2/22</p>
<p>Corporate Performance Indicators 2022-2023</p> <p>This report will set out the proposed corporate performance indicators for 2022-23, highlighting the suggested targets and any changes for the year ahead.</p>		<p>Councillor John Chilver</p> <p>Matthew Everitt</p>		<p>22/4/22</p>
<p>Electric Vehicle (EV) Action Plan</p> <p>To formally adopt the Buckinghamshire Electric Vehicle Action Plan. The Action Plan will be the Council's plan to increase EV charging infrastructure in Buckinghamshire, in support of its commitment to net zero carbon by 2050.</p>		<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent</p> <p>Richard Lumley</p>		<p>22/4/22</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Kingsbury & Market Square, Aylesbury The regeneration of two historic town centre spaces. The aim is to make these spaces more accessible and attractive, giving priority to pedestrian use.	Aylesbury North	Councillor Gareth Williams, Councillor John Chilver John Reed	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	22/4/22
Woodlands strategy for negotiated acquisition Recommendations to Cabinet regarding the freehold interest in the Woodlands development site.	Aston Clinton & Bierton	Councillor John Chilver John Reed	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	17/1/22
April 2022 Leader Decisions				
Buckinghamshire Council Coat of Arms Design and registration of a new coat of arms for Buckinghamshire Council		Councillor Martin Tett Roger Goodes		20/7/21
Emerald Way Improvements Scheme Upgrading Emerald Way cycle route along Rabans Lane, through Fairford Leys and into the Town Centre	Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury West; Stone & Waddesdon	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian McGowan		31/1/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>High Wycombe Junction Protection Restrictions Report on a Statutory Consultation proposing waiting restrictions in the High Wycombe area. A recommendation will be made in the report after taking the responses received into account</p>	Abbey; Booker, Cressex & Castlefield; Downley; Ryemead & Micklefield; Terriers & Amersham Hill; West Wycombe	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ricky Collymore		26/8/21

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>High Wycombe Transport Strategy and High Wycombe Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Consultation Request for agreement to conduct public consultation on the draft High Wycombe Transport Strategy and High Wycombe Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) once engagement has been undertaken with local members.</p>	<p>Abbey; Booker, Cressex & Castlefield; Chiltern Villages; Downley; Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South East; Hazlemere; Penn Wood & Old Amersham; Ridgeway East; Ridgeway West; Ryemead & Micklefield; Terriers & Amersham Hill; The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor; Totteridge & Bowerdean; Tylers Green & Loudwater; West Wycombe</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Joan Hancox</p>		<p>14/5/21</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Highway Safety Inspection Policy Update to the existing Highway Safety Inspection Policy		Councillor Steve Broadbent Keith Carpenter		30/6/21
Places of Natural Beauty Parking (from November 2021 consultation) Parking restrictions around areas of natural beauty	Aston Clinton & Bierton; Chiltern Villages; Denham; Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches; Great Brickhill; Iver; Ivinghoe; Ridgeway East; Stoke Poges & Wexham; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		6/1/22
May 2022 Leader Decisions				
A41 PPTC Bus Lane Relocation Statutory Consultation Bus Lane relocation on the A41 Bicester Road as part of the A41 PPTC scheme.	Aylesbury North West; Stone & Waddesdon	Councillor Steve Broadbent Vanessa Silva		14/5/21

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Aylesbury Garden Town Framework and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document – Draft for Consultation The Aylesbury Garden Town Framework and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document is a requirement of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan to support the delivery of the Aylesbury Garden Town. The Supplementary Planning Document sets out the strategic infrastructure delivery schedules for the physical, green and social infrastructure required for the Garden Town. It also outlines the funding and delivery programme.</p>	Aylesbury East; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury South East; Aylesbury South West; Aylesbury West	Councillor Gareth Williams Simon Meecham		25/11/21
<p>Aylesbury Vale Area Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document - For Consultation Decision to approve the Draft SPD and for it to go to a public consultation for Six Weeks</p>		Councillor Gareth Williams David Broadley		7/12/21
<p>Bourne End and Wooburn Waiting Restrictions Proposed parking restrictions in Wooburn Green and Bourne End on the following roads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boundary Road - New Road - Hedsor Road - Watery Lane 	The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor	Councillor Steve Broadbent Daniel Pearson		7/3/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF): agreement and authorisation for funding for 2022/23 To continue funding BBF through our grant agreement for 2022/23.</p>		Councillor Martin Tett Lisa Michelson		14/3/22
<p>Budget Adjustments to the Approved Capital Programme To approve changes to the Approved Capital Programme</p>		Councillor John Chilver Sue Palmer		14/9/20
<p>Bus Service Enhanced Partnership To set up an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators in accordance with Department of Transport guidance.</p>		Councillor Steve Broadbent Sara Turnbull		23/12/21
<p>Business Case for the recommissioning of The Vines (respite service for Children and Young People) To agree the Business Case for the recommissioning of The Vines - a six bedded unit providing residential short breaks to disabled young people aged 11 – 19 years old with behaviours that challenge which is due for renewal on 1st April 2022. This is for a 2 year contract with one year extension.</p>		Councillor Anita Cranmer Tracey Ironmonger	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	18/8/21
<p>Collins House, High Wycombe Disposal of freehold of Collins House and adjoining land fronting Bridge Street and Mendy Street.</p>	Abbey	Councillor John Chilver John Reed	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	24/3/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>D-AGT1 Aylesbury Garden Town - South Aylesbury - Supplementary Planning Document D-AGT1 South Aylesbury is an adopted mixed use allocation in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. The Local Plan requires a site-specific Supplementary Plan Document for this allocation; in the form of masterplan to set out clear and detailed advice for place-making. This key decision is to seek the Leaders approval to consult the public on the draft masterplan.</p>	Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville	Councillor Gareth Williams Simon Meecham		1/11/21
<p>Dadford Road, Dadford - Proposed Round Top Speed Hump Following informal discussions held with Dadford Parish Council, nearby residents and the local Councillor for the area, MEPC propose to install a round top speed ramp at the Northern end of the village to compliment the S278 traffic calming measures already installed on this section of road. These works will be fully funded by the developer at no cost to the Council.</p>	Buckingham East	Councillor Steve Broadbent Christine Urry		17/1/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Demand Responsive Transport Pilot Scheme To consider and agree the award of the contract for the pilot scheme.</p>	<p>Abbey; Aston Clinton & Bierton; Aylesbury East; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury South East; Aylesbury South West; Aylesbury West; Booker, Cressex & Castlefield; Downley; Ryemead & Micklefield; Stone & Waddesdon; The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor; Tylers Green & Loudwater; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville; West Wycombe; Wing</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Sara Turnbull</p>	<p>Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)</p>	<p>14/3/22</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Domiciliary Care Procurement Vehicle Decision to go out to tender to procure domiciliary care services for adults in Buckinghamshire.</p>		<p>Councillor Angela Macpherson Erica Boylett</p>	<p>Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i></p>	<p>2/3/22</p>
<p>Gerrards Cross Waiting Restrictions Report to be written with recommendations upon the conclusion of a statutory consultation on waiting restrictions proposed in Gerrards Cross.</p>	<p>Gerrards Cross</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Ricky Collymore</p>		<p>12/7/21</p>
<p>Haddenham Parking Restrictions Scheme proposing to introduce parking restrictions on Tibbs Road, Haddenham.</p>	<p>Bernwood</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Daniel Pearson</p>		<p>24/3/22</p>
<p>Hatters Lane Signalised Pedestrian Crossing New signalised crossing outside Highcrest Academy on Hatters Lane, High Wycombe</p>	<p>Totteridge & Bowerdean</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Bestman Agu</p>		<p>17/1/22</p>
<p>Household Waste Collection Policy Document South Bucks Area To make minor changes to waste collection policies in the south of Buckinghamshire to harmonise the service delivered.</p>		<p>Councillor Peter Strachan Martin Dickman</p>		<p>20/7/21</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Ivinghoe Freight Strategy - Weight Restriction Proposals on introducing a 7.5 tonne weigh restriction zone in the Ivinghoe Area</p>	Ivinghoe; Wing	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ricky Collymore		2/3/22
<p>Land off Amersham Road Development Brief - Consultation Consultation on the draft development brief for the allocated housing site identified as HW8, Land off Amersham Road, in the adopted Wycombe District Local Plan</p>	Hazlemere	Councillor Gareth Williams Chris Schmidt-Reid		1/10/21
<p>Network Hierarchy Review Our Network Hierarchy drives our maintenance operations. It is important that the hierarchy reflects the needs, priorities and actual use of the network and that this is kept up to date. This review will update the hierarchy and suggest amendments to reflect changes to the use of the network since it was adopted and last updated.</p>		Councillor Steve Broadbent Keith Carpenter		25/11/21
<p>Oxford Street, High Wycombe Surrender and disposal.</p>	Abbey	Councillor John Chilver John Reed	Part exempt (para 3)	17/1/22
<p>Sexual and Reproductive Health Services To agree the business case for the recommissioning of the sexual health service. This service provides a range of information, guidance and services with respect to sexual and reproductive health services, genito-urinary medicine and contraception services.</p>		Councillor Angela Macpherson Adam Johnson, Teresa Martin		17/1/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Station Road, Quainton - Proposed Traffic Calming Build Out Barwood Homes propose to fully fund and construct a Traffic Calming Build Out on Station Road, Quainton. This is to facilitate the widening of the existing footway to 1.5m beside No.17 Station Road. Works would be carried out via a Section 278 Legal Agreement.</p>	Great Brickhill	Councillor Steve Broadbent Darryl Bonsor		22/10/21
<p>Support to the Provider Market To seek approval for support to ensure the care market continues to be able to respond to the needs of Buckinghamshire residents.</p>		Councillor Angela Macpherson Tracey Ironmonger	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	6/4/21
<p>Temporary staffing contract award Decision required on the award for the award of a contract for temporary staffing, interims and specialist contractors</p>		Councillor John Chilver Lorna Fisher	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	4/4/22
<p>Tingewick Road Area of Buckingham Proposed reduction in the speed limit for Tingewick Road Area of Buckingham</p>	Buckingham West	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		15/2/22
<p>Updated Fees & Charges Update to Fees & Charges for Definitive Map & Occupational Health Package</p>		Councillor John Chilver Fiorella Mugari		8/4/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
June 2022 Leader Decisions				
Fleet Trading Account budget To confirm details of the 2022/23 Fleet Trading Account budget, which is a zero balanced budget and therefore can't be included in the full council decision taken in February that confirmed other revenue budgets.		Councillor Steve Broadbent Andrew Clarke		24/3/22
Interim Tree Risk Management Strategy Approval of an interim tree risk management strategy with respect to trees that Buckinghamshire Council manages		Councillor Peter Strachan David Sutherland		5/10/20
July 2022 Leader Decisions				
Aston Clinton - Traffic Calming Vertical traffic calming and speed limit reduction	Aston Clinton & Bierton	Councillor Steve Broadbent Daniel Pearson		19/3/20
Community Prevention Service To agree the recommissioning of the Community Prevention Service.		Councillor Angela Macpherson Gemma Workman	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	14/3/22

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

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

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

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

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

Paragraph 1 - Information relating to any individual

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

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

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

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

Paragraph 6 - Information which reveals that the authority proposes:

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

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

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

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

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

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Report to Cabinet

Date: 10th May 2022

Title: **Community Boards Review - Select Committee Report**

Relevant councillor(s) Councillor Mimi Harker OBE, Chairman, Communities and Localism Select Committee

Author and/or contact officer: Kelly Sutherland, Scrutiny Manager
Kelly.sutherland@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: *Not ward specific*

Recommendations:

Recommendations made by the Communities and Localism Select Committee to Cabinet are that:

- 1) A refreshed vision for Community Boards should be agreed and widely promoted to ensure a shared understanding for residents, key partners, elected members and council officers about the role of the Community Boards in enriching local communities.
- 2) The unique skill set required to be an effective Community Board Chairman, as well as the necessary commitment in terms of energy and time, should be given due consideration when appointing Community Board Chairmen.
- 3) Cabinet should ensure that there is sufficient resource and resilience in the Community Board Co-ordinator team due to the pivotal role they play in delivering the Council's localism agenda.
- 4) Community Boards should be allowed full autonomy to identify and agree their own local priorities, in line with Buckinghamshire Council's priorities and to establish relevant sub-groups in order to tackle key issues in their area.
- 5) A proactive communications strategy for Community Boards should be developed as a matter of urgency, to enable a 'step change' in community engagement, the

promotion of Community Boards and the positive impacts they have had in their local area.

- 6) There must be greater clarity around the Community Board funding process and improved transparency around decision making. The process should be revised to deliver both the necessary governance and oversight and efficient processing of monies in a realistic and proportionate way.
- 7) Consideration should be given to an alternative mechanism for the delivery of local Highways schemes.
- 8) Community Board Champions should be appointed in each service area of the Council, to demonstrate corporate commitment to the CBs as the local face of the Council and to act as a dedicated contact point for Community Boards Co-ordinators. In addition, guidance should be issued which sets out clear expectations for service officers in supporting Community Boards and manages expectations of the Community Boards, in terms of the resource that might be available, especially in smaller service areas.
- 9) An overarching plan, we suggest a three year road map, for the development of the Community Boards should be drawn up, with clearly defined milestones to enable their progress to be evaluated.
- 10) The success of each Community Board and individual projects that receive funding should be evaluated in a simple and proportionate manner. (This could be as straightforward as each CB reflecting on the priorities they set at the beginning of each year and how well the projects they have supported have delivered on those priorities at year end)
- 11) A mechanism should be established to enable greater sharing of best practice ideas across Community Board areas and to consider opportunities for working in partnership across Community Board boundaries.

Reason for decision: For Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Communities and Localism Select Committee.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Communities and Localism Select Committee agreed to set up a rapid review into Community Boards in the December 2021.

1.2 After some initial discussions across the wider Select Committee, a smaller group of councillors volunteered to participate in further evidence gathering meetings with a number of stakeholders, which took place across two consecutive days in March 2022. The review group was chaired by Cllr Mimi Harker OBE and comprised of Cllrs Paul Bass, Peter Cooper, Greg Smith, Linda Smith BEM and Ashley Waite. Following the evidence gathering meetings the review group then met to discuss and agree its key findings and recommendations, which are presented in the report found at Appendix 1.

2. Other options considered

2.1 Appendix 1 provides further context to the Select Committee's recommendations. Cabinet is asked to consider these recommendations and provide a response.

3. Legal and financial implications

3.1 These will be considered as part of the Cabinet's response.

4. Corporate implications

5.1 These will be considered as part of the Cabinet's response.

5. Consultation with local Councillors & Community Boards

5.1 The report and recommendations were produced by a cross-party review group of Members from the Communities and Localism Select Committee.

5.2 As the focus of this review was the Community Boards, a variety of stakeholders attended evidence gathering meetings in early March. These included Community Board Chairmen and Co-ordinators, Town and Parish Council representatives, Council service officers and community groups who had benefitted from Community Board funding. The Chairman also attended a number of Community Board meetings, at their invitation. All 16 Community Boards were represented at the evidence gathering sessions.

6. Next steps and review

6.1 As noted above, Cabinet will provide a response to the Select Committee recommendations at its meeting on 10th May 2022. The Communities and Localism Select Committee will then receive an update after 6 months and 12 months to monitor the implementation of these recommendations.

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Communities and Localism Select Committee – Community Boards Rapid Review

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Introduction

Hello, I am Mimi Harker OBE, Buckinghamshire Councillor for Great Missenden and Chairman of the Communities and Localism Select Committee. In December 2021, the Select Committee decided to undertake a rapid review of Community Boards and after some initial discussions across the wider Select Committee, a smaller group of councillors volunteered to participate in further evidence gathering meetings with a number of stakeholders which took place across two consecutive days in March 2022. I was joined in this endeavour by six colleagues, Cllrs Paul Bass, Peter Cooper, Frank Mahon, Linda Smith, Gregory Smith and Ashley Waite.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the review group for all their hard work, as well as Cllr Steve Bowles, Cabinet Member for Communities and Claire Hawkes, Service Director for Localism and Strategic Partnerships and all the staff dedicated to supporting the Community Boards. In addition, I would like to thank the Community Boards who welcomed me to their meetings in Autumn 2021 and all contributors to our meetings in March, when we spoke to Community Board Chairmen and Co-ordinators, Council officers, Town and Parish Councillors and Clerks and Community Groups and Charities who had benefitted from funding from Community Boards. These meetings were incredibly valuable in widening the review group's understanding of the issues faced by different Community Boards, as well as highlighting some of the real successes that the Community Boards have facilitated.

Cllr Mimi Harker OBE, May 2022



Mimi Harker OBE
Great Missenden



Cllr Paul Bass
Denham



Cllr Peter Cooper
Wing



Cllr Frank Mahon
Grendon Underwood



Cllr Gregory Smith
Bernwood



Cllr Linda Smith BEM
Chalfont St Peter



Cllr Ashley Waite, Stone & Waddesdon

Aim of the Rapid Review

The Communities and Localism Select Committee recognise that the Community Boards play a vital role at the forefront of Buckinghamshire Council's Localism agenda. The Community Boards are the most recognised public interface between the Council, voluntary organisations, Town and Parish Councils and local people.

Buckinghamshire Councillors are all members of Community Boards and as community leaders they regularly interact with other key stakeholders such as Town and Parish Councillors, community groups and residents and had received a lot of varied feedback about the Community Boards.

The Select Committee was therefore very keen to undertake a cross party Rapid Review to gain a better understanding of both the challenges and the successes of the Community Boards during their first two years of operation. In addition, the Rapid Review would identify areas for refocus as the Community Boards emerge from a period of being reactive 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.

Methodology

The review group gathered evidence as follows:

October - November 2021 – The Chairman attended a number of Community Board meetings, at their invitation, and had informal discussions with stakeholders after the meeting to understand their experience of the Community Board to date.

Amersham
Aylesbury
Wycombe
Haddenham
Chiltern Ridges
Wing & Ivinghoe
South West Chilterns

December 2021 – Select Committee members discussed experiences with their own Community Boards alongside the feedback the Chairman had gathered at the above Community Board meetings.

January 2022 – Discussion with Cabinet Member and Service Director

14th March 2022 – Review Group meeting with Stakeholders – Separate sessions with Community Board Chairmen, Co-ordinators and Council Officers.

15th March 2022 – Review Group meeting with Stakeholders – Separate sessions with Town and Parish Councillors and Clerks and Community Board beneficiaries.

18th March 2022 – Review Group meeting to discuss and consider all evidence gathered to date and to identify areas of recommendation

Context

Buckinghamshire Council launched in April 2020, a new Unitary Council replacing five legacy councils which covered the whole geographical area of Buckinghamshire, excluding Milton Keynes. Whilst the new Unitary Council had been several years in the planning, no one could have predicted that it would launch during a global pandemic which meant that the first elections for the Council had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 lockdown and a large proportion of Council staff had to work from home.

A commitment to establish a network of 16 Community Boards had been an integral part of 'Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire', which was the 2016 business case for a Unitary Council. The Community Boards were seen as an important way to ensure that residents, town and parish councils, community groups and other key partners could get involved and influence service delivery of the Unitary Council in their local area. Other large Unitary Councils had used similar mechanisms to enhance community engagement effectively and Councillors and officers from Buckinghamshire who had visited Durham and Wiltshire to see their respective Area Action Partnerships and Area Boards had been impressed with what they had achieved.

Therefore, despite the constraints of Covid-19, the 16 Community Boards were quickly launched and began to hold their first meetings, albeit virtually, in July 2020. The Community Boards played a key role in supporting local community responses to the pandemic and in administering emergency Councillor Covid Support grants, with a streamlined process to enable community groups to access funding quickly. The Community Board Co-ordinator team were immediately heavily involved in supporting grass root community initiatives, but it wasn't the ideal scenario in which to have launched the Community Boards. (The Councillor Covid Support grants were the subject of a Select Committee Inquiry which was presented to Cabinet in March 2021)

In May 2021, the postponed Buckinghamshire Council elections were held. The total number of councillors reduced to 147 and of those 147, 55 brand new councillors were returned. Summer 2021 was then the ideal time to reset the Community Boards, with a view to establishing a bit more of a 'business as usual' footing, but because of the continued Covid-19 restrictions, the year was still very challenging and meetings continued to take place online.

By Autumn 2021, Members felt it would be opportune to review how the Community Boards were operating. It was recognised that each Community Board area was very different and therefore the Boards would all work differently but at the same time it was felt that there should also be some consistency across all 16, particularly in relation to funding processes. As we now approach Spring 2022 and all hope that we are emerging from the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been helpful to reflect on what has been learnt over the first two years of Community Boards and look to make improvements to areas that have caused frustrations, whilst also building on their undoubted successes.

"It was valuable to hear different views on Community Boards and the Select Committee's questions were very helpful in determining what we should be aiming to achieve in future"
Cllr Howard Mordue, Chairman, Buckingham and Villages Community Board



**Community
Boards**



Summary of Recommendations

The Communities and Localism Select Committee Rapid Review group recommend that:

- 1) A refreshed vision for Community Boards should be agreed and widely promoted to ensure a shared understanding for residents, key partners, elected members and council officers about the role of the Community Boards in enriching local communities.
- 2) The unique skill set required to be an effective Community Board Chairman, as well as the necessary commitment in terms of energy and time, should be given due consideration when appointing Community Board Chairmen.
- 3) Cabinet should ensure that there is sufficient resource and resilience in the Community Board Co-ordinator team due to the pivotal role they play in delivering the Council's localism agenda.
- 4) Community Boards should be allowed full autonomy to identify and agree their own local priorities, in line with Buckinghamshire Council's priorities and to establish relevant sub-groups in order to tackle key issues in their area.
- 5) A proactive communications strategy for Community Boards should be developed as a matter of urgency, to enable a 'step change' in community engagement, the promotion of Community Boards and the positive impacts they have had in their local area.
- 6) There must be greater clarity around the Community Board funding process and improved transparency around decision making. The process should be revised to deliver both the necessary governance and oversight and efficient processing of monies in a realistic and proportionate way.
- 7) Consideration should be given to an alternative mechanism for the delivery of local Highways schemes.
- 8) Community Board Champions should be appointed in each service area of the Council, to demonstrate corporate commitment to the CBs as the local face of the Council and to act as a dedicated contact point for Community Boards Co-ordinators. In addition, guidance should be issued which sets out clear expectations for service officers in supporting Community Boards and manages expectations of the Community Boards, in terms of the resource that might be available, especially in smaller service areas.
- 9) An overarching plan, we suggest a three year road map, for the development of the Community Boards should be drawn up, with clearly defined milestones to enable their progress to be evaluated.
- 10) The success of each Community Board and individual projects that receive funding should be evaluated in a simple and proportionate manner. (This could be as straightforward as each CB reflecting on the priorities they set at the beginning of each year and how well the projects they have supported have delivered on those priorities at year end)
- 11) A mechanism should be established to enable greater sharing of best practice ideas across Community Board areas and to consider opportunities for working in partnership across Community Board boundaries.

Please read on to understand more fully the reasoning and evidence behind the recommendations.

Key Findings & Recommendations

After carefully considering the evidence we collected across a number of meetings, the review group wish to report on our observations and key findings across a number of important themes, as follows:

A Clear Vision for Community Boards

- It became clear during our discussions with different stakeholders that Community Boards represent different things to different people and we heard from both Town and Parish Councillors and Council service officers that they were not 100% clear on the role of the Community Boards.
- Cllr Ashley Waite, a member of the review group and also the Chairman of Haddenham and Waddesdon Community Board drew a very effective analogy. He commented that at the beginning 16 Chairmen were given a pot of money and a blank canvas and were told to go away and paint community, which has resulted in 16 very different pictures.
- Whilst it is recognised and accepted that the Community Boards are likely to all be very different due to their geography, demographics and varied local needs, a shared understanding of the role and purpose of the Community Boards is still important. As the Community Boards continue to establish themselves and look to increase public engagement and build improved relationships with key partners, a clear vision of what the Community Boards are about and aspirations for their future growth and development is vital.
- In 2021, when the Community Boards entered their second year the vision and aims were set out as follows:

Our Vision

- *To proactively support council priorities at a very local level, and in a way which is the best fit for that local community.*
- *To connect the council with community groups, partners and residents to understand what matters to them and work together to problem solve.*

Community Boards aim to:

- *Represent the voice of local people*
 - *Capture thoughts, ideas and suggestions to address council and local priorities within the community*
 - *Bring together key community partners and residents.*
 - *Identify local needs and work to produce creative solutions*
- Although the review group believe that much of this remains relevant now, they would like to see a more dynamic vision which will appeal to local residents and inspire them to get involved. It should be more ambitious in encouraging 'grass roots' engagement, rather than being focussed on delivering the Council's agenda.
 - The following suggested vision could be a starting point for discussion:

Our Vision

Community Boards will be the 'local face' of Buckinghamshire Council and will deliver the council's key priorities in a way that is relevant to each Community Board area.

Community Boards will support delivery of the aspirations of Parish and Town councils, their community groups, partners and residents based on the specific local needs of each Community Board area. Their aim will be to work in partnership to identify local needs and deliver imaginative workable solutions to create a new sense of local community.

- Members are supportive of the vision not explicitly referring to funding, as the underlying purpose of the

Community Boards is more than simply facilitating grants for local projects and there is a sense that some of the networking and community capacity building that Community Boards have done to date has been overshadowed by the funding aspects.

Recommendation 1 - A refreshed vision for Community Boards should be agreed and widely promoted to ensure a shared understanding for residents, key partners, elected members and council officers about the role of the Community Boards in enriching local communities.

Leadership

- Another theme that came through strongly during our discussions with stakeholders was the importance of committed leadership for the Community Boards. The Chairmen we spoke to believed they had a crucial role to play in shaping their Community Board and in driving its success.
- Town and Parish Council representatives also paid tribute to the work of their Chairmen in involving them in discussions and the work of sub-groups. Some Town and Parish Councillors told us that initially they had struggled to feel part of their Community Board but over time they now felt more involved and could see that their views were valued.
- It is important that a Community Board Chairman is proactive and energetic and someone who can inspire the trust and confidence of key partners and local residents. The role of the Chairman is much more than being able to run a meeting efficiently, in accordance with the Council's constitution. They need to be a respected community leader who can bring people together and encourage creative thinking around how to resolve local issues.
- Commitment of time is also a consideration, as a Community Board Chairman will need to be able to devote a lot of time in between Community Board meetings in order to deliver real change in their local area.

Recommendation 2 – The unique skill set required to be an effective Community Board Chairman, as well as the necessary commitment in terms of energy and time, should be given due consideration when appointing Community Board Chairmen.

- In addition to the importance of the role of the Chairman, another key player in the success of a Community Board is the Community Board Co-ordinator. Each Community Board has a dedicated Co-ordinator, most of whom work full time. Whilst speaking to stakeholders it was immediately apparent that the Co-ordinators were universally well-respected and there were lots of comments about the sheer volume of work that they have undertaken over the past two years.
- When speaking to Community Board Co-ordinators it was clear that whilst they have worked hard, launching the Community Boards during Covid has been very challenging and a lot of their time – an estimated 80% - had been very focussed on dealing with funding applications, rather than proactive community engagement work.
- We heard from community groups how helpful the Co-ordinators had been in supporting them with preparation of funding applications and in some cases, in proactively connecting them to sources of third-party funding as well.
- It appeared that Town and Parish Councillors saw the Co-ordinator as the 'go to' person for Council related queries and issues and whilst this is testament to the relationship building skills of the co-ordinators, it could also lead to them getting bogged down in dealing with complicated queries.
- In addition, there appeared to be a misconception that the Co-ordinator would be able to 'project manage' different initiatives on behalf of the Community Board. The Co-ordinator is there to support community groups by acting as a link to the Board and facilitating connections between organisations that might have shared goals, but they do not have sufficient resource to proactively manage projects on behalf of the community.
- Where some Co-ordinators had changed due to a member of staff leaving or being redeployed to cover maternity or sick leave, it was clear that stakeholders felt the lack of continuity had undermined the

progress of their Community Board. With a team of 16 Co-ordinators, there will inevitably be changes but the review group can see that consistency of support is important, particularly when the Community Boards are still relatively immature.

Recommendation 3 - Cabinet should ensure that there is sufficient resource and resilience in the Community Board Co-ordinator team due to the pivotal role they play in delivering the Council's localism agenda.

- In the first two years of operation, Buckinghamshire Council ringfenced a certain proportion of the Community Board budgets to address particular issues and also proposed that each Community Board should set up three sub-groups on Transport/Highways, Environment and Economic Recovery. The areas were chosen in line with Buckinghamshire Council's corporate priorities but some stakeholders were unhappy that these parameters were set for them by the Council, as not all of them felt relevant to every Community Board.
- If one of the key principles of the Community Boards is that the needs of individual communities should be identified at a very local level, then the Community Board priorities should also be set locally. Much of the feedback received from stakeholders around the setting of priorities and the establishment of sub-groups to address specific issues reflected strong feelings that the Community Boards are best placed to identify these themselves.
- Interestingly some stakeholders felt that the sub-groups were more representative of their local communities than the main Community Board meetings and were often more engaging, so it is important that there is a feeling of ownership with sub-groups, as this is where a lot of work is actually delivered.

Recommendation 4 - Community Boards should be allowed full autonomy to identify and agree their own local priorities, in line with Buckinghamshire Council's priorities and to establish relevant sub-groups in order to tackle key issues in their area.

"We need people to understand that they are the Community Board and we can achieve amazing things if we work together."

Elaine Hassall, Community Board Co-ordinator, Haddenham and Waddesdon

Importance of Communications and Engagement

- From the outset, members of the review group shared the view that more could be done to support the Community Boards in terms of proactive communications and other members frequently commented that there was a lack of Community Board branding on projects that had been funded during the past two years.
- Communications was repeatedly raised as a concern with the Chairman during her visits to Community Boards in the Autumn and we heard from other stakeholders who echoed these views during our meetings in March. For example, some representatives from charities commented that they hadn't heard of Community Boards as residents or seen promotional material around their towns and had only become aware of them due to their professional connection and the draw of possible funding opportunities.
- This is perhaps unsurprising as the Community Boards launched during the Covid 19 pandemic and the public and indeed the Council were more focussed on crucial public health messaging. It may also reflect the pressures for the new Unitary Council delivering services in an unprecedented situation, where a lot of staff had to suddenly work remotely.
- The review group is aware of some good supporting comms that were produced including an introductory video for service officers on The Source (Council's internal website) and a Community Board Handbook which was designed for Chairmen/Vice Chairmen and Co-ordinators to use but could have been more widely promoted. This included very useful information and the review group would like to see this refreshed and publicised more widely for use by all Community Board members.

- Social media is another way of promoting Community Boards. We note that some Community Boards have Facebook pages but it is important that they are kept fresh and up to date. A member also commented that an email bulletin developed by Elaine Hassell, Community Board Co-ordinator for Haddenham and Waddeson, had been very informative and well-received.
- Of course, more face to face public engagement is needed and we hope that this will be achieved going forward. This is the best way of reaching local residents who may not have heard about their Community Board. The Chairmen we spoke to were very keen to have Community Board stands at local events/shows. The review group are aware that the Co-ordinator team now have event 'grab bags' and gazebos for this purpose and hope they will identify a programme of events to attend over Spring and Summer 2022 across the County.
- We heard about a community event that had been held recently in Amersham where projects who had received funding from the Community Board and other partners had an opportunity to showcase their work. This had been very well-attended and had a buzzing atmosphere, which can hopefully be replicated in future elsewhere.
- In addition to reaching out to members of the public at events, consideration should also be given to how to make Community Board meetings more inclusive and engaging, in order to encourage more residents to attend and get involved.
- The review group would welcome further engagement with key partners such as Thames Valley Police and the NHS and also voluntary sector organisations at Community Boards. It is noted that in the south of the county the Police have made a commitment for senior officers to attend each Community Board annually and it would be good to see a similar level of commitment elsewhere. It is important that the Council works together with key partners to agree clear expectations and to ensure that engagement can be meaningful for all involved.
- Finally, it is recognised that all Buckinghamshire Councillors have a role to play as advocates for the Community Boards. Training for members around a refreshed vision and other changes that may result from the Select Committee's recommendations would be helpful to ensure a shared understanding and consistent messaging from members.
- The review group acknowledge that as the Community Boards were launched on an emergency footing and have continually evolved over the past two years, there may not have been enough opportunity to reflect and consider how effective communications have been. Now is the ideal time to review what has worked well, what more can be done, especially as there is now more freedom to engage with stakeholders in person and to take on board some of the above suggestions of the review group in developing a proactive communications strategy for the Community Boards.

Recommendation 5 - A proactive communications strategy for Community Boards should be developed as a matter of urgency, to enable a 'step change' in community engagement, the promotion of Community Boards and the positive impacts they have had in their local area. The Community Board Handbook should be refreshed as part of this and promoted more widely.

Clarity regarding the Funding Process

- The Community Board budgets which enable funding of local projects in support of their priorities are universally welcomed by stakeholders and we heard details of a number of different projects which have supported vulnerable adults, mental health in young people, youth led conservation and recycling and waste reduction. In total, over 350 local projects have been funded over the course of the last two years.
- However, it was noted that there had been some issues with different aspects of the funding application process and there was concern from Community Board Chairmen, Town and Parish Council representatives and other stakeholders that delays and uncertainties related to funding applications could undermine the credibility of the Community Boards.
- The review group appreciate that governance and oversight are necessary when public money is being spent but it is important that the funding process is not so over-engineered that it becomes inefficient. We heard of a number of cases where relatively small sums of money took an unreasonable length of

time to gain approval, with the process described as 'slow and clumsy'. Community Board Co-ordinators also estimated that they were spending 80% of their time on dealing with funding applications, which is not ideal.

- The review group would like to see a more streamlined funding process with a simplified application form. One of the charities we spoke to admitted that their professional fundraisers found the funding application form challenging, as some of the boxes that needed to be completed were very prescriptive.
- In addition, we would like to request more support for very small groups who may have a great idea for a local project but don't have a bank account or are not formally constituted. Several members had examples of local groups who had been put off by the process - the Council should look at creative ways to assist smaller groups.
- It would also be helpful if consideration could be given to how best to administer applications that might cut across Community Board areas. We heard from some community groups that they were unsure if they could submit one funding application form to cover multiple localities and they wouldn't necessarily have the resources to make multiple applications, although we did hear of some projects that had been undertaken by South West Chilterns in partnership with the High Wycombe Community Board.
- Town and Parish Council representatives also requested clear guidance around the requirements for contributory funding. Whilst the reasoning behind contributory funding was accepted there was concern that very small parishes might be disadvantaged in getting local projects off the ground and the review group would like this to be considered and reflected in the guidance.
- The review group heard that different Community Boards handled the decision making around funding applications in different ways, with some approval decisions being taken by funding sub-groups, others at the formal Community Board meetings and sometimes discussions being undertaken via email. Whilst we understand the logic behind the different approaches it is important that members of each Community Board are clear about how and when decisions are taken and there should be a clear line of sight so that everyone is aware of which projects have received funding to increase transparency.
- Consideration should also be given to introducing a scoring matrix to assist members in assessing funding applications consistently.
- The review group also suggests that there could be scope for the Community Boards to each have a 'Small Grants Fund' which may set an upper limit on grants of perhaps £500. The approval process for these smaller sums could be lighter touch to enable rapid delivery of the money, empowering local groups to act quickly and decisively.
- The review group would like all these comments to be taken into account and recommend that the funding process should be revised to improve clarity and transparency around both the funding process and decision making. It was clear from our discussions with stakeholders that improvements to the efficiency of the funding process would improve 'buy-in' to the Community Boards.

Recommendation 6 - There must be greater clarity around the Community Board funding process and improved transparency around decision making. The process should be revised to deliver both the necessary governance and oversight and efficient processing of monies in a realistic and proportionate way.

Alternative mechanism for the delivery of Local Highways Projects

- Linked to the above general discussions about funding, the review group also sought the views of various stakeholders on the highways spending that falls within the remit of the Community Boards.
- Some Community Board Chairmen felt that discussions about highways schemes could dominate the agenda when they wanted Community Boards to focus more on community issues. It was noted that some issues such as installation of yellow lines could be quite divisive as whilst it helped some residents it simply pushed parking problems along to the next road.
- Community Board Co-ordinators expressed some frustration with the current system as they felt like 'ineffectual middlemen' as they lacked the technical highways knowledge to be able to advise on schemes at an early stage and had to go to and fro between Transport for Bucks and Town or Parish councils, often delivering unwelcome news about what was actually possible or the associated costs.

- Town and Parish representatives recognised that the Community Board Co-ordinators lacked the highways expertise and expressed frustration at the costs associated with highways projects and the length of time they took to be delivered. Many also questioned whether the Community Boards were the right forum for delivering local highways projects.
- The Community Board Co-ordinators reported that they had good working relationships with colleagues in Transport for Bucks who always provided the necessary information, but there were often timing issues because they were under resourced and the Community Boards had generated considerable additional workload. In addition, it was noted that often a costly highways scheme that would only benefit a small group of residents will come forward for consideration at the Community Board only to be inevitably rejected.
- We also spoke to Rosie Tunnard, Highways Community Liaison Manager who explained that Highways wanted to be more focussed in their work with Community Boards going forward. She commented that it was challenging to support 16 Community Boards but several changes that would be coming in following the appointment of a new Highways contractor in April 2023, should help.
- With all this feedback in mind, the review group suggest that this aspect of the Community Board's remit should be revisited. It might be that Community Boards could have a reduced scope, perhaps considering very small-scale projects such as drop kerbs, vehicle activated speeding signs and line painting and the rest of the local highways budget could be administered via a different route.
- As a new Highways contractor will be taking over in April 2023 it would seem an opportune time to explore different options for the delivery of local highways schemes.

Recommendation 7 - Consideration should be given to an alternative mechanism for the delivery of local Highways schemes.

Service Area Champions

- As part of our evidence gathering, we spoke to some Council Service Officers about their experiences to date in working with the Community Boards. This might have been in connection with attendance at Community Board meetings to deliver presentations linked to their service area or work undertaken in support of specific Community Board funded projects. In addition, some officers had been asked to comment on funding applications which were relevant to their service.
- It was clear from our discussions that service officers were not totally clear about how they should be interacting with Community Boards and what the expectations were. We spoke to very small services who really wanted to engage but due to limited resources this had been quite ad hoc so far, whilst other services had tried to take a more strategic approach but still felt unsure of what was expected and acknowledged that it was challenging to balance Community Board engagement alongside their 'business as usual' activities.
- Community Board Co-ordinators also confirmed that services had responded to requests from Community Boards in varied ways and it was acknowledged that it would be helpful for Co-ordinators to have stronger service links, for example, to know in advance about different service campaigns which could then be promoted at Community Board meetings.
- The review group is aware that each Community Board has a Service Director linked to it, but this will not represent every service area of the Council. Therefore, we recommend that Community Board Champions are appointed in each service area to act as a dedicated contact point for Community Board Co-ordinators. In addition, guidance should be issued to help the Community Board Champions fulfil this role.
- It is important that the whole Council understands the importance of the Community Boards and can work to support the Community Board Co-ordinators in delivering the Council's Localism agenda. In addition, consideration must be given to the resources that are available to ensure that the expectations of Community Boards can be realistically managed.

Recommendation 8 - Community Board Champions should be appointed in each service area of the Council, to demonstrate corporate commitment to the CBs as the local face of the Council and to act as a dedicated contact point for Community Boards Co-ordinators. In addition, guidance should be issued which sets out clear expectations for service officers in supporting Community Boards and manages expectations of the Community Boards, in terms of the resource that might be available, especially in smaller service areas.

Evaluating Success – What does ‘good’ look like?

- Another strong theme which emerged during the course of our review related to evaluating success. It was recognised that the Community Boards had launched very quickly in difficult circumstances – a brand new service with staff in brand new roles in a brand new Council during the unprecedented situation of a global pandemic. Staff admitted that they had reacted to the emergency situation and systems and processes had been stood up very quickly, which would inevitably lead to issues that then had to be ironed out.
- The review group hope that this review of the Community Boards alongside the internal service review means that now is an appropriate time to refocus on what the Council’s ambitions are for Community Boards, what the Council wants them to achieve in the short and medium term and how they might need to evolve in order to deliver that goal. The learning that has been gained from the past two years will obviously inform this, but we should also look to best practice ideas from elsewhere and revisit our original aspirations.
- A three-year road map for the development of the Community Boards should be drawn up, with clear goals and key milestones to measure their success. It was interesting to observe how Community Boards successes have been ‘measured’ informally to date – some stakeholders held up examples of good community engagement, others cited individual projects that had been funded and others the fact that their Community Board had spent 100% of its budget within the year.

Recommendation 9 - An overarching plan, we suggest a three year ‘road map’, for the development of the Community Boards should be drawn up, with clearly defined milestones to enable their progress to be evaluated.

- Alongside this overarching ‘road map’, there needs to be more focus on the success of each individual Community Board and evaluation of the projects that receive funding from them. There is a sense that so much energy has been invested in processing and approval of funding applications to date, that there has not been much scope for routinely following up with beneficiaries in a reliable way. Community Board Chairmen, Co-ordinators and other stakeholders all highlighted this, yet it was agreed that Community Board members would definitely like to hear about the projects that had been supported.
- As we have already mentioned, the promotion of these successful projects will also help to create a brand for the Community Boards, increase engagement and provide further momentum to continue to drive them forward.
- We heard about Local Action Plans from the Service Director for Localism and Strategic Partnerships, which are a mechanism for Community Boards to forward plan and proactively manage the delivery of their agreed priorities over the year. They weren’t mentioned during our discussions with other stakeholders, but the Local Actions Plans could be a vital link between individual Community Boards and the ‘road map’, if they are developed and owned by the Community Boards and not simply used as an oversight/management tool for the Community Board Co-ordinators.
- The review group suggest that whilst evaluation of each Board and individual projects is important it should also be simple and proportionate. Community Boards should be involved in identifying ‘What does Good look like’ for their Board.

Recommendation 10 - The success of each Community Board and individual projects that receive funding should be evaluated in a simple and proportionate manner. (This could be as straightforward as each CB

reflecting on the priorities they set at the beginning of each year and how well the projects they have supported have delivered on those priorities at year end)

- Across our two days of gathering evidence from different groups of stakeholders, many people commented that it had been interesting to hear about how other Community Boards worked and to share ideas. This seems to the review group to be an opportunity for a quick and easy win and we suggest that a mechanism should be established to enable and encourage greater sharing of best practice ideas across Community Board areas.
- Members are aware that the Community Board Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen have regular meetings and a standing item to share ideas or to ask advice from each other could be valuable. We heard from a number of Community Boards who were keen to engage with young people in their area for example and Aylesbury Community Board had designed a survey in partnership with Aylesbury Youth Action and the Buckinghamshire UTC. This could be useful insight to share with others.
- Likewise, the Community Board Co-ordinators have regular meetings where they could also discuss and share best practice.
- It would also be useful for considering opportunities for cross-boundary working. We heard that in some areas certain communities felt more of an affinity with their neighbouring Community Board and there were also initiatives that whilst based in one Community Board, served residents in other areas. There may also be projects where economies of scale could be achieved by delivering across Community Board areas.

Recommendation 11 - A mechanism should be established to enable greater sharing of best practice ideas across Community Board areas and to consider opportunities for working in partnership across Community Board boundaries.



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|-----|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Buckingham and Villages |
| 2. | Winslow and Villages |
| 3. | Haddenham and Waddesdon |
| 4. | Wing and Ivinghoe |
| 5. | Aylesbury |
| 6. | Wendover |
| 7. | North West Chilterns |
| 8. | Chesham and Villages |
| 9. | Missendens |
| 10. | Amersham |
| 11. | High Wycombe |
| 12. | South West Chilterns |
| 13. | Beaconsfield and Chepping Wye |
| 14. | Denham, Gerrards Cross and Chalfonts |
| 15. | Beeches |
| 16. | Wexham and The Ivers |



Report to Cabinet

Date:	10 May 2022
Title:	Early Help Partnership Strategy 2022 - 2025
Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
Contact officer:	Richard Nash, Corporate Director, Children's Services
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	For Cabinet to note (a) the achievements since the 2019 strategy, (b) the priorities identified for 2022-2025 and (c) agree the Early Help Partnership Strategy be adopted.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this strategy is to present what we know about the need for early help, why it is important and what action will be taken to make progress and deliver our vision for children, young people and families in Buckinghamshire. It is jointly produced and owned by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board and all its member organisations and sets out what we are already doing and plan to develop together in Buckinghamshire to ensure that children and their families get early help when they need it. This document will steer and enable the priorities detailed in this strategy to be delivered, while also reflecting the priorities set out by Children's Services.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 The strategy details the achievements since the 2019 strategy including; Continuing delivery of the Healthy Child Programme and support for those in care to have their health needs met. The delivery of health advice clinics in secondary schools,

providing support on a range of topics and engaging parents of children under two in Walk the Talk activities to reduce isolation and provide support to new parents

- 2.2 Together with the voluntary and community sector we have delivered a comprehensive youth offer, including for those with SEND including programmes supporting employability, wellbeing, transition to adulthood and has included the National Citizen Service, DofE Award, and the Inspiration programme and worked with Heart of Bucks to provide financial support for families and Care Leavers who suffered hardship due to the pandemic.
- 2.3 Together with education partners we have engaged 565 families with parenting provision and supported 72% of families to achieve sustained positive outcomes following targeted support; we have provided school link workers to all schools within the county, helping to provide appropriate support to children and young people when they need it; expanded our Mental Health Support Teams, building on the success of an initial pilot enabling families to access multidisciplinary support in schools; delivered prevention programmes including activities for young people open to Youth Offending and increased our trainee and apprenticeship offer, enabling more young people to access employment.
- 2.4 Together with statutory services we have worked collaboratively in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to ensure children received the right support at the right time through allocating the appropriate level of intervention and escalating to Social Care as appropriate to needs; developed a pilot using Family Group Conferencing to support families experiencing parental conflict which was impacting on the child's mental health, and developed closer working and integration between statutory and non-statutory services to provide the right support to families.
- 2.5 The strategy outlines our 4 identified priorities for 2022-25, how we will deliver them, how we will measure outcomes and what will be achieved by so doing.

Priority 1: Strengthen multi-agency strategic governance and joint ownership of the Early Help Strategy

Priority 2: Further develop the Early Help offer to include a targeted response to the increased risk of long-term disadvantage for children, young people and families due to the Covid-19 pandemic

Priority 3: Work together to provide effective Early Help in line with our strategic objectives and Early Help Partnership Action Plan, that supports children, young people and families to easily access support.

Priority 4: Develop a common understanding of Early Help across the partnership and promote a cohesive Buckinghamshire offer.

3. Other options considered

3.1 N/A

4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 N/A

5. Corporate implications

5.1 N/A

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

6.1 N/A

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

7.1 An extensive period of engagement has taken place to ensure that our Early Help Strategy (2022 - 2025) is co-designed. The engagement process allowed for a significant period of reflection; we wanted to fully understand where our previous Early Help Strategy (2019-2022) had taken us, what it had achieved and, most importantly, what life is like for those receiving support in Buckinghamshire in 2021. We also needed to understand the full extent of our collective resources and strengths. The principles that were developed for our first strategy remain relevant and will continue to drive our approach to Early Help over the next three years. This strategy builds upon and further develops the good work which resulted from the 2019-22 Early Help Partnership Strategy.

8. Next steps and review

8.1 An Early Help Partnership Action Plan owned by an Early Help Operational Sub-group will be developed to detail the activity required to meet the 4 partnership priorities. This Action Plan will include performance measures and success criteria so that the Children and Young People's Partnership Board can assess and challenge progress against this Strategy. The Plan will be a living document with appropriate governance, updated to reflect changing priorities.

8.2 In addition to the Partnership Action Plan, the Children & Young People's Partnership Board will receive reports and provide oversight of performance management information provided by all those who directly deliver early help. Utilising

approaches used in Supporting Families and across the partnership the sub-group will develop a 'Families Outcomes Performance Framework' to collate and report on:

- Identified need, enabling provision to be jointly planned.
- Where early help interventions have been successful in enabling families who have multiple and complex needs to sustainably improve their lives and step away from formal support. The Action Plan and the Framework underpin the implementation of this strategy and are intended to evidence sustained and significant progress against the priorities.

9. Background papers

9.1 Early Help Partnership Strategy 2022 - 2025

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]



Early Help Partnership Strategy 2022 – 2025



**Buckinghamshire
Children & Young
People's Partnership**

Working together to reach our goals



Foreword

This is Buckinghamshire’s second Early Help Partnership Strategy, and it reflects both the progress we have made together in supporting families and communities, but also the changing context and how we operate within it, in order to effectively meet the challenges faced by individuals and families who have additional support needs. We believe this strategy shows the development of our partnership early help approach and how with increased collaboration and a shared commitment to providing the right support at the right time, we are and can continue to make a real difference to our communities.

The themes from our last strategy – Pro-active, Targeted and Connected – remain our focus, underpinned by the principles agreed across the partnership following a comprehensive review of our early help services. Our evaluation highlighted the success from the point of view of families engaged with early help and the Supporting Families programme and showed the needs of families and the areas we need to concentrate on improving. This self-assessment was wide-reaching across the partnership and has shaped the priorities set out in this refreshed strategy.

Since launching our first early help partnership strategy alongside the introduction of a new, integrated Family Support Service, we have built new and effective relationships with a range of partners. As we emerge from the additional challenges of the Pandemic, we recognise now more than ever that we must build on this positive start, be responsive and flexible in finding the best way to help families at the earliest opportunity to prevent things getting worse and enable them to become more resilient as they move away from longer-term, high cost and statutory services. We believe that this strategy recognises the progress made in the last three years, acknowledges that there remains work to be done and provides direction and focus to enable those in need to easily access appropriate support from partners who work increasingly closely together. This includes sharing skills, knowledge and understanding to support children, young people and families to stay safe, achieve their potential and be more resilient and self-reliant, within supportive communities.

Richard Nash - Chair, Buckinghamshire Children’s Partnership Board and Corporate Director, Children’s Services, Buckinghamshire Council.

Cllr Anita Cranmer - Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services, Buckinghamshire Council.

Robert Majilton - Vice-Chair, Buckinghamshire Children’s Partnership Board and Deputy Chief Executive, Clinical Commissioning Group



Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to present what we know about the need for early help, why it is important and what action will be taken to make progress and deliver our vision for children, young people and families in Buckinghamshire. It is jointly produced and owned by the Children’s Partnership Board and all its member organisations and sets out what we are already doing and plan to develop together in Buckinghamshire to ensure that children and their families get early help when they need it. This document will steer and enable the priorities detailed in this strategy to be delivered, while also reflecting the priorities set out by Children’s Services.

Children’s Services priorities for 2022/23:

Children’s Social Care:

1. Service improvement.
2. Responding to the growing and unpredictable demand as a result of COVID 19.
3. Recruitment and retention of social care workforce.
4. Recruitment of in-house foster carers.

Education:

1. SEND delivery and improvements.
2. Improving education provision and educational outcomes.
3. Work with schools to ensure that young people have access to good mental health support.
4. Early help.



Our Vision

Our partnership vision, as set out in Buckinghamshire's Children and Young People's Plan, is:

To build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire so that they realise their potential, whatever their starting point is. We will ensure children and young people:

- Are safe.
- Live fulfilling lives.
- Are healthy.
- Reach their potential in education and other aspects of their lives.
- Together with their families are resilient and can identify their own solutions.
- Make a positive contribution to their community.

Within Early Help, we want all children and young people in Buckinghamshire to live in resilient families, to be happy, safe and healthy, and to grow up with skills, knowledge and attributes to be confident and independent, ready for adult life. As partners we will work together, including with volunteers and communities to provide a seamless service for children and families. We aim to prevent escalation of need and ensure targeted, timely interventions that achieve positive outcomes for children and families, supported by effective multi-agency practices.

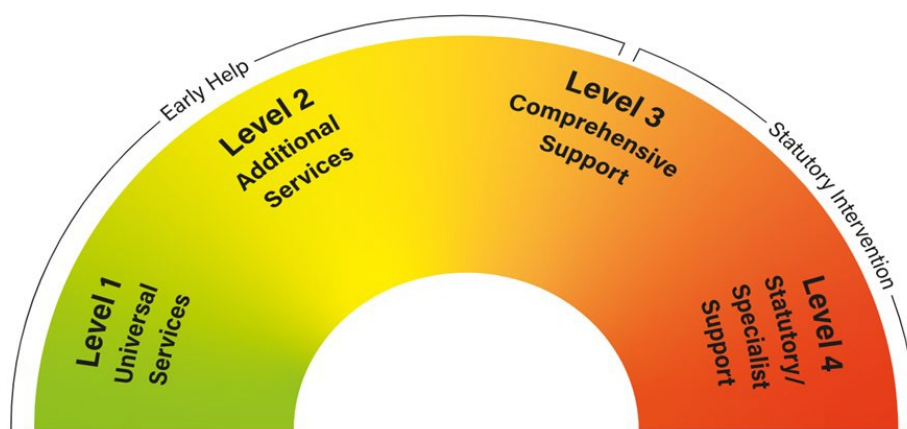
What is Early Help?

Early help is an approach that supports the identification of and response to emerging problems that children, young people and their families face at any point in their lives. It is a way of working that supports families to overcome these challenges and avoids things becoming worse and having long-lasting, negative consequences that are harder to resolve. Timely and flexible support is evidentially better for children and families, it prevents escalation and is as a result, more cost effective. Early help is provided through a range of different services: universal (which are open to all), targeted provision, and specialist services. It is also embedded in communities where provision is available to families through informal support, local networks and voluntary activity which add real capacity and value to our collective early help offer.

Effective early help relies on a partnership approach with local organisations and agencies working together to:

- Reflect the Government guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children document.
- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help.
- Undertake an assessment of the family or child's needs for early help.
- Provide appropriate targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.

Early help in Buckinghamshire consists of all the support available to children and families at levels 1, 2 and 3 of the Buckinghamshire Children safeguarding Partnership's Continuum of Need document. It also enables children and young people moving away from statutory support (level 4), to sustain the progress they have achieved and promote their increasing independence.



- Level 1 – children whose needs are met within universal services. May need limited intervention to prevent needs arising (universal – available to all).
- Level 2 – children with additional needs identified that can be met through a single agency response and partnership working (early help).
- Level 3 – children with multiple needs requiring a multi-agency coordinated response with a lead professional (targeted early help provision).
- Level 4 – children with a high level of unmet and complex needs or a child in need of protection (statutory intervention).

The partnership approach enables support to be provide at all levels of this continuum, from universal and preventative services to more targeted work with families with identified need or who are already known to Services. The different organisations making up the Early Help Partnership enable a varied offer to be provided to children and families in Buckinghamshire. These organisations include voluntary and community sector partners as well as Council, Health, Police and other community services.



Local Context

Buckinghamshire has a total population of approximately 545,900. 29% of the population is aged 0-24 years. Figures from 2018 projected that the population in Buckinghamshire will increase to 579,109 (approx. 6%) by 2043. Approximately 126,400 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Buckinghamshire. This is 23% of the total population in the area (ONS Subnational population projections – local authorities, [ONS website](#)).

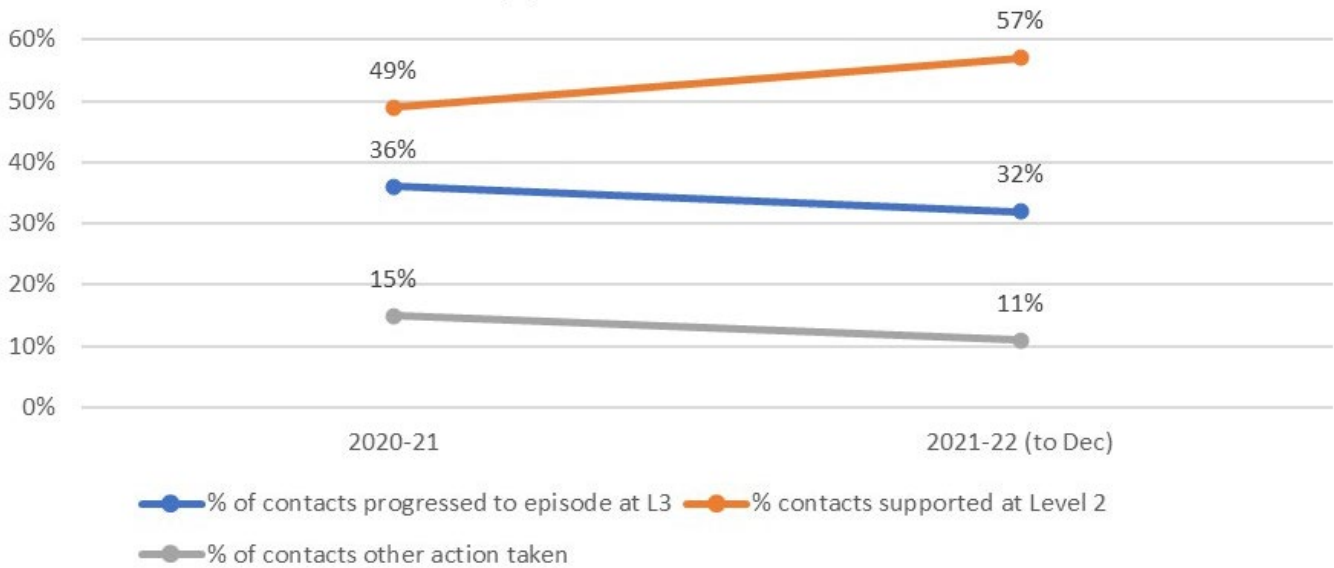
Buckinghamshire is home to an increasingly diverse population. 38% of the pupils attending Buckinghamshire schools in January 2021 were from an ethnic minority (Black and Minority Ethnic or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), compared to the England average of 36% (January 2021 School Census).

Demand

There has been a significant increase in demand for Early Help Services both within the council and across the partnership. For example, there were 4781 contacts (children) to the Family Support Service in 2020/21 compared to 3481 in 2018/19. On average 29% of contacts are from schools and while there was a dip in 2020-21, this is likely to be linked to the impact of the pandemic when less children were able to attend, potentially resulting in some early intervention opportunities being missed. If the numbers continue at the same pace in 2021-22 then contact numbers will exceed those seen in 2019-20. There have been 4430 contacts in 2021/22 to December.

The table overleaf shows that more families have been supported at level 2 in 2020/21 and 2021/22, reflecting an increased offer of support, including parenting courses, youth groups, wellbeing support for young people, drop-in sessions and targeted 1:1 support. This has meant that families have more opportunity to be supported at an appropriate level and shows a shift towards earlier intervention and a reducing demand against longer-term and potentially statutory intervention.

% of contacts to the Family Support Service that were supported at Level 2 or 3



The table below shows the Areas of Concern for contacts that progressed to an episode during 2020-2021 with a comparison between April – December in each year. Concerns relating to Education have seen a 28% increase between April – December 21 compared to the same period in 2020. Support for young people demonstrating school avoidance has been introduced to address increased anxieties about returning to schools, as an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Area of concern	April 20 - Mar 21	April 20 - Dec 20	April 21 - Dec 21	% change comparing April-Dec
Home, family and parenting	2483	1836	2042	11%
Health	1398	1031	1148	11%
Education	725	518	665	28%
Affected by abuse/exploitation	385	294	288	-2%
Finance	163	121	106	-12%
Crime	109	87	56	-36%

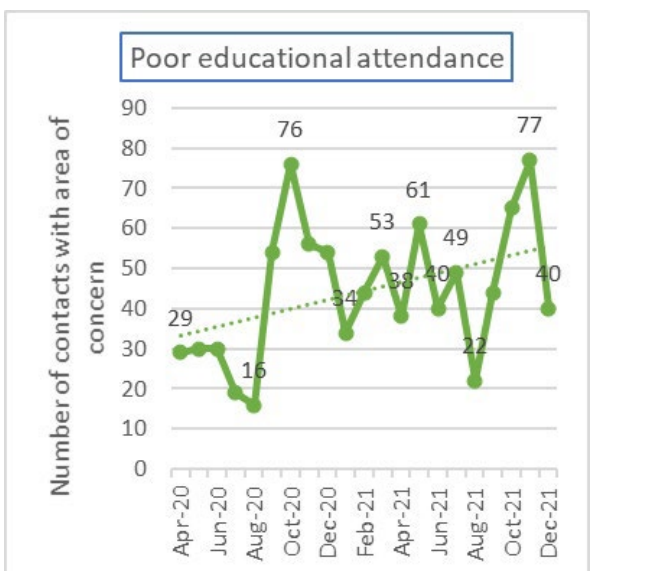
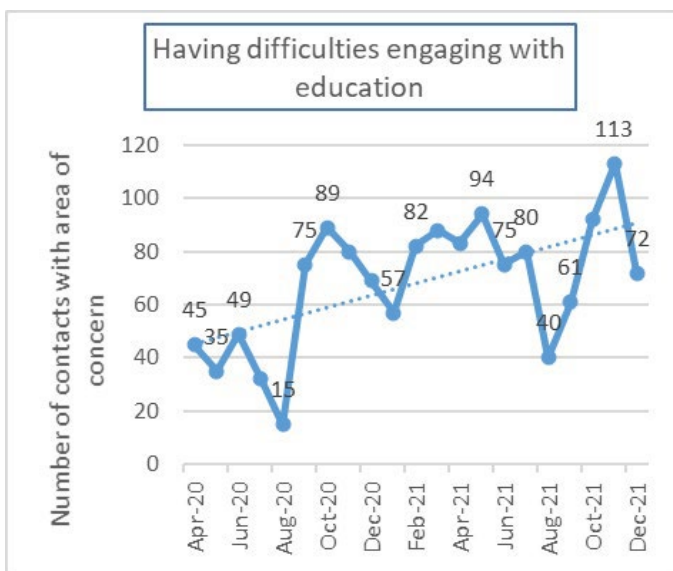
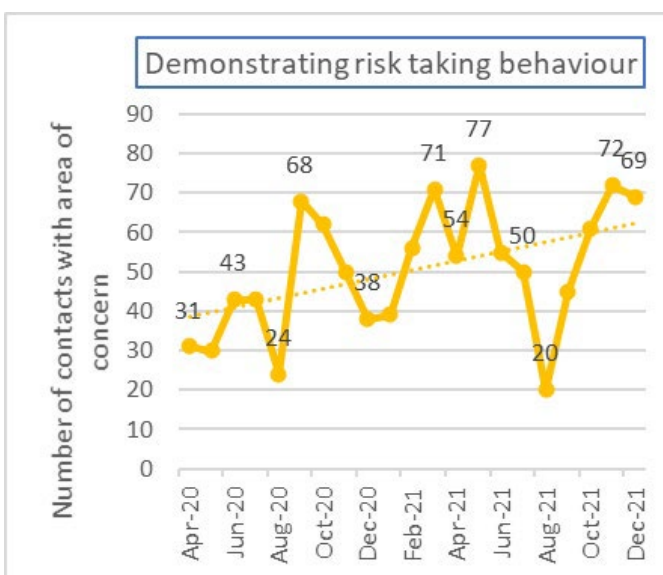
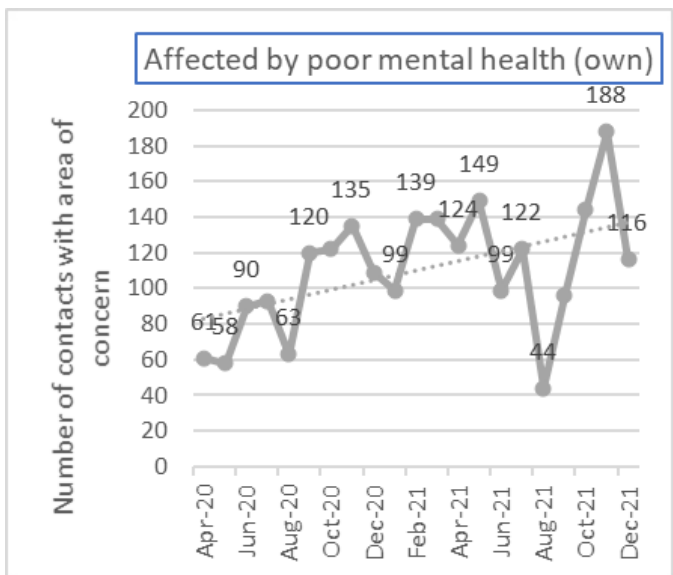
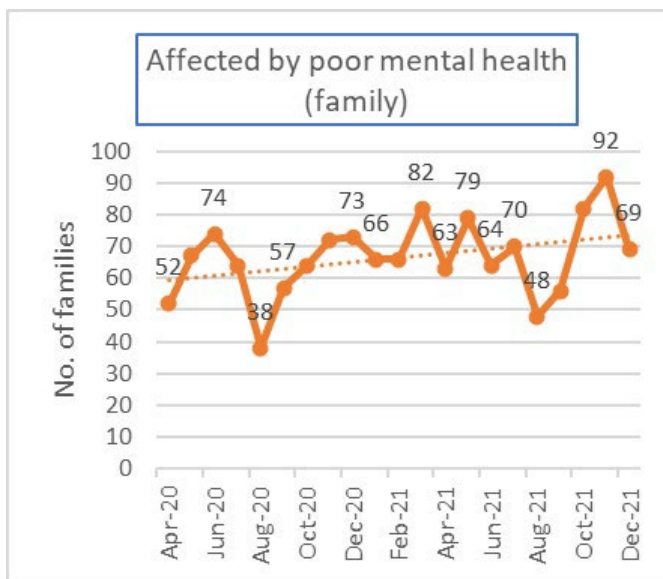
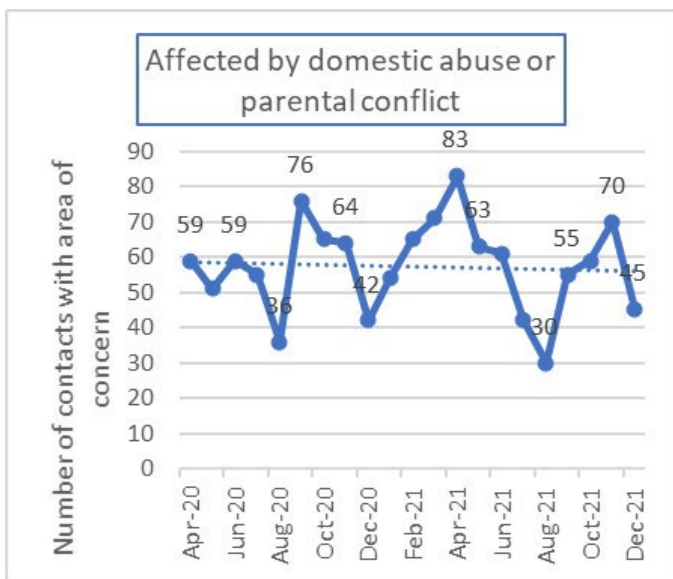
Data extracted from Early Help Module (EHM) data management system

The impact of the pandemic is seen in other areas too. Contacts remain consistently high for:

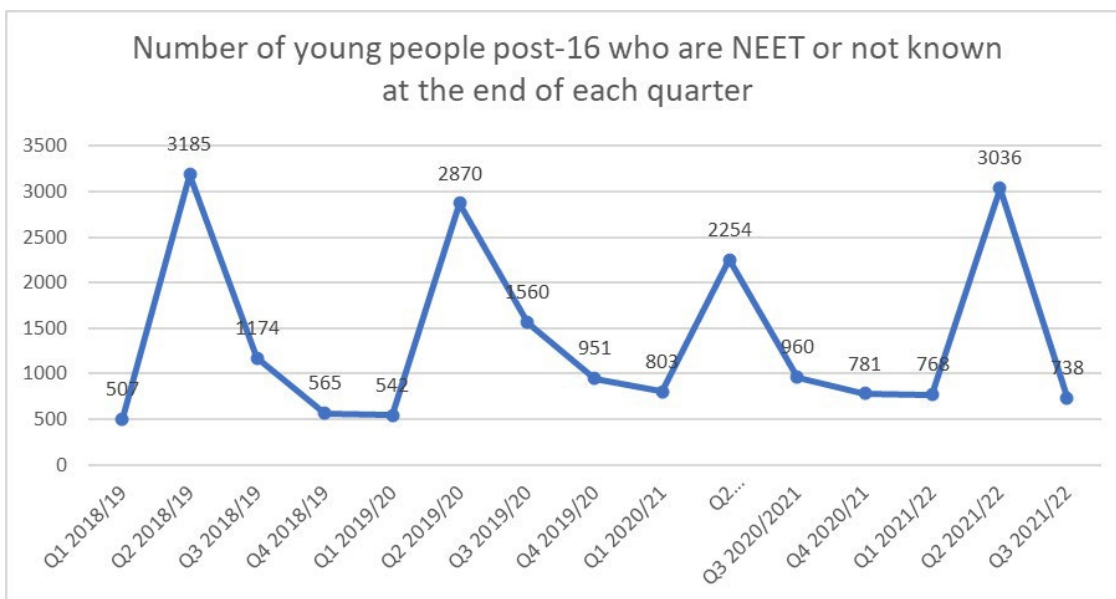
- Families and children with a range of health problems.
- Having difficulty maintaining boundaries and expectations within the home.
- Having difficulty parenting in a consistent way.
- Home environment is impacting on the health and wellbeing of the child.

Within Early Help, parenting course requests continue to be in demand particularly in Aylesbury where at least twice as many courses were delivered to parents of teenagers than for primary age, reflecting the impacts from the pandemic as shown above.

While numbers continue to fluctuate, influenced by the stages of the pandemic and associated restrictions, increases over time remain likely. Priority 2 aims to mitigate the long-term impact that is not yet apparent in the data.



The number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) has remained relatively stable.



The number of students shown as NEET or Not Known fluctuates in line with the academic year, with an annual peak in Quarter 2 each year. Based on the DfE target period of Dec 20 – Feb 21, Buckinghamshire has a higher proportion of 16 and 17-year-olds who are NEET or whose activity is not known compared to both the South East and England, however this figure is improved to date for Dec 2021. It is anticipated that numbers of NEET young people will increase because of the impact of the pandemic on employment and training opportunities.

	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Dec 21
Buckinghamshire NEET and not known	7.7%	6.9%	6.5%	5.9%
South East NEET and not known	7.6%	6%	5.7%	6.4%
National NEET and not known	6.3%	5.2%	4.9%	5.3%

The increase in demand for Early Help Services is mirrored by an increase in need and requests for statutory services. The volume and complexity of cases in children’s social care has increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions and impact of the pandemic has resulted in spikes in demand after restrictions eased. Alongside this, there has been a rise in the complexity in the needs of families requiring an assessment, particularly for families and children with needs relating to mental health, self-harm and sexual abuse which reflect some of the presenting issues seen in Early Help.

The need for early help support from the partnership is seen across the county and the benefit of timely early intervention is well evidenced locally and nationally. In Buckinghamshire demand continues to grow and correlates broadly with areas of higher deprivation. As a partnership we will monitor and use all relevant data to ensure that services are targeted towards areas and communities in highest need and which are tailored and accessible to all residents. We will focus our use of the Supporting Families Grant to further our contribution to the levelling up agenda, working more collaboratively and sharing key information across the partnership to ensure we make best use of our collective resources to support the most vulnerable children and families.



Early help – delivered in partnership

Buckinghamshire's early help model

Our early help partnership offer is delivered through our integrated network of providers including but not limited to Council services, schools, other education settings including early years, health services and the voluntary and community sector. This partnership approach adds strength and variety to the early help offer and enables flexibility in our approach to supporting families. Our partnership activity must be coordinated, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance.

We are committed to using our network of 16 family centres to support the identification of emerging needs and provide informal and peer support at a universal level. Teams across organisations provide direct, practical support for children, young people and families and/or advice, guidance and signposting. Lead practitioners coordinate agreed support plans that are developed through a clear understanding of the family context, needs and support priorities. By working together with the family, we all contribute towards achieving the outcomes agreed with the families we are supporting.

Our early help offer aims to be timely and responsive, available to those in need, when they need it. By building on our partnership approach, we will continue to increase our ability to work together for the benefit of the children and families who need our support.

Governance

The governance and oversight of Buckinghamshire's Early Help Partnership Strategy recognises that the delivery of our offer is not the responsibility of a single agency but is owned by all partners that work with children, young people and families. Governance is provided by Buckinghamshire's Children's Partnership Board, via the Early Help Operational sub-group. Scrutiny and challenge are provided by Buckinghamshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership. Membership of each of these Boards is broad and involves statutory, voluntary and community sector partners. Organisations and services currently represented on these boards include:

- Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Partnership Board
- Buckinghamshire Council: Children's Social Care, Public Health, Education, Integrated Special Educational Needs Service (iSEND)
- Aspire
- Families and Carers Together (FACT) Bucks
- Leap
- Thames Valley Police
- Action4Youth
- Oxford Health
- School representatives
- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
- Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue
- Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust

In Buckinghamshire, early help is a collaboration between Council services and the wide range of organisations who work with children and families. Early help services cannot be viewed in isolation, but instead as a complimentary, constituent element of the continuum of support, from universal services through to statutory or acute provision (where required), all of which are focussed on improving the lives of children at the earliest opportunity.

The delivery of our early help strategy is founded on a joint commitment to shared outcomes, which will evidence the impact we make for families by intervening early and providing the right support at the right time, enabling sustainable outcomes and building family resilience.

A critical ingredient to successful working is the partnership with families, and their commitment to make changes in their lives. All our work is child and family-centred, consent-based and focussed on working collaboratively with families to overcome the issues they face, build their resilience and leave them better able to manage future challenges.



Our principles

The early help partnership has adopted the following shared principles:

1. **Work to families' strengths** – recognising and developing existing strengths of children, parents and carers and take the time to understand their needs fully.
2. **Focus on preventing problems** before they occur and offer timely, flexible and responsive support when and where it is required.
3. **Build the resilience** of children, young people, parents and communities to support each other.
4. **Work together across the whole system** aligning resources to best support families to do what needs to be done when it needs to be done.
5. **Base all that we do on evidence of what works**, what is needed and what will be effective for families. We must be brave enough to innovate and honest enough to stop things that are not working as well as we want.
6. **Be clear and consistent about the outcomes** we expect and measure our performance against them.

Achievements since 2019

The Covid 19 pandemic impacted on delivery, however all services contributing to early help, adapted and maintained provision in a range of ways to ensure families continued to be supported wherever possible. Achievements since 2019 are numerous and include the following examples.

Together with health partners we have:

- Continued to deliver the Healthy Child Programme and supported those in care to have their health needs met.
- Delivered health advice clinics in secondary schools, providing support on a range of topics.
- Engaged parents of children under two in Walk the Talk activities to reduce isolation and provide support to new parents.
- Continued to work collaboratively with therapies services, including delivering Little Talkers to support parents of early year children, to provide early help support for speech, language and communication needs.

Together with the voluntary and community sector we have:

- Delivered a comprehensive youth offer, including for those with SEND. This has included programmes supporting employability, wellbeing, transition to adulthood and has included the National Citizen Service, DofE Award, and the Inspiration programme.
- Identified more young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) who have then been supported to re-engage.
- Worked with Heart of Bucks to provide financial support for families and Care Leavers who suffered hardship due to the pandemic.

Together with education partners we have:

- Engaged 565 families with parenting provision and supported 72% of families to achieve sustained positive outcomes following targeted support.
- Provided school link workers to all schools within the county, helping to provide appropriate support to children and young people when they need it.
- Expanded our Mental Health Support Teams, building on the success of an initial pilot enabling families to access multidisciplinary support in schools.
- Delivered prevention programmes including activities for young people open to Youth Offending.
- Increased our trainee and apprenticeship offer, enabling more young people to access employment.

Together with statutory services we have:

- Worked collaboratively in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to ensure children received the right support at the right time through allocating the appropriate level of intervention and escalating to Social Care as appropriate to needs.
- Developed a pilot using Family Group Conferencing to support families experiencing parental conflict which was impacting on the child's mental health.
- Developed closer working and integration between statutory and non-statutory services to provide the right support to families.



Refreshing our strategy

An extensive period of engagement has taken place to ensure that our Early Help Strategy (2022 - 2025) is co-designed. The engagement process allowed for a significant period of reflection; we wanted to fully understand where our previous Early Help Strategy (2019-2022) had taken us, what it had achieved and, most importantly, what life is like for those receiving support in Buckinghamshire in 2021. We also needed to understand the full extent of our collective resources and strengths. The principles that were developed for our first strategy remain relevant and will continue to drive our approach to Early Help over the next three years. This strategy builds upon and further develops the good work which resulted from the 2019-22 Early Help Partnership Strategy.

What are children, young people and families telling us?

Families using early help services generally give very positive feedback about their experiences and feel they have been supported to resolve concerns, overcome issues and cope with their own personal circumstances. Comments have included:

“Overall great, helpful course, helping to change our lives to positive and well-being.”

“Great facilitators who ensured a safe and open space for the attendees to open up. Provided useful tips, advice and empathy...The format is very good.”

(Parents of children with SEND attending a nurture parenting group)

Children and young people who have attended courses and groups have found them engaging and fun, creating an environment in which they felt safe and listened to and therefore able to learn.

“I really enjoyed the sessions and I started to open up with the help! It was and is the highlight of my week and I’m going to miss seeing everyone!”

“I have learnt helpful coping mechanisms to deal with my anxiety and know that help is available should I need it.”

“My self-esteem and confidence boosted drastically in such a short amount of time.”

(Young people commenting on Family Support Service courses)

Families have also identified areas where they would like to see more provision or receive more support. These areas include:

- Support for new parents: *“I don’t know what to expect my child to be doing, I haven’t had the chance to discuss their development or compare to other children, which is difficult as he is my first child.”*
- Support for parents/carers of children returning to school following closures due to the pandemic, so they know how best to support those who are finding the return difficult.
- Support for parents/carers of children with SEND. A parenting course specifically for this group was successful and feedback suggested more were needed: *“Definitely been worthwhile. It’s a shame there isn’t an opportunity for more parents to attend.”*
- Opportunities for parents/carers with shared experiences to meet to support each other.

Parent/carers have also fed back the need to promote the early help offer more widely, including promotion to young people: *“I wish I’d known about the early help offer and support a year ago”* and *“Young people need to know what support is available and how to access for themselves when they need it.”*

This engagement and consultation together with our self-evaluation and data analysis have enabled us to identify our key partnership priorities for the next three years.



Our priorities for 2022 - 25

Priority 1: Strengthen multi-agency strategic governance and joint ownership of the Early Help Strategy by:

1. Establishing an operational sub-group with key stakeholders (including representatives of children and young people). This group will provide reports on progress to the Children's Partnership Board who steer, support and challenge the partnership in order to achieve the aims of the strategy.
2. Improving planning, coordination and oversight of all organisations and services contributing to the early help offer to ensure provision is high quality, comprehensive, cohesive and gaps are identified and responded to through innovation, provision of common tools and greater collaboration.
3. Ensuring data on the impact of the support provided is routinely collected, collated, analysed and shared so achievements across Early Help can be quantified and used to inform future developments.

Priority 2: Further develop the Early Help offer to include a targeted response to the increased risk of long-term disadvantage for children, young people and families due to the Covid-19 pandemic, by:

1. Providing support for those children, young people and families who have increased vulnerabilities. This may include those who:
 - a. are not in employment, education or training (NEET)
 - b. are home educated, excluded, or are not receiving education
 - c. are vulnerable to exploitation
 - d. have special educational needs and/or disabilities
2. Developing a support offer for new parents/carers whose early parenthood experience has been altered by the pandemic, resulting in increased anxieties, greater isolation from peers and reduced access to help and support to address any developmental delays in their children.

Priority 3: Work together to provide effective Early Help in line with our strategic objectives and Early Help Partnership Action Plan, that supports children, young people and families to easily access support. We will do this by:

1. Regularly reviewing need, demand and location of services to ensure families in all areas are able to access suitable, high quality provision and be effectively supported.
2. Building on current good practice, identify additional opportunities for joint working to improve the experience of families, co-producing solutions and providing timely and appropriate services, reducing the need for unnecessary statutory or clinical intervention.
3. Further developing our practice and maximising our capacity to work together as a partnership using the lead agency model to meet the needs of families in complex circumstances, who need the coordinated effort from all sectors, working together towards the agreed outcomes for the family.
4. Creating a consistent and jointly owned Early Help training and support offer for front-line practitioners e.g. trauma informed practice, responding to presenting needs.
5. Reviewing pathways in partnership with families to ensure they are clear and easy to navigate, improving the user experience and timely access to support.
6. Seeking engagement of Primary Care Networks in the health liaison meetings and wider early help engagement to further enable an holistic approach to supporting families.
7. Identifying additional opportunities to co-locate early help services and further develop Family Centres into community hubs in line with the national Family Hub Model Framework (Nov 2021), ensuring spaces are fit for purpose for all age groups and the wide range of providers.

Priority 4: Develop a common understanding of Early Help across the partnership and promote a cohesive Buckinghamshire offer, by:

1. Increasing the visibility of all aspects of the Early Help offer from universal and preventative delivery, through to targeted and specialist support in Buckinghamshire to ensure all families and partners are aware of and able to access the right services to support them.
2. Identifying opportunities to share practice and collaborate across organisations and services to further embed a shared understanding of Early Help at all levels (tiers 1-3).
3. Generating a sense of purpose and belonging as a provider delivering early help in Buckinghamshire, to maximise the availability and collective impact of a broad range of support, service and intervention.
4. Recognising and engaging new partners, including the range of voluntary and community sector providers to add breadth and capacity to our partnership and expand our network, providing clear and well understood pathways to appropriate support.



Outcomes and measuring success

An Early Help Partnership Action Plan owned by an Early Help Operational Sub-group will be developed to detail the activity required to meet the 4 partnership priorities. This Action Plan will include performance measures and success criteria so that the Children and Young People's Partnership Board can assess and challenge progress against this Strategy. The Plan will be a living document with appropriate governance, updated to reflect changing priorities.

In addition to the Partnership Action Plan the Board will receive reports and provide oversight of performance management information provided by all those who directly deliver early help. Utilising approaches used in Supporting Families and across the partnership the sub-group will develop a 'Families Outcomes Performance Framework' to collate and report on:

- Identified need, enabling provision to be jointly planned.
- Where early help interventions have been successful in enabling families who have multiple and complex needs to sustainably improve their lives and step away from formal support.

The Action Plan and the Framework underpin the implementation of this strategy and are intended to evidence sustained and significant progress against the priorities.

Achieving the strategy priorities will mean:

Priority 1 - Strengthen multi-agency strategic governance and joint ownership of the Early Help Strategy.

- A broad range of key stakeholders are part of the governance group and regularly attend and contribute.
- A multi-agency action plan is in place with measurable outcomes owned and monitored by a wide range of partners, with clear evidence of progress and achievement.
- Impact data is available and collated from all early help partners and is used to inform the action plan of the governance group.

Priority 2 - Further develop the Early Help offer to include a targeted response to the increased risk of long-term disadvantage for children, young people and families due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Children and young people who are additionally vulnerable feedback that they received support that helped them at the right time.
- Children and young people feedback that universal and targeted services are available and accessible.
- Targeted interventions have a positive impact on the data where appropriate.
- A support offer for new parents impacted by the pandemic evidences positive outcomes.

Priority 3 - Work together to provide effective Early Help in line with our strategic objectives and Early Help Partnership Action Plan, that supports children, young people and families to easily access support.

- A mechanism is developed to ensure need, demand and locations of services are shared at the operational sub-group and this informs new developments as part of the early help offer.
- Early help providers take the lead agency role where appropriate to ensure the model is embedded across the partnership.
- Families experience a 'tell your story once' approach and have one plan of support in which all agencies work together.
- Universal and targeted support is co-facilitated, so families benefit from relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.
- A multi-agency early help training and support programme is implemented that enables partners to train together and work in a truly joined up and connected way.
- More services are co-located in locality areas and the Family Hub Model Framework is reflected both in family centres and across the wider partnership.
- There is evidence of coproduction with families in relation to reviewing and improving access and services provided. Pathways are published and families feedback that they are effective and easy to navigate.
- Primary Care Networks are actively engaged in the early help partnership.

Priority 4 - Develop a common understanding of Early Help across the partnership and promote a cohesive Buckinghamshire offer.

- Feedback identifies that children, young people and families know about how they can access early help in Buckinghamshire and find out more.
- A multi-agency communications plan supports partners to understand and promote a coordinated early help offer.
- A rolling engagement strategy enables new partners to become part of the early help offer; they are actively involved at an operational level and engage with strategic development.

The detailed multi-agency action plan and measures will be developed through the Early Help Partnership Governance group to reflect the breadth of involvement, engagement and delivery of appropriate support collectively agreed by the partnership.





Report to Cabinet

Report Date:	10 May 2022
Title:	Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-25
Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
Contact officer:	Richard Nash, Corporate Director Children's Services
Ward(s) affected:	All Wards
Recommendations:	For Cabinet to (a) agree the Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-25 and (b) note the ambitions set out within the Strategy.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 In Buckinghamshire, our ambition is to provide the best services possible to support children and young people and their families. In doing so we strive to continually develop our services and how we deliver them, so they are relevant and appropriate to those we work with. Our children and young people have valuable contributions to make in helping us to understand what they need.
- 1.2 Supporting active participation is key to us improving services which are truly effective and make a positive difference to those who experience them first-hand. This strategy provides a clear framework for Children's Services to use in an inclusive manner, actively listening, acting and responding to the issues which children and young people tell us are important to them, and involving them in identifying and providing creative solutions.
- 1.3 During the December 2021 Ofsted re-inspection, inspectors commented that the inclusion and participation of children in helping to shape improved practice and services is underdeveloped. The implementation of this Strategy forms part of our response to this finding.

- 1.4 This is the first Participation Strategy for Buckinghamshire and signals our intent to ensure we provide opportunities to engage with children and young people so that their voices are heard, responded to and acted upon.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 This Strategy was co-produced with young people and The Care Leaders, a social enterprise led by experts by experience. The strategy brings together all areas of engagement and participation for young people, including the We Do Care Council, for children and young people in care, and Shout Out For SEND, the forum for young people with SEND. In addition to groups and forums, the strategy includes wider engagement through Youth Councils and the Youth Voice Executive.
- 2.2 The strategy promotes new ways of engaging with and listening to young people to ensure their voices are heard and can have genuine impact on services, practice and policy. This significant range of activities is Championed by colleagues across children's services, who are supported by specialist staff and a Participation Coordinator, within the Family Support Service.
- 2.3 In Buckinghamshire, we want to promote and simplify pathways for young people to participate in services by developing opportunities for young people to have a say about things that are meaningful to them. We know it's important for young people to have ownership of the things they speak about and what happens as a result and that we have a duty to build a system that can enable this. Furthermore, we recognise that we do not always need to suggest what young people should consult on, our focus must be to create opportunities for young people to talk about what matters to them. We hold the belief that if we do this honestly, maximising ownership, being clear about the power young people have, providing transparent feedback we can better meet the needs of young people in Buckinghamshire.
- 2.4 We recognise that to ensure young people receive the very best services we need to engage them in conversations that help us understand their views, opinions and ideas about what we can do. We know that without young people's views, we will not know what they need, how best to support them or how our services should be developed.
- 2.5 We are ambitious to ensure we engage with all young people, especially those who have special educational needs, disabilities, those who are considered vulnerable and in need of extra support. We believe that by listening to young people and acting on their views we can ensure every young person can be enabled to realise their potential, whatever their starting point is.
- 2.6 This strategy sets out how we plan to listen to young people, respond to them and act on their views, ensuring they know we value their knowledge and work with them to build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire.

3. Other options considered

3.1 N/A

4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 N/A

5. Corporate implications

N/A

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 Strategy review in 2025

9. Background papers

BC Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-25

BC Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-25 - Young People's Version

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]

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Participation Strategy for Young People 2022 - 2025

How Buckinghamshire Council hears the voice of young people

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1. Vision and foreword

Buckinghamshire's Vision for Children and Young People

'We aim to build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire so that they realise their potential, whatever their starting point is.'

Foreword from Cllr Anita Cranmer, Cabinet member for Children's Services

In Buckinghamshire our ambition is to provide the best services possible to support children and young people and their families to realise their potential. In doing so we strive to continually develop our services and how we deliver them, so they are relevant and appropriate to those we work with. Our children and young people have valuable contributions to make in helping us to understand what they need and how to use that knowledge to develop services. We need to provide opportunities to engage children and young people to have their voices heard, responded to and acted upon.

Supporting active participation is key to us improving services which are truly effective and make a positive difference to those who experience them first-hand. This strategy provides a clear framework for all of us who work with and within Children's Services to use in an inclusive manner, actively listening, acting and responding to the issues which children and young people tell us are important to them, and involving them in identifying and providing creative solutions. It is our aspiration that everyone within Children's Services embrace participation as it is described within this strategy, to involve children and young people from across the county to affect positive change in shaping our services and delivery, by using a wide range of opportunities and innovation to enable them to be involved.



2. Definitions

What the dictionary says and what it means to us:

Consultation

- *The action or process of formally consulting or discussing.*

Seeking the views of children and young people in creative ways on how we are supporting them and how they think services should be delivered, and taking actions in response to what they have said.

Participation

- *The action of taking part in something.*

Young people taking an active part in a range of activities including forums, consultations, interview panels and training.

Engagement

- *participate or become involved in.*
- *occupy or attract (someone's interest or attention).*
- *involve someone in (a conversation or discussion).*
- *establish a meaningful contact or connection with.*

Building positive relationships with young people by offering opportunities to interact with us in ways that are meaningful and interesting and gives them an appropriate degree of ownership and control.

Diversity

- *showing a great deal of variety; very different*
- *including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.*

Offering a wide range of activities that are delivered and promoted in different ways to reach young people from different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations and abilities. Getting feedback to ensure these activities meet their needs, interests and passions and making changes based on what they tell us.

3. Context

This participation strategy has been developed to ensure we capture the views of all young people in Buckinghamshire so that their experiences influence service development at an individual, operational and strategic level. We have worked alongside a wide range of stakeholders to create a strategy that is effective, maximises ownership and has Buckinghamshire's strategic aims and the profile of need of young people at its heart.

The Council has a statutory duty, set out in The Children Act 1989, to consider the wishes and feelings of children when decisions are made about them. How well the Council listens to and acts upon the views and experiences of children and young people is part of Ofsted's inspection framework.

Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2019 to 2024 states, *'The experiences and chances that Buckinghamshire children and young people have will shape their lives. Listening to what our children and young people have to say is central to the planning and delivery of services in Buckinghamshire.'*

3.1 Our 9 Priorities

We have 9 challenges that we are working to meet, to ensure we are improving the participation of our young people. These challenges have been developed based on research and what young people and adults have told us are important issues to overcome, to ensure authentic and meaningful participation.

Our 9 challenges and how we plan to address them:



1. Updating young people's contact details

Facilitate an internal campaign to ensure young people's details are updated, including those residing outside of Buckinghamshire, so that we can be proactive in making contact and offering opportunities to all.

2. Ensuring young people are not consulted on things that they don't own and are not relevant to them

Devolve power to young people to enable them to develop their own consultations about issues they 'own', because these are their challenges, they matter to them and they may own the solutions.

3. Strengthening our relationship between Youth Voice Buckinghamshire, service areas and partners

Develop and manage a Champions Programme to help champions develop creative ways to engage with all young people from across children's services. Maximise resources to ensure we effectively coordinate our action plan, monitor and report our progress and impact to the widest audience.

4. Engaging with young people who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (Disability, Race, Sexual Orientation, Gender Reassignment), those with Special Educational Needs and those from under-represented or marginalised communities

Work with young people, particularly those with the highest needs, and the services that support them to understand what engagement should look like. Understand and respond innovatively to barriers to engagement to be inclusive and accessible to all, with a conscious focus on increasing engagement and participation amongst young people with SEND, those from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities and the LGBTQ+ community.

5. Addressing the isolation of young people caused by COVID-19

Host a series of activities to bring young people together, experience new things and have fun whilst getting their voices heard.

6. Engaging with young people from rural areas of Buckinghamshire

Support and enable young people to attend activities in person e.g. providing transport and provide online events so young people can engage online.

7. Ensuring the information we provide for young people is appealing and engaging

Rebrand our participation service so that it is appealing to young people and uses straightforward, jargon-free language that is easy for everyone to understand.

8. Engaging with young people through digital means

Develop a new online brochure that will share important information, events, consultations, opportunities and contact information, so the council can ensure it is easy for young people to get involved.

9. Making participation count by acting on it

Develop clear parameters for consultations and lines of communication and accountability to ensure that when young people are consulted, they know how much power their views will have, who will make the final decision and how they can communicate with decision-makers.

4. Purpose

4.1 Our Mission for Participation

To listen, act and respond to the views of young people in Buckinghamshire.

- **Listen** - listen to the views of young people in Buckinghamshire, ensuring we do so in ways that engage the widest possible audience while respecting their needs and capturing their ideas.
- **Act** - work with young people to build opportunities, services and a better future which meet young people's needs.
- **Respond** - respond to the needs, interests and aspirations of young people in a timely and transparent manner, so that their ownership and engagement are maximised.
- **Repeat** – participation will be a process: we listen, act and respond and then we continue to review and develop by listening, acting and responding.



4.2 Our Statement of Purpose

In Buckinghamshire we want to promote and simplify pathways for young people to participate in services by developing opportunities for young people to have a say about things that are meaningful to them. We know it's important for young people to have ownership of the things they speak about and what happens as a result, and that we have a duty to build a system that can enable this.

We recognise that to ensure young people receive the very best services we need to engage them in conversations that help us understand their views, opinions and ideas about what we can do. We know that without young people's views, we will not know what they need, how best to support them or how our services should be developed.

Furthermore, we recognise that we do not always need to suggest what young people should consult on; our focus must be to create opportunities for young people to talk about what matters to them. We hold the belief that if we do this honestly, maximising ownership, being clear about the power young people have and providing transparent feedback, we can better meet the needs of young people in Buckinghamshire.

We are ambitious to ensure we engage with all young people, especially those who have special educational needs, disabilities, those who are considered vulnerable and in need of extra support. We believe that by listening to young people and acting on their views we can ensure every young person can be empowered to realise their potential, whatever their starting point is.

This strategy sets out how we plan to listen to young people, respond to them and act on their views, ensuring they know we value their knowledge and work with them to build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire.

5. Scope

5.1 Embedding Participation into our Culture

5.1.1 Our 3 Rules of Engagement

We have developed 3 rules to ensure that whenever we engage with young people, we do so ethically and authentically.

Rule 1: We don't ask young people to do something we would not do ourselves.

Rule 2: Whenever we engage young people in service development, we provide them with development opportunities to ensure they have the skills to do so meaningfully.

Rule 3: We only engage with young people if we have a clear strategy about how we will listen, respond and act in a timely, transparent manner that maximises young people's ownership.

These rules have also considered and responded to the priority, '**providing opportunities for children and young people to meet their full potential**' within the Children and Young People's 2019 – 2024 partnership plan.

5.1.2 Our Participation Principles

'Listen, Act, Respond and Repeat' sums up our transparent operational approach and acts as a memorable mantra that everyone within Buckinghamshire should know.

To understand how everyone can 'Listen, Act, Respond and Repeat' we explain how this is relevant to individuals, services, and decision-makers.



	Individuals	Services	Decision-Makers
Listen	<p><i>Individuals listen to young people with the intention to learn.</i></p> <p>We engage with young people with the intention to listen, learn and encourage them to take ownership by being active participants within our service.</p>	<p><i>Services to use creative methods to listen to young people.</i></p> <p>Each service works with young people from different backgrounds and levels of need. Our expectation is that all service areas develop creative methods to ensure they engage effectively and listen to their young people. These methods will include more than surveys and focus groups and will be developed based on the needs of their young people.</p>	<p><i>Decision-makers invite young people to meetings that make decisions.</i></p> <p>Decision-makers will role model youth participation by ensuring they create space for and support young people to have presence in spaces where decisions are being made. These include but are not exclusive to corporate parenting panels, sub-groups and senior leadership meetings.</p>
Act	<p><i>Individuals to co-create agreements to act with young people.</i></p> <p>We focus on doing things with young people and do this by creating a clear plan and a timeline that explains how we will act based on what we have learnt from them. This is to ensure the young person and individual can take ownership and hold each other accountable to an agreement.</p>	<p><i>Services to develop opportunities with and for young people.</i></p> <p>We have a duty to listen to young people and provide opportunities for them to develop themselves and the services they receive. Where young people are not initially present at discussions that may affect their services, or where their input is needed and could enhance the offer, we will develop creative methods to gain their views. We must be clear about the developmental process: sometimes we will co-design, sometimes we will make an offer first; we will always be open to feedback.</p>	<p><i>Decision-makers to devolve power to young people.</i></p> <p>Decision makers commit to a bottom-up approach and devolve power to young people to enable them to take ownership of the things that are important to them. Devolution will include but is not exclusive to having shared power in recruitment panels, vote on relevant boards, own their agenda in forums, choose to consult on issues that matter to them and can say no to consultations from others.</p>

	Individuals	Services	Decision-Makers
Respond	<p><i>Individuals to always respond to young people with no exceptions.</i> We recognise the ethical and moral duty to always let young people know what we are planning to do with their views, within a reasonable timeframe, even if we haven't been able to do what we originally agreed. There should be no exception to this.</p>	<p><i>Services to be honest with young people about what we can and can't do.</i> Services will ensure they communicate clearly to young people how their views have shaped service development. We recognise that on occasions services may not be able to act, this must also be communicated with a clear explanation why.</p>	<p><i>Decision-makers commit to communicating directly with young people.</i> Our expectation is that if young people are to attend decision-making meetings to share views, young people should expect decision-makers to attend youth forums to share updates. These should form part of a decision-makers routine and be scheduled with the same importance as any other meeting.</p>
Repeat	<p><i>Individuals recognise that participation is everyone's responsibility.</i> We recognise that engagement and participation is everyone's responsibility and that it is not the sole responsibility of a participation team. To ensure participation is diverse, effective and impactful it needs support from everybody from the front-line who can support access to young people, to the decision-makers who can build systems for authentic engagement.</p>	<p><i>Services to develop new opportunities to engage with young people annually.</i> Services recognise that young people have varying needs and that needs change, they will review their offers at least annually for young people and adapt dependant on the needs at that time. Services will pay particular focus on young people with special educational needs, disabilities, those who are considered vulnerable and in need of extra support.</p>	<p><i>Decision-makers to offer a permanent invitation for young people in decision making spaces.</i> Decision makers will ensure that young people have a permanent invitation to all appropriate decision-making spaces and that they are supported to attend.</p>

5.2 Developing Participation within our Services

How we plan to engage with young people in the future

We know that youth participation should be embedded in all our service areas and that everyone should take an active role in ensuring young people have opportunities to engage in service development whilst developing themselves.

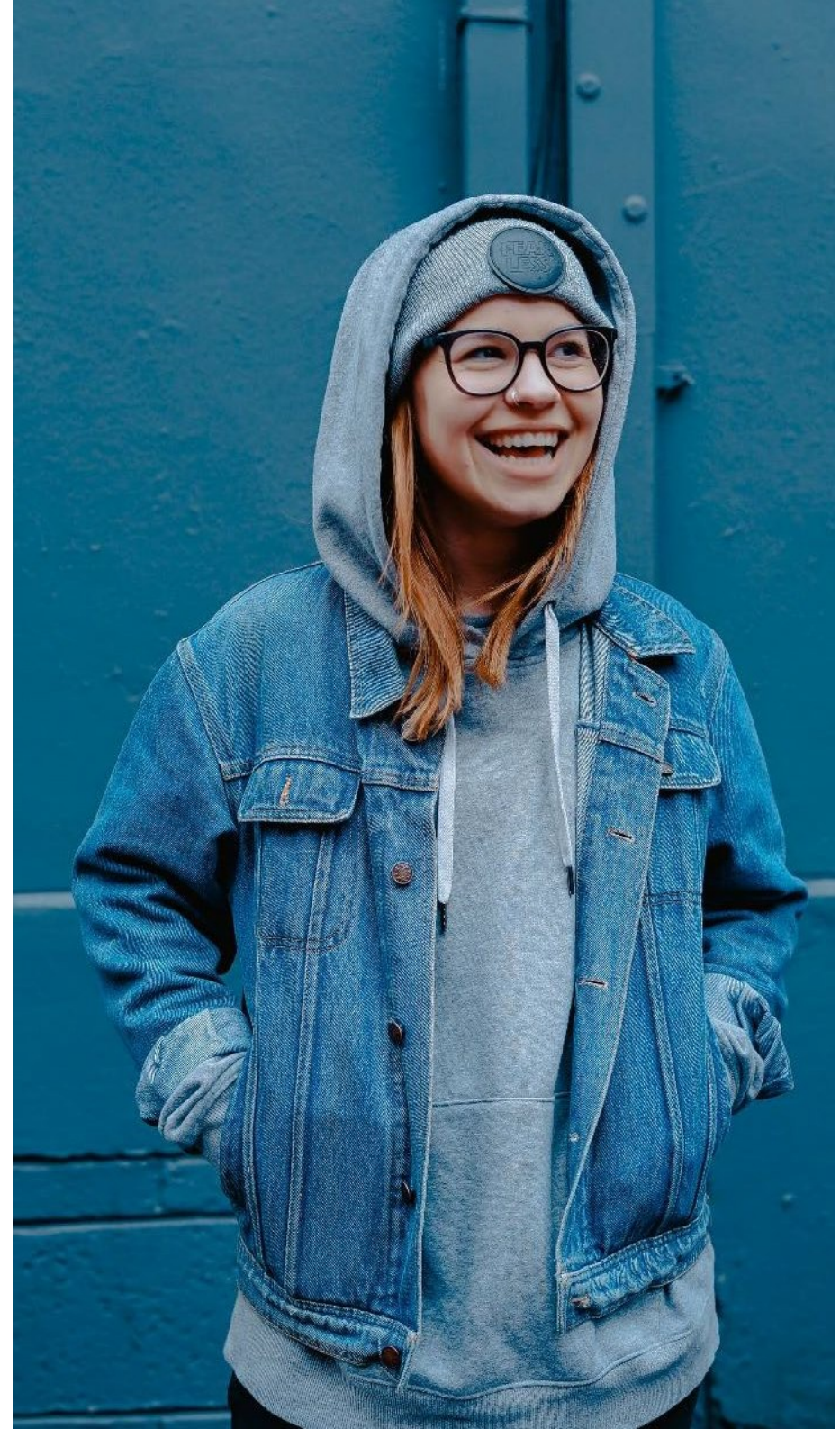
This section of the strategy explains what we are currently doing and how we plan to develop our youth participation offer.

5.2.1 Youth Voice Bucks

Context

Youth Voice Bucks is the new brand that will bring together all the participation activity across the local authority. Youth Voice Bucks is focused on listening to young people, acting on their views and responding to them to let them know what impact they have had. Its work will encompass the Specialist Participation Team, individuals responsible for youth engagement within the Family Support Service and wider Children's Services teams.

The concept of Youth Voice Bucks was developed to ensure we have one clear participation brand for all young people, displaying a clear and consistent message and have an up to date, engaging and youth focused design. From feedback we recognised the term 'specialist participation team' was difficult to explain and labels particular groups of young people as different, which is contrary the work of the 'We Do Care' and their 'Language that Cares' campaign. Therefore, children and young



people who are looked after or have special educational needs will share their voice through tailored opportunities which contribute to Youth Voice Bucks.

We have developed 4 service areas that focus on engaging young people in a diverse, effective and meaningful way, while actively involving individuals, services and decision-makers.

Our 4 service areas/offers:

1. Champions Programme

A forum of individuals from children's services focused on developing opportunities for young people to develop themselves and the services they and others receive.

2. Activities

Bringing young people together to experience new things and have fun whilst getting their voices heard.

3. Forums

Forums that engage young people in conversations about the services they receive, sharing their views, opinions and ideas about how to develop them.

4. Training

Providing training for service areas that support them to engage with their young people.

5.2.2 Youth Voice and the Youth Voice Bucks Executive Committee

Engaging with young people from all 16 localities across Buckinghamshire.

We want our young people to be proud of living in Buckinghamshire and have ambitions for themselves and their peers. Our proposed partnership between Youth Voice and The Executive Committee enables a collaborative and trusting working relationship that gives young people an active role to strengthen our community, supporting Buckinghamshire's key priority to make it the best place to live for all young people.

Youth Voice is a place where young people can have their voices heard to benefit and strengthen our community, raise the issues that they are most passionate about and take an active role in making Buckinghamshire the best place to live for all young people. Youth Voice is open to 11- to 19-year-olds (or up to 25 years old for young people with a disability or learning disability) from Buckinghamshire.

Young people's governance of Youth Voice Bucks is managed through a new Youth Voice Bucks Executive Committee. The Committee will have representation from each locality within the county and, over time, from other youth forums including 'We Do Care' and 'Shout Out for SEND'. The committee will be chaired and managed by young people and will be able to call on officers for consultation and support.

The Executive Committee informs senior leaders from the council about youth issues and undertakes programmes of work to improve local services. There is also the opportunity to represent the county at national events too. Youth Voice is coordinated by the Community Youth Team based within the Family Support Service.

With the Community Boards now established across the county and the existing Youth Voice Executive Committee in place there is a real opportunity to link them together to the benefit of both, ensuring that Youth Participation is embedded as part of this key new process in Buckinghamshire.

There is an opportunity for young people to get involved in the following ways:

- Attend Community Board meetings as official members ensuring their voice is heard and consulted.
- Be given budget responsibility as a Youth Voice Executive Committee to drive forward identified change.
- Consult on key Local Authority Priorities.
- Assess relevant applications to the board and offer input, particularly those with a youth focus.
- Support with recruitment of young people to those boards in need.

Proposed Model

Our ambition is to have 2 Ambassadors from each Community Board area identified to join the Youth Voice Bucks Executive Committee. They will represent their board at meetings and feedback relevant information/opportunities to their Community Board for further discussion and actions. This may then lead to discussions at Youth Voice where key trends are identified to be taken forward by the Youth Voice group as countywide or area-specific actions and opportunities.

This will make the Youth Voice Executive Committee stronger with wider representation, while ensuring that Community Boards are inclusive to young people.

Training

We will provide training to both Community Board members and Community Board Coordinators as part of an induction process. This training will focus on three main areas:

1. Engagement with young people
2. Introducing the model and ensuring this process is understood and being used as a standard approach across each of the boards.
3. Highlighting the role of Ambassadors.

5.2.3 'We Do Care' - Buckinghamshire's Children in Care Council

Engaging with our care experienced young people.

'We Do Care' gives children and young people with experience of care a chance to have their say on issues that matter to them, to make sure that they are listened to by social workers, managers and decision-makers in the council, and to make a difference to the lives of children and young people in care and care leavers.

The Children in Care Council is a group of children and young people who are either in care or a Care Leaver. Their ages range from 5-12 ('We Do Care' Juniors), 12 plus ('We Do Care' Seniors) and 18 plus (Care Leavers).

What we do:

- Talk to decision makers about being in care in Buckinghamshire
- Share ideas about how to improve services for children and young people in care and Care Leavers

- Help interview people who want to work with children and young people
- Organise events like fun days and an award event to celebrate the success of children in care and Care Leavers

Examples of 'We do Care' projects

- **Using Language that Cares**

Our young people developed a video that explained what it means to be in care and what language we need to be using when speaking about young people. The video can be viewed [here](#)

- **'Things to know about care' booklets**

We Do Care Supported the development of booklets that explain what it means to be in care. These can be viewed [here](#)

Online Brochure

We are developing our digital presence to ensure we have an online brochure that can share the opportunities available for young people to participate, we also recognise we have some improvements to make to ensure some of our most vulnerable young people know where to go to access information such as care leavers accessing their rights and entitlements.

Message from young people: 'Being a good Corporate Parent means that you listen to us and that you do not dominate. Whilst not replacing the parenting role, being a good corporate parent means having clear boundaries, helping us settle into new homes and getting the most out of these new routines, ensuring that we feel safe, can sleep and eat well and that there is always someone there for us to talk to and to develop our interests. A Corporate Parent builds our confidence and helps us work through our feelings.'

5.2.4 Shout out for SEND

Shout out for SEND (SOFS) gives children and young people with SEND a chance to have their say on issues that matter to them, to make sure that they are listened to by workers, managers and decision makers in the council, and to make a difference to the lives of children and young people receiving SEND services.

There are a number of ways in which young people can participate. These include:

- Shout Out Reps – where representatives speak for their school, college, friends and community. Reps meet virtually once a month to share the views of young people with SEND in Buckinghamshire.
- SEND Young Inspectors - young people (Inspectors) visit local activities and clubs to check they can meet the needs of young people with SEND. Their reports aid others in finding what a club or activity is like before they go.
- Annual conference for young people - a day of creative and fun activities, for young people with SEND with the opportunity to talk to senior people at Buckinghamshire Council.
- Young people's group - meet every month during school term time, providing the opportunity to develop confidence, self-esteem, improve teamwork skills and share views and help other young people with SEND.
- Activity days - young people with SEND take part in new and fun activities, usually during the school holidays, which also provides opportunities to give their views to influence the support and services provided for SEND children and young people.

SEND Co-Production Pledge

Our SEND Co-production Pledge puts the needs of the individual at the heart of all decision-making processes and the support services that are provided.

Our SEND Co-production Pledge principles:

- Everyone is welcome and treated with care and respect
- Everyone's opinion is not only listened to, but is equally valued and included
- Everyone is communicated with respectfully and in a timely fashion

- Everyone works together to achieve the best outcomes, offering compromise where necessary
- Everyone acts with trust and transparency

The pledge is aimed at all levels of the organisation which include;

- Individually – where an individual can influence the support and services they need. Their voice is heard, they feel empowered about the decisions being made about their future.
- Collectively – where two or more people influence the way services are designed, commissioned and delivered.
- Strategically – where co-production is an embedded culture of inclusion. Individuals, families, groups and organisations can influence equally services, commissioning, monitoring and new projects.

5.2.5 Champions Programme

A staff forum of colleagues focused on developing opportunities for young people, self-development and the services they receive.

While the perception of previous participation efforts is that the focus has been on providing consultation opportunities for young people, we believe participation is so much more.

Our Champions Programme brings together individuals from across children's services and the partnership to develop creative ways to engage with young people [see section 6. Service commitments to young people].

Based on our participation principles, the champions have 4 clear aims:

- 1. Listen:** Services to use creative methods to listen to young people.
- 2. Act:** Services to develop opportunities with and for young people.
- 3. Respond:** Services to honest with young people about what we can and can't do.
- 4. Repeat:** Services to develop new opportunities to engage with young people annually.

Champions are volunteers from across Children's Services who work together to ensure that youth participation activities are integral to service development and delivery. Every service area commits to providing a champion, who will support for as long as their role allows.

Champions are provided with training to learn about how to create opportunities for young people to develop both themselves and the services they receive.

Champions have 4 meetings a year where they discuss the opportunities that they have identified and developed for young people. They also work with Youth Voice Bucks and decision-makers to remove barriers that might prevent young people from engaging, and will nominate adults and young people for 'recognition awards' to celebrate good practice.

Upon ending involvement, the outgoing Champion will discuss the opportunity with colleagues, nominate and appoint someone else from the represented service area to become the service participation Champion. The services represented are listed in Appendix A.

Once embedded within Children's Services, the Champion model will be expanded into the wider council and partner agencies.

6. The Future for Participation

How we are developing opportunities for youth participation

6.1 Champion's Commitments to Participation

Our Champions are developing opportunities for young people to engage in their service area. They recognise that for participation to be great a joined up approach should be developed to ensure Buckinghamshire offer a robust and meaningful youth participation offer.

As part of the initial Champions Programme, attendees were asked to research and identify:

- Current participation activities in their service
- Their vision for participation
- The barriers that are preventing them from achieving their vision
- The impact of achieving their vision

From these responses, we can create a 'whole system' view of participation, giving us vital information that enables Champions to think creatively about solutions to providing meaningful engagement opportunities for young people. These commitments will be reviewed and developed through the Champions Group and will form part of the impact



monitoring activity. See Appendix A for the Champion's Participation Research and Appendix B for the Opportunities by Service Area. Once established, the intention is for the wider Council and then partner agencies to adopt the Champions approach.

6.2 Participation Development Opportunities

Our ambitious plan to develop youth participation in Buckinghamshire

This section explains our ideas around engaging with young people across Buckinghamshire. These opportunities have been developed through engagement with our Champions, Specialist Participation Team and Family Support Service, and have been informed by feedback from our Corporate Parenting Panel.

6.2.1 Annual Surveys

Champions to develop annual surveys to consult with young people

We recognise that capturing of the views of young people is key to ensuring that our services can be developed to best support them. We also understand that service areas request consultations at different times throughout the year, many surveys ask similar questions and can lead to 'over consultation' with young people.

Through the Champions we will agree annual surveys to hear the views of young people. These surveys will be designed to ensure we ask young people relevant questions, so that all service areas can benefit from young people's feedback. We will also ensure that surveys will be scheduled mindfully throughout the year so that young people are not 'over consulted'.

6.2.2 Training

For young people, staff and leaders

It is important to develop the relevant skills to understand how to engage with young people. Providing development opportunities to staff, young people and leaders will help us build a culture of outstanding participation across Buckinghamshire. We plan to explore development opportunities for young people to learn skills in facilitation, presentation and leadership so they can effectively engage with our service.

For staff, we aim to offer training that develops their skills in engaging with young people, with a particular focus on engagement with SEND young people. Finally, training for leaders will be based on our new approach to participation ensuring we have buy-in at every level of Buckinghamshire. We will be providing training that will support our community board members, lead members and participation champions to understand how to engage with young people and understand their corporate parenting responsibility. This training will include learning to enable adults to understand the new participation strategy and to recognise the lived experiences of young people in Buckinghamshire. This training will be provided by lived experience leaders who have personal and professional experience of children's services and our partner services.

6.2.3 Digital Offer

Communications and Web Content

We know that most young people now access and engage with information digitally. Our aim is to develop our digital offer to reflect the participation opportunities. Developing our digital offer will focus on two areas; firstly, to share online the opportunities for young people to engage through forums, activities and conversations: secondly, to provide information about rights, entitlements, events and other useful content.

We have 'rebranded' participation as 'Youth Voice Bucks' which will bring together all the participation activity across the local authority. This branding will enhance our ability to engage digitally with young people through visually appealing content.



6.2.4 Youth Apprenticeships

Supporting young people into employment

From our work with Champions we have identified existing opportunities for young people to engage with services (See 6.1.1). These opportunities range from interviewing potential staff, supporting training, developing resources, engaging in decision-making spaces and more. Usually, individual service areas would reach out and ask young people to volunteer their time to support with these requests, often asking the same young people to be involved. Our focus here is to identify opportunities from all service areas and create a coordinated set of activities that could be suitable for an apprentice.

6.2.5 Mentorship Programme

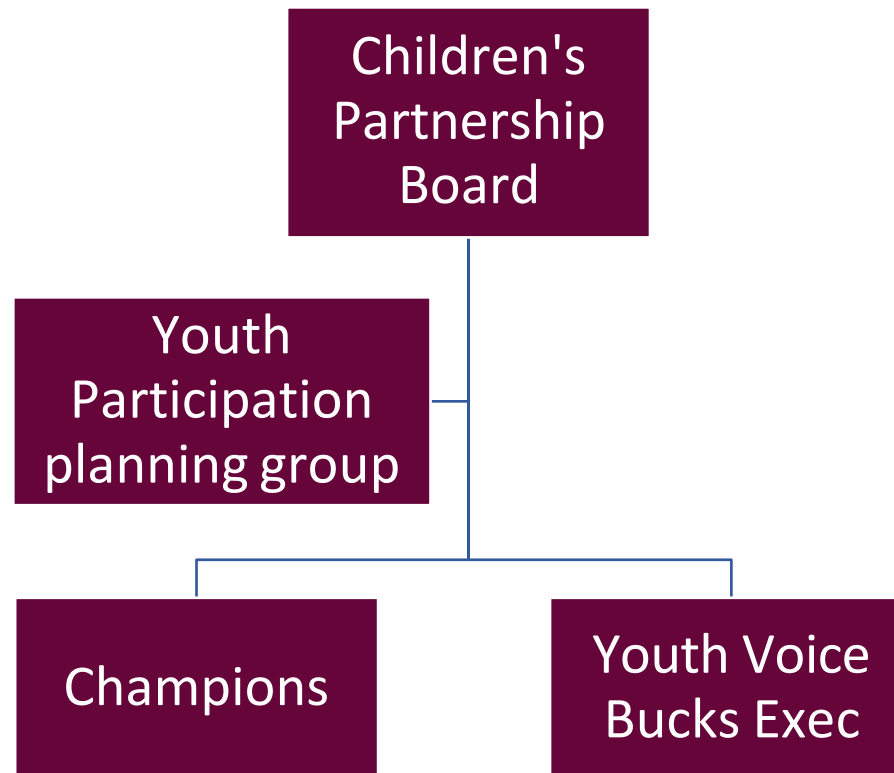
Providing young people with a mentor to learn skills and develop interests

Our mentor programme will provide mentors who are able support young people to develop their skills, interests and hobbies. Mentors will be volunteers from the employee pool within local authority. Recognising that we have various sectors within our organisation we have the potential to access individuals with a wide range of expertise from law, health, social care, finance and more. We are also asking volunteers who have a skill or hobby that they can share to become a mentor, enabling us to offer mentorship based on people's interests which could include playing an instrument, sport, music, art and more.

7. Governance

The governance for Youth Voice Buckinghamshire will mirror existing governance processes and reporting but with the addition of the Youth Voice Bucks Executive Committee, which will receive and write reports and be able to call on the support of officers and members to fully understand and respond to strategic and operational development outlined in this strategy or in other developmental areas.

7.1 Governance Tree



7.2 Governance Tree - Overview

To ensure we have the most senior buy-in and can hand over appropriate power, our Children's Partnership Board will oversee the participation strategy.

Our Youth Participation Planning group is made up of Youth Voice representatives, the Participation Coordinator, Specialist Participation Team Manager, Community Youth Service Development Manager, Participation Champion Representative and Heads of Service for Early Help and Social Care (or delegate) whose responsibility is to create an action plan to ensure we implement our participation strategy, monitor KPIs and maintain senior oversight.

The Champions are individuals from the services areas outlined in section 5.2.5 of this strategy whose primary focus will be supporting Youth Voice Bucks by providing and evidencing participation opportunities for young people.

Increasing engagement and participation will bring benefits to Buckinghamshire's young people, and the whole council. As such, the ambitions in this strategy should be widely known and understood so everybody contributes to maximising the impact the new strategy and approach can bring. Youth Voice Bucks is the service dedicated to enhancing participation activity across Buckinghamshire Council but it cannot achieve our strategic goals without the full support of children's service staff, council officers, Members and partner agencies.

8. KPIs and outcomes

Youth Voice Bucks Executive Committee to receive quarterly report from each service area covering:

Listen, Act, Respond and Repeat

Increased effectiveness and engagement of young people's consultation:

- Number of participation/consultation events and opportunities
- Number and diversity of young people engaged
- Outcomes from proposals made by young people: response given, action taken and impact

When consultation with young people has happened, individuals/services can produce a clear agreement that states what actions were committed to, the impact it had and what response was given to the young person.

Youth Participation Planning Group

This subgroup will be responsible for overseeing the progress of the strategy and impact on youth participation. Once the participation planning group is established and the action plan for implementation of the strategy agreed, the group will also confirm KPI targets for the forthcoming year, April 2022 – March 2023, which will include:

- Levels of engagement and participation (e.g. the number of opportunities and attendance)
- Training engagement and impact
- Feedback from young people
- Examples of positive change



The planning group will monitor performance and progress on a quarterly basis and provide an annual report to the Children's Partnership Board to demonstrate the progress towards the aspirations of the strategy. The group will also be responsible for the review and setting of new KPI targets each year.

Baseline Data

We recognise that baseline data has not been previously captured. Therefore our commitment is to capture data that can be used to hold us to account to ensure we provide effective youth participation and so that we can understand the impact we are making. As a starting point, baseline data will be captured through participation work across Children's Service, through the Champions network. We will clearly evidence where young people have authentic power in decision making, and will demonstrate progression towards solving our 9 challenges of participation through case studies and examples of change.

Outcomes

The action plan and KPIs will ensure that the strategy delivers on its aims and make a demonstrable difference. The outcomes that we expect to see include:

- Increased number of diverse participation opportunities.
- More young people attending participation activities and groups.
Wider representation of young people attending participation activities, including those with SEND, those from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities and the LGBTQ+ community.
- Clear evidence through case studies of actions taken as a direct result of listening to young people's voices.
- A well-attended and active champion network in place for Children's Services, with members from the wider council and partner agencies, who can provide clear evidence of the opportunities made available to young people and the changes made as a result.
- Young people report that they feel listened to, know that action will be taken and can see the difference they are making.

9. Reference and Index

In developing this strategy, we have engaged with:

- The Unitary Council's Community Boards and their development with the Youth Voice Executive Committee.
- The Specialist Participation Team and their engagement with young people considered 'vulnerable', particularly those who have care experience.
- Representatives from service areas across children's services and the partnerships working with young people including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Senior leadership and their vision for participation and engagement.

We have also referenced and considered local documents including:

- Buckinghamshire's Children & Young People's Partnership Plan 2019 – 2024.
- Children's Service Plan.
- Corporate Plan 2020 – 2023.
- Corporate Values Proud, Ambitious, Collaborative, Trustworthy (PACT).
- Buckinghamshire Partnership Early Help Strategy 2019 - 2022.
- Buckinghamshire's Equality Objectives.
- Buckinghamshire's Equality Policy 2020 –2023.
- SEND Co-Production Pledge 2021.
- OFSTED services inspection 2018 and 5 monitoring visits between 03 July 2018 – 24th February 2021.
- Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Additionally, we have taken guidance from:

- Department for Education's Government Design Principles.
- Department for Education's Participation of young people in education, employment or training.

- Understanding accessibility requirements for public sector bodies (Gov.uk)
- Plain English Campaign
- UN Conventions for the Rights of the Child

10. Contact

If you would like to speak to us about this strategy you can contact us by emailing youthvoicebucks@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or by calling 01296 382583.



Appendix A – Champions’ Participation Research

	Current Youth Participation Activities	Vision for Youth Participation	Barriers to Overcome to Achieve Vision	Impact of the Vision	Opportunities
Youth Offending Service	<p>Young people are consulted on their individual intervention plans as part of the assessment process. They complete a self-assessment that gives feedback on various elements of their life which is then triangulated with information gathered from other sources. We have involved young people in recruitment processes in the past and gather feedback from every young person at the end of their intervention, asking them about each stage of the criminal justice</p>	<p>We gather feedback but I want to see us do something more meaningful with this and make positive, tangible change. I would love for a young person to attend our Partnership Board so strategic partners can hear their experiences first-hand and I would love to see the collective voice of young people within strategic decision-making processes. – Becky</p> <p>Have young people involved in the decision making and shaping of the YOS, including on a strategic level. Not only doing interviews but being transparent and honouring the weighting the YP panel have in interviews. Forming a pathway of opportunities including potential employment within the Council. - Lisa</p>	<p>Resources. Partnership buy in. Ensuring young people feel safe to share, both with professionals and other young people.</p> <p>Clear planning and process for staff including partners, supporting and training young people with a variety of forums to engage.</p> <p>Resources available in the community, resources available to the Youth Offending Service, having a digital platform would be helpful for young people to access as there is so much information and</p>	<p>Services are more effective and young people feel valued.</p> <p>Increased confidence, voice, transferable skills into their education/employment/family settings. Making a positive difference to make change to future services.</p> <p>Young people feeling more involved, young people feeling hopeful about the future, creating positive outcomes that can continue to benefit young people long after they've finished their contact with the YOS.</p>	<p>Young person to attend our Partnership Board</p> <p>Honouring the weighting the YP panel have in interviews</p> <p>Supporting and training young people with a variety of forums</p> <p>Access to opportunities and resources to help them develop the skills to avoid further contact with the system</p> <p>Training for senior leaders about youth engagement</p>

	<p>programme and supporting them to consider how they felt about each of these.</p> <p>Forming and sequencing action plans, feedback form at end of interventions, supporting with young people interview panels.</p> <p>Young people coming to the YOS are involved in their sentence planning, they give feedback on interventions, they are encouraged to make suggestions of how sessions will work best for them (e.g. appointments taking place in the community instead of the office, shorter sessions etc) and we try to accommodate this where possible.</p>	<p>For young people to be supported through their contact with the Criminal Justice System and be provided with access to opportunities and resources to help them develop the skills to avoid further contact with the system. – Melissa</p> <p>Resources. Partnership buy in. Ensuring young people feel safe to share, both with professionals and other young people.</p>	<p>jargon associated with the Criminal Justice System so an easy way for them to get local information about Court processes, opportunities (such as ETE) etc would be great</p>		<p>Develop copy/inset with young people to add to Youth Voice Buckinghamshire brochure site that explains the criminal justice system.</p>
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Family Support Service/ Children's Services Education	Youth Executive Voice group, SEND and Child Looked After Youth Voice Groups - the SEND and CLA youth voice groups are currently a little more developed than the executive group, with paid staff assigned to the running of the former as their main jobs. All 3 these groups include consultation, engagement activities and training	We would like to see participation embedded in strategic thinking and policymaking of services that affect them as well as the county. This includes a coherent strategy for making this work, including appropriate resourcing for youth participation	Staff resourcing, local authority processes including management buy-in and support, communication rules and policymaking	A county where young people and their communities feel safe, supported and empowered to contribute and live fulfilled lives.	<p>Decision-makers to offer a permanent invitation for young people in decision making spaces.</p> <p>Young people participate in recruitment of staff, particularly Youth Family Support Workers.</p> <p>Young people participate in further development the FSS Service provision, delivery and Family Centre spaces.</p> <p>Youth representative(s) attend and are active members of the EH Strategy governance group.</p>
Children in Care Team	From the Children in Care Team this includes: Direct work with children and young people by social workers to	We want the Children in Care Team to be a place where we are not just 'corporate parents' who do things for children and young people, but also do things with them. I want children and young	The Children in Care Team is just beginning to find stability after a time of overwhelming caseloads and changes of social workers. We	To have a service that keeps children and young people at the heart of all we do, to have better relationships for children and young people with their social workers,	<p>Disseminate Language that cares more widely</p> <p>Children and young people to come to</p>

	gather their views about their care plan. Inviting children and young people to attend CLA Reviews and PEP meetings.	people to be actively involved in saying what they want for their care plans (and for this to be reflected in the language we use in assessments and care plans), but also what they want from the service as whole. For example, to have direct feedback from children and young people about social work practice; to give them a voice that we listen to and make changes as a result. The expert in knowing what a social worker needs should do and be like, are the children and young people who we work with. I'd like children and young people to come to training sessions/team meetings to help my team to make sure they are always thinking about what work they do and why. Often as adults we can overcomplicate and create jargon filled processes. I want there to be simple, fun, and easy ways to provide feedback and to be involved.	are still concentrating on getting the basics right and there is a lot of work to do - so it's about what to focus on first. I think people can be stuck in their habits of how they practice social work - and to think about change can be difficult. People have caseloads that are too high so to add in any other work can feel/be overwhelming. A small proportion of children in care go to the participation group, so we're only getting feedback from a relatively small group compared to the number of children/young people in care.	where they feel listened to and their views are valued, and to know they are cared for. The journey into care is never going to be an easy one; it's related to trauma and loss. However, once children are in care, I want to make that experience as supportive and positive as we can.	training sessions/team meetings
Children and Young Adults Disability Service	Very limited for children and young people with additional needs in my service. There has recently been a	That children and young people with additional learning physical and medical needs are enabled to have their views and voices heard. If there were to be a participation job role that person	TIME, resources, accessibility. For our team engagement with other services education health etc is great but it would	They children and young people will feel empowered and heard.	Provide training about how to engage with young people who have additional or complex needs

	<p>consultation for the 0 to 25 CYA disability service and an agency we used to gather views with the young people but these were not with the young people with the most complex needs who our team support so I don't not feel it was a true reflection for our team. There are significant challenges to obtaining Children and young adults views. We have resource to obtain views within our team and we try to establish their views as best we can.</p>	<p>would need to have a good knowledge of children and young people with additional and complex needs.</p>	<p>need us all to work together to enable young people with complex additional needs to be heard.</p>		
Virtual School	<p>The young person is invited to every PEP and they can contribute verbally. They also complete a section of the ePEP with a trusted person in the education setting to help</p>	<p>To have a clearer view of the voice of young people, active engagement with young people through listening to their needs and trying to implement them where possible and if appropriate. – Trudi</p> <p>More ways for the young people to communicate with us, more</p>	<p>YP need to be able to access an online forum where they can get answers to queries and access help without going through a third party</p> <p>To be able to provide a way of getting</p>	<p>that YP feel validated through being heard.</p> <p>PEP will be relevant to the young person and reflect their plans for the future and the actions and support needed. It won't be just a process.</p>	<p>Develop an online forum for young people to ask questions about education</p> <p>Develop inset for Virtual School on the Youth Voice</p>

	prepare for the PEP meeting	input from them on what makes a good PEP meeting, more focus on their voice, wishes and ideas. - Sara	information to our young people more quickly, in a way they can interact with rather than keep going through the social worker and carers/key workers. To be more open to having leaving care ambassadors rather than always being risk averse to everything.		Buckinghamshire Website Create care leaver ambassador role within the virtual school
Children's Social Care (Court Team)	For my team it is completed through wishes and feelings/direct work, this can be useful but can also sometimes feel like a tick box exercise as often it doesn't end with a resolution.	I would like the voice of the child/YP to actually be heard. One of the missions was for the journey of the child to be clear throughout their SC involvement and to show the journey they had made etc. and it is shown but often through work completed by professionals e.g. LAC reviews but there doesn't seem to be an area that really shows the child participated to give their voice.	The team I work in is time limited and then moves over to another team, there are also staffing issues and the case load numbers are very high for the number of staff in the team, there just doesn't feel like there is enough time to cover everything.	It will hopefully get them the right services, it will enable them towards the future to know that they can speak up, it will give them a little bit of power (not sure that is the right word) in what happens in their future. It will enable them to work with professionals rather than against them.	Create a visual journey (infographic) to explain the journey into care
Education Psychology, Children's Services Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of our role as educational psychologists is to elicit and promote the voice of the CYP we are involved with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All CYP will feel that they are able to participate meaningfully in decisions about them. All CYP will feel that their views are both heard and understood by adults working with them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring all partners understand the needs and challenges to participation CYP face at an individual level across the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each CYP would feel meaningfully included in the various systems around them. Longer term, there would be a stronger sense of 	Education Psychology to offer training to the wider council Staff to be Makaton trained

	<p>in statutory processes such as an EHC needs assessment or Annual Review for an EHCP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In promoting CYP's views we use a range of tools and techniques to promote active participation, including consultation skills, solution focussed questioning, visual cues such as strength cards. • As well as trying to elicit their views we look to draft outcomes and targets based on the aspirations and interests centred around what the CYP has told us, in order to promote a sense of agency and ownership for the CYP over decisions being made for and about them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All CYP will know what happens to the information/views they share when we ask them to participate with county wide policy development. • All staff working with CYP in the county would be Makaton trained. • All staff working with CYP in the county would feel comfortable with and be using visual prompts and cues to aid communication with CYP. • All staff working with CYP in the county would have sound knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues and be sensitive to them when working with CYP. • CYP would rate all staff they encounter in the local authority as accessible if they were to rate us on a scale 1-10. • CYP would communicate having confidence in the adults they work with and feel they could share in an open and safe way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that we are ethical in how we seek participation of CYP and what we do with the information we gather. • Ensure funding and time is available for appropriate training. • Consistent buy in and valued placed on participation strategies from senior leaders at the council. 	<p>community value and spirit amongst CYP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff would feel more equipped and confident in their skills and this in turn would have a positive effect of the relationships built with CYP. • The Local Authority would be identified as a leading advocate of inclusion and CYP engagement. 	<p>Campaign to get young people to 'rate their worker'</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We also seek consent/assent from each CYP we work with. 				
Missing and Exploitation Hub	Using advocates, strength and difficulty questionnaires, direct relationship-based work.	We need better face to face consultation with our children and young people to support our understanding of what is important for them, how they want us work with them etc, this needs to be acted upon not just given lip service. For instance, having an advocate to voice the child's voice at conference, this needs to formulate part of the child's plan, even if what they are saying is not safe, it needs to be acknowledged in the plan and feedback to the child so that they know they have been heard and have some power over their own destiny. In addition, these plans need to be child/young person friendly, so that a child can truly be part of it. This needs to go further, children need to be part of formulating this and helping to create a process that can empower them. In my service, I would like to get to a point where we not only ask children to support our understanding but	Concerns about risk to the LA. For instance, asking young people to be champions/experts to support other young people, could be emotionally triggering for them, the LA would be concerned with regards to this risk. Although a young person is the expert in their own experience, there would also be concern that their experience may have created different norms and values which could be unsafe for to share with other children, all of this risk could be mitigated with good supervision and management	I would like children that have been victim of exploitation to help professionals understand what they found beneficial in the multi-agency response and what they found harmful/unhelpful, I would then like to create a program for these children to support other young people who are still being exploited, in terms of impact, I feel that this would empower victims too become mentors, improve trust with professionals and will also improve the response to children still being exploited, as they are more likely to talk to a peer and we are more likely to gain an understanding of what is actually important for the child rather than what we think is important to the child.	Care Leavers/Teenage ambassadors 'Peer to Peer' support programme

		get to a place where these young people are empowered enough to then support other children with similar circumstances.			
Help and Protection Team	In the Help & Protection Team direct work is completed with children and young people to determine their views and wishes. Before CIN or CP reviews children are invited to come along and share their views. Most children and YP choose to not attend but pass on their views to SW in consolation prior to meetings.	What I have found powerful in my role is when you receive service user feedback - for example from care leavers talking about their experiences and what they found supportive and what they didn't like such as how upsetting every day professional language like LAC can impact on young people and how this makes them feel. This makes you reflect and consider the language you use and record.	In the HAP team we support babies - 18 yr olds so this is a very varied age range to tailor a vision for. It's difficult as our goal is to not work long term with families its short interventions to then close or step down, so I am unsure how participation long term could look. It's also difficult with time constraints. Not everybody has the same training and approach.	If they look back at their case file in years to come, it needs to show their journey in a respectful and clear way that doesn't involve using professional jargon that can cause offence and make them feel unimportant.	Life story work Training for staff
Leaving Care	We do not have enough care leavers engaging in participation within the leaving care service, the youth/ participation team should work more collaboratively with	Care leaver can participate in reviewing our policies, procedures and standard documents & get involved in staff recruitment A video to send to our new care leavers to inform them what to expect from the leaving care	Motivating care leavers to participate Location and access Young people don't want to engage when they don't know anyone	The service will be tailored to meet the needs of our care leavers identifying what works and what doesn't work	Care leaver to be involved in reviewing policies, OFSTED inspections, attendance to national and local events and staff recruitment

	<p>care leaver, this needs to improve</p>	<p>team and transitioning into adulthood including Adult social care, CHC, Probation.</p> <p>A video to send to our care leavers re: 21-25 service</p> <p>Care leaver to be a “mentor” or care leaver champion with support and guidance from one of our PA’s</p> <p>Involvement with Ofsted inspections</p> <p>Involvement to organise events and forums e.g. LGBTQ+ care leaver forum and Diversity forum and national care leaver week.</p> <p>WhatsApp group for care leavers</p> <p>A care leavers group represents the views of care leavers aged 18 onwards. Perhaps meet once a month/ bi-monthly and discuss issues to do with leaving care and everything related to transitioning into adulthood and other Adult services, Adult social care, AMHT.</p>	<p>Young Parents - what activities can they do? Childcare?</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>Out of county Care leavers</p> <p>Age-appropriate activities such as over 18 groups</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Being with other care leavers, conflict</p> <p>Having a label being a “care leaver” Care experience or former looked after – changing the language we use</p>		<p>Care leavers to develop media for other care leavers</p> <p>Care leaver as a mentor</p> <p>Organising events for other care leavers</p> <p>Development of a care leavers forum</p>
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		<p>Employment guarantee for care leavers - Employment Guarantee is an opportunity for care leavers to get extra support and experiences of work to help them get into employment. Work with ETE providers and DWP/ Bucks HR, work coaches, find local work experience places for care leavers</p> <p>Buckinghamshire to engage UK Artist (music, music management) www.apprenticenation.co.uk ETE opportunities</p> <p>Accessible venue - in a safe and comfortable environment</p> <p>Not using labels such as; “care leaver” Care experience or former looked after – but look at changing at the language we use</p> <p>Care leaver to participate in national Bench Catch 22 – forum</p> <p>AQA awards to be implemented to our care leaver</p>			
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Appendix B - Opportunities by Service Area

This table highlights the opportunities for young people to engage in service areas identified from the Champion's Programme.

Opportunity	Service Area
<p>Young person to attend our Partnership Board</p> <p>Honouring the weighting the YP panel have in interviews</p> <p>Supporting and training young people with a variety of forums</p> <p>Access to opportunities and resources to help them develop the skills to avoid further contact with the system</p> <p>Training for senior leaders about youth engagement</p> <p>Develop copy/inset with young people to add to Youth Voice Buckinghamshire brochure site that explains the criminal justice system.</p>	Youth Offending Service
<p>Decision-makers to offer a permanent invitation for young people in decision making spaces.</p> <p>Young people participate in recruitment of staff, particularly Youth Family Support Workers.</p> <p>Young people participate in further development the FSS Service provision, delivery and Family Centre spaces.</p> <p>Youth representative(s) attend and are active members of the EH Strategy governance group.</p>	Family Support Service, Children's Services Education
<p>Disseminate Language that cares more widely</p> <p>Children and young people to come to training sessions/team meetings</p>	Children in Care Team
<p>Provide training about how to engage with young people who have additional or complex needs</p>	Children and Young Adults Disability Service
<p>Develop an online forum for young people to ask questions about education</p> <p>Develop inset for Virtual School on the Youth Voice Buckinghamshire Website</p> <p>Create care leaver ambassador role within the virtual school</p>	Virtual School
<p>Create a visual journey (infographic) to explain the journey into care</p>	Children's Social Care (Court Team)
<p>Education Psychology to offer training to the wider council</p> <p>Staff to be Makaton trained</p> <p>Campaign to get young people to 'rate their worker'</p>	Education Psychology, Children's Services Education
<p>Care Leavers/Teenage ambassadors</p> <p>'Peer to Peer' support programme</p>	Missing and Exploitation Hub

Life story work Training for staff	Help and Protection Team
Care leaver to be involved in reviewing policies, OFSTED inspections, attendance to national and local events and staff recruitment Care leavers to develop media for other care leavers Care leaver as a mentor Organising events for other care leavers Development of a care leavers forum	Leaving Care

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Youth Voice Bucks
Young people's version of the
Participation Strategy for young people
2022-25

YOUTH
VOICE
BUCKS

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Our Vision

‘We aim to build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire so that they realise their potential, whatever their starting point is.’



The Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-2025

What does participation mean?

Participation is about how we can involve you in different ways to hear your views and tell you about the action we will take as a result of what you have said. Participation activities include events, fun days out, forums, youth councils/boards, consultations, interview panels, mentoring councillors and more.



What is the Participation Strategy?

Our participation strategy document sets out how we plan to make sure that this happens, the actions we will take and the different ways we will engage with you to make sure your voice makes a difference.

In Buckinghamshire we want to create opportunities for you to talk about the things that matter to you. We want to create simple ways for you to get involved in things that are fun, to help us understand how we can provide you with the best services and for you to know what we will do with what you say. We are committed to making sure that you are listened to and that your views and ideas change the way we provide services for you.

We want you to share with us your views, ideas and thoughts because we believe that your voices are what we need to hear to make Buckinghamshire the best place for young people to live.





Our mission to
engage with the
young people in
Buckinghamshire



- Listen

listen to the views of young people in Buckinghamshire, ensuring we do so in ways that engage, respect the needs and ideas of the widest possible audience

- Act

work with young people to build opportunities, services and a better future which meets young people's needs and which they are part of building

- Respond

respond to the needs, interests and inspirations of young people in a timely and transparent manner, so that their ownership and engagement are maximised

- Repeat

participation will be a process: we listen, act and respond and then we continue to review and develop by listening, acting and responding





What have we said we will do?

These are the top 3 actions that we will take to make sure that participation is the best it can be, that you have opportunities to share your views and that you can see the difference you have made.



1. Develop a new website

This website will tell you about all the exciting events and opportunities that you can get involved in, important information, who to contact and how you can join in. It will include fun activities, participation opportunities, training to help you develop your skills and forums that you can get involved with.

www.youthvoicebucks.co.uk

2. Re-brand participation activity

‘Youth Voice Bucks’ is the name that we have given to all of our participation opportunities and activities. We will use clear language so it’s easy for everyone to understand how to take part and there is a vibrant new look that will help you to recognise Youth Voice Bucks.



3. Change our culture

We want all our colleagues and council partners to understand that participation is everyone's responsibility. We have agreed some ways to change our culture in the Council to make sure that there are lots of opportunities to hear your views and involve you in making decisions and developing services. We will provide training to staff to make sure they have the skills to create opportunities to involve you, listen to you, act on what you say and tell you what they did as a result.

We will have a group of staff called 'Participation Champions' who will be leading on this activity for their own teams but come together as a group to ensure participation is joined up.



Our 3 Rules of Engagement

We have 3 rules ensure we engage with young people ethically and authentically.



Rule 1:

We don't ask young people to do something we would not do ourselves.

Rule 2:

If we want young people to engage in service development, we provide them with development opportunities to ensure they have the skills to do so.

Rule 3:

We only engage with young people if we have a clear strategy about how we will listen, respond and act in a timely, transparent manner that maximises young people's ownership.





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Youth Voice Bucks -
the team that **listen**
to you!





What we do

Youth Voice Bucks aims to bring together all youth participation activity across the Council and its local partners. Our mission for young people is clear: we will listen to you, act on your views and then tell you what difference you have made.

Who we are

Youth Voice Bucks has a core team of staff who run the following projects:

- Youth Voice Executive Committee (including Ambassadors from each Community Board area)
 - We Do Care
 - Shout Out For SEND
- 



These are not the only opportunities we offer you. We are clear that youth participation is the responsibility of everyone who works with young people and we support our colleagues across the Council and partners to understand how to offer meaningful participation opportunities to the young people they work with.

We are also pleased to have an ambitious group of staff who are our ‘Participation Champions’ actively committed to offering you opportunities to get involved and have your voice heard.



Contact Us:

If you would like to speak to us about this strategy you can contact us by emailing youthvoicebucks@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or by calling 01296382583

**YOUTH
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BUCKS**

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Report to Cabinet

Date:	10 May 2022
Title:	Moving Traffic Offences and Camera Enforcement
Relevant councillor(s):	Cllr Steven Broadbent
Author and/or contact officer:	Julie Rushton. Head of Parking Services
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	<p>To approve an application to be submitted to the Department for Transport for Buckinghamshire Council to apply for a Designation Order to enforce moving traffic offences.</p> <p>The cost of the cameras including the processing system is an estimated £276k, which will be covered within the existing capital programme.</p>

Reason for decision:

These powers will enable the Council to directly influence driver behaviour and assist with the operational performance of the highway network. It will also enable the Police to concentrate their time on dealing with other matters.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Department of Transport (DfT) is inviting local authorities with Designation Orders for parking enforcement to apply to enforce moving traffic offences. This would help improve road safety, reduce congestion, and promote active traffic and clean air policies. Enforcement of moving traffic offences outside of London and Cardiff is currently undertaken by the Police.
- 1.2 If approved, enforcement would take place using cameras.

2. Content of report

Background

- 2.1 The Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) places a statutory duty on local authorities to effectively manage the Highway network. Part 6, Schedule 7, of the TMA outlines the road traffic contraventions that are subject to civil enforcement. These are:
- a) Parking contraventions (Part 1 of the Schedule);
 - b) Bus lane contraventions (Part 2 of the Schedule);
 - c) London lorry ban contraventions (Part 3 of the Schedule)
 - d) Moving traffic contraventions (Part 4 of the Schedule).
- 2.2 Across England, all authorities are now permitted to apply and enforce parking and bus lane contraventions. This is by way of an application for a Designation Order. Buckinghamshire Council currently has five Designation Orders, which in their entirety cover the whole of the Buckinghamshire county. The number of Designation Orders is largely due to the timing when legacy councils respectively applied for civil parking enforcement powers covering on and off street, and bus lanes.
- 2.3 Until now, only London authorities have been permitted to utilise the powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions. The Government is now extending this to allow authorities outside of London to apply for Designation Orders for civil enforcement of moving traffic contraventions.
- 2.4 The Statutory Instrument to provide for civil enforcement of moving traffic contraventions outside London has been laid before parliament on 27 January 2022 and is due to come into force on 31 May 2022.
- 2.5 The DfT has advised they will make Designation Orders thereafter in tranches and is aiming to lay the first Designation Order in Spring. To be included in the first tranche, applications must reach DfT by 20th May 2022 at the latest.
- 2.6 Subsequent applications will be considered as they are submitted. The second tranche Designation Order is expected late-2022. This is however subject to demand. Indications from DfT is that Orders will be laid at the most twice yearly.
- 2.7 Applications may be made for the whole, or part of, a local authority area. To reduce demands and pressure on the parliamentary timetable the DfT strongly encourage local authorities to apply for the whole area (where permitted). In accordance with Schedule 8 of the TMA, applications can only be made by local authorities who operate civil parking enforcement and within the area the Designation Order(s) cover.

- 2.8 The recommendation for Buckinghamshire Council is that the application for the Designation Order for civil enforcement of moving traffic contraventions applies to the whole of the Buckinghamshire County. At the same time, the intention is to consolidate the five designation orders, referred to earlier, into one.

Moving Traffic Offences

- 2.9 These powers will enable the Council to enforce certain moving traffic offences such as, no entry, yellow box junctions, banned turns, and environmental weight limits. The powers also allow stopping on school keep clears to be enforced by camera, as long as they are supported by a valid Traffic Regulation Order. A full list of contraventions that can be enforced utilising these powers is provided at Appendix A.
- 2.10 The new powers **do not** allow the Council to enforce structural weight limits; these have not been included on the final list and enforcement of these restrictions will remain with the Police. The difference between an environmental weight restriction and a structural weight restriction is provided at Appendix B.
- 2.11 Taking on the new powers will provide the Council with the ability to further influence driver behaviour, thus assist with the operational performance of the highway network and fully discharge the Council's statutory network management duty.
- 2.12 Enforcement is carried out using an approved device. This is a camera with automatic number plate recognition that has been certified by the VCA (Vehicle Certification Agency).
- 2.13 The key benefits of the Council adopting the new powers include:
- Improved pedestrian and cyclist safety, supporting modal shift to sustainable transport options.
 - Improved safety for drivers including risks associated with reduced visibility. Safety extends to passengers (private car, public transport).
 - Environmental - reduced congestion and improved air quality, thus support the Council's Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy.
 - Improved reliability and punctuality of public transport.
 - Improved response time for emergency service vehicles.
 - Improved air quality, reduction in transport related emissions contributing to carbon net zero targets.
 - Increased safety and cleaner air around schools.
 - Reallocation and saving of police time.

- Deters abuse of restrictions where the problem is such that it cannot be addressed through changes at site, such as design/additional signage, or physical patrols by Civil Enforcement Officers.
- 2.14 In terms of public safety, in some places turning movement bans are being ignored, which can result in a conflict between a vehicle and a pedestrian thereby placing pedestrians and more vulnerable highway users at risk. In other places, vehicles are stopping on school keep clears causing safety concerns and in some areas congestion.
- 2.15 It is important to get the correct balance of locations and types of restrictions. Local authorities are not required to enforce every sign or marking; instead, the guidance provides that enforcement should only be used to target problem locations. This reduces the potential to bring the Council into disrepute, or for enforcement to be seen as a revenue raising exercise. The DfT has further advised that using these new powers should not be the default solution at problem sites. Deterring contraventions by improvements in the area, such as appropriate signage, and appropriate monitoring should be considered beforehand.

Application to DfT

- 2.16 The DfT has provided guidance on the conditions that a local authority must meet and commit to in respect of bringing forward moving traffic enforcement sites. The key requirements are:
- a) Consulted the appropriate Chief Officer of Police.
 - b) Carried out a minimum six-week public consultation on the detail of planned civil enforcement of moving traffic contraventions.
 - c) Considered all objections raised and has taken such steps the Council considers reasonable to resolve any disputes.
 - d) Carried out effective public communication and engagement as the Council considers appropriate, for example using local press and social media, and that this will continue up to the start of enforcement and for a reasonable period thereafter.
 - e) Ensured all moving traffic restrictions to be enforced will be underpinned by accurate Traffic Regulation Orders and indicated by lawful traffic signs and road markings.
(Local authorities are not required to audit all their TROs and traffic signs; but instead those that are directly related to the moving traffic restrictions to be enforced).
 - f) Ensured all the relevant equipment has been certified by the Vehicle Certification Agency specifically for moving traffic contraventions.

Priority Locations

- 2.17 To support the application and make sure local authorities progress and implement the new powers in a timely manner, the DfT is requesting that specific sites are identified on the application and enforcement introduced to ensure the Order is used.
- 2.18 Examining road safety reports and historical data, in collaboration with TVP, the initial list of locations for Buckinghamshire have been created. The locations, which can be seen below, are deemed to be problem areas, as well as locations where utilising moving traffic enforcement powers would result in one or more of the key benefits listed above.
- 2.19 The locations (in alphabetical order of area) are:
- **Amersham** - Gore Hill - No right turn out of Fieldway on to Gore Hill
 - **Amersham** - Whielden Lane A404 - No right turn into Whielden Street
 - **Amersham** - Amersham Road (A413) junction with Pipers Wood - No U-turn
 - **Aylesbury** - Mandeville Road - No right turn into road (back of Asda near hospital)
 - **Buckingham** - High Street at the junction with Moreton Road A413 (running parallel to A422) - No entry
 - **Buckingham** - Well Street - Environmental weight restriction - Prohibition of goods vehicles exceeding 7.5 T (*please see Appendix B for more information on environmental weight restrictions*)
 - **Chalfont St Peter** - Oval Way outside Thorpe House School - School keep clear
 - **Chesham** - High Street - Pedestrian zone - Prohibition of motor vehicles except loading for commercial vehicles
 - **Gerrards Cross** - Packhorse Road junction with Station Road - Box junction
 - **High Wycombe** - Corporation Street - Prohibition of vehicles except buses and taxis (Hackney carriages only)
 - **High Wycombe** - Hamilton Road outside The Royal Grammar School - School keep clear
 - **High Wycombe** - Marlow Hill junction with School Close - Box junction
 - **High Wycombe** - Castle Street - No entry except for buses
 - **Wexham** - Uxbridge Road at the junction with Black Park Road - No U-turn
- 2.20 In addition to the safety reports and historical data, camera trials took place at Castle Street and Corporation Street in High Wycombe to assess the level of abuse. This showed that on average 480 motorists per day abused the restriction on Corporation Street and 381 motorists abused the restriction on Castle Street.
- 2.21 At the time of commencing the trials, the guidance available for enforcement of moving traffic offences showed that structural weight limits could potentially be available for enforcement by local authorities. A camera trial was therefore

undertaken at Marlow Bridge. This showed that on average the restriction is abused 97 times a day.

- 2.22 To publically engage with Members, local businesses, residents, and visitors, a consultation took place from 21 February 2022 to 4 April 2022.
- 2.23 When undertaking consultation, the DfT has informed that local authorities are not required to seek the views of the public on whether they agree with the principle of moving traffic enforcement. The consultation instead is to communicate the rationale and benefits of moving traffic enforcement to help promote compliance and to provide the public with the opportunity to raise any concerns. For example, junction design - a box junction is designed in such a way that a motorist is unable to see the exit when they enter it, or the restriction is not clear and understandable, thereby requiring amendments to the signage. These are the sort of things that drivers may raise objection to and local authorities are expected to give due regard to.
- 2.24 There is no requirement for newspaper advertising. Local authorities should consider the full range of media available to them when communicating with the public.
- 2.25 The outcome of the consultation resulted in 477 responses, of which 63% support enforcement of moving traffic offences in Buckinghamshire. A large number of responders also support the initial locations. A summary of the responses from the consultation can be found in Appendix C.
- 2.26 One of the main focuses of the consultation is to provide the opportunity to flag up any key concerns in respect of signs/lines/designs. The consultation has been effective in this regard with six sites being flagged for review. Four of which relate to signage to show the correct restriction is demonstrated, one relates to lines being faded, and one is a new design proposal. These will be reviewed and the anomalies addressed before enforcement commences. The list of associated locations can be found in Appendix C.
- 2.27 As a result of the consultation, other locations have been highlighted as problem areas, either on the grounds of safety, congestion, or obstruction. These areas have been placed on a monitoring list.
- 2.28 It is essential to continue to collate information and encourage wider buy in from all stakeholders to help assess compliance at locations where moving traffic enforcement is taking place and for monitoring purposes to help inform decisions for future locations where enforcement may be required. This includes locations where a camera has been relocated following initial compliance having been achieved. To this end, a database is being set up and we welcome feedback either through Fix My Street, or the Council's main 'contact us' form. A specific mailbox has also been set up MTO@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- 2.29 The aspiration is to undertake a review of the initial locations approximately 12 months following installation of the cameras. This will enable sufficient time to pass following the six-month period of warning notices to first offenders. In the meantime, compliance levels will be regularly monitored.
- 2.30 All new locations will be agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport before commencing the minimum six-week consultation - consultation is

required for every new location. There is no requirement to seek further approval from the DfT.

- 2.31 Local authorities are not required to enforce every applicable traffic sign or road marking. Instead, enforcement should only be used to target problem locations. Future locations will therefore be considered on a case by case basis. Essentially, there must be evidence of a problem and the problem is such that it cannot be sensibly 'designed out' through delivery of physical changes. Also for consideration is the implementation/operations costs, and complexity across the different restrictions. The most complex is Environmental Weight restrictions due to the allowance of local delivery.
- 2.32 Once enforcement action commences, local authorities are required to issue warning notices for the first six months. This is for first offenders only. If a motorist abuses the restriction more than once a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) may be issued. This applies for every new location where a camera is deployed. Thereafter, appeals in respect of any PCNs that are issued will be dealt with similar to appeals for non-moving traffic contraventions.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 To not apply for the powers. The police would retain the powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions, however none of the benefits set out in the report would be realised.

4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 Legal

- 4.1.1 The DfT has fully enacted the remaining elements of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act permitting local authorities outside of London to enforce moving traffic contraventions.
- 4.1.2 New Regulations named 'The Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Approved Devices, Charging Guidelines and General Provisions) (England) Regulations 2022 SI 2022 No71' have also been laid before Parliament on 27 January 2022. The Regulations together with the Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Representations and Appeals) (England) Regulations 2022 (S.I. 2022/0000), provide for the civil enforcement of parking contraventions and bus lane contraventions in England. In addition, they provide for moving traffic contraventions, in England but outside Greater London, for local authorities that receive permission for a Designation Order to enforce these offences.
- 4.1.3 The Council will be required to adhere to the requirements set down by the DfT and ensure that the site specific Traffic Regulation Orders are compliant and enforceable, and that the required consultations are carried out.

4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 The DfT is clear that whilst delivering a parking service including enforcement is self-funding, it cannot be used to purposely generate income. Any income that is received in respect of on street parking is regulated by Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended by Section 95 of the TMA. Income from PCNs issued for moving traffic contraventions will be regulated in the same way.
- 4.2.2 The cost of the cameras (16 of) including the processing system, which then links to the back office parking management system is approximately £276k. The cameras will be mobile cameras enabling them to be redeployed to different locations over time, as required (subject to meeting DfT criteria). If additional cameras are required these are in the region of £20k each. In addition, costs apply to test the lighting columns to assess the viability of placing a camera on them and to source an additional electricity feed so the supply can be filtered and charged appropriately. This will apply to initial locations and locations where the cameras may be redeployed.
- 4.2.3 The cost of the system and cameras will be funded by Capital. The approved capital budget for 2022/23 is £233k. The shortfall of £43k will be covered by slippage for 2021/22 capital funding as it was originally anticipated that the powers to allow local authorities to obtain moving traffic enforcement powers would materialise in time for it to be funded out of 2021/22 Capital funds.
- 4.2.4 Thereafter, new cameras, or re-deployment of existing cameras, including testing and connection costs for the lighting column will be funded by the income received from the enforcement. It is worth noting that where cameras are in situ the footage could be provided to the Police to assist with their investigations in respect of an accident, if requested.
- 4.2.5 It is anticipated that the system will be self-funding in a little over 12 months from the point of installation. This is based on camera enforcement usually achieving 95% compliance within a given area. Of the remaining 5% of motorists who would be issued with a PCN, the current recovery rate for parking infringements is that 79% usually pay at the discounted rate. The data to calculate the above has been taken from the camera trials in Corporation Street and Castle Street, High Wycombe.
- 4.2.6 The above is a guide only, as the level of abuse and compliance rates will differ from location to location and depend on the restriction that is being enforced.

5. **Corporate implications**

- 5.1 Appendix D provides an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to adopting the new enforcement powers.
- 5.2 Buckinghamshire Council delivers the parking service to comply with the network management duties set out in the Traffic Management Act 2004. The enforcement itself for some locations will support active travel measures and delivery of a sustainable transport network.

- 5.3 The new powers will also support the Corporate Plan, particularly helping to improve air quality and the environment, increasing prosperity by effectively managing the highway network and supporting punctuality of public transport, all of which contribute to helping make Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work, and do business.
- 5.4 The expectation is that implementation of the new powers and roll out thereafter will be covered by existing resources.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 The launch of the consultation, which ran from 21 February 2022 to 4 April 2022 included an email to all Buckinghamshire Council Members. Information was also included in the newsletter that went to Town and Parish Councils and High Wycombe Town Committee, as well as being provided to local MPs.
- 6.2 Overall, 14 responses have been received from Buckinghamshire Council Members, all of which are in support of an application to DfT. An additional 18 responses have been received from Town and Parish Council Members. Of these, 56% are in support, 27% are against, and 17% are unsure. Of those that were against, the reasons ranged from potential confusion on signage following experience within London, concerns of over stretching resources, and concerns of public perception.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 For public engagement, the Council utilised the full range of communication channels. This included a press release, social media, and information on the Council's website.
- 7.2 In total, 477 responses were received with 63% in support of moving traffic enforcement in Buckinghamshire. An overview is provided at Appendix C.

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 Should the recommendation be approved, the next steps will be to submit an application to the DfT for a Designation Order to enable Buckinghamshire Council to enforce moving traffic contraventions. If the application is successful it is anticipated enforcement will commence at the back end of 2022.
- 8.2 In the meantime, surveys will be undertaken of the proposed locations to ensure signs and lines are correct. Assessment will also be undertaken of the lighting columns for testing and connectivity in preparation for the cameras.
- 8.3 Procurement of the new system and approved devices is underway; this will include a data protection impact assessment. This work has commenced as the system also

enables enforcement of bus lanes, which the Council currently has the powers to undertake.

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. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk







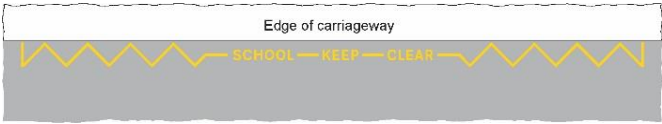
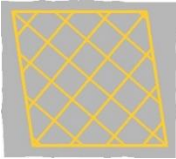
Appendix A Offences subject to Moving Traffic Enforcement by Local Authorities

Under TMA Schedule 7, restrictions indicated by the below traffic signs, as prescribed in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (as amended: 'TSRGD') are civilly enforceable as moving traffic contraventions. This applies to any permitted variant under TSRGD; for example, diagram 606 when varied to point ahead or to the right.

It should be noted that the Government committed only to introduce moving traffic enforcement powers in respect of those signs listed. Therefore, any traffic sign or road marking not listed will remain enforceable only by the police.

Description	TSRGD diagram number & location	
Vehicular traffic must proceed in the direction indicated by the arrow	606 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 1 and Schedule 14, Part 2, item 42)	
Vehicular traffic must turn ahead in the direction indicated by the arrow	609 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 2)	
Vehicular traffic must keep to the left/right of the sign indicated by the arrow	610 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 3)	
No right turn for vehicular traffic	612 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 7 and Schedule 14, Part 2, item 43)	
No left turn for vehicular traffic	613 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 8 and Schedule 14, Part 2, item 43)	
No U-turns for vehicular traffic	614 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 6 and Schedule 14, Part 2, item 43)	
Priority must be given to vehicles from the opposite direction	615 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 9)	
No entry for vehicular traffic (when the restriction or prohibition is one that may be indicated by another traffic sign subject to civil enforcement)	616 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 10 and Schedule 14, Part 2, item 44)	
All vehicles prohibited except non-mechanically propelled vehicles being pushed by pedestrians	617 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 11)	

Description	TSRGD diagram number & location	
Entry to and waiting in a pedestrian zone restricted	618.3B (Schedule 8, Part 2, item 1)	
Entry to and waiting in a pedestrian and cycle zone restricted	618.3C (Schedule 8, Part 2, item 2)	
Motor vehicles prohibited	619 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 12)	
Motor vehicles except solo motorcycles prohibited	619.1 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 18)	
Solo motorcycles prohibited	619.2 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 20)	
Goods vehicles exceeding the maximum gross weight indicated on the goods vehicle symbol prohibited	622.1A (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 13)	
One-way traffic	652 (Schedule 9, Part 4, item 5)	
Buses prohibited	952 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 17)	
Route for use by buses, pedal cycles and taxis only	953 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 33)	

Description	TSRGD diagram number & location	
Route for use by tramcars only	953.1 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 36)	
Route for use by pedal cycles only	955 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 28)	
Route for use by pedal cycles and by pedestrians only	956 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 29)	
Route comprising two ways, for use by pedal cycles only and by pedestrians only	957 (Schedule 3, Part 2, item 32)	
With-flow cycle lane	959.1 (Schedule 9, Part 4, item 9)	
Contra-flow cycle lane	960.1 (Schedule 9, Part 4, item 6)	
Part of the carriageway outside an entrance where vehicles must not stop when the marking is placed in conjunction with the prescribed upright sign which includes the symbol at Schedule 4, Part 3, item 10	1027.1 (Schedule 7, Part 4, item 10)	
Box junction markings	1043 (Schedule 9, Part 6, item 25)	

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Appendix B Structural vs Environmental Weight Restriction

Weight restrictions generally fall into two categories; those introduced for environmental reasons and those implemented to protect weak structures on the highway such as bridges. A summary for each is provided below.

Environmental weight restrictions

An environment weight restriction can be imposed for environmental reasons on routes which have been identified as unsuitable for use by heavy goods vehicles, and where there is a better and equally convenient alternative.

An environmental weight restriction applies to vehicles with a maximum gross weight of 7.5 tonnes or above (it can be varied to 18 tonnes or above). The maximum gross weight is the maximum permitted weight of the vehicle when fully loaded.

Environmental restrictions can be applied to individual routes or a defined area of roads that have been determined as unsuitable for use by vehicles over a certain width or weight. They are useful in preventing heavy goods vehicles from using minor roads as inappropriate short-cuts between main routes.

Reasons to introduce a restriction of this nature include:

- To prevent damage to the highway infrastructure (carriageway, footways, street furniture) and buildings.
- Protect the character and environment of rural areas, villages and residential estates.
- Manage congestion on the roads.
- Reduce risks to vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.

An environmental weight restriction will nearly always include exemptions for:

- Vehicles making deliveries or collections at premises within the restriction.
- Vehicles working on or near the roads in question.
- Emergency service and military vehicles.
- Buses, coaches and other public service vehicles.

This means that vehicles requiring legitimate access within the area covered by the environmental weight limit, such as to deliver to a shop or access an industrial unit, are permitted.

An environmental weight restriction cannot be varied to prohibit vehicles less than 7.5 tonnes.

Structural weight restrictions

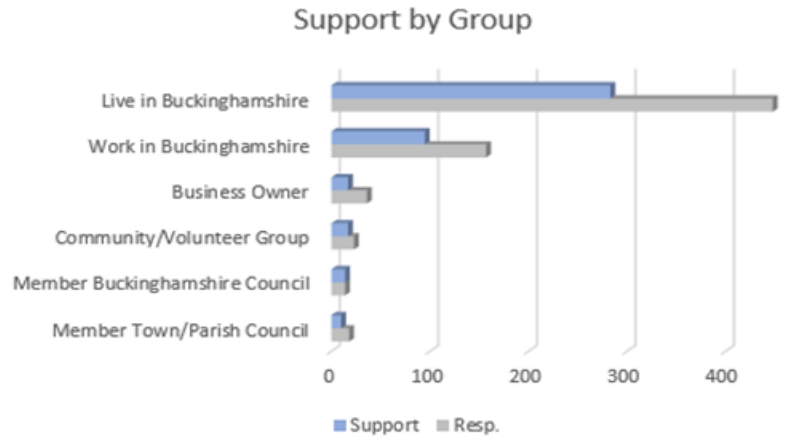
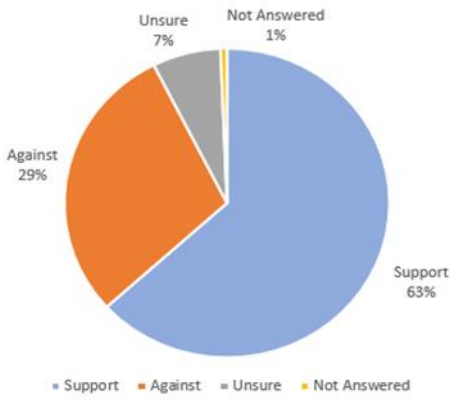
A structural weight restriction is imposed on routes where following an assessment, it is deemed that the structure is weak and as such, cannot bear vehicles over a certain weight, and can only safely accommodate a lower load. Restrictions of this type will typically cover only short sections, where the structure is located.

The restriction can be varied to prohibit weights over 3 tonnes(3T), as well as 7.5T, 10T, 13T, 18T, 26T and 33T.

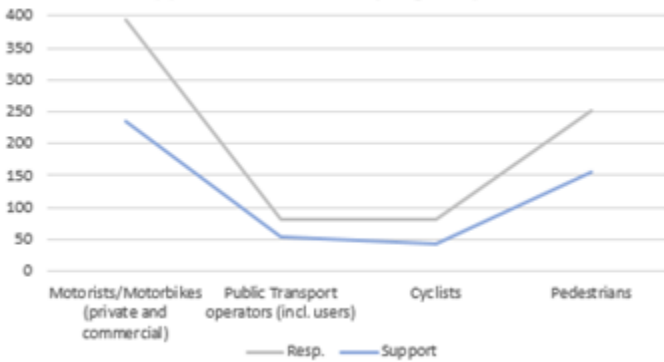
This restriction applies to all vehicles that exceed the weight on the sign including buses/delivery vehicles etc.; there are no exemptions.

Where an assessment has identified a weak structure necessitating the need to prohibit all vehicles over 3 tonnes, a structural weight restriction can apply. It is not possible to apply an environmental weight restriction, as this permits vehicles up to 7.5 tonnes, as well vehicles exceeding this weight due to the exemptions that are allowed. This would therefore cause irreplaceable damage to the structure and create a safety issue.

Responses 477



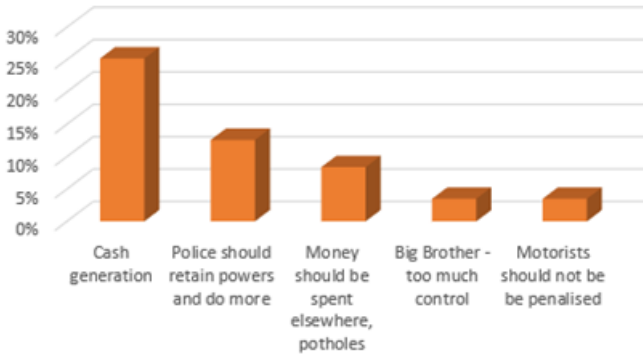
Support levels from key highway users



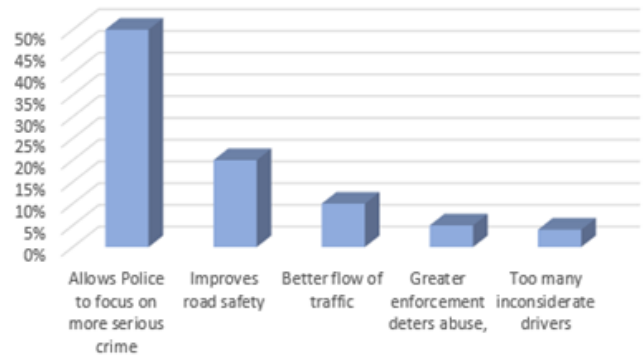
One of the purposes of the consultation is to obtain feedback on concerns regarding signs/lines at the proposed locations. The following have been flagged, which will be assessed:

- Gerrards Cross - Station Road Road marking - refresh
- Amersham - Whielden Street Signage
- Amersham - Gore Hill Design
- High Wycombe - Castle Street Signage
- Buckingham - Well Street Signage Design
- Aylesbury - Mandeville Road Signage

Top five reasons for against



Top five reasons for support



Locations submitted for future consideration

Area	Location	Restriction
Amersham	Deep Mill Lane and A413	No right turn
Amersham	Mitchell Walk	School keep clears
Aylesbury	Exchange Street	No right-turn into car parks either side of road
Aylesbury	Friarage Road	No right turn to/from Mount Street, Mill Way and Castle Street, plus unauthorised vehicles in bus lane.
Aylesbury	Oxford Road, Aylesbury (section between Bicester Road & Friarage Road)	No right turn to/from Chadbone close, Whitehill Lane and Whitehall Street.
Aylesbury	Tring Road	Yellow box
Aylesbury	Chiltern Street.	No right turn into Chiltern Street.
Buckingham	Chandos road / Hunter street / mitre street / bath lane	Environmental Restriction - lorry 7.5 ton infringement
Chesham	Bellingdon Road onto St Mary's Way	No Right Turn
Chesham	Brockhurst Road	School keep clears
Chesham	Moor Road and Waterside	Both No Entry
Hazlemere	Park Parade	No entry
High Wycombe	Handy Cross	Yellow box junctions
High Wycombe	High Street, Easton Street, Queen Victoria Road and Crendon Street	No right turn
High Wycombe	Outside Hamilton School	School keep clears
High Wycombe	Oxford Street/Oxford Road junction	No Entry
High Wycombe	Temple End	Bus Lane
Iver	Bangor's road south	Environmental Restriction - lorry 7.5 ton infringement
Princes Risborough.	High Street and the A4010	No right turn
Taplow	Hag Hill Lane between Lent Rise Road and Taplow Road	One-way
Woobum Green	The Green	One Way

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Appendix D

EqIA – Screening Questions

Proposal/Brief Title: Proposed application to enable enforcement of Moving Traffic offences.

Date: 25/03/2022

Type of strategy, policy, project or service:

Please tick one of the following:

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

This report was created by

Name: Julie Rushton

Job Title: Head of Parking Service

Email address: Julie.rushton@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

Buckinghamshire Council carries out civil parking enforcement in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA). The Department of Transport has fully enacted the remaining elements of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act permitting local authorities outside of London to use approved camera devices to enforce moving traffic contraventions.

What outcomes do we want to achieve?

To influence driver behaviour and better manage the highway network. The key benefits are:

- Improved pedestrian and cyclist safety, supporting modal shift to sustainable transport options.
- Reduced congestion on the highway network.
- Support local transport policies
- Improved journey times for public transport and emergency service vehicles.
- Improved air quality and reduced transport related emissions, thus contributing to carbon net zero targets.

- Increased safety and cleaner air around schools.
- Provide reallocation and saving of police time.

The assessment provides an analysis of the impact should the Council be successful in applying to the Department for Transport for a Designation Order to enforce moving traffic offences.

1) Screening Questions

1.1 Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence?

No

Please explain your answer: **This is an application for a new enforcement process which is a function that is not currently undertaken.**

1.2 Does this proposal plan to reduce a service, activity or presence?

No

Please explain your answer: This is an application for a new enforcement process policy which is to manage a function that is not currently undertaken.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer:

This proposal introduces the ability to enforce moving traffic violation. It includes the issuing of initial warnings and penalty charge notices.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer:

This proposal will affect the wider community in such a way that should the driving offences be committed, the offender may or may not be eligible to be dealt with using an initial warning or a Penalty Charge Notice. The process for appeals/payments will be the same as per the Council's existing arrangements for Civil Parking Enforcement, which is carried out in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004.

1.5 Does this proposal affect employees?

No

Please explain your answer:

This policy would not directly or indirectly affect Buckinghamshire Council employees.

1.6 Will employees require training to deliver this proposal?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Additional training will be developed should we be successful in our bid.

1.7 Has any engagement /consultation been carried out?

Yes

A consultation is currently underway on the locations for enforcement.

<https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/roads-parking/mto-consultation>

Engagement has been held with

The consultation, which runs from 21 February 2022 to 4 April 2022 included an email to all Buckinghamshire Council Members. Information was also included in the Town and Parish Councils newsletter, as well as being provided to local MPs.

Prior to consultation, engagement took place with other Council services (Highways, Transport, Road Safety, Legal). The proposals have also received support from TVP.

2) Are there any concerns at this stage which indicate that this proposal could have negative or unclear impacts on any of the group (s) below? (*protected characteristics). Please include any additional comments.

- A) Age - No
- B) Disability - No
- C) Gender Reassignment - No
- D) Pregnancy & maternity - No
- E) Race & Ethnicity - No
- F) Religion & Belief - No
- G) Sex - No
- H) Sexual Orientation - No
- I) Marriage & Civil Partnership - **No**

Additional comments (please indicate which of the protected groups you are commenting on):

The draft application if successful will take into consideration the reasonable approach and legislation required for issuing a PCN.

As a result of this screening, is an EqlA required?

(If you have answered yes to any of the screening questions or any of the group (above), a full EqlA should be undertaken)

- No

Briefly explain your answer:

The introduction of enforcement in regards to moving traffic contraventions will apply to all residents equally. A monitoring exercise will be completed to allow a review of implementation and ongoing practice to ensure that protected characteristics are not disproportionately impacted. Education and communications pieces for the public will be delivered alongside the implementation to deter abuse of the restrictions and consequently the need for enforcement. Should legislation change considerably in the future which impacts on processes, a review will be undertaken to assess if a full EqlA is required.

EqlA Screening Sign off

Officer completing this Screening Template: Julie Rushton 25/03/2022

Equality Lead: Natalie Donhou Morley Natalie Donhou Morley 25/03/2022

Service Director: Rob Smith 25/03/22

Buckinghamshire Corporate Board sign off (if required) (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)



Report to Cabinet

Date:	10 May 2022
Title:	Business Improvement District (BID) Ballots: High Wycombe Town Centre (HWBIDCo) and Cressex Business Park BID
Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Gareth Williams
Author and/or contact officer:	Jacqueline Ford
Ward(s) affected:	Abbey Ward
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note that the Buckinghamshire Council has received two notices of intent to ballot from HWBIDCo (High Wycombe Town Centre) and the Cressex BID Steering Group (Cressex Business Park); 2. To note that arrangements are put in place for a postal ballot and for the Returning Officer with the support of the Economic Development Manager, to appoint Civica to undertake this; 3. That Cabinet confirms its full support to the creation of a new Business Improvement District on Cressex Business Park and for the continuation of High Wycombe Town Centre BID (HWBIDCo); 4. The Corporate Director for Planning, Growth and Sustainability, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, be given delegated authority to vote 'yes' in the HWBIDCo ballot and Cressex Business Park ballot subject to ballot offers being satisfactory, and 5. Subject to a yes vote, that the Corporate Director for Planning, Growth and Sustainability, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members and service areas, be authorised to agree the detailed service level agreements in line with the business plans submitted and any operational decisions required to enable both BIDs to commence from 1 October 2022.

Reason for decision: To ensure the Council is ready to discharge its duties to as set out in Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2003 and supplemented by the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004. This includes arrangements for ballot and, if successful, arrangements for levy billing and collection and ensuring Operating Agreements are in place.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Business Improvement District (BID) operating in High Wycombe Town Centre (HWBIDCo) comes to an end on the 30 Sep 2022. HWBIDCo has served notice of its intent to instruct the billing authority (Buckinghamshire Council) to put a new BID proposal to ballot to enable a third five-year term from 1 October 2022.
- 1.2 Notice has also been served by the Cressex BID Steering Group of its intent to instruct Buckinghamshire Council to carry out a ballot on a proposal to create a new BID on Cressex Business Park from 1 October 2022.
- 1.3 Legislation requires that the Council put ballot arrangements in place and, on receipt of a successful ballot outcome, make arrangements for the billing and collection of a levy payment. The Council is also required to work with the BID proposers to develop baseline service and operating agreements to ensure that activity carried out by the BID is additional to that provided by the local authority and that reasonable charges for levy billing and collection are agreed.
- 1.4 The importance to both the town centre in High Wycombe and Cressex Business Park in achieving BID status is that each BID, over the period of 2022 – 2027, will generate c £1.2m and £1.45m business-led investment to support their respective trading environments and will enable the delivery of a targeted range of improvements to benefit businesses and the local economy.
- 1.5 This paper sets out the Council’s statutory obligations in this process along with an overview of the activity carried out by HWBIDCo and the Cressex BID Steering Group to provide assurance that this has been carried out as per the requirements of the 2004 Regulations.

2. Content of report

Background

- 2.1 A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led partnership that covers a defined geographic area in which a levy is charged on all business rate payers in addition to the business rates bill. This levy is used to develop projects which will benefit businesses in the local area and improve the trading environment. A levy

rate is typically between 1% – 3% of the rateable value. A BID is established following a ballot process and has a five-year term. Approaching the end of this period, the BID is required to consult with businesses once more, develop a new business proposal and carry out a new ballot of businesses.

- 2.2 There is no limit on what projects or services can be provided through a BID. The only requirement is that it should be ‘additional’ to services provided by local authorities. Improvements may include, but are not limited to, extra safety/security, cleansing and environmental measures. The Council is required to work with the proposer to develop a baseline service agreement that defines what statutory activities are carried out in the geography of the BID to ensure that new activity demonstrates additionality.
- 2.3 A successful vote is one that has a simple majority both in votes cast and in rateable value of votes cast. Each business entitled to vote in a BID ballot is allowed one vote in respect of each property occupied or (if unoccupied) owned by them in the geographical area of the BID.
- 2.4 Once the BID is in operation the levy is charged on all businesses within the BID area (regardless of whether or how that business voted in the ballot). The Council is required to set up arrangements to collect the BID levy on behalf of the BID from businesses within the designated BID area. A charge is made for this.
- 2.5 The content of the BID business plan is determined by (a) HWBIDCo in consultation with businesses in the established BID area and (b) in the case of the Cressex BID Steering Group, the businesses within the proposed BID area. Buckinghamshire Council has no right to veto the proposal based on opinions regarding the contents, although may choose to vote against the proposal if it is opposed to the content of the plan.
- 2.6 The establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) is governed by Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2003 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 (“the 2004 regulations”). A summary of what this means for the Council is set out in **Appendix A**.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in Buckinghamshire

- 2.7 There are currently two BIDs established in Buckinghamshire: a town centre BID in High Wycombe known as HWBIDCo and a business park BID on Globe Business Park in Marlow (started in 2015 with a second five-year term running from January 2020 to 31 December 2025). Legacy Wycombe District Council was instrumental in establishing both BIDs by making financial allocations to support their creation.
- 2.8 Prior to unitary transition, project work was nearing completion to create a third BID on Cressex Business Park. This was scheduled to go to ballot in summer 2020 but with the onset of Covid-19 this was placed on pause.

Ballot arrangements

- 2.9 84 Notices of ballot have been received from Cressex Business Park BID Steering Group and HWBIDCo setting out the intention of both to instruct Buckinghamshire Council (as the billing authority) to put their proposals to ballot.
- 2.10 In consultation with the Returning Officer, the Economic Development Manager has appointed Civica to carry out the ballot. Indicative costings have been supplied and these are now being refined in consultation with the two proposers. In the case of HWBIDCo (c£3,700) this will be recharged to the BID. In the case of Cressex (c£2,030) this has been budgeted for as part of the project set up costs.

BID process overview

The following section sets out an overview of HWBIDCo and the Cressex BID Steering Group and their pre-ballot activity to provide assurance that this has been carried out as per the requirements of the 2004 Regulations.

HWBIDCo

- 2.11 HWBIDCo was established on the 1 October 2012 and achieved a successful five-year second term ballot from 1 October 2017. The BID is setup as a Company Limited by Guarantee and is a business controlled, not-for-profit company. The BID Board of Directors has representation from sectors across the town including independent retail, entertainment, hospitality and leisure (Wycombe Swan, Wycombe Arts Centre), national retail (Eden Shopping Centre), night time economy establishments and the University. Cllr Lesley Clarke OBE and Cllr Tony Green are the Council's appointed representatives on the HWBIDCo Board.
- 2.12 The management of hanging baskets, planters, lamp column banners, management of bookings for public realm and the organisation of the popular Christmas Light Switch On Event in November have been successfully devolved to HWBIDCo since 2012.
- 2.13 For BID3, a boundary review has been carried out by the BID Board and an extension proposed to include an additional section of Oxford Road and Westbourne Street area. This has increased the total number of hereditaments from BID2 by 61 – making 763 (c625 businesses). The area covered is shown in **Appendix B**.
- 2.14 For Term 3, HWBIDCo will charge a 1.1% levy for hereditaments with a rateable value (RV) over £2,500 (with a reduction for shopping centre premises who have additional management charges). This is an increase of 0.1% on BID2 and the first increase made. Similar (and higher) increases have been noted over the last year nationally with other town centre BIDs. Using a 95% collection rate, this will generate c£1.45m of investment into the town centre over the five-year term.

2.15 Key achievements over the last term focussed on five themes:

- a) **Enhance & Recover:** helped with Covid support promotion, installed footfall sensors and free WiFi in the town centre; launched new visitor website My Wycombe; 750+ floral displays (hanging baskets and planters); worked with the council as a delivery partner for Welcome Back Fund activities to bring a range of footfall-driving animations to the town.
- b) **Better for Business:** secured £1.2m BID levy and £400k extra funding; free parking days; extended employee benefits scheme and represents the business voice on the High Wycombe Regeneration Board and Community Board.
- c) **Safe & Secure:** more than 166 businesses on the DISC app and radio schemes; Pubwatch and Shopwatch membership groups; delivered key training; working with the Police and other partners through the new Town Centre Partnership to address perception issues in the town; collaborated on the new Community Hub.
- d) **Promote & Animate:** creation of the partnership 'MyWycombe' website to promote events and animations across the town linked to a common town branding; installed free town centre WiFi; new parklet seating on Frogmoor; new cross-street banners and bunting deployed – including heritage chair bunting; provide regular business updates and e-newsletters.
- e) **Events & Activities:** runs three large events a year – Frogfest (May), Desborough Carnival (Aug) and Christmas Light Switch On (Nov) and a range of smaller experimental and innovative events such as live theatre, character meet and greets and free crafts events / family activities, introduced new events in 2021 including Heritage Day (September) and additionality to Armed Forces Day; introduced the Vegan Market; set up 'Live After Five' pop up entertainment to support the early evening economy; and is working with the council and market operator to provide further animations on market days.

2.16 Buckinghamshire Council currently has responsibility for 27 hereditaments within the BID area made up of operational and income generating sites. These include the Council Offices on Queen Victoria Road, the Old Wycombe Library, the Library (in Eden), car parks (Easton Street and The Swan) and retail units for example. The Council will have one vote for each hereditament. The Council will be eligible for levy payment from 1 October 2022 if a business rental property is not tenanted. As the BID has been an established entity since 2012, the cost of levy payments is

already factored into baseline budget setting by the Property and Assets and Car Parks Team. Indicative levy liability is c £14.8k a year.

- 2.17 Should a property be de-listed for rates purposes due to redevelopment work, depending on the timings of this, the Council will not have the opportunity to vote in June and will not be liable for the year 1 charge on the 1 October 2022.
- 2.18 HWBIDCo ran a consultation exercise with levy payers through January and February 2022 to ascertain business perceptions and priorities for improvement for the town centre to help shape and determine the activities and actions that will form the new business plan.
- 2.19 The key project areas for the next five-year term focus on:
- a) **Better for Business:** being the voice for business; extend employee benefits; support the continued evolution of the market space; advocate pedestrianisation; develop business awards to celebrate achievements of local businesses.
 - b) **Safe & Secure:** continuation of DISC app, radio scheme, Shop Watch and Pub Watch membership groups; support for and development of night time economy / live after five agenda – including new campaigns such as ‘Best Bar None’ and ‘Women’s Night Safety Charter’; partnership working to address ASB with introduction of contactless giving points to deter begging and raise vital funds for support charities and pursue Purple Flag once more.
 - c) **Marketing the Town:** evolve and grow the ‘My Wycombe’ brand and media sites to promote the town – including the creation of original content and video; raise the profile of the town in national media; develop seasonal maps and guides; investigate a new loyalty card and monthly campaigns to spotlight BID businesses.
 - d) **Events & Animations:** continue to deliver a compelling calendar of events to increase footfall – learning from the successful ‘little and often’ post Covid approach as well as three major events; take charge with town dressing and animation projects to make the trading area attractive; trial innovative and experimental pop up events that utilise the public space within the town.
 - e) **Enhance & Evolve:** continue to invest in greenery (hanging baskets, pots and planters) to bring colour and vibrancy to the street scene; lobby for improvements to street cleaning (gum clearance for example); continue the

popular 'town tidy' events; evolve and grow the employee perks scheme; continue card board recycling and explore High Wycombe gift / loyalty card.

- 2.20 The management of hanging baskets, planters, lamp column banners, management of bookings for public realm and the organisation of the popular Christmas Light Switch On Event in November have been successfully devolved to HWBIDCo since 2012.
- 2.21 HWBIDCo is an established and respected organisation within the town centre and carries out a range of activities to support businesses and provide animation to attract footfall and increase dwell time. If the BID is not successful at renewal, then this will be a significant loss to the business community and wider community and mean that the council may be required to step in to support some of the established functionality while an alternative operating model for town centre management is determined.

Cressex Business Park BID

- 2.22 The Cressex BID Steering Group re-engaged with business across the park through February 2022 to seek confirmation that the improvement themes identified in 2019 were still the correct focus post Covid-19. Support was received from businesses with a request for environmental improvements to improve the look and feel of the business park to be elevated as a higher priority.
- 2.23 The Business Plan themes for a first five-year term focus on:
- a) **Theme 1: Getting Cressex Moving**
 - i. Lobby for new investment for transport infrastructure (*as per work of Steering Group in 2019 to support Bucks CC application for Pinch Point Funding*)
 - ii. Work with landlords to review and improve parking options
 - iii. Champion development of sustainable and active transport solutions
 - b) **Theme 2: Creating and Attractive and Secure Environment for Businesses**
 - i. A greener, cleaner and more attractive business park
 - ii. Landscape master plan
 - iii. Unit numbering and signage
 - iv. Safe and secure
 - c) **Theme 3: Supporting Businesses and Investing in Employees**

- i. Establish a business park management service – your first point of contact to get things done
 - ii. Engage and work with landlords to secure improved facilities and amenities
 - iii. Improved communications and profile: regular e-bulletins and other communication channels set up
 - iv. Employee incentives
- 2.24 Seed funding was allocated by Wycombe DC as part of the BID development budget to enable quick wins to be progressed concurrent with the BID process to demonstrate to businesses what can be achieved with a small pot of money. This has enabled a baseline image audit to be conducted; a site mapping and zoning exercise is underway to inform wayfinding signage installation; a messaging system has been set up (proving useful for keeping businesses in the loop about upcoming road works in the area) and Living Streets holding an inaugural lunchtime walk on the 9 February (that attracted 30+ employees), for example.
- 2.25 The proposed area covered by the Cressex Business Park BID is set out in **Appendix B** and includes 446 businesses of which 226 will be eligible to pay a levy rate of 1.5% (those with an RV below £12k will not pay). This will generate c £235k per year - amounting to £1.18m business-led investment over the five-year term 2022-2027.
- 2.26 The council are a key land holder on Cressex Business Park, but this is covered by long ground leases to 2048 (with sublets). The Council will only be liable for a levy if a property is not let as at the 1 October 2022. At present the Property Team are in the process of letting two small units on Lincoln Park and have advised that tenancies will be in place by ballot time in June. Should this not be possible by October, a sum of the order of £400 would be required for the levy.
- 2.27 The Steering Group have chosen to adopt a managing authority operational model, as in place for Globe Business Park BID, with Groundwork South appointed to manage the BID with the current businesses on the steering group becoming the BID Board. A local Member and a Buckinghamshire Council Officer will be co-opted to the Board, given our land interest on Cressex and the unlikelihood of us being a levy payer as set out in 2.27.
- 2.28 If the BID is not successful at ballot, the business park will not be able to achieve its ambitions to improve the look and feel of the trading environment to help attract wider investment at the level of place that will help it evolve post Covid.
- 2.29 Given the economic importance of both High Wycombe town centre and Cressex Business Park it is recommended that the Council support both the High Wycombe and Cressex Business Park BIDs, and put delegated authorities in place as set out in

the recommendations to help to streamline the process of renewal and ensure that the new BIDs can be in place by 1 October 2022 if the ballots are successful.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 Ballot: To carry out the ballot in house. This option was discounted as it a recognised best practice amongst councils to use a third party for BID ballots to clearly demonstrate independence from the process.
- 3.2 To not support the BIDs at ballot: As a levy payer, the Council could choose to vote no at ballot. The impact on High Wycombe town centre not securing a third term and failure to create a new BID on Cressex Business Park would detrimentally impact both trading areas significantly – creating a loss of c£1.2m business led-investment to each over five years. The reputation of the Council as a facilitator and champion to support local economic growth would also be negatively impacted.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 BID Ballot Process: The cost of appointing Civica to carry out the ballot can be met within existing budget allocations.
- 4.2 BID billing and collection: HWBIDCo currently pays £8,000 a year to the Revenues Team for billing. This will be reviewed as part of the Operating Agreement work should a yes vote be secured. Costs for setting up a new billing and collection arrangement for Cressex Business Park have been factored into the project budget. This includes coverage of additional software licences and also a contribution to additional staff time in the service.
- 4.3 Levy Costs: The Council will incur the levy charge for both operational assets and any development properties that it currently pays business rates for within both proposed BID areas from the 1 October 2022. HWBIDCo has been established since October 2012 and both legacy Buckinghamshire County Council and Wycombe District Council will have had processes in place to build in the cost of levy payments into existing budget setting and medium term financial plans accordingly. This approach has continued for Buckinghamshire Council.
- 4.4 In the case of Cressex Business Park, although the Council is a key land holder, the assets are covered by long ground leases to 2048 (with sublets). Exposure to levy payment would only come into play should an asset become vacant.
- 4.5 Legal Implications: The establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) is governed by Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2003 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 (“the 2004 regulations”). Information relating to the Council’s responsibility for this can be found in **Appendix A**.

5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 The activity delivered by a BID provides support to businesses and their local trading environment that compliments the ‘increasing prosperity’ priority in the Council’s Corporate Plan.
- a) Property – as set out in 4.3 and 4.4 above.
 - b) HR - not applicable to this report
 - c) Climate change - not applicable to this report
 - d) Sustainability - not applicable to this report
 - e) Equality (does this decision require an equality impact assessment) - not applicable to this report
 - f) Data (does this decision require a data protection impact assessment) - not applicable to this report
 - g) Value for money – a BID collects a levy payment that is ring fenced for ‘additionality’ improvements within the geography that it operates in. The resulting improvements to trading areas impact perception and boost the appeal of place, making it a more desirable place to do business in.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 Cllr Lesley Clarke OBE and Cllr Tony Green are the Council’s appointed Members to the HWBIDCo Board of Directors and are supportive of the approach being taken by HWBIDCo in their new term preparations.
- 6.2 All Abbey Ward Members have been advised of the ballot work programmed for HWBIDCo and Cressex Business Park and given the opportunity to provide feedback.
- 6.3 Presentations on HWBIDCo and Cressex Business Park BID proposals were made at High Wycombe Town Committee on the 8 March 2022 and to the Economic Recovery and Regeneration Sub Group of the High Wycombe Community Board on the 15 March 2022. Both groups were fully supportive of the activity and the benefits brought to the trading environment and businesses within the designated BID areas.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 Both HWBIDCo and the Cressex BID Steering Group will be running a ‘Vote Yes’ campaigns ahead of ballot.

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 The Economic Development Manager to liaise with Civica and the proposers to ensure that the Returning Officer is ready to make the 42 Day Notice releases as set out in **Appendix A**;
- 8.2 Baseline service information and operating agreements for billing and collection arrangements to be developed and finalised on receipt of 'yes' vote in July to ensure first bills are issued on the 1 October 2022.

9. Background papers

- 9.1 Business Improvement District legislation can be viewed [here](#)
- 9.2 The BID proposals from HWBIDCo and Cressex Business Park will be submitted to the Council by the end of week commencing 16 May 2022 and will be available to view on their respective websites.

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

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Appendix A

Legislative Framework

- 1.1 The establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) is governed by Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2003 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 (“the 2004 regulations”). This legislation requires the Council to work with the proposer upon submission of a formal proposal (business plan) to the Authority and the Secretary of State. This process is first triggered by an 84 Day Notice which calls on the Council to make preparations for ballot.
- 1.2 Notices of ballot have been received from Cressex Business Park BID Steering Group (17 February 2022) and HWBIDCo (18 February 2022) as set out later in this report. HWBIDCo and the Cressex BID Steering Group will submit to Buckinghamshire Council a copy of their proposed business plan, a summary of the consultation taken with the BID levy payers and summary of the financial management arrangements for the BID.
- 1.3 The Local Authority is required to ensure that the ballot is operated, either in-house or outsourced, in line with BID Regulations.
- 1.4 It is a requirement under Schedule 1, paragraph 1(1) (b) to the BID Regulations that the BID proposals include a statement of the existing baseline services provided by the local authority or any other public authority in the proposed BID area (if any)ⁱ. For Example, if street cleansing was included in the BID business plan the Local Authority would have to set out the current service provision as the baseline. Services funded by the BID would be set out and agreed as additional to the baseline offer.
- 1.5 The statement of baseline services is only required where there is a correlation with the services proposed by the BID. This statement will form part of the BID proposals which demonstrate to businesses voting for the BID that the proposed BID services are, as at the time of the BID Proposal, additional to the baseline services provided by the public authorities (if any).
- 1.6 The Local Authority is required to manage the collection and enforcement of BID levy charges. BID Bodies and their local authority establish a levy collection agreement covering the BID term, referred to as an Operating Agreement. The purpose of this agreement is to define the principles and processes for collecting the levy; enforcing the payment of the levy; reporting on collection and bad debt; monitoring provisions between then BID and the local authority; and providing regular detailed and summary information on the service to the BID as the client.

Ballot Timeline

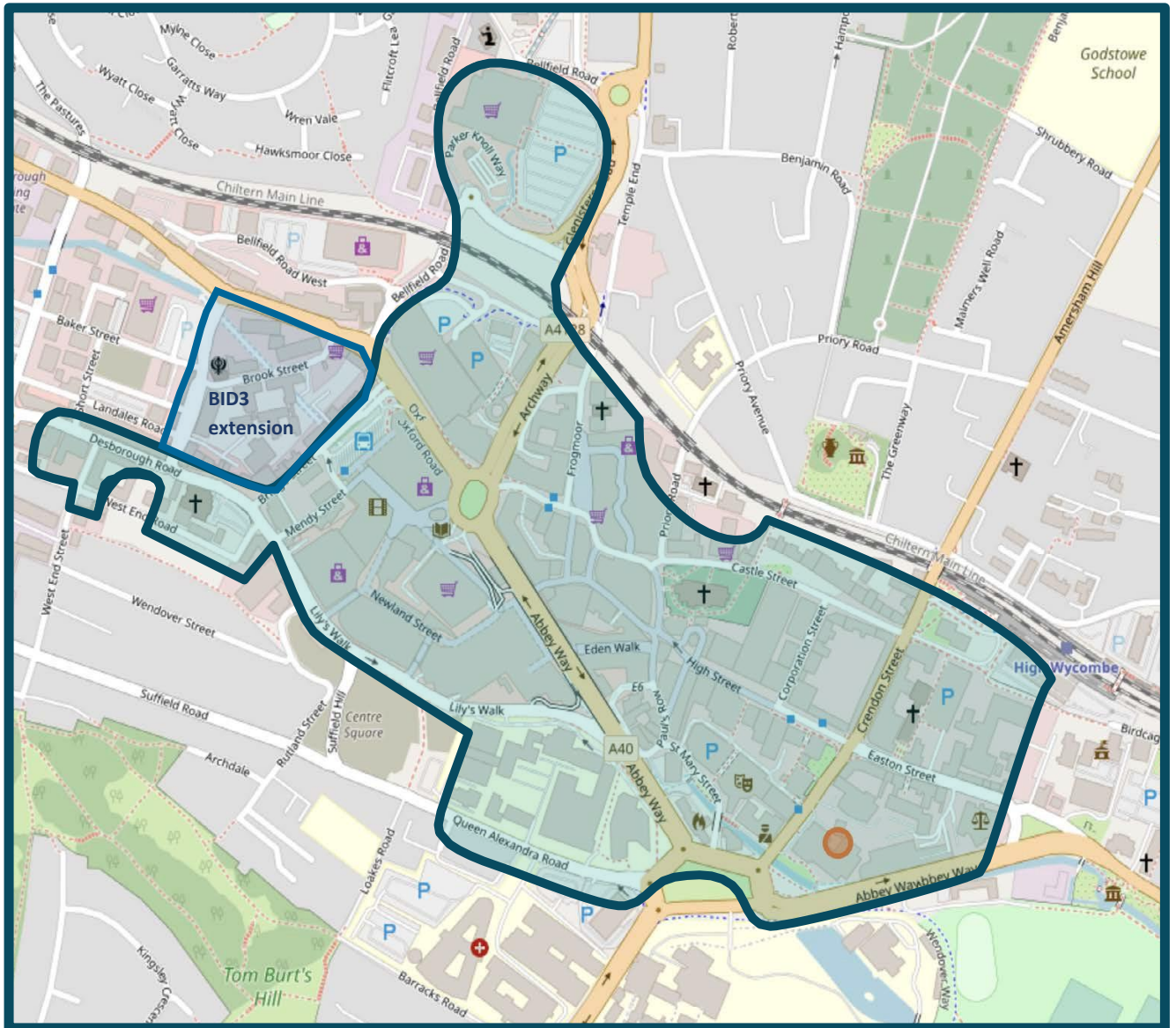
1.7 The timeline that will be followed is set out in **Table 1** below:

Action	HWBIDCo	Cressex BID Steering Group
84 Day Notice setting out intention to instruct Council to put BID proposal to ballot	18 Feb 2022	17 Feb 2022
Notice in writing to instruct the billing authority to instruct the ballot holder to hold a BID ballot in relation to the BID proposals	On or after 12 May 2022	On or after 6 May 2022
42 Day Notice of Ballot issued	26 May 2022	1 Jun 2022
Issue of ballot papers (28 day ballot period)	9 Jun 2022	15 Jun 2022
Day of Ballot	7 Jul 2022	13 Jul 2022
(Expected result of Ballot)	(8 Jul 2022)	(14 Jul 2022)
Start of BID five-year term	1 Oct 2022	1 Oct 2022

- 1.8 The Revenues Team have supplied up to date rateable value (RV) lists to both proposers to enable schedules to be developed and enable Civica to prepare for ballot.
- 1.9 Buckinghamshire Council, via Civica, will issue the formal 42 Notice of Ballot on the 26 May and 1 June 2022 respectively.
- 1.10 The Local Authority is required to manage the collection and enforcement of BID levy charges. BID Bodies and their local authority establish a levy collection agreement

ⁱ This typically includes green space management (grass cutting, planting, tree maintenance); highway and pavement cleansing / maintenance; car parking; enforcement; licencing; street scene maintenance including litter bin emptying frequency and other cleansing activity; gritting; road name plates, signage, bollards; street lighting activities; community safety / CCTV for example. This is to ensure that any project work developed by the BIDs is 'additionality' and not duplicating what we are required to doⁱ. This will be progressed from May.

Appendix B: BID Area for High Wycombe Town Centre



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Appendix C: BID Area for Cressex Business Park



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Report to Cabinet

Date: 10 May 2022

Title: Outcomes from the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group

Author: Nigel Dicker

Recommendations: That Cabinet considers the findings of the affordable housing member led task and finish group, including the proposed interim position statement on affordable housing,

and

- a) Provides any comments and amendments as appropriate;
- b) Agrees that the affordable housing position statement is adopted with any required amendments and the required activities be taken forward by officers.

Background

- 1.0 An affordable housing member task and finish group was initiated in August 2021, led by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services. The group met on a number of occasions to discuss the issues and challenges around the delivery of affordable housing in Buckinghamshire and to develop an affordable housing 'position statement', with the aim of reporting back to the Leader and Cabinet.
- 1.1 The position statement is intended to set out the Council's interim approach and immediate commitment to (subject to planning and assessment) bringing forward a development on a Council owned site that provides affordable housing, potentially with an element of specialist affordable and / or key worker housing. The interim approach is intended to cover the period while the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping and Overarching Housing Strategies are in development and is expected to provide early tangible progress for the key Council priority of increasing the delivery of affordable housing.

- 1.2 The member led task and finish group (TFG) had the immediate objectives of:
1. Identifying how the Council can help secure more affordable housing delivery, for example by looking at options for the possible use of suitable county wide property assets.
 2. Identifying and following up issues that may require further clarification, for example a corporate 'key worker' definition.
 3. Agreeing possible sites or schemes to pilot new approaches for delivery of affordable housing of various types.
 4. Applying learning from these schemes to set the framework and methods for getting the best outcomes for future affordable housing schemes.
- 1.3 Some of the longer term objectives of the member led TFG are to provide input into the development of the Council's Overarching Housing Strategy and to identify learning from completed pilot projects to inform future schemes, thereby maximising delivery, and also complementing existing delivery that occurs through the planning process and registered provider partnerships.

Main content of report

- 2.0 The proposed position statement is shown at Appendix 1. The key aspects or immediate commitments are in bullet points a-g., para 2.1 of Appendix 1. The TFG also proposes a two-line statement to describe its basic purpose:
- "to develop proposals on how to best provide affordable housing in Buckinghamshire, and bring forward a site that demonstrates the Council is delivering on its promises".*
- 2.1 Appendix 2 (confidential) - site costings - outlines the potential impacts of introducing different types of affordable housing on site values at two major potential development sites and presents possible options for consideration and highlights that there may be an impact on the Council's capital programme.
- 2.2 As shown below in points 1-15, the TFG considered a number of aspects and challenges around the delivery of affordable housing in Buckinghamshire, identifying areas of need and prioritising opportunities to house those residents in greatest need. (Types of affordable housing are listed in Appendix 4.)
1. As there is more need in the north of the Council's area – we will investigate how this can be addressed, given that there are underused Council owned sites across the whole of the Council area.
 2. Where there is a business case to do so, we will employ disused Council owned sites / buildings where possible, tying into our ambitions to regenerate town centres and using the Council's planning powers and permitted development rights where appropriate, to convert these into affordable housing and discounted rent units.
 3. We will develop a definition for key workers, and how we house them sustainably (including what happens when they stop being key workers). This is likely to be a combination of social and affordable housing, discounted rent or in some cases discounted ownership models.

4. We recommend that the planning requirements for affordable housing on new build developments across the Council area be harmonised, reviewing the existing requirements which range from 25% affordable to 48% affordable and replacing them with a single requirement for Buckinghamshire.
5. We will look for opportunities to use rural exceptions and neighbourhood plans driven by local communities to develop local schemes that keep families connected with their villages, especially in locations where developers would be unlikely to build.
6. We will explore the use of innovative building methods, including modular construction techniques to enable quicker builds and fit-outs where possible.
7. We will develop an enabling strategy to partner with other organisations (e.g. Homes England), leading with RSL's and private builders, using S106 and grant funding.
8. We will develop and upscale Consilio Property Ltd, a Council owned company, as an active partner that could contribute to bringing forward affordable housing, potentially at lower cost, especially in areas where there is already an active regeneration plan. Consilio will need to be properly resourced to meet this considerable challenge. There will need to be detailed attention to ensuring sufficient capacity and robust governance processes.
9. We will continue with the process of setting up the governance arrangements required to create a registered provider of social housing (RP) potentially as a subsidiary of Consilio so as to be able to act as a social landlord and let affordable units acquired by or possibly brought forward by Consilio.
10. We will develop a 'principles' document outlining the affordable strategy, and relevant principles to follow, including tenure, number of bedrooms, and types of housing, including adapted housing, bringing clarity to geography, location and utilisation of Council owned sites, working with the 'one estate' work stream.
11. In order to assess potentially foregone capital receipts from using Council properties or sites, and so the impacts on the overall capital programme that can be afforded by the Council, we will identify and cost out options (See confidential Appendix 2) for at least one appropriate Council owned site in Buckinghamshire on which to deliver additional affordable (potentially of a specialist nature) and key worker housing. As appropriate, we will seek to expedite (subject to planning) such a scheme on one of these Council owned sites:
 - Stoke Mandeville former Sports and Social Club
 - Horns Lane, High Wycombe
 - Tatling End, Denham

12. We will review and catalogue empty homes and explore the possible use of processes to bring these back into use. We will review the framework of Council Tax charges to incentivise owners to bring these back into use as dwellings.
13. The Council will agree a position statement on the new national 'First Homes' product for first time buyers and ensure that First Homes delivered in new housing developments are prioritised for Buckinghamshire residents and key workers. (See Appendix 5, First Homes Interim Position Statement)
14. We will adopt language that avoids stigmatising occupants in mixed tenure developments and find better descriptions than "social housing" that minimises stratification.
15. We will carefully examine and summarise the opportunities that are in the pipeline (See Appendix 3) making the Council's objectives transparent and developing a narrative that follows and showcases the progress of our activities.

3.0 Next steps and review

- 3.1 If Cabinet agrees to adopt the approach suggested above and the content of the position statement, with or without further amendments, officers will action as appropriate and as soon as possible seek to identify a Council owned site on which to deliver additional affordable (potentially specialist) and key worker housing.
- 3.2 **Financial Implications**
- 3.3 Any detailed financial implications arising from the position statement will have to be submitted and considered through the usual Medium Term Financial Planning process.

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]

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Affordable Housing Position Statement**
- Appendix 2 - Site costings (confidential appendix)**
- Appendix 3 - Affordable housing delivery performance**
- Appendix 4 - Affordable housing types**
- Appendix 5 - Draft First Homes Position Statement**

Appendix 1

Buckinghamshire Council Affordable Housing Position Statement**1.0 Current Conditions in Buckinghamshire**

- 1.1 With around 4800 (as of September 2021) households on Bucks Home Choice seeking social housing, yet with only around 1500 lettings made annually, the Council recognises that Buckinghamshire has an acute shortage of housing in terms of socially rented housing, affordable rent and rented key worker accommodation.
- 1.2 This shortage is largely driven by high rents and property values, which put even properties defined as 'affordable' in government guidance (e.g. rented at up to 80% of market rent or sold as shared ownership or discounted purchase price) out of the reach of many residents.
- 1.3 Symptomatic of this is the fact (column 7, table 1 below) that the proportion of Buckinghamshire residents in work and claiming housing benefit is higher than in the South East and significantly more than in England. This demonstrates that lower income working households often need welfare support to afford to rent in both social housing and private rented sectors in Bucks.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Average (mean) house prices in 19/20	Mean annual earnings in 19/20	Ratio house prices/income 19/20	Income for 80% mortgage 19/20	Mean monthly private sector rent 19/20	Unemployment 2019/20	Housing Benefit claimants total in employment %	HA affordable homes 18/19
England	£309,678	£30,248	10	£70,784	£843	3.9%	17.3%	2,753,583
South E	£388,040	£32,162	12	£88,695	£999	3.1%	19.4%	392,396
Bucks	£480,356	£35,526	14	£109,796	£1,160	3%	23%	31,394

Table 1 - National Housing Federation - Home Truths. The housing crisis in the South East, August 2021

1.4 The challenges faced in the delivery of affordable housing

- 1.5 To effectively tackle the shortage of affordable housing in Buckinghamshire is clearly a significant challenge. High land values mean there is a shortage of suitable modestly priced sites available for building, making the supply of a good number of truly affordable homes near to employment and amenities difficult.
- 1.6 Housing supply has a major influence on economic development and it impacts upon economic performance - a lack of supply can place an area at a competitive disadvantage. Essentially, a good supply of affordable housing is an enabler, bringing access to jobs, education, it underpins economic growth, the ability to recover from the economic effects of the pandemic, and health and wellbeing.

1.7 **The 'cost' of affordable housing**

1.8 However, it must be recognised that the delivery of affordable housing has to be subsidised in order for the rent level or sale price to be truly affordable to those people who cannot afford renting or buying on the open market. This can be through direct subsidy via financial grants or indirect subsidy whereby a landowner (perhaps the Council) or developer has to accept a lesser capital receipt, or lower income from the scheme.

1.9 Table 2 below shows housing need in the former district areas in Buckinghamshire, in terms of bedrooms for households on Bucks Home Choice, as of September 2021.

Bed need	Chiltern Area	Wycombe Area	South Bucks Area	Aylesbury Area	Totals
1 bed	345	736	271	1614	2966
2 bed	113	238	113	334	798
3 bed	161	272	92	349	874
4 bed	16	44	14	76	150
5 bed	1	3	3	4	11
Totals	636	1293	493	2377	4799

Table 2 - Housing need in the former district areas in Buckinghamshire, September 2021

2.0 The Council will be reviewing homelessness in its area and producing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping and Overarching Housing Strategies in 2022. These will set the scene for the next 5 years, examine the issues in Buckinghamshire and set key priorities for how the Council will work with others to tackle homelessness, rough sleeping and strategic housing challenges in Buckinghamshire. The strategies will identify the need for the delivery additional general, specialist and key worker affordable housing across a range of tenures.

Our immediate commitment

2.1 The Council is committed to increasing the delivery of affordable and key worker housing. Therefore, over the next 12 months;

- a) The Council will work closely with house builders, through planning obligations, to maximise delivery of general needs affordable housing. On average, this system has delivered 643 new affordable homes in Buckinghamshire each year. The Local Plans across Buckinghamshire set targets for new developments to deliver affordable housing. These targets range from 25% to 48% (as a proportion of the new dwellings built). Given the high land values in the county and the increasing cost of development it is likely that fully meeting these targets will remain a challenge.
- b) The Council will work closely with Registered Social Landlords to support them to deliver their development plans, and also to encourage them to work in partnership with the Council to use s106 funds and other enabling grants to make nomination rights for affordable rented accommodation available to those on the Bucks Home Choice system.

- c) *The Council will agree a local definition for 'key workers'.*
 - d) *The Council, through its housing company 'Consilio Property Ltd', may engage with private house builders to explore the viability of acquiring homes to accommodate key workers. Provided this is a viable option, and subject to business case and governance requirements, will seek to deliver at least one scheme in 2022.*
 - e) *The Council will identify at least one Council owned asset in Buckinghamshire on which to potentially deliver (subject to planning) affordable and key worker housing, possibly of a specialist nature. The sites identified to be assessed are:*
 - 1. *Stoke Mandeville former Sports and Social Club*
 - 2. *Horns Lane, High Wycombe*
 - 3. *Tatling End, Denham*
 - f) *The Council will agree a position statement on the new national 'First Homes' product for first time buyers and ensure that First Homes delivered in new Buckinghamshire housing developments are prioritised for Buckinghamshire residents and key workers. An interim position statement on First Homes has already been developed.*
 - g) *Empty homes in Buckinghamshire will be reviewed and catalogued and the Council will explore if these can be brought back into use. Council Tax charges for persistently empty homes will be reviewed.*
- 2.2 *Whilst the forthcoming Homelessness & Rough Sleeping and Overarching Housing strategies will emerge in 2022, the approach embodied in this statement will offer an opportunity to deliver tangible benefits in the shorter term whilst not replicating wider general housing market activity. The approaches will also inform strategy and pilot some of the potential future delivery models on Council owned sites i.e. whether the Council is the developer, an RSL, or a combination of the two)*

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Appendix 3 - affordable housing delivery performanceTable 1: Affordable homes completed and delivered in Buckinghamshire in **2020/21**

Model	No. Units
Social rent	51
Affordable rent	325
Intermediate rent	14
Shared ownership	157
Other affordable home ownership	4
Total	551

Table 2: Currently *anticipated* delivery of new affordable s106 housing units in **2021/22**

Site	Rental Units	Shared Ownership	Total
Haddenham Airfield	24	6	30
Aylesbury East (Kingsbrook)	66	30	96
Tingewick Road, Buckingham	27	0	27
Marsworth Road, Pitstone	16	6	22
Aston Clinton Road, Weston Turville	35	21	56
Abbey Barn South, High Wycombe	15	13	28
Berryfields, Aylesbury	21	7	28
Haddenham Glebe	21	4	25
Winslow Furze Lane	15	12	27
Stoke Mandeville - Various	45	19	64
Steeple Claydon - Sandholme	17	4	21
Cheddington	6	4	10
Newton Leys	9	1	10
Whitchurch	0	2	2
TOTAL	317	129	446

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Appendix 4 - Affordable housing types

1. Social Rented Housing

May be owned by local authorities or registered providers of affordable housing (RPs). Rent is determined through the national rent regime. Social rents are normally low and so generally affordable. Most social tenants will be on a lower wage and so in receipt of housing benefit.

2. Affordable Rented Housing

Affordable rent is defined as a rent of less than 80% of the local market rent.

3. Intermediate tenure types

This includes a range of homes for sale and rent at above social rent, but below market levels. Includes shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), and intermediate rent.

4. Low cost market

Low cost market homes do not meet the National Planning Policy Framework definition of affordable housing and, are not considered as 'affordable housing' for planning purposes.

5. Shared ownership

An occupier will typically buy a share of a new build property from a housing association. The association owns the remaining share and the occupier pays a proportional rent on this share.

6. Key Worker (see para 3.8 Appendix 5 First Homes – Interim Position Statement)

Housing offered at affordable rent to bring a financially accessible option for key workers. Rents may typically be set at 80%, or less than local market rates. A 'key worker' is a public sector employee who provides an essential service. Key workers include those occupations listed below.

1. Clinical staff employed by the NHS to include ambulance drivers, paramedics, healthcare workers;
2. Providing care services (including those working in care homes);
3. Police officers, community support officers, and frontline police staff;
4. Uniformed staff in the Fire & Rescue Service;
5. Prison officers, and frontline prison staff;
6. Probation officers;
7. Public sector employed teachers, social workers, planning and building control officers, environmental health officers, occupational therapists, speech therapists and educational psychologists;
8. Or such other critical workers that the council acting reasonably shall approve.

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Appendix 5.

First Homes – Interim Position Statement

Last updated: 6 January 2022

Version: 1.4

Online version: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/insert-link-to-policy>



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1. Summary

Interim Position in Buckinghamshire

- 1.1 The proposed interim policy position set out in this report reflects the guidance issued by the MHCLG (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – DLUHC)
- 1.2 In August 2020 Local Authorities were consulted on the government’s proposals to introduce First Homes as part of the affordable housing tenure on all new housing developments.
- 1.3 First Homes are a new Government scheme for affordable home ownership designed to help local first time buyers and key workers onto the property ladder, by offering homes at a discount compared to the market price. This could save each buyer a significant amount of money, making deposits and mortgages more affordable. The discounts will apply to the homes forever, meaning that generations of new buyers and the local community will continue to benefit every time the property is sold.
- 1.4 On 1 April 2021, the Government released its response to the consultation setting out the key details for delivery of First Homes. On 24 May 2021 a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) and changes to the National Planning Practice Guidance were published, setting out further details on the application of First Homes policy and procedures, and confirmed an implementation date of 28 June 2021.
- 1.5 The WMS requires local planning authorities to make clear how existing policies should be interpreted in the light of First Homes requirements using the most appropriate tool available to them. It is on that basis that this report has been prepared, recommending an interim policy framework for negotiating the delivery of First Homes in Buckinghamshire until such time that it can be incorporated into the new Local Plan 4 Buckinghamshire.
- 1.6 The Government have clarified that despite absence of First Homes from the July 2021 National Planning Policy Framework, the Written Ministerial Statement on First Homes does not cease to apply and should be read

alongside the NPPF as a statement of national planning policy. The WMS still represents current national policy on First Homes and exception sites.

1.7 First Homes will be delivered through three routes within the planning system in Buckinghamshire as set out below until a new Local Plan 4 Buckinghamshire is adopted. This reflects the First Homes Transitional Arrangements (Government policy on First Homes at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes#plan--and-decision-making> Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 70-018-20210524) that Local plans and neighbourhood plans submitted for examination before 28 June 2021, or that have reached publication stage by 28 June 2021 and subsequently submitted for examination by 28 December 2021, will not be required to reflect the First Homes policy requirement.

1. In the Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe areas, First Homes are required as these areas have Local Plans adopted before First Homes requirement came into existence. Therefore, First Homes will be secured through the council's consideration of affordable housing on planning applications. The Government rules on discount and local connection criteria will apply until such a time the council has published evidence to set a local discount and connection criteria.
2. In the Aylesbury Vale area – no First Homes are required as the Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VALP) was at examination after 28 June 2021 and the area is therefore caught by the transitional arrangements. The associated Affordable Housing SPD will explain the delivery of affordable housing to meet policy H1 in the VALP.
3. Across Buckinghamshire - Neighbourhood plan policies in new or revised neighbourhood plans can have policies and or site proposals for First Homes.

2. Background

First Homes – the key details

2.1 The key requirements of First Homes delivery are: -

- a) At least 25% of affordable homes delivered on each site must be First Homes. Some exemptions apply, including developments that provide solely Build to Rent homes, 100% affordable housing schemes, rural exception sites, developments that provide specialist accommodation for a group with specific needs such as the elderly, and self-build developments.
- b) Purchasers must be first time buyers.
- c) The discount must be at least 30% of open market value. Local authorities can set policies that seek discounts of 40% or 50% if they can evidence the need and viability through the Local Plan process.
- d) The discount and first time buyer eligibility requirement will be held in perpetuity and secured through legal mechanisms, i.e. when any First Homes are sold to subsequent purchasers the same level of discount and first time buyer eligibility criteria will apply.
- e) There will be a price cap for qualifying properties, and the maximum purchase price after the discount will be £250,000.
- f) Local authorities can apply their own local connection criteria and other criteria such as giving priority to keyworkers.
- g) Purchasers are eligible to purchase a First Home if they have household income of less than £80,000 (this is the same as the qualifying criteria for shared ownership housing).
- h) Local connection criteria can only be applied for the first 3 months of marketing, after which a property can be sold to any purchaser from anywhere in England, subject to meeting the criteria around household income, first time buyer eligibility, and with the discount still being held in perpetuity.
- i) A First Home must be a purchaser's only home.
- k) At least 50% of the discounted value of the property must be financed via a mortgage or other similar form of finance.
- l) In the event that a First Home cannot be sold to a qualifying purchaser within 6 months of marketing, the property can be sold as an open market home and the seller pays the council a cash contribution in lieu

of the 30% discount. This requirement will be secured in the Section 106 agreement.

- m) House values should be set by developers obtaining valuations from a registered valuer acting in an independent capacity, and any valuations should be in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors red-book valuation guidance for new-build homes. When the home is resold in future, the seller should secure a valuation in the same way in accordance with RICS's guidance. Where First Homes do not sell, a local authority may include provisions in a Section 106 agreement which allow a developer or First Home owner to sell a First Home on the open market and remove the title restriction, as long as certain conditions are met.
- n) The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended) make provisions for charging authorities to give relief or grant exemptions from the levy. These regulations allow developers of First Homes to obtain an exemption from the requirement to pay CIL. There is a CIL in operation in the Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks areas of the county.

3. Terms – Local Variations

3.1 The national terms to be used for the qualifying criteria for what constitutes a First Home and eligibility criteria to apply for a First Home are summarised in section 2. Local authorities and neighbourhood planning groups by preparing a neighbourhood plan can vary these criteria and add additional criteria based on local evidence and these local criteria would be time limited for the first 3 months from the start date of marketing the property. Local plans should set out policies for the level and type of affordable housing including the minimum of 25% of affordable homes being First Homes.

Discount

3.2 Local authorities can set a deeper minimum discount at either 40% or 50% and impose lower price caps if they can demonstrate a need for this through evidence. However, the same level of discount must apply each time such houses are sold in perpetuity secured through a planning obligation.

3.3 The council is considering the case for local evidence given the proximity of parts of Buckinghamshire to the more expensive London and indeed the south east of England housing market. Neighbourhood planning groups would also need to prepare their own evidence to support neighbourhood plan policies which go beyond the national parameters.

Local Connection

3.4 Local authorities will be able to apply additional criteria at a local level such as, setting a lower income cap, prioritising key workers (locally defined) and/or specify a particular local connection requirement based on work or current residency (excepting those with military connections).

3.5 If local authorities or neighbourhood planning groups choose to introduce their own eligibility restrictions, these will still be time-limited to the first three months from the start date of marketing of the property. Upon expiry of the three-month period, any homes which have not been sold or reserved will revert to the national standard criteria and these will apply to all future sales of a First Home.

3.6 The council will require First Homes in the Buckinghamshire Council area (that are not already subject to local connection criteria such as through a Neighbourhood Plan) to be prioritised for the first three months of marketing to eligible applicants in the following priority order:

1. Those who have:

lived in the 'area' continuously for at least two years immediately prior to exchange of contracts for the relevant First Home or

been in continuous employment in the 'area' for at least two years immediately prior to exchange of contracts for the relevant First Home and have worked a minimum of 24 hours per week throughout that period

been living outside the 'area' but employed or with a firm job offer within the Buckinghamshire Council area that falls within the definition of 'keyworker'

2. Those who have:

lived in the 'area' continuously for at least one year immediately prior to exchange of contracts for the relevant First Home or

been in continuous employment in the 'area' for at least one year immediately prior to exchange of contracts for the relevant First Home and have worked a minimum of 24 hours per week throughout that period.

Where 'area' is the Local Plan area these applicants shall be prioritised for the first month of marketing before extending priority to people meeting one or more of the above local connection criteria from the wider Buckinghamshire Council area for the remaining two months of marketing.

Price Cap

3.7 The Council can impose a lower price cap than £250,000 if it can demonstrate a need for this through evidence. It may be that there needs to be different price caps reflecting the housing markets in the south nearer to London than the north of the country nearer to the Midlands.

Key Worker

3.8 The council wishes to restrict First Homes with local eligibility restrictions so that First Homes have the best chance to be sold to local people and key workers. The Council prioritises Key workers for the eligibility criteria to apply for a first home with the following definition. Key workers are:

- Clinical staff employed by the NHS to include ambulance drivers, paramedics, healthcare workers
- Providing care services (including those working in care homes)
- Police officers, community support officers, and frontline police staff
- Uniformed staff in the Fire & Rescue Service
- Prison officers, and frontline prison staff
- Probation officers
- Public sector employed teachers, social workers, planning and building control officers, environmental health officers, occupational therapists, speech therapists and educational psychologists
- Or such other critical workers that the council acting reasonably shall approve.

Local Evidence

3.9 The council will consider the case for local evidence for the discount and price cap given the proximity of parts of Buckinghamshire to the more expensive London and indeed the south east of England housing market. This matter will be taken forward in the evidence gathering stage for the Local Plan 4 Buckinghamshire. Neighbourhood planning groups may also prepare their own evidence to support neighbourhood plan policies on First Homes discount and price cap.

4. Impact on other Affordable Housing Tenures

4.1 The requirement is that at least 25% of all affordable homes delivered through planning obligations will be delivered as First Homes, with the balance of the affordable units being delivered as per the relevant former District Council's local plan requirement.

4.2 Where cash contributions for affordable housing are secured instead of on-site units, a minimum of 25% of these contributions should be used to secure First Homes. A local authority should prioritise securing their policy requirements for social rent once they have secured the 25% First Homes requirement. Where specific developments are exempt from delivering affordable home ownership products under paragraph 64 of the NPPF, they shall also be exempt from the requirement to deliver First Homes.

Local Plan requirements

4.3. The following sets out the impacts of the application of First Homes policy on each of the areas that are not exempt.

4.4. Wycombe Local Plan 2019 (Wycombe Local Plan 2019 - weblink <https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/pages/Planning-and-building-control/Planning-policy/Wycombe-Development-Plan.aspx>) plan policy DM24, requires a tenure split of 80% affordable rent and 20% intermediate. So a scheme of 100 homes not on a greenfield site or a Class B business use would provide 35 affordable homes. Following implementation of this position statement would produce a tenure mix of: -

- First Homes 8.75 units (25%) – leaving a balance of 26.25 affordable homes comprising:
- Affordable Rented units 21 units (80% of 26.25)
- Intermediate – 5.25 units (20% of 26.25)

4.5. The Chiltern Core Strategy 2011 (Chiltern Core Strategy 2011 - weblink <https://www.chiltern.gov.uk/planning/adoptedcorestrategy>) Policy CS8 requires at

least 40% affordable on a site of more than 15 dwellings and Policy CS10 identifies a tenure split of 70% social rented and 30% shared ownership. So, an example of 30 homes would mean 12 homes are to be affordable and therefore following implementation of this position statement:

- First Homes – 3 units - 25% of 12 leaving 9 affordable homes comprising:
- Affordable Rented units – 6.3 units (70% of 9)
- Intermediate – 2.7 units (30% of 9)

4.6. South Bucks Core Strategy (2011) (weblink -

<https://www.southbucks.gov.uk/planning/corestrategy>) Core Policy 3 requires at least 40% of five dwellings or above to be affordable with a tenure split of 2/3 social rented and 1/3 intermediate. So for an example a scheme of 20 homes would mean 8 affordable homes and following implementation of this position statement:

- First Homes - 2 units (25%) leaving a balance of 6 affordable homes comprising:
- Affordable Rent – 4 units (2/3 of 6)
- Intermediate - 2 units (1/3 of 6)

4.6 The impact of the application of First Homes would be to reduce the amount of affordable rented and intermediate housing that would be delivered by approximately 25%. The inclusion of First Homes will not only reduce the amount of affordable rented homes being delivered but may also affect the viability of the inclusion of any social rented homes. This is largely because of the requirement for First Homes to be part of the affordable housing mix there will be a reduced number of shared ownership homes which tend to generate the higher level of income to the developer.

4.7 In terms of rounding, where the provision of First Homes results in figures below 0.5 of a unit this should be rounded down but where the figure is 0.5 or above this should be rounded up. The rounding of the remainder of affordable housing secured should be in line with the relevant local plan policy or Supplementary Planning Document in force for that part of Buckinghamshire.

4.8 The size of the units (1 bed/2-bed/3 bed etc.) to be secured and accessibility standards that apply to First Homes are the same standards

as those for housing or affordable housing in the relevant local plan (or made neighbourhood plan) policy in force in Buckinghamshire.

- 4.9 The definition of what is 'affordable housing' is as per each Local Plan in force in the relevant area of Buckinghamshire. Therefore how forms of sheltered housing are addressed and if they are 'affordable housing' will be as set out in each relevant local plan (or made neighbourhood plan).

5. Exception Sites

DLuHC Guidance

5.1 The Government is also seeking to deliver First Homes via an exception sites approach and is introducing a 'First Homes exception sites' policy. First Homes exception sites are acceptable:

- a) on land which is not already allocated for housing,
- b) should comprise 100% First Homes (as set out above), and,
- c) be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them

5.2 First Homes exception sites should not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance identified in the NPPF (National Parks, AONB's or Green Belt), and comply with any local design policies and standards.

5.3 A small proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of First Homes without grant funding. Also, a small proportion of other affordable homes may be allowed on the sites where there is significant identified local need. In designated rural areas, which include Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, rural exception sites will remain as a tool for the delivery of housing. Elsewhere, First Homes exception sites and rural exception sites can both come forward.

Position for Buckinghamshire

5.4 In Buckinghamshire in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Green Belt, rural exception sites will remain as the sole exception site which can come forward. Elsewhere, in the Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks areas, First Homes exception sites and rural exception sites can both come forward.

5.5 The site size threshold for Entry-Level Exception Sites in the NPPF (2021) para 72 where exception sites should not be larger than one hectare in

size or exceed 5% of the size of the existing settlement - see National Planning Policy Framework 2021 para 72 (weblink to this document at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>) has been removed for First Homes Exception Sites. A local authority can determine what it considers to be appropriate as a site size threshold.

5.6 As an Interim Position until the final Local Plan 4 Buckinghamshire is agreed, proposals for First Homes Exception Sites in the Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks areas will be considered on a site-by-site basis taking into consideration the size of the proposed site against the size of the adjacent settlement. Proposals will also need to demonstrate evidence of need in the sites location to justify the size of the development and will need to demonstrate that the development is sustainable in terms of its proximity to local transport networks and amenities.

5.8 To be clear none of the above applies to the Aylesbury Vale area.

6. Monitoring, Management and Enforcement

Section 106 Agreements

6.1 The Council, in drafting Section 106 Agreements for planning decisions on First Homes, will take into account the Government's model Section 106 agreement for First Homes published on 23 December 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/first-homes-model-section-106-agreement-for-developer-contributions>

6.2 The Council's Section 106 Agreement will set out all the obligations on the applicant for a First Home planning permission and future purchasers of the home (s). These obligations may cover clustering, development construction standards, arrangements for marketing and sale, the use and occupancy of the property including letting or subletting and any mortgagee exclusions.

6.3 The Council will monitor the delivery of First Homes in the Buckinghamshire Council area and use where necessary its powers to enforce the obligations and other parts of a planning decision so that the rules of qualification of a First Home and the full terms of the planning permission are being adhered to.

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