



# Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee Agenda

Date: Thursday 6 April 2023

Time: 10.00 am

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

## Membership:

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

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| <b>Agenda Item</b>                                   | <b>Time</b> | <b>Page No</b> |
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| <b>1 Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership</b> |             |                |
| <b>2 Declarations of Interest</b>                    |             |                |
| <b>3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>             |             | <b>5 - 14</b>  |

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

**4 Public Questions**

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

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

**5 Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Model**

**10:10**

**15 - 32**

The Committee will review the Buckinghamshire 'place-based' governance arrangements. The new Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Model approach was approved at Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

**Contributors:**

Cllr Martin Tett, Leader

Lisa Michelson, Service Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration

**6 The Legacy of 'Everyone in' and Homelessness in Buckinghamshire**

**11:00**

**33 - 36**

The Committee will discuss and agree the scoping document for the proposed scrutiny review into the Legacy of 'everyone in' and homelessness in Buckinghamshire. Members are encouraged to volunteer to be part of the review group.

**7 Work Programme**

A work programming meeting will be held in early May with Select Committee Members to explore topics for the Select Committee to discuss for 2023-24.

**8 Date of Next Meeting**

The date is to be confirmed and will be circulated in due course.

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 [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)  
01494 732009

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# Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee

## Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE & HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2023 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.27 PM

### MEMBERS PRESENT

D Carroll, T Hogg, N Brown, S Chapple, Q Chaudhry, I Darby, M Hussain, N Marshall, C Poll, D Town, S Wilson and P Brazier

### OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

R Stuchbury, S Broadbent, M Winn and P Strachan

### Agenda Item

#### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies had been received from Councillors Carl Etholen, Tom Hunter-Watts, Imran Hussein and Simon Rouse.

Councillor Peter Brazier was in attendance substituting for Councillor Simon Rouse.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

It was noted that item 7 from the minutes was not discussed in detail at the meeting and that a further update would be for members at a future meeting.

#### 4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Two Public Questions had been received.

Question from Andrew Douglas

Today's report on damp and mould in rented housing states the lack of available housing as one

of the contributing factors. A recent Bucks Free Press article states that Buckinghamshire now has 678 fewer social homes than it did 10 years ago and that includes the 16 built last year. Clearly the present system is failing to deliver the warm, dry, cheap to heat social homes that are so desperately needed. What does Buckinghamshire Council intend to do to ensure this decline is reversed so that in the future damp and mould free social homes are available to all those who need them?

Response from Councillor Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services

The Council is committed to maximising the delivery of additional good quality affordable rent housing. During 2021/22, nearly 500 additional new rented social housing properties were delivered in Buckinghamshire by Registered Providers working alongside the Council. (The difference between the figure in the Bucks Free Press Article quoted in the question of just 16 is because they were referring only to properties that were available at the social rented level, whereas the majority of new Registered Provider rented properties are delivered using the Affordable Rent model. Hence we had 500 new properties delivered overall).

In 2022, the Council adopted an Interim Position Statement on Affordable Housing which set out the Council's broad approach and immediate commitment to working with house builders and Registered Providers to maximise the delivery of general needs affordable housing. This included a commitment to bring forward a development on a Council owned site that could provide affordable housing, potentially with an element of specialist affordable and key worker housing, and this is now being explored on the former Sports and Social Club site at Stoke Mandeville and other sites are being investigated in Horns Lane High Wycombe Tatling End in Denham. The Council's recently adopted accommodation strategy may provide further opportunities for exploring sites that could include affordable housing.

The Interim Position Statement is underpinning the current development of the Council's new single Housing Strategy which will provide the framework going forward for the Council's approach to maximising the delivery of new affordable homes. The initial draft of the strategy is currently being finalised and will be brought forward for public consultation in due course. Alongside this, the Council's Planning Policy approach to securing affordable housing will be a key consideration in the current work developing the Buckinghamshire Local Plan for adoption in 2025.

Question from Councillor Mark Cole JP, Chairman of the Planning Committee, Buckingham Town Council

Although Buckingham currently has no unmet housing need under VALP, can the Select Committee give an indication how much housing need it forecasts under the emerging Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, bearing in mind that the Secretary of State for Levelling Up Housing and Communities stated on 6th December 2022 that he has conceded that the 300,000 pa national housing target is being dropped, and local authorities will be allowed to build fewer homes if they can show that hitting centrally imposed targets would significantly change the character of their area?

Pushing more houses up to North Bucks would have the same despoiling effect on its rural and agricultural nature as it would have on South Bucks Green Belt/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in terms of significantly changing its character.

Response from Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

There is still considerable uncertainty about the approach Buckinghamshire should take to assess the need for housing here and how growth should be distributed across the Council area. This is because the government is going through a process of considerable change to the planning system and because evidence being prepared for the Local Plan is at an early stage.

One of the four 'tests of soundness' which local plans need to pass at their independent public examination is for them to be 'consistent with national policy'. That is defined as enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

The current July 2021 version of the NPPF is under review. The government is consulting on some proposed changes to the NPPF which it says will be confirmed in a new interim version of the document that it will publish in spring 2023. National planning policy is therefore in a state of flux.

National policy as it stands is that councils that are preparing local plans should determine the minimum number of homes that are needed over the period of their plan. This process should be informed by a local housing needs assessment, conducted using the government's 'standard method', a statistical formula for calculating local housing need – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.

Applying the government's 'standard method' to Buckinghamshire gives a figure of 2,861 homes needed each year over the 10-year period 2023 – 2033. This represents an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed without reference to any environmental constraints or policy designations. It is also merely the starting point for establishing a housing requirement figure (or housing target) in the local plan and preparing policies to meet this, such as housing site allocations. It is not mandatory and should not properly be regarded as a centrally-imposed top-down target.

Work on the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire is at an early stage. The Council's Planning Policy team is shortly to begin the site assessment process for the 1000-plus sites which have been gathered through the three 'call for sites' consultations and through other sources of data. This assessment will inform a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which will consider the suitability (environmental constraints), availability (when) and achievability (any viability issues) of the sites.

Until this assessment is completed, which is likely to be after the government has published a revised version of the NPPF, there will be no reliable, up-to-date evidence in place on the amount of land, and its capacity to accommodate new homes, in Buckinghamshire that is both available and suitable to be considered for potential inclusion within the Local Plan. Without this evidence, it will not be possible to determine the Local Plan's response to the theoretical level of housing that is assessed as being needed over the plan period.

## **5 HOUSING STANDARDS**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services, Lisa Michelson, Service Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration and Jacqui Bromilow, Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards to the committee meeting.

CLlr Robin Stuchbury submitted a question for the Cabinet Member and Officers to consider.

*Properties with Damp and Mould are being rented within the local authority, am I correct there is a statutory duty to repair the structure and keep the external part of a dwelling in good repair & proper working order?*

*Under Section 11 of the landlord tenant act 1985, obligations on the landlord requires a time limit for section 11 repairs. Many of these obligations were set out in October 24, 1961 in respect to keeping a property in good order.*

*The HHSRS (Housing health and safety rating system) definition of hazard comes under housing in the health and safety rating system, of which damp and mould in a property are both within the housing unit and within the rating systems.*

*I seek assurance that the local authority has the resources to, where necessary, seek & enforce removal of damp within properties, noting how harmful this is to growing young people and vulnerable adults within Buckinghamshire.*

*If the authority does not have the powers to enforce, especially within social housing & private rented housing robustly. Who's best placed to protect and defend all Buckinghamshire constituents within property which is rented within Buckinghamshire, both in private and public rent sectors? Noting the aspirations within the report before your committee today, please could I have clarity around these questions I ask as a Buckinghamshire councillor regarding damp within socially rented properties.*

*Information quoted within the question, I've provided the evidence to legislation attached, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/helping-tenants-with-damp-and-mouldy-housing-england/>*

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regulator-of-social-housing-writes-to-social-housing-landlords-on-the-issue-of-damp-and-mould>*

Response from Councillor Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services

*Following the tragic case in Rochdale, Buckinghamshire Council has seen a large increase in requests for service relating to issues of Damp and Mould compared to previous comparable winter periods. This increase has also been seen nationally within other councils. Whilst the increase in demand in this area of work has put the Environmental Health service under pressure, it has managed to respond to all requests for service regarding damp and mould. As stated in the report the council will be reviewing our future needs in line with the heightened awareness that residents have around housing standards and their rights along with the demands of future legislation which are being proposed. The council is a key enforcement agent with respect to housing standards and has responded as required to cases it has been made aware of. There are some legislative proposals to extend the powers of the Housing Ombudsman and the Social Housing Regulator and we await more information regarding how our enforcement duties will work alongside these organisations.*

*The Council has a statutory duty under the Housing Act 2004 to investigate complaints of disrepair within properties, and to take enforcement action in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy where there is a significant hazard affecting the occupiers (if any). An inspection would be undertaken by an officer competent in the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) which lists 29 hazards that should be assessed, of which Damp and Mould is just one.*



*Once an inspection is complete the officer will determine the most appropriate course of action for that property. There are a range of options available. One option is the service of an Improvement Notice. If this is not complied with the council has a power (not a duty) to undertake the necessary works and make arrangements to recover the costs incurred. All action must be appropriate and proportionate, and the Council will work with all landlords and owners to ensure they are aware of their duties in terms of keeping property in good repair. Failure to comply with Statutory Notices is an offence, and further legal action may be taken if appropriate to do so and the legal evidential threshold is met. In some cases, no formal enforcement action is required.*

*It must be remembered the contract is between the landlord and tenant and the role of the council is an escalation route for tenants to get matters resolved where the landlord has failed to do so. The council should not be managing properties on behalf of the owners. The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the Homes (Fitness for Habitation) Act 2018, give further recourse to tenants under the civil law to take their own action in court to require landlords to undertake repairs and to maintain the condition of the property.*

*The link between poor housing conditions and ill health has long been documented. It is recognised that the work to improve housing conditions is vital to prevent poor physical and mental health across all age groups and vulnerabilities. The Council continues to work with partners across Primary care and Social care to identify the most vulnerable cases, and is seeking through the Opportunity Bucks strategy to strengthen and expand this preventative work and to address Health inequalities in this area.*

CLlr Mark Winn, Lisa Michelson and Jacqui Bromilow presented the report to the committee and took questions from Members.

The following points were highlighted from the report:

- The process for Council intervention in a case of Damp and Mould was explained. Complaints should go to the Landlord in the first instance and where issues remain unresolved the Environmental Health team at Buckinghamshire Council gets involved. The primary way to contact the Environmental Health team about this issue was online via the [website](#).
- The roundtable meeting held by the Cabinet Member with Housing associations was successful. Best practice was shared, and the ongoing efforts by those present to address the issue was examined (e.g. visiting maintenance workers looking out damp and mould).
- Ventilation was key in prevention. Tenants were advised to open windows where possible. It was noted that Tenants are not blamed for the presence of damp and mould in a property.
- There had been a big increase in demand for the Environmental Health services following the news of the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale. These were being triaged based on priority.
- When an inspection is undertaken, a Housing Health and Safety rating system (HHSRS) is used to judge the property. There were 29 listed factors, e.g. damp, mould, excess cold/heat. There were a range of enforcement options available, including an emergency prohibition notice, meaning the property cannot be lived in until matters are resolved. There was also the possibility of an improvement notice, outlining actions need. Where the Landlord has begun repairs, no enforcement action may be needed.

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

- It was noted that if a tenant informs the team of issues with money, the Environmental Health team will direct them to the Helping Hands scheme or to debt advisors where appropriate.
- The Registered Providers that attended the roundtable meeting engaged well, and the missing Registered Provider had been contacted. It was suggested that Registered Providers are invited to a future meeting for the committee to discuss the importance of successful partnership working with the council.
- Cllr Thomas Hogg mentioned a specific case where a tenant was having difficulty with their registered provider and not getting a resolution to their matter which included broken windows. Following the meeting, the Cabinet Member reported that *'we checked on resolution of this case and can confirm that a compliance notice was put in place on the property. So although action was taken, this fact was relayed to the local MP, but was in error not copied to the Cllr. So hopefully there is an assurance the matter was responded to quickly and appropriate enforcement action was taken'*.
- A Member noted the work being done by the Environmental Health team on the triage system and identifying where more help was needed. It was suggested that the Cabinet Member and team return to the Select Committee before winter to update the committee. The Cabinet Member confirmed they would return to the Select Committee in the Autumn.
- It was clarified that when Tenants are advised to open windows, this would only need to be for a short amount of time to allow moisture in the air to clear. Trickle vents on windows and opening windows a few times a day should be adequate (dependent on the housing situation) to prevent/manage mould. Advice was available on the [Buckinghamshire Council website](#).
- If someone wished to report an issue with damp & mould, they should make contact with the Environmental Health service.

## 6 UPDATE ON KEY PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND REGENERATION STRATEGIES ALIGNMENT

The Committee received an update from Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Cllr Steve Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport, Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Planning Growth and Sustainability, Steve Bambrick, Service Director, Planning & Environment, Darran Eggleton, Head of Planning Policy and Compliance, John Cheston, Planning Policy Manager, and Rosie Brake, Planning Policy Team Leader.

The following points were highlighted:

- It was clarified that under item 6 on the agenda front sheet, it should read 'regeneration strategies', not 'infrastructure plan'
- In addition to the plans listed, various other schemes worked in collaboration with the Local Plan, Transport Plan & Regeneration Strategies, such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Design Codes. The interdependencies were consistently assessed to ensure compatibility and that good practice was being followed.
- The new Transport Plan being produced was the 5<sup>th</sup> Local Transport Plan (LTP 5), a new LTP was produced every 10-15 years. Intelligence was gathered to assess the priorities of movement of people and goods in intra-authority and inter-authority areas.
- Buckinghamshire Council was still awaiting final guidance on LTP 5 from the Department for Transport. This guidance was required before they could fully consult. Funding for projects was decided on a case by case basis with appropriate DfT indications. Given the nature and cost of transport schemes, there will be a need to draw on external funding in many instances.

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

- Where major works/movements were conducted, in line with the asset management policy, the road was inspected and defects were dealt with accordingly.
- In preparing the Local Plan, transport links are considered when looking at areas for large scale development. The Local Plan can't fix historic problems. Where it is possible, roads/infrastructure are built prior to housing, however this won't always be the case.
- Policy requirements contained within the current Local Plans remain in place until overtaken by the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan. The Council is committed to following up on any infrastructure requirements contained within current Local Plans. Going forward, these allocations and requirements would be considered in the formulation of the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan.
- A Member mentioned that Luton Airport had been looking to increase employment opportunities within Buckinghamshire. The LTP would examine the needs of residents as well as cross-boundary opportunities in its formulation. Research would be undertaken to identify where residents need to travel for work and how best to develop transport links. There is a legal duty to cooperate when preparing the Local Plan and Local Infrastructure Plans, as such the Council ensures their strategies are coherent with other Local Authority strategies.
- It was clarified that when planning permission is granted, conditions or requirements only apply within the application site. This red line can limit the ability of conditions to stop incidents such as pavement damage outside the area of the planning application site.
- Where a planning application requires infrastructure delivery, the developers are not always able to deliver this up front. Viability of arrangements such as a requirement for infrastructure delivery prior to the development would need to be balanced appropriately. Ultimately, the independent inspector would need to assess that the Buckinghamshire Local Plan can be delivered by the development industry.
- It was noted that while property prices in Buckinghamshire were notably higher than other areas, the cost of building the house was not considerably higher than other areas. Developers looked to build within Buckinghamshire as it was more profitable.
- The importance of developing a complete Local Plan on time was highlighted. This was necessary to ensure that the right kind of developments were approved, e.g. truly affordable housing.
- When consultation questionnaires are sent to Parish/Town Councils asking for similar types of information, they are aligned to go out at similar times, e.g. the Local Plan and LTP consultation requests.
- Neighbourhood plans, when adopted, carry full weight within the planning decision process. Communities can benefit from the production of a neighbourhood plan and Town/Parish Councils looking to create one were encouraged to look at the [Council's website](#) and get in touch. Neighbourhood plans can be very useful in highlighting things that are important in their local areas, it provides an element of control about where growth goes, in turn shaping their local community. They also provide an extra defence against speculative planning applications.
- When the Buckinghamshire Local Plan is adopted, it will take precedence over Neighbourhood Plans that were completed before its adoption in the event of any conflict. The new Buckinghamshire Local Plan would take into account what was in those previously adopted Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Plans would probably need to be refreshed following adoption of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan to ensure they're up to date and hold full weight within the planning process.
- Modern design standards would be applied to new infrastructure and developments e.g. cycle lanes would be segregated from the road where possible. The new Plans would align with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to improve connectivity across the county.

- It was noted that work was underway on a Parking review and Parking strategy. This would feed into work on the LTP. The Climate Change strategy would also contribute to future transport provision. EV charging points would be important for the future as electric vehicles rollout. Considerable work had been done on the Electric Vehicle Action Plan, Members were encouraged to review the update given to the [Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022](#).

## 7 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

The Chairman invited Cllr Peter Strachan, Steve Bambrick, Service Director, Planning & Environment, Darran Eggleton, Head of Planning Policy and Compliance to give an update on Planning Enforcement.

The following points were highlighted:

- The Planning Enforcement service was important to local residents, and there was a very high level of performance reported across the team.
- The team was fully staffed, having recently filled 5 new posts. It was noted many other authorities struggled to fully staff their Planning Enforcement service and faced unmanageable workloads.
- Buckinghamshire was in the top 4 local authorities in the country for number of enforcement notices issued. While the level of appeals was high, the success rate of the service in defending these appeals was also very high. At the time of the committee meeting, there were 78 appeals reported in the overall process, with 43 in the determination phase.

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

- How best to keep Members updated on the success of the enforcement service was to be reviewed by the Cabinet Member. Members of the committee were keen to have up to date information to disseminate to Parish Councils and residents as necessary.  
**ACTION: Cllr Peter Strachan**
- A new reporting form for planning breaches was to be released in the month following the committee meeting. This form was more user friendly and combined the 4 different previous forms into a single one.
- Communication with complainants was being worked on to ensure that customers are informed at all steps of the planning enforcement process. Members were encouraged to contact the team if they were unsure of the progress of a case.
- The Planning Enforcement Team was always looking at new ways to improve the process. Due to the nature of planning enforcement cases, it was hard to speed up the turnaround of cases.
- Buckinghamshire Council had responded to the government's consultation around the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill highlighting the length of time planning enforcement cases take. It was reported that cases can take years due to legal requirements, despite the best efforts of the enforcement team. Due to these legal barriers, sometimes the impression is that nothing is happening on an enforcement case, despite the correct processes being followed in a timely manner.
- Members of the public can help the process where they feel comfortable by providing photographic evidence of planning breaches.

- The Committee expressed their gratitude for the hard work performed by the Planning Enforcement team.
- The Cabinet Member clarified that quarterly developers forum's take place ensuring a constant dialogue with developers. The Council's reputation as a planning enforcement authority could be assisted by local Members managing expectations.

## **8 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman noted the agreement of the Cabinet Member to return to the Select Committee prior to Winter 2023 to further update the committee regarding damp and mould. Attendance from Registered Housing Providers to scrutinise their work was suggested as a future topic for the committee.

A scope was being drafted for a review into the legacy of 'everyone in' and homelessness within Bucks. Cllr Thomas Hogg had volunteered to chair the review group. The Scrutiny Officer would circulate the scoping document to the committee when complete.

## **9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would take place on 6th April 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

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## Report to Cabinet

**Date:** 14 February 2023

**Title:** Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Model

**Relevant councillor(s):** Martin Tett, Leader

**Author and/or contact officer:** Richard Ambrose

**Ward(s) affected:** None specific

### Recommendations:

- Buckinghamshire wants to lead the way in defining what best in class integration looks like for economic delivery. The Unitary Council alongside a coterminous LEP, with strong relationships and a shared ambition, provide the right conditions for this integration. We aim to transition to a 'No Deal' partnership model of strategic governance with effect from April 2023, as outlined in Appendix 1, and establish a 'Pooled Investment Fund' to exclusively fund inclusive economic growth.
- Our collective financial pressures and the desire of government to devolve programme activity to the local level provide further impetus for this change. A new 'Place Based Growth Board' would strengthen alignment, generate and focus funds and oversee the effective allocation of resources to support agreed priorities.
- To further align our activity four supporting boards responsible for the development and management of a number of strands of supporting work would report into the new Growth Board. These include an Enterprise & Investment Board, a Skills Board, a Place, Housing & Regeneration Board and the Opportunity Bucks Board.
- Buckinghamshire LEP (BLEP) would fulfil the Enterprise & Investment Board remit. In this initial phase we will seek to integrate activity rather than incorporate the legal entity and so would not pursue TUPE transfer and the dissolution of the LEP Company, particularly in light of the legal and government funding considerations.
- Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF), as a key delivery partner and part of our economic and business architecture, would lead on business support and integrated skills programme support whilst maintaining its status as the primary Buckinghamshire business representation organisation. BBF would specifically be

delegated the task of managing both the Growth Hub and Skills Hub subject to the core funders (Buckinghamshire Council and the Buckinghamshire LEP) agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding with BBF, to include agreed metrics, to clarify expectations around the funding provided.

- We specifically transfer into the ‘Pooled Investment Fund’ the management of the Enterprise Zone programme that is currently managed by the EZ Board (in line with the current approved MoU) and the Connected Counties Gainshare income. The gainshare from contract 1 is c£2m (Council = £1,110k and LEP = £900k) and for contract 2 is expected to be c£1m by 2028 (Council = £630k and LEP = £370k). This will be used for clearly defined economic activities and will be managed by the Enterprise & Investment Board who will assess business cases against criteria set by the Place Based Growth Board in order to help catalyse investment linked to agreed priorities.
- In transferring Council resources into the proposed ‘Pooled Investment Fund’, the Council will attach the condition that, as well as requiring a Board majority, all three Cabinet Members on the Enterprise & Investment Board must agree to the release of any funding from the ‘Pooled Investment Fund’ by the Board, to ensure that all Council resources are allocated to agreed priorities. Any additional funding required from the Council requires formal approval by the Council, in line with financial procedures.
- We will better utilise and align existing support services including IT, HR and finance and improve relationship management with the most significant Buckinghamshire businesses, increase the Inward Investment capacity in conjunction with the Department for International Trade (DIT) and maximise external funding and grant bidding capacity.

**Reason for decision:** To provide a more streamlined and integrated place based growth approach where thematic activity including health, economy and physical environment may be coordinated to best effect.

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Given the co-terminosity of the county, the disaggregated current arrangements and the strategic policy direction towards devolution then, even without a county deal, we should look to move towards closer integration, including having a **‘place-based’**



**governance model** rather than one purely centred around economic development. This would also then allow for a strategic review of our approach to economic prosperity across Buckinghamshire. Any model should ensure that Buckinghamshire is the 'master of its own destiny'.

- 1.2 Locally the financial position to fund growth and levelling up activity will be challenging with scarcity of funding, which is why it would make sense to transition towards a single vision and the pooling of resources to meet jointly agreed priorities to achieve the vision. The creation of a '**Pooled Investment Fund**' would be a new and powerful tool and would require approved funding from both the Council and the LEP. It would also be prudent to continue to position for government funding programmes at every opportunity.

## 2. Content of report

### Background

- 2.1 The Levelling Up White Paper and supporting draft legislation provides Buckinghamshire with the opportunity to take control and address levelling up, regeneration and innovation priorities. Ideally Buckinghamshire is seeking a case for a 'Level 2 plus' County Deal that could result in devolution of both capital funds and powers through the award of new local flexibilities and freedoms. However, whether or not the Government continues to proceed with county deals, or indeed allow Level 2 plus deals, we are collectively agreed that we need to synthesise our current work in this space into a better aligned governance structure.
- 2.2 On the 31 March 2022, government issued a guidance letter which outlined a framework for integrating LEPs into local democratic institutions, where devolution deals were to be secured by 2030. The stated aim being to '*balance the accountability of local growth institutions, our objectives on devolution and the need to retain a local, independent, business voice.*' The Government have more recently published an 'Integration Plan' template, which would be required to be completed for those pursuing a devolution deal.
- 2.3 In the *Levelling Up the United Kingdom* white paper, published in February 2022, the government announced that nine county areas will be invited to negotiate new devolution deals with central government. These areas were: Cornwall; Derbyshire & Derby; Devon, Plymouth & Torbay; Durham; Hull & East Yorkshire; Leicestershire; Norfolk; Nottinghamshire & Nottingham; and Suffolk. In May 2022, Government published the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which is currently going through Parliament. This new legislation proposes new devolved powers and devolution arrangements, which aim to empower local authorities to drive economic growth

and improve public services via the new County Deal framework. In August 2022 Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils together signed a new devolution deal with central government, which will include the creation of a directly elected mayor for the East Midlands. In Nov / Dec 2022 deals to bring Mayors to Cornwall, Norfolk and Suffolk were announced and a forthcoming deal to an area of the North-East including Newcastle, Gateshead, Northumberland, Durham and Tyneside was trailed. All deals have so far been struck in peripheral areas and all at Level 3. While integration is a requirement of a Level 2 deal it remains unclear as to whether government would continue to fund the LEP function within such a deal. A decision on this is imminent.

- 2.4 Notwithstanding the extraordinary changes in the global and national economy and across the political landscape over recent months, the direction of travel appears to remain the same with the recent appointment of Rishi Sunak as the new Prime Minister and the re-appointment of Michael Gove as the Levelling Up Secretary. However, it is apparent that priority will be given to Level 3 deals. In the absence of a 'Level 2 plus' deal, yet to be tested at a political level in Government, resources should be concentrated on developing a best-in-class Level 2 deal, or indeed a best-in-class local solution to no deal for the foreseeable future.

### **A Place Based Programme**

- 2.5 Currently we have an organisational based programme that is coordinated by joint working at a senior level. This can sometimes give the impression of, or result in, duplication. It also has enabled government to fund different partners with different funding streams that have sometimes become confusing and less impactful in their profusion. While national policy and government funding lays outside of our control we do have the opportunity to reorganise locally to ensure that we are making the best use of limited resource. The proposed new model of governance will ensure that we are all aligned to a placed based common vision and plan and provide the broadest platform from which to address our growth and cohesion priorities. No one organisation will likely succeed on its own.
- 2.6 The new proposed Growth Board represents a place based approach where thematic activity including health, economy and physical environment may be coordinated to best effect. Closer integration should allow us to retain the strength of organisations and coordinate activity through a common Place Based Growth Board framework. Incorporating functions into one organisation may help develop a single delivery plan but it may also make it difficult to differentiate from that organisation's processes and priorities and those of the wide place based partnership. The proposal also has a clear focus on our local work on levelling up.

## New Model of Strategic Governance

- 2.7 A steering group has been considering a proposed new model of governance which aligns Buckinghamshire to the path of national government policy and a deal. The new model aims to further strengthen the work currently undertaken by partners including supporting and developing our key sectors, providing a strong and independent business voice, taking forward skills delivery and combining this with a wider focus on health and equality, education, place and regeneration.
- 2.8 To achieve this the proposed new '**Place Based Growth Board**' would have a strengthened and expanded scope and remit that effectively brings together the current strengths of both the LEP and Growth Board functions. This new Place Based Growth Board would be the **overarching top tier Board** that sets the **vision and overall strategy and has oversight of the accountability** resting with it. Sitting underneath this new board would be a series of supporting boards, including an **Enterprise & Investment Board, a Skills Board, a Place/Housing/Regeneration Board and the Opportunity Bucks Board**.
- 2.9 The key **benefits** of the proposed new place based model are that they:
- a) Align with the Government's ambition for more devolution and empowered local democratic institutions while integrating business voice, with a single point of contact for a place;
  - b) Positions Buckinghamshire as an example of how to develop a new model outside of a devolution framework but demonstrates our readiness and ambitious and innovative thinking, which can strengthen our position for securing a County Deal;
  - c) Brings together the strengths of both the LEP Board and Growth Board to provide a more holistic view to steer meaningful economic activity to deliver a unified vision that can help drive economic prosperity, enhance place-making, improve skills delivery and provide targeted support for business and local levelling up activity across the county;
  - d) Can help accelerate net zero, reduce dependency on fossil fuels and bring huge social benefits, as evidenced through a recent study / report by PwC on place-based approaches;
  - e) Removes duplication in terms of membership and discussions on current boards and allows a single Place Based Growth Board to be able to lead and coordinate activity;

- f) Fosters a more cohesive and co-operative approach by bringing together different stakeholders and, thereby, removing confusion for partners, including government;
- g) Involves business leaders and other stakeholders on the relevant boards thereby facilitating meaningful involvement and influence within local decision-making;
- h) Enables effective pooling of LEP and Council financial resources (as well as any secured external / third party funding) and swifter decision making to support investment priorities (Investment Fund), independent of Government. Potential funds that could be pooled and ring-fenced for defined economic development activity include surplus EZ retained business rates, future LEP and Council connected counties gainshare, BLEP balances (from recycled pots and loan repayments) and possible future pension fund investments (pending government guidance);
- i) Streamlines the current model of working in a more cost effective and efficient manner that could lead to savings and enable clearer and strengthened strategic leadership;
- j) Subject to agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with key metrics, maintains Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) as a powerful independent business voice for Buckinghamshire;
- k) Does not require legislation to establish a County Combined Authority and is a relatively straight forward integration given the co-terminosity across the county (unlike in other parts of the country).

2.10 **Appendix 1 sets out a proposed model of strategic governance, including a remit for each of the Boards.** We need to ensure that all board structures have the right experience, expertise, and insight. The membership of the boards will need to be politically and managerially inclusive and ensure strong business and partnership input at both the strategy and implementation levels as well as reducing current duplication.

2.11 As government policy now appears to be re-emphasising the Industrial Strategy the LEP / Enterprise & Investment Board could develop a new green place based industrial strategy that meet the requirements of both growth and levelling up as it relates to Buckinghamshire. The transition to the new governance arrangements will need to be managed carefully to avoid any disruption. Furthermore, any risks will need to be identified and managed carefully (e.g. ability to optimise all potential funding opportunities).

## Other Due Diligence Work

2.12 In terms of the due diligence work this has been completed across a number of specific workstreams. The key highlights to draw out are as follows:

- **Business Voice** – in order to enhance our strong and independent business voice we look to bring together the two current business facing organisations so that **BBF becomes the primary business facing representative organisation in Buckinghamshire**. It is also recommended that we continue to delegate the **management of the running of both the Growth Hub and the Skills Hub (strategy set by the Skills Board) to BBF** subject to the core funders (Buckinghamshire Council and the Buckinghamshire LEP) agreeing a **Memorandum of Understanding with BBF, to include agreed metrics**, to clarify expectations around the funding provided. The agreed governance model will ensure that business leaders and partners are meaningfully involved in local decision making.
- **Projects, Programmes & Services delivered by the LEP** – all current LEP activity will continue. A mapping exercise has been undertaken to review the current offer in terms of economic development undertaken by the main partners in **'Team Bucks'** so that any duplications, gaps or opportunities for closer and early collaboration can be identified. Although there is little operational duplication between the LEP and the Council the exercise has identified a **number of areas for closer alignment across 'Team Bucks'**, including the opportunity to improve relationship management with the most significant Buckinghamshire businesses, the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive and aligned Inward Investment Function in conjunction with the DIT, an analysis of the external funding and grant bidding capacity of the partners and to consider the opportunities to better utilise and align existing support services such as IT, HR and finance.
- **Staffing** – there are two options around possible staff integration (wholly owned company or TUPE transfer). Financial analysis shows that there would be a saving of c£135k with TUPE transfer and closing of the company, although the timelines for this (including staff consultation) would mean that it would take between 3 to 6 months to complete. TUPE transfer would enable staff and functions to integrate 'fully', as they become one team with one vision and set of priorities. **However, for legal and funding reasons we recommend keeping the legal entity of the LEP at the present time**. It is also suggested that **TUPE is not pursued at this stage** but may be considered in the future. The costs of a transfer process would need to be managed and hosting costs incorporated into the Buckinghamshire Council central resource.
- **Finance & Assets** – we have a full record of all contracts, liabilities and assets of the LEP. There are no long term contracts in existence and relevant ones

could be formally transferred over to the Council in the event of the company being dissolved, especially given that the Council remains the accountable body for the LEP. Until then we would look to **pool together and ring-fence specific resources (in a binding way), for defined economic development functions as part of establishing a 'Pooled Investment Fund'**. A financial risk exists around the future core funding for the LEP, which is currently £375k per annum.

### **3. Other options considered**

- 3.1 The other option is to keep the governance arrangements as they currently exist until any devolution deal with government is agreed. This is not recommended as it represents an organisational approach to economic development rather than a more holistic and streamlined approach and it also results in duplication in terms of both discussions and membership of boards. The proposed new approach aligns with current government thinking and demonstrates our readiness and ambition for securing a 'County Deal'.

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

- 4.1 The Boards will have no formal Council decision-making powers but can form collective views and develop a shared position / view on specific topics. Work will continue to be undertaken in a range of forums outside of the Place Based Growth Board and its Supporting Boards.
- 4.2 A key decision is required to approve the transfer of any Council resources into the proposed 'Pooled Investment Fund' (e.g. Enterprise Zone programme / Connected Counties Gainshare). There is an approved MoU around the use of EZ income that sets out how funds can be utilised. This states that no surplus income can currently be distributed until 2026 without the agreement of both the LEP and the Council. The surplus as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 was c£3.4m although this is expected to increase considerably over the next few years. Connected Counties gainshare income from contract 1 is c£2m (Council = £1,110k and LEP = £900k) and for contract 2 is expected to be c£1m by 2028 (Council = £630k and LEP = £370k).
- 4.3 A formal agreement / MoU between the Council and the LEP will need to be developed setting out how the fund will be practically operated. However, it is the intention that the fund will be managed by the Enterprise & Investment Board in accordance with agreed criteria based on political priorities and commercial Return on Investment principles, with the aim of having a recyclable and commercially oriented investment fund that will help catalyse investment linked to agreed priorities. Any additional funding required from the Council would require formal approval by the Council, in line with financial procedures.

- 4.4 The terms of reference for the Enterprise & Investment Board will reflect the condition that the release of any funding from the Investment Fund will require a Board majority and unanimous approval from the three elected Cabinet Members on the Board to ensure that all Council resources are allocated to agreed priorities.
- 4.5 Full integration of the LEP into the Council (including the dissolution of the Company and transfer of functions, assets and liabilities) would be counter to current government guidance which contains the express statement *“Where no devolution deal is in place, LEPs will be maintained until a devolution deal is agreed, subject to future funding decisions.”*
- 4.6 It would be possible to leave the LEP in existence but change how this is operated / controlled, with the agreement of the current LEP directors and Government. However, it should be noted that the National Local Growth Assurance Framework (September 2021) states that: *“at least two-thirds of the (LEP) Board must be representatives from the private sector”*. The framework also says that: *“The LEP should ensure that there are Local Authority representatives on the LEP Board to ensure democratic accountability and provide local intelligence.”*
- 4.7 The new model of governance being recommended requires the agreement and cooperation of the LEP. This was given at its meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

## **5. Corporate implications**

- 5.1 Having a new place based growth model links directly to the Council’s key priority of ‘Increasing prosperity’. It will help to encourage sustainable economic growth, working with our partners to maximise opportunities and boost productivity. Furthermore, it aims to attract high quality jobs and investment in skills, innovation and connectivity; keeping Buckinghamshire one of the best places to do business.

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

- 6.1 Not applicable.

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

- 7.1 Relevant communication and engagement will be taken forward, with our key strategic partners, to launch the new governance arrangements and explain how these will help improve outcomes for both businesses and the public. This will include an initial press release. Further communications will be formulated and developed once the new arrangements have been implemented.

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

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 27 January 2023  | Proposed Model of Governance considered by the LEP Board members and notification to the Secretary of State (BEIS and DHLIC).  |
| 01 February 2023 | Proposed Model of Governance considered by the Growth Board members.   |
| 14 February 2023 | Proposed Model of Governance considered by Cabinet.  |
| Feb / March 2023 | Partners take the proposals through their governance arrangements (e.g. BBF, Bucks Health Trust, Buckinghamshire New University etc.).<br><br>Agree Membership of the Boards (including the Chairs), draft terms of reference for the Boards, develop the MoU for setting out how the Pooled Investment Fund will operate, including the criteria for assessing and prioritising business case investment bids and draw up the MoU between BBF and the core funders around the funding provided. |
| 01 April 2023    | Implementation of the New Model of Governance.   |

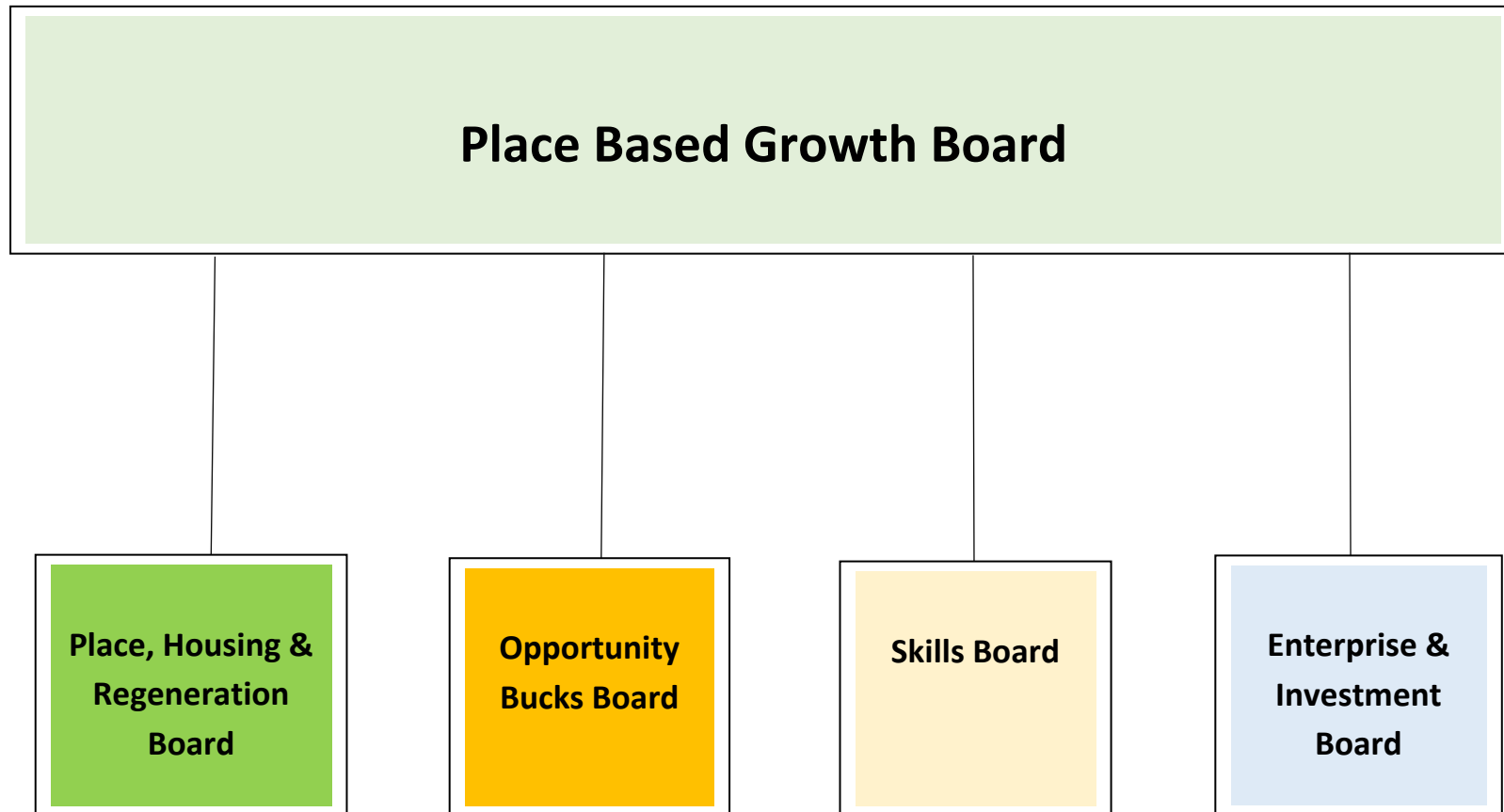
## **9. Background papers**

9.1 None.

## **10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)**

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).





## **SUGGESTED REMITS OF THE PROPOSED BOARDS**

Detailed terms of reference will be developed by the relevant Boards and agreed by the Place Based Growth Board. However, it is suggested that they include or reflect the following aims:

### **Place Based Growth Board (PBGB)**

The overarching partnership board that will approve the overall vision and strategy for Buckinghamshire to ensure that ambitions are agreed, work is undertaken to realise them, and that future economic growth and development aligns with local priorities. To achieve this it will oversee the work of the supporting boards, including the Enterprise & Investment Board, the Skills Board, the Place, Housing & Regeneration Board and the Opportunity Bucks Board.

The PBGB will have no formal decision-making powers and work will continue to be undertaken in a range of organisations and forums that subscribe to the PBGB model. Members of the PBGB will ensure the alignment of other relevant strategies and plans to ensure a single narrative to support the growth ambitions of the county. The PBGB will provide a single forum that works across the public, voluntary and private sector in Buckinghamshire to reflect the need for joined-up thinking on the economy and growth.

The PBGB will set the criteria to enable the Enterprise & Investment Board to assess and prioritise business case investment bids based on political priorities and commercial Return on Investment (ROI) principles, with the aim of having a recyclable and commercially oriented investment fund that will help catalyse investment linked to agreed priorities.

The PBGB will also sign off bids or opportunities for the securing and allocation of external funding (e.g. government funding). These may also need to be approved by the Council and/or LEP.

### **Enterprise & Investment Board (EIB)**

To provide a strong and independent business voice to the new integrated structure, to secure and generate funding and to lead business and sector growth innovation, inward investment, place branding, destination management and tourism.

The EIB will manage an approved '*Pooled Investment Fund*' including providing assurance to the Place Based Growth Board on the level of resource available, how business cases have been assessed and prioritised against the set criteria in respect to investment recommendations and with the monitoring of spend and deliverables against all released funding. Release of any funding will require a board majority and unanimous approval from the three elected members on the Board.

The EIB will work with the other supporting boards in the development of business cases for potential investment and also with leveraging in additional private sector capital to accelerate economic growth. It will also assist the Place Based Growth Board in seeking, endorsing and promoting bids or opportunities for the securing and allocation of external funding (e.g. government funding).

The EIB will fulfil the current responsibilities of the LEP as an incorporated body, including submitting returns to BEIS, adherence to the assurance framework and approving and submitting the annual accounts of the current LEP company.

### Skills Board (SB)

To set the strategic direction and develop a comprehensive work plan to ensure that all residents, irrespective of their working age, have access and support to play a full and active role in the local employment market, workforce gaps are identified, and plans are developed to support the future growth and economic needs for Buckinghamshire that connect business need and sector growth with employment ready local talent, expertise and experience. The SB will play into the national economic ambitions for key sector workforce future needs and will make recommendations and decisions about submitting applications for specific programme funding.

The SB will ensure that appropriate collaboration, coordination and partnership working across key public, voluntary and private sector partners is in place to deliver key objectives and identified priorities through the development of investible business cases and securing funding for key initiatives (in conjunction with the Enterprise & Investment Board). This will include the County's approach to apprenticeships, work readiness schemes, career change programmes and work within schools and colleges.

### Place, Housing & Regeneration Board (PHRB)

To have a strategic role for ensuring that a clear vision and narrative is set out for regeneration and development for town centres and high streets in Buckinghamshire and specific pieces of regeneration work are agreed, funded and initiated. This includes aligning the Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework, Regeneration Strategies for Aylesbury, High Wycombe, and Chesham, the Housing Strategy and other key place strategies for effective delivery.

This Board will take account of strategies developed in partner organisations such as accessible housing, key worker housing and the Local Plan.

The PHRB will ensure that appropriate collaboration, coordination and partnership working across key public and private sector partners is in place to deliver key objectives and identified priorities through the development of investible business cases and securing funding for key redevelopment initiatives (in conjunction with the Enterprise & Investment Board).

### Opportunity Bucks Board (OBB)

To drive the development and delivery of a Levelling Up Programme of work for Buckinghamshire, incorporating a number as aspirations in our County Deal proposition alongside a locally focussed programme of activity.

This work is threefold:

1. The creation of a series of workstreams focusing on thematic areas that can support levelling up.
2. The interface with local members in our 10 Opportunity Bucks areas via community board sub-groups.
3. The creation of the MEAM programme and work with individuals and their families / networks.

The OBB may submit business cases to the Enterprise & Investment Board for the potential release of funding to support economic opportunities that are targeted at the most vulnerable within our communities and that provide an opportunity for multi-agency collaboration.

### Notes:

The relevant Council Scrutiny Committee may request information from the Place Based Growth Board / Supporting Boards on specific issues on behalf of both the Council and the LEP.

[Note: The Council is the accountable body for the LEP].



## Extract from Cabinet minutes

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

### Members present

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

### Others in attendance

D King, P Martin and R Stuchbury

### Agenda Item

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

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

While national policy and government funding lay outside of the Council's control the Council have the opportunity to reorganise locally to ensure that the Council was making the best use of limited resource. The proposed new model of governance would ensure that the Council was all aligned to a placed based common vision and plan and provide the broadest platform from which to address growth and cohesion priorities. The new proposed Growth Board represented a place based approach where thematic activity included health, economy and physical environment which could be coordinated to best effect. Closer integration should allow the Council to retain the strength of organisations and coordinate activity through a common Place Based Growth Board framework. A Government review had also proposed a number of changes in order to strengthen Local Enterprise Partnerships to help deliver proposals outlined in the Industrial Strategy White Paper. Having a single body for

economic development meant closer collaboration for the Growth Board and the LEP with a series of supporting boards including Enterprise and Investment, Skills Board, a Regeneration Board and the Opportunity Bucks Board. There would be a pooled investment fund to exclusively fund inclusive economic growth.

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

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

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1. That the Council will aim to transition to a 'No Deal' partnership model of strategic governance with effect from April 2023, as outlined in Appendix 1, and to establish a 'Pooled Investment Fund' to exclusively fund inclusive economic growth.**
- 2. That a new Place Based Growth Board be established to strengthen alignment, generate and focus funds, and oversee the effective allocation of resources to support agreed principles.**
- 3. That a further 4 Supporting Boards be established reporting into the Growth Board. The Supporting Boards will be responsible for the development and management of a number of strands of supporting work including an Enterprise and Investment Board; a Skills Board; a Place, Housing and Regeneration Board (with amendment referenced above to focus on economic regeneration); and an Opportunity Bucks Board. As above, the Cabinet delegated authority to the Leader to make minor changes to the terms of reference of the Supporting Boards as required.**
- 4. That it be agreed that the Buckinghamshire LEP will fulfil the Enterprise and Investment Board remit. As such, in this initial phase the Council will seek to integrate activity rather than incorporate the legal entity and will not pursue TUPE transfer and the dissolution of the LEP Company.**
- 5. That Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) will lead on the business support**

and integrated skills programme support whilst maintaining its status as the primary Buckinghamshire business representation organisation. As such, BBF will manage both the Growth Hub and the Skills Hub, subject to the core funders (Buckinghamshire Council and the Buckinghamshire LEP) agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding with BBF, to include agreed metrics, to clarify expectations around the funding provided.

6. That the management of the Enterprise Zone programme (currently managed by the EZ Board (in line with the current approved MoU) and the Connected Counties Gainshare income) be transferred into the 'Pooled Investment Fund'. The gainshare from contracts 1 and 2 (as detailed in the Cabinet report) will be managed by the Enterprise and Investment Board who will assess business cases against criteria set by the Place Based Board in order to help catalyse investment linked to agreed priorities.
7. That as a condition of transferring resources into the proposed 'Pooled Investment Fund' the Council will require:
  - i. A majority on the Place Based Growth Board.
  - ii. that all 3 Cabinet Members on the Enterprise and Investment Board must agree to the release of any funding from the 'Pooled Investment Fund'.
  - iii. formal Council approval for any additional funding, in line with financial procedures.
8. That the objectives of place based growth will include:
  - i. better utilising and aligning existing support services including IT, HR and finance.
  - ii. improving relationship management with the most significant Buckinghamshire businesses.
  - iii. increasing the Inward Investment capacity in conjunction with the Department for International Trade (DIT).
  - iv. maximising external funding and grant bidding capacity.

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**Rapid Review Scope**

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|---|--|
| <b>Title</b>  | <b>The legacy of ‘Everyone in’ and homelessness in Buckinghamshire.</b>  |
| <b>Signed-off by</b>                                    | CLlr David Carroll, Chairman, Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee  |
| <b>Author</b>   | Tom Fowler, Senior Scrutiny Officer  |
| <b>Date</b>   | 6 <sup>th</sup> April 2023   |
| <b>Rapid Review Group Membership</b>                    | CLlr Thomas Hogg (Chairman), CLlr David Carroll, (TBC)   |
| <b>Scrutiny Team Resource</b>                           | Tom Fowler, Senior Scrutiny Officer and Kelly Sutherland, Scrutiny Manager   |
| <b>Lead Cabinet Member</b>                              | Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Housing & Homelessness   |
| <b>Lead Service Officer</b>                             | Lisa Michelson, Service Director, Economic Growth & Regeneration.<br>Michael Veryard, Head of Housing  |
| <b>What is the problem that is trying to be solved?</b> | <p><b>Homelessness – Everyone in</b></p> <p>In March 2020, the government took the unprecedented step of asking councils to move all those, and those at risk of, sleeping rough into accommodation in a scheme known as 'Everyone In'. By 18<sup>th</sup> April 2020, Government reported that over 90% of rough sleepers, (over 5,400) had been offered accommodation through ‘Everyone In’. By May 2020, Government reported that 14,610 people had been provided with emergency accommodation. The DLUHC 2022 Rough Sleeping Snapshot for Autumn 2021 showed that 40,000 had moved out of emergency accommodation into longer term accommodation between March 2020 and November 2021, with a further 4,300 people continuing to be housed in emergency or short term accommodation who would “otherwise have been sleeping rough or were at risk of sleeping rough.” Over 300 individuals were accommodated across Buckinghamshire during the “Everybody In” initiative.</p> <p>Central Government funding was a major contributor to the success of ‘Everyone In’ with over £700m allocated to rough sleeping in 2020/21 and a further £750m in 2021/22. The Government has now implemented their ‘Ending Rough Sleeping for Good’ strategy. This commits £2bn over the next three years to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.</p> <p>We should note the general shortage of housing across the country – the National Housing Federation talks of 8.5m people in housing need in England with just over 300,000 social homes available to let each year.</p> |

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|  | <p>The Council successfully brought all rough sleepers into temporary accommodation during this period. Since then, rough sleeping has increased and some anti-social behaviour has been observed.</p>  |
| <p><b>What might the Rapid Review achieve?</b></p> | <p>It is proposed to hold evidence gathering sessions across April &amp; May 2023 which would conclude with recommendations being developed and reported to Cabinet and other key partners.</p> <p>The review would look to achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity around the outcomes of Everyone in for Buckinghamshire.</li> <li>• Review the experiences of temporary accommodation providers that provided accommodation to rough sleepers during Everyone in.</li> <li>• Identification of potential gaps in provision of follow-up support for rough sleepers, including partners and Council teams.</li> <li>• Greater understanding of how support for rough sleeping is funded and the level of support provided to homeless individuals/groups.</li> </ul> <p>Key lines of enquiry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore which areas officers and partners (police, housing providers and charities) have identified as ‘gaps’ and key challenges since the expiry of Everyone in.</li> <li>• Identify what currently works well from the council’s rough sleeping processes and also from those involved in providing temporary accommodation;</li> <li>• Provide clarity on how funding is provided to support for rough sleepers.</li> <li>• Clarify the work done to combat the increase in rough sleepers since Everyone in.</li> <li>• What has been the experience at comparable local authorities, and what lessons have they learnt.</li> </ul> <p>By investigating the above, outcomes will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight areas where resources could be shifted to achieve a better outcome for rough sleepers.</li> <li>• Review the successes of ‘Everyone in’ and what challenges prevent this from being ‘business as usual’.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify potential improvements where Buckinghamshire Council works with partners in relation to Rough Sleeping.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Is the issue of significance to Buckinghamshire as a whole and is the topic within the remit of this Select Committees?</b> | Yes   |
| <b>What work is underway already on this issue?</b>  | Homelessness Strategy 2022-2025 agreed last year  |
| <b>Are there any key changes that might impact on this issue?</b>  | Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy is in development  |
| <b>What are the key timing considerations?</b>   | This will be a focussed rapid review  |
| <b>Who are the key stakeholders &amp; decision-makers?</b>   | <p>Cllr Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness<br/> Ilan Thompson, Corporate Director, Planning Growth &amp; Sustainability<br/> Lisa Michelson, Service Director, Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration<br/> Michael Veryard, Head of Housing<br/> Julie Oliver, Homelessness &amp; Advice Manager<br/> Julie Nokes, Housing Options &amp; Supply Manager</p> <p><b>Representatives from:</b><br/> Rough Sleeping Team<br/> Community Safety Team<br/> Thames Valley Police<br/> Temporary Housing Providers<br/> Charities addressing rough sleeping</p> |
| <b>What is out of scope?</b>   | Reviewing the Housing Strategy  |
| <b>What media/communications support do you want?</b>  | None identified at this stage   |

### Evidence-gathering Methodology

|   |
|---|
| <b>What types of methods of evidence-gathering will you use?</b>  |
| <p>List them here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desktop research</li> <li>Meetings</li> <li>Discussions with other local authorities</li> </ul> |

### Outline Project Plan

| Stage              | Key Activity  | Dates  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Scoping            | Inquiry Scope Agreed by Select Committee  | End of March 2023,   |
| Evidence-gathering | Evidence-gathering phase, interviews and meetings with key stakeholders               | April & May 2023   |
| Reporting          | Final Inquiry Group report with recommendations completed (signed-off by SC Chairman) | May/June 2023  |
|                    | Report published for Select Committee   | <b>September</b> – Agenda publication date (GIH)           |
|                    | Select Committees agree report to go forward to decision-makers                       | <b>September</b> – Growth Infrastructure & Housing meeting |
|                    | Cabinet/Partners consider recommendations   | <b>October Cabinet TBC</b> – Cabinet meeting               |

### **Definition of a Rapid Review**

A Rapid Review is a focussed investigation with fairly narrow parameters, that can be conducted in a relatively short time scale. For example, you may hold three or four meetings as a review group – one to establish and understand what the key issues are, one or two to gather evidence from service users or other authorities to gain insight into best practice and a final meeting to discuss what members have heard and identify any useful recommendations. A rapid review format will be useful when considering less complex issues and may be helpful in delivering ‘quick wins’ for the Council’s service users and residents.