



## Council agenda

Date: Wednesday 20 September 2023

Time: 4.00 pm

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

### Membership:

P Birchley (Chairman), M Harker OBE (Vice-Chairman), S Adoh, A Alam, M Angell, D Anthony, K Ashman, M Ayub, R Bagge, M Baldwin, D Barnes, S Barrett, K Bates, A Baughan, J Baum, D Blamires, A Bond, M Bracken, S Broadbent, N Brown, S Bowles, P Brazier, T Broom, T Butcher, M Caffrey, R Carington, D Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Q Chaudhry, J Chhokar, S Chhokar, J Chilver, A Christensen, L Clarke OBE, A Collingwood, M Collins, P Cooper, C Cornell, A Cranmer, E Culverhouse, I Darby, D Dhillon, T Dixon, M Dormer, P Drayton, T Egleton, C Etholen, P Fealey, M Flys, R Gaffney, M Fayyaz, R Gaster, E Gemmell, P Gomm, D Goss, T Green, P Griffin, S Guy, G Hall, G Harris, C Harriss, D Hayday, O Hayday, C Heap, T Hogg, G Hollis, T Hunter-Watts, A Hussain, I Hussain, M Hussain JP, Majid Hussain, Maz Hussain, N Hussain, T Hussain, P Irwin, C Jackson, S James, D Johncock, C Jones, J Jordan, S Kayani, P Kelly, R Khan BEM, D King, M Knight, S Lambert, S Lewin, J MacBean, Cllr A Macpherson, I Macpherson, F Mahon, N Marshall, P Martin, R Matthews, Dr W Matthews, Z Mohammed, H Mordue, S Morgan, N Naylor, J Ng, R Newcombe, C Oliver, A Osibogun, A Poland-Goodyer, C Poll, S Raja, W Raja, N Rana, M Rand, S Rouse, J Rush, G Sandy, G Smith, L Smith BEM, M Smith, N Southworth, B Stanier Bt, M Stannard, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, L Sullivan, D Summers, M Tett, N Thomas, D Thompson, D Town, J Towns, A Turner, M Turner, P Turner, G Wadhwa, A Waite, H Wallace, L Walsh, M Walsh, J Ward, J Wassell, J Waters, D Watson, A Wheelhouse, W Whyte, G Williams, S Wilson, M Winn, A Wood and K Wood

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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: Ian Hunt - [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)



## Council minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 12 July 2023 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 4.00 pm and concluding at 6.35 pm.

### Members present

P Birchley, M Harker OBE, S Adoh, A Alam, D Anthony, K Ashman, M Ayub, R Bagge, M Baldwin, D Barnes, S Barrett, K Bates, A Baughan, J Baum, D Blamires, A Bond, M Bracken, S Broadbent, N Brown, S Bowles, P Brazier, T Broom, R Carington, D Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Q Chaudhry, S Chhokar, J Chilver, A Collingwood, M Collins, P Cooper, C Cornell, A Cranmer, E Culverhouse, I Darby, T Dixon, T Egleton, P Fealey, M Flys, E Gemmell, P Gomm, D Goss, T Green, S Guy, G Harris, C Harriss, D Hayday, O Hayday, C Heap, A Hussain, I Hussain, M Hussain JP, Majid Hussain, Maz Hussain, N Hussain, T Hussain, P Irwin, C Jackson, S James, J Jordan, S Kayani, P Kelly, R Khan BEM, D King, M Knight, J MacBean, A Macpherson, I Macpherson, F Mahon, P Martin, R Matthews, Dr W Matthews, Z Mohammed, H Mordue, S Morgan, R Newcombe, C Oliver, A Osibogun, A Poland-Goodyer, C Poll, W Raja, N Rana, M Rand, S Rouse, G Smith, L Smith BEM, M Smith, N Southworth, M Stannard, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, L Sullivan, M Tett, N Thomas, D Thompson, J Towns, M Turner, P Turner, H Wallace, L Walsh, J Ward, J Waters, D Watson, A Wheelhouse, W Whyte, G Williams, S Wilson, M Winn and K Wood

### Agenda Item

#### 1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Caffrey, Christensen, Clarke OBE, Dhillon, Dormer, Drayton, Etholen, Fayyaz, Gaffney, Gaster, Griffin, Hall, Graham Harris, Hogg, Hunter-Watts, Johncock, Jones, Lambert, Lewin, Marshall, Naylor, Sarfaraz Raja, Rush, Sandy, Sir Beville Stanier, Summers, D Town, A Turner, Wadhwa, Waite, M Walsh, Wassell and Andrew Wood. Apologies were also received from Countess Howe, his Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire and Dame Ann Limb, The High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire.

#### 2 Mrs Kathleen Peatey MBE JP

Tribute was paid to Mrs Kathleen Peatey MBE JP, who had recently passed away. The Chairman recorded sincere condolences to her family on their sad loss.

Mrs Peatey had been a Member of Wycombe District Council from 1976-1999, and was Leader of that Council from 1993-95, and the Chairman of Wycombe District Council during 1989-90. Mrs Peatey had been made an Honorary Alderman by WDC

in 2000, and of Buckinghamshire Council since 2020. She was also a long time Trustee for Wycombe Almshouses, and a Magistrate on the Wycombe and Beaconsfield bench between 1979 and 2002.

Members then observed a minute`s silence in memory of Kathleen Peatey MBE JP.

### **3 Minutes**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 17 May 2023 be approved as a correct record.

### **4 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

### **5 Chairman's Update**

The Chairman detailed events that she had attended since the last Council meeting which included 3 events with the Armed Forces in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Great Missenden, and the rural farm tour to Hard To Find farm, High Wycombe. Congratulations were extended to Councillor Mahboob Hussain JP who had recently celebrated 25 years as a Justice of the Peace. There had been a very busy schedule of events and the Vice Chairman was thanked for events she had attended.

Members who were able were asked to try to attend and support the Chairman`s charity film event on Sunday 10 September at Pinewood Studios, with an outside picnic to see `Rocketman`.

### **6 Petitions**

Councillor P Martin presented an e-petition on behalf of a constituent relating to `Stop Investing in Fossil Fuels.` The Chairman accepted and referred the petition to the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources for response. The Cabinet Member thanked the resident for the petition and asked for it to be referred to Cabinet for further consideration.

### **7 Corporate Plan Refresh 2023-24**

Buckinghamshire Council`s Corporate Plan set out what the Council wanted to achieve and how this would be done, addressing the challenges faced and harnessing opportunities as they presented themselves. It reflected the services that mattered the most to residents.

The current plan had been approved in February 2020. A light-touch review of it had been undertaken to reflect current challenges facing the economy and other events and how these could have an impact on the Council`s priorities, together with other key developments such as new national legislation.

The Leader introduced a draft of the refreshed Corporate Plan that could be seen attached at Appendix 1 to the Council report. The plan was intended to cover the

period until 2025, in accordance with the current Council term, and would continue to be subject to an annual refresh.

In response to queries, Members were informed:

- That Parish Councils were included in the Corporate Plan and deliverables as key stakeholders.
- That ageing demographics was placing additional pressures on the Council's budget. Proposals for future years would come forward in due course to be considered during budget scrutiny.
- That the Corporate Plan provided strategic direction for decision-making by the Cabinet and Council. Some areas would have individual Action Plans to assist in delivering the Council's key priorities.

RESOLVED –

That the refreshed Corporate Plan for the period 2020-25 be ADOPTED.

## **8 Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee**

Prior to introducing the annual report prepared of the work carried out by the Council's Audit and Governance Committee during the 2022/23 financial year, Councillor R Newcombe, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee informed Members that the Council's risk team (headed by Caroline Jenkins, Risk and Business Continuity Manager) had recently won Team of the Year 2023 at the ALARM (Association of Local Authority Risk Managers) annual awards.

Members were informed that the content and presentation of the annual report met the requirements of the CIPFA Audit Committees Guidance 2018 to report to full Council on a regular basis on the Committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose.

Members were informed that the Audit and Governance Committee had met six times during the year. Each meeting had reviewed a Forward Plan to ensure that the work being undertaken mirrored the level of risks and priorities of the Action. Any actions raised during previous Committee meetings were reviewed for completeness.

The Committee had continued to receive valued professional reports, support and advice from Corporate Finance, Treasury Management, Risk Management, Procurement, Internal Audit and from our External Auditors.

The Committee's work had included approving and monitoring the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Money Laundering Policy. The Committee was also responsible for overseeing the Council's financial reporting process and for approving the Council's Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement. It was explained that due to a combination of factors the audit of the draft statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 had not yet been completed by the external auditors but was expected to be concluded

during December 2023. This was part of wider endemic problem across the country whereby 73% of local authority audits for 2021-22 were still outstanding and 300 audits for 2020-21 were also outstanding.

Information provided in the annual report to Council included:

- On audits undertaken during the year, including the Pension Fund audit.
- That the Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 had been agreed in November 2022, with the AGS for 2022/23 due to be considered at the July 2023 meeting.
- That the terms of reference for Internal Audit (Internal Audit Charter), the Business Assurance Strategy including the Annual Internal Audit Plan, and the Counter Fraud Plan had been approved.
- That updates had been received on the work of the Counter Fraud/Investigations team, including details of successful outcomes, prosecutions and recoveries.
- That the Risk Management Group, is a sub-group of the Audit and Governance Committee, had met seven times during the financial year. The group review the strategic and key directorate risks facing the authority and the internal controls and governance in place to manage those risks to demonstrate how risk management is embedded within Services.
- That the Committee was responsible for approving the Risk Management Strategy, and the Risk Management Group monitors the effective implementation of the strategy, as well as undertaking the scrutiny role for the development of future Treasury Management strategy prior to its presentation to Council for approval. Mid-term and annual reports on the extent of compliance with the approved Treasury Management strategy and an analysis of the performance against the targets set were also received.
- That a review of the impact and effectiveness of the Audit and Governance Committee had been carried out in June 2023 using the CIPFA Self-Assessment of Best Practice. The review had concluded that the Committee conformed with the majority of the principles of good practice, with some areas for improvement. An improvement plan had been developed to address areas of partial or non-conformance.

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee placed on record his thanks to Members and Officers who have supported the work of the Committee by presenting, discussing, challenging, and debating solutions to the governance, risk, financial, and control environment of the Council.

In response to a question, Members were informed that it was anticipated that the 2020-21 audit of the accounts would be completed by December 2023. The proposed timetable for all subsequent audits had been discussed at the Audit and Governance Committee meeting on 5 July 2023.

RESOLVED –

That the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2022/23 be NOTED.

## **9 Reports from Cabinet Members**

Members received reports from Cabinet Members. There was an opportunity for members to ask questions of individual Cabinet Members about matters and issues affecting their portfolios.

### **Leader of the Council, Councillor Martin Tett**

The Leader received questions on charging for commercial waste, the Electoral Review of Buckinghamshire and on flood risk. Members were informed:

- (i) That secondary legislation would be required before the Government introduced new arrangements for Councils not to be able to charge for commercial waste. It was anticipated that the new arrangements might apply from the start of 2024. The details of the impact on the Council were still to be fully understood but it was likely to lead to £1m in additional budget pressures.
- (ii) That the meeting with Lee Rowley MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Local Government and Building Safety) had discussed the general context and issues facing the Council including from ageing demographics, social care and waste.
- (iii) That there were a wide range of issues that would need to be looked at now that the Electoral Review of Buckinghamshire had concluded. Work had not yet been done on Community Board boundaries that would need to change from 2025.
- (iv) That the transport team's risk assessments would include planning for issues such as flooding incidents and responding to the impacts of extreme weather conditions.

### **Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Clive Harriss**

The Cabinet Member received questions on Higginson Park and on accessible play parks. Members were informed:

- (i) That the new Higginson Park play area was on track to be open towards the end of July 2023.
- (ii) That he would check to see who had been consulted relating to accessibility when new play parks had been built. He apologised for the oversight in not mentioning the Whizz Fizz Fest and Aylesbury on Sea in his report, which had been delivered through partnership working with the Aylesbury Town Council.

### **Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services, Councillor Mark Winn**

The Cabinet Member received questions on the Bridge Court temporary accommodation facility, High Wycombe, and on rough sleepers. Members were informed:

- (i) That the Council was taking the opportunity to move families from B&B accommodation into the Bridge Court accommodation, that was saving the Council a considerable amount of money. This also demonstrated the need to provide additional temporary accommodation.
- (ii) That a site with a number of rough sleepers highlighted by the Members

was currently being investigated by Officers. It was stated the rough sleeping numbers did fluctuate and tended to be higher during the Summer months. The Cabinet Member would speak to the Oasis Partnership and community safety about the instances of begging that had been occurring in the vicinity of collection points in the Wycombe town centre.

**Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Councillor Peter Strachan**

The Cabinet Member received questions on the lack of provision for religious worship as part of new developments and on the visitor economy. The Member was asked to write to the Cabinet Member on the planning issues so that he could provide a fuller response. The Cabinet Member stated he was happy to meet with a Member to discuss his concerns about the visitor economy.

**Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, Councillor Anita Cranmer**

The Cabinet Member received questions on SEND provision and on the quality of education in the county. Members were informed:

- (i) On the proactive work the Council was doing on SEND provision. There were 6,000 children in Buckinghamshire with an EHCP, with there being a 9% increase in SEND applications this year. Steps being taken included simplifying the application procedure and increasing SEND provision by appointing 3 new Divisional i-SEND Officers, recruiting additional educational psychologists, and adding to the property areas where SEND could be provided.
- (ii) That the Council totally supported excellent education. It was commented that independent schools were very generous in terms of sharing their facilities and teaching expertise and in providing other help. The grammar schools were exactly the same and the Council had very good relations with them.

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Angela Macpherson**

The Cabinet Member received questions on people in care and on the Autism Strategy. Members were informed:

- (i) That the Council was seeing an increase in demand for adult social services as well as in the number of people requiring residential or nursing care. At the same time, there had also been an increase in the number of people the Council was providing information, guidance and assistance to so that they can continue to stay at home and access the right services in the community.
- (ii) On what the Council was doing to develop the emerging Autism strategy. The Cabinet Member also commended the Dementia Journey scrutiny rapid review that had been submitted the day before to Cabinet.

**Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Arif Hussain**

There were no questions to the Cabinet Member for Communities.

Councillor M Harker OBE (the Council's Armed Forces champion and chair of the Civilian Military Partnership Board) informed Members that the Council had recently



achieved Gold in the Defence Employers Recognition Scheme, which was the highest level for employer organisations that had pledged, demonstrated and advocated support to defence and the armed forces community. It also aligned with the values of the Armed Forces Covenant.

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, Councillor Gareth Williams**

The Cabinet Member received questions on protection for trees and on the groundwater strategy. Members were informed:

- (i) That as well as planting 145,000 trees in the last year, the Council also took protecting mature trees extremely seriously, particularly with reference to holding HS2 to account which had included putting in place a Tree Protection Order against them.
- (ii) On project groundwater, where the Government had funded 3 pilot projects in Chesham, Marlow and Chalfont St Peter. Hopefully, the learning from these would benefit other areas in the county that were subject to flooding.

**Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Steven Broadbent**

The Cabinet Member received questions on potholes and on HS2 funding for road safety. Members were informed:

- (i) On the continuing work being done by 15 gangs, 7 days per week, to maintain roads and respond to outstanding jobs across the county's road network.
- (ii) That HS2 had provided just under £4m for road safety which was being used to negate the impact of their increased traffic movements rather than for projects such as road re-surfacing. There were currently approximately 23 schemes allocated that would cost £3.5m to deliver. It was stated a project relating to the A418 Wing was in the advance stages of being designed.

**Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources, Councillor John Chilver**

The Cabinet Member received questions on asset management and on school travel plans. Members were informed:

- (i) That the Cabinet Member was always happy to talk to Members about Council assets located in their Wards. A property and assets review was about to be launched to update the Council's database and ensure that assets were being best operated and used.
- (ii) That parking was one of the key issues considered by the schools property team when new schools or extensions to existing schools were being planned and delivered. This would include consultation and engagement on any plans.

**10 Notices of Motion**

The Chairman informed Members that four motions had been submitted to the meeting. The motions related to:

- (i) Cross Party working on the Buckinghamshire Council Local Plan.
- (ii) Day Travel Card.
- (iii) Implementing a 20 mph speed limit on roads outside all schools in

- Buckinghamshire.  
(iv) Scrutiny.

**(i) Cross Party working on the Buckinghamshire Council Local Plan.**

The motion was proposed by Councillor Stuart Wilson and seconded by Councillor Robin Stuchbury –

“This Council regards the development of the new Buckinghamshire Council Local Plan (LP4B) as one of the most significant actions during this Council term of office to May 2025 and the next. It understands the importance of creating the LP4B based on the widest possible views from all parts of the county as represented by the elected Members. It is noted that cross-political group participation in its development is absolutely necessary to ensure that there is fair and transparent representation across all sections of our communities, towns, villages and rural areas.

**Council requires Cabinet to ensure that:**

- a. **All future LP4B working parties/task & finish groups and such like involving any Members will include Group Leaders or their delegates as full participants; and,**
- b. **All future LP4B working parties/task & finish groups and such like involving any Members will also include additional representatives from all political groups, as a minimum in line with political proportionality, to ensure any geographical or other gaps are covered.”**

Councillor Wilson briefing explained the rationale of the motion. During the debate the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration explained the role and makeup of the Local Plan Working Group, and detailed the scrutiny and consultation that would be undertaken as the Local Plan was being developed.

At the conclusion of the debate, a requisite number of Members present requested that a recorded vote be held. Following a recorded vote, the motion was declared to be **LOST**.

Voting was as follows:

**FOR (25):** Councillors Baldwin, Bates, Baughan, Cooper, Dixon, Gemmell, Guy, D Hayday, O Hayday, I Hussain, Majid Hussain, N Hussain, T Hussain, James, Kayani, Kelly, R Khan BEM, Morgan, Poland-Goodyer, W Raja, G Smith, M Smith, Stuchbury, Wheelhouse and Wilson.

**AGAINST (80):** Councillors Adoh, Alam, Anthony, Ashman, Ayub, Bagge, Barnes, Barrett, Baum, Birchley, Blamires, Bond, Bowles, Bracken, Brazier, Broadbent, Broom, Brown, Carington, Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Chaudry, Chhokar, Chilver, Collins, Cornell, Cranmer, Culverhouse, Darby, Egleton, Fealey, Flys, Gomm,

Goss, Green, M Harker OBE, Harriss, Heap, A Hussain, Maz Hussain, Mahboob Hussain JP, Irwin, Jackson, Jordan, King, Knight, MacBean, A Macpherson, I Macpherson, Mahon, Martin, R Matthews, W Matthews, Mohammed, Mordue, Newcombe, Oliver, Osibogun, Poll, Rana, Rand, Rouse, L Smith BEM, Southworth, Stannard, Strachan, Sullivan, Tett, Thomas, Thompson, Towns, M Turner, P Turner, L Walsh, Ward, Waters, Williams, Winn and K Wood.

**ABSTENTIONS:** There were none.

**(ii) Day Travel Card**

The motion was proposed by Councillor Steven Broadbent and seconded by Councillor Martin Tett –

“This council notes the proposed removal of Day Travel Cards by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, for those travelling into and throughout London. This will result in Buckinghamshire residents having to buy separate Rail and London transport service tickets.

Currently, Day travelcards provide unlimited travel on TfL services, including London Underground, Bus, Tram, Docklands Light Railway, London Overground and Elizabeth line, and National Rail services in London. They can also be used to obtain a one third reduction in River Services fares.

The proposals to remove Day Travelcards constitute an unfair, unacceptable and expensive levy on Buckinghamshire residents who wish to travel to London. The proposals have deliberately targeted the removal of the Day travelcard as a method to generate additional income for TfL.

It is anticipated by the Mayor’s own consultation that the withdrawal of day travelcards will result in Rail Operators ceasing to sell Zone 1-6 travelcards. This will add barriers and travel friction to journeys to London – running counter to evidence that passenger journeys and the use of public transport are enhanced by improving integrated ticketing not reducing it.

No regard is given in the proposals for the potential loss of revenue to the London economy that may be caused by the increase in travel costs as Buckinghamshire residents risk being priced out of the nation’s capital. Employers, retail and leisure businesses, theatres and many others may see a reduction in revenue as the people of Buckinghamshire reduce their time and/or expenditure in London.

The Cabinet Member for Transport has written to TfL on this matter to express concern and a lack of support for these proposals.

This Council therefore resolves:

- **To demand that London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, immediately withdraws his proposals for the removal of day Travelcards.**

- To request that the Leader of the Council writes to Sadiq Khan informing him of this resolution of Buckinghamshire Council, the discriminatory nature of his proposal, the impact on Buckinghamshire residents, the negative impact on the economy of London and therefore the need to abandon plans to remove Day Travelcards.
- That the Leader write to the Secretary of State for Transport urging him to intervene in this matter.”

Councillor Broadbent briefing explained the rationale of the motion. During the debate Members raised a number of issues including that the proposed removal of Day Travel Cards for those travelling into and throughout London would unfairly and adversely impact Buckinghamshire residents, both those that worked in London but also those that travelled there for leisure and family outings. It would also have a negative impact in removing vehicles from road networks and discouraging people from travelling on public transport.

At the conclusion, a requisite number of Members present requested that a recorded vote be held. Following a recorded vote, the motion was declared to be **CARRIED**.

Voting was as follows:

**FOR (99):** Councillors Adoh, Alam, Anthony, Ashman, Ayub, Bagge, Baldwin, Barnes, Barrett, Baughan, Baum, Birchley, Blamires, Bond, Bowles, Bracken, Brazier, Broadbent, Broom, Brown, Carington, Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Chaudry, Chhokar, Chilver, Collins, Cooper, Cornell, Cranmer, Culverhouse, Darby, Dixon, Egleton, Fealey, Flys, Gemmell, Gomm, Goss, Green, M Harker OBE, Harriss, O Hayday, Heap, A Hussain, I Hussain, Maz Hussain, Mahboob Hussain JP, N Hussain, T Hussain, Irwin, Jackson, James, Jordan, Kayani, Kelly, R Khan BEM, King, Knight, MacBean, A Macpherson, I Macpherson, Mahon, Martin, R Matthews, W Matthews, Mohammed, Mordue, Morgan, Newcombe, Oliver, Osibogun, Poland-Goodyer, Poll, W Raja, Rana, Rand, Rouse, L Smith BEM, Southworth, Stannard, Strachan, Sullivan, Tett, Thomas, Thompson, Towns, M Turner, P Turner, L Walsh, Ward, Waters, Watson, Wheelhouse, Williams, Wilson, Winn and K Wood.

**AGAINST (4):** Councillors Guy, Majid Hussain, G Smith and M Smith.

**ABSTENTIONS (3):** Councillors Bates, D Hayday and Stuchbury.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That this Council demands that the London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, immediately withdraws his proposals for the removal of Day Travelcards.
- (2) That the Leader of the Council should write to Sadiq Khan informing him of the resolution of Buckinghamshire Council, the discriminatory nature of his proposal, the impact on Buckinghamshire residents, the negative impact on the economy of London and therefore the need to abandon plans to remove

Day Travelcards.

- (3) That the Leader of the Council should write to the Secretary of State for Transport urging him to intervene in this matter.

**(iii) Implementing a 20 mph speed limit on roads outside all schools in Buckinghamshire**

The motion was proposed by Councillor Adam Poland-Goodyer and seconded by Councillor Peter Cooper –

“We request that Council seek to adopt a new policy implementing a 20mph speed limit on the roads in Buckinghamshire where there are schools.

**Council notes that:**

- Buckinghamshire Council should be providing a safe environment for children and adults to work and study by reducing casualties on the roads and community inequality.
- As part of Buckinghamshire Councils climate challenge, it is acknowledged that 20mph speed limits lower emissions, tackle congestion, improves air quality and reduces ambient noise. DFT guidance states that 20mph schemes have environmental benefits through saving fuel and reducing pollution.
- Buckinghamshire Council is committed to increasing child and adult activity levels and mental health and wellbeing by promoting walking and cycling, which after the pandemic should be a key concern of this Council to address all aspects of public health.
- 20mph schemes promote quality of life, community benefits and encouragement of healthier and more sustainable transport modes such as walking or cycling.
- There are currently over 2000 20mph schemes in the UK in operation.
- Reducing speed reduces collisions and casualties as the collision frequency is lower at lower driving speeds. There is also a greater chance of survival if struck at 20mph (90%) compared to 30mph (50%).
- The Royal Society for the prevention of accidents found that the risk of pedestrians being fatally injured at 20mph was 2.5% compared to a 20% chance at 30mph.
- DFT’s free flow speed report shows that 50% of drivers drive at less than 30mph in a 30mph zone. In a 20mph zone 80% of drivers drive less than 20mph.

**Council further recognises that:**

- Between 2020 and 2021 on Urban and Rural roads in Buckinghamshire there was a total of 701 accidents and 831 casualties. 26 of these were children who were walking on the pavement and 48 were adults. 17 of these were children riding bikes to and from school, and 59 were adults cycling on the road. 1 Pedestrian and 2 people in a vehicle were killed. 5 Children walking on the pavement were seriously injured and 14 adults. 1 Child and 13 Adults was seriously injured riding a bike. All this information is available on the DFT

website.

- On the government website it states local speed limits are determined by local traffic authorities having regard to the guidance issued by the DfT.
- Other Councils who have adopted the 20mph speed limit policy have not had to implement the costly expense of physical calming measures.
- Thames Valley Police have no policy to enforce based on arbitrary speed limits alone but will enforce based on the threat of harm, risk, and resourcing. 20mph speed limits are not excluded from this and will be enforced where appropriate.

**Council therefore resolves to:**

- Establish a cross party working group to seek to implement a Council wide 20mph speed limit outside all schools as soon as possible. This should include identifying which roads the 20mph speed limit should be implemented and explore enforcement measures such as average speed/ ANPR cameras and community speed watch initiatives.
- Ask the Chief Executive/Leader of the Council to write to all the Town and Parish Councils in Buckinghamshire, inviting them to consult with Buckinghamshire Council on the proposed 20mph speed limits.”

Councillor Poland-Goodyer briefing explained the rationale of the motion. During the debate Members raised a number of issues as follows:

- That there was already a mechanism in place with Community Boards and Parish Councils to identify and implement, where required, 20 mph speed limits on a case-by-case basis.
- That the police had a policy of not enforcing 30 mph speed limits outside schools (unless there was an identified threat or risk) and this would not change if 20 mph speed limits were introduced. A far greater problem was caused in the near vicinity of schools, usually by parents, through bad parking and other dangerous and inconsiderate practices.
- The Cabinet Member for Transport provided statistics that in 2020/21 there had been 15 injury incidents outside schools although none had been caused through speeding. It was also commented that through mechanisms in place there were already 105 roads in the county that had 20 mph limits.

At the conclusion of the debate, a requisite number of Members present requested that a recorded vote be held. Following a recorded vote, the motion was declared to be **LOST**.

Voting was as follows:

**FOR (26):** Councillors Baldwin, Bates, Baughan, Cooper, Dixon, Gemmell, Guy, D Hayday, O Hayday, I Hussain, Majid Hussain, N Hussain, T Hussain, James, Kayani, R Khan BEM, Knight, Morgan, Poland-Goodyer, W Raja, G Smith, M Smith, Southworth, Stuchbury, Wheelhouse and Wilson.

**AGAINST (80):** Councillors Adoh, Alam, Anthony, Ashman, Ayub, Bagge, Barnes,

Barrett, Baum, Birchley, Bond, Bowles, Bracken, Brazier, Broadbent, Broom, Brown, Carington, Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Chaudry, Chhokar, Chilver, Collingwood, Collins, Cornell, Cranmer, Culverhouse, Darby, Egleton, Fealey, Flys, Gomm, Goss, Green, M Harker OBE, Harriss, Heap, A Hussain, Maz Hussain, Mahboob Hussain JP, Irwin, Jackson, Jordan, Kelly, King, MacBean, A Macpherson, I Macpherson, Mahon, Martin, R Matthews, W Matthews, Mohammed, Mordue, Newcombe, Oliver, Osibogun, Poll, Rana, Rand, Rouse, L Smith BEM, Stannard, Strachan, Sullivan, Tett, Thomas, Thompson, Towns, M Turner, P Turner, L Walsh, Ward, Waters, Watson, Williams, Winn and K Wood.

ABSTENTIONS: There were none.

#### **(iv) Scrutiny**

The motion was proposed by Councillor Stuart Wilson and seconded by Councillor Robin Stuchbury –

“Council noted the importance of Scrutiny for Buckinghamshire Council following the Annual Scrutiny Report presented to Council in April 2023. The Minutes of that meeting record that the process at Buckinghamshire is highly regarded by other councils, and by the LGA. Buckinghamshire Council strives to operate best practice.

According to the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny, pre-decision scrutiny results in more meaningful engagement for Scrutiny Committees leading to better decision-making. Call-in procedures are used to scrutinize policy post-decision if necessary. Forward Plans are aligned to enable Scrutiny in advance of Executive decision-making at Cabinet.

In Buckinghamshire Council, detailed policy decision papers rarely come before Scrutiny Committees in advance of Cabinet, although policy development papers are sometimes put before Scrutiny Committees which is to be applauded. The notable exception of consistent Pre-Decision Scrutiny is Budget Scrutiny which is a compressed timeframe prior to Cabinet approval and publication to Full Council.

The call-in scope is limited by the Constitution to procedural matters, rather than policy content, so there is very limited opportunity for a Scrutiny Committee to scrutinize and recommend amendment of detailed policy either in advance or indeed after a policy decision has been taken.

#### **This Council notes:**

- The best practice of Pre-Decision Scrutiny of Policy highlighted by the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny and in the recent training delivered to Members.

#### **This Council resolves that:**

- The Pre-Decision Scrutiny of Policy is adopted by Buckinghamshire Council, such that all Policy Decisions undergo Pre-Decision Scrutiny through the relevant Select Committee prior to going to Cabinet.

- Pre-Decision Scrutiny of any Policy Decision considered to be confidential on grounds permitted by law will be held in a confidential Scrutiny session.
- The Council's emergency powers remain available in appropriate circumstances to override the need for Pre-Decision Scrutiny; in such circumstances, a Decision can be reviewed at the appropriate Select Committee at the next available opportunity.
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny by Select Committees will result in a Pre-Decision Scrutiny Report submitted to the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder(s) for full consideration in advance of a Policy Report to Cabinet, which should include the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Report as an appendix.
- Any Policy Decision taken by Cabinet without Pre-Decision Scrutiny, or the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Report being appended to the Cabinet Report, is subject to Call-In by the relevant Select Committee on procedural grounds.
- Forward Plans and Calendars for Select Committees and Cabinet are amended within three months of this resolution to enable Pre-Decision Scrutiny of Policy for the remaining term of this Council and beyond."

Councillor Wilson briefing explained the rationale of the motion. During the debate Members raised a number of issues as follows:

- That the Council already operated one of the strongest, most powerful Select Committee systems in the country that was an LGA role model. The Select Committees worked in a constructive and bipartisan way to hold the Executive to account, and had powers to call-in Executive decisions and summons the Leader or Chief Executive to attend scrutiny meetings.
- That Select Committees were already able to, and did, undertake pre-decision scrutiny which was working well. An excellent example of this was budget scrutiny.
- That the motion was not intended to hold up decision-making but to focus on pre-decision scrutiny of the most important policy decisions of the Council.

At the conclusion the motion was put to the vote and declared to be **LOST**.

#### **11 Questions on Notice from Members**

The written responses to questions from Members, published as a supplement to the agenda, were noted.

#### **12 Report for information - Key Decisions Report**

A list of decisions taken by the Leader since the last Full Council meeting on 17 May 2023 were received and noted.

#### **13 Date of Next Meeting**

4pm, Wednesday 20 September 2023.





## Report to Council

<b>Date:</b>	20 September 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2024
<b>Relevant councillor(s):</b>	Cllr Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
<b>Contact officer:</b>	John Macilwraith, Corporate Director, Children's Services
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All
<b>Recommendations:</b>	Council is asked to resolve to agree the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2022-23 following Cabinet endorsement on 12 September 2023

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2024. The Youth Justice Strategic Plan provides details of progress made against agreed outcomes for children and young people. It outlines priorities, alongside potential future challenges for the partnership over the coming year. The Youth Justice Strategic Plan highlights the partnership arrangements and budget position for the Youth Offending Service Partnership.

### 2. Content of report

- 2.1 Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service is a multi-agency partnership funded by the following statutory partners: Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire Council Children's Services, Health Services and Probation. Other partners including Community Safety and the voluntary sector also make up the partnership.
- 2.2 The Youth Offending Service (YOS) plays a key role in keeping our communities, families, children and young people safe through the prevention of offending and reoffending, reduction in the use of custody and through contribution to multi-agency public protection and safeguarding.

2.3 The Youth Justice Strategic Plan is produced in compliance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 40 which stipulates the following:

‘It shall be the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement for each year a plan (a “youth justice plan”) setting out:

- i. How youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded; and
- ii. How the Youth Offending Team (YOT) or teams established by them (whether alone or jointly with one or more other local authorities) are to be composed and funded, how they are to operate, and what functions they are to carry out.’

2.4 The plan is produced in line with guidance published by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State. The final plan is produced following consultation with partners via the Youth Offending Service Partnership board.

2.5 The requirement for local authorities to have Youth Offending Teams has existed since 2000, following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. The intended function of Youth Offending Teams is to reduce the risk of young people offending and re-offending, and to provide counsel and rehabilitation to those who do offend. The act stipulates the composition of the YOT and identifies statutory partners to work alongside the Local Authority.

2.6 The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has set three national outcome indicators for all YOTs which form the baseline for performance information included within this year’s plan. These are as follows:

- i. Reduce the number of First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System
- ii. Reduce Re-offending
- iii. Reduce the Use of Custody

2.7 From April 2023 the Ministry of Justice also requires all YOTs to submit performance data against the following 10 additional Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s):

- Accommodation
- Education Training and Employment
- Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)/Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

- Mental Health and Emotional Well-being
- Substance Misuse
- Out of Court Disposals
- Management Board Attendance
- Wider Services
- Serious Violence
- Victims

## Local Context

- 2.8 The Youth Offending Service continues to play a key role in preventing offending, reoffending, reducing the use of custody where appropriate, and delivering services for victims and safeguarding the most vulnerable.
- 2.9 The data provided below is the latest available from the Ministry of Justice for each measure. Reoffending data appears delayed as this includes a 12 month follow on period to track any potential reoffending.
- i. First time entrants: The number of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time in Buckinghamshire has continued to fall. The October 2021 to September 2022 period shows a rate of 125 young people per 100,000 of the local 10-17 year old population, which represents stronger performance than that seen Nationally, across Thames Valley and within the YOT family. This represents a reduction from the 132 per 100,000 entering the system in Buckinghamshire between October 2020 and September 2021.
  - ii. Reoffending: The rate of young people reoffending in Buckinghamshire has risen to 30% for the January to March 2021 cohort, with performance stronger than that seen Nationally but weaker than that seen across the Southeast, Thames Valley and YOT family. This is a notable increase during a period when most other comparator groups saw a decrease. In actual numbers, this represents an increase from 6 young people reoffending in the January to March 2020 cohort in comparison with 9 in the January to March 2021 cohort. The overall tracking group reduced from 37 to 30 young people between these two periods which has also had an impact on the percentage increase.

- iii. Use of Custody: The rate of young people receiving a custodial sentence per 1000 of the local 10-17 year old population has decreased from 0.07 in 2021 to 0.03 in 2022. In actual numbers, this represents a reduction from 4 to 2 young people. Performance is stronger than that seen across the Thames Valley, South East, Nationally and within the YOT family.
- iv. Data is also monitored on numbers of young people remanded to custody and the number of bed nights this entails. 1 young person was remanded in 2022/23 and this represented a reduction in bed nights in comparison with the previous financial year.

### **Priorities for the coming year**

- 2.10 2022-23 saw the Youth Offending Service continue to expand the scope of prevention delivery, with the volume of non-statutory out of court interventions overtaking statutory work (Youth Conditional Cautions and Court Orders) for the first time. In January 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) published their report on the Inspection of Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service. An overall rating of 'Good' was made, with a number of strengths recognised. There were also some very clear areas for development identified, predominantly in relation to out of court disposals.
- 2.11 Important activity on improving and developing out of court disposals has already begun and will continue throughout 2023/24. This coincides with direct funding from the Ministry of Justice for all Youth Justice Services to increase the scope of out of court disposal work as part of the 'Turnaround' programme. As a result, there has been a significant amount of developmental work in this space which will see diversionary work offered to more children at risk of entering the youth justice system.
- 2.12 Despite a significant focus on ethnic disproportionality at strategic and operational level for several years, rates of disproportionality are once again high, and this will therefore remain a key strategic focus for the Board, as we continue to explore ways of influencing the key drivers and seeking systemic change through a partnership approach.
- 2.13 There will also be an increased focus on developing child first ways of working at strategic and operational level. This will mean greater involvement of children and young people in key decision making, increasing the scope of feedback and more work on improved outcomes as a result of the feedback received. There will be significant work undertaken to bring an increased child first focus to assessments.

- 2.14 The Youth Offending Service will continue to work in close partnership with colleagues in the Missing and Exploitation Hub and wider Children's Social Care. 2023/24 will see Buckinghamshire Children's Social Care Adolescent Service launched and the Youth Offending Service will play an important role in this, working in close partnership.
- 2.15 The partnership board maintains strategic oversight of data regarding groups that are over-represented in the Youth Justice System. Strategic links with the Opportunity Bucks project will allow the partnership board to analyse patterns of disproportionality within different geographical areas of the county. This will provide further opportunities to address gaps in provision.

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

- 3.1 n/a

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

- 4.1 The local authority must carry out its statutory obligations in compliance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 40. In addition, the local authority must also carry out its statutory obligations in respect of safeguarding Children and Young People, as set out in the Children Act 2004 and in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- 4.2 The Youth Offending Service is funded through a combination of grant funding from the Youth Justice Board and contributions from partners. Contributions may also be in kind, for example staffing employed by partner organisations but dedicated to the YOS.

The following partnership resources make up the Youth Offending Service budget for 2023-2024:

<b>Partner Contributions 2023-2024</b>	<b>Staffing Costs (£)</b>	<b>Posts In Kind</b>	<b>Other Delegated Funds (£)</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
<b>Buckinghamshire Council</b>	686,051		40,000	726,051
<b>Thames Valley Police</b>		90,657		90,657
<b>Integrated Care Board</b>		76,285		76,285
<b>National Probation Service</b>		29,431	8,580	38,011
<b>Police Crime Commissioner</b>	134,663		65,000	199,663
<b>Youth Justice Board Grant</b>	475,306			475,306
<b>Ministry of Justice (Turnaround)</b>	114,685			114,685
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,410,705</b>	<b>196,373</b>	<b>113,580</b>	<b>1,720,658</b>

## **5. Corporate implications**

5.1 n/a

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

6.1 n/a

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

7.1 The Youth Justice Strategic Plan will be communicated to partners via the YOS Partnership Board, ensuring a multi-agency approach across partner organisations.

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

8.1 The Youth Justice Plan should be reviewed and agreed annually. Progress of the plan will be monitored through the YOS Partnership Board which reports into the Safer Buckinghamshire Board.

## **9. Background papers**

9.1 Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-24

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

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

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## Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024

<b>Service</b>	Buckinghamshire YOS
<b>Service Manager/ Lead</b>	Ollie Foxell, Deputy Service Manager
<b>Chair of YJS Board</b>	John Macilwraith, Corporate Director Children’s Services, Buckinghamshire Council

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## 1. Introduction, Vision and Strategy

The Youth Justice Plan for 2023-24 sets out the strategic vision for Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service for the year. It reviews achievements and areas for development from the previous 12 months and sets out priorities for the year ahead. The plan aligns to the Community Safety Partnership's 'Safer Buckinghamshire Plan' and its priorities. Our aim is that Buckinghamshire remains one of the safest places to grow up, raise a family, live, work and do business.

The Youth Offending Service continues to play a key role in preventing offending, reoffending, reducing the use of custody where appropriate, and delivering services for victims and safeguarding the most vulnerable. The role of the Partnership Board is to ensure an effective partnership between Children's Services, Health Services, Probation, Police, Community Safety and both third sector and private sector providers, ensuring high quality and effective services are delivered to young people, their families and the victims of offending.

I started as chair of the Youth Offending Service Partnership Board in September 2022, having taken over from Supt Rebecca Mears, whom I thank for her hard work and service to the role. 2022-23 was an eventful year, including an Inspection from His Majesties Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP). The Inspection outcome was positive, with an overall grading of 'Good'. There are also some very clear areas for improvement, which the Partnership Board and Youth Offending Service have and will continue to work hard to develop.

Since taking over in my role as chair of the Partnership Board, it was quickly apparent to me that the strength of the Youth Offending Service workforce and the commitment and focus of the Board are significant assets in Buckinghamshire, indeed both were recognised by inspectors. The strength of partnership working and focus on early prevention, underpinned by the YOS's innovative schools project, are also particular assets which have contributed to the success of the Youth Offending Service in recent years, measured by performance against key performance indicators (KPIs). This year will see the start of a new set of KPIs, for which the YOS and the partnership are well prepared.

Looking ahead, there are several areas of focus for the Partnership Board, including the successful completion of inspection improvement work, a commitment to working alongside and listening to staff, as well as ensuring that we hear the views of children and young people and involve them more in decision making. Our strategic priorities over recent years have been themed to contribute to systemic change across the wider organisation and within criminal justice as a whole. They will continue to do this, with the inclusion of a specific priority regarding further developing and expanding prevention work, which will involve the implementation locally of the Ministry of Justice funded Turnaround Project. The 3 key strategic priorities for the Partnership Board for 2023-24 are:

1. Addressing disproportionality
2. Addressing exploitation of young people
3. Expanding prevention work

It has been a pleasure to work with colleagues at the Youth Offending Service and on the Partnership Board to ensure the delivery of high-quality services to support young people, families and victims in Buckinghamshire. I look forward to the year ahead with an absolute commitment to not only maintaining this, but to improve outcomes in the areas we know require more work.

***John Macilwraith, Corporate Director, Children's Services***

## **Vision and Strategy**

2022-23 saw the Youth Offending Service continue to expand the scope of prevention delivery, with the volume of non-statutory out of court interventions overtaking statutory work (Youth Conditional Cautions and Court Orders) for the first time. In January 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) published their report on the Inspection of Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service. The service was rated as "Good", with a number of areas recognised as "Outstanding", in relation to organisational delivery, court disposal work, and resettlement. There were also some very clear areas for development identified, predominantly in relation to out of court disposals, which saw assessment, planning and policy and provision of out of court disposal work assessed as "Requires Improvement".

Important activity on improving and developing out of court disposals has already begun and will continue in 2023/24. This coincides with direct funding from the Ministry of Justice for all Youth Justice Services to increase the scope of out of court disposal work as part of the 'Turnaround' programme. As a result, there has been a significant amount of developmental work in this space which will see diversionary work offered to more children at risk of entering the youth justice system.

Despite focus on ethnic disproportionality at strategic and operational level for several years, rates of disproportionality are once again high, and this will therefore remain a key strategic focus for the Board, as we continue to explore ways of influencing the key drivers and seeking systemic change through a partnership approach.

There will also be an increased focus on developing child first ways of working at strategic and operational level. This will mean greater involvement of children and young people in key decision making, increasing the scope of feedback and more work on improved outcomes as a result of the feedback received. There will be significant work undertaken to bring an increased child first focus to assessments.

## **Local Context**

Buckinghamshire is widely known as an affluent county with great outcomes. However, we know that this overall picture masks some significant variations in outcomes, with some areas experiencing significant hardship. As partners, we want to come together with these communities and draw upon our collective resources to enhance opportunities and promote community wellbeing.

'Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for all' is Buckinghamshire Council's response to the Government's levelling up strategy. It provides a framework for bringing partners together to focus collective resources on tackling those local priorities that will make a difference to residents. It focuses on 5 themes:

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

Initially the programme will be focused on 10 wards in 3 areas – parts of Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham. Local action plans will be developed through engagement with communities led by Community Boards.

The ambition for the Opportunity Bucks programme is to improve opportunities for all.

The goal is to make sure the people living in the 10 identified wards can access the same level of opportunity that people in other parts of the county benefit from.

Everyone in Buckinghamshire should have the opportunity to achieve:

- a good quality job, that pays enough money to support a decent quality of life
- good standard of attainment and skills
- learning and career progression
- good mental and physical wellbeing and independent living
- a decent, warm home and good quality food
- involvement in shaping their community, with strong social connections
- a feeling of being safe where they live
- pride in where they live

This is a long-term programme that will involve working with local partners, the voluntary and community sector, businesses and other public sector bodies and organisations within Buckinghamshire.

This will enable collective resources to be coordinated to tackle local priorities that will make a difference to the lives and lifestyles of people living in areas of Aylesbury, Chesham, and High Wycombe.

Working together with local partner organisations, Buckinghamshire Council will look to:

- 1) Create new projects which share the objectives of the Opportunity Bucks programme.
- 2) Develop or enhance existing projects to support people living and working in the identified wards experiencing significant hardship.

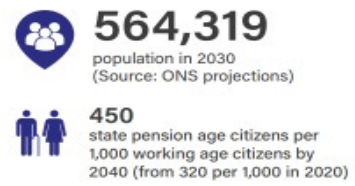
The following infographics provides an overview of Buckinghamshire in numbers.

## Buckinghamshire in Numbers

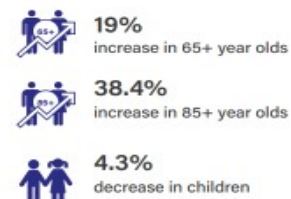
In 2022



On the horizon...

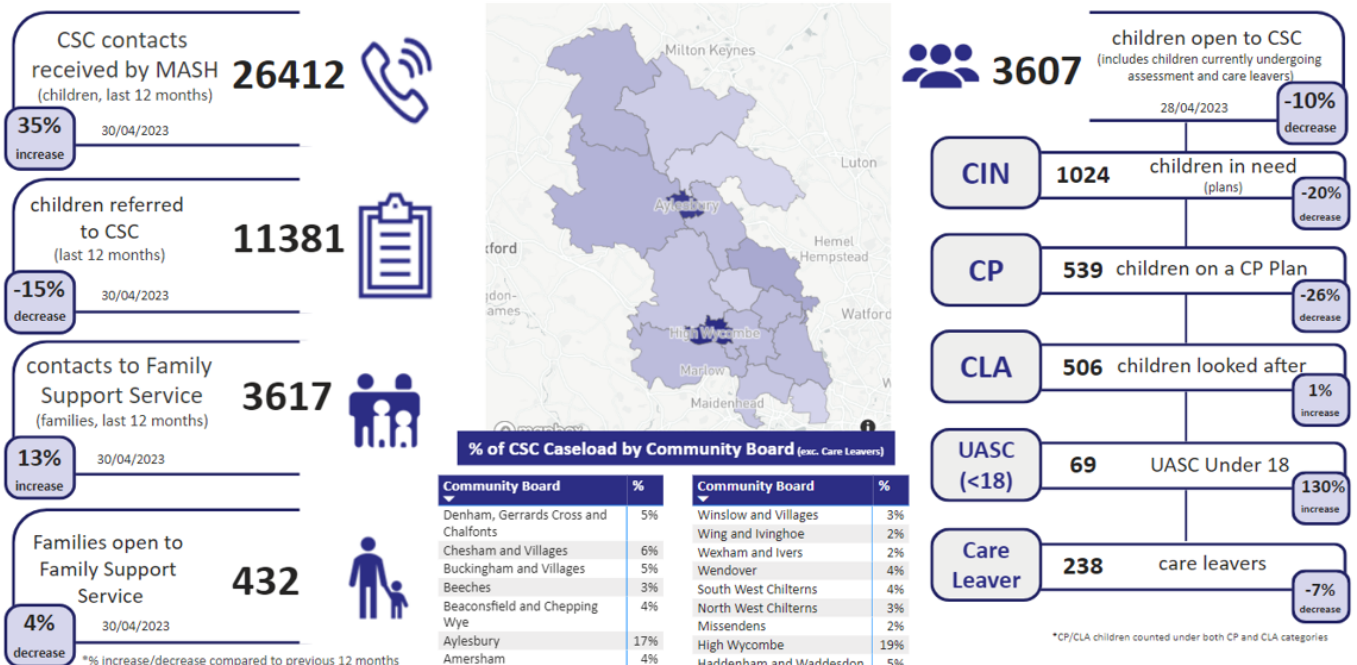


In the next decade (2022-2032):

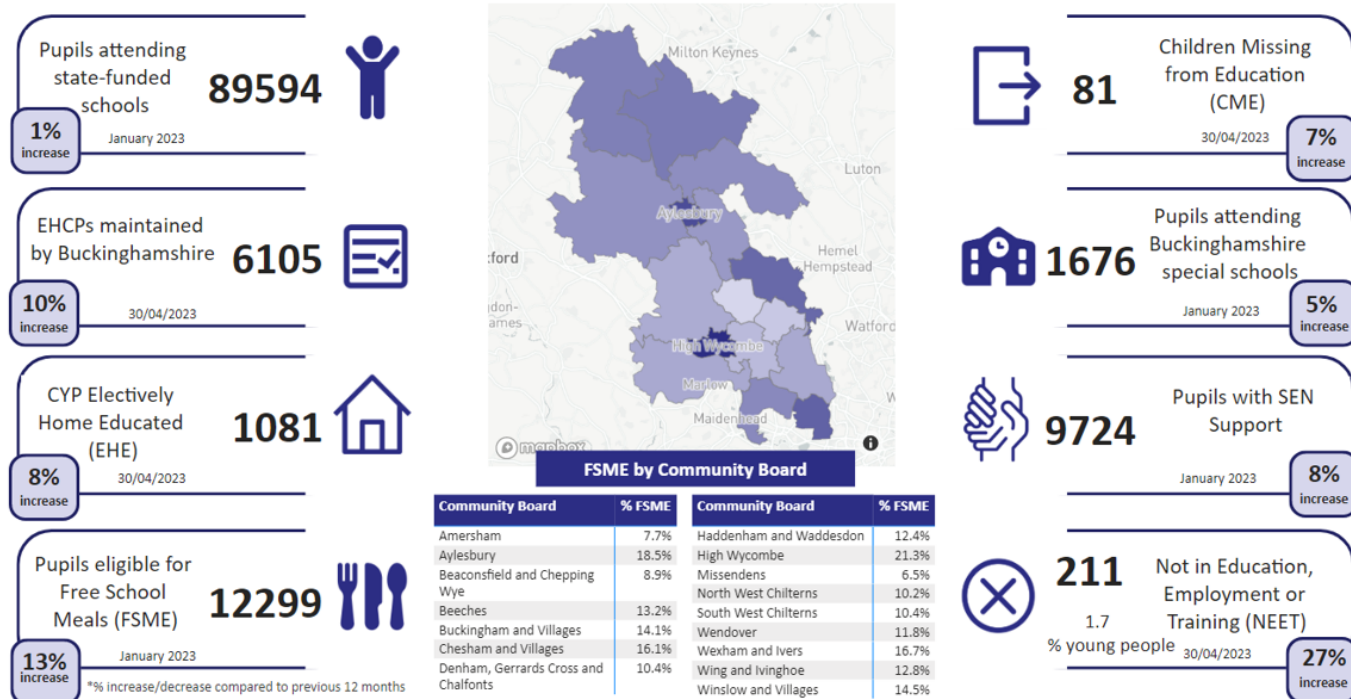


BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

## Our Service in Numbers - Social Care & Early Help



## Our Service in Numbers - Education



There are a number of significant national policy changes that have enabled Children's Service to consider the way in which both social care and education services are designed and delivered to the children and young people of Buckinghamshire. The proposed changes to the way in which the Service operates are in line with national policy direction and are 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. The following key principles have already been agreed and will inform the new delivery model and address some of the barriers that exist currently:

- Multi-disciplinary locality teams
- Fewer hand off points for children and families
- Greater alignment of services
- Introduction of a clear and consistent practice methodology
- Work is led by one trusted professional.
- Workforce development strategy to focus on the continuous professional development of staff.
- A menu of evidenced based interventions will be available.
- Mature and improve the children's system across the county.

## 2. Child First

Buckinghamshire YOS is committed to the principles of Child First and can demonstrate this in the following ways:

*1. Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.*

Staff are trained in trauma informed practice. Trauma informed practice is overseen and guided by CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) colleagues who provide support in a number of areas, such as chairing of case formulations and delivering complex group case supervision. In February 2023, front line practitioners received training on anti-racism and allyship. This, as part of the wider focus on disproportionality, is designed to assist staff in overcoming structural barriers that exist in relation to race and ethnicity.

There is a strong focus on quality in the work that the YOS do, with a robust Quality Assurance Framework and regular Quality Reports submitted to the Partnership Board. This ensures strategic oversight of the impact of work delivered with children and young people.

*2. Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.*

The HMIP Inspection, which took place in October 2022, identified increasing the scope and range of reparation projects as an area for development. Following this, a Community Engagement Practitioner post has been created. As well as holding responsibility for increasing the diversity of community reparation projects, this post will also increase community involvement by the YOS.

*3. Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.*

The YOS uses the LifePath model to seek feedback from children and young people. This has proven an effective way to gain meaningful, feedback which has enabled the service to ensure children's voices are heard and implemented as part of service delivery. Findings are presented to the Partnership Board and appropriate actions taken where needed. An example of this is the constructive feedback given in relation to experiences of children held in police custody. Following discussion at the Partnership Board, trauma informed practice training was delivered by CAMHS to custody staff. Positive feedback was received by custody staff. Further evaluation of impact will be assessed through the quarterly quality report.

The YOS have sought to increase the level of consultation with children on how the organisation is run. This has involved the setting up of a feedback group to advise on potential changes to ways of working, the decision to rename the YOS as Youth Justice and Support Team which was influenced by feedback from young people, and the priorities for this plan which were informed by feedback from a group of young people, who fed back that feeling safe was important to them.

*4. Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.*

Since 2018, the YOS has pursued a path of very deliberately seeking to grow the prevention and diversion offer available to children and young people. As a result, the YOS now works with more children in a prevention capacity than those in a statutory capacity. This focus on early prevention will be expanded in 23/24 with the addition of Turnaround funding. The prevention strategy is supported by our innovative schools model, which places Youth Workers across 16 secondary schools (originally 8) within

Buckinghamshire, delivering diversionary intervention with children who have not entered the youth justice system. The vision is to seek further opportunities to grow this model.

### 3. Voice of the Child

Buckinghamshire YOS actively identifies ways for young people to participate in service development to ensure that the voice of the child underpins practice. During 2022/23, the following activities have reinforced this objective:

- The Life Path model continues to be well embedded, allowing every young person the opportunity to feedback on each step of their youth justice journey at the end of their intervention. By sharing collated feedback from this with the Partnership Board, all agencies have an opportunity to reflect on their engagement with those known to the YOS and how this can be improved. For example, information was shared with the Board that young people were often struggling to understand what was happening at Court. This allowed the Magistrate representative to take this learning back to their own organisation and, as a result, more individuals are reporting a positive experience in that environment.
- More creative ways of bringing the voice of the child to the Board have also been explored, and recorded verbal feedback delivered, to help members understand more about the needs of these individuals in their own words.
- Young people have been consulted on the name change for the YOS and the themes from their responses have been used to create a new title for the service.

Feedback from young people and their families cited within the HMIP Inspection Report clearly evidences the way the YOS focuses on both the voice of the child and their individual needs. Example quotations are included below:

*“They have helped my son to learn to be himself and to take ownership of his own career path and take responsibility for his own actions.”*

*“I am not a very open person but with my case workers, I become an open person. I can share my views and thoughts and feelings and not feel judged.”*

*“My YOS officers are amazing and have helped me to improve my life for the better. I came from a really dark place to now being more confident with a full-time job and being happy in general.”*

Work is currently taking place to create a Young People’s Reference Group, who can be called on to participate in a range of activity whenever developmental changes are being proposed.

### 4. Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service is located within Buckinghamshire Council Children’s Services. The YOS Head of Service post is jointly responsible for the Children’s Social Care, Missing and Exploitation Hub, reporting to the Service Director for Children’s Social Care and part of the Senior Management Team. The Head of Service post is currently vacant and is being considered as part of the wider children’s services transformation programme. A deputy Head of Service remains in post, and improvements regarding HMIP are being overseen by the Assistant Director for the Quality Standards and Performance Service. The YOS



Performance Review and Information Manager reports directly into this role to ensure some independent oversight of quality.

Strategic oversight of the Youth Offending Service is provided by the Partnership Board, which is chaired by the Corporate Director for Children's Services and attended by all statutory partners, as well as many non-statutory. The governance of the Partnership Board sits under the Safer Bucks Board (see appendix 2 for further detail).

At an operational level, the YOS contains a number of specialist posts. A full structure chart is contained within appendix 1.

## 5. Board Development

In September 2022, the Youth Offending Partnership Board agreed a change of Chair. The position had been held by Thames Valley Police for a number of years and it was timely, with the appointment of a new Corporate Director for Children's Social Care, for the role of chair to change.

The introduction of a new set of Key Performance Indicators in April 2023 brings with it more responsibility for partnership data to be shared via the board. In particular, the board have identified data on ethnic disproportionality as a key focus, to influence the drivers for the levels of disproportionality seen in the youth justice population locally.

Greater interaction between the Partnership Board and operational staff, as well as children and young people are identified as key priorities for 2023/24.

The HMIP Inspection report published in January 2023, identified the two recommendations, and one additional area for improvement which has been incorporated as an action, specifically for the Partnership Board:

***Recommendation 1: Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service Board should monitor the reintegration rates of YOS children into mainstream education to make sure that children return to full-time mainstream education in every case where this is appropriate***

***Recommendation 2: Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service Board should ensure information within out of court disposal assessments consistently reflects social care input and that the roles and responsibilities for each service area are clearly identified within children's plans.***

***Area for improvement: Managers and the board could do more to consistently recognise and reward good work***

To ensure full strategic ownership of the HMIP improvement plan, all recommendations and actions are overseen by a member of the Partnership Board, who works closely with operational staff to ensure completion and the monitoring of impact.

## 6. Progress on Previous Plan

The following table outlines the actions identified in last year's Youth Justice Strategic Plan and the progress made against these.

Addressing Over-Representation		
ACTION	PROGRESS	IMPACT
Provide Youth Work resource to schools to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic children at risk of exclusion	<b>Ongoing</b> – The intention was to offer direct intervention from a Youth Worker with a diverse background. Due to unforeseen absence, it has not been possible to deliver this aspect. However, it was possible to repurpose some of the school's youth work resource to support young people in Pupil Referral Units with low attendance, an area where we know there is a diverse range of young people. In addition, the Community Coaching project continues to provide mentoring support to young people from ethnically diverse communities.	A review will take place in the coming year to agree the best way to progress this action and to evaluate impact.
Deliver mentoring support to children to support transition from year 6 to 7	<b>Completed</b> - During 2022/23, 10 young people were supported through transition from year 6 to year 7.	At of the end of March 2023, none of the young people mentored had come into contact with the youth justice system.  Positive feedback from both parents and young people indicates the effectiveness of this intervention. Case study feedback is provided to the PCC who fund the project.
Deliver mentoring support to parents of children who are transitioning from year 6 to 7	<b>Completed</b> - During 2022/23, 5 parents of children were supported.	Positive feedback from parents who received this support indicates that this intervention is effective. Case study feedback is provided to the PCC who fund this project.
Share regular data on drivers for disproportionality with the YOS Board to guide partnership work	<b>Ongoing</b> – An agreement is now in place with statutory partners regarding regular disproportionality data reports. This will commence from the	Impact will be assessed after this has been embedded.

	June 2023 Partnership Board meeting.	
<b>Addressing Exploitation of Young People</b>		
Commission mentoring support for children and young people at risk of exploitation from those with lived experience	<b>Completed</b> – 5 young people have received mentoring support from Roadlight, aimed at reducing the risks of those being actively exploited.	Impact included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 young person’s attendance and behaviour at school improved alongside relationships at home</li> <li>• 1 young person increased their engagement with the YOS after initially refusing to speak to their YOS Officer</li> <li>• The intervention allowed advocacy for 1 young person with their parents in respect of boundary setting and the mentor-maintained contact when they transitioned to living with other family members in Europe</li> <li>• For 1 young person, the mentor was able to contribute to the professional group and their management of a highly complex situation, specifically in how contextual safeguarding risks were managed.</li> </ul>
Increase scope of YOS Prevention work for those at risk of exploitation	<b>Completed</b> – Prevention work has increased significantly during 2022/23 with referrals now accepted from a wider range of sources. This includes young people identified as being at risk of exploitation.	Local monitoring data demonstrates a consistently low rate of children who have received prevention support, going on to offend. This data is contained within section 9 of this document.
Deliver Contextual Safeguarding training for all front-line practitioners	<b>Completed</b> – Contextual Safeguarding training was delivered to all front-line practitioners in May 2022.	An audit of cases subsequently took place to measure the impact on practice.

Deliver additional Youth Work resource to Pupil Referral Units to support children missing education	<b>Ongoing</b> – 4 young people with low attendance have been supported to date. Conversations are ongoing with Pupil Referral Units to agree how this provision can be extended. This is in addition to the support offered to Pupil Referral Units through the Multi-Agency Schools Project.	Impact will be assessed once this has been embedded.
<b>Embedding Evidence Based Practice</b>		
Commission research from Buckinghamshire University on the experience of Black and Mixed heritage children and young people	<b>Ongoing</b> – consent has been gained from a number of young people and work is underway with the university to ensure they are able to gain feedback from a sufficient number to research is meaningful. Research will be completed by October 2023.	Findings from the research will be presented to the Partnership Board and be adopted by the YOS to inform practice.
Deliver refresher training on Psychological Formulations and Trauma-Informed Practice to all front-line practitioners	<b>Completed</b> - Psychological Formulations and Trauma-Informed Practice training was delivered to all front-line practitioners in July 2022.	An audit of cases subsequently took place to measure the impact on practice, identifying areas of strength and impact of this training. The audit demonstrated evidence of learning from the training being adopted in practice. There were also areas identified where learning could have been further embedded. Changes were made to the quality assurance tool as a result.
Deliver refresher Restorative Justice training to all front-line practitioners	<b>Completed</b> – Restorative Justice refresher training was delivered to front-line practitioners in November 2022.	The impact of this on practice is being measured through quality assurance activity. This will be evaluated in the next quarterly quality report.
Continue to provide Youth Work provision in 16 identified schools	<b>Completed</b> – In 2022/23, 168 young people were supported across 16 schools including 3 Pupil Referral Units.	The effectiveness of this project can be evidenced through offending data: of the 128 young people who worked with a Schools Youth Worker in 2021/22, only 10 (7.8%) have gone on to enter the youth justice system within a 12-month tracking period.

<p>Increase numbers of professionals from other agencies trained in Restorative Approaches</p>	<p><b>Completed</b> - Since April 2022, 85 professionals from a range of agencies have received training in Restorative Approaches. This includes 39 social workers, 4 foster carers, 4 residential workers and 4 Police Community Support Officers.</p>	<p>Case study feedback has consistently demonstrated that the training is well-received, has been used in practice and positively impacts service users.</p>
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## 7. Resources and Services

The Youth Justice Grant will be used exclusively to deliver against activities linked to the 14 Key Performance Indicators. The following activities will be funded by the grant:

- Delivery of effective assessment, intervention planning and supervision for young people who have offended or who are at risk of offending in Buckinghamshire
- Delivery of services to the victims of youth offending
- Development of key areas of practice such as SEND, Liaison and Diversion and Restorative Justice
- Analysis of performance information to inform practice development across all areas
- Delivery and development of Community Reparation
- Development and training of staff in effective practice
- Provision of the Core+ database, to support effective case management, timely submission of statutory data and the use of connectivity to ensure mandatory documentation is shared securely with the Youth Custody Service.

Local authority funding will also be used to contribute towards the delivery of these outcomes.

Funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner will be used to deliver two projects:

- The YOS Multi-Agency Schools Project - this provides Youth Workers to deliver diversionary support to 16 secondary schools across the county. The aim of this project is to reduce numbers of First Time Entrants to the youth justice system
- The Community Coaching Project - this funds an external provider, Spark2Life, to deliver community coaching to support transition from primary school to secondary school for children from ethnically diverse communities. The project seeks to address structural inequality and provide improved outcomes for students across a range of areas that can sometimes be pathways into the youth justice system.

A more detailed description of these projects is provided in section 11 of this plan.

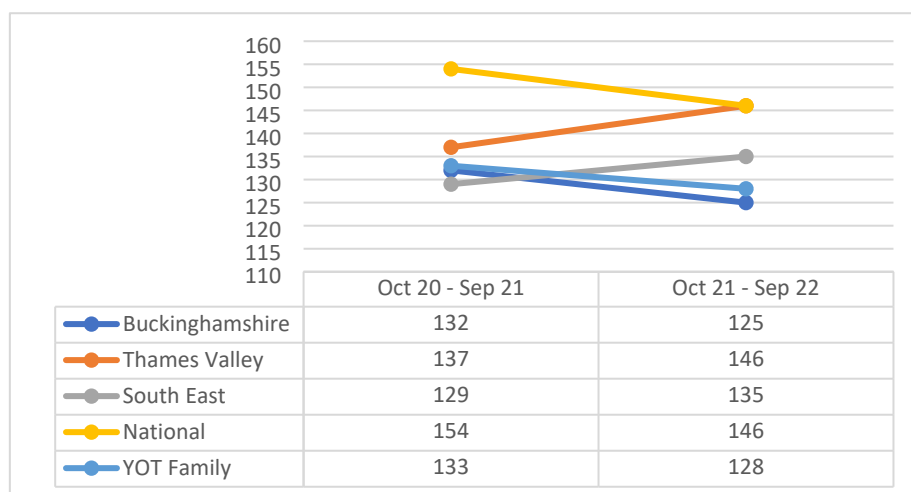
Funding from the Ministry of Justice will be used for the purpose of delivering the following activities as part of the Turnaround project:

- Funding two posts to deliver diversionary activities for children identified as 'on the cusp' of the Youth Justice System
- Funding constructive activities for children eligible for Turnaround support

## 8. Performance - National Key Performance Indicators

### First Time Entrants

The number of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time in Buckinghamshire has continued to fall, as the chart below illustrates. Data for the October 2021 to September 2022 period shows a rate of 125 young people per 100,000 of the local 10–17-year-old population, which represents stronger performance than that seen Nationally, across Thames Valley and within the YOT family. This represents a reduction from the 132 per 100,000 entering the system in Buckinghamshire between October 2020 and September 2021.



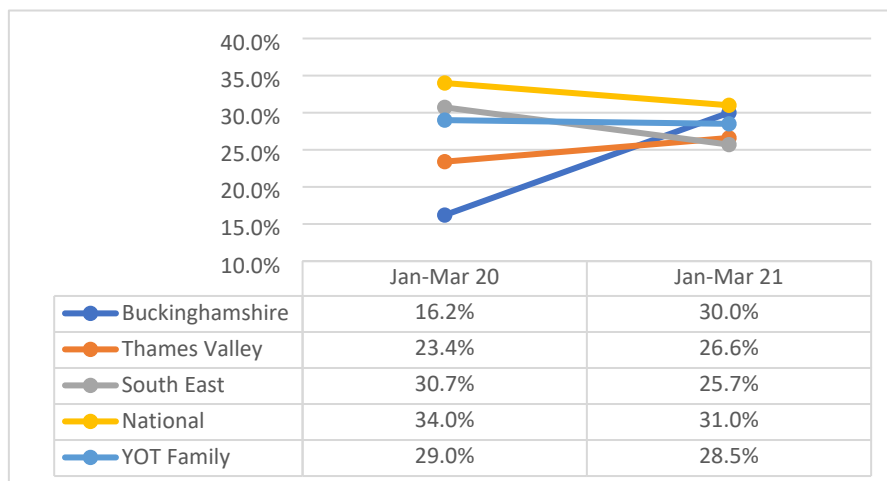
The strength of this data can be contributed to a number of factors, including:

- Ongoing development of the Multi-Agency Schools project (funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner)
- A Community Coaching project, supporting black and minority ethnic children in primary school year 6 through their transition to year 7 at secondary school (funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner)
- New processes that ensure all young people receiving a Community Resolution are screened and offered intervention where appropriate
- Delivery of restorative justice training to professionals from a range of agencies, including care homes and schools, to support appropriate management of challenging situations.

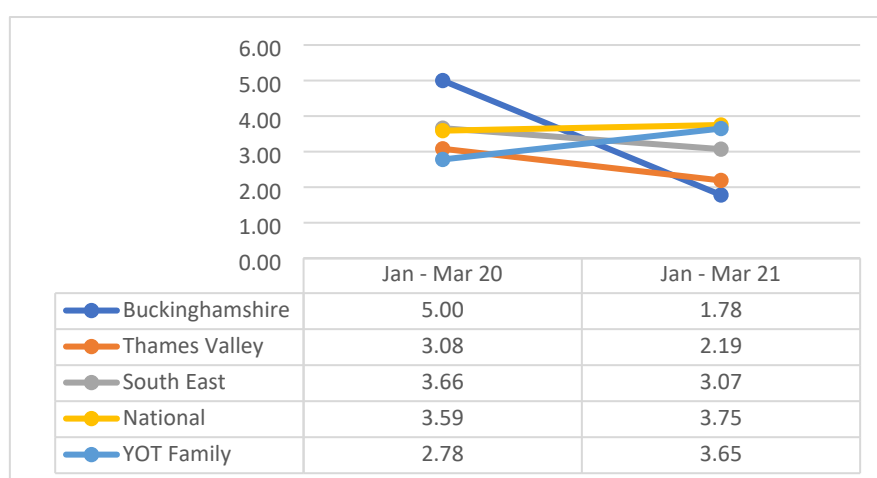
Work will continue to ensure that this strong performance is sustained and improved on wherever possible, including the use of Turnaround funds to increase the scope of diversionary interventions.

### Reoffending

The rate of young people reoffending in Buckinghamshire has risen to 30% for the January to March 2021 cohort, with performance stronger than that seen Nationally but higher than that seen across the Southeast, Thames Valley and YOT family. This is a notable increase during a period when most other comparator groups saw a decrease. In actual numbers, this represents an increase from 6 young people reoffending in the January to March 2020 cohort in comparison with 9 in the January to March 2021 cohort. The overall tracking group reduced from 37 to 30 young people between these two periods which has also had an impact on the percentage increase.



Positively, the rate of re-offences per reoffender has seen a significant decrease across the same 2 periods, with a frequency rate far lower than all comparator groups.

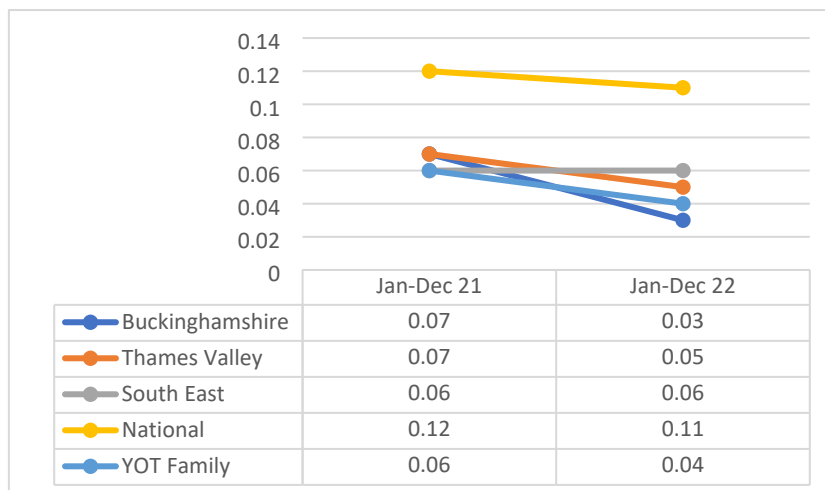


Reducing reoffending remains a key objective and the YOS seek to strengthen their understanding of the factors impacting on this in a number of ways. This includes:

- Data provided by the Police on over-18's reoffending within an identified 12-month cohort, which allowed more detailed analysis to take place. This showed that local data was largely in line with the national figures at that time and where reoffending had taken place, management oversight of the interventions being delivered could have been stronger. As a result of this, and the wider HMIP findings, management oversight training will be delivered in 2023/24.
- Ongoing discussions through the YOS Partnership Board to agree whether more frequent over-18 offending data could be provided therefore increasing the scope of local reoffending data analysis.
- Identification of training for front-line practitioners in 2023/24, to include risk of harm, intervention planning and understanding and supporting neuro-divergent young people.
- Continuing to prioritise staff well-being and recognising the risk of vicarious trauma: reflective supervision; CAMHS group complex case formulation; individual case consultations; and staff feedback activity every 6 months.
- Ongoing audit activity on a monthly basis to ensure practice quality is regularly reviewed.

## **Custody**

The rate of young people receiving a custodial sentence per 1000 of the local 10–17-year-old population has decreased from 0.07 in 2021 to 0.03 in 2022. In actual numbers, this represents a reduction from 4 to 2 young people. Performance is stronger than that seen across the Thames Valley, South East, Nationally and within the YOT family.



The YOS also monitor the number of young people remanded to custody and the number of bed nights this entails. As the table below shows, only 1 young person was remanded in 2022/23 and this represented a reduction in bed nights in comparison with the previous financial year.

	No. of Young People	No. of Bed Nights
2020/21	4	876
2021/22	1	34
2022/23	1	23

Ongoing activity is in place to ensure custody is used only when all community options have been explored. This includes:

- Sustaining the trauma-informed approach to assessing and engaging with young people through the delivery of further training on Psychological Formulation
- The use of custody panels for all appropriate cases, whereby a manager supports the report author in building their proposal
- A comprehensive Quality Assurance Framework that ensures all assessments and report proposals are subject to robust management oversight. This includes activity built in to ensure consistency in approach.

## **Additional Key Performance Indicators from 2023**

From April 2023, the following key performance indicators will be reported on. Key risks and potential challenges are identified for each measure below.



- **Suitable Accommodation** – The national pressures around suitable placements for children looked after has the potential to impact on the new accommodation measure. Whilst custody levels are currently low in Buckinghamshire, any increase in the numbers of those coming back into the community from custody could also impact on the timeliness of placement identification. This has been discussed with the Partnership Board and agreement given that contextual narrative will be supplied as needed to clarify any barriers and ensure issues are escalated where appropriate.
- **Education, Training and Employment** – Whilst information on school attendance is routinely gathered by the YOS, the sheer number of educational establishments in Buckinghamshire can mean that verifying the accuracy of this data is challenging. The YOS have escalated concerns around availability of data to the Partnership Board and this is being addressed through a multi-agency working group.
- **Special Educational Need and Disabilities / Additional Learning Needs** – There has been a decrease in the percentage of those on the YOS caseload with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities over the last 12 months. This is at a time when national data has shown an increase in Education, Health and Care Plans. Local processes are in place to monitor numbers closely, alongside strong working relationships with appropriate partners.
- **Mental Health Care and Emotional Well-being** – The YOS do not currently monitor mental health data and reporting for the KPI will therefore provide an opportunity to have more robust oversight of this. Provision from both CAMHS and wider Health services remains strong, including NHS nurses, a Speech and Language Therapist and delivery of the forensic CAMHS model.
- **Substance Misuse** – Partnership arrangements are in place with local substance misuse provider Cranstoun who deliver interventions for the YOS. The Drug Diversion Scheme provides a targeted intervention for those young people who come to the attention of the police for drug possession offences across Thames Valley and is also delivered by Cranstoun on behalf of the YOS. This partnership relationship is well-embedded.
- **Out of Court Disposals** – 2022/23 saw a significant increase in the numbers of Out of Court Disposals being received in Buckinghamshire and the YOS has responded by increasing provision for those receiving Community Resolutions. Out of Court interventions have been the focus of significant developmental work and new practices have been identified to improve engagement. This should be reflected in the data for this measure moving forward.
- **Links to Wider Services** – As evidenced elsewhere in the Youth Justice Plan, data is monitored on Children’s Services involvement with young people known to the YOS. The YOS sits under Children’s Services within the local authority and benefits from strong strategic links with partners. At an operational level, audit activity also takes place to ensure robust oversight of those young people known to multiple services.
- **Management Board Attendance** – Board attendance has remained strong in Buckinghamshire over the last 12 months. Local processes are in place for monitoring attendance and for identifying if agencies do not attend on a regular basis. Concerns are escalated to the Board Chair who follows up with the relevant partner.

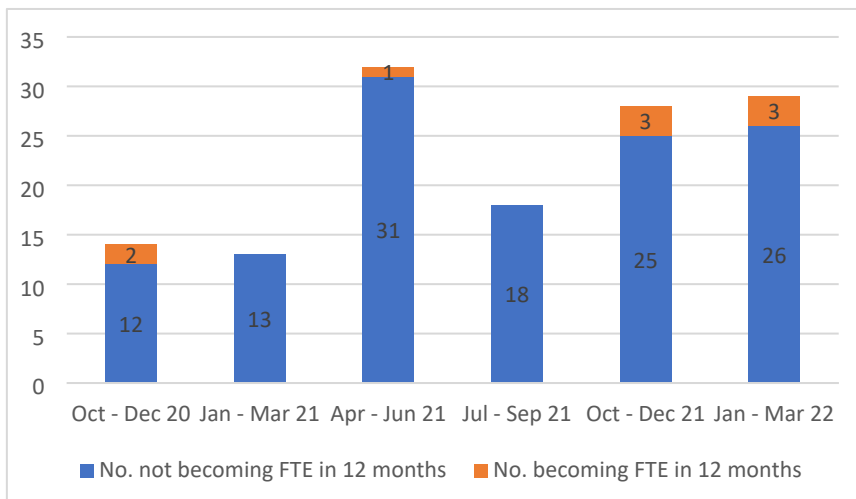
- **Serious Violence** – Serious Violence across Thames Valley fell between 2019 and 2022. This pattern was replicated in Buckinghamshire with a fall in the serious violence crime rate from 0.8 to 0.5 in 2020/21 which held at 0.5 in 2021/22. This measure will provide an opportunity to establish if similar patterns are seen within youth offending data.
- **Victims** – Victim data is monitored across the Thames Valley region and is captured in the Restorative Approaches section of the plan below. The most significant challenge is receiving consent to contact victims, via the Police, to explain the services on offer. Work has taken place across Thames Valley to address this with Police colleagues and to ensure the work the YOS does is actively promoted to these individuals.

Some of these data may provide the opportunity for further analysis of trends and themes within specific areas of the county, alongside the Opportunity Bucks project. This will allow the partnership board to identify gaps in provision within these specific wards.

## 9. Local Performance

### Local Indicator – Prevention Cases that Become First Time Entrants

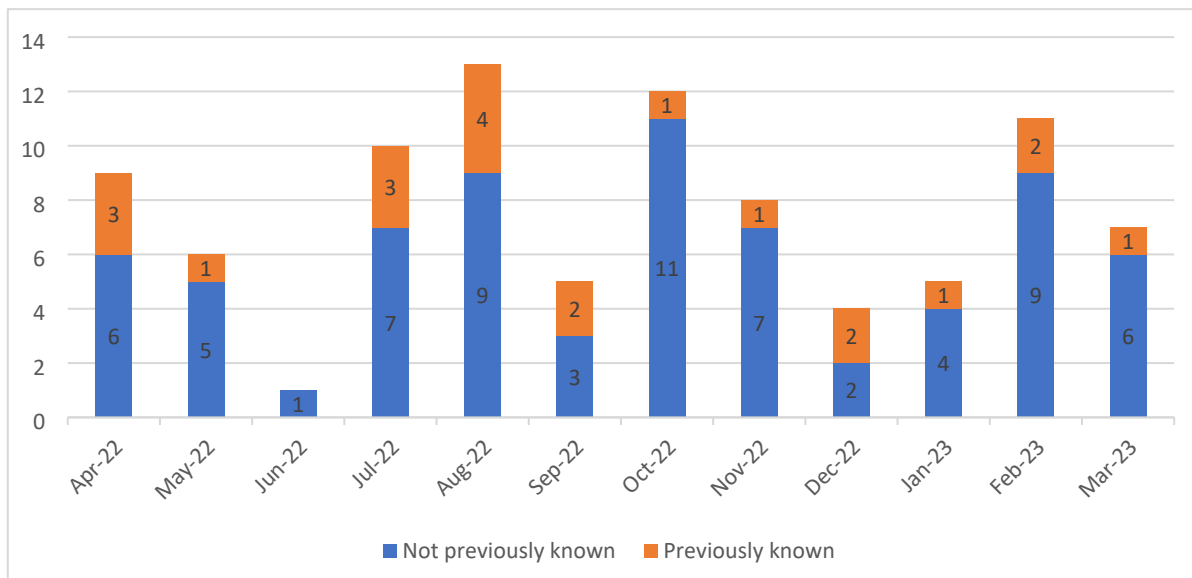
The YOS reports quarterly on Prevention cases that have gone on to become a First Time Entrant within 12 months of starting their intervention. The chart below shows that of the 134 young people engaged in preventative work between October 2020 and March 2022, 9 (6.7%) went on to receive a substantive outcome within 12 months. Whilst this represents a small rise in comparison with the October 2019 to March 2021 cohort, where only 3 (4.5%) went on to receive a substantive outcome within the tracking period, there has been a significant increase in the number of young people engaged on these interventions overall. This increased substantially from 66 young people to 134.



The strength of this performance reflects the effectiveness of the YOS Schools Project in engaging and diverting individuals from an offending pathway. This provides a robust, evidence-based model for the increased focus on prevention work moving forward, with the aim of sustaining and building further on these positive outcomes.

### Local Indicator – First Time Entrants Previously Known to the YOS

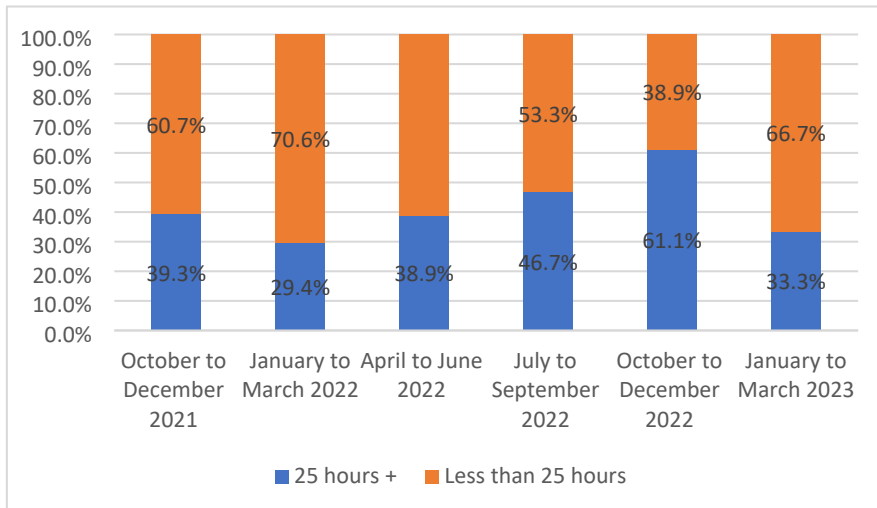
This measure identifies how many young people enter the youth justice system for the first time having been previously engaged by the YOS in a preventative intervention. In the 2022/23 period, there were a total of 91 First Time Entrants, of which 21 (23.1%) had been previously known to the service. This is an increase when compared to 2021/22 where there were 65 First Time Entrants, of which 12 (18.5%) had been previously known to the service. This data reflects both an overall increase in the numbers being engaged at a preventative level and a rise in numbers of First Time Entrants which has yet to translate into the national data, which runs approximately 6 months behind local data.



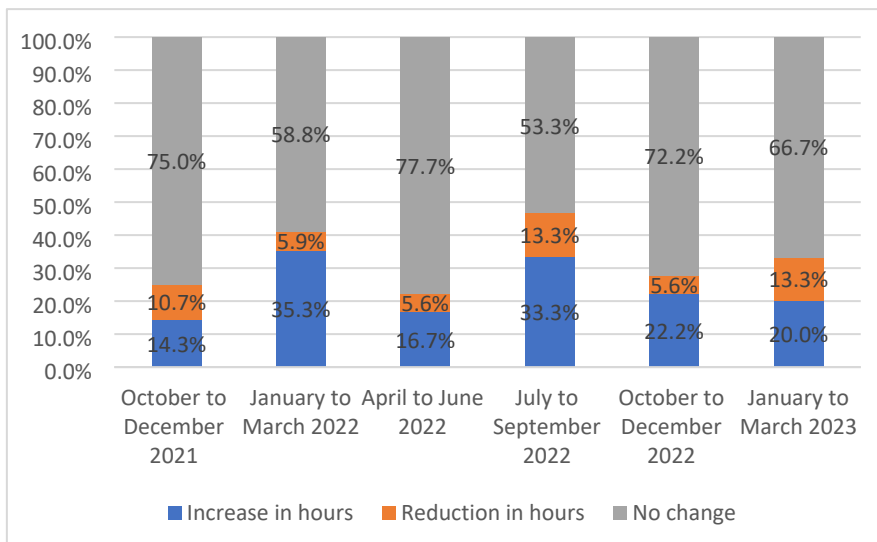
Measuring this particular indicator has 2 key purposes. Firstly, it allows the YOS to monitor the effectiveness of prevention programmes by reviewing individual cases where the young person went on to offend, and secondly, it provides a chance to identify if opportunities were missed to engage those who have not been worked with. The aim of this data analysis is to ultimately reduce the number of those entering the system both previously known and not known to the YOS.

**Local Indicator – Education, Training and Employment**

The YOS monitors the % (and number) of young people receiving 25 hours or more of education, training and employment provision at the end of their intervention. This includes all young people receiving statutory interventions. The data shows that whilst there had been some improvement since October 2021, in the most recent quarter two thirds of those completing YOS programmes were receiving less than 25 hours provision.



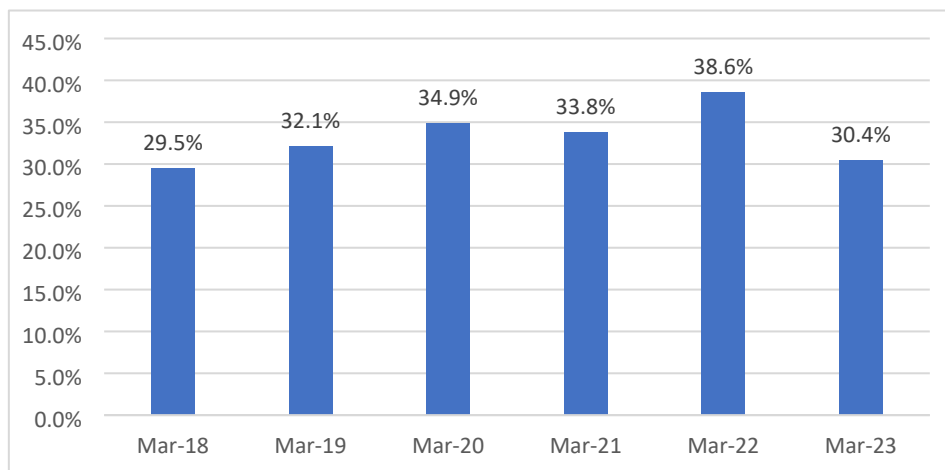
In addition, the YOS also monitor the % (and number) of young people receiving more hours provision at the end of their intervention than at the start. This includes all young people receiving statutory interventions. The data shows a significant fluctuation quarter on quarter.



Both of these measures have raised questions around the individual circumstances of the young people within each cohort. This has driven additional development of the local Education, Training and Employment monitoring process to ensure all open cases are tracked and supported as appropriate.

These measures will be replaced by the new key performance indicator which will further strength the understanding of local education, training and employment challenges for young people known to the YOS.

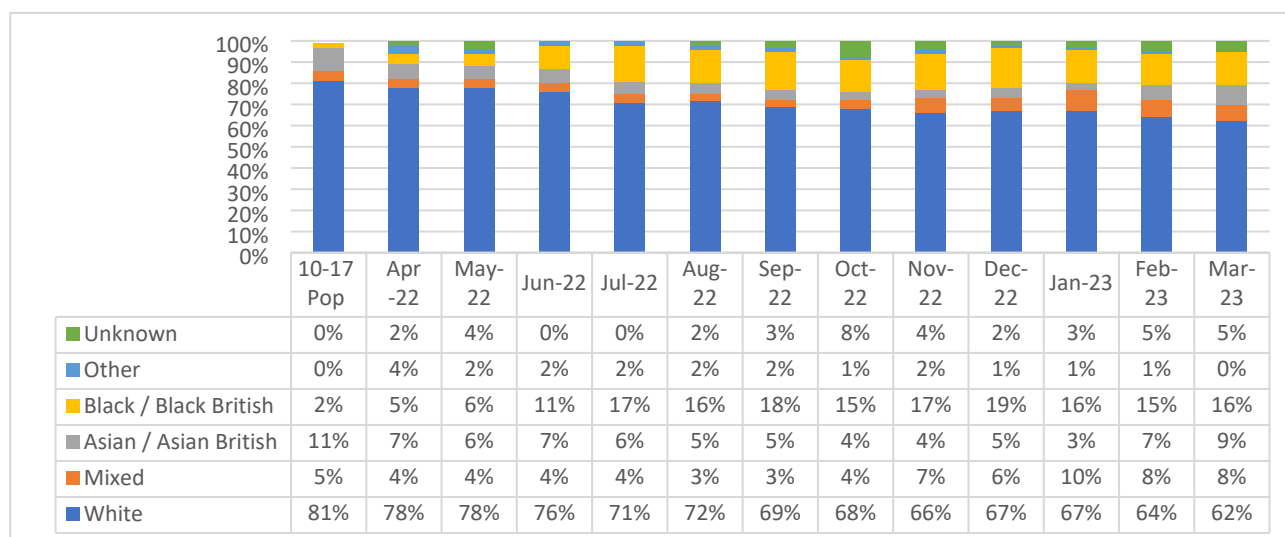
The percentage of young people on the YOS caseload with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is monitored on a monthly basis. The chart below shows a snapshot of this data across the last 6 years, with the reduction in March 2023 going against the general trend of increase across the previous 5 snapshots.



The YOS continue to work closely in partnership with the local authority to address the needs of these young people, as evidenced in the Education section below.

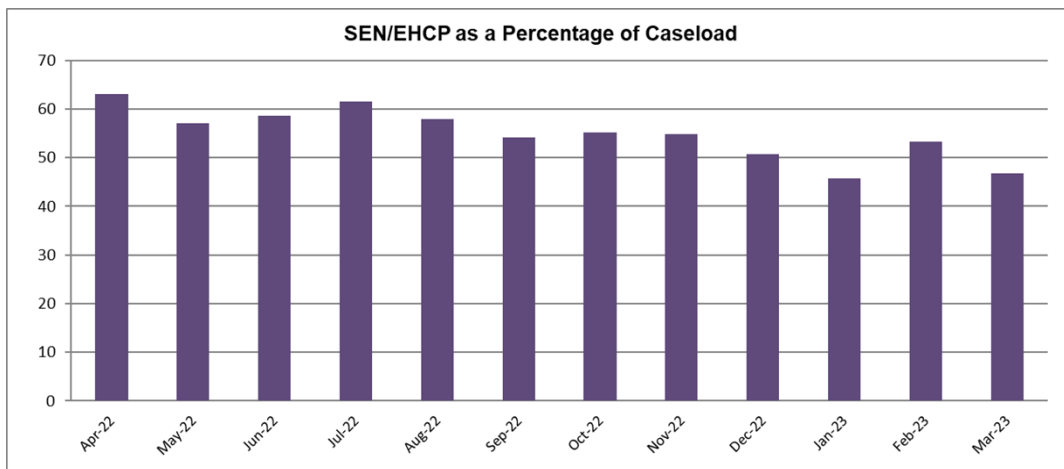
### 10. Children from Groups which are Over-Represented

Work on addressing ethnic disproportionality has been, and continues to be, a key strategic priority and area of particular focus for the YOS. However, despite this there continues to be a disproportionate number of young people from ethnic minority groups on the YOS caseload. This is a similar trend to that seen nationally. This can be seen most significantly for the Black / Black British group, where the local 10 to 17 population is 2% in comparison with the caseload proportion of 16%. Whilst some ethnicity data has now been published from the 2021 census, the YOS have yet to receive the 10–17-year-old breakdown for comparison purposes. The following chart compares the proportion of young people from different ethnic backgrounds from within the 10–17-year-old population and the caseload snapshots from the last 12 months



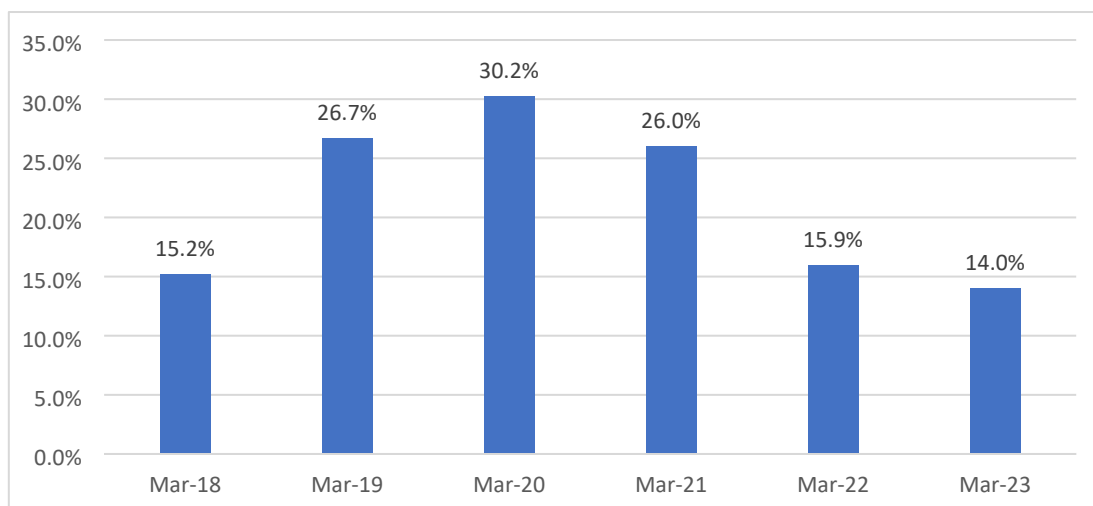
Addressing disproportionality remains one of the 3 key strategic priorities for the YOS. The Partnership Board have committed to regular data sharing as part of the new key performance indicators, and to ensuring that this data is meaningful and drives activity in relation to continuing systemic change. Following the HMIP thematic report on the experiences of black and mixed heritage boys, published in October 2021, the Partnership Board adopted all recommendations. Further information on progress against these recommendations is included within the Service Development section.

In relation to children subject to Education Health and Care plans or with identified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, the following caseload data shows that whilst there has been a reduction in the proportion of children supported by the YOS, numbers remain disproportionately high.



This is another priority area for the Partnership Board, supported by the new key performance indicator. Following the HMIP Joint Inspection of Education Training and Employment, published in June 2022, the Partnership Board adopted all recommendations. Further information on progress against these recommendations is included within the Service Development section.

Data indicates that Children Looked After are significantly over-represented within the Youth Justice System. The following chart shows a snapshot of Children Looked After as a proportion of the overall caseload over the past 6 years and shows a significant reduction since 2021. However, this still amounts to over-representation when compared to the general population.



The YOS will continue to work closely with colleagues in Children’s Social Care, to ensure that Children Looked After are not unnecessarily criminalised and benefit from the same opportunities for prevention and diversion as those who are not care experienced. Joint audit work ensures that there is ongoing oversight of the quality of work involving children known to the YOS with Children’s Social Care involvement.

The partnership board maintains strategic oversight of data regarding groups that are over-represented in the Youth Justice System. Strategic links with the Opportunity Bucks project will allow the partnership board to analyse patterns of disproportionality within different geographical areas of the county. This will provide further opportunities to address gaps in provision.

## 11. Prevention

The YOS Multi-Agency Schools Project continues to deliver support across 16 schools in Buckinghamshire. This is a significant increase on the 2 schools originally identified at the start of the project and the increased take-up is a testament to the effectiveness of the interventions being delivered. During 2022/23, 168 young people were offered support by the Schools Youth Workers. Additional support is also now in place in 3 Pupil Referral Units, where work is focusing on addressing low attendance levels. A further 4 individuals are engaged within this setting.

The over-arching programme aims to deliver the following outcomes:

1. Enhancing school achievement & engagement (including at risk of exclusion)
2. Preventing crime, violence, and antisocial behaviour
3. Preventing exploitation
4. Improving relationships within the school, peer, or professionals
5. Improving attendance
6. Preventing risky teenage behaviour – including drugs

One of the key measures of effectiveness is whether the individuals engaged go on to enter the youth justice system within 12 months. Of the 128 young people who started an intervention with a Schools Youth Worker in 2021/22, 10 (7.8%) have gone on to receive a substantive outcome and enter the youth justice system in this tracking period. Individual case studies are also collated to evidence impact and to aid learning around good practice.

The YOS Community Coaching project is delivered by Spark2Life and is designed to improve outcomes for identified young people, helping them to achieve their potential. Mentors support individuals through the transition to secondary school and seek to engage them in positive activities in their communities. This project has now been extended to include referrals for siblings of those engaged by the YOS on statutory interventions.

During 2022/23, 10 young people benefitted from one-to-one mentoring. In addition, 5 parents / carers were also supported through this period. As of March 2023, none of the young people supported by the project had gone on to enter the youth justice system. Case studies continue to evidence the positive impact mentors have on these young people's lives.

## 12. Diversion

Expanding the scope and breadth of the diversionary work in relation to out of court disposals is identified as one of the 3 key strategic priorities for the YOS. This is an area of work in which there has been, and will continue to be, a significant amount of activity and the Partnership Board retain a high level of oversight. 2022/23 saw the YOS increase the scope of out of court disposal work. This was very clearly identified as an area of improvement in the HMIP Inspection report published in January 2023. The

improvement plan which followed, along with the start of the Ministry of Justice funded Turnaround project, has led to the following specific pieces of work:

- The creation of 2 distinct ‘pathways’ into early intervention support: route A – children and young people who are eligible for Turnaround support; route B – those who are being discussed at the out of court decision making panel.
- A new process that ensures the views of children, young people and families are sought prior to out of court disposal outcome, where this is possible.
- The recruitment of 2 new posts: a Turnaround coordinator and a Turnaround Youth Worker
- The creation of a new out of court disposal assessment and planning tool
- The creation of a new out of court disposal quality assurance template
- Refresher training for staff in relation to safety and well-being, specifically for out of court disposals
- The commissioning of management oversight training with a specific focus of out of court disposals
- Updated out of court disposal guidance
- Improvements made to quality assurance and performance monitoring process for out of court disposals, ensuring significantly increased oversight in this area.

### 13. Education

In June 2022, Her Majesties Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) published a joint Inspection of Education Training and Employment services in Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales. One of the published recommendations is for Youth Justice Services to have a clear vision and strategy. The YOS’s vision and strategy is contained within the Youth Justice Plan and is informed by the recommendations from the HMIP local area Inspection report, which was published in January 2023, as well as the findings from the Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection of the services provided for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Buckinghamshire from March 2022.

The vision for Buckinghamshire YOS is to ensure that as a result of the support offered by the service, all children regardless of the level of intervention, benefit from improved outcomes in relation to education, training and employment.

The Service Director for Education is a member of the Partnership Board, enabling strong strategic links. The YOS is required to report on Key Performance Indicators, specifically in relation to Education, of which the Partnership Board maintains strong oversight and scrutiny. The local authority provides designated ring-fenced funding to the YOS, which funds a dedicated Education Officer post, which supports the delivery of outcomes in this area.

The HMIP Inspection report, published in January 2023, contained the following recommendations specifically in relation to education:

*“The Youth Offending Service Partnership Board should monitor the reintegration rates of YOS children into mainstream education to make sure that children return to full-time mainstream education in every case where this is appropriate”.*

There are a number of actions contained within the HMIP action plan relating to this recommendation, progress against which is outlined in the Service Development section of this document. Overall oversight of this recommendation and linked actions are held by the Service Director for Education.



The YOS works in partnership with colleagues in Education to achieve the stated vision for education and to address recommendations made in the Joint Inspection of Education, Training and Employment Services in Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales (July 2022), as well as the YOS local area Inspection. To achieve this work, the following responsibilities are undertaken:

**Team Manager:**

- Holds the lead area for Education and both chairs and represents the YOS on a number of key partnership meetings in relation to Education and Special Education needs and Disabilities.

**Education Officer:**

- Represents the YOS at a number of key operational meetings regarding Education
- Ensures a focus on addressing children and young people who are not currently engaged with a suitable education provision.
- Is a qualified teacher and delivers some direct teaching to children.

The YOS receives support from 2 part-time Speech and Language therapists, who deliver screenings and intervention for children identified with potential speech language and communication needs. They also deliver important training for staff and deliver consultations where needed.

The 2 Police and Crime Commissioner funded prevention projects that the YOS run in schools are both central to the education strategy. Both have consistently demonstrated positive outcomes for children, further details of which are contained within the Prevention section of this document. Of the 16 secondary schools who received support as part of the multi-Agency Schools project, 7 are located within the 10 wards identified as priority based on deprivation, as part of the local authority's Opportunity Bucks project.

As part of the multi-Agency schools project, the YOS also delivers a programme of positive activities for children during school holidays, funded by the Holidays Activities and Food Programme. This has been extremely successful and well received by children and parents. It has assisted the YOS in being able to engage young people and provided opportunities for consulting with young people on key decisions around service delivery.

In addition to this work, the YOS also offers some additional resource to support children who attend pupil referral units, where there are concerns around low attendance. This is in recognition of increasing numbers of children affected by the pandemic and the vulnerability associated with low school attendance.

**Snapshot of data**

As of May 2023, the overall number of children and young people open to Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service and not receiving their education entitlement was 13, accounting for 15% of the caseload. This is broken down into the following categories:

- Electively Home Educated – 3 (23%)
- Not in Education, Training or Employment – 7 (54%)
- Education Health and Care Plan No Placement – 2 (15%)
- Admissions Pending – 1 (8)

The ethnic groups of this cohort reflect the disproportionality seen in wider caseload data, with only 62% from a White ethnic background.

Of these children and young people, 6 (46%) have an Education Health and Care Plan or have an identified Special Educational Need and 9 (69%) are known to Children’s Social Care. This represents a disproportionate number of children and young people with identified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and who are known to Children’s Social Care that are not receiving their education entitlement. The local authority is aware of this and the presence of a YOS Team Manager and Education Officer in the above forums represents steps being taken to ensure that vulnerable children receive their education entitlement.

The HMIP improvement plan, includes actions specially in relation to improving work to support the reintegration of children from alternative education provision. As such, the delivery of this work is overseen by the Partnership Board. Operationally, the Education Officer meets with all practitioners to ensure there is a focus on supporting these children to reintegrate to mainstream education where appropriate.

#### 14. Restorative Approaches and Victims

Data is collected across Thames Valley for a local performance indicator relating to victim engagement. This is collated by the Buckinghamshire YOS Performance Review and Information Manager and discussed at the Thames Valley YOT Manager’s Meeting. The table below provides the data for 2022/23. This shows that both the percentage of victims giving consent to be contacted and the percentage accepting an offer of support from the YOS is lower than average in Buckinghamshire.

	<b>Numbers - Bucks</b>	<b>% Bucks</b>	<b>% Thames Valley</b>
Total Number of victims identified in period	230		
a) Number of victims identified in period – Pre-court	206		
b) Number of victims identified in period - Court	24		
Number of victims where consent to contact is given on the YOT1	100	43.5%	56.8%
Victims who accept the service from the YOT (where consent has been given)	34	34%	62.6%
Victims engaged in indirect Restorative Justice / reparation	17	50%	53.4%
Victims engaged in direct Restorative Justice / reparation	2	5.9%	9.6%

Ongoing developments in this area of practice include:

- Delivery of refresher training on Restorative Justice to all front-line staff
- The introduction of regular restorative justice surgeries, where front-line practitioners meet with the RJ Worker to discuss the young people on their caseload and identify opportunities for restorative intervention. This includes the use of Restorative Family Meetings

- The recruitment of a Community Engagement Practitioner who will lead on the development of additional restorative opportunities in the community, specifically targeting those wards identified as priority as part of the Opportunity Bucks project.

All victims who are engaged are asked if they would like to provide feedback on the service they have received. Between January and December 2022, 7 victims responded, with all of them either satisfied or very satisfied with their involvement with the YOS.

The YOS continues to deliver Restorative Justice training to other professionals, helping embed the use of a restorative approach across a range of agencies. During 2022/23, 85 professionals received training, including social workers, foster carers, residential workers, and Police Community Support Officers. Case studies gathered from participants following the training provide tangible evidence of the effectiveness of this in de-escalating conflict.

## 15. Serious Violence and Exploitation

The YOS is represented on the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) Board by the Head of Youth Offending Service for Oxfordshire, who represents Thames Valley YOTs at this forum.

Locally, the YOS is part of the Serious Violence Task Force, which is a forum chaired by the Service Director for Children's Social Care and attended by partners and stakeholders involved in the delivery of the Serious Violence Duty. This forum acts as a steering group for the Serious Violence plan and Serious Violence duty actions. Participation with this group ensures that the YOS is fully engaged in ensuring that it meets its obligations as part of the serious violence duty.

As a key partner in the Thames Valley VRU, the YOS is a signatory to the Thames Valley Together (TVT) project, a cloud-based environment where strategic partners can share data and drive analytics in relation to serious violence.

The YOS continues to work closely with colleagues in the Missing and Exploitation Hub. Developments have included:

- Spot purchase of lived experience mentoring for children vulnerable to exploitation and at risk of offending or reoffending
- 2 YOS Officers have exploitation as a lead area and act as the link between services / provide consultation to staff
- Collaboration between the YOS and Exploitation Hub on the delivery of contextual safeguarding and trauma informed practice training.

In response to 2 serious violence incidents involving young people, the YOS set up a new pilot weapons awareness groupwork programme for young people attending Alternative Education Provision in Buckinghamshire. This was delivered across 4 sessions in April and May 2023 and covered the following areas: myth busting, including a session with a young person open to the YOS for a weapon related offence; drugs and weapons, involving local substance misuse providers; 'street' first aid, delivered by YOS nurses; police, eventualities and consequences. Both pilots are in the process of being evaluated. Further groupwork is planned for more schools, benefitting children who live in the wards identified as priority based on deprivation, as part of the Opportunity Bucks project.

## 16. Detention in Police Custody

Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service receives Person In Custody information daily from Thames Valley Police, allowing for oversight of children and young people from Buckinghamshire being present in Thames Valley Custody Suites. These are monitored by the duty manager and where appropriate contact is made with partner agencies to address concerns to ensure children and young people and victims are safeguarded. The YOS continues to maintain strong working relationships with neighbouring Youth Justice Services, to ensure children taken to custody suits outside of the county, receive the support to which they are entitled.

The service has volunteers who act as appropriate adults for children and young people in police custody, however, if one cannot be sourced from this resource a duty officer will attend. Outside of working hours, the Emergency Social Work Team provide this service.

An example of our efforts to ensure effective representation for children and young people can be seen in the case of Child A. Child A was arrested for serious offences, and Courts granted Police permission to detain them for an extended time. Considering the best interests of the child, the YOS were concerned that multiple interviews over several days could result in them receiving a service from a number of appropriate adults. Therefore, the agreement was made for the YOS Senior Practitioner to be present for the period of their detention and fulfil the role of appropriate adult throughout. This approach allowed the young person's needs to be fully understood and represented throughout the detention period and for them to receive a consistent level of service.

## 17. Remands

The use of custodial remand for young people in Buckinghamshire remains low. With only 1 young person remanded to youth detention accommodation in 2022/23, numbers are too small to draw conclusions on themes experienced by those within that cohort. The YOS continue to work closely with partner agencies to ensure the needs of those in custody are met on an individual level. Data is monitored at both operational and board level, and any increase in numbers will lead to analysis to understand the drivers behind this.

The number of remands to local authority accommodation has fluctuated over the last 3 years, as the table below illustrates. It is possible that the increase in numbers in 2022/23 may have been affected by recent changes within the external placement market, which have impacted all local authorities nationally. Demand for placements has continued to rise, driven by a combination of factors that include more young people with complex needs, placements for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), and more child protection work involving young children. Simultaneously, the supply of placements has reduced, particularly in residential establishments where difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff (related to cost-of-living pressures) and strict Ofsted 'matching' expectations have had a marked impact.

Where potential remands to local authority accommodation are identified, the YOS works closely with Social Care colleagues taking a multi-agency approach to agreeing the best outcome for the young person.

	No. of Young People Remanded to Local Authority Accommodation
2020/21	3
2021/22	0
2022/23	3

## 18. Use of Custody

As the National Indicator data in section 9 of the plan shows, custody levels remain low in Buckinghamshire. With 2 young people receiving a custodial sentence in 2022, numbers are too small to draw conclusions on themes experienced by those within this cohort. The YOS continue to work closely with partner agencies to ensure the needs of those in custody are met on an individual level. Data is monitored at both operational and board level, and any increase in numbers will lead to analysis to understand the drivers behind this.

## 19. Constructive Resettlement

Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service has a clear Resettlement Policy, which is also used by case managers during other transition phases, for example for a placement move for children looked after.

During their Inspection in 2022, HMIP rated the Resettlement Policy and Provision as Outstanding and found the following strengths:

*“The YOS resettlement policy (March 2022) promotes a high-quality, constructive, and personalised resettlement service for all children. The policy sets out a strengths-based approach that considers identity shift, safety and wellbeing, and promotes a personalised resettlement service for all children.”*

*“The policy sets out caretaking requirements for any child who is released to live in another borough. It refers to considering diversity and provides direction and guidance to staff on effective resettlement practice in line with relevant research recommendations.”*

*“The quality of work in the resettlement case we inspected was excellent. The child was fully engaged, kept up to date on plans and multi-agency work was noted as a strength. Effective work was undertaken to manage risk of harm and support the child’s safety and wellbeing, with a consistent focus on diversity.”*

## 20. Standards for Children in the Justice System

Whilst the Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System 2019 removed many of the prescriptive timescales of previous guidance, locally the YOS have developed standards that are reported to the Partnership Board via the Performance Report on a quarterly basis. These include:

- **Assessment Timescales** – all assessments should be quality assured and countersigned within 35 days of report request / sentence / review being opened. Between October 2022 and March 2023, 95% of assessments took place within this timescale.
- **Frequency of Assessment** – all statutory interventions should be reviewed at a minimum of every 6 months. This measure is taken as a snapshot at the start of each month. At the time of writing, 92% of open cases had been reviewed within these timescales.
- **Home Visits** – home visits should take place within either 14 days before or after a start or review assessment being opened. Between October 2022 and March 2023, 85% of home visits took place within this timescale.
- **Referral Order Panels** – panels should take place within 20 working days of sentence. Between October 2022 and March 2023, 9% of panels took place within this timescale. A new process has been introduced to ensure any panel that may go out of timescales is authorised by a senior manager to ensure appropriate oversight of this measure and an improvement in performance.

In conjunction with the bi-annual Quality Report, this gives strategic assurance of both quantitative and qualitative performance and a key opportunity for challenge if there are concerns with operational practice.

The additional Key Performance Indicators introduced in April 2023, will add another layer of oversight of performance against key standards.

## 21. Workforce Development

The YOS produces a Workforce Development Plan which is reviewed monthly by managers. The following plan has been produced for 2023/24:

What is the training?	Who is the training for?	Who is the provider?	When will this be completed?
Management Oversight Training	Managers	Cordis Bright	By Sept 23
Social Media (risk in assessment)	Front-line practitioners	Internally delivered	Sep-23
Risk of Harm Training	Front-line practitioners	Internally delivered	May 23
Out of Court Disposal Assessment Tool	Front-line practitioners and managers	Internally delivered	May 23
Gender Identity Awareness Training	Identified YOS Officers and a manager	External Provider	TBC

		TBC	
Further service wide training to be identified	All staff	TBC	TBC

The YOS has recently taken steps to proactively increase the diversity of the workforce by following enhanced recruitment processes, which reach a wider and more diverse audience. This has been successful in delivering an increase in numbers applying and a more diverse range of applicants for recent posts.

Following two training events in 2022/23 on Contextual Safeguarding and Psychological Interventions, a management audit was undertaken to review the impact of the training. The outcomes from this audit have informed the development of the local quality assurance tool.

Steps have been taken to increase staff feedback, and there is a YOS Officer identified as well-being and participation champion. A ‘You Said, We Did’ process led to a number of changes to practice. The Partnership Board has identified increasing participation with YOS staff as a priority for the coming year.

**22. Evidence-based Practice, Innovation and Evaluation**

In 2022/23 and previous years, the Youth Justice Plan included evidence-based practice as one of the 3 key strategic priorities. This year the decision has been taken to remove this, reflecting the fact that evidence-based practice is embedded throughout the work that the YOS does. Both prevention projects in schools, funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, deliver strong evidence-based outcomes. These are covered within the Prevention section of this document. Work has commenced with research specialists within the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit on further developing the evidence of the effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Schools Project, with a view to strengthening the case for ongoing funding for the project, beyond April 2025.

The YOS also ensure that projects and interventions are evaluated using qualitative outcomes, recognising that not all impact can be assessed quantitatively. An example of this is an evaluation of spot purchased, lived experience mentoring provision, the outcomes of which has been documented in the ‘Progress on Previous Plan’ section.

**23. Service Development Plan**

Following the HMIP Inspection in September 2022 and the subsequent report, which was published in January 2023, an action plan was agreed by the Partnership Board and approved by HMIP. The plan is monitored by the Partnership Board, with individual recommendations and actions held by members to ensure strategic ownership. There were 7 recommendations made by inspectors. An additional 3 priority actions were identified following areas for improvement contained within the inspection report. Below is a breakdown of work undertaken against each recommendation.

**Recommendation 1: Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service Board should monitor the reintegration rates of YOS children into mainstream education to make sure that children return to full-time mainstream education in every case where this is appropriate**

- A system has been created to monitor and track children in alternative provisions and to use this to drive YOS practice in respect of reintegration.
- Joint audit work is planned with colleagues in Education, on the quality of work undertaken with children not in mainstream education for over 3 months. The findings from this will inform further work in this area.

**Recommendation 2: Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service Board should ensure information within out of court disposal assessments consistently reflects social care input and that the roles and responsibilities for each service area are clearly identified within children's plans.**

- Joint audit activity is planned with colleagues in children's social care, on the quality of out of court assessment and planning. The findings of this will inform further work in this area.
- The quarterly quality report submitted to the Partnership Board, will now include additional data on the quality of out of court work.
- Workshops are being delivered to social care teams, to increase understanding of out of court disposals.

**Recommendation 3: Buckinghamshire YOS should improve the quality of assessment and planning for Out of Court disposal work to focus on the safety and well-being of children and the management or risk of harm to others**

- A new Out of Court Disposal Assessment tool has been created, using the draft Youth Justice Board tool. The impact of this tool on practice will be monitored and evaluated.
- Quality assurance processes have been amended to ensure QA is distributed across the management team.
- An external provider has been commissioned to deliver management oversight training.
- Changes have been made to the reviewing manager system, to streamline and improve the process for providing management oversight.
- Internal training is planned for staff on assessing and planning in relation to risk and safety and well-being.

**Recommendation 4: Buckinghamshire YOS should review Out of Court disposal guidance so that it sets out explicitly how the service intends to meet all diversity, safety and well-being needs and risk of harm to others**

- The guidance document has been reviewed to include risk, safety and well-being, and diversity and inclusion, linking to other relevant policies.
- The review also includes an overview of the new Out of Court Disposal referral routes.

**Recommendation 5: Buckinghamshire YOS should strengthen the Out of Court Disposal Process so that children and families are engaged at the earliest opportunity**



- A new process has been created which provides 2 clear referral 'routes' into out of court disposal support. Qualitative impact will be assessed as part of the Turnaround programme.
- The views of children and families are now sought prior to outcome decisions being made, for all suitable cases
- Agreement has been made with Police colleagues that Youth Caution outcome decisions will be made via the joint decision-making panel, wherever possible.

***Recommendation 6: Buckinghamshire YOS should consistently ensure that there are suitable supervision arrangements for children completing reparation and expand the number of projects available***

- The job description was amended to create a new Community Coordinator post.
- Recruitment is underway for this post, and this has taken place with assistance from colleagues from the Council's Community Safety Team.
- Once recruitment has been completed this will facilitate an increase in reparation placements available.

***Recommendation 7: Buckinghamshire YOS should seek to proactively diversify the pool of volunteers so that it reflects the children and families the service works with***

- Work has been undertaken to gain feedback from staff and colleagues in other youth justice services, on ideas for diversifying the pool of volunteers.
- The new Community Coordinator post will assist in building links between the community and the YOS.
- A plan will be created setting out how the diversity of volunteers will be increased.

**Priority 1: Managers and the board could do more to consistently recognise and reward good work**

- Opportunities for shadowing of key pieces of YOS work have been provided to the Partnership Board and a rota has been created to ensure this takes place.
- Further opportunities are planned to enable board members to meet with children and young people.
- Staff have been consulted on ways in which the board can provide feedback to the team, and this has been shared with the Partnership Board chair.
- Impact will be assessed via feedback from staff.

**Priority 2: Inspectors noted some delays in interventions starting once disposal decisions had been made**

- A number of improvements have been made to the weekly quality assurance monitoring meeting, to strengthen oversight in this area.
- The allocations process has been strengthened, with a more formalised allocations meeting template used in every case.
- Impact will be assessed through quality monitoring processes.

**Priority 3: Victim issues are considered at the risk management panels and resettlement panels, but the policy could define the role of the YOS Restorative Justice/Victim worker more clearly and set out the support available to victims**

- The policy has been reviewed to ensure the role of the Restorative Justice Officer is more clearly defined.

In addition to this action plan, the following key pieces of work are identified in line with the 3 strategic priorities for the year:

<b>Addressing Disproportionality</b>
Continue to provide mentoring support to children and parents, to support transition from year 6 to 7
Agree set of partnership measures for evaluating the effectiveness of disproportionality work
Develop collaborative data sharing across the partnership, through the new KPI framework, to support in influencing systemic change in this area
Seek further opportunities to increase the diversity of the workforce, to ensure it better reflects the children, young people and families that are supported by the YOS
<b>Addressing Exploitation of Young People</b>
Monitor and report on lived experience mentoring
Deliver a knife crime prevention group and monitor the impact of this on the young people involved
Deliver prevention groupwork in schools, which includes a focus on exploitation, and monitor the impact of this on the young people involved
<b>Expanding Prevention Work</b>
Increase the number of young people engaged in diversionary activity through the Turnaround project, with measures in places to evidence impact
Ensure creative programmes used to engage young people, which deliver impact
Ensure the delivery of consistently high-quality assessments for all prevention and diversion work
Develop additional measures to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention work
<b>Additional Priority Pieces of Work</b>
Increase participation of young people in key service development decisions

Key pieces of work identified in response to the HMIP thematic review of Education, Training and Employment are covered in the Education section of this plan.

There has been one Critical Learning Review carried out in 2022/23, which led to the following actions which were adopted by the Partnership Board in April 2023:

- Learning from the review to be shared with key partners, including a neighbouring Youth Offending Service
- Improvements to be made to information sharing protocols between the MASH and the YOS, in respect of children who move into the county
- The YOS to provide updated risk of serious harm training to practitioners.

#### 24. Challenges, Risks and Issues

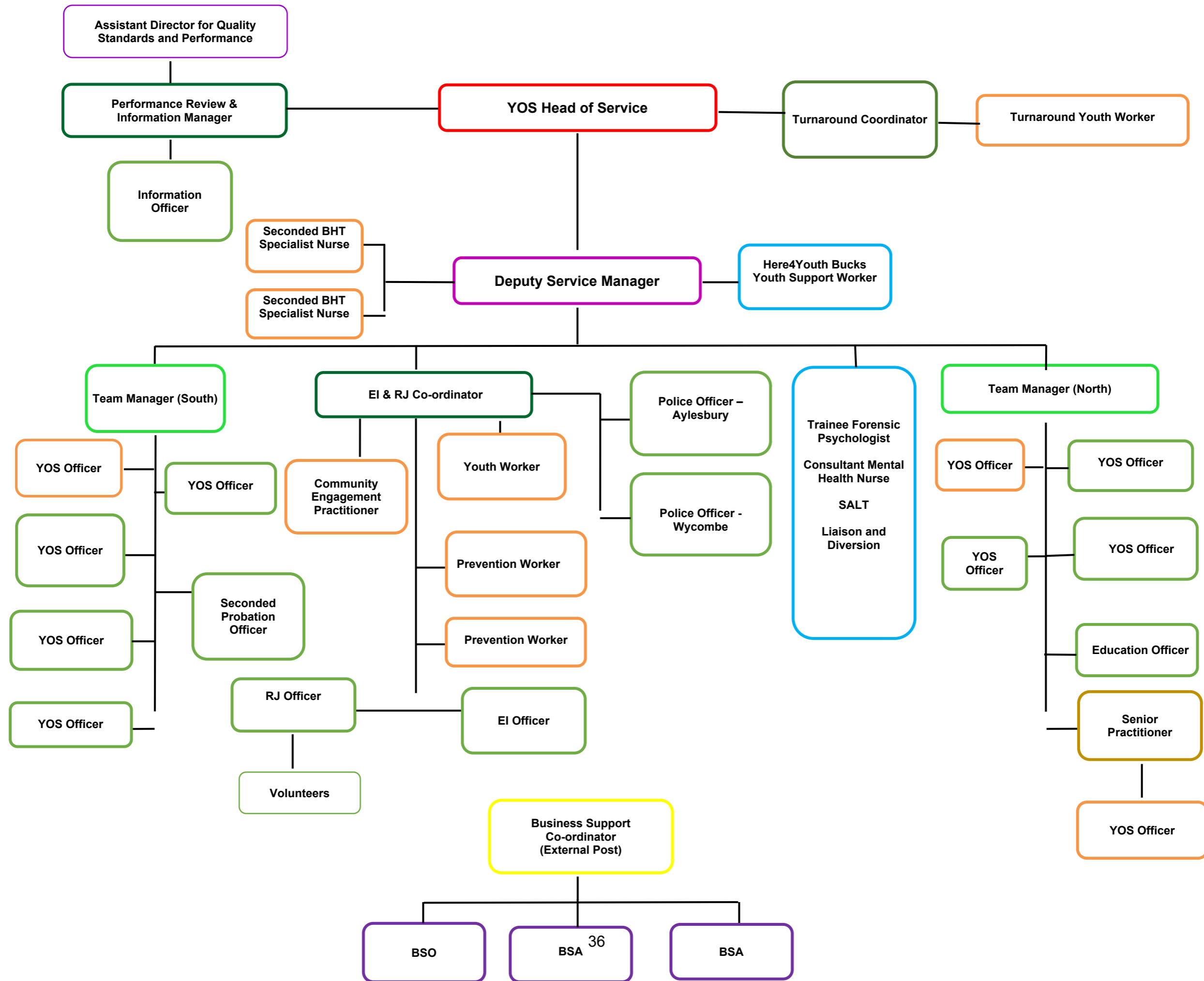
The following are identified as current challenges to delivery:

- The shift towards prevention and diversion presents the challenge of engaging children, sometimes with complex needs, on a voluntary intervention. The Turnaround Project provides a Youth Work resources and intervention projects aimed at increasing levels of engagement.
- The nature of exploitation, crossing over multiple Local Authorities and Police forces, means disruption activities and consistency of practice can be challenging. This can lead to difficulties in embedding a trauma informed model of delivery. The YOS seek to address this by working closely with colleagues in Children’s Social Care and within the specialist Exploitation Hub, who have good links to regional and national networks such as the South-East Regional Organised Crime Unit.
- The systemic over-representation of Black and Mixed heritage children across the criminal justice sector is an ongoing challenge. This is recognised by the Partnership Board as a significant systemic issue and addressing this continues to be a key strategic priority.
- The current national situation with placements for children in care means that the most vulnerable may not have the most suitable environment to support desistance. The YOS work closely in partnership with colleagues across the council to support our most vulnerable to access a stable living environment.

#### 25. Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of YJS Board - name	John Macilwraith
Signature	
Date	30 June 2023

Appendix 1 – Staffing Structure



Appendix 2 – Budget Costs and Contributions 2023/24

The following partnership resources contribute towards the aims and expected outcomes in the plan:

Partner Contributions 2023-2024	Staffing Costs (£)	Posts In Kind	Other Delegated Funds (£)	Total (£)
Buckinghamshire Council	686,051		40,000	726,051
Thames Valley Police		90,657		90,657
Integrated Care Board		76,285		76,285
National Probation Service		29,431	8,580	38,011
Police Crime Commissioner	134,663		65,000	199,663
Youth Justice Board Grant	475,306			475,306
Ministry of Justice (Turnaround)	114,685			114,685
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,410,705</b>	<b>196,373</b>	<b>113,580</b>	<b>1,720,658</b>

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## Report to Full Council

**Date:** 20 September 2023

**Title:** Buckinghamshire Council Pay Policy Statement – 1 July 2023

**Relevant councillor:** Councillor Martin Tett, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Senior Appointments and Pay Committee

**Author and/or contact officer:** Sarah Keyes / Julie Pead

**Recommendation:** To consider and approve the Buckinghamshire Council Pay Policy Statement (1 July 2023).

**Reason for decision:** The council is required to publish a Pay Policy Statement in accordance with Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011.

### 1. Purpose

1.1 This Pay Policy Statement is provided in accordance with Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 and will be updated annually.

1.2 This pay policy statement sets out Buckinghamshire Council's policies relating to the pay of its corporate service workforce (excludes Schools employees) for the year 2023-24; in particular:

- a) The remuneration of its Chief Officers;
- b) The remuneration of its "lowest paid employees";
- c) and the relationship between:
  - (i) The remuneration of its chief officers; and
  - (ii) The remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers.

## 2. Legislative Compliance

- 2.1 In determining the council’s pay and remuneration policy, the council will comply with all relevant legislation. This includes, The Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1984 as amended, Part Time Employment (Prevention of less favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, The Agency Workers Regulations 2010, The Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 The council will ensure that there is no pay discrimination and that all pay differentials can be objectively justified.

## 3. Scope of Pay Policy Statement

- 3.1 The Pay Policy statement covers all employees

## 4 Definitions

For the purpose of this pay policy statement the following definitions will apply:

- 4.1 “Chief Officer” refers to the following roles within Buckinghamshire Council:

<b>Table 1 – Chief Officers</b>	
<b>Definition under the Localism Act 2011</b>	<b>Post Held at Buckinghamshire Council</b>
The Head of Paid Service	Chief Executive Officer
The Monitoring Officer	Deputy Chief Executive
Section 151 Officer	Service Director Finance (s.151)
Statutory Chief Officers	Corporate Director Children’s Service Corporate Director Adults & Health Director of Public Health
Non-Statutory Officers	Corporate Director Planning Growth and Sustainability Corporate Director Communities Corporate Director Resources

- 4.2 The definition of “Lowest paid employees” refers to those staff employed within grade 1 of the Council’s main pay framework, and TUPE’d employees on the lowest pay point of their pay scales.



## **5. Remuneration levels**

- 5.1 The full Council has delegated responsibility to the Senior Appointments and Pay Committee (SAPC) for the approval of remuneration packages for any newly created permanent posts in excess of £100,000 (to include salary, bonus, fees allowances and benefits in kind) offered in respect of a new appointment; and for termination payments, outside of the normal statutory and contractual entitlements, in excess of £100,000 (see 8.1 Severance Payments). SAPC comprises elected Councillors from the main political parties and has responsibility for local terms and conditions of employment for staff.
- 5.2 The general approach is that remuneration at all levels needs to be adequate to secure and retain high-quality employees dedicated to fulfilling the council's business objectives and delivering services to the public. This must be balanced by ensuring remuneration is not, nor is seen to be, unnecessarily excessive. In setting remuneration levels, the council must balance these factors taking account of own unique challenges and opportunities in doing so whilst retaining flexibility to cope with circumstances that may arise which may necessitate the use of market supplements or other such mechanisms for individual categories of posts.
- 5.3 It is essential for good governance that decisions on pay and reward packages for Chief Executives and Chief Officers are made in an open and accountable way. Pay for the "lowest paid employees" and "all other employees' including Chief Officers" is determined by SAPC.
- 5.4 The lowest paid full-time equivalent employee at Buckinghamshire Council in the period 2023/24 will be paid at £20,104 per annum full time equivalent (FTE). The definition of lowest paid employee is a fully competent employee undertaking a defined role and excludes apprentices who are undertaking approved training. The highest paid employee is the Chief Executive who will be paid in the period a salary of £240,000.
- 5.5 The pay multiple between the highest paid employee, the Chief Executive at £240,000 and the median salary of the rest of the workforce at £36,002 is 6.67:1.
- 5.6 The pay multiple between the highest paid employee, the Chief Executive at £240,000 and the lowest paid full-time equivalent employee at £20,104 is 12:1.

## **6. Remuneration Levels**

- 6.1 The council's corporate service pay is determined locally. Grades are determined by recognising what people do – their jobs and responsibilities – and paying them

accordingly using HAY job evaluation. Job evaluation is a consistent process used for determining the relative worth of jobs. Whilst the process is not a science, it is based on the systematic analysis of the different factors found within all jobs.

- 6.2 The Senior Leadership Team comprising of, Chief Officers, Corporate Directors and Service Directors are paid on a Leadership Pay Broad Band and are appointed on a personal contract with a spot salary, with the opportunity for a discretionary additional annual non-consolidated performance payment to those who have 'exceeded' expectations for their role. Each role has pay set individually based on the following components:
- a) The size of the job as determined by Job Evaluation.
  - b) The benchmark data for the market and sector rate for the post.
  - c) The assessed quality of the applicant including skills and experience balanced against candidate expectations.
  - d) Scarcity of the required skills.

Senior Leadership pay for statutory and non-statutory posts will be reviewed annually by SAPC and there is no guarantee of a pay uplift or performance payment.

### 6.3 Professional Technical and Managerial Grades

Professional, technical, and managerial roles are paid on one of two Professional Managerial & Technical pay grades. They are appointed on a personal contract with a spot salary, with the opportunity for a discretionary additional annual non-consolidated performance payment to those who have 'exceeded' expectations for their role. Pay for each role is set individually as outlined in paragraph 6.2.

- 6.4 Pay awards for all corporate service staff will be considered annually after consultation with Trades Unions and employees. Any pay award is determined by SAPC who consider inflation and any significant considerations from elsewhere in the public sector; SAPC will undertake a pay review each year.
- 6.5 The Council's main pay scale comprises Grade 1 to Grade 10 (table 2). Grades 11 to 14 still exist. Each pay grade has three pay points with progression through a grade subject to individual employees receiving a minimum 'achieves' performance rating. Employees may also receive annual additional payments based on exceeding or outstanding performance awarded as a percentage of the individual's salary as a Non-Consolidated Payment.

**Table 2: Buckinghamshire Council Main Pay Grades July 2023- June 2024**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Pay Point 1</b>	<b>Pay point 2</b>	<b>Pay point 3</b>
<b>1</b>	£23,365	£23,905	£24,445
<b>2</b>	£25,078	£25,663	£26,247
<b>3</b>	£27,354	£27,996	£28,639
<b>4</b>	£30,416	£31,137	£31,858
<b>5</b>	£32,598	£33,139	£33,911
<b>6</b>	£36,002	£36,866	£37,732
<b>7</b>	£40,778	£41,764	£42,752
<b>8</b>	£45,851	£46,967	£48,085
<b>9</b>	£53,412	£54,782	£56,153
<b>10</b>	£60,583	£62,136	£63,690
<b>11*</b>	£67,531	£69,263	£70,995
<b>12*</b>	£74,815	£76,733	£78,653
<b>13*</b>	£84,569	£86,736	£88,904
<b>14*</b>	£94,061	£96,472	£98,883

\* These grades only apply to employees who were on these grades prior to the introduction of Personal contracts for senior Professional, Managerial and Technical staff.

## **7. Charges, fees or allowances**

7.1 There are no specific fees or allowances made to Chief Officers or others in the Leadership team. The Council offers, annual leave purchase, and car lease and bicycle purchase through salary sacrifice schemes to all employees. The Council has negotiated various discounts with local suppliers, including gym memberships and local restaurants, which are available to all employees through the Council's intranet and the School's website. The Council reimburses mileage and travel expenses.

7.2 Market Premiums, Recruitment and/or Retention allowances may be paid to certain 'Hard to Fill' posts, e.g., Children's Social Workers, in accordance with the Council schemes.

7.3 Returning Officer

Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires that a Council should appoint an officer of the Council to be the Returning Officer. The role of the Returning Officer is to ensure that all elections are administered effectively and conducted in accordance with the law. The role is separate from duties as an employee of the Council, and the Returning Officer is not responsible to the Council. The role is directly accountable to the courts as an independent statutory office holder. It is a personal responsibility of the individual designated as the Returning Officer.

Due to the personal responsibility of the role, and with the role being separate from the Council, Returning Officers receive fees to reflect this responsibility. The way in which this fee is calculated is based on the total number of the electorate for the specific election and the number of polling stations that are within the area for the election.

As The Returning Office Fee element is paid as a result of the personal responsibility in delivering the election, it is purely up to the individual themselves as to how they use the fee paid whether to retain the whole fee for themselves or share a percentage or allocation with other officers.

## **8. Severance Payments**

8.1 The Council adheres to the Governments Statutory guidance on the making and disclosure of Special Severance Payments by local authorities in England.

8.2 The statutory guidance defines Special Severance Payment examples, see below.

- a) Payments reached under a settlement agreement between the employer and employee to discontinue legal proceedings without admission of fault.
- b) The value of any employee benefits or allowances which are allowed to continue beyond the employee's agreed exit date.
- c) Write-offs of any outstanding loans.
- d) Honorarium payments.
- e) Hardship payments.
- f) Payments to employees for retraining related to their termination of employment.

8.3 The Council approves Special Severance payments by the following process:

- a) Payments of £100,000 and above have been delegated for approval to SAPC, as set out in the Localism Act 2011.
- b) Payments of £20,000 and above, but below £100,000, must be personally approved and signed off by the Chief Executive, s.151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, with a clear record of the Leader's approval.
- c) Payments below £20,000 must be approved by the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, and s.151 Officer.

8.4 As a Local Government employer, the Council must comply with its duties under The Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government, etc.) (Modification) Order 1999.

8.5 In the event that an employee ceases to hold office and is eligible for a redundancy payment, such payment is determined in accordance with the Council's redundancy policy and procedure that applies to all employees, or any protection rights accrued from a predecessor Council in Buckinghamshire where these have TUPE transferred to the Council.

8.6 Where the payment exceeds £100,000 this must be referred to the Senior Appointments and Pay Award Committee for consideration.

8.7 If an employee who is under notice of redundancy receives an offer of a job from another local authority or associated employer and accepts and starts working for the new employer within 4 weeks of the end of the individual's employment with the Council, there is no dismissal for redundancy payment purposes and therefore the employee is not entitled to a redundancy payment. In cases where the current contract ends on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, the redundancy payment will not apply where employment commences on or before the fifth Monday following the end of the current contract.

8.8 If the Council employs a Chief Officer already in receipt of a Local Government Pension Scheme pension, the Council will apply the normal pension abatement rules that apply to all employees.

## **9. Transparency**

9.1 In accordance with Chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council will prepare a Pay Policy Statement each year in accordance with the Localism Act and related guidance under section 40 provided by the Secretary of State. The annual Pay Policy Statement may be amended from time to time. The Pay Policy Statement and amendments will be approved by Full Council of Buckinghamshire Council.

9.2 The Council's annual Pay Policy Statement and any amendments will be published on its website along with details of remuneration of the Council's Chief Officers.

9.3 Publication of the Pay Policy Statement, any amendments and details of remuneration will be in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

9.4 The Council in compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 publishes information about:

- The number of employees whose remuneration in that year was at least £50,000 in brackets of £5,000
- Details of remuneration and job title of certain senior employees whose salary is at least £50,000, and
- Employees whose salaries are £150,000 or more must also be identified by name

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## Report to Full Council

**Date:** 20 September 2023

**Title:** Committee Proportionality Review

**Author and/or contact officer:** Sarah Ashmead, Monitoring Officer

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Recommendations: That: -**

1. **The Council approves the allocation of seats on council committees to political groups at Appendix 1**
2. **As a result of a tie with the most marginal seat on the BOB (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West) Joint Health Scrutiny and Overview Committee, the Council decides which Political Group to allocate the final seat to (Conservative Group or IMPACT Alliance)**

### Background

- 1.1 A request has been received from the Conservative Group Leader to conduct a proportionality review. Since the last proportionality review in May 2023, Cllr Jaspal Chhokar has been elected via by-election and subsequently joined the Conservative Group. Additionally, Cllr Nabeela Rana has left the Alliance Grouping and joined the Conservative Group. These political group changes have resulted in a change in proportionality as detailed below.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval to the proportionality arrangements for committees of Buckinghamshire Council established in the constitution as follows:
  - Strategic Sites Committee and the Area Planning Committees
  - Licensing Committee
  - the Pensions Committee
  - the Senior Appointments and Pay Committee
  - the Standards and General Purposes Committee
  - the Audit and Governance Committee

- the Select Committees

## Political Proportionality

- 1.3 The distribution of seats on Committees is governed by Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, which require the allocation to accord with the rules on proportionality. The Regulations state that seats on Committees must be allocated to each political group in the same proportion to the number of seats held by each of those groups on the Council (rules of aggregation as well as being in the correct proportions on each Committee individually, in so far as this may be practicable).
- 1.4 The political balance of the Council is currently 113 Conservatives, 16 Liberal Democrats, 6 Independents, 6 Labour, 3 Wycombe Independents, 2 Independent Network and 1 Green Party. There are 3 political groups comprising 113 (The Conservative Group), 19 (The Alliance Grouping) and 15 (IMPACT Alliance) Members. There are no ungrouped Members. Following the agreement of all political groups the final allocations proposed are listed in Appendix 1.
- 1.5 The allocation of total seats in line with political proportionality is as set out in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 – Total Seats**

Political Group	Seats on Council	% of whole	Seats actual	Seats rounded
Conservative	113	76.9%	165.27	165
Alliance Grouping	19	12.9%	27.79	28
IMPACT Alliance	15	10.2%	21.94	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>215</b>

- 1.6 The initial allocation of seats to committees in line with political proportionality (before adjustments) is as set out in Table 2 and 3 below.



**Table 2 – Initial calculations before adjustments**

Committees	No	Conservative		Alliance Grouping		IMPACT Alliance	
		Strict	Rounded	Strict	Rounded	Strict	Rounded
Pension Fund	<b>7</b>	5.381	5	0.905	1	0.714	1
Senior Appointments	<b>7</b>	5.381	5	0.905	1	0.714	1
Strategic Sites	<b>12</b>	9.224	9	1.551	2	1.224	1
Audit & Governance	<b>12</b>	9.224	9	1.551	2	1.224	1
Standards	<b>14</b>	10.762	11	1.810	2	1.429	1
Licensing	<b>15</b>	11.531	<b>12</b>	1.939	<b>2</b>	1.531	<b>2</b>
Area Planning North	<b>12</b>	9.224	9	1.551	2	1.224	1
Area Planning East	<b>12</b>	9.224	9	1.551	2	1.224	1
Area Planning West	<b>12</b>	9.224	9	1.551	2	1.224	1
Area Planning Central	<b>12</b>	9.224	9	1.551	2	1.224	1
Area Planning South	<b>10</b>	7.687	8	1.293	1	1.020	1
Select Committee – Health & Adult Social Care	<b>15</b>	11.531	<b>12</b>	1.939	<b>2</b>	1.531	<b>2</b>
Select Committee - Children & Education	<b>15</b>	11.531	<b>12</b>	1.939	<b>2</b>	1.531	<b>2</b>
Select Committee - Transport, Environment & Climate Change	<b>15</b>	11.531	<b>12</b>	1.939	<b>2</b>	1.531	<b>2</b>
Select Committee – Communities & Localism	<b>15</b>	11.531	<b>12</b>	1.939	<b>2</b>	1.531	<b>2</b>
Select Committee - Growth, Infrastructure & Housing	<b>15</b>	11.531	<b>12</b>	1.939	<b>2</b>	1.531	<b>2</b>
Select Committee – Finance & Resources	<b>15</b>	11.531	<b>12</b>	1.939	<b>2</b>	1.531	<b>2</b>
Aggregate	<b>215</b>	165.272	167	27.789	31	21.939	24
Adjustment required			-2		-3		-2

Note – Committees with 15 seats are over-allocated by one seat, due to rounding (those marked in bold)

**Table 3- Initial allocations of seats on other committees and outside bodies**

Committee	Size	Conservative	Alliance Grouping	IMPACT Alliance	Remainder
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority	12	9 (9.22)	2 (1.55)	1 (1.22)	0
BOB (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West) Joint Health Scrutiny and Overview Committee	6	<b>4 or 5</b> (4.61)	1 (0.78)	<b>0 or 1</b> (0.61)	-1*
Chilterns Conservation Board	5	4 (3.84)	1 (0.65)	<b>0</b> (1) (0.51)	-1*

\* In the case of a remainder of -1, the most marginal seat is lost. Adjusted figures are shown in bold above. In the case of the BOB JHOSC, there is a tie for the most marginal seat and as such, it falls to Council to decide which political group the final seat is allocated to.

**Table 4 – Committee size & model allocation of seats by Group**

Size	Conservative	Alliance Grouping	IMPACT Alliance	Remainder
<b>3</b>	2	0	0	1
<b>4</b>	3	1	0	0
<b>5</b>	4	1	1	-1
<b>6</b>	5	1	1	-1
<b>7</b>	5	1	1	0
<b>8</b>	6	1	1	0
<b>9</b>	7	1	1	0
<b>10</b>	8	1	1	0
<b>11</b>	8	1	1	1
<b>12</b>	9	2	1	0
<b>13</b>	10	2	1	0
<b>14</b>	11	2	1	0
<b>15</b>	12	2	2	-1
<b>16</b>	12	2	2	0

## **Legal and financial implications**

1.7 The legal implications are as detailed within the body of the report.

## **Consultation and communication**

1.8 Consultation on the proportionality and appointments has taken place with the Group Leaders.

**Final allocations of Seats** (figures in bold indicate where adjustments have been made)

Committee	Size	Conservative	Alliance Grouping	IMPACT Alliance
Pension Fund	7	5	1	1
Senior Appointments	7	5	1	1
Strategic Sites	12	9	2	1
Audit & Governance	12	9	2	1
Standards	14	11	2	1
Licensing	15	<b>11 (12)</b>	2	2
Area Planning North	12	9	2	1
Area Planning East	12	9	2	1
Area Planning West	12	9	2	1
Area Planning Central	12	9	2	1
Area Planning South	10	8	<b>1*</b>	<b>1*</b>
Select Committee – Health & Adult Social Care	15	<b>12</b>	2	<b>1 (2)</b>
Select Committee - Children & Education	15	<b>11 (12)</b>	2	2
Select Committee - Transport, Environment & Climate Change	15	<b>12</b>	<b>1 (2)</b>	2
Select Committee – Communities & Localism	15	<b>12</b>	<b>1 (2)</b>	2
Select Committee - Growth, Infrastructure & Housing	15	<b>12</b>	<b>1 (2)</b>	2
Select Committee – Finance & Resources	15	<b>12</b>	2	<b>1 (2)</b>
<b>Total</b>	215	<b>165 (167)</b>	<b>28 (31)</b>	<b>22 (24)</b>

\* By mutual agreement between Group Leaders, the Alliance Grouping seat on Area Planning South will be taken up by the IMPACT Alliance

Figures in brackets show the original calculated proportionality seats. Due to rounding, this results in an over-allocation for the Conservative Group of 2 seats, an over-allocation of 3 seats for the Alliance Grouping, and an over-allocation of 2 seats for the IMPACT Alliance Group. Figures in bold indicate where committee seats have been manually adjusted with the agreement of Group Leaders to arrive at the correct committee seat entitlements for Groups overall.

Compared with the last proportionality review in May 2023, the net effect is that the Conservative Group gain a seat on the Communities & Localism Select Committee at the expense of an Alliance Grouping seat.

### Final allocation of seats on other committees and outside bodies

Committee	Size	Conservative	Alliance Grouping	IMPACT Alliance
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority	12	9	2	1
BOB (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West) Joint Health Scrutiny and Overview Committee	6	<b>4 or 5</b> (4.61)	1 (0.78)	<b>0 or 1</b> (0.61)
Chilterns Conservation Board	5	4	1	<b>0</b> (1)

Figures in brackets show the original calculated proportionality seats. The proportionality calculations result in an over-allocation of one seat to the BOB Joint Health Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Chiltern Conservation Board – in each case, the most marginal seat is lost (adjusted figures are shown in bold). In the case of the BOB JHOSC, there is a tie for the most marginal seat and as such, it falls to Council to decide which political group the final seat is allocated to.

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## Cabinet Member report – Leader

Councillor Martin Tett

### Strategic Finance

The Q1 budget monitoring position was taken to Cabinet on 11 July, and this showed an adverse position of £8.3m. This is primarily due to pressures in Health and Wellbeing and Education and Children’s Services from demand and market insufficiency issues, coupled with pressures in Accessible Housing and Resources in Energy budgets, Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Services in Temporary Accommodation budgets and Transport in Parking income budgets.

Detailed Portfolio Action Plans are already in development to address the pressures, with a view to urgently bringing budgets back into line. These will consider the acceleration of savings plans from future years along with a range of other measures. It is important to remember that the same savings cannot be taken twice.

The Medium-Term Financial Planning process for the next four years has begun. This is likely to be a very difficult budget-setting process due to continued uncertainties around the height and length of inflation levels, future government funding and the implications of the cost of living pressures on spending and income levels. Cabinet Members are actively reviewing their current budgets and considering options to address the financial challenges that the current position will pose. Cabinet Members are looking at and challenging underlying pressures, examining new options and looking for extra savings and efficiencies to balance the budget. Discussions with other similar council Leaders indicates that very many councils are experiencing similar pressures.

### Proposed expansion of the Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) and withdrawal of TfL Travel Cards

The implementation of the ULEZ went ahead on 29<sup>th</sup> August despite representations from most of the surrounding councils affected by the implementation. I helped bring together other Home Counties Leaders to write several times to the Mayor of London requesting adaptations and mitigations for our residents who will be impacted. I continue to seek mitigations for the residents of Buckinghamshire who to date I do not feel have been fully considered and have asked for more information on scrappage schemes and any planned public transport offering. Additionally, I have requested the opportunity to discuss exemptions for Taxis operating across the border and exemptions for key workers such as Care and NHS staff and non-chargeable ‘corridors’ to adjacent NHS facilities, such as Mount Vernon Hospital and Hillingdon Hospital.

As requested by the last full Council meeting, I have also written to the Mayor of London concerning the proposal to withdraw Day Travelcards, which delivered alongside the expansion of ULEZ, constitute a double blow to Buckinghamshire's residents who need to travel across the border into London to work or visit relatives.

### **Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) including SEALR**

In late July, the Council received agreement from Central government to the proposals that had been put forward to flex its Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) between projects in Aylesbury. The Council has successfully delivered two schools below budget, as part of the initial funding package (Kingsbrook Primary and Kingsbrook Secondary Schools) and we have now been allowed to use these savings to progress delivery of the South East Aylesbury Link Road which has seen significant inflationary pressures over the last 20 months.

With the revised HIF funding secured, we can progress negotiations with developers in Aylesbury on other projects that had been halted due to inflationary pressures. I look forward to providing you with fuller updates in the coming months on these schemes when these negotiations have concluded.

We are also actively working with developers and central government on progressing the Princes Risborough Southern Road Links. There remain a number of important issues to resolve.

### **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (and Rural England Prosperity Fund)**

In June we launched a call for projects to deliver activities to provide support to local business. The call closed in July and 29 applications were received. The call covers funding for 2023/24 & 2024/25, as part of our Shared Prosperity Fund programme. We invited proposals to deliver to local business support on the following themes:

- business start-up and entrepreneurship.
- business growth and productivity.
- business sustainability and journey to net zero; and
- rural business support.

A panel is now assessing the applications and decisions will be made in coming months with projects likely to start in the autumn.

Delivery is continuing on the Energy Doctor and Building Futures programmes which deliver against our other Shared Prosperity Fund priorities.

### **Bucks Rural Business Grants**

The Bucks Rural Business Grant programme (funded through the Rural England Prosperity Fund as part of the Shared Prosperity Fund) provides capital funding to award grants to rural businesses. In Buckinghamshire this funding is focused on grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. The programme has £1.8m of funding available for capital projects such as machinery or building costs. We launched the scheme in late June and are actively encouraging eligible businesses to apply. Buckinghamshire Business First are supporting us with the grant scheme given their experience in this area and relationships supporting local businesses.



To date we have had 24 expressions of interest of which 17 have been invited to submit a full application. Our first panel is due to meet in September where we hope to have our first group of applications to assess and make recommendations for funding. To help promote the programme we are building and strengthening relationships with organisations such as Buckinghamshire Business First, Visit Bucks and the NFU, with the rural forum also playing a role in promoting the programme. Details of the grant scheme can be found on the [‘About the Bucks Rural Business Grant’ webpage](#), including how to contact the team to discuss eligibility.

### **Rural Broadband Contract**

The £1.6m Bucks Rural Business Broadband project was completed in January 2023 and in total, 723 premises have benefitted from the scheme. They are now able to access broadband speeds which are 10x faster than the average superfast connection. We have undertaken communications targeted to residents who are now able to take-up the services. Openreach estimated that take-up of the improved service has increased by over 10% in the past quarter. The team are also working with Openreach and BDUK to close off which it is anticipated will be completed by December 2023.

### **Project Gigabit**

Buckinghamshire is part of a broader region with Hertfordshire and East Berkshire known as ‘Lot 26’ in the Government’s Project Gigabit roll out. It is expected that there will be between 20,000-25,000 premises in Bucks alone that will benefit from the scheme. Procurement for Lot 26 is still ongoing and has now entered the tender evaluation stage. Local Authorities have the responsibility of evaluating social value, with the remainder of the tender evaluated by BDUK. We understand that the Lot 26 contract will be awarded in early October and the contract will start that month. Construction work is not expected to begin until 2024 and we will await details of the premises in Buckinghamshire that will be in scope.

### **Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Board**

The supporting boards which sit underneath the Growth Board are finalising their priorities and forward plans for the next year. The Regeneration Board has already had a deep dive discussion on Aylesbury, completed a site visit to High Wycombe and booked a visit to Chesham to discuss plans for regeneration opportunities. In September the Growth Board will be discussing the draft Skills Strategy and proposals for the new pooled investment fund among other items.

### **Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (BLEP)**

I joined Cabinet colleagues at the BLEP meeting on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> July. At the meeting there was continued uncertainty about Government’s direction of travel to cease funding LEPs from April 2024; however, an announcement on this was made on 2<sup>nd</sup> August. Government has confirmed that funding to LEPs will cease in 2024 and that it is transferring the economic growth and business representation responsibilities of LEP’s to local authorities. The announcement also clarified that council’s would receive transition funding in 2024/25 to support the taking on of these functions, with future funding to be set out at the next Spending Review. We are working closely with the BLEP to consider how best to deliver these functions and manage the transition from April 2024.

At the Board meeting we received presentations from the Westcott Venture Park on their ambitions for development of the site and preparation of a masterplan. There is much opportunity to develop

Westcott and the Enterprise Zone to drive growth locally and develop the space sector in Bucks. I saw the potential for this through a recent visit organised by the LEP to the Harwell campus in Oxfordshire. Harwell has used its EZ status and anchor institutions to create a desirable location for business to locate.

A presentation was given on the economic research and insight ward profiles which will be used to support the development of the Opportunity Bucks actions plans for each identified ward.

A list of the top 100 businesses in Buckinghamshire was presented to the Board. This will ensure that those involved in business support are engaging with the companies that are making, or could potentially make, the greatest contribution to Buckinghamshire's economy.

### **Support to Buckinghamshire Businesses and Aylesbury Enterprise Zone update**

Focus of activity this year is to accelerate pipeline development opportunities including the Westcott Incubation and Accelerator Programme. A bid for £5.86 million to the Space Clusters and Infrastructure Fund on behalf of the Westcott Space Cluster for the development of new facilities has been submitted. This project will help to secure key investment in facilities at Westcott which will support their wider development plans. Successful applicants are expected to be notified in late September, if not sooner.

### **Bucks Business First – Buckinghamshire Business Leaders Dinner**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> July I was invited to be the guest speaker at the BBF Buckinghamshire Business Leaders Dinner event held at the De Vere De Vere Latimer Estate. During my presentation, I spoke about how the Council is investing in initiatives and strategic ambitions aimed at helping Bucks businesses, including creating a net zero Bucks economy. I also spoke of our focus on recruitment and retention and addressing local skills shortages, and our aims around growth and productivity.

### **Homes for Ukraine**

There are currently close to 1700 Ukrainians living in Buckinghamshire. The Homes for Ukraine team in the Council continue to provide practical support to enable guests to find employment, and 42% have now secured jobs. This support is provided through a variety of activities including promoting English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) lessons, converting Ukrainian qualifications to an equivalent UK qualification and working closely with DWP.

A quarter of our guests have now moved into private rented accommodation, and we are continuing to encourage residents to sign up as rematching sponsors, whilst working to support existing sponsors and Ukrainian guests.

### **Afghan Resettlement**

With the national closure of the bridging hotels and Afghan families being given notice to move out of these hotels, our primary focus recently has been to complete the preparation of nine properties that the Ministry of Defence has made available for eligible Afghan families. To qualify to live in one

of these properties, families must have worked directly with the British Military in Afghanistan and have obtained approval from the Ministry of Defence.

Families have now started to move into these properties, and we are supporting them to register for GPs, find school places for their children and find employment as well as enabling them to integrate into their local communities.

### **LGA People and Places Board**

I am pleased to announce that I have been appointed as Chairman of the LGA People and Places Board, which seeks to champion the role of non-metropolitan authorities. This covers a wide range of issues and activities including the role of rural areas in enabling economic growth for the long-term benefit of residents. I travelled to London on 12 September to chair the first meeting in person.

### **England's Economic Heartland**

England's Economic Heartland's focus continues to be on pressing for investment in order to deliver the region's strategic infrastructure projects. The EEH Strategic Transport Leadership Board recently agreed a new report which sets out the key strategic objectives across the different rail lines within the area, including the Chiltern Line. Separately, EEH is working with Buckinghamshire Council to continue to press how timetable changes along the Chiltern line are disadvantaging residents and businesses.

EEH is reviewing National Highways' route strategies which will feed into the development of the Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3) - the capital road infrastructure pipeline in 2025-2030 for the strategic road network. The Oxford-Cambridge road study, developed in partnership between National Highways, Department for Transport and EEH awaits Ministerial agreement and will be presented to EEH Board members as soon as possible.

### **South East Strategic Leaders (SESL)**

Leaders wrote to the Secretary of State for transport setting out ideas and concerns regarding investment in the roads network and highway maintenance.

SESL has written to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Levelling Up regarding devolution and levelling up in the wider South East.



## Cabinet Member report – Planning and Regeneration

Councillor Peter Strachan

### Enforcement update

Further to my previous reports on planning enforcement matters I am pleased to report our continued positive approach taken by our high performing enforcement team. The team have issued 47 planning enforcement notices in 2023 so far, along with 27 other notices, including Breach of Condition Notices and Temporary Stop Notices. This formal action is taken alongside the day-to-day management of cases which has resulted in over 1500 cases being closed this year so far.

Our officers have achieved remedial action in cases ranging from the removal of waste materials and earth bunds, to the removal of an outbuilding in the Chilterns AONB used as a dwelling. When we seek resolutions, we treat perpetrators in a firm, fair and reasonable way but we will not hesitate to use all the tools available to us to ensure harmful breaches are remedied. This includes undertaking Direct Action, and other legal action where it is appropriate to do so.

Direct Action was recently undertaken on a site in Little Chalfont where a derelict caravan was removed along with unauthorised areas of hardstanding and piles of green waste. The team will now seek to recover the costs of undertaking this work from the land owner.

Due to the diligent work and no-nonsense approach from the team, we continue to see harmful breaches of planning control being regularly remedied. We continue to take a firm but fair approach to dealing with breaches of planning control, and this regularly leads to compliance being achieved up and down Buckinghamshire.

### Planning Policy update

The government issued an important housing and planning-related announcement on 24 July 2023. As part of this, the Prime Minister confirmed that the government will meet its manifesto commitment to build 1 million homes over the current Parliament. In a related speech, the Housing and Levelling Up Secretary, Michael Gove, set out new measures intended to unblock the planning system and build more homes in the right places where there is local consent. Rather than concreting over the countryside, the government stated that it will focus on prioritising building in inner-city areas where demand is highest and growth is being constrained.

The following day, the government launched a consultation on some detailed proposals for reforming the local plan-making system in England which, if implemented, will be of relevance to the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. The government's vision is for local plans to be simpler to understand and use,

and be positively shaped by the views of communities about how their area should evolve. The government wishes local plans to clearly show what is planned in a local area so that communities and other users of the plan can engage with them more easily, especially while they are being drawn up.

The government also wants them to be prepared more quickly and updated more frequently to ensure more local authorities have up-to-date plans that reflect local needs. Furthermore, it wants them to make the best use of new digital technology, so that people can get involved without having to go through lengthy documents at council offices and to drive improved productivity and efficiency in the plan-making process.

Through this consultation, the government is seeking views on its proposals to implement the parts of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill which relate to plan-making, to make plans simpler, faster to prepare and more accessible. The Planning Policy team is preparing a Council response to this consultation, which closes on 18 October 2023.

The Planning Policy team is also working on the next public engagement exercise for the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. Subject to agreement, this is planned for early 2024 and will focus on possible high-level growth scenarios for the spatial distribution of new development to meet assessed levels of housing and employment need.

In the meantime, our programme of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) continues to progress. The Aylesbury Vale Residential Design SPD was adopted on 30 June and those for the site-specific Aylesbury Garden Town 1 Masterplan and on Affordable Housing are well advanced. At an earlier stage of preparation, the Planning Policy and Communications teams are gearing up for public consultations on the draft SPDs for the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan strategic housing sites at Shenley Park and RAF Halton in the autumn.

### **Development Management Update:**

The number of new planning and related applications registered has reduced, albeit the overall number of applications determined remains consistent resulting in a slight reduction on the overall number of cases in hand. Planning applications (major, minor and other) are being determined above the KPI targets set for speed of decision. The number of planning appeals being received from the Planning Inspectorate continues to be very high, with 15 new appeals registered in July. In 2022/23 Buckinghamshire had the highest number of appeal decisions (186) nationally and the second highest number of appeals dismissed (112).

### **Luton Airport Expansion - Development Consent Order**

The expansion of Luton Airport falls under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) consenting regime, whereby the Council is a Consultee/Interested Party in this process, as opposed to the decision-maker. The Development Consent Order (DCO) process for NSIPs is administered by The Planning Inspectorate, with the final decision made by the relevant Secretary of State based on a recommendation by a panel of independent Planning Inspectors (known as 'the Examining Authority').

The Council has registered as an Interested Party in the DCO process and has raised initial concerns which include air quality, noise, climate change and transport. These concerns are currently being considered further, with a more detailed case to be made by the Council towards the end of August 2023 to meet the first deadline, as set by the Examining Authority. The Council has written to the Examining Authority as it has concerns about the timing of this first deadline due to the Summer Holidays. While not ideal, the Council has the resources available to enable it to meet the deadline of 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023.

The timetable for the Examination stage of the DCO can be found and is viewable through the following link: [TR020001-001182-R6 Stitch.pdf \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](#) It is currently in draft form and will be confirmed following the Examining Authority's Preliminary Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023. At this present time it is expected that the Examination will close in February 2024, with a decision expected 3 months after that.

The Planning Inspectorate's website will be updated regularly through the Examination stage which can be viewed through the following link: [London Luton Airport Expansion | National Infrastructure Planning \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](#) The DCO application documents, along with representations made by local communities and consultees can also be found using this website.

### **Local Heritage List artwork unveiled**

Following the launch of the Buckinghamshire Local Heritage List project in 2021, many hundreds of buildings, archaeological sites and parks and gardens have been nominated by members of the public. We now have over 3000 nominations, representing those heritage assets important to local people and their communities. Reflecting the interest in the publicly nominated sites, the Local Heritage List team at Buckinghamshire Council have worked collaboratively with Buckinghamshire Culture and Farnham Maltings to commission artwork to celebrate the publicly nominated heritage assets, made possible through grant funding from the Rothschild Foundation.

Two local artists were chosen, Keziah Ferini, who produced a fantastic information panel on the Maids Moreton mound archaeological site, and Henry Rice, who produced a beautiful photographic piece of Thornton Canal Bridge #18.

On July 17<sup>th</sup> the artwork was unveiled at Buckingham library by Cllr Gary Hall, Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, and Katy Snelling of Farnham Maltings, where they will stay on permanent display. The artwork is accessible to all, with no booking required or fees attached, and provides a lasting testament to the wonderful Local Heritage List project. The team will be bringing forward another tranche of sites for adoption onto the Local Heritage List this autumn.

For further details please see the blog here: [Local Heritage List Artwork | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

### **Aylesbury Town Centre Update**

The Economic Development Team ran a second successful Aylesbury Town Centre Business Forum at the start of June. The forums will be held quarterly and will rotate venues. The June forum was held at The King's Head and had a focus on 'promoting Aylesbury' picking up on one of the priority themes identified through earlier business engagement. A refresh of the Aylesbury place promotion video

produced as part of the 'Welcome Back Fund' work with Visit Bucks has been commissioned on the back of this. The next forum will be held in September. The team have also established a business e-newsletter which will be used to update town centre businesses on council projects and the wider support it provides to businesses. Ongoing engagement with businesses and stakeholders is helping to identify quick win interventions that will help improve the vibrancy of the town.

### **Visitor Economy Strategy Update**

An overview of findings from workshops, 1-to-1 interviews, stakeholder engagement and research and analysis of our visitor economy, will be presented to the GIH Select Committee in September. This will outline the key themes and opportunities for the county and provide a framework for both council and partner delivery. The strategy and action plan will be vital for the county as it will help us outline our approach to making Buckinghamshire a destination of choice, support our visitor economy businesses and generate greater economic vibrancy. The strategy work is due to be completed in Autumn this year.

### **Town Centre Markets**

The Council continues to support our town centre markets and traders. The national picture continues to show that market trader numbers (including Bucks) remain lower than pre-COVID levels. The Council has started a piece of work to review the current state of Buckinghamshire council-led markets and to identify measures that can be taken forward to initiate activities to improve the quality of our markets and increase footfall to them. Markets have an important role in bringing activity and liveliness to our public spaces and also provide opportunities to support the growth of our local business communities.

### **Aylesbury Market events**

Over the summer a series of children's entertainers and music acts will be performing on Aylesbury Market as part of the 'Summer Saturdays' programme: from a magic act to circus skills and different genres of music there is a great variety of entertainment programmed. Building on the 'Love Your Local Market' national campaign in May run by the National Association of British Market Authorities, we are preparing for a 'Be a Market Trader' campaign to encourage more market traders to come to Buckinghamshire. Work is also progressing on the 'Aylesbury Christmas Craft and Gift Fair' that will take place on Sunday 3 December. This is a long established and popular event draws footfall into the town which supports town centre retailers and restaurants too.

### **Regeneration Strategies**

The Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework provides an overarching framework for delivering regeneration across our key places. Within the framework key principles are described that will support the delivery of initiatives for our major market towns of Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe. As well as providing a tool kit for other key places enabling projects, activities and

partnerships. The Framework is currently going through the internal processes for input and sign off and is due at Cabinet in the Autumn.

### **Aylesbury**

We have been developing a Regeneration Strategy for Aylesbury which sits beneath the overarching Regeneration Framework for Buckinghamshire. The Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy sets out new town centre ambitions as well as following through with the good work that has already been achieved through its Garden Town programme. Although the town centre faces competition from larger nearby towns such as Milton Keynes and Bicester, it is well placed to provide a more distinct, specific proposition as a modern market town centre with vibrant independent shops. The Aylesbury Strategy supports the town centre in becoming a thriving community with greener streets, more outdoor spaces, improved accessibility and greater biodiversity. It will inform our approach to council owned assets. The strategy is due to go to Cabinet in the Autumn.

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been recently adopted. This is a key SPD which supports delivery of the principles for the Garden Town. We are striving to improve design quality in Aylesbury and build on the design principles contained within the SPD, officers are working with elected members to ensure that planning applications comply with these principles.

### **Chesham**

Regeneration strategies are also being developed for our next two biggest towns: High Wycombe and Chesham. In Chesham, the strategy will enable us to build on the town's rich culture and heritage, position Chesham as a home for creative businesses, and support community events and innovation. Council teams continue to explore opportunities and options for the redevelopment of council owned sites across the town centre. Projects to improve wayfinding and clarifying access points and spaces for pedestrians into the shopping and leisure spaces are being initiated, including options to extend and expand the pedestrianised areas of the high street.

### **High Wycombe**

The Regeneration Board undertook a tour of High Wycombe town centre. The tour (by mini bus and by foot) provided invaluable first hand insight and appreciation of the opportunities in High Wycombe, particularly key council owned sites, as set out in the emerging High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy. The Strategy highlights strategic regeneration opportunities in the 'eastern quarter' – the area from the back and front of the train station down to the Council offices on Queen Victoria Road. The Council is a significant land owner in this quarter and therefore we will be exploring potential future opportunities for this key gateway entry point to the town centre.





## Cabinet Member report – Communities

Councillor Arif Hussain

### Helping Hand

April '23 – July '23.

The Helping Hand team continues to provide much needed support to those residents who are experiencing significant financial difficulties utilising funds from the fourth tranche of the Household Support Fund (April 2023 – March 2024), provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. The team provides both direct support through the application-based Helping Hand scheme and also supports initiatives and schemes delivered by both the Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

During April '23 – July '23.

- Over 14,500 digital food vouchers have been issued to eligible families to provide support during summer holidays.
- Over 14,500 digital food vouchers issued to eligible families to provide support during the May half-term.
- Over 3,300 applications for support have been managed by the team with over 4,400 provisions of support delivered including white goods, essential furniture and emergency food and fuel support.
- Funding has been provided to support over 45 Voluntary and Community Sector initiatives/schemes for residents across Buckinghamshire.

### Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) Referrals

Helping Hand has identified a cohort of resident who are within Opportunity Bucks areas and have made a high number of applications for support from the team. These cases have been referred on to our Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) Team who can offer intensive support to these residents to develop a better understanding of the challenges they are facing and helping to connect them with services who can support.

## Community Boards



The Community Boards Proud of Bucks awards have now been held, they have been excellent events, well attended by local communities and well organised by the boards. Both those nominated and those who received awards do amazing things to improve and help people in their day to day lives. It has also been great to hear how they work closely with the boards in delivering your priorities too.

The individual Community Board priorities for 2023/24 have now been set and issued to stakeholders and partners. There are similar themes across many boards – health & wellbeing, environment, community safety/resilience. This year has also seen a new theme with some commonality around community pride and spirit.

The Chairs will be meeting early in September consider all the priorities and where there may opportunities for joint delivery for better value money and a wider community impact. Boards also seeing success in developing their own projects to deliver their priorities, and engagement work continues to help communities support themselves. A recent Grow to Give project originally developed by a Board, is now being run by a local allotment champion who co-ordinates the goods and collections.



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The summer has been very busy with attendance at lots of local events, show casing the work of the Boards and asking residents about what is important in their communities, as well as linking people and organisations together.

## Town & Parish Councils

Two in-person Clerks Forums were held in July with good attendance at both. There was good discussion around a variety of topics, and an open forum saw clerk-to-clerk discussions and information exchanges on some good practice and opportunities for joint working. These forums will continue on a quarterly basis.

The town & parish survey which was open from May to July is now closed with the results being analysed to help us better understand what is currently working well, and not so well, for town and parish councils. In total we had 51 responses. Over the past month I have made several visits to town and parish councils which has been really helpful in understanding some of the local challenges and opportunities, as well building on the existing relationships that exist.

An BMKALC meeting was also held during July, this was the first face-to-face meeting since April 2022, and it was good to see so many town and parishes represented. The BMKALC meetings will also continue quarterly in person, and BMKALC will work with us to agree a theme for the meeting and also have time for discussion and interaction across the organisations present.

### **VCSE Sector Resilience Fund**

The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector Resilience Fund remains open for applications. More details can be found on The Heart of Bucks website - [Voluntary Sector Resilience Fund - Heart of Bucks Community Foundation](#)



The Resilience Fund has been funded through donations from The Mulberry Trust and Rothchild Foundation and the Buckinghamshire Lottery Community Fund.

The Buckinghamshire Lottery supports local good causes and with proceeds from the lottery supporting local projects and organisations that make a positive impact on the community. There are over 370 good causes registered from animal charities to scout groups. If you are part of a local good cause looking to boost your fundraising in 2023, why not sign up to the Buckinghamshire Lottery. It is completely free to sign up, there is no admin, and no risk, free marketing and support are provided to get you started. For more information, visit: [www.buckinghamshirelottery.co.uk/good-causes](http://www.buckinghamshirelottery.co.uk/good-causes)

### **Community Safety**

Community Safety has led on and organized our first two Community Engagement Days of Action in two of the [Opportunity Bucks](#) wards; Quarrendon and Meadowcroft, and Totteridge and Bowerdean.

The aim of the days was to visit areas and roads in the wards which agencies have had the greatest level of involvement in and undertake a range of activities. It was also a great opportunity for residents to meet local teams and agencies.

Key highlights and outcomes over the two days were:

- 23 blood pressure and health checks completed.
- Visual audits undertaken and local concerns identified by the community.
- Undertook visual audits of hotspot areas for Crime and ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour)
- Anti-social behaviour concerns raised by residents and community members.
- Interest in 4 new Neighbourhood Watch schemes

- Nearly 40 volunteers supporting litter picks.
- 80 bags of waste collected by litter pickers.
- A minimum of 2 vans of bulky waste collected.
- Weeds cleared.
- 50 engagement home safety checks undertaken by the Fire Service
- A lost dog found and taken to a local vet.
- Bike security marking
- Abandoned vehicles identified.
- Dangerous building reported.
- Police & Street Warden patrols; leaflet drops on how to report matters to the Council and Police

A whole range of agencies and teams supported us on both days including;- Street Wardens, Community Safety team, Thames Valley Police, Bucks Fire & Rescue Service, Neighbourhood Watch, Ward partnerships (CED (Community Engagement and Development) Team), Public Health, Waste Service, NHS Healthy Lifestyles, Street Scene, Community/ Council Volunteers (Chiltern Rangers), NHS volunteers, Helping Hands team, Redkite Housing, Fairhive Housing, Energy Doctor, Highways, Transport team - Bike Marking, Parks Services, Pressure station for heart and blood pressure testing, One Can Food Bank, SPACE Buckinghamshire, Mediation Bucks, Mosaic Café and Quarrendon and Meadowcroft Community Centre.



Future engagement days have been arranged for the following areas and dates.

- 20<sup>th</sup> September - Aylesbury North -Elmhurst family centre, Dunsham Lane, Aylesbury, HP20 2DB.
- 21<sup>st</sup> September – Ryemead and Micklefield – St Anne’s and St Peter’s Church, 245 MickleField Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7HU.
- 25<sup>th</sup> October – Aylesbury Town centre – Friars Sq. shopping centre.
- 26<sup>th</sup> October – Abbey ward- Eden shopping centre- Wycombe Town centre.

## Resilience Service

**September is Preparedness Month** which is a national campaign which aims to boost personal and collective resilience and preparedness through daily, themed information based on the National Risk Register (NRR),

It will provide and share resources, links, and activities to:

- connect and facilitate the understanding of risks.
- empower personal preparedness through easy steps.
- inform recovery and resilience.

Daily themes are discussed under hashtag **#30days30waysUK** throughout September across a wide range of partners, to enable people to follow along at their leisure, accessing free resources such as informative video, household emergency plan leaflets and templates.

An annual [household preparedness survey](#) will also be running – please take part.

We will host 15 of the themes on our webpages, <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/planning-for-emergencies/>

The Resilience Service attended the County Show on the 31st of August, speaking to the public on several issues with regards to personal and household resilience. We were also able to engage with local communities to develop local Community Emergency Plans, providing them with handouts and interactive demonstrations on how to access to our web page to look at what activities are available for our communities to get involved with.

### **Summer to Winter Readiness**

Building on the success of winter readiness and response framework a summer version was designed which commenced on the 1st of June and ended on the 15th of September following Government Heat-Health Forecast guidance. The Summer planning assumptions have not played out as expected due to the changing weather patterns over the last month or so, as we did not experience excessive heat. Learning from feedback from the winter framework we invited four external partners. 3 x water utility companies and the Met Office, to be involved in our summer version which has helped provide re-assurance and guidance.

### **Marlow Town Flood Fayre**

The Resilience Service supported and presented at the Marlow Town Flood Fayre which was hosted by Buckinghamshire Council's Strategic Flood Management Team, South West Chilterns Community Board, Project Groundwater and Marlow Town Council, on Tuesday, 19 September, 2pm-8pm and Wednesday, 20 September, 9.30am-12.30pm at Court Garden House.



## Cabinet Member report – Culture and Leisure

Councillor Clive Harriss

### WhizzFizzFest

This year WhizzFizzFest, the Council’s popular family arts festival, reached out to even more children in more parts of the county, with a focus on the ‘Opportunity Bucks’ priority areas. The programme included artists’ workshops in 15 schools and three Family Centres engaging over 800 children; theatre shows in six libraries; and three festival celebration events in partnership with local organisers in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham over consecutive weekends, which included street performances, crafting activities, dance workshops and stage performances from local groups, giving our local cultural organisations a chance to showcase their offer.



### Open Weekend

Buckinghamshire Culture’s flagship event, Open Weekend, took place this year on 27-30 July. Supported by Buckinghamshire Council, the Rothschild Foundation and Visit Buckinghamshire, events and activities were delivered by individual creatives and community groups as well as larger venues. This year’s theme ‘One World’ inspired projects which focused on sustainability/preserving our planet as well as an expression of inclusivity of the wide range of local communities around Buckinghamshire. Activities included craft workshops, exhibitions, free theatre performances, dance performances and classes, textile workshops, opera, concerts, choir



sessions for families and much more. More details of some of the events can be found on the Buckinghamshire Culture website [here](#).

## Summer Reading Challenge Success

Buckinghamshire Libraries successfully delivered the Summer Reading Challenge between 8 July and 16 September. By mid-August, we had 3,879 participants across the county, with many libraries exceeding last year's participant figures, and 1,273 new under 12s library members. With over 100 supporting events, we have been thrilled to welcome so many children and families into our libraries this summer. Images shown are the Summer Reading Challenge Completer display at High Wycombe Library and a fabulous poem written at an 'I love my bike' poetry workshop, a free event for families linked to the Challenge.



## Library Partnerships

Buckinghamshire Libraries have continued to develop partnerships that enhance our service offer and make efficient use of our library buildings. Below are two more recent examples.

On 30 June, the first temporary Banking Hub in the UK opened at Buckingham Library. Facilitated by CashAccessUK, there are community bankers from four different banks available to offer customers advice on a rotation basis throughout the week, allowing customers to withdraw cash and process a variety of transactions from a large number of UK banks. The long-term plan is to have a permanent Banking Hub offer in Buckingham at a separate site, but in order to facilitate access to services quickly, the Buckingham Library team were pleased to be able to offer their assistance as a temporary site. This is a great example of partnership working between Buckinghamshire Council, Buckingham Town Council, CashAccessUK and the Post Office Team.

On 24 July, local radio station Marlow FM started to broadcast from their new temporary studio on the upper floor of Marlow Library, with presenters broadcasting live from 7am each morning. Long term Marlow FM are due to be moving to new premises in the town, but needed a temporary home whilst their new studio site is refurbished. Feedback on their new location has been extremely positive and the library team are looking forward to seeing how we can work together with the radio station in the local community to promote library services and activities.

## Country Parks & Green Spaces

Visitor numbers to our Country Parks reflect the poor weather this summer, totalling approximately 440,000 from April to July, compared to approximately 470,000 for the same period last year. Although numbers have reduced, satisfaction across a range of sites throughout the county showed a slight improvement, with 91% posting an excellent or good rating and only 2.69% being dissatisfied (Google reviews).

There has been an extensive programme of events and activities across both parks and country parks through the summer including film walks, outdoor theatre, fairs, a regatta and a pop-up sand pit using sand recovered from a film set at Black Park.

Despite the US writer's strike, filming in the Country Parks is set to be one of the busiest years ever with continued interest in our sites; current productions include a BBC Natural History series and a significant international feature film, the third this year. Indications from the industry are that once the strike ends, impacts could be seen in terms of delays with filming recommencing or new productions coming online.

The new play area facilities in Higginson Park, Marlow, were completed and reopened officially on 2 August to very positive reviews.



We are also pleased that works have begun on the long-awaited Bridge Street skate park in Buckingham; these works are expected to be completed in the late Autumn.

As a mark of the quality of our parks and green spaces, we have once again achieved six prestigious Green Flag Awards for notable parks across Buckinghamshire, from Heartlands in Buckingham, Vale Park and Bedgrove Park in Aylesbury, Hughenden Park and The Rye in Wycombe to Higginson Park in Marlow. This award recognises excellence in parks management and is testament to the hard work of officers, contractors and volunteers who keep our parks at the highest of standards. We will be looking to put forward Black Park and Langley Park Country Parks for this award in 2024.



## Leisure

Our leisure centres continue to see strong visitor numbers. From April to June, there have been 950,419 visits, an increase on the same period last year (915,812) and a positive step to improving again on our overall numbers from last year of 3.6m visits.



Investment to improve facilities for residents is continuing at both Wycombe Leisure Centre and at the Little Marlow Athletics Track. A full gym refit took place at Wycombe Leisure Centre during August, which has created a really positive enhanced environment for customers. The refit represents £500k of investment into the site from Places Leisure as part of their ongoing contract and commitment to improving the range and quality of the fitness offer for residents.



The works at the Little Marlow Athletics Track included repairing and resurfacing the track and replacing the throwing cage. Despite the challenges of the rain throughout July, the work progressed with only minor delays and the clubs returned to a much-improved facility in early September. This investment will ensure that the track will continue to hold UK Athletics TrackMark accreditation for the future.

### **Simply Walk**

On 21 July, nearly 90 people gathered in the Orchard of Hughenden Manor to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the popular Simply Walk initiative. Simply Walk is a health walks scheme supported by funding from Public Health which encourages people of all ages and abilities to take part in regular walks across the county. There are currently more than 65 walks, most of which take place weekly, with over 2,000 people regularly taking part and more than 250 volunteers. It is free to join (although donations are welcome) and no need to book. Every walk is led by a trained volunteer leader and backmarker to ensure no-one gets left behind. More information on Simply Walk can be found [here](#).



## Cabinet Member report – Accessible Housing and Resources

Councillor John Chilver

### Resources update

#### **Human Resources and CIPD September Awards Shortlisting**

HR's submission to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) for best health and well-being initiative for a public/third sector organisation has been shortlisted for the prestigious CIPD September awards. HR's submission focussed on the diverse range of support put in place including the cost-of-living staff network, hardship fund, flexible resource pool, office pantries and additional mental health and well-being support sessions. The award will be announced on 21<sup>st</sup> September.



HR has also submitted an entry for the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (ENEI) for enhancing well-being and belonging at work and will hear in mid-October if the submission has been shortlisted and then in November if the entry has won. In 2023, HR has submitted 13 award entries and has won/been highly commended for 3 around well-being and recruitment has been shortlisted for a further 6.

#### **IRRV Annual Award – Revenues and Benefits Shortlisting**

The Revenues and Benefits team entered the professional bodies (Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation) annual awards and have been shortlisted in three categories:

- Revenues Team of the Year
- Most improved Team of the Year
- Excellence in Innovation

The team have been recognised over the last two years for delivering the single revenues and benefits system on time, quality and budget, achieving the £725k savings, while issuing £92m in business grants and improving performance all under COVID working conditions. To be shortlisted for three awards is an amazing achievement. The results will be announced on the 5<sup>th</sup> October.

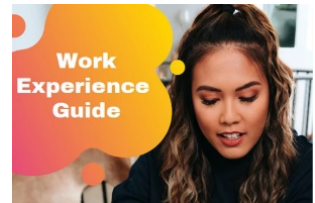


### Single Person Discount Review

Between May and August, the Revenue & Benefits team completed the Council Tax Single Person Discount Review. This is the first time the Council has contacted all residents to check that their single person discount continues to be valid and is a great example of the benefits of the move onto the new single Revs and Bens system. In total, 50,000 letters were sent, including 12,000 reminder letters, which has led to 5,500 discounts being cancelled. This has resulted in almost £1.5m more Council tax now being available to support other Council work.

### Virtual Work Experience

We have developed a virtual work experience portal with Youth Employment UK that will sit on the council careers pages and meets the Gatsby Benchmark for experience of workplaces, the eight Gatsby benchmarks are a framework for good career guidance developed to support secondary schools and colleges in providing students with the best possible careers education, information, advice, and guidance. The virtual work experience portal went live at the end of August and, ensures a fair and consistent way of offering work experience to all schools across the county, and not just those we have capacity to offer in-person placements. The platform and accompanying workbooks give students an insight into the breadth of careers at Buckinghamshire Council, whilst raising our profile as an employer of choice within schools at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, when students begin considering their career options.



Our longer-term aim is to use insights and learning from the virtual platform and rotational in-person placement (piloted in April 2023), to help offer a fair and accessible face-to-face work experience programme; but this will be proportionate to the capacity available in HR to coordinate this. With both approaches, we aim to ensure that we are focussing on addressing the skills shortage in our workforce, and pockets of need within the deprived wards as identified by Opportunity Bucks.



### [Buckinghamshire Council Work Experience Guide - Youth Employment UK](#)

Discover more about careers at Buckinghamshire Council with Youth Employment UK. Know your options!

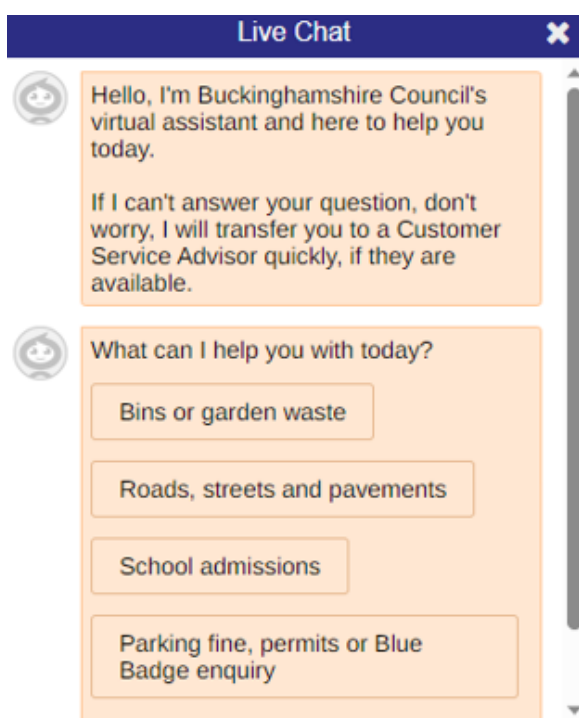
[www.youthemployment.org.uk](http://www.youthemployment.org.uk)

## ChatBot – 24/7 access to information

In mid-July Customer Improvement launched an automated chatbot, giving customers 24/7 access to helpful information and signposting if they choose to contact us using the web chat service online.

The previous web chat service has been available for some time to customers during working hours only and required a Customer Service Agent to be reading and answering the web chat questions being asked. Whilst Web chat is popular due to the convenience offered to customers not having to wait on a call queue, it's not fully self-serving so offers a middle ground for customers who need some extra guidance and support.

The new automated chatbot takes this capability one stage further as it triages the customer enquiry and offers information for the most popular web chat enquiries, asking a series of questions to help the customer self-serve online for these services. Waste, Fix my street reporting, parking enquiries and school admissions have been added to the first iteration of the chatbot and so far, Waste is proving to be the most popular enquiry.



At key points in the chat the customer is offered the chance to be transferred to a Customer Service Advisor who will be able to help with more specific enquiries or where the enquiry is not covered by the services currently offered by the Chatbot.

Following the introduction, we can already see that it is having a positive impact - in a recent 7 day period, 1,549 Chatbot automated interactions were started, of which 337 chats then escalated through to an advisor. This means that over 1,200 queries were resolved via the Chatbot, without the need for direct conversation with our customer service team – freeing them up to focus on conversations with those most in need of our assisted services. It also means that customers can get answers in the evening and over a weekend when we aren't available to help first hand.

The service areas covered on the chatbot can be adjusted to suit service peaks and we are exploring other popular services to add on such as Council Tax.

We're really pleased with the promising figures and look forward to sharing more success over the coming months.

## Property & Assets Update

### **Construction Update:**

Working collaboratively with other Council Portfolios including Education, Culture and Leisure, Planning and Regeneration and Housing and Regulatory Services, we have continued to deliver against our significant and substantial capital programme.

The second new Primary School at Kingsbrook; The Council entered into a Pre-Construction Agreement with the successful contractor in June to develop and agree design. The target date for planning submission is November 2023 with the commencement of works on site June 2024.

The Major extension at Green Ridge Academy at Berryfields; The Council entered into a Pre-Construction Agreement with the successful contractor in June to develop and agree design. The target date for planning submission for a non-material amendment is September 2023 with the commencement of works on site May 2024.

The Major extension Cottesloe School in Wing; The Council entered into a Pre-Construction Agreement with the successful contractor in June to develop and agree design. The target date for planning submission is October 2023 with the commencement of works on site May 2024.

Chiltern Wood School (Cressex site, High Wycombe) Remodelling Demolition and New Two Storey Teaching Block project. Procurement of external teams via the NHS SBS Construction Consultancy Services Framework will be completed in September. The target date for commencement of works on site is currently March 2025.

The new Kingsbrook Secondary School, the project is currently being managed through the rectification period with final sign off planned for January 2024.

Phase 2 of the Kingsbrook Secondary School to provide an expansion from 6 to 8 forms of entry. Work has progressed on the procurement of the project's external consultant teams. The school has been designed to be able to be expanded from the current 6fe, to 8fe and ultimately up to 10fe should demand necessitate.

A new 3FE Primary School at Hampden Fields has now been instructed via Education. Procurement of the project's external consultant teams is planned to commence in October 2023.

Major expansion works at Holmer Green, the project is currently being managed through the rectification periods with various sections being completed with final sign off planned for October 2023.

Major expansion works at Chiltern Hills Academy, the project is currently being managed through the rectification period with final sign off planned for December 2023.

Misbourne School and the new Misbourne Sports Hall project is currently being managed through the rectification period with final sign off planned for September 2023.

The Chilterns Lifestyle Centre, the project is currently being managed through the rectification period with final sign off planned for December 2023.

### **Special Projects Update:**

The focus has been on progressing the Council's £15m 'Future High Streets' (FHS) programme in High Wycombe, on behalf of Regeneration. One strand of which is to bring back into use vacant shops in the Old Town. Following the successful 're-purposing' of 37 High Street, the refurbishment of 16 Church Street is to be followed by the improvement of recently acquired adjoining 22 Queen Square.

Another strand of FHS is to reduce redundant retail floorspace in the town. Therefore £4m of FHS funding has been co-invested with the owners of Eden (of which the Council are ground landlords), in the £12m conversion of the former House of Fraser building, for Primark to relocate into Eden and to bring new leisure attractions into the upper floors. Works are well underway. This will enable the comprehensive redevelopment of the old Chiltern Shopping Centre, for 300+ apartments which is subject to planning.

A third strand of the FHS programme is 'Gateways' – improving visitor perception of the town. The council's Brunel building refurbishment is an example ('Northern Gateway'). FHS is to be used to acquire and refurbish the High Wycombe Social Club, the former Liberal Club building, prominently located on Abbey Way Gyratory ('Southern Gateway'). It is proposed that the first floor former ballroom be converted to a galley/store for Wycombe Museum's 'Chair Collection', to provide anew visitor attraction, exhibiting the town's former chair making history (CGI visual below). A third major 'Western Gateway' is being planned.



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Studio 308 Pill Box 115 Coventry Road London E2 6GG  
+44 (0)20 3176 7671 | info@richardmarkland.com | www.richardmarkland.com

C10 SK13 | 21 12 22 | HW Liberal Club HP11 1BA | Views of New Entrance

## Asset Management

The Asset Management Team is working hard to deliver our budgets and other critical targets in terms of occupational and functional requirements, safety, and the environment. Ongoing improvements to our operating model continue to reduce risk and are helping us to ensure that portfolio performance, especially in the context of challenging market and economic conditions, is best supported in terms of people, processes, and systems.

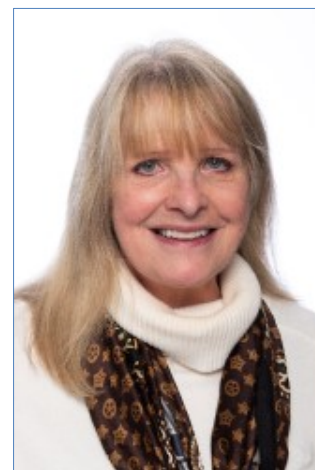
Our Strategic Asset Management Plan, which will deliver a clear statement of our objectives and plans for the entire property estate, including the investment portfolio, our operational portfolio, and our Agricultural and strategic land holdings, is now at a draft consultation stage and we look forward to completion of this process during the remainder of 2023.

A major item of work over the last quarter has been to organise the open market re-tendering of our principle external service provider. It is of vital importance that we access best value in terms of the cost of services acquired, and also to ensure access to the very best available services and expertise, to support our real estate endeavours over the coming years. This process is scheduled to complete, with a service provider appointed, by November 2023.



## Cabinet Member report – Health and Wellbeing

Councillor Angela Macpherson



### Adult Social Care in Buckinghamshire: Annual Reflective Review 2022/23

The 'Adult Social Care in Buckinghamshire: Annual Reflective Review 2022/23' gives a plain English overview of how the council's Adult Social Care services have helped residents with care and support needs and their carers in 2022/23.

Previously known as the Local Account, we renamed this annual report after talking with residents and hearing their suggestions.



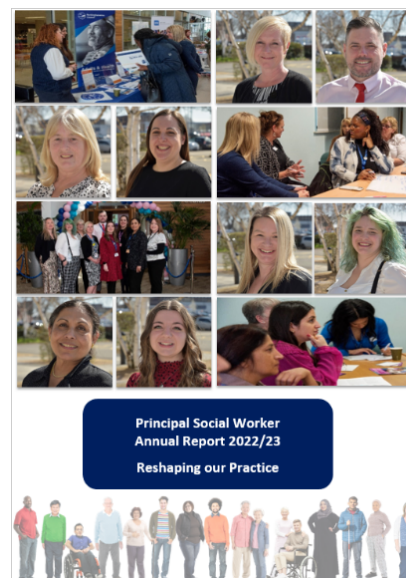
The Reflective Review can be read [here](#). Adult Social Care undertook 14,990 assessments last year and provided support to 12,103 residents. The Home Independence service support 943 residents to regain their independence and 74,300 items of equipment were provided to support over 29,000 residents. In addition to facts and figures about the service, it includes case studies of how we have worked with residents to help them retain them live fulfilling lives, even when their health may be failing.

### Principal Social Worker Annual Report

The Principal Social Work (PSW) role is a key role in upholding excellence in social work.

This annual report, written by our Adult Social Care PSW, highlights the work undertaken to promote and improve the quality of social work practice and outlines the key priority areas of work for 2022-23. It is also a reflective account highlighting the collaborative approach adopted within social care to improve the delivery of excellent social work practice. The PSW annual report will be published on the council's website later this month.

Key achievements include the roll out of the named worker approach, the development of a social work taskforce group and a thematic review of sensory services in partnership with Bucksvision which currently provides the Buckinghamshire Integrated Sensory Service.





This review involved a number of service users and identified areas of good practice as well as opportunities to improve social care staff knowledge.

## Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assurance of Adult Social Care



As many members already know, the Health & Care Act 2022 reintroduced CQC inspection of how well local authorities are delivering their Care Act functions. The CQC's interim guidance on local authority inspection, along with the draft framework, can be read [here](#).

At the last Council meeting on July 12<sup>th</sup>, I reported on the preparation being undertaken by the CQC. The CQC had previously planned to start assessing all the 152 English councils in scope over twenty-four months starting in September 2023. The CQC has recently announced the start of formal assessments is now delayed until later in the year. We still do not know when Buckinghamshire is likely to be formally assessed - the CQC is developing how it will select the first councils to be assessed and will publish more information on this before the start of formal assessments.

### Autumn Vaccination Programmes (Covid and flu) 2023/24

At the end of August, NHS England announced that the rollout of this year's Autumn/Winter Flu and COVID-19 vaccination delivery programme would begin on 11<sup>th</sup> September. It is planned that all care home residents are vaccinated by 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

Vaccinations remain critically important in reducing serious illness and hospitalisation in the most vulnerable groups of the population. Operational delivery of the vaccination programme is an NHS responsibility. However, the Council remains a key partner in providing support and guidance to the NHS, providing a voice for our residents, and sharing key messages with our communities.

**Eligibility:** Eligibility criteria for the 2023/24 vaccination programmes are different from last year. The following people should be offered **both covid and flu vaccines**: all adults aged 65 years and over, residents of older adult care homes, pregnant women, people in a clinical risk group, those living with someone who is immunosuppressed, carers, and frontline health and social care workers. In addition, the **flu vaccine only** will be offered to children aged 2 to school Year 11. A full list of those eligible is available [here](#).

**Roll-Out:** The autumn flu vaccination programme for children will start from September. Due to the emergence of a new covid variant in August, it was announced on 30<sup>th</sup> August that roll-out of adult vaccinations for flu and covid will be brought forwards to begin from 11<sup>th</sup> September (for care home residents) and from 18<sup>th</sup> September (for other eligible groups). The NHS will invite eligible people at greatest risk first. Where practically feasible, receiving both covid and flu vaccines at the same time is both efficient and safe and therefore is encouraged.

**Participating Sites:** Vaccination venues will include a mix of pharmacies, GPs and hospital sites. We know there have been different levels of vaccination uptake between communities for previous campaigns. The Council continues to work with the NHS in designing engagement and outreach plans to proactively try to reduce these inequalities. Councillors, as leaders in our communities, can continue to identify residents' needs and help to build confidence in both the covid and flu vaccines.

## Autism Strategy Consultation

Consultation on Buckinghamshire Council's Autism Strategy was launched at the end of July and lasts until September 24<sup>th</sup>. During this time, we will collect and listen to feedback so that we can keep improving the strategy, and making sure it really represents the views and needs of Buckinghamshire residents.

The strategy has been developed in collaboration with several hundred residents with lived experience, as well as numerous health and social care professionals who have provided their input. We are confident that we have captured the needs of our population better than ever before, and the draft strategy includes clear and impactful goals. The consultation gives a wider opportunity for stakeholders to feedback, and we would really value your comments on the strategy.

Since going live on our website, the Autism Strategy consultation has received over 240 responses from Autistic People, Parents, Carers, Family members and Friends. If you would like to provide your feedback on the strategy or share your experiences, please do follow the weblink below.



The link will take you to our consultation page that includes our online strategy and survey, as well as accessible and young people focussed versions too. There is also a timetable of engagement events if you would prefer to hear more or feedback in person.

[Buckinghamshire Autism Strategy 2023 to 2027 consultation - Your Voice Bucks - Citizen Space](#)

The finalised strategy will work hand-in-hand with a new Autism Steering Group and Action plan so we can drive the change and developments needed to offer excellent support services to Autistic people as well as their families and care networks.

## Vaping and disposable vapes

Although vaping can assist people to stop smoking, the long-term effects are unknown. A particular concern is the impact of vaping on children and young people whose bodies are especially vulnerable. I will be pleased to support the motion being brought by colleagues, proposing the banning of disposable vapes.

In Buckinghamshire one of our Tobacco Control Strategy priorities is deterring people, especially children and young people, from taking up smoking and vaping. Young people are most at risk of becoming smokers or vapers themselves if they grow up in communities where smoking and vaping is the norm. Healthwatch Bucks will carry out insight work focused on vaping amongst children and young people later in 2023 which will help shape our approach moving forwards. Some of our current and planned initiatives are:

- Smoke Free gates: This is a collaboration between Public Health and Buckinghamshire Schools to promote smoke and vape free school gates. This will be starting in the autumn term.
- Smoke Free sidelines, to stop smoking at football matches: We now have 11 clubs signed up including one (Aylesbury Vale Dynamos) which is in an Opportunity Bucks ward.
- Smokefree Parks and Playgrounds: We are working with Community Boards and Parish Councils to identify parks and playgrounds to be made smoke-free. Currently, 14 parks/playgrounds have had Smokefree signage installed. Building on the success of the Design a Sign competition at

Millbrook Combined School, we will be working with other primary schools to host similar “design a sign” competitions.

- The Illegal Tobacco Roadshow took place in the marketplaces of High Wycombe and Aylesbury on 22 and 23 August. Although largely focused on cigarettes, the roadshow also covered vaping and the risks of using illegal vape products. The roadshow aimed to encourage residents to share intelligence anonymously with Trading Standards.
- Public Health is funding additional capacity in Trading Standards to focus on underage sales of tobacco, vapes and nitrous oxide and prosecutions.



*Councillor Macpherson, our Public Health and Trading Standards teams and partners at the Illegal Tobacco Roadshow on 23rd August 2023 in Aylesbury Market Square*

## **Women’s Heart Health**

We are developing a new Women’s Heart Health campaign which forms part of Love Your Heart Bucks, the campaign to reduce cardiovascular disease (CVD) in Buckinghamshire. We are currently working up what the campaign will look like and will provide further information over the coming months. I hope you will support us in raising awareness for this important initiative.

Although CVD is commonly associated with men, in 2021 women made up approximately 50% of the deaths caused by CVD-related illness in Buckinghamshire. Women have a 50% higher chance of receiving the wrong initial diagnosis after a heart attack and are 50% less likely than men to receive the recommended heart attack treatments. In light of these staggering statistics, the main aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of a heart attack in women and take pre-emptive measure to reduce their chances of having a heart attack, by adopting a healthy lifestyle.



## **Eliminating Hepatitis C**

Buckinghamshire Council’s Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service, provided by One Recovery Bucks, has recently achieved a major milestone in eliminating hepatitis C virus from its service users.

Hepatitis C is a virus that can affect the liver. The virus is spread through blood-to-blood contact and people who inject drugs are at the highest risk of becoming infected. No vaccine is available, and if left untreated it can result in serious and sometimes life-threatening liver damage. However, the good news is that detecting and treating hepatitis C can prevent liver damage and make sure the infection is not passed on to other people.

One Recovery Bucks has been awarded ‘micro-elimination’ status – meaning that everyone who has previously injected drugs who has accessed the service across the whole of Buckinghamshire has been tested for hepatitis C, and more than 9 in 10 people who have tested positive have either started treatment or cleared the virus naturally.



One Recovery Bucks is the first county-wide service to achieve this nationally, representing a major achievement for Buckinghamshire.

In doing so, we are supporting the ambition to eliminate hepatitis C nationally by 2025 – ahead of the rest of the world.

### Better Points Update



To encourage people to get more active and make healthy choices, we have introduced BetterPoints.

BetterPoints is a free [app](#) open for our residents aged 14+. People earn rewards residents for making positive changes to their lives, such as walking, accessing support services through [Be Healthy Bucks](#) and even taking the bus.

We have 1065 registered users, with 33% of these registered users coming from Opportunity Bucks wards which are our priority areas. Between the 1<sup>st</sup> January and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 106,982 active and sustainable

journeys have been recorded, with 52% of these journeys directly replacing single occupancy car journeys. Sixty percent of participants at 12-weeks reported they were more active because of the campaign.

### Physical Activity Strategy 2024-2029

The Physical Activity Strategy 2024-2029 will be published later in September this year. This builds upon the previous strategy to encourage our residents to adopt a more active lifestyle and increase physical activity for all.

We are really grateful to the Buckinghamshire Physical Activity Steering Group, made up of 44 members from 17 different organisations and council services for their work in developing the strategy and their ongoing commitment to its implementation. We would also like to express our thanks to the five focus groups of residents who contributed to the strategy and annual action plan.





## Cabinet Member report – Education and Children’s Services

Councillor Anita Cranmer

### To Planet Care We Go! book launch



Our We Do Care team are pleased to announce the launch of ‘To Planet Care We Go!’ – a story about coming into care.

This book is the result of a brilliant youth voice project that involved members of our We Do Care Juniors group. The children used a creative story-telling approach to write a book that is for both children in care and the grown-ups who work with and support them.

The children developed the book to help people understand how children might feel when they first come into care. They also hope that the book helps other children and young people feel less alone, understand better what is happening, and why they might have lots of different feelings.

We held a successful launch event on Thursday 20 July at Aylesbury Library for the children who developed the book, along with their carers, friends and family. The event was an opportunity for colleagues from Children’s Services and Buckinghamshire Health Trust to meet the children who created the book, hear a live reading of ‘To Planet Care We Go!’ and receive signed copies.

The book is available now to borrow from all Buckinghamshire libraries, hard copies will also be available in the members’ suite at The Gateway or you can watch an animation of the story [here](#). Please visit your local library and show your support, by borrowing this book and telling others about it.

In addition, the We Do Care team also held our annual children in care celebration event on Wednesday 23 August. I was thrilled that so many of children and young people in care and their foster carers attended and pleased to report that the sun shined and a fun-filled day was had by all. All children attending the event were given their certificates of achievement.

## National Co-production Week (3 – 9 July 2023)

We marked National Co-production Week in July by sharing an update on what has been happening across the Local Area to bring more co-production into our collective work with children and young people with SEND and their families. The annual [National Co-production Week](#) is an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of co-production, share good practice and promote the contribution of everyone who uses co-production to develop better services.

Details were shared with colleagues on current work happening across the Local Area which is using co-production. These include the co-production of the Therapies Strategy, the co-production of the All-age Autism Strategy and development of a needs-based model to strengthen Early Intervention SEND support.

The [Buckinghamshire SEND Co-production Charter](#) sets out our shared principles and ways of working using co-production and describes how we do this individually, collectively in teams or groups and strategically in organisations and schools. Our [SEND Co-production Promise](#) is a simple way for anyone involved in co-production to sign-up to support the Buckinghamshire SEND Co-production Charter.

Our SEND co-production webpages showcase the new SEND co-production toolkit along with other resources and information at [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coproduction](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coproduction)

## Holiday Activities and Food Summer activity programme



I'm very pleased to update members that thanks to our Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, thousands of children from low-income families across Buckinghamshire have enjoyed a packed summer of free, high-quality activity clubs, with over 15,000 holiday club places on offer in around 50 locations across the county.

The programme is targeted to school-aged children in Reception to Year 11 inclusive who receive benefits-related free school meals. The Council also offers up to 15% of the overall HAF programme places to other children who are not eligible for benefits-related free school meals but who could benefit from HAF club provision; these groups include looked after and previously looked after children, young carers and children with an education, health and care plan. We have been working with our schools and our HAF club providers to identify and invite children from these additional groups to attend. We know that the long summer school holiday can be a difficult time for some families. I am pleased that we have supported local children and families to access these fantastic free holiday clubs, eat a healthy meal at every session, learn about good nutrition and physical health – and just as importantly, have the



opportunity to make new friends and have fun. The HAF programme will return for the Christmas school holiday period. Information on the programme is at [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/haf](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/haf)

## Academic results

Ofqual announced last autumn that for 2023 the grading structure would return to pre-pandemic standards for GCSE, AS and A level, although with some protection for this cohort to acknowledge the disruption their education has faced and to prevent grading falling too far below 2019 pre-pandemic levels. Ofqual were expecting this to mean 2023 results would be lower than 2022 and much closer to pre-pandemic years than results since 2020.

For GCSEs, we have received grade information from approximately 45% of the pupils in Buckinghamshire schools, with 17 out of 36 secondary schools sharing their data with us on a voluntary basis. The emerging picture demonstrates that our students have performed broadly comparably with the 2019 benchmark and this is similar to the national picture. This means that we can expect Buckinghamshire results to be more than 10% above national figures and in line with our high comparative performance in previous years.

In looking at A level results, 21 secondary schools, out of a possible 36, have shared results with us representing just under 65% of the expected pupil cohort. From the initial response, we can see that the percentage of pupils achieving the top A\* grade in Buckinghamshire, was lower than in 2022 but still significantly higher than the emerging England figure, which has also decreased. Across all our early measures it looks like whilst our results have dropped since 2022, they are above the 2019 results which are the last comparable figures, and have overall dropped less than the national picture, meaning that our students have performed very well indeed.

Results are still provisional at this stage and may change. Final figures for both sets of exams which can be shared will be released by the Department for Education later in the Autumn after late results, appeals and possible re-marks are taken into consideration.

Well done to all those students who have worked hard and got the results they wanted. We know that the effects of the pandemic are still impacting children and young people of all ages, so the achievements are testament to their resilience, and they should be very proud. We also know there may be some students who may not do as well as they hoped or expected, and our schools have been on hand to provide help and support to those who need it.

## Improving Educational outcomes for Disadvantaged Pupils



Educational Outcomes in Buckinghamshire are extremely strong, with the majority of young people across our county leaving school with very good results. However, this is not always the case for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Disadvantaged pupils continue to achieve less well than their non-disadvantaged peers.

One of the biggest challenges faced by schools across the county is therefore how to mitigate against the effects of disadvantage on educational attainment at all stages in a child's education. The Buckinghamshire Challenge is an ongoing collaborative programme to collectively upskill schools in the latest research and understanding and to support schools to undertake the cultural changes that will make the biggest differences to all pupils, but especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. As part of the programme, Buckinghamshire Disadvantaged Handbook for Schools has been developed, in partnership with Marc Rowland (Unity Research School, the Education Endowment Foundation, DfE Advisor on Pupil Premium) in collaboration with Buckinghamshire schools. It contains learning and best practice on raising attainment for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds in Buckinghamshire schools, national good practice and latest research.

The Buckinghamshire Challenge continues, with a focus for 2023/24 and beyond, linking with the Council's Opportunity Bucks programme to improve everyday lives and life chances for people resident in underperforming places across the county. Opportunity Bucks will enable collective resources to be coordinated to ensure that pupils living in disadvantaged wards of Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe achieve a good standard of education and skills and access the same level of opportunity as their county-wide peers. The handbook will continue to be updated with latest learning from the project.

### **Important developments in Children's Social Work Practice**

As part of the wider Children's Services transformation programme, the service has embarked on a journey to ensure services delivered to families in Buckinghamshire demonstrate consistently high-quality practice. This programme of transformation has provided the service with an opportunity to consider our approach when working with children and families, ensuring it is aligned to a practice methodology that all our staff are trained in. The agreed approach will follow 3 distinct approaches to evidence-based practice including:

1. Consolidating the use of the 'Strengthening Families' approach: Strengthening Families is a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.
2. Motivational Interviewing training: Motivational interviewing is a strengths-based conversational approach to counselling that encourages families to improve their child's welfare by enhancing their readiness for change.
3. Trauma informed training: Trauma-informed practice incorporates core principles of safety, trust, collaboration, choice, and empowerment and delivers services in a manner that avoids inadvertently repeating unhealthy interpersonal dynamics in the helping relationship.

The underlying principles for this training include having a strong focus on relationships, ensuring all practitioners are continuously forging strong connections with the families and the communities they work with, to bring about positive change. The programme of training will start in September 2023 and will be delivered incrementally to all staff, starting with staff within Children's Social Care teams and the Family Support Service. Training will be ongoing with a schedule of continued training and support for staff, recognising the importance of revisiting and ensuring the organisation and leadership is clear on what we want to achieve for all children and families engaged with a



practitioner. Crucially, this will be a cycle of learning, testing of learning and evidence of improved outcomes for children and families ensuring our frontline managers and staff fully understand the ask in terms of practice and that this is monitored and evaluated through regular quality assurance activity.

Our ambition is to create a culture of learning and we look forward to seeing the impact this training on the professional skillset of our staff, and most crucially the impact this work has for our children and families.



## Cabinet Member report – Transport

Councillor Steve Broadbent

### Buckinghamshire Highways

The new Buckinghamshire Highways service is delivering substantial improvements to our road network following the very harsh winter and its impact on our network. Over 19,000 highway defects have been fixed since April. Up to 17 crews have been working on repairs, with cover 7 days a week, with schemes being accelerated to tackle the highest priority routes in many areas. Other maintenance and repairs are also making excellent progress, with 39,000 gullies cleansed and 1600 streetlights fixed since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

Our larger, capital intensive carriageway re-surfacing programme has continued apace over the summer. As of mid-August, 66 surfacing schemes were fully complete out of the 216 that we have planned during the year, with another 51 schemes already fully designed and programmed to start and over 90 more being developed for later in the year.



Before



Before and completion photos –  
Hillbottom Road, High Wycombe



After



Before and completion photos –  
Hatters Lane, High Wycombe

The capital programme for other highways areas is now fully underway following the early focus on road repairs, works are commencing to deliver 22 street lighting schemes, including replacement and repair of illuminated bollards and signs, 8 road safety schemes, 17 drainage schemes, 21 signals schemes and 3 major structures schemes.

Preparations for the delivery of the winter plan are advanced, the gritters are ready and the team alert to the start of the winter season in mid-October.

## **HS2 and EWR**

The Council continues to hold both HS2 and East West Rail (EWR) to account for the impact of their construction on our environment, residents, communities, and businesses.

HS2 negotiations on road repairs are progressing following a previous meeting with the Rail Minister. EWR reinstatement works to permanently repair the damage caused by their construction works are underway across north Buckinghamshire, this is part of the programme of 12 roads in 12 months that was agreed by EWR following work by councillors and council officers. Repairs on Verney Road were completed in July and these are being swiftly followed by repairs to Little Horwood Road and Sandhill Road by the end of September.

HS2 Ltd's contractor EKFB is undertaking extensive works on the Princes Risborough Aylesbury (PRA) line under blockade between Sat 19 Aug 2023 – Sun 29 October 2023 (10 weeks). The works will be 24 hours with the exception of school hours to mitigate the impact to Booker Park School. EKFB has informed us that they have engaged extensively with the local parishes, communities and directly impacted residents. They have developed a bespoke community support package for residents in the vicinity. We are monitoring this work closely.

The Council continues to work with both organisations to minimise the impact of traffic management and road closures.

## **Rights of Way**

The Council had intended to replace the mid-section of the Berryhill footbridge in Taplow during the summer and autumn. Unfortunately, the Environment Agency (EA) had held back the necessary consent to allow the Council to carry out the replacement, because it had its own work programme ongoing on the Taplow Gantry, which is very close to Berry Hill bridge. They advised that it was not possible to have the two projects operating at the same time. As the EA's infrastructure forms part of the flood alleviation requirements for the Thames River its work programme had to take priority. The EA's works have been completed, and a new application for the bridge replacement will be submitted to the EA for formal approval.

Assuming approval is granted then it is intended that Berry Hill Footbridge will be reopened over this coming winter/spring.

Clearance crews have been operating across the Rights of Way network over the summer months carrying out surface clearance. Surface growth has been particularly vigorous this year due to the warm and wet conditions but all the jobs from the clearance schedule have now been completed.

Clearance issues notified to the Council will continue to be undertaken with the help of volunteer groups and the Council's own contractor work crews. Thank you to all volunteers who help with this work.

### **Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5)**

A public consultation on the draft Local Transport Plan 5 (and Local Plan for Buckinghamshire) Vision and Objectives was undertaken from 19 April – 4 June 2023. Analysis of the results from this consultation has shown the majority of the respondents support the draft vision which has three overarching objectives: connecting our economy, decarbonising our transport system and building places for people. The feedback from this consultation will inform and shape the development of our future transport policies and implementation plan. We are now in a position to proceed with drafting the core Local Transport Plan 5 document, with the aim of holding a further public consultation in 2024.

### **Electric Vehicles – Project updates**

An award of £72k received from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capability fund for 2022/23 will be utilised to increase the number of staff available to the Council for EV-related projects, including any necessary training. A further application to the LEVI Capability fund has resulted in additional staff resource funding of £165,230 per annum for financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 to progress further schemes.

Progress continues with the installation of 128 new electric vehicle (EV) charging bays in sixteen Buckinghamshire Council-managed car parks. A total of 88 charging bays across eleven sites are fully operational with the remaining sites suffering delays due to a delay in works undertaken by the Distribution Network Operators (DNO) for the electricity supply. These sites are expected to go live in the autumn.

### **Moving Traffic Enforcement (MTE)**

We are in the process of reviewing the next round of camera locations for Moving Traffic Enforcement (MTE), the aim of which is for implementation by the end of December 2023. For the locations that have gone live, we are already starting to see a reduction in the level of abuse, leading to a safer and more efficient travel flow.

### **Pick Me Up, Wycombe – expansion of the service**

The Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) scheme '[Pick me up](#)' launched as a pilot in October 2022. DRT is a flexible type of bus service that allows users to book their journey on demand as they require it, between any two points within the area covered by the route. The service runs Monday to Friday from 6am to 7pm.

Since the scheme was launched the Council has received several requests to expand the scheme and from 29<sup>th</sup> August the area served now includes Flackwell Heath. This enables the best use of buses and will improve connectivity links for residents where there is no direct bus service.

### **Wycombe Park and Ride improvements**

Working in partnership with the bus operator, new improvements have been made to the park and ride service in High Wycombe with the aim of increasing passenger numbers and longer-term viability. The Park and Ride has been combined with the existing Service 28 service to provide journeys up to every 20 minutes between High Wycombe town centre and Coachway (Park and Ride). Service 8 will serve Cressex, including the Business Park, and Service X8 will operate an express service to the town centre using Marlow Hill. This should result in a reduced peak journey time from 17-22 minutes to 7 minutes between the Coachway and the railway station, providing a better service for passengers.

### **Extension of travel for £1 pre 09:00 scheme for concessionary bus pass holders**

The current local [scheme](#) offering travel for £1 before 09:00 on weekdays to concessionary pass holders will now be extended through to the end of October 2023. Bus use with a concessionary pass remains free between 09:00 and 24:00 on weekdays and all day at weekends.

### **School bus arrangements**

Officers have worked extremely hard to prepare for the start of the new school term in September. 2023/24 timetable details for school buses for children who are eligible for Council transport assistance have been published and are available on our [website](#).

The Council's [spare seat scheme](#) continues to operate. This scheme enables parents who do not qualify for free transport assistance for their child to apply to buy a spare seat on a Council-run school bus where there is space available (after seats are allocated to eligible children). As at the end of August, 368 spare seat passenger places have been arranged for the coming academic year.



## Cabinet Member report – Climate Change and Environment

Councillor Gareth Williams

### Fly Tipping Enforcement

On 31 July 2023 the Government increased the maximum allowable fixed penalty rates for fly-tipping, failure in duty of care by householders (whose waste is removed by waste carrier and later found fly-tipped). Buckinghamshire Council will review its provision for fixed penalties in the light of this over the next few months. These fixed penalties are issued for more minor offences, and usually where there is positive co-operation with investigations. Since 2020, 136 FPNs have been issued in Bucks for these offences (85 for fly-tipping, 54 for Duty of Care failures), compared with 110 (more serious) cases prosecuted at court (86 for fly-tipping, 24 for duty of care failures).

### Littering

Bucks is beginning to see deterrent publicity following cases where people have been 'fined' for dropping and leaving litter at the roadside. Two images here show individuals recently 'fined' £150 each for littering in Bucks. A report is being prepared to set out a broader Litter Enforcement Strategy for Council consideration later in the year, which will also review the fines for fixed penalties for littering.



## **Household Recycling Centre Charging – Government announcement on future changes**

The Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) announced in June that when implemented later this year, households will be able to deposit limited amounts of DIY waste for free at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). The announced changes still need to go through the legislative process, so it is important we are all aware that these changes are yet to come into effect. The current charging system for non-household waste, which is outlined in detail on our website, is still in place at all Buckinghamshire HWRCs.

If the policy needs to change to reflect updated legislation, this will happen in due course, and we will keep residents fully informed as to the timetable and any changes to charges. We continue to await the publication of the draft legislation. It is important to note the proposed changes will allow some currently charged waste in for free but that it won't be limitless. The detail of the draft legislation is needed to inform the control measures and practical changes needed and when the change in legislation applies.

The consequence of these changes will be substantially increased costs and loss of income for managing more waste which local authorities do not have duties to do so. These financial impacts will have to be managed through the MTFP process. Also based on past experience, the Council does not expect to see a decrease in fly tipping with the implementation of these proposed charging changes.

The Council has an extremely strong track record with regard to tackling fly tipping and has implemented a number of successful initiatives with government. Furthermore, in June 2021 the national body WRAP published a report, 'The relationship between fly-tipping rates and HWRC charging' which concluded there was no link between charging and fly tipping at recycling centres. The research also considered a range of other factors such as deprivation, which again did not find evidence that HWRC charging is associated with higher rates of fly tipping.

## **South Waste Collection and Street Scene**

Continuous affective contract management activities and ongoing work with Veolia has resulted in the first quarter of 2023/24 (April - June) KPI target of 0.20% for missed bins being achieved. Veolia continue to meet the contractual target for container deliveries, residents receiving bins within 10 working days. Enhanced cleansing in public realm areas have seen improvements in challenging areas such as car parks which often suffer from anti-social behaviour and require additional cleansing.

Garden waste subscriptions are increasing, especially in the Wycombe area where we recently introduced charging. We have 49% of Wycombe residents signed up to the garden waste service. Chiltern area has 43% and South Bucks 37% subscribers.

The first 'Community Action Day' under the Opportunity Bucks Programme took place in the first of seven South ward areas, Totteridge and Bowerdean. The day was a success with community and staff volunteers and operational support teams from Veolia clearing litter and areas of fly tipped waste. Work will continue in this ward area to improve community areas through engagement and work with stakeholders, such as Redkite Housing and local businesses. Plans are now in progress for the next set of action days scheduled for later this year.



### **Environmental Protection**

The Strategic Environmental Protection Team (within the Environmental Health service) have been busy meeting more Community Boards across the county as part of the Clean Our Air Campaign. In addition, the latest Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) has been completed to schedule and has been submitted to Department for Environment, Farming & Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

### **Local Nature Recovery Strategy - work underway to reverse the decline in nature in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes**

The Government has recently announced 48 areas where there will be a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) put in place over the next 12-18 months. Together these 48 [strategy areas](#) cover the whole of England with no gaps or overlaps. Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes comprise one of the nominated areas and work has now commenced on the production of this important strategy. Each local nature recovery strategy will agree priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities.

LNRSs are a key requirement set out in the Environment Act 2021 aimed at reversing the decline in England's nature. This new requirement will support efforts to:



- recover nature across England
- help deliver national environment targets
- support the delivery of biodiversity net gain in the planning system
- help planning authorities incorporate nature recovery objectives

Buckinghamshire Council has been designated the Responsible Authority (RA) – or the local authority responsible for producing the strategy for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes - with Milton Keynes City Council and Natural England serving as key supporting authorities. The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (NEP), the area's successful Local Nature Partnership, will be leading the strategy creation process. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy process will work closely with communities and other stakeholders to map out how and where to recover nature and identify priorities that also achieve wider environmental benefits. Buckinghamshire was chosen to be part of a pilot LNRS process in 2020-2021 to help to inform and determine the final regulations and guidance for producing a LNRS.

To start the LNRS process a series of 8 introductory webinars were held in July, targeted at land managers/owners, environmental organisations, developers, Parish/Town Councils, businesses and residents. The sessions were very well attended where the project team provided more information about what an LNRS is, together with why and how stakeholders can get involved in the process and importantly action to deliver it.

Further information is available here:

[Local Nature Recovery Strategy Overview – Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership \(bucks.mknep.co.uk\)](https://bucks.mknep.co.uk)



## Cabinet Member report – Homelessness and Regulatory Services

Councillor Mark Winn

### **Environmental Protection**

One of the key roles the service undertakes is responding to planning and licensing consultations and attendance of Safety Advisory Groups for large events. The service is also currently supporting the planning policy team on the expansion of the Luton Airport Development Consent Order. Officers are providing expert advice on air quality and noise. Required documents have been submitted on time and briefing papers are being prepared for our Barrister. Issue specific hearings will take place at the end of September when we will be prepared to give evidence. We are working with key stakeholders to minimise potential impact.

The team have also worked with the Cemeteries and Crematoria Service on the environmental permitting of the Chilterns Crematorium as part of its recent upgrading project and are extremely pleased with the significant collaboration and positive way the scheme has been undertaken.

Following on from the successful health and safety project looking at workplace transport, Environment Health Commercial Team Officers have turned their attentions to gas safety in catering businesses with a particular emphasis on ovens. Evidence has suggested that the ignition devices on some ovens do not always work and staff have to resort to lighting them with burning paper. Therefore, following training from Gas Safe engineers, officers will be looking at gas safety in kitchens and raising awareness of the need for appropriate controls, maintenance and certification. Where necessary, enforcement action will be taken where it is found that appliances are unsafe.

Officers had a successful weekend at Silverstone F1, inspecting campsites for public safety and welfare, water sampling at the campsites, inspections of mobile caterers both outside and inside the circuit and the main hospitality providers. Officers are now focusing their attention on the Moto GP and Silverstone Festival.

The harmonised skin piercing byelaws approved by Council on 21 September 2022 have now been confirmed by the Secretary of State for Health and came into force on 5th August 2023.

## **Housing and Domestic**

As part of Opportunity Bucks the team have had two days where they have focused on identifying unlicensed HMOs (houses in multiple occupation.) During an exercise in Chesham the team did a door knock on 750 properties in 12 streets. This identified one urgent issue and another property of serious concern. They also flagged approx. 50 properties for a follow up letter as they were unable to gain access.

A similar exercise was undertaken in Aylesbury which targeted 30 properties identified through intelligence. One unlicensed HMO has been identified and there are some more properties that require a follow up due to either the inability to gain access or due to other concerns. A similar exercise will happen in the coming weeks in the Wycombe area.

The team continue to undertake inspections as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. They have recently completed their 1000th visit since the scheme started March 2022.

## **The Homelessness Service**

The Homelessness Service continues to receive high numbers coming through to the service, a 27% increase in presentations in July 2023 compared to July 2022.

There has been an increase in debt advice cases with higher rates of households struggling with rent/mortgage arrears which is reflected in the rising numbers of Rough Sleepers where we currently have 31 across Buckinghamshire (9 clients in the North and 22 in the South). Underlying causes for the recent Rough Sleepers include evictions from privately rented accommodation and/ other supported accommodation as well as issues with relationship/family breakdowns. Compounded with this is a lack of available emergency beds, suitable move on accommodation and affordable private rentals.

Homelessness Officers work in partnership with the Make Every Adult Matter (MEAM) team to provide extra support to the long term rough sleepers targeting the cohort in High Wycombe. This has recently been successful in placing two entrenched clients. To further support this work, a portion of the Housing First Funding has been identified to increase the number of emergency beds available (five additional). Housing First is a philosophy which differentiates housing from support needs, setting housing as a first priority and removing support requirement conditions (although support is still offered). It is aimed at those with complex needs, often entrenched rough sleepers.

## **Disabled Facilities Grant**

As at the end of July 2023, we had 481 ongoing applications for Disabled Facilities Grant for property adaptations, of which 80 have been completed. We are still in the process of reviewing the Council's Disabled Facilities Grant and Financial Assistance policy to reflect the increase in costs.

## **Bucks Home Choice – Demand for Social Housing**

The demand for social housing tenancies via the Council’s Bucks Home Choice scheme remains high and as at the end of July 2023, we had 5,853 live applications on the register, an increase of 264 since my last Cabinet report in May.

## **Registration Service**

The service continues to register all births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships which have taken place in the county and is now planning for the busy autumn season of excess births during September and the increase in deaths as we head towards the winter.

The Buckingham Library is being prepared to enable registrations at that location one day a week starting this autumn. Information on when this is up and running will be available on our website as well as notification to local members in advance with more detail.

Bookings for ceremonies for the current year stand at 1520, with the total for last year being 1851. It is too early to conclude that bookings will be lower for the end of the current year, but officers will be monitoring this closely for the remaining six months. 542 ceremonies have already been booked for 2024/25 which is encouraging.

## **Coroner’s Service**

There continues to be instances of uncertified deaths due to delays in GPs not seeing patients within 28 days of death. This is a national issue, and the General Register Office continues to liaise with various government departments in order to try and find a solution to this.

## **Crematoria and Cemeteries Service**

The team at Chilterns Crematorium were given the opportunity to host a visit by Councillors Mark Winn and Carl Jackson and were delighted to be able to showcase the outcomes of the recent cremator replacement project and improvement works and tell them about the positive comments received from Funeral Directors and Celebrants who use the services on a regular basis.

The Councillors were also able to present a long-standing crematoria staff member Clive Dickens with a card celebrating his 40-year anniversary of working at Chilterns Crematoria.



The service has continued to be busy recruiting following completion of the crematoria service review and implementation of a new staffing structure. Once the new team members are fully trained new rotas will be introduced and the cremation service times at both Chilterns and Bierton crematoria will be extended to increase the number of cremation service times available giving service users greater choice.

Our commitment to continuous improvement continues with work to install concrete plinths in Penn Road Cemetery due to be completed in July. Installation of the plinths will enable bereaved families to erect headstones more quickly following a burial and will improve the appearance of the cemetery as the headstones will not be adversely affected by ground subsidence following the excavation.

### **Gypsy and Traveller Service**

The number of unauthorised encampments this summer has so far remained relatively low in Buckinghamshire in line with our previous report, this may be testament to the Bucks Gypsy and Traveller Services team efficiency in visiting new groups very quickly upon arrival to address any welfare issues, which is a mandatory part of the eviction process. Although numbers across the country are lower since the Covid pandemic began, there are still many groups travelling up and down the country. We are still seeing more and more of the settled community taking to living on the roadside in vans/caravans/motorhomes, these can be more time consuming to deal with due to issues such as awaiting an outreach visit, the provision of homelessness advice, or complete referrals. We are committed to supporting where possible rather than seeing families moved from one place to another and not addressing their welfare needs.

Out of the eight unauthorised encampments that we have dealt with this fiscal year 37.5% have been people living in vans/caravans/motorhomes from the settled community. There have been several more that have been reported to the Bucks Gypsy and Traveller service that have been referred to homelessness, and the DVLA for vehicles which were untaxed or declared SORN.

### **Policies Update**

Having already carried out public consultations this year on the new draft Charitable Collections Policy and draft Animal Licensing Policy, the consultation on the new draft Scrap Metal Licensing Policy has also been carried out. The Council is responsible for the licensing of all scrap metal dealers, including mobile collectors who wish to collect scrap metal within Buckinghamshire Council's area and those operating scrap metal sites. The draft policy provides guidance on the application process, a brief overview of relevant legislation, links to Government guidance on the Scrap Metal Dealers Act and outlines matters which the Council will take into consideration when deciding if someone is suitable to hold a licence. The policy also sets out how best practice recommendations, such as carrying out compliance visits, partnership working with other agencies and intelligence sharing will be incorporated into day to day working practices.

It is hoped that feedback on the draft policies will have been considered by Licensing Committee by the end of the year with meetings scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> September and 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

A pre policy engagement survey to inform the draft of a new Street Trading Policy for Buckinghamshire has also been carried out and will be reported to Licensing Committee at the November meeting.

## **Licensing Act 2003 – updates**

Following a public consultation, the Home Office have announced that the regulatory easements relating to off sales for alcohol licensing in the Business and Planning Act 2020 will now be extended until March 2025. During the extension period government have advised they will be working on a permanent solution to create a unified pavement licence scheme that includes licensing consent for the consumption and sale of alcohol in outside pavement areas. They will be engaging with local authorities to inform this work.

Regulatory easements relating to temporary event notices (TENs) will not be extended and will lapse on 31 December 2023. This means that in 2024 licensed premises will only be able to apply for 15 TENs to run over a maximum of 21 days in total over the year, instead of the 20 TENs over a maximum of 26 days they have been allowed this year.

Guidance for Licensing Authorities has also been amended by the Home Office to reflect the recommendations made following the Manchester Arena bombing inquiry. The guidance recommends that licensing authorities pay particular attention to terrorist threats when making specific licence conditions in relation to security or health care provision at appropriate premises and events applying for a licence. This is most likely to be relevant to high profile or large premises or events. Any licence conditions would need to be appropriate and proportionate. The Licensing Service are working with Environmental Health colleagues and the Safety Advisory Group to incorporate this guidance into supporting organisers with the safe planning and delivery of events that are notified to the Council.

## **Proactive Enforcement Work**

Over the summer months both the Commercial and Taxi Licensing teams have carried out a number of enforcement operations to check compliance with both Licensing Act (alcohol and entertainment) and hackney carriage and private hire requirements. These have included events such as the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, Pennfest, Towersey Festival and spot checks at adult social care centres with colleagues from Client Transport. Officers from the Commercial Licensing team have also carried out a number of compliance checks of animal exhibitors licensed under Licensing of Activities Involving Animals Regulations (LAIA) at events such as the Buckingham Country Show and Bucks County Show, ensuring exhibitors have acceptable standards of animal welfare in place.

Both the Taxi and Commercial Licensing teams continue to build upon our good working relationships with external and internal stakeholders such as Thames Valley Police and Trading Standards as we work jointly with their officers to undertake proactive enforcement work and targeted spot checks to protect and promote public safety.

## **Animal licensing prosecution**

Following a lengthy investigation into unlicensed dog breeding and animal welfare concerns two defendants were sentenced to imprisonment at Amersham Law Courts on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023 for offences including unlicensed dog breeding, causing unnecessary suffering and failing to ensure animal welfare. Following complaints from concerned members of the public, Licensing Officers obtained Court warrants to enter two houses in Aylesbury in September 2021 where 24 bull breed dogs were found in squalid conditions. A number of the dogs were taken into the Council's possession

and, following further visits, the remaining dogs were removed by the RSPCA. Officers used forensic analysis of digital devices to help identify the details of the illegal activity taking place. Evidence showed that dogs had been intensively bred, in several cases having had two litters in less than a year and had been subjected to repeated caesarean sections. Unfortunately fighting had also led to the death of two of the dogs. The dogs that were removed and the puppies that were subsequently born, were cared for by the RSPCA and Appledown Rescue and Rehoming Kennels. With assistance from these charities, all the dogs have now been successfully rehomed. The outcome of this case will assist the Council in promoting animal welfare and encouraging people to buy puppies through licensed reputable breeders, as well as send a warning to others engaged in illegal dog breeding activity that we will act on information received. Concerns about unlicensed breeders can be reported to the Licensing Team via the [website](#).



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## Notices of Motion

**Date:** 20 September 2023

### **Notice of Motion – Banning the sale of single-use vape products**

**Proposer:** Councillor Zahir Mohammed

**Seconder:** Councillor Mark Winn

#### **Introduction**

Using an e-cigarette is known as vaping. Vape devices fall into two types: multi-use (rechargeable and refillable) and single-use disposable vapes ready-filled with liquid that may contain nicotine.

Vaping is generally considered a helpful aid to assist people stop smoking and less harmful than smoking cigarettes. However, the long-term effects of vaping are unknown and there is concern in the health community about the escalating popularity of vaping amongst non-smokers, especially children.

Selling vaping products to anyone aged under 18 and buying vaping products for anyone under 18 is illegal. Disposable vapes are often sold at “pocket money prices” and marketed to be attractive to children.

The council is actively discouraging children from vaping through a range of “smoke free” initiatives, information for parents and schools; and extra investment in Trading Standards to focus on underage sales (of vapes, tobacco, alcohol and nitrous oxide) and support prosecutions.

The Local Government Association is calling for the sale and manufacture of all single use vapes to be banned by 2024. In addition, without such a ban, there is also a strong risk that the UK will become a targeted disposable vape market as bans are rolled out in European countries.

#### **Health concerns about vaping in children and young people**

Research from NHS Digital in 2021 and the charity Action on Smoking in 2023 found that there has been a significant uptake of vaping amongst children. Children experimenting with

vaping has grown by nearly 50% since 2022, and the use of disposable vapes is most favoured by children. In June this year, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) called for a ban on disposable e-cigarettes to prevent an "epidemic" of under-age vaping.

### **Environmental concerns about disposable vapes**

There are also environmental concerns about disposable vapes – they are generally just thrown away. This creates a fire risk and environmental harm from the lithium batteries, as well as litter in public spaces. Lithium is a material that is critical to the Net Zero transition, and the 10 tonnes of lithium discarded from disposable vapes each year is the same as that needed for 1,200 electric cars.

### **Regulation**

The marketing of single use vapes to children makes enforcement against under-age sales very challenging. Nationally the intelligence is that underage sales went up in the 100s of percentage points in a few months after disposable vapes came into the UK market demonstrating that this is not a problem about all vapes, but specific to disposable vapes.

### **This Council therefore resolves:**

1. To support a full ban on the sale of all single-use vape products to the general public due to the disproportionate use among children and young people and their detrimental impact on the environment; and to continue proactive measures to tackle underage vaping alongside similar measures for smoking.
2. To call on the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to request that disposable vapes are banned.



## Leader Decisions Taken

Information on decisions taken by the Leader since the last full Council agenda. For an up-to-date list of decisions taken and forthcoming decisions, please refer to the Council's website – <https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/>

3 Jul 2023

### **EC05.23 - Closure of The Mary Towerton School, Studley Green**

**The Leader:**

**APPROVED** the closure of The Mary Towerton School, Studley Green with effect from 31st August 2023.

7 Jul 2023

### **TR14.23 - Amendment to Fees & Charges for Transport Portfolio – Definitive Maps (Public Path Orders)**

**The Leader:**

**AGREED** to the Amendment to Fees & Charges Schedule for Definitive Map (Public Path Orders) (recommended Option 1)

2 Aug 2023

### **EC06.23 - Adult Learning: Accountability Agreement**

**The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, on behalf of the Leader:**

**APPROVED** the content of the Council's Accountability Agreement. This will then be published on our websites and submitted to the Education and Skills Agency (ESFA) as a record of the education to be delivered in the academic year 2023/24.

11 Aug 2023

**EC07.23 - Local Area Strategy (2023-26): Early Identification and Intervention to Better Support Children and Young People's Therapy Needs ("the Strategy")**

**The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing (on behalf of the Leader):**

**APPROVED the final Local Area Therapy Strategy (2023-26)**

11 Aug 2023

**FR07.23 - Surrender of the existing head lease and concurrent grant of a new lease of the Holmer Green Sports Ground**

**The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing (on behalf of the Leader):**

- 1) AGREED to the surrender of the existing head lease of the Sports Ground at Watchet Lane, Holmer Green to Little Missenden Parish Council and the current underlease of the site to Holmer Green Sports Association and to then permit the re-grant of a new agreement for a Contracted Out lease directly to Holmer Green Sports Association for a period expiring on 31st December 2066 and to authorise the Director of Property and Assets to advertise the open space disposal as required under section 123 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972.**
- 2) AUTHORISED the Director of Property and Assets to consider and respond to any objections received as a result of the advertisement under section 123 (2A).**
- 3) AUTHORISED the Director of Property and Assets, subject to the grant of planning permission for the construction of the new pitch, to agree the terms of both lease surrenders, the ensuing re-grant of the agreement for lease and a licence for alterations and any associated documents in consultation with the Portfolio holder.**

23 Aug 2023

**PR04.23 - Shenley Park Supplementary Planning Document - approval of draft for public consultation**

**The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, on behalf of the Leader:**

**APPROVED for public consultation the Shenley Park Supplementary Planning Document**

25 Aug 2023

**FR09.23 - Local Authority Housing Fund – Refugees Freehold Acquisitions**

The Leader:-

- A. AGREED the addition of £12.2m to the Council’s Capital Programme, funded from LAHF and ringfenced Afghan and Ukraine grants to fund the purchase of houses in accordance with the LAHF Memorandum of Understanding**
- B. AUTHORISED that the Director of Property and Assets in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources, the Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services and S151 Officer to finalise and conclude due diligence and agree heads of terms, freehold contracts, exchange and complete on the initial 15 homes referenced in this report.**
- C. AUTHORISED the Director of Property and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Accessible Housing and Resources, the Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services and S151 Officer, to consult with relevant local members and proceed to identify, exchange and complete further purchases within the terms of the LAHF grant and the balance of the funding available (£5.1m).**
- D. AUTHORISED the Director of Property and Assets in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Accessible Housing and Resources and Homelessness and Regulatory Services and the Housing Team to agree the terms of the proposed lease to a chosen Registered Provider for a term of 3-5 years, who will let and manage the properties within that period.**
- E. AGREED that any capital premium paid by the Registered Provider to the Council will be retained in an earmarked reserve to be reinvested in the long-term maintenance of the properties.**

**This decision is being taken under Special Urgency provisions of the constitution due to the timescales required for completion.**

31 Aug 2023

**FR08.23 - Budget Adjustments to the Approved Capital programme**

**The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, on behalf of the Leader AGREED to:**

- 1. Release budget of £150,000 from the Special Schools Capital funding towards the conversion of two former changing rooms into class spaces/group rooms at Stony Dean School in Amersham.**

2. **Release budget of £480,000 from the Special Schools Capital funding towards adaptations that are required to enable the Abbey Centre in Aylesbury to be used on a temporary basis to house additional 16 SEND pupils.**
  
3. **Release budget of £210,000 from the Waste budget to commence land site and feasibility work on the New Buckingham Household Recycling Centre (HRC) and transfer station Project.**

For further information please contact Ian Hunt on 01494 421208