



## Cabinet agenda

Date: Tuesday 21 March 2023

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 Climate Change and Environment), S Bowles (Cabinet Member for Communities), S Broadbent (Cabinet Member for Transport), J Chilver (Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources), A Cranmer (Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services), C Harriss (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure), P Strachan (Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration) and M Winn (Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services)

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To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2023.

**3 Declarations of interest**

**4 Hot Topics**

**5 Question Time**

**Question from Councillor Robin Stuchbury to Councillor Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services**

“Can the Cabinet Member please provide information on what is being done to improve the percentage of SEND children and young people under 25 years who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place, as improvement efforts will likely be impacted by the long waiting lists that exist for diagnoses for autism, speech therapy, attention deficit and hyperactive disorder?”

<b>6</b>	<b>Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)</b>	<b>21 - 38</b>
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## Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 14 February 2023 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 12.26 pm.

### Members present

M Tett, Cllr A Macpherson, S Bowles, S Broadbent, J Chilver, A Cranmer, C Harriss, P Strachan, M Winn and J Jordan

### Others in attendance

D King, P Martin and R Stuchbury

### Agenda Item

#### 1 Apologies

Apologies have been received from Cllr Gareth Williams and from Nick Graham. Cllr Jilly Jordan (Deputy Cabinet Member – Environment) attended in Cllr Williams's place.

#### 2 Minutes

**RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 January 2023 were agreed as a correct record.**

#### 3 Declarations of interest

Cllrs Broadbent, Cranmer, Strachan, Tett and Williams declared a personal interest at Members of the Buckinghamshire Growth Board

#### 4 Hot Topics

The following hot topics were discussed:-

##### Leader

The Leader made reference to the appeal to help people affected by earthquakes that hit Turkey and Syria. There was a link on the Buckinghamshire Council website where residents could donate to the UK's Disasters Emergency Committee. If residents wanted to make a financial contribution it was important to use an officially registered charity. The Leader commented that thoughts go out to all those affected and their families and friends.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/news/support-survivors-of-the-turkey-syria-earthquake/>

#### Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources

The Cabinet Member reported that to help residents different methods of payments were being offered to pay Council Tax. Usually Council Tax was paid in 10 instalments throughout the year, however residents could request to pay in 12 instalments instead. There was an online application form to do this on the website. There were changes for former Chiltern District Council area residents who paid by direct debit. From April 2023 the Council Tax Direct Debit would be collected monthly which would finish on 1 January with no payments in February and March. This was a change from making the first payment in May.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-payments/pay-your-council-tax/>

#### Cabinet Member for Transport

The Cabinet Member reported that Councils now have the power to issue fines for vehicles that break moving traffic restrictions such as driving in a bus lane, taking a restricted turn or stopping in a hatched box. ANPR would be used to enforce certain restrictions across Buckinghamshire, initially at 14 locations. These restrictions using enforcement cameras would be enforced from mid – February onwards with the first location commencing this week.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/moving-traffic-offences/>

#### Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills

The Cabinet Member reported that Opportunity Bucks’ aimed to help residents access the fantastic opportunities on offer in Buckinghamshire where education, skills, work, living standards and health were concerned. This work was focusing on ten wards where outcomes for residents were poorer than other parts of the county. The ten wards were in parts of Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham. Part of the multi-faceted programme including the Multiply Programme which aimed to upskill/reskill vulnerable residents with no qualifications. This Programme was being advertised through the Multiply Bus visiting the ten wards in Buckinghamshire.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/news/opportunity-bucks-levelling-up-in-buckinghamshire/>

#### Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

DLUHC’s Housing and Planning Minister Lucy Fraser visited Buckinghamshire Council on 26 January to learn more about Buckinghamshire’s experience of being part of the Open Digital Planning project (ODP), demo new user-centred Digital Planning Services and hear about the Council’s wider ideas for streamlining. Buckinghamshire was one of the first LPAs to [launch new live services to citizens in 2022](#). Two of the ODP products were demonstrated to Minister Frazer during the visit as part of the department’s Digital Planning Programme.

#### Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

The Cabinet Member referred to some of the exciting events being held during half term week.

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### **Question Time**

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

##### **“Neighbourhood Plans**

Buckinghamshire Council has set up a Sub-Group which includes Area Planning Committee Chairmen, Cabinet members and senior officers looking at the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. Other Parish and Town Councils are drafting their own neighbourhood plans such as Chesham and Buckingham and will be going out to consultation on their plans with their constituents in the future. With the uncertainty, which still prevails on development housing numbers within Buckinghamshire and the questions around greenbelt protections, what work is being undertaken to engage and help guide and influence future local neighbourhood development plans for parish and town councils which will be funded through the town or parish precept, as well as guidance on the use and disparity between Section 106 agreements being used in the north of the Council area and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) being used in the south of the Council area to help facilitate infrastructure associated with growth?”

##### **RESPONSE from Councillor Strachan**

We are preparing the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire having regard to government planning policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This requires local plans to set out a housing requirement figure for each neighbourhood area that has been designated which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant housing allocations. Once these strategic policies have been adopted, these housing figures should then not need re-testing at a neighbourhood plan examination unless there has been a significant change in circumstances that affects the requirement.

We already provide significant advice and support to town and parish councils on the preparation of their neighbourhood plans and employ a dedicated Neighbourhood Planning Coordinator to assist with this. As work on the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire progresses, we shall engage with the relevant town and parish councils about what an appropriate housing requirement figure might be for their area.

In the meantime, where it is not possible to provide a housing requirement figure for a neighbourhood area, the NPPF advises the local planning authority to provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body. This figure should take into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority.

Under provisions in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, the government intends

to introduce a national Infrastructure Levy as a new mandatory charge on development to replace Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in England. Within this context, officers are considering whether to introduce CIL in the North and Central planning areas; whether to review the existing CIL charging schedules in operation in the South, East and West planning areas; and whether to commence work on a single CIL charging schedule for the whole of Buckinghamshire. A review of CIL processes and allocations would then take place once the process for introducing and reviewing CIL in the County has been concluded.

## **6 Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)**

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

**RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.**

## **7 Budget Scrutiny 2023 Report**

Cabinet were asked to consider the recommendations of the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Group which was formed to scrutinise the Draft Revenue Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme for 2023/24 – 2026/27 that Cabinet approved on 5 January 2023. As the Chairman, Cllr Ralph Bagge, had given his apologies, the Vice Chairman Cllr David Goss presented the report.

In January, the Finance and Resources Select Committee carried out its review of the draft budget. This involved three full days of questioning with each portfolio session attended by Cabinet Members and their deputies, the Section 151 officer, Corporate Directors and Heads of Finance. It was a cross-party constructive review on behalf of residents for Cabinet to consider. The report included 9 recommendations across the portfolios.

Overall, the Inquiry Group supported the budget proposals and increase in Council Tax and acknowledged the tough decisions proposed in a difficult financial climate and rising social care costs. It was clear that there was not much room to manoeuvre given increased cost pressures for the Council. In particular the Inquiry Group wanted to highlight three key areas of the budget:

1. The significant contribution to the budget of income from the Energy from Waste plant (although this was less than it might have been due to the impact of the green levy);
2. Increased costs in Adults and Children's Services due to case volume and complexity and;
3. The increasing costs for temporary accommodation.

The Vice-Chairman extended his thanks to all Members of Cabinet and officers for attending the sessions and their contributions as this helped the Inquiry Group gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities for the Council. He also thanked the review group, Cllrs Bagge, Anthony, Bracken, Fayyaz, Harris,

Macpherson, Newcombe, Walsh and Wilson, for all their hard work and Chris Ward, Senior Scrutiny Officer for his support in producing the report.

The Leader thanked the Vice-Chairman and the Review Group for the constructive cross party work that had been undertaken and then went through the Cabinet response to the recommendations in the report. A complete breakdown of the scrutiny recommendations and Cabinet's responses can be found [here](#).

During discussion the following points were made:-

Recommendation 2 – consideration of more capital investment projects to reduce revenue pressures

The Leader reported that this approach was already taken by Cabinet but invest to save schemes were scrutinised closely by Cabinet as sometimes these schemes did not generate as much savings as expected but still put pressure on the revenue budget.

Recommendation 3 – risk management

Key financial risks were identified as part of the routine risk management processes with mitigating actions being monitored by the Corporate Management Team. These processes were also monitored by Members through the Audit and Governance Committee and its Risk Management Group.

Recommendation 5 – development of a sustainable CCTV framework

The Leader reported that a strategic business case was currently being developed in conjunction with Thames Valley Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and other stakeholders. It was important to note however that given the financial pressures on the Council and that this was not a statutory responsibility of the Council, decisions about the future funding of CCTV would need to be taken in the context of the wider budget pressures on the capital and revenue programme.

Recommendation 6 – agency staffing costs

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing reported that the Council had robust mechanisms for monitoring agency staffing and detailed reporting already took place. An explanatory report would be brought to the Select Committee meeting in June 2023 about the Council's expenditure on Agency staff and the steps taken to mitigate this spend. Her Service Area had a robust Workforce Plan. The Leader reported that agency staff were usually employed due to their specialist skills, only being needed for a short period, or because there were a shortage of staff in that area, often being experienced nationally.

Recommendation 7 – finding a permanent home for Buckinghamshire Archives

The Leader reported that possible sites were being identified, however there was a substantial cost attached to this as documents needed to be kept in an environment where they would not deteriorate so specialist housing was required e.g. reinforced floors. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration also reported that it was not just documents that needed to be stored, but historical artefacts as well.

Recommendation 8 – development of alternative Temporary Accommodation solutions

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness reported that Property and Housing team have already begun a major programme to acquire additional units for Temporary Accommodation and there had also been a £3.6 million increase in budget. Prices had increased with the cost of living crisis and the pandemic had also impacted on residents with shortages in temporary accommodation. New temporary accommodation was being built such as Bridge Court in High Wycombe. The Service Area was working on the draft Housing Strategy, which would include recommendations in this area and also increased collaboration with Adults and Children’s Services.

**RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Group, as well as the supporting Officers, be thanked for their work and subsequent recommendations.**
- (2) That Cabinet’s responses to the Budget Scrutiny report 2023 and recommendations, as detailed at the meeting, be agreed.**

**8 Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27**

Cabinet received a report on the revenue budget for 2023/24 and on the capital programme for Buckinghamshire Council covering the period to 2026/27. These proposals were based on the latest known funding position, service budget pressures and the key financial risks facing the Council both now and in the future. They also took account of the findings from the recent budget scrutiny inquiry.

The Council Tax Resolution report would be presented as a separate report as part of the budget to Council in February and would contain the final information from the other precepting authorities leading to the total Council Tax for the area, which Full Council would be required to approve.

The Leader reported that the budget reflected the Council’s desire to deliver it’s corporate objectives, maintain front-line services and support residents and businesses through the Cost of Living crisis. The budget had evolved and been updated during its development to reflect the changing economic environment, especially the exceptionally high levels of inflation and the increasing demand experienced within services. Feedback from the Residents Survey had also helped shape the budget.

Whilst the Provisional Local Government Settlement had provided additional funding to the Council it remained insufficient to fund the level of inflation and growth forecast for 2023/24. The Final Local Government Finance Settlement was expected to be announced in February 2023 (after the report deadline for the meeting). There were not expected to be any changes from the figures published in the Provisional Settlement which form part of these budget proposals. 93% of the



Council's income came from Council Tax and business rates.

Changes from the draft revenue budget were minimal and largely reflect additional Government Grant announcements. Overall, the final revenue budget proposals include unavoidable growth of **£33.3m**, Inflation of **£30.0m**, savings of **£10.1m**, and income changes of **£20.3m** in 2023/24. The proposed budget was built on the proposed Council Tax base and included increasing Council Tax by the Referendum threshold limits of a 2.99% increase in basic Council Tax and a 2% increase for the Adult Social Care Precept, giving a total increase of 4.99%. This was required to maintain levels of service as much as possible in the current economic climate.

The budget continued to include the use of £1.36m of General Fund in 2023/24, as originally approved as part of the Medium-Term Plan approved at Council in February 2022.

The Capital Programme was balanced across its 4 years, as many schemes spanned multiple financial years. The Council currently had borrowing headroom of £100m. It was proposed that Council delegate to Cabinet the addition of schemes to the Capital Programme which have a financially viable business case, subject to due diligence and final Cabinet approval. £143 million was being spent on school improvement, £20 million on housing and homelessness, £15 million on climate change and flooding, £20 million on waste and recycling.

The Section 151 Officer would be producing a report to Council on 22 February 2023 and was required to comment on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and also the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

The Leader referred to current and future risks with the budget as follows:-

- Inflation and national economic conditions which made forecasting very difficult
- Central Government funding being diverted
- Complexity and demand in social care and client transport
- Increased demand for temporary accommodation
- The sustainability of providers within the social care market and care reforms
- The impact of the covid-19 pandemic

Each Cabinet Member in turn acknowledged that they had read and understood the risks set out in the report and the Equality Impact Assessment.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- Reference was made to the EIA in that the draft budget proposals related to the early stages of projects and also changes to services. As individual projects were developed in detail to deliver the changes there would need to be an individual re-assessment of Equalities impacts. The Deputy Leader and

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing reported that if there were any negative impacts on vulnerable people the focus of the service area would be to mitigate those impacts and any transformational work would be closely monitored.

- The Cabinet Member for Transport reported that his service area had strong links with the Capital Programme which was being affected by high inflationary pressures. He also commented on the reactive repairs which had to be carried out mostly through the winter due to extreme weather.
- The Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources reported that he welcomed the £100 million investment in roads but it was important that the impact on the roads of external works in Buckinghamshire due to HS2 and East-West Rail traffic should be funded by those bodies not the Council. The Cabinet Member for Transport and the Leader reassured the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources that constant pressure was being applied to HS2 and East-West Rail to reinstate roads where damage had been caused by their works.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services Education and Skills reported that demand was outpacing supply in her area which was a budget risk if this continued in the long term.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council to –**

- (1) Approve the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme (Appendices 1-3).**
- (2) Approve the 'Special Expenses' budgets, precepts and associated services for Aylesbury Town, High Wycombe Town and West Wycombe Church Yard (Appendices 5 & 6).**
- (3) Support the proposal to delegate to Cabinet decisions to add up to £100m to the Capital Programme, to be funded by Prudential Borrowing, subject to a robust business case being approved.**
- (4) Approve the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy (Appendix 7).**
- (5) Note that a supplementary report, the formal Council Tax Resolution, will accompany the final budget to full Council.**

**9 Council Tax Support Fund**

Central Government had provided funds to the Council under S31 of the Local Government Act 2003 with the proviso that all monies were paid strictly in accordance with S13a (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and in line with guidance issued on 23 December 2022. The fund, named by Central Government as the 'Council Tax Support Fund' was designed to meet the immediate needs of all taxpayers who were currently claiming Council Tax Reduction (CTR). The mandatory element was to award all recipients of Council Tax Reduction (both working age and pension age) with a further reduction in their annual council tax bill of up to £25. This reduction would apply to all Council Tax Reduction recipients who have an outstanding liability for the 2023-24 financial year.

It was proposed after applying the mandatory reduction in liability above, that the Council would continue to make similar discretionary payments to all applicants who

became eligible for Council Tax Reduction for the first time after 1 April 2023.

The report proposed an additional policy framework that set out the Council's approach to the award of the mandatory and discretionary elements of the Council Tax Support Fund from 1 April 2023, which was a new policy in addition to the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy. There was no cost to the Council in respect of Council Tax Discretionary Discounts awards as Government had made a budget allocation of £634,939. There was discretion on how this funding could be used including transferring money into the Helping Hands Fund.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council –**

**To adopt the discretionary Council Tax Support Fund policy for Buckinghamshire local Council tax support claimants, as shown in Appendix A to the Cabinet report.**

**10 Care Leaver Council Tax Disregard**

Cabinet received a report proposing the introduction of a Discretionary Council Tax Discount scheme for Buckinghamshire Council Care Leavers. The scheme would work alongside the Local Offer to support young care leavers in taking on the responsibility of having their own property and being able to support themselves financially.

One of the key points of the Local Offer was for Buckinghamshire Council to meet the obligation of paying Council Tax for the Care Leaver up until the age of 21 where they continued to interact with the Leaving Care team.

The report proposed a policy framework that set out the Council's approach to the award of discretionary Council Tax discount for Care Leavers from April 2023. Rather than Children's Services having to pay these charges, this new policy would mean that it would be more efficient to apply the discount directly to the council tax account and removed the need for care leavers to forward bills to Children's Services for payment.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council –**

**To adopt the Discretionary Council Tax Discount Scheme for Buckinghamshire Council Care Leavers, as shown in Appendix A to the Cabinet report.**

**11 Council Tax Changes to the Second Home Discount**

The report highlighted that currently there were 753 homes receiving a 10% discount for a second home. Assuming a 4.99% Council Tax increase, this was equivalent to £157k to the Council in 2023/24 (and £37k to other preceptors). The change proposed was to help encourage the active occupation of properties as a primary residence in Buckinghamshire.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council:-**

**That they remove the 10% Council Tax discount on second homes from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.**

## **12 Capital and Investment Strategy**

The Council was required to approve its Capital & Investment Strategy on an annual basis. The Capital & Investment Strategy provided the framework within which to deliver its Corporate Plan objectives through the effective investment of its limited capital resources. As well as the Council's immediate statutory responsibilities, the strategy also reflected the important role that it had to play in the regeneration and growth, affordable housing and climate change agendas, especially in the context of a post-Covid recovery and the significant housing growth in the area. Section 7 of the Strategy outlined capital risk of which inflation was the greatest risk and Section 8 covered capital governance and processes. There were capital governance advisory boards but they were not decision making bodies.

An amendment was made to the Strategy relating to the Green Belt Estate owned by the Council. Alongside the Agricultural Estates Management Policy the Green Belt Estate owned by the Council under pre-war legislation needed to be considered as well. Where considering any proposals which involved or impacted upon the Agricultural Estate or Green Belt Estate, the Property Board would ensure that environmental policies and protection of the Green Belt were fully considered as part of any recommendations to Cabinet, and also that any recommendations have the agreement of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council :-**

**To approve the Capital and Investment Strategy attached at Appendix 1 of the report including reference to the amendment above.**

## **13 Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Model**

The Levelling Up White Paper and supporting draft legislation provided Buckinghamshire with the opportunity to take control and address levelling up, regeneration and innovation priorities. Ideally Buckinghamshire was seeking a case for a 'Level 2 plus' County Deal that could result in devolution of both capital funds and powers through the award of new local flexibilities and freedoms. However, whether or not the Government continued to proceed with county deals, or indeed allow Level 2 plus deals, the Council were collectively agreed that there was a need to synthesise current work in this space into a better aligned governance structure, even though no funding had been received. As mentioned under the Hot Topics item Buckinghamshire had the Opportunity Bucks Programme which was concentrating on 10 wards.

While national policy and government funding lay outside of the Council's control the Council have the opportunity to reorganise locally to ensure that the Council was making the best use of limited resource. The proposed new model of governance would ensure that the Council was all aligned to a place based common vision and plan and provide the broadest platform from which to address growth and cohesion

priorities. The new proposed Growth Board represented a place based approach where thematic activity included health, economy and physical environment which could be coordinated to best effect. Closer integration should allow the Council to retain the strength of organisations and coordinate activity through a common Place Based Growth Board framework. A Government review had also proposed a number of changes in order to strengthen Local Enterprise Partnerships to help deliver proposals outlined in the Industrial Strategy White Paper. Having a single body for economic development meant closer collaboration for the Growth Board and the LEP with a series of supporting boards including Enterprise and Investment, Skills Board, a Regeneration Board and the Opportunity Bucks Board. There would be a pooled investment fund to exclusively fund inclusive economic growth.

The Leader made a distinction between economic development and economic regeneration as opposed to housing and that it was important to focus on economic development as a separate issue. Therefore the terms of reference would be amended with reference to the Housing and Regeneration Board to focus on economic regeneration and not housing and regeneration. It was agreed that the Cabinet would delegate to the Leader authority to make minor changes to the terms of reference as required.

During discussion Cabinet Members welcomed the report and that having a single body would champion economic development for Buckinghamshire and promote the County as a great place to invest. A Cabinet Member commented that it was disappointing that no Government funding had been given to Buckinghamshire especially with its pockets of deprivation. Another Cabinet Member welcomed the changes including having one body to ensure no duplication and having good governance in one place to ensure good decision making.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1. That the Council will aim to transition to a 'No Deal' partnership model of strategic governance with effect from April 2023, as outlined in Appendix 1, and to establish a 'Pooled Investment Fund' to exclusively fund inclusive economic growth.**
- 2. That a new Place Based Growth Board be established to strengthen alignment, generate and focus funds, and oversee the effective allocation of resources to support agreed principles.**
- 3. That a further 4 Supporting Boards be established reporting into the Growth Board. The Supporting Boards will be responsible for the development and management of a number of strands of supporting work including an Enterprise and Investment Board; a Skills Board; a Place, Housing and Regeneration Board (with amendment referenced above to focus on economic regeneration); and an Opportunity Bucks Board. As above, the Cabinet delegated authority to the Leader to make minor changes to the terms of reference of the Supporting Boards as required.**

4. That it be agreed that the Buckinghamshire LEP will fulfil the Enterprise and Investment Board remit. As such, in this initial phase the Council will seek to integrate activity rather than incorporate the legal entity and will not pursue TUPE transfer and the dissolution of the LEP Company.
5. That Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) will lead on the business support and integrated skills programme support whilst maintaining its status as the primary Buckinghamshire business representation organisation. As such, BBF will manage both the Growth Hub and the Skills Hub, subject to the core funders (Buckinghamshire Council and the Buckinghamshire LEP) agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding with BBF, to include agreed metrics, to clarify expectations around the funding provided.
6. That the management of the Enterprise Zone programme (currently managed by the EZ Board (in line with the current approved MoU) and the Connected Counties Gainshare income) be transferred into the 'Pooled Investment Fund'. The gainshare from contracts 1 and 2 (as detailed in the Cabinet report) will be managed by the Enterprise and Investment Board who will assess business cases against criteria set by the Place Based Board in order to help catalyse investment linked to agreed priorities.
7. That as a condition of transferring resources into the proposed 'Pooled Investment Fund' the Council will require:
  - i. A majority on the Place Based Growth Board.
  - ii. that all 3 Cabinet Members on the Enterprise and Investment Board must agree to the release of any funding from the 'Pooled Investment Fund'.
  - iii. formal Council approval for any additional funding, in line with financial procedures.
8. That the objectives of place based growth will include:
  - i. better utilising and aligning existing support services including IT, HR and finance.
  - ii. improving relationship management with the most significant Buckinghamshire businesses.
  - iii. increasing the Inward Investment capacity in conjunction with the Department for International Trade (DIT).
  - iv. maximising external funding and grant bidding capacity.

#### **14 Q3 Performance Report 2022-23**

Cabinet received a performance report which detailed the key performance measures reported through the Corporate Performance Framework for 2022/23. Cabinet also received the performance scorecard, which provided information on four key elements of performance for the Council covering Finance, Customer Service, Performance and Human Resources indicators. Within the performance report and performance scorecard, outturns which were performing at or better than target were classified as Green, those which were within 5% of the target were

Amber and those which were more than 5% of the target were Red. At the end of Quarter 3, 98 indicators had outturns reported with a Red, Amber or Green status. Of these, 66 are Green (67%), 10 are Amber (10%) and 22 are Red (22%).

The following updates were given on red performance indicators:-

#### Leader

Buckinghamshire unemployment rate as a percentage of National unemployment rate

The Claimant Rate measured the percentage of working age population claiming 'out-of-work' benefits from the total working age population. The target was for the percentage unemployed in Buckinghamshire to be less than 55% of the percentage unemployed nationally – the current value was 73%. Bucks LEP continued to monitor, conduct analysis alongside partners, and develop reports and area profiles to target activity effectively through programmes such as Opportunity Bucks supporting the most deprived wards focusing particularly on central Wycombe, Aylesbury and Chesham, and also to help inform the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan with Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) as the employer representative body. It was important to identify reasons behind unemployment such as transport or language which could be causing difficulties.

#### Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources

Average webchat response time (target was 50 seconds but the current value was 59). As there was pressure on phone lines resources moved to answer phones. Training and further resource would be organised, including new starters to support the web chat service going forwards. There would be a rollout of webchat across the whole website, currently it was on the contact us page only. The good news was that the target for answering phones was being met and they were well within target.

#### Average time for processing new Housing Benefit claims (days)

#### Average time for processing Housing Benefit change claims (days)

These two indicators were impacted by the 11 week closure during the rollout of the new single county wide revenues and benefits system which has been successfully implemented. This was in two phases which impacted Q1 and Q3. Additional resources over and above the planned additional capacity has been brought in to clear the outstanding work back to normal service levels by the end of Q4 2022-23. The Leader referred to pressure on phones due to the problems being experienced with waste collection in South Buckinghamshire for which the Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment had apologised. This had been largely overcome and the Council were now only dealing with a few complaints. However, this previously had a big impact on the webchat and the customer service centre.

#### 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 - 55%, current value 49.6%)

The dip in performance was due to unseasonably hot weather. There was less green

waste as a result and it would be difficult to meet the target because of this by the year end. Food waste recycling promotions were planned for Q4, which would be aimed at increasing the amount of food waste recycled.

#### % of Missed Bin Collections

This had improved and complaints relating to missed bins were infrequent. 330,000 bins were collected per week in the south; 157,000 in the north of the County (500,000 bins in total). The target was 80 per day to be missed which was small, although it was appreciated that having a bin missed was very frustrating for the householder. There were improvement actions in place.

#### Cabinet Member for Communities

##### Number of assets devolved to Town and Parish Councils, and Community Organisations

Q3 performance was one against a target of two and the delay in the devolution of Prestwood Recreation Ground was as a result of complex lease negotiations and the asset was now expected to be devolved by the end of Q4. There were 10 assets that he hoped to be devolved by the end of Q4 but this target may not be achieved. Future projects included the Green Street pilot which was at lease negotiation stage and the Aylesbury Special Expenses, where negotiations were being carried out with the Town Council. There were improvement actions being carried out; projects have a dedicated project group which met regularly to ensure progress and regular meetings were held with the organisations to which the assets were to be devolved. The Devolution Programme progress was being monitored frequently by a dedicated officer group and Members' Board.

#### Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

##### Number of library information enquiries (signposting and referral)

The Leader reported that libraries were being used as Council Access Points where enquiries could be made about Council Services and this was a log of how well they were being used. The Leader commented that libraries perform a very important function and referred to numbers dropping due to the cold weather experienced in December. The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture reported that a project with customer services was currently underway to review the CAP model and identify improvements to optimise this service.

#### Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

##### Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Annual Reviews - % of CYP with an EHCP who have had an annual review within the last 12 months

##### % of re-referrals within 12 months

##### % of children with Initial Child Protection Conferences completed within 15 working days of the strategy discussion

##### % of Children in Need seen within 4 weeks

The Cabinet Member reported that there was a common theme running through the red indicators in that the Council was reliant on reports from partners for every assessment made such as schools, GPs, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and also were impacted by staff shortages.



#### Health and Wellbeing

Percentage of all clients attending GUM clinics seen or assessed by a healthcare professional within 48 hours (2 working days) of first contacting the service

The provider was Buckinghamshire Hospital Trust but some patients were refusing appointments which was their choice which could be also linked to the cost of living crisis and taking time off work to travel to the clinics which were in Aylesbury and Wycombe. The service had re-introduced 6 walk-in clinics per week across two locations (Aylesbury and Wycombe) from mid-September, allowing patients to be seen and assessed without needing to book an appointment. The online booking system was upgraded in November making it easier for patients to book an appointment at a time convenient to them. The service issues letters to patients to show their employers that they have a medical appointment which should help some people to be able to take paid time off work to attend appointments.

% of births that receive a face-to face New Birth Visit within 14 days by a health visitor in the quarter

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing reported that 20 children in the whole of Buckinghamshire had missed an appointment. Only 3 had not received a new birth visit. The resident may have refused the visit or moved away from the County itself. Visits were focused in areas of deprivation and areas of most need.

% of service users due an annual review that receive their review

Team Managers were allocating a larger number of reviews to social workers during Q4, to further increase the number of annual reviews being completed. The short-term project team would continue to complete the 300 reviews overdue from last year (2021/22), with additional resource agreed during Q4. A named social worker would continue to be allocated to service users to oversee their care, which would improve how annual reviews were completed.

Number of older people (65+) admitted to permanent residential or nursing care homes per 100,000 population

The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS) were in the process of developing a Transfer of Care Hub, which once implemented would help to reduce admissions to care homes from hospital settings.

% of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person that they care for.

Implementation of the 'Carers Transformation Project' had commenced as planned and would be delivering a strength-based approach to supporting carers achieve their personal outcomes. Further work engaging Carers on the Carers Passport would take place during Q4 and was seen as a crucial part of the Service.

Cabinet Member for Transport

NHT Public Satisfaction on the condition of road surfaces (HMBI 01).

Six out of eight increased and only two out of eight decreased so there was some improvement.

A communications strategy was being developed and would be included in the new contract model from April 2023 to help improve public satisfaction scores. It was particularly key with the new model and investment into roads to identify any improvement in customer satisfaction.

Highways capital programme % spend against forecast  
All works were now programmed for delivery before the end of the financial year.

% Streetlights in light

Resourcing to the end of the contract was being reviewed to identify if further improvements can be made and an additional team was addressing this. Programmes of work were being pulled together for delivery by the new service provider from April onwards. It was unlikely for this target to be met by the year end.

Average daily cycling count per active cycle counter per day

This was a new KPI this year and in Q2 in the summer months there was a larger number of people cycling which has fallen over the winter months. £400,000 had been awarded to the Council to increase the capabilities of the cycle network which was good news and increasing coverage of cycling counters to increase data coverage would help. In terms of gully cleaning (amber indicator), 13,560 gullies had been cleaned which was 73%, however with a target of 73.5% this showed the difficulty of meeting a hard target.

**RESOLVED –**

- 1) That the Council's performance for the Quarter 2 period 2022-23 be NOTED.**
- 2) That the actions being taken to improve performance, where required, be NOTED.**

**15 Highways Service - Frameworks 1 & 2 Contract Award**

Cabinet agreed the new Highways service contracts operating model and the associated procurement strategy for the new contracts on 2nd March 2021. On 29th June 2021 Cabinet agreed the evaluation and quality criteria that would be used to determine the selection process and outcome of the procurement exercise as well as the criteria and process for determining any potential future extensions of the Term Maintenance and Term Consultancy contracts. These Framework Contracts would be for a maximum 4-year contract period. The procurement process was carried out in three parts for the Term Maintenance Contract, Term Consultancy Contract and finally Two Frameworks; the first framework comprising 3 lots, one for Conventional Surfacing, one for Surface Dressing and Micro Surfacing and one for Minor works up to £500k. The second framework was for larger projects and works in excess of £500k.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1. That the progress made to date on the procurement of the new Highways**

**Services Contracts be NOTED.**

- 3. That Framework 1, Lot 1, Lot 2 and Lot 3 and the Framework 2 Highways contract be awarded to the preferred bidders, as detailed within confidential Appendix 1.**
- 4. That the proposed management, use and commissioning of works via the Framework and the Term Maintenance and Consultancy contracts be NOTED.**

**18**     **Date of next meeting**  
21 March 2023 at 10am

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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
<b>Cabinet 21 March 2023</b>				
<b>Libraries Vision and Strategy</b> A high level vision and five year strategy demonstrating how Buckinghamshire Libraries will deliver sustainable high quality services and contribute to key local and national priorities and agendas.		Councillor Clive Harriss  Sophie Payne		26/1/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Food and Health and Safety Service Plan and policies</b> The Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Code of Practice and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) require local authorities to produce and publish an annual service plan that demonstrates how the authority will work to deliver its food safety and health and safety service. The Office for Product Safety and Standards also requires local authorities to produce and publish their enforcement policies and to ensure that they comply with The Regulator's Code.</p>		Councillor Mark Winn  Ian Snudden		21/12/22
<p><b>Q3 Budget Monitoring Report 2022-23</b> Quarterly report</p>		Councillor John Chilver  Dave Skinner		7/11/22
<b>Cabinet 11 April 2023</b>				
<p><b>Buckinghamshire Drugs and Alcohol strategy</b> To agree the Buckinghamshire Multi-Agency Combatting Drugs Strategy. This will support delivery of the government's 10 year strategy to reduce drug use, drug-related crime, deaths and other harms.</p>		Councillor Angela Macpherson  Dr Jane O'Grady		16/1/23
<p><b>Household Support Fund</b> The report will provide details on the Government Household Support Fund 4 allocation for Buckinghamshire and detail options for the usage of this fund to support financially vulnerable residents of Buckinghamshire during the Fund period.</p>		Councillor Steve Bowles  Matthew Everitt		7/3/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy Report</b> To provide an assessment of indoor sports and leisure facilities, considering future opportunities and demand around this provision.</p>		<p>Councillor Clive Harriss  Sophie Payne</p>		26/1/23
<p><b>Safer Buckinghamshire Plan 2023-26</b> To ratify the Safer Buckinghamshire Plan for 2023-26.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire Council is a statutory member of the Safer Buckinghamshire Board which is the statutory Community Safety Partnership for Buckinghamshire.</p> <p>A key responsibility of the Safer Buckinghamshire Board is to maintain the Community Safety Plan for Buckinghamshire, based upon the strategic assessment of crime and community safety in the county, public engagement and other insight into crime and the causes of crime in Buckinghamshire.</p>		<p>Councillor Steve Bowles  Dr Jane O'Grady</p>		7/10/22
<b>Cabinet 9 May 2023</b>				
<p><b>6 Monthly Adult Social Care update</b> To provide Cabinet with an update on the national and local issues relating to adult social care in Buckinghamshire.</p>		<p>Councillor Angela Macpherson  Gill Quinton</p>		16/1/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<b>Annual report of the Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee</b> For Cabinet to note the work undertaken by the Committee in 2022-23.		Councillor John Chilver  Richard Ambrose		26/1/23
<b>D-AGT1 - Supplementary Planning Document</b> This Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance for the development of the D-AGT1 allocation within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.	Aston Clinton & Bierton; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville	Councillor Peter Strachan  Simon Meecham		15/2/23
<b>Cabinet 13 June 2023</b>				
<b>Building Control Fee Increase</b> Report to increase the Building Control fees		Councillor Peter Strachan  Androulla Andreou		26/1/23
<b>Cabinet 12 September 2023</b>				
<b>Buckinghamshire Healthy Ageing Strategy 2023-28</b> To approve the Council's Healthy Ageing Strategy 2023-2028. The Healthy Ageing Strategy sets out how the Council and its partners will work to make Buckinghamshire more age friendly, which is a priority in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This will support Buckinghamshire residents to live healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives for as long as possible, to 'age well'.		Councillor Angela Macpherson  Dr Jane O'Grady		23/12/22
<b>March 2023 Leader Decisions</b>				



Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>A41 Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury - amendments to parking restrictions</b></p> <p>To write report following statutory consultation for changes to the parking restrictions outside the new Sainsbury's Aylesbury development</p>	Aylesbury North West	Councillor Steve Broadbent  John Pateman		23/12/22
<p><b>All-age Autism Strategy</b></p> <p>To agree the All-age Autism strategy for Buckinghamshire</p>		Councillor Angela Macpherson  Simon Brauner-Cave		11/5/22
<p><b>Assets of Community Value</b></p> <p>To agree the changes to procedure for managing Buckinghamshire Council's Assets of Community Value and Community Right to Bid Process</p>		Councillor Steve Bowles  Nick Graham		8/9/22
<p><b>Award of Consultancy Services via ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) Framework Lot 2d General Finance</b></p> <p>To award the Financial consultancy contract to provide support across Neighbourhood Services</p>		Councillor Gareth Williams  Gurbaksh Badhan	Part exempt (para 3)	23/11/22
<p><b>Award of Consultancy Services via ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) Framework Lot 8b Environmental and Sustainability</b></p> <p>To award the Engineering consultancy contract to provide support across Neighbourhood Services</p>		Councillor Gareth Williams  Gurbaksh Badhan	Part exempt (para 3)	23/11/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Award of Consultancy Services via ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) Framework Lot 8h Waste and Recycling</b> To award the Technical consultancy contract to provide support across Neighbourhood Services</p>		Councillor Gareth Williams Gurbaksh Badhan	Part exempt ( <i>para 3</i> )	23/11/22
<p><b>Aylesbury Grid Reinforcement - Update</b> An update on the way forward for the Aylesbury Grid Reinforcement Project.</p>		Councillor Martin Tett David Johnson	Part exempt ( <i>para 3</i> )	23/2/23
<p><b>Bierton Traffic Calming</b> Public consultation is to be carried out on a traffic calming scheme along the A418 through Bierton. The proposals include; narrowings, chicanes, build-outs, and pedestrian, cycle, and bus stop improvements. Public consultation and the delivery of a traffic calming scheme was secured as a s106 obligation of the nearby Kingsbrook development.</p>	Aston Clinton & Bierton	Councillor Steve Broadbent Christine Urry		25/5/22
<p><b>Budget Adjustments to the Approved Capital Programme</b> To approve changes to the Approved Capital Programme</p>		Councillor John Chilver Sue Palmer		14/9/20
<p><b>Calvert Parking Restrictions</b> To introduce two bus stop clearways on Brackley Lane, Calvert and double yellow lines ("No Waiting at any Time") at the junction of Brackley Lane and Werner Terrace, opposite the bus stop clearways, and across vehicular accesses.</p>	Grendon Underwood	Councillor Steve Broadbent Tara Rutland		26/10/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Chilterns Beechwoods Mitigation Strategy</b> Report to consider the recreational disturbance mitigation strategy for Ashridge Commons and Woods.</p>	<p>Amersham &amp; Chesham Bois; Aylesbury South East; Chesham; Chess Valley; Chiltern Ridges; Great Missenden; Ivinghoe; Little Chalfont &amp; Amersham Common; Penn Wood &amp; Old Amersham</p>	<p>Councillor Peter Strachan  Simon Meecham</p>		<p>18/10/22</p>
<p><b>Formal appointment of Buckinghamshire Council as Responsible Body to lead preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategy</b> Agreement of formal appointment of Buckinghamshire Council as Responsible Body to lead preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategy as required by Environment Act 2021</p>		<p>Councillor Gareth Williams  David Sutherland</p>		<p>23/2/23</p>
<p><b>Future Commissioning of Supported Living Contracts</b> Decision on the future commissioning intentions for Supported Living Block contracts and decision to go out to advert for multiple Supported Living services following the upcoming expiry of existing contracts.</p>		<p>Councillor Angela Macpherson  Tracey Ironmonger</p>	<p>Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i></p>	<p>18/10/22</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<b>Haddenham Parking Restrictions</b> Scheme proposing to introduce parking restrictions on Tibbs Road, Haddenham.	Bernwood	Councillor Steve Broadbent  Daniel Pearson		24/3/22
<b>Harmonisation of Pest Control Fees</b> The harmonisation of policy and fees regarding which residents are able to access subsidised pest control treatment.		Councillor Mark Winn  Jacqui Bromilow		30/8/22
<b>Hicks Farm Rise, High Wycombe - Proposed Traffic Calming</b> Public consultation is to be carried out on a vertical traffic calming scheme along Hicks Farm Rise between Baring Road and Gayhurst Road. The proposals include; advance warning signs and speed cushions.	Totteridge & Bowerdean; Ryemead & Micklefield	Councillor Steve Broadbent  Ujjwal Kakkar		26/10/22
<b>Leasehold Acquisition - Coombe Lodge, Wendover</b> Leasehold Acquisition to support the Councils response to Residential Temporary Accommodation needs in Buckinghamshire at Coombe Lodge, Nash Lee End, Wendover HP22 6BH	Ridgeway East	Councillor John Chilver  John Reed	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	2/2/23
<b>Property at Cressex Road, High Wycombe</b> Release of Covenant	Booker, Cressex & Castlefield	Councillor John Chilver  John Reed	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	2/2/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Recommissioning of Buckinghamshire Adult Integrated Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service</b> Recommissioning of Buckinghamshire Adult Integrated Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service</p>		<p>Councillor Angela Macpherson  Lisa Truett</p>	<p>Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i></p>	<p>23/2/23</p>
<p><b>Recommissioning of Buckinghamshire Healthy Child Programme (0-19 Years) Public Health Nursing Services</b> To agree the recommissioning of the Buckinghamshire Healthy Child Programme (0-19 Years) Public Health Nursing Services contract. This will be based on the current model, with some amendments to meet the revised national guidance. And to also agree to delegate authority for award of the contract to the appropriate officer following the procurement process.</p>		<p>Councillor Angela Macpherson  Tracey Ironmonger</p>	<p>Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i></p>	<p>23/12/22</p>
<p><b>Russet Street/Worcester Street, Berryfields, Aylesbury – Prohibition of Motor Vehicles Traffic Regulation Order</b> Proposal to introduce a ‘Prohibition of Motor Vehicles’ Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on Russet Street/Worcester Street, Berryfields, Aylesbury.</p>	<p>Stone &amp; Waddesdon</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent  David Cairney</p>		<p>16/6/22</p>
<p><b>Stablebridge Road, Aston Clinton - 30mph Speed Limit T.R.O</b> Decision regarding the introduction of a 30mph speed limit restriction on a section of Stablebridge Road.  A decision will only be required if there are objection/s during its statutory consultation period.</p>	<p>Aston Clinton &amp; Bierton</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent  Ujjwal Kakkar</p>		<p>26/10/22</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<b>Stoke Poges Parking Scheme</b> Waiting restrictions on Rogers Lane, Duffield Lane, Hollybush Hill, Sefton Paddock and Broom Hill; Stoke Poges	Stoke Poges & Wexham	Councillor Steve Broadbent  John Pateman		15/2/23
<b>The Courtyard, High Wycombe</b> Disposal options for surplus land in High Wycombe.	Abbey	Councillor John Chilver  John Reed	Part exempt ( <i>para 3</i> )	10/11/22
<b>April 2023 Leader Decisions</b>				
<b>Adult Social Care Travel Assistance Policy</b> To agree the travel assistance policy for Adult Social Care		Councillor Angela Macpherson  Tracey Ironmonger		22/9/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document - North and Central Planning Areas</b>  This Supplementary Planning Document provides affordable housing guidance to the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Policies H1, H2, H6a, H6c, BE2.</p>	Aston Clinton & Bierton; Aylesbury East; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury South East; Aylesbury South West; Aylesbury West; Bernwood; Buckingham East; Buckingham West; Great Brickhill; Grendon Underwood; Ivinghoe; Stone & Waddesdon; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville; Wing; Winslow	Councillor Peter Strachan  Simon Meecham		15/2/23
<p><b>CYP Integrated Therapies</b>  Recommission of the Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Integrated Therapies service</p>		Councillor Anita Cranmer  Marie-Claire Mickiewicz	Part exempt ( <i>para 3</i> )	30/6/22

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<b>CYP Integrated Therapies Strategy</b> Sign off of CYP Integrated Therapies Strategy		Councillor Anita Cranmer  Marie-Claire Mickiewicz	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	30/6/22



Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>E-Bike Hire</b> Following the conclusion of the ADEPT funded e-Bike trial at the Waddesdon Greenway, the Council is proposing a wider e-bike hire scheme to run in parallel with the e-scooter hire trial areas in Aylesbury and High Wycombe.</p>	<p>Abbey; Aston Clinton &amp; Bierton; Aylesbury East; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury South East; Aylesbury South West; Aylesbury West; Booker, Cressex &amp; Castlefield; Downley; Ryemead &amp; Micklefield; Stone &amp; Waddesdon; Terriers &amp; Amersham Hill; Totteridge &amp; Bowerdean; Wendover, Halton &amp; Stoke Mandeville; West Wycombe</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent  Steve Bambrick</p>	<p>Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)</p>	<p>7/3/23</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Fleet Trading Account Budget</b> To confirm details of the 2023/24 Fleet Trading Account budget, which is a zero balanced budget and therefore can't be included in the full council decision taken in February for other revenue budgets.</p>		<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent  Lindsey Vallis</p>		7/3/23
<p><b>Market Sustainability Plan</b> To agree the Market Sustainability Plan. As part of its adult social care reform programme, the government requires local authorities to submit a Market Sustainability Plan. The Market Sustainability Plan requires councils to identify the key risks to the adult social care market and plans to address those risks, including how the council will move towards a fair cost of care over the next 3 years.</p>		<p>Councillor Angela Macpherson  Tracey Ironmonger</p>		26/10/22
<p><b>School Transport Policy - consultation findings and recommendations</b> Post-consultation findings and recommendations on proposed changes to: - Home to School Transport Policy, - Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2023/24 - School bus ticket charges - Spare Seat Scheme Fees for adoption from 2023/24</p>		<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent  Lindsey Vallis</p>	Part exempt (para 3)	2/2/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan - Design - Supplementary Planning Document</b></p> <p>This Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance to inform and guide the quality of development within the north and central planning areas.</p>	<p>Aston Clinton &amp; Bierton;  Aylesbury East;  Aylesbury North;  Aylesbury North West;  Aylesbury South East;  Aylesbury South West;  Aylesbury West;  Bernwood;  Buckingham East;  Buckingham West;  Great Brickhill;  Grendon Underwood;  Ivinghoe;  Stone &amp; Waddesdon;  Wendover,  Halton &amp; Stoke Mandeville;  Wing;  Winslow</p>	<p>Councillor Peter Strachan   Simon Meecham</p>		<p>15/2/23</p>
<b>May 2023 Leader Decisions</b>				
<p><b>Iver Village Infant School</b></p> <p>Decision required to approval lowering the age range at Iver Village Infant School</p>	<p>Iver</p>	<p>Councillor Anita Cranmer   Paula Campbell-Balcombe</p>		<p>7/3/23</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<b>Prestwood Infant School</b> Decision required to approval lowering the age range of the school	Great Missenden	Councillor Anita Cranmer  Paula Campbell-Balcombe		7/3/23
<b>June 2023 Leader Decisions</b>				
<b>Mary Towerton Primary School</b> Descision required on the future of The Mary Towerton School, Studley Green	Ridgeway West; West Wycombe	Councillor Anita Cranmer  Paula Campbell-Balcombe		7/3/23

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](mailto: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](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

## Select Committee Work Programmes 2022/23

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description &amp; Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Contributors</b>
23 March 2023	Education Standards Report	For the Select Committee to receive the assessment outcomes for the years 2021/22 for children and young people in Buckinghamshire	Simon James	Simon James Anita Cranmer John Macilwraith
	Education Strategy 2022-27	To receive an update on the agreed Strategy	Simon James	Simon james Anita Cranmer John Macilwraith
	Update on Children’s Mental Health (CAMHS to present)	To receive an update on service provision following the increased demand post-Covid	Richard Nash/John Macilwraith	CAMHS representatives – Andy Fitton Dr Joe Clacey Anita Cranmer John Macilwraith
	Update on progress of recommendations on Social Worker recruitment & retention report	For the Select Committee to receive an update on departmental progress against the recommendations in the rapid review group’s report	Richard Nash	Richard Nash Anita Cranmer

**Communities and Localism Select Committee** (Chairman: Mimi Harker, Scrutiny officer: Kelly Sutherland)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description and Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Contributors</b>
19 April 2023	Town and Parish Charter	Members will receive an update on the implementation of the Town and Parish Charter Action Plan.	Simon Garwood	Steve Bowles, Roger Goodes, Simon Garwood
	Community Resilience Update	Members will receive an update from the Resilience Service on their work with town and parish councils to strengthen community resilience.	Vince Grey	Steve Bowles, Vince Grey, Lloyd Jeffries
	Safer Bucks Plan	Members will have an opportunity to assess the Safer Bucks Plan, which is a partnership plan.	Gideon Springer	Steve Bowles, Gideon Springer



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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description &amp; Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Contributors</b>
6 April 2023	Budget Performance Monitoring Q3	To review the Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring Report	David Skinner	John Chilver
	BC Health, Wellbeing and Absence Management Update	To consider a report on BC Health, Wellbeing and Absence Management that the Committee expressed an interest in.	Sarah Murphy-Brookman Sarah Keyes Emily Biggs	John Chilver
	External Property Companies	Report on the performance and business plans of the Council's companies: AVE, Consilio, London Road Management Company, and Buckinghamshire Advantage	John Reed	John Chilver
	External Company Governance Annual Update	To receive a report following one year of the new governance arrangements with the external property companies	John Reed	John Chilver

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

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
6 April 2023	Member Engagement in Planning – 12-month progress update	The Select Committee will review the progress of work on implementation of the 6 recommendations made in the Member Engagement in Planning review which was presented to Cabinet on 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2022.	Steve Bambrick/Chrissy Urry	Peter Strachan
	Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Model	The Select Committee will review the Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Model.	Richard Ambrose/Ian Thompson	Martin Tett

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

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Presenters	Contributors
20 April 2023	PCN Inquiry – 6 month recommendation monitoring	For the Committee to receive a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations made in the HASC’s Inquiry into Primary Care Development in Buckinghamshire.	Philippa Baker, Place Director	Simon Kearey, ICB ASC representatives - TBC
	Maternity services	Following the publication of the Ockenden reports, the Committee will receive an update from Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust on local maternity services.	Heidi Beddall, Head of Midwifery  Karen Bonner, Chief Nurse	
	Evaluation of the System Winter Plan	The Committee reviewed the system winter plan at its September meeting. This is an opportunity to hear from health and social care colleagues and evaluate the plans which were put in place over the winter months.	Philippa Baker, Place Director (lead presenter in place of Caroline Cappell)	Representatives from across health and social care

**Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

(Chairman: Jane MacBean, Scrutiny officer: Liz Wheaton)

Work programme is to be advised in due course.

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

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
30 March 2023	HS2	To receive an update on the project	Dr Laura Leech Ian Thompson	Steve Broadbent Peter Martin HS2 Reps EA Reps
	New Highways Model	To hear details regarding the mobilisation of the new Highways model	Richard Barker Kevin Goad David Farquhar	Steve Broadbent
	Air Quality Monitoring in Buckinghamshire	To provide an overview of air quality monitoring across the county	Ben Coakley Deborah Ferady Cerys Williams	Gareth Williams

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## Report to Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	<b>21 March 2023</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>A Vision and Strategy for Buckinghamshire Libraries</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	<b>Clive Harriss, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure</b>
<b>Contact officer:</b>	David Jones – Head of Libraries
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Cabinet are recommended to approve the Buckinghamshire Libraries strategy as set out in this report and appendix. This would be implemented within the approved MTFP.</b>
<b>Reason for decision:</b>	<b>Adoption of this new strategy - developed through a comprehensive process of research and engagement - will ensure a clear focus for Buckinghamshire Libraries, aligned to local communities' needs and the delivery of wider priorities.</b>

### **1 Executive summary**

- 1.1 Buckinghamshire Libraries have transformed over recent years to offer a range of services and activities that promote wellbeing, inclusion, and community cohesion.
- 1.2 Work has taken place with staff, volunteers, councillors, and partners to develop a new vision and strategy for Buckinghamshire Libraries. The strategy establishes a clear set of priorities to ensure we continue to meet the evolving needs of our communities and to maximise libraries' contribution to key agendas across Buckinghamshire.
- 1.3 The vision is for a service that provides welcoming and safe spaces for everyone to access reading, culture and the information and services they need to learn, discover, imagine, and thrive.
- 1.4 The priorities for Buckinghamshire Libraries are:

- Encouraging Culture, Reading and Learning
- Building Stronger Communities
- Enabling Access, Information, and Inclusion
- Promoting Health and Wellbeing

1.5 Our guiding principles for delivery are:

- Building partnerships
- Developing libraries as hubs
- Engaging and empowering staff and volunteers
- Constant service improvement.

1.6 An extensive engagement exercise was undertaken to inform the priorities and gauge the level of support for the proposed approach. This demonstrated that 90% of respondents agreed with the vision, with approval ranging from 84% to 92% for the four priorities.

1.7 Work has taken place to develop short to medium term objectives to deliver the new vision and priorities, along with the associated measures of success. We will now engage with staff, volunteers, and partners to develop a detailed action plan to deliver a modern, relevant, and sustainable library service for Buckinghamshire. The action plan will be reviewed annually with particular attention given to ensuring alignment with the *Opportunity Bucks - Succeeding for All* programme including future discussion with ward partnerships.

## **2 A vision and strategy for Buckinghamshire Libraries**

### **2.1 Background**

2.2 The library service has transformed in recent years in response to a range of challenges and opportunities and an innovative 'mixed economy' delivery model has been developed, based on local community partnerships, to ensure sustainable local library services. Buckinghamshire libraries have also modernised through the development of enhanced digital services offering free 24/7 access to an extensive range of resources. Key performance information and statistics for Buckinghamshire Libraries can be found in the attached slide pack.

2.3 Increasingly, the emphasis for the service has been on promoting health and wellbeing, inclusion, and in enabling access to information and services - particularly for the most vulnerable. Buckinghamshire Libraries have re-modelled buildings and developed partnerships to broaden the offer:

- Most libraries now operate as Council Access Points (CAPs) and provide local and supported access to information and services.



- Specific projects have taken place to engage residents and partners in developing new services and activities in libraries, to meet the needs of local communities (for example, the Marlow Library refurbishment, and community engagement to deliver new activities in Micklefield).
- The new Amersham library within the Chilterns Lifestyle Centre has demonstrated the benefits of shared premises. Library usage has diversified and significantly increased; this is now the second busiest library in Buckinghamshire behind High Wycombe.
- In High Wycombe, a successful partnership with Action4Youth has been developed to deliver the Junction Youth Club. Open seven days a week, this facility attracts 50 – 100 young people a day and has resulted in the doubling of library usage by young people.
- Buckinghamshire Libraries have responded with speed and flexibility to re-purpose staff, information, and spaces to support residents throughout the pandemic and to welcome Ukrainian refugees. Most recently, libraries are now supporting residents with the cost-of-living crisis, with surgeries promoting financial health and mutual aid and in developing the role of libraries as warm and welcoming spaces.

2.4 There is now an opportunity to build on the successes and lessons learned from the above developments to create a new vision and strategy that aligns with key national and local agendas and priorities, for example *Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All*.

## 2.5 Development of the vision and strategy

2.6 Initial scoping workshops around developing a new vision and strategy were undertaken with library staff and volunteers, as well as Trustees and volunteers from the Community Libraries, at the end of 2021. The following were proposed through these groups.

### ***Shared purpose*** (*‘Why the library service exists’*)

*Our purpose is to provide free and accessible resources to connect communities and support learning and wellbeing in an inclusive, safe, trusted, and welcoming environment.*

### ***Shared vision*** (*‘What we are going to aim for’*)

*Our vision is for all libraries to be welcoming and safe spaces for everyone in our communities to access services, information, and tools they need to learn, imagine, discover, and thrive.*

2.7 Work also took place to map the high-level strategic context for Buckinghamshire Libraries, with the following plans considered:

- Buckinghamshire Council Corporate Plan

- Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All - A local response to Levelling Up
- Community Board Priorities
- Buckinghamshire Cultural Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Universal Library Offers (National vision for libraries)

2.8 This assessment of the strategic context identified four broad areas, common to all plans, that could be agreed as service priorities for Buckinghamshire Libraries:

### 2.9 Health and Wellbeing

Buckinghamshire Libraries have made important contributions around key health challenges such as mental health, loneliness and social isolation, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases, and there is scope for the library offer to be developed further. Activities to date include:

- Social activities e.g., knit and natter, which bring people together and combat loneliness
- NHS Health Checks, smoking cessation sessions, blood pressure checks in libraries
- Bibliotherapy – ‘reading well’ collections to support mental health
- Health education, campaigns around particular conditions e.g., strokes
- Information on diet and physical activity (libraries staff trained to have conversations)
- Proactive services and activities to support people living with dementia and autism.

### 2.10 Culture and Learning

National research has evidenced that people who do not usually engage with cultural activities are more likely to do so in an informal library setting. Buckinghamshire Libraries have recently delivered successful poets in residence and touring theatre programmes and the library service is a key partner in delivery of the Buckinghamshire Cultural Strategy.

Libraries have always had a role in promoting reading and learning and this will remain as a key priority for the service. The library service supports Buckinghamshire schools with project collections and works with early years to get book packs to babies and carers. The service supports hundreds of reading groups, hosts writing groups and library spaces are used for a wide range of learning activities in partnership with organisations such as Adult Learning and University of the Third Age (U3A).

Importantly, libraries also support computer literacy and promote digital inclusion with free classes and gadget days and support skills and employment with interview and CV writing classes.

#### 2.11 Stronger Communities

The position of library sites as neutral and safe spaces in the community, means that they are excellent venues for the types of community activity that build cohesion, encourage civic participation, and promote community safety.

Two thirds of our library sites are co-delivered in partnership with volunteers and third sector organisations. Looking ahead, we will build stronger links with community boards, further develop libraries as local hubs at the heart of the community and align with the *Opportunity Bucks - Succeeding for All* programme including future discussion with ward partnerships.

#### 2.12 Access, Information, and Inclusion

Free access to information is the core function of a library service. In Buckinghamshire we have extended this role by developing libraries as council access points, offering support and signposting to services across all three channels – face to face, phone, and web.

Access and inclusion are central to our work to ensure that all residents can access services and we have developed strong partnerships with organisations such as Age UK, BucksVision, RNIB, Dementia Friends and Buckinghamshire Disability Service.

Libraries have a strong offer to help support the most vulnerable in society. The flexible spaces, strong partnership arrangements, free access to information and staff aptitudes of care and helpfulness mean that libraries can be deployed at short notice to support council initiatives to help the most vulnerable residents.

#### 2.13 **Community and stakeholder engagement**

2.14 Building on the initial phase of scoping workshops, there has been subsequent wide-ranging engagement to gauge the level of support for the emerging vision and service priorities set out above, to understand the views of users, non-users, and stakeholders, and to identify ideas and opportunities to inform the further development of the strategy.

2.15 This latest phase of engagement has included discussion with the Communities and Localism Select Committee; a community survey seeking views on the proposed libraries vision and strategy; staff, volunteer, and community library workshops; and meetings involving a wide range of internal and external stakeholders and partner organisations. Please refer to section 7 of this paper for further details.

#### 2.16 **Key findings**

- 2.17 Analysis of the of 802 survey responses demonstrates strong support for the purpose, vision, and draft priorities. The data shows that 90% of the people who answered this question agree or strongly agree with the purpose and vision statements and that 84% to 92% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the four priorities.
- 2.18 The survey has also generated helpful insight into the current user profile, popularity of different services and effectiveness of library service communication channels. Over half of the respondents have provided free text comments explaining what might make them use the library more often; this detailed information is being analysed and will be used to inform service planning.
- 2.19 The following points were noted during the discussion of the emerging vision and priorities at the Communities and Localism Select Committee:
- Members were provided with assurance that books and reading remain a key priority.
  - It was noted that Buckinghamshire were ahead of the curve in maintaining a great service offer on a reduced budget.
  - A member pointed out that community libraries should be given the opportunity to operate as freely as possible, as Buckinghamshire's community libraries had been successful in the past.
  - A member suggested that more interaction with parish councils was needed to effectively offer support to libraries.
  - At the last Select Committee looking at Visitor Economy, it had been suggested that libraries could host visitor information.
  - In response to a member's concerns about gaps in physical access to libraries, it was noted that work had been undertaken to map areas and identify gaps in provision.
- 2.20 Key themes emerged across all the engagement sessions:
- There is strong support for the vision, purpose, and priorities
  - Partnership work is the key to delivering the vision
  - Key priorities need to be flexible enough to adapt to the changing environment
  - There needs to be consideration as to how the vision and strategy is brought to life and communicated
  - The vision needs to be more succinct - no need to promote the statement of purpose
  - Reading and literacy is key and should be referenced in the priorities wording.

2.21 **Proposed vision, priorities, and objectives for Buckinghamshire Libraries**

2.22 Based on the feedback from engagement, we have refined the vision statement (below) and priorities, including short to medium term objectives and success measures to underpin these. These are set out in the strategy document appended to this report.

**Buckinghamshire Libraries**

*Welcoming and safe spaces for everyone to access reading, culture and the information and services they need to learn, discover, imagine, and thrive.*

2.23 Work will now take place with staff, volunteers, and partners to further develop and embed the strategy, including through the production of a detailed action plan. Our concern with service planning and development will be to remain flexible and responsive, mindful of new and emerging trends and the development of a new national public libraries strategy led by Baroness Elizabeth Sanderson.

2.24 Through our engagement we have also identified four key principles which will underpin effective delivery:

2.25 Constant service improvement

Buckinghamshire Libraries are committed to continuous service improvement driven by enabling digital access to our services, having an effective marketing strategy, and improving the reporting and monitoring of performance.

2.26 Engaging and empowering staff and volunteers

Our libraries staff and volunteers are the greatest assets of the service. They are motivated, skilled and have strong personal values around caring and support for Buckinghamshire communities. Our priority will be to harness the creative energies of staff and cultivate an empowered and dynamic workforce encouraging the contribution of staff from all levels.

2.27 Developing libraries as hubs

Traditional use of libraries e.g., book borrowing is in decline nationally, and so the future vision and strategy for libraries supports the diversification of the library service offer to contribute to wider agendas such as health, wellbeing, and inclusion. Sharing premises and re-modelling existing library spaces as hubs can reduce

premises costs, increase footfall, and ensure future sustainability for the service. This will be informed by the needs of the local community and mapping of wider service provision, building on the success of existing co-locations with public, VCSE and banking services.

#### 2.28 Working in partnership

Buckinghamshire libraries are enabling services, collaborating with a wide range of partners to deliver shared outcomes. The library service has a strong and successful track record of partnership working and partners are positive towards libraries because of the safe and informal community setting, high levels of customer reach and satisfaction, free access to ICT and knowledgeable and helpful staff.

### **3 Other options considered**

- 3.1 The alternative is to not produce a strategy; this option has been discounted, as we need to ensure clear direction for service planning and to align with key Buckinghamshire priorities to maximise the impact of library services.

### **4 Legal and financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no specific legal or financial implications arising from adoption of this new strategy and the strategy proposed will be implemented within the approved MTFP; it supports the fulfilment of the Council's statutory duty 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library for all persons'. As context, the net revenue budget for the library service is £3.7m in 2022/23 and existing MTFP targets are set out in the table below; these are being achieved through a combination of service efficiencies and increased income.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Total</b>
Savings (£000)	180	85	265
<b>Incremental Savings (£000)</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>265</b>

### **5 Corporate implications**

- 5.1 The development of a vision and strategy for Buckinghamshire Libraries will contribute to a range of key corporate priorities as described in the report and appendix.
- 5.2 This decision does not require a full equality impact assessment

- 5.3 This decision does not require a data protection impact assessment

## **6 Local councillors & community boards consultation & views**

- 6.1 Posters and online links were sent to all Community Boards and the survey was shared with all elected members through the members' bulletin. No specific additional views were received.

## **7 Communication, engagement & further consultation**

- 7.1 Communities & Localism Select Committee – A report on the emerging vision and priorities was provided to members of the Communities and Localism Select Committee and discussed at the Committee's meeting on 5 October 2022.
- 7.2 Survey - seeking views on the proposed libraries vision and strategy. The survey ran for six weeks from the beginning of December 2022 until 15 January 2023 and a total of 802 responses were received. The survey was promoted through a wide range of organisations and channels to ensure inclusivity.
- 7.3 Workshops with library staff, volunteers, and community library partners - All library staff and volunteers participated in local team workshops and local library managers also visited community libraries in their areas to discuss the vision and priorities. The views of community libraries were also sought through meetings with the Community Library Forum.
- 7.4 Wider stakeholder engagement - three online sessions were held during December 2022 and January 2023 to seek the views of internal and external stakeholder groups. There were a total of 58 attendees, including: Buckinghamshire Council services - Early Years, Youth Services, Adult Learning, Public Health, Adult Social Care, Community Safety, Helping Hand; Buckinghamshire Culture and cultural organisations; Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust and Buckinghamshire Integrated Care System/Board; Buckinghamshire Older People's Action Group; Community Impact Bucks; Leap (Active Partnership); BucksVision; Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS); RNIB; Dementia Friends; Citizens' Advice Bucks; Heart of Bucks; Financial Insecurity Partnership.
- 7.5 A communications plan setting out how we will share the engagement feedback and promote the new vision and strategy is attached as an appendix.

## **8 Next steps and review**

- 8.1 Following Cabinet approval of the strategy, the next steps will be to formally launch the strategy by implementing the attached communications plan. This will include

further discussion of the strategy and action plan with staff, volunteers, and stakeholders at the library service conference on 24 March.

- 8.2 We will engage with staff, volunteers, and partners to develop a fully detailed action plan. This action plan will be reviewed annually in line with the Council's business planning cycle, with particular attention given to ensuring alignment with the *Opportunity Bucks - Succeeding for All* programme.

## **9 Background papers**

N/A

## **10 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 email to [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).





# A Strategy for Buckinghamshire Libraries



*Welcoming and safe spaces for everyone  
to access reading, culture and the  
information and services they need to  
learn, discover, imagine, and thrive*

# Our Service

Buckinghamshire Libraries are multi-functional and serve as central hubs offering a wide variety of local activities, services and facilities that support local communities. Our libraries are trusted places which connect people to their communities and council services.

## Our people

- 140 staff members
- 600+ volunteers
- 120+ partner organisations



## Our Customers

- 191,000+ customers
- 24% age 15 and under
- 61% aged 16-64
- 15% aged 65 and over



## Our Libraries

- 29 libraries in total
- 9 County libraries
- 8 Community-supported libraries
- 12 self-managed libraries



## Physical visits (2021/22)

- 652,334



## Services (2021/22)

- E-resource downloads: 670,443
- Council Access Point Enquiries: 15,816
- Loans: 1,050,604
- 271 customers signed up for the home library service



## Our Offers

- 11 Libraries are Council Access Points
- Free public Wi-Fi
- Public Computers and tablets (1 hour free per day)
- Free printing for CVs and job applications
- Low cost printing and scanning
- Access to over 7,000 online resources
- Health and wellbeing activities
- Cultural activities
- Digital inclusion support



# Our 29 Libraries

**9 County libraries** are managed and delivered by Buckinghamshire Council

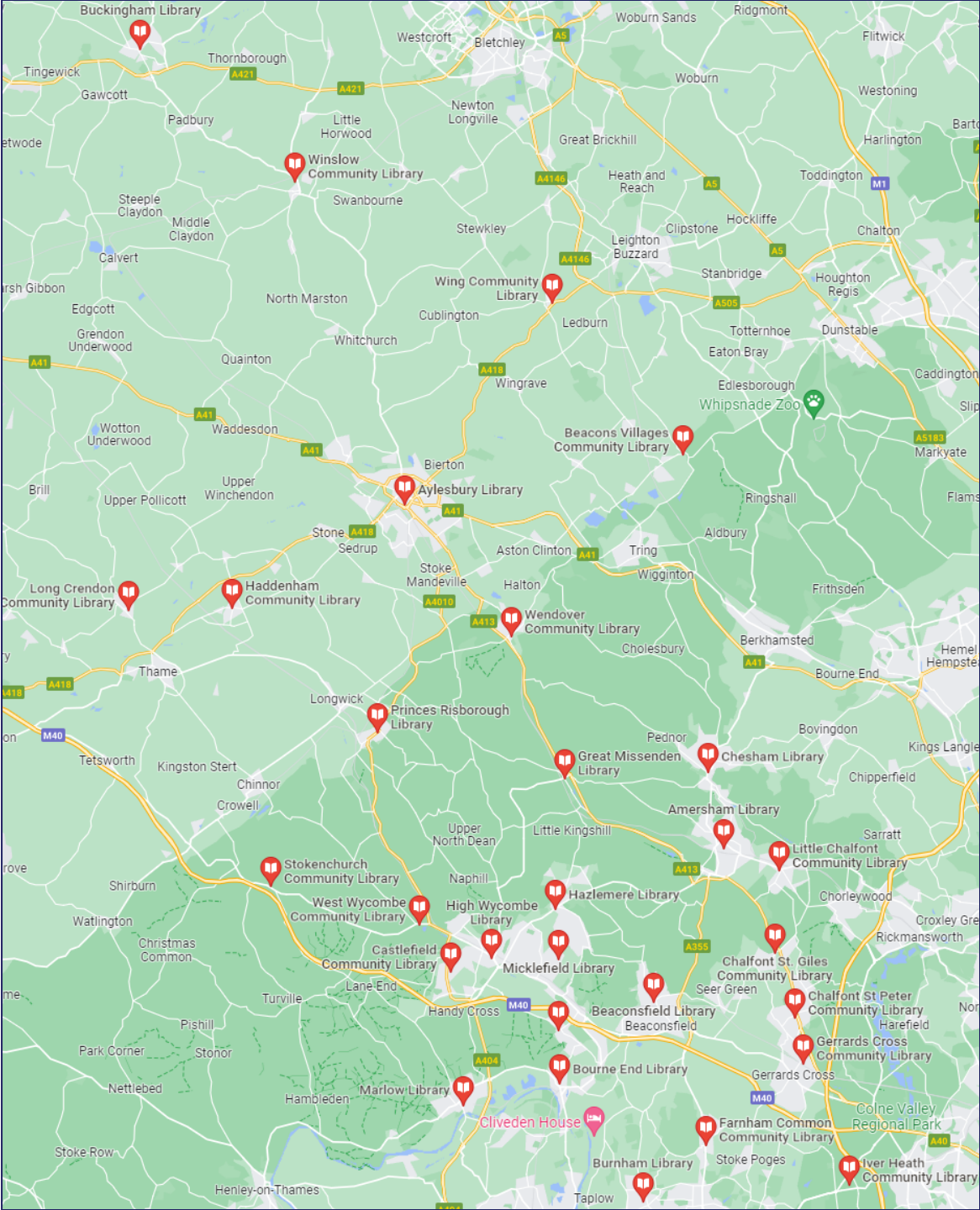
Amersham, Aylesbury, Beaconsfield, Buckingham, Chesham, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, Marlow, Princes Risborough:

**Community Supported libraries** are managed by Buckinghamshire Council and services are delivered with the support of volunteers:

Bourne End, Burnham Gerrards Cross, Great Missenden, Iver Heath, Micklefield, Wendover, Winslow

**12 Self-managed community libraries** are managed and delivered by local community organisations and volunteers with the support of Buckinghamshire Council:

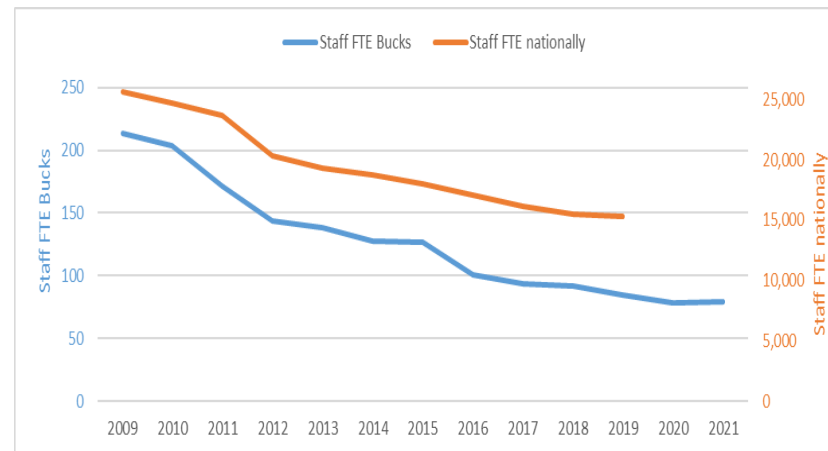
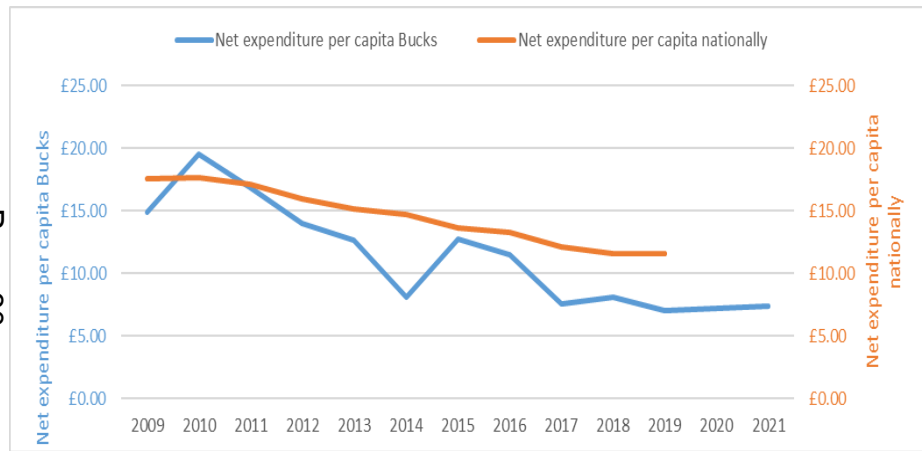
Beacon Villages, Castlefield, Chalfont St Giles, Chalfont St Peter, Farnham Common, Flackwell Heath, Haddenham, Little Chalfont, Long Crendon, Stokenchurch, West Wycombe, Wing



# Financial context

The library service has been successful in driving efficiencies and reducing costs through introduction of new self-service technologies and enabling of co-production delivery models (Community Libraries along with lean management structures). The net cost of the service has reduced from £5.8m in 2011 to £3.7m in 2022/23. Buckinghamshire libraries compare well against the national average in terms of cost. In 2019 the net expenditure per capita was £7.04 in Bucks compared to £11.54 nationally and staff in post per 1000 population was 0.14 in Bucks, compared to 0.23 nationally:

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There are no specific financial implications arising from adoption of this new strategy and the strategy proposed will be implemented within the approved MTFP. The net revenue budget for the library service is £3.7m in 2022/23 and existing MTFP targets are set out in the table below; these are being achieved through a combination of service efficiencies and increased income.

YEAR	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Savings (£000)	180	85	265

# Developing a Shared Vision and Purpose

We asked our staff and volunteers what they liked

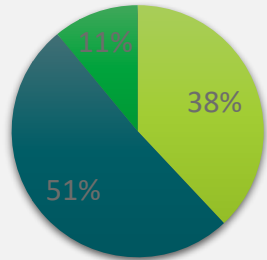
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**Purpose:**

A purpose is why the library service exists, it's an unchanged description of the things that you do as a service. It's not deep, but it's encompassing.

Options provided:

1. Our purpose is to enable access to inclusive spaces, services, tools, culture and support to promote learning, imagination, fairness and participation.
2. Our purpose is to provide free and accessible resources to connect communities and support learning, culture and wellbeing in an inclusive and welcoming environment
3. Our purpose is to inclusively support, inform and connect our communities to promote learning, imagination, fairness and participation for everyone.



■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3

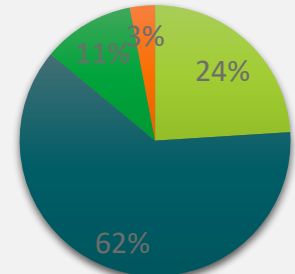


**Vision:**

A vision is aspirational, and something we are going to aim for. It is somewhere we want to be and provides us with a guiding light when we are delivering a future service and projects into the future.

Options provided:

1. Our vision is to be a trusted guide at the heart of the community, providing free services and resources that meet modern needs and are inclusive of all the communities we serve.
2. Our vision is for all libraries to be welcoming and safe spaces for everyone in our communities to access services, information and tools they need to learn, imagine, discover and thrive.
3. Our vision is to provide welcoming, safe, inclusive and cultural spaces and services that are flexible to meet the needs of our communities and spark imagination.
4. Our vision is to be a trusted guide at the heart of the community and inspire and empower people to live happy and healthy lives.



■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4

# Aligning to the corporate plan, working as one

We recognise the need to align services across the Council. Libraries will work towards the below corporate aims, actively collaborating to ensure we offer a joined up experience for our residents across our services.

- Provide an informal and accessible 'face' for Buckinghamshire Council and enable access to other information and services
- Support people through all stages of their life
- Connect people to other sources of support and council services which contribute to resident wellbeing
- Inspire interest in culture and enable access to cultural activities
- Support people with developing their digital skills and capabilities
- Meet the diverse needs of our communities
- Connect people to new ideas and experiences
- Provide free, accessible access to information
- Support and inspire learning, including intergenerational learning
- Build a sense of community with libraries at the heart
- Encourage residents to get involved in shaping the service
- Be customer focused, and maximise accessibility of services through Council Access Points.



- Deliver a service that helps the council achieve its net zero carbon emissions target by 2050
- Sustainable ways of working
- Reduce, reuse, recycle where possible
- Promote / raise awareness of green agenda

- Enhance the health and wellbeing of our communities
- Reduce social isolation and loneliness
- Provide an inclusive and safe space for all to visit
- Support those living with health conditions (e.g. dementia and chronic illness), and those in difficult life situations (e.g. refugees, homeless, lower income families, bereavement)
- Support those that are homebound through the home library service

- Connect people to resources (e.g. courses, grants) that will support career development, jobs, training and business start-ups
- Support children with their development
- Support people who want to learn English and improve their literacy skills
- Provide space and technology for people to conduct work

# Identifying Strategic Priorities

We recognise the need to align our services across the Council. Libraries will support a range of council priorities, collaborating widely to offer a joined up experience for our residents.

- Strengthening our Communities
- Improving our Environment
- Protecting the Vulnerable
- Increasing Prosperity

Community Boards bring the council, groups, organisations and local people together to look at local issues and find ways of improving them together. Libraries will continue to work in partnership with Community Boards to ensure we listen and respond to local needs.

- Environment and Climate Change
- Covid 19 Economic Recovery and Regeneration
- Health and Wellbeing
- Transport and Travel
- Enhancing The Lives of the Elderly, Vulnerable and Young
- Community Safety
- Road Safety, Highways & Infrastructure
- Community Cohesion

The Customer First vision is that a 'customer first' culture is prioritised through the entire organisation and every employee values, owns and exemplifies this. The Customer First programme sets out three promises to our council customers:

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

National / universal libraries offers which aim to enrich the lives of individuals and communities by improving wellbeing and promoting equality through learning, literacy and cultural activity; fulfilling our statutory duty 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons'

- Health and Wellbeing
- Culture and Creativity
- Information and digital inclusion
- Reading

Developing a stronger partnership approach to culture will result in greater impact and open up access to a wider range of funding opportunities.

- A thriving economy and transformed places
- Equality of access to cultural activities and opportunities
- Improved health and wellbeing of the population
- An energised creative and cultural sector

Building on the 'Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All' framework to reduce inequality within communities, whilst improving outcomes for all residents.

- Education and Skills
- Jobs and Career Opportunities
- Quality of Public Realm
- Standard of Living
- Health and Wellbeing



# Buckinghamshire Libraries Strategic Priorities



## Encouraging Culture, Reading and Learning

- The libraries culture and learning offer celebrates diversity, promotes inclusivity, values identity and contributes to an active local cultural economy.
- We will encourage literacy and the enjoyment of reading with an extensive range of reading materials, early year activities, reading schemes and support children in schools.
- We will provide arts and cultural experiences in our libraries.
- We will provide support for study, skills and employment by providing learning materials, study spaces, access to ICT, jobs clubs and information to support businesses.



## Building Stronger Communities

- Buckinghamshire libraries are neutral, safe, welcoming spaces in the community, making them excellent venues for local activities which build cohesion, resilience, civic activity, and community safety.
- Two thirds of our libraries are already delivered in partnership with volunteers and third sector organisations.
- We will position libraries as local community hubs, build stronger links with and through local community boards and organisations.



## Promoting Health and Wellbeing

- Our libraries can make an important contribution to supporting the health and wellbeing of residents.
- We work in partnership with health organisations to provide services such as health checks and stop smoking sessions, and have extensive resources to support good health.
- Libraries work with health and wellbeing partners to provide services and events to reduce health, social and economic inequalities.
- Libraries are safe meeting places that provide social contact and emotional support to combat isolation and loneliness.



## Enabling Access, Information and Inclusion

- We will enable local access to council information and services by developing libraries as Council Access Points (CAPs) and supporting our customers by signposting to organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau.
- We will increase digital access, with an extensive range of online resources and IT skills sessions to promote digital inclusion.
- We will continue working in partnership with organisation such as BucksVision, Age UK, Dementia Friends, Autism UK and Bucks Disability Service and by identifying and addressing the different language needs of our communities.

Developing Libraries as  
Community Hubs

Staff Empowerment

Building Partnerships

Continuous improvement

**Our Guiding Principles**



# How we engaged with our communities



## Communities and Localism Select Committee

A report on the emerging vision and priorities was provided to members of the Communities and Localism Select Committee and discussed at the Committee's meeting on 5 October 2022.

## Survey

**802 responses**

The Help shape the Buckinghamshire Libraries' vision and strategy for 2023 to 2028 survey was open for 8 weeks between 18th November 2022 and 15th January 2023.

## Web and Social Media Campaign

Newsletter: delivered to 5000+ people, over 70% opens.  
Webpages: 64 clicks  
Social Media: 7256 impressions

We used social media (Facebook, twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn) to drive engagement. We also promoted the engagement exercise on the library webpages, newsletters, press conference and the library public catalogue.

## Staff, Volunteer and Community workshops

**284 staff and volunteers engaged across 29 libraries**

Workshops were held with staff and volunteers at local level. Community libraries were also engaged with at the Community Library Forum. Engagement was also carried out via the staff and volunteer newsletter.

## Stakeholder Meetings

**58 Attendees**

Online workshops were held with internal and external stakeholder groups to gather feedback and identify opportunities.

# What has community engagement told us?

## Vision, Purpose and Priorities

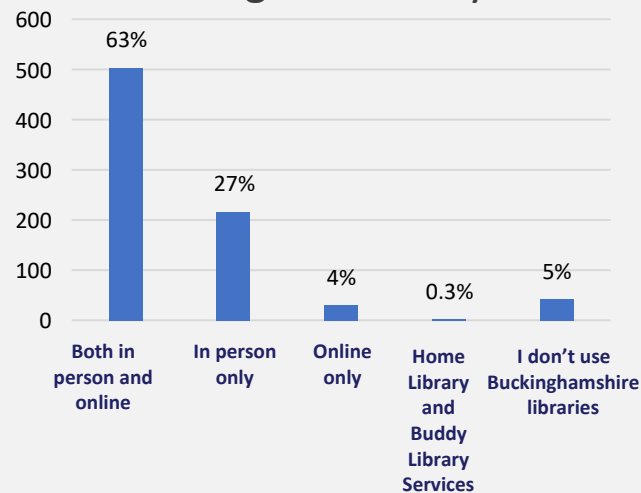
- 90%** Strongly agree or agree with the vision and purpose.
- 92%** Strongly agree or agree with Culture and Learning as a priority.
- 91%** Strongly agree or agree with Access, Information and Inclusion as a priority.
- 87%** Strongly agree or agree with Stronger Communities as a priority.
- 84%** Strongly agree or agree with Health and Wellbeing as a priority.

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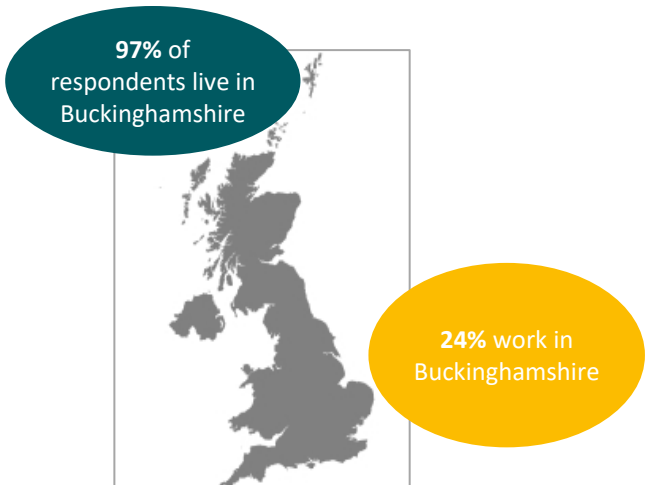
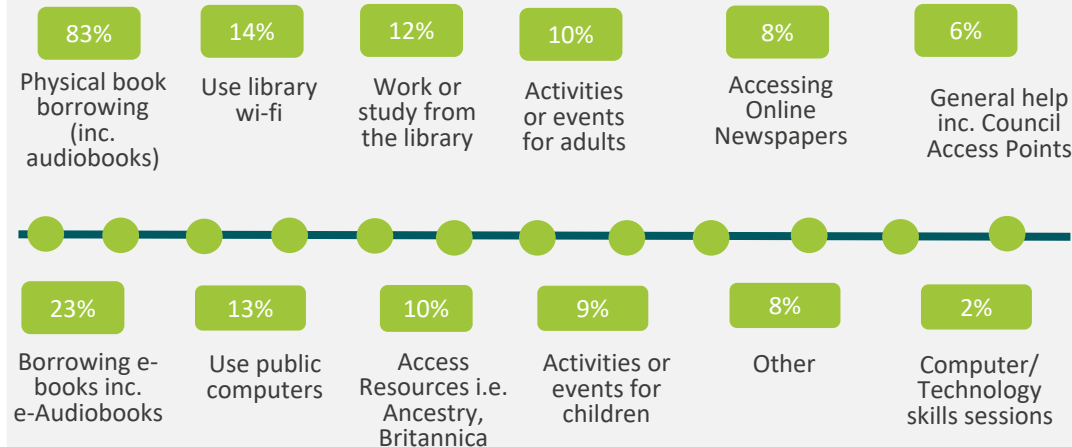


- 83%** of respondents are over 45 years old
- 71%** of survey respondents are female.
- 89%** of respondents use the library once a year or more
- 94%** of survey respondents are White ethnic group
- 99%** of respondents have English as their main language
- 74%** of respondents use the library once a month or more

## Accessing the Library



## Library Services Used



## What would make you use your library more?

- | Longer opening hours   | Use for more after hours events  | Improved stock of books  |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open into the evening during the week</li> <li>Open outside school hours / normal work hours</li> <li>Open Saturday / all day Saturday</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local music / history / arts</li> <li>Events for children &amp; young people</li> <li>Events linked to literacy and theatre</li> <li>Crafting</li> <li>Adult education classes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More choice of non-fiction</li> <li>More classics / high end fiction</li> <li>Copies of recently reviewed books / high profile books</li> </ul> |



# Buckinghamshire Libraries

## Our short to mid-term objectives



# Encouraging Culture, Reading and Learning

We will work towards gaining National Portfolio of Organisations (NPO) status with Arts Council England (ACE) by:

- developing a robust framework around evaluation and project and event management
- supporting staff in building their experience and confidence around cultural delivery
- delivering events to build a solid track record of bringing accessible cultural activities into our libraries.

We will grow our Culture Programme by:

- developing strong partnerships with the arts sector to expand our offer of inclusive cultural and creative activities
- installation of artwork at Wendover Library designed and shaped by local people
- delivery of ACE funded three year 'Rekindle' project – five events per year at five Buckinghamshire libraries in year 1 (2023/24). This will include theatre performances, creative writing groups, poetry workshops, author talks etc.

We will promote learning, literacy and the joys and benefits of reading through expanding our offer of diverse and inclusive resources for all ages by:

- expanding the Summer Reading Challenge
- implementing Reading Sparks - bringing together science, technology, engineering, and math's (STEM) themes with creative arts and reading
- developing new School Library Service resources – with local studies, artefacts and a digital offering.
- expanding the free 'Learn My Way', computer classes including projects that engage partially sighted residents and increasing the availability of loanable tablets (Hublets) in our libraries.



# Promoting Health and Wellbeing

We will deliver a Healthy Libraries programme in partnership with Public Health to:

- provide a wide variety of new activities including a men's mental health project, parent advice and support sessions and intergenerational projects to reduce social isolation and loneliness
- make our libraries more neurodiversity- and dementia-friendly and work with partners to deliver early intervention and wellbeing initiatives.

We will work towards greener libraries and supporting initiatives to tackle environmental issues by:

- installing a Living Wall in Aylesbury Library to improve air quality, provide thermal benefits for the building, reduce noise and improve wellbeing.
- work in partnership to help people reuse and recycle or to improve their local environment (examples: loan out litter picks tools; supply food waste caddies).
- seeking opportunities to reduce our carbon footprint and improve the energy efficiency of our library buildings (examples: installation of solar panels in Chesham and Hazlemere libraries and a ground air source heat pump at Aylesbury library).





Proposed redevelopment plans for Wendover Community Library

# Building Stronger Communities

- We will transform libraries into community hubs making them inclusive and multi-use, providing a single point of contact for local services and a range of social, educational, health and cultural activities i.e. Wendover Library. Looking ahead, we will build stronger links with community boards, further develop libraries as local hubs at the heart of the community and align with the *Opportunity Bucks - Succeeding for All* programme in discussion with ward partnerships.
- We will increase recruitment and training of volunteers across all our sites and services, ensuring an enriching and rewarding experience for all.
- We will support local young people through structured volunteering opportunities and work with local organisations and schools to offer work experience opportunities for students with additional needs
- We will ensure that all our teams have up to date information to signpost residents to financial and practical support and develop new partnerships to offer expert advice on areas such as credit, energy efficiency; working with partners such as Citizens Advice Bucks



MONTH	MAJOR EVENTS		OTHER DATES
January	27	Holocaust Memorial Day International day to remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, other people killed under Nazi persecution and in genocides that followed. This year's theme is Ordinary People.	30 to 5 National Storytelling Week
February	February is <b>LGBTQ+ History Month</b>		4 World Cancer day
	6 to 12	Children's Mental Health Week A spotlight on the importance of children and young people's mental health.	7 Safer Internet Day
	27 to 3	Early Year's Communication Week A weeklong campaign in Buckinghamshire to highlight the importance of speech, language and communication on the development of children in their youngest years.	
March	March is <b>Women's History Month</b>		2 World Book Day
	8	International Women's Day Global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women.	8 to 9 Bucks Skills Show 10 to 19 British Science Week 20 to 26 Shakespeare Week 27 to 2 World Autism Acceptance Week
April	April is <b>Bucks Crime Reading Month (name to TBD)</b>		2 International Children's Book Day
	22	Stephen Lawrence Day Opportunity for children and young people to have their voices heard and create a society that treats everyone with fairness and respect.	23 World Book Night
May	May is <b>Local and Community History Month</b>		2 to 8 Deaf Awareness Week
	15 to 21	Dementia Action Week An awareness raising campaign encouraging people to 'act on dementia'.	6 Coronation of King Charles III
	15 to 21	Mental Health Awareness Week Mental Health Awareness Week is all about starting conversations about mental health and the things in our daily lives that can affect it.	27 Elmer's Day
June	June is <b>Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month</b>		5 World Environment Day
	1 to 7	National Volunteer Week An annual celebration of the contribution millions of people make across the UK through volunteering	1 to 14 High VIS Fortnight 12 to 16 Loneliness Awareness Week
	8	Empathy Day Empathy Day aims to help everyone understand and experience the transformational power of empathy through stories.	22 Windrush Day
July	July is <b>Disability Pride Month</b>		3 to 9 Health Information Week
	1 to 15	WhizzFizzFest WhizzFizzFest is a Buckinghamshire celebration of all creative arts with children's literature and imaginations at the heart of it all.	
	8	Summer Reading Challenge launch Aimed at children aged 4 to 11 years to encourage reading	
August	2	National Playday Playday is the national day for play in the UK, a day of activities for children and young people.	1 to 7 World Breastfeeding Week
September	8	International Literacy Day A celebration to remind the public of the importance of literacy as a matter of dignity and human rights.	16 Summer Reading Challenge ends
	13	Roald Dahl Story Day An annual celebration of Roald Dahl's marvellous stories from Matilda to Charlie and The Chocolate Factory	8 to 17 Heritage Open Days 19 to 25 National Coding Week
October	October is <b>Black History Month</b>		5 National Poetry Day
	2 to 8	Libraries Week An annual showcase and celebration of the best that libraries have to offer.	10 World Mental Health Day 18 Anti-Slavery Day
	6 to 8	Fun Palaces weekend 'Fun Palaces' are events made by local people for their own communities, bringing together activities in the arts and sciences, crafts, tech and digital.	16 to 22 Get Online Week
November	November is <b>Buckinghamshire History Festival and Movember</b>		National Novel Writing Month
	13 to 17	World Nursery Rhyme Week Celebrating the importance of nursery rhymes in early childhood development.	6 to 10 Talk Money Week
December	1	Winter Mini Challenge launches Encourages children to keep up their reading habits over the winter holidays.	1 World AIDS Day

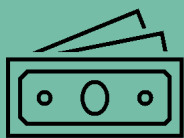
# Enabling Access, Information and Inclusion

- We will ensure local access to information and services by piloting the co-location of the High Wycombe Council Access Point+ service (face to face service for vulnerable residents and support for complex cases) in High Wycombe library, and increase the number of libraries operating as Council Access Points to provide local access and support to information and services.
- We will develop and train library staff as champions to promote Domestic Abuse services, the Hate Crime phonenumber and child safeguarding, and hosting partners such as Aylesbury Homeless Action Group (AHAG) and P3 housing support to provide advice and information around financial insecurity, housing and homelessness.
- We will expand our Prison Library Programme at both HMP Grendon Underwood and Springhill by delivering a two-year funded project, 'New Chapters' with the National Literacy Trust to raise aspirations of prisoners, helping them to find their voices and tell their stories through the power of creative writing.
- We will celebrate the diversity of Buckinghamshire by offering an inclusive and accessible calendar of activities highlighting local, national, and international campaigns across the year e.g. Black History Month, Dementia Action Week, International Women's Day, and Mental Health Awareness Week.
- We will increase access to library services by implementing Library Extra in Amersham and expanding across three additional sites (Library Extra is non-staff assisted technology which allows members to access the library premises outside of the usual opening times using their library card).



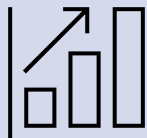
## Engaging and empowering staff and volunteers

Our libraries staff and volunteers are the greatest assets of the service. They are motivated, skilled and have strong personal values around caring and support for Buckinghamshire communities. Our priority will be to harness the creative energies of staff and cultivate an empowered and dynamic workforce leading change and improvement at all levels. This will mean improving internal communications, increasing staff input in local planning, enabling local budget management, developing new and clearer performance targets and the development of strong staff development plans.



## Developing income generating opportunities

Buckinghamshire Libraries will launch a new online room system during 2023/24. The new system will enable our customers to manage bookings at 11 libraries online and make payments online. Customers will have increased access and visibility of our facilities as they will be able to make bookings 24 hours a day, 7 days a week due to the real time availability calendar on the sites. The system improves customer experience and increases digital access to Buckinghamshire libraries facilities. The rigorous reporting provided by the new system will enable us to continuously improve our services by reviewing trends and proactively react to customer behaviours.



## Developing an improved performance culture

Buckinghamshire Libraries will develop a new and improved reporting and monitoring framework with clear performance measures and objectives for the service which will be used to monitor staff performance, local branch performance, and the overall performance of the library service. The service has acquired a new business intelligence tool (Speedups BI) which enables us to pull rigorous reporting from our Library Management system. This will enable us to evaluate usage of our services by generating management information on footfall, use of IT services, events, and other added value services we offer.



## Increasing self service

Buckinghamshire Libraries will introduce a remote printing service to enable customers to send documents for printing to a library near them and collect within a 24-hour period. Documents can be sent from a personal device (phone, tablet, laptop) or through a library device.



## Communications and Marketing Strategy

Buckinghamshire Libraries have a wide service offering for residents, businesses, and partners. There is a need to better promote the full breadth of our service offer and to target groups who do not currently use our services.

Specific marketing priorities will be to:

- evaluate recent survey data on the relationship between marketing channels, service take up and customer profiles to develop effective marketing campaigns

- conduct more research and surveying on the current opening hours and opportunities to increase hours with Library Extra technology.





# How we will measure success

- Increased number of visits, activities and groups
- Increased use of services by under-represented users
- Increased use of IT and percentage of IT usage
- Increased grant funding for projects that align with our priorities
- Return on investment from our marketing activities
- Increased self-service take up such as online renewals and printing
- Number of new partnerships created
- Increased number of arts and cultural activities
- Maintain customer satisfaction



# What's Next

1  
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Organise focus groups and surveys to generate insight on groups who were under-represented in the recent survey response (non-users, under 45s and non-white residents).

2

Work with staff and partners to develop an action plan which sets out clear milestones to help us achieve the vision and strategy. The action plan will be reviewed annually, with particular attention given to ensuring alignment with the *Opportunity Bucks -Succeeding for All* programme.

3

Organise a campaign to launch the Vision and Strategy.



## Report to Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> March 2023</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Food and Health and Safety Service Plan and Policies</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Councillor Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services.
<b>Contact officer:</b>	<b>Ian Snudden</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All wards</b>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p><b>1.1 To approve the joint Food and Health and Safety Service Plan</b></p> <p><b>1.2 To approve the food Policy and Health and Safety Enforcement Policy</b></p>
<b>Reason for decision:</b>	The Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Code of Practice and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) require local authorities to produce and publish an annual service plan that demonstrates how the authority will work to deliver its food safety and health and safety service. The Office for Product Safety and Standards also requires local authorities to produce and publish their enforcement policies and to ensure that they comply with The Regulators' Code.

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Food and Health and Safety Service Business Plan details how the food and health and safety enforcement services are to be delivered within Buckinghamshire Council for the period 2022/24.

1.2 The Service Plan is divided into the issues covered by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement and the key priorities identified by the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Strategy Document. The Service Plan and Enforcement Policies are appended.

## 2. Content of report

### **Food Safety Service Plan 2022/24**

- 2.1 Since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has set out a timetable (Recovery Roadmap) to bring local authorities back on track with their inspection programmes following a cessation of the inspection programme during the pandemic. We have been able to achieve the current milestones in inspecting our category A, B and non-compliant C and D businesses and were able to get a rolling start on the inspection of the compliant Cs as well as triage 927 new businesses. However, the Service has experienced a continual increase in the number of new food business registrations which, together with other work, has meant that we may not be able to achieve the final milestone of all compliant C businesses inspected by the end of March 2023. The Food Standards Agency has identified this as an area of concern for the authority. This will continue to be the team's focus for 2022/24.
- 2.2 Whilst an annual plan is expected by the FSA, on this occasion due to the above the first plan for Buckinghamshire Council covers a period of two years. At this point last year we were still under restrictive arrangements and focus was heavily aimed towards the regulatory response to Covid-19
- 2.3 In addition to the FSA Recovery Plan, as part of an ongoing programme of service transformation, improved and more efficient and effective ways of working and delivering the service are being explored. These will include the inspection processes, schemes of delegation and procedures for the assessment of officer competency and authorisation, streamlining the export health certificate process and the harmonisation of sampling equipment and calibration of thermometers.
- 2.4 The Service actively participates in the Primary Authority Partnership scheme, with seven established partnerships and two new partnerships formed in 2022. The primary authority acts as a point of contact and advice for food businesses that have a number of outlets nationally and local authorities who inspect them. This is a paid for service.
- 2.5 There has also been a noticeable decline in hygiene standards which has resulted in an increase in enforcement action and revisits. There has also been an increase in requests for FHRS re-inspections as businesses move to a more online presence.

## **Health and Safety Service 2022/24**

- 2.6 The Health and Safety Executive has set out a 10-year strategic plan 'Protecting People and Places' which sets out its key objectives and national priorities. In 2022/24 we will identify projects which will aim to raise health and safety awareness and improve standards in a particular sector or topic. It is likely that these will focus on workplace transport in warehouses and distribution centres following a number of reported accidents this year and gas safety in catering establishments.
- 2.7 In 2021, the Environmental Health Service took on the responsibility for the issue of the General Safety Certificate for the Designated Sports Ground at Wycombe Wanderers Football Club. In addition, the team has also taken on the administration of the registration for skin piercing establishments and operators and as part of this, will look to harmonise the registration process and fees from legacy areas and adopt a single set of byelaws covering safe and hygienic arrangements for skin piercing.

## **Food Policy and Health and Safety Enforcement Policy**

- 2.8 Both policies reflect the principles set out in the Regulators' Code issued by the Office of Product Safety and Standards. The key principles are to supporting growth, engaging with businesses, having a transparent and risk based approach to activities, sharing information between regulators and providing clear information and advice to businesses. The Regulators' Code applies to local authority regulatory services such as: environmental health, licensing, housing standards, planning enforcement, building control and revenues and benefits. A corporate enforcement policy has been developed and the policies have been drafted in accordance with this overarching policy.

## **3. Other options considered**

- 3.1 As the food service plan and enforcement policies are requirements of central government, there are no other options available to their publication.

## **4. Legal and financial implications**

- 4.1 The Food Standards Agency requires local authorities to produce and publish a food service plan, as does the Health and Safety Executive for health and safety and local authorities may be audited by these government bodies for compliance against the statutory guidance. The FSA audit reports are public documents and published on the FSA website.
- 4.2 The service plan aims to be delivered within existing budgets.
- 4.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and no adverse implications have been identified.

## **5. Corporate implications**

- 5.1 The food service strongly contributes towards the Council's corporate aims and objectives in all four key areas of the Corporate Plan 2020-2025 and the service plan details how this will be achieved. Additionally, the food and health and safety policies set out the principles that will be adopted when undertaking investigations and enforcement action in creating a 'level playing field' for businesses to trade and supporting businesses to prosper.

## **6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views**

- 6.1 The recommendations in this report are not specific to any one area in Buckinghamshire and so no specific local councillor or community board engagement has been carried out.

## **7. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

- 7.1 The approved plan and policies will be published on the council's website.

## **8. Next steps and review**

- 8.1 The approved action plan will be implemented across the whole Buckinghamshire Council area.

## **9. Background papers**

- 9.1 None

Appendix 1 Food and Health and Safety Service Plan

Appendix 2 Food Policy

Appendix 3 Health and Safety Enforcement Policy

## **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 email to [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).



# **Buckinghamshire Council**

**Environmental Health  
Housing and Regulatory Services**

## **Joint Food and Health and Safety Service Business Plan**

**2022-2024**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The joint Food and Health and Safety Service Business Plan outlines the nature, objectives and influences on the Environmental Health service and the statutory and policy framework within which the service is delivered in terms of food hygiene and health and safety. It sets out the key service priorities and objectives for 2022/24 and identifies the main issues planned to be addressed during the period. It also fulfils the requirements set down by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in its 'Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement' and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in its 'Section 18 Guidance to Local Authorities'.

In April 2020 a new unitary authority was formed from the legacy Buckinghamshire district councils of Wycombe, Chiltern, South Bucks and Aylesbury Vale and Buckinghamshire County Council. This joint food and health and safety service plan is the first to be produced for the new unitary authority.

During 2020-21, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was enormous and it is clear there will be a legacy left for years to come. As well as transitioning to a new unitary authority the service found itself under extreme and sustained pressure, providing advice and guidance to businesses wishing to comply with constantly changing legislation, monitoring and enforcing lockdown measures, providing support corporately on the Council's response to the pandemic, responding to notifications of clusters of infections including support to test and trace and surge testing and providing further support to businesses and event organisers as restrictions were lifted. The team's commitment and dedication to keeping consumers safe in the face of such challenges is to be recognised.

## 2.0 SERVICE AIMS AND KEY PRIORITIES

### 2.1 Service Aims

The Environmental Health Service has a significant role to play in improving quality of life within Buckinghamshire, predominantly through providing a proactive, accessible and efficient service that protects and promotes the health of those who work, live and visit the area.

The Service's vision is

*"to provide a trusted and approachable Environmental Health service for local communities, businesses and visitors, ensuring Bucks is a safe place to work, live and visit."*

The Environmental Health Commercial Team aims are to:

- support and assist businesses to achieve a greater than broadly compliant food hygiene rating i.e. a rating greater than 3;
- provide consistent, accurate and up-to-date information aimed at providing protection to customers, employees and visitors;
- support and assist businesses to comply with their legal obligations to ensure that food and workplaces are safe.

and we will achieve this by:

- targeting current and relevant information to businesses;
- ensuring officers are equipped with tools to effectively support businesses;
- ensuring that poor performing businesses are proportionately targeted with enforcement action;
- adopting a “light touch” approach to compliant businesses and organisations;
- positively engage in the Primary Authority Partnership scheme;
- promoting the food hygiene rating scheme;
- exploring and implementing innovative opportunities and approaches to working with other regulatory stakeholders to improve businesses’ experience.

The Food Standards Agency has set out a recovery plan for re-starting food safety interventions following the impact of COVID-19 and the cessation of inspections and closure of businesses. The Recovery Plan provides a framework up to 2023/24 for the inspection of new food establishments and high-risk and non-compliant establishments while providing flexibility for lower risk establishments. This will be implemented alongside delivery of:

- official controls where the nature and frequency are prescribed in specific legislation and official controls recommended by FSA guidance that support trade and enable export;
- reactive work including enforcement in the case of non-compliance, managing food incidents and food hazards, and investigating and managing complaints;
- sampling, and;
- ongoing proactive surveillance.

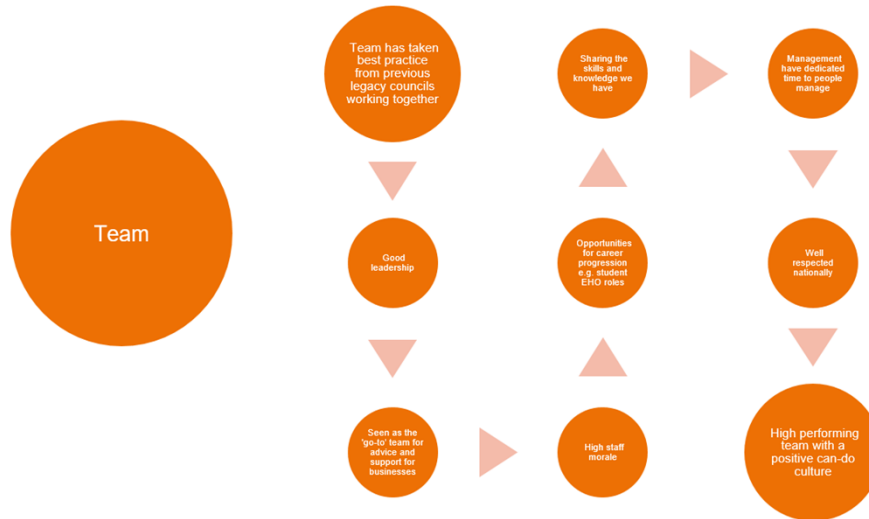
All local authorities are expected to have regard to the guidance and advice in this Recovery Plan which came into force from 1 July 2021.

The Environmental Health Commercial Team, will where we can, move at a faster pace in realigning with the intervention frequencies and other provisions set out in the Food Law Codes of Practice.

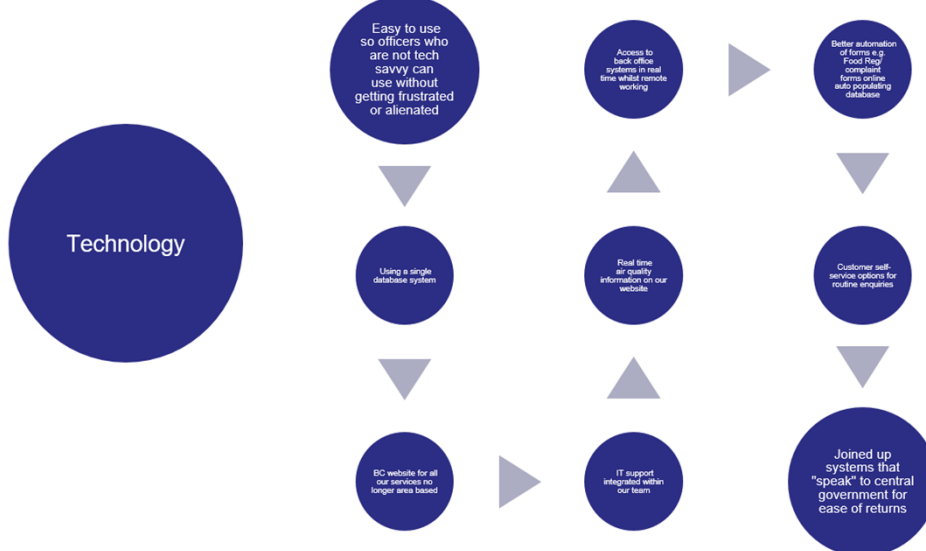
## **2.2 Service Review**

As part of the Environmental Health Service Review following the establishment of the Buckinghamshire unitary authority, a piece of work was carried out with staff to identify what their key requirements were for the new service. It is our aim over the next two years to create a service along these principles:

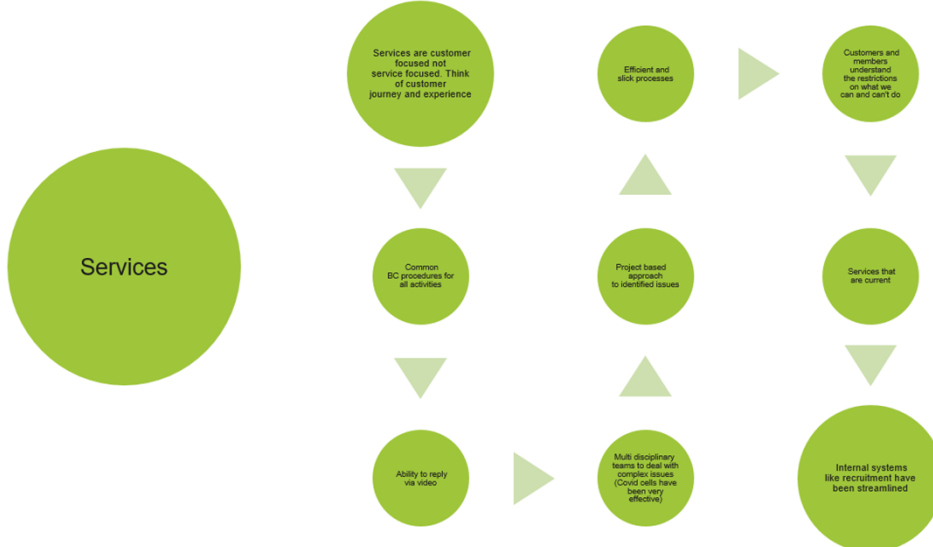
## What we want to see in our aligned service



## What we want to see in our aligned service



## What we want to see in our aligned service

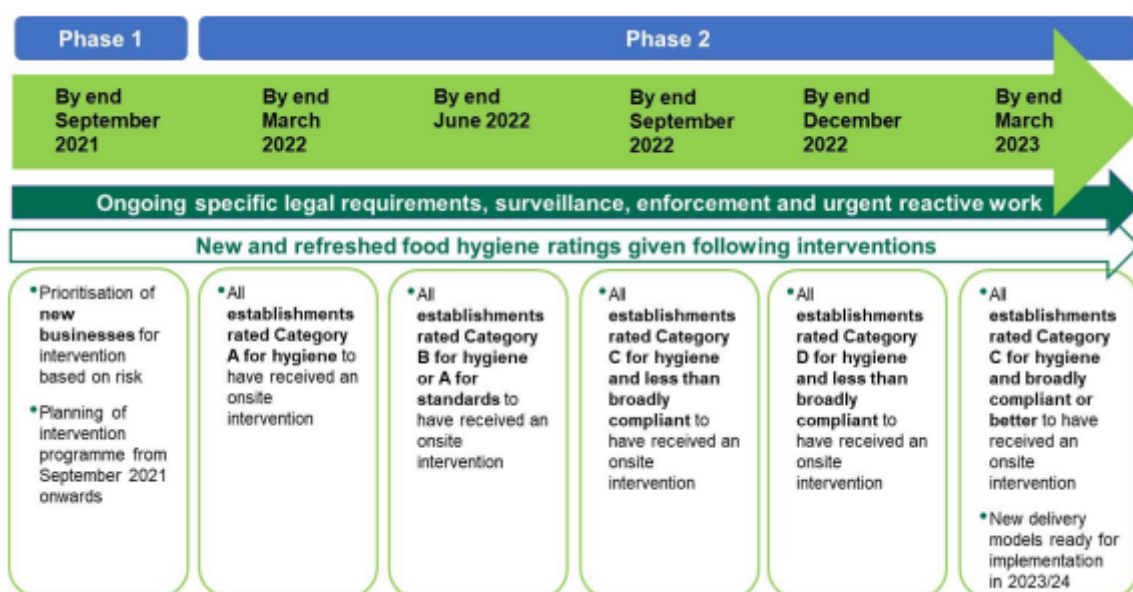


## 2.3 Key Priorities

The key priority for the coming two years will be to meet the milestones set out in the FSA Recovery Plan. There are two phases to the Recovery Plan and Phase 1 has been met following a successful bid for funds to employ staff to contact new businesses and provide an initial triage based upon the potential risk posed by that business. The triaging of new businesses will continue to be a priority as will the inspection of those that pose a high risk to food safety.

Phase 2 will continue until a new food hygiene delivery model and a revised food hygiene intervention rating scheme are in place.

An outline of the recovery plan is provided below.



In addition, our service priorities are:

- To bring together the best practices from each of the legacy authorities and to create a high performing service in line with our officers' aspirations and vision;
- To ensure a consistent approach to interventions and enforcement across the new service;
- To review the Scheme of Delegation and authorise officers according to their competencies and qualifications in line with the FSA Competency Framework;
- To develop policies and procedures and in particular those relating to food safety, health and safety, operation of the Safety Advisory Groups, skin piercing registration and enforcement action;
- To participate in the cross-authority liaison groups and to carry out targeted food safety interventions at large events such as the F1 British Grand Prix at Silverstone;
- To ensure that the General Safety Certificate for Wycombe Wanderers Football Club is issued at the start of the 2022/23 football season and monitor compliance;
- To manage and develop future partnerships with small local businesses and larger national companies as part of the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme and maintain the existing partnership relationships;
- To manage the efficient and timely issuing of export health certificates for local businesses;
- To participate in the UKHSA food sampling programme based on local and national priorities;
- To undertake topic based projects relating to health and safety based on local intelligence and national priorities;

- To provide informed and helpful advice to businesses and the public alike on matters relating to food and health and safety;
- To ensure that interventions are carried out commensurate with the principles of risk, at food premises within the district, ensuring compliance with the relevant food laws;
- To ensure food complaints are investigated;
- To act on food safety alerts promptly and in a manner that is proportionate to the risks involved.

## 2.4 Key Service Standards and Performance

As part of the authority's key objectives, service standards and performance measures have been set.

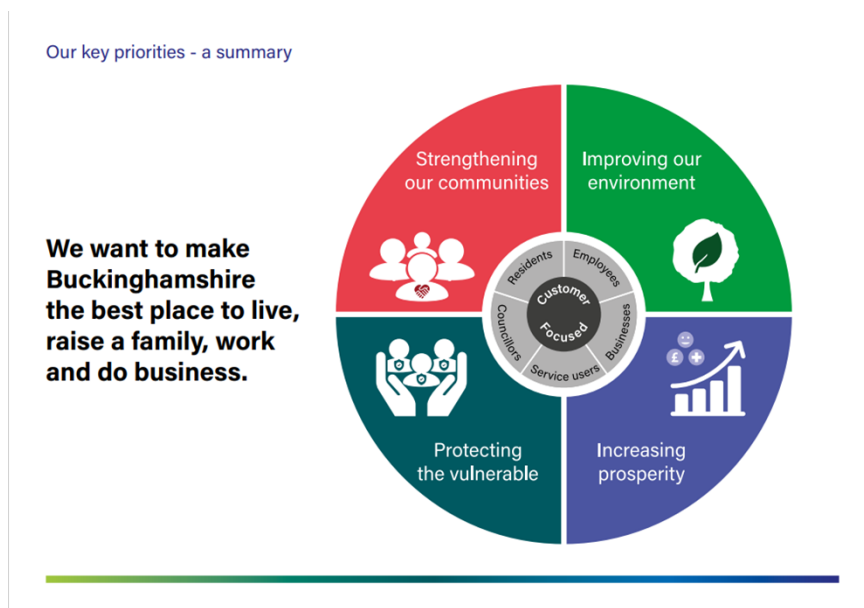
Services are prioritised and resources targeted at issues of greatest concern in terms of food and health and safety. The service covers inspections of businesses, complaint and accident investigation and developing schemes to assist and motivate businesses to achieve compliance and good practice. The departmental management performance measure used is: *'Number of new registered food businesses that are trading awaiting an inspection'*. This provides a measure of additional workload above that of the annual inspection programme.

In addition, managers monitor on a monthly basis the progress towards the milestones set out in the Food Standards Agency's Recovery Roadmap.

As a consequence of Government's aims for health and safety reform including reducing the inspection burden on business and focussing on better health and safety outcomes, proactive inspections will be targeted at high risk premises where the national priorities identify them as being an at-risk sector or local intelligence identifies businesses with poor compliance history or a particular sector specific issue in the county.

## 2.5 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

The food service strongly contributes towards the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025, which outlines the ambitions and priorities for Buckinghamshire.



**Strengthening our communities:** the service will contribute towards this priority by:

- ensuring we are delivering services to all communities equitably, proportionally and consistently;
- providing help, advice and support to consumers to protect health and promote healthier lifestyles and consumer choice e.g. Food Hygiene Rating Scheme;
- providing transparent, robust and consistent approaches to investigating and resolving consumer complaints about food and food businesses;
- providing transparent, robust and consistent approaches to investigating and resolving complaints from members of the public/users of publicly accessible facilities;
- providing transparent, robust and consistent approaches to investigating and resolving employee complaints about their working environment and investigating accidents to prevent further occurrence;
- taking part in national food sampling programmes and taking action to remove unsafe food from the market;
- working towards increasing overall food hygiene ratings for food businesses, thereby protecting food consumers;
- investigating substantiated food poisoning allegations and notified food poisoning outbreaks.

**Protecting the vulnerable:** the service will contribute towards this priority by:

- carrying out interventions prioritised by risk and regulate to help ensure that all businesses are providing a safe environment for customers and employees;
- investigating accidents in a timely manner to identify not only non-compliance but the root cause of the accident to prevent future occurrences;
- working towards increasing overall food hygiene ratings for food businesses, thereby protecting all food consumers, and particularly those more vulnerable;
- investigating single cases of specific infectious diseases where this involves a person within a vulnerable group;

**Improving our environment:** the service will contribute towards this priority by:

- carrying out waste and pest enforcement and education during visits to food businesses, ensuring that adequate provisions have been put in place;
- encouraging event organisers to consider the impact of their event on local communities and where possible, to encourage alternative means of transport to and from events;
- delivering services in an efficient, cost-effective manner and encouraging officers to be mindful of their own environmental impact when planning their work.

**Increasing prosperity:** the service will contribute towards this priority by:

- identifying the need to ensure a consistent, proportionate and fair approach to enforcement and to create a level playing field for all businesses across the district;
- working towards increasing overall food hygiene ratings for food businesses within the District, thereby improving their reputation and appeal to consumers;
- delivering support, signposting and tailored advice to new and existing businesses to help them comply with relevant legislation;
- targeting interventions at lower food hygiene rated businesses to encourage improvement and to help facilitate their presence on online delivery platforms and to increase their customer base;
- supporting businesses through Primary Authority Partnership arrangements to ensure they get assured and consistent advice on regulatory compliance;

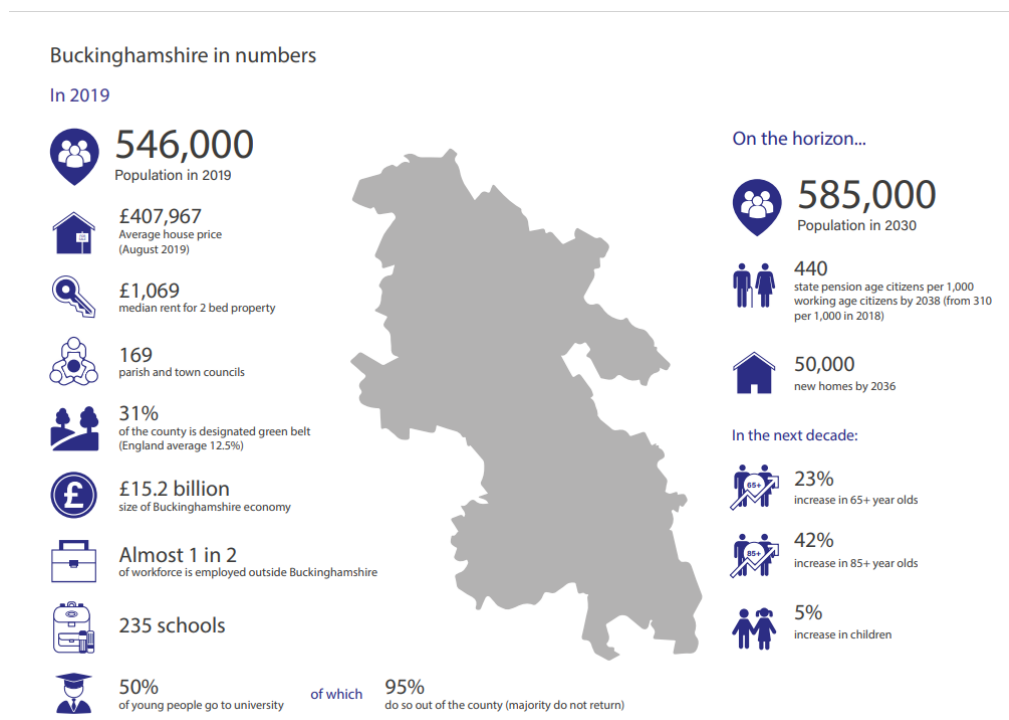
- processing export health certificates in a timely manner to facilitate the smooth export of goods produced within the district;
- supporting event organisers, through the Safety Advisory Group process, to provide safe events for workers and attendees, reducing the impact of an event on the local community and to demonstrate that Buckinghamshire is a great place to hold events.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Profile

Buckinghamshire Council is a newly formed unitary authority (as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020) comprising the legacy District Councils of Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe and Buckinghamshire County. It covers an area of 1,874 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of approximately 546,000 (2019). It is predominantly a rural area with towns and villages set in countryside, a large area of which forms part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and part of the Greater London Green Belt. 31% of the area is designated as green belt. The main towns in the north of the district are Aylesbury and Buckingham whilst in the south they are High Wycombe, Marlow, Amersham and Beaconsfield.

The county has good transport links with adjoining areas. There are good national and motorway networks and direct rail-links to central London or northwest via Aylesbury or High Wycombe and the Midlands, provided by Chiltern Railways, Great Western Railways and London Underground Ltd. There is significant development of future network links including HS2 and East-West Rail.



#### 3.2 Organisational Structure

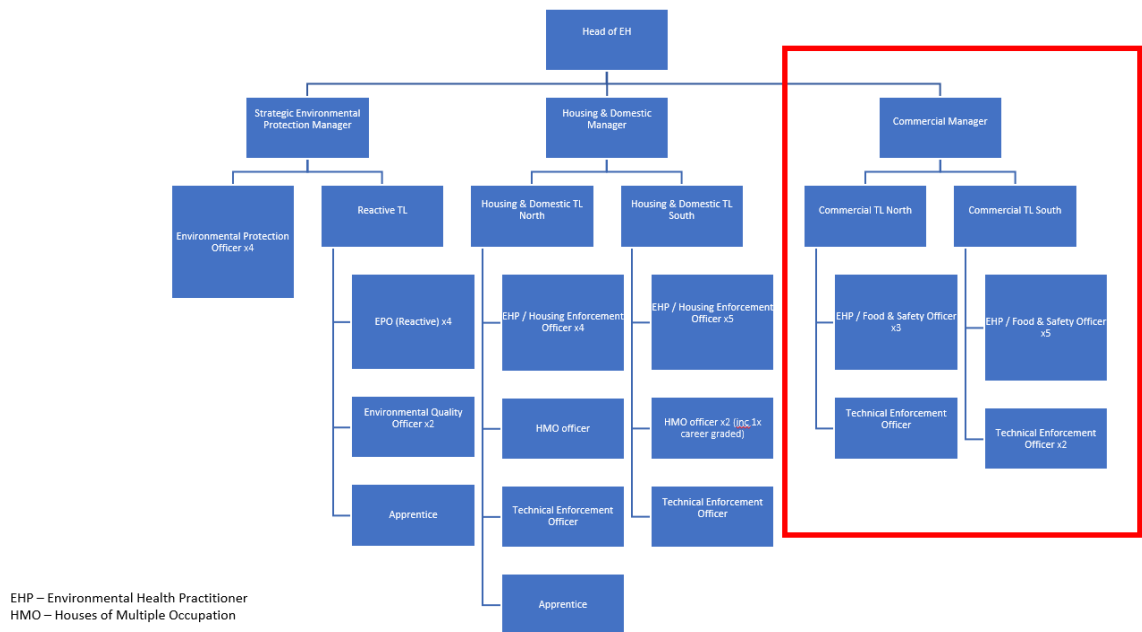
During 2019/20, Buckinghamshire local authorities underwent both political and structural changes following the Government's decision to create a unitary authority for Buckinghamshire. This has had significant implications on the way in which all services have and will be delivered and the incorporation of District and County functions into a single service. This took effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

A new Housing and Regulatory Service was created that encompasses Environmental Health, Housing, Trading Standards and Registrars and Coroners Services. This service sits within the Planning, Growth and Sustainability Directorate. The senior management structure is comprised of a Chief Executive, corporate and service directors and heads of service. The Head of Environmental Health reports to the Director of Housing and Regulatory Services and has delegated powers to act on behalf of the Council in relation to food and health and safety.

The Environmental Health service is divided into three specialist teams; Commercial, Housing and Domestic and Strategic Environment that operate from Council offices in High Wycombe, Amersham and Aylesbury. The food and health and safety is delivered by a specialist Commercial Team across geographical North and South areas.

As of the March 2022, the Commercial Team comprised of 10.2 full time equivalents, including 1 vacancy. This is made up of 13 'suitably qualified' officers and 3 Regulatory Support Officers.

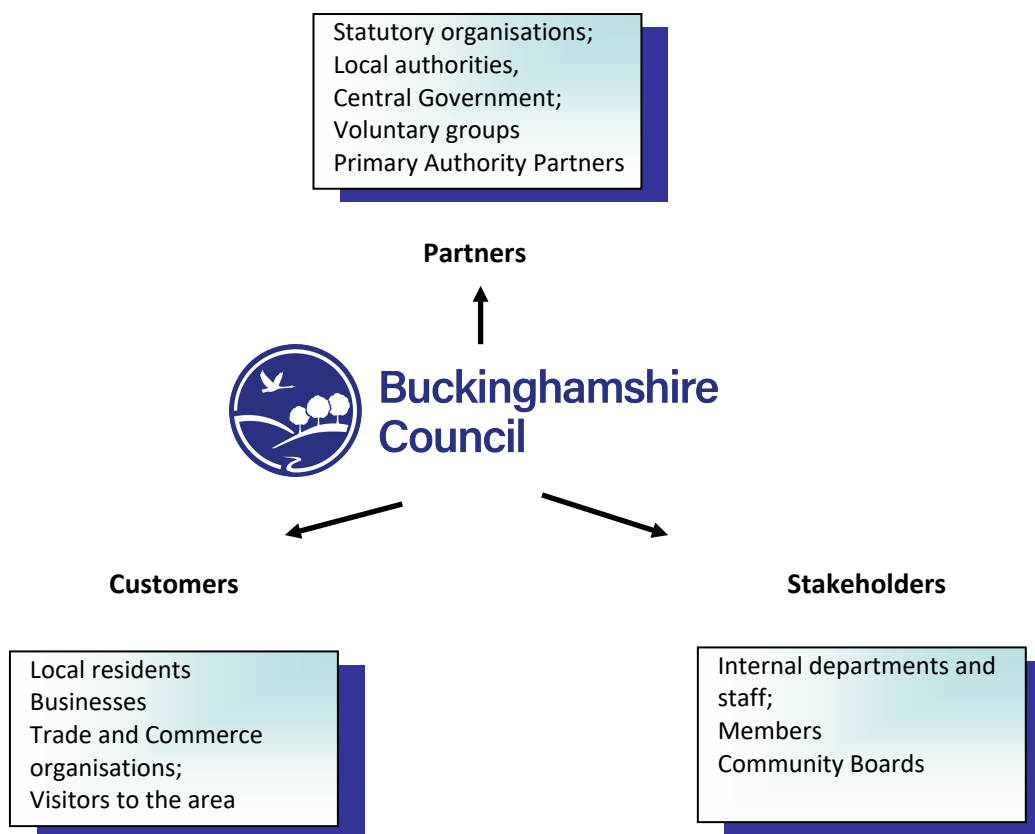
All food services are delivered by in house staff, except where food analytical services are used. Casual staff or contractors are occasionally used to support our work and help us manage variances in demand.



Dr Jill Morris is the appointed Consultant in Communicable Disease Control at United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) - Thames Valley and is the 'Proper Officer' for the Authority.



### 3.3 Customers, Stakeholders and Partners



### 3.4 Scope of the Service

The scope of the service is:

- i) the enforcement of legislation relating to safety, welfare and hygiene;
- ii) routine inspection and auditing of businesses in accordance with current Government requirements;
- iii) providing support, training and advice for food handlers and businesses, either free of charge or as part of a paid-for advice service;
- iv) participation in the Primary Authority Partnership scheme;
- v) investigation of consumer complaints relating to food safety and hygiene;
- vi) investigation of employee and public complaints and requests for information relating to working environments and standards;
- vii) investigation of reportable accidents;
- viii) management of the Safety Advisory Groups in relation to public events and sports ground safety;
- ix) health education and promotional activities to educate the consumer;
- x) investigation of sporadic cases and outbreaks of infectious disease within the District, in consultation with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control;
- xi) drawing up and implementing appropriate contingency incident and outbreak control plans.

In addition, officers also enforce the smoke-free provisions, undertake the registration and inspection of businesses and operators carrying out skin piercing activities, participate in the Safety Advisory Groups, investigate cases of infectious disease, issue sports ground certificates and where necessary provide support to the Resilience Service.

The service is delivered from the Council offices in Aylesbury, Amersham and High Wycombe during normal office hours of 9.00 – 17.30. It is recognised that businesses operate outside normal office hours of work and so the inspection programme will take this into account. Officers are therefore expected to work outside these hours when circumstances require, for example, for food poisoning investigations and accident investigations, where the nature of the business dictates evening or early morning visits and upon request by businesses.

### 3.5 Demands on the Service

As at 1st April 2022 there are 5357 food premises requiring an intervention in the Buckinghamshire district ranging from international manufacturers to home caterers. The number of premises falling into each risk category is given in Table 1. Classification of premises is in compliance with Food Standards Agency Code of Practice. Category A businesses, either because of the nature of their operation or poor standards of hygiene, pose a greater risk than category E. Those premises within category E are subject to an alternative enforcement strategy which takes the form of a self-assessment questionnaire. Non-rated businesses are those whose risk rating has not yet been assessed. The high number is a direct of the COVID pandemic. Premises outside the programme are those which presents so low a risk that it shouldn't be included in the inspection programme. These will be reviewed during 2022/23.

Table 1 Number of premises falling into risk categories

	A	B	C	D	E	Non-rated	Outside programme	Total
Number of premises	3	63	917	1536	1758	566	514	5357
Interval between Inspections (months)	6	12	18	24	*AES			

\*AES – Alternative Enforcement Strategy

Currently officers are complying with the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Recovery Roadmap and so the inspection intervals have been dropped and interventions have been focussed on those businesses that pose the greatest risk i.e. category A and B, non-compliant category Cs and Ds, triaging new businesses and inspecting the higher risk new businesses.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the FSA Recovery Roadmap by 2023, more recently, officers have been tasked to carry out home checks as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme whereby a sponsoring family homes a Ukrainian family for up to 6 months. The home checks are to ensure that the host property is safe and appropriate for the arriving family. The Government required local authorities to undertake these visits as staff from across the service were involved to ensure that there were not any unnecessary delays in the visa process.

Within the premises profile, there are 20 food businesses that are approved. Approved establishments are food premises that prepare and handle foods of animal origin for sale or supply to other businesses. These premises must meet additional legislative food safety requirements and will generally require greater officer resource than other food premises.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the service saw a significant increase in new food business registrations, particularly low risk home caterers. During 2021/22, 927 new food business registrations were received.

The Service provides health export certificates to several manufacturers within the area to assist with the export of products of fish or plant origin to countries that require these to be accompanied by a certificate issued by the official food control authority i.e. Buckinghamshire Council. These often require bespoke certificates to meet the specific needs of the client and country receiving the products. Health certificates are provided for companies that have received an inspection or audit of the premises and this service is charged for. The authority has a flexible approach to determining whether each consignment would need to be physically checked, based on existing records or the outcomes of previous official controls. With the UK's exit from the European Union, this service is becoming an increasing demand on resources.

The inspection of businesses in terms of health and safety is in compliance with Health and Safety Executive/Local Authorities Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA) Local Authority circular LAC 67/2 (rev11) i.e. a business will not be subject to any proactive interventions unless it comes within one of the priority subject areas or local intelligence suggests the need for a targeted intervention.

With the formation of the Buckinghamshire Council, the Environmental Health Service took on the responsibility for the issue of the General Safety Certificate for the Designated Sports Ground at Wycombe Wanderers Football Club. In addition, the team has also taken on the administration of the registration for skin piercing establishments and operators and as part of this, will look to harmonise the registration process and fees from legacy areas and adopt a single set of byelaws covering safe and hygienic arrangements for skin piercing.

### **3.6 Enforcement Policy**

A generic enforcement policy covers the majority of the work performed by the Service. However, a more specific enforcement policy has been developed and is detailed within the Food and Health and Safety Enforcement Policies, together with enforcement procedures that set out the actions to be taken when formal action is required.

Regard is given to the Regulators' Code published by the Office for Product Safety and Standards, the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme and the Council's overarching enforcement policy.

## **4.0 SERVICE DELIVERY**

The service will be delivered through:

- i) routine programmed inspection of food businesses, at frequency determined by a risk assessment, with appropriate follow-up action;
- ii) proactive targeted inspections of businesses and service sectors where there is likely to be a greater risk of injury from those activities identified by national accident statistics and local intelligence with appropriate follow-up action;
- iii) assessment of relevant food hygiene premises to determine their food hygiene score in terms of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and which will be published on the Food Standards Agency website;
- iv) routine self-assessment questionnaires to low risk premises;
- v) investigation of complaints with appropriate follow-up action;
- vi) investigation of accidents with appropriate follow-up action;
- vii) participation in national and local food sampling programmes;
- viii) appropriate training, development and monitoring of officers;

- ix) provision of information, coaching and advice to businesses about legal requirements and good practices;
- x) provision of relevant food safety courses for food handlers and a chargeable advice service to businesses;
- xi) promotional activities to inform and encourage high standards in businesses;
- xii) promotional activities to educate the consumer in food hygiene and safety;

Priority will be given to targeting those activities that pose the greatest risk to members of the public and employees by:

- i) the correct and uniform identification of high-risk areas during programmed inspections and as a result of complaint and accident investigation and to concentrate efforts to reduce these risks;
- ii) focussing enforcement efforts on those businesses who pose the greatest risks e.g. those that are not broadly compliant;
- iii) ensuring efforts are focussed on persistent offenders;
- iv) ensuring compliance with the law and;
- v) engaging in those promotional activities for businesses and consumers, which are most likely to foster improved safety.

Revisits to businesses will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant policy.

#### 4.1 Food Safety Interventions

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the key priorities was to inspect all food businesses when they became due in accordance with the Food Law – Code of Practice (England). However, as a consequence of the pandemic, resources were diverted to responding to the challenges posed by the pandemic, including enforcement of business closures during periods of lockdown and restrictions put on those that remained open, advising businesses once restrictions were lifted and responding to outbreaks and clusters of infection.

As previously mentioned, the Service is following the FSA Recovery Roadmap. As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, a significantly reduced food hygiene inspection programme was followed during 2019/20 and 2020/21 with no inspections being undertaken in the first two quarters of 2020/21. Therefore, the previous inspection programme is out of date and there are now a substantial number of food businesses that have not received an intervention within the minimum frequency as set out in the Food Law- Code of Practice, coupled with an increase in new food business registrations. At the start of the FSA Recovery Roadmap, there were 927 new food business registrations that had not been triaged or inspected. We were successful in bidding for funds from the FSA to employ staff to contact and triage new businesses and to provide an assessment as to their potential food safety risk. This was initially by phone and followed up by email. Of these, 654 were effectively triaged, 105 of which still needed to be triaged in terms of risk, and 80 high risk businesses were awaiting inspection.

In addition to the new business triaging, officers focussed their attention on inspecting all those food businesses rated as category A and B and the non-compliant Cs and Ds. As such, we are ahead of the Recovery Roadmap milestones and are now inspecting the compliant category C businesses. As such the 2022-23 inspection programme has the following profile:

Risk category	A	B	Non-compliant C	Compliant C	New businesses not yet inspected	TOTAL


	3	64	3	1032	843	1945
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The intention is to have caught up with all overdue inspections by the end of Phase 2 of the Recovery Plan (March 2023) and to be in a position to move forward with the new proposed FSA delivery model. Agency staff have been employed to inspect the lower risk new food businesses, leaving permanent staff to focus on the higher risk new businesses and existing compliant category C premises.

However, the Service is experiencing a continual increase in new food businesses registrations, increased numbers of large public events over the summer together with demands for home inspections under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. With new variants of COVID-19, we have also experienced increasing staff absence following positive tests. Therefore, there is some concern that not all the compliant category C premises and new businesses will be inspected by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. There may come a point where agency staff will be assigned to inspect the high risk new businesses, thus leaving the lower risk new businesses uninspected. Progress will be monitored on a monthly basis.

During 2022/23, focus will also be on the harmonisation of policies and procedures across the legacy areas and at the same time look at areas for service improvement. To this end, policies and procedures of the legacy authorities continue to be reviewed and developed, taking the best practice from each. This will include the inspection processes, schemes of delegation and procedures for the assessment of officer competency and authorisation, streamlining the export health certificate process and the harmonisation of sampling equipment and calibration of thermometers.

As part of an ongoing programme of service transformation, improved and more efficient and effective ways of working and delivering the service will be explored. In one legacy area, officers use iPads to record their inspections and produce much improved electronic reports for food businesses. These reports are designed to show a traffic light system of compliance and incorporate photographs thus making it clear to businesses what the issues are that need addressing. These will be rolled out to all officers during 2022/23.

Adequate separation between raw and ready-to-eat food being stored?	Yes	
Food protected from contamination in storage?	N/A	
Adequate stock rotation of food being stored?	No	A number of items found past their useby date on display for sale: 2 packets of pepperoni useby 30.04.18. 6 chicken in roast gravy pies useby 02 May 2018. 1 chicken samosa useby 30 April 2018. 1 beef salami best before 21.04.18. These were taken off sale by staff.
		
<p>Photograph 1      Photograph 2      Photograph 3      Photograph 4</p>		

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) continues to be well received by both the public and businesses. Businesses wishing to improve their rating following an inspection can apply for a re-inspection. From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, local authorities have been able to charge for re-inspection requests to cover their costs; this is currently set locally at £164. A number of online delivery platforms require food businesses to have a food hygiene rating of at least 3

before they can be on their database and as a consequence, we continue to see an increase in the number of applications for re-inspections.

Where businesses attain a 0-2 rating, a revisit is always undertaken to gain compliance. If at this visit it is found that the business would improve their rating, they are encouraged to apply for a re-inspection.

## 4.2 Health and Safety Interventions

The Health and Safety Executive has set out a 10-year strategic plan 'Protecting People and Places' which sets out its key priorities to enable it to respond and adapt to a changing landscape.

To support the strategy, guidance has been published for local authorities (LAC 67/2 (rev 11)) to aid the prioritisation of health and safety interventions. This identifies the national priorities based upon accident statistics and the associated high risk activities and business sectors. These will form the focus of projects we will undertake during 2022/24.

The key areas of national interest are:

- Work-related stress and mental health – 'Working Minds' campaign
- Electrical safety in hospitality – outdoor use
- Construction – asbestos, falls from height, respirable silica dust, handling materials
- Animal visitor attractions – infection control
- Inflatables – safe operation and set-up
- Trampoline parks – information provision and supervision
- Gas safety in commercial catering – installation, maintenance and inspection
- Pesticides – storage, use and supply
- Spa pools/hot tubs on display - legionella
- Welfare of delivery drivers – welfare provision
- Work-related road safety - delivery
- Safety of commercial waste and recycling bins – gaining access for shelter
- Worker involvement in safety management systems – involvement of staff

### Our strategy and objectives

The world of work is changing, and HSE's mission is expanding. The time is right to introduce our new ten-year strategy, *Protecting people and places: HSE strategy 2022 to 2032*. This is a strategy that reflects our broad role to include public assurance across a range of health and safety and environmental issues.

The strategy has set five **objectives** that we will deliver over the next ten years:



Reduce work-related ill health, with a specific focus on mental health and stress.



Increase and maintain trust to ensure people feel safe where they live, where they work and, in their environment.



Enable industry to innovate safely to prevent major incidents, supporting the move towards net zero.



Maintain Great Britain's record as one of the safest countries to work in.



Ensure HSE is a great place to work, and we attract and retain exceptional people.

## Annex B – List of activities/sectors considered suitable for proactive inspection

No	Type	Hazards	Potential Poor Performers within an Industry Sector	High Risk Activities
1	Safety	Explosion caused by leaking LPG	Communal/amenity buildings on caravan/camping parks with buried metal LPG pipework	Caravan/camping parks with poor infrastructure risk control/management of maintenance
2	Health	E.coli/ Cryptosporidium infection esp. in children	Open Farms/Animal Visitor Attractions <sup>1</sup>	Lack of suitable micro-organism control measures
3	Safety	Fatalities/injuries resulting from being struck by vehicles	High volume Warehousing/Distribution <sup>2</sup>	Poorly managed workplace transport
4	Safety	Fatalities/injuries resulting from falls from height/ amputation and crushing injuries	Industrial retail/wholesale premises <sup>3</sup>	Poorly managed workplace transport/ work at height/cutting machinery /lifting equipment
5	Health	Occupational deafness	Industrial retail/wholesale premises <sup>3</sup>	Exposure to excessive noise (e.g., steel stockholders).
6	Health	Industrial diseases / occupational lung disease (silicosis)	Industrial retail/wholesale premises <sup>3</sup>	Exposure to respirable crystalline silica (Retail outlets cutting/shaping their own stone or high silica content 'manufactured stone' e.g., gravestones or kitchen resin/stone worktops)
7	Health	Industrial diseases / occupational lung disease (cancer)	Industrial retail/wholesale premises <sup>3</sup>	Exposure to all welding fume regardless of type or duration may cause cancer. (e.g., Hot cutting work in steel stockholders) Exposure to be controlled with LEV and or appropriate RPE. <sup>4</sup>
8	Health	Occupational lung disease (asthma)	In-store bakeries <sup>5</sup> and retail craft bakeries where loose flour is used and inhalation exposure to flour dust is likely to frequently occur i.e. not baking pre-made products.	Tasks where inhalation exposure to flour dust and/or associated enzymes may occur e.g., tipping ingredients into mixers, bag disposal, weighing and dispensing, mixing, dusting with flour by hand or using a sieve, using flour on dough brakes and roll machines, maintenance activities or workplace cleaning.
15	Safety	Fires and explosions caused by the initiation of explosives, including fireworks	Professional Firework Display Operators <sup>7</sup>	Poorly managed fusing of fireworks

<sup>1</sup> Animal visitor attractions may include situations where it is the animal that visits e.g., animal demonstrations at a nursery.

<sup>2</sup> Typically larger warehousing/distribution centres with frequent transport movements/work at height activity.

<sup>3</sup> Includes businesses such as: steel stockholders; builder's and timber merchants.

<sup>4</sup> Specific guidance available re welding fume on HSE's website at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/welding/protect-your-workers/index.htm>

<sup>5</sup> For supermarket and other chain bakeries etc check to see if there is a Primary Authority inspection plan with more specific guidance.

<sup>6</sup> Pubs, clubs, nightclubs and similar elements of the night-time economy.

<sup>7</sup> Specific guidance on the application of the Explosives Regulations 2014 to the activities of professional firework display operators is available on the HSE website - [www.hse.gov.uk/explosives/er2014-professional-firework-display.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/explosives/er2014-professional-firework-display.pdf)

The guidance is clear however, that there should not be an inspection without a reason and that other alternative interventions may be more suitable, for example advisory visits, publicity campaigns and seminars.

Unlike with food, the risk category of a business will not form part of the inspection programme and so will not be subject to any proactive interventions unless they come within one of the priority subject areas or local intelligence suggests the need for targeted interventions. In 2022/23 we will identify an area of project based work which will aim to raise health and safety awareness and improve standards in either that particular sector or topic.

### 4.3 Requests for Service

The Food and Health and Safety Enforcement Policies detail the policy relating to the investigation of complaints, whether they are about hygiene standards at premises, complaints about food purchased within the county, safety standards at premises or welfare issues. In 2021/22, 366 food related service requests were received, 284 concerning the hygiene of premises and 82 in relation to food itself. 38 visits were made following complaints or incidents relating to either reported accidents or concerns about standards at premises.

Buckinghamshire Council has established Safety Advisory Groups, the purpose of which is to collate information about an event to enable the emergency services to gauge its potential impact upon the local community, to identify beforehand any issues or concerns which may potentially arise and to give advice to event organisers. In 2021/22 in excess of 250 consultations were considered for a variety of events.

In addition, the team is now responsible for the issuing of the General Safety Certificate for the Designated Sports Ground at Wycombe Wanderers Football Club and chair the statutory Safety Advisory Group for this stadium. The team has also been extensively involved in the inspection of food vendors and the hospitality provision at Silverstone Circuit during the F1 British Grand Prix and MOTO GP along with associated camping provision for attendees

#### 4.4 Accident Notifications

Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013, employers and self-employed are required to notify the enforcing authority of any notifiable injury etc. The policy for the investigation of accidents is detailed in the Health and Safety Enforcement Policy and accidents are investigated according to the criteria within it.

#### 4.5 Primary Authority Scheme

In July 2009, the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act introduced the concept of a 'Primary Authority' for the majority of regulatory functions. At the request of a business, a local authority is compelled to act as that company's Primary Authority. The role of the Primary Authority is to act as a point of contact for other local authorities on policy issues, inspection programmes and when considering taking any enforcement action. The Primary Authority is able to prohibit that local authority from taking their enforcement action subject to an appeal process to the Office for Product Safety and Standards against the decision of the Primary Authority.

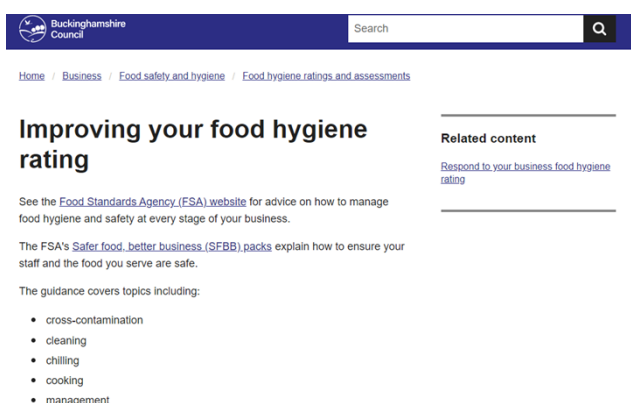
We have 7 established Primary Authority Partnerships with a variety of businesses. These are: Culinera Ltd, Beechdean Group, BFS Group Ltd (Bidfood), Bidfresh Holdings Ltd, Premier Foods Ltd, Royal Air Force and Hovis Ltd. The team will actively participate in the Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Primary Authority 'Single Point of Contact' Model and work with trading standards colleagues in establishing future primary authority partnerships with local businesses and trade associations where resources allow.

#### 4.6 Advice to Businesses

The authority is committed to ensuring that businesses are aware of the requirements of the law and good practice, and will wherever resources permit, provide advice to assist businesses. Such an approach helps to improve food hygiene standards and enables positive relationships to be built with businesses.

As part of its role in the Safety Advisory Group process, advice is given to event organisers on all aspects of Environmental Health, including food safety, health and safety, noise control, water supply and waste management. The group also coordinates responses from other external agencies.

Work is currently being undertaken to bring together the legacy websites into one Buckinghamshire Council site which will incorporate advice, signposting and online applications and payments.



The screenshot shows the Buckinghamshire Council website. The header includes the council logo and a search bar. The breadcrumb trail is: Home / Business / Food safety and hygiene / Food hygiene ratings and assessments. The main heading is 'Improving your food hygiene rating'. Below this, there is a link to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) website for advice on managing food hygiene and safety. Another link points to the FSA's Safer food, better business (SFBB) packs. A list of topics covered by the guidance is provided: cross-contamination, cleaning, chilling, cooking, and management. A 'Related content' section on the right lists 'Respond to your business food hygiene rating'.



Some of the legacy authorities also provided a chargeable advice service for new and existing businesses to support them in achieving higher standards of safety and compliance and this will now be rolled out across all areas. A charge is made for those businesses who wish to have a re-inspection under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

Whilst some of the legacy authorities have provided face to face Level 2 'Award in Food Safety in Catering' courses in the past, these have become less popular and over the past few years, and particularly during the COVID pandemic, there has been little uptake of these types of courses, with businesses preferring to use online training. Not only is this cheaper but it also frees up their staff time. As a consequence, we will continue to provide these and investigate increasing the range of online courses further. All courses are accredited by QCA and the Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance Ltd. These courses can also to be run for organisations at their premises upon request.

## Book a food safety course

We currently offer online food safety courses for anybody working in a catering or hospitality setting where food is prepared, cooked and served.

### Courses details and fees for 2022 to 2023

Course	Cost per person	Duration	Exam	Date and location
Online Level 2 Food Safety (an accredited course provided by <a href="#">Highfield</a> )	£28	6 hours	Multiple choice at the end of each module	Online course available 24 hours a day

[Book an online Level 2 Food Safety course](#)

### Food Standards Agency courses

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has produced a [free online food allergy training course](#) for managers and staff in the food manufacturing and catering industries.

The FSA has also created 10 short [food hygiene awareness training videos](#). Each video is about a minute long and covers specific food safety practices. New kitchen staff who have not previously worked in catering can watch these before attending a level 2 course.

In addition to advice being given to businesses, information is also provided for the public in the form of information on the website, social media and participation in National campaigns.

## 4.7 Food Sampling

The policy in relation to sampling is detailed in the Food Policy and covers sampling of food, water and faecal and food samples as part of food poisoning investigations.

Whilst policies and procedures are being harmonised, proactive sampling will be restricted to the UKHSA national and regional co-ordinated sampling programme. This will cover:

**Table providing planned study timings for 2022-23 Programme:**

Year	2022-2023											
Months of sampling	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
<i>Study 74- Hygiene in sandwich and salad bars</i>												
<i>Study 75- Vegan meals/ingredients/meat alternatives</i>												
<i>Study 76 – reactive study</i>												

In 2023/24 an annual sampling programme will be drawn up to cover:

- i) Food products manufactured locally;
- ii) National and regional co-ordinated sampling;
- iii) Imported foods;
- iv) Locally co-ordinated sampling.

The sampling programme will be based on the following objectives and an assessment of the potential risks associated with the particular activity:

- i) To obtain recognised and usable microbiological standards for foods, via a nationally co-ordinated sampling programme;
- ii) To fulfil legal and government driven obligations;
- iii) To monitor those businesses whose standards of hygiene are less than satisfactory;
- iv) To check that food complies with statutory microbiological standards, where available;
- v) To check that locally manufactured and handled foods are microbiologically safe;
- vi) To identify specific foodstuffs which are more likely to be microbiologically unsound.
- vii) To form part of the non-inspection official control programme for broadly compliant food businesses.

It is recognised that good co-operation and co-ordination at a national and local level is necessary to achieve such objectives and the authority is committed to:

- i) participating in and co-operating with the UK Health Security Agency and Food Standards Agency's national sampling schemes;
- ii) co-ordinating with adjoining local authorities and local UKHSA to agree locally co-ordinated sampling;
- iii) ensuring 10% of samples come from third country imported foodstuffs, in line with the Food Standards Agency requirements.

Sampling forms an important part of the inspection programme with lower risk, broadly compliant businesses being sampled rather than having a full inspection. This approach provides an efficient and effective use of officer's time, enabling greater focus on those businesses which continue to be non-compliant. Sampling is also performed on an adhoc basis as necessary, generally in response to a complaint from a member of the public, as part of a food poisoning outbreak or during a routine inspection.

As part of the revised inspection processes the use of bioluminescence analysis of hand and food contact surfaces provides rapid assessments of cleanliness and cross contamination. As well as demonstrating potential failures in hygiene arrangements, the visual nature of these tests also aids the educational aspect of the inspection.

Samples for microbiological analysis continue to be taken to the UKHSA laboratory at Colindale, London. Samples for examination will go to the Public Analyst, Hampshire Scientific Services.

#### **4.8 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease**

The policy for dealing with food related diseases is to:

*"Prevent the spread of notifiable infectious disease in the community and particularly reduce outbreaks of food poisoning."*

a) To investigate all outbreaks of notifiable disease within the county in co-operation with the UK Health Security Agency:

- i) to identify the cause of infection;

- ii) to prevent the spread of infection;
- iii) to educate and prevent re-occurrence.

b) Promote the training of food handlers.

A Single Case Protocol and Joint Health Protection Incident and Outbreak Control Plan have been developed in consultation with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control and Thames Valley UKHSA Centre which are reviewed on a regular basis.

Notified cases are followed up in line with the UKHSA protocols to identify the source and cause, and to establish whether the case is within a high-risk group. Such outbreaks involve a considerable amount of time and effort to investigate and control and as a consequence, other proactive work tends to be held in abeyance until the outbreak is concluded.

#### 4.9 Food Safety Incidents

Food Alerts are the Food Standards Agency's way of informing local authorities and consumers about problems associated with food and, in some cases, provide details of specific action to be taken. They are often issued in conjunction with a product withdrawal or recall by a manufacturer, retailer or distributor. Officers will carry out action specified in the Food Alert as instructed and in the most appropriate, expeditious and cost effective manner possible to safeguard public health. Action will be taken in accordance with guidance issued by central government. Action taken in relation to food alerts associated with chemical contamination will be in consultation with Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards.



**PRODUCT RECALL: FSA-PRIN-45-2022 - John West recalls two John West Sardine products because of a possible microbiological contamination risk**  
 John West is taking the precautionary action of recalling John West Boneless Sardines in Sunflower Oil and John West Sardines in Olive Oil because of a possible microbiological contamination risk.

Issued by: FSA Incidents Team

✉ [foodincidents@food.gov.uk](mailto:foodincidents@food.gov.uk)

☎ 020 7276 8448

🌐 [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)

📍 FoodStandardsAgency

📱 @foodgov

Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) is primarily a tool to exchange information between EU member states on consignments of imported food and feed in cases where a risk to human health has been identified and measures have been taken. As of 1 January 2021, the UK no longer has full access to the system although it still receives RASFF notifications for those alerts which directly impact the UK. As with the food alert officers will carry out any action specified in the RASFF.

If a Food Alert needs to be issued following complaints or issues arise as part of the routine inspection programme, the guidance in the Code of Practice will be followed.

When necessary, the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control and Public Analyst will be consulted and advice sought as to the public health significance of particular issues. Specialist experts will also be called upon as necessary. Appropriate resources will be allocated to resolving any food safety incident and alternative measures taken to deal with other work.

We will continue to work closely with our Primary Authority partners where their products may give rise to a food safety incident, providing advice and guidance and liaising with other regulators as required.

## 4.10 Liaison with other Organisations

The Authorities have a number of formalised liaison arrangements with various public bodies and neighbouring local authorities. These include:

- i) Liaison Groups – meetings to discuss current enforcement issues and to develop action plans to progress food and health and safety promotion and enforcement. Also in attendance is the Quality Manager from the UKHSA, Colindale to discuss sampling results and programmes and the Health and Safety Executive;
- ii) Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards - to discuss joint initiatives and primary authority partnerships;
- iii) Thames Valley UKHSA Centre – meetings to discuss current infectious disease issues and to progress initiatives in outbreak control;
- iv) Buckinghamshire Council Safety Advisory Groups – meetings with event organisers to discuss event safety management and to highlight issues of particular concern, as well as meeting statutory requirements for designated sports grounds;
- v) Thames Water Utilities, Anglian Water and Affinity Water – meetings to discuss current developments in water quality and monitoring and to develop closer links between organisations;
- vi) The team also has links with other Council services e.g. Licensing, Planning, Building Control and Waste Management;
- vii) Officers will also work and exchange information with other enforcement agencies such as HMRC and Thames Valley Police;
- viii) Participate in and contribute towards public health initiatives such as childhood obesity, smoking cessation and alcohol control.

## 4.11 Promotion

The value of safety promotions is recognised as an effective way of conveying safety information to both public and businesses and as a means of raising standards. Therefore, when resources permit, officers actively participate in a number of promotions. These include Food Safety Week, Health

### Search results: Buckinghamshire area

The data is provided by Buckinghamshire.

Website: [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

Email: [environmentalhealth@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)



Business name  Street, town or postcode

Business type  
All

Hygiene rating (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)  
5

Equal

Sort results by:  
Relevance

[Less search options](#) [Search all data](#) [Search a different area](#)

Show results with map

Food hygiene ratings - 2,798 search results

Cannot find a business? Try searching using just the business name or with the first part of the postcode

Name	Rating	Last inspection
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21 Mishes

FOOD HYGIENATING

21 March 2022

and Safety Week and other local promotions organised on an adhoc basis through the Liaison Groups.

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme shows how well food businesses are complying with food hygiene law. The scheme applies to all caterers and retailers handling and preparing open food to the public. The food business is given a sticker to display that shows their food hygiene rating out of 5. The ratings are made publicly available on a national website so that customers can make informed choices about the places where they eat out and purchase food, and through this, to encourage businesses to improve hygiene standards. Businesses are encouraged to display their rating.

## **5.0 RESOURCES**

### **5.1 Staffing allocation**

The food and health and safety service is delivered by a specialised Commercial Team who are responsible for undertaking food safety and health and safety interventions, investigations of accidents and hygiene complaints, nuisance complaints linked to commercial premises, skin piercing registrations, food poisoning outbreaks and sporadic infectious disease cases and provide support and advice to businesses and participate in the primary authority partnership scheme. The Team is divided geographically North and South and is comprised of an Environmental Health Manager, 2 team leaders, 7.6 Environmental Health Officers and Food and Health and Safety Officers and 3 Technical Enforcement Officers (including 1 vacancy), supported by 0.45 FTE Administrative Officers.

All officers are authorised in accordance with an assessment of their individual competencies and qualifications and in accordance with the FSA Food Law - Code of Practice and Section 18. A record of authorisation for each individual is kept and any training and competency issues are dealt with throughout the year.

Contractors engaged in food or safety interventions will be appointed and authorised in accordance with the authorisation procedures and must demonstrate their competence to the satisfaction of the relevant codes of practice. During 2021/22 consultants were employed to undertake food hygiene inspections, primarily in relation to new businesses.

In order to achieve the FSA Recovery Roadmap, permanent staff have been assigned to inspect those high risk food businesses (category A, B and non-compliant Cs and Ds) and those new businesses that have been triaged as high risk. Technical Enforcement Officers are triaging the new businesses as high or low risk. Agency staff have been employed to inspect low risk new businesses but for various reasons we have not been able to consistently retain them and recruitment has proved difficult at times. Currently we have one contractor inspecting low risk new businesses and another covering maternity leave. However budgetary constraints prevent employing additional staff and there is concern that the recovery plan will not be achieved. The vacant Technical Enforcement Officer post will be advertised after the summer 2022.

### **5.2 Staff Development**

The Food Standards Agency, as part of their revision of the Code of Practice, has introduced a Competency Framework for officers who are responsible for undertaking official controls. All officers authorised to carry out official control interventions will be required to complete the Competency Framework and any gaps will form part of their personal development plan. Officers have recently passed the Food Competent Certifying Officer (FCCO) qualification which enable them to authorise export health certificates.

The Council has a quarterly goal-setting and review process and two 6-monthly formal appraisals at which time any training and development needs are identified and incorporated into a training plan. Throughout the year, core courses are identified and staff allocated to attend as necessary. Staff have increasing access to online training and webinars. Not only does this plan reflect the business needs of the Service, it also provides for the personal development of individual officers. The Food Standards Agency's Competency Framework has been used to identify individual competencies and training and knowledge gaps.

All training undertaken is reviewed as to its usefulness and practical applications and feedback to other officers is done during team meetings.

Following each review meeting, officers may be set more specific, short-term goals, whether this be work-related or for personal development. Staff are encouraged to stretch themselves and so they may be asked to present to team members on a particular topic or lead on a specific intervention project or campaign. These are reviewed on an on-going basis and as part of the annual appraisal.

### **5.3 Financial Allocation**

The budget for the Commercial team activities is comprised of a number of elements, the greatest of which is staffing costs (97.8%). The total budget is in the region of £850,000. A budget of £10,000 is also set aside for agency staff employment.

Microbiological analysis is undertaken by the UKHSA who has agreed an allocation of sampling units based on one food sampling unit per 1000 head residential population which equates to 15,633 credits. There is also a budget of £4,300 for 'paid-for' samples.

### **5.4 Physical Assets**

The officers involved in the food service are provided with any equipment that is deemed necessary for them to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently. This includes appropriate personal protective equipment, inspection equipment including thermometers and sampling equipment and iPads. A record of equipment allocated to staff is to be listed in an equipment inventory, which will also include a record of the necessary calibration and service checks.

### **5.5 Information Technology**

The Service currently operates two software packages as a consequence of legacy systems. These are Salesforce and IDOX Uniform database and management systems and are used to log complaints, investigations and inspections. We also use RIAMS supplied by RHE Ltd to provide consistency in enforcement notices and which also provides a library of guidance and information on various topics.

All documents are scanned and linked to the business record which provides a more efficient management of information and data and improved access to information and business history.

As a consequence of becoming a unitary authority, the Council is undertaking a series of IT harmonisation projects including the use of MS Teams, Windows 365, SharePoint, a single Uniform system, digital post room and common hardware. This will involve a significant input from team members over 2022/23. Additionally, there is a project to migrate web-based information from the legacy websites to a single Buckinghamshire.gov.uk website. The

team have been heavily involved in the current project and have successfully reviewed and consolidated the information for event safety and Safety Advisory Group guidance, food hygiene and skin piercing. We are currently developing the use of online application forms and payments which will improve both access to services by residents and businesses and efficiency.

As well as being involved in corporate IT projects, the team are constantly looking at ways of improving the service it delivers. To this end, we will be rolling out the use of the iauditor software to develop templates for paperless inspection checklists and inspection reports for businesses. Not only will this facilitate a more efficient use of officer's time but will also provide a clearer way of highlighting the key issues that need to be actioned using a traffic light system and incorporation of photographs in reports. These templates continue to be developed and now include templates for verification visits, sampling health and safety projects.

## **6.0 QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

It is recognised that as well as ensuring that premises due for inspection are actually inspected, the quality of the inspection is of equal importance. By ensuring and maintaining the quality of an inspection, it becomes a more focussed, effective tool in securing food safety.

As part of our harmonisation process, it is recognised that there are a number of legacy policies and procedures that need to be reviewed and consolidated into single Buckinghamshire Council ones. This is an ongoing process and as such will be undertaken throughout 2022/23. One of these to be prioritised will be that for monitoring the quality and consistency of approach to inspections, information provided and correspondence.

Notices to be served and other enforcement work are verified by the team leaders or Environmental Health Manager to ensure consistency with the Enforcement Policy and compliance with the Code of Practice.

The Council also has a corporate complaints procedure which forms the basis of an escalation process to managers. Such cases are reviewed and any lessons learned are discussed with team members.

## 7.0 ACTION PLAN 2022/24

Task	Responsibility	Action	Success Criteria	Monitoring	Target
To meet the milestones set out in the FSA Recovery Roadmap and the expectations of the FSA	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team leaders to identify those food businesses that require to be inspected and to programme them in to meet the various milestones of the recovery roadmap;</li> <li>• All newly registered businesses triaged on receipt of registration and assigned either as low or high risk in terms of the nature of the business;</li> <li>• Inspectors to prioritise the inspection of high-risk new businesses;</li> <li>• Inspectors to regularly review the existing outstanding inspections allocated to them and prioritise the inspections in line with the recovery roadmap milestones;</li> <li>• Inspectors to regularly review the inspection programme for those businesses that have previously been inspected and now become due.</li> </ul>	<p>Milestone targets achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All establishments rated category B have received an intervention by end June 2022;</li> <li>• All establishments rated category C and less than broadly compliant have received an intervention by end September 2022;</li> <li>• All establishments rated category D and less than broadly compliant have received an intervention by end December 2022;</li> <li>• All establishments rated category C and broadly compliant or better have received an intervention by end March 2023;</li> <li>• All high risk new businesses to have</li> </ul>	Monthly review	<p>March 2023</p> <p>June 2022</p> <p>September 2022</p> <p>December 2022</p> <p>March 2023</p>



			received an intervention soon after having been triaged.		Ongoing
As part of the harmonisation of activities from legacy areas; review policies and procedures required by the FSA Food Law- Code of Practice and Guidance	EHM, TL, EH officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify <b>procedures</b> required by the FSA Food Law – Code of Practice in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of food businesses;</li> <li>• Food business database;</li> <li>• Food incidents and alerts</li> <li>• Authorisation;</li> <li>• Internal monitoring;</li> <li>• Corporate complaints;</li> <li>• Food complaints;</li> <li>• Sampling;</li> <li>• Official food controls and activities;</li> <li>• Enforcement;</li> <li>• Outbreaks and food related infectious diseases;</li> <li>• Information;</li> <li>• Registration of food businesses;</li> <li>• Conflict of interest.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Identify <b>policies</b> required by the FSA Food Law – Code of Practice in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampling;</li> <li>• Enforcement;</li> <li>• Complaints</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Project plan developed and implemented.</p> <p>More efficient, effective and streamlined service delivery.</p> <p>Procedures and policies reviewed in light of changes</p> <p>Existing services maintained to a high standard</p>	Monthly review against project plan.	March 2024

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify <b>programmes</b> and plans required by the FSA Food Law – Code of Practice in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contingencies;</li> <li>• Service plan;</li> <li>• Interventions;</li> <li>• Sampling;</li> <li>• Training;</li> <li>• Alternative Enforcement Strategy.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Devise a project plan over the next two-year period to review and harmonise the identified policies, procedures and programmes;</li> <li>• Implement the project plan;</li> <li>• As part of the implementation, identify where service delivery can be improved and streamlined.</li> </ul>			
Continue to participate in Primary Authority Partnership arrangements with local businesses for both food and health and safety	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively manage existing Primary Authority Partnerships</li> <li>• In discussion with the particular business, develop the Primary Authority Partnership in line with government guidance.</li> <li>• Participate in the Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards PA Schemes</li> </ul>	Continued management of existing partnerships  Successful development and smooth implementation of new Primary Authority Partnership.	Monitoring of food and health and safety complaints/enquiries and liaison with other local authorities	Ongoing
To review the delivery of skin piercing registration	EHM, TL, EH officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the legacy processes for the registration of skin piercing</li> </ul>	New procedures in place.	Monthly review	December 2022

<p>applications and adoption of model byelaws</p>		<p>businesses and operators;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review website information and consolidate within the new Buckinghamshire Council website, including online application forms and guidance;</li> <li>• Review application forms and certificates, amend as necessary and re-brand;</li> <li>• Harmonise application and registration process to provide most efficient means of processing and completing applications; provide training for staff on new procedure;</li> <li>• Amend back-office database systems as necessary;</li> <li>• Review fees and charges and take to Licensing Committee for approval;</li> <li>• Inform existing businesses and operators of changes to fees, procedure and model byelaws;</li> <li>• Review position of legacy authorities in relation to adoption of model byelaws, report to Licensing Committee and implement process for adoption;</li> </ul>	<p>Website updated and online application forms and payment available.          Back-office systems amended          New fees and charges agreed and implemented.          New consolidated byelaws adopted and publicised.</p>		
<p>To review the delivery of</p>	<p>EHM, TL, EH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the legacy processes for</li> </ul>	<p>New procedures in</p>	<p>Monthly review</p>	<p>August 2022</p>

Safety Advisory Group (SAG) notifications	officers, SAG members	<p>the notification of public events that require to be notified to the Safety Advisory Group;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review website information and consolidate within the new Buckinghamshire Council website, including online notification forms and guidance;</li> <li>• Harmonise notification process to provide most efficient means of processing; provide training for staff on new procedure;</li> <li>• Utilise MS Teams channels for the efficient dissemination of notifications and accompanying documentation to SAG members and maintain an events calendar that is accessible to relevant parties;</li> <li>• Amend back-office database systems as necessary;</li> <li>• Review the SAG meeting process to provide an efficient means of discussing events of concern.</li> </ul>	<p>place.</p> <p>Website updated and online notifications and guidance available.</p> <p>MS Teams channel created and populated with relevant information. SAG members given permissions and notified of new method of accessing information.</p> <p>SAG meetings effectively run.</p>		
To develop and enhance the authority's web pages in relation to food, health and safety, skin piercing and event safety	TL, EH Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ways in which the websites can be better used to provide information and guidance for businesses and to improve service delivery;</li> </ul>	Websites enhanced – improved and readily accessible guidance and information available for businesses.	<p>Quarterly review against project plan.</p> <p>Quarterly review of website information to ensure that information is</p>	December 2022

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ways in which the websites can supplement mobile/remote working to provide more efficient and effective work practices;</li> <li>• To review the content of the legacy websites and amend, remove or add new information as necessary in light of changes in legislation, government guidance and Council changes.</li> </ul>	<p>Officers able to use website to improve their interaction with businesses and to enhance remote working.</p> <p>The relevant sections of the websites are up to date, relevant and readily accessible.</p>	still current	
Undertake an awareness and enforcement campaign to address national or local health and safety priorities	EH Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In line with the HSE Strategy and guidance, identify and deliver an appropriate intervention project;</li> <li>• Work to include development of website information and targeted visits in collaboration with the HSE representative where appropriate.</li> </ul>	Identified project delivered according to the project plan. Businesses increasingly aware of the priority topic areas and implementing recommendations.	Review meeting at end of project period. Briefing note provided on successes and lessons learned for future projects.	March 2023
Undertake an awareness and enforcement campaign with Trading Standards Officers in relation to the provision of allergen information.	EH Officers, Trading Standards Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a joint working project, identify areas of work across the retail and catering sectors where additional business advice and guidance is required;</li> <li>• Undertake enforcement action against businesses who have shown blatant disregard for the law or pose a significant risk to health;</li> </ul>	Identified project delivered according to the project plan. Businesses increasingly aware of the requirements regarding the provision of allergen information and implementing recommendations.	Review meeting at end of project period. Briefing note provided on successes and lessons learned for future projects.	March 2024

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review website information and update as necessary</li></ul>			
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# Buckinghamshire Council

**Environmental Health  
Housing and Regulatory Services**

## **FOOD POLICY**

1.0	Aims and Objectives
2.0	Standards for food related work
3.0	Food Hygiene Interventions
4.0	Enforcement Policy
5.0	Policy with respect to Complaints
6.0	Policy with respect to Sampling
Appendix 1	Risk Rating Categories and Interventions
Appendix 2	Service Standards



## **BACKGROUND**

The Environmental Health Service has a key role in working with businesses and consumers to ensure that food and drink intended for sale for human consumption, which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed within the county, is without risk to the health or safety of the consumer.

The need for high standards of hygiene within food businesses remains paramount particularly to maintain public confidence and meet consumer expectations.

The Council's approach to the enforcement of food safety reflects the responsibilities placed upon them by the Food Safety Act 1990, Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, General Food Regulations 2004 (as amended), the Official Feed and Food Control (England) Regulations 2009 (as amended) and other regulations.

We aim to protect the public by delivering a complementary programme of education and enforcement which endeavours to ensure that food businesses within the county are operated and maintained at a standard that complies with relevant legislation. We also ensure that our service fulfils the statutory duty imposed on the Council as a "food authority" and to ensure the effective implementation of Government strategy on food safety issues.

Our enforcement policy reflects the Principles of Good Regulation set out in the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006, namely that regulatory activities should be carried out in a way which is transparent, accountable, proportionate and consistent; and that regulatory activities should be targeted only at cases in which action is needed. In drafting this policy, we have taken account of the Regulators' Code and the Council's overarching enforcement policy.

### **1.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **1.1 Aims**

It is the Council's aim for food safety to:

- support and assist businesses to achieve a greater than broadly compliant food hygiene rating i.e. a rating greater than 3 and therefore described as "Generally satisfactory";
- provide consistent, accurate and up-to-date information aimed at providing protection to customers, employees and visitors;
- support and assist businesses to comply with their legal obligations to ensure that food and workplaces are safe.

#### **1.2 Objectives**

The Council will achieve these aims in the following ways:

- ensuring that poor performing businesses are proportionately targeted with enforcement action;
- providing current and relevant information to businesses;
- ensuring officers are equipped with tools to effectively support businesses;
- supporting compliant businesses and organisations;
- positively engaging in the Primary Authority Partnership scheme;
- promoting the food hygiene rating scheme;
- exploring and implementing innovative opportunities and approaches to working with other regulatory stakeholders to improve businesses' experience.

### 1.3 Service Delivery

The service will be delivered through:

- i) routine programmed inspection of food businesses, at a frequency determined by a nationally recognised risk assessment, with appropriate follow-up action;
- ii) assessment of relevant food hygiene premises to determine their food hygiene score in terms of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and which will be published on the Food Standards Agency website;
- iii) routine self-assessment questionnaires to businesses assessed to be low risk;
- iv) investigation of complaints with appropriate follow-up action;
- v) investigation of incidents with appropriate follow-up action;
- vi) participation in national and local food sampling programmes;
- vii) appropriate training, development and monitoring of officers;
- viii) provision of information, coaching and advice to businesses about legal requirements and good practices;
- ix) provision of relevant food safety courses for food handlers and a chargeable advice service to businesses;
- x) promotional activities to inform and encourage high standards in businesses;
- xi) promotional activities to educate the consumer in food hygiene and safety.

### 1.4 Priorities

Priority will be given to targeting those activities that pose the greatest risk to the consumer arising from the consumption of food. This will be by:

- the correct and uniform identification of high-risk areas during programmed inspections and as a result of complaint and incident investigation and to concentrate efforts to reduce these risks;
- focusing enforcement efforts on those businesses who pose the greatest risks e.g. those that are not broadly compliant;
- identifying and taking enforcement action against persistent offenders or where risk is such that immediate action is required;
- encouraging compliance with the law and;
- engaging in those promotional activities for businesses and consumers, which are most likely to foster improved safety.

## **2.0 STANDARDS FOR FOOD RELATED WORK**

### **2.1 Authorisations**

The Council will set standards for the qualifications, experience and competence of its officers in line with the statutory guidance.

In the context of the Food Safety Act 1990 and Regulations, an authorised officer's powers include the inspection of food premises, the inspection, detention and seizure of food, the service of notices and taking emergency action. Officers will be authorised in accordance with the Food Standards Agency Food Safety Law Code of Practice.

The Buckinghamshire Council [Constitution](#), reviewed on 1 April 2020, delegates to the Corporate and Service Directors all executive and non-executive powers and duties relevant to their areas of responsibility. The Service Director has further delegated powers to the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards.

#### **2.1.1 Inspections**

The inspection of food premises will only be undertaken by officers who are suitably qualified, experienced and competent in accordance with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice pertinent to their duties. This will equally apply to those employed on a contract basis. Inspectors will be authorised in accordance with the authorisation procedure.

Newly appointed officers or currently employed officers who are extending their duties will not be authorised unless they are qualified as above, that they possess the appropriate competencies, skills, qualifications and experience to undertake their duties and that they have undergone a period of structured training in accordance with the Code of Practice. The assessment of competency etc. will be undertaken by their Team Leader in consultation with the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial).

#### **2.1.2 Enforcement Notices**

Service of Hygiene Improvement Notices will only be undertaken by qualified officers with experience in food law enforcement, in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice and after consultation with their Team Leader or Environmental Health Manager (Commercial).

The service of notices by hand will be by any person who is capable of explaining the meaning and legal status of the notice. Notices served by other methods will be in accordance with current legal guidance.

Officers will be authorised to serve Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices in accordance with the standards within the policy and Food Standards Agency Food Safety Law Code of Practice. Where practicable, he/she will be accompanied by another officer to corroborate the proceedings and will consult with their Team Leader or Environmental Health Manager (Commercial).

#### **2.1.3 Seizure and Detention of Food**

Officers will be authorised to inspect, detain and seize foodstuffs subject to experience and competence.

All officers will be assessed for the necessary practical skills, experience and competency by the relevant Team Leader. Non-authorized officers may assist under the guidance of appropriately competent officers.

#### **2.1.4 Competency**

The Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) and Team Leaders have been given specific responsibility for food hygiene and food safety matters and managing the food safety service. This will be in accordance with the documented food safety monitoring procedure.

Officers will carry out inspections and exercise their powers in accordance with the relevant legislation, Food Law Code of Practice and within the restrictions of their authorisation.

The Team Leaders (or in their absence, the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial)) will be responsible for the supervision and training of officers and for the maintenance of auditable records. The FSA Competency Framework will be used to establish current qualifications and competencies and to identify future training needs in order that officers can effectively carry out their duties.

Recommendations will be made by the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial), to the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards in respect of the powers to be given to officers and the category of premises to be inspected.

A list of the officers, their powers and the category of premises which the officer may inspect, will be maintained and regularly updated. Records of training will also be kept.

Other officers may be appointed to assist in carrying out inspections.

## **2.2 Guidance**

The authority will have regard to the Food Law Code of Practice and Guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency, other advice issued by the Government, advice issued by the Office of Product Safety and Standards, information and guidance issued by a Primary Authority and any approved Industry Guides.

## **2.3 Approvals**

Some specific food premises are required to be formally approved by the local authority. They are then given an approval number that specifically relates to their premises and products and can then use the appropriate identification mark.

The Head of Environmental Health, in consultation with the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial), has the authority to issue or revoke such approvals.

## **2.4 Uniformity**

The Authority acknowledges the need to act in a consistent and uniform manner and advocates a common-sense approach to the selection of enforcement action and activities.

The following areas are all considered important in achieving uniformity. These are detailed in an inspection monitoring procedure:

- i) the awareness, adherence to and review of the food policy document and further development of office procedures;
- ii) training, qualifications supervision of staff. Regular practical training and update sessions will be essential to ensure uniformity;
- iii) cross monitoring visits of staff;
- iv) use of the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme, specified by the Office of Product Safety and Standards;
- v) liaison with local food groups/adjoining authorities. Use of joint training initiatives. Co-operation and joint working on uniformity issues;
- vi) compliance with the Code of Practice and guidance.

## **2.5 Advice to Businesses**

The Authority is committed to ensuring that food businesses are aware of their legal obligations and to supporting businesses in achieving best practice by providing coaching, training and appropriate advice.

In responding to requests, the advice given should support compliance and be reliable. When appropriate, the information on the Council's website will be reviewed in light of changes in legislation and government guidance. Requests for advice should not necessarily trigger enforcement action but should be a means to forge positive relationships with businesses.

Where opportunities arise to provide advice and guidance to businesses over and above that required to ensure legal compliance, then a charge may be made. A charge will also be made for re-inspections to review a business' food hygiene rating.

Where, during a charged advisory service or during a primary authority audit significant risks are identified which pose a serious and imminent risk to health, these will be brought to the attention of the business for immediate action to rectify. Officers will be expected to ensure that action is taken by the business and if not, appropriate enforcement action will be taken. Steps will be taken to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between officers providing the advice and those undertaking enforcement work.

Where advice is to be provided by another department, e.g. Trading Standards, then the business will be appropriately signposted. In relation to allergens in food, officers will provide advice in respect to non-pre packed food and other requests for guidance and information will be referred to Trading Standards. Officers will not make direct referrals.

In particular:

- i) businesses will be encouraged to acquire food hygiene training where this is appropriate to the business. To assist in this, online Level 2 Food Hygiene courses will be made available charged on a cost recovery basis. At all times it will be made clear that there is no legal requirement to attend the course run by the Council;
- ii) the Council's website will provide the relevant signposting to government

websites to assist businesses with the interpretation of legislation or good practice. The Council also provides services for ethnic minority groups through 'Language Line' translation services. Where the Council does not provide the service themselves, information will be given to businesses about other providers;

- iii) a chargeable advice service may be available to new and existing food businesses to support them in achieving high standards of safety and compliance;
- iv) businesses will be supported and encouraged to participate in the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme where applicable;
- v) coaching and mentoring visits may be made to businesses in order to raise standards of hygiene by focussing on issues identified during primary inspections. Appropriate toolkits will be used to assist effective delivery of information;
- vi) where there is sufficient demand and resources allow, occasional talks will be given to businesses. Charges to cover costs may be made.

## **2.6 Advice to Consumers**

The authority is committed to assisting consumers to understand basic hygiene in the home and to providing consumer confidence in local food businesses. The Council's website will provide access to advice and information on food safety issues and will be reviewed periodically. The authority may participate in national food safety activities and local events and will promote the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Talks to voluntary organisations and groups will be given where resources permit.

## **2.7 Conduct**

Inspecting officers will at all times act and dress in a professional manner. Protective clothing will be worn that is appropriate to the premises being inspected and equipment will be maintained and calibrated where appropriate. The Council will provide the necessary personal protective equipment and tools to enable officers to carry out their roles effectively.

Officers will ensure the highest standards of personal hygiene and will not act in such a way as to pose a risk of cross contamination or to health.

## **2.8 Information Sharing**

Where the legislation permits, the authority will share information via agreed secure mechanisms with other regulatory agencies, internal departments and local authorities about businesses to help target resources and activities and to minimise duplication in relation to, for example, concerns of fraud, immigration and staff welfare, illicit products and trading and food crime.

The authority will share information about businesses with the primary authority as appropriate and with other authorities when acting as a Primary Authority. Where third

parties request copies of inspection reports, these will be provided in a redacted format through the Freedom of Information process.

Officers will co-operate with any requests for assistance and/or information from the Food Standards Agency or other enforcement bodies or local authorities. Information on businesses trading within the Buckinghamshire Council area will be shared with enforcement agencies and internal departments.

Information will be shared with the Food Standards Agency to ensure that official controls are conducted at premises that are enforced by them.

Data is held on our respective legacy data management systems and will be uploaded to the Food Standards Agency for the purposes of annual statutory returns and FHRS. The databases are under review and will be combined into a single data source in the coming years.

### **3.0 FOOD HYGIENE INTERVENTIONS**

#### **3.1 Premises**

An up to date record will be kept and maintained on a computer database of all known food premises, together with the food register required by law. All known food businesses will be assessed for the need to be included on the planned programme of inspection based on information obtained from the food business operator or following inspection.

Newly registered food businesses will undergo an initial triage to determine the potential risk they pose. Newly registered high risk food businesses will be inspected within 28 days, where possible, following receipt of the application for registration. Any longer period should take account of the nature of the business and prior knowledge of the level of managerial competence.

#### **3.2 Frequency and type of inspections**

The Food Law Code of Practice, to which officers legally must have regard when inspecting food businesses, allows authorised officers and food authorities to use a range of interventions, using strategy and officers' professional judgement to determine the most suitable level of intervention, proportionate to the activities of the food business. The range and scope of interventions is detailed in *Appendix 1*. In determining the inspection approach, officers will take into account the compliance record of the business and any other earned recognition and third party verification in place. Officers have been given training and regular reviews are in place to ensure consistency in this approach. Officers will participate in the FSA's consistency exercises. Interventions are defined as activities that are designed to monitor, support and increase food law compliance within a food establishment. More intensive regulation will be directed at those food businesses that pose the greatest risk.

Resources will be targeted at those businesses posing the greatest food safety risk. Premises that are engaged in low risk activities, e.g. those only serving teas and biscuits, are deemed to pose a non-inspectable food risk and will not be subject to official food controls or be part of the intervention programme.

Systems will be maintained to monitor inspection frequency against the planned programme. All visits will be recorded on the computer-based system and documents scanned to the corporate Electronic Document Management System.

### **3.3 Inspection Procedure**

#### **3.3.1 Approach**

The authority will work to the standards in the Food Law Code of Practice and Guidance and the internal inspections procedure documents.

The main purpose of inspection is to identify potential risks to food safety or which are likely to give rise to food poisoning and to ensure that the business understands the risks and has put the necessary measures in place to minimise them. When undertaking an intervention, officers will pay particular emphasis to documented management systems. However, it is recognised that the seven Hazard Analysis, Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles are a model towards compliance and that the legislative requirement can be achieved by other simplified, effective equivalent means.

A systematic approach to risk assessment will be adopted based on The Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013. Where businesses have identified their own critical points for food safety and have introduced controls, the intervention will focus on the accuracy of the critical points assessment and on the effectiveness of the controls. Written assessments will normally be expected in high risk or complex businesses. Low risk or simple businesses will not be expected to have written or elaborate assessments although the use of Safer Food, Better Business will be promoted where appropriate.

Where no assessment by the business can be demonstrated the inspection will focus on the officer's own critical points assessment and examination of controls. In accordance with government advice on enforcement, formal action will be considered where an informal approach has been unsuccessful in achieving compliance with the food safety management requirements.

The whole of a premises may not necessarily be inspected at each inspection; those areas of greatest risk will be given priority. Where the inspection varies from government guidance or departmental procedures, this will be recorded.

Computer records will be updated following every visit.

In relation to enforcement of allergen information (Food Information Regulations 2014, as amended), officers will check for compliance when undertaking programmed official food controls and issue advice and guidance where there is non-compliance. Where the issue of concern relates to measures enforced by Trading Standards, then this will be referred accordingly. Officers may seek formal compliance by taking enforcement where regulatory action for other food safety matters is being carried out.

#### **3.3.2 Communication**

Every intervention (including those where no defects are identified) will result in a written report to the food business operator. Copies of the report will be sent to the Manager or



other relevant persons. The report will comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice and advice will be in line with guidance and relevant Industry Guides to Good Hygiene Practice.

A standard format will be used. The report will cover the important issues noted during the inspection and will clearly distinguish between legal requirements and recommendations. It will give details of the person carrying out the inspection, date, time, the areas inspected, the FHRS rating where possible and the procedure if the food business operator disagrees with the issues raised in the report.

Good communication between inspector and proprietor/manager is essential wherever possible, including ensuring that the purpose and scope of an inspection is understood and the "works" needed following the inspection with an agreed time limit. The impact of the advice should be considered so that it does not impose unnecessary burdens upon businesses.

### 3.3.3 Timing of Inspections

Programmed inspections will be carried out at all reasonable hours. It is recognised that food businesses operate outside normal office hours of work and so the inspection programme will take this into account. Food businesses operating outside of 'normal' office hours will, on occasions, be inspected at times when different activities occur to that in the day time.

Programmed inspections will normally be unannounced with the following exceptions:

- i) where officers are unlikely to gain access without notifying the proprietor e.g. sports clubs, small home caterers, church halls etc.;
- ii) where security measures are in existence;
- iii) if full information is not able to be gained at the unannounced visit, an appointment may then be made to discuss the issues further, e.g. specific HACCP documentation, advice from a technical manager at a large manufacturer.

Notice will not be given where serious complaints are being investigated.

Revisit dates may be notified in advance as an aid to ensuring that works are completed and to facilitate further discussions with the food business operator.

Where alternative dates for visits are requested by a business the inspector may agree, if suitable justification is given, and the inspector is satisfied that the purpose behind the request is not to conceal a major risk. However, this is at the officer's discretion.

### 3.3.4 Revisits

Revisit inspections will be arranged to check on matters raised during an inspection (and any obvious extra defects) where there are *significant* contraventions and/or serious risks to public health, to check on compliance with statutory notices and where subject to a Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice or Order, to check that the business remains closed or a process continues to be stopped. They will not turn into a further full inspection except where a major risk is identified. Where significant breaches of hygiene regulations have been identified, the revisit should whenever practicable be undertaken by the same officer

who undertook the initial visit. After initial inspections, businesses must be made aware that a revisit will be made and appropriate dates discussed.

Revisits will not always result in a written report (unless further work is required) to the proprietor/manager although the proprietor/manager will always be advised of the outcome verbally, and in writing if requested. However, detailed records of revisits will be made and kept on the computer property database. Records will be maintained of correspondence and formal notices which have been complied with.

If at a subsequent intervention or revisit, no progress has been made to achieve compliance or standards within the business have not improved, then more formal action will be considered in line with this policy.

For premises with a FHRS score of 0, 1, or 2, a phased revisit process may be implemented. This could apply to those businesses who have contraventions that are likely to affect the safety of the food being served, producing an 'unsafe contravention'. Where appropriate, enforcement action will be taken in accordance with the Enforcement Policy. The officer, using their knowledge of the business and food business operator may decide upon the best approach to establishing compliance and improved hygiene standards. This may involve a coaching session in the areas that the business has scored poorly on for which a range of tools have been developed. The business may then, if necessary, be given time to implement the changes before another revisit is made. Dependant upon the nature of the outstanding requirements, and the past history of the food business operator, the 2<sup>nd</sup> revisit, may be able to be achieved over the phone or the submission of documentation or photographs. Should businesses fail to maintain their compliance during subsequent inspections, then enforcement action will be taken in accordance with the Enforcement Policy.

Where a re-inspection under the FHRS is requested, this will be in writing and supplemented with supporting evidence in order to establish whether adequate measures have been put in place to warrant a re-inspection and the fee paid. Re-inspections will generally be un-announced and will take place within 3 months of the request for re-inspection and the business re-rated according to the hygiene standards found at the time. Distinction will be made between those *re-visits* necessary to ensure compliance and to address food safety issues and those *re-inspections* at the request of the Food Business Operator to re-rate the business under the FHRS.

#### **4.0 ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

This section sets out the policy relating to the general principles of enforcement of food safety legislation and is drafted in accordance with the overarching Corporate Enforcement Policy. It embraces the principles set out in the 'Regulators' Code' issued by the Office for Product Safety and Standards.

More specific procedures concerned with statutory notices, emergency action, formal cautions and prosecutions are detailed in enforcement procedures. These procedures take account of all Codes of Practice and 'The Code for Crown Prosecutors'

Enforcement officers by necessity as professional officers have considerable discretion in decision making and initiating enforcement action. Such action can range from informal advice, information and support through to formal enforcement mechanisms, including the

use of statutory notices and prosecution.

This part applies to all dealings, formal and informal, between officers and businesses, all of which contribute to securing compliance with the law. It will provide policy standards, aid professional judgements and decision making and ensure both consistent and effective enforcement.

#### 4.1 Principles of Enforcement

The core expectation for those we deal with, quite reasonably, is for us to be professional, fair, co-operative and consistent in our approaches. Businesses and the public also expect local authority actions to result in the remedying of potentially risky situations and for those guilty of serious offences to be adequately punished.

We will adopt a positive and proactive approach towards ensuring compliance by:

- i) helping and encouraging businesses to understand and meet regulatory requirements more easily without imposing unnecessary additional cost;
- ii) assessing whether other social, environmental and economic outcomes can be achieved by less burdensome measures, and
- iii) responding proportionately to regulatory breaches.

Enforcement should be informed by the principles of **proportionality** in applying the law and securing compliance; **consistency** of approach; **targeting** of enforcement action, **openness** about how we operate and what businesses may expect and **helpfulness** in providing advice and assisting with compliance.

*Appendix 2* sets out the standards of service businesses should expect to receive.

It will be expected that enforcement officers, when making decisions and communicating with businesses, will follow these principles, together with relevant codes of practice and guidance. The Primary Authority partnership scheme will be used and adhered to where appropriate.

Any departure from this must only occur when the following criteria are complied with:

- i) in exceptional circumstances;
- ii) where actions are capable of justification;
- iii) where there has been full consultation with the Team Leader or Environmental Health Manager (Commercial).

Any sanctions or penalties being considered should:

- aim to change the behaviour of the offender;
- aim to eliminate any financial gain or benefit from non-compliance;
- be responsive and appropriate for the particular offender and regulatory issue
- be proportionate to the nature of the offence and the harm caused;
- aim to restore the harm caused by regulatory non-compliance, where appropriate;
- and
- aim to deter future non-compliance

This policy will be reviewed periodically in response to new legislation and guidance issued by central government departments.

#### 4.1.1 **Proportionality**

All enforcement actions and advice must be proportional to the risks posed to the public and the seriousness of any breach of legislation.

When considering enforcement action, consideration should be given to the cost of measures required to reduce the risk weighed against the benefit to be gained by reducing the risk. Consideration should be given as to the impact upon small businesses.

In addition, there should be a staged approach to enforcement action with increasing degrees of enforcement as management of businesses fail to respond to previous requests. Officers should provide an opportunity for dialogue in relation to the advice, requirements and decisions.

The only exceptions to the above approach would be where a serious and/or imminent risk to public safety or health exists in which case, immediate action will be taken to rectify the issue in question.

The staged approach to enforcement is further detailed in the enforcement procedures.

#### 4.1.2 **Consistency**

Consistency of approach does not mean uniformity. It means taking a similar approach in similar circumstances to achieve similar ends.

Businesses expect consistency from enforcing authorities in advice given, the use of statutory notices, decisions on prosecution and responses to complaints. It is recognised however, that in practice it is not simply due to the wide range of variables faced. Therefore, it is expected that officers will use their professional judgement and exercise discretion, in conjunction with this policy, when coming to a decision on appropriate action.

Enforcement officers will however have the following arrangements in place in order to promote consistency of approach:

- i) Officers will perform validation exercises relating to joint inspections by team leaders;
- ii) Team leaders will accompany all officers on a minimum of one initial inspection per year to assess the consistency of approach between officers;
- iii) Officers openly discuss cases at team meetings and/or with Team Leaders to provide a consensus of opinion;
- iv) Formal action will be 'signed off' by the Team leaders and where prosecution is being considered, by the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) and Head of Environmental Health;
- v) correspondence and file records will be checked and monitored on a regular basis;
- vi) Where there is a need for clarification, approaches will be made to other regulators, e.g. the Berks and Oxon Food Liaison Group;
- vii) Officers will participate in inter-authority consistency exercises and the FSA

- consistency exercises and change working practices, if necessary, to achieve consistency;
- viii) Buckinghamshire Council will take an active role in the Berks and Oxon Food Liaison Group;
- ix) Reference will be made to appropriate central government guidance;
- x) Reference will be made to appropriate guidance issued by a Primary Authority;
- xi) Where inconsistencies arise, appropriate training and supervision will be given.

#### **4.1.3 Targeting**

Inspections and enforcement action will be targeted primarily at those activities giving rise to the most serious risks or where hazards are least controlled and that action is focussed on those responsible for the risk and who are best placed to control it.

The prioritisation of inspections will be based on guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency, primarily the Code of Practice and the Regulators' Code.

#### **4.1.4 Openness**

Enforcement officers will help businesses to understand what is expected of them (and what would not be expected) and what they should expect from the enforcing authority.

Confirmation of all work (initial inspections, revisits and complaints) will be given in writing to business managers and as appropriate to head offices. Information will clearly explain what the non-compliant item or activity is, the advice being given, actions required or decisions taken and the reasons for these.

There will be a clear distinction between legal requirements and good practice recommendations (either verbally or written).

Where notices have been served and are on a Public Register, this will be available for viewing free of charge.

If formal requests for information are received from a third party, they will be handled in line with requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

Businesses will be made aware of the Corporate Complaints Procedure when appropriate and the appeals procedure to the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) in the first instance. This is to be included in correspondence to businesses following inspections.

#### **4.1.5 Helpfulness**

The principle is to actively work with businesses to advise on and assist with compliance wherever possible. To this end, officers will identify themselves by name and provide a contact point and telephone number for further dealings. Businesses will be encouraged to seek advice/information; information will be freely available on the Council's website with links to those produced by central government. When appropriate and resources permit, training courses/seminars will be provided for businesses on specific issues.

## **4.2 Procedures Based on HACCP Principles**

Article 5 of EC Regulation 852/2004 is flexible and requires food businesses to establish procedures that control food safety hazards and integrate these with documentation and record keeping appropriate to the size and nature of the business. Whilst larger, more complex businesses and those with a high level of understanding of food safety management may choose to demonstrate compliance by having a traditional HACCP system, others may do so with simpler approaches that take account of this flexibility as long as the same outcome is achieved; safe food being produced.

### **4.2.1 Appropriateness of the Food Safety Management System (FSMS)**

Although the Food Standards Agency has produced the Safer Food, Better Business (SFBB) packs to help a variety of businesses within the food industry e.g. catering, retail and childminders, it is recognised that it does have limitations and may not be the most appropriate FSMS to use. Therefore, if inspectors identify that the scope of the food operation exceeds that of the SFBB toolkit, then the food business will be required to produce a fully documented food safety management system in accordance with HACCP principles.

In certain circumstances, in particular in food businesses where there is no preparation, manufacturing or processing of food, it may be the case that the relevant hazards can be controlled through the implementation of prerequisite requirements. For example, where a business is especially low risk, e.g. sweet shop, greengrocer, market stalls etc. presenting only basic hygiene hazards, it may be sufficient that the business uses the industry guide, understands and applies it. In these circumstances, documentation and record keeping may not be necessary.

### **4.2.2 Enforcement**

When the Food Standards Agency introduced the Safer Food, Better Business toolkits, local authorities were funded to deliver coaching to food businesses. Therefore, unless a new business, all established food businesses have been given a great deal of advice and guidance to meet their legal obligations.

This policy will secure compliance with Article 5 of EC Regulation 852/2004 through a staged approach where appropriate but otherwise, where non-compliance is established, appropriate enforcement action will be taken. This will normally take the form of Hygiene Improvement Notices but where significant risks exist, more immediate action will be taken.

Where there is a partly developed system, and controls are in place and there are no significant risks to health, a more informal approach may be more appropriate.

Some of the HACCP principles are on-going, for example monitoring, so notices cannot be served. It is therefore likely that notices may only be served for the implementation or review of a documented FSMS.

### **4.2.3 New Premises**

From time to time new businesses will be established and existing premises will change ownership. The following options should be considered:

- i. New owners should be made aware of their responsibilities in respect of Article 5 (if possible before the premises are open for business);
- ii. Establish at the initial inspection that the business does not present a significant risk to public health. This inspection should be performed at the earliest opportunity following the local authority being notified;
- iii. Provided that no significant risk to public health exists, agree with the proprietor a programme of compliance with Article 5;
- iv. Where a significant risk to public health exists, action is to be taken in line with the general enforcement policy.

### **4.3 Prosecution**

If the formal enforcement action being considered is prosecution, we will also consider a number of additional factors in line with the Code for Crown Prosecutors and any other nationally recognised guidance. These factors may include the following:

- The seriousness of the alleged offence;
- The history of the party or business concerned;
- The willingness of the business or the individual to prevent a recurrence of the problem and co-operate with officers;
- Whether it is in the public interest to prosecute;
- Whether any other action (including other means of formal enforcement action) would be more appropriate or effective

These factors are not exhaustive and are not listed in order of significance. The rating of the various factors will vary with each situation under consideration.

Where a prosecution is not considered to be in the public interest, a simple caution may be administered.

## **5.0 POLICY WITH RESPECT TO COMPLAINTS**

### **5.1 Background**

Complaints in respect of food either relate to:

- i) hygiene issues and hence involve local businesses;
- ii) complaints relating to the actual food itself, either appearance, taste, contamination, (whether physical, chemical or allergenic where an imminent risk to health), or microbiological quality;

The purpose of investigating such complaints is:

- i) to identify possible causes for and to resolve any problems which pose a risk to public health;
- ii) to substantiate complaints and to provide a service to the public;
- iii) to provide information to the food industry in order to raise and maintain standards;
- iv) to perform a duty of enforcement and;

- v) to prevent further complaints.

## **5.2 Food Hygiene**

These types of complaint generally involve a local business, either relating to the standard of hygiene seen/experienced or a complaint following illness.

Complaints that relate to issues that may pose a risk to health are considered of utmost importance and therefore require an immediate response upon notification in order to investigate as thoroughly as possible and to ensure that food continues to be prepared safely. In cases involving issues that do not pose a risk to health, these will be investigated within the departmental response time target.

In determining whether a complaint warrants an immediate response, officers are to consider whether this is an isolated incident or more widespread, whether the complainant has provided a specimen in order to isolate a causative organism, if a complainant reports illness and therefore whether sampling of food would be of benefit, the time period between eating allegedly contaminated food and onset of symptoms and hence the likelihood of the symptoms being caused by food pathogens and the time taken between becoming ill and notifying the local authority. Also, where an official control intervention has recently been undertaken and the officer has indicated high confidence in management, there may not be a need to carry out a further inspection. However, this would be for the investigating officer to judge whether this is necessary or not.

Officers will conduct their investigations and visits in accordance with previously detailed policies and guidance. Where appropriate, samples will be taken in accordance with the Sampling Policy.

## **5.3 Food Complaints**

These types of complaint relate to food that has been purchased or eaten within the county and does not meet certain health standards. This could include issues such as mould growth, physical contamination or chemical contamination posing an imminent risk to health. Where the complaint is concerned with composition, adulteration, chemical contamination where no imminent risk to health or misleading claims (labelling), the complaint will be referred to the Trading Standards Service. Likewise, where the complaint originated outside Buckinghamshire, the complaint shall be referred to the relevant local authority.

In relation to complaints associated with allergens, officers will investigate complaints where there has been an alleged reaction by a member of the public. All other complaints relating to labelling and provision of information to consumers will be referred to Trading Standards.

All investigations shall be performed in accordance with the FSA Code of Practice and Practice Guidance and the 'Primary Authority Scheme' shall prevail throughout the investigation.

Enforcement action will be in accordance with the Enforcement Policy.

## **5.4 Food Alerts**



The Food Standards Agency operates a system to alert the public and local authorities of serious problems concerning food that does not meet food safety requirements, food that is inadequately labelled or food that may be allergenic. Where a problem has occurred, food is normally withdrawn on a voluntary basis. However, in some cases the withdrawal of food involves the food companies working with central and local Government.

When a Food Alert is issued, local authorities are informed of the action that they should take at a local level e.g. local publicity, contact with local food businesses or just to be aware of potential problems during visits to businesses.

Officers will carry out actions as specified in the Food Alert as instructed and in the most appropriate, expeditious and cost effective manner possible to safeguard public health. Action will be taken in accordance with guidance issued by central government.

If, following complaints, a Food Alert needs to be issued by Buckinghamshire Council, the guidance in the Code of Practice will be followed.

When necessary, the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control and/or Public Analyst will be consulted and advice sought as to the public health significance of particular issues.

## **6.0 POLICY WITH RESPECT TO SAMPLING**

It is recognised that food sampling provides a valuable contribution to the protection of the public and the food law enforcement functions of the authority and that the food and water sampling programme is a valuable tool to assist in determining food safety standards.

### **6.1 Objectives**

The following are the key objectives for sampling recognised by the authority:

- To protect the consumer through the enforcement of food legislation;
- To obtain recognised and usable microbiological standards for foods, via a nationally co-ordinated sampling programme;
- To assist in the assessment of food safety and to help in the evaluation of hazard analysis (or HACCP) management systems;
- To check that food complies with statutory microbiological standards, where available;
- To assess the microbiological quality of food manufactured, distributed or retailed in the authority's area;
- To verify that the control measures operated by the business are effective and ensure the food safety of their products;
- To identify specific foodstuffs that could pose a hazard to the consumer because they may contain significant levels of pathogenic bacteria;
- To facilitate the issue of an export certificate.

When sampling, officers will have regard to the Food Law Code of Practice and comply with additional guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency. Officers will also undertake

appropriate training in sampling techniques.

## 6.2 Co-ordination

It is recognised that good co-operation and co-ordination at a national and local level is necessary to achieve some objectives and therefore the authorities are committed to:

- i) participating in and co-operating with the Food Standards Agency's national sampling schemes;
- ii) participating in and co-operating with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) national schemes.
- iii) co-ordinating with adjoining local authorities and local UKHSA to agree locally co-ordinated sampling.
- iv) undertaking final product and critical control point monitoring as part of the authority's own primary authority responsibilities and to avoid duplication with other Port Health or Primary Authorities;
- v) assisting businesses when sampling by the local authority is required in relation to the health certification of products for export.

## 6.3 Sampling Programme

An annual sampling programme will be drawn up based on the objectives above to cover:

- UKHSA and FSA co-ordinated sampling
- locally co-ordinated sampling including locally manufactured products and approved premises
- identified high risk businesses
- poor performing businesses
- lower risk businesses as part of an alternative intervention strategy

The sampling programme will take account of the number, type and risk ratings of food businesses within the Buckinghamshire area, the authority's own Primary Authority responsibilities and the need to ensure that the provisions of food law are adequately enforced.

Adequate resources will be available to fulfil the annual sampling programme. However, in the event of food poisoning outbreaks and other emergency incidences, additional resources will be made available as necessary.

When deciding to sample, the following should be considered:

- i) Whether further processing of the food will reduce or eliminate micro-organisms prior to consumption;
- ii) The role played by hazard analysis or HACCP in the production of safe food;
- iii) The statistical confidence in the sampling technique.

All businesses will be notified at the time of sampling of the purpose of taking the sample and will be sent the results. In circumstances where results are unsatisfactory, businesses will be notified of the result and given advice and guidance to remedy the specific problem. Officers will follow up unsatisfactory results with visits and further sampling where necessary.

As part of informal monitoring, the company concerned generally will volunteer the sample to the sampling officer. However, if the company requests payment or the quantity or frequency of sampling is likely to give rise to significant financial consequences for the owner of the food, then the food may be purchased.

If enforcement action is anticipated under Section 14 of the Food Safety Act following microbiological examination, the sampling officer should purchase the sample. Otherwise, in other circumstances, powers under the Food Safety Act 1990 will be used. Enforcement action will be in accordance with the Enforcement Policy. In relation to nationally coordinated sampling programmes, the protocol concerning obtaining the sample will be followed.

#### **6.4 Water**

All private water supplies will be monitored and risk assessed in accordance with the Private Water Supplies Regulations. This is carried out by the Strategic Environment Team who will work closely with Commercial Team officers where food businesses are supplied by a private water supply or distribution network.

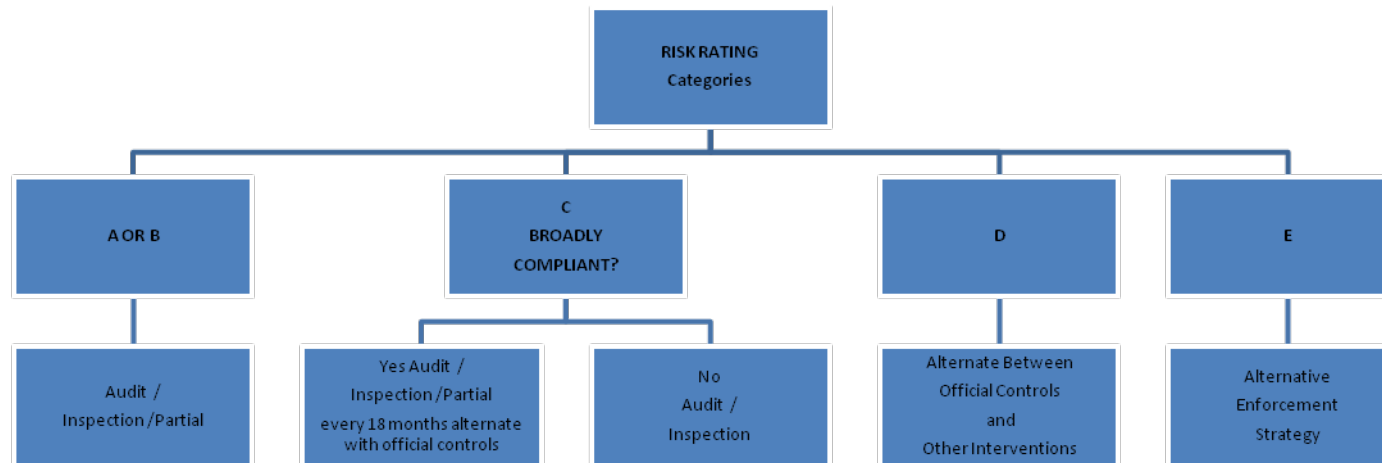
#### **6.5 Suspect Food Poisoning**

Where a food poisoning outbreak is suspected, faecal specimens will be taken together with any remaining foodstuffs, as a matter of priority and as directed by UKHSA or the Incident/Outbreak Control Team (if one has been convened).

Individual cases of suspect food poisoning will be referred initially to their General Practitioner unless officers feel other action is merited or requested by UKHSA. Foodstuffs will be sampled where evidence supports this action but this will not normally be the case where there is little or no causative link with a food business.

## APPENDIX 1 - RISK RATING CATEGORIES AND INTERVENTIONS

Note information within this appendix relates to terminology and practices outlined in Food Standard Agency's Code of Practice and Practice Guidance



NB. A broadly compliant premises is one which has a risk rating score of not more than 10 points under each of the following three parts of Annex A i.e. level of compliance relating to hygiene, structure and confidence in management. The types of intervention allowed will therefore vary depending upon the category. The following explains the types of interventions allowed for each category.

### **1a. Types of intervention for Category A, B & C which are not Broadly Compliant**

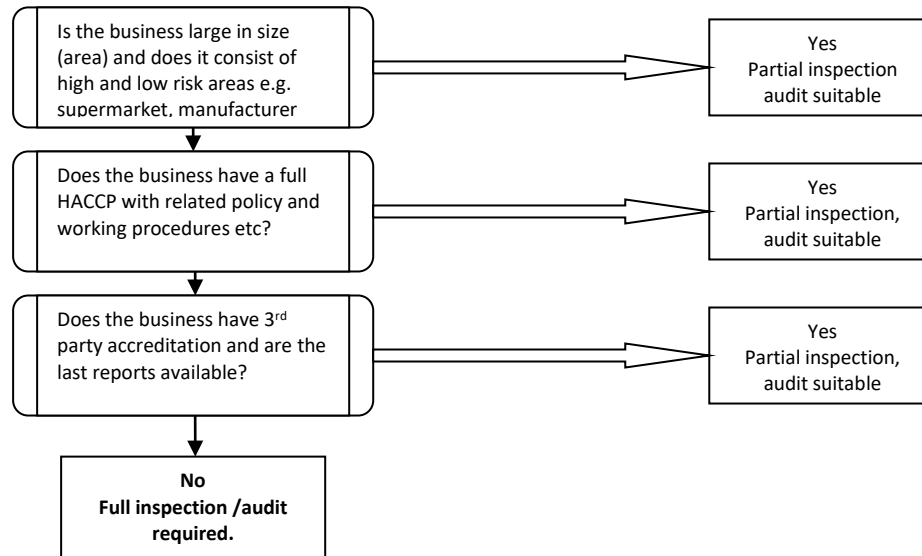
For Categories A and B, and those category C premises that are not broadly compliant, these are considered to be the high risk premises, and therefore most of our focus will be targeted to these premises. The appropriate planned intervention should be:

- an inspection
- a partial inspection; or
- an audit

Other interventions such as sampling, or education and training can also take place alongside the above interventions. Sampling of a high risk premises is encouraged where poor practices are identified, or where they do not have confidence in the method of production of a particular foodstuff.

To decide whether to conduct an Inspection, Partial Inspection or Audit the following flow chart will be considered.

**For Category A & B and Broadly Compliant C, Choosing Full or Partial inspections**



**1b. Types of intervention for Category A & B which are not Broadly Compliant and have persistent non compliance**

At the start of each financial year the Team Leaders will assess those premises within those categories that have **persistent** non compliance i.e. those food businesses that have been rated at Category A or B and that have not been broadly compliant on more than two occasions. Each persistent non-compliant business will be allocated to an officer and will be inspected on the due date. Case reviews of these premises will be carried out between the inspecting officer and their Team Leader.

### **1c Food Hygiene Inspections Full and Partial**

During partial or other inspections the following information as a minimum will still be ascertained:

- Confirmation of the operations carried out;
- Confirmation of the products produced;
- An assessment of the effectiveness of the critical control points;
- The examination of the CCP records.

Partial areas officers can choose to cover; drainage, personal hygiene, sickness policies, ventilation, pest control records, detailed water plans, waste contracts, detailed cleaning schedules etc.

### **2. Types of Intervention for Premises that are Category C and Broadly Compliant**

For Category C Premises that are broadly compliant; on an 18-month alternative basis, official control interventions, other than inspections, can be used for example;

- Sampling visit
- Surveillance / alternative enforcement visit
- Monitoring and Verifications visits – risk based visit, focus on most critical points;
- Cleaning
- Temperature Control (chilling, cooking, hot holding, cold displays)
- Cross contamination etc

### **3. Types of Interventions for Category D Premises**

These are premises that are considered to be lower risk and therefore interventions can alternate on a 2 year alternating basis between official control interventions and non-official control interventions such as;

- Sampling visit (sampling visits will not currently be used with this type of premises unless high risk contraventions are found.)
- Surveillance / Alternative Enforcement Visit
- Monitoring and Verifications visits – risk based visit, focus on most critical points;
- Cleaning

- Temperature Control (chilling, cooking, hot holding, cold displays)
- Cross contamination etc
- Coaching Visit
- Advice, Education, Information,

However, where a business has scored 30 or 40 for 'type of food and method of handling' the official control must be an inspection, partial inspection or audit.

#### **4. Types of interventions for Category E Premises– Alternative Enforcement Visits**

Alternative food hygiene inspections are carried out in 'low risk' establishments. These are establishments which score less than 31 points overall as dictated by the Food Law Code of Practice – Food Hygiene Inspection Rating Scheme. Category E food businesses form part of the inspection programme and are monitored accordingly. The approach will be through the use of self-assessment questionnaires which are completed and returned by the food business operator and assessed by authorised officers who would also determine any necessary follow up action.

The use of an alternative enforcement strategy does not preclude the use of an official control intervention when considered necessary or appropriate and would not be used for those businesses that are approved under Regulation 853/2004.

#### **Summary of Interventions relating to risk category**

<b>Premises Category</b>	<b>Interventions that can be undertaken</b>
A	Inspection, Audit (Full or Partial)
B	Inspection, Audit (Full or Partial)
C (not broadly compliant)	Inspection, Audit (Full or Partial)
C (broadly compliant)	Inspection, Audit (Full or Partial) alternating (18 monthly) with Monitoring, Surveillance or Verification, Sampling
D	Inspection, Audit (Full or Partial), Monitoring, Surveillance or Verification, Sampling alternating (every 2 years) with Advice, Coaching, Information, Intelligence Gathering
E	Alternative Enforcement

The risk assessment will be reviewed at every general inspection, but not at revisits. Businesses will be encouraged to be aware of this risk assessment scheme and be encouraged to reduce their score thereby reducing the frequency of inspection. When requested, each officer will advise the food business operator/manager of their rating and be prepared to discuss how it was arrived at and how the business can reduce it.



## Appendix 2 Service Standards

### Our Commitment

- We will give you verbal feedback at the end of each inspection and aim to give you written confirmation either at the time of the inspection or within 5 working days.
- We will update the FSA Food Hygiene Rating Scheme website at least fortnightly
- We will respond to FHRS safeguarding requests within 10 working days
- We aim to respond to any request to the department within 3 working days. All correspondence is reviewed shortly after receipt to determine the type of response required and if it relates to something which must be dealt with as a priority. We will always provide a contact name, email and number if requested.

### What to do if you are unhappy with the service?

The Council has a Corporate Complaints Procedure which can be found at:

[Give feedback on our services | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

These pages explain how to make a complaint against any Council Service.

If you disagree with the nature of your food hygiene inspection, the FHRS outcome or wish to add a comment to your website entry, then you can use the safeguarding measures published at:

[Respond to your business food hygiene rating | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

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# **Buckinghamshire Council**

**Environmental Health  
Housing and Regulatory Services**

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

- 1.0 Aims, Objectives, Priorities and Methods
- 2.0 Standards for health and safety related work
- 3.0 Planned Safety Inspections
- 4.0 Health and Safety Enforcement Policy
- 5.0 Health and Safety Complaints
- 6.0 Accident Investigation
- 7.0 Disclosure of Information

## Background

The Environmental Health Service has a key role in ensuring that everyone who works, resides or visits Buckinghamshire, are protected from unsafe work practices and that the incidence of accidents and the causes of ill health are as low as possible.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) specifies the following elements as essential for a local authority to adequately discharge its duty as an enforcing authority:

- i. A clear published statement of enforcement policy and practice;
- ii. A system for prioritised planned inspection activity according to hazard and risk, and consistent with any advice given by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Local Authority Unit (LAU);
- iii. A service plan detailing the local authority's priorities and its aims and objectives for the enforcement of health and safety;
- iv. The capacity to investigate workplace accidents and to respond to complaints by employees and others against allegations of health and safety failures;
- v. Arrangements for benchmarking performance with peer local authorities
- vi. Provision of trained and competent inspectorate;
- vii. Arrangements for liaison and co-operation in respect of the Primary Authority scheme.

This policy sets out the ways in which the Environmental Health Service will achieve Central Government aims and objectives, and policies in relation to ensuring that standards required by the Health and Safety at Work etc Act are met, advise businesses and employees on safety issues and ensuring that preventative health measures are adopted by businesses.

## 1.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### 1.1 Aim

It is the Council's aim to:

- Support and assist businesses to comply with legislation
- Provide consistent, accurate and up-to-date information aimed at providing protection to employees and customers
- Support and assist businesses to comply with legal obligations to ensure a safe environment

### 1.2 Objectives

The Council will achieve these aims in the following ways:

- To protect people by providing information, training and advice, and undertaking enforcement in accordance with this policy and Government guidance;
- Develop partnerships and approaches to service delivery to enhance services, increase impact and reduce costs through innovation;
- To support businesses to adopt best practice and to recognise their contribution towards economic growth and social benefits;
- Develop new ways to establish and maintain an effective health and safety culture in a changing economy, so that all employers take their responsibilities seriously, the workforce is fully involved and risks are properly managed;
- Participate in the Primary authority scheme;
- Exemplify our own corporate health and safety practice in managing our resources.

### 1.3 Service Delivery

The service will be delivered through:

- i) Risk-based targeting of inspections of high risk businesses based on national and local intelligence, with appropriate follow-up action;
- ii) Project based intervention programmes based on the HSE's key priority areas and local intelligence;
- iii) Investigation of complaints with appropriate follow-up action;
- iv) Investigation of accidents with appropriate follow-up action;
- v) Suitably trained and experienced officers who are effectively monitored;
- vi) Provision of information to businesses about legal requirements, good practices and what to expect of the inspecting officer/authority;
- vii) Promotional activities to inform and encourage high standards in businesses.

### 1.4 Priorities

It is recognised that resources are finite. Therefore, it is particularly important that resources for health and safety are targeted at activities that pose the greatest risk and that will allow for the most effective and efficient use of resources in delivering outcomes.

Priority will be given to targeting those activities that pose the greatest risk to employees and members of the public. In particular, priority will be given to those issues within the HSE Strategy identified as the greatest causes of accidents within the local authority enforced sector. In setting priorities and the local authority's work plan, due regard will be given to the National Local Authority Enforcement Code published by the HSE. This will consist of having regard to national priorities and sector specific strategies set by the HSE; local priorities informed by local intelligence, workplace accidents and complaints, Matters of Evident Concern and Matters of Potential Major Concern; and Primary Authority inspection plans.

These key priorities will determine the approach taken towards individual inspections and the overall intervention programme itself. Officers will focus on these key priorities during interventions in the following ways:

- the correct and uniform identification of high-risk areas with particular attention being given to the key priorities during inspections and as a result of complaint and accident investigation and to concentrate efforts to reduce these risks;
- ensuring compliance with the law;
- engaging in those promotional activities for businesses and employees, which are most likely to foster improved health and safety, and;
- working with other agencies to improve health and safety standards either through enforcement or promotional activities.

## **2.0 STANDARDS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY RELATED WORK**

### **2.1 Authorisations**

The Council will set standards for the qualifications, experience and competence of its officers.

In the context of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, an authorised officer's powers include the inspection of premises, the examination, sampling and seizure of substances, articles and equipment, the service of notices and taking emergency action. Appointed inspectors will be authorised in accordance with Section 18 guidance issued by the HSE.

The Buckinghamshire Council [Constitution](#), reviewed on 1 April 2020, delegates to the Corporate and Service Directors all executive and non-executive powers and duties relevant to their areas of responsibility. The Service Director has delegated their powers to the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards.

#### **2.1.1 Inspections**

Inspection of premises will only be undertaken by officers who are suitably qualified, experienced and competent in accordance with the requirements of Section 18 Guidance. This will equally apply to those employed on a contract basis.

Newly appointed officers or currently employed officers who are extending their duties will not be authorised unless they possess the appropriate competencies, skills, qualifications and experience to undertake their duties and that they have undergone a period of structured training in accordance with Section 18 Guidance. The assessment of competency etc. will be undertaken by their Team Leader in consultation with the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial).

#### **2.1.2 Enforcement Notices**

Service of Improvement Notices will only be undertaken by qualified officers with experience in health and safety law enforcement, and after consultation with their Team Leader or Environmental Health Manager (Commercial).

The service of notices by hand will be by any person who is capable of explaining the meaning and legal status of the notice. Notices served by other methods will be in accordance with current legal guidance.

Officers will be authorised to serve Prohibition Notices in accordance with the standards within the Policy. Whenever possible, he/she will be accompanied by another authorised officer to corroborate the proceedings and will consult with their Team Leader or Environmental Health Manager (Commercial). If this is not possible, then the Team Leader or Environmental Health Manager is to be notified as soon as possible after service.

### **2.1.3 Seizure and Detention**

Officers will be authorised to inspect, detain and seize articles and equipment subject to experience and competence.

All officers will be assessed for the necessary practical skills, experience and competency by the relevant Team Leader.

### **2.1.4 Competency**

The Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) and Team Leaders have been given specific responsibility for health and safety enforcement matters and managing the health and safety service. This will be in accordance with a documented inspection monitoring procedure.

Officers will carry out inspections and exercise their powers in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, associated Regulations and accompanying Codes of Practice and within the restrictions of their authorisation.

The Team Leaders (or in their absence, the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial)) will be responsible for the supervision and training of officers and for the maintenance of auditable records. A training and development plan will be used to establish current qualifications and competencies and to identify future training needs in order that officers can effectively carry out their duties.

Recommendations will be made by the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial), to the Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards in respect of the powers to be given to officers and the category of premises to be inspected.

A list of the officers, their powers and the nature of premises which the officer may inspect, will be maintained and regularly updated together with records of training.

### **2.1.5 Authorisation of Persons with Expert Knowledge**

Under Section 20(2) (c)(i) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 an authorised officer may take another person with them on the inspection e.g. a person with an expert knowledge of the type of activity being inspected. Authorisation of such persons is necessary to ensure the right of entry to the premises concerned. Where it is necessary to be accompanied by another person, an officer will ensure they are duly authorised in writing and empowered under Section 19 to perform such activities as are necessary under Section 20 of the Act. Such authorisation is given under the authority of the Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards.

## **2.2 Guidance**

The authority will have regard to Approved Codes of Practice and guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive, other advice issued by the Government and advice issued by Health and



Safety Executive/Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Committee.

### **2.3 Uniformity**

The Authority acknowledges the need to act in a consistent and uniform manner and advocates a common-sense approach to the selection of enforcement action and activities.

The following areas are all considered important in achieving uniformity. These are detailed in an inspection monitoring procedure:

- i) the awareness, adherence to and review of the health and safety policy document and further development of office procedures;
- ii) training, qualifications, supervision of staff. Regular practical training and update sessions will be essential to ensure uniformity;
- iii) cross monitoring visits of staff and monitoring of letters, inspection records and notices by senior officers;
- iv) use of the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme, specified in HELA Guidance and by the Office of Product Safety and Standards;
- v) liaison with local health and safety groups/adjoining authorities. Use of joint training initiatives. Co-operation and joint working on uniformity issues;
- vi) compliance with relevant Codes of Practice and guidance from LAU;
- vii) Consistent application of the Enforcement Management Model (EMM) when making enforcement decisions.

### **2.4 Advice to Businesses**

The authority is committed to ensuring that businesses are aware of their legal obligations and to supporting businesses in achieving best practice by providing information and guidance to assist businesses. In particular, it is recognised that small businesses do not have access to specialist health and safety knowledge or information and so initiatives will be developed to target information for these businesses within the county. The authority will be committed to helping small businesses.

Where opportunities arise to provide advice and guidance to businesses over and above that required to ensure legal compliance, then a charge may be made.

- i) The Council's website will be, along with relevant signposting to government websites, the primary source of information to assist businesses with interpretation of legislation or good practice. The Council also provides services for ethnic minority groups through 'Language Line', translation services. Where the Council does not provide the service itself, information will be given to businesses about other providers.
- ii) A chargeable advice service may be available to new and existing businesses to support them in achieving high standards of safety and compliance.
- iii) Businesses will be supported and encouraged to participate in the Primary Authority partnership scheme where applicable.

- iv) Where there is sufficient demand and resources allow, occasional talks will be given to businesses. Charges to cover costs may be made.

## **2.5 Advice to Members of the Public**

The Council's website will provide relevant signposting to government websites on safety issues. The authority will participate in national health and safety activities and local events. Talks to voluntary organisations and groups may be given free of charge where resources permit.

## **2.6 Conduct**

Inspecting officers will at all times act and dress in a professional manner. Protective clothing and any other necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) will be worn that is appropriate to the premises being inspected and equipment will be maintained and calibrated where appropriate.

Officers will not act in such a way as to pose a risk to safety or health either to themselves, employers and employees and members of the public.

## **2.7 Information Sharing**

Where the legislation permits, the authority will share information via agreed secure mechanisms with other regulatory agencies, internal departments and local authorities about businesses to help target resources and activities and to minimise duplication in relation to, for example, concerns of fraud, immigration and staff welfare, illicit products and trading and food crime.

The authority will share information about businesses with the primary authority as appropriate and with other authorities when acting as a Primary Authority. Where third parties request copies of inspection reports, these will be provided in a redacted format in line with requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

Officers will co-operate with any requests for assistance and/or information from the Health and Safety Executive or other enforcement bodies or local authorities. Information on businesses trading within the Buckinghamshire Council area will be shared with enforcement agencies and internal departments.

Data is held on our respective legacy data management systems. The databases are under review and will be combined into a single database over the coming years.

## **3.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY INTERVENTIONS**

### **3.1 Frequency of inspections**

The National Local Authority Enforcement Code and HELA guidance note LAC 67/1 (Rev11) 'Advice to Local Authorities on Inspection Programmes and a Rating System' provide advice as to the prioritisation of inspections. Proactive inspection will be used only for the activities identified within the HSE's published list of higher risk activities or where there is local intelligence that risks are not being effectively managed. It is recognised that 'inspection' may not necessarily be the most effective means of dealing with a particular situation and that other

types of interventions may be more suitable. The current guidance is that *'there should be no inspection without a reason'*.

Risk ratings alone will not be used to determine the use of a particular intervention or to decide an intervention frequency. However, whilst it is likely that premises rated Category A have been rated such because they have been judged as not managing their risks effectively, sufficient evidence will be required to justify the risk rating; confidence in management considered in isolation is not sufficient to justify an A rating.

In recognition of the HSC/HELA Strategy priorities, inspections will be programmed on a project based basis. Each project will be identified in relation to the impact it will have in addressing the key priorities and will either be a cross-cutting project targeting a single priority e.g. slips and trips across a wide range of businesses or will be sector specific targeted at those activities that have been identified as being high risk e.g. warehousing, or those sectors where inspections will address a number of the key priorities at the same time e.g. residential care homes.

This project based approach will provide for a more efficient use of resources and be more effective in targeting the priorities that have been identified as giving rise to the highest number of accidents. Statistical data, both nationally and locally, will be used to identify those activities which require the most attention.

Category B1, B2 and C premises will not form part of the inspection programme and so will not be subject to any proactive interventions unless they come within one of the priority subject areas.

Revisits to check on outstanding issues will be made where necessary. Where health and safety interventions coincide with food hygiene inspections, a joint inspection may be undertaken. All visits will be recorded on the computer-based system and documents scanned to the corporate Electronic Document Management System.

## **3.2 Inspection Procedure**

### **3.2.1 Approach**

The authority will work to standards set within HELA Guidance and internal inspections procedure documents.

The main purpose of inspections is to identify potential risks to employee's and the public's safety or health and to ensure that the business understands the risks and has put the necessary measures in place to minimise them. When undertaking an inspection, officers will pay particular emphasis to risk assessment based management systems and the HSE key priorities.

A systematic approach to risk assessment will be adopted. Where businesses have identified their significant risks and have introduced controls, the inspection will focus on the accuracy of the assessment and on the effectiveness of the controls. Written assessments will normally be expected in high risk or complex businesses. Businesses with less than 5 employees will not be expected to have written assessments.

Where no assessment by the business can be demonstrated the inspection will focus on the officer's own assessment and examination of controls.

The whole of a premises may not necessarily be inspected at each inspection; those areas of greatest risk will be given priority. Officers will have regard to the key priorities and the focus will be on those which are significantly pertinent to the activities of the business being inspected.

When a project-based intervention has been undertaken and matters of evident concern are identified, steps will be taken to rectify the issue, either using informal means or by enforcement. A project-based intervention may be followed up by a more detailed inspection of the whole business when standards of health and safety are found to be poor or there are issues of significant concern.

Computer records will be updated following every visit.

### **3.2.2 Communication**

Every inspection (including those where no defects are identified) will result in a written report to the employer. Copies of the report will be sent to the manager or other relevant persons, including employee and safety representatives.

A standard format will be used. The report will cover the important issues noted during the inspection in priority order and will clearly distinguish between legal requirements and recommendations. It will give details of the person carrying out the inspection, date, time, the areas inspected and the procedure if the proprietor disagrees with the issues raised in the report.

Good communication between inspector and employer is essential wherever possible, including ensuring that the purpose and scope of an inspection is understood and the “works” needed following the inspection with an agreed time limit. The impact of the advice should be considered so that it does not impose unnecessary burdens upon businesses.

The role of Safety Representatives in preventing injuries and ill health at work and promoting good standards of health and safety in the workplace is recognised. Therefore, their role will be promoted and officers will effectively consult and communicate with them where appropriate.

Section 28(8) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act places a duty on inspectors to provide factual information where it is necessary to do so for the purposes of assisting in keeping employees or their representatives informed about matters that affect their health and safety. This factual information will also be provided to employers. This will include correspondence, enforcement notices, results of sampling and monitoring and intentions to prosecute.

### **3.2.3 Timing of Inspections**

Inspections will be carried out at all reasonable hours. It is recognised that some businesses operate outside normal office hours of work and so the timing of interventions will take this into account. Interventions may be by appointment to facilitate better communication with the most appropriate person at the business. Notice may not be given where poor standards are likely to be found, the nature of the project work dictates an alternative approach or where complaints or accidents are being investigated.

Revisit dates may be notified in advance as an aid to ensuring that works are completed and to facilitate further discussions with the employer. Appointments may also be made when there is

a need to discuss specific issues.

Where alternative dates for visits are requested by a business the inspector may agree, if suitable justification is given, and the inspector is satisfied that the purpose behind the request is not to conceal a major risk. However, this is at the officer's discretion.

#### **3.2.4 Revisits**

Revisit inspections will be arranged to check on matters raised in an inspection (and any obvious extra defects) where there are *significant* contraventions and/or serious risks to public health and to check on compliance with statutory notices. They will not turn into a further full inspection except where a major risk is identified. Where significant breaches of regulations have been identified, the revisit should whenever practicable be undertaken by the same officer who undertook the initial visit particularly where formal notices have been served. After initial inspections, employers must be made aware that a revisit will be made and appropriate dates discussed.

Revisits will not always result in a written report (unless further work is required) to the employer although the employer will always be advised of the outcome verbally, and in writing if requested. However, detailed records of revisits will be made and kept on the property database. Clear records will be maintained of formal and informal notices which have been complied with.

### **4.0 ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

This section sets out the policy relating to enforcement of health and safety legislation. It details the general principles of enforcement and embraces those set out in the 'Regulators' Code' issued by the Better Regulation Delivery Office and Section 18 Guidance issued by the HSC.

More specific procedures concerned with statutory notices, emergency action, formal cautions and prosecutions are detailed in enforcement procedures. These procedures take account of all Codes of Practice and guidance issued by HSE and 'The Code for Crown Prosecutors'.

Enforcement officers by necessity as professional officers have considerable discretion in decision making and initiating enforcement action. Such action can range from informal advice, information and support through to formal enforcement mechanisms, including the use of statutory notices and prosecution.

This part applies to all dealings, formal and informal, between officers and businesses, all of which contribute to securing compliance with the law. It will provide policy standards, aid professional judgements and decision making and ensure both consistent and effective enforcement.

#### **4.1 Principles of Enforcement**

The core expectation for those we deal with, quite reasonably, is for us to be professional, fair, co-operative and consistent in our approaches. Businesses and the public also expect local authority actions to result in the remedying of potentially risky situations and for those guilty of serious offences to be adequately punished.

We will adopt a positive and proactive approach towards ensuring compliance by:

- helping and encouraging businesses to understand and meet regulatory requirements more easily; without imposing unnecessary additional cost;
- assessing whether other social, environmental and economic outcomes can be achieved by less burdensome measures, and
- responding proportionately to regulatory breaches.

Enforcement should be informed by the principles of **proportionality** in applying the law and securing compliance; **consistency** of approach; **targeting** of enforcement action, **openness** about how we operate and what businesses may expect and **helpfulness** in providing advice and assisting with compliance.

Appendix 1 sets out the standards of service businesses should expect to receive.

It will be expected that enforcement officers, when making decisions and communicating with businesses, will follow these principles, together with relevant codes of practice and guidance. The Primary Authority Partnership scheme will be used where applicable.

When considering formal action, officers will perform an assessment in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive's Enforcement Management Model (EMM). Where the proposed enforcement action deviates from the EMM, a management review will be undertaken by the Team Leader.

Any departure from this must only occur when the following criteria are complied with:

- i) in exceptional circumstances;
- ii) where actions are capable of justification;
- iii) where there has been full consultation with the Team Leader or Environmental Health Manager (Commercial).

In exceptional circumstances when officers become aware that they are considering measures which may be inconsistent with those adopted by other local authorities, formal action should be delayed to allow the matter to be discussed with other regulatory partners e.g. the local liaison group. Reference will also be made to the Primary Authority where appropriate. However, this would not be applicable in cases where there is a serious risk to public health.

Any sanctions or penalties being considered should:

- aim to change the behaviour of the offender;
- aim to eliminate any financial gain or benefit from non-compliance;
- be responsive and consider what is appropriate for the particular offender and regulatory issue
- be proportionate to the nature of the offence and the harm caused;
- aim to restore the harm caused by regulatory non-compliance, where appropriate; and
- aim to deter future non-compliance.

This policy will be reviewed periodically in response to new legislation and guidance issued by central government and HELA.

#### **4.1.1 Proportionality**

All enforcement actions and advice must be proportional to the risks posed to the public and employees and the seriousness of any breach of legislation.

When considering enforcement action, consideration should be given to the cost of measures required to reduce the risk weighed against the benefit to be gained by reducing the risk.

In addition, there should be a staged approach to enforcement action with increasing degrees of enforcement as management of businesses fails to respond to previous requirements. Officers should provide an opportunity for dialogue in relation to the advice, requirements and decisions.

The only exceptions to the above approach would be where a serious and/or imminent risk to safety or health exists.

The staged approach to enforcement is further detailed in enforcement procedures.

#### **4.1.2 Consistency**

Consistency of approach does not mean uniformity. It means taking a similar approach in similar circumstances to achieve similar ends.

Businesses expect consistency from enforcing authorities in advice given, the use of statutory notices, decisions on prosecution and responses to complaints.

It is recognised however, that in practice it is not simple, due to the wide range of variables faced. Therefore, it is expected that officers will use their professional judgement and exercise discretion, in conjunction with this policy, when coming to a decision on appropriate action.

The following arrangements will be in place in order to promote consistency of approach:

- i) officers will perform validation exercises relating to joint inspections on an annual basis;
- ii) Team leaders will periodically accompany all officers on an inspection to assess the consistency of approach between officers;
- iii) officers openly discuss cases at team meetings and/or with Team leaders to provide a consensus of opinion;
- iv) all formal action will be 'signed off' by the Team leaders and where prosecution is being considered, by the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) and Head of Environmental Health;
- v) correspondence and file records will be checked and monitored on a regular basis;
- vi) where inconsistencies arise, appropriate training/coaching will be given by the Team Leaders;
- vii) in the event of differences of opinion or where there is a need for clarification, approaches will be made to other regulators e.g. the Health and Safety Liaison Group and the Primary Authority where applicable;
- viii) officers will participate in inter-authority consistency exercises and change

- ix) working practices, if necessary, to achieve consistency; Buckinghamshire Council will take an active role in the Health and Safety Liaison Group;
- x) reference will be made to appropriate central government guidance;
- xi) reference will be made to appropriate guidance issued by a Primary Authority.

#### **4.1.3 Targeting**

Inspections and enforcement action will be targeted primarily at those activities giving rise to the most serious risks or where hazards are least controlled and that action is focussed on those responsible for the risk and who are best placed to control it.

The prioritisation of inspections will be based on guidance issued by the HSE and informed by the HSE Strategy.

#### **4.1.4 Openness**

Enforcement officers will help businesses to understand what is expected of them (and what would not be expected) and what they should expect from the enforcing authorities.

Confirmation of all work (initial inspections, revisits and complaints) will be given in writing to business managers and as appropriate to head offices. Information will clearly explain what the non-compliant item or activity is, the advice being given, actions required or decisions taken and the reasons for these.

There will be a clear distinction between legal requirements and good practice recommendations (either verbally or written).

Where notices have been served and are on a Public Register, this will be available for viewing free of charge.

If formal requests for information are received from a third party, they will be handled in line with requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

Businesses will be made aware the Corporate Complaints Procedure when appropriate, the informal appeals procedure to the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) in the first instance and any statutory appeals procedure against enforcement. This is to be included in correspondence to businesses following inspections.

#### **4.1.5 Helpfulness**

The principle is to actively work with businesses to advise on and assist with compliance wherever possible. To this end, officers will identify themselves by name and provide a contact point and telephone number for further dealings. Businesses will be encouraged to seek advice/information; information will be freely available on the Council's website with links to those produced by central government. When appropriate and resources permit, training courses/seminars will be provided for businesses on specific issues.

#### **4.2 Prosecution of Individuals**

Subject to the general provisions of this Enforcement Policy, recommendations for prosecutions



of individuals will be made if warranted. The role played by individual directors and the management chain will be taken into account, particularly when an investigation reveals that the offence was committed with their consent or connivance or to have been attributable to neglect on their part.

### **4.3 Enforcement against Employees**

Enforcement action may be taken against employees and others, including managers, company officers etc. under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Sections 7, 8, and 37(1). Prosecution will only be considered against the employee if they have been warned before, either by an authorised officer or by the business, or the employer can demonstrate that they have taken all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that safety devices were in place and the offence by the employee was flagrant.

### **4.4 Work Related Death**

Any authorised officer called upon to investigate a fatality should ensure that early contact with the bereaved family is made and/or arrangements made to meet the bereaved as soon as they wish in order to explain the local authority's roles and responsibilities and to provide them with relevant information. The Team Leader or Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) will normally take responsibility for conducting the meeting with the bereaved family and act as the Family Liaison Officer, supported if necessary, by another officer but not necessarily the investigating officer. This should take place as soon as possible, bearing in mind the convenience and wishes of the family. Officers should also keep relatives informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation.

Where there has been a breach of the law leading to a work related death, consideration will be given whether the circumstances of the case might justify a charge of manslaughter. To this end, the investigating officer will liaise with the Police, Coroner and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in accordance with 'Work-Related Deaths – A Protocol for Liaison' and 'Practical Guide'. If they find evidence suggesting manslaughter, this will be passed to the Police or where appropriate, the CPS. If the Police or CPS decides not to pursue a manslaughter case, the local authority should consider prosecution under health and safety legislation.

## **5.0 POLICY WITH RESPECT TO COMPLAINTS**

### **5.1 Background**

Requests for service in respect of health and safety either relate to:

- i) complaints received from employees or safety representatives concerning workplace issues;
- ii) complaints received from members of the public or visitors to businesses concerning the impact of a business' activity on others;
- iii) requests for advice and information.

The purpose of investigating complaints is:

- i) to identify possible causes for and to resolve any problems which pose a risk to health and safety;
- ii) to substantiate complaints and to provide a service to the public;
- iii) to provide information to the industry in order to raise and maintain standards;
- iv) to perform a duty of enforcement and;
- v) to prevent further complaints.

Complaints that relate to issues that may pose a serious and/or imminent risk to health and/or safety are considered of utmost importance and therefore require an immediate response upon notification in order to investigate as thoroughly as possible. In cases involving issues that do not pose a serious and/or imminent risk to health and/or safety, these will be reviewed within the departmental response time of 3 working days. Officers will conduct their investigations and visits in accordance with previously detailed policies and guidance.

All investigations shall be performed in accordance with HELA guidance and Codes of Practice and the Primary Authority principles shall prevail throughout the investigation.

Where it is determined that the HSE is the responsible enforcing authority, then appropriate liaison and transfer of the complaint will take place.

Enforcement action will be in accordance with the Enforcement Policy.

## **6.0 POLICY WITH RESPECT TO ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION**

Local authorities are under a duty to investigate accidents that are notified to them under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

The purposes of investigating an accident are:

- i) to identify the cause of the accident, to make the situation safe and to prevent further accidents occurring;
- ii) to identify whether there have been any breaches of legislation;
- iii) to provide information to the industry in order to raise and maintain standards;
- iv) to inform local and national statistics and hence the planned inspection priorities.

### **6.1 Decision to Investigate**

In considering whether to investigate a notified incident, reference will be made to the HSE Incident Selection Criteria. All accidents which occur at premises enforced by the local authority and involve one or more of the following shall be investigated by an authorised officer:

- i) the work-related accident results in a fatality, except when the circumstances indicate that an investigation is inappropriate i.e. death from natural causes unrelated to a work activity;
- ii) the accident results in a serious injury or a case of ill health or a dangerous occurrence;
- iii) the accident results in a serious injury or a case of ill health to a member of the public except accidents when it is clearly unrelated to a work activity;
- iv) there is a degree of public concern and the application of the Enforcement

- Management Model would give an initial enforcement expectation of a notice or prosecution;
- v) the accident is related to local special surveys or campaigns or to the HSE key priority areas;
  - vi) a serious breach of the law is involved;
  - vii) an accident is a recurrence or is likely to recur;
  - viii) a young person or child is involved (under the age of 18);
  - ix) the accident indicates a more general management failure;
  - x) a complaint has been made regarding an accident that has occurred which meets the above criteria.

The initial decision whether to investigate and how far to carry that investigation will depend upon a number of factors. The following will be taken into consideration when deciding to investigate:

- i) severity and nature of the accident;
- ii) seriousness of the breach;
- iii) track record of the duty holder;
- iv) the relevance of event to a wider range of premises;
- v) practicality of achieving a satisfactory outcome;
- vi) legal considerations;
- vii) resource constraints.

In addition to informing the decision for the initial investigation, these factors will also determine the approach to be adopted and the extent of the investigation itself. This approach will ensure that resources are effectively targeted at the most serious accidents and which will result in the greatest effect on improving standards of health and safety.

## **7.0 POLICY WITH DISCLOSURE OF HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to describe practices in dealing with the disclosure of information under legislation and good practice note 'Open Government: a Good Practice Note on Access to Local Authority Information'. The policy is intended to ensure consistency with the policy and practices of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The good practice note requires local authorities to draw up and follow their own policy statements. This policy document seeks to fulfil that aim. It does not seek to replace any statutory requirements on disclosure where the law requires the local authority either to withhold or to disclose. Local authorities and the HSE must follow the same legislation on disclosure of health and safety information namely:

- i) Section 28 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974;
- ii) Environmental Information Regulations 2004;
- iii) Environment and Safety Information Act 1988;
- iv) Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This policy is fully retrospective, i.e. it applies to information acquired by Buckinghamshire Council before the legislation came into effect.

## **7.2 Freedom of Information Act 2000**

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005 the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) created two important rights of access for any person making a request for information to a public authority:

- To be informed by the public authority whether it holds the **information** of the description specified in the request; and
- If that is the case, to have the **information** communicated to them.

The Council has published a Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme that will be followed should requests for information be made.

## **7.3 Section 28 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974**

Section 28 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act has been amended to bring restrictions on giving information into line with FOI Act.

Subject to the exemptions in the FOI Act (or EIR exemptions), the local authority can release information:

- proactively - because it is in the public interest for us to put that information into the public domain, or
- in response to a request under the FOI Act or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004

We are not required to disclose information when the public interest for making the information available is outweighed by a greater public interest in protecting it. However, applying the public interest requires us to exercise our skill and judgement and document our reasoning and decision making.

## **7.4 Environmental Information Regulations 2004**

Buckinghamshire Council recognises that these Regulations impose responsibilities in respect of the environment, environmental information held and the release of such information, subject to exempted classes of information.

Buckinghamshire Council further recognise that the Regulations disapply all other statutory provisions on disclosure where those other provisions conflict with the Regulations. Section 28 in accordance with this will not normally apply to requests made for environmental information as defined in the Regulations.

For the purposes of the policy, environmental information is regarded as information relating to:

- i) the state of any water, air, flora, fauna, soil, natural site or other land;
- ii) any activities or measures (including activities that give rise to noise or other nuisance) which adversely affect or are likely to adversely affect anything in i);
- iii) any activities or other measure (including environmental management programmes) which are designed to protect anything in i).

This policy will not require the release of information about human health and safety except

where human health and safety have been, or could be, affected through environmental media (e.g. air, water or soil). For example, information that workers were directly harmed in the manufacture of a substance is not releasable under the Regulations as environmental media are not involved. However, if fish were harmed, or could have been harmed, because a substance got into the food chain, such information would have to be released on request as environmental media are involved.

Local Authorities are within scope of the Regulations as we have environmental responsibilities and hold environmental information. We may obtain environmental information in carrying out any of our functions or in any area of our responsibilities and such information is subject to the requirements of the Regulations. For example, information could be obtained on noise, Legionnaires' disease, ionising or non-ionising radiations and may be disclosable to the extent that it relates to the environment.

## **7.5 Environment and Safety Information Act 1988**

In order to comply with the provisions of the Act Buckinghamshire Council will maintain public registers of information on improvement or prohibition notices having public safety or environmental implications.

The register entries will include brief details of the breach of legislation and action required and will consist of the first page of the notices.

No charge will be raised for the inspection of the register.

## **7.6 Enforcement Notices, Inspection Reports and Convictions**

### **7.6.1 Enforcement Notices**

Information on only some notices is on the public registers kept under the Environment and Safety Information Act 1988. Under this policy Buckinghamshire Council will also provide enquirers with information on any other health and safety notice it has served. The information provided will include the name and address of the premises, the date of the notice, the statutory breach and the date by which the breach must be remedied.

### **7.6.2 Inspection Reports**

Requests for inspection reports will be considered in accordance with the Council's FOI Publication Scheme and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

### **7.6.3 Convictions**

Buckinghamshire Council may hold on public registers the names and addresses of firms/individuals convicted of breaches of health and safety legislation.



## **Appendix 1. Service Standards**

### **Our Commitment**

- We will give you verbal feedback at the end of each inspection and aim to give you written confirmation either at the time of the inspection or within 5 working days.
- We aim to respond to any request to the department within 3 working days. All correspondence is reviewed shortly after receipt to determine the type of response required and if it relates to something which must be dealt with as a priority. We will always provide a contact name, email and number if requested.

### **What to do if you are unhappy with the service?**

The Council has a Corporate Complaints Procedure which can be found at:

[Give feedback on our services | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

These pages explain how to make a complaint against any Council Service.

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# Report to Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	21 March 2023
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring Report 2022-23</b> <b>Budget Adjustments to the Approved Capital Programme</b>
<b>Relevant councillor(s):</b>	Councillor John Chilver, Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources
<b>Author and/or contact officer:</b>	David Skinner, Finance Director & S151 Officer
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	none specific
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Cabinet is requested to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>note the report and the risks and opportunities contained within it.</b></li><li>- <b>approve a drawdown from the Mitigating Future Financial Risks reserves to fund a further contribution of £150k to the Staff Hardship Fund as agreed by the Senior Appointments and Pay Committee (SAPC) on 1st February 2023</b></li></ul>
<b>Reason for decision:</b>	To understand the financial position of the Council in respect of 2022-23 Budgets.

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Revenue and Capital outturn position for Buckinghamshire Council for the financial year 2022/23 as at Quarter 3.
- 1.2 The Council is continuing to experience significant financial pressures due to the current economic situation and the high levels of inflation.
- 1.3 Although the rate of inflation has reduced recently from a peak of 11.1% in October 2022, it continues to be at one of the highest levels in 40 years, measuring 10.1% in January 2023. This is due to oil, gas and food prices which have been affected by the

Ukraine conflict, and also energy prices which have increased by around 70% from the budgeted position. The modest drop in CPI was driven mainly by a significant fall in petrol and diesel prices, but housing, energy and food costs were above the overall rate in January, continuing to put pressure on household finances.

- 1.4 In response to the high levels of inflation, the Bank of England increased interest rates to 4% in early February 2023, which will further impact on businesses and homeowners. The Bank commented however, that the first signs were emerging of inflation beginning to reduce, as gas wholesale prices have begun to fall and supply chain issues are easing. They estimate that inflation may return to around 4% by the end of 2023 calendar year.
- 1.5 Although this would be welcome news, the Council’s budgets continue to experience pressures, particularly in Adults and Children’s social care due to increased demand and complexity of demand. In addition, in Children’s Services the market has become sub-optimal with a lack of suitable placements driving up unit costs.
- 1.6 Buckinghamshire Council is well placed to contend with these challenges, as the Council has a culture of sustainable financial management, strong processes in place to manage risk and a healthy level of reserves. However, the Quarter 3 position does highlight ongoing pressures the Council is facing related to inflation, energy prices, increase in demand for social care, Home to School Transport and Temporary Accommodation.
- 1.7 The Revenue outturn position as of Quarter 3 is a balanced position, which is an improvement from the adverse variance of £1.8m reported at Quarter 2.
- 1.8 The key areas of movement in the forecast variance from the Quarter 2 position are as follows:

Forecast variance Quarter 2	£1.8m adverse
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> – reduction of £2.1m in the adverse pressure to £2.7m (£4.8m last quarter). Although there have been increased demand pressures, corporate contingency budget of £3.3m has been released to mitigate pressures and additional government funding of £1m has been received from the Hospital Discharge fund.	(£2.1m)
<b>Education and Children’s Services</b> – reduction of £2.8m in the adverse variance from £9.5m to £6.7m. This reflects revised staffing forecasts and maximisation of grant funding to reduce pressures.	(£2.8m)
<b>Homelessness &amp; Regulatory Services</b> – an increase of £3.1m from an adverse variance of £0.8m to £3.9m due to a significant increase in demand for Temporary Accommodation, particularly nightly accommodation. Temporary Accommodation has now been escalated to a Key Financial Risk. Although the	£3.1m

budget for 2023/24 has been increased to meet additional demand, work is progressing apace to develop a more sustainable solution.	
<b>Transport</b> – increase of £1.4m in the adverse variance related to Home to School Transport from £2m to £3.4m due to inflationary pressures on contractors.	£1.4m
<b>Accessible Housing and Resources</b> – improved position in Property and Assets due to revised forecasts for rental income.	(£0.7m)
<b>Other</b> – minor movements in Culture & Leisure, Planning and Regeneration and Leader.	(£0.3m)
<b>Corporate and Funding</b> – although the overall movement is an improvement of £0.4m, within this there are some significant movements in forecast due to £3.3m of contingency released into Health & Wellbeing budgets, a further £2.4m of contingencies forecast to be released to offset pressures, £0.7m of additional interest income due to increases in interest rates, and £0.5m surplus of income relating to the reversal of the 1.25% increase in National Insurance effective from November.	(£0.4m)
<b>Forecast variance Quarter 3</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>

1.9 Within the overall position the main variances are:

- a) An adverse variance on Portfolio spend of £14.3m (£15.7m forecast at Quarter 2) offset by £14.3m (£13.9m forecast at Quarter 2) of corporate mitigations.
- b) The £14.3m adverse variance in Portfolios includes:
  - i. £2.7m pressure (£4.7m last quarter) in Health and Wellbeing from demand pressures and fee uplifts in Adult Social Care.
  - ii. £6.7m pressure (£9.5m last quarter) in Children’s Services, including:
    - £3.6m in placement budgets due to the national lack of available placements and increased complexity of need driving up unit costs;
    - £1.1m in domiciliary care and direct payments, due to continued increases in seriousness and complexity of support needed for children with disabilities;
    - £1.1m in client costs in Children’s social care due to demand pressures;
    - £0.4m adoption and special guardianship allowances;
    - £0.2m care leavers’ accommodation and allowances due to increase volumes;

- £0.6m across Children's Social Care including transport/mileage and operational costs for fostering and adoption.
  - £0.3m across Education budgets
  - £0.6m underspend against staffing budgets in Children's Social Care
- iii. £1.3m in Accessible Housing and Resources (£2.0m last quarter), of which £1.1m is attributable to inflation on energy costs in Property & Assets due to the exceptional price increases in 2022/23, £1m is due to pressures in Legal and Democratic Services and Insurance, offset by increased rental income of £0.7m.
- iv. £3.4m adverse variance (£2m last quarter) in Transport Services due to increased contract costs and a 3% increase given to Home to School Contracts to mitigate rising fuel prices.
- v. A favourable variance of £3.3m (no change from last quarter) in Climate Change & Environment from additional income from the sale of electricity from the council's Energy for Waste (EfW) site.
- c) The £14.3m of corporate mitigations (£13.9m last quarter) include:
- i. £4.4m contribution from earmarked reserves to support the Council's overall bottom line. This is as a result of £4.4m of income received in the Climate Change and Environment portfolio contributed to reserves, following partial resolution of the legal dispute with the council's EfW contractor.
  - ii. £2.7m increased favourable variance relating to Interest on Revenue Balances (£2.0m last quarter). This reflects a higher level of cash balances than budgeted, and the recent further increase in Bank of England base rate to 4% during February.
  - iii. £0.8m favourable variance on Interest Payable budgets. This forecast has arisen due to the Council's ability to fund any new borrowing required in year from internal borrowing rather than external PWLB borrowing.
  - iv. A forecast surplus of £0.8m in grant income budgets (£0.3m last quarter) due to additional income from unringfenced grant income £0.3m, plus a surplus of income of £0.5m relating to the reversal of the 1.25% increase in National Insurance effective from November.
  - v. Corporate Contingencies: £3.3m of contingency has been released from corporate budgets to the Adult Social Care budget. A £5.5m favourable variance is forecast on remaining contingency budgets, as

shown below, helping to mitigate variances in Portfolios. A balance of £3.2m remains in Service Risk Contingencies for any further pressures that may arise during the final quarter of the year.

- vi. If the remaining £3.2m of Service Risk Contingencies is not required in year to offset pressures in Portfolios, this could be set aside in reserves in order to mitigate risks or to fund specific future policy purposes.
- vii. Available reserve balances: in addition to the Corporate Contingencies, the “Mitigating Future Financial Risks” reserve, which was set up following outturn 2021/22 as a result of unused contingencies and the overall favourable variance, contains £9.9m. After known commitments of £6.3m, a balance of £3.6m remains which could be called upon if required.

**Figure 1: Corporate Contingencies & Mitigating Future Financial Risks Reserve**

2022-23 Revenue Contingencies	Budget	Released	Current Budget	Favourable Variance - Mitigating pressures in monitoring	Remaining to cover pressures that may arise in remainder of the year
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Pay &amp; Pension Contingency</b>					
Pay Inflation	4,245	(4,245)	-	-	-
Pay - c/fwd (non consolidated)	710	0	710	-	710
Redundancy (non unitary)	500	0	500	-	500
<b>Total Budget Risk</b>	<b>5,455</b>	<b>(4,245)</b>	<b>1,210</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,210</b>
<b>Service Risk Contingency</b>					
Inflationary Pressures (incl. NI)	2,950	0	2,950	1,500	1,450
National Living Wage	250	0	250	-	250
Adult Social Care Pressures / Demography	3,210	(2,300)	910	910	-
Adult Social Care Provider Market	1,700	(1,000)	700	700	-
Home to School Transport	1,000	0	1,000	1,000	-
Children's Services Demography	1,410	0	1,410	1,410	-
High Cost Children's Placements	500	0	500	-	500
General Contingency - Economic Uncertainty	1,000	0	1,000	-	1,000
<b>Total Service Risk</b>	<b>12,020</b>	<b>(3,300)</b>	<b>8,720</b>	<b>5,520</b>	<b>3,200</b>
<b>Total Contingency</b>	<b>17,475</b>	<b>(7,545)</b>	<b>9,930</b>	<b>5,520</b>	<b>4,410</b>
<b>Total Variation on Contingencies</b>				<b>5,520</b>	
Available balance from "Mitigating Future Financial Risks" reserve	9,900				
£1.5m recommended by SAPC to support pay award	(1,500)				
£0.15m approved by SAPC to support staff hardship fund	(150)				
Further £0.15m approved by SAPC to support staff hardship fund	(150)				
Additional £500 cost of living award paid January 2023	(2,540)				
Committed to Helping Hand scheme: £1m in 2023/24 and £1m in 2024/25	(2,000)				3,560
<b>Total resources earmarked to mitigate further pressures</b>					<b>7,970</b>

1.10 Appendix 1 provides further detail for each Portfolio and information about performance relating to overdue debts and late payments of commercial debt.

## 2. Revenue

- 2.1 The forecast revenue budget outturn is summarised in Figure 2. The key Portfolio variances are explained in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Overall a balanced position is forecast after allowing for £14.3m of corporate mitigations.

**Figure 2: Revenue Budgets**

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q2 Cab)
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Revenue</b>				
Expenditure	7,700	7,200	(500)	
Income	(700)	(600)	100	
<b>Leader</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>(400)</b>	<b>(400) ↓</b>
Expenditure	172,000	173,900	1,900	
Income	(116,900)	(117,500)	(600)	
<b>Accessible Housing &amp; Resources</b>	<b>55,100</b>	<b>56,400</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>(700) ↓</b>
Expenditure	41,100	57,400	16,300	
Income	(11,900)	(31,500)	(19,600)	
<b>Climate Change &amp; Environment</b>	<b>29,200</b>	<b>25,900</b>	<b>(3,300)</b>	<b>0</b>
Expenditure	29,400	29,100	(300)	
Income	(21,800)	(21,500)	300	
<b>Communities</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Expenditure	8,800	8,700	(100)	
Income	(3,800)	(3,800)	0	
<b>Culture &amp; Leisure</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>4,900</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>(200) ↓</b>
Expenditure	425,000	431,700	6,700	
Income	(335,200)	(335,200)	0	
<b>Education &amp; Childrens Services</b>	<b>89,800</b>	<b>96,500</b>	<b>6,700</b>	<b>(2,800) ↓</b>
Expenditure	251,700	256,700	5,000	
Income	(83,700)	(86,000)	(2,300)	
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	<b>168,000</b>	<b>170,700</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>(2,100) ↓</b>
Expenditure	21,600	23,600	2,000	
Income	(14,600)	(12,700)	1,900	
<b>Housing &amp; Homelessness &amp; Regulatory Serv</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>10,900</b>	<b>3,900</b>	<b>3,100 ↑</b>
Expenditure	18,500	19,100	600	
Income	(11,000)	(11,500)	(500)	
<b>Planning &amp; Regeneration</b>	<b>7,500</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>300 ↑</b>
Expenditure	74,000	78,300	4,300	
Income	(18,700)	(19,600)	(900)	
<b>Transport</b>	<b>55,300</b>	<b>58,700</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>1,400 ↑</b>
<b>Portfolios</b>	<b>431,500</b>	<b>445,800</b>	<b>14,300</b>	<b>(1,400) ↓</b>
Corporate	29,500	16,000	(13,500)	
Funding	(461,000)	(461,800)	(800)	
<b>Corporate &amp; Funding</b>	<b>(431,500)</b>	<b>(445,800)</b>	<b>(14,300)</b>	<b>(400) ↓</b>
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,800) ↓</b>

2.3 **Appendix 1** provides further detail on the revenue forecast outturn by Portfolio.

### 3. Achievement of Savings

3.1 £19.2m of savings were incorporated into the approved 2022-23 Revenue budgets. The table below shows performance against those targets.

**Figure 3: Savings Targets by Portfolio**

Portfolio	Target £k	Forecast £k	Shortfall £k
Accessible Housing & Resources Portfolio	2,520	2,314	206
Climate Change & Environment	2,916	2,916	0
Communities	1,900	1,900	0
Culture & Leisure	1,634	1,634	0
Education & Children's Services	713	306	407
Health & Wellbeing	3,258	3,260	-2
Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Services	395	395	0
Leader	595	595	0
Transport	5,259	5,259	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,190</b>	<b>18,579</b>	<b>611</b>

3.2 Achievement of the £19.2m savings targets is summarised in the above table. Overall there is a shortfall of £0.6m as follows:

- a) Accessible Housing & Resources – a net shortfall of £206k is forecast. Delays in the Revenues and Benefits systems implementation will mean contract savings will also be delayed this year, and in recognition of this, a £206k one-off contribution from an earmarked reserve will meet the savings shortfall.
- b) Education & Children's Services – an adverse variance of £407k relating to elements of the Placement Sufficiency Strategy. The Placements budget is forecast to overspend and the Growth in Special Guardianship Orders cannot therefore be contained within the overall budget (£200k). Additionally the £250k Agency Staff saving has not been achieved. Trading with schools is now forecast to increase by £43k more than the target.

### 4. External Funding

4.1 The Council has been successful in obtaining additional funding during the financial year from external grant income. It is part of our financial strategy to maximise external funding through bidding for grants, provided these align with the Council's policies and priorities. Clear oversight and governance is in place to ensure that this process is effectively managed including:

- Agreed protocol for bidding for new grant funding;
- Regular reporting at Directorate and Corporate Management Team budget boards;

- Tracking of outcomes to ensure that maximum benefit is being derived from the funding;
- Agreed contributions to overheads to reflect the administration required and ensure recovery of overhead costs.

4.2 This financial year an additional £38m of grant funding has been received. This has been utilised to support the Council's essential front-line services and also to provide vital support to residents and those in need. The funding is predominantly ring-fenced for particular activities and must be spent in accordance with strict conditions of each grant.

A summary of the additional income can be found below.



**Figure 4: Additional Grant Income**

Type of grant	Purpose of grant	£'m
<b>Ringfenced grants</b>		
Homes for Ukraine	£14.73m of ringfenced funding to provide vital support for Ukrainian refugees.	14.73
Homes for Ukraine education and childcare grant	To support the provision of education and childcare for children who have entered the UK via the Homes for Ukraine visa route. The majority of the funding is allocated to Schools, with a small proportion allocated to Special Educational Needs and Home to School Transport.	4.61
Household Support Fund	To provide support to vulnerable households, particularly those with children and pensioners, to help with rising living costs including energy.	4.80
Rural England prosperity fund	Part of the levelling up agenda, with the aim of improving productivity and strengthening the rural economy and rural communities.	1.83
BOPS (Back-office Planning System) and RIPA (Reducing Invalid Planning Applications)	To fund improvements to the Planning function.	1.43
Hospital Discharge Fund	Ringfenced to support the discharge of patients from hospital settings over the winter months.	1.39
Asylum Seekers - Unaccompanied Children	Funding to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASCs) who are placed with the Council.	1.29
Rough Sleepers Initiative Round 5	To provide local support to eradicate rough sleeping.	1.17
England's Economic Heartland Business Plan Grant	To deliver the Economic Heartland Business Plan.	1.14
Shared Prosperity Fund	The aim of the funding is building pride in place and increasing life chances, with 3 key investment priorities: communities and place; supporting local business; and people and skills.	0.72
Children's Services - Adult learning Multiply	Funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) / levelling up, with the aim of improving adult numeracy.	0.66
Children's Services - DSG (Dedicated School Grant)	Top up of original DSG grant, based on updated financial information. Paid directly out to schools.	1.30
Various smaller grants	Various grants including £0.6m of Afghan resettlement funding, £0.4m towards the Health and Wellbeing portfolio, £0.3m top up to Homelessness Prevention Grant, and various smaller grants aligned to the climate change agenda.	2.63
<b>Total Ringfenced</b>		<b>37.69</b>
<b>Unringfenced</b>		
Extended Rights Home to School Travel	The amount awarded was higher than had been originally anticipated.	0.25
Redmond Review funding	New burdens grant reflecting additional audit costs as a result of the Redmond Review which recommended improvements to the local authority audit regime.	0.13
<b>Total Unringfenced</b>		<b>0.38</b>
<b>Overall total</b>		<b>38.07</b>

## 5. Capital

- 5.1 At Q3, the overall forecast capital outturn is £30.7m (21.0%) less than the capital cash limit for the year.
- 5.2 The position as reported is subject to approval of a number of in-year changes to the approved capital programme. These have been through the appropriate internal governance boards and are pending a Leader Decision

**Figure 5: Q3 Budget and Outturn**

Portfolio	Actuals To Date £000	Released Budget £000	Unreleased Budget £000	Total Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000
Leader	10,733	7,205	10,492	17,697	16,326	(1,371)
Climate Change & Environment	6,550	4,396	7,281	11,678	12,596	918
Communities		50		50	50	(0)
Culture & Leisure	2,821	6,774	580	7,354	4,994	(2,360)
Health & Wellbeing		335		335		(335)
Transport	32,342	38,992	1,700	40,692	38,221	(2,471)
Homelessness & Regulatory Services	4,702	9,891	11	9,902	10,673	771
Education & Children's Services	18,185	37,861	1,157	39,018	24,412	(14,606)
Accessible Housing & Resources	1,986	5,497	620	6,117	4,704	(1,413)
Planning & Regeneration	1,854	14,094	2,580	16,675	6,833	(9,842)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>79,172</b>	<b>125,096</b>	<b>24,422</b>	<b>149,518</b>	<b>118,808</b>	<b>(30,710)</b>

- 5.3 This is an increase in net slippage of £17.7m compared with the Q2 position. The overall forecast variance of £30.7m includes:
- Slippage £33.2m: School Places (£3.0m), SEND projects (£3.0m), Culture, Sport and Leisure projects (£2.4m), Highways and Technical Services (£1.0m), Economic Growth and Regeneration (£9.3m) including Future High Streets (£7.9m), Housing and Regulatory Services (£1.2m) including S106 Affordable Housing schemes (£1.2m), Strategic Transport and Infrastructure (£11.0m) including HIF funded Aylesbury Electricity Grid (£7.9m).
  - Overspends £7.4m: School Places (£4.2m), Neighbourhood Services (£2.4m) including Biowaste Scheme (£1.4m), also £0.6m Waste Container costs, Housing and Regulatory Services Bridge Court (£0.6m) which is to be funded from S106.
  - Accelerated spends (£10.4m): Strategic Transport and Infrastructure (£9.0m) including South East Aylesbury Link Road (£6.8m); Eastern Link Road (£1.2m); DFG (£1.1m); A40 London Rd Wycombe NPIF (£0.6m) Highways and Technical Services (£0.3m).
  - Underspends (£14.6m): School Places (£12.4m) including Kingsbrook Secondary School (£6.7m), Strategic Transport and Infrastructure (£1.1m) including Taplow Station – project closed (£0.6m), ICT (£0.3m) Buckinghamshire Network project planned to be transferred to fund revenue reserve for software licences. Other projects (£4.2m).

5.4 Further details of the delivery of the capital programme for each portfolio may be found in **Appendix 1**.

## **6. Other options considered**

6.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **7. Legal and financial implications**

7.1 This is a Finance report and all the financial implications are included in the report.

7.2 There are no legal implications arising from the report.

## **8. Corporate implications**

8.1 Actions resulting from consideration of this report may influence future expenditure in areas of concern / interest.

## **9. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views**

9.1 Not applicable.

## **10. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

10.1 Not applicable.

## **11. Next steps and review**

11.1 The 2022-23 Outturn position will be brought to Cabinet in June.

## **12. Background papers**

12.1 Appendix 1 – Portfolio level summaries.

## **13. 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 email [[democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)].

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## Appendix 1

### Further detail by Portfolio, Outstanding Sundry Debt and Late Payment information

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*Please note that the rounding of numbers gives rise to minor differences in the totals for each Portfolio between the covering report and this appendix.*

## 1. Leader

### 1.1 Leader Revenue: Budget £7.0m, Forecast £6.6m, Var -£0.4m

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q2 Cab) £000
	£000	£000	£000	
Expenditure	500	420	(80)	
Income	0	0	0	
<b>Chief Executives Office</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>(80)</b>	<b>(80) ↓</b>
Expenditure	2,360	2,410	50	
Income	(120)	(100)	20	
<b>Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</b>	<b>2,240</b>	<b>2,310</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>(50) ↓</b>
Expenditure	4,460	4,220	(240)	
Income	(550)	(500)	50	
<b>Policy &amp; Communications</b>	<b>3,910</b>	<b>3,720</b>	<b>(190)</b>	<b>(90) ↓</b>
Expenditure	360	180	(180)	
Income	0	0	0	
<b>Strategic Infrastructure</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>(180)</b>	<b>(130) ↓</b>
<b>Leader</b>	<b>7,010</b>	<b>6,630</b>	<b>(380)</b>	<b>(350) ↓</b>

- a) Leader Revenue is reporting a variance of £0.38m.
- b) Policy & Communications £0.19m underspend, primarily related to staffing underspends due to vacancies.
- c) Economic Growth £0.07m adverse variance due to £0.05m increase project work on economic growth and a small £0.02m drop off in markets income, Income generation strategies due to be reviewed as part of the markets strategy; offset by favourable variance in staffing in Regeneration, as budgets are managed flexibly within the Economic Growth and Regeneration team.
- d) Strategic Infrastructure £0.18m favourable variance due to staffing vacancies in the team.

1.2 **Leader Capital: Budget £17.7m, Forecast £17.9m Var +£0.2m**

Service/Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000	Unreleased Budget £000	Budget £000	Released Forecast £000	Unreleased Forecast £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000
Economic Growth								
Rural Broadband	112	1,323		1,323	1,323		1,323	-
<b>Economic Growth Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>1,323</b>		<b>1,323</b>	<b>1,323</b>		<b>1,323</b>	<b>-</b>
Strategic Infrastructure (HIF)								
A355 Improvement Scheme (Wilton Park)	48	397		397	397		397	-
Abbey Barn - HIF / S106	134	50		50	50		50	-
Aylesbury Eastern Link Road	966	274		274	1,250		1,250	976
Creditor Reserve Payments		194		194	194		194	-
Cycle Infrastructure	8	840	336	1,176	805		805	(371)
Grid Reinforcement Works	2,043		9,976	9,976	2,061		2,061	(7,915)
Marginal Viability Works			181	181				(181)
Princes Risborough Relief Road	747	876		876	1,005		1,005	129
SEALR (South East Aylesbury Link Road)	5,435	2,000		2,000	9,815		9,815	7,815
Stoke Mandeville Relief Road / SEALR II	234	1,250		1,250	980		980	(270)
<b>Strategic Infrastructure (HIF) Total</b>	<b>9,615</b>	<b>5,882</b>	<b>10,492</b>	<b>16,374</b>	<b>16,558</b>		<b>16,558</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9,728</b>	<b>7,205</b>	<b>10,492</b>	<b>17,697</b>	<b>17,881</b>		<b>17,881</b>	<b>184</b>

- a) There is £1.1m of accelerated spend reported: £1.0m on Eastern Link Road, as design and planning work continue apace; £0.1m on Princes Risborough HIF from expected early works and a prospective land acquisition aiming to be delivered before the end of the year.
- b) Slippage is reported on Cycle Infrastructure projects (£0.4m) due to ongoing discussions with landholders on the High Wycombe cycleway scheme; Marginal Viability Works (£0.2m) as funding is not yet committed; Grid Reinforcement Works reporting slippage (£7.9m) as land is identified for the works.
- c) The budgets for SEALR is due to be reprofiled once the funding reallocation from Homes England, and DfT grant is confirmed, in line with the HIF Link road paper agreed at Cabinet in December 2022.

## 2. Accessible Housing and Resources Portfolio

### 2.1 Accessible Housing and Resources Revenue: Budget £55.1m, Forecast £56.4m, Var +£1.3m

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q2 Cab) £000
	£000	£000	£000	
Expenditure	11,680	11,820	140	
Income	(370)	(510)	(140)	
<b>Business Operations</b>	<b>11,310</b>	<b>11,310</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Expenditure	640	640	0	
Digital	640	640	0	(10) ↓
Expenditure	98,690	98,810	120	
Income	(89,650)	(89,430)	220	
<b>Finance</b>	<b>9,040</b>	<b>9,380</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>40 ↑</b>
Expenditure	5,580	5,650	70	
Income	(830)	(900)	(70)	
<b>Human Resources &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>4,750</b>	<b>4,750</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Expenditure	14,140	14,150	10	
Income	(100)	(110)	(10)	
<b>ICT</b>	<b>14,040</b>	<b>14,040</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Expenditure	16,200	17,420	1,220	
Income	(1,500)	(1,520)	(20)	
<b>Legal &amp; Democratic Services</b>	<b>14,700</b>	<b>15,900</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>80 ↑</b>
Expenditure	20,960	22,020	1,060	
Income	(24,470)	(24,980)	(510)	
<b>Property &amp; Assets</b>	<b>(3,510)</b>	<b>(2,960)</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>(530) ↓</b>
Expenditure	570	240	(330)	
Income	40	30	(10)	
<b>Resources Director and Bus Mngmnt</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>(340)</b>	<b>(40) ↓</b>
Expenditure	3,560	3,180	(380)	
Income	(60)	(70)	(10)	
<b>Service Improvement</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>3,110</b>	<b>(390)</b>	<b>(240) ↓</b>
<b>Accessible Housing &amp; Resources</b>	<b>55,080</b>	<b>56,440</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>(700) ↓</b>

a) The main revenue variances are as follows:

- i. £0.3m adverse variance in Finance, being income shortfall on Council Tax/Business Rates Court costs recovered, pressure arising from optimistic legacy income budget plus reduction in caseloads processed during Phase 2 of the single Revenues & Benefits system implementation. Movement adverse £0.04m.
- ii. £1.2m adverse variance in Legal & Democratic Services. **Legal Services** £1.0m adverse variance mainly being increase in Disbursements commissioned across client directorates. **Business Assurance** £0.7m adverse variance due to increased insurance premiums, outsourced audit and fraud activity to cover vacant posts.



**Democratic Services** £0.5m favourable variance due to staff vacancies and reduction in Member costs and allowances.  
Movement adverse £0.08m.

- iii. £0.5m adverse variance in Property & Assets. Previous adverse variance of £1.1m from projected increases in Energy Prices due to inflation has improved by £0.5m due to £0.3m of income increase from rent reviews in Qtr. 3 and Qtr. 4, and £0.2m drawdown on income from ESCROW account held for voids on Friar's Square.
- iv. £0.3m favourable variance within Resources Directorate & Business Management Supplies and Services, being savings currently used to offset income shortfall on Revenues & Benefits Council Tax/Business Rates Court costs recovered. These savings have been identified in advance of full-service reviews, and a further saving of £0.4m is to be set aside in a reserve to partly fund an ERP solution in future years.  
Movement favourable £0.04m.
- v. Service Improvement £0.39m favourable variance, arising from staff vacancies and funding from Homes for Ukraine Visa Scheme.  
Movement favourable £0.24m.

## 2.2 Accessible Housing and Resources Capital: Budget £6.1m, Var (£1.4m)

Service/Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000	Unreleased Budget £000	Budget £000	Released Forecast £000	Unreleased Forecast £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000
ICT								
Buckinghamshire Network	434	2,026		2,026	1,749		1,749	(276)
Delivery of Technology Strategy	296	819	66	884	516	17	533	(351)
Device Refresh & Windows 10	294	57	250	307	174	250	424	117
Mobile Phone Refresh	171		200	200		200	200	-
Social Care Systems		200		200	145		145	(55)
<b>ICT Total</b>	<b>1,194</b>	<b>3,101</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>3,617</b>	<b>2,584</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>3,051</b>	<b>(566)</b>
Property & Assets								
Agricultural Estate	85	200		200	120		120	(80)
Conversion Old Wycombe Library	55	308		308	100		100	(208)
Corporate Investment Portfolio	229	639	79	718	370	269	639	(79)
Enhancement of Strategic Assets	5	200		200				(200)
Property Management Programme	407	1,048		1,048	768		768	(280)
Rowley Farm	11		25	25		25	25	-
<b>Property &amp; Assets Total</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>2,396</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>1,358</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>1,652</b>	<b>(847)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,986</b>	<b>5,497</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>6,117</b>	<b>3,942</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>4,704</b>	<b>(1,413)</b>

- a) ICT Capital programme main variances are as follows:
- i. Buckinghamshire Network project (£0.3m) of budget to be transferred to fund revenue reserve for software licences. Actuals are currently lower than forecast due to delay in delivery of computer components. Movement £0.
  - ii. Delivery of Technology Strategy attributed mainly (£0.2m) to underspend on EDRMS, based on the decision to continue with existing solution OTCS following discovery work; slippage on Datacentres (£0.05m) and on unreleased budgets (£0.05m). Movement £0.01m.
- b) Property & Assets capital projects are forecasting a variance of (£0.9m), of which (£0.5m) is from slippage on the following projects: construction project delays on roof works at Vale Retail Park (due to tender delays), the corporate maintenance programme, and the enhancement of Tilehouse (still in feasibility stage), Rowley Farm barn refurbishment (due to planning delays), and slippage on how much maintenance is required on Friar's Square this year (less than previously expected). The Agricultural Estate Maintenance budget has not needed to be fully utilised this year, giving (£0.1m) underspend which will roll forward into next year. A further (£0.2m) is a likely underspend on the final retention amounts due for Old Wycombe Library conversion project.

### 3. Climate Change and Environment

3.1 **Climate Change and Environment:** Revenue Budget £29.2m, Forecast £25.9m, Favourable Variance **£3.3m**

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q2 Cab) £000
	£000	£000	£000	
Expenditure	3,610	3,740	130	
Income	(1,740)	(1,900)	(160)	
<b>Environment</b>	<b>1,870</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>(30) ↓</b>
Expenditure	3,000	3,080	80	
Income	(380)	(350)	30	
<b>Street Cleaning</b>	<b>2,620</b>	<b>2,730</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>0</b>
Expenditure	34,460	50,540	16,080	
Income	(9,740)	(29,230)	(19,490)	
<b>Waste</b>	<b>24,720</b>	<b>21,310</b>	<b>(3,410)</b>	<b>(10) ↓</b>
<b>Climate Change &amp; Environment</b>	<b>29,210</b>	<b>25,880</b>	<b>(3,330)</b>	<b>(40) ↓</b>

- a) EFW & Residual Waste - Budget -£0.1m, Var Favourable £4.1m
- i. £14.5m additional electricity income including the impact of electricity generator levy from 1st January 2023, 10 day unexpected plant outage in November and 7 days in January 23, and the impact of reduced market rates on forecast.
  - ii. £4.4m receipt related to legal dispute on third party EFW income for previous years.
  - iii. £15.4m transfers to reserves in excess of budgeted level (an adverse variance), comprising:
    - £4.4m related to the unbudgeted prior-year income referred to above.
    - £11.0m related to additional in-year EFW income. This figure is being used to balance the overall Council position and may move in future months
- b) Grounds Maintenance – Budget £0.8m, Var Adverse £0.1m  
Overspend due to additional grant awards to voluntary organisations and unachievable budget income streams in relation to internal recharges and miscellaneous licenses offset with savings due to staff vacancies.
- c) Household Waste Recycling Centres - Budget £3.2m, Var Favourable £0.1m  
Underspend due to savings achieved from the current 9 site contract as 10 site contract envisaged to commence in January 2023 and additional re-use income and commodities income.

- d) Waste Collection – Budget £16.6m, Var Adverse £0.9m  
Pressure arising from dry mixed recycling market price volatility from October 2022 and additional contract operational costs from the paper sort facility back dated to April 2021. These additional identified pressures will be met from third party income waste received from previous year from EfW.
- e) Waste Disposal – Budget £2.7m, Var Adverse £0.1  
Overspend due to inflationary pressures on current costs in Green Food Bulky Wood (GFBW) contract.
- f) Environment – Budget £1.8m, £0.03m Favourable variance  
Income is £0.1m higher than budgeted which includes grants for Tree Planting (which are passported through to external organisations) and biomass boiler and feed in tariffs. This is offset by costs accordingly.

### 3.2 Climate Change & Environment Capital: Budget £11.7m, Var £1.0m

Service/Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000	Unreleased Budget £000	Budget £000	Released Forecast £000	Unreleased Forecast £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000
Climate Change & Air Quality								
Climate Change Strategy		167		167	20		20	(147)
<b>Climate Change &amp; Air Quality Total</b>		167		167	20		20	(147)
Flood Management								
Flood Defence Schemes	356	1,239	158	1,397	815		815	(582)
Strategic Flood Management		100		100				(100)
<b>Flood Management Total</b>	356	1,339	158	1,497	815		815	(682)
Waste								
Aylesbury Waste Vehicles Replacement	141		2,471	2,471	2,471		2,471	-
Biowaste Treatment	2,217	2,483		2,483	3,883		3,883	1,400
Buckingham HRC & Waste Transfer Station			275	275			0	(275)
Pembroke Rd Depot Welfare Facilities	11	111		111	111		111	-
Recycling Centre Welfare Facilities	218	254		254	254		254	-
Recycling Centres Drainage EA Compliance	8	224		224	224		224	-
Recycling Centres Vehicles & Plant			360	360		360	360	-
Recycling Initiatives & Waste Containers	1,040	343		343	965		965	622
Southern Waste Contract - Vehicles	2,339		4,018	4,018	3,418		3,418	(600)
Southern Waste Contract-Depot Improvmt	162	(525)		(525)	75		75	600
Waste Management Vehicles & Plant	57							-
<b>Waste Total</b>	6,193	2,890	7,124	10,014	11,401	360	11,761	1,747
<b>Grand Total</b>	6,550	4,396	7,281	11,678	12,236	360	12,596	918

- a) Biowaste Treatment project is expected to be over by £1.4m due to increased costs of fuel, steel and contaminated soil disposal. The build is anticipated to be completed this financial year. Also £0.6m cost increase in relation to additional waste containers within Southern Waste. Both these pressures will be funded from in-year revenue and reserves contributions. Slippage of (£0.3m) on unreleased Buckingham HRC project budget which is delayed due to the capital moratorium and will be determined further by CCIB for commencement date.
- b) (£0.6m) of slippage on Flood alleviation schemes; delays in the installation of culverts at Pednormead and Marlow.
- c) (£0.1m) of slippage on Climate Change strategy projects; plans are now in place and approved for Solar Panel installation on some Council buildings, which will start to show accelerated spend early next year.

## 4. Communities

### 4.1 Communities Revenue: Budget £7.7m, Forecast £7.7m, Var £0.04m

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q2 Cab) £000
	£000	£000	£000	
Expenditure	3,190	3,010	(180)	
Income	0	0	0	
<b>Community Boards</b>	<b>3,190</b>	<b>3,010</b>	<b>(180)</b>	<b>(170) ↓</b>
Expenditure	3,530	3,380	(150)	
Income	(1,530)	(1,400)	130	
<b>Community Safety</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>1,980</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>170 ↑</b>
Expenditure	20,550	20,600	50	
Income	(19,790)	(19,760)	30	
<b>Community Support</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>(30) ↓</b>
Expenditure	330	330	0	
<b>Resilience Services</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Expenditure	1,840	1,730	(110)	
Income	(470)	(370)	100	
<b>Special Expenses</b>	<b>1,370</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>(10) ↓</b>
<b>Communities</b>	<b>7,650</b>	<b>7,520</b>	<b>(130)</b>	<b>(40) ↓</b>

- Communities Revenue is reporting £0.02m underspend.
- Localities & Strategic Partnerships reporting £0.08m overspend due to 4th quarter Citizens Advice Bureau payment not accrued in FY22.
- Community Safety staffing related underspends offset by a shortfall in car park income and additional project spend.
- Community Boards £0.07m underspend and £0.06m favourable movement from Q2 as the Boards have declared an underspend due to 22/23 anticipated spend.

### 4.2 Communities Capital: Budget £0.05m, Var £0.0m

Service/Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000	Unreleased Budget £000	Budget £000	Released Forecast £000	Unreleased Forecast £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000
Community Safety								
CCTV Projects		50		50	50		50	(0)
<b>Community Safety Total</b>		<b>50</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>(0)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>50</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>(0)</b>

- On target

## 5. Culture and Leisure

### 5.1 Culture and Leisure Revenue: Budget £5.0m, Var £0.1m

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q2 Cab) £000
	£000	£000	£000	
Expenditure	8,790	8,720	(70)	
Income	(3,780)	(3,810)	(30)	
Culture & Leisure	5,010	4,910	(100)	(90) ↓
Culture & Leisure	5,010	4,910	(100)	(90) ↓

#### a) Arts & Culture - Budget £1.4m, Var Favourable £0.1m

Vacancies within Arts & Culture and reduced spend on project work within Culture & Learning.

### 5.2 Culture and Leisure Capital: Budget £7.4m, Var (£2.4m)

Service/Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000	Unreleased Budget £000	Budget £000	Released Forecast £000	Unreleased Forecast £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000
Country Parks								
Country Parks Visitors Centre			100	100		20	20	(80)
South Bucks Country Pk Leisure Facility	(117)	500		500	500		500	-
<b>Country Parks Total</b>	<b>(117)</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>(80)</b>
Leisure Centres								
Chalfont & Chesham Leisure Centres	77	(60)		(60)	(65)		(65)	(5)
Chilterns Lifestyle Centre	1,078	1,453		1,453	1,453		1,453	-
Leisure Centres Maintenance	143	605		605	605		605	-
<b>Leisure Centres Total</b>	<b>1,298</b>	<b>1,997</b>		<b>1,997</b>	<b>1,992</b>		<b>1,992</b>	<b>(5)</b>
Libraries								
Libraries Enhanced Technology			100	100				(100)
Libraries Self-Service Replacement	12	124		124	124		124	-
Wendover Library Project		50	380	430				(430)
<b>Libraries Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>124</b>		<b>124</b>	<b>(530)</b>
Parks & Play Areas								
Parks & Play Areas	245	1,339		1,339	303		303	(1,036)
<b>Parks &amp; Play Areas Total</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>1,339</b>		<b>1,339</b>	<b>303</b>		<b>303</b>	<b>(1,036)</b>
Sport & Leisure Projects								
S106 Funded Projects	1,383	2,764		2,764	2,055		2,055	(710)
<b>Sport &amp; Leisure Projects Total</b>	<b>1,383</b>	<b>2,764</b>		<b>2,764</b>	<b>2,055</b>		<b>2,055</b>	<b>(710)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,821</b>	<b>6,774</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>7,354</b>	<b>4,974</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4,994</b>	<b>(2,360)</b>

*Note: negative actuals relate to accruals and retentions – where the value of work done / completed has been charged to last year, but invoices not yet paid.*

- a) Most projects are forecast to be mostly fully spent with risks being monitored closely through the Service Project Boards. Parks & Play area slippage of £1.03m for play area replacement projects due to long lead in times for equipment and a £0.06m underspend variance due to completion of projects planned for 23/24; slippage of £0.71m from S106 Funded projects mainly being the Secret Window project; slippage of £0.53m for Libraries due to delays in testing enhanced technology at the new Amersham Library and the Wendover Library project to be completed next financial year; and slippage of £0.1m in Country Parks due to accessing project support.

## 6. Education & Children's Services

### 6.1 Education & Children's Services Revenue: Budget £89.8m, Forecast £96.5m, Var +£6.7m

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q2 Cab) £000
	£000	£000	£000	
Expenditure	81,400	87,090	5,690	
Income	(6,510)	(5,850)	660	
<b>Children's Social Care</b>	<b>74,890</b>	<b>81,240</b>	<b>6,350</b>	<b>(2,870) ↓</b>
Expenditure	26,920	26,130	(790)	
Income	(12,040)	(10,910)	1,130	
<b>Education</b>	<b>14,880</b>	<b>15,220</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>0</b>
Expenditure	316,690	318,430	1,740	
Income	(316,690)	(318,430)	(1,740)	
<b>Education - Dedicated Schools Grant</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Education &amp; Children's Services</b>	<b>89,770</b>	<b>96,460</b>	<b>6,690</b>	<b>(2,870) ↓</b>

- An adverse variance of £6.7m is projected against the budget of £89.8m. This is a favourable movement of £2.9m compared with the previous quarter.
- An adverse variance of £6.4m is reported against the budgets for Children's Social Care and an adverse variance of £0.3m against budgets for Education
- The factors contributing to the significant overspend for Children's Social Care are:
  - Increase in demand experienced by front line social care teams leading to the requirement for additional staffing in order to manage caseloads. Due to difficulties in recruitment and a reduction in the numbers of agency staff forecast for the year there is a favourable variance of £0.6m against staffing budgets across Children's Social Care. This is a favourable movement of £2.8m compared with the previous quarter.
  - National position in relation to the sufficiency of placements for children looked after is leading to a shortage of available placements and very high unit costs of those placements that can be accessed. This is also resulting in the need to develop creative solutions to support young people with complex needs and manage risk. Placement budgets for children looked after are projected to overspend by £3.6m for the financial year, a reduction of £0.1m compared with the previous quarter. Budgets for adoption and Special Guardianship Order allowances are also projected to overspend by £0.4m and operational costs for foster care and adoption by £0.2m.



- f) The costs of accommodation and allowances for care leavers are forecast to exceed the budget by £0.2m.
- g) Continued increases in seriousness and complexity of support needed for children with disabilities. An adverse variance of £1.1m is projected against budgets for domiciliary care and direct payments.
- h) Client cost budgets, to support children in need, are projected to be £1.0m overspent, and client costs for children with disabilities are projected to exceed the budget by £0.1m. This forecast reflects the increase in demand for support experienced by front line teams.
- i) Other pressures of £0.4m across Children's Social Care.
- j) An adverse variance of £0.3m across Education budgets includes pressures against the premature retirement cost budget for schools and legal/mediation costs. These pressures are partially offset by an underspend against staffing budgets.

## 6.2 Education & Children's Services Capital: Budget £39.0m, Var (£14.6m)

Service/Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000	Unreleased Budget £000	Budget £000	Released Forecast £000	Unreleased Forecast £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000
Children's Homes			499	499				(499)
<b>Children's Social Care Total</b>			<b>499</b>	<b>499</b>				<b>(499)</b>
Primary School Places	(58)	5,036	1,517	6,553	1,881		1,881	(4,672)
Provision for Early Years	0	83	101	183	10		10	(173)
Provision for Special Educational Need	772	2,261	2,131	4,391	1,286	50	1,336	(3,055)
School Access Adaptations	97	151		151	151		151	-
School Property Maintenance	4,246	5,625		5,625	5,625		5,625	(0)
School Toilets	156	217		217	217		217	-
Secondary School Places	12,972	24,489	(3,090)	21,399	15,293	(100)	15,193	(6,206)
<b>Schools Total</b>	<b>18,185</b>	<b>37,861</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>38,519</b>	<b>24,462</b>	<b>(50)</b>	<b>24,412</b>	<b>(14,107)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>18,185</b>	<b>37,861</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>39,018</b>	<b>24,462</b>	<b>(50)</b>	<b>24,412</b>	<b>(14,606)</b>

- a) A favourable variance of £14.6m is forecast against the Education and Children's Services capital programme.
- b) Slippage on Children's services Capital programme is forecast to be £6.4m. slippage includes:
  - SEND Projects £3.0m, including slippage against the unallocated budget of £2.1m
  - Primary school projects slippage of £1.1m
  - Secondary school projects slippage of £1.8m
  - Children's Social Care residential provision £0.5m
- c) Underspends of £12.4m are forecast against the programme, these contingencies are to be returned to the programme. The most significant underspends are as follows:
  - Kingsbrook Primary School £1.7m underspend
  - Maids Moreton £0.6m
  - Kingsbrook Secondary School current forecast underspend £6.7m
  - Chiltern Hills Academy £0.9m
  - Other secondary school projects £0.7m
  - Unallocated primary school budget £1.5m underspend
  - SEND projects £0.1m
  - Early Years projects £0.1m
- d) Overspend £4.2m including £3.0m of budget phasing, £0.9m against Chesham Grammar School and £0.3m against Great Missenden.

## 7. Health & Wellbeing

### 7.1 Health & Wellbeing Revenue: Budget £168m, Forecast £171.1m Var **+£2.7m**

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q2 Cab)
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure	228,580	233,540	4,960	
Income	(60,560)	(62,820)	(2,260)	
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	<b>168,020</b>	<b>170,720</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>(2,060) ↓</b>
Expenditure	23,100	23,170	70	
Income	(23,100)	(23,170)	(70)	
Public Health	0	0	0	0
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	<b>168,020</b>	<b>170,720</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>(2,060) ↓</b>

- Adult Social Care shows an adverse variance of +£2.7m relating predominately to Residential +£1.9m Nursing +£0.1m and Supported Living +£2.8m, Day Care £0.8m and Dom Care £1.6m. This is partly offset by favourable variances on Direct Payments, employee costs and additional income. The release of £3.3m of contingency has been included in the budget. Further mitigations include -£1.6m remaining contingency, -£0.25m Direct Payment additional clawbacks, and the potential use of further contingency to cover inflation and National Living Wage pressures from providers.
- The growth pressure in Nursing has been partly offset by the use of £2.3m contingency. The number of clients coming into Nursing care from Discharge to Assess beds continues to increase, due to the pressures in the hospitals and is being carefully monitored.
- Residential, has shown significant increases in demand (+23 Full time equivalents) and unit cost (further 1%) in the last few months; so is now showing an adverse variance of +£1.9m.
- The adverse variance in Supported Living is +£2.8m, this relates to growth in client numbers this year (+16 Full time equivalents), 2% above inflation in terms of the growth in unit cost and existing clients receiving more care. £1m of contingency has been included in the budget since Q2 which has reduced the forecast overspend
- There are adverse variances of +£0.8m on external Day Care and £1.6m on Dom Care, these relate to an increase in clients and individual clients requiring more care.

- f) There are still a significant number of risks linked to the forecast in particular inflationary pressures from providers, the future funding of Discharge to Assess and the risk of additional growth in client numbers, complexity and one-off price rises.

## 7.2 Health & Wellbeing Capital: Budget £0.34m, Var (£0.34m)

Service/Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000	Unreleased Budget £000	Budget £000	Released Forecast £000	Unreleased Forecast £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000
Adult Social Care								
Respite Care		335		335				(335)
<b>Adult Social Care Total</b>		<b>335</b>		<b>335</b>				<b>(335)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>335</b>		<b>335</b>				<b>(335)</b>

- a) The approved budget for 2022-23 includes £1.3m of adult social care equipment funded from DFG. This is included within the overall Disabled Facility Grant budget line in the capital programme, currently reported under Housing & Homelessness.
- b) The budget of £335k for Respite Care relates to monies received from the NHS for the project which will need to be repaid. There is not expected to be any spend in the current year.

## 8. Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Services

### 8.1 Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Revenue: Budget £7.0m, Var £3.9m

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q2 Cab) £000
	£000	£000	£000	
Expenditure	10,940	12,590	1,650	
Income	(7,620)	(5,490)	2,130	
<b>Housing &amp; Homelessness</b>	<b>3,320</b>	<b>7,100</b>	<b>3,780</b>	<b>3,070 ↑</b>
Expenditure	10,650	10,950	300	
Income	(6,990)	(7,170)	(180)	
<b>Regulatory Services</b>	<b>3,660</b>	<b>3,780</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>30 ↑</b>
<b>Housing &amp; Homelessness &amp; Regulatory Serv</b>	<b>6,980</b>	<b>10,880</b>	<b>3,900</b>	<b>3,100 ↑</b>

- a) Temporary Accommodation: The £0.8m adverse variance reported at Qtr 2 has increased to £3.8m for two reasons: the previous forecast did not include the unmet funding gap between Housing Benefit payments and Government Subsidy, and demand has increased from 145 households in nightly paid accommodation to 190 in November. December saw an increase to 230 due to the cold weather protocol being instigated; additional Homelessness Prevention Grant of £0.2m was received from Government in December to contribute to the winter pressures, and will be required to fund the numbers spike seen in December. Temporary Accommodation is now escalated as a Key Financial Risk, the budget is due to be increased via the MTFP, and work progresses apace to acquire additional cheaper Temporary Accommodation.
- b) £0.1m net adverse variance in Regulatory Services: £0.1m adverse variance in Trading Standards from staff pay award and reduction in primary authority income post-COVID (expected to recover by 2024); £0.4m staffing cost adverse variance in Coroners for additional administrative staff to work on caseload; £0.1m favourable variance in Registrars from increases in ceremony income; £0.1m adverse variance in Environmental Health from agency staff costs.

## 8.2 Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Capital: Budget £9.9m, Var £0.8m

Service/Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000	Unreleased Budget £000	Budget £000	Released Forecast £000	Unreleased Forecast £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000
<b>Affordable Housing</b>								
Affordable Housing - S106 Funded	7	2,103	42	2,145	2,310	(1,306)	1,004	(1,141)
<b>Affordable Housing Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2,103</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2,145</b>	<b>2,310</b>	<b>(1,306)</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>(1,141)</b>
<b>Homelessness</b>								
Temporary Accommodation	1,036	1,188		1,188	1,788		1,788	600
<b>Homelessness Total</b>	<b>1,036</b>	<b>1,188</b>		<b>1,188</b>	<b>1,788</b>		<b>1,788</b>	<b>600</b>
<b>Housing</b>								
Disabled Facility Grants	2,891	3,848		3,848	4,957		4,957	1,109
Enabling Schemes	(864)	31	(31)					-
Raynes Avenue Park Drainage Replacement		152		152	20		20	(132)
<b>Housing Total</b>	<b>2,028</b>	<b>4,032</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>4,977</b>		<b>4,977</b>	<b>977</b>
<b>Cemeteries &amp; Crematoria</b>								
Cemeteries & Memorial Gardens	44	317		317	313		313	(3)
Chiltern & Bierton Crematoria	1,588	2,252		2,252	2,591		2,591	338
<b>Cemeteries &amp; Crematoria Total</b>	<b>1,632</b>	<b>2,569</b>		<b>2,569</b>	<b>2,904</b>		<b>2,904</b>	<b>335</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4,702</b>	<b>9,891</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9,902</b>	<b>11,979</b>	<b>(1,306)</b>	<b>10,673</b>	<b>771</b>

- a) (£1.1m) of slippage reported on the allocation of affordable housing funding, pending member decision on the use of the funding.
- b) £1.1m accelerated spend reported on Disabled Facilities grant: £4.1m grant received in 22-23 to be fully utilised and carried forward funding from 21-22 to fund the remaining expenditure. Expenditure covers mandatory adaptations, adult social care equipment and healthy homes on prescription scheme, which have all had accelerated spend following a backlog during COVID.
- c) Cemeteries & Crematoria: £0.3m over budget for Crematory and Hampden Chapel refurbishment/cremator replacement and building projects due to historical building defects with increased costs for furniture and crematory equipment and staffing – to be funded from reserves.

## 9. Planning and Regeneration

### 9.1 Planning & Regeneration Revenue: Budget £7.53m, Outturn £7.65m, Var **£0.1m**

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q2 Cab)
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure	1,170	1,090	(80)	
Income	(250)	(250)	0	
<b>Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>(80)</b>	<b>40 ↑</b>
Expenditure	17,300	18,020	720	
Income	(10,690)	(11,210)	(520)	
<b>Planning</b>	<b>6,610</b>	<b>6,810</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200 ↑</b>
<b>Planning &amp; Regeneration</b>	<b>7,530</b>	<b>7,650</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>240 ↑</b>

- Regeneration are reporting £0.1m favourable variance on staffing vacancies as posts continue to be recruited to following the Service Review.
- Planning are reporting £0.2m adverse variance. Income from planning applications has dropped further than expected in January. If the trend continues, the unmitigated impact is estimated to be £0.4m. Planning SLT have already identified £0.2m of non-staffing mitigations (to give the current £0.2m projected loss). Another mitigation would be to reduce the number of agency staff but this would have an impact on the current cases. Planning SLT will monitor closely the trends and the impacts during Q4.

### 9.2 Planning & Regeneration Capital: Budget £16.7, Forecast £6.8m Var (£9.8m)

Service/Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000	Unreleased Budget £000	Budget £000	Released Forecast £000	Unreleased Forecast £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000
LEP 3rd Party Schemes								
LEP 3rd Party Schemes	552							-
<b>LEP 3rd Party Schemes Total</b>	<b>552</b>							-
<b>Regeneration</b>								
Amersham Regeneration (St John's Build)			50	50		50	50	-
Ashwells	122	100		100	173		173	73
Aylesbury Town Centre	89	150	574	724		150	150	(574)
CIL Funded Regeneration		113	260	373	113		113	(260)
Employment & Regeneration Led Opportur	365	2,949		2,949	2,195		2,195	(754)
Environment Led Opportunities	23	349		349	50		50	(299)
Former WDC Third Party CIL Projects		125		125	20		20	(105)
Future High Street Funds	370	9,700	1,600	11,299	2,944	385	3,329	(7,971)
High Wycombe Town Centre	94	176	(3)	173	153	(3)	150	(22)
Retasking of Winslow Centre	157	326		326	296		296	(30)
Waterside North Development	36	81	100	181	81	100	181	-
Wycombe Air Park	46				100		100	100
Wycombe District Centres		25		25	25		25	-
<b>Regeneration Total</b>	<b>1,302</b>	<b>14,094</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>16,675</b>	<b>6,151</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>6,833</b>	<b>(9,842)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,854</b>	<b>14,094</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>16,675</b>	<b>6,151</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>6,833</b>	<b>(9,842)</b>

- a) £8.0m reported slippage on Future High Streets Fund projects is reported as replacement projects (varying from the original business case, where opportunities have changed due to market conditions) need to be agreed with DLUHC before the grant can be committed. This amended profile matches the recent annual progress return reported to DLUHC in December. A pipeline of replacement projects is being progressed for future Cabinet decision.
- b) A further net £1.8m slippage on other projects, including; £0.5m Cressex Island Aldi 5m where work commences on site in February 2023; £0.4m Kingsbury Market Square where the detailed specification of the programme continues to be worked on; £0.3m on other Wycombe regeneration schemes mainly Handy X where landscaping and other works have not been completed; £0.3m slippage Cressex Transport Improvements; £0.3m slippage for Spade Oak Lake which will become part of a wider project for Little Marlow Lakes Country Park.



## 10.Transport

### 10.1 Transport Revenue: Budget £55.2m, Outturn £58.7m, Adverse Variance **£3.5m**

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q2 Cab) £000
	£000	£000	£000	
Expenditure	35,120	35,580	460	
Income	(14,770)	(15,080)	(310)	
Highways & Technical Services	20,350	20,500	150	(170) ↓
Expenditure	35,550	38,290	2,740	
Income	(2,430)	(1,930)	500	
Transport Services	33,120	36,360	3,240	1,570 ↑
Expenditure	1,630	1,990	360	
Income	(570)	(810)	(240)	
Transport Strategy	1,060	1,180	120	50 ↑
Expenditure	1,660	2,480	820	
Income	(960)	(1,780)	(820)	
Highways Infrastructure Projects and HS2	700	700	0	20 ↑
Transport	55,230	58,740	3,510	1,470 ↑

- a) Transport Services £3.2m adverse variance. The service is experiencing increasing numbers of contracts being handed back which require re-tendering or contract variations. Also, due to cost-of-living impacts on drivers and operators, there is a 3% uplift in place for the short term. Mitigations for these pressures include short term actions around rigour and transparency with suppliers to avoid prohibitively costly contracts and longer-term actions which include assessing and challenging the existing supply chain for value for money opportunities and alternative delivery options.
- b) Highways & Technical Services adverse variance £0.2m. Increased energy costs forecast (updated in December) affecting Highways and Parking after taking into account the recently announced energy price caps and a new energy contractor offset by increased income in Streetworks.
- c) HS2 (and EWR) team break even. The Council is due to be in receipt of an additional £0.5m more than budgeted on HS2 income, for staffing expenditure incurred in line with the Funding and Service Level Agreements in place with HS2.
- d) Transport Strategy £0.1m adverse variance on unachievable income and savings targets which have been resolved next year via the recent restructure, plus a temporary increase in agency staffing costs to fill vacant posts following the recent service review. These variances are being offset and managed across the whole Service Area, with headroom on staffing under Infrastructure Projects under the Leader Portfolio.

## 10.2 Transport Capital: Budget £40.7m, Var (£2.5m)

Service/Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000	Unreleased Budget £000	Budget £000	Released Forecast £000	Unreleased Forecast £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000
Car Parks								
Car Parks	136	566		566	677		677	111
<b>Car Parks Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>566</b>		<b>566</b>	<b>677</b>		<b>677</b>	<b>111</b>
Highways & Cycleway Funded Schemes								
Active Travel Tranche II - Emerald Way	431	500		500	710		710	210
ADEPT Live Labs	543	925		925	675		675	(250)
Globe Park Access / Westhorpe Junction	73	50		50	78		78	28
Haydon Hill Cycle Way	32	42		42	32		32	(9)
Highways & Cycleway Funded Schemes	397	1,365		1,365	617		617	(748)
HS2 Funded Schemes	(25)	81		81	34		34	(46)
HS2 Road Safety Projects	9	383		383	584		584	202
NPIF Schemes	(181)	(372)		(372)	169		169	542
Taplow Cycle Way		607		607				(607)
<b>Highways &amp; Cycleway Funded Schemes Total</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>3,579</b>		<b>3,579</b>	<b>2,900</b>		<b>2,900</b>	<b>(678)</b>
Other Transport & Infrastructure								
East West Rail	1,537	2,425		2,425	2,417		2,417	(8)
Electric Vehicle Charging Points		200		200	10		10	(190)
Other Highway & Technical	20	1,020		1,020	151		151	(869)
Wycombe Parking Review		50		50	50		50	-
<b>Other Transport &amp; Infrastructure Total</b>	<b>1,557</b>	<b>3,696</b>		<b>3,696</b>	<b>2,629</b>		<b>2,629</b>	<b>(1,067)</b>
Rights of Way								
Berryhill Footbridge Repair	109					109	109	109
Denham Bridleway Bridge Replacement	(17)	213		213	75		75	(138)
Improvements to Rights Way	174	167		167	144		144	(23)
<b>Rights of Way Total</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>380</b>		<b>380</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>(52)</b>
Strategic Highway Maintenance								
Abbey Way Flyover High Wycombe	81	(70)	300	230	200		200	(30)
Bridge Maintenance	653	998		998	822		822	(176)
Failed Roads Haunching & Reconstruction	1,586	3,000		3,000	3,010		3,010	10
Footway Structural Repairs	1,814	2,065		2,065	2,006		2,006	(60)
Maintenance Principal Rds - Drainage	1,661	2,041		2,041	2,006		2,006	(35)
Marlow Suspension Bridge	259	(1,107)	1,400	293	293		293	-
Plane & Patch	4,238	4,369		4,369	4,287		4,287	(83)
Replacement Traffic Signals	591	438		438	333		333	(104)
Road Safety - Casualty Reduction	754	856		856	856		856	-
Safety Fences	166	236		236	289		289	53
Strategic Highway Maintenance Program	16,293	15,973		15,973	15,748		15,748	(226)
Street Lighting	878	1,600		1,600	1,466		1,466	(134)
<b>Strategic Highway Maintenance Total</b>	<b>28,974</b>	<b>30,400</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>32,100</b>	<b>31,316</b>		<b>31,316</b>	<b>(785)</b>
Transport Services								
Public Transport	23	131		131	131		131	-
Purchase of Fleet Vehicles	108	240		240	240		240	-
<b>Transport Services Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>371</b>		<b>371</b>	<b>371</b>		<b>371</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>32,342</b>	<b>38,992</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>40,692</b>	<b>38,112</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>38,221</b>	<b>(2,471)</b>

- Strategic Highway Maintenance – Budget £32.1m, (£0.8m) variance -. Slippage within: Structures of £0.2m due to mitigations no longer required, Street Lighting of £0.1m due to resource shortage, and £0.2m due to refunds for over charging by RJ Contract following data entry errors. Underspends within: Footway schemes of £0.1m due to completion under budget, and Plane and Patch of £0.1m where completion of programme has come in less than anticipated. These are offset by higher costs within Safety fences of £0.1m due to inflation and increased cost of materials.
- Car Parks – Budget £0.6m, £0.1m variance. Accelerated spend for cashless machines replacement.
- Rights of Way – Budget £0.4m, £0.1m variance  
Slippage relates to Denham Bridleway due to main construction now to commence in Spring 2023/24 to accommodate other works within the

vicinity and allow for site access. This slippage is offset by accelerated spend for Berryhill Footbridge due to un-foreseen design and cradle costs for removal and storage of the bridge.

d) Highways & Cycleway Funded Schemes – Budget £3.6m, var (£0.7m)

Slippage for Highways and Cycle schemes including the High Wycombe Cycleway (£0.5m) due to the National Trust stalling the project.

## 11. Corporate & Funding

### 11.1 Corporate & Funding Revenue: Budget -£431.5m, Outturn -£445.8m, Var -£14.3m

	Budget	Y/E Out- turn	Forecast Variance	%	Change in Forecast Variance
	£m	£m	£m		£m
Capital Financing	27.1	26.3	(0.8)	(3%)	-
Corporate Costs	11.8	6.2	(5.6)	(47%)	0.7
Reserves	(6.2)	(10.6)	(4.4)	71%	0.1
Treasury Management	(3.2)	(5.9)	(2.7)	84%	(0.7)
<b>Corporate Total</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>(13.5)</b>	<b>(46%)</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Business Rates	(58.2)	(58.2)	-	-	-
Council Tax	(377.4)	(377.4)	-	-	-
New Homes Bonus	(5.8)	(5.8)	-	-	-
Unringfenced Grants	(19.6)	(20.4)	(0.8)	4%	(0.5)
<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>(461.0)</b>	<b>(461.8)</b>	<b>(0.8)</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>(0.5)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>(431.5)</b>	<b>(445.8)</b>	<b>(14.3)</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>(0.4)</b>

- a) The £14.3m favourable variance (£13.9m last quarter) forecast comprises:
- b) £4.4m contribution from earmarked reserves to support the Council's overall forecast position. This is as a result of £4.4m of non-recurring income received in the Climate Change and Environment portfolio contributed to reserves, following partial resolution of the legal dispute with the Council's EfW contractor.
- c) £2.7m favourable variance relating to Interest on Revenue Balances, an increase of £0.7m from last quarter. This reflects the further increase in Bank of England base rate to 4.0% in February.
- d) £0.8m favourable variance on Interest Payable budgets. This forecast has arisen due to the Council's ability to fund any new borrowing required in year from internal borrowing rather than external PWLB borrowing.
- e) A forecast surplus of £0.8m in grant income budgets (£0.3m last quarter) due to additional income from unringfenced grant income £0.3m, plus a surplus of income of £0.5m relating to the reversal of the 1.25% increase in National Insurance effective from November.
- f) Corporate Contingencies: £3.3m of contingency has been released from corporate budgets to the Health & Wellbeing budget for Adult Social Care. A £5.5m favourable variance is forecast on remaining contingencies, helping to mitigate variances in Portfolios, as shown below. A balance of £3.2m remains in Service Risk Contingencies for any further pressures that may arise during the final quarter of the year.

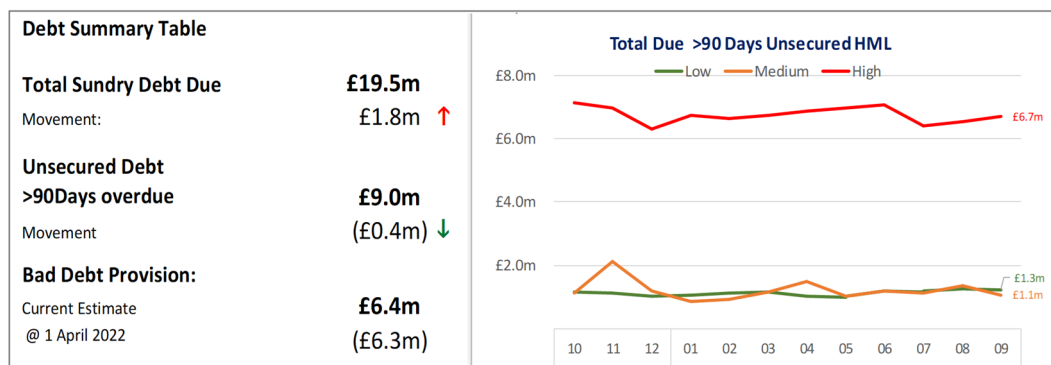
- g) If the remaining £3.2m of Service Risk Contingencies is not required in year to offset pressures in Portfolios, this could be set aside in reserves in order to mitigate risks or to fund specific future policy purposes.
- h) Available reserve balances: in addition to the Corporate Contingencies, the “Mitigating Future Financial Risks” reserve, which was set up following outturn 2021/22 as a result of unused contingencies and the overall favourable variance, contains £9.9m. After known commitments of £6.3m, a balance of £3.6m remains which could be called upon if required.

Figure 1 Corporate Contingencies & Mitigating Future Financial Risks Reserve

2022-23 Revenue Contingencies	Budget	Released	Current Budget	Favourable Variance - Mitigating pressures in monitoring	Remaining to cover pressures that may arise in remainder of the year
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Pay &amp; Pension Contingency</b>					
Pay Inflation	4,245	(4,245)	-	-	-
Pay - c/fwd (non consolidated)	710	0	710	-	710
Redundancy (non unitary)	500	0	500	-	500
<b>Total Budget Risk</b>	<b>5,455</b>	<b>(4,245)</b>	<b>1,210</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,210</b>
<b>Service Risk Contingency</b>					
Inflationary Pressures (incl. NI)	2,950	0	2,950	1,500	1,450
National Living Wage	250	0	250	-	250
Adult Social Care Pressures / Demography	3,210	(2,300)	910	910	-
Adult Social Care Provider Market	1,700	(1,000)	700	700	-
Home to School Transport	1,000	0	1,000	1,000	-
Children's Services Demography	1,410	0	1,410	1,410	-
High Cost Children's Placements	500	0	500	-	500
General Contingency - Economic Uncertainty	1,000	0	1,000	-	1,000
<b>Total Service Risk</b>	<b>12,020</b>	<b>(3,300)</b>	<b>8,720</b>	<b>5,520</b>	<b>3,200</b>
<b>Total Contingency</b>	<b>17,475</b>	<b>(7,545)</b>	<b>9,930</b>	<b>5,520</b>	<b>4,410</b>
<b>Total Variation on Contingencies</b>				<b>5,520</b>	
Available balance from "Mitigating Future Financial Risks" reserve	9,900				
£1.5m recommended by SAPC to support pay award	(1,500)				
£0.15m approved by SAPC to support staff hardship fund	(150)				
Further £0.15m approved by SAPC to support staff hardship fund	(150)				
Additional £500 cost of living award paid January 2023	(2,540)				
Committed to Helping Hand scheme: £1m in 2023/24 and £1m in 2024/25	(2,000)				3,560
<b>Total resources earmarked to mitigate further pressures</b>					<b>7,970</b>

## 12.Outstanding Sundry Debts

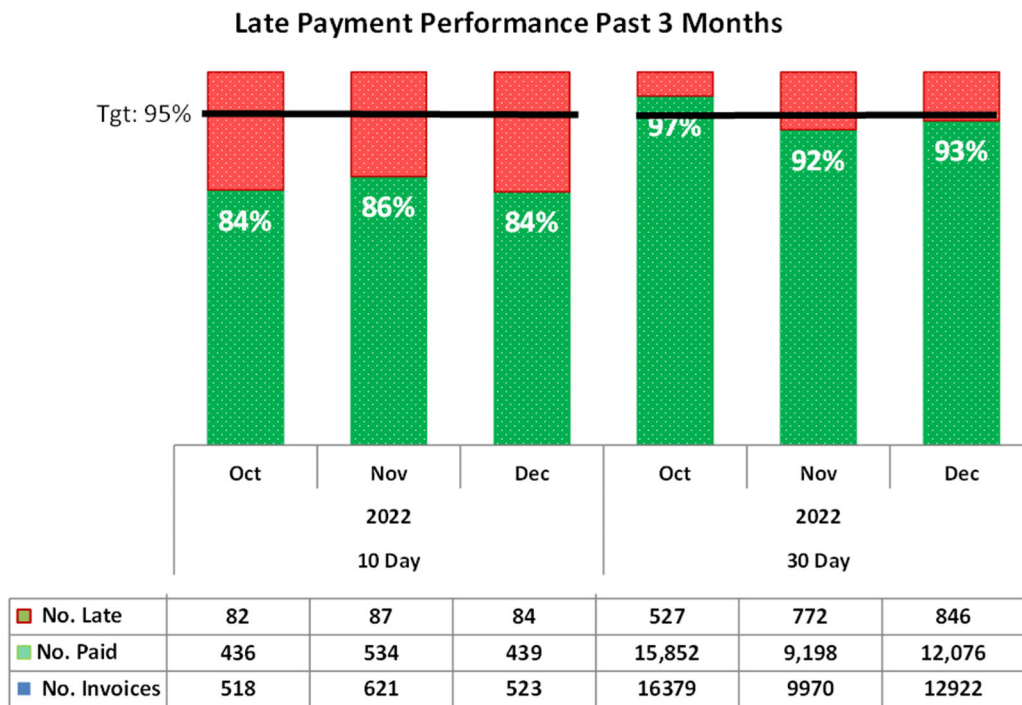
Figure 2: Sundry Debts Table



- 12.1 Total sundry debt sits at £19.5m at the end of Q3, an increase of £1.8m from Q2. Of the £19.5m, £15.1m is unsecured with an age profile of: less than 30 days £4.9m (32%); 31-90 days £1.2m (8%) and over 90 days £9.0m (60%).
- 12.2 Unsecured debt over 90 days has seen a £0.4m reduction between Q2 and Q3 from £9.4m down to £9m. This reduction has been within the medium and high-risk categories, with the improvement keeping us well below the £10m KPI.
- 12.3 During the quarter we have seen an increase in our billing, with a 15% increase in invoices sent out to customers compared to Q2. This increase is reflected in our debt aged less than 30 days, but we are continuing to chase invoices as soon as they become overdue.

### 13.Late Payments

Figure 3: Late Payments Table



- 13.1 For Q3 our overall invoice payment performance is 93.9% paid “on-time” compared with 90.8% achieved in Q2 and 94.1% over the last 12 months.
- 13.2 Q3 performance for invoices with 10-day payment terms is 85.4%, up 0.6% from Q2, and our rolling 12 month performance is 86.4%.
- 13.3 Our performance against the 10-day payment terms generally tends to fall below the expected 95%, and we find that the reasons for this vary and are rarely consistent. When issues arise, we are working alongside our services to resolve them, but any delays with a small number of vendors can have a large impact on our performance. We are continuing to remind Services of the expectations around payment performance.
  - a) Our 30-day payment performance for Q3 is 94.2%, up 3.1% from Q2, and our rolling 12 month performance is 94.4%.
  - b) Our performance for 30-day payment is generally good, but we are still working to address any issues that arise and put in place effective solutions to increase our payment performance. We have identified improvements that could be made regarding our utility’s payments, so we are introducing paying by Direct Debit to ensure that our payments are not delayed. Regular meetings have also been held with Client Transport to better

understand challenges that are being faced, and further guidance has been developed & provided by Finance to improve query resolutions.

#### 13.4 Improvement Actions:

- a) As part of the AURA workstream we are currently reviewing our Accounts Payable functions and looking in more details at our vendors and our payment channels. As part of this process, we are reviewing our existing methods of making a payment and as we move in to phase 3 of the AURA workstream we hope to see some developments across our processes that improve our 10-day and 30-day payment performance.
- b) Client Transport have managed to reduce the number of invoices they have in workflow by 80%, and we would hope to see improvements to the payment performance of these invoices now that the backlog has been cleared.