



Cabinet decision notice

The following decision(s) were taken by Cabinet at its meeting held on **9 May 2023**. Decisions will (unless called-in) become effective at 5pm on 16 May 2023.

Agenda item no. 7

Children's Services update

(a) Decisions

Since the last update to Cabinet in October 2022, the Service had received two regulatory visits. The first was a Focused Visit from Ofsted that looked at the services and support offered to care leavers and the second was an inspection of Youth Offending Services by HM Inspectorate of Probation. Both visits went well and confirmed that the Service continued its improvement journey and whilst there was more to do, the Service had an accurate self-assessment and understanding of what was needed to be done. In addition, two of the Council's Children's Homes were now judged to be 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and the Council's new 4 bedded Parent and Baby residential assessment resource had just opened, following registration by Ofsted.

IMPOWER had now completed their analysis of the profile of demand and developed a number of recommendations outlining how the Service could improve its financial sustainability by delivering better outcomes at less cost. The IMPOWER work also concluded that the service and its partners could work differently together to meet the needs of children and young people. The findings from this analysis had helped the Service to refine its self-assessment from which a whole system Children's Services Transformation Programme had been developed. This change programme would redefine the support that was to be provided to children and families and redevelop the model to enable interventions that were more responsive to children's needs. The ambition was to create more opportunities for professionals, including partner agencies, to integrate services around the needs of communities and move from a process driven case management model with multiple hand off points to a relationship based, solution focused system.

There were a number of significant national policy changes on the horizon and the proposed changes to the way in which the Service operated were in line with national policy direction and were based on ensuring that children receive a consistent, purposeful and child centred approach wherever they are on their journey of need from early help through to being in care.

RESOLVED –



That the national and local developments across the Children's Services Directorate be NOTED.

(b) Reasons for decisions

To keep Cabinet informed of the national and local developments across the Children's Services Directorate.

(c) Alternative options considered

Not applicable.

(d) Conflicts of interest/ dispensations

None.

Agenda item no. 8

6 Monthly Adult Social Care update

(a) Decisions

The Cabinet report provided an update on the recent developments in adult social care, both locally and nationally, and plans for the next period. The report included updates on several recent developments in April, including the Next Steps to put People at the Heart of Care government white paper and the findings of the Hewitt Review into Integrated Care Systems. An update on the current position of adult social care services in Buckinghamshire was provided.

RESOLVED –

That the latest developments in relation to adult social care both locally and nationally be NOTED.

(b) Reasons for decisions

To keep Cabinet informed of the latest developments in relation to adult social care both locally and nationally.

(c) Alternative options considered

Not applicable.

(d) Conflicts of interest/ dispensations

None.

Agenda item no. 9

Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy 2023-26

(a) Decisions

The 2020-2023 Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy ended on 31 March 2023. Following the completion of the Community Safety Strategic Assessment and public consultation, the 2023-26 Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy had been produced ready for publication on 15 May 2023.

The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) (as revised by the Police and Justice Act 2006, and the Policing and Crime Act 2009) placed a duty on the Safer Buckinghamshire Board (SBB) to undertake a strategic assessment of community safety in its area and produce a three-year community safety strategy. The Safer Buckinghamshire Board considered the findings and recommendations of the Strategic Assessment at its meeting on 5th December 2022.

As part of developing the strategic priorities for the Safer Buckinghamshire Board it was also a legislative requirement that there be public engagement. During September and October, through a survey and extensive communications plan, people in Buckinghamshire were asked what their community safety concerns and priorities were. The survey, which included multiple choice questions and the opportunity to make additional comments, was also promoted to Councillors and Town and Parish Councils in Buckinghamshire. An analysis of the public engagement was also presented to the Safer Buckinghamshire Board on 5th December 2022.

Taking the Strategic Assessment, the public engagement findings and other known insights into account, the Community Safety Team developed proposed priorities and key actions. The 5 proposed priorities, outlined in more detail within the Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy 2023-26, were:

- Neighbourhood crime
- Anti-social behaviour
- Serious violence
- Violence against women and girls
- Exploitation of vulnerable people

With regard to the next steps, the Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy would be published on the Buckinghamshire Council website. The Safer Buckinghamshire Board Managers would work with the relevant Priority Sponsors to:

- Ensure that detailed delivery plans were developed for the delivery of the priorities.
- Ensure mobilisation and delivery of the Strategy, commissioning task and finish groups etc. as required.
- Develop a dashboard that would include delivery impact measure for the plans.

The Annual report on the work of the Safer Buckinghamshire Board would be produced in February/March 2024.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the priorities and key actions for the Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy 2023-26 be ENDORSED.
- 2) That the next steps be NOTED, which include;
 - i) Publication of the Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy 2023-26 by 15 May 2023.
 - ii) Development of detailed delivery plans for each priority area.
 - iii) Development of measures to track and demonstrate progress and impact.

(b) Reasons for decisions

The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) (as revised by the Police and Justice Act 2006, and the Policing and Crime Act 2009) placed a duty on the Safer Buckinghamshire Board (SBB) to undertake a strategic assessment of community safety in its area and produce a three-year community safety strategy.

(c) Alternative options considered

Not applicable.

(d) Conflicts of interest/ dispensations

None.

Agenda item no. 10

Cost of Living Support for Buckinghamshire Residents

(a) Decisions

Buckinghamshire Council recognised the growing pressures being faced by its residents linked to the increases in the cost of living. The Council had developed and delivered a range of initiatives this year to support residents and staff in regard to these cost of living pressures and had committed to ensuring the continuation of its Helping Hand service to provide support to residents who needed it most.

The Council was pleased to receive confirmation of the fourth tranche of Household Support Fund grant allocation for the period from April 2023 to March 2024, which would be used to continue to provide essential support to residents during the year. This built on the funding the Council had received from Government since 2020, initially through the Winter Grant and Local Support Grant and subsequently through the Household Support Fund.

Previous allocations of the Household Support Fund were awarded for a 6-month period only. For the period 1st October 2022 to 31st March 2023, Buckinghamshire was awarded £2.4m of funding from the Household Support Fund to provide support for residents in need of help with food, fuel and other essential household costs.

The Cabinet report outlined the support the Council had provided, and continued to provide, to support residents with cost-of-living pressures. The report also detailed how the previous Household Support Fund allocation was used and set out a proposed use of the new allocation between 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, ensuring that this would be targeted to residents in need of support and in line with the Government guidance.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the range of support provided by Buckinghamshire Council for individuals experiencing hardship across the County be NOTED.**
- 2) That the arrangements for deploying the new Household Support Fund allocation be APPROVED.**

(b) Reasons for decisions

The Government announced final allocations for the Household Support Fund on 20 February 2023. The Cabinet report set out proposals for use of the funding to provide support for Buckinghamshire residents between April 2023 and March 2024 in line with Government guidance.

(c) Alternative options considered

Not applicable. Local Authorities were required to complete a delivery plan to outline their intentions for The Fund, clearly setting out their priorities and approach for use of the Fund, and to demonstrate the ways in which they intend to allocate their funding.

(d) Conflicts of interest/ dispensations

None.

Agenda item no. 11

Buckinghamshire's Rural Business Grants Fund delivery and governance approach

(a) Decisions

The Cabinet report set out details of the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), which was announced by DEFRA in September 2022.

The REPF was a new capital fund from DEFRA and was a 'top-up' to the UKSPF. It was part of the succession from the EU funded LEADER and Growth Programmes, which were part of the Rural Development Programme for England and hugely successful in Buckinghamshire with over 50 businesses supported.

The Council submitted its Addendum to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan in November 2022. DEFRA had now approved the addendum and Buckinghamshire

Council had been awarded £1.8m to deliver the Rural England Prosperity Fund Capital Grants programme over two financial years up to 31st March 2025.

The Cabinet report proposed the delivery approach and governance needed by the Council to ensure high quality delivery and value for money that would support growth for rural businesses and support a vibrant Buckinghamshire rural economy. A suggestion was made to provide maps to ward members to indicate which rural areas could apply for grant funding.

RESOLVED -

- 1) That the programme eligibility and parameters for businesses applying for a Grant be AGREED.**
- 2) That the Buckinghamshire Rural Business Grants Fund be included in the Council's capital programme.**
- 3) That a new funding panel be formed to guide the review process of eligible grant applications.**
- 4) That the awarding of grants be delegated to the Economic Growth and Regeneration Service Director, in consultation with the Leader and S151 Officer.**

(b) Reasons for decisions

To agree the Council's approach to allocating the Rural England Prosperity Funding.

To agree appropriate programme parameters before launching the fund, alongside delegated decision-making for grant applications to ensure the grant funding is allocated as stipulated by DEFRA by March 2025.

(c) Alternative options considered

The recommended approach had been developed with the support of Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) and the Bucks Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), who both had experience of running similar programmes successfully. REPF was seen as an evolution of LEADER and in the design process for REPF, the Council took the necessary parts of the application process and reduced the bureaucracy by removing elements that were no longer relevant.

Funding had been awarded directly to the Council and it was the Council's responsibility to run and manage the programme, and to meet the objectives of the REPF funding pot. By ensuring a robust and transparent approach to decision making on successful grant applications, the Council would be able to ensure it allocates its REPF by the required deadline from DEFRA.

The funding could only be used towards capital grants, which meant that the Council could only provide funding to businesses for investment in capital assets.

A number of options were considered from grant amount, types of businesses applying to

how the applications were assessed and considered, but with the support of BBF and the LEP, the Council was able to design and recommend a robust and credible outline for how REPF should be delivered.

(d) Conflicts of interest/ dispensations

None.

Agenda item no. 12

Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee Annual Report 2022-23

(a) Decisions

The role of the Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee was to ensure that the Council's companies and limited liability partnerships acted in the interests of the Council as shareholder and that best practice was being adhered to in delivering statutory arrangements. In doing so, the Committee contributed to the proper governance of the Council's subsidiaries. This added level of governance was more important than ever, following a number of other local authorities experiencing difficulties. Understanding the risks associated with wholly or jointly owned companies was a key task of the Committee.

This was the first year of the Shareholder Committee and producing an annual report to reflect the work and outcomes achieved by the Committee over the past year was considered good practice.

Members of the Shareholder Committee were not directors, and did not have any direct involvement, in any of the subsidiary bodies.

RESOLVED –

That the 2022-23 Annual Report of the Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee and the work it has undertaken to date be NOTED.

(b) Reasons for decisions

As a sub-committee of Cabinet, it was good practice for the Shareholder Committee to report annually to Cabinet on the work it had undertaken over the previous financial year.

(c) Alternative options considered

Not applicable.

(d) Conflicts of interest/ dispensations

None.

For further information please contact: Ian Hunt on , email
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You can view upcoming decisions to be made and all decisions taken on the Council's
website [here](#).