



Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee agenda

Date: Thursday 16 February 2023

Time: 10.00 am

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

Membership:

D Carroll (Chairman), T Hogg (Vice-Chairman), N Brown, S Chapple, Q Chaudhry, I Darby, C Etholen, T Hunter-Watts, I Hussain, M Hussain, N Marshall, C Poll, S Rouse, D Town and S Wilson

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1 Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership		
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3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting		5 - 12

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 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.

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<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/get-involved-with-council-decisions/select-committees/>

5 Housing Standards

13 - 30

Following the death of a two year old boy in Rochdale in Dec 2020 which was found in 2022 to be due to extensive mould in his home, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities requested information from all local authorities pertaining to damp and mould in rented housing accommodation. Members will have an opportunity to review Buckinghamshire's response.

Contributors:

Cllr Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services

Lisa Michelson, Service Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration

Jacqui Bromilow, Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards

6 Update on Key Planning, Transport and Regeneration Strategies Alignment

10:40

31 - 40

An opportunity for members to understand and discuss the synergies between the emerging Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and Infrastructure Plan.

Contributors:

Cllr Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

Cllr Steve Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport

Steve Bambrick, Service Director, Planning & Environment

Darran Eggleton, Head of Planning Policy and Compliance

John Cheston, Planning Policy Manager

Rosie Brake, Planning Policy Team Leader

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| 7 | Planning Enforcement Update
The committee will receive an overview and update on the planning compliance and enforcement service.

Contributors:
Cllr Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration
Darran Eggleton, Head of Planning Policy and Compliance | 11:20 | 41 - 46 |
| 8 | Work Programme
The Committee will discuss and note the Work Programme for future meetings. | | 47 - 48 |
| 9 | Date of Next Meeting
The next meeting will take place on 6 th April 2023 at 10.00 a.m. | | |

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

For further information please contact: Tom Fowler on 01494 732009, email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

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Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE & HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER 2022 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.43 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT

D Carroll (Chairman), T Hogg, S Chapple, N Marshall, S Rouse, D Town, S Wilson, B Chapple OBE and N Thomas

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

S Bambrick, N Graham, L Michelson, T Fowler, A Collingwood, D Watson, P Strachan, M Tett and C Phillips

Agenda Item

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies had been received from Councillors Carl Etholen, Tom Hunter-Watts, Andrea Baughan, Qaser Chaudhry and Nic Brown.

Councillor Bill Chapple OBE was in attendance substituting for Councillor Chris Poll.

Councillor Nathan Thomas was in attendance substituting for Councillor Isobel Darby.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bill Chapple OBE declared an interest in item 6 as Vice Chairman of the Aylesbury Garden Town Board.

Councillor Stuart Wilson declared an interest in item 7 as a member of the Member Development Working Group.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

5 CALL IN OF THE DECISION ON LITTLE MARLOW LAKES COUNTRY PARK TAKEN AT CABINET ON 11TH OCTOBER 2022

The Chairman invited Nick Graham, Service Director, Legal and Democratic Services, to outline the process for hearing the call-in and to advise the Select Committee on the validity of the call-in request that had been received in relation to the decision on Little Marlow Lakes Country Park taken at Cabinet on 11th October 2022.

Nick Graham reminded the committee of the call-in process laid out on page 161 of the Council's constitution. This statutory right could be applied to decisions made by Cabinet. The call-in request had been submitted by Cllr Stuart Wilson supported by a further 32 councillors, which met the required 15% of total councillors.

Nick Graham noted that the call-in request had been made on 3 grounds. The monitoring officer had rejected the first and second grounds. The third ground was found valid and subject to consideration at the Select Committee. The third ground related to Buckinghamshire Council being unable to deliver SANG (Suitable Area of Natural Green Space) requirements, as set out in Appendix 2, the call-in request form.

RESOLVED – That the Select Committee agreed that the third ground of the call-in request was valid and that the Select Committee would continue to hear evidence from both sides at this meeting.

The Call-in Submission – Cllrs Stuart Wilson and David Watson

The Chairman invited Cllr Stuart Wilson and Cllr David Watson to explain their reasons for requesting a call-in of the Cabinet decision of 11th October. The following main points were noted:

- Cllr Wilson felt the Cabinet Decision failed on the delivery of the country park at Little Marlow as envisaged and promised in the Wycombe Local Plan. The Cabinet decision for a substantially reduced country park could not meet the recreational mitigation requirements necessary for the major developments in Bourne End and Wooburn to proceed. The building would likely continue without the promised Little Marlow Lakes Country Park developing in parallel.
- The Council's failure to commit to the full country park now would give further encouragement and rise to future speculative industrial developments in the Little Marlow Lakes Country Park area.
- The response given in the report did not address the fundamental issues with the Cabinet decision. The area designated to be SANG could only be the area in the Council's ownership which would need to be negotiated with Natural England.
- The technical requirements for SANG were laid out in the appendix to the cabinet report. Natural England initially agreed to the SANG proposals for the Hollands Farm development in Bourne End based on the deliverability of 329 hectares and not the 55 hectares proposed here. Paragraph 2.14 of the response failed to note this difference.
- Natural England had re-inspected the site on 8th December and concluded that the site could be SANG compliant but with preconditions. The frequently polluting sewage treatment works is next to the path round Spade Oak Quarry. There is a limited space between the lake and the Sewage works and screening would not prevent the smell. The absence of odours is a requirement for SANG and Natural England require an odours report. There must be a circular walk which would need to go past the sewage works.
- The latest appropriate assessment of the Hollands Farm endorsed by Natural England

required 7 mitigation measures that sat outside of the Spade Oak Lake site. 5 out of 7 of those measures were rated high and would need to be implemented to meet the appropriate assessment requirements. One of these mitigation measures required negotiation with a private land owner.

- Cllr David Watson advised there was a failure by Wycombe District Council (WDC) to adhere to statutory requirements from September 2017 – March 2020. He felt there had not been a satisfactory answer to what these were. There were substantial differences in the legal advice given to WDC compared to Buckinghamshire Council relating to; time elapsed since provision, the private landowners and use of the term ‘designation’.
- WDC was given legal advice that it was not constrained by timing. Buckinghamshire Council legal advice was that there was a failure by WDC to do so. The Country Park was provided for and owned by various owners since 2017, BC had been in charge for 33 months out of these 63 months. It was noted there had been significant disruption during this period.
- With regards to private landowners, the 1968 Act has the power to provide a country park on land belonging to them, or other land owners. There was a suggestion the need to negotiate with private landowners across the area covered by policy RUR4 was contrary to how WDC was advised. Unrestricted public access was never envisioned.
- On ‘Designation’, the October 11th Cabinet report asserts a lack of formal designation. ‘Designation’ was not used in 1968 Act, and use of the term in the Cabinet Report was not valid. The Act does not mention designation and/or describe a process through which Designation could be achieved.
- The Buckinghamshire Legal Advice had introduced a criterion which is not in the law.
- A way forward was envisioned as a local project board to consider future options composed of local Members. Once options are determined, further legal advice could be sought, all decisions to be consistent with the 1968 Countryside Act. The Chairman received a statement from Joy Morrissey MP to this effect on the day preceding the meeting.

The Chairman invited Cllr Alex Collingwood to speak as a local Member on the call-in.

- Cllr Alex Collingwood questioned why, in 2.2, a whole Council resolution was no longer deemed valid. The Council was duty-bound to implement democratically approved decisions.
- Previously requested deferral to this, as there was uncertainty around the second legal opinion. 2.24 in the report shows there’s a temporary vehicle storage worth 1 million pounds over 5 years.
- The Cabinet decision was premature and not enough due diligence was taken to make a fully informed decision.
- The Holland Farm and Slate Meadow planning applications being approved would allow for section 106 agreement funds to be ring-fenced for use in delivering the country park.
- The Council’s film office should be using this site to generate additional revenue, confirmed in 5.4 of the report. The Council had enough capital and reserves and revenues to deliver the country park. This was the view of the government inspectors.
- Cllr Alex Collingwood requested that Cabinet should revisit the decision to assess the options

properly and fully, and then decide how the country park will be taken forward.

Response to the Call-in – Cllr Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Mr Steve Bambrick, Service Director, Planning and Environment, Nick Graham, Service Director, Legal and Democratic and Simon Meecham, Lead Local Plan Consultant.

- Cllr Peter Strachan clarified that the area in question was not currently a country park, and that Wycombe District Council had resolved to make the land a country park, but no steps had been taken to make the land into a country park. The WDC resolution relied on there being agreement with the other landowners on the site as it's not wholly owned by the Council. Those steps were not taken and therefore the land is not, with regards to the 1968 Countryside and Rights of Way Act, a Country Park.
- Unequivocal legal advice had been received by Buckinghamshire Council, that, if it were to deliver the Country Park, then it cannot rely on a resolution from its predecessor council, which prompted the report to Cabinet on 11th October. The Council had outlined their intent to deliver the site as a Country Park in the Cabinet report.
- Steve Bambrick gave advice at the Cabinet meeting that the Wycombe Local Plan would not be altered by the Cabinet report and that the allocation for a country park would remain.
- Cabinet had asked for a business case to be provided for the Country Park. Until that business case is produced, questions about deliverability were deemed speculative. With suitable mitigation measures, including structural planning, the area is capable of being SANG compliant.
- It was reiterated that Cabinet was correct to agree the principle of delivering phase 1 of the Country Park on land owned by the Council. This would be the most pragmatic and efficient way of delivering benefits in the Little Marlow area.
- Natural England decide whether a site can be SANG compliant. Conversations throughout the process had been ongoing to ensure this was possible. At a recent site visit, the capability of the site was determined to need certain conditions. The conditions would be addressed in the business case and management plan. Natural England have supported the case that the site can be SANG compliant.
- Nick Graham advised that the concern regarding Legal Advice was not considered a valid reason for the call-in. Cabinet has a right to seek legal advice as appropriate, which it had done, and the validity of this had been addressed by the Cabinet Member and the Monitoring Officer.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Strachan, Steve Bambrick and Nick Graham for this information and invited questions from Committee Members. In response to questions and during the subsequent discussions the following main points were noted:

- Cllr Stuart Wilson stated that he wished for Marlow Town Council and local Members to be consulted and involved with building the business case for the Country Park. The Cabinet Member clarified that the whole site was being considered for the Country Park in 2 phases. The second phase which dealt with the land that was privately owned would include consultation with local members and parish councils.
- Surrounding Planning applications were dependent on the delivery of this SANG, and the consequences of not delivering would detrimentally impact the 5 year housing supply in

Wycombe. That would encourage speculative planning applications that could take advantage of the opportunity. There was an urgency to deliver this, and delivering first on the land owned by the Council in a phased approach was the most logical course.

- The delivery of Hollands Farm development was not dependent on the whole of the county park allocation coming forward. It was reliant on the SANG requirement, and the SANG delivered on the council owned land would be sufficient for the site to come forward.
- Proximity of the sewage works, and the ability to mitigate the smell was a significant concern. The length and path of the circular walks were identified as needing clarification. Deliverability would be explained in detail in the business case.
- The breach that exists on the site is from a previous planning permission which required the restoration of the site to a certain specification. An enforcement notice had since been served. The notice required the restoration condition to be complied with. The subsequent management plan, should it be confirmed by Cabinet would be the subject of a Section 73 planning application to amend the condition on the site by restoring the site to a new Country Park with SANG compliance.
- Discussions with the developers of Hollands Farm and Slate Meadow with Natural England confirmed the existing site does have the capacity for both applications, and was capable of being SANG compliant.

Deliberations

The Chairman invited comments from Select Committee Members based on the written evidence in the agenda pack and the discussions at the meeting today

- Members expressed an eagerness for the project to move forward and that further delay would be detrimental to the development of the Country Park.
- A Member looked forward to future consultation on the Country Park and local Member involvement.

As there were differing views, the Chairman put the issue to a vote. A majority of Members present voted in favour of rejecting the call-in and taking no further action.

RESOLVED – That the Select Committee reject the Call-in request and take no further action.

6 AYLESBURY GARDEN TOWN UPDATE

The Committee received an update from Cllr Martin Tett, Leader of the Council, Cllr Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration and Lisa Michelson, Service Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration, on the Aylesbury Garden Town.

The following points were highlighted:

- The Aylesbury Garden Town was important for the economic growth agenda around Aylesbury. The project would aim to improve the town establishing it as an excellent place to live. Improvements were aimed at housing, green infrastructure, leisure centres and the town centre.
- Bids for levelling up funds had been submitted for the regeneration of the bus station, south

east ring road and the Gardenway. The result of these bids would be revealed by the end of 2022. Various Aylesbury wards had been identified as targeted wards for Opportunity Bucks, the Council's local levelling up initiative. There are 4 work streams within the programme - workforce & employment, skills & development, public health and public realm. These work streams would be used to improve lives of local residents and target those in certain wards.

- Following the transformation of Aylesbury in the 1960's, the historic centre of the town was replaced. This created areas within Aylesbury with distinctly different styles.
- The Council owns the County Hall, as well as Friar's Square. The Economic Growth and Regeneration Team would be looking in detail at redevelopment plans for these areas to find an appropriate style.
- The projects for the area would need to be conducted in partnership with various organisations due to the substantial cost. Discussions had taken place with the Local Enterprise Partnership on how to leverage funding into the area. There would also be the need for major private sector funding. Significant challenges had arisen from massive inflation which has especially affected the construction sector. Local MPs, such as Rob Butler, had been very supportive of lobbying for funding.

During discussion, comments and questions raised by the Committee included:

- The final decision on the character of town had not yet been decided, this would involve significant consultation with various stakeholders. Input from local people would be important for this.
- Town centre regeneration was an identified ambition as part of the masterplan. Detailed proposals would be brought to Cabinet during 2023. This would look at opportunities and challenges, as well as how the Council could best influence its investment. Stakeholders and the public will be involved and input from local people will be sought.
- A distinct style for the regeneration had not been identified, and there was an aim to find a durable approach, and not something that would fall out of fashion quickly.
- The Aylesbury Masterplan went to public consultation in 2020, and was adopted by the Council. Further updates had been included in press releases and ongoing communication would be pursued as necessary. Thought would be given to the method which would be most effective when disruption from the projects would occur.
- There were areas of significant deprivation in Buckinghamshire, and measures such as those included in the Aylesbury Garden Town aimed to address this. Enhancement of communities, infrastructure and levelling up priorities would improve the lives of local residents.
- Planning processes for large developments, often dependent on infrastructure projects would be slow. The delivery of infrastructure projects would be key, especially with the large housing growth expected in Aylesbury. It is important to not rush the process to ensure the correct outcome.

7 MEMBER ENGAGEMENT IN PLANNING REVIEW UPDATE

The Committee received an update from Cllr Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration and Steve Bambrick, Service Director, Planning & Environment.

8 WORK PROGRAMME

Members were advised to contact the Scrutiny Officer for the committee with any additional topics they wished to be included in the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing work programme.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee would be on 16th February 2023 at 10am.

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Report to Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee

Date:	February 2023
Title:	Housing Standards in particular to address issues pertaining to Damp and Mould across Buckinghamshire
Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Mark Winn – Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Service
Contact officer:	Jacqui Bromilow, Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards
Ward(s) affected:	None specific
Recommendations:	That the Committee note content of this report

1. Executive summary

1.1 Following the tragic death of 2-year-old Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, the Government wrote to all local authorities directing them to provide information concerning matters pertaining to damp and mould in rented housing accommodation. The Council has undertaken an array of activities to ensure we reviewed our own processes and enforcement arrangements. Moreover, we also prepared and subsequently sent a response to the Government outlining what we currently have in place, along with relevant data.

2. Background

2.1 In November 2022, a coroner published a judgment that outlined that a 2-year-old boy, Awaab Ishak, died from a respiratory condition caused by exposure to mould in the family home in Rochdale, which was rented accommodation. The Council was saddened to hear of what happened in Rochdale. It is recognised that the judgment

of the coroner was unusually specific in the fact that the causative factor for the death was outlined to be damp and mould within the property.

2.2 Following this devastating news, the Council reviewed the arrangements in place to ensure the correct safeguarding procedures have been implemented locally.

2.3 Buckinghamshire Council holds no social sector accommodation but does have a small portfolio of residential properties. This report does not specifically address conditions within these properties however Property Services have been made aware of the raised profile of damp and mould and our responsibilities as landlord where accommodation is in use.

3. Risks Associated with Damp & Mould and Enforcement Options

3.1 For a variety of reasons, including insufficient ventilation, sources of accumulating water (such as a leak) and/or humid and damp weather conditions, excess moisture can accumulate in residential properties. If this moisture stays in place for a period of time, mould can develop. In certain cases, this mould can let off spores and other particles into the air which can create adverse health conditions for occupants, and children are particularly susceptible.

3.2 The Environmental Health Service at the Council has a statutory responsibility to provide a route to remedy through enforcement where these hazards are identified in residential properties. Powers within the Housing Act 2004 enable the Service to inspect and have enforcement provisions to require corrective action where appropriate.

3.3 It is not unusual to get an increased demand assistance during the winter period concerning issues of damp and mould and this has increased significantly since the coroner's judgment relating to the case in Rochdale. In the 2 weeks prior to the coroner's judgment, the council received 5 requests for assistance. In the following 2 weeks, 17 requests were received, and we have continued to receive requests for assistance.

3.4 Detailed data analysis needs to be undertaken. Between 7 November 2021 and 21 January 2022 the council's systems indicate there were 59 requests for service made to the environmental health service relating to housing standards, 29% (17) related to damp and mould. The same period 12 months later indicated 142 requests for service and 58% (83) relate to damp and mould. It is believed that this is an underrepresentation of the demand due to the methods used to record housing complaints.

3.5 Data remains a challenge as each legacy council recorded information in different ways. There are data harmonising activities in place and a new system has been procured and is in the early stages of development.

- 3.6 The service has secured funding to increase capacity in the team to respond to this increased demand over the winter period and will do analysis regarding the resourcing of the team in the future. We also need to consider other growing demands on the horizon for the service. These include the emerging introduction of the Decent Homes Standard for all rented accommodation.
- 3.7 The Decent Homes Standard was introduced in the early 2000's and sets the minimum standards that social housing is required to meet. It means that properties must not have any category one hazards, it must be in a reasonable state of repair and have reasonably modern facilities and services and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. In the Queen's Speech delivered in May 2022, it was announced that the standard for social housing would be expanded to the private rented sector. No detailed information has yet been provided regarding when it will be implemented.
- 3.8 In addition the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill is going through parliament and contains provisions for regulation of supported exempt accommodation. Exempt accommodation is defined as being a resettlement place or accommodation which provides the claimant (resident) with care, support or supervision. Tenants tend to come from vulnerable groups.
- 3.9 Data on this remains a challenge as each legacy council recorded information in different ways. There are data harmonising activities in place and a new system has been procured and is in the early stages of development.
- 3.10 The environmental health service deals with matters on a reactive basis to assist tenants who are experiencing issues during the winter months when problems regarding damp and mould are more prevalent. Innovative approaches have been adopted, such as the work undertaken to aid hospital discharges and the grant assistance given to vulnerable people to improve issues associated with cold and damp homes.

4. Raising Awareness and local approach

- 4.1 A further role that the Council plays is in terms of raising awareness of what residents are able to do and information around what causes mould to form in properties. It is important to note that the Council does not have open access to private homes for inspections, and in the majority of cases needs to be undertaken by invitation (in contrast to the environmental health inspections that happen with respect to food hygiene inspection within food businesses). There is a heavy reliance on intelligence which primarily is from residents' reporting of these issues or other reporting from those other partners with access to private homes (such as health, fire service etc.).
- 4.2 It is recognised that the management of moisture within properties is very important, and the Council's website has been updated to ensure that there is useful

information for residents on simple things which can be done to reduce moisture in their homes.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/housing-and-benefits/housing/housing-conditions/report-poor-housing-conditions/keep-your-home-free-from-damp-and-mould/>

- 4.3 Advice is also available on the website which informs residents the steps they need to take if they wish to report issues. They must contact their landlord in writing first and give them an opportunity to put things right. If they do not respond or take appropriate steps the matter can be raised with the Environmental Health Service at the Council. They will assess the issue and determine if the matter requires an enforcement intervention. In addition, if a person is in social housing they are able to report matters through their housing association formal complaints process and can then escalate to the Housing Ombudsman. There is an indication that the role of the Ombudsman maybe expanded to cover private rented accommodation in the future. <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/housing-and-benefits/housing/housing-conditions/report-poor-housing-conditions/>

- 4.4 In July 2022, “Opportunity Bucks” was launched under a local levelling up agenda, one of its 5 key themes is “Standards of Living.” It is hoped that this will also play a significant part in improving housing standards – especially in the most deprived areas of the country. Opportunity Bucks is a partnership approach to dealing with issues initially within 10 wards across the county.

5. National Response

- 5.1 On the 19th November 2022, Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities wrote to all local authorities regarding housing standards in rented properties in England (Appendix 1). The letter contained directions made under the Housing Act 2004 which required an initial response to be sent by the 30th of November 2022 (Appendix 2), and a full response (appendix 3) to be received by the 27th January 2023. A separate letter was sent to providers of social housing.
- 5.2 The letter from Michael Gove recognised that to raise housing standards, multiple agencies, including DLUHC, needed to be involved. He requested that local authorities “do everything in your power to prioritise the improvement of housing conditions for the millions of private and social tenants, in line with existing duties in the Housing Act 2004.”
- 5.3 The letter contains 3 directions for information and specifically asks how the council is prioritising the enforcement of standards and the plans to ensure we have adequate enforcement capacity. These are addressed within the response (Appendix 3).

- 5.4 The full response has outlined current arrangements that are in place to ensure the safeguarding of Buckinghamshire residents, along with planned reviews and actions to ensure current and future demands are met.
- 5.5 The letter from Michael Gove focuses upon actions undertaken under the Housing Act 2004, however the service uses other legislative tools to achieve the same goal – remove hazards and improve standards.

6. Recent engagement with Registered Social Landlords (RSL)

- 6.1 The majority of Registered Social Landlords (RSL) who operate in the county were invited to a meeting by Cllr Mark Winn to discuss the approach that they are taking following Awaab's death. It is clear that there are many challenges, especially regarding the growing economic pressures on households. The purpose of the meeting was to engage and open channels of communication.
- 6.2 Key themes which emerged from that conversation include:
- Communications – Registered Providers undertake surveying activities and there had been increased communications with residents, with efforts being made to engage with those who are not generally engaging with their landlord. They understand that there may be other reasons for avoidance of contact, such as concerns over rent.
 - Additional Training – Registered Providers have also increased training for staff around a 'Make Every Contact Count' approach ensuring that all staff are able to spot the warning signs of potential issues eg if a visit is being undertaken with respect to undertaking routine maintenance, the maintenance operative should actively look for other issues related to damp and mould/condition of property.
 - Additional Staff – Some Registered Providers have also hired additional staff such as surveyors to enable increased checks.
 - Many of the key activities are in place, so it isn't an issue of major new initiatives, but to build upon what is already in place.
- 6.3 Responding to this issue has already begun with many of the registered providers reviewing procedures following the coroner's judgment and the decision by the Housing Ombudsman. They have also been written to by the Secretary of State and their regulator.
- 6.4 That engagement with Registered Providers also highlighted that this issue is bigger than just housing conditions, some of which are outside of the control of the Registered Providers and the Local Authority. Contributing factors include:

- Cost of Living – if people could afford to heat and eat then that would go a long way to addressing this.
- Lack of Available Housing Stock – There is a known issue with the lack of larger family homes (which are affordable).
- New Housing is slow to come forward – Some of the new development of regeneration sites are not able to come forward with sufficient affordable accommodation which is exacerbating the issue. Investment in stock is part of the long-term solution – but this is difficult and will not have an impact in the short-term.
- There is a need to take care not to oversimplify this down to a single issue to the detriment of wider issues This is not always a landlord repairs issue, but a total stock and system issue
- Spotting trends is difficult, mostly down to individual properties, evidence suggests that this can be an issue, but not necessarily an endemic issue. It could be that improved data sharing (across RPs, the Council, and NHS) may help identify and predict issues.

7. Next Steps

7.1 The council will continue to focus on this pertinent issue and will:

- Continue to engage on next steps for this and possible new national policy which may emerge, having responded to the Government request for data collection on this issue.
- Continue to raise awareness of this issue with residents so they are supported to identify issues and to make the public aware of the services the council offers when it comes to addressing issues pertaining to damp and mould. It has become apparent that some residents were unaware they could report issues to the Council where their landlord as failed to address issues when approached.
- Review resources with respect to housing standards, ensuring we meet current and future demands – whilst also working with residents and landlords to make sure they have access to the right information when it comes to such an important issue.



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling up Housing &
Communities
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities**
4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

19 November 2022

Dear Local Authority Chief Executive and council leaders,

HOUSING STANDARDS IN RENTED PROPERTIES IN ENGLAND

The tragedy of Awaab Ishak, who died at two years old as a direct result of mould in his family home, has highlighted the urgent need to ensure a decent standard of properties for tenants in all sectors.

I know you will join me in mourning this avoidable loss. I also know, from previous experience, that councils and authorities across the country are already determined to improve housing standards. That is why I am confident you will all be as focussed as my department is on ensuring that no family ever has to experience such a tragedy again. In 21st century Britain, this should not be a high aspiration.

I have today written to social housing providers on this crucial matter. All of us – including my department – need to deliver our responsibility to people living in poor quality housing. That is why I am writing to you to request you do everything in your power to prioritise the improvement of housing conditions for the millions of private and social tenants, in line with existing duties in the Housing Act 2004. This becomes ever more urgent as we go into winter with a cost of living and energy crisis, which may exacerbate damp and mould conditions in some homes.

As you will be aware, local housing authorities have a duty under the Housing Act 2004 (“the Act”) to keep housing conditions in their area under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken by them under the Act (section 3(1)).

Treating damp and mould seriously

Having considered it necessary and urgent to ensure that, as we go into a challenging winter, damp and mould issues are being addressed, I now direct, under section 3(3) of the Act, that all local housing authorities in carrying out their duty to review housing conditions in their area must:

- have particular regard to high scoring (bands D and E) category 2 damp and mould hazards, as outlined in the guidance ‘Housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) enforcement guidance: housing conditions¹
- supply the department with an assessment of damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties in your area, including the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards; and

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-enforcement-guidance-housing-conditions>

- supply the department with an assessment of action you have identified that may need to be taken in relation to damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties in your area.

In addition, pursuant to your duties under section 3(3) of the Act, I would like you to provide the following data covering your last three 12 monthly reporting periods for privately rented properties in your area:

- how many damp and mould hazards you have remediated, compared to your assessment of the prevalence of these hazards;
- how many times you have taken enforcement action to remedy damp and mould hazards and the form this has taken;
- how many civil penalty notices have been issued in relation to non-compliance with enforcement action over damp and mould hazards; and
- how many prosecutions have been successfully pursued in relation to damp and mould hazards.

If you have not collected this information, please explain why.

Finally, I would also like you to set out how you are prioritising enforcement of housing standards more generally in your authority, across all tenures, including what plans you have to ensure adequate enforcement capacity to drive up standards in the private rented sector.

Alongside this, I have asked social housing providers to make an assessment of their properties and the Regulator of Social Housing will also be writing to them shortly on this matter.

I would like an initial response by the end of the month – this should set out how you are prioritising this work and any other initial information you can provide. I would then like the full response by 27 January at the latest. My officials will work with the Local Government Association and local authorities to agree the process and format for these responses in the coming days. Any questions in the meantime can be directed to housingstandards@levellingup.gov.uk. My department will review these returns and may ask for further information. We may also periodically publish the responses, or a summary, to improve transparency on this important issue. I have focussed here largely on damp and mould to make quick progress on this important area during the winter months, but reserve the right to make further directions and requests in relation to wider standards in the near future as the department deems necessary.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the important work that you do in your local areas to improve housing standards for tenants. It is vital that we all learn from the events that led to the tragic death of Awaab, and my officials and I look forward to working collaboratively with you to improve standards for renters across the country and across all tenures.

With every good wish,



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

**Leader of the Council**

Martin Tett
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Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
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Sent via E-mail: housingstandards@levellingup.gov.uk

30 November 2022

Dear Michael

Housing Standards in Rented Accommodation

We are writing following receipt of your letter dated 19 November 2022 concerning housing standards in rented accommodation in England.

Firstly, we would like to acknowledge the tragedy of the avoidable death of Awaab Ishak; what happened in Rochdale is devastating and it is clear we need to be vigilant across the country and within Buckinghamshire to avoid a similar heartbreak. As we respond to the data request from your letter, we will be reviewing our existing strategies and considering whether there are changes and/or additional measures we might implement to drive up standards within housing across all tenures.

As a local authority, we are very aware that there is a clear link between housing and health. Whilst Buckinghamshire Council is not a social housing provider, it is clear we have a role to play in ensuring homes are safe and to drive up standards within all housing tenures including the private rental market. To this end we already work closely with the registered providers and landlords that operate within Buckinghamshire to ensure they uphold their responsibilities for addressing critical safety issues and improving standards within the rental sector. Housing also features as a priority in the programme of work that Buckinghamshire has initiated for 'Levelling-Up' in our county, called Opportunity Bucks.

Our aim is to work with landlords, and we acknowledge that many do want to work alongside us in providing suitable, safe accommodation for residents. Many of the housing provider partners operating in Buckinghamshire have already been updating the Council on their response to the Rochdale tragedy; we have invited the registered social housing providers who operate in Buckinghamshire to meeting on the 9 December 2022 to discuss the letter you have sent and to ensure we have the appropriate communication channels for cases which are reported to the Council regarding their housing stock.

This is a wide-reaching information gathering exercise as the housing picture in Buckinghamshire, like the rest of the country, is complex. There are a variety of buildings being used for accommodation, using different construction techniques along with a variety of ages each of which bring their own challenges and require specific solutions, especially concerning damp and mould. It is noted that the

request for information focuses upon civil penalties and prosecutions related specifically to damp and mould. While Buckinghamshire Council has not issued any civil penalty notices or pursued any prosecutions successfully in relation to damp and mould hazards during the last three years, the Council has taken action using other hazard categories under the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System used as part of the enforcement process) which have a demonstrable impact on preventing or minimising damp and mould such as the “excess cold” hazard.

There are also times when other legislation has been used to accelerate remedies such as the abatement notice provisions within the Environmental Protection Act 1990 which can be used in certain circumstances without a standstill period to enable the recipient to appeal before works are undertaken. Using other legislative tools may solve issues more expediently and will have a positive impact for occupants but will not directly be captured within the data being requested. We are concerned that the data request is focussed upon information regarding prosecution and civil penalties. It is very important to note that there is no immediate provision within Part I of the Housing Act 2004 to prosecute for the presence of poor/dangerous housing standards. The option to prosecute would only apply where there is a failure to comply with any notices served. Therefore, the number of prosecutions pursued may not necessarily provide useful insight into whether a local authority is proactive at tackling poor housing standards or reflect the success of the other tools which are used locally to improve standards.

Lastly, in our full response, we will provide information about the engagement that the council undertakes with tenants to support the proactive role residents can play regarding managing excess moisture. We run outreach campaigns and have information on our website which details energy saving tips and links to partners who may be able to offer financial assistance for improvements such as insulation. To support enforcement procedures, tenants need to understand the importance of raising defects with landlords promptly and evidencing this, especially in respect to faulty heating, extraction and ventilation systems. Effective communication by both parties is key in enabling issues to be resolved in a timely manner and thus potentially preventing issues from occurring.

We would be happy to support the development and implementation of new national initiatives or changes in policy that you may be considering. For example, we are aware of the contents of the Queen’s Speech which confirmed that a Renters’ Reform Bill will be introduced which includes a Decent Homes Standard for the private rented sector.

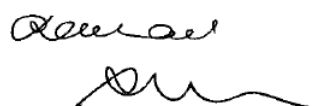
Gathering the information requested, along with the engagement with stakeholders and analysis of other data sources, will help us identify any additional plans we need to put in place to drive up standards and to assess the resource we need to achieve this. A more detailed update will be provided within the response which will be received by 27 January 2023.

We trust the above information will reassure you that Buckinghamshire Council is taking the matter seriously and will continue to look at measures we can implement to improve housing in Buckinghamshire.

Yours sincerely



Martin Tett
Leader, Buckinghamshire Council



Rachael Shimmin
Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire Council

cc: Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness & Regulatory Services
Ian Thompson, Corporate Director Planning, Growth & Sustainability



Leader of the Council

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The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

Sent via E-mail: housingstandards@levellingup.gov.uk

25 January 2023

Dear Michael

Housing Standards in Rented Accommodation

I trust this letter finds you well and managing a productive start to 2023.

I am writing today further to my letter dated 30 November 2022 which provided an interim response to your correspondence from 19 November 2022 and which is in reference to matters of damp and mould within housing.

By way of background, since the coroner's judgment was announced, we have seen a large increase in residents reporting matters of damp and mould within their properties. As typical for us during the winter season, we have seen an increase in requests for service concerning damp and mould and have focused our resources on dealing with the cases that have been brought to our attention. Very few of the cases we are receiving have previously been reported to the Council, and many are from tenants within the social housing sector and not from the private rented sector.

Buckinghamshire Council does not hold any social housing stock, and our approach to enforcement of the Housing Act, or any other related environmental health legislation, does not differentiate between that which is private or socially rented. What we have learnt in Buckinghamshire is that tenants in any rented accommodation are often not aware that they are able to approach the Council for assistance when landlords fail to correct defects. We know that tenants can fear reporting issues to the Council, or other agencies, as they perceive it may lead to retaliatory eviction and homelessness. Consequently, we plan to raise awareness of the remit of environmental health services for tenants, especially those in social housing and the legal protection available to them.

You may recall from our previous conversations that Buckinghamshire Council was formed on 1 April 2020 when we united the county's former five previous councils. Since then, we have evaluated our information and harmonised services and processes. Some harmonisations for private sector housing enforcement took place ahead of vesting day. Medium to long-term strategic priorities have not, however, been fully developed due to us responding to the immediate external challenges of the past three years.

The Environmental Health Service (EHS) covers a broad range of functions including food hygiene, environmental protection, public health enforcement, investigation of infectious diseases, caravan site licensing, health and safety in the workplace, as well as enforcement within the rented housing sector. EHS has been at the forefront of enforcing the Covid-19 restrictions that affected businesses during the pandemic, as well as undertaking the required Home Safety Checks as part of the Homes for Ukraine programme and facilitating swift hospital discharge to appropriate homes both through enforcement and innovative means to reduce pressures on the NHS. Consequently, many of our interventions related to mould and damp have been reactive rather than proactive in nature.

Despite these challenges, we would like to reassure you that the service has been dealing with requests for assistance based on risk. Cases have been triaged so that those that pose the highest risk to residents are quickly addressed. We are developing an approach for meeting longer term need, based on risk, health needs and inequalities.

In reference to the three directives outlined in your 19 November letter, please can I draw your attention to the enclosed appendix, which outlines the actions we have taken, and which includes further information on activity we are undertaking to address wider issues related to housing.

We will also complete the survey as requested in your letter dated 22 December 2022. It should be noted the information has been provided as accurately as possible. Currently the EHS operates using three different customer databases for which data entry is completed differently. It is important to note that local authorities have not historically been asked to provide such data. Consequently, it has not been recorded in a way that allows us to extract information regarding the category of each hazard outlined in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. We have recently procured a new customer database that is in the early stages of being designed and scoped prior to implementation and it is not envisaged that we will be on a single platform for at least another two years.

In summary, Buckinghamshire Council is saddened to have learned about the death of Awaab Ishak. We have made it a priority to deal with any service requests concerning issues of damp and mould in any property, irrespective of tenure, during the current winter period. Furthermore, we are going to review resources with respect to housing standards to ensure we meet current and future demand. We want to work with residents and landlords to ensure they have the right information to manage moisture and deal with structural issues in their properties and, importantly, to take action to ensure that standards increase. This maybe via enforcement and/or the utilisation of a more strategic approach which involves working with partners.

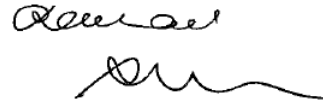
As a new Council we have an opportunity to take a strategic look at how we address housing standards across the county to ensure we prevent avoidable tragic deaths such as Awaab Ishak's.

I hope the above information is of interest. As ever, if it would be helpful to discuss in further detail, please contact Ian Thompson (ian.thompson@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) who will be more than happy to work with your team to arrange a suitable time and date.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Martin Tett in black ink, with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Martin Tett
Leader
Buckinghamshire Council

Handwritten signature of Rachael Shimmin in black ink, consisting of a cursive name and a long horizontal flourish.

Rachael Shimmin
Chief Executive
Buckinghamshire Council

cc Cllr Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services
Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Buckinghamshire Council

Appendix I – Buckinghamshire Council’s response to the directives given under section 3(3) of the Housing Act 2004

- 1) *have particular regard to high scoring (bands D and E) category 2 damp and mould hazards, as outlined in the guidance ‘Housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) enforcement guidance: housing conditions;*

Buckinghamshire Council’s current Enforcement Policy specifically recognises that all Category 2 hazards that present a risk to health (including Excess Cold and Damp and Mould Hazards) would, by default, usually result in the Council utilising enforcement powers to formally secure improvements to the dwelling when the property is rented.

Although all issues are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, the majority will result in an Improvement Notice if the owner does not immediately and swiftly engage to remedy any defect. It should be noted that there are often cases that are dealt with under the Excess Cold hazard (perhaps due to heating or insulation defects) that may also remedy secondary Damp and Mould hazards but will be recorded differently under the system. Buckinghamshire Council is confident it is addressing these hazards effectively.

- 2) *supply the department with an assessment of damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties in your area, including the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards;*

Damp and mould complaints range from penetrating or rising dampness, which can be easily pinpointed to a specific defect and a remedy applied, to more challenging cases, often due to condensation, which has a complex set of interacting variables, and which can lead to optimum conditions for associated mould growth.

Placing occupational arrangements above structural defects as leading factors in the presence of damp and mould is problematic because this will not always be the cause. The Council is keen not to place blame on occupiers, but to explore all causes of damp and mould. The range of housing stock (age and design) can present a challenge in pinpointing a solution, and as such inspectors require the appropriate competency to understand and apply solutions to individual circumstances. Furthermore, some blocks of properties, prevalent in the social housing sector, were built in the 1960s era of concrete construction, meaning large blocks of housing have similar design flaws that lead to cold bridging and extensive condensation issues. The prevalence of poor workmanship, fraud and inadequate private building control sign off for new build properties remains a serious concern in housing stock constructed and converted in the last 15 years, and the Council can foresee a risk that further significant defects could be identified in this sector of the housing stock in the future.

The current exemption of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) from the Energy Performance Certificate requirement also disadvantages those living in these properties and does not identify improvements that HMO landlords can make that would reduce the likelihood of cold damp homes.

Each year, the Council receives an increase in service requests concerning damp and mould or malfunctioning heating systems during the winter months. Whilst it is recognised that some issues are related to occupancy and are outside a landlord’s/owner’s control, on several occasions there are either matters of disrepair or poor design that are exasperating the situation. The Council is often able to get matters resolved through informal contact with the landlord/agent or by providing advice to tenants, negating the need for enforcement.

Apart from the issues associated with HMOs, all the above apply to any property irrespective of tenure.

We will be reviewing all requests for service received over recent winter periods to note if there are trends with respect to issues identified, the method used to resolve the issue, and the tenure of the property. A Housing Stock Condition survey has not been undertaken for some years in any legacy council so there is no current data concerning the prevalence of conditions within housing stock in Buckinghamshire. Based upon information currently available to us, it is not felt that there is an unusually high level of issues associated with damp and mould in the private rented sector. However, a more detailed analysis is required to confirm this view.

We will be using information from a variety of sources including the 2021 Census, which was published on 5 January 2023, to help identify areas with high levels of rented accommodation where proactive interventions may need to be targeted. The most recent breakdown of housing stock indicates that in Buckinghamshire on 1 April 2021 there were 230,039 residential premises. 29,497 (13%) were in the Registered Provider category and 15.8% privately rented.

- 3) *supply the department with an assessment of action you have identified that may need to be taken in relation to damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties in your area.*

The Council has identified that further resources will be necessary to address this concern and to meet current and future demand. Our EHS has been under increasing workload to assist in preventative interventions to avoid hospital admissions and to assist discharge. In recent months, the service has also been key to the re-settlement programmes for the Afghan and Ukraine refugees. Preventative interventions can significantly reduce the burden on NHS and social care budgets through the reduction of ill health.

Since the coroner's judgment, we have tried to identify themes as to the cause of the cases most recently reported to the Council. Currently, it is acknowledged issues concerning cost of living and rising fuel costs is making it difficult for some people to heat their homes, further exacerbating the problem. In new housing developments, the types of heating systems may differ between the properties designated for private ownership, social housing, and affordable housing.

In addition, a number of properties have become overcrowded and there is, therefore, an increase in moisture burden on properties and the facilities within them. It is fundamental that everyone understands what creates moisture in their homes and that simple maintenance will help resolve issues. For example, it is not appreciated how much moisture is created by everyday tasks such as drying washing on radiators, showering, cooking without putting lids on pans etc. Shutting internal doors and opening windows, even for a short time, will help in rooms that have a high moisture burden. Education is key to managing moisture in homes and we will look to undertake some informative campaigns during 2023.

Also highlighted is that several tenants simply do not know how to use the heating systems within their home. Information can be provided at the beginning of a tenancy, but this may not be retained when it comes to the winter months, especially in properties that use systems such as storage heaters rather than central heating. We need to ensure that landlords provide decent advice to tenants upon moving into a property and it would be responsible of them to "check in" during the late autumn to ensure that systems are working correctly. If a property is using gas central heating, the landlord is required to get the boiler checked annually by a

Gas Safe certified person, and this is a good opportunity for landlords to understand any issues a tenant may have (although it is recognised the check may happen at any time during the year).

Education for landlords and tenants is key to maintaining a safe and warm home environment. Our legacy councils co-ordinated Landlord Forums for the private sector but they were suspended during the pandemic. The Council needs to review the effectiveness of these networks and determine if we should resurrect them post-pandemic. It is noted that engagement tends to be by landlords who are generally compliant with legal requirements, and we need to identify how to engage with harder-to-reach landlords and ensure they are provided the appropriate information and support.

The provision of a national landlords database would help local authorities in regulating the private rented sector. A national database would enable local authorities to better use resources to drive up standards and help target rogue landlords who operate in multiple authority areas.

Buckinghamshire Council and housing standards: further information

Innovating for the future

In September 2022, our EHS worked in partnership with NHS colleagues in Acute Respiratory Care to develop a pathway to refer vulnerable patients for grant assistance to improve cold and damp homes. Strategically, working closely with health partners in all sectors of primary care to identify persons at the highest risk in a preventative framework is in place and is the intended way forward over the medium to long term.

Last year, Buckinghamshire Council launched 'Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All' in July 2022, developed in response to the national levelling up agenda. Buckinghamshire is often perceived as an affluent county, but areas of deprivation do exist. 'Opportunity Bucks' initially focuses on the 10 most deprived wards in the county, mainly with older housing stock and very high levels of private rented accommodation. It provides a framework for bringing together partners to focus our collective resources on tackling those local priorities that make a difference to the outcomes of residents. There are five key themes, one of which relates to "Standard of Living". An initial workshop has been held to initially scope what the theme may include. The matters raised are broader than those associated purely with the causes of damp and mould. It is, however, hoped that general living standards will increase and will therefore have an impact on the health of residents in the longer term. More detail is available

<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=45692>

Historically, issues of damp and mould have been heavily weighted towards how a property has been occupied and potentially putting the onus solely on residents. Some years ago, one of the legacy councils in Buckinghamshire created an educational approach to damp and mould. Information was provided on their website and when a person contacted the council to request assistance with respect to their housing conditions relating to mould, they would be directed to the website and asked to complete a questionnaire. The purpose of this was not to blame residents, but to educate them and to try and influence behavioural change which may improve the situation for them. This meant that when the matter was referred to an enforcement officer, they had background information and could offer more bespoke advice and determine if the likely issues were occupancy or structural related. This approach was rolled out across the county in early November when pages on our website were updated as part of the harmonisation process:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/housing-and-benefits/housing/housing-conditions/report-poor-housing-conditions/keep-your-home-free-from-damp-and-mould/>.

In reference to issues concerning supporting residents who are experiencing financial hardship, the Council has a Helping Hands scheme to which people are directed to for information about available support. This has been in place for some months and builds upon support given during the pandemic. Residents can apply for assistance and the scheme has proved to be a necessary lifeline for some: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living/contact-helping-hand/>

Staffing

The EHS underwent a service structure in 2021 as part of the harmonisation of services following the vesting of Buckinghamshire Council. Since that structure was implemented a year ago, we have been able to get a better understanding of the demands on the service post pandemic and to also horizon scan forthcoming demands and pressures such as the future provision of the 'Decent Homes' standard across all rented accommodation and the Private Members' Bill associated with exempt accommodation. In reaction to the recent increase in requests for service concerning damp and mould, we have secured additional funding to get agency staff for four months over the winter period. In the longer term, we will look at the staff resources available and decide whether our current staffing levels are sufficient to cope with demand in a timely manner.

Obtaining suitably qualified staff has been a challenge. The service has unsuccessfully advertised for Housing Enforcement Officers several times this past year. Unfortunately, there is not enough suitably qualified personnel available or people who have suitable transferable skills to be able to be trained as enforcement officers. We are currently exploring apprenticeship roles, but we must acknowledge that there is a time lag before someone is deemed competent. It appears that this is not an uncommon issue for local authorities.

At present, there is no nationally recognised competency framework for housing enforcement officers unlike in the other environmental health areas of food and health and safety enforcement. It is not uncommon for graduates to follow careers in these areas as there are specific standards laid down by Food Standards Agency and Health and Safety Executive with an ongoing requirement to undertake annual CPD (training) to maintain competency. This lack of requirement of qualification to operate within the housing standards field maybe a barrier to obtaining competent staff to enforce standards.

Enforcement

We are robust with respect to undertaking enforcement to secure safe homes and employ competent officers to ensure this. Much of the enforcement has focused upon management within Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). We have, however, taken action to address hazards in single family occupied properties in both social and private rented sectors. Enforcement approaches have included using powers under the Housing Act, along with other powers contained within the Public Health and Environmental Protection acts to gain resolution. Prosecutions and civil penalties have been instigated, but not for issues concerning damp and mould as there is no immediate option to do this under the current legislation. In short, we are an authority who will take appropriate action when necessary and appropriate.

Engagement with social landlords

On 9 December 2022, the Council invited registered social landlords (RSLs) who operate in the county to a meeting to discuss how they are addressing issues within their properties. Whilst not all were able to attend, it is noted that some have few properties in Buckinghamshire, many were able to provide feedback on what they have done in light of the Ombudsman decision concerning Rochdale and the challenges they face, especially with respect to tenants who are not engaging with them. The RSLs who attended found this a very useful session as it provided not only an opportunity to say how they were aiming to tackle damp and mould but also to share best practice with respect to engagement with tenants. We have used this as a forum to open channels of communication and will continue to work with RSLs to understand the challenges they face. It is likely some of this intelligence will feed into the Opportunity Bucks strategy highlighted above.

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Report to Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee

Date:	16 February 2023
Title:	Key planning, transport and regeneration strategies alignment update
Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Peter Strachan, Cllr Steve Broadbent
Contact officers:	Rosie Brake, Hannah Joyce, Claire Phillips, Shabnam Ali
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	To note the three-way relationship between the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, Local Transport Plan 5 and the Regeneration ambitions for Buckinghamshire and how they are being synergised and aligned.
Reason for decision:	To ensure the Select Committee is kept up to date with the alignment of the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, Local Transport Plan 5 and the Regeneration Frameworks.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the three-way relationship between the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire (LP4B), Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) and the Regeneration ambitions for Buckinghamshire and how they are being synergised and aligned. It examines how the three interlink in terms of their scope and programme of work, and how communication and engagement will be managed and integrated. Please note that overall scrutiny of LTP5 sits with the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 The Council is preparing a number of plans and strategies that will need to interlink and reinforce each other, taking their cues from Council-wide strategic documents such as the Corporate Plan and the Strategic Vision. It is important that these strategies present consistent ambitions and synergise their proposals, rather than conflict with, each other. Principal among these are:
- a) Local Plan for Buckinghamshire
 - b) Local Transport Plan 5
 - c) Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and the Regeneration Strategies for Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham
- 2.2 We aim to align this work along a range of dimensions, including: scope of work; overall programme and dependencies; and the timing of engagement and consultation with the public.
- 2.3 It is worth noting that the LP4B must also take account of – and can provide a statutory underpinning to – a range of other important plans and strategies either adopted or under development within the Council, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Design Code pilot. We will be happy to return to the committee on these matters on a future occasion.

Scope of work

- 2.4 The LP4B is one of the Council's key corporate priorities. The Plan provides a major opportunity to shape the direction of growth of Buckinghamshire over the next 15 – 20 years. It will set out areas for new housing and employment, while also designating areas for protection and enhancement, such as our valued landscapes, natural habitats and heritage.
- 2.5 It will designate not only where and how much new development takes place, but also the quality required for that development and will secure the infrastructure (or funding for infrastructure) to support it. The LP4B is a plan with statutory force, setting out rules with which development proposals must accord, to have planning permission granted.
- 2.6 As a local transport authority, the Transport Act 2000¹ requires the Council to prepare an LTP which typically looks forward over 10-15 years. LTPs must:
- a) Set out the long-term strategic priorities and objectives for transport in Buckinghamshire
 - b) Be in the form of a strategic policy document and separate shorter term implementation plan

¹ https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/38/pdfs/ukpga_20000038_en.pdf

- c) Be supported by an evidence base which outlines the current baseline and future projections with regard to transport connectivity, accessibility and carbon emissions.
- 2.7 The Council is preparing an overall Regeneration Framework for Buckinghamshire, and supporting Regeneration Frameworks and Strategies for Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham town centres.
- 2.8 The Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework sets out the strategic priorities to guide the overall direction for regeneration activity in different places across Buckinghamshire.
- 2.9 It sets out the role our market towns and villages play in achieving our ambitions for regeneration as key local centres for our people and our businesses. The document will also help to guide and support regeneration and placemaking activity at a local level.
- 2.10 The place-based strategies are developed in close collaboration with local regeneration boards and stakeholder groups, drawing on local knowledge and sensitive to local priorities. They can inform the Local Plan development process in the short term by setting out the areas of focus and ambition for the town centres. In the longer term they can help to underpin Local Plan work in demonstrating the deliverability of proposals.
- 2.11 Work on Aylesbury has identified our key priorities for regeneration in the town centre. To realise these opportunities, a plan for developing investment proposals that allow the Council to bid for future funding opportunities as well as attracting third party investment in the town centre is being developed.
- 2.12 The High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy is a refresh of a 2019 version created by Wycombe District Council. The Strategy has been updated to reflect the move to a Unitary authority with a focus on High Wycombe town rather than the former district area. In addition, the strategy reflects a post Covid-19 world in which our work, shopping and leisure habits have changed. We are currently engaging with stakeholders on the proposed vision, themes and locations.
- 2.13 The Chesham Regeneration Strategy is focused on the Town Centre with its purpose to create an overarching document enabling local strategies such as the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan as well as Buckinghamshire-wide frameworks such as the LTP. It is driven by a locally generated vision, building on the town's strengths in heritage, culture, and location, to become resilient, adapting to the changing economic climate, vibrant and diverse, thriving for both now and the future. The strategy will set the aspirations to guide change, creating priorities for action.
- 2.14 The opportunities for the scope of these plans to work together to achieve more than the sum of their parts include:

- a) Plans for town centre regeneration can inform how much growth the LP4B can allocate to town centres, and how much remains to be sourced from other supplies of land.
- b) By integrating social, economic and physical priorities, in line with local needs and ambitions, they can improve the quality of places, in a way that is locally sanctioned.
- c) Regeneration studies can also identify or generate requirements for development – infrastructure, open space, transport initiatives, public realm enhancement – that can be incorporated as rules into the LP4B to be delivered through planning obligations which support local communities’ ambitions. The transport initiatives can be designed to align with the LTP5 objectives.
- d) Ultimately, the LP4B will need to demonstrate to the examination Planning Inspector that regeneration proposals have a reasonable prospect of delivery, so the more that the studies can demonstrate in terms of landowner commitment, achievability and viability, the better this will support the LP4B process.
- e) In terms of LTP5, an understanding of the patterns of travel activity associated with settlements of different types and sizes, and the Council’s ambitions for the transport network, can help inform the proposed distribution of growth in the LP4B. This includes locating new developments in already well connected locations, identifying the need for new travel links and highlighting issues of funding and deliverability.
- f) This is an iterative process as it is likely there will also need to be growth in areas that will generate the need for entirely new transport links. LP4B can plan for this from the outset, achieving further transport benefits through scale or comprehensiveness and ensuring new communities are well connected by the most sustainable (i.e. low carbon) transport options.
- g) When the LP4B reaches the stage of allocating land for growth, it can set out rules to support the Council’s transport objectives through allocating development and infrastructure in appropriate locations, ensuring the delivery of high quality public realm, compact 20-minute neighbourhoods, high quality long-term public transport provision and, where necessary, highway efficiency/capacity improvements.

2.15 LTPs are likely to become the focus of engagement between central and local government around future funding for transport improvements. Grants from Government make up a significant proportion of the Council’s capital funding for new infrastructure schemes. Ensuring the LP4B, the Regeneration Frameworks and LTP5 are aligned will mean we can maximise opportunities for funding from new

developments which will both complement public investment and deliver our strategic objectives for infrastructure delivery. [The regional transport strategy](#) prepared by England's Economic Heartland will also inform the development of LTP5.

Programme and dependencies

- 2.16 The programmes for both LP4B and LTP5 are subject to considerable uncertainty as we wait to hear more detail from the Government.
- 2.17 For the LP4B, this rests on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB) and the following secondary legislation and guidance. We set out more detail on this uncertainty in our previous report to the Committee in October 2022. Similarly, for LTP5, we are still awaiting detailed guidance from the Department for Transport (DfT).
- 2.18 The Council is still waiting to hear about the success of its Levelling Up Fund Round 2 submissions which included regeneration proposals for Aylesbury and High Wycombe. The outcome of this bid will impact on the programme of our key town centres strategies as there will be a requirement to ensure delivery of any successful projects by 2025.
- 2.19 The LP4B team is currently gathering evidence which will feed into a range of approaches to growth we will be developing through 2023.
- 2.20 The DfT have stated that they require LTPs to be largely completed by spring/summer 2024 in order to inform funding discussions with the Treasury for the next Spending Period (2025+).
- 2.21 The Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and the Aylesbury and High Wycombe place-based strategies are proposed to be completed in early 2023. We note that the Aylesbury Regeneration update was also discussed at Select Committee in December 2022.
- 2.22 We are tracking the following dependencies across these pieces of work:
 - a) The capacity delivered by town centre regeneration will be a key piece of the jigsaw as the LP4B develops options for growth across Buckinghamshire
 - b) Sites put forward through the brownfield call for sites and the emerging process for assessing land available for development, can inform proposals for growth in our town centres
 - c) Future transport connections identified in LTP5 can also help inform proposals for sustainable growth across Buckinghamshire and maximise the scope for developer contributions.
 - d) The LP4B team will need to test options for growth for their transport impacts. We will consider these impacts together with transport colleagues

to assess their compatibility with LTP5 objectives, including carbon impacts. Our conclusions will inform the later drafts of both the LP4B and LTP5.

- e) As the LP4B develops, we will need to incorporate any requirements arising from the LTP and regeneration strategies into the plan's rules for site allocations.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 Not applicable at this stage.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 The harmonisation of these three approaches will not require additional funding. The development of the strategies is being funded from existing Council budgets: the Local Plan has a dedicated Revenue budget of £3m over 4 years; the Regeneration Strategies are being developed by staff in the Regeneration Team, with external input funded from revenue budgets; the LTP is funded from the Transport Strategy budget plus £178K grant from the Department for Transport.
- 4.2 The delivery of projects within the LP4B, LTP5 and Regeneration Strategies will require funding on a case-by-case basis, generally from external funding sources such as developer contributions and government grants.
- 4.3 The statutory instrument which brought Buckinghamshire Council into being requires the Council to have a Local Plan in place by April 2025. At present it must be prepared according to the [Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012](#). However, legislative change is on the horizon with the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#). We have briefed the committee before on the uncertainties associated with this process.
- 4.4 The Local Plan process itself is adequately resourced, as previously reported to the committee. The delivery of the Local Plan aspirations will be resourced principally from planning obligations and the adoption of the Plan will also provide a robust justification for bidding for forward funding from grant or lending sources. Having an up to date Plan in place will also facilitate the Development Management process, leading to fewer appeals and / or dismissal of appeals, together with their associated costs and unwanted effects.
- 4.5 The Transport Act 2000² requires the Council to prepare an LTP which typically looks forward over 10-15 years. Once adopted it will inform funding discussions with Treasury for the next Spending Period (2025+).

² https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/38/pdfs/ukpga_20000038_en.pdf

- 4.6 The regeneration of town centres will require inward investment, and investment options and opportunities, including Government Grants like the Levelling Up Fund, and developer-led opportunities, will be developed alongside the strategies.
- 4.7 Harmonisation of the three approaches will strengthen any business cases developed for funding bids.

5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 Working together, the LP4B, LTP5 and the regeneration framework and strategies will be instrumental in delivering against Corporate Plan priorities such as increasing prosperity, strengthening our communities and improving our environment. They will support the ambitions of the Buckinghamshire Strategic Vision by creating the conditions for successful businesses, vibrant and connected places, and a thriving culture, heritage and natural environment.
- 5.2 The strategies present significant opportunities to reduce carbon consumption by locating development in the right places, such as town centres, and establishing initiatives to travel sustainably or reduce the need to travel. These support the 'regulatory' and 'enabling change' approaches of Buckinghamshire's [Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy](#).
- 5.3 The Council's land holdings present an opportunity to facilitate the delivery of development (where appropriate), generate value, and give the Council leverage in wider development negotiations.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 The teams have engaged, and will continue to engage, with Members through verbal and written briefings, creating the opportunity for Members to have any questions answered.
- 6.2 The teams also intend to engage with Parish and Town Councils through the Community Boards as their plans and strategies develop, to support the identification of local priorities.
- 6.3 In terms of the regeneration frameworks and strategies, the following member boards and groups are engaged in the development of the programme:
 - a) High Wycombe – High Wycombe Regeneration Board takes place once a quarter. The Council also meets regularly with the High Wycombe BIDCo and Town Centre Partnership with Cressex BidCo

- b) Chesham – Chesham Regeneration Group takes place once a quarter. The Council has also started to engage with the Chesham Town Team, which represents key local stakeholders.
- c) Aylesbury – Garden Town Strategic Oversight Board takes place every quarter. Representatives include Buckinghamshire Council Members, Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Homes England.

6.4 Overall scrutiny of LTP5 sits with the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 It is important that the Council provides consistency and continuity in its communication with the public and that we coordinate efforts to ensure we avoid ‘consultation fatigue’.
- 7.2 Both the LP4B and LTP5 teams are considering engagement on Visions, and/or Themes and Objectives early in 2023. We’ll be working together to ensure that these are compatible and that the public recognise any distinctions. It’s worth observing that while different plans or strategies across the Council may develop distinct Vision statements to serve their specific purposes, we work together to ensure that they are all following a consistent direction, harmonising and not conflicting.
- 7.3 Later in 2023 the LP4B team is working towards public engagement on growth options; subsequent to that, the LTP5 team will follow on later with a consultation on the draft LTP5.
- 7.4 In terms of the regeneration frameworks and strategies, the Council is currently engaging with stakeholders on the proposed vision, themes and locations for the Chesham and High Wycombe town strategies.

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 Officers will continue to report regularly on strategy alignment, as well as providing updates on individual plans and strategies.

9. Background papers

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 telephone [] or email []

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Report to Growth, infrastructure and Housing Select Committee

Date:	16 th February
Title:	Planning Enforcement
Relevant councillor(s):	Councillor Peter Strachan
Author and/or contact officer:	Darran Eggleton
Ward(s) affected:	All Wards
Recommendations:	It is recommended that the Committee note the report for information.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report is prepared in order to provide an overview of the planning compliance and enforcement service to the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee.

2. Content of report

Planning Enforcement

- 2.1 Since the last report to the GIH Select Committee in October 2021 the team has continued to see a stable level of employment and staff retention, has improved internal systems and processes and continued to provide a robust planning enforcement service, taking a no-nonsense approach where appropriate. This includes a further and significant increase in the number of formal actions taken and numerous compliance achieved.
- 2.2 The team continues to address breaches of planning control in a firm but fair way, with great support from colleagues in legal, taking strong and justified enforcement action against breaches where necessary and appropriate. This approach means that the Council complies with the relevant legislative framework whilst providing a service which maintains the public's confidence in the Council being able to perform its duties. The enforcement ultimately underpins the overall planning system and contributes towards making Buckinghamshire a better and safer place to live work and visit.

Team structure and service improvements

- 2.3 Having previously completed the team's management restructure, the team has been able to retain its overall staff levels resulting in a team of 20 officers.
- 2.4 The team, which is split geographically into 2 area based teams, continues to be managed by Gemma Davies, with Team Leaders Olivia Stapleford and Stephanie Penney responsible for matters arising in the North and Central, and the West, East and South planning areas respectively.
- 2.5 The service now successfully operates in consistent way bringing a single planning enforcement service (including minerals and waste) across the Buckinghamshire Area.
- 2.6 Examples of this single service includes single procedures and processes for both teams as well as providing website based public access to the Enforcement Notices Register (S188) and a single 'alleged breach of planning reporting form' rolled out in January 2023.
- 2.7 In the 2022 financial year, additional funding of £225,000 was agreed for the creation of 5 new posts in the team. These posts have been successfully recruited in to and has enabled the team to, amongst other things, provide its officers with a more manageable and productive workload as well as the allocation of 2 officers to 2 key and specific roles.
- 2.8 The first role is in relation to an officer who is now dedicated to pursuing the compliance and enforcement of formal notices. This role has been a resounding success which has resulted in a significant number of resolutions achieved across the Buckinghamshire area. These successes include dozens of enforcement notices being pursued and subsequently complied with. These have varied in their type, scale and impact but include dangerous vehicular accesses removed and walls rebuilt, harmful fences removed, caravan sites ceased and disruptive air BnB's brought to an end.
- 2.9 The second role is an officer who is dedicated to pro-actively monitor and enforce compliance with conditions imposed on planning permissions granted on larger development sites. This project is being piloted for site with 10+ residential units and not only catches breaches of conditions at an early stage, thus minimising the impact of any breaches on residents, but also strengthens our relationship with the development industry whilst further reiterating the council's message that Buckinghamshire is not the place to breach planning control.
- 2.10 In the meantime, the team have continued to increase the number of formal notices issued and have maintained high performance in enforcement notice appeals.
- 2.11 The team continues to engage with elected members and with our Town and Parish Council's through our relevant periodic forums, as well as providing quarterly updates to the area planning committees. The team also notify Local Councillors and town and Parish Councils of any formal actions taken in their area as a matter of course.

3. Staffing Vacancies

- 3.1 At present the team has 0 vacancies.

4. LEMP Review

- 4.1 The Local Enforcement and Monitoring Plan (LEMP) was adopted by Cabinet in June 2020. The LEMP sets out the types of activity that the planning enforcement service can investigate and the way in which that investigation takes place.
- 4.2 The LEMP set out that a review of the document would take place within 3 years of its adoption.
- 4.3 The team carried out a formal in house review of the LEMP in October 2022 with officers coming to an opinion that, notwithstanding a few more typographical errors, the LEMP continues to be relevant and appropriate. The team intends to have that review process signed off with the cabinet member in Q1 of 2022.

5. Performance

- 5.1 In the calendar year ending 31 December 2022, the team received 1825 new reports of alleged breaches of planning control.
- 5.2 In the same period the team closed 1661, issued 126 formal notices and had received 58 enforcement notices appeals.
- 5.3 On average the team receive around 456 cases per quarter.
- 5.4 Of the 126 formal notices issues, 116 of those were planning enforcement notices (42.5% increase on FY21-22 (80) and a 132.6% increase on 2020/21 (49)).
- 5.5 The Department of levelling up, Housing and Communities publish on its website ([Live tables on planning application statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics)) details of the numbers of enforcement notices issued by Councils across England.
- 5.6 Over the past 3 years Buckinghamshire have steadily and continually risen up that 'league table' rankings and have become one of the most active Planning Enforcement teams in the country. At the end of 21/22 Buckinghamshire Council had issued 80 planning enforcement notices and sat 5th overall and the highest outside of London in terms of the number of enforcement notices issued. During that same period, Buckinghamshire had issued the most Breach of Condition Notices, and, with the support of the Councils legal team, been granted the highest number of High Court Injunctions.
- 5.7 As stated above the team has again increased its performance in this area with a further 42.5% increase in the number of enforcement notices issued. Final figures for the overall 'league table' standings for 2022 are still being awaited but at the end of 2022 Q3, Buckinghamshire sat 4th overall and we therefore anticipate a top 4 finish to 2022.

2022	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Brent	50	14	39		103
Westminster	37	24	32		93
Barnet	38	21	23		82
Buckinghamshire	31	23	24		78
Cornwall	15	23	19		57

5.8

5.9 In addition to the formal notices, the team has had successful prosecution proceedings, taken direct action on 6 sites and been granted 4 High Court Injunctions.

5.10 The direct action sites were located in the East and South Planning areas and saw the council employ specialist contractors to enter the sites and bring to resolution 6 unauthorised caravan sites removing mobile homes, utility buildings, rip up hardstanding, remove fences, remove unauthorised accesses and replant hedgerows. Following which the recovery of the costs incurred are being pursued through invoices and land charges.

6. Appeal performance

6.1 The increase in the number of enforcement notices over the past 2.5 years has resulted in an increase in the number of appeals we receive. We currently have 43 appeals that are either going through the process or awaiting a decision from the Planning Inspectorate.

6.2 Our performance on enforcement notice appeals remains very high. Whilst the Planning Inspectorate have only determined a limited enforcement notice appeals, all those that have been determined has been dismissed, thus upholding the Council's decision to issue a notice.

6.3 The high performance on appeals is a direct endorsement from the Planning Inspectorate that the Council are making the correct decisions in their planning Enforcement Notices.

7. Customer service/Customer experience

7.1 Following on from our last report to this committee, we have continued to maintain focus on the customer service element of the service.

7.2 The appointment of the area team leaders continued to provided team management stability and our dedicated and focussed case conference sessions continues to make a difference in the speed of our decision making. These initiatives continue to help free up officer time so that customer service is now a fundamental and well embedded part of the enforcement service.

7.3 The team received welcome positive feedback from numerous members during the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry in January 2023 highlighting the progress the team has made over the past couple of years in improving the overall planning enforcement service and its reputation with our members, Town and Parish Councils and the general public.

7.4 However, we continue to explore the potential for IT solutions for improving the public's self service to our service.

8. Legal and financial implications

- 8.1 There are no direct legal or financial implications in terms of the content of this report.
- 8.2 However, one legal and financial implication being experienced by the team relates to the level of enforcement notices appeals being received.
- 8.3 This is an inevitable bi-product of issuing lots of notices but it is being experienced that dealing with lots of appeals take time and costs money to defend.
- 8.4 The government guidance on appeals sets out that *“Parties in planning appeals and other planning proceedings normally meet their own expenses. All parties are expected to behave reasonably to support an efficient and timely process, for example in providing all the required evidence and ensuring that timetables are met. Where a party has behaved unreasonably, and this has directly caused another party to incur unnecessary or wasted expense in the appeal process, they may be subject to an award of costs”*. ([Appeals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk))
- 8.5 Whilst the Council are able to apply to the Planning Inspectorate seeking to recover costs in appeals (and this is pursued where appropriate), such costs are only awarded where the appellant has behaved unreasonably. In most planning enforcement appeals, unreasonable behaviour may mean that deadlines have been missed or matters pursued without sound ground or planning merit.
- 8.6 In most cases however, there is little justification to show that the appellants have acted unreasonably and therefore the council are to bear their own costs in the vast majority of matters.
- 8.7 As a result, the increase in notices is having an increased financial implication in terms of money spent defending enforcement notice appeals.

9. Corporate implications

- 9.1 Whilst the performance of the planning enforcement team has a direct influence of the corporate reputation of the Council, there are no direct corporate implications in relation to the content of this report.

10. Consultation with local councillors & community boards

- 10.1 This report is for information only and whilst the relevant Cabinet member is aware of the content of the report, no formal consultation has taken place with local councillors or community boards.

11. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 11.1 No further consultation or engagement has been carried out.

12. Next steps and review

- 12.1 This paper is for information and therefore recommends that the committee note its content.

13. Background papers

None

14. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

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

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 st March 2022.	Steve Bambrick/Chrissy Urry	Peter Strachan

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