



# Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee Agenda

Date: Thursday 2 February 2023

Time: 10.00 am

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

## Membership:

B Chapple OBE (Chairman), R Carington (Vice-Chairman), P Brazier, M Caffrey, M Collins, P Cooper, C Cornell, E Culverhouse, E Gemmell, M Knight, A Poland-Goodyer, M Rand, L Sullivan, D Watson, W Whyte and A Wood

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Agenda Item	Time	Page No
1 Apologies for Absence		
2 Declarations of Interest		

**3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting** **5 - 10**  
That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

**4 Public Questions**  
Public Questions is an opportunity for people who live, work or study in Buckinghamshire to put a question to a Select Committee. The Committee will hear from members of the public who have submitted questions in advance relating to items on the agenda. The Cabinet Member, relevant key partners and responsible officers will be invited to respond.

Further information on how to register can be found here:  
<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/get-involved-with-council-decisions/select-committees/>

**5 East West Rail** **10:10** **11 - 16**  
The Committee will receive an update report on the East West Rail project and hear from representatives from East West Rail.

**Contributors:**

East West Rail Alliance

Mark Cuzner, Director

Jez Baldock, Deputy Director

East West Rail Company

Kate Campbell, Senior Communications Manager

Network Rail

Peter Hume, Joint Sponsor Lead

Cllr Steve Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport

Cllr Peter Martin, Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport – HS2/East West Rail

Ian Thompson, Corporate Director for Planning, Growth & Sustainability

Dr Laura Leech, Head of Major Projects

Susan Browning, EWR Stakeholder & Team Leader

- |          |  |              |                |
|----------|--|--------------|----------------|
| <b>6</b> | <b>Public Transport</b><br>The Committee will receive an update on Public Transport including progress on Demand Responsive Pilots.<br><br><b>Contributors:</b><br>Cllr Steve Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport<br>Richard Barker, Corporate Director for Communities<br>Lindsey Vallis, Service Director for Transport Services<br>James Loader, Head of Public Transport   | <b>11:00</b> | <b>17 - 26</b> |
| <b>7</b> | <b>Waste Options Appraisal &amp; Strategy</b><br>To provide Members with information regarding the work being undertaken to assess the future operational arrangements relating to waste collection & street scene services and the planned approach regarding the Council's future Waste Strategy.<br><br><b>Contributors:</b><br>Cllr Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment<br>Richard Barker, Corporate Director for Communities<br>Martin Dickman, Service Director for Neighbourhood Services<br>Claire Oakins, Waste Strategy Manager<br>Graham Neale-Flower, Project Officer | <b>11:30</b> | <b>27 - 34</b> |
| <b>8</b> | <b>Work Programme</b><br>The Select Committee will consider the upcoming work programme.   | <b>12:00</b> | <b>35 - 36</b> |
| <b>9</b> | <b>Date of Next Meeting</b><br>Thursday 30 March at 2pm.   |              |                |

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Agenda Item 3  
**Buckinghamshire Council**  
**Transport, Environment &  
Climate Change Select Committee**

## Minutes

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2022 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.04 PM**

### MEMBERS PRESENT

B Chapple OBE, R Carington, P Brazier, M Caffrey, M Collins, C Cornell, E Culverhouse, S Guy, A Poland-Goodyer, M Rand, L Sullivan, D Watson, W Whyte and S Wilson

### OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

S Broadbent, J Jordan, R Stuchbury, S Bambrick, R Barker, E Barlow, A Beckett, C Platts, L Vallis, C Ward and R Zierler

### Agenda Item

#### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors E Culverhouse, E Gemmell, D King, G Williams and A Wood. Councillor S Wilson had substituted in for Councillor E Gemmell.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor W Whyte declared a personal interest in Item 6 as the founder of the Bucks EVs Electric Car Club.

#### 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record.

#### 4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Four public questions were considered at the meeting as attached to the agenda, and verbal responses were provided by the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment. The questions and the responses are appended to the minutes.

#### 5 CLIMATE CHANGE & AIR QUALITY STRATEGY: ANNUAL REVIEW

The Chairman welcomed the Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor J Jordan, to the meeting and invited her to present the report to the Committee. The Deputy Cabinet Member outlined the Council's important role in controlling and reducing its emissions, and that all the Cabinet Member portfolios were engaged in this process. The Council also had an

influencing role over its subcontractors and communities.

Compared to the 1990 baseline, the Council had reduced its carbon output by 70% and in 2021/22, the Council was responsible for 6,095 tonnes of greenhouse gas. The Council was on track towards its target of reducing its emissions by 75% by 2030. The Deputy Cabinet Member highlighted a number of Council actions and initiatives and outlined the success of the team in securing £10.3m funding from grant sources to progress initiatives.

The following points were noted during the Select Committee discussion:

- Although the Council was closing in on its 75% reduction in emissions by 2030, the progress on this could vary year to year, for instance by an excessively cold winter. To reach 100% by 2030 would require significant acceleration of expenditure.
- Funding of £7.4m that had been secured was split across three programmes:
  - Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme (GHGLAD) 1b – this completed earlier in 2022.
  - GHGLAD 2 – this completed in September 2022. The confirmed number of retrofits was being calculated.
  - Sustainable Warmth – currently active until March 2023.
- As per Government guidance on third parties, Veolia had not been included in the council's carbon emission calculations as they reported their own figures to national Government.
- Grant funding from Defra to create air quality toolkits for Community Boards would assist tackling the issue of engine idling in problematic areas. The toolkits would help by raising awareness of air quality locally and include an air quality sensor to record air pollution levels. Additionally, the service was able to assist with queries on any potential local schemes via [climatechange@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:climatechange@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) to ensure local organisations worked efficiently.
- Consideration would be given on how to maximise Member turnout of future education programmes planned by the service. Members agreed the importance of this and suggestions from the Select Committee included day and evening events as well as the possibility to make the sessions mandatory.
- The council's target and carbon budget were based on a carbon audit baseline that had been carried out during the council's unitary formulation to calculate the legacy councils' emissions. The target and budget needed to balance the need to be timely and deliverable with calculations taking into account assumptions on council buildings, the fleet and the tree planting programme. The Council followed the Government approach of having multi-year carbon budgets to take into account annual fluctuation.
- The Pension Fund Committee was best placed to consider and influence the environmental impact of investment funds.
- The Council engaged with Highways England regarding fund streams available on the strategic road network and both organisations wanted to reach net-zero by 2050. The Council was a consultee on upcoming schemes at Bisham Roundabout and Handy Cross which aimed to improve flow and ease congestion.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Cabinet Member and the officers for the annual report and acknowledged the work that had been carried out under the Strategy.

## **6 ELECTRIC VEHICLE ACTION PLAN**

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor S Broadbent, to the meeting and invited him to introduce the report. Before doing so, the Cabinet Member updated that, subject to contractual confirmation, the Council had received a provisional award in full for

its bid to install 128 charging bays. This would be a significant boost for the county's infrastructure. The Cabinet Member also reiterated that the Council had budgeted £800,000 to top-up Government funding on EV charging where necessary. The council's second bid would be focused on assisting Town and Parish Councils access charging points in publicly accessible car parks or spaces.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that under the new highways procurement, Balfour Beatty Living Places, as Buckinghamshire Highways, would have smaller EVs and EV chargers in depots by the end of the first year. Further opportunities for fleet electrification would be considered in future.

The following points were noted during the Select Committee's discussion:

- The Cabinet Member welcomed the suggestion that the team speak with Coldharbour Parish regarding its Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) Project which combined street lighting with on street charging.
- Various Members expressed concerns with the performance of BP Pulse particularly when compared to other providers. The Cabinet Member advised that the contract had been awarded based on a procurement exercise where providers had bid against the council's criteria. The Council had an improved relationship with BP Pulse and its service level agreement covered incident severity and response times which ranged between four hours and seven days. There was an overall agreement that 95% of the network would be working at all times. One Member's comment regarding issues with BP Pulse's Radio Frequency Identify Card (RFID) would be investigated.
- The wireless charging trial had been a Department for Transport (DfT) scheme in conjunction with the Council that had now ceased. The Council was awaiting the data from the Open University which would be available to TECC.
- Pavement channels required numerous considerations which included best practice, legal restrictions, parking and maintenance schedules.
- Plans for EV chargers at the Wycombe office car park would be investigated outside the meeting.

**Action: R. Zierler**

- Members reiterated the importance of ensuring the right charger was in the right place and took dwell time into account. Policy work was underway on parking reviews to consider where improvements were needed to better reflect dwell time and EV chargers. This policy would also consider aspects of enforcement to ensure a turnover of EV users.
- Power grid connections provided by Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) were proving challenging, with one quotation for installation being in excess of £50,000. Consideration of sites took into account potential DNO connection costs.
- The service was investigating contingencies for increased demand which included discussions with England's Economic Heartland.
- Car park viability was based on a threshold capacity of over 40 spaces as EV chargers took up around eight spaces. Beaconsfield featured in a number of potential locations due to the Council having large enough assets in the town and being densely populated. The Cabinet Member encouraged Town and Parish Councils with ownership of car parks to come forward for consideration in ORCS bid, 2 which would enable a greater spread of coverage, and advised that the service could help Town and Parish Councils with their own bids to Government. The Chairman noted that Members should relay this to their respective Community Boards.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member and the officer for the update.

## 7 SCHOOL TRANSPORT

The Cabinet Member introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- School Transport was subject to inflationary pressures from suppliers.
- The service was currently carrying out a three-year service review with re-procurements intended for financial and service efficiency.
- There had been an increase of 700 mainstream pupils and an additional 750 new SEND pupils in September 2022.
- The take-up of Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) had been successful.
- A public consultation was in progress on the Spare Seats scheme which aimed to simplify the charging structure for customers.

The following points were made during the Select Committee discussion:

- The Cabinet Member was aware of recent correspondence regarding concerns of a bus service run by Carousel between The Chalfonts and Amersham and would be answered outside the meeting.
- SEND transport was protected under statutory provision so would continue to be delivered despite demand pressures. The Cabinet Member asked any specific cases of concern be referred to the service.
- Home to school transport and SEND transport were both funded by general council funding. PTBs required a needs assessment and agreement with parents where it was financially sensible and suitable for the child. The council's website contained clear, transparent guidance on PTBs; one example of PTB usage was hiring a child minder to monitor siblings whilst a parent took another child to school. PTB funding was only during term time and could be flexible to include micromobility measures, such as electric bikes or e-scooters, where appropriate.
- One Member commended the improvements in the service and the recent briefing on the spare seat scheme.
- To tackle emissions, the contracts for School Transport required suppliers to upgrade towards cleaner vehicles. The majority of buses needed to be Euro5 by September 2023. All new contracts for smaller vehicles, such as taxis and minibuses, in September 2022 needed to be Euro6. This policy was dovetailed with policies in taxi licensing which had requirements for newer Euro5 and Euro6.
- Further information regarding the benchmark category for a low-income family, the percentage that met this threshold out of the 7,850 pupils and the increase of this percentage would be investigated and provided outside the meeting. The Cabinet Member advised that this was complex and that people could be eligible across different criteria.

**Action: L. Vallis / C. Platts**

The Chairman thanked Members for their discussions, and the Cabinet Member and officers for their recent Home to School Transport briefing.

## 8 INQUIRY REPORT: POLLUTION IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S RIVERS AND CHALK STREAMS

The Chairman invited the Chairman of the Inquiry Group, Councillor R Carington, to introduce the report to the Select Committee. In his introduction, the Chairman of the Inquiry Group outlined the inquiry process timeline and the organisations that had been involved. The Chairman thanked the Group Members, officers, the scrutiny officer and external organisations for their input throughout the inquiry. Highlights of the recommendations in the report included the need for further investment by the water companies in Buckinghamshire, what the Council



could do to influence water quality and improvements required by the Environment Agency (EA).

The Chairman invited Councillor R Stuchbury to ask his pre-submitted questions which were as follows:

- i. *Has work begun to expand the Chesham Sewage Treatment Works and do we know its progress? Did the Inquiry hear of this as part of the report?*
- ii. *Will the same efforts that have been applied in the Chess catchment area be applied in the Thames and Great River Ouse areas?*
- iii. *Will the report be highlighted to the Buckinghamshire MPs in light of the legislation passed in Parliament in 2021?*

In response, the Chairman of the Inquiry Group, Councillor R Carington, answered as follows:

- i. The inquiry heard about progress at the Chesham Sewage Treatment Works from Thames Water when they attended a meeting in person as part of the evidence gathering. The site needed to increase its Flow to Full Treatment by March 2025, and Thames Water planned to deliver this scheme in 2023 to benefit the environment and resolve spills into the River Chess. Thames Water advised that the scheme would deliver an increased treatment capacity from 240 litres per second to 353 litres per second.
- ii. The Chess catchment had an active partnership that was selected by Thames Water to be one of three Smarter Water Catchment Programmes in their area. The inquiry group recognised the benefit of this programme and its report recommended that the Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change lobbied the water companies to invest in other programmes in the county.
- iii. It was intended that the report would be circulated to Buckinghamshire MPs in due course.

Members of the Select Committee considered the report and noted that:

- Engagement from the water companies, Thames Water and Anglian Water, had been positive and it was hoped the relationships could be maintained.
- Disappointment was expressed regarding the EA not attending a meeting either virtually or in person. One Member was encouraged to share his ward experience of a lack of EA engagement with the Leader as part of the linked recommendation in the inquiry report.
- Gully emptying was an important activity that needed to continue.
- It was suggested that the report be shared to the creator of a petition that the Council received that ran between November – December 2021.

**Action: C Ward**

- The report would be presented to Cabinet on Tuesday 15 November.

The Select Committee Chairman thanked his Vice-Chairman for leading on the report and thanked all Members of the Inquiry Group for their work.

## 9 WORK PROGRAMME

One Member raised that when HS2 attended Select Committee, an undertaking had been given that a bailey bridge would be used over the A418. It was reported that this was now not being done due to costs and instead traffic lights would be used on the A418 for construction and staff traffic which would impact Aylesbury and Stone and be compounded by closures of the Marsh Lane crossing and Blackthorn Road at the same time. Concern was expressed over upcoming HS2 plans that may deviate from their original plans with the Council.

- 10**    **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**  
Thursday 2 February 2023 at 10am.



## Report to the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee

**Date:** Thursday 2 February 2023

**Title:** **East West Rail Progress Report**

**Cabinet Member(s):** *Cllr Steven Broadbent*  
*Cllr Peter Martin (Deputy)*

**Contact officer:** Susan Browning, EWR Stakeholder & Team Leader

### 1. Introduction

The third year of construction has seen continued activity on the Buckinghamshire region of the East West Rail route. The line has required the building of new highway bridges and new footway bridges as well as the remodelling of many existing bridges, significant earthworks, and the preparation of the site in Winslow for the new station and new carpark to be built.

### 2. Progress update

2.1 An update of the progress / construction of the project will be given by East West Rail Alliance (EWRA) during their presentation to the TECC Select Committee on the 2 February 2023.

### 3. Current key issues

3.1 Buckinghamshire Council has taken steps throughout 2022 to assist and support local communities with mitigating the impacts of disruption caused by the East West Rail line being constructed through the north of the county, by ensuring EWR Alliance (EWRA) are being held to account.

3.2 Current key issues include road closures and associated traffic management, road repairs, mud on the road, EWR interface with HS2, the Aylesbury spur, environmental impact and biodiversity net gain, rolling stock, freight and noise pollution.

## Road Closures and Traffic Management

3.3 This is one of the most significant ongoing issues for the Council and impact on our communities. The issues peaked in August 2022 with EWRA's submission of their forward programme for road closures and traffic management (temporary traffic lights) to end 2022. EWRA applied for multiple road closures and temporary traffic lights commencing early September 2022 which would have led to problems with traffic flow, diversion routes and conflict with other parties (including HS2, TfB and Utilities) on our roads in the north of the county. Regrettably the Council had to refuse some permits and has invested a significant amount of resource and time to work together with EWRA to find better and more workable solutions. Working together has led to improved outcomes to minimise disruption on communities.

3.4 *Key areas of concern include:*

- *Impact on our communities* – EWRA road closures and temporary traffic lights impacting traffic flow and our communities' ability to go about their daily lives to get to/from work, the school run, doctors' appointments etc.
- *Community notifications for road closures and temporary traffic lights* – Councillors and residents have raised concerns particularly in the first half of 2022 with timings of communications and notifications issued for construction works traffic management and road closures. This has improved.
- *HGVs using non-permitted roads* – complaints have been increasing in the community regarding EWRA HGVs using non-permitted routes through villages and rural roads and associated driver behaviour.
- *Emergency Services access* – concerns have been raised as to whether the HS2 and EWR national infrastructure projects road closure planning is considering properly the essential requirement for maintaining access for emergency services.
- *School Transport* – concerns have been raised regarding ensuring that all EWRA road closures must incorporate planned access for school transport / buses or provide alternative solutions.
- *Diversionary Routes* – diversion routes have been put in place by EWRA for construction works and closed bridges. This has led to a number of complaints from residents regarding increased traffic through villages, increased journey times for commuters, and increased costs to residents and businesses following lengthy diversions.
- *Impact on our businesses and requirement for compensation* – concerns have been raised by Councillors and businesses that the extensive EWRA road closures over the past 2 years has had a significant commercial impact on many north Buckinghamshire businesses who are struggling to stay afloat.

- 3.5 Compensation Claims – the Council requires those businesses and residents impacted by the project to be engaged with by Network Rail, and EWRA where appropriate, in a timely fashion to assess and process claims.

### **Road repairs**

- 3.6 Councillors and residents have been concerned by the state of the roads impacted by EWRA construction works. EWRA have multiple compounds situated in the North of Buckinghamshire and a major number of HGV's using B roads and villages not designed for HGV traffic. This has caused significant damage and defects to our roads and verges.
- 3.7 The Council has been engaged in extensive discussions with EWRA to repair and reinstate our roads and verges. The permanent road repairs and reinstatement programme is dependent upon EWRA's compound demobilisation programme and significant reduction in HGV movements. EWRA have fully engaged with the Council in this process and are committed to repairing the roads. Permanent repairs commenced in Q4 2022 and will continue throughout 2023 and 2024. In the interim EWRA will undertake a programme of planned temporary repairs as well as ad-hoc urgent/emergency repairs.
- 3.8 Permanent Repairs – the permanent road repairs programme commenced in Q4 2022 with Queen Catherine Road in Steeple Claydon, and Whaddon Road in Newton Longville completed. Permanent repairs and reinstatement will continue throughout 2023 including Verney Road, Little Horwood Road, Herds Hill, Ox Lane & Lenborough Road and Sandhill Road. The programme will continue into 2024.
- 3.9 Planned Temporary repairs – a programme of planned temporary repairs is being undertaken by EWRA in the interim to maintain road useability and safety prior to permanent repairs taking place once HGV movements have significantly reduced.
- 3.10 Currently Ox Lane remains closed to the public due to significant damage caused by EWR HGVs and exacerbated by flooding in the area. Permanent repairs and opening are dependent on the EWRA compound demobilisation and reduction in HGV movements, currently estimated for Q3 2023.

### **Mud on the Road**

- 3.11 Mud on Buckinghamshire roads generated by EWRA works and HGV movements in and out of their many works Compounds across North Buckinghamshire presented a significant issue on our highways in November 2021 and has been an ongoing problem since. Mud on the road creates a risk to public safety and the Council is holding EWRA to account on this issue requesting updated monitoring and mitigation plans, review of equipment efficacy and driver behaviour.

### **EWR/HS2 interface**

- 3.12 The Council is keen that the handover of civils works in the Calvert area to EWRA from HS2 Ltd and their contractor EKFB happens on time. These East West Rail civils works are being undertaken by HS2 on behalf of EWRA which presents a programme risk.
- 3.13 The Council has requested from both HS2 Ltd and their contractor EKFB on a number of occasions for a copy of the interface and handover documentation in order to understand the risks associated with the handover and mitigate any risk linked to the Council, to facilitate the process to ensure EWRA programme timings do not slip resulting in on-going community impact. This documentation has yet to be provided by HS2.

### **Aylesbury Spur**

- 3.14 Buckinghamshire Council continues to support the project on the understanding that the East West Railway will include a rail link to Aylesbury. No formal go ahead from the Department for Transport (DfT) has been given to date. The facilitating infrastructure is currently being built and the Council continues to proactively lobby the DfT and Network Rail to confirm that the necessary funding has been secured and the Aylesbury spur will proceed.

### **Environmental Impact and Bio-Diversity Net Gain**

- 3.15 Vegetation removal has been part of the East West Rail construction works and has caused significant concern amongst communities and key stakeholders. To mitigate the environmental impact of these works the Council ecologists have carried out multiple checks during bird nesting season and action has been taken to protect hedges and trees by reworking some planned removals.
- 3.16 EWRA have actively planned their construction works wherever possible to minimise vegetation removal and impact on the environment. They are creating 20 Ecological Compensation Sites (ECS) providing habitats for species including newts, butterflies, bats, birds, badgers, otters and reptiles, with 150,000 new trees and plants.
- 3.17 EWRA have a project bio-diversity net gain target of +10%. They are currently assessing how to achieve this throughout 2023 and 2024, and we have requested Buckinghamshire to be a focal county for achieving this target.

### **Diesel Rolling Stock**

- 3.18 EWR Company has advised that the East West Rail service will commence in 2025 with diesel rolling stock. The Council and other key stakeholders including the local Member of Parliament are robustly challenging this position with the DfT and Network Rail requesting alternative rolling stock solutions are considered for service launch including bi-mode.

### **Freight**

- 3.19 The East West Rail line is being built to accommodate freight as well as passenger movements. The Council and other key stakeholders are challenging Network Rail and EWR Company to provide information to our communities on the likely scope of freight movements and importantly how this may increase over time.

### **Noise Pollution**

- 3.20 Communities are concerned by potential noise pollution when the East West Railway enters into service in 2025. Particularly from passenger train and freight train movements which may operate late at night or in the early hours of the morning. Also, significant concerns have been raised by line side residents regarding potential noise impact from the new Winslow Station tannoy announcements.

## **4. Actions taken by Buckinghamshire Council to support residents in the construction of the line**

- 4.1 Over the course of the year Buckinghamshire Council has continued to assist residents, communities, and businesses with mitigating the impact of the construction of the East West Rail line by its continued investment (through Work in Kind) in funding dedicated officers to the EWR project to support communities to address the issues set out above.
- 4.2 Additionally, Buckinghamshire Council still funds two marshals to support residents with the construction of both HS2 and EWR. Marshals are on hand to go on site and investigate issues, meet face to face with residents and raise concerns with works relating to major projects in the county.
- 4.3 The Council is working with the East West Rail Alliance to secure the necessary remuneration from the Alliance for both temporary and permanent road repairs to be completed to align with their on-going construction activities and their compound demobilisation programme.
- 4.4 Additionally, the Council continues to proactively lobby the Department for Transport and Network Rail to confirm that the necessary funding has been secured to deliver the link to Aylesbury.

## **5. Your questions and views**

- 5.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. This can be done by telephone: 07734 126794 or email: [susan.browning@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:susan.browning@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).





## Report to Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee

<b>Date:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Public Transport in Buckinghamshire
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Steven Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport
<b>Contact officer:</b>	James Loader, Head of Public Transport
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	none specific
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That the Committee note and comment on the content of the report

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Public Transport Service comprises three separate teams, the Fleet Management Team, Schools' Sustainable Travel Team and the Public Transport Team.
- 1.2 The Fleet Management Team is responsible for managing the arrangements for Council-owned vehicles. There are approximately 200 vehicles managed by the team, including school minibuses, library vans and the vans of the Local Area Technicians within the Highways Service. As well as arranging the purchase and internal leasing of vehicles to client service areas within the Council, the team also oversees the maintenance arrangements for each vehicle.
- 1.3 The School's Sustainable Travel Team are responsible for co-ordinating schools' Travel Plan activities, promoting cycling and walking to schools in particular through the Footsteps and Bikeability initiatives, and the provision of School Crossing Patrollers.
- 1.4 As part of this work, the Team helps and encourages schools to develop Travel Plans through the Modeshift Stars platform, with the primary aims of reducing private car journeys to school or reducing congestion in their immediate facilities. As of December 2022, Buckinghamshire Council has 60 school accredited by Modeshift Stars, making this the top performing large local authority nationally. This area of

work is an important part of the Council's efforts towards improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions.

- 1.5 The Public Transport team manages the network of contracted bus services within the County. This includes services which are not commercially viable, for example rural bus services such as the County Rider in the Buckingham area or less-viable urban or near-urban services like services 27 and 28 in High Wycombe. This also includes the Demand Responsive Transport pilots, produces publicity and information regarding bus services, including at the roadside and on the internet, and relays the impact of roadworks and road closures to bus companies. The team also maintain a relationship with commercial bus operators and produce the annual Bus Service Improvement Plans.
- 1.6 This briefing covers the activities of the Public Transport Team, with a particular focus on the ongoing Demand Responsive Transport pilot in High Wycombe and the overall status of the bus network in Buckinghamshire.

## **2. Main content of report**

### **Legislative and Policy Context**

- 2.1 In England, outside London, bus services are deregulated. This means that commercial bus companies may, at their sole discretion, run bus services that are open to the public provided that they are registered with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner. This includes the routes these services run, the fares that are offered and the timings and regularity of the service. These are services that are considered as being run "commercially".
- 2.2 Under the Transport Act 1985, the Council has the power to provide bus services in addition to those which are operated commercially, but only where said services are not already provided or not provided to a requisite standard.
- 2.3 As of 2021, each year Local Transport Authorities are required to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). This sets out the Council's aspirations towards improving and developing bus services within the County. It acts as a *de facto* bidding document against which the Department for Transport (DfT) may award funding to the Council to implement some or all of the measures within it. Disappointingly, despite having developed an ambitious and compelling BSIP for Buckinghamshire, the Council, along with circa 30 other Local Transport Authorities, received no funding from DfT in connection to the first BSIP. The current [BSIP](#) is published on the Council's website.
- 2.4 The BSIP acts as a statement of intent from the Local Transport Authority, against which further funding allocations may be judged. This will lead to the formation of an Enhanced Partnership between commercial bus companies and the Local

Transport Authority, which is the delivery mechanism for any future funding which may be awarded. Buckinghamshire Council is currently working on our Enhanced Partnership, which is intended to be completed during the Spring 2023.

### **Bus Services update**

- 2.5 The Council has a net budget of circa £2.05 million net budget, which supports:
- wholly-contracted services in rural areas or suburban areas which are not served comprehensively by the commercial network, or
  - subsidy to commercial operators to make minor adjustments to their commercial network to provide an additional level of service than might otherwise be commercially viable.
- 2.6 In Buckinghamshire there are 95 bus services provided in total, of which 28 are supported in their entirety by the Council. In 2019/20, which is the most recent years' worth of data published by the Government that was not significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, there were 7.8 million passenger journeys made on local bus services within Buckinghamshire, with 11.8 million miles operated by bus companies of which 2.2million were supported by the Local Authority.
- 2.7 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on bus usage nationwide, with a 90% reduction in bus usage at its lowest point during the Spring and early Summer of 2020. However, by May 2022, usage had recovered to around 80% of its pre-pandemic levels, although this recovery has been slower for older persons and those with a disability. Full data tables charting the recovery of the bus network in the year to May 2022, along with a narrative discussion around the current situation, is included within the [BSIP](#)
- 2.8 Bus companies have been receiving various means of support from the Government during the pandemic. Initially this was through Covid Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG) during the first year of the pandemic and latterly through Bus Recovery Grant (BRG). These grants are intended to providing funding which somewhat mitigates the gap between actual revenue lost and the revenue required to maintain the current level of service across the bus network, with the aim of averting mass reductions in service during the recovery period. BRG is due to end at the end of March 2023.
- 2.9 Local Transport Authorities have also been eligible for grants to support services which run under contract, under CBSSG initially and latterly through the Local Transport Fund (LTF). Buckinghamshire Council is in receipt of these grants, which are being used to support the non-commercial bus network as required.

- 2.10 The increase in the rate of inflation and the general cost of living is having an impact on the bus industry. Fuel prices, labour costs and the cost of parts have also risen sharply in 2022, as has been well documented nationally. In addition, there has been a national shortage of drivers dating back to the autumn of 2021 and whilst that has reduced over time, companies have increased their rates of pay in order to attract and retain BRG. BRG is due to end in March 2023, with no replacement announced by Government as yet. Bus companies are still having to deal with usage figures which are below their pre-pandemic levels and with cost increases associated with wider market pressures. This presents them with a challenge on the level of certainty over their commercial network and may additionally present a challenge to Local Transport Authorities if there are new gaps in service that we may be required to address.
- 2.11 Buckinghamshire Council has an active and positive relationship with the main bus operators within the County. Over the Summer of 2022, a series of “Network Review” meetings took place, as was required by the Government, aimed at mitigating against a scenario where BRG ended in October 2022 (as was originally intended). This resulted in the successful rationalisation of parts of the network to reduce competition between commercial operators meaning that the resources of the bus companies could be more efficiently distributed without an unacceptable loss of service.
- 2.12 So far, only one service has been lost entirely as a result of the cost increases and reduced usage, a service between Chesham and Uxbridge although many of the constituent parts of the service are maintained through other parallel services.
- 2.13 However, as BRG comes to an end and operating costs remain high, commercial operators may need to make additional difficult decisions about more-marginal parts of the network. The Council will be required to work with operators to attempt to mitigate loss of services on these parts of the network. Ultimately the bus operators will be responsible for these decisions and due to the deregulated nature of the market, the Council’s ability to influence and intervene in such decisions is limited.
- 2.14 Whilst inflationary pressures on the Council’s £2.05m local bus subsidy budget can for the moment be offset by the LTF grant, if there are significant additional calls on this budget where services are withdrawn then decisions over what is affordable to the Council would need to be taken and may include:
- a) Whether to preserve the withdrawn service at all or at a reduced level, attempting to cover key movements
  - b) Whether to reduce other services to cover the additional expenditure within the existing budget
  - c) Whether the existing budget needs to be increased in order to fund additional services

- 2.15 The Council is beginning work on a review of the criteria and strategy behind the spend of the bus subsidy budget, to ensure that decisions to subsidise routes are appropriate, transparent, and achieve the best value for money and outcomes for passengers in Buckinghamshire. This work will be carried out during 2023/24.
- 2.16 The Public Transport Team will also take a role in delivering on improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions through the bus industry. Data collected as part of the BSIP update in the autumn of 2022 told us that over one third of buses on the network in Buckinghamshire are at EURO VI standard which is the cleanest standard of diesel vehicle available. Public Transport is, of its own accord, an excellent way of making a difference in this area where one full single decker bus could take up to 40 single-occupancy vehicles off the road.
- 2.17 There is, understandably, a continued interest in the move towards alternatively fuelled vehicles - such as electric buses. Aside from the need for funding to effect change in this area, one of the other primary constraints is the capabilities of operators to upgrade facilities at their depots and whether the National Grid can support this in their localities. Work to explore and understand these constraints is just beginning and the Public Transport Team will feed into this with a view to ensuring that the Council is in a good position to react if and when future Government funding in this area is announced.

## **Demand Responsive Transport**

### **High Wycombe**

- 2.18 Buckinghamshire Council were successful in submitting a bid to the Rural Mobility Fund (RMF) in 2020. This provides part-funding for two pilot schemes in High Wycombe and Aylesbury. These are two out of seventeen such schemes in the Country, and only one other local transport authority was awarded funding for two schemes.
- 2.19 £736k was allocated to a scheme for High Wycombe that covers the suburban villages and areas of Booker, Loudwater, Wooburn Green, Daws Hill, Wycombe Marsh and Daws Hill.
- 2.20 Demand Responsive Transport is a flexible type of bus service that allows users to book their journeys on demand as they require it, between any two points within the operational area. This is instead of a traditionally routed and scheduled bus service but at fares that are in line with them.
- 2.21 The High Wycombe scheme launched in September 2022 following a procurement exercise that awarded a contract to Carousel Buses, who partner with technology provider Via, who are also providing the technology solution to 11 other Rural Mobility Fund schemes.

- 2.22 The service is operational five-days-a-week between the hours of 6am and 7pm. Passengers may book the service through an app, which shows the live position of the bus and other journey options available to them, or through a dedicated telephone line to a staffed control centre at Carousel Buses depot in High Wycombe. This ensures that those without access to an internet service can utilise the service. The service in High Wycombe is known as "[Pick Me Up](#)".
- 2.23 At the time of launch extensive marketing took place, including a leaflet door drop to households in key areas, to new arrivals at the Bucks New University and to key interested organisations. There was also a radio campaign that ran through local digital radio channels up until December 2022.
- 2.24 Bookings can be made in advance, by up to two weeks, or "on demand" with a target arrival time of 20 minutes. Passengers can also book for themselves, plus travelling companions. Because it is pre-bookable, there is certainty that that there will be wheelchair space available for anyone who needs it.
- 2.25 Close to 100 passengers per day were travelling by the end of the first week of service and by December 2022 this had increased to 220 passengers per day, when the milestone of 10,000 individual journeys was reached. Other key statistics include:
- a) In the region of a third of bookings made are in advance, rather than in real time.
  - b) Each vehicle is completing an average of 3.2 passenger trips per hour across the whole day, with this being higher at peak hours.
  - c) The app allows users to rate their experience at the end of their journey, with this giving an average rating of 4.9 out of 5 stars to date based on approximately 700 user ratings.
  - d) Around 20% of journeys are made by a concessionary pass holder, which is lower than traditional bus services where this figure is usually around 35-40%.
- 2.26 Usage is taking place across the whole geographical pilot area, with many journeys ending or starting in the town centre and rail station. Key origin points include Booker, Daws Hill and Wycombe Marsh. Many students are using the service to access education, with other use cases showing residents using the service to access the coachway or railways station for onward connections.
- 2.27 In December 2022, during the first contract review meeting with the providers, it was noted that the service was starting to become saturated at peak times, particularly on school days, with some challenge to meet demand within service expectations at peak periods. The scheme has been extremely successful and whilst it was considered that demand may present a challenge at some point within the

pilot period, this has arisen earlier than was anticipated. Work is on-going with the scheme providers to assess the options available to us to address this going forward.

- 2.28 Negative comments since service launch have primarily related to the coverage area of the scheme and that there are parts of the town in which the service is not available. The area of coverage was determined during the bidding process in conjunction with the Department for Transport and industry experts. Recurring mentions for areas that are not within the service area include Hazlemere, Terriers and Flackwell Heath.
- 2.29 Part of the future development of the service will be to test options for expanding the service and there is the flexibility to do this, provided that it is financially feasible and that it can be operated reliably. Some of these unserved areas would be more straight-forward to incorporate but all would need to be modelled in conjunction with the current service providers before implementation. In particular, Flackwell Heath sits between Wooburn Green and Daws Hill, which are both on the service and so this may be more easily incorporated than Hazlemere, for example. There are also clear environmental benefits where the service is passing through an unserved area regularly and could collect passengers on that route.
- 2.30 As a national project, the High Wycombe scheme is just one of seventeen awarded funding by the DfT. These are pilot projects being tested by the Department for Transport to ascertain where DRT is and isn't successful and regardless of the longevity of the service beyond the pilot period locally, there will be learning that can be shared nationally on the possibilities that DRT can offer.

### **Aylesbury**

- 2.31 A similar DRT scheme for Aylesbury was also procured during 2022 and it was anticipated that the scheme would launch in the months following the start of the High Wycombe scheme. Arriva the Shires were the successful bidder and therefore entered discussions with the Council for the award of the contract.
- 2.32 Disappointingly, Arriva have recently withdrawn from this process and have advised that they are no longer able to provide the scheme, citing increased operational costs, including increases in fuel and wage costs, as the reason that they are unable to honour their original bid.
- 2.33 The good performance of the High Wycombe DRT scheme demonstrates that services of this nature can be successful and do have a place within the local transport network. We remain committed to funding the scheme for the Aylesbury area and have had positive discussions with the Department for Transport (DfT) about the Council's ongoing participation in the Rural Mobility Fund.
- 2.34 As part of the re-procurement process for a provider to operate the Aylesbury area DRT pilot, we are reviewing and carefully considering the scope of the scheme and

options available to ensure that it is affordable and commercially viable, given current wider market pressures. This could include a small reduction in the operational hours of the service such as the removal of service provision on Sundays and the later service on weekday evenings, so to ensure that it is viable within the fixed budget available. This would also bring the service more consistently in line with the High Wycombe DRT scheme.

- 2.35 The re-procurement process will commence in January 2023, and it is anticipated that the process will be completed by May 2023, with the scheme then commencing in the late summer/early autumn of 2023.

### **3. Legal and financial implications**

#### **Legal implications**

- 3.1 S63 of the Transport Act 1985 states that: “In each non-metropolitan county of England and Wales it shall be the duty of the county council— (a)to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose”
- 3.2 S1 of the Concessionary Travel Act 2007 requires Buckinghamshire Council to issue, free of charge, a permit to anybody who “appears to the authority” to be an elderly or disabled person entitling them “to a concession consisting of a waiver of the fare for the journey by the operator of the service”. S3 of this Act states the Council must reimburse operators for the acceptance of this permit.

#### **Financial Implications**

- 3.3 Buckinghamshire Council has a net budget for the support of local bus services of £2.05 million in 2022/23. The Council has been paid three instalments of £207,000 of the Local Transport Fund to offset cost pressures and revenue losses as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing recovery, which will limit the Council’s exposure to inflation in the short-term.
- 3.4 Once the local transport fund is fully committed, there is the potential for these inflationary pressures to translate into budget pressures.
- 3.5 The Council has a £4.89 million budget for the reimbursement of operators in respect to the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. The Council’s current scheme of reimbursement is published <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/4518048/bc-encts-scheme-details-22-23.pdf>.



3.6 The Council was awarded £736k under the Rural Mobility Fund for the High Wycombe Demand Responsive Transport Scheme, matched with up to £2.02 million of section 106 contributions from Daws Hill.

## 4. Corporate Implications

4.1 The support of local bus services links to the Council's corporate priorities in the following ways:

- **Increasing prosperity** – public transport use dropped significantly during Covid-19, and is yet to fully recover. Provision of public transport is critical to reducing car use and carbon emissions as well as supporting social mobility and equality by providing access for individuals to education, jobs and work.
- **Strengthening our communities** – public transport provides access to work and access for our communities to essential services, including to medical and social provision, and links to wider infrastructure for those living in rural communities.
- **Improving the environment** – the Council is committed to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest. There is a need to reduce car use by providing more passenger journeys in a cleaner greener way. A walk to a bus stop or collection zone can also positively impact health and well-being.
- **Protecting the vulnerable** – public transport provides safe essential services for vulnerable users enabling and providing equality of access and supporting well-being.

## 5. Next Steps and Review

5.1 The keys next steps for the Public Transport Service are as follows:

- a) To present a report to the Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee in February 2023.
- b) The procurement of a Demand Responsive Transport scheme for Aylesbury between January 2023 and May 2023, ahead of an anticipated start date in the summer/autumn of 2023
- c) The delivery of the Bus Enhanced Partnership Scheme - operator consultation is currently taking place and will be followed by a key stakeholder consultation, with a view to forming the Enhanced Partnership by April 2023
- d) Bus service retendering - a routine programme of retendering local bus service contracts is taking place in between now and August 2023.

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## Report to Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee

<b>Date:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2023
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Waste Options Appraisal &amp; Strategy</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment
<b>Author:</b>	Martin Dickman, Service Director Neighbourhood Services ( <a href="mailto:Martin.Dickman@buckinghamshire.gov.uk">Martin.Dickman@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</a> )
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Claire Oakins, Waste Strategy Manager ( <a href="mailto:Claire.Oakins@buckinghamshire.gov.uk">Claire.Oakins@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</a> )
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>The Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee note the information regarding the waste options appraisal and strategy review</b>

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with an update on the work being undertaken to assess the future operational arrangements relating to waste collection & street scene services and the planned approach regarding the Council's future Waste Strategy.
- 1.2 The Council currently has a 'mixed economy' in respect of the delivery of waste collection and street scene services – the service in the North of the county is delivered in-house, and the service in the South is delivered through a 10 year contract with Veolia, which was let by the former Southern District Councils prior to the formation of the Unitary Council and commenced in September 2020.
- 1.3 The overall operational cost of waste collection services in the county is c.£18.2m per annum. The operational cost of the North Waste collection and Street Scene service

is c.£7.2m (this figure doesn't include the Commercial Trade Waste collection service). The operational cost of the Southern Waste collection & Street Scene service is c.£11m.

- 1.4 Nationally, a number of significant issues are being recommended as part of the Government's Environment Act and Resources and Waste Strategy which will impact on Local Authority waste services (policy, collection and disposal) and those implications need to be carefully considered when the Government release further information.
- 1.5 The objectives for this programme cover two key areas:
- To provide a detailed quantitative and qualitative options appraisal of the potential operational arrangements relating to waste collection and street scene services, as well as potential considerations for the harmonisation and/or optimisation of services in the future (waste improvement activities).
  - To review and refresh the Council's Waste Management strategy (along with any associated policies), which reflects the new future direction of travel for the service and considers the key legislative / policy drivers and the impact of these on waste management services.
- 1.6 The programme of work is politically, reputationally and commercially sensitive due to the nature of the options being appraised.

## 2. Content of report

### Background

- 2.1 As part of the business case for forming a unitary authority ('Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire' 2016) Waste Management was cited as one of the areas where harmonisation could deliver efficiency gains: *"A consistent and integrated waste collection and disposal service, creating an end-to-end waste service with a single, consistent strategy supported by joined-up delivery, enhancing performance and customer satisfaction, would be a major benefit from a single unitary council."*
- 2.2 The Council currently has a 'mixed economy' in respect of the delivery of waste collection and street scene services – the service in the North of the county is delivered in-house, and the service in the South is delivered through a 10 year contract with Veolia, which was let by the former Southern District Councils prior to the formation of the Unitary Council and commenced in September 2020.
- 2.3 Although the waste collection service operation is different between the North and the South of Buckinghamshire (in-house vs. outsourced), the services offered are very

similar from a resident's perspective and policies are largely aligned. The frequency of collection, materials collected, collection of excess recycling are all the same. The only differences are in the separate collection of paper/card in the Southern area (from other recycle) and bin colours and sizes. All communications are delivered as a single message, avoiding caveats about different services wherever possible.

2.4 Since the formation of Buckinghamshire Council there have been several harmonisation activities that have already taken place across waste services, namely:

- Fees and charges reviewed e.g. bulky waste collection charges harmonised to one price and consistent service (number of items collected etc.);
- Waste collection services, including the collection frequency for all waste commodities, are the same or very similar across Buckinghamshire;
- Simple messaging regarding waste collection services for bank holidays / festival day changes;
- All general waste and recycling content is on the central Council website and reference to legacy council information has been removed; and
- Recent harmonisation of garden waste services, including subscription charges and the winter suspension period.

2.5 In order to consider wider service harmonisation and operating model options a Waste Strategy programme has been initiated. This programme of work is being carefully planned due to the nature of the options being considered, the importance of this critical universal service for residents and the potential impact for the Council, employees, and contractors. The Waste Strategy programme has been divided into three main projects (further timetable information is provided in section 7, Next Steps and Review):

- Project 1: To provide a detailed quantitative and qualitative options appraisal of potential operational arrangements relating to waste collection and street scene services, as well as potential considerations for the harmonisation and/or optimisation of services in the future (waste improvement activities). Project commenced in July 2022.
- Project 2: To review and refresh the Council's Waste Management strategy (along with any associated policies), which reflects the new future direction of travel for the service and considers the key legislative / policy drivers and the impact of these on waste management services. Project commenced in January 2023.

- Project 3: To implement the approved option(s) from Project 1 and the approved Waste Management and Street Scene Strategy from Project 2. Project due to commence following council governance process.

### **Waste Collection and Street Scene Options Appraisal (Project 1)**

2.6 This project is made up of two elements in order to deliver a detailed quantitative and qualitative options appraisal, namely:

- Evaluate the potential operational arrangements to identify the preferred model to deliver the waste collection and street scene service in Buckinghamshire; and
- Assess potential harmonisation and/or optimisation of waste collection and street scene services (i.e. waste improvement activities). These options will include timescales, i.e. if / when best to implement any changes and time required to do so. These options will also consider the necessary actions arising (some of which are still currently unknown) from the Environment Act and the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy, as well as current local service differences and where they could be aligned.

2.7 The high level project outputs are:

- A definition of the current services and associated costs (baselining);
- Best practice benchmarking;
- An assessment of the modelled options and associated forecasted costs over the agreed evaluation period;
- An assessment of potential service harmonisation and/or optimisation options (waste improvement activities) for the future and associated forecasted costs;
- Outline plans and costs for future implementation (costs of change) for the options so they can be considered as part of the decision making process; and
- Reports to support recommendation(s), in order to take the proposal(s) through the Council's decision making process.

2.8 Services in scope are:

- North waste collection and street scene (in-house) services;
- South waste collection and street scene (contracted) services; and

- iii. Household Recycle Centre (HRC) service, but only in relation to the costs per tonne applying when kerbside or street scene collected material is deposited into an HRC, including any transfer costs.

### **Waste Strategy Review and Refresh (Project 2)**

- 2.9 As part of the Government’s Environment Act and Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) there are a number of significant impacts on Local Authority waste services (policy, collection and disposal), some of which are still currently unknown.
- 2.10 Having separately consulted during February – July 2021 on the detailed proposals regarding Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging, a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and Consistent Recycling Collections, which included proposals for mandated material collections with six recyclable waste streams (food, garden waste, plastic, glass, paper and cardboard), and free garden waste collections, there has been a delay in the Government providing further information / outcomes to some of their consultations.
- 2.11 During March 2022 the Government provided further updates on the details regarding EPR, which includes mandating kerbside collection of plastic films and flexibles by March 2027 and will see the performance of local authorities further assessed. The details of how the EPR scheme administrator will assess local authority systems in terms of ‘efficiency and effectiveness’ are still currently unknown.
- 2.12 Information / consultation outcomes regarding DRS and Consistency were last due to be published in Autumn 2022 and, at the time of writing this report, were still unpublished. In July 2022, Defra restated that it is *“committed to introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers to boost recycling and clamp down on plastic pollution and litter.”*. Defra has also stated *“that to drive up recycling levels, with a target of 65% recycling of municipal waste by 2035, under the proposals in England, a core set of materials must be collected from every household and business in England, specifically: plastic, paper & card, metal, and food waste.”*<sup>1</sup> (as identified in their Consistency consultation in 2021).
- 2.13 As previously mentioned, the known implications from the Government’s Environment Act and Resources and Waste Strategy are being considered as part of the options appraisal (project 1), however a separate project has now commenced to review and refresh the Council’s Waste Management strategy (along with any associated policies), which reflects the new future direction of travel for the service and considers the key legislative / policy drivers and the impact of these on waste management services.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/defra-reaffirms-epr-consistency/>

- 2.14 The project is currently in 'start up' phase, but plans include reviewing the legacy Waste Partnership for Buckinghamshire's Waste Management strategy and engagement with key stakeholders, as well as assessing best practice / current examples from other local authorities, and consideration of the actions arising from the Environment Act and the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy.

### 3. Legal and financial implications

#### Legal implications

- 3.1 Legal colleagues form part of the project team and project assurance, with specific external expertise and advice being sought when required.

#### Financial implications

- 3.2 The overall operational cost of waste collection services in the county is c.£18.2m per annum. The operational cost of the North Waste collection and Street Scene service is c.£7.2m (this figure doesn't include the Commercial Trade Waste collection service). The operational cost of the Southern Waste collection & Street Scene service is c.£11m. These are 2022-23 Base Budget figures representing the direct service cost and do not include any back office costs.

	North (in-house service)	South (outsourced service)
2022-23 Annual service cost (Budget)	c. £7.2m*	c. £11m*
Cost per household	c. £84.10	c. £74.80

- 3.3 The detailed financial assessment is being supported by external financial advisors to the Council, with internal financial colleagues forming part of the project team, project board and project assurance.
- 3.4 Financial implications in terms of any capital and revenue funding requirements, mitigations and the timings in relation to the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP) process are being considered as part of this review. A demonstration of value for money will be one part of the evaluation criteria.
- 3.5 The Waste Options appraisal costs are being funded from committed funds within the Waste reserve and form part of MTFP proposals (£750k for 23/24).



#### **4. Corporate implications**

- 4.1 The programme reflects one of the Climate Change and Environment Portfolio priorities relating to Waste Strategy and Management.
- 4.2 The multi-disciplinary team to deliver this programme of work includes representatives from HR, legal, procurement, finance, communications, property, and waste management (both collection and disposal teams). External technical and financial advisors, Resource Futures and New Networks, have been commissioned to lead the analysis and modelling, with the overall programme being coordinated and managed by the Waste Strategy team.
- 4.3 Corporate implications are being assessed as part of the options appraisals and implementation planning.
- 4.4 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) Screening Questionnaire has been completed, along with a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) Screening Questionnaire. The projects do not currently require a full EqIA and / or DPIA to be completed at this stage, but this will be kept under review.

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

- 5.1 The options appraisal is to determine a recommended approach and so far during the project there has been engagement and briefings with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment.
- 5.2 Members and Community Boards will be engaged as proposals develop at the appropriate time and as appropriate during the decision making / governance process.

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

- 6.1 A Communications Strategy has been developed and relevant stakeholders have been engaged with during the project and will be involved in considering the options through the decision making / governance processes.
- 6.2 Advice has been sought and a formal public consultation is not legally required at this stage. This will be kept under review throughout the different stages of the programme to assess the need for consultation.

#### **7. Next steps and review**

- 7.1 The indicative timeline for the next steps is shown in table 1 overleaf.

**Table 1: Project Timelines**

<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>Indicative Timeline</b>
Project 1: Waste Options Appraisal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical and financial modelling by project team</li> </ul>	July 2022 – February 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council governance process</li> </ul>	February – June 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commencement of mobilisation &amp; implementation</li> </ul>	June 2023 onwards (timescale to be determined based on decision taken)
Project 2: Waste Strategy & Policies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project initiation, set up and road mapping</li> </ul>	January – April 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy review &amp; development</li> </ul>	May – October 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council governance process</li> </ul>	November 2023 – March 2024

## **8. Background papers**

8.1 None

## Select Committee Work Programmes 2022/23

**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 Richard Lumley	Steve Broadbent Peter Martin HS2 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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