



Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee Agenda

Date: Thursday 23 November 2023

Time: 10.00 am

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

Membership:

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

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Agenda Item	Time	Page No
1 Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership		
2 Declarations of Interest		
3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting		5 - 10

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

4 Public Questions

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

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

5 Development Management Performance Review 22-23 10:10 11 - 20

The Select Committee will review the performance of the Council's Development Management functions for the financial year April 2022 to March 2023.

Contributors:

Cllr Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration
Christine Urry, Head of Planning and Development

6 Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029 11:00 21 - 90

Members will consider the draft Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029.

The strategy is out for consultation from 8 November 2023 until 18 December 2023. This consultation can be accessed from the [website](#).

Contributors:

Cllr Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services
Lisa Michelson, Service Director, Housing & Regulatory Services
Duncan Smith, Head of Housing Assets & Development

7 Work Programme 91 - 92

The Committee will discuss and note the Work Programme for future meetings.

8 Date of Next Meeting

15th February 2024 at 10.00am.

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

For further information please contact: Tom Fowler democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
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Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE & HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2023 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.14 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

D Carroll (Chairman), T Hogg, A Baughan, S Chapple, I Darby, T Hunter-Watts, C Poll, D Town, S Wilson, P Brazier, P Cooper and L Smith BEM

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

R Stuchbury, C Harriss, R Matthews, P Strachan and M Winn, L Michelson, J Bromilow, D Eggleton, J Cheston, M Broadbent, S Ali, L Dowson, S Payne and R Dickinson

Agenda Item

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies had been received from Councillors Simon Rouse, Neil Marshall, Nic Brown, Carl Etholen and Qaser Chaudhry

Councillor Peter Brazier was present as substitute for Councillor Simon Rouse.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

5 VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Rachael Matthews, Deputy Cabinet Member for Town Centre Regeneration, Cllr Clive Harriss, Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure, Cllr Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Sophie Payne, Service Director, Culture, Sport & Leisure, Shabnam Ali, Head of Economic Growth, Matthew Broadbent, Senior Economic Development Officer, and Lucy Dowson, Tourism Development Manager for Visit Buckinghamshire, to the meeting.

The following points were highlighted from the presentation.

- The Visitor Economy produced large economic benefits for the county and would be supported further through the Visitor Economy Strategy. The final strategy would be ready by November 2023.
- Bucks domestic tourism had grown less than comparable counties (Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire) over the last decade. The County was mid-table in performance rankings for the Visitor Economy, sitting at 33rd nationally for tourism day visits.
- There were 7,772 visitor rooms in the county, 71% of these were in serviced operations, 19% non-service and 10% provided by campsites. There were 200 attractions in Bucks, with a 'traditional' asset base comprising historic properties and museums. These Hotels and attractions were generally clustered around the south of the county.
- Visitors for the Ridgeway and Waddesdon were compared. It was noted that Waddesdon tended to attract visitors that were relatively local, with Bucks and surrounding counties. The Ridgeway drew visitors from much further away, and across the country, reflecting its status as a National Trail.
- The consultation highlighted the residents and businesses perceptions of the visitor economy and tourism. Residents felt particularly positive about the benefits to the environment and local businesses, but they were concerned about the impact of litter. The response from businesses showed that 63% were smaller organisations with less than 10 employees, with 20% as registered charities.
- Three key themes for Buckinghamshire's visitor economy had been identified, these were Countryside, Walking & Cycling. Culture, Festival, Events & Film Industry. Local Food & Drink. Further large events held in Buckinghamshire would help improve the perception of the County as a place to visit.
- Current economic & financial pressures were negatively affecting the Visitor Economy. It was noted the Visitor Economy Strategy would not be revenue intensive for the Council.

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

- In response to a question regarding comparative local authorities, it was noted that Hertfordshire was particularly advanced in its approach to the Visitor Economy. They had chosen to outsource their Destination Management organisation as part of their strategy.
- Buckinghamshire was ideally located near to London with accessible train links. This represented an opportunity for Bucks and related to the key themes from the strategy - walk, cycle, take time out and relax. There was an opportunity for expansion of glamping sites, which were especially popular among younger generations.
- Cycle tracks were available from train stations to encourage visitors to access attractions. A particular challenge, compared to Oxford, was that attractions in Bucks tended to be spread across the county.
- Advertising in airports and train stations in London were typically not feasible due to expensive fees. However, flyers were distributed to key destinations and hotels in London to encourage tourists to visit bucks. Various options had been explored to ensure the best value for money.
- It was noted that Buckinghamshire was not necessarily associated with its notable tourist attractions. For example, Silverstone and Pinewood, while located in Buckinghamshire were not typically attributed to it. There was an opportunity to build on this as part of the Strategy.
- Data would be available on number of cyclists coming to the county for formal events, but not readily available for smaller clubs that go out informally. Cyclists positively contributed to the visitor economy and were likely to have visited coffee shops and food premises within the county.

- Online resources were typically used to research accommodation and attractions within Bucks. These were also cheaper for a businesses to develop than leaflets and advertisements at physical locations.
- The consultation was shared widely with Community Boards where it would've been further circulated to community and residents groups.

VISITOR ECONOMY PRESENTATION

VISITOR TYPES INFORMATION

6 LOCAL PLAN FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE UPDATE

The Committee received an update from Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Darran Eggleton, Head of Planning Policy and Compliance and John Cheston, Planning Policy Manager.

The following points were highlighted from the report.

- There was a requirement that the Local Plan for Bucks (LP4B) be adopted by April 2025, however the council estimates that this will be adopted by the second quarter of 2027. This was due to the regularly changing national picture for planning, with the introduction of new legislation delayed, as well as the complexities around a county-wide local plan.
- LP4B was proceeding on schedule and within budget. The call for Brownfield sites remains open to maximise the possibility of developing brownfield sites over greenfield.

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

- It was clarified that the Site Assessment referenced in 2.4D would establish availability of land for housing, economic development, and other uses. This feeds into the Housing and Economic Land availability Assessment (HELAA). The Housing and Economic development needs assessment looked at the need for housing over the plan period, as well as commercial development.
- The Employment and Retail land review was undertaken by consultants Lichfield. Furthermore, the Local Housing needs assessment would give a picture of housing and economic development over the Plan period.
- Members were advised the Green Belt doesn't necessarily need to be released for development. 68% of Buckinghamshire was not in the green belt, there could potentially be the scope to meet housing needs in the area without encroaching into the Green Belt. It was indicated Secretary of State, Michael Gove could introduce changes to the NPPF which would remove the requirement for planning authorities to use Green Belt to meet housing needs.
- There were no statutory sanctions in place should a local authority not have a Local Plan within 5 years of their vesting date. The Chief Executive of the Council has written to the Levelling up department for clarification but had not yet received a response. The LPB4 was being developed on schedule as set out in the report.
- An approved Local Plan would be the best defence against planning appeals in the Green Belt. The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the south of the county also offered some protection from unplanned and inappropriate development.
- Data Centres and Solar Farms are new areas of Planning Policy. In development of LP4B, the Council would look to include Policies to regulate their development. Policies in LP4B would encourage the use of renewable energy and sustainable development methods. The Planning team would be working alongside climate colleagues to ensure planning policies developed would go as far as they reasonably can to encourage adaption to climate change.
- SANGS are used to help protect the Chilterns Beechwoods area. A Mitigation strategy would go to Cabinet within a year. The Cabinet Member advised the Member to contact them to

ensure there's follow up.

7 HOUSING STANDARDS UPDATE

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

The following points were highlighted from the report:

- The tragic death of 2 year old Awaab Ishak and the Coroner's report published in November 2022 highlighted to the risk of damp and mould. The Cabinet Member pledged that the Council would do everything possible to minimise the risk of such a tragedy occurring in Buckinghamshire.
- A report came to the 2023 February meeting of the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee detailing the measures taken by Buckinghamshire Council to combat damp and mould.
- In 2022/23 there were 211 service requests relating to excess cold, or damp & mould. This compared to the 99 requests received in 2021/22, demand increased twofold compared to the previous year.
- It was noted that many tenants fear eviction if they raise concerns about damp and mould, however there were legal protections in place to protect residents.
- In collaboration with Opportunity Bucks, which looked at the 10 most deprived areas in Bucks, a project was ongoing to raise awareness of damp & mould, as well as create a referral pathway for partners to pass on information to the Council quickly.
- A 2 phase communications plan was set to launch in early October focusing on prevention, and what actions people can take to manage damp and mould. The team would work closely with other teams to ensure messaging is consistent with energy efficiency messages. Later on in November/December, alongside winter messaging focused on cost of living and heating advice, further information would be disseminated on damp & mould and how to report it.

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

- Households were facing a lot of pressure with cost of living crisis, where necessary affected residents are signposted to the helping hand scheme, as well as suggesting contacting (where appropriate) their social housing provider for particular schemes they have in place.
- Of the 82 improvement notices issued in the previous year referenced in 2.7 of the report, 7 were served to social landlords, and the remainder were to private sector landlords. It is important to note that social and private landlords are not treated differently with respect to enforcement action. At times where a hazard has been identified that may require formal action the social landlord has matters in hand and therefore does not require a notice to be served to remedy the defect.
- Improvement Notices may have varied time lengths attached them. This would be dependent on the works required to be undertaken. Tenants are kept in properties where possible. If compliance isn't forthcoming, works may be commenced by the Council to fix the problem (recovering costs from the landlord afterwards), and a formal civil penalty pursued where appropriate.
- Members were reassured that the Council had a good working relationships with Social Housing Providers, and attended quarterly meetings with providers. Making every visit count was a scheme whereby visitors (e.g. trades people) would be bale to recognise signs of damp & mould and inform the resident/provider.
- As part of Opportunity Bucks programme, work was done with housing associations to ensure that improving standards for residents was addressed for all tenants within the

County. It was noted that when tenants left social housing, if carpets were in good condition, they could be 'gifted' to the next tenant, rather than ripped out. Historically, there had been reluctance to do so as this could indicate carpets were the landlords responsibility.

- The Energy Doctor scheme was highlighted. This scheme allowed eligible households to request a visit from a domestic resource efficiency officer (Energy Doctor) to advise on ways the household can reduce energy consumption. More information was available on the [Buckinghamshire Council website](#).

8 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Work Programme. Members could contact the Scrutiny Officer for the committee with any additional topics they wished to be included in the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing work programme.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place 23rd November 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

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Report to Growth Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee

Date 23rd November 2023
Title Development Management Performance Review 22-23
Author Chrissy Urry (Head of Planning & Development)

1. Background

- 1.1. As part of ongoing monitoring of the Service the *Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee* have requested a review of the performance of the Councils Development Management functions for the financial year April 2022 to March 2023.
- 1.2. It should be noted that at present the service is operating four legacy back-office planning systems, all accessed through legacy IT networks. These are all set up very differently and data is stored differently to follow legacy processes and procedures. As a result, it is not always possible to access authority wide planning data sets.
- 1.3. A project, known as One Uniform, is underway to move all our data onto a single IT system. This should be completed at the end of 2024 at which time access to far more planning data and analysis will be possible.
- 1.4. As a Unitary, Buckinghamshire Council is required to provide the full range of statutory Local Planning Authority (LPA) functions, both District and County. These include:

Service	Activity
Processing Planning Applications, Consultations & Notifications	<p>The planning service, in accordance with legislative requirements and Council Standing Orders, process a huge variety of “planning” or planning related” applications, consultations and prior notifications as appropriate.</p> <p>This is a reactive service which has no control over what is submitted, or when. As a result, it must be ready to receive and deal with around 70 or so very different submission types most with unique legal processing requirements.</p>
Defending Planning Appeals	<p>Ensure that a robust defence of the Council’s position is provided against all planning related appeals.</p> <p>Planning Appeals are considered by the Planning Inspectorate using what they consider to be the most appropriate method;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Householder: fast tracked appeals with no opportunity

Service	Activity
	<p>for the Council to submit a statement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Representations: Council provide a statement in support of their case. • Hearing: written evidence provided and discussed at a meeting chaired by a Planning Inspector. • Public Inquiry: Proofs of Evidence provided, and legal representatives cross examine witnesses in an Inquiry run by a Planning Inspector.
Provision of Planning Advice	<p>Although the provision of planning advice services is discretionary the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at paragraph 39 that: <i>“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community”</i>.</p> <p>As well as a wide range of up-to-date self-serve information being made available on our website, the Council offers a range of charged discretionary planning advice services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning History Check: confirming recent planning history of your property. • Planning Application Advice: informal planning advice, can be part of a formal Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). • Validation Advice Service: Advice from a Planning Technician on how to make your planning application valid.

2. National Position

2.1 The table below provides a comparison of “Planning Applications” for the year 2022/23 against some of our immediate neighbours.

Local Planning Authority	Applications received	Applications decided	Applications withdrawn	Application decisions delegated	Applications given an extension of time
Buckinghamshire	6462	5815	664	5745	3043 (52%)
Hillingdon	2697	2384	216	2298	1140 (48%)
Central Bedfordshire	2097	2104	0	2047	871 (41%)
South Oxfordshire	1995	1959	134	1899	669 (34%)

Local Planning Authority	Applications received	Applications decided	Applications withdrawn	Application decisions delegated	Applications given an extension of time
Windsor and Maidenhead	1877	1752	167	1716	707 (40%)
Milton Keynes	1444	1499	151	1469	636 (42%)
Dacorum	1433	1309	150	1265	307 (23%)
Bedford	1250	1347	91	1306	578 (43%)
Three Rivers	1032	939	123	885	205 (22%)
Slough	721	738	57	730	312 (42%)

Source: Government national planning statistics collected on a quarterly basis

2.2 Buckinghamshire Council is one of the largest Local Planning Authorities in the country as is demonstrated by the volume of applications being processed annually. For context the 6462 applications received as a percentage of population (553,300 as of mid-2021) is 1.16%.

3. Planning Applications

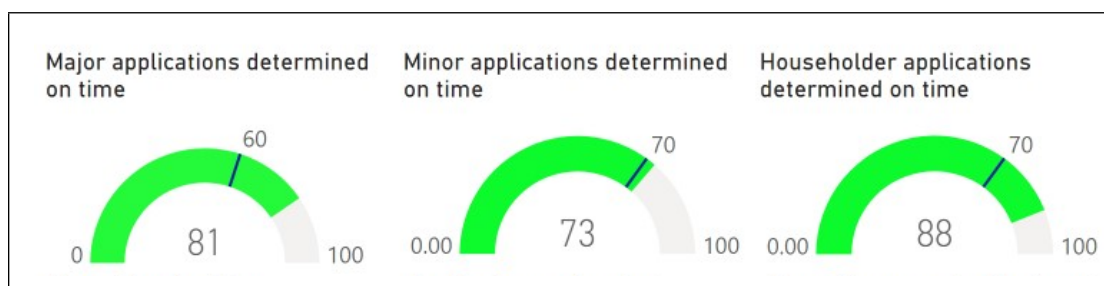
3.1 A range of headline performance data and application statistics for the period requested is provided in Appendix One and Two.

3.2 It should be noted that the figures do not exactly match the nationally reported figures in the table above. Partly as the quarterly reported figures to government occasional change after they have been reported and also because the methodology used for the internal reports is slightly different.

3.3 The graph titled “Applications in progress” shows the number of applications being processed at any one time and also the number of applications being received. Since its creation in 2020 this indicates how the workload of the Council has fluctuated. In particular the number and type of applications (major, minor and other) received.

3.4 This is a situation reflected nationally and is a result of many factors at play: covid, the economic situation (increase in building costs, etc) and uncertainty over the proposed national changes to the planning system being proposed through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

3.5 The headlines are that the targets for the speed of determination of planning applications (major 60%, minor 70% and Householders 70%) are all being met.



- 3.6 Once a planning application has been validated, the local planning authority should make a decision on the proposal as quickly as possible. In any event within the statutory time limit unless a longer period is agreed in writing with the applicant.

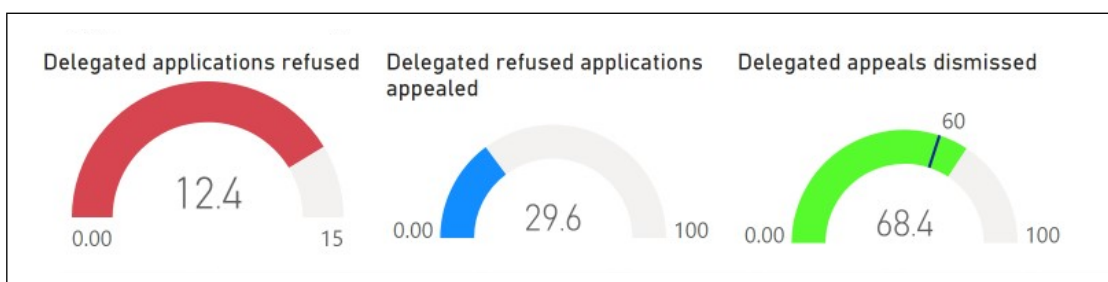
Applicants and agents would generally rather agree a longer period of time to allow an application to be made acceptable and receive approval, than have a quicker refusal within the statutory time limits. As a result, 46% of application have Extensions of Time (EOTs) agreed.



- 3.7 Changes to the application fee system were confirmed on 25th July 2023 by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLHUC) in response to the consultation “**stronger performance of local planning authorities supported through an increase in planning fees**”.
- 3.8 The draft item of legislation has not yet been made as a UK Statutory Instrument One proposal however is to severely restrict, or remove, the ability to agree an EOT. This would be done in an attempt to speed up decision making.
- 3.9 In conjunction with this, the “Planning Guarantee” allows for an applicant to obtain a refund of the planning fee from the local planning authority where a decision on the planning application has not been made within 26 weeks. In order to support more timely decision-making of applications for non-major development, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 will amend the “Planning Guarantee” for applications for non-major development from its current 26 weeks to only 16 weeks by the end of the year.
- 3.10 Such changes in legislation will have a significant impact on the resources required to progress planning applications within the statutory time requirements.

4. Planning Appeals

- 4.2 The headline figures for 2022/23 are very positive.
- 4.3 Where possible the Council work to resolve outstanding issues with as many planning applications as possible. As a result, only 12.4% (733) are refused. This is very much in line with the government advice set out at paragraph 39 of the NPPF (which is set out in full when discussing the provision of planning advice earlier in this report).



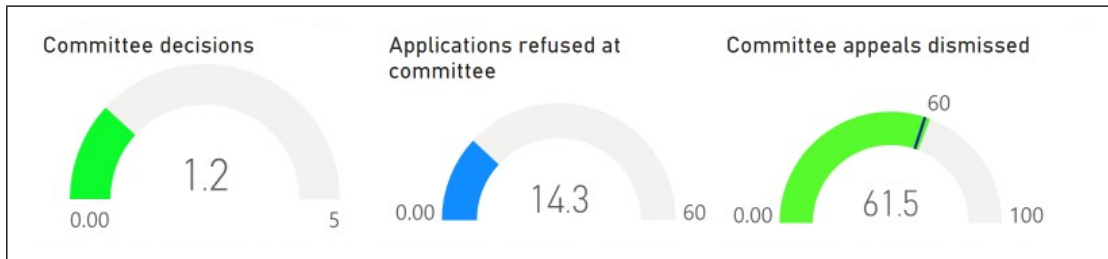
2022/23	
Applications refused	733
Appeals received	225
Appeals dismissed	173

- 4.4 Working hard to reduce the number of planning refusals allows applicants to progress their projects more quickly and help deliver economic benefits while protecting and where possible enhancing the unique built and natural environment Buckinghamshire has to offer.
- 4.5 The Council has to fund the defence of each appeal lodged against one of its planning decisions. So, reducing these in any way we can minimise this resource burden, both in external costs and in officer time diverted from processing planning applications.
- 4.6 Of those relatively small number of refusals, around 30% are subsequently challenged at appeal. The Council robustly defends all appeals and have an impressive success rate of 68.4%.

5. Planning Committee

- 5.2 The role of Planning Committee is to focus on those planning applications which would benefit from scrutiny, such as reviewing recommendations where the weighing and balancing of the issues is considered to be finely balanced. In such cases the Committee is entitled to consider the issues and in giving them different “weight” come to a different decision to that being recommended by the Officers. All Committee decisions must be robust and capable of defence if challenged.
- 5.3 Five Area Planning Committees and a Strategic Planning Committee are operated as required by the Council Constitution. They can determine any “outline”, “full” or “reserved matters” planning applications brought before them.
- 5.4 A few planning applications are automatically considered by Committee. There is however no limit to the number of other planning applications that either Members or Parish and Town Councils can identify as potentially benefiting from Committee scrutiny.
- 5.5 Bringing any planning application before a Planning Committee will however result in additional cost and a delay in a decision being made. To ensure consistency all requests are considered in consultation with the relevant Planning Committee Chairman. This process ensures only those applications which would benefit from additional scrutiny are referred to Committee, allowing the others to be more appropriately determined under delegated powers.

- 5.6 Planning applications should be determined as quickly as possible. The majority of applications are straightforward (either approvals or refusals) and are therefore determined by Planning Officers.
- 5.7 The headline figures show an efficient process being operated. In accordance with good practice only a small percentage of applications are referred to Planning Committee for scrutiny.



- 5.8 Of those considered at Planning Committee only 14.3% are being refused. Of those subsequently challenged at appeal the Council is then successfully defending its position in 60% of cases. The fact that this is slightly lower than the Council wide figure of 68.4% is a reflection of the fact that it is the more challenging and complex applications that are considered by Planning Committee(s).

2022/23	
Committee decisions	75
Applications refused at Committee	10
Delegated following consultation with the Planning Committee Chairman	29

6. Current Trends

- 6.2 Although this report requested was specifically a review of 22/23, Appendix Three provides comparable data for the first six months of 23/24 to allow any trends to be identified.
- 6.3 For the purposes of providing comparable figures, those shown in the first 6 months have been doubled to give an indication of the year end outturn. This allows the trends below to be highlighted but comes with the caveat that planning related workload is very dynamic and fluctuates over a year.
- 6.4 So, while it cannot therefore be assumed with any certainty that the data trends over final 6 months will in fact remain constant to the end of the financial year, this does provide a useful insight in workload and performance.
- 6.5 **Applications:**
 - a) Major applications determined on time remains relatively static at 81% for 22/23 and 79% halfway through 23/24.

- b) Minor applications determined on time has increased from 73% to 79%.
- c) Householder applications determined on time has increased from 88% to 93%.
- d) Assuming the second half of 23/24 was identical to the first, “Major” applications received would be down 9.6% (a drop of 18 applications), “Minor” applications down 12% (a drop of 173), and householders down 15.8% (a drop of 678).

This drop in planning applications being submitted releases capacity and would account for the improved speed of determination.

- e) Applications refused at committee remains static at 14.3% and 15%.

6.6 Appeals:

- a) 68.6% of appeals following a delegated decision were dismissed for 22/23, with this rising even higher to 79.2% in the first six months of 23/24.
- b) Appeals successfully defended following a Planning Committee refusal has also increased from 88% to 93%.
- c) The number of appeals received are estimated to drop by 25% (225 in 22/23 down to an estimated 168 for 23/24).

6.7 Overall, the trend is of performance improving against a slight decrease in workload.

Appendices

- **Appendix One** – Buckinghamshire Council planning application statistics 2022/23
- **Appendix Two** – Applications in progress 2022/23
- **Appendix Three** - Buckinghamshire Council planning application statistics 2023/24 (April-Sept)

Appendix One - Buckinghamshire Council planning application statistics 2022/23

Major applications determined on time



Committee decisions

Minor applications determined on time



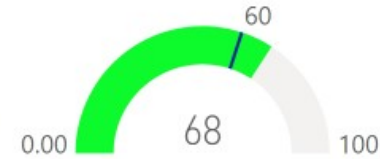
Applications refused at committee

Householder applications determined on time

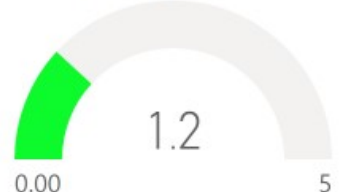
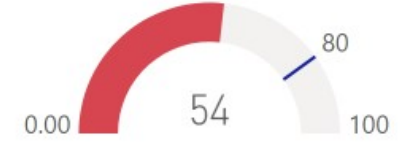


Committee appeals dismissed

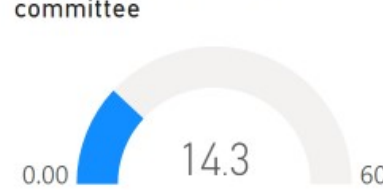
Other applications determined on time



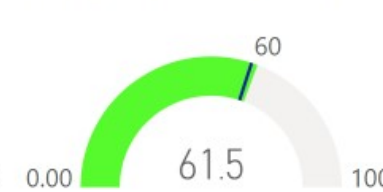
Decisions issued without extension of time



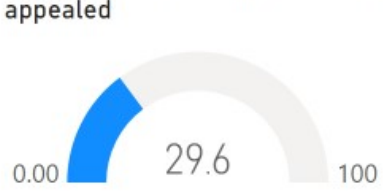
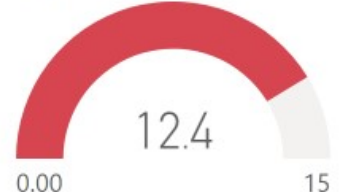
Delegated applications refused



Delegated refused applications appealed



Delegated appeals dismissed



Committee decisions	Delegated in consultation with Chair
75	29
Applications refused at committee	Appeals received for committee refusals
10	1
Appeals dismissed	
5	

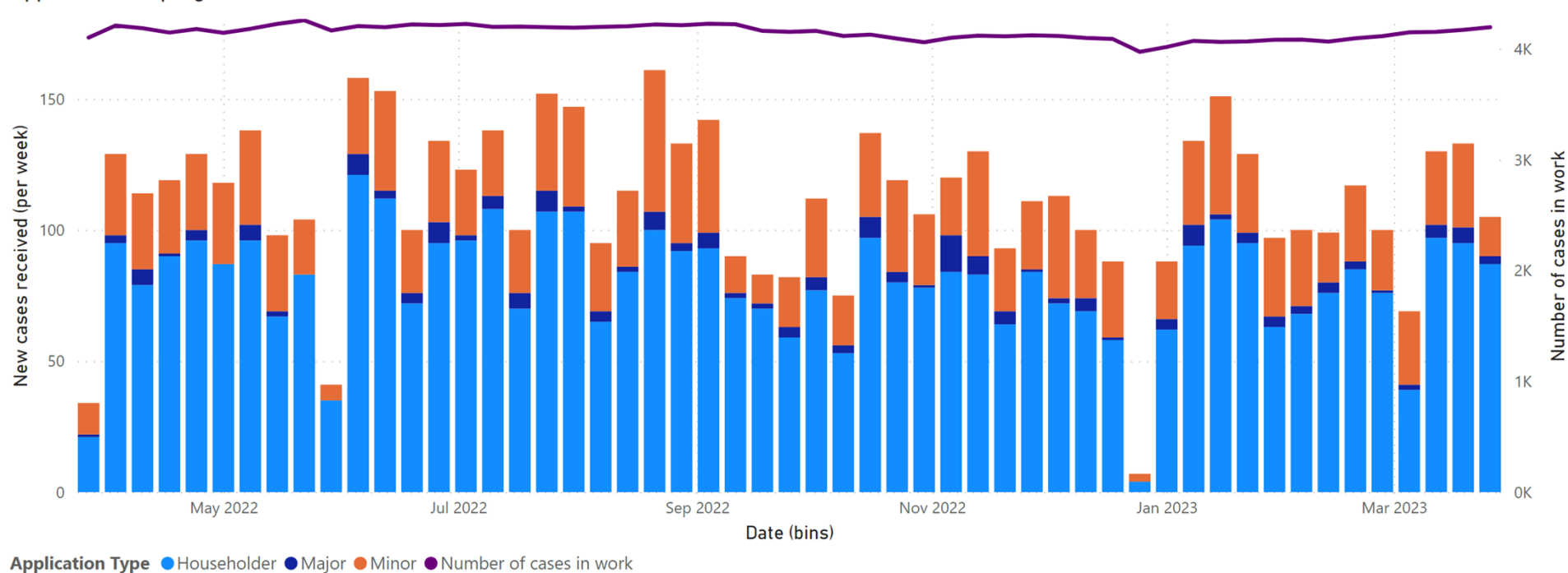
Major applications received	Minor applications received	Householder applications received	Other applications received	All applications received	Applications refused	Appeals received	Appeals dismissed
188	1441	4278	6505	12412	733	225	173

AREA	
■	Select all
■	Minerals & Waste
■	North & Central
■	South & East
■	West



Appendix Two – Applications in progress 2022/23

Applications in progress



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The government monitor the performance of every planning authority under three main application definitions.

Householder application types - definition

- Householder developments are defined as those within the curtilage of a dwelling house and include extensions, conservatories, loft conversions, dormer windows, alterations, garages, car ports or outbuildings, swimming pools, walls, fences, domestic vehicular accesses including footway crossovers, granny annexes, porches and satellite dishes.

Major application - definition

'Major development' involves any one or more of the following;

- The provision of dwelling/houses where –
 - The number of dwelling/houses to be provided is 10 or more: or the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the number of dwelling/houses to be provided is 10 or more.
- The provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1000 square metres or more: or
- Development carried out on a site having an area of one hectare or more.

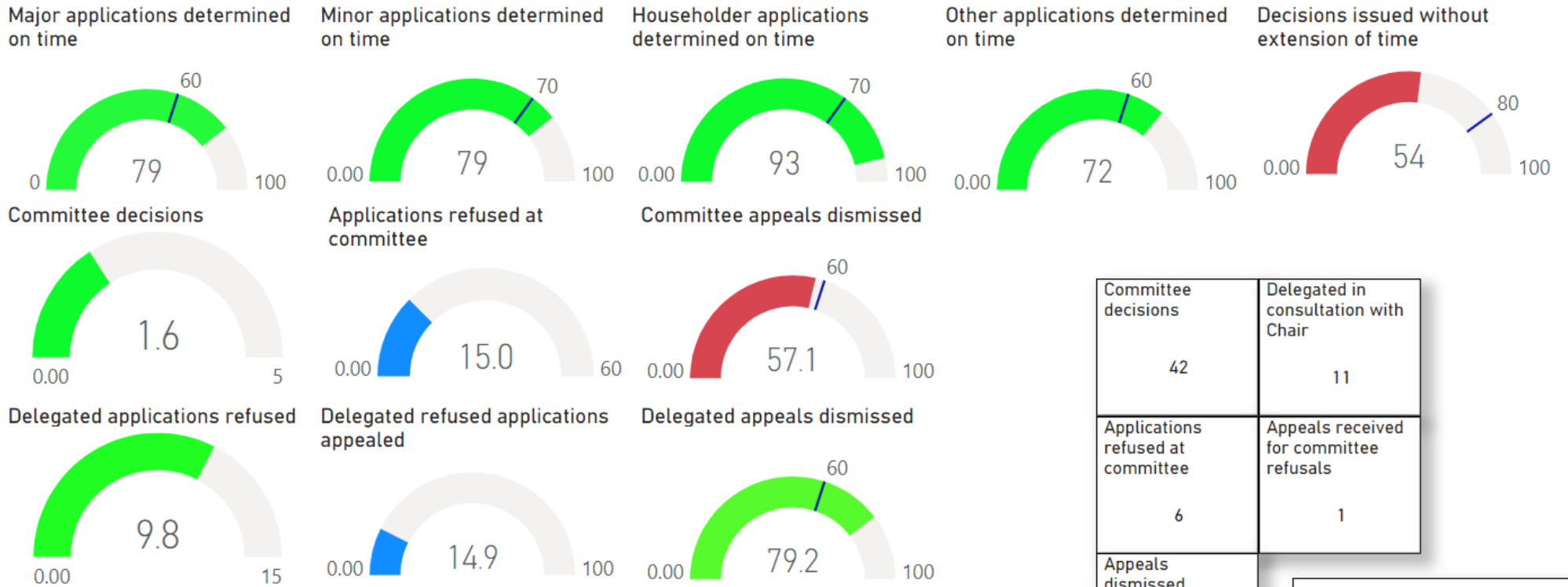
Minor application - definition

'Minor development' involves any one or more of the following;

- For dwelling/houses, minor development is one where the number of dwellings/houses to be provided is between one and nine inclusive on a site having an area of less than one hectare.
- Where the number of dwellings/houses to be provided is not known, a site area of less than 0.5 hectares should be used as the definition of a minor development.

For all other uses, a minor development is one where the floor space to be created is less than 1,000 square metres or where the site area is less than one hectare.

Appendix Three - Buckinghamshire Council planning application statistics 2023/24 (April-Sept)



Committee decisions	Delegated in consultation with Chair
42	11
Applications refused at committee	Appeals received for committee refusals
6	1
Appeals dismissed	
3	

Major applications received	Minor applications received	Householder applications received	Other applications received	All applications received	Applications refused	Appeals received	Appeals dismissed
85	634	1800	2975	5494	248	84	76

AREA

- Select all
- Minerals & Waste
- North & Central
- South & East
- West



Report to Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee

Date:	23 November 2023
Title:	Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029
Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services
Contact officer:	Lisa Michelson – Service Director
Ward(s) affected:	All.
Recommendations:	It is recommended that the draft Housing Strategy is considered and comments made as appropriate
Reason for decision:	Although there is no legal obligation to introduce a housing strategy, a Buckinghamshire-wide housing strategy will have a positive impact upon both affordable housing delivery and housing conditions, and upon other corporate priorities.

1. Executive summary

1.1 This new single Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy has been developed to replace the district-based strategies that were carried forward when unitary authority was formed in April 2020. This single strategy will aim to:

- Ensure a co-ordinated approach to housing activities and interventions in Buckinghamshire, linking county-wide policies and strategies to deliver Buckinghamshire Council’s ambitions.

- Maximise opportunities and resources to meet housing needs and aspirations, setting out a framework for the use of council resources and partnering opportunities.
- Promote the role of housing in delivering corporate priorities and wider objectives, including health and wellbeing, climate change, and sustainable economic growth.
- Ensure Buckinghamshire Council meets its housing -related obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and meeting a diverse range of housing needs.

1.2 The housing strategy has been drafted for consideration ahead of a public and stakeholder consultation which will take place in November and December 2023. The strategy covers the five-year period 2024 to 2029. Within each of the three priority areas, a set of actions has been devised. The action plan will be revised and updated on an annual basis to ensure that the strategy remains agile and responsive to a range of changing circumstances.

2. Content of report

2.1 The draft Housing Strategy, in both full version and executive summary, is in **Appendix 1**. It has been devised for the five-year period 2024 to 2029. The vision for the housing strategy is the following:

A strong housing offer that provides affordable, accessible, sustainable and suitable choices at all life stages.

2.2 The three updated strategic priorities for the Housing Strategy are:

- Priority One - Understanding the housing needs of our diverse population.
- Priority Two - Better Homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need.
- Priority Three - New Homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate.

2.3 The Critical Success Factors for each of the priorities are:

- i) Understanding the housing needs of our diverse population – we will:
- Understand the housing issues and needs.
 - Enable the fair and consistent allocation of tenancies for affordable housing via Bucks Home Choice Register.
 - Adopt an effective and proactive approach to address Temporary Accommodation (TA) and homelessness increases in number of placements and costs.

- Identify, specify, and deliver housing options for groups with particular needs.
- ii) Better Homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need – we will:
 - Ensure that Registered Providers are actively maintaining and improving the quality of their homes.
 - Ensure that the Private Rented Sector maintains and improves the quality of rental properties.
 - Work to ensure that best use is made of existing social housing.
 - Improve the accessibility of new and existing homes.
- iii) New Homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate – we will:
 - Support and enable Registered Providers to deliver new affordable homes, including for those with special needs.
 - Explore the use of local authority assets and resources for the purposes of delivering additional new housing.
 - Ensure that residential development (including affordable housing) is considered in regeneration strategies, and in brownfield and redevelopment proposals for mixed use developments where appropriate.

2.5 Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee is asked to consider the draft Housing Strategy and comment as appropriate, including recommending any amendments that the Committee wishes to see.

3. Other options considered

3.1 **Not to produce a Housing Strategy for Buckinghamshire** – This is not recommended. The housing strategy is an opportunity to marshal and co-ordinate the resources of the Council and its partners and stakeholders to produce effective housing-related interventions.

4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 Although there is no legal obligation upon local authorities to produce a housing strategy, it is relevant to the following legislation:

- Housing Act 1996 – legal obligations for the allocation of social housing and assisting households who are potentially or have become homeless.

- Homelessness Act 2002 – a legal obligation to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping review and strategy.
- Housing Act 2004 – improvement of private sector housing conditions.
- Localism Act 2011 – a legal obligation to produce a Tenancy Strategy.
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 – a legal obligation upon local authorities to prevent or relief homelessness.

4.2 Housing delivery budgets: the council invests annual revenue of £7 million to support its housing function and has a £1.6 Capital Programme for affordable housing investment. The council invests any developer funding (Section 106) which it receives for affordable housing (funds currently standing at more than £5 million) and the council may be using its ability to borrow to invest in new temporary accommodation units.

4.3 Financial implications: the delivery of this strategy will be met from existing budgets in the council.

5. Corporate implications

- Property – The Housing Strategy includes broad content and recommended actions relating to the potential use of Council-owned property and assets to support the delivery of affordable housing.
- Human Resources – The Housing Strategy does not have relevance to Human Resources.
- Climate change – the Housing Strategy is relevant to the following corporate priority: Improving the Environment. It will link to the following corporate strategy: Buckinghamshire Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021.
- Sustainability – the Housing Strategy is relevant to the following corporate priority: Improving the Environment. It will link to the following corporate strategy: Buckinghamshire Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021.
- Equality – The Housing Strategy is relevant to the following corporate priority: Protect the Vulnerable. The Housing Strategy will require an Equality Impact Assessment.
- Data – The Housing Strategy does not have relevance to Data Protection.
- Value for money – The Housing Strategy does not seek any specific financial commitments, so Value for Money is not a relevant consideration.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder has been consulted on the drafting of the Housing Strategy and his comments and feedback have been incorporated in the initial draft.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 The draft Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029 has been drawn up from engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and partners. A series of workshops were held in the autumn of 2022 to explore the priorities and the actions that would sit beneath them. In addition, participants were asked to consider the commitments they would make to support the delivery of the new strategy. These initial consultation exercises have assisted in the drawing up of the priorities and the action plan.
- 7.2 A wide range of sources have been used to provide information on housing need and condition in Buckinghamshire, including the Census 2021, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) data, Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) information on earnings.
- 7.3 Two All-Member briefings on the housing strategy for Buckinghamshire councillors were held on Monday 6 November. The attendees at the briefings provided comments and feedback on the draft housing strategy.
- 7.4 A formal public and stakeholder consultation on the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy will be conducted between 8 November and 18 December 2023. Next steps and review
- 7.5 The formal public and stakeholder consultation exercise, taking place between 8 November and 18 December 2023, will provide comments and feedback on the contents and proposals within the housing strategy.

8. Background papers

- 8.1 Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029, full version and executive summary (see Appendix 1)

9. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 9.1 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 to democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

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HOUSING STRATEGY 2024 - 2029

Executive summary



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Appendix

OUR VISION IS:

A strong housing offer that provides affordable, accessible, sustainable and suitable choices for all life stages.

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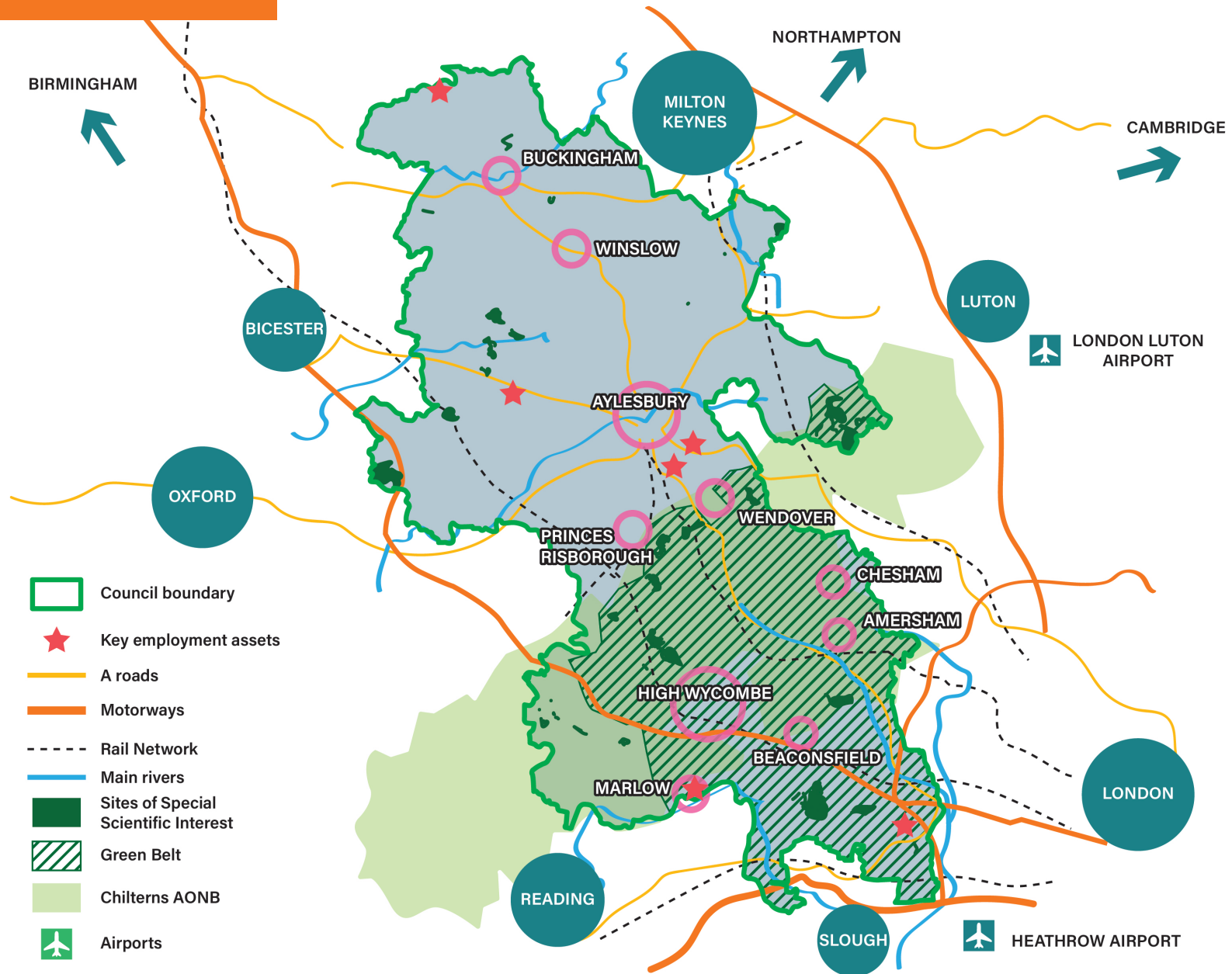
Images on front cover:

Top right - Queensmead Road, High Wycombe

Bottom right - Aylesbury



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



THIS IS THE FIRST COUNTYWIDE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The strategy has been developed with the input and support of a wide range of partners and will be delivered through continuing partnership working.

Buckinghamshire is a richly diverse, enterprising, and attractive county located in the heart of a growing and innovative region. Boundaries stretch from Greater London in the south to the East Midlands in the north, from Oxfordshire in the west across to Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire in the east. With a population of over half a million people, the county is one of the traditional Home Counties, bringing with it great connections into central London and ready access to international gateways at Heathrow and London Luton Airports. From quintessential rural villages and a backdrop of beautiful countryside to urban based living in our network of diverse towns, Buckinghamshire is a sought-after location. It is a beautiful place to live and work, famous for its natural environment and its quality of life. As a place to raise a family, we benefit from top-performing schools, family friendly communities, and a variety of accessible cultural attractions on our doorstep. Residents of Buckinghamshire enjoy active healthy lifestyles with health and wellbeing better than the English average.





Kite Meadows, Buckinghamshire

We are a thriving county, but like many other places within the UK, this creates challenges for people looking for housing. Buckinghamshire has house prices and rents which are higher than the English average.

Parts of our county are fast-changing - demographically, economically, and environmentally. This puts even more pressure on the availability of affordable housing and highlights a growing need for a healthy built and natural environment. There is a need to make sure future growth is accommodated in well-connected sustainable locations, providing high-quality, low carbon, affordable, accessible, and adaptable homes. We must ensure our future housing need is met through a greater proportion of high quality accessible, low-carbon and digitally enabled homes, including a range of tenure for all, in the right locations. We must employ methods to minimise the barriers for accessing these homes, such as affordability, accessibility, and housing condition.

Buckinghamshire Council has clear corporate priorities: to strengthen our communities, protect the vulnerable, improve the environment, and increase prosperity. Housing is vital to delivering these. A secure and affordable place to live provides a foundation for our ability to take part in society – to work, to learn, to be healthy and to develop a sense of community. This strategy sets out how all the partners involved in delivering housing in Buckinghamshire will work together to ensure that the housing offer delivers the housing our residents need.

This Housing Strategy is a vital step to delivering those commitments. It sets out in one place the housing challenges we face, the opportunities we can seize, and how we are all responding to these.

THE HOUSING STRATEGY PRIORITIES

PRIORITY ONE

Responding to the needs of our diverse population

PRIORITY TWO

Better homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need

PRIORITY THREE

New homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate

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Longwick, Buckinghamshire

PRIORITY ONE:

Responding to the needs of our diverse population

Buckinghamshire Council will:

Understand and respond to the housing issues and needs.

Enable the fair, consistent, and effective allocation of tenancies for affordable housing via Bucks Home Choice Register.

Adopt an effective and proactive approach to address Temporary Accommodation (TA) and homelessness increases in number of placements and costs.

Identify, specify, and deliver housing options for groups with particular needs.

Critical Success Factors:

- Housing Strategy Adoption.
- Local Housing Needs Assessment for the Local Plan (Expected 2024).
- Deliver a new Allocations Policy.
- Deliver a new Tenancy Strategy.
- Achieve a 100% compliance with our nomination rights with registered providers.
- Ensure applications are processed within three months from submission.
- On average, placements in 'Nightly Paid' accommodation are kept to a set maximum level.
- Maximise 'Substantive Placements' for Temporary Accommodation with a target of 90%+ occupancy.
- Ensure effective 'Move on' options are in place to reduce Temporary Accommodation placement durations.
- Options development for specialised housing solutions for care leavers, key worker persons leaving the Armed Forces, older people, persons with a physical and/or learning disability or mental health needs.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

- The proportion of people living in Buckinghamshire who are aged 65 or over increased as a percentage of the population from 16.6% in 2011 to 18.7% in 2021 – this is in the context of the overall increase in population. The overall number of persons aged 65 and over rose from 84,151 in 2011 to 103,713 in 2021, a 23.2% increase. The proportion of people aged 50 – 65 also increased during the same period.
- The number of older people living in Buckinghamshire is expected to increase in line with averages for England as a whole: a 23% increase in those aged 65+ and a 42% increase in those aged 85+. This means there will be increased demand for housing suitable for older people; many will not require specialist schemes but may need homes suitable for those with reduced mobility.
- According to the Census 2021, a significant change from 2011 to 2021 is the increased number of those who are retired in Buckinghamshire – the figure almost doubled with the percentage increasing from 13.3% to 21.6%. There was a corresponding drop in the number of people who were in employment.
- Census information shows the growth of the number of older people in Buckinghamshire. This is likely to correspond with an increase the demand for Disabled Facilities Grants to improve the accessibility of accommodation and enable households to remain in their existing accommodation for longer. An increase in demand has also been noted for adapted accommodation among households containing children with disabilities.



Buckingham

- Research has shown that there is a continuing high need for appropriate homes for people with mental health needs, people with learning disabilities and/or autism, and people with physical disabilities. This will likely correspond to an increase in demand for supported housing, independent living, and extra care facilities.
- There are also other groups with a particular housing need including: keyworkers such as in emergency services and health, those leaving the Armed Forces, and adults with special educational needs.
- In line with national trends, the number of households requiring temporary accommodation has significantly increased over the past year.
- There has been an increase in refugee and asylum seeker households in housing need in Buckinghamshire since April 2022. By early 2023 the numbers who were resident in the county were as follows: 1,607 Ukrainian guests (763 households), 56 Afghan relocated citizens (15 households), 73 unaccompanied asylum seekers aged under 18, and a total of 188 asylum seekers.



Sidney Close, Buckinghamshire

OUR ACTION

- We are managing the social housing allocations process through Bucks Home Choice.
- We are providing a homelessness and housing advice service under Part VII of the Housing Act.
- We are providing temporary accommodation to homeless households.
- We are producing an updated Allocations Policy for Buckinghamshire. This will ensure robust processes are in place for delivery of the Bucks Home Choice scheme and allocations process, including clear workflows and regular monitoring and cross checking of applications to ensure consistency of approach and fairness.
- We are meeting with Registered Providers on a regular basis and as part of the Buckinghamshire Housing Management Forum.
- We are working with Registered Partners and private developers to deliver suitable adapted/adaptable dwellings through planning obligations and other opportunities.
- We will produce a new Tenancy Strategy including guidelines for registered providers on Affordable Rent levels.
- We will develop a Supported Housing Strategy which will include prospective housing delivery for older persons, persons with physical disabilities, and other types of supported housing.
- We will achieve the targets for developing affordable housing options as set out in the Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care Accommodation Market Analysis November 2022.
- We will work with Registered Providers and other housing developers to understand the role played by sheltered housing and other accommodation for older people in the area and whether some housing schemes should be remodelled to better meet current needs. Consider innovative new options for specialist housing (for example, extra-care villages with a dementia inclusive design).
- With our partners, we will produce a housing options guide for younger people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); ensure appropriate advice and signposting is available to make good choices.
- We will explore ways of increasing the number of one bed properties available in the private and social rented sectors which would be suitable for young people, including care leavers under the agreed Pathways Protocol.

PRIORITY TWO: Better Homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need

Buckinghamshire Council will:

Ensure that Registered Providers are actively maintaining and improving the quality of their homes.

Ensure that the Private Rented Sector maintains and improves the quality of rental properties.

Work to ensure that best use is made of existing housing.

Improve the accessibility of new and existing homes.

Critical Success Factors:

- All Registered Providers have current asset management strategies and investment plans.
- All Registered Providers have a net zero carbon road map in place.
- Enforcement and subsequent remediation of housing condition issues as they emerge, in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy.
- Effective and Enforced Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing through intelligence-led enforcement with key partners.
- Under-occupation strategy for social housing developed.
- Effective Allocations Policy and Tenancy Strategy.
- Disability Facilities Grants Programme Delivery Deliver accessible and adaptable new housing through planning decisions.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

- From 2035, all homes in the Social Rented Sector must meet a specified level of energy efficiency (Energy Performance Certificate Level C). Social landlords in Buckinghamshire are undertaking energy efficiency programmes to achieve this.
- From 2025, compliance with the Future Homes Standard will become mandatory. New homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80 per cent fewer carbon emissions than homes built under 2012 regulations.
- From November 2022, providers of affordable housing are required to provide detailed information on their methods for identifying properties affected by damp and mould, and their strategies for responding to customer complaints for remedying cases of damp and mould.
- Energy prices have increased significantly. The energy price cap (the maximum that an average consumer should have to pay) more than doubled between October 2021 and October 2022.
- Increases in materials and labour costs correspond to increases in costs for the refurbishment of existing stock and new construction.
- The Renters Reform Bill, including abolition of fixed term assured shorthold tenancies, imposing obligations on landlords and temporary accommodation. Introduced in Parliament in May 2023, the Bill includes new duties for enforcement for housing authorities.
- The introduction of a new Decent Homes Standard is progressing, which, when introduced, has the potential to have a significant financial implication for all landlords.
- Recent expansions of permitted developed for residential conversions can lead to poor quality developments for example, poor location and lack of amenities, poor standard of conversion, low level of noise insulation etc.



Building energy efficient homes

OUR ACTION

- We are supporting the Buckinghamshire Council Energy Doctor scheme (funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund).
- We are supporting sustainable warmth upgrade grant programmes, such as the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) and Solar Together, which are which are being carried out by Buckinghamshire Council.
- Through our work with houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), we are delivering increased levels of safe and secure accommodation for single people.
- The Buckinghamshire Disabilities Facilities Grants and Housing Improvement and Adaptations Policy is being updated to ensure that it continues to achieve the following:
 - Improve and promote the physical and mental health of residents.
 - Prevent accidents.
 - Enable residents to live safely at home, as independently as possible, for longer.
 - Reduce hospital admissions and enable speedy discharge from hospital.
 - Make best use of adapted and adaptable accommodation.
- We will work with Registered Providers and other care/support agencies to agree best ways to tackle under-occupation, including incentives where appropriate in order to generate more turnover in family-sized accommodation.
- With our partners, we will produce a housing options guide for younger people with SEND; ensure appropriate advice and signposting is available to make good choices.
- We will explore ways of increasing the number of one bed properties available in the private and social rented sectors which would be suitable for young people, including care leavers under the agreed Pathways Protocol.

PRIORITY THREE: New Homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate

Buckinghamshire Council will:

Support and enable Registered Providers in delivering new affordable homes, including for those with special needs.

Explore the use of local authority assets and resources for the purposes of delivering additional new housing.

Ensure that Residential Development (including Affordable Housing) is considered in Regeneration Strategies, brownfield and redevelopment proposals for mixed use developments where appropriate.

Critical Success Factors:

- Delivery of Affordable Housing (Target 500 new affordable homes per year).
- Achieve site targets for Affordable Housing in negotiations with developers in line with council policies and the Local Plan.
- Supporting site identification and funding options/opportunities (for example grants and Section 106 monies) in line with council policies.
- New Temporary Accommodation development.
- Using Section 106 monies to support the development of Affordable Housing.
- Incorporating Council held assets in redevelopment proposals (Target 500 by 2028).
- Consider different delivery vehicles (e.g., Joint Ventures or other collaborative models).
- Local Plan and site policies for residential development that prioritise brown before green and include strong Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 Affordable Housing requirements.
- Working with Homes England including pursuing funding opportunities as they become available.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

- House prices and market rents in Buckinghamshire are present affordability challenges to households. House prices and rents are relatively lower in the two major towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe (see Appendix Two, Housing Supply – Market Housing).
- The demand for affordable homes of various types outpaces the annual delivery of new homes and re-lets, in some recent years by a factor of 3:1.
- Increasing cost of living pressures and lack of local affordable housing options corresponds with an increased number of adult children living with parents for longer.
- Private landlords are under new pressures with increasing interest rates and legislation changes such as the Rental Reform Act.
- The new Local Plan will set out the number, size, tenure type and location of new homes in the area, a proportion of which will be affordable. The plan will reflect the levels of housing need in different parts of the County and also reflect the availability of sites suitable for housing use. The Local Plan will also identify the need for accessible housing under Part M of the building regulations. This action plan therefore focuses on activity which can be delivered ahead of the implementation of the Local Plan, and on activity which will build on the Local Plan once it has been agreed.



Queensmead Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

OUR ACTION

- We are working with Registered Providers to facilitate delivery of new schemes, helping to identify sites and secure funding as appropriate.
- We are supporting Registered Providers with funding for garage-site developments.
- We are ensuring that housing (including affordable housing) is included in regeneration plans by the Council and partners.
- We will work proactively to ensure that the planning process accelerates delivery of affordable housing applications in acceptable locations.
- We will explore opportunities for the Council to deliver more housing utilising its land, property and financial assets, including any potential role for Consilio, the council's property company. (Consilio was set up by South Bucks Council in 2017 as a wholly owned local authority trading company to allow the council to facilitate income generation. It has now transferred to Buckinghamshire Council. It owns a limited number of property assets).
- We will identify three Council-owned sites to bring forward for new development and complete these developments by 2027. Three new developments completed and let by December 2027.
- We will agree priorities for capital funding (including commuted sums) and implement a list of priorities for section 106 monies to be developed.



HOUSING STRATEGY 2024 - 2029



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1. Background for the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy
2. The county of Buckinghamshire
3. Council Policy Context
4. Buckinghamshire Council's Housing Offer
5. The Housing Strategy Priorities
6. Delivery

Appendix One: Buckinghamshire Housing Context

Appendix Two: Affordable Housing Types, Funding Mechanisms and Delivery

Appendix Three: Glossary

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FOREWORD



The concern over people having safe and secure homes has been in the news on a regular basis over the last few years and there are tangible reminders of this within most of our towns and cities. To have a safe and secure home is the bedrock of any modern society and the basis of which we can succeed and thrive as individuals.

To deliver our commitment to making Buckinghamshire the best place to live, we must address the challenges that we face, along with our close partners, to bring around change. We must develop our understanding of the issues our residents face and how we respond to them.

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Our population continues to grow, so we need a strong housing strategy which identifies not just the issues but the solutions and opportunities. In order to understand and face our emerging challenges the council and all partners need to take a proactive approach in stimulating the right kind of investment in housing solutions, to create good quality homes and to enhance the role of housing in place shaping.

The Housing Strategy sets out clear priorities for Buckinghamshire which are to enable a strong housing offer that provides affordable, accessible, sustainable, and suitable choices at all life stages. We must work collaboratively and flexibly to adapt to new opportunities and challenges.

I would like to thank everyone who took part in the preparation and consultation for this strategy. Having all the views of our residents and key partners with their shared their experiences and knowledge of how, through a partnership approach, we can make a difference in Buckinghamshire is valuable.

Mark Winn

Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services



Kite Meadows, Buckinghamshire

OUR VISION IS:

A strong housing offer that provides affordable, accessible, sustainable and suitable choices for all life stages.

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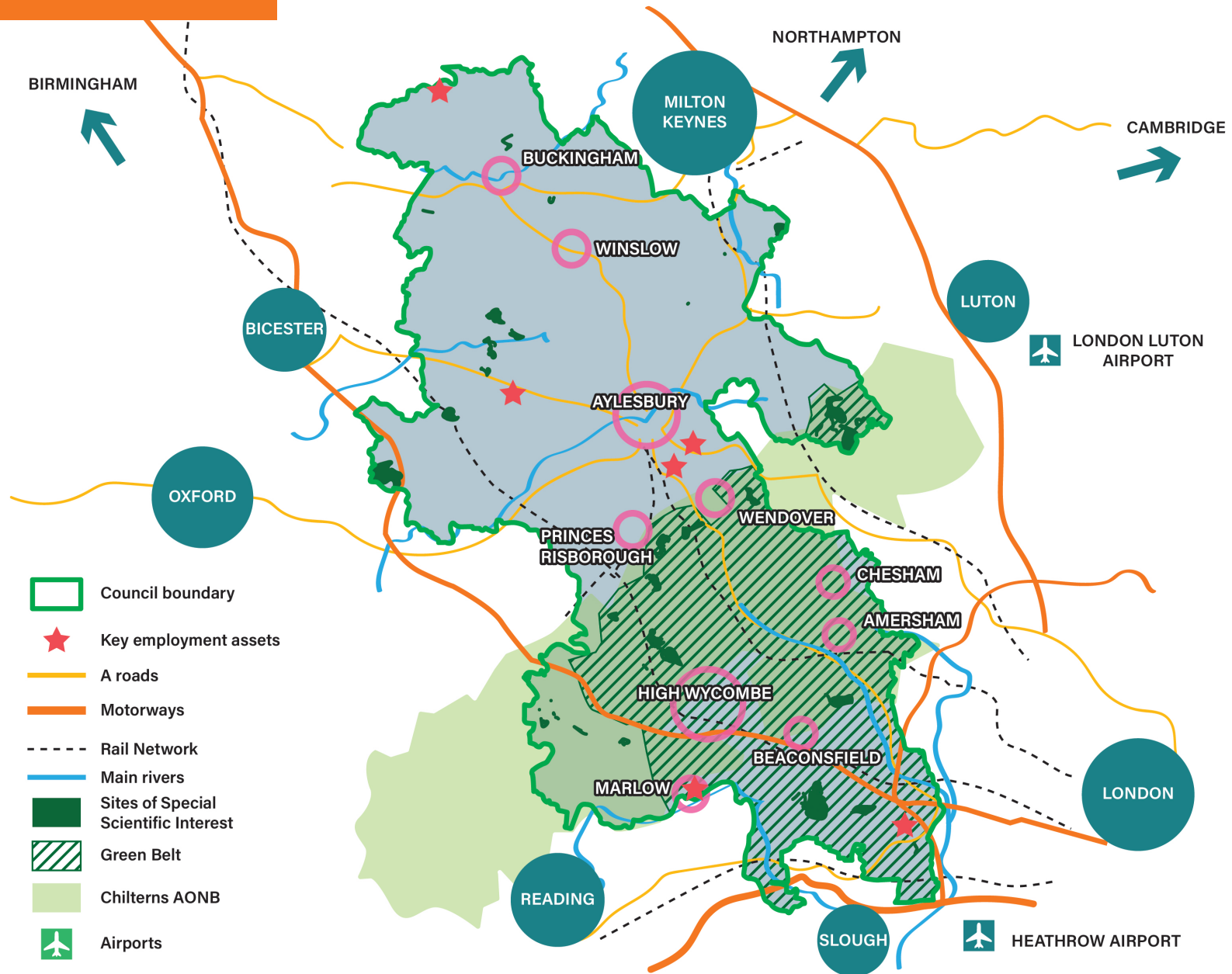
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Bottom right - Aylesbury



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



THIS IS THE FIRST COUNTYWIDE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The strategy has been developed with the input and support of a wide range of partners and will be delivered through continuing partnership working.

Buckinghamshire Council has clear corporate priorities: to strengthen our communities, protect the vulnerable, improve the environment, and increase prosperity. Housing is vital to delivering these. A secure and affordable place to live provides a foundation for our ability to take part in society – to work, to learn, to be healthy and to develop a sense of community. The strategy sets out how all the partners involved in delivering housing in Buckinghamshire will work together to ensure that the housing offer delivers the housing our residents need.

This Housing Strategy is a vital step to delivering those commitments. It sets out in one place the housing challenges and opportunities and how we are all responding to these.

The Housing Strategy has been developed through the following:

- a) Building on the work to produce the Buckinghamshire Affordable Housing Position Statement which was adopted in May 2022.
- b) Consultation with stakeholder organisations including representatives of statutory organisations and voluntary organisations in Buckinghamshire.
- c) Key Housing data:
 - i) An overview of Buckinghamshire, including the results of the Census 2021 and the indices of multiple deprivation 2019.
 - ii) Housing demand, including homeless statistics, housing register and allocations data, research into housing needs among special needs groups in Buckinghamshire.
 - iii) Housing conditions, including information from registered providers on stock condition and government data on Energy Performance Certificates and fuel poverty.
 - iv) Housing affordability, including earnings data and house price/rental data.
- d) Public and stakeholder consultation.



I. BACKGROUND FOR THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HOUSING STRATEGY

- 1.1. Producing a comprehensive strategy with our partners provides the opportunity to set out our approach to tackling housing needs and to continue to build on Buckinghamshire's reputation as a great place to live and work. The delivery of a housing strategy will improve quality of life, help more people benefit from the opportunities our county has to offer, and contribute towards the achievement of Buckinghamshire Council's corporate objectives.
- 1.2. Buckinghamshire Council has a statutory duty (required by law) to provide certain services: these include managing a housing register, assisting households under homelessness legislation, providing an adaptations service for disabled persons, and compiling data on affordable housing need and supply. The council also undertakes supporting and enabling roles: this includes supporting our registered housing provider partners to develop new affordable homes and to improve their existing homes.
- 1.3. Buckinghamshire Council is not a Registered Provider and does not own or directly manage affordable housing stock. All four of the legacy district councils transferred their housing stock to Registered Providers between 1988 and 2011. Therefore, Buckinghamshire Council plays a role in enabling new affordable housing development and ensuring that Registered Providers and private landlords provide an affordable and well maintained the housing stock.
- 1.4. The role of the housing strategy is to:
 - I) Ensure a co-ordinated approach for the council and key partners to the housing offer in Buckinghamshire.
 - II) Provide a framework for identifying and agreeing key priorities across the council and partners in order to facilitate delivery and/or allocation of resources.
 - III) Promote the role of housing in delivering wider priorities and objectives including improved health and wellbeing, tackling homelessness, and supporting sustainable economic growth.
 - IV) Ensure that Buckinghamshire Council meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.



1.5. Our Partners and Stakeholders

Organisation:

Tenants' and Residents' associations, Citizens' Panel, other organisations

Registered Providers who own and/or manage affordable housing in Buckinghamshire.

Statutory organisations: Homes England, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department for Work and Pensions, Bucks Health Care Trust, Oxford Health, Connections Support.

Voluntary organisations:
Citizens Advice Bucks, Helping Hands, Bucks Mind, Wycombe Rent Deposit Scheme, Aylesbury Homeless Action Group, Wycombe Connections.

Role:

- The organisations who represent the residents of Buckinghamshire and provide comments and feedback on proposals.

- Registered Providers develop a majority of new affordable housing in Buckinghamshire. They are also members of the Buckinghamshire Housing Development Forum and the Buckinghamshire Housing Management Forum.

- To monitor Buckinghamshire's performance in facilitating the delivery of affordable housing and housing-related support services.

- The organisations who work in partnership with the housing teams to support the delivery of specialist services for households with particular needs.

2. THE COUNTY OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

2.1. Buckinghamshire is a richly diverse, enterprising, and attractive county located in the heart of a growing and innovative region. Boundaries stretch from Greater London in the south to the East Midlands in the north, from Oxfordshire in the west across to Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire in the east. With a population of over half a million people, the county is one of the traditional Home Counties, bringing with it great connections into central London and ready access to international gateways at Heathrow and London Luton Airports. From quintessential rural villages and a backdrop of beautiful countryside to urban based living in our network of diverse towns, Buckinghamshire is a sought-after location.

2.2. Buckinghamshire is a beautiful place to live and work, famous for its natural environment and its quality of life. As a place to raise a family, we benefit from top-performing schools, family friendly communities, and a variety of accessible cultural attractions on our doorstep. Residents of Buckinghamshire enjoy active healthy lifestyles with health and wellbeing better than the English average.

2.3. We are a thriving county, but like many other places within the UK, this creates challenges for people looking for housing. Buckinghamshire has house prices and rents which are higher than the English average. In September 2022, the average house price in the market overall was £420,500 and the average cost of a home within the cheapest 25 per cent of the housing market was £320,000. The average income for an individual in the county is £37,300.

2.4. 50 per cent of Buckinghamshire is either an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Green Belt which limits opportunities for sustainable and appropriate growth locations.

2.5. Parts of our county are fast-changing, demographically, economically, and environmentally putting even more pressure on the availability of affordable housing and highlighting a growing need for a healthy built and natural environment.

There is a need to make sure future growth is accommodated in well-connected sustainable locations, providing high-quality, low carbon, affordable, accessible, and adaptable homes. We must ensure our future housing need is met through a greater proportion of high quality accessible, low-carbon and digitally enabled homes, including a range of tenure for all, in the right locations. We must employ methods to minimise the barriers for accessing these homes, such as affordability, accessibility, and housing condition.

2.6. The Census 2021 has shown the following population and economic trends in the county over the 2011 to 2022 period:

- The population of Buckinghamshire grew from 505,283 in 2011 to 553,078 in 2021, a 10% increase.
- The number of households in Buckinghamshire grew from 200,727 in 2011 to 220,329 in 2021, a 10% increase.
- The number of homes in Buckinghamshire grew from 208,334 in 2011 to 226,612 (including empty homes) in 2021, a 9% increase.
- The number of residents aged 50 and over has increased from 36% of the population in 2011 to 39% of the population in 2021.
- The most frequent types of household in Buckinghamshire are a single household headed by a couple who had dependent children at 20%, a household consisting of a single person aged under 66 at 14%, and a household consisting of a single person aged 66 and over at 12%.
- Managers, directors, senior officials and those in professional occupations made up 41% of the economically active population in 2021, an increase from 35% in 2011. However, 25% of the economically active population were employed in the lower paid sectors of care, leisure, sales and customer services, machine operatives and elementary occupations.

The population of Buckinghamshire has become substantially more ethnically diverse between 2011 and 2021 with the percentage of 'white British' decreasing from 81.1% to 72.0% over that time period.

The following statistics show how Buckinghamshire compares with the national picture:

Number of residents	Census 2011 - number and %	Census 2021 - number and %	% increase or decrease
England	53,012,456	56,490,045	+6.6%
Buckinghamshire	505,283	553,081	+9.5%

Number of households	Census 2011 - number and %	Census 2021 - number and %	% increase or decrease
England	22,063,368	23,436,086	+6.2%
Buckinghamshire	200,727	200,327	+9.8%

Number of persons aged 65+	Census 2011 - number and %	Census 2021 - number and %	% increase or decrease
England	8,660,529 16.3%	10,401,303 18.4%	+20.1%
Buckinghamshire	84,151 16.6%	103,713 18.7%	+23.2%

The population of Buckinghamshire, in terms of both people and households, grew faster between 2011 and 2021 than in England as a whole. The growth in the number of persons aged 65 and over is particularly significant.

3. COUNCIL POLICY CONTEXT

This Housing Strategy will complement our corporate direction.

[Buckinghamshire Corporate Plan 2020-2025](#) – sets out the following priorities:

- Increasing prosperity
- Strengthening communities
- Improving the environment
- Protecting the vulnerable

The Housing Strategy can contribute to the achievement of all four priorities within the Buckinghamshire Council Corporate Plan 2020-2025.

[The Buckinghamshire Local Plan](#) – will set out the framework for where development will happen and where it will be prevented and constrained, creating the right kind of good quality homes in the right locations. In 2023 Buckinghamshire Council is consulting with communities on a vision and objectives for the Local Plan. The timetable for the completion, publication and implementation of the Local Plan is dependent upon proposed government planning reforms.

The Housing Strategy will contribute information on housing need and demand in Buckinghamshire and will provide details of the districts where housing needs are most acute.

[Buckinghamshire's Economy: Succeeding as a place, succeeding as a county](#) - Buckinghamshire has a strong £14.6bn economy with the 11th highest GDP per head in the country. There are 34,400 business, 281,000 jobs, and £3.8 billion goods and £1.7 billion services in exports. The county's economic unique selling point is based around four key economic sectors which are space, creative and digital, high-performance tech, and medtech. According to the Census 2021, 41 per cent of Buckinghamshire's working age population had a degree or a higher degree.

However, the following have been identified as constraints to future economic growth:

- Housing pressures – this particularly affects those who work in sectors such as care, retail, hospitality and leisure, emergency services, education, and health



- High levels of traffic congestion
- Poor digital connectivity, particularly in rural areas

[Buckinghamshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025](#) contains the following priority which is relevant to the Housing Strategy:

- Improving places and helping communities to support healthy ageing.

The Housing Strategy will include a range of actions to improve health and wellbeing, including accommodation options for older people, improving the conditions, accessibility and energy efficiency of homes, and planning supported homes for people with particular needs. This is also informed by the work through the Learning Improvement Network and the market analysis regarding housing needs in the county (November 2022).

[Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework](#) – Under its Corporate Plan objectives, a key priority for is the regeneration of town centres in Buckinghamshire especially for the three largest towns which are Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham.

The Housing Strategy will include a range of actions to support the economic development and environmental aspects of Buckinghamshire’s regeneration strategies.

[Opportunity Bucks](#) – Under the Buckinghamshire Levelling Up Framework, ‘Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All’ seeks to address disparities between Buckinghamshire communities. It provides a framework for bringing together parties to tackle local priorities which will make a difference for local residents. Two relevant priorities within the programme are:

- Standard of living
- Health and wellbeing

The programme focuses upon six wards in High Wycombe, three wards in Aylesbury and one ward in Chesham.

The Housing Strategy will include a range of actions to support the levelling-up framework of Opportunity Bucks.

[Buckinghamshire Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021 -](#) aims to reduce carbon emissions in activities across the county.

Priority 2 within the Housing Strategy, focusing on Better Homes, will include actions to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes in Buckinghamshire, and promote high sustainability in new build homes.

[Buckinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2025](#) – priorities within this strategy are:

- To provide advice, information, and support.
- To identify those at risk of homelessness
- To support households to find alternative accommodation.
- To prevent anyone from sleeping rough.
- To maximise the supply of affordable rented homes.

[The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2025](#) complements the housing strategy. It has its own action plan which focuses specifically upon homelessness issues.

[Buckinghamshire First Homes Interim Position Statement](#) – First Homes is a government scheme, introduced in 2021, to assist first-time buyers and key workers onto the property ladder. The First Homes Interim Position Statement sets out Buckinghamshire Council’s policy on the development of this type of affordable housing which consists of a home priced at a percentage discount from market level.

[Buckinghamshire Council Housing Allocations Policy](#) - Bucks Home Choice is our scheme for allocating affordable housing for rent in Buckinghamshire. Because the demand for affordable housing exceeds the supply, the Buckinghamshire Council Housing Allocations Policy sets out priorities for applicants. This enables the affordable homes that become available to be allocated fairly and transparently.

[Buckinghamshire Tenancy Strategy](#) – outlines what Buckinghamshire Council expects from Registered Providers in terms of the delivery of affordable housing, tenancies, rents and allocations.

4. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S HOUSING OFFER

Buckinghamshire Council is responsible for delivering a wide range of housing services:

Housing Strategy and Development

- Creating, delivering, and monitoring Buckinghamshire's housing-related strategies and policies.
- Enabling an increase in supply of affordable housing so it meets the needs of residents.
- Developing partnerships with developers, Registered Providers, statutory organisations and voluntary organisations.
- Working in partnership with Planning Policy to support the development of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan.

Achievements 2022-2023

- **303** affordable homes for rent completed.
- **196** affordable homes for low-cost home ownership completed.
- **499** total number of affordable homes completed.

Homelessness and Housing Advice

- Meeting the obligations of Buckinghamshire Council under the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018, processing applications for assistance under this legislation.
- Commissioning temporary accommodation for homeless households.
- Assisting households in accessing and maintaining accommodation in the private rented sector.
- Providing an outreach service for Rough Sleepers.
- Working with partners to support persons with mental health issues or who suffer from drug and alcohol abuse.
- Providing a service for clients with complex needs in partnership with Social Care, Adult Care and Children's Services.

Achievements 2022-2023

- **1,386** cases of homelessness prevented.
- **873** cases of homelessness relieved.
- **380** homes in the Buckinghamshire private rented sector scheme.
- **37** households assisted into the private rented sector.

Housing Options

- Meeting the obligations of Buckinghamshire Council under the Housing Act 1996 to operate a social housing allocations policy.
- Administering Bucks Home Choice (Buckinghamshire Council's choice-based lettings system).
- Working in partnership with the Registered Providers of social housing in Buckinghamshire to re-house households via the Bucks Home Choice scheme.

Achievements 2022-2023

- **1,541** affordable homes for rent allocated.
- **38** care leavers assisted.

Housing Standards

- Delivering home adaptations for qualifying people with physical and sensory issues funded through the £4 million Disabled Facilities Grant budget.
- Administering loans for home improvement and energy efficiency grants.

Achievements 2022-2023

- **232** Disabled Facilities Grants completed.
- **£128,000** advanced in Flexible Home Improvement Loan payments.
- **27** 'Better Housing, Better Health' grants for heating and insulation improvements for residents with health conditions which make them vulnerable to the cold completed.

In addition, the Environmental Health teams at the Council monitor conditions in both the social and the private housing sector.

5. THE HOUSING STRATEGY PRIORITIES

PRIORITY ONE

Responding to the needs of our diverse population

PRIORITY TWO

Better homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need

PRIORITY THREE

New homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate



Longwick, Buckinghamshire

PRIORITY ONE:

Responding to the needs of our diverse population

Buckinghamshire Council will:

Understand and respond to the housing issues and needs.

Enable the fair, consistent, and effective allocation of tenancies for affordable housing via Bucks Home Choice Register.

Adopt an effective and proactive approach to address Temporary Accommodation (TA) and homelessness increases in number of placements and costs.

Identify, specify, and deliver housing options for groups with particular needs.

Critical Success Factors:

- Housing Strategy Adoption.
- Local Housing Needs Assessment for the Local Plan (Expected 2024).
- Deliver a new Allocations Policy.
- Deliver a new Tenancy Strategy.
- Achieve a 100% compliance with our nomination rights with registered providers.
- Ensure applications are processed within three months from submission.
- On average, placements in 'Nightly Paid' accommodation are kept to a set maximum level.
- Maximise 'Substantive Placements' for Temporary Accommodation with a target of 90%+ occupancy.
- Ensure effective 'Move on' options are in place to reduce Temporary Accommodation placement durations.
- Options development for specialised housing solutions for care leavers, key worker persons leaving the Armed Forces, older people, persons with a physical and/or learning disability or mental health needs.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

- The proportion of people living in Buckinghamshire who are aged 65 or over increased as a percentage of the population from 16.6% in 2011 to 18.7% in 2021 – this is in the context of the overall increase in population. The overall number of persons aged 65 and over rose from 84,151 in 2011 to 103,713 in 2021, a 23.2% increase. The proportion of people aged 50 – 65 also increased during the same period.
- The number of older people living in Buckinghamshire is expected to increase in line with averages for England as a whole: a 23% increase in those aged 65+ and a 42% increase in those aged 85+. This means there will be increased demand for housing suitable for older people; many will not require specialist schemes but may need homes suitable for those with reduced mobility.
- According to the Census 2021, a significant change from 2011 to 2021 is the increased number of those who are retired in Buckinghamshire – the figure almost doubled with the percentage increasing from 13.3% to 21.6%. There was a corresponding drop in the number of people who were in employment.
- Census information shows the growth of the number of older people in Buckinghamshire. This is likely to correspond with an increase the demand for Disabled Facilities Grants to improve the accessibility of accommodation and enable households to remain in their existing accommodation for longer. An increase in demand has also been noted for adapted accommodation among households containing children with disabilities.
- Research has shown that there is a continuing high need for appropriate homes for people with mental health needs, people with learning disabilities and/or autism, and people with physical disabilities. This will likely correspond to an increase in demand for supported housing, independent living, and extra care facilities.



- There are also other groups with a particular housing need including: keyworkers such as in emergency services and health, those leaving the Armed Forces, and adults with special educational needs.
- In line with national trends, the number of households requiring temporary accommodation has significantly increased over the past year.
- There has been an increase in refugee and asylum seeker households in housing need in Buckinghamshire since April 2022. By early 2023 the numbers who were resident in the county were as follows: 1,607 Ukrainian guests (763 households), 56 Afghan relocated citizens (15 households), 73 unaccompanied asylum seekers aged under 18, and a total of 188 asylum seekers.

The Council already has a strategy in place for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping which was adopted in March 2022 (as stated under section 3). This incorporates a detailed action plan on preventing and tackling homelessness that is currently being delivered covering groups such as rough sleepers, persons suffering from domestic abuse, ex-offenders and persons leaving hospital. Therefore, this Action Plan below does not incorporate specific measures on preventing and tackling homelessness. For further information on these measures please refer to the [Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2025](#).



Sidney Close, Buckinghamshire

OUR ACTION

- We are managing the social housing allocations process through Bucks Home Choice.
- We are providing a homelessness and housing advice service under Part VII of the Housing Act.
- We are providing temporary accommodation to homeless households.
- We are producing an updated Allocations Policy for Buckinghamshire. This will ensure robust processes are in place for delivery of the Bucks Home Choice scheme and allocations process, including clear workflows and regular monitoring and cross checking of applications to ensure consistency of approach and fairness.
- We are meeting with Registered Providers on a regular basis and as part of the Buckinghamshire Housing Management Forum.
- We are working with Registered Partners and private developers to deliver suitable adapted/adaptable dwellings through planning obligations and other opportunities.
- We will produce a new Tenancy Strategy including guidelines for registered providers on Affordable Rent levels.
- We will develop a Supported Housing Strategy which will include prospective housing delivery for older persons, persons with physical disabilities, and other types of supported housing.
- We will achieve the targets for developing affordable housing options as set out in the Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care Accommodation Market Analysis November 2022.
- We will work with Registered Providers and other housing developers to understand the role played by sheltered housing and other accommodation for older people in the area and whether some housing schemes should be remodelled to better meet current needs. Consider innovative new options for specialist housing (for example, extra-care villages with a dementia inclusive design).
- With our partners, we will produce a housing options guide for younger people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); ensure appropriate advice and signposting is available to make good choices.
- We will explore ways of increasing the number of one bed properties available in the private and social rented sectors which would be suitable for young people, including care leavers under the agreed Pathways Protocol.

PRIORITY TWO: Better Homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need

Buckinghamshire Council will:

Ensure that Registered Providers are actively maintaining and improving the quality of their homes.

Ensure that the Private Rented Sector maintains and improves the quality of rental properties.

Work to ensure that best use is made of existing housing.

Improve the accessibility of new and existing homes.

Critical Success Factors:

- All Registered Providers have current asset management strategies and investment plans.
- All Registered Providers have a net zero carbon road map in place.
- Enforcement and subsequent remediation of housing condition issues as they emerge, in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy.
- Effective and Enforced Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing through intelligence-led enforcement with key partners.
- Under-occupation strategy for social housing developed.
- Effective Allocations Policy and Tenancy Strategy.
- Disability Facilities Grants Programme Delivery Deliver accessible and adaptable new housing through planning decisions.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

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- From 2035, all homes in the Social Rented Sector must meet a specified level of energy efficiency (Energy Performance Certificate Level C). Social landlords in Buckinghamshire are undertaking energy efficiency programmes to achieve this.
- From 2025, compliance with the Future Homes Standard will become mandatory. New homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80 per cent fewer carbon emissions than homes built under 2012 regulations.
- From November 2022, providers of affordable housing are required to provide detailed information on their methods for identifying properties affected by damp and mould, and their strategies for responding to customer complaints for remedying cases of damp and mould.
- Energy prices have increased significantly. The energy price cap (the maximum that an average consumer should have to pay) more than doubled between October 2021 and October 2022.
- Increases in materials and labour costs correspond to increases in costs for the refurbishment of existing stock and new construction.
- The Renters Reform Bill, including abolition of fixed term assured shorthold tenancies, imposing obligations on landlords and temporary accommodation. Introduced in Parliament in May 2023, the Bill includes new duties for enforcement for housing authorities.
- The introduction of a new Decent Homes Standard is progressing, which, when introduced, has the potential to have a significant financial implication for all landlords.
- Recent expansions of permitted developed for residential conversions can lead to poor quality developments for example, poor location and lack of amenities, poor standard of conversion, low level of noise insulation etc.



Building energy efficient homes

OUR ACTION

- We are supporting the Buckinghamshire Council Energy Doctor scheme (funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund).
- We are supporting sustainable warmth upgrade grant programmes, such as the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) and Solar Together, which are which are being carried out by Buckinghamshire Council.
- Through our work with houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), we are delivering increased levels of safe and secure accommodation for single people.
- The Buckinghamshire Disabilities Facilities Grants and Housing Improvement and Adaptations Policy is being updated to ensure that it continues to achieve the following:
 - Improve and promote the physical and mental health of residents.
 - Prevent accidents.
 - Enable residents to live safely at home, as independently as possible, for longer.
 - Reduce hospital admissions and enable speedy discharge from hospital.
 - Make best use of adapted and adaptable accommodation.
- We will work with Registered Providers and other care/support agencies to agree best ways to tackle under-occupation, including incentives where appropriate in order to generate more turnover in family-sized accommodation.
- With our partners, we will produce a housing options guide for younger people with SEND; ensure appropriate advice and signposting is available to make good choices.
- We will explore ways of increasing the number of one bed properties available in the private and social rented sectors which would be suitable for young people, including care leavers under the agreed Pathways Protocol.



High Wycombe

PRIORITY THREE: New Homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate

Buckinghamshire Council will:

Support and enable Registered Providers in delivering new affordable homes, including for those with special needs.

Explore the use of local authority assets and resources for the purposes of delivering additional new housing.

Ensure that Residential Development (including Affordable Housing) is considered in Regeneration Strategies, brownfield and redevelopment proposals for mixed use developments where appropriate.

Critical Success Factors:

- Delivery of Affordable Housing (Target 500 new affordable homes per year).
- Achieve site targets for Affordable Housing in negotiations with developers in line with council policies and the Local Plan.
- Supporting site identification and funding options/opportunities (for example grants and Section 106 monies) in line with council policies.
- New Temporary Accommodation development.
- Using Section 106 monies to support the development of Affordable Housing.
- Incorporating Council held assets in redevelopment proposals (Target 500 by 2028).
- Consider different delivery vehicles (e.g., Joint Ventures or other collaborative models).
- Local Plan and site policies for residential development that prioritise brown before green and include strong Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 Affordable Housing requirements.
- Working with Homes England including pursuing funding opportunities as they become available.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

- House prices and market rents in Buckinghamshire are present affordability challenges to households. House prices and rents are relatively lower in the two major towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe (see Appendix Two, Housing Supply – Market Housing).
- The demand for affordable homes of various types outpaces the annual delivery of new homes and re-lets, in some recent years by a factor of 3:1.
- Increasing cost of living pressures and lack of local affordable housing options corresponds with an increased number of adult children living with parents for longer.
- Private landlords are under new pressures with increasing interest rates and legislation changes such as the Rental Reform Act.
- The new Local Plan will set out the number, size, tenure type and location of new homes in the area, a proportion of which will be affordable. The plan will reflect the levels of housing need in different parts of the County and also reflect the availability of sites suitable for housing use. The Local Plan will also identify the need for accessible housing under Part M of the building regulations. This action plan therefore focuses on activity which can be delivered ahead of the implementation of the Local Plan, and on activity which will build on the Local Plan once it has been agreed.



Queensmead Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

OUR ACTION

- We are working with Registered Providers to facilitate delivery of new schemes, helping to identify sites and secure funding as appropriate.
- We are supporting Registered Providers with funding for garage-site developments.
- We are ensuring that housing (including affordable housing) is included in regeneration plans by the Council and partners.
- We will work proactively to ensure that the planning process accelerates delivery of affordable housing applications in acceptable locations.
- We will explore opportunities for 'build to rent' schemes, including the use of institutional investment.
- We will explore opportunities for the Council to deliver more housing utilising its land, property and financial assets, including any potential role for Consilio, the council's property company. (Consilio was set up by South Bucks Council in 2017 as a wholly owned local authority trading company to allow the council to facilitate income generation. It has now transferred to Buckinghamshire Council. It owns a limited number of property assets).
- We will identify three Council-owned sites to bring forward for new development and complete these developments by 2027. Three new developments completed and let by December 2027.
- We will agree priorities for capital funding (including commuted sums) and implement a list of priorities for section 106 monies to be developed.



6. DELIVERY

This Housing Strategy, while delivered locally, relies on close partnership working with central Government departments and other agencies such as Homes England. Alongside the actions taken forward in Buckinghamshire, we will also be in dialogue on a number of key issues including:

Planning

- A more workable national planning system in which a well co-ordinated Local Plan can operate.
- The potential for a new Infrastructure Levy to deliver affordable housing development.

Regeneration

- Acknowledgement of regeneration schemes with Buckinghamshire's Registered Providers (Homes England announced that the Affordable Homes Programme for 2021-2026 could contribute to the funding of regeneration schemes).

Sustainability

- Funding for affordable housing stock in Buckinghamshire through further rounds of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- Further legislation on the design and sustainability standards of new housing of all tenures.

Overall Funding

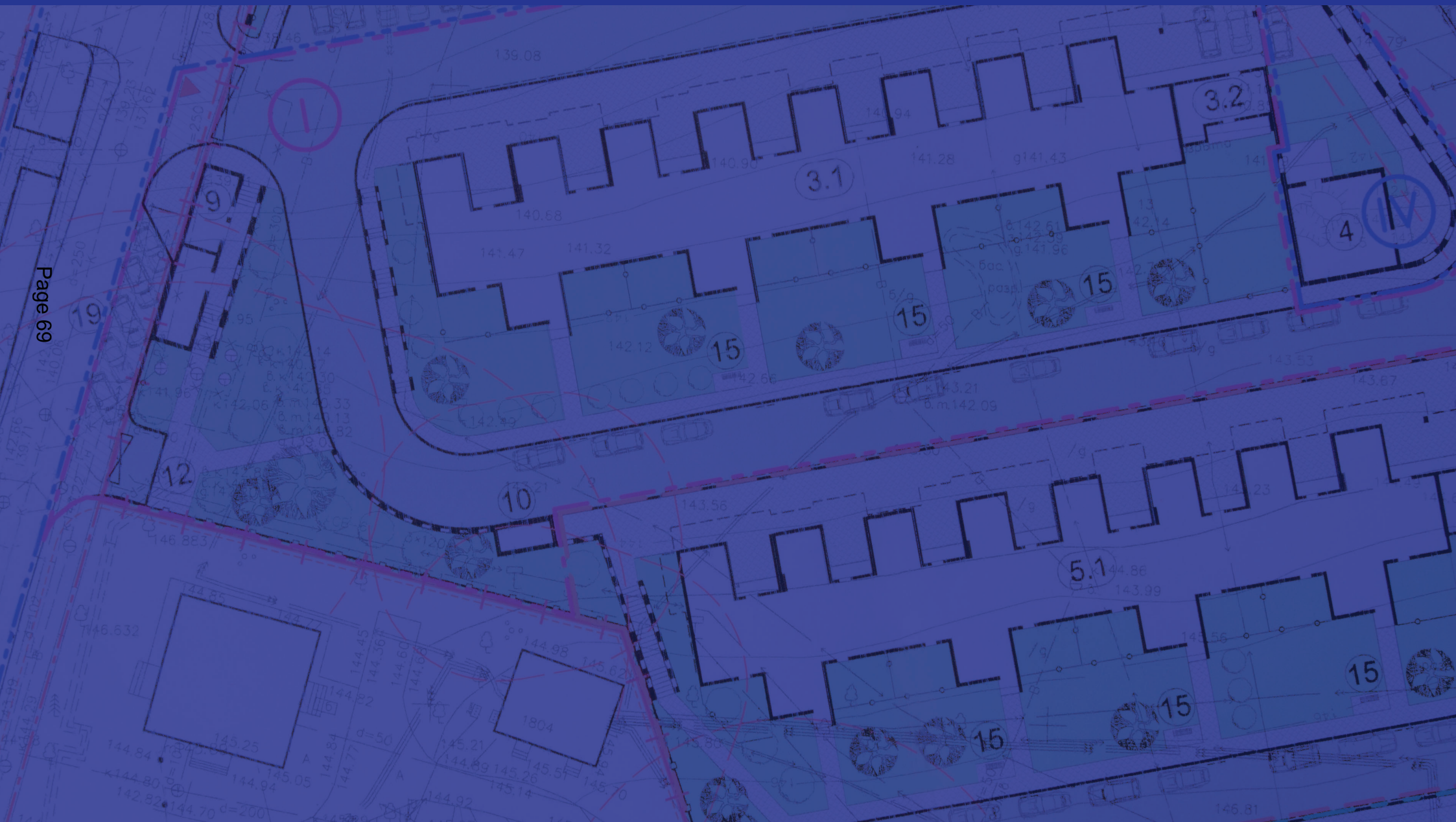
- Funding for affordable housing through the Homes England Affordable Homes Programme from 2026.
- Resources to assist with the implementation of new legislation, including the Renters Reform Bill and the Supported Housing Strategy.

This strategy will be reviewed annually.

Financial implications

Some of the actions will have financial implications for Buckinghamshire Council. The costs of each project will be considered individually within the context of the financial year in which they are introduced.

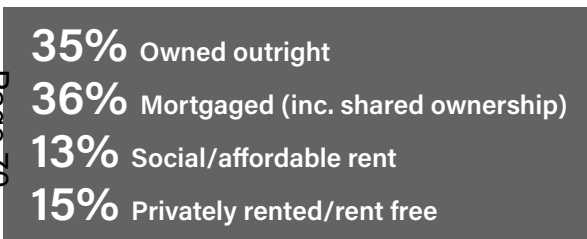
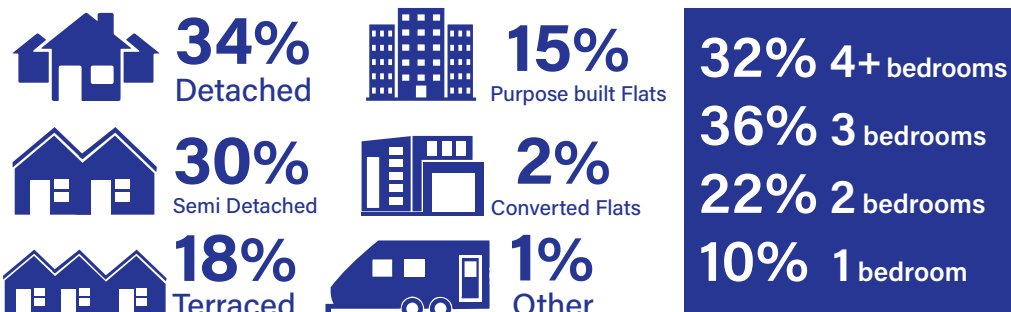
APPENDICES



Appendix One - Buckinghamshire Housing Context

1) Dwelling stock

220,328 Occupied Homes in 2021



October 2022 **5,581** homes in Buckinghamshire classified as empty - of which 1,986 long term empty (unoccupied for 6 months or more)

2) Housing Supply - Market housing

Buckinghamshire has consistently high house prices and private rents, making the open market largely unaffordable to households in receipt of average incomes, even for homes priced in the at the lowest quarter of the market (lowest quartile).

Median and Lower Quartile house prices for year ending September 2022:

Dwelling type	Median price	Lower Quartile price
All	£420,500	£320,000
Detached	£745,000	£562,500
Semi-detached	£425,000	£368,000
Terraced	£345,000	£296,000
Flat/Maisonette	£230,000	£190,000

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

The following table shows that average lower quartile house prices in Buckinghamshire in September 2022 are considerably higher for both the England and the South East average:

Dwelling type	Buckinghamshire	South East region	England
All	£320,000	£269,950	£180,000
Detached	£562,500	£469,000	£310,000
Semi-detached	£368,000	£325,000	£185,000
Terraced	£296,000	£265,000	£145,000
Flat/Maisonette	£190,000	£167,000	£140,000

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Average monthly private rents in Buckinghamshire October 2021 to September 2022:

Dwelling type	Lower Quartile	Median average	Upper Quartile
Studio	£600	£650	£700
1 bedroom	£760	£825	£900
2 bedroom	£915	£1,050	£1,250
3 bedroom	£1,208	£1,395	£1,650
4+ bedroom	£1,650	£2,100	£2,750

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

The following table shows the variation of average monthly rent levels in locations across the county in March 2023:

Dwelling type	Aylesbury	High Wycombe	Amersham	Chesham
1 bedroom	£895	£1,000	£1,250	£950
2 bedroom	£1,200	£1,380	£1,465	£1,300
3 bedroom	£1,475	£1,450	£2,000	£1,500
4 bedroom	£1,850	£1,900	£2,425	£2,500

Source: Home.co.uk

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the maximum amount of housing-related benefit which can be claimed by tenants renting from a private landlord. LHA rates are based on private market areas being paid by tenants in a Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA). LHA rates have been frozen since April 2020. As private rents have risen, the shortfall between private rents and LHA levels has widened.

The two biggest BRMAs in Buckinghamshire are Aylesbury Vale BRMA and Chilterns BRMA. The following two tables shows the monthly shortfalls between LHA rates as at February 2023 and average private rents between April 2021 and March 2022.

Aylesbury Vale BRMA (private rents are usually lower than the county average in this BRMA)

Size of home	Average monthly rent	Maximum monthly amount of which can be claimed	Monthly Shortfall (market rent minus Local Housing Allowance)
1 bedroom	£800	£673	£127
2 bedroom	£1,000	£798	£202
3 bedroom	£1,350	£1,047	£303
4+ bedroom	£2,122	£1,396	£728

Chilterns BRMA (private rents are usually higher than the county average in this BRMA)

Size of home	Average monthly rent	Maximum monthly amount of which can be claimed	Monthly Shortfall (market rent minus Local Housing Allowance)
1 bedroom	£800	£748	£52
2 bedroom	£1,000	£972	£28
3 bedroom	£1,350	£1,247	£103
4+ bedroom	£2,122	£1,646	£476

The following tables show how households on average (50th percentile) and below average (30th percentile) incomes in Buckinghamshire would experience difficulty in affording privately rented homes at both average and lower quartile rents.

Average rent levels October 2021 to September 2022:

Property size	Average monthly rent	Total annual cost	Annual cost as a % of 50th percentile annual income of £37,300	Annual cost as a % of 30th percentile annual income of £29,583
Studio	£650	£7,800	20.9%	26.4%
1 bedroom	£825	£9,900	26.5%	33.5%
2 bedroom	£1,050	£12,600	33.8%	42.6%
3 bedroom	£1,395	£16,740	44.9%	56.6%
4 bedroom	£2,100	£25,200	67.6%	85.2%

Source of Income Data: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) data for Buckinghamshire September 2022.

Lower Quartile rent levels October 2021 to September 2022:

Property size	Average monthly rent	Total annual cost	Annual cost as a % of 50th percentile annual income of £37,300	Annual cost as a % of 30th percentile annual income of £29,583
Studio	£600	£7,200	19.3%	24.3%
1 bedroom	£760	£9,120	24.5%	30.8%
2 bedroom	£915	£10,980	29.4%	37.0%
3 bedroom	£1,208	£14,496	38.9%	49.0%
4 bedroom	£1,650	£19,800	53.1%	66.9%

Source of Income Data: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) data for Buckinghamshire September 2022.

What percentage of income should be spent on housing costs?

Most affordability calculations work on the basis of a maximum percentage of income which can be spent on housing costs. Using 30% of income (net of tax and NI) is a fairly standard approach and reflects national guidance on affordability assessments in Strategic Housing Market Assessments. Many housing need assessments use 33%. CORE figures show that new social housing tenants paying affordable rents will be spending closer to 40% of their income on their housing cost – and national estimates show that many of those living in the PRS are spending more than 50% of their income on housing. It is therefore not straightforward to decide the most appropriate percentage of income to use.

The core calculations below have been done using 30% and 40% of income; it could be argued that spending 30% of income on housing costs is 'comfortably affordable' while 40% is affordable 'at a stretch.'

Conclusions:

- Households with average incomes are likely to have accessing outright ownership in the market due to affordability issues. Low-cost home ownership products, including shared ownership, play a role in supporting homebuyers.
- Most households in receipt of housing benefit face difficulty in being able to afford to rent a home in the private rented sector because of the shortfalls between the full amount of Local Housing Allowance which can be claimed and the market rents. This applies to households living in all districts of Buckinghamshire. Even households who are working full-time experience difficulty in being able to afford privately rented accommodation if their annual incomes were at or below the Buckinghamshire average.

3) Housing Supply - Affordable Housing

The following new affordable homes were developed in Buckinghamshire between April 2016 and March 2022. This table distinguishes between Social Rent, which is usually between 50%-60% of Market Rent, and Affordable Rent which can be set up to 80% of Market Rent. The extra rental income generated by Affordable Rent is used by registered providers to develop more affordable homes.

Year	Total affordable homes for rent completed	Affordable Rent	Social Rent
2022-2023	303	264 87.1%	39 12.9%
2021-2022	619	568 91.8%	51 8.2%
2020-2021	341	325 95.3%	16 4.7%
2019-2020	422	388 91.9%	34 8.1%
2018-2019	389	375 96.4%	14 3.6%
2017-2018	333	294 88.3%	39 11.7%
2016-2017	271	251 92.6%	20 7.4%

Source: DLUHC Live Tables on Affordable Housing Supply.

(The variation in annual figures is due to a number of factors including the timing of the completion of developments, the availability of Affordable Housing Grant, variations in the costs of building materials and labour which can affect development timetables).

The total number of lettings of affordable homes (both new build and existing) in Buckinghamshire between April 2016 and March 2021 was as follows (data as on 31 March of each year).

Year	Total	General Needs	Social Rent	Supported Housing#	Social Rent	General Needs	Affordable Rent	Supported Housing	Affordable Rent
2020-2021	1,118*	354	31.7%	361	32.3%	399	35.7%	4	0.4%
2019-2020	1,962	725	37.0%	603	30.7%	630	32.1%	4	0.2%
2018-2019	2,062	746	36.2%	632	30.6%	675	32.7%	9	0.4%
2017-2018	2,062	883	42.8%	685	33.2%	489	23.7%	5	0.2%
2016-2017	1,920	684	35.6%	736	38.3%	459	23.9%	40	2.1%

Source: DLUHC Social Housing Lettings tables.

*Numbers likely to be comparatively low because of the impact of the Covid pandemic which restricted relets.

#This refers to households who do not have any special needs so would not require support services to be associated with their accommodation. Supported housing includes support services associated with their home e.g. a scheme for older people or people with a form of disability.

Examples of Social Rents and Affordable Rents of affordable homes for rent in Buckinghamshire advertised in February and March 2023

Type of Property	Weekly Social Rent	Weekly Affordable Rent
1 bedroom ground floor flat	£101.94	£184.68
1 bedroom first floor flat	£102.94	£172.60
1 bedroom second floor flat	£101.94	£165.23
2 bedroom ground floor flat	£115.58	£224.58
2 bedroom second floor flat	£108.77	£204.92
2 bedroom house	£142.17	£224.38
3 bedroom house	£161.84	£245.47

The total number homes for low cost home ownership developed in Buckinghamshire between April 2016 and March 2022 was as follows:

	Low Cost Home Ownership
2021-2022*	161
2020-2021*	175
2019-2020	166
2018-2019	238
2017-2018	102
2016-2017	91

Source: DLUHC Live Tables on Housing Supply.

4) Housing Demand - Affordable Housing

Applicants on the housing register, Bucks Home Choice, between 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2022:

Year	1 bedroom required	2 bedroom required	3 bedroom required	3< bedroom required	Bedroom need unspecified	Total
31 March 2022	3,911	1,352	1,164	212	0	6,639
31 March 2021	3,673	1,267	1,052	187	0	6,179
31 March 2020*	2,608	692	770	111	76	4,257
31 March 2019	3,557	876	841	136	14	5,424
31 March 2018	3,439	1,308	925	134	0	5,806
31 March 2017	3,512	1,459	833	170	0	5,974

* There was a decrease in numbers at this time because of a review of the Allocations Policy which included local connection. This excluded a number of households who would previously have qualified.

Number of households for whom homelessness was **prevented**
(under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018)

	2020-2021	2021-2022	% increase or decrease
England	119,890	133,450	+11.3%
Buckinghamshire	1,042	1,105	+6.0%

Source: DLUHC Statutory Homelessness in England by financial year 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Number of households for whom homelessness was **relieved**
(under the Relief Duty)

	2020-2021	2021-2022	% increase or decrease
England	150,670	144,670	-4.0%
Buckinghamshire	732	640	-12.6%

Source: DLUHC Statutory Homelessness in England by financial year 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Buckinghamshire has seen an increase in the number of cases of homelessness which have been prevented, which is less than the national (England only) trend. However, it has seen a decrease in the number of homeless cases which have been relieved which is substantially more than the national (England only) trend.

The reasons for the households becoming homeless between 2020 and 2022 were as follows.

Households whose homelessness was prevented – reasons for homelessness

Reason for homelessness	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
End of privately rented tenancy	195	18.7%	412	37.3%	599	376.3%
Asked to leave by family or friends	225	21.6%	234	21.2%	416	25.2%
Other reason	350	33.6%	165	14.9%	172	10.4%
End of Social Rented Tenancy	66	6.3%	62	5.6%	146	8.9%
Non-violent relationship breakdown	90	8.6%	95	8.6%	103	6.2%
Domestic Abuse	64	6.1%	85	7.7%	101	6.1%
Evicted from Supported Housing	8	0.8%	20	1.8%	46	2.8%
Other violence or harassment	21	2.0%	20	1.8%	33	2.0%
Left an institution including hospital, Armed Forces, local authority care	23	2.2%	12	1.1%	33	2.0%
Total	1,042		1,105		1,649	

Households whose homelessness was prevented – reasons for homelessness

Reason for homelessness	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
End of privately rented tenancy	43	5.9%	64	10.0%	197	25.9%
Asked to leave by family or friends	205	21.6%	182	28.4%	103	13.5%
Other reason	226	30.9%	89	13.9%	83	10.9%
End of Social Rented Tenancy	7	1.0%	8	1.3%	21	2.8%
Non-violent relationship breakdown	60	8.2%	67	10.5%	75	9.8%
Domestic Abuse	104	14.2%	133	20.8%	167	21.9%
Evicted from Supported Housing	26	3.6%	30	4.7%	25	3.3%
Other violence or harassment	20	2.7%	33	5.2%	32	4.2%
Left an institution including hospital, Armed Forces, local authority care	41	5.6%	34	5.3%	59	7.7%
Total	732		640		762	

Further details of the measures undertaken by Buckinghamshire Council to prevent and relieve homelessness are included in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy.

Appendix Two - Affordable Housing Types, Funding Mechanisms and Delivery

1. Definition of Affordable Housing

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. The policies set out in the Framework apply to the preparation of local plans and the decisions on planning applications.

The definition of Affordable Housing, as set out by the government in the NPPF, consists of the following:

Definition of Affordable Housing - Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

(a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions:

(a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

(b) Starter homes: is as specified in sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used. **The Starter Home Scheme has now been replaced by the First Homes Scheme.**

(c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

(d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

2. What are Registered Providers and Housing Associations?

Housing Associations are not for profit organisations providing affordable housing and which are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. In addition to Housing Associations, there are also Private Registered Providers which are for profit organisations. Local Authorities are sometimes Registered Providers (RP) who hold their own housing stock.

Buckinghamshire Council does not hold housing stock and therefore is not currently registered as a Registered Provider with the Regulator for Social Housing.

The Registered Providers who currently have affordable housing development programmes in Buckinghamshire are: BPHA, Bromford, Fairhive, Hightown, Housing Solutions, Metropolitan Thames Valley, Paradigm, Peabody/Catalyst, Red Kite, Sage, L&Q, and Thrive. In addition, Sovereign will be developing a former council-owned site outside High Wycombe.

The RPs with the biggest development programmes in Buckinghamshire at present are Fairhive, Hightown, Paradigm, Peabody/Catalyst and Red Kite.

All RPs can develop anywhere they wish in the county with some clustering in the north of the county and others in the south. At present is as follows:

- **Both North and South** – Fairhive, Hightown, Paradigm, and Peabody/Catalyst
- **North only** – Bromford, Housing Solutions, Metropolitan Thames Valley, Sage, and Thrive
- **South only** – Red Kite.

3. Types of affordable housing products

3.1. Affordable housing for rent

Affordable Rent housing – ‘Affordable rent’ was introduced by government as a tenure in 2011. For these properties, the Registered Provider may set a rent which, can be up to a maximum of 80% of the market rent in the locality. The Regulator of Social Housing has a rent standard to which all ‘affordable rents’ must conform. Affordable Rents are higher than Social Rents and therefore provide a source of funding for new affordable housing development and an increased rental stream against which the RP can borrow.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 264 new homes for Affordable Rent were constructed in Buckinghamshire.

Social Rent housing – ‘Social rent’ properties have rents set in accordance with a formula prescribed by central government which, for Buckinghamshire are typically 50%-60% of the local market rents (although social rent is not directly linked to market rents). The formula will result in rents that will vary property-to-property as the individual property’s rent is calculated according to the market value of the property, the size of the property and the local income levels in the area

in which the property is located. Social Rents are also covered by the Rent Standard in the same way as Affordable Rents.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 39 new homes for Social Rent were constructed in Buckinghamshire.

3.2. Low-cost home ownership

This is an umbrella term covering a range of schemes that help buyers to purchase a home for less than the market value. The low-cost home ownership products which are most relevant to Buckinghamshire are:

Shared Ownership – A purchase by a household where part of the equity in the property is purchased and the remainder is rented. Rent is determined by calculating a percentage on the unsold equity. Some shared ownership of properties is limited to 80% of the equity, for example in rural areas. Shared Ownership tends to work well in areas of high housing costs, where it reduces deposit requirements and enables households to ‘step’ into the market in stages.

Households, typically:

- Buy a share between 10% and 75% of the home’s full market value.
- Pay rent to the landlord for the share they do not own.
- Usually pay monthly ground rent and service charges, for example towards the maintenance of communal areas.
- Benefit in any increase in values for the property for the owned portion.
- Have options to increase their percentage of equity if desired (staircasing).

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 196 new homes for shared ownership were constructed in Buckinghamshire.

First Homes – A specific kind of discounted market sale housing introduced by the government in 2020. The government stated that First Homes meet the definition of affordable housing for planning purposes and must comprise a minimum of 25 per cent of the affordable housing within the development. A First Homes Interim Position Statement has been drawn up for Buckinghamshire.

A First Home must be:

- Sold at a discount of no less than 30% of market value and no more than 50%, with the actual percentage determined by the local authority.
- Have their initial sale price capped at no more than a government-set maximum. The current cap is £250,000.
- Remain a First Home in perpetuity, with subsequent sales subject to the initial percentage discount.
- Sold only to first time buyers.

No First Homes have yet been developed in Buckinghamshire as of July 2023.

4. Affordable Housing Funding Mechanisms

4.1. Planning-led affordable housing development – Section 106 agreements

Planning obligations under Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, commonly known as Section 106 agreements, are a mechanism which enables on site affordable housing to be delivered or a financial contribution towards affordable housing to be collected.

Local Plans set out target percentages of affordable housing sought from qualifying development. Local Plan policies also set guidelines for affordable housing tenure mix and size.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 403 new affordable homes were constructed through the S106 agreements in Buckinghamshire.

4.2. The Affordable Homes Programme

Homes England is an executive non-departmental public body. It is sponsored by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and provides funds for new affordable housing and aims to accelerate housing delivery.

The Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) is administered by Homes England (outside of Greater London). The current Affordable Homes Programme operates 2021 to 2026.

Buckinghamshire Council works closely with Homes England to monitor the progress and impacts of affordable housing delivery in Buckinghamshire. The council will submit information to support any bids for funding from the AHP for schemes developed by Registered Providers in Buckinghamshire.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 90 new affordable homes in Buckinghamshire were funded through the Affordable Homes Programme, of which 46 were homes for Affordable or Social Rent and 44 were homes for Shared Ownership.

4.3. Use of Council resources

Local authorities can contribute to affordable housing development by providing funds and/or land and assets to Registered Providers including:

Capital Funding, including use of commuted sums (S106 contributions).

Transferring council-owned land at low or nil cost to a registered provider for affordable housing development.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 6 new affordable homes in Buckinghamshire were funded through Buckinghamshire Council contributions. These were the last completions of a garage site development programme by Paradigm Housing which began in 2019 and has produced 25 affordable homes. Buckinghamshire Council has contributed capital funding to this development.

4.4. Summary of Affordable Housing Development by product and funding mechanism, April 2022 to March 2023

Affordable Housing Product	Funded by Planning-led development	Funded by the Affordable Homes Programme	Funded by Council contributions	Total
Affordable Rent	235	23	6	264
Social Rent	16	23	0	6
Low-cost home ownership	152	44	0	6
Total	403	90	6	499

4.5. Help to Buy

The government 'Help to Buy' Equity Loan Scheme ended in March 2023 after ten years. This was a scheme subsidised by the government to assist households in accessing the open market; it was not part of any affordable development programme. The total number of homes sold in Buckinghamshire under 'Help to Buy' between April 2013 and March 2023 was 5,039 homes.

Appendix Three - Glossary

Accessible and Adaptable Housing – Construction or modification of housing to enable independent living for persons with disabilities.

Affordable Housing - Social rent, affordable rent and intermediate housing (e.g. shared ownership; below market rent) provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Defined in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Affordable Rent housing – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 3.1.

Build to Rent – Build to Rent refers to purpose-built housing designed and built for market rent rather than sale by property developers. Schemes usually offer longer tenancy agreements and are often professionally managed by the owner or operator. Build to Rent developments are marketed as an attractive option for investors seeking long-term returns.

Decent Homes Standard – First introduced in 2000, the Standard was based on social rented homes being warm and weatherproof with reasonably modern facilities. The Standard is currently (2023) under review with proposals that it be extended to the private rented sector.

Disabled Facilities Grant - Council managed grant programme to help towards the cost of adapting homes for people with disabilities.

Discounted Market Sale – A form of low-cost home ownership that helps people purchase a property below open market value.

Empty Home – A property that is empty for 6 months or more. A long-term empty property is one that is empty for 2 years or more.

Energy Performance Certificate – A property rating for energy efficiency. Ratings go from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient) and are valid for 10 years.

Extra Care Housing – Purpose-built or adapted properties with corresponding additional care provision. Residents are able to live independently with 24-hour access to support services and staff. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre.

First Homes – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 3.2.

Future Homes Standard – New legislation governing building regulations including energy efficiency measures. New build homes will have to meet this standard from 2025.

House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) – Properties let to three or more tenants who form two or more households with shared facilities (e.g., kitchen). Larger houses in multiple occupation, those occupied by five or more people in two or more households who share facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom, must be licensed by the local council.

Homes England – An executive non-departmental public body. It is sponsored by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and provides funds for new affordable housing and aims to accelerate housing delivery.

Housing Associations – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 2.

Local Housing Allowance – Local Housing Allowance is used to calculate the maximum amount people renting from a private landlord can claim in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. This maximum allowance is based on where they live, the number of bedrooms they need and the rent they pay.

Low-cost home ownership – Umbrella term covering a range of schemes that help buyers to purchase a new home for less than the market value.

National Planning Policy Framework – Sets out Government’s economic, environmental and social planning policies for England.

National Planning Policy Guidance – Provides planning practice guidance within the Framework and how planning policies are expected to be applied.

Registered Provider – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 2.

Regulator of Social Housing – The Government’s regulator of the standards applying to affordable housing management and maintenance.

Section 106 agreement – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 4.1.

Shared Ownership – Defined in Appendix 2 in section 3.2.

Social Rent housing – Defined in Appendix 2 section 3.1.

Tenancy Strategy – The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to develop a Tenancy Strategy to guide Registered Providers in allocating their properties.

Under-occupation – A household living in a home with bedrooms surplus to their requirements.



Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee

Thursday 23rd November 2023
10.00 a.m.



Housing strategy | Development

- The first countywide Housing Strategy for Buckinghamshire
- It was developed with input and support from partners, using the following:
 - Building on work to produce the Buckinghamshire Affordable Housing Position Statement (adopted in May 2022)
 - Consultation with Public and stakeholder organisations
 - Key Housing data (census, indices of multiple deprivation, Housing demand, Housing conditions, Housing affordability)
- It will be delivered through continuing partnership working



Housing Strategy | Vision & Priorities

Our Vision

‘A Strong Housing Offer that provides affordable, accessible, sustainable and suitable choices for all life stages’

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Our Priorities

**Responding to the needs of our
Diverse Population**

**Better Homes: good quality,
sustainable and matched to need**

**New Homes: affordable, accessible
and appropriate**



Priority one – Responding to the needs of our Diverse Population

Buckinghamshire Council will:	Critical Success Factors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understand and respond to the housing issues and needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Strategy adoption • Local Housing Needs Assessment for the Local Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enable the fair, consistent and effective allocation of tenancies for affordable housing via Bucks Home Choice Housing Register 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a new Allocations Policy • Deliver a new Tenancy Strategy • Achieve a 100% compliance with our nominations rights with Registered Providers • Ensure applications are processed within three month from submission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopt an effective and proactive approach to address Temporary Accommodation (TA) and homelessness increases in number of placements and costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average, placements in “Nightly Paid” accommodation are kept to a set maximum level • Maximise “Substantive Placements” for Temporary Accommodation with a target of 90%+ occupancy • Ensure effective “Move on” options are in place to reduce Temporary Accommodation placement durations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify, specify and deliver housing options for groups with particular needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options development for specialised housing solutions for Care Leavers, Key Workers, Persons Leaving the Armed Forces, Older People, Persons with a physical and/or learning disability of mental health needs.

Priority two – Better Homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need.

Buckinghamshire Council will:	➤ Critical Success Factors
➤ Ensure that Registered Providers are actively maintaining and improving the quality of their homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Registered Providers have current asset management strategies and investment plans. • All Registered Providers have a net zero carbon road map in place.
➤ Ensure that the Private Rented Sector maintains and improves the quality of rental properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement and subsequent remediation of housing condition issues as they emerge, in line with the Council’s Enforcement Policy • Effective and Enforced Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing through intelligence-led enforcement with key partners.
➤ Work to ensure that best use is made of existing housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-occupation strategy for social housing developed. • Effective Allocations Policy and Tenancy Strategy.
➤ Improve the accessibility of new and existing homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Facilities Grants Programme Delivery Deliver accessible and adaptable new housing through planning decisions.

Priority three – New Homes: affordable, accessible, and appropriate.

Buckinghamshire Council will:	Critical Success Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support and enable Registered Providers in delivering new affordable homes, including for those with special needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of Affordable Housing (Target 500 new affordable homes per year). • Achieve site targets for Affordable Housing in negotiations with developers in line with council policies and the Local Plan. • Supporting site identification and funding options/opportunities (for example grants and Section106 monies) in line with council policies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explore the use of local authority assets and resources for the purposes of delivering additional new housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Temporary Accommodation development • Using Section 106 payments to support the development of Affordable Housing • Incorporating Council held assets in redevelopment proposals (Target 500 by 2028) • Consider different delivery vehicles (e.g., Joint Ventures or other collaborative models)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that Residential Development (including Affordable Housing) is considered in Regeneration Strategies, brownfield and redevelopment proposals for mixed use developments where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan and site policies for residential development which prioritise brown before green and include strong Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 Affordable Housing requirements. • Working with Homes England including pursuing funding opportunities as they become available.

Housing strategy | Next Steps

- The Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy was discussed at the meeting of Informal Cabinet on 6th September.
- A Public and Stakeholder Consultation exercise began on 8th November and will conclude on 18th December.
- This will be followed by final sign off of any changes from the consultation process by Cabinet, then full sign off at Full Council before the end of the Financial Year.

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Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee (Chairman: David Carroll, Scrutiny officer: Tom Fowler)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
15 th February 2024	Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Model Update	Review the implementation and functioning of the new Growth Board and its 4 sub-boards.	Richard Ambrose/Steve Bambrick	Martin Tett
	CIL/106 update & Planning Committee performance	CIL/106 update & Planning Committee performance - including numbers of applications, type of applications, over-turns, appeals and cost awards	Eric Owens/Darran Eggleton	Peter Strachan
	Regeneration Framework & Strategies	To review the Bucks Regeneration Framework, as well as the Aylesbury, Wycombe and Chesham Regeneration Strategies.	Richard Ambrose	Peter Strachan/Rachael Matthews
	Review Group Report - Planning for future primary healthcare in Buckinghamshire	To receive the Joint Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee and Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee review report into the planning for future primary healthcare in Buckinghamshire.	Tom Fowler	Isobel Darby
18 th April 2024	NPPF Update	To update the committee on changes made to the National Planning Policy Framework	Eric Owens/Darran Eggleton	Peter Strachan
	Local Plan Update	To update the committee on the progress of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan	Darran Eggleton/John Cheston	Peter Strachan

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