



Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 12 July 2022 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 1.01 pm.

Members present

M Tett, Cllr A Macpherson, G Williams, S Bowles, S Broadbent, J Chilver, A Cranmer, P Strachan and M Winn

Others in attendance

M Dormer, P Martin, S Morgan and R Stuchbury

Agenda Item

1 **Apologies**

There were none.

2 **Minutes**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 be approved as a correct record.

3 **Declarations of interest**

There were none.

4 **Hot Topics**

The following topics were raised:

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

The Cabinet Member provided an update on household waste collections in the south of the Council area that had for many weeks been problematic due to the re-organisation of rounds with the new contract. The Cabinet Member again apologised to residents and advised that as of Monday there were less than 100 missed bins still left in the system. It was expected that the service would be back to business as usual by next week.

The Leader, on behalf of the Council, also apologised to all those residents who had been affected by missed collections.

Cabinet Member for Transport

The Cabinet Member referred to the decision taken by Cabinet a few months ago to apply to the Department of Transport for a Designation Order to enforce moving traffic offences. The Cabinet Member was pleased to announce that the Council was one of a handful of councils to have received these powers in the first tranche of approvals. The Council would now proceed with the procuring of cameras and would begin using these powers at the 14 identified sites across Buckinghamshire from December.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member provided an update on the call for more brownfield sites. The Council's two previous calls for brownfield sites had produced around 330 sites. At present the number of sites submitted through these calls for brownfield sites significantly underachieved the amount of land anticipated to be required in order to meet the housing requirements as set out in the Local Plan. Whilst on 13 June the Council expanded the call for brownfield sites to a call for all sites, the Council maintained its strong brown before green aspiration and encouraged all and any brownfield sites to be submitted as part of the current call. The current call for all sites was due to last until 11 September, following which the appropriateness and deliverability of all the submitted sites would be assessed.

The Cabinet Member reported that in June this year, the Government published up-to-date enforcement statistics for the financial year ending March 2022 and that these showed that Buckinghamshire was the 5th most active authority in England in relation to issuing Planning Enforcement notices and the number one most active authority outside of Greater London. In April, the Council also took the first direct action as an authority clearing five caravan pitches from a site in Little Chalfont. The Leader added that the Council had also made some significant decisions about enforcement in the north of the county, particularly the north of Buckingham area and stressed the importance of ensuring that people were aware that there were consequences if they breached planning control rules.

Nominations were currently open for the Buckinghamshire Design Awards 2022. These bi annual awards have been running for nearly 30 years and celebrate well designed new places and spaces that help make Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work, and do business. More information was available on the Council's website (Design Awards).

Cabinet Member for Communities

The Cabinet Member reported that 3 more wardens had joined the street wardens team at the beginning of July. There were now 6 street wardens to undertake enforcement work and deal with anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues in Aylesbury and High Wycombe Town Centres.

The Public Space Protection Order consultations for Aylesbury Town Centre, Buckingham Town Centre, West End Road High Wycombe, Winslow and Steeple

Clayton closed this Monday (11 July) having run for four weeks. The consultations were undertaken to give stakeholders, councillors and community members the opportunity to comment on the current orders in place and would inform the decision on whether to review, amend or extend the provisions contained within them.

With regards to the Grants Review, the first meeting of the Grants Member Task and Finish Group took place on 23 June. This group would be overseeing phase 2 of the Corporate Grants Review, which would be looking at how the Council funded voluntary sector organisations to ensure a consistent approach across services.

The Cabinet Member provided an update on Helping Hands and the Household Support Fund. The Council had used just over £1.5m of the current Household Support Fund, which would run until 30 September. These funds had enabled the Council to support approximately 12,000 eligible young people during the May half term. During the summer holiday period, the Council would be distributing a £50 digital supermarket voucher for each eligible child. The Council was still awaiting clarification on the further extension to the Household Support Fund announced by the Government in May, but work continued through the Financial Insecurity Partnership to develop approaches to build financial resilience across Buckinghamshire residents. Thanks were expressed to the Helping Hand team for their excellent work.

Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services

The Cabinet Member reported that severe weather emergency provisions had been implemented to support rough sleepers during the current extreme hot weather. This included the provision of any additional support that rough sleepers might need during this period. It was noted that the Customer Access Points in the Council's offices had been made available during opening hours to anyone who needed to find shelter off the streets and access to water. Detailed messaging had been cascaded to Town and Parish Councils and Members regarding rough sleepers and extreme hot weather over the summer. The Cabinet Member advised that if someone found themselves sleeping rough or if someone saw anyone sleeping out on the streets of Buckinghamshire, they could contact Street Link online or phone 0300 500 0914. If someone saw anyone they believed to be under the age of 18 and/or were concerned about the health or welfare of anyone sleeping rough, they should call 999.

With regards to the extreme hot weather, the Leader also stressed the importance of using all possible forms of communication to advise residents, especially the vulnerable, on what to do in the extreme weather. The Chief Executive advised that the NHS have significant amounts of advice in relation to what we all should do, particularly those people who were older or vulnerable, in incidences of extreme weather. The Council had already put information out through social media and Richard Barker, Corporate Director for Communities, would be chairing a meeting later today to consider what more might be done, taking advice from the Director of Public Health.

The Council undertook a workshop last week with local registered providers to discuss how the Council and providers could best work together to maximise affordable housing delivery across Buckinghamshire. Council officers from housing, planning and property & assets attended the session and the feedback from the discussions was being reviewed to identify options and opportunities to develop the Council's joint working arrangements with registered providers going forward.

5 Question Time

Question from Councillor Robin Stuchbury to Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration and Councillor Steven Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport

“As part of the Buckingham Transport Strategy and the A421 Corridor, Buckingham Town Council will be starting the process of developing and updating the neighbourhood plan in line with current development plans. Will the Council and the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration be consulting and working in partnership with the Town Council at the earliest opportunity on a feasible route for the A421 Corridor sharing detailed advice bearing in mind previous historical discussions relating to the A421 & A413 Roundabout and the Council's legal obligations including carrying out site visits and ensuring the needs of local residents will be taken into account?”

RESPONSE from Councillor Broadbent:

Thank you for this question Cllr Stuchbury. We welcome the update to the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan to take account of the revised development plans in the area following the adoption of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

In reference to the A421 corridor itself, you and other local ward members along the route have been involved in discussions with the Council's Transport Strategy team who are preparing to undertake a technical study to assess the A421 corridor and its links into the neighbouring areas (especially towards Milton Keynes, Bicester, Silverstone Enterprise Zone and the new station planned for Winslow). This would naturally include the A421/A413 roundabout.

This study aims to assess and appraise the efficiency of the road corridor for all modes of travel (cycling, buses as well as cars and freight) and then subsequently identify costed measures that will ensure that the route is robust enough to support future growth and expected increase in traffic. The study is due to commence in Autumn 2022. The Transport Strategy team will report back on the recommendations made to the Buckingham Town Council, and other parish councils along the route, when the study is completed (expected early 2023). We will include the Town Council's views when determining next steps for this work.

This is a relatively high level strategic study and as such there are no specific scheme proposals upon which to consult local residents. It is important that the timing of public consultation is appropriate to the situation and so when any measures identified by this study are taken forward into design and feasibility, there will be a public consultation exercise with the views of local residents taken into account at this stage.

Question from Councillor Susan Morgan to Councillor Chilver, Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources and Councillor Tett, Leader of the Council

“The Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee on 5 July referred this matter back to Cabinet to consider the results of the public consultation before any decision was confirmed. In my opinion, the consultation itself was flawed. Only a small boundary of houses surrounding the Bucks CC Sports and Social Club were asked to take part in the public consultation and yet, residents from a much wider area are affected by this decision. It's noted in the report that while Stoke Mandeville Parish Council were consulted they have yet to make a legal and formal decision in support/against development on this land. In the emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan this site is listed as Local Green Space and for the first 2 years after closure residents were allowed to access this space until it was fenced off in March 2020. However, the Leader stated at the last Cabinet meeting that this land was not, nor had ever been, public open space. Cabinet should make sure that this land is formally changed in the emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan before making a decision or this will hugely affect any planning decision.

Cabinet is requested to consider a proposal given to residents by Stoke Mandeville Parish Council at their last meeting, to come up with a new business plan by September, incorporating the additional 700 houses that have been built since the club closed, and delay any decision on this land until October 2022 to give the residents an opportunity to either prove or disprove whether this is a viable option? This would also give the Cabinet Member time to complete a more detailed comprehensive public consultation.”

RESPONSE from Councillor Chilver:

The Cabinet report on this proposal has been referred back to Cabinet, together with the Consultation report Summary and is covered on today's agenda. This follows on from the input at Select Committee. The paper asks for authority to submit an outline planning application with the intention of bringing forward a mixed development of affordable housing for local people and market housing around a green open space. Although the report looks at an affordable housing provision of 30%, there is an opportunity that the percentage of affordable housing could be as high as 60%, that would be decided upon in a subsequent delivery report. There are also plans for a community sports and leisure facility.

You state that in your opinion the consultation process was 'flawed'. I would disagree. A Local leaflet drop was undertaken and, in addition, there was a wider

consultation process. This has been set out in the Response summary report in the Cabinet report. Furthermore, posters were displayed on all the Parish Council's 8 notice boards, including the Eskdale Community Centre, in addition to a link to the consultation process being included on the Stoke Mandeville Parish Council Website, and finally on launch day a news press release was sent to local media including the Bucks Herald, the Bucks Free Press and Greatest Hits Radio.

In terms of future consultation, if Cabinet decide an application should be submitted, there will be a further statutory round of publicity by the Council as Local Planning Authority, both on site and in the press. This will afford an opportunity for the Community to submit their comments on the application to the Local Planning Authority. Furthermore, all local Members and statutory consultees will be consulted by the Local Planning Authority during the planning application process.

The Council has been in consultation with Stoke Mandeville Parish Council for some months and the proposed emerging masterplan is a reflection of those discussions. Although the Council hopes the site will be allocated in the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan, it is acknowledged it is not yet formally adopted. The Cabinet will need to consider if the consultation with the Local Community as set out in this response and the papers before Cabinet are sufficient to support the report recommendations. One point for Members to consider will be the letter from Stoke Mandeville Parish Council agreeing that they will not designate the site as green open space.

With regard to the claim that this site has been publicly accessible open space, since the time the site operated as a Council owned Sports and Social Club for staff and family of the former County Council, it did so as a members club. During that time and since it has remained fenced and not available for public use. The only new substantial fencing was to separate the temporary NHS trust car park to prevent Hospital staff accessing the remainder of the site in 2021. The site has never been dedicated public open space.

Regarding the emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan, and the weight would carry once adopted in consideration of a planning application, it would be a significant consideration, but as can be seen from the information provided, considerable Consultation has occurred which is informing the paper before Cabinet.

Finally, the Planning Process will take some time and if a viable alternative business plan is produced by the local community in the Autumn, it can be submitted and would be considered by Members.

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 Children and Education Select Committee review of recruitment and retention of social workers

Councillor M Dormer, Chairman of the Review Group, attended the meeting to present the findings and recommendations of the rapid review set up in November 2021 by the Children's and Education Select Committee to investigate the issues relating to the difficulties of recruiting and retaining both trainee and qualified social workers. This was both a local and national issue and related to the demand for social workers exceeding the available supply. In order to explore the issues relating to this thoroughly, the rapid review group had undertaken research and interviewed senior officers, social workers and their managers to explore areas that might be addressed to ameliorate the situation at Buckinghamshire.

The recruitment and retention of social workers had been a key issue for local authority Children's Services departments for over ten years and it had been well documented by various national organisations with statistics relating to the issue published annually by central government. Through interviews and research the review group assessed such influencing factors as competition, pay and employment packages, agency versus permanent recruitment, development opportunities, welfare issues and quality of leadership.

From the early stages of the review the group decided that the focus should be on the child protection area of social work as there had been a 60% increase in child protection workloads since the Covid pandemic. Turnover rates of staff in child protection were particularly high and agency workers, although relied upon to fill team vacancies, created a substantial impact on the permanent staff when they left.

The group gained the views of social workers and officers which highlighted areas of need detailed in the recommendations, which included career progression, thorough support for social workers through supervision and good management, the need for a closely aligned HR function, and a review of IT and administrative support to encourage more streamlining of processes. Appendix 1 provided further context to the Select Committee's recommendations.

Councillor Dormer thanked the other councillors on the review group and all the officers who took part in the review. In response to a question on whether the affordability of living in Buckinghamshire had an impact on recruitment, Councillor Dormer explained that this was raised, but that a number of social workers actually lived outside of Buckinghamshire and travelled in. He added that there were recommendations which would go towards meeting some of the additional costs of living in Buckinghamshire. With regards to exit interviews, Councillor Dormer confirmed that this should be two interviews; one with a team manager and one with HR.

Cabinet thanked the review group for their comprehensive report on such an important issue. The Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services then presented Cabinet's draft response to the recommendations as set out and circulated to Members. The Cabinet Member welcomed the well thought out recommendations and explained that the recommendations had been responded to with either a 'yes' or 'in part' and that they were either being implemented, would be implemented or had been implemented.

In the discussion which followed, the Cabinet Member set out the timelines for implementation. With regards to improvements to technology, it was noted that during the last 2 years, significant improvements had been made to the case management system and that these changes had been made in consultation with front line workers across the service. It was recognised there was more to do on this, and plans were in place to improve this further.

In response to a question on whether there was enough pastoral care for social workers, the Corporate Director for Children's Services explained that pastoral care and support was a high priority and that staff had access to a range of health and well-being support.

Cabinet stressed the importance of ensuring that social workers feel valued and appreciated for the extremely important work that they do.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the Select Committee and Review Group, as well as the supporting officers, be thanked for their work and subsequent recommendations.**
- 2) That Cabinet's responses to the review, as set out and circulated to Members, be AGREED.**

Note: a complete breakdown of the scrutiny recommendations and Cabinet's responses can be found [here](#).

8 Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan

In December 2021, Ofsted conducted their Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) reinspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. This inspection found that Buckinghamshire was no longer 'Inadequate', and the overall judgement of Children's Services was 'requires improvement to be good'. The Ofsted's report highlighted examples of strong practice across the service and also where improvements were required. A number of recommendations were made as set out in the Cabinet report.

As a result of the continued improvement of services, the revised Statutory Direction issued to Buckinghamshire in July 2018 had been lifted and Buckinghamshire had now entered a period of 'support and supervision', in line with all authorities who exit formal intervention. The service would continue to use its existing Quality Assurance Framework and Check & Challenge process to review practice and

monitor progress on a regular basis. Action Leads would also provide six weekly updates that would consider progress alongside Performance and Impact Reporting (including data trends, quality assurance and key performance indicators). Progress against the plan would also be a standing item on each Improvement Board agenda.

In the discussion which followed, Members welcomed the Action Plan, which would help the Council achieve its aspiration that Children's Services be rated at least good at the next Ofsted inspection. It was stated that there was no room for complacency and that it was vital that the service continues to improve. The Leader encouraged anyone who had any concerns which could impact this journey of improvement to contact either the Cabinet Member or himself.

In response to a question about how the Action Plan would be monitored and how accountability would be assured, the Cabinet Member explained that the Improvement Board would maintain oversight of the progress being made against the Ofsted recommendations and other improvements required across the service. John Coughlan, CBE, would continue to be the Independent Chair of the Board.

The Corporate Director for Children's Services assured Members that there was a significant Quality Assurance Framework in place to monitor progress and review practices, which included the carrying out of formal auditing processes. The weekly Check and Challenge afternoons, which involve a thorough examination of a sample of a specific team's work, have also continued to be carried out.

Further information was sought on the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, including a request for the work programme of the Panel to be shared with Members. The Cabinet Member updated Members on the work of the Panel, including how the voices of children in care would be heard at Panel meetings.

With regards to the national issue of the recruitment and retention of social workers, the Chief Executive stated that Senior Management were in contact with the Department for Education to highlight and raise issues of concern on this subject. Given the increasing level of need in the community, the Council would in due course need to consider how it worked with children to make sure that it was utilising what was a relatively finite resource of social workers.

In relation to the role of HR in the improvement of Children's Services, the Chief Executive stated that HR and all of the Council's support services were absolutely committed to improving this service for children and although the Council's HR services like all its other services were undergoing some form of structural review, this would not slow down or stop the acceleration of the support for this service in thinking through how the Council could further work to stabilise the social worker resource which was so critical to the outcomes for young people.

RESOLVED –

That the content of the Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan submitted to Ofsted following the December 2021 inspection be NOTED.

9 Buckinghamshire Levelling Up Framework

While outcomes for people living in Buckinghamshire were some of the best in the country there were also parts of the county where residents experienced significant hardship. The Council, in discussion with partners, had been exploring the potential for a local approach to ‘levelling up’ within Buckinghamshire designed to address disparities of outcomes experienced by particular communities within the county and promote community wellbeing and increased productivity. The proposed framework (“Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All”) attached at Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report was designed to set the context for this approach, establish a shared ambition and a programme of work to tackle the underlying issues.

At the full Council meeting in April 2022, Members had committed to producing a report on Levelling Up within 3 months which set out the initial plans for taking action to secure long term change.

The “Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All” framework would be underpinned by a programme of work focused on five themes:

- Education and Skills.
- Jobs and career opportunities.
- Quality of our Public Realm.
- Standards of Living.
- Health and Wellbeing.

Initially, the focus of the programme would be on 10 wards, as listed in section 2.4 of the Cabinet report, which were in parts of Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham that experienced particular challenges in terms of outcome.

Local action plans to tackle the five themes would be developed for each area through engagement with the communities, led by the Community Boards. Each plan would need to be designed in a way that added value to existing activity in the area. Depending on progress there could be opportunities to extend the programme to include other areas in the future, and this consideration would form part of the regular monitoring and evaluation.

A ‘Levelling Up’ Programme Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, had been established to bring partners together to help drive the development and delivery of the programme. This was a multiagency board reporting into the Growth Board, chaired by the Leader. As set out in Appendix 1, a series of metrics would be tracked regularly and reported to Cabinet in order to assess progress and impact.

In the discussion which followed, Cabinet welcomed the recommendations in the

report which would enable the Council and its partners to come together with communities and draw upon collective resources to enhance opportunities and promote community well-being and in the long term improve the life of those residents within those communities. The important role that partnership working would play in the delivery of the programme was emphasised.

A comment was made on the need to push government centrally on projects especially around infrastructure to help tackle deprivation in Buckinghamshire. The Leader confirmed that the “Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All” framework would also form part of the negotiations with the Government on a County Deal for Buckinghamshire which would aim to secure more investment in Buckinghamshire.

In relation to the theme ‘Quality of the Public Realm’, a comment was made that as well as the big town centres, there were also local smaller centres in the 10 wards which could also benefit from improvement. A suggestion was made that on page 9 of the Framework, under the financially stretched header, 16% could be increased to 22% if urban adversity was included. A further suggestion was made that it might be useful to also reference the issue of relative poverty in the Framework.

In response to a question regarding who would be invited to attend the conference to launch the programme, Sarah Ashmead (Deputy Chief Executive) explained that in principle the Council would like to open the conference up to more councillors than just those from the 10 wards, but that this would be dependent on the capacity of the venue.

Cabinet thanked the Deputy Chief Executive, and the team for this important piece of work.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the proposals for a Buckinghamshire Levelling Up Framework be AGREED.**
- (2) That the programme ‘Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All’ be SUPPORTED.**

10 Town & Parish Charter

Town and Parish Councils (T&PC’s) were the grass roots of local government in Buckinghamshire. Following the establishment of the new Buckinghamshire Council Members wanted to take the opportunity to strengthen the relationship between all tiers of local government. There had been an ongoing programme of work to create a document that outlined this commitment and articulated some key areas to help cement a strengthened relationship.

This work had involved extensive engagement with local councils, members and had been supported by an independent consultant. Following this work, the recommendation was to produce a document which set out a framework for how Buckinghamshire Council would work with local councils going forward. The

document entitled 'The Town and Parish Charter' was attached at appendix 1 to the Cabinet report. Underpinning the Charter was an Action Plan attached as Appendix 2 to the Cabinet report.

The Action Plan would establish mechanisms for accountability and how the charter would be embedded within the Council and in the ongoing relationship with local councils. It also addresses a number of areas for improvement. The Partnerships, Policy and Communications team within the Deputy Chief Executive's directorate would act as the lead service in implementing the Action Plan and building on the existing relationship to ensure effective partnership and joint working between the two tiers of local government. However, this would not replace existing relationships and arrangements for engagement and consultation with local councils on specific service issues.

Officers would monitor the progress of the action plan and review the Charter on an annual basis ensuring consultation with Buckinghamshire councillors and town and parish councils. Any key changes to the Charter itself would be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

In the discussion which followed, Cabinet stressed the importance of having a strong relationship with Town and Parish Councils and welcomed the Charter which would demonstrate and embed the Council's commitment to effective working with Town and Parish Councils across the Council.

With regards to communication with Town and Parish Councils, it was noted that regular parish liaison meetings between the Council and Town and Parish Councils were being held virtually to share information and consider shared opportunities. The Cabinet Member agreed to look into whether face to face meetings to aid communication could be held moving forwards. The Cabinet Member also agreed to look into the possibility of establishing a dedicated parish liaison role within the Council, but explained that this would be dependent on the budget.

The Cabinet thanked Simon Garwood (Senior Policy Officer) and the team for all their hard work in producing the Charter.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the proposed Charter outlining the Buckinghamshire Council's commitment to working with Town and Parish Councils across the county be ADOPTED.**
- (2) That the Action Plan supporting the delivery of the commitments in the Charter be NOTED.**

11 Biodiversity Net Gain

Cabinet considered a report on the new requirement to provide biodiversity net gain as part of the planning system. The Environment Act 2021 had introduced a new mandatory requirement for biodiversity net gain in the planning system, to ensure

that all new developments increased biodiversity by a minimum of 10%, with this requirement coming into effect from late 2023. A draft Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) explaining how biodiversity net gain could be achieved in Buckinghamshire was attached to the Cabinet report for consideration and adoption. Having a SPD would aid in implementation of the biodiversity net gain requirements.

The Council had been developing a Biodiversity Net Gain scheme that aims to provide a one-stop shop for developers, enabling them to discharge their offsite biodiversity net gain obligations through financial contributions. By potentially offering a locally operated scheme to provide net gain offsets, the Council was aiming to help ensure that biodiversity net gain offsets would support habitat creation and restoration on a strategic scale within Buckinghamshire. However, this scheme would not be available until further clarification was provided by the Government through the publication of detailed guidance on the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain by Local Authorities. Whilst work would continue to develop the proposed scheme, this would be brought back to Cabinet separately after taking into account government guidance once published. The attached SPD could be adopted without the above scheme being in place.

In response to a question as to how the 10% gain would be judged, the Head of Climate Change and Environment explained that the Environment Act included a baseline of January 2020 so local planning authorities could go back to the evidence base from that time and use that as the judgement of what the net gain would need to look like. There was a range of evidence which could be used including, for example, aerial photography of what was there at that time. Moving forward, more accurate data from those sites would become available which would make it more robust.

It was noted that the Environment Act 2021 stated that the net gain would be delivered preferably on-site, or if that was not possible off-site or as a last resort via a new government statutory biodiversity credits scheme. In response to concern being expressed that the biodiversity net gain could be delivered outside of Buckinghamshire, Cabinet were advised that the amount of net gain would be increased the further away it was to be delivered from the site which would make it more expensive and so there would be an incentive to deliver it on-site or as close to the site as possible. Cabinet were of the opinion that biodiversity net gains should be delivered in Buckinghamshire so that Buckinghamshire residents could benefit from them.

RESOLVED –

That the Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be ADOPTED.

12 Corporate Performance Indicators 2022-2023

Cabinet received a report detailing the key performance indicators and targets being

proposed for reporting to Cabinet in 2022/23. If agreed, reporting against these indicators would commence for Quarter 2. The proposed key performance indicators and the associated targets, as set out in appendix 1, had been agreed within each Directorate and with each portfolio holder. They would be reviewed on an annual basis in accordance with the Corporate Performance Framework.

Cabinet considered the KPIs and targets for 2022/23 and discussed whether they provided a satisfactory range of indicators to evidence the key Council objectives for 2022/23, would evidence outcomes that Cabinet wished to achieve, and that the targets were stretching but achievable, in line with latest benchmarking (where available).

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Key Performance indicators for 2022/23 be AGREED.**
- (2) That the associated targets for 2022/23 be AGREED.**

13 Q1 Budget Monitoring Report 2022-23

The report set out the overview of the financial Revenue and Capital outturn position for Buckinghamshire Council for the financial year 2022/23 as at quarter 1. This was the first budget monitoring report for the new financial year and came at a time when the Council was experiencing significant financial pressures due to the current economic situation and the high levels of inflation.

The forecast Revenue outturn position for 2022/23 was an adverse variance of £3.8m, 1% of Portfolio budgets. Appendix 1 provided detailed information on the revenue forecast outturn by Portfolio. £19.2m of savings were incorporated into the approved 2022-23 Revenue budgets.

At this early point in the year, Portfolios were forecasting that the Capital Programme would be managed to the agreed budget level (with no forecast variance). However, the current exceptional level of inflation and the risk that shortages of building materials could further drive up prices and cause delays and slippage in the programme would have a significant impact on what could be delivered within the approved budget for the year. It has been agreed that a moratorium would be put in place on uncommitted capital schemes (excluding rolling maintenance programmes) whilst an urgent review of the impact of inflation was carried out and the capital programme was re-prioritised via a Member and Officer Task and Finish group. Urgent sign off measures would be put in place to ensure that key schemes could commence before the review was complete.

The Cabinet discussed the issues around the current exceptional level of inflation. David Skinner, the newly appointed Section 151 Officer, explained that the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was being updated in terms of revised inflation assumptions. The MTFP, as it develops over the next few months, would need to respond to any rise in inflation and suitable mitigations would need to be considered as part of the planning process.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report, including the risks and opportunities contained within it, be NOTED.**
- (2) That the drawdown of £1.5m from the “Mitigating Future Financial Risks” Reserve be APPROVED, to fund the unconsolidated element of the 2022/23 pay award as approved by the Senior Appointments & Pay Committee (SAPC).**
(Note: This can be funded from reserves as it is a one-off element and will not be incorporated into the base budget going forwards.)

14 Proposed residential development at the site of the former Buckinghamshire County Council Community Sports and Social Club Land

Cabinet considered a report on 7 June 2022 seeking approval to submit an Outline Planning Application for a proposed residential development at the site of the former Buckinghamshire County Council Community Sports and Social Club land. Cabinet had resolved that approval to submit an Outline Planning Application for the proposed residential development at the site of the former Buckinghamshire County Council Community Sports and Social Club land be agreed.

Cabinet’s decision had been called in by Councillor Christensen and been supported by 23 Councillors. The call-in and pre-planning consultation document had been considered at a meeting of the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee on 5 July, which had referred the decision back for further consideration by Cabinet relating to the pre-planning consultation document before any decision was taken.

Cabinet considered a further report and during discussions the Leader asked all Cabinet Members individually to confirm that they had read and considered the pre-planning consultation document on the former Buckinghamshire County Council Community Sports and Social Club land that was included with the agenda papers. All Cabinet Members confirmed that they had done this.

Cabinet’s attention was also drawn to the letter from the Chairman of Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee, a letter from the Chairman of Stoke Mandeville Parish Council and a letter from the Chair of Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which were all included with agenda papers.

The Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources reconfirmed the verbal report which he provided to the last Cabinet meeting which stated that whilst there was local opposition to the loss of open green space and to building houses on the site, there had been no public right of access and much of the site had been fenced off since the club closed. These plans would bring the site back into community use with over 40% of open green space, which could include a full size football pitch to the south of the site designated as community sports provision. The Cabinet

Member stressed the need to balance the responses of all local stakeholders, including the support which had been received from local members as was set out in the report, and support from Stoke Mandeville Parish Council and Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, referring to the letters which had been included in the agenda papers.

The Cabinet, whilst understanding the strength of local feeling against the Outline Planning Application, recognised the benefits of the proposed plans in delivering on the Council's affordable housing commitments, bringing the site back into community use with new sporting facilities and improving local traffic flows. The Leader referred to one of the manifesto commitments which was to look at surplus property from the legacy councils to see which sites could be used for affordable and key worker housing. Although the report looked at an affordable housing provision of 30%, there was an opportunity that the percentage of affordable housing could be as high as 60%. The importance of providing good quality well designed affordable housing for local people and key workers was stressed.

The Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources stated that in terms of future consultation, if Cabinet decided an application should be submitted, there would be a further statutory round of publicity by the Council as Local Planning Authority, which would afford the Community a chance to submit their comments on the application to the Local Planning Authority. All local Members and statutory consultees would be consulted by the Local Planning Authority during the planning application process.

Following re-consideration of the Cabinet report, the pre-planning consultation document and feedback and the information in the confidential part of the agenda, it was –

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Service Director for Property and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources, be authorised to instruct the submission of an Outline Planning Application consisting of up to 100 residential units including 30% affordable Housing, a new road link between Booker Park School and Lower Road, an increase in size of the existing access road to Lower Road and the provision of a sports and leisure area for community and school use.**
- (2) That it be NOTED that this site is Council owned land and provides an opportunity to provide services to the benefit of Buckinghamshire residents, such as affordable and keyworker housing in excess of statutory requirements and homes for clients of adults and children's services that cannot be imposed on privately owned development sites.**
- (3) That, should an outline planning application be successful, the Service Director for Property and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources and relevant service Directors and Heads of Service, be authorised to develop a draft and bring forward a**

proposed detailed development scheme for further consideration by Cabinet.

Note: The Leader requested that the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee be informed of Cabinet's decision and outcome of the meeting.

15 Highways Term Maintenance Contract - Award

The procurement project team, with support from other disciplines from across the Council and externally, had made positive progress with the delivery of the new Highways operating model and the associated procurement activity and were on programme to deliver these key contracts for the Council.

One of these contracts was the appointment of a new Term Maintenance Contractor. The Cabinet report paper, and the confidential Appendix 1, reported on the outcome of the procurement exercise and recommended the award of contract to the preferred bidder with the most economically advantageous tender in accordance with the agreed assessment model for quality and price.

The Term Maintenance Contract was a key component of the new Highway service contracts and awarding it would enable the smooth transfer to the new operating model for the Highways Service and ensure business continuity. It would reflect value for money and was lower than current costs on a like for like basis.

In the discussion which followed, the Cabinet Member stressed the robustness of the procurement process. It was noted that the Council had used an external independent multidisciplinary team of specialists to support the Council's procurement project team to ensure that outcomes were being met.

In response to a question regarding competition, the Cabinet Member referred to section 2.2 of the report and stated that the competitive nature of the process has helped to secure value for money and innovation. Following the Market Engagement Day, in which 57 organisations attended, 7 initial returns were received. This, the Cabinet Member explained, was a large amount for the industry.

The Cabinet Member stated that a key focus going into the procurement exercise was to improve the service and that this would include communication with all stakeholders, including residents, members and town and parish councils.

In response to a question about the current contract and programme of works, the Cabinet Member explained that the Council was working actively to ensure that standards remained at the same level and that the work programme for the year would be delivered. The Cabinet Member assured Cabinet that there would be effective monitoring of the new service.

Members discussed the confidential appendix in private and asked a variety of questions around the tender evaluation including links around local employment

and upon returning to public session it was –

RESOLVED –

- (1) That progress made to date on the procurement of the new Highways Services Contracts be NOTED.**
- (2) That the award of the Highways Term Maintenance contract to the preferred bidder be AGREED, as detailed within confidential Appendix 1.**

16 Exclusion of the public (if required)

RESOLVED –

That pursuant to Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Minutes No 17 and 18 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act as defined as follows:

Minute 18 – Highways Term Maintenance Contract – Award

The items include Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972) (The need to maintain the exemptions outweighs the public interest in disclosure, because disclosure could prejudice the Council's position in any future process or negotiations).

17 Confidential appendix - Proposed residential development at the site of the former BCC Sports and Social Club land

This item was taken in public.

18 Confidential appendix for Highways Term Maintenance Contract

This item was undertaken in confidential session as part of Minute item 15 and details of the public discussion and the decisions taken are included within Minute number 15.

19 Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held at 10am on Tuesday 13 September 2022.