



# Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee Agenda

Date: Thursday 15 February 2024

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, S Morgan, C Poll, D Town and S Wilson

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<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Page No</b>
<b>1 Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership</b>		
<b>2 Declarations of Interest</b>		
<b>3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>		<b>5 - 12</b>

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 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 Cabinet Member Update**

#### **6 CIL/S106 Update**

**10:15**

**13 - 48**

The Committee will receive an update on Community Infrastructure Levy provision and Section 106.

#### **Contributors:**

Cllr Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

Eric Owens, Service Director, Planning & Environment

John Callaghan, Transport Strategy Funding Manager

#### **7 Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and Strategies**

**11:00**

**49 - 188**

The Committee will consider a report on the Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and the individual strategies for Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe.

#### **Contributors:**

Cllr Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

Lisa Michelson, Service Director, Housing & Regulatory Services

Shabnam Ali, Head of Local Economic Growth

#### **8 Joint Rapid Review with the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee Report - Planning for Future Primary Healthcare in Buckinghamshire**

**11:45**

**189 - 218**

For the Select Committee to consider the report of the

review group on “Planning for future primary healthcare in Buckinghamshire”.

**Contributors:**

Cllr Chris Poll (Joint Chairman)  
Cllr Isobel Darby (Joint Chairman)  
Group Members

- |           |  |              |                  |
|-----------|--|--------------|------------------|
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Work Programme</b><br>The Committee will discuss and note the Work Programme for future meetings. | <b>12:00</b> | <b>219 - 220</b> |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Date of Next Meeting</b><br>18 <sup>th</sup> April 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](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)  
01494 732009

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# Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee

## Minutes

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE & HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2023 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.02 PM**

### MEMBERS PRESENT

D Carroll (Chairman), T Hogg, N Brown, S Chapple, I Darby, T Hunter-Watts, Maz Hussain, N Marshall, C Poll, D Town, S Wilson, R Stuchbury and P Brazier

### OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

S Bambrick, L Michelson, T Fowler, M Aughterlony, C Bayley, D Smith and C Urry

### Agenda Item

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

Apologies had been received from Councillors Qaser Chaudhry, Andrea Baughan, Carl Etholen and Simon Rouse.

Councillors Peter Brazier and Robin Stuchbury were present as substitutes for Councillors Simon Rouse and Andrea Baughan respectively.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

#### 4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question from Claire Molyneux, Clerk to Buckingham Town Council

Buckingham Town Council Planning Committee would like to ask:

Whether the system of referral to area committees is to continue; there are 150 – 180 Buckingham applications per year, some of which we or Shire councillors have called in, and yet none have been judged deserving of a public airing since February 2020.

So far 9 of the scheduled 13 meetings this calendar year have been cancelled, so it isn't pressure of business.

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

Planning Committee provides a very important scrutiny role over planning officer decision making. The current referral system has been flexibly designed to ensure that any planning application can be subjected to Planning Committee consideration as appropriate. This system has been in place since Buckinghamshire Council was formed and has always worked well. It has also been extended to allow Town and Parish Councils to request such scrutiny for certain deserving applications.

As the Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee report explains the role of Planning Committee is to focus on those planning applications which would benefit from scrutiny, such as reviewing officer recommendations where the weighing and balancing of the issues is considered to be finely balanced.

To ensure consistency, all requests are considered in consultation with the relevant Planning Committee Chairman. Taking any planning application to a Planning Committee means more cost and more delay in making a decision. This process ensures that only those applications that would benefit from scrutiny are taken to Committee, while the others are decided more efficiently under delegated powers. The cancellation of these planned meetings was therefore due to lack of business, i.e. applications that were not considered necessary to be considered by the planning committee meeting.

The case officer report can be seen after all deleted decisions. Parish or Town Councils can see how the matters were handled and can ask the case officer or their Team Leader about anything they are unclear about.

So, in response to the specific question raised, “referral” is part of the Council constitution and is intended to remain so

## Question from Surinder Marshall

Please can you explain the process by which mitigation of, and adaptation to climate and environmental breakdown is addressed as a fundamental consideration in the housing strategy. For example, what expertise is employed, at what stage and what evidence is there that this is understood as a crucial factor in developing the strategy, rather than just an add on.

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

The Housing Strategy acts as a framework for the development of more detailed housing-related plans. These will be devised under the annual housing strategy action plans, the first of which will be produced for 2024-2025. Plans to increase the number of affordable housing schemes built to a high level of energy efficiency will be included. In Buckinghamshire there are examples of affordable housing schemes which have been built to a very high standard of energy efficiency; they can act as a model for the development of future schemes.

The Housing Strategy contains the following priority which focuses on improving the energy efficiency of housing stock in response to climate change:

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

The Housing Strategy supports the Buckinghamshire Council Climate Change Strategy. This strategy contains a section devoted to improving the energy efficiency of housing in Buckinghamshire, with the following actions:

**Action 52: Supported registered housing providers' implementation of sustainable energy and climate change adaptation initiatives in their housing stock.**

All affordable housing in Buckinghamshire is owned and managed by registered housing providers. Buckinghamshire Council works closely with its registered provider partners. This includes monitoring their plans to improve the energy efficiency of their housing stock in Buckinghamshire. All Registered Providers have asset management strategies, investment plans and net zero carbon road maps in place. Three of our partner registered providers have been awarded funding under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to improve the energy efficiency of their homes in Buckinghamshire. The improvements will include the installation of cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation, roof insulation, solar panels, and air source heat pumps. A number of innovative housing retrofit schemes are being carried out.

**Action 53: Promote opportunities for residents to improve their homes to help them mitigate and/or adapt to climate change and poor air quality.**

The following schemes are included in the Housing Strategy:

- i) The Housing Sustainable Warmth and Home Upgrade Grant.
- ii) The Energy Doctor Scheme.
- iii) The Buckinghamshire Solar Together Scheme which aims to assist residents in installing solar panels and battery storage.

Question from Alan Thawley

Given the acknowledgement that demand for affordable homes outstrips supply by 3:1, as well as concerns that homes built by developers under this category are not always genuinely affordable, how can the strategy look more creatively at other means to narrow this gap, such as support for Community Land Trust initiatives of the sort that already exist in Buckingham, and construction of social housing directly by the council, which would make it easier to more effectively address sustainability, another of the strategy's priorities, for instance by building to Passivhaus standard as has successfully been done in places such as Norwich or Exeter?

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

The Housing Strategy contains the following priority:

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

Buckinghamshire Council will commit to undertaking the following:

- i) Support and enable Registered Providers in delivering new affordable homes, including for those with special needs.
- ii) Explore the use of local authority assets and resources for the purposes of delivering additional new housing.
- iii) Ensure that Residential Development (including Affordable Housing) is considered in Regeneration Strategies, brownfield and redevelopment proposals for mixed use developments where appropriate.

The council will undertake the following actions in order to adopt an innovative approach to increasing the supply of affordable housing in Buckinghamshire:

- Ensure that residential development, including affordable housing, is considered in regeneration strategies, brownfield and redevelopment proposals for mixed use developments where appropriate.
- Support registered providers with funding for the development of affordable homes on under-used or disused land in their ownership.
- Ensure that housing, including affordable housing, is included in regeneration plans by the council and partners.
- Explore opportunities for Build to Rent schemes, including the use of institutional Investment.
- Explore opportunities for the council to deliver more housing using its land, property and financial assets through the creation of an Affordable Housing Enabling Framework
- 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.
- Agree priorities for capital funding (including commuted sums) and implement a list of priorities for section 106 monies to be developed. An option which can be considered is lowering the level of rents in certain affordable housing schemes.

Direct delivery by the council is a possibility and an outcome that should be considered. At present we are not able to advise if the council can commit to this, as it would require extensive consideration by the council's senior management team.

In order to understand direct delivery, the council would have to obtain substantial new resources in terms of funding, land, and staff with sufficient skills in finance, development, and property and housing management. A dedicated housing company would need to be set up. Funding would need to be obtained from the Public Works Loans Board; interest rates are high so this would incur significant costs from council resources. In addition, the direct development of affordable homes carries a range of risks. Registered housing providers are generally better equipped to carry this level of risk than local authorities.

As part of the affordable housing development programme, the council will encourage and support the development of affordable homes built to a high standard of energy efficiency. We have two schemes in the county which are being/have been constructed to Passivhaus Standard, and we monitor good practice from other local authorities.

## **5 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REVIEW 22-23**

The Committee received an update from Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Chrissy Urry, Head of Planning & Development, Mark Aughterlony, Development Manager (Core) and Claire Bayley, Development Manager (Majors).

The Cabinet Member introduced the development management performance review for 22-23, highlighting that the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning service was taken very seriously.

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

- In response to a Member query about staffing, the Cabinet Member assured the committee that the planning service was adequately staffed and was able to keep up with demand. A reduction in planning applications was due to a mixture of economic factors and uncertainty around planning legislation.



- The number of planning application extensions of time was an indicator closely monitored by the planning team. At 54%, the team were looking to improve this - in practice the extensions were agreed with the applicants to address issues with applications and to allow for amendments.
- Parish and Town Councils were advised to continue development of neighbourhood plans, even in parallel with the development of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan. It was noted the process itself can offer a degree of protection. If parishes were unsure about developing a neighbourhood plan, they could contact the planning policy team for further advice.
- Planning officers were able to assist with spikes in demand across Buckinghamshire. More recently, there was an increase in work required for major planning applications and a slight decrease in 'minor' applications. This is being addressed with resourcing shifts across planning teams.
- The drop in five-year land supply seen recently in the north & central planning areas could be explained by multiple factors. The overarching industry position, increased cost of materials, the cost of living crisis as well as measures relating to the Chiltern Beechwoods special area of conservation were contributing to the drop. There were planning performance agreements in place with large housing developers on strategic allocations to support delivery on prioritised sites.
- Benchmarking comparison with neighbouring authorities could be included in future versions of the report for the committee.
- The One Uniform project would eventually provide efficiencies for the Council. The use of legacy systems across Buckinghamshire required separate access and when merged would allow for greater flexibility in how the Planning team utilised their resources.
- 97% of planning applications were determined under delegated authority, compared to 3% taken at planning committee. Not all planning applications benefited from the increased scrutiny at planning committee, and it was up to the chairman of the relevant planning committee to determine whether it is necessary. It was noted the 97% figure for delegated decisions was exactly the same as Cornwall Council, a comparable unitary authority.

## **6 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HOUSING STRATEGY 2024-2029**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services, Lisa Michelson, Service Director, Housing & Regulatory Services and Duncan Smith, Head of Housing Assets & Development to the meeting.

The following points were highlighted from the presentation.

- There were critical success factors for the listed priorities in the Housing Strategy. For priority 1, following adoption of the Housing Strategy, a Housing Needs Assessment would commence and this would feed into the Local Plan process. A new allocations policy, tenancy strategy and 100% compliance with the Councils nomination rights with registered providers would deliver fair, consistent and effective allocations of tenancies for affordable housing. Temporary accommodation costs and homelessness would be addressed within the strategy through effective maximisation and "move on" options.
- As part of Priority 2, the Council would look to ensure Private Landlords and Registered Providers actively maintain the quality of the properties provided. Effective remediation of housing issues as well as enforcement of HMO licensing would take place through intelligence led cooperation with partners. Accessibility in new and existing homes would be improved through the Disability Facilities Grants Programme Delivery.
- The Housing Strategy committed Buckinghamshire Council to support and enable registered providers in delivering new affordable homes, including for those with special needs. As part of this, the use of local authority assets and resources would be considered for delivery

new housing. The creation of an affordable housing framework will allocate additional financial resources (£106 contributions) which would be used to bring forward sites for new affordable housing development for completion over the Housing Strategy horizon.

- It was noted that there was a large gap between need for one-bedroom residences and those currently provided. By examining gaps in current provision, the best approach to future housing provision could be determined.

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

- Reference was made to a historic council motion, regarding the evaluation of whether the council or a Local Housing Company, should be involved in the direct delivery of affordable housing. It was acknowledged that this piece of work was to be undertaken both to respond to the motion and as a commitment in the Housing Strategy. The aspects of risk and reward of this direct delivery model were to be evaluated, but it was acknowledged that there would be a requirement for significant land and resources to be available. The work to evaluate the opportunity would be provided in due course.
- Steps taken to brief Members on the Housing Strategy, as well as the attendance of the Cabinet Member to present the strategy to the Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Scrutiny prior to approval at Cabinet was praised for transparency and allowance for proper scrutiny.
- A variety of members challenged whether the 500 new affordable homes (per annum) was a sufficiently aspirational target. It was stated that the target was derived by speaking to the Registered Providers who will be delivering the homes. There is pressure placed on their business plans to fund the new 'decent homes' programme, net zero carbon targets and building safety. As a result, it was suggested that 500 per annum is an achievable target, but the council would be seeking to encourage and enable Registered Providers to deliver additional homes to this target and if a higher one were set, this may not be achievable. This target would be kept under review as part of the strategy horizon.
- Lack of house building was a national issue that the Council could only partly address. National solutions would need to be put forward by the government to help solve the problem. There was no obligation for Registered Providers to build affordable homes, and building new homes would be part of their individual business plans. Buckinghamshire Council works in partnership to encourage homebuilding schemes with registered providers through, for example, assistance in applying for grant funding from government.
- It was noted that if a scheme for housing development was submitted without affordable housing included, the starting point for the planning team would be to ensure its policy compliant. Where there are economic viability justifications, these are vigorously tested by the planning department to ensure accuracy, and not taken at face value.
- It was noted that the second table on page 75 of the agenda pack was mislabelled and should be titled 'Households whose homelessness was relieved – reasons for homelessness'. This would be corrected on the version available on the consultation page, as well as another minor typographical error highlighted by Members.
- Affordability was raised as an issue within Buckinghamshire. 'Affordable' housing/rent was set at 80% of the commercial level, which would still be too expensive within the county for many residents. The social rent level of 50% was more affordable, however this was difficult to achieve due to viability constraints.

## **7 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.

**8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place 15th February 2024 at 10.00 a.m.

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## Report to GIH Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	15 February
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Governance of S106 and CIL spending</b>
<b>Author:</b>	John Callaghan
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>For Information only</b>

### 1. Background

1.1 The requirement for new infrastructure is often driven by the need to mitigate development and developer contributions are an important source of funding for the Council to provide that infrastructure. Developer contributions are secured through:

- A Planning Obligation - a legal agreement entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal. They are typically between the local authority and land owners/developers, to make developments acceptable that would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms, and where these impacts cannot be addressed through a planning condition. Planning obligations need not only relate to contributions but can also, for example, require the provision of affordable housing or other infrastructure required as a result of the development; and
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – a fixed charge levied on new development at a £ rate per square metre, in areas where a CIL Charging Schedule has been adopted, to fund infrastructure that supports the development of the area.

1.2 Local Planning authorities can use a combination of both CIL and Section 106 contributions from specific developments to fund infrastructure, however the Council may be called upon by a developer to demonstrate that the need for s106 contributions is additional to any CIL paid in respect of a development. A summary of the key features of s106 contributions and CILs is included at Appendix 1.

- 1.3 CIL charging schedules apply to the East, South and West areas of the Council. Following a decision of Cabinet on 11 July 2023, the scope to introduce CIL in the North and Central areas, or alternatively for a new Buckinghamshire charging schedule - is being investigated at present. An important factor will be the timing of the Local Plan.
- 1.4 The CIL liability of a proposed development is assessed following the grant of planning permission.
- 1.5 The need for s106 contributions is assessed when planning applications are considered, taking into account national planning guidance (see Legal and Financial Implication) as well as relevant Local Plan policies, any supplementary planning guidance and consultee feedback. Planning decisions are taken either by Planning Committee or delegated to officers in appropriate cases, following appropriate consultation and consideration of comments received.
- 1.6 Information on how s106 and CIL funds have been, and may be, used is provided in the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement, the latest of which has recently been published and is attached as Appendix 2. This includes information for the period 2022-23 on funds collected, spending and projects delivered.
- 1.7 In 2022-23 Buckinghamshire Council:
- Secured £14,319,045 of s106 contributions from new development.
  - Secured £6,414,023 in CIL.
  - Passed £727,098 of 22/23 CIL receipts (the local allocation) to town and parish councils, with a further £335,763 secured for the unparished area of High Wycombe.
- 1.8 The Council spent £17,462,345 of s106 funds on infrastructure to mitigate development impacts and £4,624,377 of CIL on infrastructure to support the development of the area. 499 affordable homes were handed to registered providers across Buckinghamshire.

## **2. How decisions are taken on the use of s106 and CIL**

### S106

- 2.1 The way in which s106 contributions may be used is set out in the relevant s106 agreement that is agreed before planning permission is granted. There may or may not be flexibility in how contributions may be used but they are required to be linked to a specific spending area such as providing school places or transport improvements, as Regulations mean they can only be required where they are necessary to make a particular development acceptable in planning terms, and usually a specific objective, e.g. traffic calming in a particular area, or public transport improvements.

- 2.2 The process to approve the allocation and/or release of s106 contributions has tended to vary by service area with different factors affecting particular services (e.g. the roles of s106 in service funding and the extent to which contributions are used directly by the service or passed to a third party such as a parish council).
- 2.3 A new process is being put in place by the Transport Strategy Funding team which will be a step toward consolidating the decision making and contributions monitoring process across services. This will capture input from relevant services and cabinet members before recommendations are reported to the Corporate Capital Investment Group. Larger services, notably Education and Housing, may continue to integrate decisions on s106 into their funding programmes.

#### CIL

- 2.4 Decisions on Council spending priorities and the use of CIL are integrated into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. The Infrastructure Funding Statement elaborates on how CIL is to be used – see section on Legal and Financial Implications for more information.
- 2.5 Following consultation with the Cabinet Members for Planning and Transport and Resources the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022-23 includes text that provides further detail on how CIL is to be used.

*...Over the period 2023/24-2027/28, until a new Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan are in place or until otherwise reviewed, [the Council will] focus CIL on schemes in the West, South and East areas for which s106 contributions or other external funding are not available and which support: the protection of priority areas at risk from flooding; the cost of providing education places; updating and integrating Council systems e.g. CCTV, to achieve long term savings and resilience; traffic calming in Castlefield; essential highways asset maintenance, with a focus on bridges, classified roads and locally significant routes; the replacement and improvement of larger play and recreation areas; and new Electric Vehicle Charging Points as part of the Council's climate change strategy.*

- 2.6 Including this text will increase transparency and reduce the scope for developers to argue that s106 contributions should be discounted on account of the possibility that CIL contributions might possibly fund the same infrastructure. For this reason general areas of spend on which the council may be seeking s106 contributions have not been included. This will help to maximise the income available to the Council.

### **3. Legal and financial implications**

#### S106

3.1 Planning obligations are set out either within bilateral agreements or within unilateral undertakings. These are legal obligations between the local authority and developers that can be attached to a planning permission, to make developments that would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms acceptable.

3.2 Under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended, planning obligations are capable of:

(a) restricting the development or use of the land in any specified way

(b) requiring specified operations or activities to be carried out in, on, under or over the land

(c) requiring the land to be used in any specified way

(d) requiring a sum or sums to be paid to the authority

Therefore, planning obligations can:

- Prescribe the nature of development (for example, requiring a given portion of housing as affordable).
- Compensate for loss or damage created by a development (for example, loss of open space).
- Mitigate a development's impact (for example, through increased public transport provision).

3.3 Regulation 122 of the CIL regulations states that a planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission if it is:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

3.4 Where financial contributions are required by a planning obligation within a section 106 agreement or a unilateral undertaking these are often referred to as section 106 or simply s106 contributions.

#### CIL

3.5 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area after it has gone through a process of assessing the evidence base in public prior to the adoption of the levy.



- 3.6 This process takes account of the cost of infrastructure, the viability of development, other sources of funding for infrastructure and the administrative expenses in connection with the levy. The levy rates are published in the charging schedule for each area on the Council’s website. This information can be found [here](#).
- 3.7 According to section 59 (1) of the CIL regulations (as amended):  
*A charging authority must apply CIL to funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure to support the development of its area.*
- 3.8 Government guidance on CIL was published June 2014 and was last updated January 2023<sup>1</sup>. This says that:
- 3.9 *Local authorities must spend the levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area, and they will decide what infrastructure is needed. The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development.*
- 3.10 Article 121A of the CIL regulations says that each calendar year a contribution receiving authority must publish an annual infrastructure funding statement which includes:  
*a statement of the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which the charging authority intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by CIL (“the infrastructure list”).*
- 3.11 The 2023 government guidance on CIL goes further. It says:  
*The infrastructure funding statement should identify infrastructure needs, the total cost of this infrastructure, anticipated funding from developer contributions, and other possible sources of funding as well as the choices the authority has made about how these contributions will be used.*
- 3.12 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) includes an expectation that the Council will receive at least £4m a year and that this will be available to fund corporate spending priorities while also complying with the criteria set out in the Infrastructure Funding Statement – extracts are included below.
- 3.13 Section 4 of the Infrastructure Funding Statement is titled ‘The infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure the authority intends to be funded at least in part by CIL’ - see text below. It includes reference to the Council’s Capital Investment Strategy that

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<sup>1</sup> [Community Infrastructure Levy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy)

sets the Council's investment priorities and the types of infrastructure to be funded by CIL – see extract below.

- 4.1 *The Council has ambitious plans in the face of significant infrastructure challenges and requirements in an area where development is constrained by designations such as green belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As a large unitary authority Buckinghamshire Council has extensive responsibilities for infrastructure. Over the last 12 months continued inflationary pressures have added to the delivery challenge. The Council has been working with contractors to reduce the cost of projects as much as possible and to seek alternative or additional funds to enable project delivery.*
- 4.2 *Infrastructure challenges and requirements will be considered further as part of the work that is underway on [The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire | Buckinghamshire Council](#). This is scheduled to be in place by 2028.*
- 4.3 *This will include work to clarify what infrastructure will be expected to be provided directly by development, or directly funded by development through s106 contributions and s278 works, and what funding gaps remain.*
- 4.4 *Where development gives rise to the need for infrastructure directly, the Council aims to secure contributions through planning obligations, in compliance with the 'Regulation 122' tests (see paragraph 2.3) and in preference to using CIL.*
- 4.5 *Section 4 of the Council's Capital & Investment Strategy 2022 to 2023 covering this period was published on 1 February 2022 and is available [here](#)<sup>13</sup>. It sets out key areas where one might expect to see investment directed, taking account of capital investment objectives and corporate priorities. This includes infrastructure that supports the development of the area and which may be funded by CIL:*
  - *Investments that facilitate growth, economic development and regeneration, such as Wycombe area regeneration, and Princes Risborough growth areas.*
  - *New infrastructure such as roads and schools to support the growth in housing.*
  - *Meeting the statutory requirement to provide school places.*
- 4.6 *New and emerging priorities will become clear as work on the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, the Local Transport Plan 5, and other Council strategies and projects progresses.*
- 4.7 *In this context the CIL collected by the Council is only one relatively small funding source, but one that offers flexibility in how it may be used, provided this is for infrastructure that supports the development of the area.*

### *Decision Making*

- 4.8 *The Council has integrated CIL into the capital budget setting process as a corporate resource, with the capital budget included in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which is reviewed annually. (The approved Buckinghamshire Council Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2025/26 is available [here](#).)*
- 4.9 *The Capital and Investment Strategy sets out guidance on prioritisation of bids. In addition, in relation to CIL the Council will:*
- Be conscious of the broad relationship between schemes and development that generate CIL while recognising the impacts of development.*
  - Only use CIL to fund infrastructure that supports the development of the area.*
  - In view of the extensive range of infrastructure requirements identified to support the development of the area, not apply CIL to fund off site infrastructure specifically required to enable new developments (i.e. where contributions to that infrastructure would be R122 compliant and development would be viable). In those cases developer contributions are to be secured by way of planning obligations in order to provide infrastructure necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.*
  - Over the period 2023/24-2027/28, until a new Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan are in place or until otherwise reviewed, focus CIL on schemes in the West, South and East areas for which s106 contributions or other external funding are not available and which support: the protection of priority areas at risk from flooding; the cost of providing education places; updating and integrating Council systems e.g. CCTV, to achieve long term savings and resilience; traffic calming in Castlefield; essential highways asset maintenance, with a focus on bridges, classified roads and locally significant routes; the replacement and improvement of larger play and recreation areas; and new Electric Vehicle Charging Points as part of the Council's climate change strategy.*
- 4.10 *Each year the Capital Programme will be developed as part of the MTFP, culminating in approval by full Council in February of each year. This follows the process set out in the Capital Investment Strategy 2022 to 2023. The Council's resources (capital and revenue) are unfortunately very constrained, hence there are essential infrastructure requirements for which CIL is needed to support new development in Buckinghamshire. The Council therefore needs to be guided by its overall priorities as set out in the Capital and Investment Strategy, and as enlarged upon above.*
- 3.14 It is likely that CIL receipts will exceed the £4m a year budgeted for, based on the projection of development; this budget is a prudent budget given the economic uncertainty particularly being faced by developers at this time. Should additional

receipts materialise, they will be allocated via future MTFPs in accordance with the CIL regulations and the Infrastructure Funding Statement. Officers monitor and report on CIL receipts projections quarterly in Cabinet.

#### **4. Next steps and review**

- 4.1 Comments from the Scrutiny Committee will be shared with the relevant Cabinet Member.

## Appendix 1 Summary of the key features of s106 contributions and CIL

### s106 contributions

- financial contributions from developers secured by a legal agreement, usually accompanying a planning permission, to make developments acceptable which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms;
- secured during the planning process, bespoke and negotiated (unlike CIL) but must meet specific tests (Regulation 122 of the CIL Regs), i.e. contributions must be necessary, directly related to the development and be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- As a general rule, planning obligations for education, highways and open space infrastructure are only sought for larger developments (i.e. for 10 dwellings or more); (separate provision is made for affordable housing and this varies depending upon the policy position set out in the legacy Local Plans);
- usually focused on site specific mitigation of the impact of development, e.g. to provide specific new infrastructure;
- payments often linked to ‘trigger points’ at different stages of development e.g. occupation of 50, or 100 homes, and may vary for each contribution and by site; and
- typically have to be spent or committed within a set timescale, often ten years;

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

- Is a charge levied on new development in accordance with CIL Charging Schedules. Reflecting their legacy origins, these are different for the West and South/East areas, with different rates, which apply to different categories of uses;
- Must be used for “the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure to support the development of its area”. This can apply across the whole of the Buckinghamshire Council area;
- Although the levy can be used flexibly to fund a wide range of infrastructure (including health and social care facilities), it cannot be used to fund affordable housing (affordable housing obligations are usually secured through a s.106 Planning Obligation);
- Are not time limited and not negotiable (unlike section 106 contributions);

- Is shared with town and parish councils. A proportion of CIL (15% rising to 25% where a Neighbourhood Plan is adopted) collected from development is twice a year passed to the Town or Parish Council within which the development was situated. In the unparished area of High Wycombe the local allocation is held by the Council; High Wycombe Town Committee makes recommendations on its use.
- Is self funding: up to 5% of the sum collected is available to meet the council's costs of administering the CIL
- Is charged for all developments involving the creation of a dwelling (no floorspace thresholds for habitable space where the development proposes the creation of a dwelling);
- In these cases and for all other development not creating a dwelling, the charge is based on the size of new development (the gross internal area measured in sq.m) but is exempt if less than 100 sqm of new floorspace is created;
- There are notable exemptions and reliefs (including for self-build, affordable housing and charities)

January 2024



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**Buckinghamshire Council**  
**Infrastructure Funding Statement**  
**1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local Authorities that receive contributions from developers must produce<sup>1</sup> an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) annually. This sets out details of developer contribution receipts and the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure the Authority intends may be funded at least in part by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 1.2 Where parishes receive a proportion of CIL they are also required to produce a report for each financial year in which they receive CIL receipts.
- 1.3 This is to provide local communities and developers with clarity and transparency on contributions received (including 'in-kind' contributions where infrastructure is provided directly), how these have been or are to be used, and, more broadly on the role of development in funding infrastructure.
- 1.4 This statement sets out the position of the Council for the 2022/23 financial year. It covers both section 106 (s106) and CIL contributions.

### Headlines for 2022-23

- CIL is currently collected in the South, East and West areas of Buckinghamshire.
- 499 affordable homes were handed to registered providers across Buckinghamshire.
- Buckinghamshire Council:
  - Secured £14,319,045 of s106 contributions from new development.
  - Secured £6,405,351 in CIL.
  - Passed £727,098 of 22/23 CIL receipts (the local allocation) to town and parish councils, with a further £335,763 secured for the unparished area of High Wycombe.
- The Council spent £17,462,345 of s106 funds on infrastructure to mitigate development impacts and £4,624,377 of CIL on infrastructure to support the development of the area.

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<sup>1</sup>As required by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019 No.1103 that came into force 1 September 2019





## Developer Contributions to Infrastructure

- 1.5 Development often drives requirements for new infrastructure and is itself an important source of funding for infrastructure. Developer contributions can be provided:
- Through planning obligations within s106 agreements<sup>2</sup> and unilateral undertakings – where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.
  - Through CIL – a fixed charge levied on new development to fund infrastructure.
- 1.6 Developers may also enter into s278 agreements<sup>3</sup> that allow them to make permanent alterations or improvements to a public highway, with the agreement of the Council, as part of a planning approval.

## 2. Planning Obligations

- 2.1 Planning obligations are either set out within bilateral agreements or within unilateral undertakings. These are deeds between the local authority and developers that can be attached to a planning permission, to make developments that would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms acceptable.
- 2.2 Under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended, planning obligations are capable of:
- (a) restricting the development or use of the land in any specified way
  - (b) requiring specified operations or activities to be carried out in, on, under or over the land
  - (c) requiring the land to be used in any specified way
  - (d) requiring a sum or sums to be paid to the authority

Therefore, planning obligations can:

- Prescribe the nature of development (for example, requiring a given portion of housing as affordable).
- Compensate for loss or damage created by a development (for example, loss of open space).
- Mitigate a development's impact (for example, through increased public transport provision).

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<sup>2</sup> Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

<sup>3</sup> Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980

- 2.3 Regulations<sup>4</sup> state that a planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission if it is:
- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - directly related to the development; and
  - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 2.4 Where financial contributions are required by a planning obligation within a section 106 agreement or a unilateral undertaking these are often referred to as section 106 or simply s106 contributions.
- 2.5 It may be necessary for a Council to secure contributions from a number of developments over a period of time before there are sufficient funds and it is in a position to implement the scheme for which funds have been secured.
- 2.6 The following tables<sup>5</sup> 1 and 2 show:
- s106 contributions held at 31 March 2023, split into the different infrastructure categories for which they have been secured, across each of the council areas<sup>6</sup>.
  - s106 contributions collected between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, split into the different infrastructure categories for which they have been secured.

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<sup>4</sup> These tests are set out as statutory tests in Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended by the 2011 and 2019 Regulations) and reiterated in National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 56)

<sup>5</sup> Throughout, figures have been compiled from excel data, hence may include small apparent rounding errors

<sup>6</sup> These correspond to the areas of the forerunner Councils prior to the establishment of Buckinghamshire Council. Aylesbury Vale corresponds to Buckinghamshire North, Chiltern to Buckinghamshire East, South Bucks to Buckinghamshire South, and Wycombe to Buckinghamshire West

**Table 1 – s106 contributions held at 31 March 2023, split into the different infrastructure categories for which they have been secured across each of the council areas.**

<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>North Area</b>	<b>East Area</b>	<b>South Area</b>	<b>West Area</b>	<b>Buckingham shire County Area</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
Affordable Housing	1,620,626	2,156,819	2,361,426	794,410	0	6,933,281
Open Space & Leisure	16,662,800	0	0	1,008,070	0	17,670,870
Transport/ Highways	812,609	0	0	1,563,649	12,672,557	15,048,815
Education	0	0	0	4,798	13,144,365	13,149,163
Community Facilities	0	0	0	94,462	0	94,462
Burnham Beeches SAC*	0	4,048	173,489	0	0	177,537
Other	1,643,398	0	0	138,726	0	1,782,124
<b>Total (£)</b>	<b>20,739,433</b>	<b>2,160,867</b>	<b>2,534,915</b>	<b>3,604,115</b>	<b>25,816,922</b>	<b>54,856,252</b>

\*Funds are passed on to the City of London Corporation and are not retained by the Council.

**Table 2 – s106 contributions collected<sup>7</sup> between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023**

<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>North Area</b>	<b>East Area</b>	<b>South Area</b>	<b>West Area</b>	<b>Buckinghamshire County Area</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
Affordable Housing	0	64,230	0	394,487	0	458,717
Open Space & Leisure	1,474,023	0	0	465,267	0	1,939,290
Transport/ Highways	0	0	0	0	831,427	831,427
Education	0	0	0	0	10,773,347	10,773,347
Community Facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burnham Beeches SAC*	0	4,048	173,489	0	0	177,537
Other	0	0	0	138,727	0	138,727
<b>Total (£)</b>	<b>1,474,023</b>	<b>68,278</b>	<b>173,489</b>	<b>998,481</b>	<b>11,604,774</b>	<b>14,319,045</b>

\*The Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation contribution is only collected in East and South Area. Funds are not retained by the Council but are passed on to the City of London Corporation.

2.7 These figures show how development has contributed to infrastructure and how far the Council has succeeded in securing s106 contributions to mitigate the impact of development.

The levels of contributions secured in the different areas reflects:

- The levels of development, especially major developments, in the different areas, and development impacts.
- The availability of CIL as another source of developer funding in some areas.
- The schemes to which s106 funds were secured and local infrastructure priorities, in accordance with relevant Supplementary Planning Documents<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Based on invoice issued date, with the exception of North Area for which figures are based on payment receipt date until records are fully aligned with finance system

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-development-plans/local-planning-guidance/>

## S106 expenditure in 2022/23

- 2.8 S106 contributions are considered when projects are included in the Council's budget setting process. Specific s106 contributions are then drawn upon to fund these projects, in compliance with the terms of the relevant s106 agreements.
- 2.9 A number of projects have been implemented in 2022-23 with s106 funding. These include:

**Open Space/Leisure.** Schemes were widely delivered across the North of the County including significant investment to refurbish Winslow Public Hall and development of Wing Recreation Ground. S106 funding contributed towards a new Pavilion in Haddenham plus final payments were made to the new Aston Clinton Community Centre. Improvements were also funded for Village Halls and Community Centres in Aylesbury, Cheddington and Steeple Claydon. There was also investment to deliver improvements to many play areas, outdoor fitness facilities and skateparks right across the Aylesbury Vale area.

Other Contributions were used to celebrate the County's Paralympic Heritage at the Guttman Sports & Leisure Centre in Aylesbury and the other Community Events in the Town, such as the annual Whizzfizz Festival.

**Education.** Schemes included completion of extensive works at Chiltern Hills Academy and Holmer Green Senior School to expand both schools by two forms of entry (fe) to meet the increase in pupils across the county. The former works involved a new teaching block, remodelling of an existing block to provide new fit for purpose science facilities, new library, an additional Design Technology room, remodelled and improved SEND facilities, a Multi Use Games Area, new changing rooms and an extension of the School's English block. The scheme also provided a new pedestrian crossing to make access to the school safer for pupils.

The works at Holmer Green included a new two storey teaching block, a new 4 court sports hall, conversion of the existing rooms into science and IT classrooms, a new dining room with catering kitchen, extension to sixth form facilities, a new multi-use games area and staff car park. The scheme also provided a new pedestrian crossing to make access to the school safer for pupils.

In Aylesbury the new Kingsbrook School, opened to its first cohort of secondary school pupils in September 2022. When full the school will be home to 1080 pupils. It has been carefully designed such that it can be expanded in the longer term, should the need arise, to become either an 8fe school or ultimately a 10fe school. The building has excellent sustainable credentials being thermally efficient to reduce carbon emissions, helping meet Carbon reduction targets.

In addition to the above, projects at John Colet School, Denham Green Academy and Princes Risborough School have been progressed to provide new facilities to accommodate bulge classes to meet local demand for places. Projects to provide

additional Special School places have also been progressed at Stocklake Park and Furze Down special schools.

**Transport & Highways.** Schemes included the signalisation of Crest Road High Wycombe. This has been designed to mitigate traffic from, and facilitate the development of, the Cressex Island site while safeguarding the operation of the adjacent Handy Cross junction with the M40. The Council also completed a new 1700m traffic-free cycleway linking the new housing developments at Berryfields and Buckingham Park in Aylesbury.

Also in Aylesbury the Council delivered a public transport corridor along one of the main routes into the town centre. The project aims to improve traffic flow, journey times, and cycling and walking routes along the A41 Bicester Road. It comprises a package of measures that includes:

- junction improvements
- intelligent transport systems
- pedestrian and cycling facility improvements
- bus stop improvements

More widely the Council has also invested in supporting bus services and in some locations providing new bus shelters and/or real time passenger information displays.

**499 affordable homes** were handed over to registered providers across Buckinghamshire. Of these 394 were in the North area. 58 one bedroom units of temporary accommodation were completed and opened at Bridge Street in High Wycombe on the site of a former car park. This increased the number of temporary homes in High Wycombe by 65 per cent, enabling the Council to meet growing local need. Compared to the old accommodation at Saunderton Lodge, the new accommodation has space for more families and brings people closer to local amenities such as transport facilities, GP surgeries and schools as well as other support services.

2.10 A summary of s106 expenditure is shown in Table 3 below. A full breakdown is included at Appendix A.

**Table 3 - Summary of s106 expenditure in 2022-23**

Area	Amount (£)
North area	2,069,082
East area	105,000
South area	166,042
West area	1,547,230
Former Buckinghamshire County functions	13,574,990
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,462,345</b>

### 3. The Community Infrastructure Levy

- 3.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area after it has gone through a process of assessing the evidence base in public prior to the adoption of the levy.
- 3.2 This process takes account of the cost of infrastructure, the viability of development, other sources of funding for infrastructure and the administrative expenses in connection with the levy. The levy rates are published in the charging schedule for each area on the Council's website. This information can be found at <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy/>.
- 3.3 In contrast to s106 contributions:
- There does not need to be a direct link between the payment and the infrastructure provided
  - The use of CIL is not specified at the point of collection
  - Its calculation is an administrative process rather than a negotiation based on an assessment of development impacts
  - It applies to all developments, including those that are smaller in scale
  - A proportion of the CIL is passed to town and parish councils to be allocated locally and to cover its administration.
- 3.4 Prior to the establishment of Buckinghamshire Council, CIL was adopted by three of the former Councils:
- Wycombe District Council, which covered the area now referred to as West Buckinghamshire, adopted CIL in 2012.
  - Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council, which covered the areas now referred to as East and South Buckinghamshire, adopted a common charging schedule in February 2020.
- 3.5 The charging schedules for these areas continue for the respective areas as part of Buckinghamshire Council. The former Aylesbury Vale area does not currently have a CIL charging schedule in operation.

#### Use of CIL

- 3.6 According to the CIL regulations, the Council as Charging Authority, can use up to 5% of CIL collected towards administration of CIL.
- 3.7 The Council also has a duty to pass funds to town or parish councils ('local councils'). This is known as the 'local allocation' and amounts to 15% of CIL funds collected in a given area, rising to 25% in areas which have an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan. The local allocation in the unparished area of High Wycombe is also ring-fenced for use within that area. Parish Councils are required to publish their CIL receipts and expenditure on a yearly basis on their websites.



3.8 The regulations state that the funds passed to ‘Local Councils’ must be used:

*‘to support the development of the local area by funding (a) the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or (b) anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.’*

This is a wider definition of how the funds may be used compared to how Buckinghamshire Council can use CIL funds (as the Council is restricted to funding infrastructure to support the development of the area).

3.9 According to the CIL regulations, the Council as Charging Authority, can spend the remaining CIL on:

*“the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure to support the development of its area”* (Regulation 59 as amended<sup>9</sup>).

The Planning Act 2008 states that ‘infrastructure’ includes roads and other transport facilities, flood defences, schools and other educational facilities, medical facilities, sporting and recreational facilities, and open spaces.

3.10 Government guidance on the use of CIL<sup>10</sup> says that it can be used:

*‘to fund a wide range of infrastructure, including transport, flood defences, schools, hospitals, and other health and social care facilities’<sup>11</sup>.*

This definition allows the levy to be used to fund a very broad range of facilities such as play areas, open spaces, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, healthcare facilities, academies and free schools, district heating schemes and police stations and other community safety facilities.

This flexibility gives local areas the opportunity to decide what infrastructure they need to deliver their Development Plan. Charging authorities may not use the levy to fund affordable housing.

The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development.

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<sup>9</sup> [The Community Infrastructure Levy \(Amendment\) Regulations 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>10</sup> [Community Infrastructure Levy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

<sup>11</sup> for further details, see [section 216\(2\) of the Planning Act 2008](#), and [regulation 59](#), as amended by the [2012](#) and [2013 Regulations](#)



## CIL collected in 2022-23

- 3.11 The Council collected £5,310,355 in the West Buckinghamshire (formerly Wycombe) area. Tables 4 and 5 provide a breakdown of CIL collected and transferred to Local Councils.

**Table 4 -- West Buckinghamshire (formerly Wycombe District) CIL overview (31 March 2023) (£)**

<b>Total CIL receipts for the year (a) + (b) + (c) + (d)</b>	<b>5,310,355</b>
CIL Retained by Buckinghamshire Council excl. Unparished Area (a)	4,166,889
Total CIL allocated to administrative expenses (b)	265,518
Total CIL secured for Local Councils (c)	542,185
Total CIL ring-fenced for Unparished Area (d)	335,763
Total CIL expenditure during 2022-23 (e) See Table 8	3,768,463
Opening Balance 1 April 2022 (f)	5,360,436
Closing Balance 31 March 2023 (g) = (f) +(a) – (e)	5,758,862

**Table 5 - West Buckinghamshire (formerly Wycombe) area CIL allocated to Local Councils during 2022-2023 (as at 31 March 2023)**

Parish	Amount (£)
Bedlow Cum Saunderton	14,079.96
Chepping Wycombe Parish Council	27,419.41
Fawley Parish Meeting	8,549.29
Great and Little Kimble	69,961.86
Hughenden Parish Council	118,108.35
Lane End Parish Council	10,618.29
Little Marlow Parish Council	18,396.76
Longwick Cum Ilmer Parish	117,136.78
Marlow Bottom Parish Council	14,932.39
Marlow Town Council	9,980.07
Princes Risborough Town Council	16,388.53
Radnage Parish Council	2,508.65
Stokenchurch Parish Council	18,087.94
Wooburn And Bourne End Parish Council	89,645.94
West Wycombe Parish	6,370.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>542,185.11</b>

The table excludes the local allocation of CIL ring-fenced for the Unparished Area of High Wycombe.

- 3.12 The Council collected £1,094,996 in the East and South Buckinghamshire (formerly Chiltern and South Bucks) areas. Tables 6 and 7 provide a breakdown of CIL collected and transferred to Local Councils (parishes and town councils).

**Table 6 - East and South Buckinghamshire (formerly covered by Chiltern & South Bucks District Council) CIL overview (31 March 2023) (£)**

<b>Total CIL receipts for the year (a) + (b) + (c)</b>	<b>1,094,996</b>
CIL Retained by Buckinghamshire Council (a)	855,333
Total CIL allocated to administrative expenses (b)	54,750
Total CIL secured/passed to Local Councils (c)	184,913
Total CIL expenditure during 2022-23 (d) See Table 9	855,914
Opening Balance 1 April 2022 (e)	0
Closing Balance 31 March 2023 (f) = (e) + (a) - (d)	-581

**Table 7 East and South Buckinghamshire areas (formerly Chiltern & South Bucks District): CIL allocated to Local Councils during 2022-2023 (as at 31 March 2023)**

Parish	Amount (£)
Ashley Green	1,548
Beaconsfield	46,892
Chalfont St Giles	3,450
Chalfont St Peter	39,220
Chesham	5,997
Denham	13,878
Dorney Parish Council	4,262
Farnham Royal	3,596
Gerrards Cross	22,690
Great Missenden Parish Council	9,266
Iver Heath	1,185
Little Chalfont Parish Council	6,881
Penn	21,517
Seer Green	563
Stoke Poges	1,500
Taplow	2,468
<b>Total</b>	<b>184,913</b>

### Demand notices issued in 2022/23

- 3.13 Demand notices issued in the West Area totalled £6,744,699 (this was more than the sum actually collected)
- 3.14 Demand notices issued in East/South totalled £1,094,996

### CIL expenditure in 2022/23

- 3.15 In total £4,624,377 of CIL was spent on infrastructure to support the development of the area in 2022-2023.

**Table 8 CIL Funded Projects in West Buckinghamshire during 2022-2023**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
Wycombe Schools - expansions and improvement (Holmer Green Secondary)	750,000
Marlow Bridge Improvements	327,189
Court Garden Leisure Complex Refurbishment	57,907
Spade Oak Lake infrastructure works	68,154
A40 London Road Highways improvements	23,446
Highways Improvement Works (West area)	2,313,578
Globe Park (Westhorpe interchange)	74,286
New play area at the Desborough Rec Grounds	153,903
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,768,463</b>

- 3.15 The expenditure in Table 8 excludes any projects that may be funded from the local allocation ring fenced for the High Wycombe Town Committee. These projects are addressed separately in the annual CIL update provided to the High Wycombe Town Committee.

**Table 9 CIL Funded Projects in East and South Buckinghamshire during 2022-2023**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
Chiltern Lifestyle Centre	855,914
<b>Total</b>	<b>855,914</b>

#### 4. The infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure the authority intends to be funded at least in part by CIL

- 4.1 The Council has ambitious plans in the face of significant infrastructure challenges and requirements in an area where development is constrained by designations such as green belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As a large unitary authority Buckinghamshire Council has extensive responsibilities for infrastructure. Over the last 12 months continued inflationary pressures have added to the delivery challenge. The Council has been working with contractors to reduce the cost of projects as much as possible and to seek alternative or additional funds to enable project delivery.
- 4.2 Infrastructure challenges and requirements will be considered further as part of the work that is underway on [The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire | Buckinghamshire Council](#). This is scheduled to be in place by 2028.
- 4.3 This will include work to clarify what infrastructure will be expected to be provided directly by development, or directly funded by development through s106 contributions and s278 works, and what funding gaps remain.
- 4.4 Where development gives rise to the need for infrastructure directly the Council aims to secure contributions through planning obligations, in compliance with the 'Regulation 122' tests (see paragraph 2.3) and in preference to using CIL.
- 4.5 Section 4 of the Council's Capital & Investment Strategy 2022 to 2023 covering this period was published on 1 February 2022 and is available [here](#)<sup>12</sup>. It sets out key areas where one might expect to see investment directed, taking account of capital

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<sup>12</sup> The latest version was published in the Feb 2023 Council meeting with the Council Budget. [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 14th February, 2023, 10.00 am - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

investment objectives and corporate priorities. This includes infrastructure that supports the development of the area and which may be funded by CIL:

- Investments that facilitate growth, economic development and regeneration, such as Wycombe area regeneration, and Princes Risborough growth areas.
- New infrastructure such as roads and schools to support the growth in housing.
- Meeting the statutory requirement to provide school places.

4.6 New and emerging priorities will become clear as work on the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, the Local Transport Plan 5, and other Council strategies and projects progresses.

4.7 In this context the CIL collected by the Council is only one relatively small funding source, but one that offers flexibility in how it may be used, provided this is for infrastructure that supports the development of the area.

### Decision Making

4.8 The Council has integrated CIL into the capital budget setting process as a corporate resource, with the capital budget included in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which is reviewed annually. (The approved Buckinghamshire Council Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2025/26 is available [here](#).)

4.9 The Capital and Investment Strategy sets out guidance on prioritisation of bids. In addition, in relation to CIL the Council will:

- Be conscious of the broad relationship between schemes and development that generate CIL while recognising the impacts of development.
- Only use CIL to fund infrastructure that supports the development of the area.
- In view of the extensive range of infrastructure requirements identified to support the development of the area, not apply CIL to fund off site infrastructure specifically required to enable new developments (i.e. where contributions to that infrastructure would be R122 compliant and development would be viable). In those cases developer contributions are to be secured by way of planning obligations in order to provide infrastructure necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
- Over the period 2023/24-2027/28, until a new Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan are in place or until otherwise reviewed, focus CIL on schemes in the West, South and East areas for which s106 contributions or other external funding are not available and which support: the protection of priority areas at risk from flooding; the cost of providing education places; updating and integrating Council systems e.g. CCTV, to achieve long term savings and resilience; traffic calming in Castlefield; essential highways asset maintenance, with a focus on bridges, classified roads and locally significant routes; the replacement and improvement of larger play and recreation areas; and new Electric Vehicle Charging Points as part of the Council's climate change strategy.

4.10 Each year the Capital Programme will be developed as part of the MTFP, culminating in approval by full Council in February of each year. This follows the process set out

in the Capital Investment Strategy 2022 to 2023. The Council's resources (capital and revenue) are unfortunately very constrained, hence there are essential infrastructure requirements for which CIL is needed to support new development in Buckinghamshire. The Council therefore needs to be guided by its overall priorities as set out in the Capital and Investment Strategy, and as enlarged upon above.

- 4.11 The Council aims to make timely use of developer contributions in accordance with the terms of the s106 agreement and as opportunities arise to bring forward schemes. This process takes account of the need for scheme design and development, the potential need for further match funding, and the need to obtain any necessary consents and land (where required).
- 4.12 The Council is keen to ensure Member involvement in the allocation and use of CIL. Given that CIL has been integrated into the capital budget setting process as a corporate resource, the Council focuses on ensuring there is Member involvement in highlighting key priorities as part of the budget setting process.
- 4.15 If Members are aware of key local priorities, then there are two routes that can be taken. The first is to ensure that the relevant Cabinet Member is aware of that priority and takes this into account in terms of considering it against all portfolio priorities. The second is to influence the use of the local allocation of CIL that is passed to town and parish councils. This is at least 15% of CIL received. There is typically greater latitude in the scope of the use of these funds (as these councils have fewer funding responsibilities and the rules concerning the use of CIL are less strict).

#### The unparished area of High Wycombe

- 4.12 In relation to the unparished area of High Wycombe, the High Wycombe Town Committee recommends schemes to be funded from the local allocation of CIL collected within that area.
- 4.13 Within the unparished area, and since 12 December 2019 the Daws Hill Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted ('made'). Accordingly, within the Daws Hill Neighbourhood Plan area, since that time, the local allocation collected has been 25% rather than 15%. However, the level of CIL liable development and hence the sums involved are relatively small.
- 4.14 In accordance with the regulations the local allocation collected within the Daws Hill area can be used to support the development of that part of the charging authority's area that is not within the area of a local council, i.e. the unparished area.



Figure 1. Plan showing the Daws Hill neighbourhood plan area.



## 5 Next Steps

- 5.1 From 1 December 2022 the Council consolidated officers responsible for managing CIL and s106 contributions from the legacy councils into a single team that is part of Transport Strategy and Funding within the Planning and Environment service. The team has been reviewing the processes used across different legacy areas to ensure that these are consistent and robust. This will drive improvements and efficiencies in the administration and management of developer contributions.
- 5.2 The Council has installed an upgrade to the software and reporting system Exacom which is already used to manage developer contributions in the West area of Buckinghamshire. Since December 2023 this has been operational across Buckinghamshire. In practice this means new planning application data from the Uniform planning software is now linked with Exacom so that Exacom is importing all the required planning data to enable the Council to administer CIL/S106. This will speed up the rate at which CIL applications can be processed and ensure more consistent record keeping in the future.
- 5.3 Following a decision by 11 July [Cabinet](#) work is being undertaken to consider the case for a single charging schedule for Buckinghamshire, that includes the North and Central area (formerly Aylesbury Vale). A decision on the way forward will be made in 2024.

## Appendix A – S106 spend 2022-23 (£)

### North Area (formerly Aylesbury Vale Area)

Project	Expenditure (£)
Cheddington Pavilion	1,106
Nash Play Area	37,716
Weston Turville Village Hall Solar Panels	14,846
Alfred Rose Community Centre	3,607
Stoke Mandeville - Eskdale Road Car Park	21,929
Weston Turville Recreation Ground	55,715
Steeple Claydon Village Hall	21,450
Soulbury Play Area	37,758
National Paralympic Heritage Trust	23,600
Whitchurch Play Area and Outdoor Gym	58,472
Slapton Play & Fitness equipment	16,775
Winslow Public Hall	687,614
Ashendon Play Area	12,924
Cottesloe Green Play Area	11,550
Walton Court Play Area	64,200
Steeple Claydon MUGA	99,546
Oakley Play Area	20,324
Aston Clinton Community Centre	158,448
Grendon Underwood Toddler Play Area	43,159
Cheddington Outdoor Fitness equipment	18,469
Marsh Gibbon Play Area	19,248

Haddenham Airfield Pavilion	133,143
Aylesbury Town Centre Secret Window	5,602
Cuddington Playground	14,016
Southcourt Community Centre	2,236
Aylesbury Whizzfizz Festival	47,851
Cheddington Zip Wire	9,988
Buckingham Park Tree Planting	2,750
Paralympic Flame Lighting Cauldron	6,776
Wing Recreation Ground	146,670
Pitstone Skatepark	4,204
Weston Turville Picnic Benches	2,581
Marsh Gibbon Village Hall Car Park	36,000
Stewkley Recreation Ground	21,565
Buckingham Skatepark	231
Berryfields/Buckingham Park Greenway	40,010
Walton Street Public Realm	5,497
Kingsbury/Market Square Regeneration	88,844
SE Aylesbury Link Road	42,567
Waddesdon Greenway	30,097
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,069,082</b>

**East/South Area (formerly Chiltern and South Bucks Area) -- Affordable Housing**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Expenditure (£)</b>
Funding agreed for Paradigm Housing for small scale affordable housing development	105,000
Catalyst Housing Equity Share scheme	72,500
Major repairs to void properties to prevent properties being sold off	93,542
<b>Total</b>	<b>271,042</b>

**West Area (formerly Wycombe Area)**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Expenditure (£)</b>
<b><i>Affordable Housing</i></b>	
Bridge Court Temporary Accommodation	1,503,013
<b><i>Other</i></b>	
Cressex Park and Ride	44,217
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,547,230</b>

Contributions secured for functions related to the former Buckinghamshire County Council

Transport and Highways

Crest Road Signalisation	214,359
Pinewood Iver Active Travel Network	33,716
Aston Clinton Traffic Calming Scheme	19,238
Long Crendon Highway Scheme (delivered)	9,599
Denham Local Priority Scheme	101,203
Berryfields to Buckingham Park Cycle Route (delivered))	235,135
Cheddington Sustainable Transport Scheme	725
Cuddington Traffic Calming Feasibility	3,726
Wingrave Feasibility Study	4,995
NPIF A418, Oxford Road Aylesbury	4,731
A41 Bicester Road PPTC	580,670
SEALR (South East Aylesbury Link Road)	1,125,005
Blackpond Lane Farnham Common Footpath Scheme (delivered)	37,797
Bus Stop Improvements	43,706
22.23 s106 Bus Services Contribution	414,350
<b>Other Projects</b>	
Langley Park Woodland Management	20,130
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,849,085</b>

**Education**

<b>Project*</b>	<b>Expenditure (£)</b>
Stocklake Park	383,380
Furze Down School	287,657
Denham Green E-Act Bulge	125,258
Green Ridge Primary Expansion	150,893
Brookmead School	358,362
Green Ridge Primary Expansion	55,757
Cottesloe School 1fe Expansion	82,513
Princes Risborough Upper School Bulge	615,566
John Colet 1fe Expansion	1,261,624
Waddesdon Secondary School	950
St Michael's Aylesbury	54,220
Buckingham Upper School Expansion	180
The Misbourne School 1fe Expansion	132,365
Forward Funding - Buckingham Upper School Expansion	1,145,572
Forward Funding - St Michaels Aylesbury	2,837,390
Forward Funding - St. Louis School	309,151
Forward Funding - Bierton Primary School - Places	371,215
Forward Funding - Great Kimble Expansion	260,312
Forward Funding - Green Ridge Primary Academy	11,248
Forward Funding - Hampden Fields Primary School	6,263
Forward Funding - Haddenham Junior School	345,685
Forward Funding- Furze Down School	311,957
Forward Funding - Stocklake Park SEN	24,612

Forward Funding - Sir Henry Floyd	1,043,356
Forward Funding - Lent Rise	56,086
Forward Funding - Brushwood	73,022
Forward Funding - William Harding	200,053
HIF Programme Team Funding 2022-23	136,365
Staff Recharge 22-23	84,892
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>10,725,905</b>

\* Forward funded projects have already taken place using funding from non s106 reserves that have been allocated on the basis that they will be repaid from future s106 contributions.

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## Report to GIH Select Committee

<b>Date:</b>	<b>15 February 2024</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and Place Based Strategies</b>
<b>Relevant councillor(s):</b>	Portfolio Holders: Peter Strachan and Rachael Matthews
<b>Author and/or contact officer:</b>	<b>Richard Ambrose</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All and town centre wards for Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe</b>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>To note the Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and the town centre regeneration strategies for Aylesbury, High Wycombe and for Chesham as key corporate documents of Buckinghamshire Council.</b>

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and a series of three town centre strategies set out a coherent approach to regeneration across the whole of the county.
- 1.2 The Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework provides the framework for how communities can organise themselves to determine their local ambitions and set out the regeneration vision for their local area. Three town centre regeneration strategies provide the local vision and place-based ambitions for Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe. These key Council documents were adopted by the Cabinet in October 2023 and work is now in hand to firm up the delivery programmes to bring each strategy to life.

### 2. Summary of the regeneration framework and strategies

- 2.1 Buckinghamshire is not dominated by a single town/city but is instead made up of a thriving network of large and medium sized towns, and large villages. Regeneration

in these important towns and villages is essential to ensure long-term survival and prosperity as well as to achieve the economic ambitions for Buckinghamshire.

- 2.2 The Council is supporting communities to develop ambitions for their place and set out local strategies to stimulate and coordinate regeneration investment. Regeneration in Buckinghamshire is community led and delivered through partnerships. Working with key public and private sector partners (including the local Community Boards), the Council provides local leadership and clarity for practical, long-term vision which is essential to achieve consensus for strategic and local regeneration.
- 2.3 Working across Buckinghamshire partners, the Council plays a key role in spotting opportunities for investment and building momentum for that through a compelling narrative for communities.
- 2.4 The Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework 'Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future' (appendix a) provides a framework for action including a vision and a set of principles for how communities can organise themselves to determine their local ambitions and set out the regeneration aspirations for their local area.
- 2.5 Regeneration Bucks also sets out two guiding aims for regeneration activities for our towns to consider:
  - a) To create vibrant and characterful town centres which celebrate local culture and heritage and offer high quality inclusive public realm where people will want to live, work, visit, shop and relax;
  - b) To create fertile conditions for enterprise and skills to support the launch of new businesses and create the conditions for them to succeed.
- 2.6 Following on from the Framework, the largest towns of Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe have been developing their own town centre regeneration strategies which articulate the growth potential and set out the vision and ambition of these towns. This includes the Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy (appendix b), Chesham Regeneration Strategy (Appendix c) and the High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy (Appendix d).
- 2.7 **Aylesbury**
- 2.8 The Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy sets out new town centre ambitions as well as following through with the good work that has already been achieved through its Garden Town programme.
- 2.9 Aylesbury is seeing significant population growth leading to the Local Plan ambitions for 16,027 new homes to be built by 2033 as well as significant new employment space.

- 2.10 Although the town centre faces competition from larger nearby towns such as Milton Keynes and Bicester, it is well placed to provide a more distinct, specific proposition as a modern market town centre with vibrant independent shops.
- 2.11 The Aylesbury Strategy supports the town centre in becoming a thriving community with greener streets, more outdoor spaces, improved accessibility and greater biodiversity. It aims for a place where people want to live, work and visit.
- 2.12 The Aylesbury Garden Town Board Strategic Oversight Board and its partners have informed the Aylesbury Regeneration strategy and will continue to support the delivery of regeneration activities within the town centre.
- 2.13 **Chesham**
- 2.14 Chesham is an ambitious town. It is already recognised as a strong creative and community town, represented by many artists, musicians and other creatives. This strategy looks to capture this momentum and explore opportunities to see how culture and the creative sectors can be leveraged to drive regeneration forward.
- 2.15 The town has several vibrant independent retailers and hospitality businesses, bringing the best of urban/rural living together with the countryside on its doorstep. Excellent rail connection to London's underground network provides lots of potential and opportunities to Chesham including expanding its tourism capability and expanding its economic activity.
- 2.16 The strategy seeks to build upon, learn from and progress work already undertaken by local partners, including Chesham Town Council, the Chesham Community Board and local community groups. Together with the Chesham Regeneration Group, these stakeholders will continue to play a key role in bringing this strategy to life and realising the anticipated regeneration.
- 2.17 **High Wycombe**
- 2.18 High Wycombe has been a firm pillar of the Buckinghamshire economy, generating inward investment and leading in research and development. However, despite its many strengths, High Wycombe has challenges it must look to respond to in order to remain successful, including supporting business growth, improving public realm and planning for increased demand for urban living. This Strategy acknowledges these challenges and seeks to ensure the town centre adapts to ensure it remains relevant, lively and a vibrant place that is well used and delivers for local people and businesses.
- 2.19 The council has a strong track record of delivery in High Wycombe. Success with the multimillion pound Future High Street Fund demonstrates this is a place that can deliver regeneration and heritage led developments.
- 2.20 High Wycombe benefits from strong existing partnerships. The Council, through the High Wycombe Regeneration Group, will continue to build on these relationships,

including the High Wycombe Town Committee, High Wycombe BidCo, Cressex BID, the High Wycombe Community Board and other active groups in the town to take proposals forward to deliver this strategy.

- 2.21 The 'town centre' focus of the High Wycombe strategy has been widened to encompass the Cressex Business Park, given its economic significance to the town.

### 3. Implementation and delivery

- 3.1 The Growth Board, via the Regeneration sub board, has developed an initial high level delivery programme for each of the three towns. Schemes have been identified for feasibility assessment as well as a number of 'live' regeneration schemes. These programmes are monitored and reported on a quarterly basis by the Regeneration Board. Annex e provides a six month view of the overarching programmes.

### 4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 There are no direct legal and financial implications in the adoption of this Framework and its strategies. Any future potential schemes that require Council funding will require a key decision in line with financial procedures.

#### 4.2 Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment

- 4.3 Monitoring Officer has been consulted and had no further comment

#### 4.4 Section 151 officer comment

- 4.5 Section 151 officer has been consulted and had no further comment

### 5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 These documents also directly support the Council's Corporate Plan priorities:

- 5.2 **Increasing prosperity** – The Regeneration Framework and its strategies will encourage sustainable economic growth, working with our partners to maximise opportunities and boost productivity. It will continue to attract high quality jobs and investment in skills, innovation and connectivity. It will support growth to benefit communities, preserving the character of our environment while delivering everything we need to prosper.

**Improving our environment** – The Framework and strategies support our town centres in being more accessible to shoppers and pedestrians, they ensure spaces are flood resilient by encouraging more greenery, trees and sustainable drainage schemes and in general, buildings that are environmentally friendly as well as protecting key conservation spaces within the town.

**Protecting the vulnerable** – town centre regeneration will focus on public realm improvements that contribute to designing out crime and antisocial behaviour so that our town centres can be places where people feel safe and want to spend time in to stay connected to the community and enjoy their High Streets.

**Strengthening our communities** – Regeneration supports the delivery of more town centre living, including the provision of affordable housing for our communities.

5.3 Further implications:

**a) Property Implications** – No immediate property implications have been identified at this stage. The Council has significant assets and land ownership within the strategy areas. This strategy may provide regeneration opportunities to acquire, develop and dispose of assets. Each asset will be looked at individually at appropriate times.

**(b) Climate Change and Sustainability** – Regeneration will seek to create and ensure our town centres are healthy and resilient. It will take measures to protect our natural environment and promote biodiverse environments.

**(c) Equality and Diversity Issues, Equality Act 2010** – The Regeneration Framework and its strategies are overarching, seeking to help create and enable inclusive and diverse public places and buildings with increased access to transport, but does not have any direct impact upon protected groups itself. Proposals and initiatives which seek to introduce or implement regeneration results will be formulated considering equalities impacts where appropriate and relevant Equalities Impact Assessments will be prepared at the beginning of any proposals or initiatives.

**(d) Data** – It is not anticipated that a data protection impact assessment is required, however, if any personal data is collected or used in connection with the Regeneration Framework in the future - this will be reviewed.

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

6.1 Local stakeholder engagement takes place through the various Boards at the town centre level.

6.2 The Board's membership includes elected Members, the Town and Parish Councils and other local community groups/business interests.

6.3 Following engagement and agreement of these documents at Cabinet, engagement activities have expanded out to a wider group of local members and stakeholders as well as the relevant Community Boards for the Town Strategies.

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

7.2 Engagement has taken place with internal and external stakeholders. This will continue with details of any individual schemes and projects coming out of the strategy work shared regularly.

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

8.1 An engagement strategy is being implemented to ensure these strategies are widely shared and are proactively used to inform council decisions and influence key partner decision making. Specific forums and opportunities have been identified and targeted to share these strategies as 'prospectus' type documents to funding bodies and developers.

## **9. Background papers**

9.1 Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework with its associated strategy and delivery plans for Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe



# REGENERATION BUCKS - TRANSFORMING FOR THE FUTURE

*Succeeding in our town centres and high streets*

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE REGENERATION FRAMEWORK



# FOREWORD

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## An ambitious framework for place-based growth across Buckinghamshire

The powerful partnership forged between the Buckinghamshire Growth Board and collaborators across Buckinghamshire provides the platform from which to pursue our ambitious place-based approach to growth across the county.

This exciting regeneration framework highlights the potential of our three larger towns - High Wycombe, Aylesbury, and Chesham, and offers practical guidance to help our other towns and villages realise their potential. It recognises the numerous strengths Buckinghamshire already has as a network of towns and places, in a prime location with extraordinary natural and cultural assets.

It sets out a shared vision, highlighting how our communities and businesses will benefit from 'Regeneration Bucks' and describes our priorities for creating vibrant, distinctive, healthy, and resilient social centres with rich conditions for enterprise and skills.

It is a framework to unify partners around common goals, identifying what is meaningful for our places and it outlines our principles for achieving change. These include planning for a greener and more climate-friendly future, improving our existing places, as well as investing in new, well-designed spaces and enhancing connections within and between them.

It is the 'jumping off point' for a series of 'place' strategies that will advance how we leverage each place's distinct identity to achieve long lasting change. It paves the way, sets the tone, and attracts the right investments for culture, education, leisure, visitor, and the night-time economy and begins to prioritise and locate interventions to catalyse physical change.

Buckinghamshire stands ready to work, hand in hand with government and with partners at all levels to deliver change and shape ideas going forward into the future.



**Cllr Martin Tett**  
Leader of  
Buckinghamshire Council



**Cllr Rachael Matthews**  
Deputy Cabinet Member for  
Town Centre Regeneration



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# PURPOSE OF 'REGENERATION BUCKS – TRANSFORMING FOR THE FUTURE'

Buckinghamshire Council is driving forward a clear place-based regeneration ambition for its social centres - our towns and high streets – so that all our places succeed, as set out in the Strategic Vision for 2050.

Regeneration looks at all the interlinked ways we use our public spaces and buildings and reimagines how these complex social, business, and residential areas can be revitalised to create thriving, prosperous places that attract commercial and economic investment and opportunity. It provides a holistic view of development and placemaking and illustrates the gains to be made for people where they live, work, and relax. This contrasts with redevelopment which tends to focus solely on the demolition of old or redundant physical infrastructure to make way for new construction.

Through this framework – **Regeneration Bucks – Transforming for the Future** – the Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Board sets out a shared understanding of the role people and places can play in achieving transformation and growth within our county, building on our reputation as a great place to live and work. By promoting conversations about each community's vision for its future, the aim is to identify real improvements for our market towns and high streets, helping to articulate local identity, support sustainable development and promote economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being.

## The 'Regeneration Bucks' Framework

- Sets out our vision for place-based regeneration and the priorities that will underpin delivery of our ambitions for Buckinghamshire.
- Establishes a regeneration approach, guides investment, and focuses action as a non-statutory document. It does not make land-use allocations decisions or determine funding for projects.
- Enables effective local partnership working, encouraging collaborative approaches to addressing local challenges and sharing best practice.
- Provides a basis to develop strong cases for investment for local initiatives and supports the pursuit of external funding opportunities.

As an overarching framework and practical support document, this publication is for residents, businesses, public sector partners and private investors who want to get involved in transforming Buckinghamshire and enabling it to be the best place it can be. This framework is complemented by 'place-specific' strategies for Aylesbury, High Wycombe, and Chesham.

# NATIONAL CONTEXT

Buckinghamshire has a vital role to play in delivering the Government's Levelling Up agenda. We can build upon our history of being a productive, creative and entrepreneurial economy, and continue to be a net contributor to the UK exchequer, delivering £18.4 billion per year to national output.

National priorities for Levelling Up are to grow the economy in the places that need it most, regenerate towns and cities, improve the planning system to give communities a louder voice and ensure developments are beautiful, green and accompanied by new infrastructure and affordable housing.

In recent years as a country, the UK has experienced a significant decline in its town centres. The migration to online retail, combined with the development of out-of-town shopping malls, and the impact of high business rates and wages have all combined to result in the closure of some of the most familiar high street retailers over recent years. Between 2013 and 2019, 1 in 12 high street stores closed their doors. Over this period the biggest loss of stores was in clothing, phone, gift and bookstores, with 750 clothes stores lost from UK town centres between 2013 and 2019. Some sectors did grow, particularly hair and beauty, which added an extra 1,000 stores over this period.



The pandemic accelerated increasing trends of online sales overnight in summer 2020, and online shopping remains important in how businesses operate on high streets. Physical retail has been in steady decline for some time and although most recently the British Retail Consortium reported that high street footfall has gone up by 8.6% compared to March 2022, it is still 12% down on 2019.

Our town centres have traditionally been a central focus for interaction in our communities, providing a physical, social experience of togetherness. They have also been drivers of economic growth, jobs and innovation, with 4.4 million people employed in high street businesses in Britain (2018, latest data) of which only one quarter was retail. 16% of people in Britain live on or around a high street (2018). Widespread closures in retail, hospitality and commercial spaces have collectively made a significant impact on the feel of our town centres as well as the wellbeing, safety and prosperity of our communities.

Nationally, there is a recognition of the need to shift our town centres from shared workspaces dominated by office space to more experiential uses and activities. In Buckinghamshire, we need to give our spaces a new lease of life as vibrant community centres of economic and social activity. Through collaboration and creative thinking, there are real opportunities to develop innovative mixed use social spaces that reflect local character, culture and heritage and help our communities to thrive, boosting local productivity and restoring a sense of local pride and identity.

The aim of the Government's Future High Streets Fund is to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that drives growth, improves experience, and ensures future sustainability. Delivering high quality design and beautiful places, and protecting heritage, are fundamental aspects of the Government's Levelling Up and Regeneration agenda.

# THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CONTEXT

Buckinghamshire is a richly diverse, enterprising, and attractive county located in the heart of a growing and innovative region. 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 attractive and diverse towns, Buckinghamshire is a sought-after location.

Buckinghamshire's major town centres are supported by the surrounding large and small villages, each providing their own characters, heritage, and local centres, which form the county's network of liveable places. Our towns and villages play a critical role in achieving Buckinghamshire's ambitions for future investment and place distinctiveness.

Even though we are a thriving county and many of our communities can enjoy some of the best outcomes in the UK, regeneration in Buckinghamshire must respond to a range of issues which shape our places and key centres of growth. As we see our population continue to grow, we will also see challenges around job opportunities, skills and qualifications, and supporting business growth, as well providing a range of housing to meet the needs of our diverse demographics and communities. Resilience is an ever-growing issue as we move

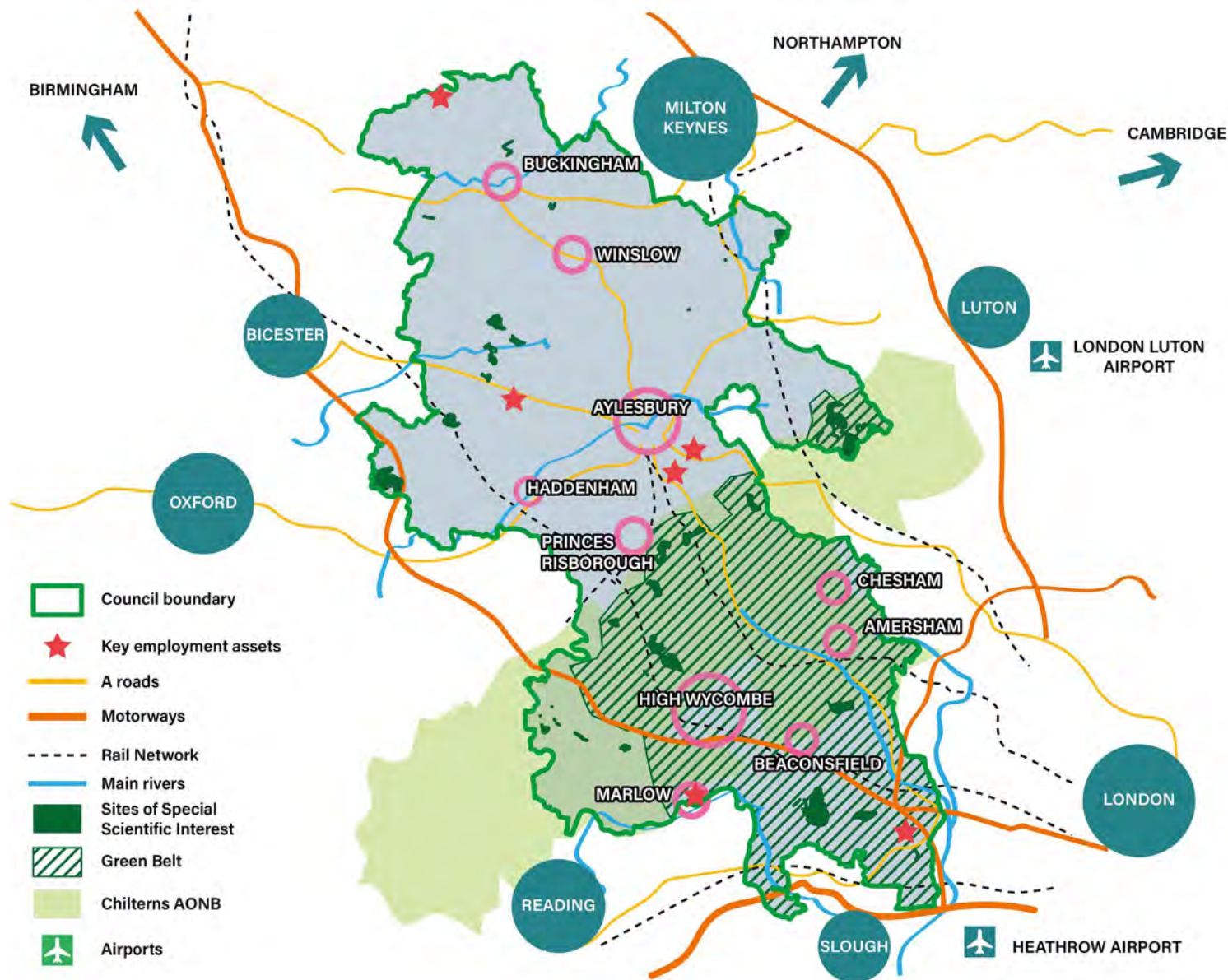
towards carbon neutrality, with a growing imperative to create places that put sustainability and health and wellbeing at the heart of people's lives.

Levelling up, high quality-places, and successful high streets are all inter-linked and require a strong spatial dimension. Across Buckinghamshire, the socio-economic dynamics of places vary, and different places may have different capacities for transforming their localities and responding to environmental and social challenges and opportunities.

Across Buckinghamshire, our towns have been impacted in different ways by the changing retail landscape, and in some cases that is down to place identity. For example, in our major towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe we are seeing a vast number of shop closures and the loss of variety in terms of the high street offer, whereas Marlow is managing to thrive with its strong mix of independent retail.

Our individual market towns and villages will need to play to their distinctive strengths and capitalise on local opportunities, building on the important role they hold in providing experiences, rather than focusing on commercial and retail. As community leaders, we need to lead the future of our town centres by developing an overall vision and working collaboratively with other stakeholders to make that a reality.

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE TOWNS



Buckinghamshire has a network of great towns and high streets, and the framework sets out an overview of our 10 largest towns and villages (by population).



## Aylesbury

As the county town of Buckinghamshire, Aylesbury provides the largest regeneration opportunity. Through the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, Aylesbury is identified as playing a substantial and critical role in delivering growth for Buckinghamshire, especially after being awarded Garden Town status in 2017. The identification of Aylesbury as a Garden Town recognises Aylesbury's role as the county town for Buckinghamshire and its central location in the 'brain belt' between Oxford and Cambridge.



## Amersham

With its new and old town, Amersham offers both a pastime and modern feel to its high streets and surrounding areas. The town is also uniquely connected to the Metropolitan railway, whilst also being on the doorstep of the River Misbourne and Chesham Bois Wood.



## Beaconsfield

Beaconsfield is a charming town with a well-kept and gracious main street with a varied range of shops and pubs, whilst also being highly accessible from both London and Birmingham via the M25 and the Chiltern Railway line.



## Buckingham

A former medieval market town, Buckingham is now a charming town with an abundance of green spaces. Buckingham is home to the University of Buckingham and is neighbouring many attractions such as Stowe Landscape Gardens and Silverstone Racetrack.



## Chesham

Chesham is a market town that is rich in culture, acting as a hub for creative start-ups. Along with Amersham, Chesham is directly connected to the London underground and this is something that is unique regarding the two towns.



## Haddenham

Haddenham is a large village that is considered highly sustainable due to its good transport links to Aylesbury, Oxfordshire and London. Haddenham also has a range of shops, public houses and other services, including a range of employment opportunities at Haddenham Business Park.



## High Wycombe

A vibrant market town with a thriving town centre and high street. High Wycombe is easily accessible from both London and Birmingham via the M40, along with direct trains offered by Chiltern Railways. The town lies along the River Wye and is at the edge of the Chiltern Hills.





## Marlow

A historic market town on the River Thames, Marlow's town centre is made up of historic streets with small-listed buildings and a rich mix of high-quality shops, restaurants, wine bars and pubs that all add to its charm as a destination and support its thriving High Street to ensure good levels of footfall and low vacancy rates. The town benefits from plenty of events through the year, including the Marlow Town Regatta and the annual 'Swan Upping' which attract visitors to the town.



## Princes Risborough

A small market town built on the spring line at the foot of the Chiltern Hills. The town is within the setting of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the boundary of which hugs the town on the southern and eastern side. The majority of businesses in Princes Risborough are very small. The main employment areas are the Princes Estate and on Longwick Road, with the former showing most potential for business expansion. New floor space is likely to cater for local companies requiring smaller, but high-quality, premises that are not dependent on direct motorway access.



## Winslow

A historic market town which has managed to retain its original layout created in the 13th century with its beautiful half-timbered buildings along its High Street. It has a mix of pubs and restaurants with interesting independent shops and antique centre. The A412 links Winslow to Buckingham and Aylesbury, and as part of future East West Rail ambitions, the town will be served by the new railway line with a new station under construction just outside the town.

# KEY STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Our approach to place-based regeneration creates the opportunity to build on our strengths and work together to tackle our challenges.

## Strengths:

- Our identity as a great place to live within a network of attractive and diverse market towns with easy access to green spaces, the AONB and countryside.
- The rich culture and heritage that underpins the attractiveness of our places and makes them well placed for character-based regeneration.
- Our strong SME economy.
- Our location at the heart of a growing and innovative region, benefitting from east west movement, inward investment opportunities and superb London and international connections.
- Emerging centres of education excellence clustering in popular towns like High Wycombe and Aylesbury, attracting youth, diversity and growth opportunities adding to the already highly educated and mobile, population.

## Challenges:

- The changing retail environment and its implications for our town centres.
- Nurturing our SMEs and specialist sectors to develop our business economy after a period of subdued growth.
- Impact of high inflation levels on businesses and residents.
- Traffic congestion in and between our town centres.
- Local labour and skills shortages, particularly in our key growth sectors.
- Employment opportunities for residents with few or no qualifications, and those claiming out of work benefits.
- Addressing deprivation in our Local Levelling Up through the Opportunity Bucks targeted wards.

# KEY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR TOWNS

Our vision for regeneration in Buckinghamshire is to create places where people want to be, driving local revitalisation and creating vibrant spaces to live and work – and this exciting process has already begun.

To ensure we focus our resources on achieving maximum impact, the immediate focus of 'Regeneration Bucks' will centre on our three larger towns – Aylesbury, High Wycombe, and Chesham, which provide the key opportunities for development and investment. Additionally, where applicable, initiatives will extend outside of town centres to areas of need, for example in Cressex and Micklefield in High Wycombe.

Regeneration and investment in our major towns will be supported by Buckinghamshire's strong existing partnerships with delivery partners. Buckinghamshire and its partners are supporting the drive forward for regeneration in our major towns through opportunities such as land ownership, facilitation of strategic discussions with investors and communities and the brand of Buckinghamshire through our Strategic Vision for 2050.



# AYLESBURY

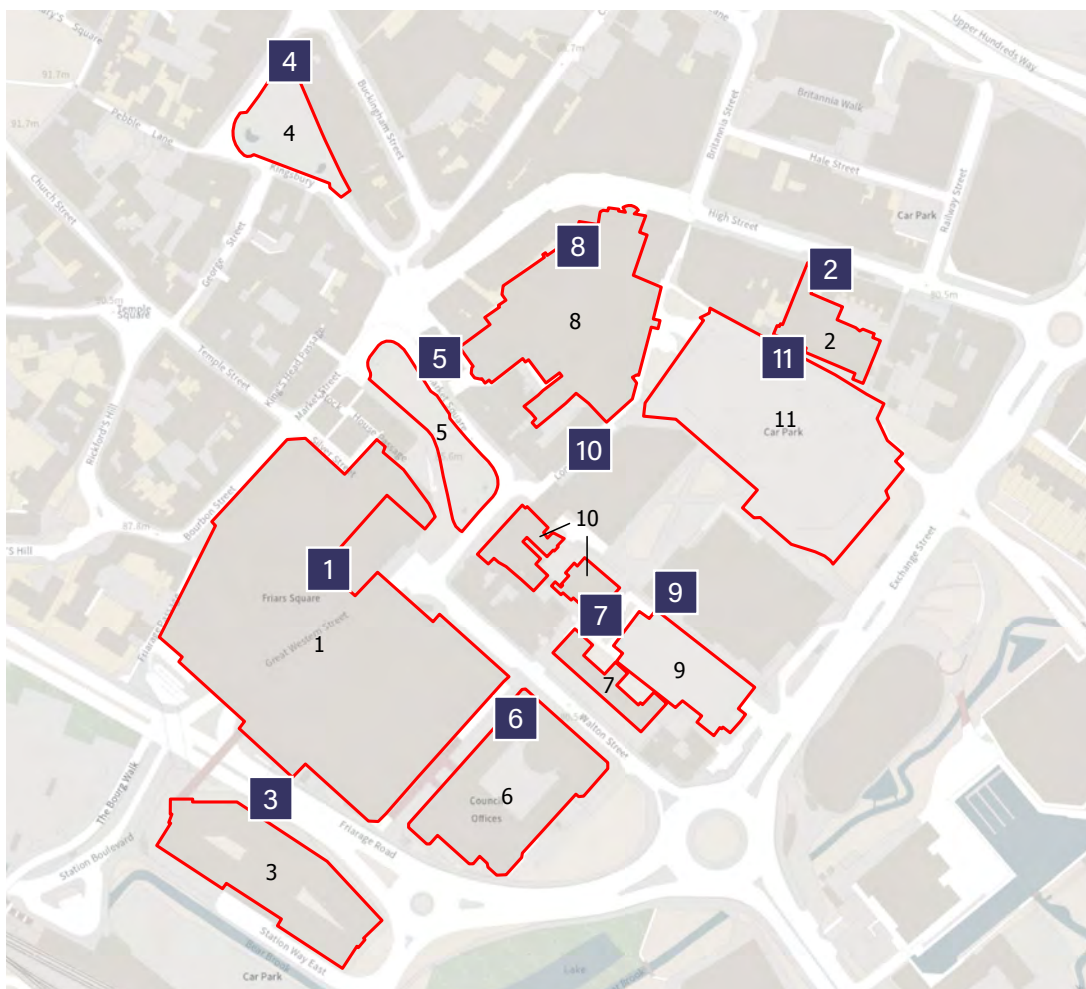
In our county town of **Aylesbury**, we are embarking on a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the historic centre, evolving our ideas to meet the demands of a modern market town centre and bringing forward homes and jobs for the growing number of new and existing residents.

There is a desire to preserve and enhance historic buildings and for a sensitively designed connection between the old and new parts of the town to overcome current challenges of coherence across the town centre. We want Aylesbury town centre to be a thriving community that combines retail, urban living, social interaction, community and economic activity.

With the recent adoption of the Garden Town Masterplan, working with local partners, we have ambitious plans for a number of projects to create a vibrant town centre. This is supported by potential significant investment facilitated by the Council as a major landowner across the county, including the recent acquisition of Friars Square Shopping Centre and capital investment in Aylesbury's public realm.



# INVESTING IN AYLESBURY



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1</b> Friars Square Shopping Centre      | <b>7</b> Old County Offices                     |
| <b>2</b> Former Gala Bingo Hall             | <b>8</b> Hale Leys Shopping Centre              |
| <b>3</b> Friars Square Multistorey Car Park | <b>9</b> Waterside North Car Park               |
| <b>4</b> Kingsbury Square                   | <b>10</b> Old Courts Building & Judges Lodgings |
| <b>5</b> Market Square                      | <b>11</b> Exchange Street Car Park              |
| <b>6</b> New County Offices                 |   |

- Given the planned housing growth for Aylesbury, there is an urgent need to ensure that the town centre delivers what a growing and changing town needs. Aylesbury has the key components of a great town but needs support to elevate its offer.
- Buckinghamshire Council and its partners have already proven their commitment to investing in Aylesbury through their track record of delivery which has seen the completion of projects such as the Waterside Theatre and the recent full occupation of the Exchange.
- Aylesbury has an appetite to be a testbed, try new things and is open to exciting new ideas for the future, particularly to improve accessibility and inclusion.
- Aylesbury is ideally located with excellent road and rail connections to London, Oxford, Birmingham and High Wycombe.

# HIGH WYCOMBE

As home to Buckinghamshire New University and our largest market town, High Wycombe, has a diverse social fabric that is rich in character and architectural diversity. The town is a gateway to the surrounding Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and located to the south of the county town of Aylesbury and northwest of London, it is well served by the strategic road network and rail line.

Future regeneration ambitions for the town seek to transform the area into a thriving, resilient town with a strong identity and a hotbed of talent. Higher education partners in High Wycombe have ambitious plans for developing their urban campuses, pulling a higher number of students to the town centre, which brings vibrancy and activity. Through recent investment from the Future High Street grant funding, the Council is enabling redevelopment projects on the high street to improve the retail and food and beverage on offer.

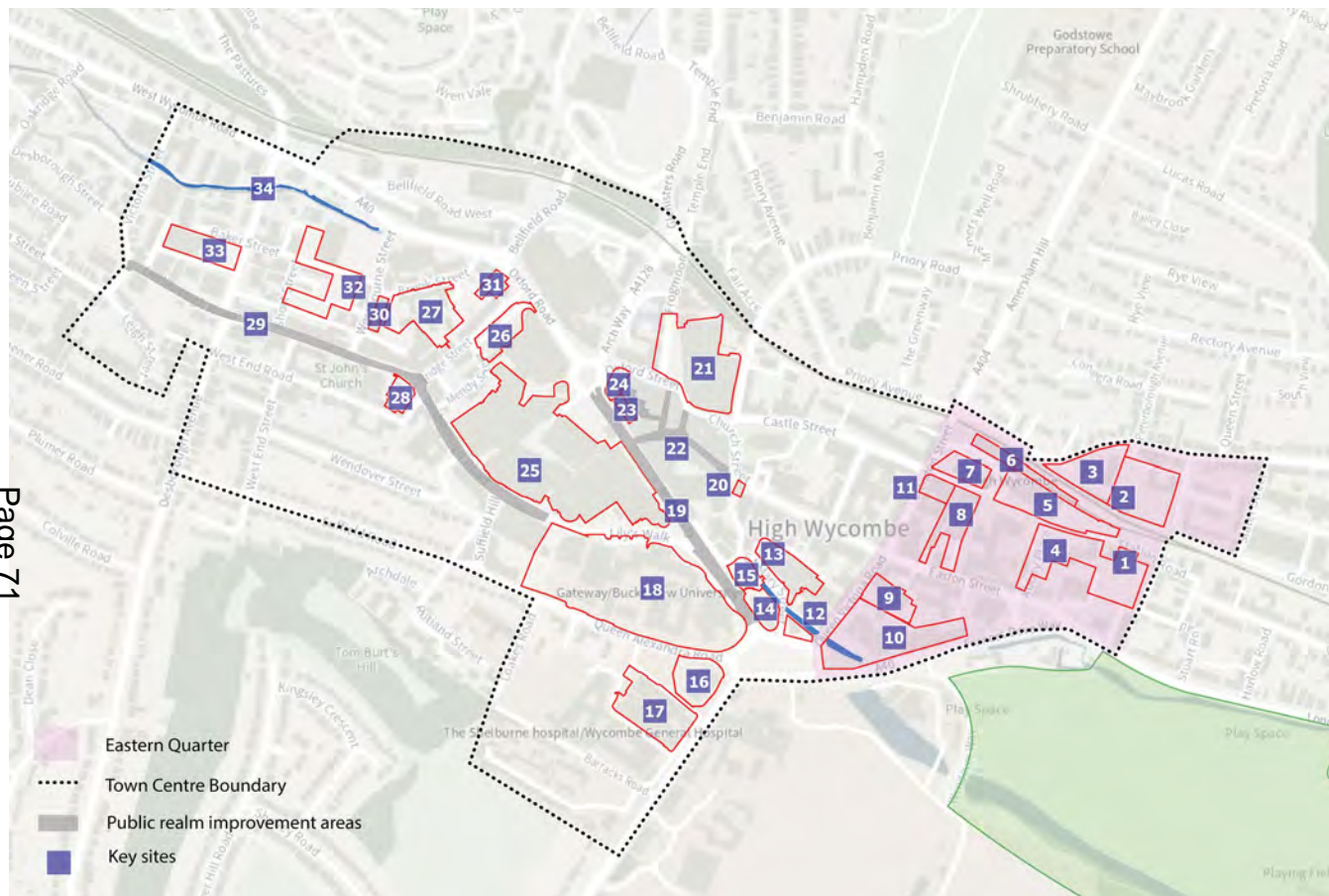
The Council is also investing capital funding for key public realm improvements in the town centre through the White Hart Street project. This includes lush new planting and trees, lighting, and sustainable urban drainage.

Regeneration in High Wycombe also includes supporting Cressex Business Park, which became a new Business Improvement District in 2022.



# INVESTING IN HIGH WYCOMBE

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- High Wycombe will create a sustainable well-connected business support structure where businesses will be able to start, grow, adapt and support a highly skilled workforce.
- Buckinghamshire Council and partners are committed to ensuring investment opportunities in the public realm, local environment, heritage, retail and cultural offering.

<b>1</b> Railway Place Car Park	<b>10</b> Council Offices	<b>19</b> Abbey Way Flyover	<b>28</b> Bridge Court
<b>2</b> Duke Street	<b>11</b> Prospect House	<b>20</b> Guildhall	<b>29</b> Desborough Road
<b>3</b> Sword House	<b>12</b> High Wycombe Social Club	<b>21</b> Chilterns Shopping Centre & Frogmoor	<b>30</b> Vernon Building
<b>4</b> Abbey Place	<b>13</b> Swan Theatre	<b>22</b> White Hart Street & Bull Lane	<b>31</b> Buckinghamshire College Group
<b>5</b> Station Car Park	<b>14</b> Fire Station	<b>23</b> Travelodge	<b>32</b> Desborough Car Parks
<b>6</b> Train Station	<b>15</b> Riverside Social Club	<b>24</b> The Curve	<b>33</b> Lidl and Car Park
<b>7</b> Brunel Engine Shed	<b>16</b> Office Outlet	<b>25</b> Eden Shopping Centre	<b>34</b> River Wye
<b>8</b> Easton Street Car Park	<b>17</b> Wycombe General Hospital	<b>26</b> Bus Station	
<b>9</b> Post Office	<b>18</b> Buckinghamshire New University	<b>27</b> BNE Brook Street	

# CHESHAM

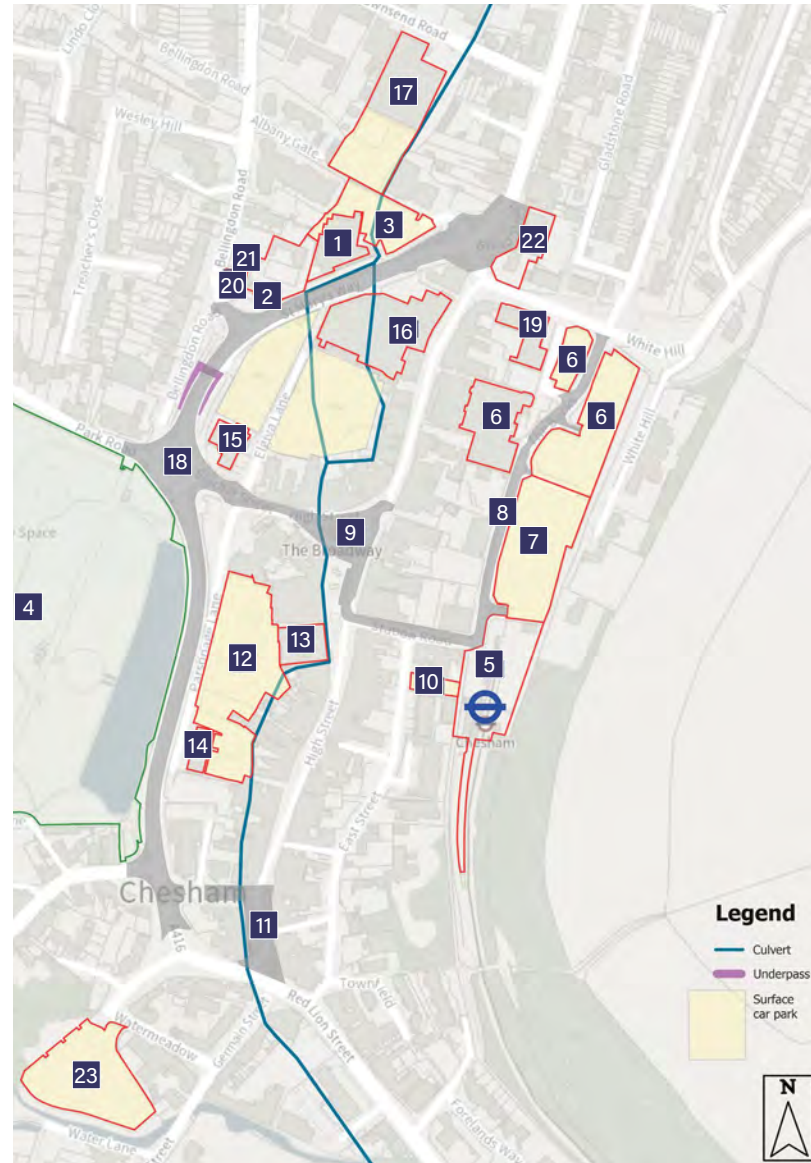
The market town of Chesham is located to the south-east of the county town of Aylesbury and north-west of central London and sits at the end of the London Underground Metropolitan Line. Chesham has a rich heritage whilst providing an important commercial, civic, leisure and community function to its residents and those in neighbouring villages. In many ways, Chesham is Buckinghamshire's arts and creative town, with the potential to be the launch pad for aspiring creative start-ups to grow and expand its night-time economy.





# INVESTING IN CHESHAM

- 1 Elgiva theatre
- 2 Chesham Youth Centre
- 3 Albany Place Car Park
- 4 Lowndes Park Skottow's Pond
- 5 Train Station
- 6 Waitrose & Car Parks
- 7 Transport for London Station Car Park
- 8 The Backs
- 9 The Broadway and Station Road
- 10 East Street Car Park
- 11 Market Square
- 12 Star Yard/Catlings Car Park
- 13 M&Co
- 14 Chesham Town Hall
- 15 Chesham Library
- 16 Sainsbury's Car Park
- 17 Wickes
- 18 St Mary's Way
- 19 UK House
- 20 Quaker's Buildings
- 21 All Spring Media
- 22 Broad Street Gateway
- 23 Water Meadow Car Park



- A strong partnership is already in place between Buckinghamshire Council and Chesham Town Council to deliver future aspirations for the town. The Town Council is developing a comprehensive Neighbourhood Plan which aligns to the regeneration strategy for Chesham.

# FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Regeneration in Buckinghamshire will vary from place to place – each place is unique and so we will never seek standardisation as one size will not fit all. Through the Framework Principles (see page 26), we set out an over-arching approach to regeneration in Buckinghamshire. Drawing on a consistent approach and a collective understanding of themes and aims will enable small or large market towns to reimagine their place while supporting Buckinghamshire as a whole county to become ‘more than the sum of its parts.’

Many areas in Buckinghamshire are already well developed in their ambitions for regeneration and improvement and this framework works alongside community strategies and plans to ensure local priorities align. Community Boards, Town/Parish Councils, and community and voluntary sector groups will be consulted as part of the local application of this framework.

‘Regeneration Bucks’ is informed by and aligns with existing and future place-specific strategies, plans and policies that protect and support Buckinghamshire. These include the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy, Local Transport 4, the emerging Local Transport Plan 5, the Council’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Buckinghamshire’s Culture Strategy, as well as regional and national strategies and the Government’s 25-year Environment Plan.



The Regeneration Framework will also help to inform the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan and neighbourhood plans by setting out strategic regeneration aims for Buckinghamshire and key placemaking principles. It also provides a guiding approach for partnerships and local people to consider their own specific regeneration ambitions and the considerations they must factor in based on the challenges facing their local place.

Additionally, the framework underpins the delivery of existing funding grants, such as the Future High Street Fund in High Wycombe, The Aylesbury Garden Town initiative, as well as providing the basis to secure future funding opportunities.

In the context of limited resources, the Council, as well as partners, must ensure capacity is targeted for maximum impact. We will, therefore, have a particular focus on the regeneration plans for Aylesbury, Wycombe and Chesham. This links to the ambitions set out in 'Opportunity Bucks', our local initiative on Levelling Up that recognises the need for targeted action in these communities to tackle inequalities and improve outcomes for all. Successful town centres in these areas will be key to supporting the development of these communities and so local regeneration strategies will be developed in each of these three towns in 2023/24.

This framework recognises that other areas in the county will have local regeneration priorities that need to be progressed. In these areas, where there is greater local capacity to drive regeneration, this Framework provides a toolkit to enable areas to develop and progress their own plans for renewal.



# PLACEMAKING AND KEY AREAS FOR LOCAL DISCUSSION IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

A place-based approach means understanding the most important local components and possible opportunities for a successful place and working with people in those communities to have the biggest impact within that area. The approach set out in this framework and its toolkit welcomes input and ideas from a broad spectrum of key stakeholders. There is an expectation for local approaches to consult widely so that the views of the communities are reflected in future proposals. Successful regeneration happens through effective consultation and engagement with residents and businesses.

Taking this localised approach provides the scope to identify, understand and collectively address the most important issues and opportunities, drawing on and valuing everyone's contribution and perspective, resulting in a lasting impact, and creating sustainable change.

Regeneration activities need to be the right fit for the scale and needs of each community. Using this framework will help target activities towards local opportunities and constraints to identify which placemaking principles and actions are most appropriate. Each of our communities, with their own assets and ambitions, will have distinctively local priorities for what might be needed for place-based regeneration.



For places that are considering exploring regeneration initiatives, a first step is to consider how well developed the three key areas for local discussion and action are. Each of our places will have some combination of these in place locally and regeneration discussions will explore how to develop them further:

1

## LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL VISION

- How clear are the local ambitions currently being expressed?
- Have the local stakeholders come together to think about the future vision for their place?
- How well developed is the case for regeneration involvement?
- Is an existing group well placed to drive this forward or is there a need to pull the right local stakeholders together?
- Who will be responsible, drive forward, co-ordinate and advocate the place of interest?
- How can existing education, health and workforce skills and distinct heritage be deployed to support ambitions of regeneration/society and/or how can these be improved?

2

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- What are the existing assets and how can those be maximised?
- These can include natural landscape including green and blue infrastructure, heritage assets such as historic buildings, and other public realm amenities like open spaces and key connectivity corridors. What protections and improvements would contribute to achieving place ambitions?
- Can these assets be enhanced and/or expanded?

3

## ECONOMIC CAPITAL

- What are the commercial activities that are taking place; are these fulfilling the local needs?
- What are the economic strengths and opportunities to increase footfall and spending for local businesses?
- Where there is a commercial case underpinning regeneration aspiration, how can financial investment play a role in achieving place ambitions?

# SPOTLIGHT ON... WINSLOW

Winslow is a smaller market town situated in the north of the county and has good road connections to Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire. For Winslow, there are opportunities to consider future vitality and viability of the town as a retail and commercial hub, particularly considering the impact of future strategic transport connections in the area such as East West Rail. Through local community groups such as the Winslow and Villages Community Board, the town and its communities are well placed to drive forward their own ambitions for future regeneration plans to deliver on local needs.



# OUR VISION

The regeneration of our towns will celebrate local identity, create prosperity, and achieve our ambitions for communities and local businesses in Buckinghamshire.



# FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE CHANGE ACROSS BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

There are two guiding aims for regeneration activities:

- To create vibrant and characterful town centres which celebrate local culture and heritage and offer high quality inclusive public realm where people will want to live, work, visit, shop and relax.
- To create fertile conditions for enterprise and skills to support the launch of new businesses and create the conditions for them to succeed.

The framework sets out ten guiding principles which we would expect our partners and communities to consider for the delivery of future place-based regeneration. These principles are specifically related to our town centres and high streets and are linked to a number of cross-cutting strategies for connectivity, environment, culture, the economy, and local levelling up.





## PRINCIPLE ONE:

### To ensure the creation of a strong network of towns in Buckinghamshire

- Provide a greater and broader overall Buckinghamshire economic, cultural, and social offer and play to the strengths of the groups of our market towns.
- Consider the relationships between local centres of activity and what connections need to be enhanced to encourage appropriate investment opportunities.
- Create communities (rather than commercial districts) through local engagement and community discussion on local priorities and needs with a good range of community facilities that provide spaces for everyone to engage with culture at a local level.
- Ensure that initiatives are based on an agreed understanding of the area identity and function and seek to enhance amenity and character areas, and culture and heritage.

## PRINCIPLE TWO:

### To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally

- Provide the right mix of residential housing to meet the needs of place and stimulate opportunities for town centre living, as well as a range of flexible working spaces, attractive and accessible green spaces, play spaces, markets, street entertainment and other leisure attractions so that workers are not required to commute far from the workplace.
- Develop partnership approaches to promote mixed use development opportunities, including strong retail functions in town centres and schemes that support flexible uses to reduce spending leakage and encourage town centres growth.

## PRINCIPLE THREE:

### To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs

- Particularly small and medium sized businesses, whilst enabling interaction with the larger high-tech sectors.
- Provide economic development support for businesses to encourage town centre occupation and work with existing business support networks to continue Buckinghamshire's role in leading the way on transitioning businesses to net zero.
- Consider opportunities to work with businesses that support the tourism and rural economy.

## PRINCIPLE FOUR:

**To create a network of high quality, well planned road networks with attractive streets and spaces, and cycling routes that are safe to use, well connected and accessible**

- Ensure attractive and well-connected sustainable travel opportunities through our towns to promote active and healthy modes of movement.
- Consider options for harmonising different modes of transport particularly in our larger towns of Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham, to provide a diverse choice of travel for residents and visitors.
- Ensure our urban streets are safe and accessible to help create a network of high-quality spaces for both walking and cycling.

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## PRINCIPLE FIVE:

**To maximise the county's natural capital through its network of waterways and green spaces**

- Open up access to natural environments such as rivers and canals, and green spaces to introduce urban greening whilst enhancing health and wellbeing outcomes and wildlife.
- Plan for a greener and carbon neutral future by identifying opportunities to mitigate against the changing climate and more extremes of weather.

## PRINCIPLE SIX:

**To provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and managed environment**

- Deliver enhanced public realm opportunities that complement the existing character, form, and heritage assets.
- Ensure the consideration of the character and form of the existing buildings when exploring public realm enhancements and delivering the form of new buildings. Heights, materials and use will all need to factor into the overall placemaking ambitions of the town.
- Consider the importance of local architecture that complements the local heritage, and which are sensitive to existing buildings, and the relationship between new and old.

## PRINCIPLE SEVEN:

**To enhance strategic connectivity opportunities**

- Maximise the opportunities of strategic links to places like London and Birmingham - particularly M4, M1, M40, rail, underground, and opportunities linked to East West Rail.
- Transform connectivity across places and to residential catchments and green infrastructure.
- Enable better digital connections across the county, particularly for those in the rural community where reach can be limited.

## PRINCIPLE EIGHT:

### To ensure a greener and more carbon neutral future

- Protect our natural environment through the promotion of new technologies, which will help to ensure our built and biodiverse environments are aligned with our climate change priorities.
- Provide diverse travel choices with a focus on promoting active and healthy sustainable modes. In our larger towns such as Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham we should consider supporting multi-modal transport hub opportunities.
- Improve traffic congestion issues and associated pollution to improve overall vibrancy and pride of place.

## PRINCIPLE NINE:

### To prioritise skills and development opportunities

- Use and work collaboratively with our high-quality educational facilities to understand a range of partnership needs that are focussed on creating the right environments for skills training and attaining employment in Buckinghamshire.
- Consider accessibility of skills training and employment opportunities when collaborating with educational organisations and local businesses.

## PRINCIPLE TEN:

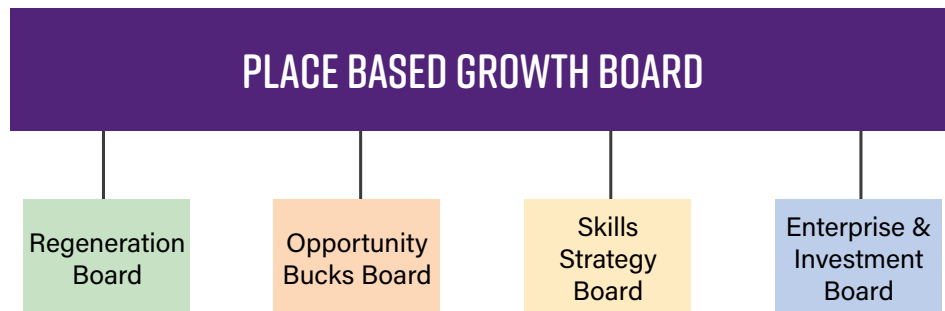
### To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities

- Showcase the unique selling points of each place's heritage/culture/visitor economy opportunities as well as establish Buckinghamshire's cultural and creative economy such as the screen industries and film production.
- Increase the visibility of the local cultural and creative industries sector to other parts of the economy - to increase opportunities to 'buy local'.
- Celebrate the unique heritage of each place and its community and promote community focused cultural programmes and activities.
- Support residents of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, to engage in culture at a local level through innovative programming and new models of delivery.

# WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE CHANGE

Working closely among partners informs the way Buckinghamshire operates. The Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Board and partnership groups meet regularly to review strategies and deliver plans for regeneration. There are also bespoke local partnership groups in place for Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham to support the regeneration of these towns.

To support further collaborative working, Buckinghamshire Council, alongside partners on the Growth Board, will play an important role in actively brokering connections to bring in and introduce the right partners for our places.



# TOOLKIT FOR ACTION - REGENERATION BUCKS

For our three biggest towns Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham, we have place-based strategies with a number of regeneration programmes in place. For our other areas interested in regeneration, we have provided a toolkit approach that sets out what our places can do to achieve successful local action and change. Using the Regeneration Bucks vision, aims and principles will be important in developing local place visions and objectives.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO NEXT TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL REGENERATION FOR YOUR PLACE AND DELIVER LOCAL ACTION

Consider the Framework for Action Key Areas for Local Discussion on page 22.

1. Leadership and Local Vision
2. Physical Environment
3. Economic Capital



You can also contact the Council's Regeneration Team if you need further support and advice on developing your action plan.

## 1. Understanding the local context

**Take the Buckinghamshire Context as a starting point and respond the following questions:**

- What is applicable, relevant to the place?
- Update data as appropriate and understand changes/trends in local characteristics.

**Establish the role and function of the place**

- What is the key purpose, USP of the place?
- What are the key relationships with other places?

**Understand key local challenges and opportunities**

- Assess key metrics of town centre performance (e.g. vacancy rate, footfall, new businesses, key anchors, user satisfaction, diversity of economy, etc.).
- Understand the catchment area of the town centre.
- How is the town centre meeting the needs of the catchment area population?
- How have the functions of the town centre changed post-pandemic and what opportunities does that afford the town centre?

## 2. Developing a local place vision

**Take the Regeneration Bucks Vision as a starting point**

- Assess how this applies locally and what else needs to be considered.
- Review other existing plans and undertake stakeholder mapping.

**Take a collaborative approach – build not just produce a vision**

- Who needs to be involved to build consensus?

**Engage the local community**

- This develops new and strengthens existing relationships between public, private sector, voluntary and community partners, including Community Boards. Review other existing plans and undertake stakeholder mapping. This increases resilience and supports more effective long-term planning and delivery.

**Assess the place against the Regeneration Bucks three key areas for discussion and guiding aims**

**Define the local place offer priorities using the 10 Framework Principles**

## 3. Set the long-term agenda for transformational change

Being realistic about priorities, timescales and potential challenges will help to plan projects from a programme and financial perspective, whilst helping manage expectations of stakeholders and communities.



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# AYLESBURY REGENERATION STRATEGY



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# FOREWORD

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As Leader of Buckinghamshire Council and Deputy Cabinet member for Town Centre Regeneration, we are delighted to introduce our strategy for regenerating Aylesbury town centre. It is one of a suite of documents that follows ***Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future***, our Buckinghamshire-wide Regeneration Strategy.

Working closely among partners informs the way Buckinghamshire operates. The Buckinghamshire Growth Board and partnership groups meet regularly to review strategies and deliver plans for regeneration. There are also bespoke local partnership groups in place for Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham to support the regeneration of these towns. This strategy provides the detail of how this is taken forward in Aylesbury and showcases all the exciting and dynamic opportunities for investment in the town.

Since Aylesbury received its Garden Town status in 2017, lots of exciting plans have been developed and changes are afoot to build on the town's existing great offer for residents and businesses.

Aylesbury's population is growing, and now stands at over 90,000. With partners already committed to delivering 16,000 new homes by 2033, steps are already being taken to position Aylesbury as a great place to work and live. Such an ambitious target means our partners and their priorities are strongly aligned with the overarching ***Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future***, helping to make Aylesbury the market town of the future.

As the County Town of Buckinghamshire, Aylesbury benefits from excellent connections by road and rail to London, Milton Keynes and beyond. The county's economy is worth £17.4 billion and is home to over 34,000 businesses. Thanks to Aylesbury's location in the middle of Buckinghamshire, opportunities for growth, regeneration, and redevelopment are plentiful.

Aylesbury is relatively affordable, with house prices around half the Buckinghamshire average. With more housing planned and the adoption of the Garden Town Masterplan, the Council alongside local partners, is already making big plans to deliver on Aylesbury town centre's potential. The Council has committed £5.5 million in the current capital programme for public realm and regeneration in the town centre. When combined with the Council's existing assets in the town centre, (totalling 11 acres of land), we can deliver transformational investment and change to deliver a vibrant town centre as well as provide opportunities for an excellent test bed for other projects.

For the first time, Aylesbury town centre has a single, comprehensive strategy, shaped by the community, owned and governed by local stakeholders via the Aylesbury Garden Town Board.

This publication is for residents, businesses, public sector partners and private investors who want to get involved in transforming Aylesbury and enabling it to be the best place it can be. Our county town has a vibrant and unique offer and by joining with potential partners, a bright future is on the horizon. We are proud of our town and its openness to do business and are excited to make Aylesbury the market town of the future. Now is the time to invest in Aylesbury.



**Cllr Martin Tett**  
Leader of  
Buckinghamshire Council



**Cllr Rachael Matthews**  
Deputy Cabinet Member for  
Town Centre Regeneration

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

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## ECONOMY

worth **£17.4 billion**

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## BUSINESSES

home to **31,355 businesses**

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## CONNECTIVITY

fully integrated with the London tube network and rail, hosting two underground stations at Chesham and Amersham

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## EDUCATION

**76% of schools** are rated **“Good”** or **“Outstanding”** by OFSTED



# REGENERATION BUCKS

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***Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future*** is our Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework. It introduces an ambitious agenda for our town centres and high streets and articulates the role people and places can play in achieving the Buckinghamshire vision for growth.

## Regeneration vision for Buckinghamshire

The regeneration of our towns will celebrate local identity, create prosperity, and achieve our ambitions for communities and local businesses in Buckinghamshire.

***Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future*** identifies two interdependent guiding aims for regeneration activities:

- To create vibrant and characterful town centres which celebrate local culture and heritage and offer high quality inclusive public realm where people will want to live, work, visit, shop and relax.
- To create fertile conditions for enterprise and skills to support the launch of new businesses and create the conditions for them to succeed.

Whilst the two priorities underpin town centre regeneration, how the priorities will be delivered, areas of focus and the actions and interventions required will vary by place.

***Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future*** also identifies ten principles to guide change:

1. To ensure the creation of a strong network of towns in Buckinghamshire.
2. To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally.
3. To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs.
4. To create a network of high quality, well planned road networks with attractive streets and spaces, and cycling routes that are safe to use, well connected and accessible.
5. To maximise the county's natural capital through its network of waterways and green spaces.
6. To provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and managed environment.
7. To enhance strategic connectivity opportunities.
8. To ensure a greener and more carbon neutral future.
9. To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities.
10. To prioritise skills and development opportunities.

***Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future*** sets the tone for our 'place' strategies and paves the way for leveraging Aylesbury's distinct identity. The Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy has been developed in accordance with this county-wide framework so that we can achieve place-based growth and long-lasting change in the best way possible.

# AYLESBURY

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## WELL CONNECTED BY ROAD

accessible by the A41 from Bicester and Hemel Hempstead; the A418 from Oxford; the A413 from High Wycombe and Amersham and the A418 from Milton Keynes and Luton



## HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

two university campuses in Buckinghamshire New University, Aylesbury Campus and the University of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire Campus and the Buckinghamshire College Campus



## WELL CONNECTED BY RAIL

one hour direct train to London Marylebone; direct connections to Birmingham, High Wycombe and Oxford



## PEOPLE

**90,540** population (Built-Up Area)



## HOMES

average house prices slightly more than half the Buckinghamshire average

**16,207** new homes proposed to be built by 2033



## SCHOOLS

a range of educational establishments including three OFSTED **“outstanding”** rated state-funded Grammar Schools

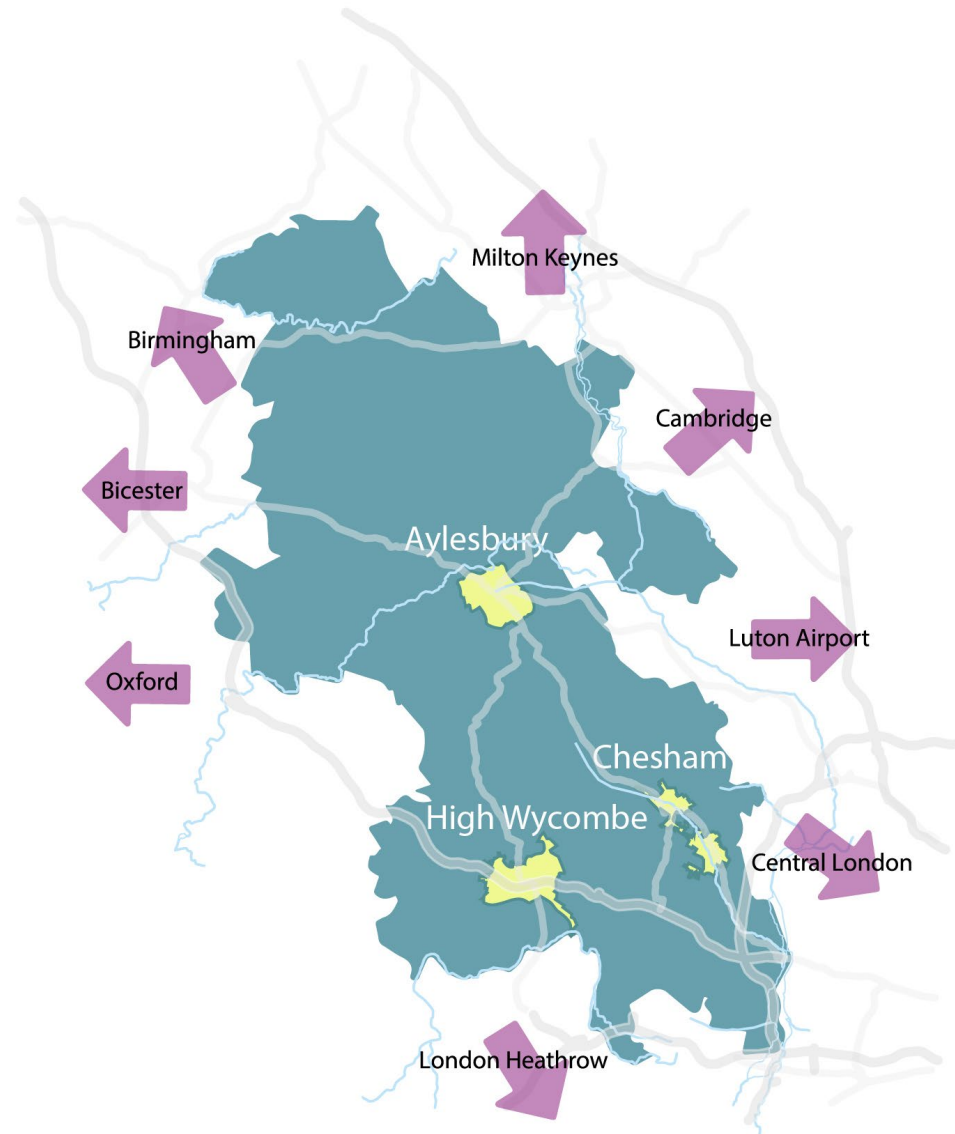
# WHY AYLESBURY?

Buckinghamshire's County Town has a young resident population with 63.9% of population in Aylesbury aged 44 or under compared to national average of 55.6% and a large working-age population. The town has seen large growth over recent years; the Aylesbury Built-Up Area population now stands at 90,540.

We have a range of educational establishments on offer; three OFSTED "outstanding" rated state-funded Grammar Schools and higher education institutions; Buckinghamshire New University, Aylesbury Campus and the University of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire Campus. The Buckinghamshire College Campus in the town also now provides further education and higher education opportunities, including apprenticeships and specialist workshops for learning.

We are excellently located both by road and by rail. In just one hour, you can reach central London by direct train, and we also have direct connections to Birmingham, and High Wycombe. Aylesbury's excellent road connections also enable you to access Oxford, Luton, Milton Keynes, Bicester and Hemel Hempstead all in under one hour.

## AYLESBURY LOCATION MAP





Aylesbury forms part of the thriving Buckinghamshire economy, worth an estimated £17.4 billion and home to more than 31,000 businesses.

Despite this, Aylesbury's house prices are still half those of the County's average and, with a commitment of 16,000 new homes by 2033, the town's profile makes for an excellent investment potential.

The Birthplace of the Paralympic Movement, Aylesbury is rich with culture and heritage too. Aylesbury's music lovers can enjoy a wide-ranging offering from live shows at Queen's Park Arts Centre and Waterside Theatre, to classical and jazz at St Mary's or 'Proms in the Park' in Vale Park.

The town contains three conservation areas and numerous listed buildings with many concentrated in the historic core. The town has a growing nightlife and cultural scene and is the home to the Discover Bucks Museum, Waterside Theatre and Friars Square Shopping Centre. It also continues to hold popular weekly markets in its Market Square.

Our award of Garden Town status in 2017 also means exciting plans are already underway to make Aylesbury greener and healthier, better connected and community focused. Investing in Aylesbury will mean playing a part in delivering our vision for a new era.



# WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

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Regeneration is already underway in Aylesbury with plans to make our county town an exemplar in inclusivity and accessibility. Including 11 acres of council-owned assets, rich with green space, the town will host the Gardenway project, an 18km orbital park around Aylesbury connecting existing walking and cycling routes and providing a green corridor to surrounding villages and the local countryside.

Our town is supported by surrounding large and small villages, each providing its own character, heritage and local centre forming a network of liveable localities.

You are never far from the great outdoors in Aylesbury. Taking time out to explore the Chiltern Hills or visiting nearby stately homes, we offer an excellent collection of leisure opportunities.

While only an hour by train from the centre of London, our town centre has a vibrant offer of social opportunities, ranging from new restaurants and cocktail bars to a cinema and the Waterside Theatre meaning our residents have everything they need on the doorstep.

Alongside this rich offer for our residents, is an even richer offer for businesses. Significant additional employment space is in the pipeline for Aylesbury focused mostly around a number of large allocated sites in the town centre area, offering exciting investment opportunities for businesses.



Servicing this space will also be a new link road extending around the southern and eastern edge of the town, providing access to the new housing area, business spaces and reducing through traffic in the town centre.

Our vision already plans to provide a flourishing natural environment across our vibrant town centre, making it greener, more accessible and increasing biodiversity to ensure a focus on sustainability in our county town.

This focus on sustainability also means a continued commitment to providing active travel options for Aylesbury residents. A more connected cycling network, the introduction of urban greening initiatives and improved public transport interconnectivity will make our County Town an exciting town fit for the future.

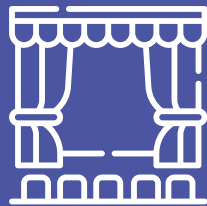
### The regeneration of our town centre will generate an additional:



**1,400**  
new homes



**18,000**<sub>m2</sub>  
business space



**5,000**<sub>m2</sub>  
leisure/community space



# WHY NOW?

In establishing a framework for the regeneration of Buckinghamshire, we have made a clear commitment to transforming our county, which starts with advancing our strategies for our three larger towns, including Aylesbury.

Strong partnerships already exist in Aylesbury and across Buckinghamshire, these partnerships are supporting Aylesbury's continued growth as a Garden Town.

Home to further and higher education institutions, Aylesbury is already working closely through aligned curriculums and seamless pathways into jobs for its students.

Buckinghamshire is also an 'aligned county', with a shared geography between the Council, Healthcare NHS Trust, Buckinghamshire Business First and a place-based partnership for Buckinghamshire with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership.

These strong partnerships mean Buckinghamshire has an excellent track record of delivery as well as strong, aligned leadership turning ambition into action. The Waterside Theatre and Exchange Street are just two examples of how we have delivered on our ambitions in Aylesbury in recent years. Our Garden Town board is helping to drive forward this ambition with high quality and sustainability at its core.

*Right: Aylesbury celebrates its strong musical legacy.*



Work is already underway for the regeneration of Aylesbury with £5.5 million of capital funding investment committed to help improve Aylesbury's public realm, building a more attractive and enticing public space for our residents and visitors.

With land assembly already underway, we have undertaken other large investments with a view to improving Aylesbury's experiential offer, such as the £12 million purchase of Friars Square, a 285,000 sq ft shopping centre which, when combined with the Council's surrounding assets, will offer 11 acres of opportunity for the redesign of Aylesbury's vibrant town centre and an environment fit for the existing population as well as future residents.

This strategy will work alongside *Opportunity Bucks - Succeeding for All*, our approach to creating equality of opportunity for all residents and communities, With a focus on 10 of the most deprived wards in Buckinghamshire, some of which are in Aylesbury, it identifies five key themes: education and skills, jobs and career opportunities, quality of public realm, standard of living, and health and wellbeing. The delivery of these themes will enable the town centre to support the needs of a range of individuals and communities.



# INVESTING IN AYLESBURY

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## Track record

We have a strong track record of delivery in Aylesbury which has seen the completion of recent projects such as the Waterside Theatre and the Exchange.

## Strong partnerships

Aylesbury and Buckinghamshire benefit from strong existing partnerships between delivery partnerships, building on initiatives such as the Aylesbury Garden Town.

## Opportunity to create a testbed

We have an appetite to try new things and are open to exciting new ideas for the future, particularly to improve accessibility and inclusion.

## Existing ambition and commitments

Buckinghamshire Council and its partners have already proven their commitment to investing in Aylesbury.

## Ideally located

Aylesbury has excellent road and rail connections to London, Oxford, Birmingham and High Wycombe.



# MARKET TOWN OF THE FUTURE

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The award of Garden Town status has given impetus to a more joined-up, collaborative approach to planning and place-making between the community, public and private sectors.

Population growth is already underway but so too is our planning for the future. 16,207 new homes will be built by 2033 as well as significant new employment space. The majority of this will be delivered across six large allocated sites around the town and a new link road extending around the south and east of the town.

Aylesbury's historic town centre faces retail competition from nearby larger towns such as Milton Keynes, Oxford and Bicester village, but rather than competing we are well placed to provide a more distinct, specific proposition as a modern market town centre with vibrant independent shops.

Central to this vision are greener streets, more outdoor spaces, improved accessibility and greater biodiversity – plans which all join up with the Government's shared focus on health and wellbeing.

We want Aylesbury Town Centre to be a thriving community and a place to live, work and visit. Building on a historic legacy, Aylesbury town centre's future as a centre for retail, urban living, social interaction, community and economic activity and sustainability makes for an exciting testbed for investment.



# LOCAL ECONOMY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

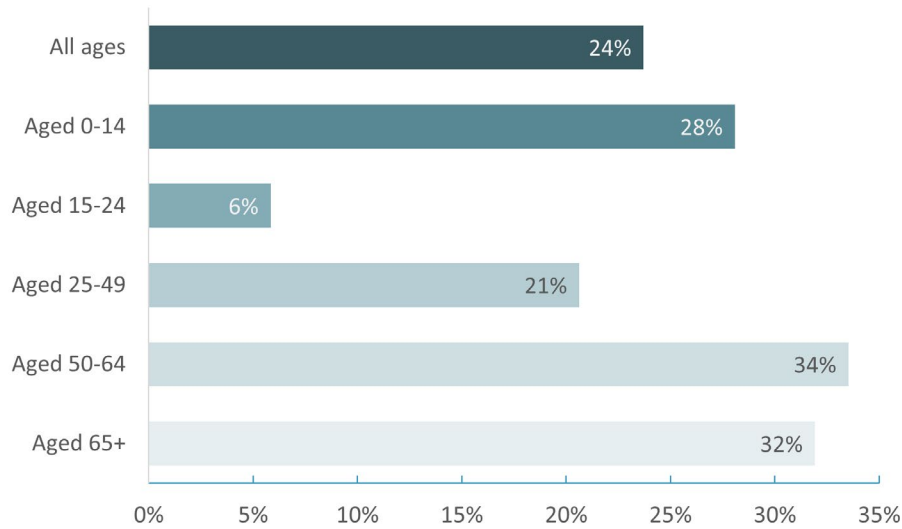
According to the ONS, the Aylesbury Built Up Area has a population of 90,540 – an increase of nearly 17,369 since 2011.

Compared with Buckinghamshire and the national average, Aylesbury has 21.19% of children (0-15) and 38.88% of people aged 25-49 – highlighting the attraction of the town for families. Aylesbury also has a very small population of 12.37% aged 65+ at present compared to the national average.

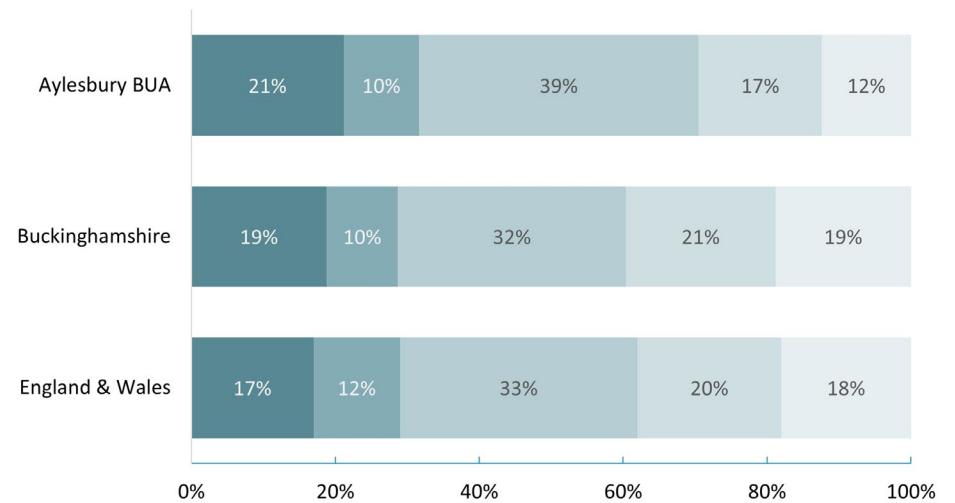
The Aylesbury population is 49.7% male and 50.3% female.

According to the 2011 Census, 81.4% of the Aylesbury population is part of the 'White' ethnic group, with the largest minority ethnic groups being 'Asian' (11.2%) and 'Black' (3.4%). This is broadly similar to the national average.

In terms of religion, 56% of the Aylesbury population classified themselves as 'Christian'. 26.7% responded as having 'No Religion' and 6.8% did not state a religion at all. The next highest religious group in Aylesbury is 'Muslim', which comprised 8% of the population.



Population growth rates in Aylesbury Built-Up Area (BUA) by age group 2011-2021 Census - Source: NOMIS



Population age profile comparison, 2021 Census - Source: NOMIS



# RETAIL CATCHMENT AND HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE

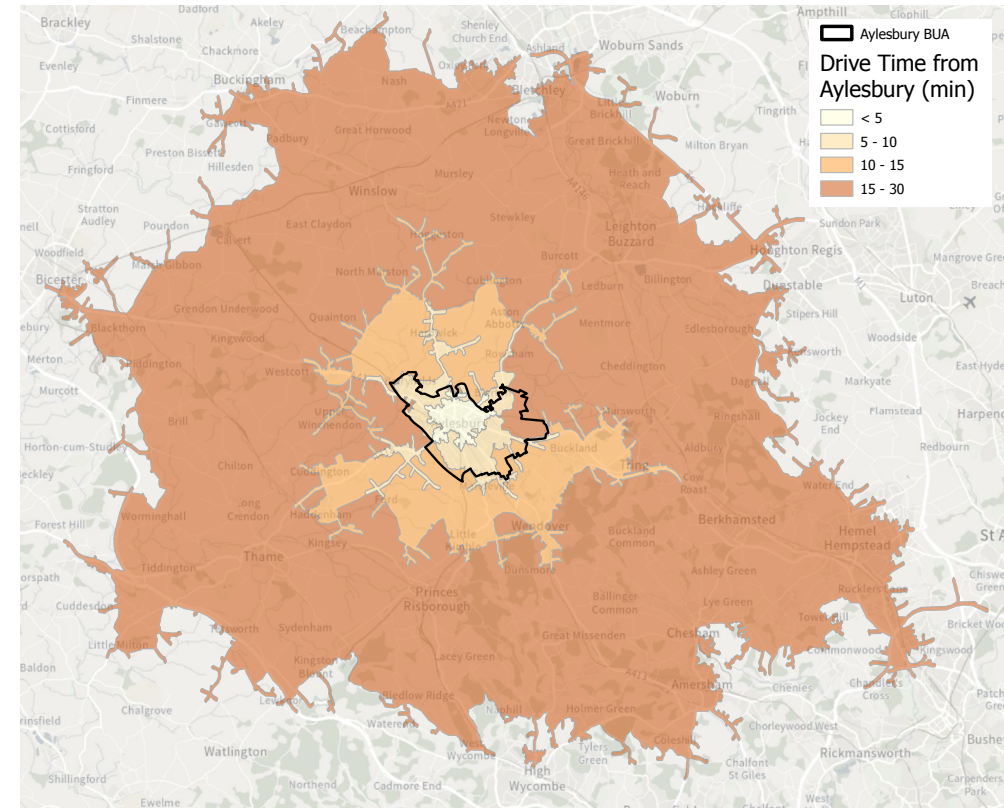
Aylesbury's catchment area has a resident population of 259,000, with around 90% of shoppers surveyed for living within this area. The same study identified 75% of Aylesbury's catchment area as being within the more affluent 'Acorn' groups, compared with 59% nationally. Studies identify Aylesbury as having the 22<sup>nd</sup> most affluent catchment nationally.

With some disparities still existing between the town of Aylesbury and its wider catchment, regeneration of the town centre could help to reduce these gaps.

While competition from online shopping and nearby Milton Keynes and London has been strong, Aylesbury has an excellent opportunity to attract more spend from shoppers in the wider catchment by creating vibrant and independent retailers.

Data shows that the highest spend levels in Q2 of 2022 were in grocery stores and supermarkets, followed by restaurants and takeaways with an Average Transaction Value of £19.89.

Footfall data for Aylesbury town centre shows an average of 246,000 visits a week which is approaching pre-covid figures once more. The busiest days are Saturday, Friday, and Thursday (with Tuesday not far



*Aylesbury retail catchment area  
- Source: Buckinghamshire Council/CACI*

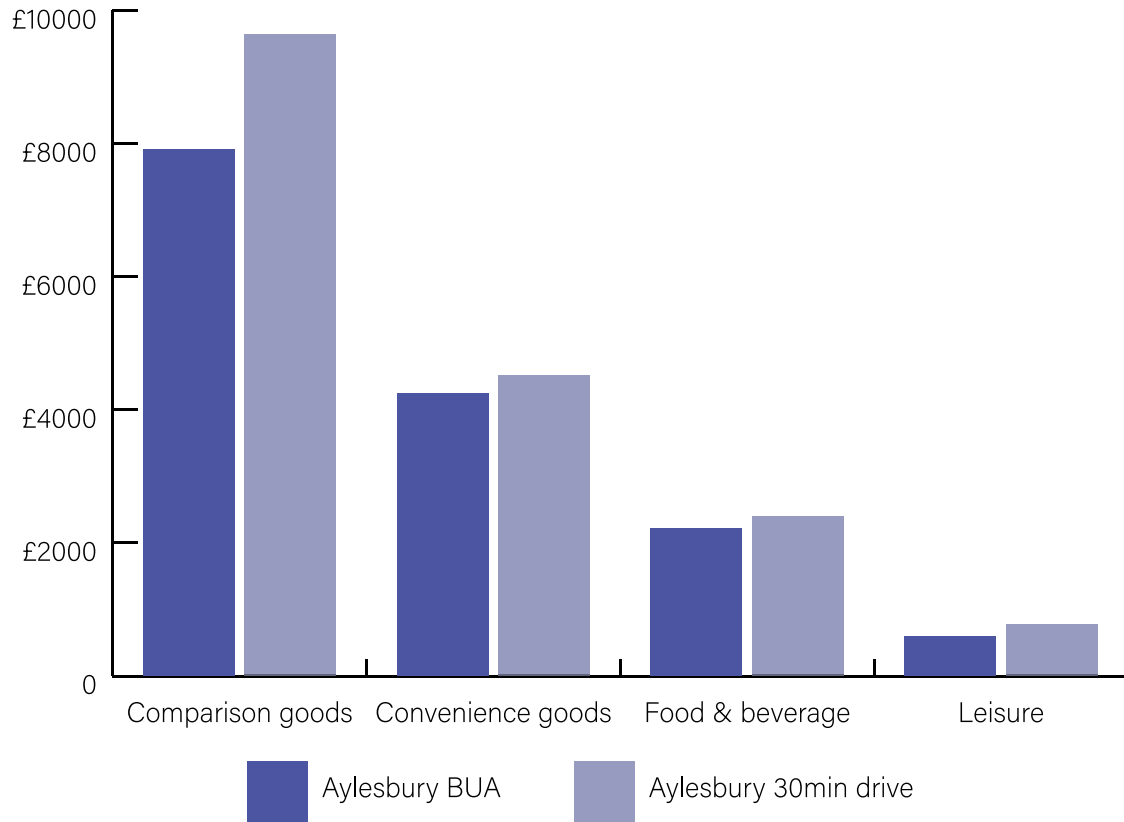
behind) with an average of 33,600 to 40,500 visits a day. The busiest period is between 9am to 4pm. 80% of visits are over 20 minutes with 31% of visits having the longest monitored dwell time of 60 to 90 minutes.

Aylesbury presents some exciting development opportunities and with land assembly already underway, up to 11 acres of land could be considered for regeneration to deliver a vibrant town centre and an exciting testbed for your future projects.

With the £12 million purchase of Friars Square Shopping Centre, Buckinghamshire Council has underlined its commitment to delivering on the ambition of being the Market Town of the Future.

The following pages give you an indication of the potential for the redesign of a number of the sites listed here. We aim to celebrate the heritage and architectural style of the town whilst inspiring creativity and imagination for progressive design ideas for these regeneration opportunities, sites and development opportunities.





*Spend per household - Aylesbury Built-Up Area (BUA) vs 30min drive time  
- Source: Aspinal & Aspinal*

	Aylesbury BUA	Aylesbury 30min drive
Comparison goods	£252m	£2.3bn
Convenience goods	£136m	£1.1bn
Food and beverage	£71m	£0.7bn
Leisure	£17m	£0.2bn
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£476m</b>	<b>£4.2bn</b>

*Estimated total residential spending power (2020)  
- Source: Aspinal & Aspinal*



# THE LABOUR MARKET

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Aylesbury and Buckinghamshire in general has a highly educated and strong labour market, highlighted by the table below. Resident earnings are slightly higher than workplace earnings in both Aylesbury Vale and Buckinghamshire. Resident earnings in Aylesbury Vale remain above national averages for England and the UK as a whole.

Nearly half of Aylesbury jobs are filled by residents of the town, with a further 25% drawn from the rest of the former Aylesbury Vale District. Former Wycombe District accounts for the next largest share, followed by Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and Dacorum.

In terms of outward commuting, around 6% of employed Aylesbury residents work in former Wycombe District, with a further 3% working in the former Chiltern District. As of 2011, 2% of employed Aylesbury residents commuted into Central London.



Source - 2021 Census	Aylesbury BUA	Buckinghamshire	England and Wales
Economically Active (inc. full time students) - In Employment	67%	62%	57%
Economically Active (inc. full time students) - Unemployed	3%	3%	3%
Economically Inactive	30%	36%	39%
<b>Occupations</b>			
Managers, Professionals, Associate Professionals & Technical Occupations	46%	56%	46%
Administrative, Secretarial and Skilled Trade Occupations	20%	19%	20%
Caring, Leisure, Service and Sales Occupations	18%	14%	17%
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives and other Elementary Occupations	16%	11%	17%
<b>Qualifications</b>			
Degree or equivalent qualifications or above	34%	41%	34%
No qualifications	16%	14%	18%

*Aylesbury's labour market - Source: ONS*

2022	Aylesbury*	Buckinghamshire	England	UK
Resident earnings (£/Yr)	£34,310	£37,300	£33,582	£33,280
Workplace earnings (£/Yr)	£32,942	£35,927	£33,571	£33,280
Difference (£/Yr)	£1,368	£1,373	£11	£0

\*Aylesbury Parliamentary constituency

*Median annual earnings for Aylesbury residents - Source: ONS*

Place of residence	Aylesbury workers	% of total Aylesbury workers
Aylesbury	11,448	47%
Rest of Aylesbury Vale	5,966	25%
Wycombe	1,131	5%
Central Bedfordshire	734	3%
Milton Keynes	670	3%
Dacorum	642	3%
Chiltern	603	2%
South Oxfordshire	488	2%
Cherwell	312	1%
Other	2,160	9%

*Aylesbury workforce by place of residence (2020) - Source: ONS*



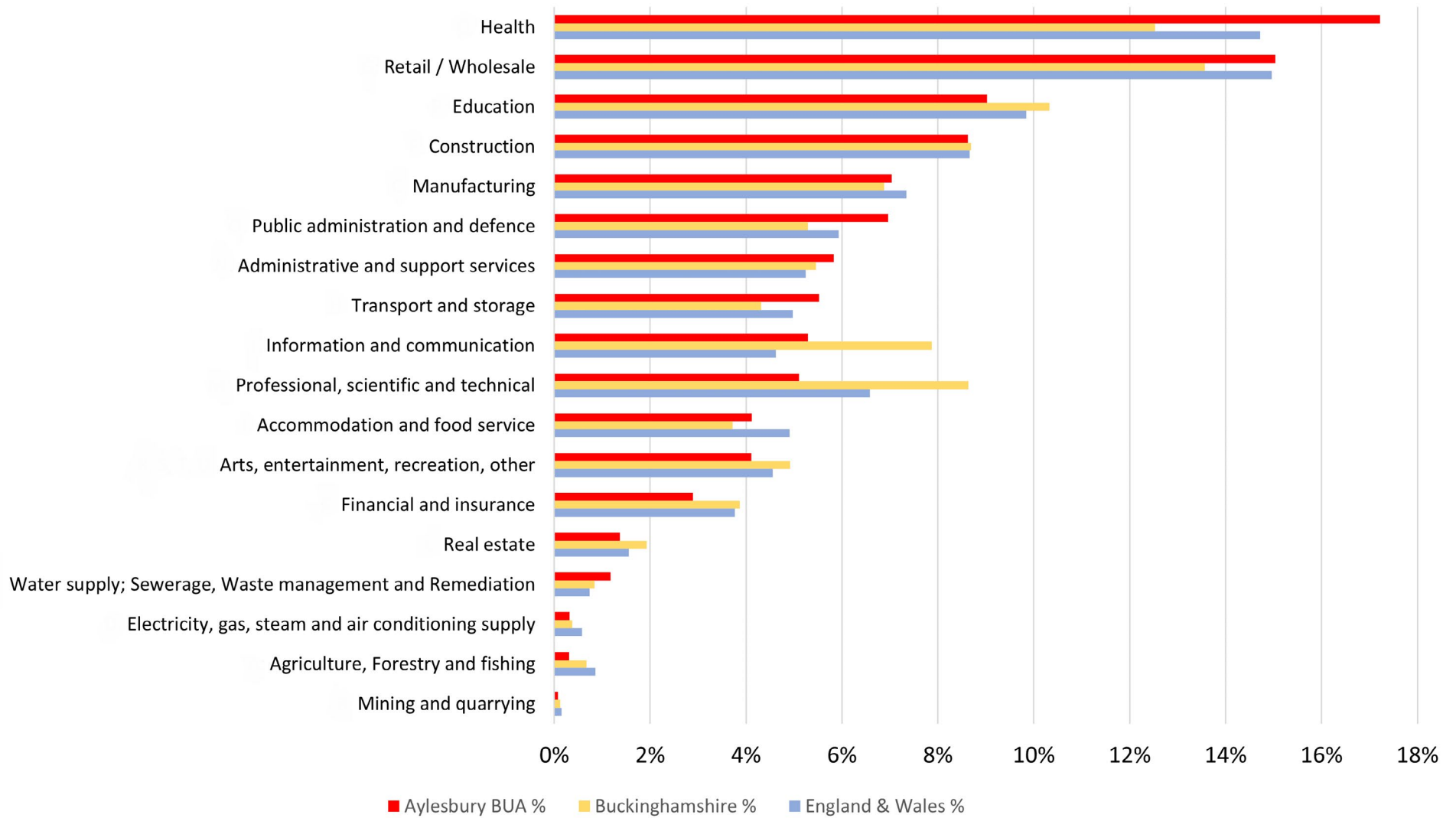
# INDUSTRY SECTORS

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There are approximately 37,000 jobs held in Aylesbury and 249,000 in the county of Buckinghamshire. The table below highlights the sectors providing the largest number of jobs in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire and England. The most significant sectors are 'Health', 'Business Administration & Support Services', 'Public Administration & Defence' and 'Education'.

As of 2021, Aylesbury has an estimated 2,585 businesses. Whilst the vast majority are classified as small or micro (less than 50 employees), there are 75 medium sized (50 to 249 employees) and 15 large enterprises in the town. In annual turnover terms, most businesses in Aylesbury have turnover of less than £1 million, however, there are 135 businesses with annual turnover between £1 million and £10 million, 15 businesses with between £10 million and £50 million, and five with annual turnover exceeding £50 million.





Employment by industry sector 2020 (descending order of % of town centre jobs) - Source: ONS



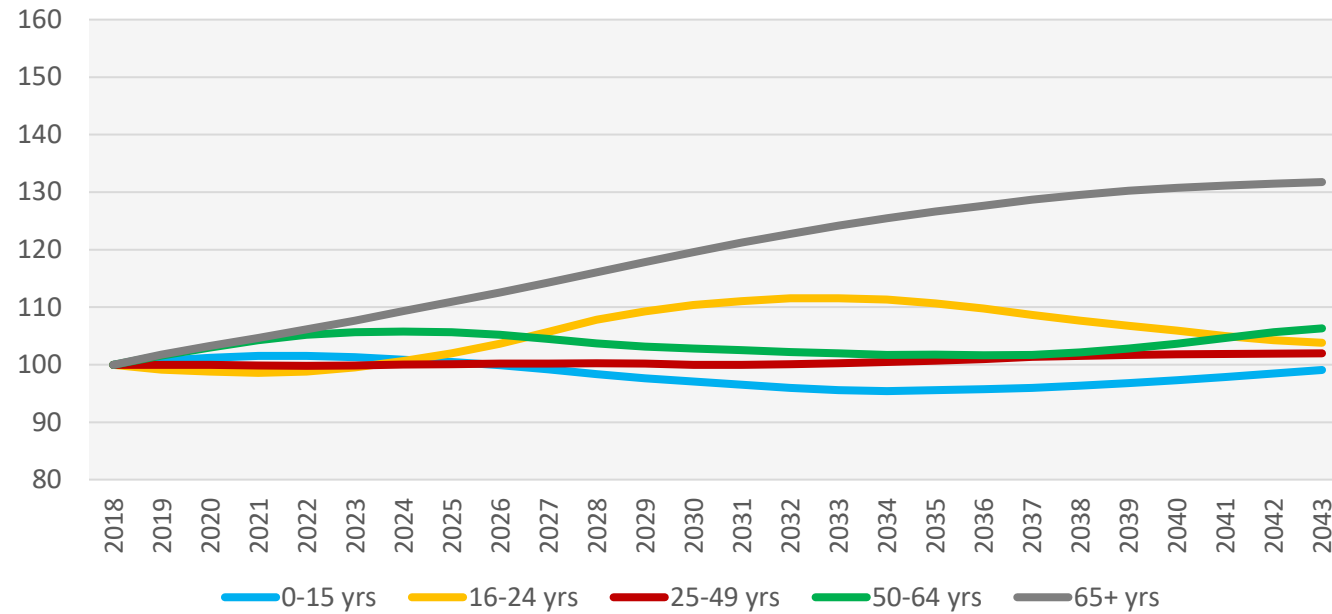
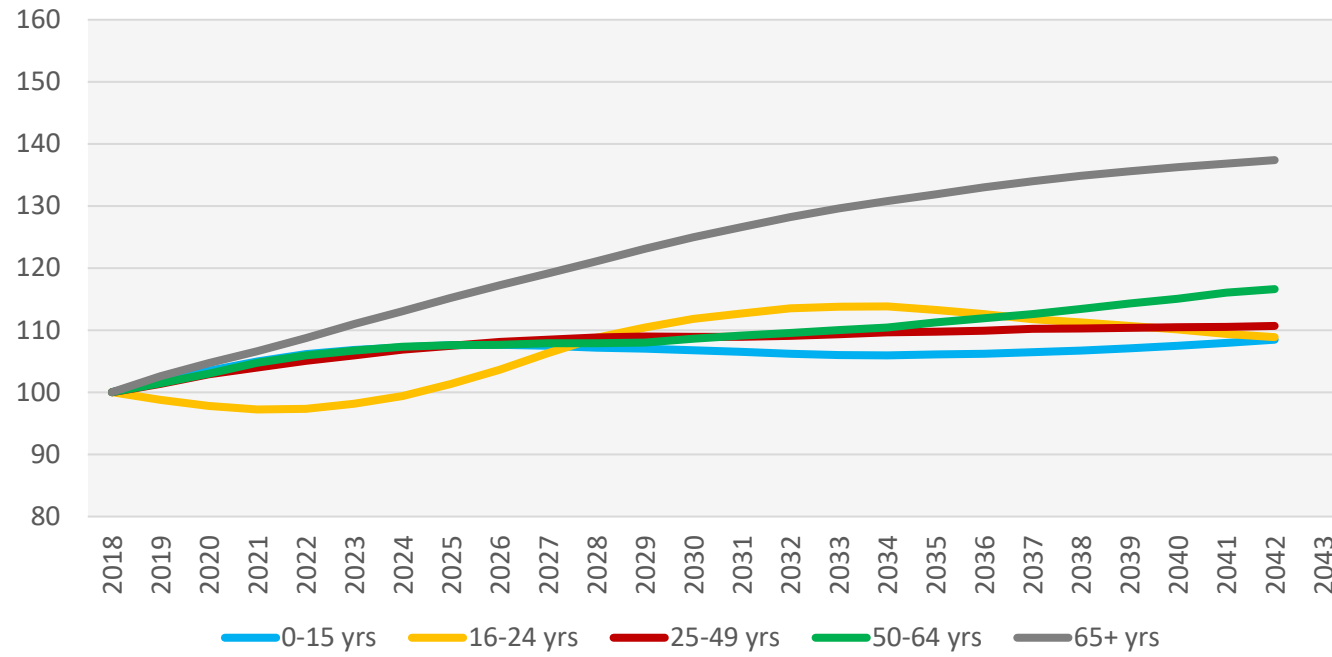
## FUTURE GROWTH POTENTIAL

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Aylesbury has enjoyed considerable population growth over recent years, growing by 25% between 2011 and 2021. The most recent ONS population projections estimate that this trend is likely to continue (albeit more slowly), with possible growth of 10.2% forecast between 2020 and 2030.

This figure is based on past trends only and does not take into account projects such as the construction of 16,000 new homes through the Garden Town programme. This will result in significant increases in the local population and job growth.





# LAND USES

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Aylesbury's historic town centre has a multitude of different uses. There is a desire for a sensitively designed connection between the old and new parts of the town to overcome current challenges of coherence across the town centre.

The retail experience in Aylesbury is centred around the town's two shopping centres Friars Square and Hale Leys as well as its High Street. A network of smaller streets provide a secondary and specialist independent shopping offer. The two shopping centres are located to either side of Market Square and its 'high street' covers primarily the northern edge of the Hale Leys Shopping Centre and extends eastwards to the ring road.

There are three supermarkets in the centre, Sainsbury's on Buckingham Street in the Old Town and a Morrisons and Waitrose to the south and east of the Ring Road. There are also a number of retail parks on the northern edge of the centre offering easy access by road.

There are a number of office buildings with the area, notably the Buckinghamshire Council offices on Walton Street and the Lloyds Campus further to the east. Some others have been recently converted to residential use through permitted development rights. There are also a number of smaller scale historic office buildings in the old town providing space for smaller businesses and services.



There are a number of cultural attractions in the town centre including the Waterside Theatre, Queen's Park Arts Centre and Limelight Theatre, Discover Bucks Museum, the ODEON Luxe cinema, the Roald Dahl Children's Gallery and Aylesbury Library.

There are also an increasing number of cafes, bars and restaurants opening in the town centre with a concentration around Kingsbury Square, Buckingham Street and Exchange Square, which offer exciting new food and drink opportunities close to the cinema and Waterside Theatre.

There is lots of potential for better connection of the town's cultural and leisure offers through walking routes between spaces such as the Kingsbury Square and the Waterside Theatre. Developments such as these could greatly improve the night-time economy offer in Aylesbury.

Beyond the town centre, Aylesbury is largely residential with relatively few currently living centrally despite its potential. While most of the buildings in the town centre are single use and non-residential, improvements to the walking and cycling network, through the Aylesbury Garden Town project, could increase the town's catchment population and greatly improve the vitality of the town centre.



# PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE CHANGE

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Building on the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan and its objectives, partners and stakeholders identified several opportunities and challenges for Aylesbury. To capitalise on the opportunities and address the challenges, a number of overarching principles of *Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future* will be deployed to guide change in the historic town centre. These principles mean we and our partners are already aligned in our vision for our Market Town of the Future and are committed to its delivery.

## **To ensure the creation of a strong network of towns in Buckinghamshire**

The Aylesbury Regeneration strategy will set out an Action Plan for change; delivering a programme to include small and immediate changes as well as larger projects over longer periods. Encouraging community initiatives and activities that bring greater pride in the town.

## **To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally**

Aylesbury will reimagine the Friars as a vibrant new mixed use quarter, creating a better experience, shifting from single use towards a more vibrant environment. It will focus on the quality of the visitor experience, building our evening economy offer and drawing on Aylesbury's cultural heritage and unique distinctive independent offer. Aylesbury town centre will also support the need for more attractive urban living, delivering new homes within a highly accessible location. Delivering a range of housing types and tenures and ensuring that appropriate infrastructure is provided to meet future needs.

## **To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs**

Aylesbury town centre will embrace change and provide space that meets the modern working needs. It will offer a range of accommodation options to meet future working needs, including space for start-ups and office hubs.

## **To create a network of high-quality, well-planned road networks with attractive streets and spaces, and cycling routes that are safe to use, well connected and accessible**

The town centre will create a better environment for walking and cycling, establishing a network of attractive and safe walking and cycling routes through and to the town centre. It will also create a network of high quality and attractive streets and spaces that are safe to use, creating a people-focused town centre with strong connection and coherence between the old town and new town. It will increase its attractiveness through a unified public realm and design approach, enhancing existing open spaces and delivering new ones as part of a connected network across the centre.

## To maximise the county's natural capital through its network of waterways and green spaces

Aylesbury centre will maximise the town's natural capital through a network of green spaces and opening up access to Aylesbury's watercourses, including the Grand Union Canal and Bear Brook. Stronger links to the natural environment and introducing urban greening to increase biodiversity and enhance wellbeing will be created.

## To enhance strategic connectivity opportunities

This principle supports Aylesbury's ambition to improve the arrival experience for all travel modes, by creating a welcoming environment for all people arriving into the town centre and transforming the environment at transport interchanges.

## To ensure a greener and more carbon neutral future

The town centre will plan for a greener, carbon neutral future, encouraging a modal shift to sustainable modes of transport, enhancing air quality through urban greening and encouraging sustainable building design.

## To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities

Aylesbury will be a place that supports inclusivity and diversity, celebrates opportunity and is accessible to everybody, ensuring all parts of the town centre are accessible to everybody. This builds on Aylesbury's paralympic legacy to deliver opportunities for all and break-down barriers of discrimination.



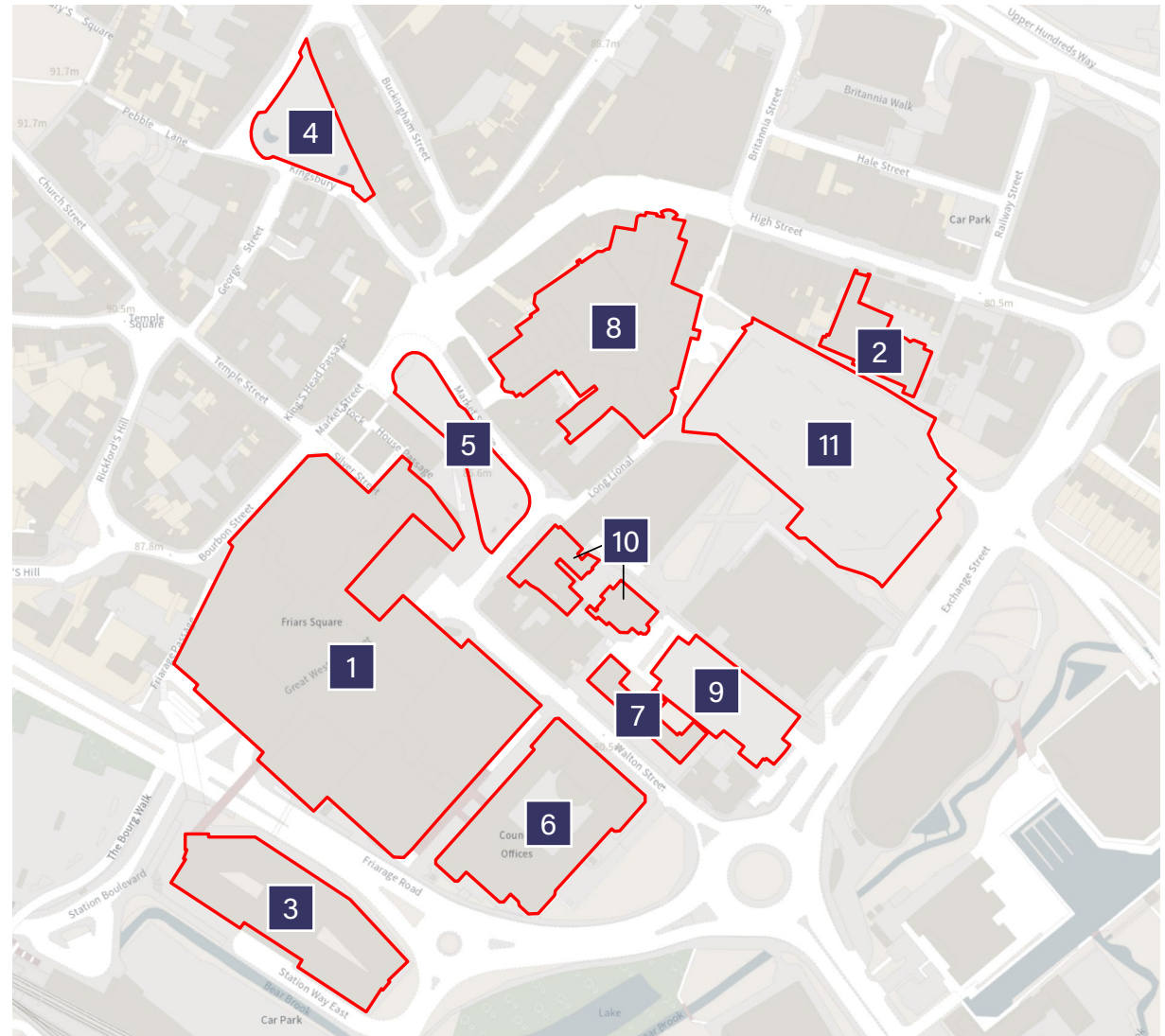
# SITES AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Aylesbury presents some exciting development opportunities and with land assembly already underway, up to 11 acres of land could be considered for redevelopment to deliver a vibrant town centre and an exciting testbed for your future projects.

With the £12 million purchase of Friar's Square Shopping Centre, Buckinghamshire Council has underlined its commitment to delivering on the ambition of being the Market Town of the Future.

The plan on this page highlights the various sites already under its ownership. Working in partnership with you, these sites provide an excellent opportunity to reimagine Aylesbury's historic town centre.

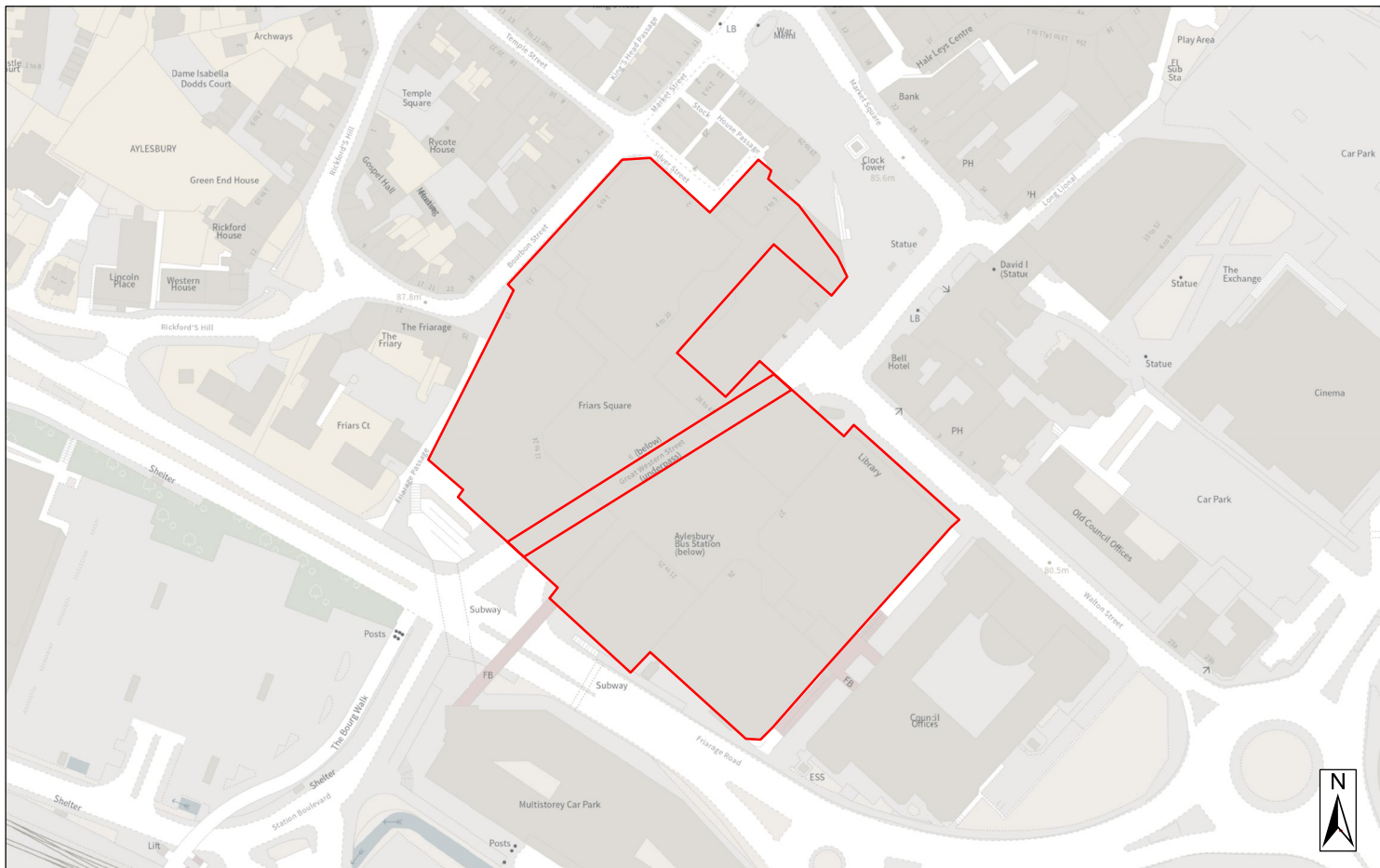
The following pages give you an indication of the potential for the redesign of a number of the sites listed here. We aim to celebrate the heritage and architectural style of the town whilst inspiring creativity and imagination for progressive design ideas for these regeneration opportunities.



- |          |                                    |           |   |
|----------|------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| <b>1</b> | Friars Square Shopping Centre      | <b>7</b>  | Old County Offices                      |
| <b>2</b> | Former Gala Bingo Hall             | <b>8</b>  | Hale Leys Shopping Centre               |
| <b>3</b> | Friars Square Multistorey Car Park | <b>9</b>  | Waterside North Car Park                |
| <b>4</b> | Kingsbury Square                   | <b>10</b> | Old Courts Building and Judges Lodgings |
| <b>5</b> | Market Square                      | <b>11</b> | Exchange Street Car Park                |
| <b>6</b> | New County Offices                 |           |   |

# SITE I: FRIARS SQUARE SHOPPING CENTRE

Currently one of Aylesbury's main shopping centres, the Friars Square site was recently purchased by the Council for £12 million. The site is a stone's throw from Aylesbury's bus and train stations and would offer 4.2 hectares (GIA) with the possibility of developing over 200 apartments and 50 units of senior living accommodation. Development could range from five and six storeys.



- 4.2 hectares site.
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Potential for residential, retirement apartments, retail, hotel, office and library.



## SITE 2: FORMER GALA BINGO HALL

The former Gala Bingo, provides circa 0.11 hectares for potential mixed use development close to the Hale Leys site. The site already boasts an archway, which could be retained as a gateway to the site in the future, providing a connection between the Exchange and the High Street, which enables regeneration of the High Street.



- Ca. 0.11 hectares site.
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Opportunity to create connectivity and wider regeneration of the high street.
- Potential for leisure, residential, food and beverage.

# SITE 3\*: FRIARS SQUARE MULTISTOREY CAR PARK

Adjacent to the Friars Square site stands the Friars Square car park, which would offer circa 1.7 hectares.



- Ca. 1.7 hectares site.
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Potential for residential, retail and travel interchange.

\* Sites 4 and 5, shown on page 31, are open spaces and not building assets.

# SITE 6: NEW COUNTY OFFICES

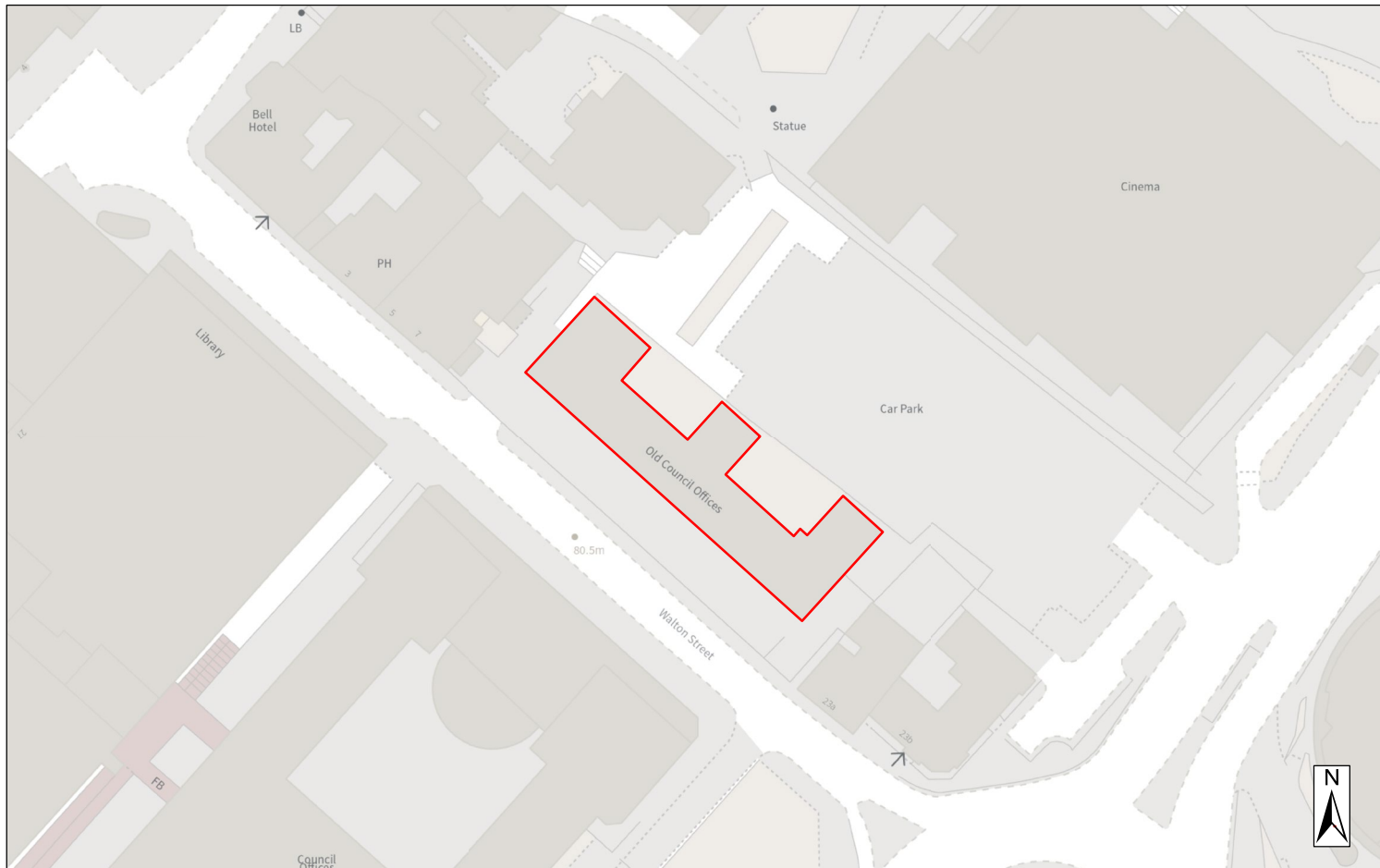
The New County Offices (NCO) site sits on the edge of the town centre a very short distance from the historic Market Square, the Waterside Theatre and the Exchange, providing a strong food and drink and night-time economy offer. The site would offer circa 1.7 hectares of residential and retail space. This site has potential for five and six storeys fronting onto Friarage Road with heights stepping down towards Walton Road to the north.



- Ca. 1.7 hectares site.
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Potential for residential, retail and office space.

# SITE 7: OLD COUNTY OFFICES

Former County Council offices, currently vacant situated on provides circa 1500 sq m (building only) for potential residential. The site benefits from an existing outline planning permission for 46 residential units, which was granted in August 2021.



- Ca 1500 sq m (building only).
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Potential for residential, leisure and community space.
- Outline planning permission granted for 46 apartments.

# SITE 8: HALE LEYS SHOPPING CENTRE

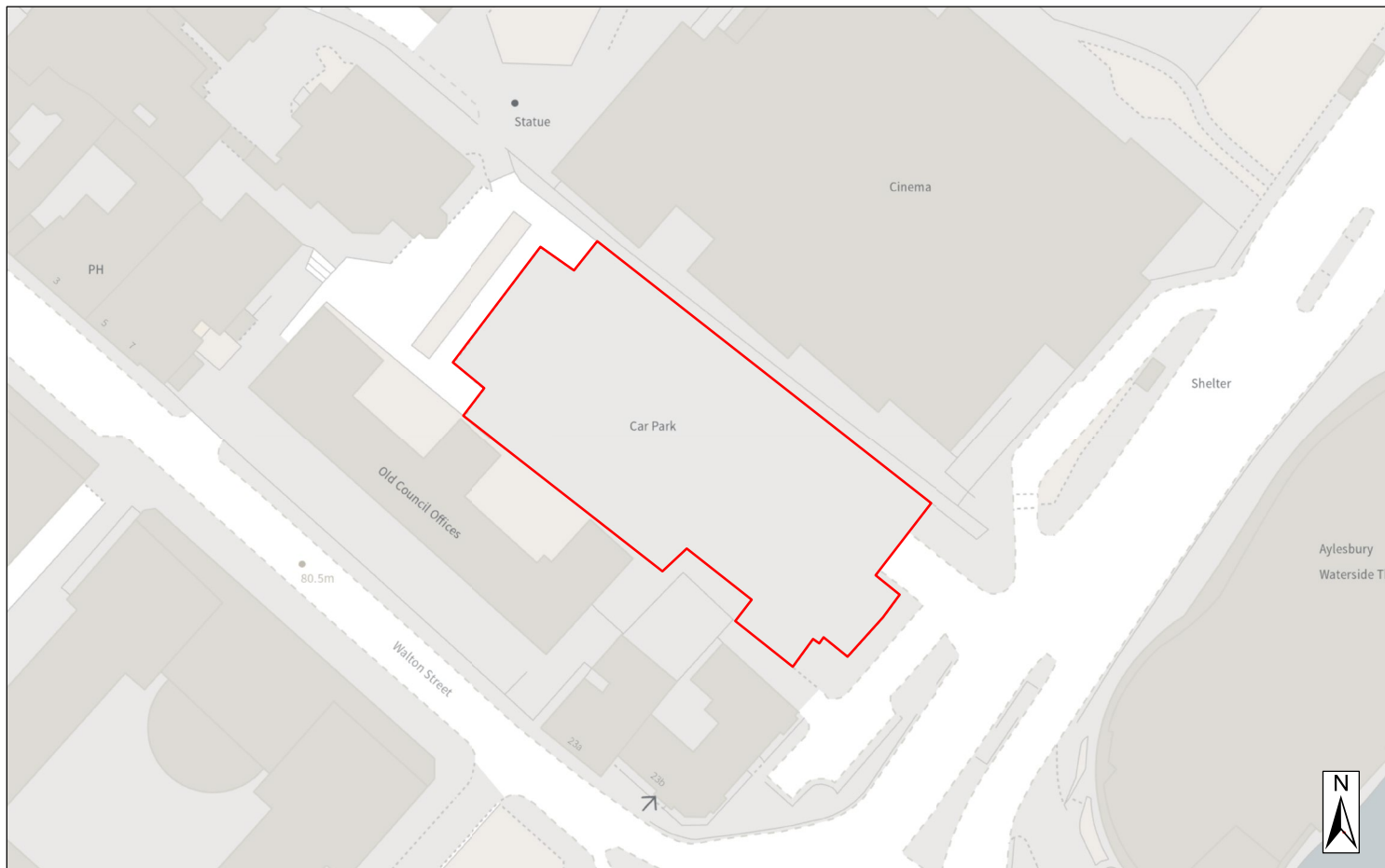
Hale Leys is the current plot of one of Aylesbury's two main shopping centres allowing it an excellent central location to retail and leisure facilities. Development has the potential for three to four storeys with residential apartments above commercial units on the ground floor. This site will be key in animating our town centre.



- Ca. 1.5 hectare site.
- Key town centre location.
- Opportunities for residential and retail space.

# SITE 9: WATERSIDE NORTH

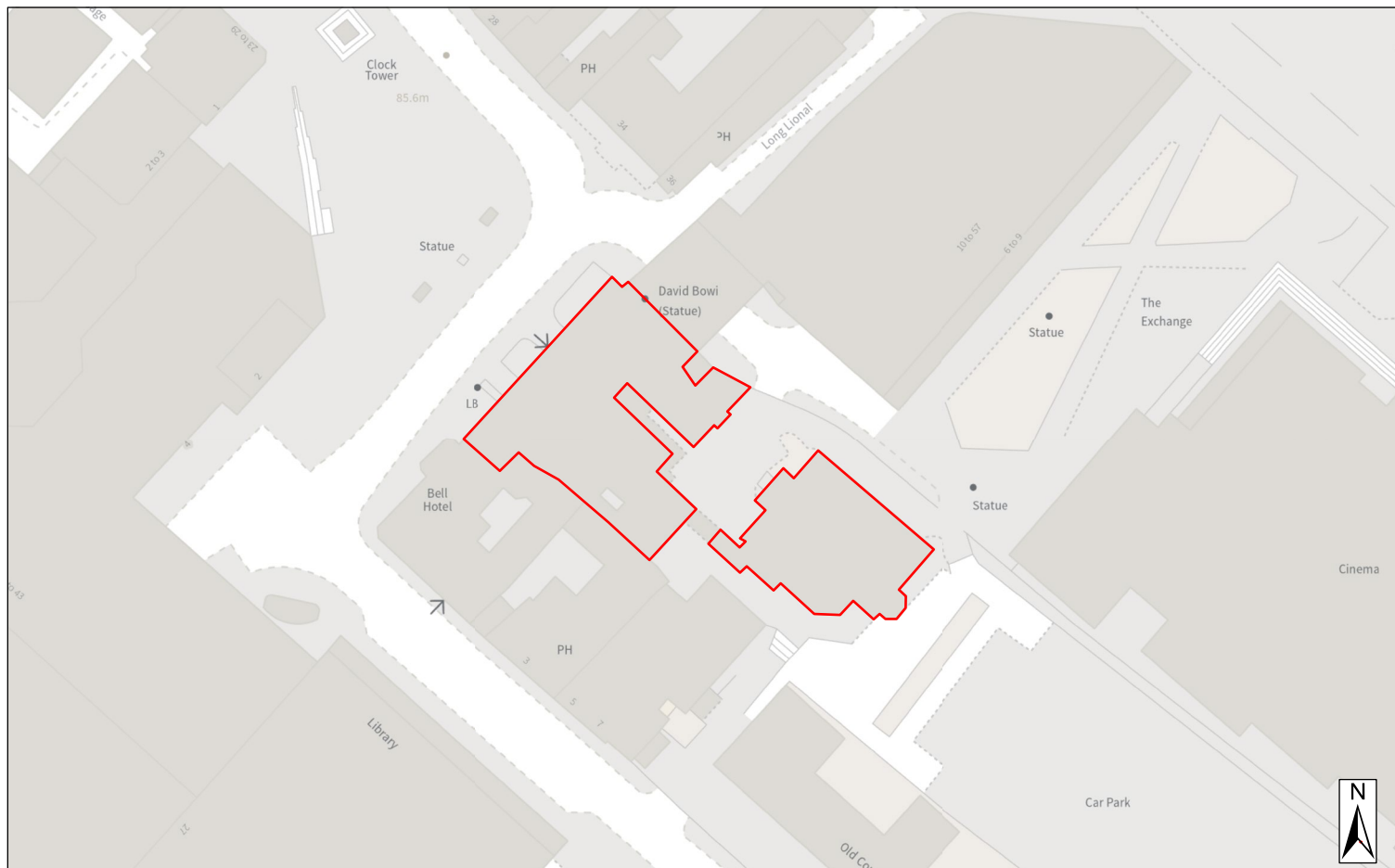
Currently utilised as a car park, the site sits between The Exchange and Waterside Theatre, and boasts circa 0.5 hectares in a prime town centre location next to exciting retail and leisure developments.



- Ca. 0.5 hectares site.
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Potential for residential.

# SITE 10: OLD COURTS AND JUDGES LODGINGS

Key Heritage asset, former Court house and Judges Lodgings, Grade Two Listed, prime town centre location. Boasts circa 0.08ha (Court House) and 0.05ha (Judges Lodgings).



- Old Courts - Ca 0.08ha AND Judges Lodgings - Ca 0.05ha
- Buckinghamshire Council Owned
- Heritage Asset
- Potential for community/leisure use

# SITE II: EXCHANGE STREET CAR PARK

Currently utilised as a park car adjacent to cinema complex. Potential for mixed use development, site boasts circa 0.82ha.



- Ca. 0.82ha
- Buckinghamshire Council owned
- Potential for mixed use development



# NEXT STEPS: TAKING THE STRATEGY FORWARD AS A PARTNERSHIP

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The next stage seeks to build on opportunities and to develop a programme of works. Some projects will require additional assessments and further analysis before regeneration activities can be delivered. Other projects are ready to be delivered and can form quick wins for the town centre.

The key priorities for the Aylesbury regeneration programme in the short term will focus on public realm improvement project delivery in the town centre as well as the delivery of redevelopment on the council owned 'Gala Bingo' site and Old County Offices. We'll continue to align council town centre investment with the plans coming forward from our key partners. For the longer term, we are undertaking work now to explore potential options for a new transport interchange in Aylesbury.

Establishing and delivering the regeneration programme for Aylesbury requires a collaborative, partnership approach. Buckinghamshire Council will continue to build on the relationships developed with key local stakeholders and will work with partners including the town council, the Aylesbury Community Board, the local business community, and other active groups to take forward proposals. The Aylesbury Garden Town Board, made of up of the council alongside key local stakeholders is the strategic steering group for delivering this strategy and the regeneration programme for Aylesbury. It forms part of the wider Place Based Growth Board governance and reports into the Regeneration Sub-Board.





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**AYLESBURY – THE MARKET TOWN OF THE FUTURE**



# CHESHAM REGENERATION STRATEGY



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# FOREWORD

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As Leader of Buckinghamshire Council and Deputy Cabinet Member for Town Centre Regeneration, we are delighted to introduce our strategy for regenerating Chesham town centre. This strategy is one of a suite of documents that follows **Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future**, our Buckinghamshire-wide regeneration framework.

We are clear on our ambitious plans for growth in Buckinghamshire, including fostering a collaborative 'place-based' approach. With place-specific strategies for our three priority towns of Aylesbury, Chesham, and High Wycombe, we are now driving forward our plans, determined to support vibrant, diverse, and thriving towns.

Working closely among partners informs the way Buckinghamshire operates. The Buckinghamshire Growth Board and partnership groups meet regularly to review strategies and deliver plans for regeneration. There are also bespoke local partnership groups in place for Aylesbury, High Wycombe, and Chesham to support the regeneration of these towns. This strategy provides the detail of how regeneration will be taken forward in Chesham and showcases all the exciting and dynamic opportunities for investment in the town.

This strategy will enable us to build on the town's rich culture and heritage, position Chesham as a home for creative industries, and support community events and innovation. Our regeneration programme in Chesham will ensure that Chesham continues to be a town centre people want to spend time in, be this as a resident, visitor or business.

The enthusiasm and engagement with which stakeholders and the community have approached the development of this regeneration strategy demonstrates a commitment to improve the town and to capitalise on what makes Chesham special. In working with our partners in Chesham we have a rich insight into the opportunities and challenges we face.

These are exciting times for Chesham. This new strategy, which has been shaped by key local stakeholders via the Chesham Regeneration Group, sets a clear way forward for realising our ambitions in Chesham together. This publication is for residents, businesses, public sector partners, and private investors who want to get involved in transforming Chesham and enabling it to be the best place it can be. By working together, we can ensure that Chesham can realise its full potential.



Cllr Martin Tett  
Leader of  
Buckinghamshire Council



Cllr Rachael Matthews  
Deputy Cabinet Member for  
Town Centre Regeneration

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

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## ECONOMY

worth **£17.4 billion**

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## BUSINESSES

home to **31,355 businesses**

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## CONNECTIVITY

fully integrated with the London tube network and rail, hosting two underground stations at Chesham and Amersham

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## EDUCATION

**76% of schools** are rated **“Good”** or **“Outstanding”** by OFSTED



# REGENERATION BUCKS

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**Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future** is our Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework. It introduces an ambitious agenda for our town centres and high streets and articulates the role people and places can play in achieving the Buckinghamshire vision for growth.

## Regeneration vision for Buckinghamshire

The regeneration of our towns will celebrate local identity, create prosperity, and achieve our ambitions for communities and local businesses in Buckinghamshire.

**Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future** identifies two interdependent guiding aims for regeneration activities:

- To create vibrant and characterful town centres which celebrate local culture and heritage and offer high quality inclusive public realm where people will want to live, work, visit, shop and relax.
- To create fertile conditions for enterprise and skills to support the launch of new businesses and create the conditions for them to succeed.

Whilst the two priorities underpin town centre regeneration, how the priorities will be delivered, areas of focus and the actions and interventions required will vary by place.

**Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future** also identifies ten principles to guide change:

1. To ensure the creation of a strong network of towns in Buckinghamshire.
2. To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally.
3. To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs.
4. To create a network of high quality, well planned road networks with attractive streets and spaces, and cycling routes that are safe to use, well connected and accessible.
5. To maximise the county's natural capital through its network of waterways and green spaces.
6. To provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and managed environment.
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8. To ensure a greener and more carbon neutral future.
9. To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities.
10. To prioritise skills and development opportunities.

**Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future** sets the tone for our 'place' strategies and paves the way for leveraging Chesham's distinct identity. The Chesham Regeneration Strategy has been developed in accordance with this county-wide framework so that we can achieve place-based growth and long-lasting change in the best way possible.

# CHESHAM

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## WELL CONNECTED BY ROAD

good connections to the neighbouring towns of Amersham, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead via the A416. It is also well placed to access the M25 and M40 motorways



## HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

Buckinghamshire New University is located within nearby High Wycombe and is well placed to serve the educational needs of Chesham and other Buckinghamshire towns



## PEOPLE

**23,689** population (2021)



## URBAN MEETS RURAL

Chesham provides the best of urban living, nestled in beautiful accessible woodlands, the River Chess and beautiful AONB countryside



## WELL CONNECTED BY LONDON UNDERGROUND

direct links from London on the Metropolitan line. Trains in Chesham connect to stations such as Kings Cross and Baker Street around every 30 minutes

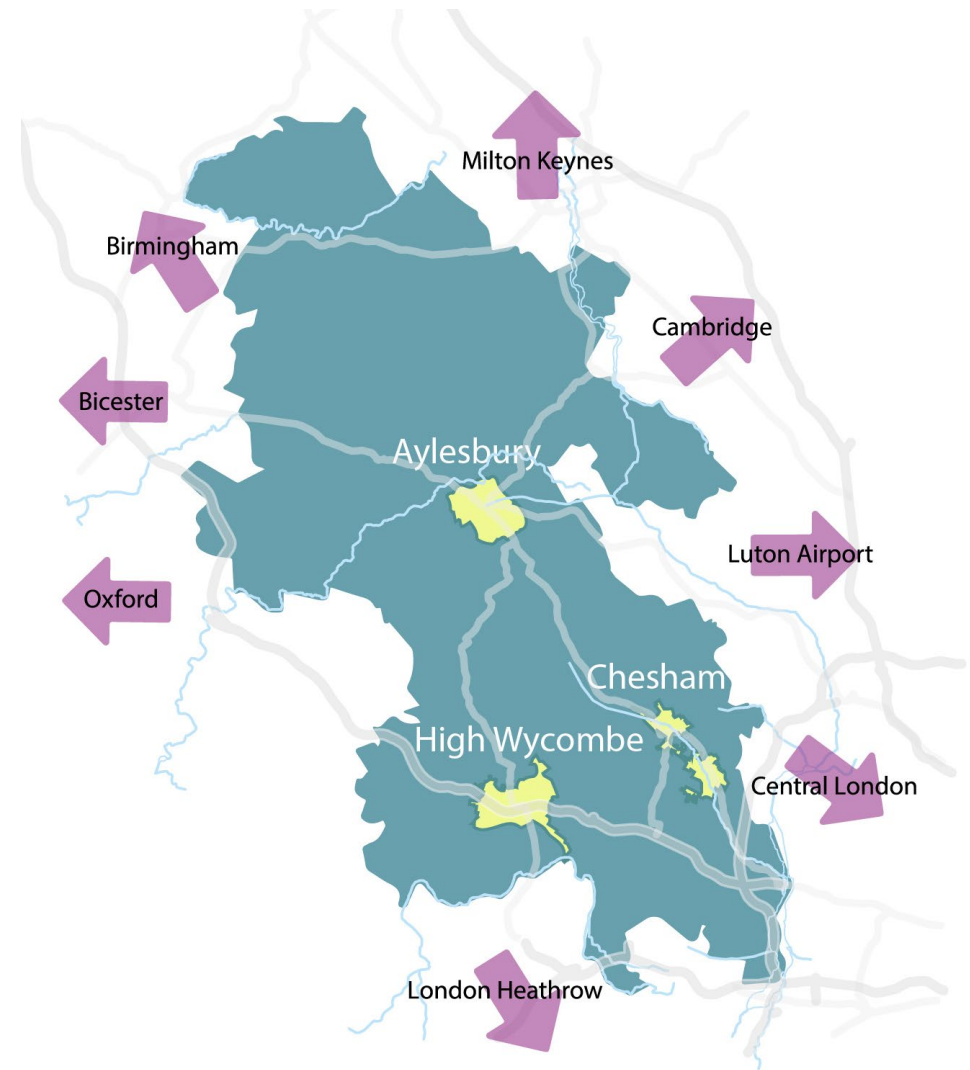


# WHY CHESHAM?

Chesham, the third largest town in Buckinghamshire, sits within the Chess Valley – an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Situated within the London commuter belt, it benefits from easy direct access on the London Underground. Chesham provides an important regional centre for its residents and surrounding rural villages, with a good offer of commercial, leisure, and community opportunities. The town has a number of vibrant independent retailers and hospitality businesses, bringing the best of urban/rural living together with the countryside on its doorstep.

The town offers something for families and those of all ages, with excellent schools (a number rated outstanding by Ofsted), active community groups and a range of cultural and historic amenities. The Elgiva Theatre is a key cultural asset with the potential to support the regeneration of the town by providing a focal point for cultural activity and stimulating the night-time economy. The theatre was the winner of three industry awards in 2022, and hosts both local and national shows. The town centre also includes the Chesham Museum which offers various activities to raise awareness and celebrate the town's heritage.

## CHESHAM LOCATION MAP



Map 1

West of the town centre, Lowndes Park provides a welcoming green space with the potential for further improvement and additional facilities.

Chesham has an array of greenery around the town with several streams from the River Chess and also boasts England's only spring fed lido at the Gym and Swim. It also has direct links to a variety of Chiltern walks and ancient woodlands

The town is home to over 1,200 businesses, collectively supporting over 6,500 jobs. Creative industries are a growing sector, with many local creatives and artists setting up businesses. House prices are above the Buckinghamshire and national averages; the town centre has seen some recent residential development.

Events and festivals are popular in Chesham, including the annual Chesham Carnival, The Hats Off Festival, Peace in the Park, and Christmas in Chesham.



# WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

Regeneration activities in Chesham are vital to support the town to grow and to realise its potential. The growth trends in town centre living provide the basis to rethink Chesham from an urban living perspective. Redevelopment of brownfield sites in the town centre reduces pressures to meet housing needs through greenfield site development.

We want Chesham to be a thriving community and a great place to live, work and visit. Building on a historical legacy, Chesham's potential as a local hub for independent and creative retail, urban living, social interaction, community and economic activity makes for an exciting future for the town centre. Chesham has beautiful surroundings which means it is a popular location for visitors and tourists who want to enjoy the scenic countryside, culture, and heritage of the place. Chesham has the potential to be a multi-use town, expanding its tourism capability, embracing opportunities to become an overnight destination.

One of the greatest opportunities for Chesham is its rail connection to London's underground network. It lends itself well for those who want to visit or relocate their businesses outside of central London as well as residents who wish to work or visit London.

This strategy seeks to build upon, learn from, and progress work already undertaken by local partners, including Chesham Town Council, Chesham Community Board, and local community groups. The Town Council in its development of the Neighbourhood Plan, has been instrumental in progressing the future planning and setting an exciting vision for the whole of Chesham.



# WHY NOW?

In establishing a framework for the regeneration of Buckinghamshire, we have made a clear commitment to transforming our county, which starts with advancing our strategies for our three larger towns, including Chesham.

Strong partnerships already exist in Chesham and across Buckinghamshire. These partnerships support Chesham's continued growth as a key market town and creative hub. Local Chesham stakeholders have well-developed partnerships in place. The Town Council plays a leading role in setting the vision for the future of Chesham and other local businesses and residents are actively engaged through groups like the Chesham Chamber of Commerce and others.

Buckinghamshire is also an 'aligned county', with a shared geography between the Council, Healthcare NHS Trust, Buckinghamshire Business First and a place-based partnership for Buckinghamshire with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership.

These strong partnerships mean Buckinghamshire has an excellent track record of delivery as well as strong, aligned leadership turning ambition into action.



Chesham is an ambitious town. It is already recognised as a strong creative and community town, represented by many, artists, musicians, and other creatives, many of whom come together through events for arts, culture and celebration. This strategy looks to capture this momentum and explore opportunities to see how culture and the creative sectors can be leveraged to drive regeneration forward.

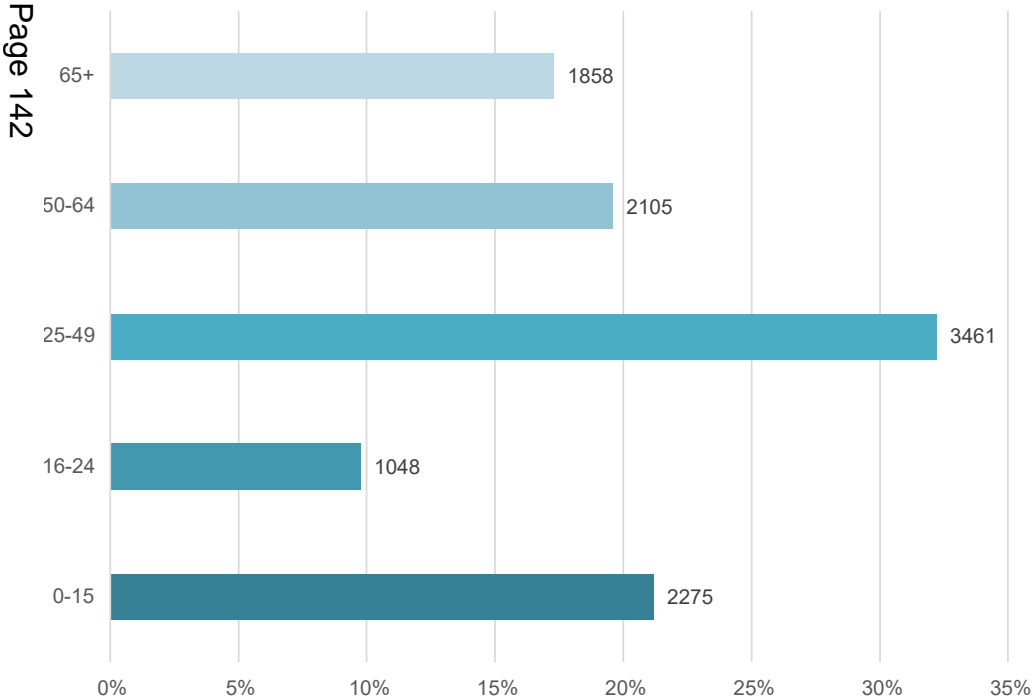
This strategy sits alongside the *Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All Framework*, which outlines an approach to creating equality of opportunity for all residents and communities. The focus is upon the ten most deprived wards, of which Chesham is one. The Opportunity Bucks framework identifies five key themes - education and youth engagement; jobs, careers and skills; quality of our public realm; standard of living; and health and wellbeing. The delivery of these themes will enable the town centre to support the needs of a range of individuals and communities.



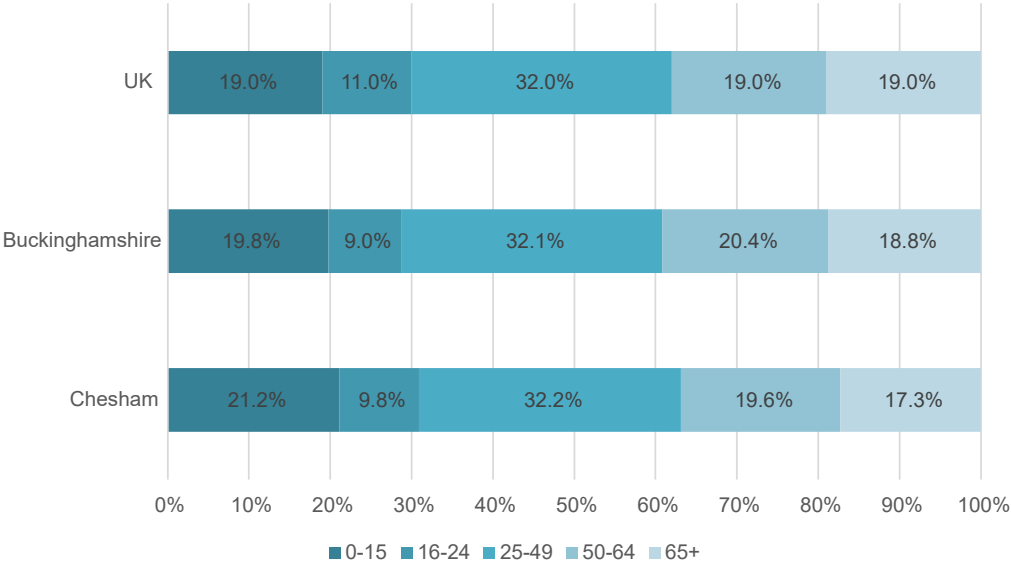
# LOCAL ECONOMY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the national census, Chesham had an estimated population of 23,056 in 2020, an increase of 7.1% over the decade. This compares to an increase of 7.4% for Buckinghamshire. The Chesham population then increased as per the 2021 census data to 23,689, a further increase of 2.8%.

Graph 1 breaks down the population into various age bands with Graph 2 showing that Chesham has a younger population 0-15 at 20.4%, comparatively with Buckinghamshire and the rest of England but with high numbers in age the age population group 25-49 at 34.1%.



Graph 1: Percentage of age groups in Chesham - Source: ONS 2021



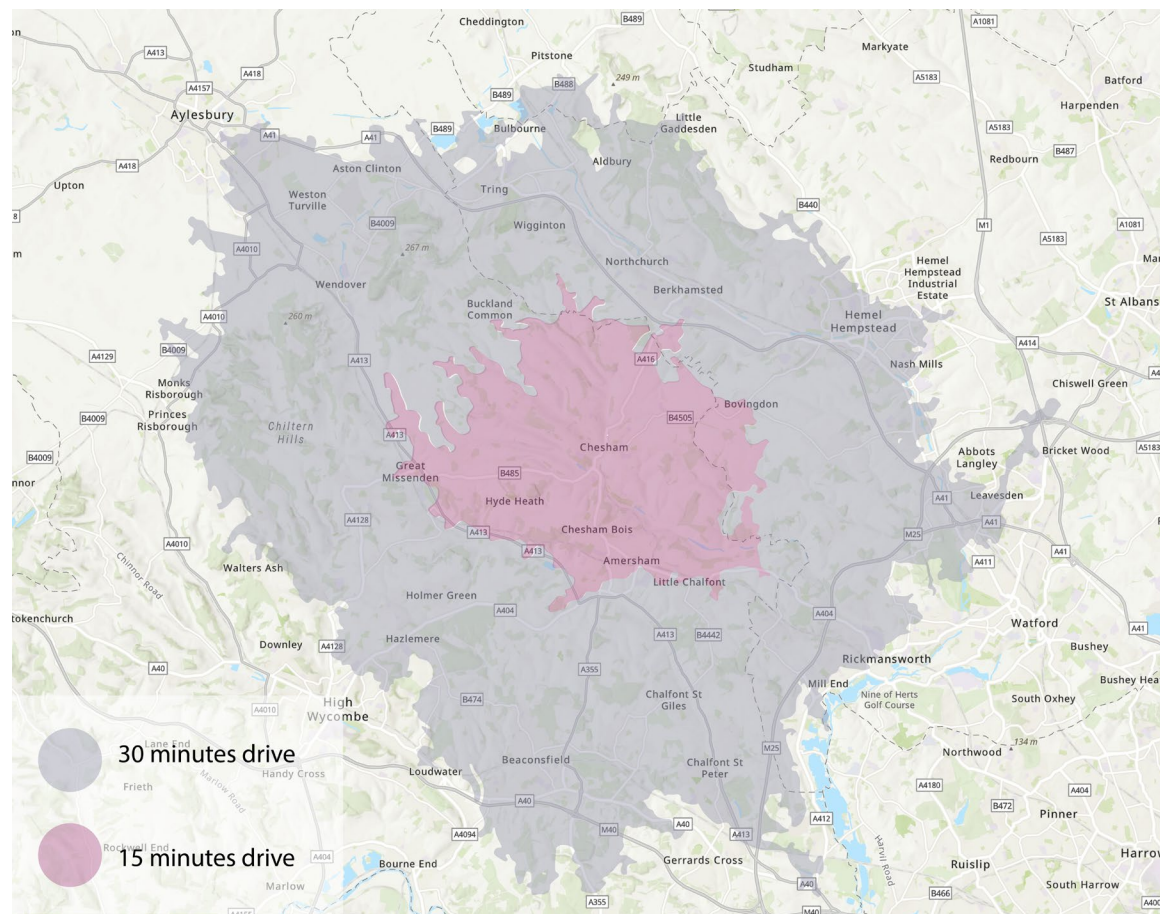
Graph 2: Age groups percentages compared - Source: ONS 2021

# RETAIL CATCHMENT AND HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE

Retail is the dominant sector in Chesham town centre with 44% of the units being used in this manner. The two largest units in the centre are supermarkets – Sainsbury’s and Waitrose.

While offerings from nearby Amersham, Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Watford may be strong, Chesham, with its growing independent retailers, offers something different to other market towns in the area.

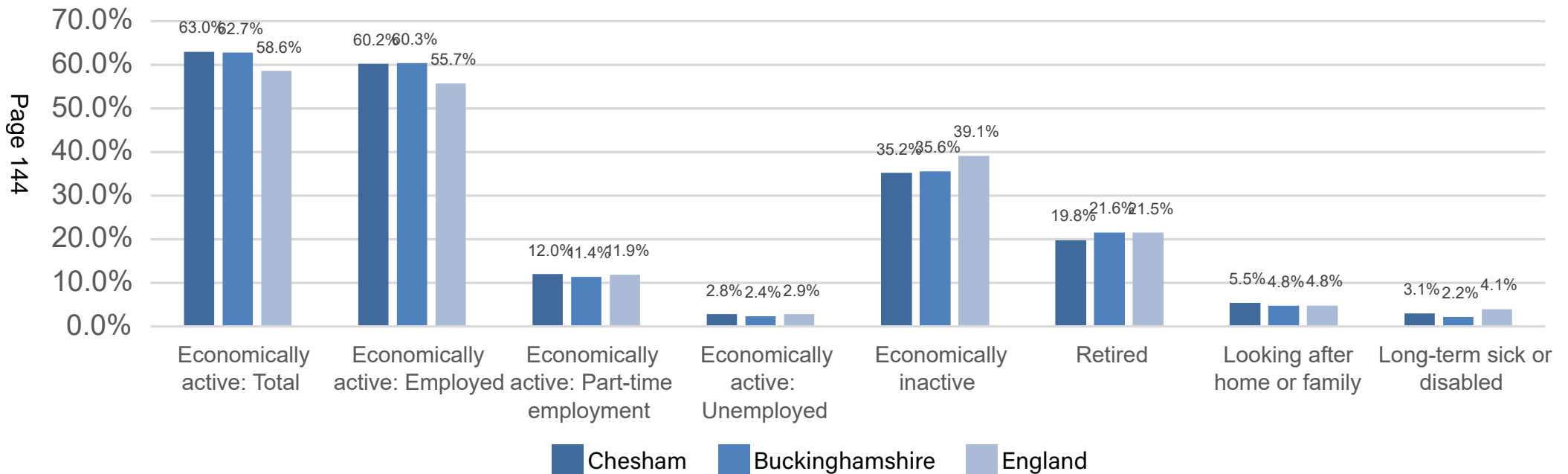
Footfall data for Chesham town centre shows an average of 51,700 visits a week which is above pre-Covid levels. The busiest days are Saturday, Friday, and Wednesday (with Thursday not far behind) with an average of 7,750 to 8,600 visits a day. The busiest period is between 9am to 5pm. 74% of visits are over 20 minutes with 29% of visits having a dwell time of 20 to 40 minutes. Longer visits and visits as part of the night-time economy are areas of opportunity to explore.



Map 2: Chesham retail catchment area

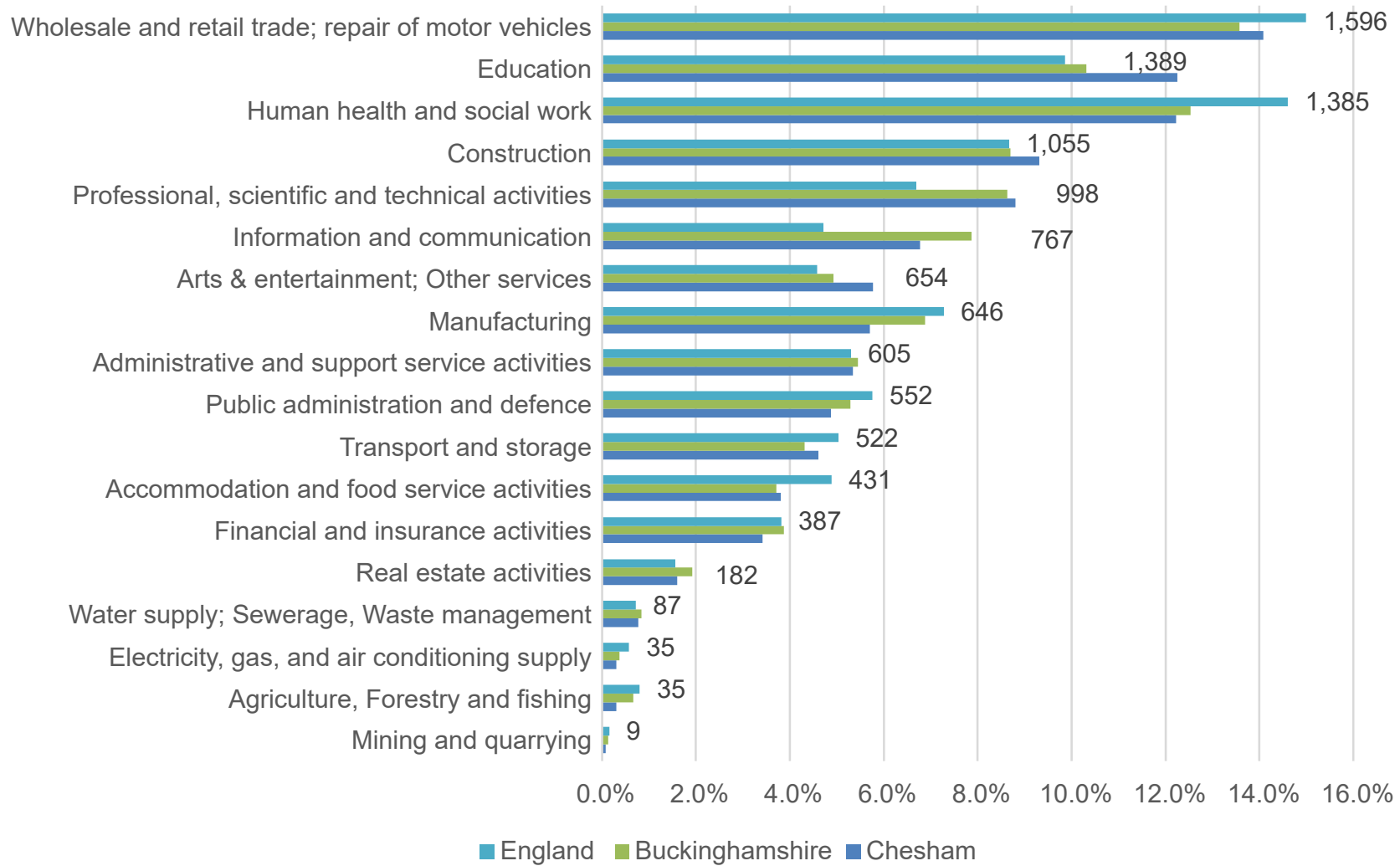
# THE LABOUR MARKET

Chesham has a highly educated and strong labour market, which is demonstrated within Graph 3 below. Chesham's education rates are slightly higher than the national average.



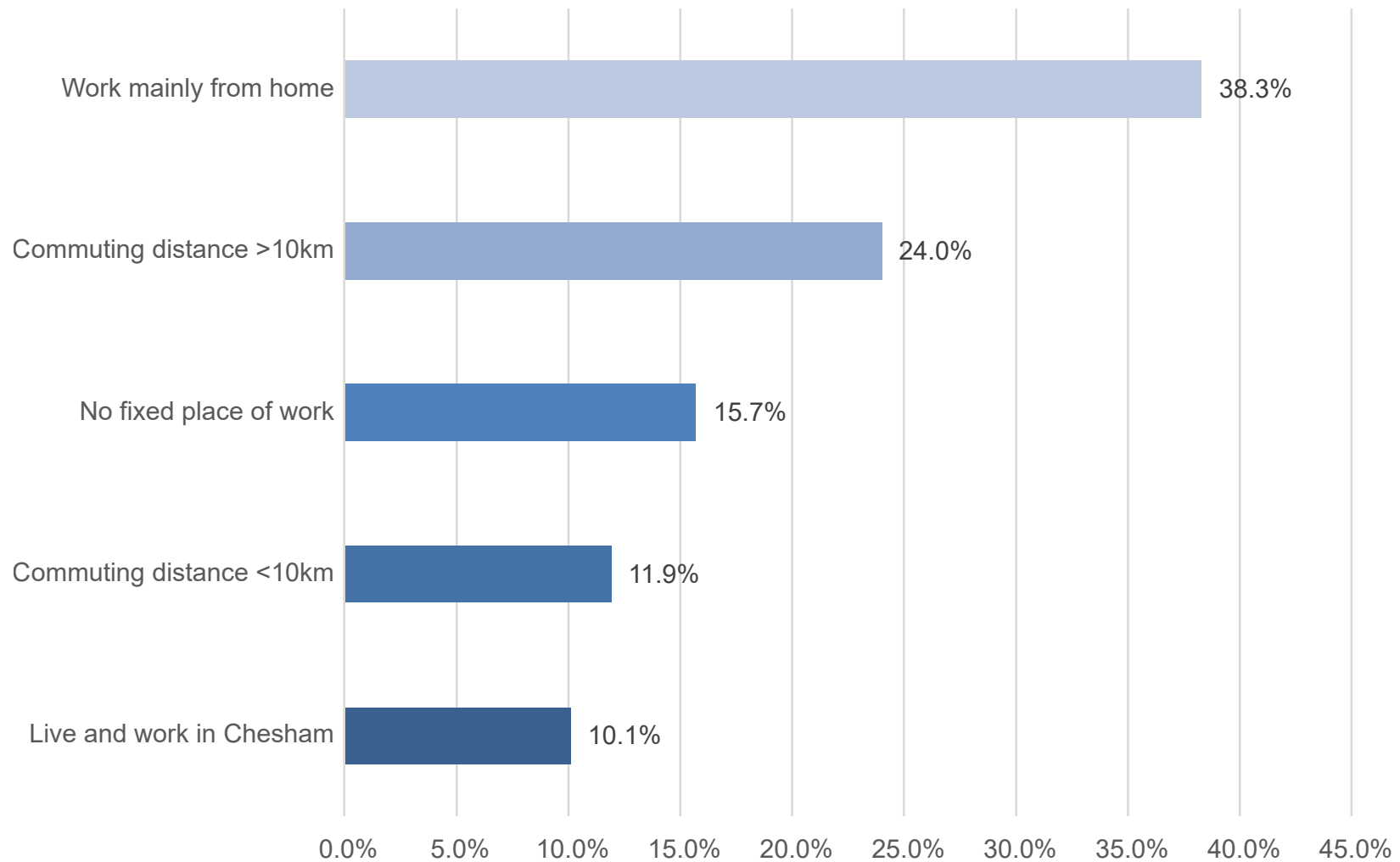
Graph 3 - Source: ONS 2021





Graph 4 - Source: ONS 2021

Graph 4 shows the percentage of employed residents by industry, for Chesham, Buckinghamshire, and England. Absolute figures of employed residents in Chesham are shown for each sector. Chesham has a notably higher number of residents employed in the education sector, and within the creative industries when compared to national figures. Source: ONS 2021.



Graph 5 - Source: ONS 2021

Graph 5 shows the working patterns of Chesham residents. The proportion of people working from home has significantly increased following COVID-19. Around a quarter of residents are commuting out of the area (over 10km) for work. A similar proportion live and work in the town or nearby. Source: ONS 2021.

# LAND USES

Over the last five to 10 years, Chesham has seen a shift towards a higher level of town centre residential land use.

In terms of retail space, as well as the national supermarket providers, the high street has several national chains including Boots, Savers, and Waterstones. There are also a broad mix of independent providers, particularly within the café, food and beverage.

There are a number of different car parking sites in Chesham including several surface level car parks which are owned and managed by Buckinghamshire Council. These are Water Meadow, Albany Place, Star Yard, and East Street.

There are a few gaps for land uses in the town centre including an absence of a central hotel offering on or near the high street. Chesham also lacks sufficient civic, arts, and community space. While the Elgiva Theatre is an important local venue, there are no other comparable sized options or larger venues in town. The Chesham Museum does not have a permanent location.

Different parts of the town centre are sometimes not well connected. For example, the High Street and station in Chesham sit on the opposite side of St Mary's Way to Lowndes Park. This severance inhibits the flow of pedestrians and reduces access to the greenspace from the high street. St Mary's Way also creates a separation between the Elgiva Theatre and the rest of the town centre.



# PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE CHANGE

## REGENERATION PRINCIPLES FOR CHESHAM

Foundational work and stakeholder and community engagement identified several opportunities and challenges for Chesham. To capitalise on the opportunities and address the challenges, a number of relevant principles from the *Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future* framework will be deployed in Chesham to support a thriving and successful town centre:



## **To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally**

For Chesham, this means improving the food, beverage and accommodation offer and increasing demand for the night-time economy. Options that explore new events and pop-up street food vendors will be developed.

For the retail sector on the High Street, there will be a focus on exploring ways to encourage and expand the independent offer. This includes identifying ways to utilise the Chesham Market and market traders to nurture and support new businesses.

Chesham has also seen a recent trend towards residential growth in the town centre and this is likely to continue. New housing development in the High Street will be most successful if it comes forward as mixed-use commercial proposals that keep the street level active.

We will monitor the collective offer of the businesses on the High Street and in times of turnover, proactively use those opportunities to play a role in brokering the best replacement tenants/owners.

## **To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs**

For Chesham, this means that development in the town centre supports existing businesses so that they can grow and evolve as well as provides the premises needed to attract new business investment. Exploring options for further development of business incubator

models like business hubs, subsidised empty shop-front initiatives, and links with the Chesham Market is a priority, particularly where this can be targeted to creative sectors.

## **To provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and managed environment**

In Chesham, there is a need to address some areas of poor-quality public realm. For example, the entrance to the town from the railway/tube station is an underwhelming experience, with little indication to a visitor how nearby the High Street is located. Options for improving wayfinding, hygiene, and improved 'coherence' to the look and feel of the town centre should be explored.

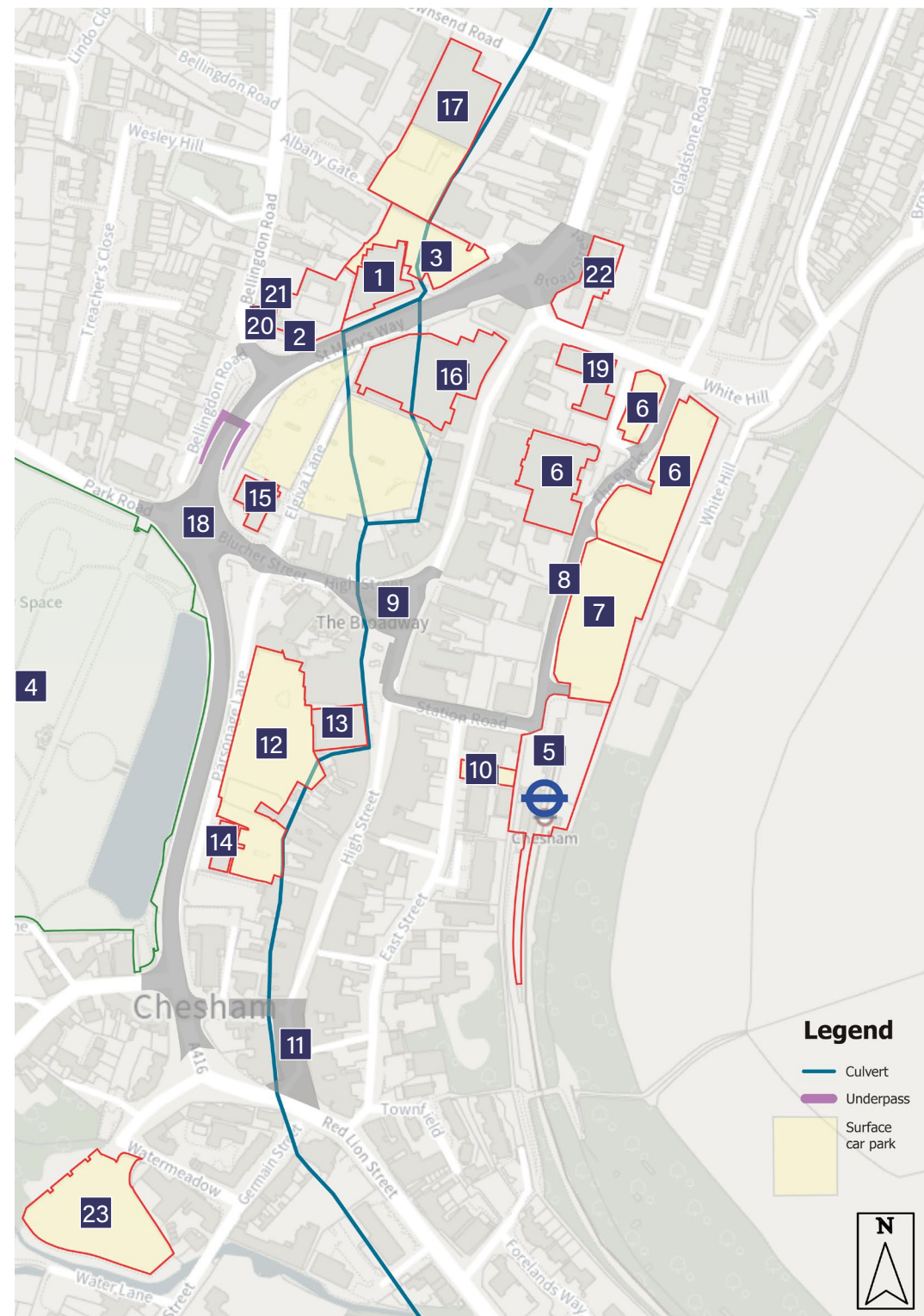
Enhancements to the natural environment through more tree planting, sustainable planting and improving bio-diversity in the town centre will be prioritised where possible.

## **To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities**

Chesham has rich local heritage, a number of important cultural partners, and an active arts community which should be supported and developed in line with any regeneration programme. Developing the 'cultural offer' in Chesham can provide a catalyst for investment and delivery.

# SITES

1	Elgiva Theatre - 991.5 sqm
2	Chesham Youth Centre - 264.3 sqm
3	Albany Place Car Park - 1,822.8 sqm
4	Lowndes Park and Skottow's Pond - 134,110 sqm
5	Train Station - 797 sqm
6	Waitrose and Car Parks - 4,102.9 sqm
7	Transport for London Station Car Park - 4,102.9 sqm
8	The Backs - 1,887.8 sqm
9	The Broadway and Station Road - 2,041.8 sqm
10	East Street Car Park - 636.2 sqm
11	Market Square - 267.3 sqm
12	Star Yard/Catlings Car Park - 5,405.3 sqm
13	M&Co - 128.2 sqm
14	Chesham Town Hall - 338.7 sqm
15	Chesham Library - 535.6 sqm
16	Sainsbury's Car Park - 3,276 sqm
17	Wickes - 2,052.2 sqm
18	St. Mary's Way - 9,657.3 sqm
19	UK House - 857.9 sqm
20	Quaker's Buildings - 113.7 sqm
21	All Spring Media - 128 sqm
22	Broad Street Gateway - 1,088 sqm
23	Water Meadow Car Park - 3,992.9 sqm



Map 3 - Site reference map

# CHESHAM 'CLUSTERS'

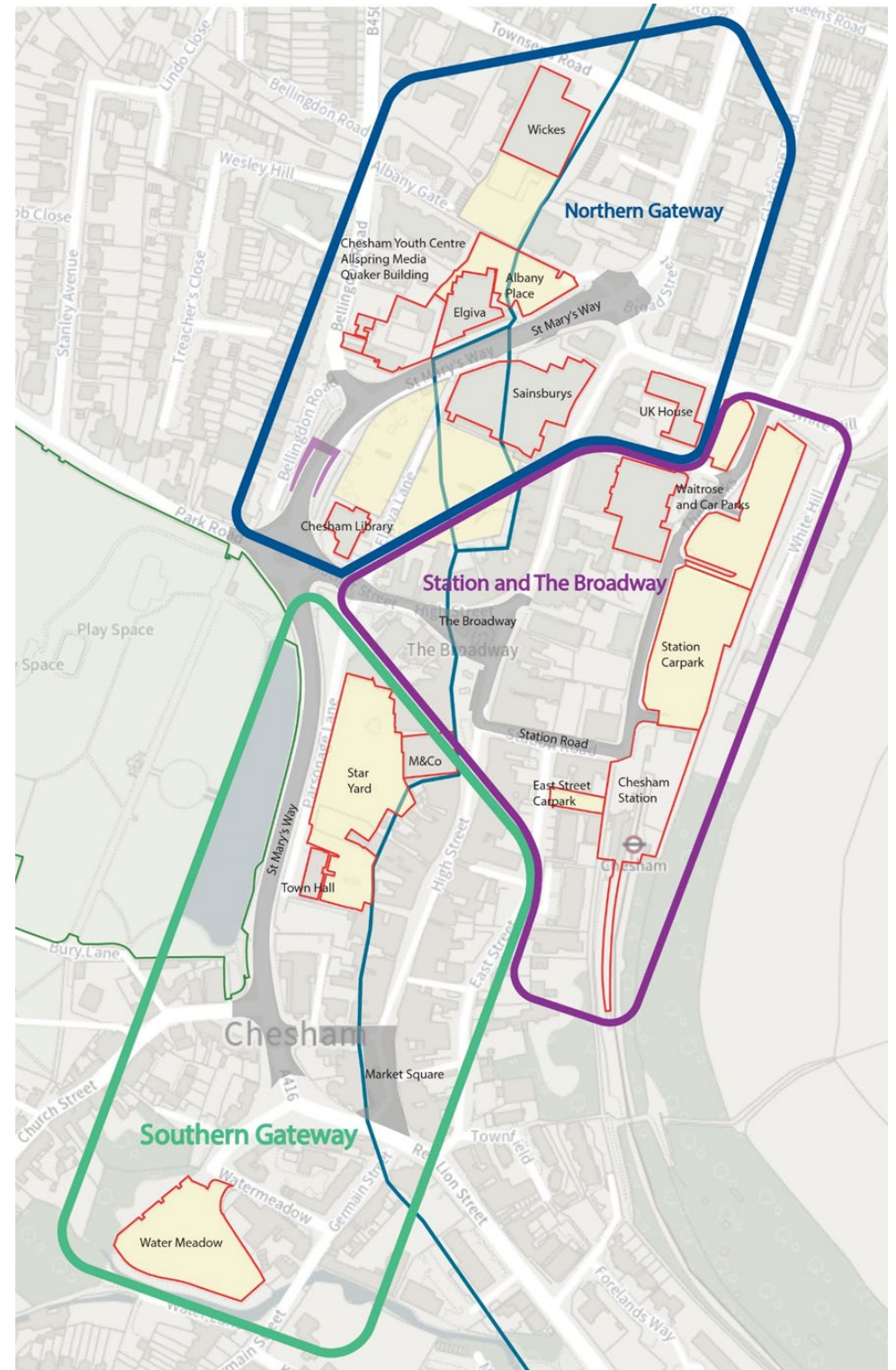
The town centre can be considered as having three 'clusters' each with its own strengths and challenges that need to guide and shape potential interventions. Whilst activity in each cluster will support delivery of this strategy, how this is delivered, and the type of interventions will vary based upon need, funding, and appraisals.

## The Northern Gateway

Starting at the northern end of the town centre is the 'Northern Gateway', the location of the Elgiva Theatre and the cultural heart of Chesham. This area includes the north end of the High Street, which is home to the weekly town market. The Northern Gateway cluster touches the north-eastern corner of Lowndes Park and also includes the Chesham Library.

This cluster can feel disconnected to the rest of the town centre and far from the station even though the distance from the theatre is five minutes on foot. St Mary's Way is a busy road, which contributes to this feeling of severance as a pedestrian.

There are a few sites in this cluster that have long been discussed as development opportunities and in taking these forward there is a need to ensure plans support the cultural offer in the area.



Map 4 - Site clusters

## The Station and The Broadway

This cluster is the central part of the town centre. Within it are the tube station and main drop off points for buses, taxis, and private transport, which serve as an important entrance point for the high street. 'The Broadway' is the central point between the northern and southern sections of the High Street where the street widens and creates a small public realm area.

Behind the northern section of the High Street is an access road called 'The Backs' which connects the supermarkets, a few car parks, and the station. Opportunities to invest in and improve this area should be explored.

## The Southern Gateway

This cluster is an important location for Chesham's night-time economy. The pedestrianised Market Square provides a space for outdoor dining and for events, including a monthly themed market. It is home to several independent retail and hospitality businesses, which already collaborate and work together.

Recent new painting and other public art additions have improved the attractiveness of routes into the town centre and have created new focal points promoting some businesses to introduce new outdoor seating areas.

The regeneration activities for this cluster should prioritise initiatives which generate footfall and support the night-time economy.





# NEXT STEPS: TAKING THE STRATEGY FORWARD AS A PARTNERSHIP

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Town centre regeneration is a top priority for the Buckinghamshire Growth Board, which has established a sub-board for Regeneration as part of its governance. A local Chesham Regeneration Group is in place to drive this strategy forward and feed up into the Regeneration sub-board of the Growth Board.

The key priorities for the Chesham regeneration programme in the short term will focus on pedestrianised spaces by clarifying access, improving wayfinding (including improvements initially on Station Road), and other options to introduce more public art. The programme will also include exploring options to increase high street activity through additional events, specialty markets, and street-food pop-ups. Active monitoring is in place to pursue opportunities that may emerge to broker the right type of occupancy turnover on the high street. Work is underway and will progress in exploring options for the redevelopment of council owned sites such as the ones in the 'Northern Gateway' cluster, including the Library (enhancing the offer and improving access), sites adjacent to the Elgiva Theatre and the East Street Car Park near the Tube station in the 'Station and Broadway' cluster. The council will work with the Chesham Town Council in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Establishing and delivering the regeneration programme for Chesham requires a collaborative, partnership approach. Buckinghamshire Council will continue to build on the relationships developed with key local stakeholders and will work with partners including Chesham Town Council and the active business community, and residents, to take forward proposals. The Chesham Regeneration Group, made up of the council alongside key local stakeholders is the strategic steering group for delivering this strategy and the regeneration programme for Chesham. It forms part of the wider Place Based Growth Board governance and reports into the Regeneration Sub-Board.





CHESHAM

Free school meals  
for primary  
school children

For unlimited  
all day travel,  
thank you  
£8.10



# HIGH WYCOMBE REGENERATION STRATEGY

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# FOREWORD

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High Wycombe has been a firm pillar of the Buckinghamshire economy, generating inward investment, leading in research and development, and holding firm against national and local challenges over time.

However, despite its many strengths, High Wycombe has challenges it must look to respond to in order to remain successful, including supporting business growth, improving the public realm and planning for an increased demand for urban living especially from young professionals, students, and keyworkers. We understand that our town centre must continually adapt to ensure that it remains relevant, lively, and a vibrant place that is well used and delivers for local people and businesses.

High Wycombe has modern creative, digital, and high-tech businesses sitting alongside nationally important heritage sites and a vibrant culture. It is a popular place to live with first class public and private educational institutions making it a popular town for families.

This strategy sets out key regeneration objectives for the town, in line with the **Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future** Framework. This strategy has been shaped by key local stakeholders via the High Wycombe Regeneration Group. This collaboration with other key stakeholders such as the Town Committee and Community Board will continue and will aid the strategy's realisation.

This publication is for residents, businesses, public sector partners and private investors who want to get involved in transforming High Wycombe and enabling it to be the best place it can be.

It forms the basis of many emerging regeneration opportunities that will take the town from strength to strength, and by working together, we can ensure High Wycombe continues to be a place people want to spend time in, be this as a resident, visitor, or business.



**Cllr Martin Tett**  
Leader of  
Buckinghamshire Council



**Cllr Rachael Matthews**  
Deputy Cabinet Member for  
Town Centre Regeneration

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

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# HIGH WYCOMBE

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## WELL CONNECTED BY ROAD

accessible by the M40 from Oxford in the West and London in the East; the A4010 heads north towards Aylesbury; the A404 gives access to Maidenhead southbound and Amersham and Great Missenden northbound



## WELL CONNECTED BY RAIL

a regular service from High Wycombe train station arrives into London Marylebone in as little as 30 minutes with regular services to Oxford and Birmingham also available



## PEOPLE

**105,034** population growing by 18% over the last decade



## HOMES

**6,350** new homes proposed to be built from 2019 to 2033



## SCHOOLS

a range of excellent educational establishments



## HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

the main campus for Buckinghamshire New University is in High Wycombe and is home to a range of state of the art facilities, such as personal art and design workspaces, Aviation Simulator, Gym and Film and TV Studios. The Bucks College Group is due to build its brand-new state of the art campus in 2025 in the town centre

# WHY HIGH WYCOMBE?

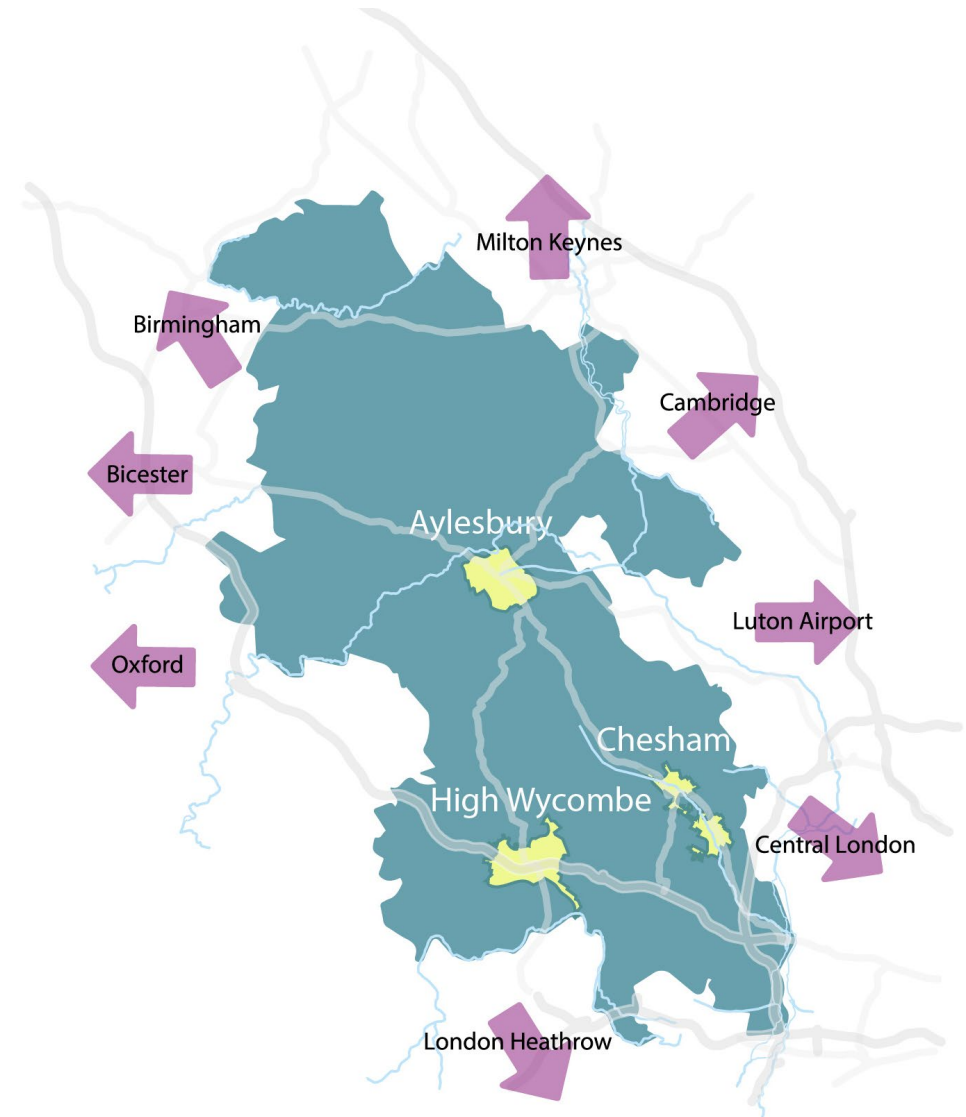
High Wycombe is a historic market town rich in character and architectural diversity, with a settlement having existed since 970. By 1875 High Wycombe was known as the furniture capital of England, with the furniture industry continuing to dominate the manufacturing base of the town into the 20th century.

Today, High Wycombe has a diverse social fabric and is a successful and vibrant market town in Buckinghamshire. The town is a gateway to the surrounding Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), sitting within the rare chalk stream valley of the River Wye.

It is well served by the strategic road network, including the M40 and M4, and has fantastic rail connections into London, Oxford and the north, towards Birmingham. Alongside physical infrastructure, there is good communications infrastructure, such as high-speed fibre optic broadband.

The Cressex Business Park is home to more than 400 business premises, collectively supporting over 20,000 jobs in sectors that are as diverse as tech to health to manufacturing. It recently formed its own Business Park Improvement District, enabling companies to invest in and improve its surrounding environment.

# HIGH WYCOMBE LOCATION MAP



Town centre businesses have also organised their own Business Improvement District (HWBIDCo), a key asset and stakeholder in the town centre. It is an independent, not-for profit partnership, representing over 675 businesses in the town centre, ranging from major players such as the Eden Shopping Centre, as well as smaller businesses including independent businesses. The HWBIDCo has helped embed a new identity for the town aimed at promoting local heritage, businesses, and town centre events. In its third term now, HWBIDCo is able to invest £1.3m each year, through its levy and external funding, back into the town centre. This supports businesses around the core themes of festivals and events and supports the representation of business voices.

High Wycombe is home to the expanding Buckinghamshire New University, which is ranked 11th in What Uni's 2022 University of the Year. The Eden Shopping Centre in the centre of the town attracting a substantial number of visitors per year. Recently, the town centre has seen significant residential development, including the redevelopment of the gas works site to 239 residential units and 1,472 sqm of commercial space.



# WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

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High Wycombe is home to international companies such as Johnson & Johnson, Wilkinson Sword, and global science and technology innovator, Danaher. There are also many exciting opportunities for business start-ups wanting to locate in High Wycombe, in business incubator spaces such as Desbox and HQube, with plenty of further 'grow-on-spaces' when they are ready to move into bigger premises. Alongside this, there has been major inward investment from larger more established businesses including Porsche and Bentley as part of the wider Motorsport Valley industry cluster in the Thames Valley.

Buckinghamshire New University has plans for diversifying its educational offering and increasing student numbers. The University is an important partner in building High Wycombe's identity as a thriving university town. More young people living and studying in the town centre will greatly benefit the vibrancy of the High Street and drive footfall into the night-time economy with its experiential offerings, food, beverage, and cultural opportunities.

The upcoming implementation of the White Hart Street Public Realm Improvement Scheme not only enhances the area for residents and visitors but will support food and beverage businesses to provide an outdoor 'alfresco' offer. Improved public realm affords greater cultural and creative activities such as the popular 'Frog Fest'. This will help to activate, animate, and celebrate the culture of High Wycombe through expressive means such as murals, shows, and events. It will draw people into the town and offer opportunities to meet, socialise and dwell.



# WHY NOW?

Strong partnerships already exist in High Wycombe and across Buckinghamshire, and these partnerships are supporting High Wycombe's continued growth as a market town.

Buckinghamshire is an 'aligned county,' with a shared geography between the council, Healthcare NHS Trust, Buckinghamshire Business First and a place-based partnership for Buckinghamshire with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership.

These strong partnerships mean Buckinghamshire has an excellent track record of delivery as well as strong, aligned leadership turning ambition into action. The Brunel Engine Shed and delivery of Future High Streets projects are just two examples of how we have delivered on our ambitions in High Wycombe in recent years.

This strategy sits alongside the *Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All Framework*, which outlines an approach to creating equality of opportunity for all residents and communities. The focus is upon the ten most deprived wards, some of these are in High Wycombe. The Opportunity Bucks framework identifies five key themes - education and youth engagement; jobs, careers, and skills; quality of our public realm; standard of living; and health and wellbeing. The delivery of these themes will enable the town centre to support the needs of a range of individuals and communities.



# INVESTING IN HIGH WYCOMBE

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## Track record

We have a strong track record of delivery in High Wycombe. We have been successful in bidding for Future High Street funding, demonstrating we are a place that can deliver regeneration and heritage-led developments.

## Strong partnerships

High Wycombe benefits from strong existing partnerships between delivery partners, building on programmes that have already been delivered such as the building of the Hughenden Gardens Retirement Village, and the establishment of two Business Improvement Districts in the town.

## Ideally located

High Wycombe has excellent road and rail connections, with 1.6 million passengers using the station in the last year for services to London, Oxford, Aylesbury, Reading and Heathrow Airport.

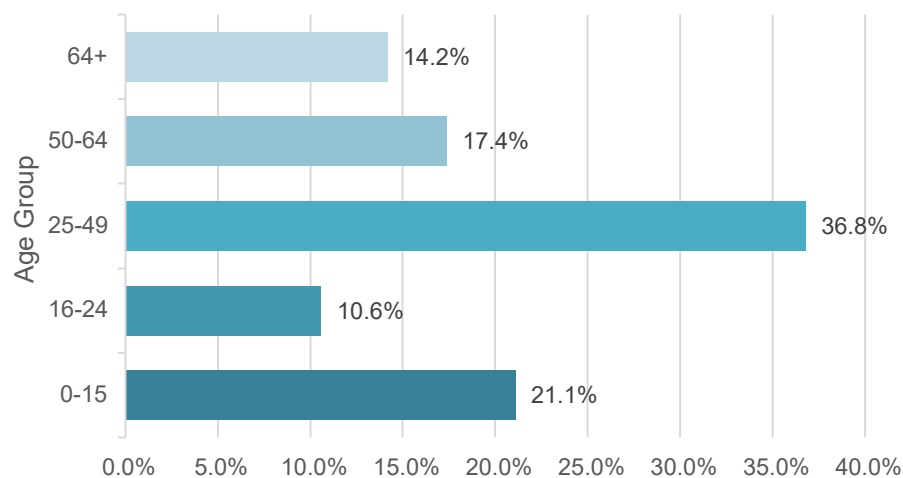


# LOCAL ECONOMY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

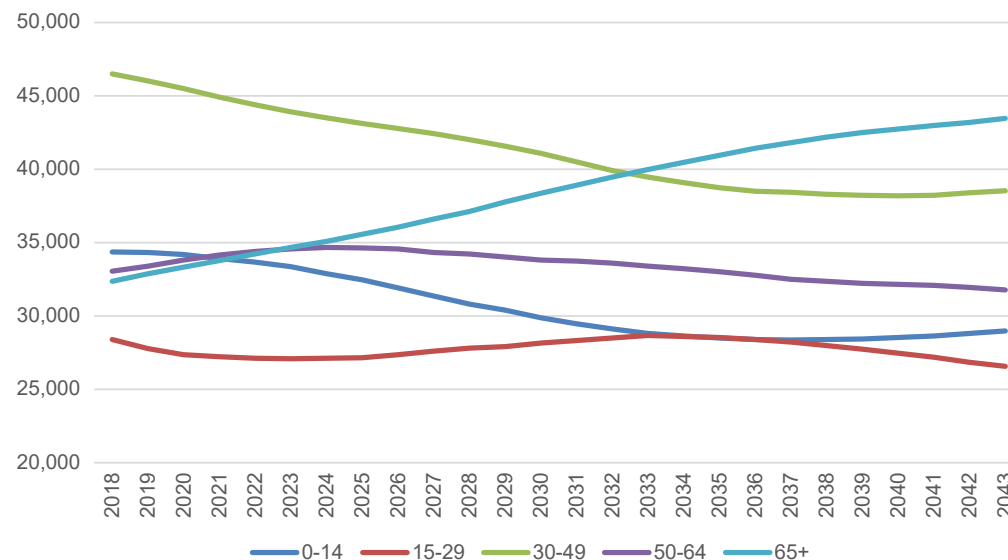
Census data from 2021 showed the built-up area of High Wycombe to have a population of 105,034 - a growing town with the population increasing by approx. 18% from 2001. Graph 1 shows the proportion of total population for each age group.

Compared with Buckinghamshire and the national average, High Wycombe has high proportions of children (0-15) and people aged 25-49 – highlighting the attraction of the town for families.

Census data published in 2022 shows the ethnic makeup of the town to be diverse, with 66.8% of the population identifying themselves as 'White', with the second largest group being 'South Asian' at 22%, followed by 'Black' at 7%.



Graph 1: Proportion of total population by age group.  
Source: ONS 2021



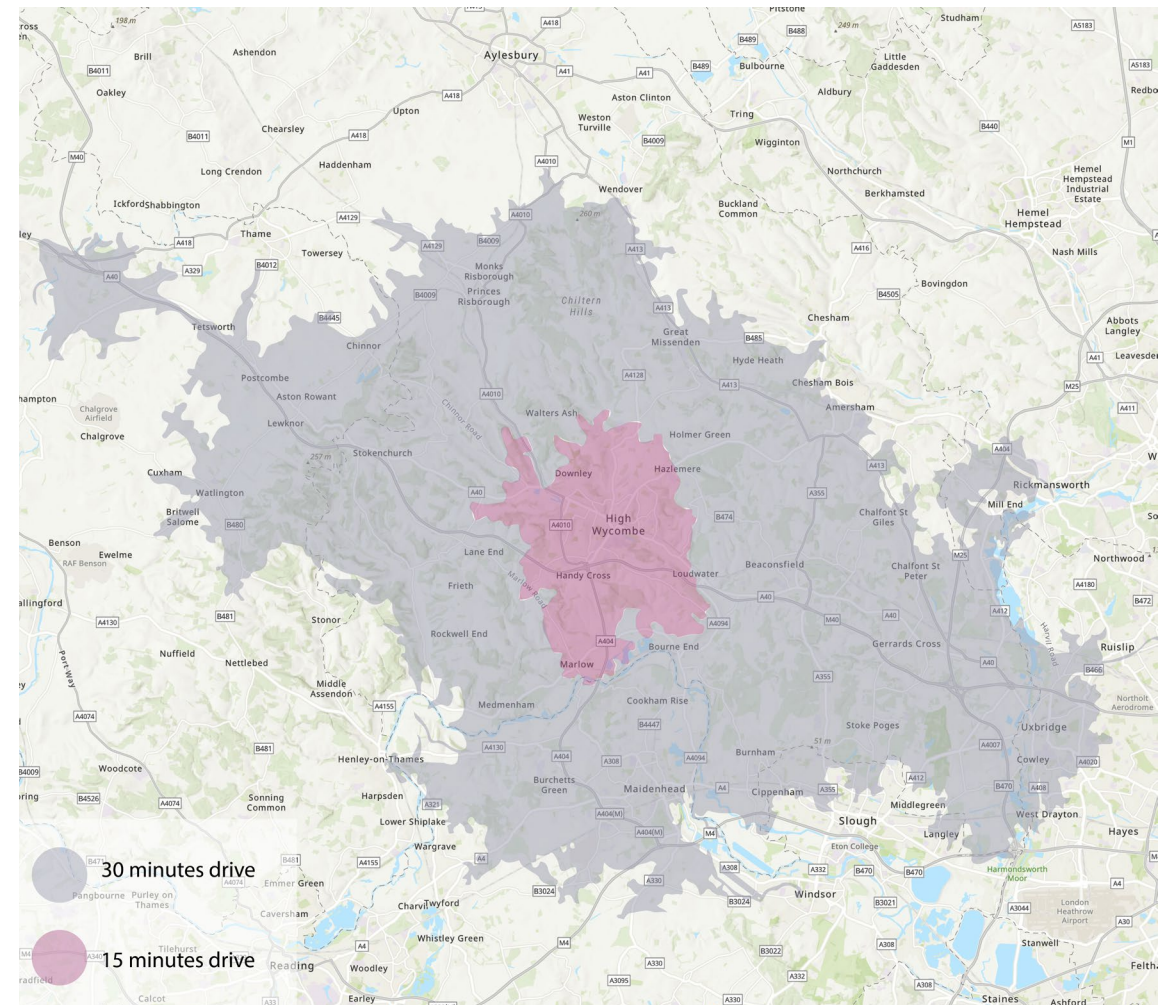
Graph 2 shows the Population Projection in High Wycombe – The 65+ demographic is expected to increase in number, while other age groups are expected to decline in numbers moderately. Source: ONS 2018

# RETAIL CATCHMENT AND HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE

High Wycombe is the nearest centre of retail for the population within a 15-minute travel time radius. Regular train services bring in a wider market of shoppers along the Chiltern Mainline.

High Wycombe has an affluent local catchment with higher-than-average spending power, demand for leisure, trends for homeworking, and amenity needs.

Footfall data for High Wycombe town centre shows an average of 247,500 visits a week which is approaching pre-Covid levels once more. The busiest days are Saturday, Friday, and Thursday (with Tuesday not far behind) with an average of 33,300 to 42,200 visits a day. The busiest period is between 9am to 5pm. 80% of visits are over 20 minutes with 32% of visits having the longest monitored dwell time of 60 to 90 minutes.

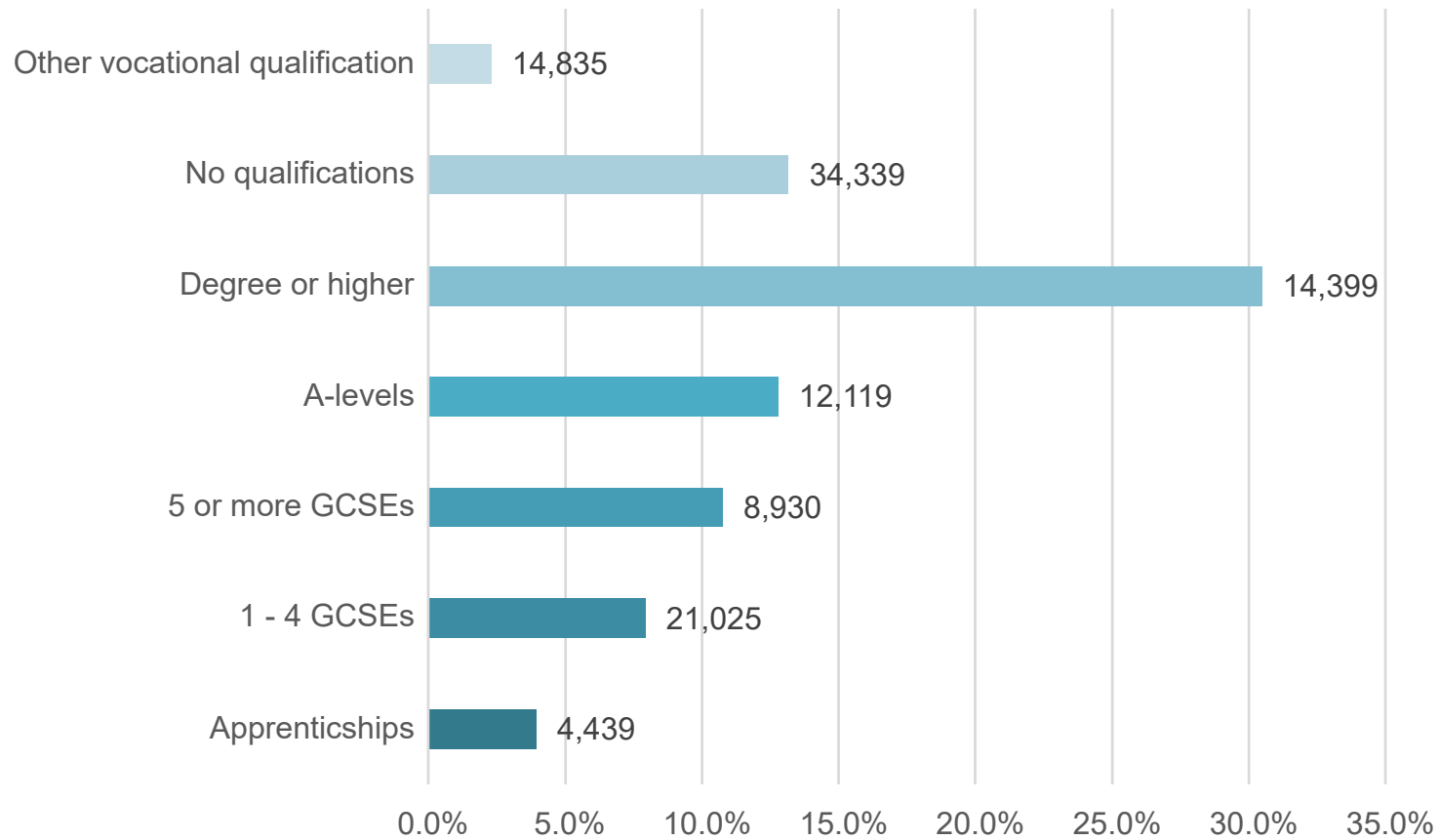


Map 1: High Wycombe retail catchment area.



# THE LABOUR MARKET

As High Wycombe's population grows, so does the local labour market. The town has a diverse working population with a range of qualifications, from professional to vocational accreditation.

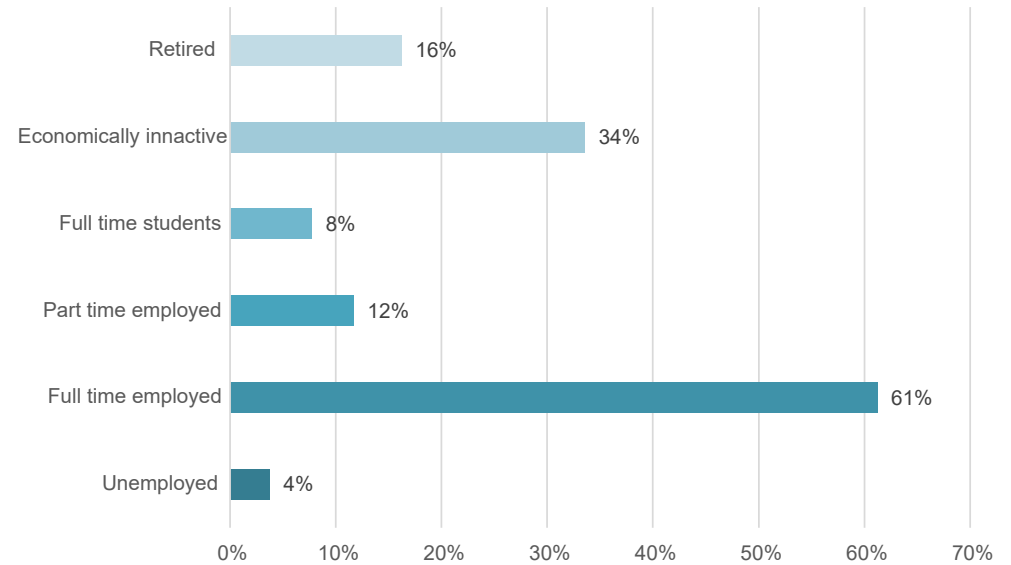


Graph 3 - Qualifications within the labour market. Source: ONS 2021

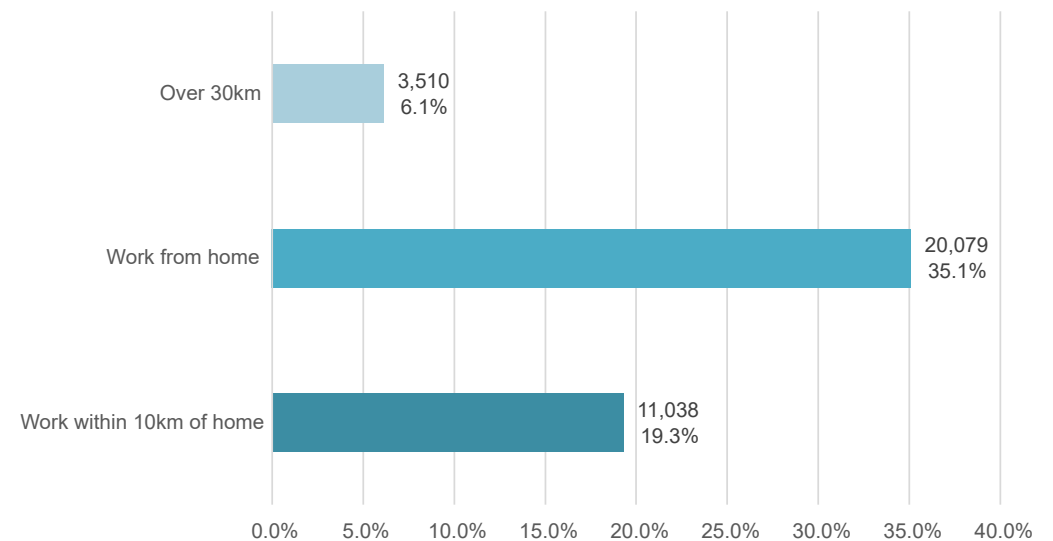
Around 30% of the population is educated to degree level and uptake of apprenticeships is also high within High Wycombe, with 4% of residents holding a trade qualification. However, nearly 13% have no qualifications. There is a strong focus in the *Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All* framework to support people with low or no qualifications into quality jobs supported by upskilling and retraining.

Just under half of all residents (50k) are in full time employment, with a further 10k residents in part time employment. The town has a sizable student population of just under 6,500, of which around 1,500 also work in either part-time or full-time roles.

Around 6% of residents have a commuting distance of more than 30km, while 35% of local residents are employed within 10km of the town. Hybrid working trends have also seen a notable increase in the number of people working at home or close to home, which for High Wycombe is 19.3% of the working population.



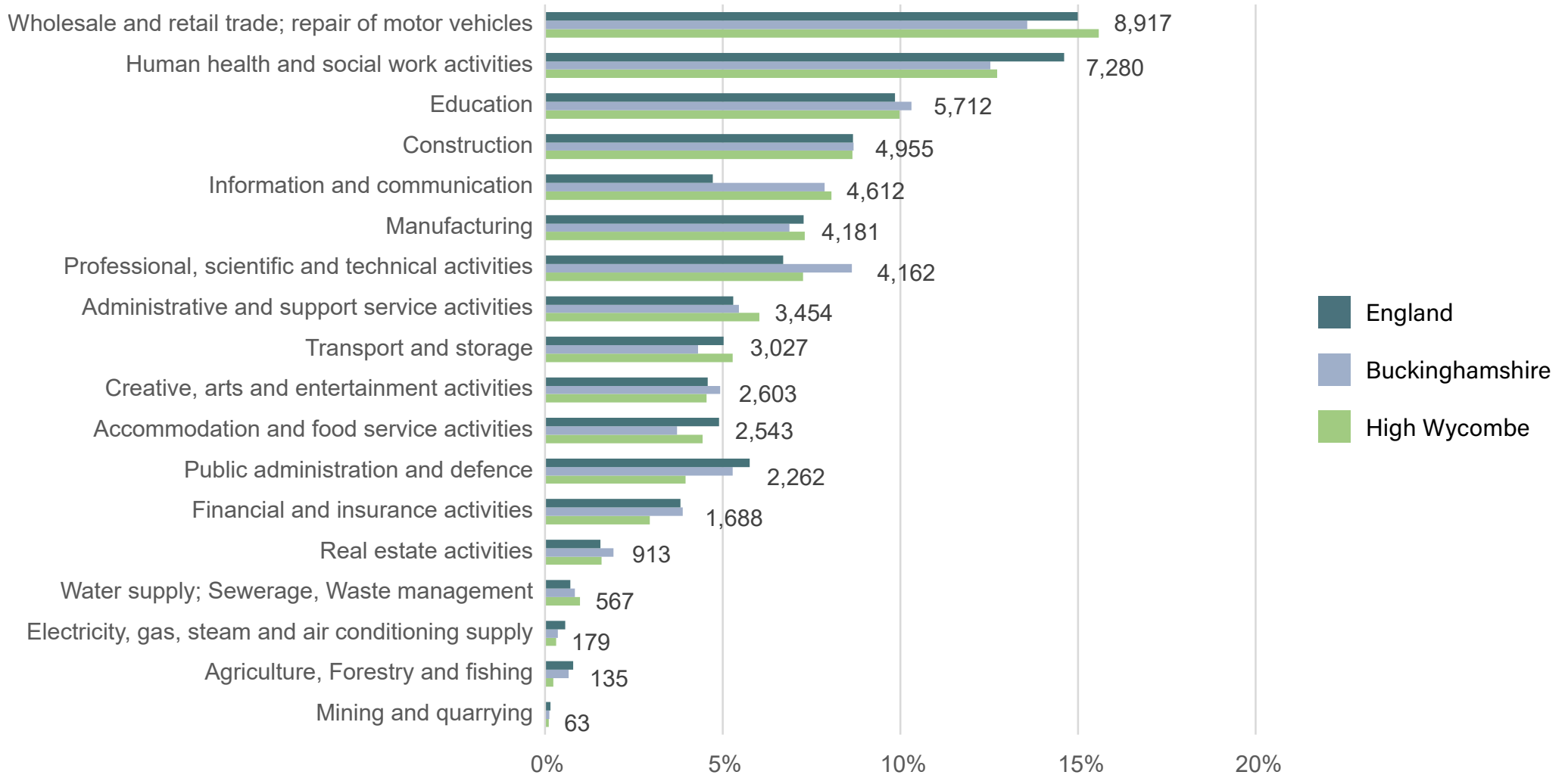
Graph 4 - Economic status of High Wycombe residents. Source: ONS 2021



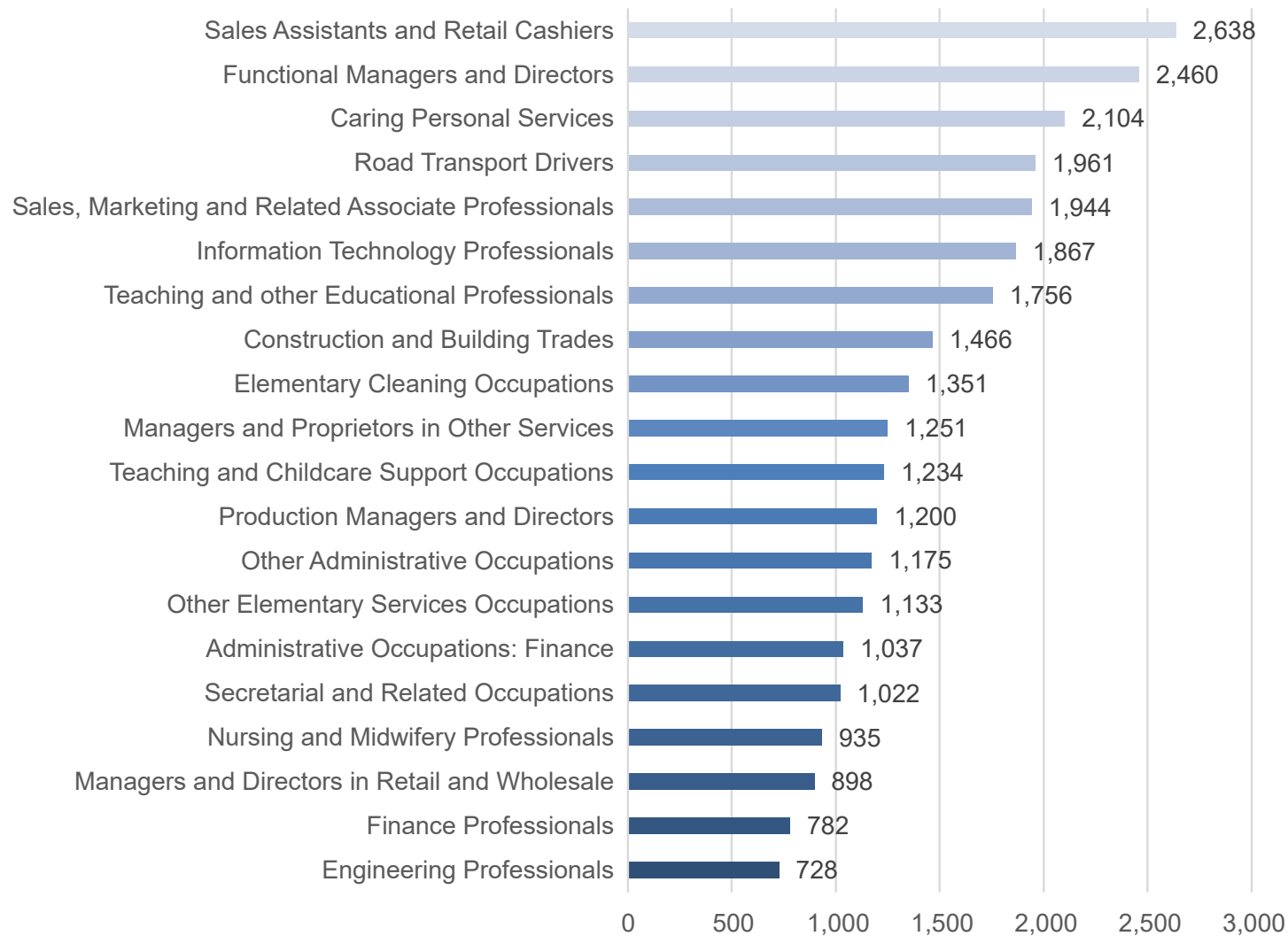
Graph 5 - Number and percentages of full time working population in High Wycombe, by distance travelled to work. Source - ONS 2021

# INDUSTRY SECTORS

High Wycombe is home to around 62,000 jobs and the table below highlights the sectors providing the largest number of jobs in the town.



Graph 6 - Industry sectors in High Wycombe, compared to Buckinghamshire and England. The graph shows the percentage of the working population in each sector, with absolute numbers shown to the right of each bar. Source: ONS 2021



*Graph 7 - Top 20 occupations of residents in High Wycombe. Source: ONS 2021*

As of 2022, High Wycombe is home to just under 5,000 businesses of which 90% are classified as small and medium sized enterprises with under 10 employees. There are 480 medium sized businesses employing between 50 and 250 staff and 255 large enterprises employing 250 (or more) staff. 30 businesses in High Wycombe have a turnover in excess of £50m.

# LAND USES

High Wycombe is increasing home to residents and 'urban living' in the town centre is more popular than ever. Residential demand is driven by Buckinghamshire New University's expansion plans and the Buckinghamshire College Group's new campus site development in the town centre.

There are a number of car parking facilities in High Wycombe including some surface level car parks as well as multi-storey. There is an opportunity to analyse this further and consider rationalising car park land uses in conjunction with redevelopment opportunities.

High Wycombe town centre is an important retail area for the town as well as the surrounding area with a large retail footprint. Physical Retail as a sector has seen a steady decline for some time at a national level and this is reflected locally in High Wycombe. The two shopping centres have had turnover challenges including a recent exit of House of Fraser from Eden Shopping Centre. Due to the large retail footprint in High Wycombe, regeneration proposals need to consider a wide variety of repurposing uses, including towards more 'experiential' activities and flexible co-location options.



Independent retail, and food and beverage sectors have been growing recently. As part of the town's Future High Street Funds programme, retail and commercial units are being refurbished, repurposed, and brought back into use, assisting businesses to locate and grow within the town centre.

High Wycombe's strength as a centre of economic start-up activity within Buckinghamshire continues to drive economic performance. Desbox and HQube are prime examples of start-up business premises. As part of ongoing investment in the town, consideration needs to be given to expanding this model to encourage more start-ups but also for the provision of attractive and flexible grow-on space so that businesses can continue to stay in High Wycombe. The Brunel Engine Shed is now complete and when the new tenants, Buckinghamshire New University, open the premises, it can provide for exciting times ahead for student spin off businesses.

While there are a number of parks and other natural spaces just outside the town centre, there are a limited number of greenspaces and waterways within it. The River Wye runs through the town centre and there are opportunities both to improve access to the river where it is not built over and consider incorporating further 'opening-up' of the river as part of potential redevelopment proposals. Over the longer-term there may be further opportunities around the river, but these will be subject to wider development plans and investment.



# PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE CHANGE

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To capitalise on the opportunities and address the challenges, a number of the overarching principles of *Regeneration Bucks – Transforming for the Future* will be deployed:

- **To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally**

For High Wycombe town centre, this will support the delivery of additional residential (including student accommodation). New housing development will be most successful if it comes forward as mixed-use commercial proposals that keep the street level active. We will explore opportunities to build a vibrant night-time economy and actively consider a wide variety of repurposing uses, including towards more 'experiential' activities and flexible co-location options.

- **To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs**

For High Wycombe, this principle will be applied by supporting start-ups and growing businesses - exploring incubation space for small businesses and innovators. It will also be applied by supporting facilities within our business parks, such as in Cressex Business Park, for growing demands of businesses and raising the profile of High Wycombe as a location of choice.

- **To provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and managed environment**

There will be a focus on enhancing public realm and the environment by improving our streets, creating more greenery, and making the River Wye more attractive and accessible. Improving the physical quality of buildings and public spaces goes hand in hand with improving the experience of using them, while designing out anti-social behaviour at the outset. Enhancements to the natural environment through more tree planting, sustainable planting and improving bio-diversity in the town centre will be prioritised where possible.

- **To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities**

Working closely with key cultural partners such as the Swan Theatre and the active arts community, this principle will support High Wycombe's unique identity and heritage in chair and furniture making.

- **To prioritise skills and development opportunities**

The sizable university and college presence in the town centre in High Wycombe creates a strong 'university town' identity. Aligning the local higher education partners ambitions with regeneration initiatives will elevate the town centre offer and accelerate the change.

# SITES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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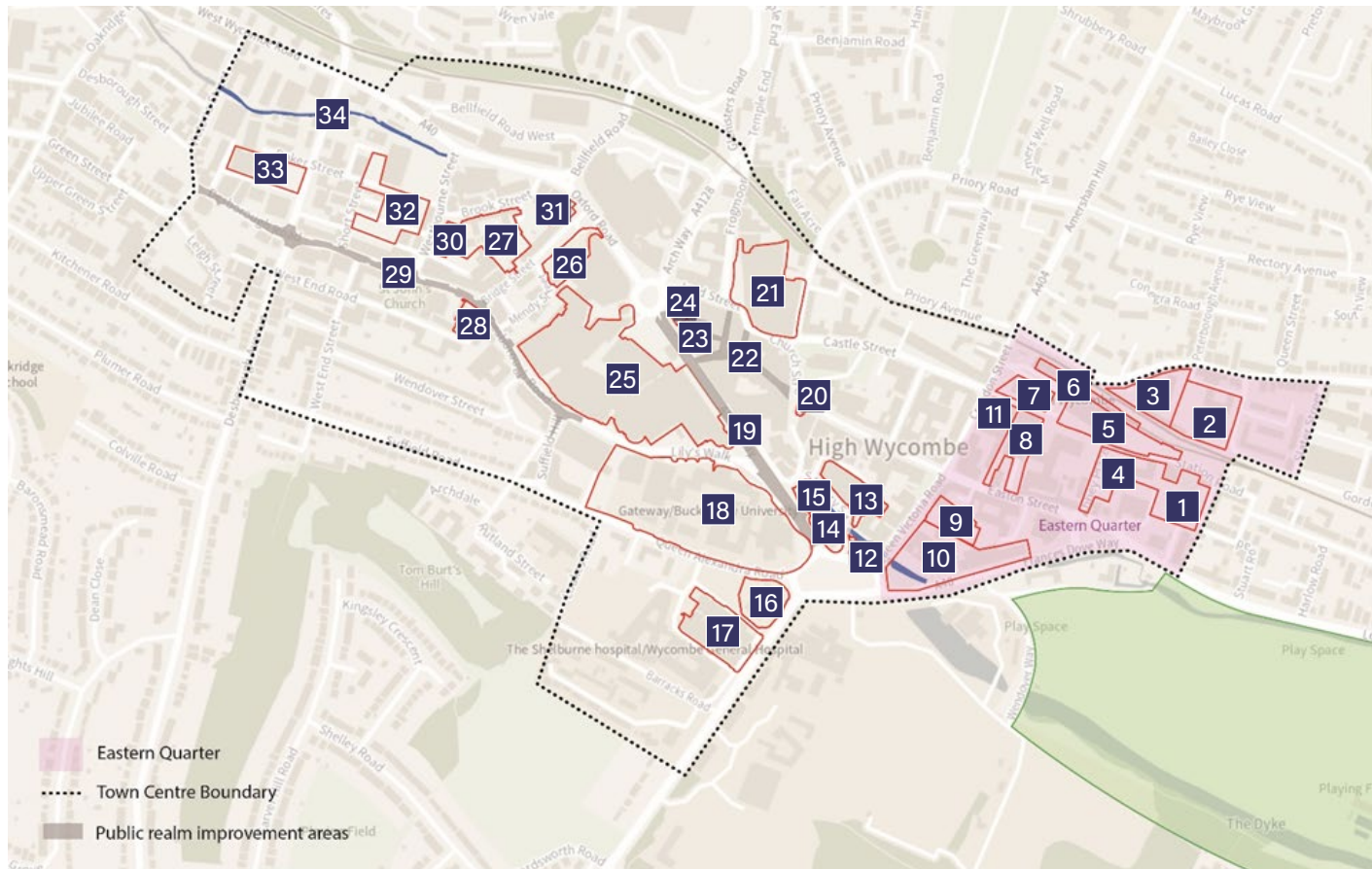
There are many anchor locations in High Wycombe town centre which present opportunities to enhance, develop, renew and re-provide sites. This forms the basis of a programme of works that brings projects forward, readying them up for regeneration activity.

The town centre can be split into two areas in order to focus regeneration work on options and redevelopment opportunities. These are the Western Quarter of the town covering the main High Street and shopping area and the Eastern Quarter covering the railway station area, Easton Street and the Queen Victoria Road council offices.

In addition to the town centre 'quarters' there is also the Cressex Business Park, which plays an important role in High Wycombe's economy. Given the size and location of the business park, there is a need to coordinate the interplay between it and the town centre economic development.







- |                                    |  |                                |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Railway Place Car Park    | <b>13</b> Swan Theatre                         | <b>25</b> Eden Shopping Centre |
| <b>2</b> Duke Street               | <b>14</b> Fire Station                         | <b>26</b> Bus Station          |
| <b>3</b> Sword House               | <b>15</b> Riverside Social Club                | <b>27</b> BNE Brook Street     |
| <b>4</b> Abbey Place               | <b>16</b> Office Outlet                        | <b>28</b> Bridge Court         |
| <b>5</b> Station Car Park          | <b>17</b> Wycombe General Hospital             | <b>29</b> Desborough Road      |
| <b>6</b> Train Station             | <b>18</b> Buckinghamshire New University       | <b>30</b> Vernon Building      |
| <b>7</b> Brunel Engine Shed        | <b>19</b> Abbey Way Flyover                    | <b>31</b> Bucks College Group  |
| <b>8</b> Easton Street Car Park    | <b>20</b> Guildhall                            | <b>32</b> Desborough Car Parks |
| <b>9</b> Royal Mail                | <b>21</b> Chilterns Shopping Centre & Frogmoor | <b>33</b> Lidl and Car Park    |
| <b>10</b> Council Offices          | <b>22</b> White Hart Street & Bull Lane        | <b>34</b> River Wye            |
| <b>11</b> Prospect House           | <b>23</b> Travelodge                           |                                |
| <b>12</b> High Wycombe Social Club | <b>24</b> The Curve                            |                                |

# WESTERN QUARTER

The Western Quarter currently provides the main retail offering and shopping experience. At its heart is the Eden Shopping Centre, which offers a good mix of retail and entertainment. The changing nature of retail nationally has seen that shops and commercial areas have had to adapt, in some cases reducing retail land use in town centres; this trend is playing out in High Wycombe as well. The Eden Shopping Centre has recently lost its anchor tenant, House of Fraser.

In 2021, High Wycombe received the first tranche of grant funding via the Future High Streets Fund. Investment from this fund is already breathing new life into retail units that have become vacant or are otherwise in decline. Where there is turnover for commercial and retail space, this creates opportunities for repurposing. The introduction of more innovative business hubs and startup units similar to the model in place for HQube and Desbox are good options in the industrial areas to the rear of Westbourne Street, such as the Vernon building.

Buckinghamshire New University's campus sits at the centre of the Western Quarter. Along with other new investment by the Buckinghamshire College Group and their new site, the recent and planned investment by higher education partners will have a significant impact on the town centre.

Alongside the university campus area is the hospital campus, home to Wycombe Hospital and the BMI Shelburne (a privately run hospital). Wycombe Hospital is currently considering options for their future use of that site.

This area includes the old historic town, an important part of the conservation area. Within this is the location of a number of fantastic historic buildings including the Grade 1 listed Guildhall, the former Wheatsheaf public house built in 1399, and All Saints Church. There are opportunities to build on the assets of the conservation area and create a place to socialise and enjoy the heritage and culture. The encouragement of additional sympathetic mixed-use developments that provide retail, office, and residential spaces can introduce new life and vibrancy to the street-level. With an expanding university population, increased footfall will support emerging new food and beverage, and experiential economy growth. Despite these heritage assets there are improvements that should be considered to address underutilised public areas, some areas with poor public realm, a general lack of wayfinding, and sporadic greenery.

The area surrounding the Swan Theatre, the fire station, and the High Wycombe Social Club, presents an exciting opportunity to consider an improvement and animation of the open space. Adjacent to the River Wye, this area could be reshaped into a 'piazza' offering with outdoor eating and drinking.

Investment by the Council is underway in public realm enhancements for White Hart Street and Bull Lane. In addition, the Council is developing new residential options for the future through the redevelopment of the Chilterns Shopping Centre. Other enhancements to Frogmoor and a new walkway connecting different parts of the town are also progressing.

The bus station is in this quarter and together with the surrounding car parks serves as a key transport access location. There is a large multi-storey car park attached to the Eden Shopping Centre as well as a number of smaller car parks nearby.

A key feature of the Western Quarter is the Desborough Road area. It is vibrant and ethnically diverse, which is reflected in the cultural food and retail offering. Historically home to a thriving manufacturing base, the area has transitioned to a mix of light industrial, small retail and other mixed use residential. There is an energy on Desborough Road and opportunities to consider additional event and specialty market activities, and better linking between the entrepreneurial start-up businesses and the university and college group.



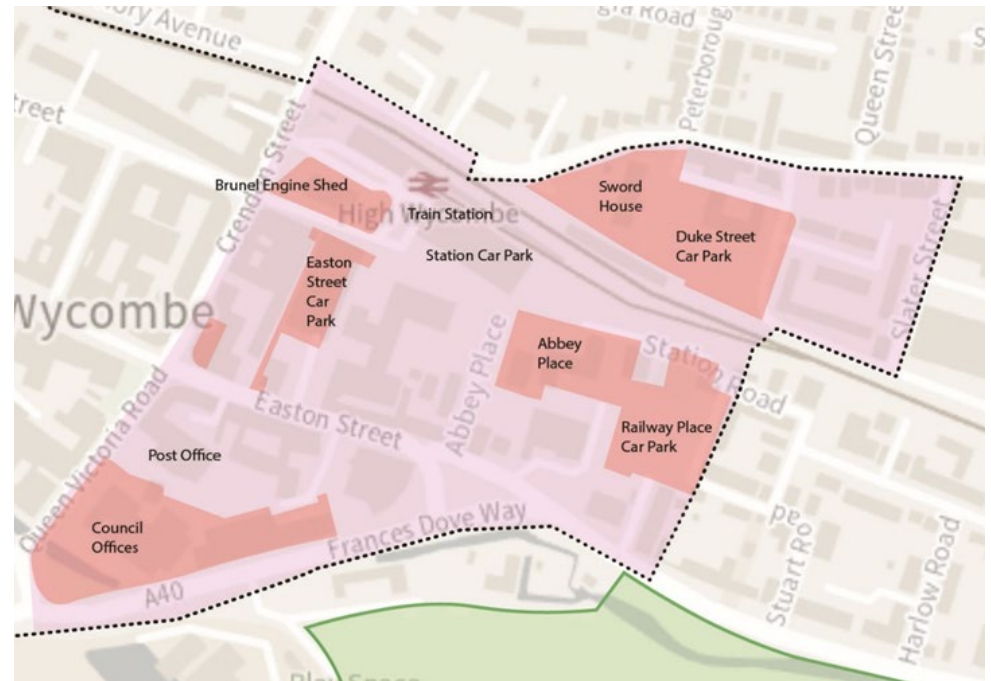
# EASTERN QUARTER

The Eastern Quarter is located to the east of the town centre and is the gateway for people arriving to High Wycombe via the railway station. To the north of the station are a number of key sites including the Wilkinson Sword building, Duke Street car park, and a mix of office and commercial space.

The rail station itself is the key transport hub for High Wycombe with a number of local bus bays co-located there. There are two multi-storey car parks adjacent to the station which are the Network Rail owned multi-storey car park just to the east and the council owned Easton Street multi-storey car park to the south.

The Brunel Engine Shed has recently been restored and renovated through investment by the council. The Brunel Shed is a significant piece of Britain's industrial heritage and for those arriving by rail is the first local landmark seen as they exit the rail station. Buckinghamshire New University have taken the lease on the building and are planning a cafe gallery space which will be open to the public as well as providing work-space for entrepreneurs and start-up business.

This quarter also includes a large site that the council owns. On this site are the council office building and car park/office building. Adjacent to the council's site is the Royal Mail High Wycombe North Delivery Office and the High Wycombe Magistrates Court. Across the Eastern Quarter there are significant public sector landholdings.



Map 3: showing Buckinghamshire Council assets within the Eastern Quarter

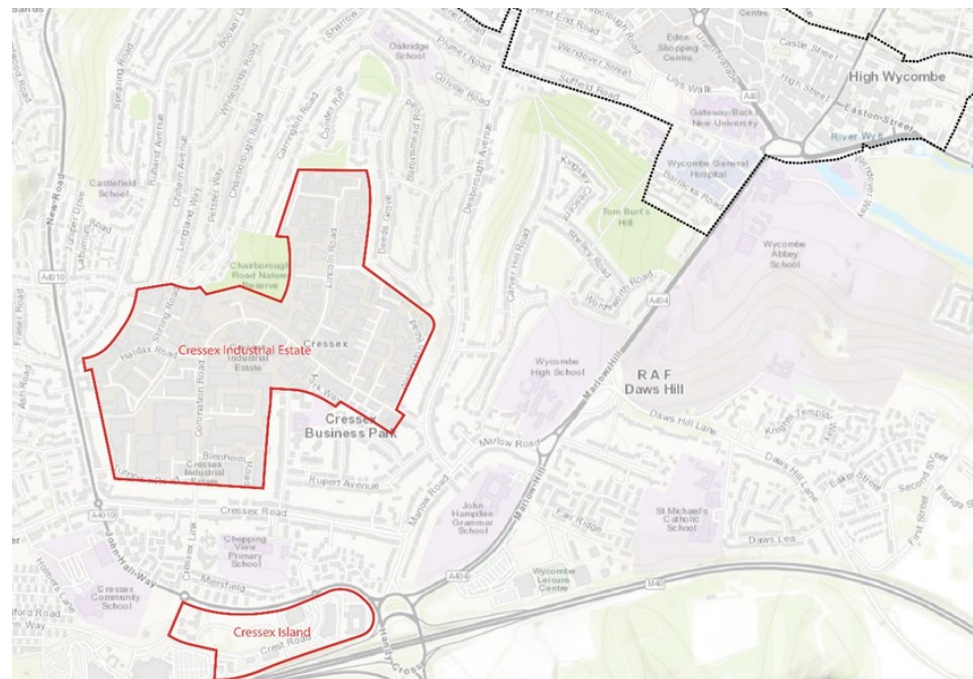
# CRESSEX INDUSTRIAL ESTATE AND CRESSEX ISLAND

Cressex Business Park is located to the south of the town centre close to junction 4 of the M40 and the A404. There are real opportunities for Cressex to be a location of choice for business. By aligning with the University to develop a highly skilled, adaptive workforce, Cressex Business Park can become a high value, high growth proposition.

It is home to over 400 businesses and includes a diverse range of multinational and Small Medium Enterprise (SME) businesses, including Biffa, Hovis, and UPS. Basepoint, which offers managed workspace, is also located here. The business park is a key economic driver for Buckinghamshire, generating around £1.4b of GVA.

A variety of sectors operate at the Business Park, ranging from biomedical through to construction and distribution. There is a mix of manufacturing, automobile servicing and trade supply stores located in the business park.

A new Business Improvement District (BID) was established in October 2022 with a five-year business proposal up to 2027. The BID's vision is for Cressex Business Park to become the greenest, cleanest and safest environment for business. A premier location, home to a diverse and successful business community, that provides high value employment for the local community and where businesses lead and shape the development of the business park into 2027 and beyond.



*Map 3: Cressex Industrial Estate and Cressex Island proximity to High Wycombe Town Centre*

Cressex BID delivers key activities including:

- Improving the park's image through signage enhancements
- Lobbying for better transport and parking
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Channeling the voice for businesses
- Enhancing the working environment

The council works closely with Cressex BID in the above and any further development proposals for the park.

# NEXT STEPS: TAKING THE STRATEGY FORWARD AS A PARTNERSHIP

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The next stage seeks to build on opportunities and to develop a programme of works. Some projects will require additional assessments and further analysis before regeneration activities can be delivered. Other projects are ready to be delivered and can form quick wins for the town centre.

The key priorities for the High Wycombe regeneration programme in the short term will focus on public realm improvement project delivery (for White Hart Street) and the next batch of Future High Street Fund investments. We'll continue to align council town centre investment with the plans coming forward from our key partners such as the university and college expansion initiatives and the hospital site redevelopment plans. For the longer term, we are initiating a major piece of work now to explore potential options for wider-scale redevelopment in the Eastern Quarter and exploring how the council's assets in that area can play a role in delivering the strategy. Similar exploratory work will be initiated for the Desborough area.

Establishing and delivering the regeneration programme for High Wycombe requires a collaborative, partnership approach. Buckinghamshire Council will continue to build on the relationships developed with key local stakeholders and will work with partners including High Wycombe Town Committee, High Wycombe BidCo, Cressex BID, the High Wycombe Community Board and other active groups in the town to take proposals forward. The High Wycombe Regeneration Group, made up of the council alongside key local stakeholders is the strategic steering group for delivering this strategy and the regeneration programme for High Wycombe. It forms part of the wider Place Based Growth Board governance and reports into the Regeneration Sub-Board.

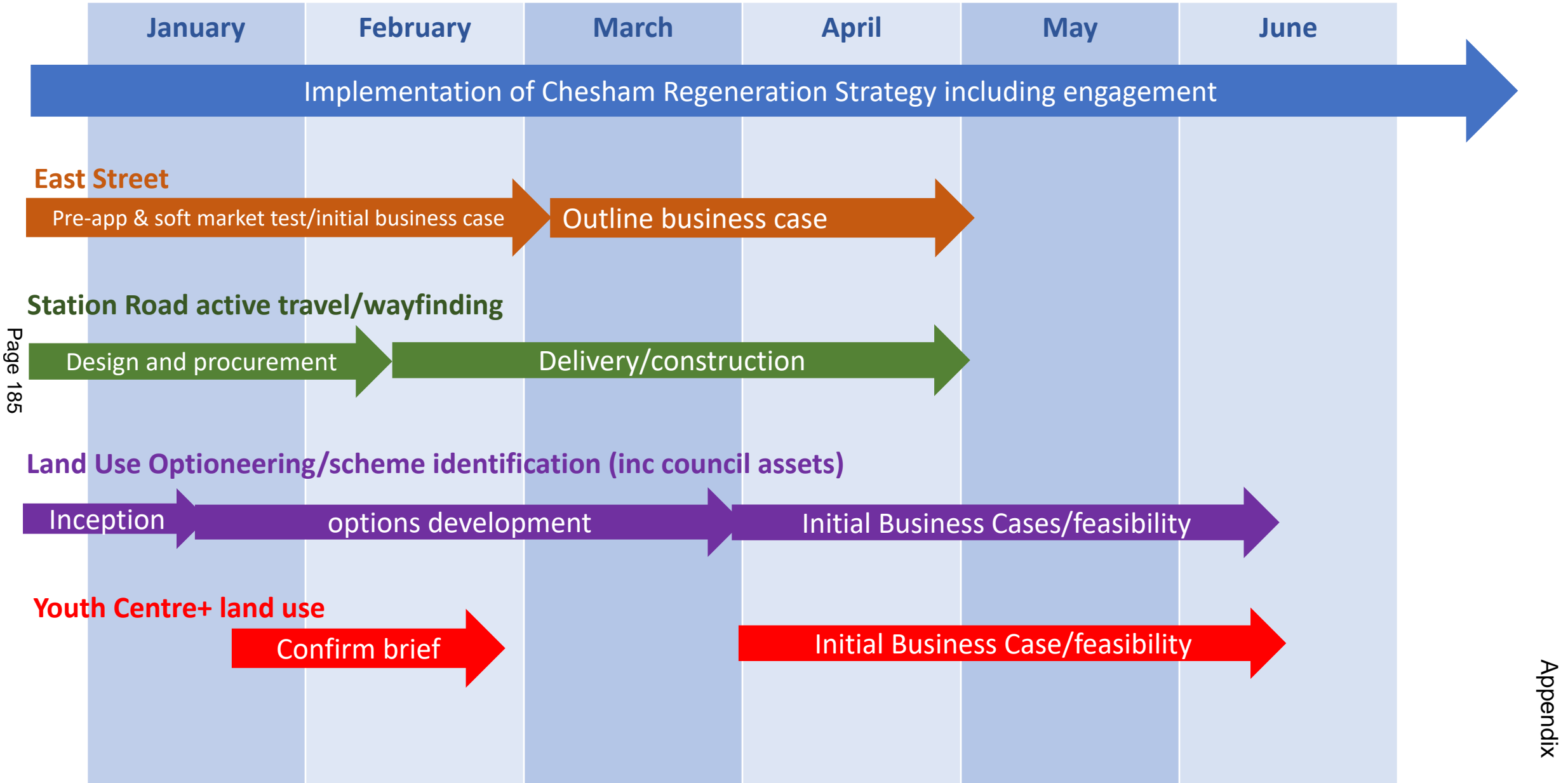




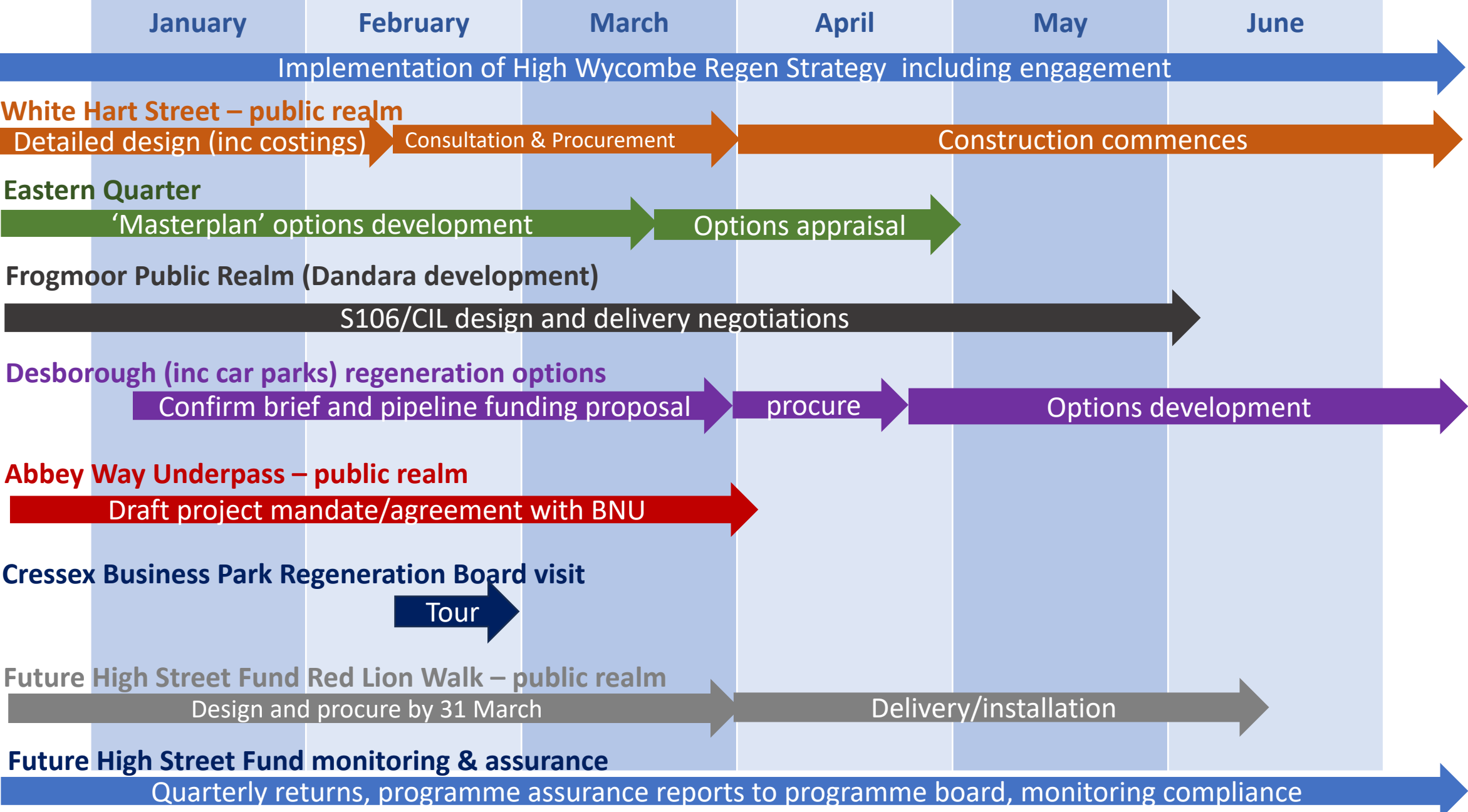
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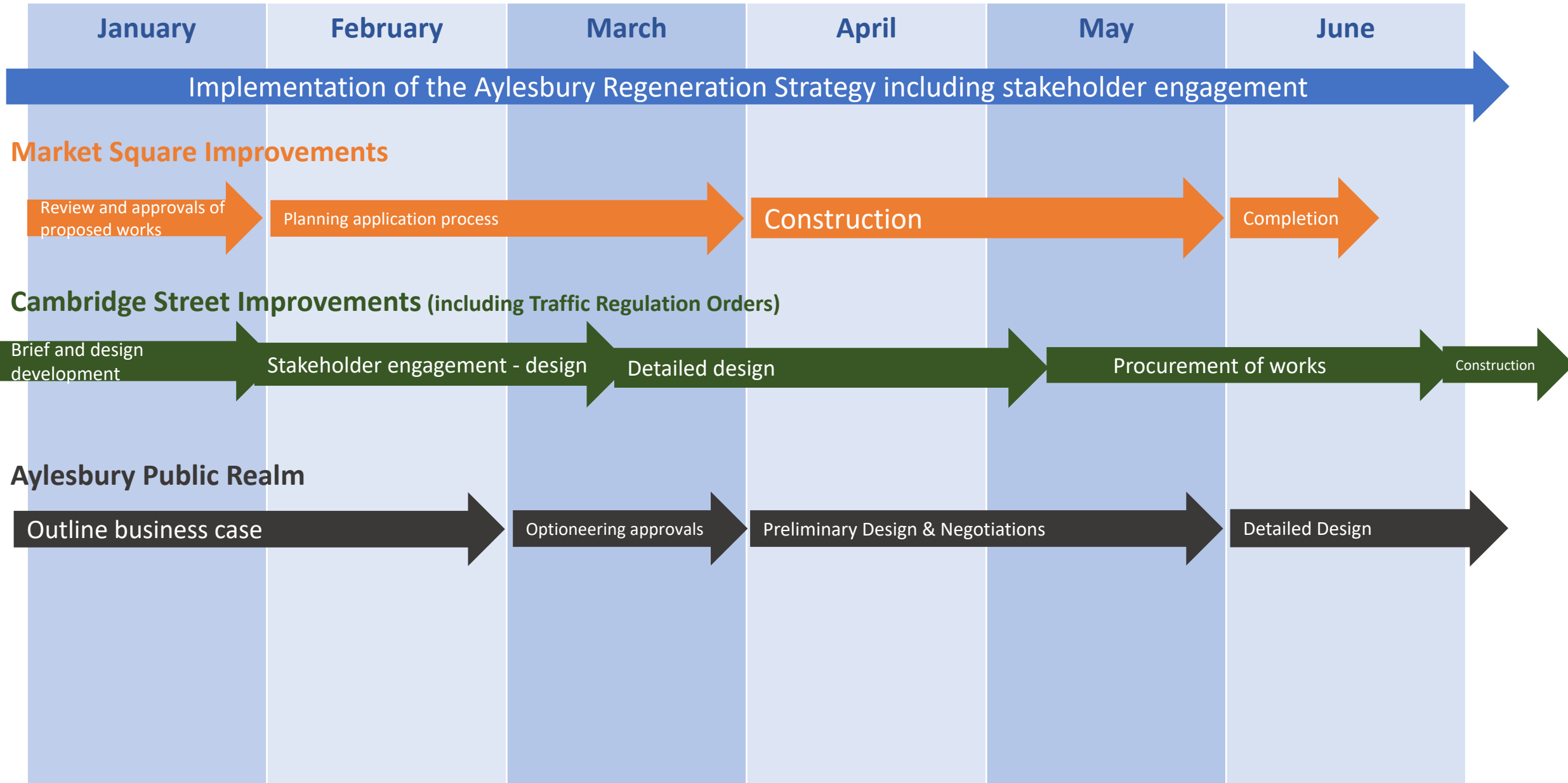
# Chesham Regeneration Delivery Programme Roadmap 2023/24 – next 6 months



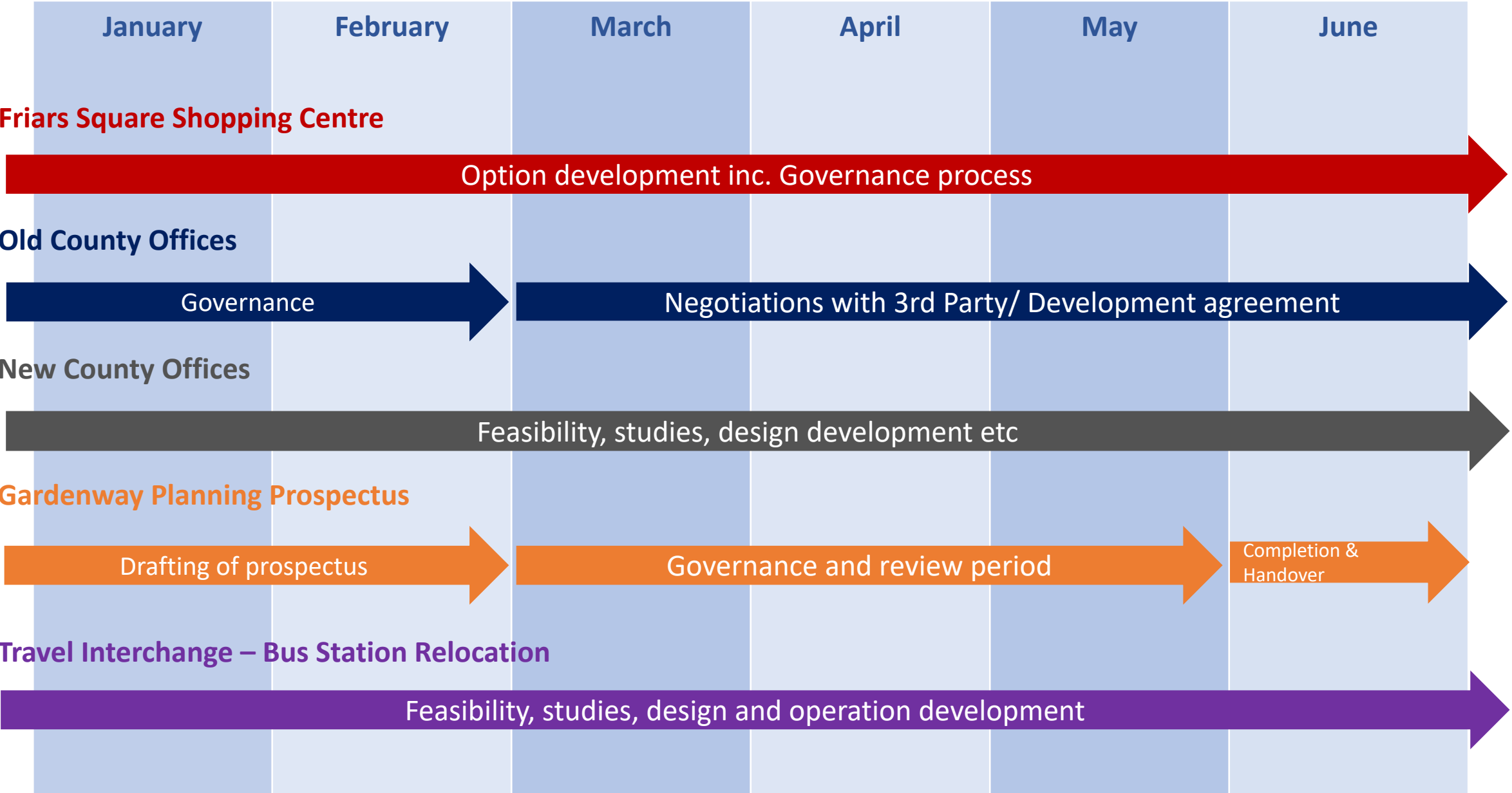
# High Wycombe Regeneration Delivery Programme Roadmap Next 6 months



# Aylesbury Regeneration Delivery Programme Roadmap 2023/24: next 6 months



# Aylesbury Regeneration Roadmap 2023/24: next 6 months





Health & Adult Social Care  
Select Committee and Growth,  
Infrastructure & Housing Select  
Committee –  
Joint review into planning for  
future primary healthcare in  
Buckinghamshire

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## Introduction by the Joint Chairmen of the Review



Cllr Isobel Darby  
Chalfont St Peter



Cllr Chris Poll  
Ivinghoe

“Primary Care in Buckinghamshire is one of the most important pathways for our residents when accessing services to help them remain healthy, happy and prosperous. With significant housing growth expected within Buckinghamshire over the coming years, there is a real need to have a robust delivery plan for primary care estates which aligns with the predicted housing growth to ensure that the population’s health needs are met. We recognise the significant challenges faced by the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, Primary Care Networks and GP surgeries in planning for future provision – short planning cycles, regular changes to NHS services and structures, lack of funding for GP estates and a complex property valuation mechanism to name a few. We hope that the key findings and areas of recommendation from this rapid review will provide a basis for improving cooperation and planning for primary care estates. We would like to extend our thanks to the Members of the review group and to all the contributors who gave their valuable time to attend the evidence gathering meetings.”

## Members on the Review Group



Cllr Qaser Chaudhry  
Chesham  
(Day one only)



Cllr Robin Stuchbury  
Buckingham West



Cllr Nathan Thomas  
Tylers Green & Loudwater



Cllr Alan Turner  
The Risboroughs



Cllr Stuart Wilson  
The Wooburns,  
Bourne End & Hedsor

## Aim of Rapid Review

The rapid review, undertaken jointly between the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee and the Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee aimed to achieve the following:

- Clarity on where the responsibility around planning future primary care services lies and identify the key influencers and decisions-makers in this process.
- Review current mapping of primary care provision against planned housing growth and identify potential gaps in the process to lead to improved working practices.
- Achieve greater understanding of how primary care infrastructure is funded and the level of support provided to Primary Care Networks/GP surgeries in securing funding and support to deliver proposals.
- Clarity around current planning consultations (including the Local Plan) and the engagement by health partners in the process.
- Strengthen existing partnerships by ensuring there are opportunities for primary care development as part of the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. Contributions for local health provision via Section 106 (S106) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) agreements would also be examined.

## Methodology

The review group gathered evidence as follows:

Desktop research – Members considered important documentation relevant to the review. This included, but were not limited to the following:

- Next steps for integrating primary care: Fuller stocktake report
- Buckinghamshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Pharmaceutical Needs Analysis
- Planning Documentation around CIL and S106 agreements
- A proforma produced to assist Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust (BHT) applying for S106 contributions
- Case studies of healthcare developments in Buckinghamshire

Two days of evidence gathering took place:

- 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – meeting with Integrated Care Board (ICB) representatives (including Estates Team), Planning Officers, BHT representative and relevant Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet Members. This set the scene, discussed existing planning processes, including the Local Plans and decision making. ICB funding, planning and delivery of primary care services, engagement between Planning and the ICB, and S106 and CIL were also discussed.
- 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – meeting with ICB representatives (including estates team), Planning Officers, Primary Care Networks (PCN) Lead, BC Estates, and BC Cabinet Members, discussing needs analysis and mapping, relevant case studies, and gap analysis.



## National Context

Integrated Care Boards (ICB) were introduced in July 2022 replacing Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). The ICB is a statutory NHS organisation responsible for developing a plan for meeting the health needs of the population, managing the NHS budget and commissioning the provision of primary care services in a geographical area. New ICBs tend to cover a larger area than the predecessor CCGs, to allow for enhanced cooperation and cost savings, although these large diverse geographical areas can also present a challenge for the ICB.

In July 2019, as part of the NHS Long-Term Plan (LTP), around 7,000 general practices across England came together to form more than 1,250 Primary Care Networks (PCNs), covering populations of approximately 30,000-50,000 patients. They aim to improve the ability of practices to recruit and retain staff, to manage financial and estate pressures, to provide a wider range of services to patients and to ease integration with the wider health and care system.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to prepare a Local Plan for their area. This development plan sets out the location of future growth and is the starting point for determining planning applications. As part of this, the ICB are a statutory consultee (specific consultation body) and are responsible for the provision of primary healthcare. On the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill obtained royal assent. This aims to help speed up the planning system, hold developers to account and encourage infrastructure development like GP surgeries, schools and transport links.

Concerns have been expressed nationally regarding the provision of Primary Care. The shortage of GPs, and a perceived inability to get a timely appointment, as well as a lack of NHS Dentists have implied a crisis in Primary Care. The continuing rise in population, and expected housing growth across the country, will further compound the problem.



## Local Context

Buckinghamshire Council has a statutory duty to prepare a new Local Plan for Buckinghamshire and adopt it by 2027. More importantly, the Plan provides a major opportunity to shape the growth of Buckinghamshire over the next 15 years and beyond.

Buckinghamshire currently has four Local Plans and two Core Strategy development plan documents adopted by its predecessor councils. These are the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP), Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe Local Plans, and Core Strategies for Chiltern and South Bucks. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been adopted for all these plan areas with the exception of Aylesbury Vale. An ongoing review is assessing whether CIL will be implemented in Aylesbury Vale before the adoption of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan. It is notable that only the Wycombe Local Plan makes specific reference to providing CIL monies for primary care facilities under policy CP7.

During the formulation of the VALP, the most recently adopted Local Plan in Buckinghamshire, whilst there was engagement with Health partners, the quality of their input was variable. In retrospect, this was a missed opportunity, and the Council is keen to have more engagement with Health partners as the Buckinghamshire Local Plan moves forward.

Buckinghamshire is part of an Integrated Care System (ICS) with Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, which consists of five local authorities. As mentioned above, the NHS created Integrated Care Boards as the statutory body to commission health services across the ICS. As part of this, staff working for predecessor Clinical Commissioning Groups were TUPED into the new organisation, however the ICB is still recruiting to a number of posts across the organisation and has had a number of interims in place since its creation.

Since July 2023, Buckinghamshire has a General Practice Providers Alliance (GPPA), a collaborative alliance of the key General Practice leaders and stakeholders in Buckinghamshire. This is the united front for General Practice in Buckinghamshire, and is comprised of the PCNs, FedBucks and the Local Medical Committee (LMC). FedBucks is a federation of 47 GP practices covering a population of over 485,000 patients across Buckinghamshire, they work to develop opportunities to support resilience and sustainability in local general practice. The function of LMCs is to represent the interests of GPs and practices with the objective of optimising the terms and conditions, working environment and stability of all GPs both individually and at practice level.

Members of Buckinghamshire Council routinely hear from residents that their main concern around new housing growth relates to the associated infrastructure that is needed, including primary care provision, and there are growing concerns that delivery results to date have been mixed and far from ideal to meet future need. Financial contributions from developers can be used to deliver some of this infrastructure. However, there is also a need for developer contributions to support infrastructure linked to Council Services, such as education, highways and leisure. The Local Planning Authority therefore has to balance these competing priorities, taking into account site viability, when negotiating contributions with developers.

## Summary of Recommendations

Please find below a summary of our recommendations. The full narrative which leads to these recommendations is set out in the body of the report.

### Recommendation 1

**Mindful of the emerging ICB Primary Care Strategy and ICS Infrastructure Strategy, the ICB, in conjunction with the GPPA and BHT, should create a shared vision for Primary Care in Buckinghamshire as a matter of urgency. The vision and process should encompass:**

**Development of an action plan and timeline for the delivery of a draft vision for Buckinghamshire within a year to include but not be limited to:**

- **A comprehensive audit and mapping exercise of current GP and primary care facilities as detailed in the Fuller Report, to include a condition review and SWOT analysis of current GP and primary care facilities**
- **The mapping of this data against future growth identified in the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan**
- **Incorporation of Census 2021 data, Public Health data and additional research to aid the mapping of future growth and need**

### Recommendation 2

**The Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing, the ICB and the GPPA should write to the Secretary of State for Health to highlight the barriers and inadequacies of the current funding formula and request a fundamental review of the funding mechanisms for Primary Care Estates and the methods of procuring new Estates Developments, including how the District Valuer assesses rental values. A new and improved 'fit for purpose' process needs to be developed that aligns more fully with the developing national ICS landscape and aims.**

### Recommendation 3

**Buckinghamshire Council should work with the ICB, the GPPA and BHT to identify the co-resourcing of a key role to assist in the creation of a vision for future healthcare planning, as detailed in recommendation 1.**

### Recommendation 4

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) guidance for Town and Parish councils should be updated to raise awareness of how they could use their CIL funding allocation to support healthcare initiatives serving their local areas by funding or part funding projects. These could be initiatives or projects brought forward by their GP Practices, Local Members, their Community Board or by local voluntary organisations.**

### Recommendation 5

**The Health and Wellbeing Board, Director of Public Health and the ICB should benchmark against comparable authorities in order to assess development of the Buckinghamshire JSNA, identify gaps and improvements and improve the Buckinghamshire provision, and specifically explore the development of Buckinghamshire bitesize housing growth digests.**

### Recommendation 6

**Buckinghamshire Council and the ICB need to work together to update annually the quality and consistency of data which is used to inform service and estates planning, such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment. The JSNA should include the evidence base as a part of the new Local Plan and Public Health should work with Planning colleagues to produce bitesize summaries of housing growth across Buckinghamshire.**

#### **Recommendation 7**

**Public Health, the ICB and the Planning Policy team should review how the data contained within the latest Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment can be used to inform the next Local Plan. This would include looking at examples from other authorities to demonstrate how it has been achieved.**

#### **Recommendation 8**

**The GPPA Enabler Lead (Estates), once appointed, should be the key link to the ICB Primary Care Estates team and be included in all future discussions around Primary Care Estates in Buckinghamshire. This role should aim to convene a regular programme of estates assessment / future planning meetings of key stakeholders as an early priority, the first of which should take place within 3 months of their appointment.**

#### **Recommendation 9**

**The ICB should formally assess the feasibility of increasing staffing levels in their Primary Care Estates team and consider including Data Analysts, in order to facilitate the development and delivery of a Primary Care Estates Plan at place as well as at the strategic level.**

#### **Recommendation 10**

**Buckinghamshire Council should formally assess how key staff members from the Planning and Public Health teams might work collaboratively with the enhanced ICB team, mentioned above, in the short and medium term. This would support the development and delivery of the Primary Care Estates Plan for Buckinghamshire and ensure the sustainability of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan.**

#### **Recommendation 11**

**As a matter of urgency, further improvements need to be made to the toolkit to ensure the results can be used to inform future estates planning. The toolkit should be re-directed to individual GP practices for completion. This project needs to be prioritised and a formal progress report of findings be produced within six months and presented to the HASC Select Committee for scrutiny.**

#### **Recommendation 12**

**The Buckinghamshire Executive Partnership (BEP) should commission a working group drawn from the ICB and the Council's estates teams and the GPPA. The group should identify and highlight opportunities within all organisations existing property portfolios which could expediate the delivery of additional health facilities. The working group should report back to the BEP.**

## Primary Care Estates Planning

From the outset, we knew this review was going to be a complex piece of work due to the nature of what we were looking at and we heard a lot of evidence over the two days. For ease, we have divided the key findings and areas of recommendation under three main headings – Primary Care Estates Planning, Funding Primary Care Estates and Delivering Integrated Primary Care.

Buckinghamshire Council sets out in the introduction to its Corporate Plan - 'We are committed to making Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work, and do business. We want our county to be a place everyone can be proud of, with excellent services, thriving businesses and outstanding public spaces for everyone. We want our residents, regardless of background, to live healthy, successful lives and age well with independence.'

After the pandemic, all public services are under pressure financially and resourcing remains a key focus for all our healthcare partners. There is a need to collaborate effectively with partner organisations in order to deliver more by working smarter and more creatively. For the purposes of this review Buckinghamshire Council is not just seen as the planning authority but also as an enabler and a 'place shaper'. The developing Buckinghamshire Plan is not simply about where in the county is best placed to absorb additional housing growth, but it is also an opportunity to think about the wider implications of that growth for all public services and businesses in Buckinghamshire.

Access to healthcare is a hot topic locally and nationally and the interdependence between primary care, acute hospital trusts and local authority social care is well-recognised. A lack of investment in primary care can lead to a significant increase in acute admissions and subsequent demand for social care. Therefore, it is important for Health and local authorities to work together more closely to enable a whole system approach to deliver more effective and integrated care for our residents. The decision to create ICBs nationally reflects the fact that the NHS cannot deliver in isolation and highlights the importance of a partnership approach.

### Legal and governance framework

One of the aims of this review was to provide clarity around where the responsibility for planning future primary care services lies and to identify the key influencers and decision-makers in this process. This section of the report looks at the legal and governance structures currently in place as part of the Council's planning process and in relation to primary care estates planning and delivery, as well as looking at the current situation in relation to existing local plans and primary care estates planning.

As mentioned, the Council has a statutory duty to prepare a new Local Plan for Buckinghamshire and adopt it by 2027 which provides a major opportunity to shape the growth of Buckinghamshire over the next 15 years and beyond.



We heard about the rigorous statutory tests for seeking infrastructure through the planning process both in terms of onsite provision or financial contributions towards off site provision, which needs to take into account the complex NHS funding mechanisms amongst other matters, to ensure any mitigation is:

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- (b) directly related to the development; and
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

How this works in practice will be discussed later in the report, alongside the differences in funding options available for infrastructure projects through S106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

In July 2022, Clinical Commissioning Groups were abolished and replaced by an Integrated Care Board. According to the NHS England website, an Integrated Care Board is “A statutory NHS organisation responsible for developing a plan for meeting the health needs of the population, managing the NHS budget and arranging for the provision of health services in the ICS area. Within each Integrated Care System, place-based partnerships will lead the detailed design and delivery of integrated services across their localities and neighbourhoods. The partnerships will involve the NHS, local councils, community and voluntary organisations, local residents, people who use services, their carers and representatives and other community partners with a role in supporting the health and wellbeing of the population.”

Whilst the ICB is responsible for commissioning primary care services, it does not hold any capital to invest in primary care estates nor is it allowed to do so. There are no ICBs that currently own primary care estate and in order to do so, the ICB will need consent from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), who in turn will require the ICB to pay for an annual “capital charge” to hold such estate.

A complex landscape of primary care estates ownership currently exists, which sits predominantly with corporate Landlords, NHS Property Services, individual GP practice owner-occupiers or “accidental” GP landlords (retired GPs who continue to own the building with current GPs occupying the premises).

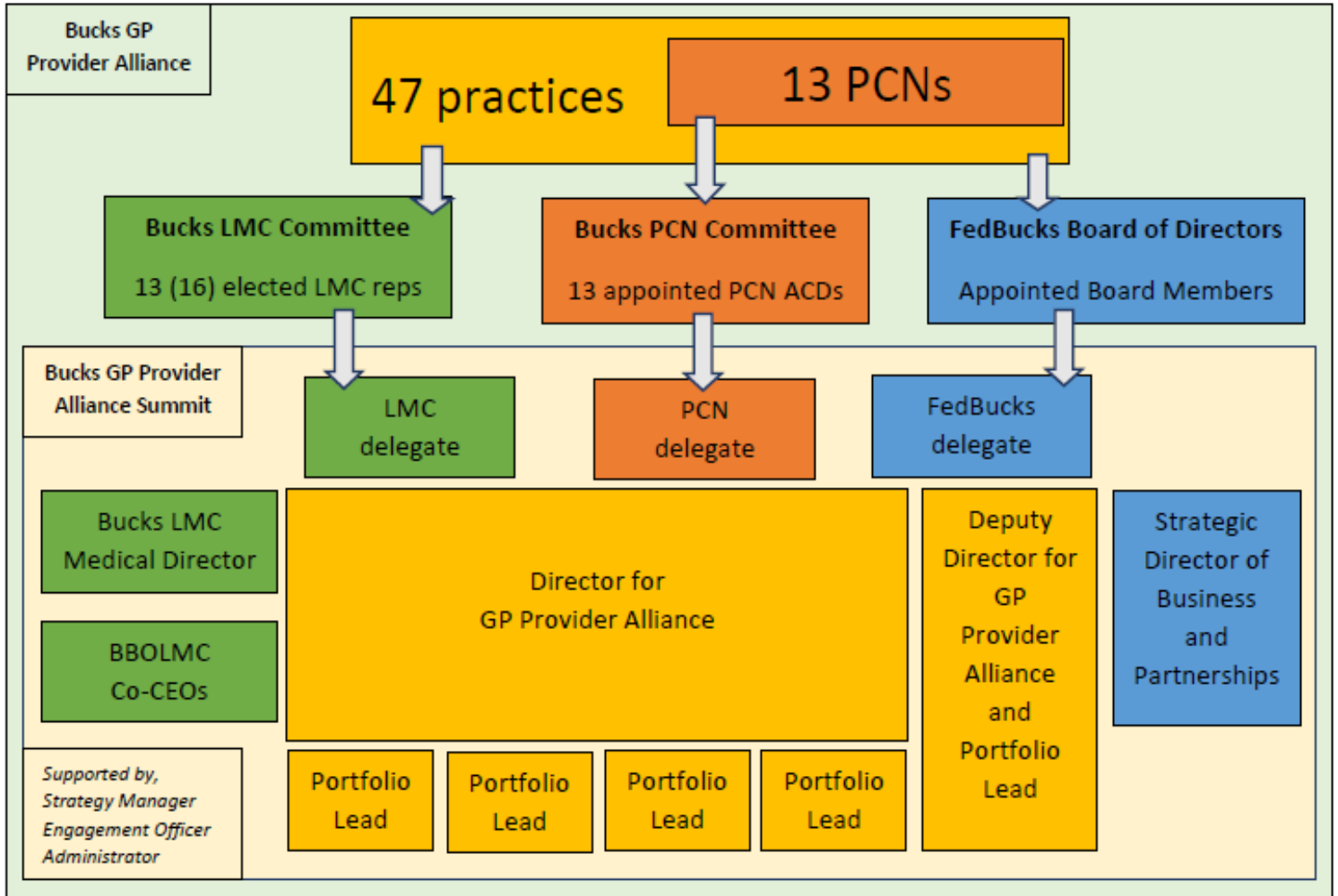
We understand that new primary care developments, whether brand-new buildings or extensions to existing premises, need to be GP-led. GPs would approach the ICB with plans around their existing estates (or to discuss any plans to expand) with a view to that Practice being willing to either take a new long-term lease from a Third-Party Developer (in the case of new premises or significant extension), or if the premises are owner-occupied, to find capital funding to pay for the proposed development. In each case, the ICB is responsible for the revenue-funding of such development (through rent reimbursement) and for working with the GP practice to develop those plans to deliver the project.

The Review Group was struck by a mismatch between the aspirations of the ICB and PCNs to deliver ‘primary care at scale’ and the fact that the starting point for any new GP estates development would be at the individual GP practice level. An individual GP practice would be asked to identify a need to expand their estate, secure funding for it, perhaps through liaison with the local planning authority to secure S106 or CIL, devise a project and then approach the ICB to provide more expertise or support. This appears to place a heavy burden on individual GPs who may not view property development as a top priority or have in-house expertise or funding to lead on such an endeavour. This also presents a ‘Catch 22’ whereby a GP cannot secure developer funding without a fully detailed and specific project plan, but the ICB is unlikely to support the development of such a plan without knowing that funding has been agreed.

## **Buckinghamshire General Practice Providers Alliance (GPPA) and Primary Care Networks (PCN)**

We also heard about the newly created Buckinghamshire General Practice Providers Alliance (GPPA), which brings together the key General Practice leaders and stakeholders (see structure below). The GPPA will provide the united front for general practice in Buckinghamshire by directly working at System and Place with the ICS and local providers and supporting resilience within general practice.

In Buckinghamshire, there are 47 GP practices which make up the 13 Primary Care Networks.



*Basic structure of the GPPA, June 2023*

In 2022, the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC) undertook an inquiry into the development of Primary Care Networks in Buckinghamshire.

For context purposes, as part of the NHS Long-Term Plan (LTP), around 7,000 general practices across England came together to form more than 1,250 Primary Care Networks, covering populations of approximately 30,000-50,000 patients. Bringing general practices together to work at scale has been a priority for some years for a range of reasons, including improving the ability of practices to recruit and retain staff, to manage financial and estate pressures, to provide a wider range of services to patients and to ease integration with the wider health and care system.

The new five-year framework for the GP contract published in January 2019, put a more formal structure around this way of working. To support PCNs, the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) provides funding for 20,000 additional roles to create bespoke multi-disciplinary teams, including pharmacists, physiotherapists, paramedics, physician associates and social prescribing support workers. Whilst the ARRS initiative has exceeded original expectations with over 26,000 additional staff successfully recruited, this funding is for a set time period and ICBs and PCNs are awaiting clarity from NHS England around whether the scheme and funding will be extended, discontinued or a new model brought forward.

Members on the HASC Select Committee inquiry heard that, whilst the additional roles were welcomed across the PCNs, these additional roles had created pressure on existing workspace. One of the recommendations in

the HASC inquiry was for the ICB to undertake a mapping exercise to align future primary care provision, based on fully developed PCNs across the county, with future housing growth at “Place and neighbourhood”. The recommendation also stated that senior people should be involved in conversations between Buckinghamshire Council and health in relation to future planning of primary care.

**“NHS England has significant ambitions for Primary Care Networks, with the expectation that they will be a key vehicle for delivering many of the commitments in the NHS Long-Term Plan and providing a wider range of services to patients.”**

King’s Fund report, November 2020

## Health and Wellbeing Board

We heard about the statutory role of Health and Wellbeing Boards to promote and improve integrated working among local providers of healthcare and social care so that patients and other service-users experience more joined-up care. We also heard from Public Health colleagues about the statutory duties associated in producing a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) and the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS). More on these later in the report.

## Buckinghamshire Executive Partnership

We understand that the Buckinghamshire Executive Partnership (BEP) was established in April 2023 to support the delivery and transformation of health and care services in Buckinghamshire and to complement the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Its purpose is to bring together CEOs, statutory officers and senior executives across Buckinghamshire to:

- Accelerate progress on shared system priorities, as defined by the ICP and HWB;
- Ensure the right enablers are in place to deliver those priorities (such as infrastructure, workforce, and governance);
- Identify specific areas where system and partnership approaches can add value and drive improvements;
- Support and champion innovation and transformation through sharing best practice and risk; and
- Ensure strategic alignment, best use of resources and operational oversight of integrated care across the Buckinghamshire health and care system.

We understand that senior members of the GPPA are included on the Bucks Executive Partnership and they will also be invited to have a member on the Health and Wellbeing Board. We are pleased to hear that there will be continuity of GPPA membership on the HWB and the BEP to help improve information sharing across GPs and a more joined-up approach to delivering integrated primary care services.

## Current situation

This section of the report outlines a summary of the adopted local plans for Buckinghamshire with identified areas of growth until 2033. We acknowledge that the Buckinghamshire Local Plan will look at housing growth until 2040 but these plans will be used as the basis of developing the Buckinghamshire Local Plan. This section will also look at the current situation in relation to planning primary care estates by the Integrated Care Board. It is important to recognize that the majority of new development will come from larger schemes that will trigger CIL and S106 contributions. However, a significant number of additional smaller windfall units of development will collectively add to pressure on services but will not trigger thresholds and developer contributions.



## Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

For the purposes of providing some context for this report, below is a summary of the key detail contained in the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan (VALP).

The VALP makes provision for 28,600 new dwellings for the period 2013 to 2033. It refers to the total population of the Aylesbury Vale area as 174,100 (2011 Census) and also states that there is an ONS forecast of population increase in the area to around 214,000 by 2033 (this did not take into account the impact of the VALP accommodating unmet need) including unmet housing need from the former legacy council areas of Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe (8,000 dwellings).

A number of sites contributing to the VALP housing target already have planning permission (since 2013) with 12,325 dwellings having been completed between 2013 and 2022. 11,127 homes have permission but are not built as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. This equates to 82% of the total VALP housing provision (23,452 dwellings compared to 28,600 dwellings provided for within the plan).

The Local Plan housing target is equivalent to 1,430 dwellings p.a. which is taken from the published Five-Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement (2023).

There are relevant Local Plan policies to secure appropriate infrastructure linked to new development, including provision for GP practices. There are also policies relating to specific site allocations requiring healthcare infrastructure provision on site or financial contributions towards off site provision.

Below are the eight largest site allocations detailed in the Local Plan.

- D-AGT1 – South Aylesbury
- D-AGT2 – South West Aylesbury (Oxford Road and Lower Road)
- D-AGT3 – Aylesbury North of A41 (Woodlands<sup>1</sup>, Manor Farm, Westonmead and College Farm)
- D-AGT4 – Aylesbury South of A41 (Hampden Fields, New Road and Aston Clinton Road)
- D-AGT5 – Berryfields, Aylesbury
- D-AGT6 – Kingsbrook, Aylesbury
- D-NLV001 – Land south of the A421 and east of Whaddon Road, Newton Longville (SW Milton Keynes)
- D-WHA001 – Shenley Park, south of Milton Keynes



<sup>1</sup> Note that the Woodlands site is not the entire area of AGT3

## Wycombe Local Plan

The Wycombe Local Plan makes provision for 10,925 dwellings to 2033.

The annual Local Plan target is equivalent to 546.3 dwellings p.a. which is taken from the Council's Five-Year housing supply position statement.

There are relevant Local Plan policies to secure appropriate infrastructure linked to new development CP7 Delivering the Infrastructure to Support Growth which includes the provision of primary care facilities where required.

In terms of site allocations PR7 sets out the development requirements for the Princes Risborough expansion area which includes healthcare. Policy BE3 supports health facility development in the Bourne End and Wooburn area.

Below are the largest site allocations in the Local Plan.

- Policy HW5 – Abbey Barn South
- Policy HW6 – Gomm Valley and Ashwells
- Policy HW7 – Terriers Farm, High Wycombe – Development Brief
- Policy HW8 – Land off Amersham Road including Tralee Farm, Hazlemere
- Policy PR4 & PR7 - Princes Risborough Expansion – adopted SPD
- Policy BE1 – Slate Meadow Bourne End and Wooburn, Development Brief
- Policy BE2 – Hollands Farm Bourne End and Wooburn, Development Brief

In the Wycombe area, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is in place since the adoption of the CIL charging schedule in November 2012.

Both Local Plans were supported by evidence of future housing and population needs in a joint study called The Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA, dated December 2016, updated August 2017).

New information is being released from the 2021 Census which will feed into new household projections (usually published in 2 years' time). This will help inform the new Local Plan for Buckinghamshire.

## Chiltern and South Bucks

The Chiltern Local Plan was adopted in 1997, and the South Bucks Local Plan adopted in 1999. Further Core Strategy documents were adopted in 2011 for both areas. A proposed Local Plan for both areas, the joint Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan was withdrawn following agreement by Buckinghamshire Council, at its full Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020. Whilst the examination Planning Inspectors' initial findings on the duty to cooperate were not agreed and/or accepted, the likelihood was that this action might in any event be forced on the Council by the Inspectors. Therefore, to withdraw would have potentially saved significant abortive costs and would allow efforts and resources to be concentrated on the preparation of the new Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. Therefore, the Chiltern and South Bucks areas are more susceptible to speculative development without the protection of an up-to-date recent Local Plan and an inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

Against this backdrop of existing local plans, we heard that the Council's planning team has been in discussion with both the ICB, responsible for primary care and Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT), responsible for acute and community care. These discussions focused on how both organisations can positively engage in

the planning application process as well as engaging with the development of the new Local Plan to identify the impact of development on healthcare and identify their infrastructure requirements. The focus of the discussions has been on the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan area where the CIL charging regime is not currently in place.

We heard how joint working between the planning team and Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) intensified following the unsuccessful judicial review in 2021 brought by the Hampden Fields Action Group on Hampden Fields in relation to the provisions made for healthcare, with officers working collaboratively with both bodies. We heard that improvements in working practices have been made following this with BHT and planners working together to produce a proforma which is now used by BHT in the planning application stage. This has helped BHT to demonstrate the evidence required for S106 agreements more robustly.

It was good to hear that BHT and the planners have taken positive steps to improve their working practices and we heard that BHT has taken four of its services through the proforma planning process. We recognise that BHT is one organisation with its own legal and governance structures in place as opposed to GP practices, who are individual businesses each with their own business plans and who are also operating within Primary Care Networks to provide additional healthcare support within their locality. Decisions regarding primary care estates start with the individual GP practices and we acknowledge that GP practices operate differently, depending on their size, location and in-house expertise/skills. We also recognise that estates planning is not a core business for GP practices.

## Primary Care Estates for Buckinghamshire

From speaking to ICB colleagues, it became apparent that there is no current Primary Care Estates Plan which identifies specific projects for investing in future estates which could then be linked to local housing development. Without this information, planners are unable to justify and secure developer contributions to mitigate against housing development which could then be used to meet the identified local healthcare needs.

We understand that KPMG has been commissioned by the ICB to develop a Primary Care Strategy which will cover the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System. They are in the process of conducting a public consultation designed to inform the new ICB Primary Care Strategy and a wider ICS Infrastructure Strategy, both of which we believe will feature elements relating to primary care estates. We welcome the development of these much-needed strategies, however it remains uncertain whether either will contain sufficient detail relating to primary care estate planning at place level in Buckinghamshire and how the future needs of the county will be identified, designed, funded and delivered. We are concerned that these will be high-level documents which will not address the fundamental issues around developing and delivering a local primary care estates plan which aligns with the local Buckinghamshire plan and the already identified areas of housing growth as outlined above in the VALP and newly identified areas emerging through the Local Plan process.

During the evidence gathering, we heard that the planning cycle for the NHS is far shorter than the planning cycle for the council planners, which looks to 2040 and beyond. This immediately highlighted the challenges around aligning the key elements from both planning processes. However, a starting point should be the already developed local plans which detail where housing growth will be over the next 10 years.

As part of the request for background information for this review, ICB colleagues provided us with a copy of the Fuller report, “Next steps for integrating primary care: Fuller Stocktake report”. This report was commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement and was published in May 2022.

The Fuller report states that a detailed review of the space available in the system, service by service, needs to be undertaken in order to inform the ICS estates infrastructure strategy.

The Fuller report also states that PCNs have been more successful than had hoped in hiring staff in new roles with the latest data as of Q4 2021/22 showing over 18,000 FTEs were in post by the end of March 2022 – significantly ahead of the trajectory towards the 26,000 March 2024 target. The report provides details of integrated neighbourhood “teams of teams” which need to evolve from PCNs and require a shared, system-wide approach to estates, including NHS Trust participation in system estate reviews, with organisations co-locating teams in neighbourhoods and places.

During the evidence gathering, we heard that primary care also includes Pharmacy, Optometry and Dentistry (POD). These services have recently become part of the ICB’s commissioning responsibility. For the purposes of this review, the focus is on future planning around GP provision but we are mindful of the need for the ICB to have wider discussions with other primary care providers to ensure future needs are met across all services.

We would like to have heard more evidence of joint working between those commissioning and delivering primary care and BHT, who are responsible for community services. We are increasingly concerned at the apparent lack of integrated planning across all healthcare providers and with increased financial pressures there is even more need for integrated planning of healthcare services and smarter ways of working.

There is direction from the NHS to create integrated neighbourhood teams and discussions are already taking place around community diagnostic centres, as well as BHT’s ambition for delivering care closer to home through the development of community hubs. Delivery of pilot projects in Marlow and Thame, which have been

discussed by the HASC Select Committee for several years, have extended far longer than originally planned and there is no clear indication that these initial hubs will be developed further or provide a model for further sites and delivery of community-based services in the future. A final decision about the feasibility and scope of the Marlow and Thame community hubs, whether they provide a model that will be rolled out to other sites across Buckinghamshire and an indication of potential locations would be very welcome.

There needs to be a clear vision for integrated primary care in Buckinghamshire which describes the ambition for primary care over a defined timeframe (at least the next 10 to 15 years). From this overall vision, a local delivery plan can be developed which can be aligned to the identified areas of growth in the local plan to ensure funding opportunities are maximized and future local healthcare needs are met. It was clear from our evidence gathering that this lack of a coherent strategy made it incredibly difficult for the Council's planning team to secure developer contributions towards primary care estate. Whilst developer contributions alone cannot fix existing problems within the primary care estate or plug all the gaps in terms of meeting additional health needs arising from new housing developments, a more proactive approach from the ICB and a deliverable Primary Care Estates Plan would provide an evidence base to enable more robust applications to secure funding.

### **Recommendation 1**

**Mindful of the emerging ICB Primary Care Strategy and ICS Infrastructure Strategy, the ICB, in conjunction with the GPPA and BHT, should create a shared vision for Primary Care in Buckinghamshire as a matter of urgency. The vision and process should encompass:**

**Development of an action plan and timeline for the delivery of a draft vision for Buckinghamshire within a year to include but not be limited to:**

- **A comprehensive audit and mapping exercise of current GP and primary care facilities as detailed in the Fuller Report, to include a condition review and SWOT analysis of current GP and primary care facilities**
- **The mapping of this data against future growth identified in the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan**
- **Incorporation of Census 2021 data, Public Health data and additional research to aid the mapping of future growth and need**

## **Funding Primary Care Estates**

### **NHS funding for primary estates**

As mentioned earlier, the ICB does not hold capital to invest in primary care estates, nor is it allowed to do so. The Fuller report states that there are 8,911 premises in England, 22% of which are pre-1948 and 49% of which are owned by GPs, 35% by third party and 14% owned by NHS Property Services. Around 2,000 premises have been identified by GPs as not being fit for purpose.

We heard about the current rent arrangements for GP practices and how NHS England reimburses GP practices for rent and business rates on leased properties. We also heard about the role of the District Valuer Service (DVS) to assess whether the rent/lease terms for any new premises represent value for money, given that the NHS reimburse that rent. The DVS advises the NHS whether the proposed terms of a new or changed lease represent value for money, based on a specific approach to calculate the rental value. The DVS will generally calculate an appropriate rent by multiplying the net internal area of a premises by their opinion of an appropriate rent per square metre (gathered only from other assessments of nearby GP premises) to provide their assessment of a value for money rent. Where developments are proposed to be part-funded by developer contributions (S106 or CIL), the DVS will also calculate an abatement of that rent to reflect those contributions. It is necessary to have this approval from NHS England (or occasionally an agreed departure from it) before a new lease is signed. During the evidence gathering, we heard that there is a significant disconnect between the DVS's rental valuations and the rent that commercial property developers require, given the current economic

environment in which we are working in, as detailed below.

With the uptick in interest rates and increased costs in building materials, developers have seen a reduction in commercial estate values. To compensate for this, developers see an increase in rent as the only way to match the price with the cost of building. The DVS therefore do not find that the proposed rent value represents value for money. This is stopping GP's from acquiring new properties via lease/rent agreement.

As outlined earlier, when looking to develop GP estates in response to housing growth, developer contributions from the housing developments is only a small part of the funding solution. The complexities around securing funding for primary care estates were highlighted through a number of examples which were discussed during the evidence gathering. Specific examples are detailed below and in Appendix 1.

We heard that a GP practice in North Buckinghamshire spent over 7 years trying to deliver a primary care estates project. Significant delays in the process meant that opportunities were lost but ultimately the district valuer's value for money assessment for the rental contributions over a 35-year lease agreement were not considered viable, leading to more project delays whilst possible alternatives are considered. It is fair to say that this appears to be a common theme in the other examples which were discussed, with the District Valuer Value for Money Assessment being the common factor in proposed primary care estate developments not being viable.

We heard examples where NHS England had funded, through its Estates and Technology Transformation Fund (ETTF) and Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) Grant funding infrastructure, projects across the county in Beaconsfield, Berryfields and Chalfont St Peter. We also heard that in Winslow, NHS Property Services have funded another major refurbishment. Chalfont and Winslow were largely expansion of existing premises with Beaconsfield and Berryfields being the development of new sites.

From what we heard, the complexities around the funding and investment opportunities in primary care estates are a barrier to delivering existing primary care estates, let alone being able to plan for future estates. We feel that understanding the current primary care estate is key to understanding what investment is needed to meet the future ambitions around primary care estates and ultimately how it will then be funded.

Section 106 and CIL funding, which we will consider next, is only one part of the solution and it is recognised that it is unlikely to raise the substantial sums needed to adequately finance future primary care estate needs. However, it could play a role in resourcing necessary enabling and feasibility work and needs to be viewed in conjunction with all other funding options when considering primary care estates. A joined-up and integrated approach by key stakeholders will ensure all potential opportunities can be reviewed as a whole and funding opportunities can be maximised to achieve successful outcomes.

What is clear is that a fundamental review of the funding mechanisms available to invest in primary care estates needs to be undertaken nationally. It needs to look at ownership models and a thorough reassessment of the role of the DVS is long overdue, including the assessment model/formula used by the DVS. This will ensure future funding of primary care estates can be delivered in a more commercial, financially viable and joined-up way.

## **Recommendation 2**

**The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, the ICB and the GPPA should write to the Secretary of State for Health to highlight the barriers and inadequacies of the current funding formula and request a fundamental review of the funding mechanisms for Primary Care Estates and the methods of procuring new Estates Developments, including how the District Valuer assesses rental values. A new and improved 'fit for purpose' process needs to be developed that aligns more fully with the developing national ICS landscape and aims.**

## Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy

During the evidence gathering, we received a short presentation on the differences between S106 developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy. These schemes currently operate in very different ways when it comes to funding health infrastructure through developer contributions.

To briefly summarise what we heard, S106 monies are contributions from developers secured by a legal agreement usually accompanying a planning permission, to make developments acceptable which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. We understand that S106 money can only be secured if there is a costed, identified project which can be linked to the specific development. We heard from health colleagues about the challenges in the timescale for accessing the money and the longevity of the available funds (as set out in the agreement). Health providers, like other infrastructure providers for education and highways, are unable to forward fund so they may have to wait for the delivery of a certain number of homes on a development before any monies can be released.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a fixed charge levied on new development to fund infrastructure. CIL is not negotiable (unlike S106 contributions). Up to 5% may be retained by the Council towards the cost of administering CIL. A proportion of CIL (15% rising to 25% where a Neighbourhood Plan is adopted) collected from development is passed to the Town or Parish Council within which the development was situated.

Unlike S106 funding, CIL can be used to fund an infrastructure project which is not specifically linked to the development so it could be used for improved transport links, roads or schools in the wider locality, for example. How CIL money is allocated is a decision for the councils who receive it. We understand that Buckinghamshire Council is currently reviewing whether it should take a county wide approach to CIL.

Historically, Wycombe District Council allocated 20% of its CIL to fund social infrastructure with 5% on healthcare but we heard that CIL is not currently being used to fund any healthcare facilities.

During the evidence gathering, we heard examples of healthcare projects in the Aylesbury Vale area where S106 agreements had been drawn up to include funding for healthcare facilities. Without an agreed Buckinghamshire Primary Care Estates Strategy to refer to, there have been examples where S106 agreements have specified the provision of land parcels or funding for healthcare facilities but delivery of these facilities is no longer part of the ICB and local GPs plans and therefore managing local expectations becomes very challenging.

The HASC Select Committee have been advised of an evolving issue in the settlement of Long Crendon in north Buckinghamshire as part of their duty to review substantial service changes. A new development proposal allocated a specific parcel of land for a healthcare facility as part of the agreed S106 provision in a final site planning permission. However, no one designated contact in either the planning or healthcare teams took ownership of formalising a delivery plan and residents and the parish council only became aware of the land allocation when the Long Crendon GP surgery was designated as 'unfit' and marked for closure due to the age and constraints of the building during the Covid crisis. Patients were informed they would be reallocated to the surgery in the neighbouring settlement of Brill where the CCG planned to bring health professionals together under one roof. The local community rejected this proposal on logistical grounds and on the basis of significant housing growth within the settlement increasing the need for improved services in Long Crendon. They lobbied stakeholders including their MP and the HASC Select Committee and have spent two years trying to bring forward a viable business plan to facilitate the building of a new surgery, dispensing and community service facility with no success due significantly to the obstacles and failings within the current funding process and model of value assessment.

Please see a further case study demonstrating the misalignment of Local Plans and Primary Care in Bourne End and Wooburn in Appendix 1.

We heard that proposals for mitigation schemes that comply with planning policy and are considered affordable and deliverable, are more likely to result in contributions being secured. Mitigation can only be sought where it is necessary, directly related and proportionate to development proposals.

It is important to recognise that developer contributions, whether from S106 agreements or CIL cannot fix existing shortcomings in the primary care estate. They can only be used to mitigate an increased need for healthcare arising from the new development. However, when there is very little funding available to support the expansion of the primary care estate it is incumbent on the ICB, the Council, BHT and the GPPA to try and maximise this potential funding stream. This is why a more strategic approach is vital.

There have been examples in Buckinghamshire where developer contributions have had to be ‘retrofitted’ because the original plans haven’t been deliverable and with a more robust strategy in place this could be avoided. We also acknowledge that there are competing priorities for developer contributions – they can also be used to fund new schools, affordable housing, roads and leisure facilities.

However, as we alluded to earlier, the Council has a role to play as an enabler and a ‘place shaper’ and if health facilities are a priority for residents of Buckinghamshire, then this should be reflected in the effective use of CIL monies. In addition, if primary care can focus more on a preventative agenda and residents can be seen quickly by a GP or other professionals, this could save money down the line across the wider health and care system. This is a fundamental element of the Council’s Live Well, Age Well approach in the Buckinghamshire Joint Local Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022 to 2025.

### **Recommendation 3**

**Buckinghamshire Council should work with the ICB, the GPPA and BHT to identify the co-resourcing of a key role to assist in the creation of a vision for future healthcare planning, as detailed in recommendation 1.**

### **Recommendation 4**

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) guidance for Town and Parish councils should be updated to raise awareness of how they could use their CIL funding allocation to support healthcare initiatives serving their local areas by funding or part funding projects. These could be initiatives or projects brought forward by their GP Practices, Local Members, their Community Board or by local voluntary organisations.**



## Delivering Integrated Primary Care

Earlier in the report, we highlighted the need for a clear vision of what future primary care will look like as well as a recommendation to lobby Government to undertake a wholesale review of how primary care estates are funded, with more focus on providing funding for primary care. We feel that proper investment in primary care will, ultimately, take the pressure off other parts of the health and care system and strengthen the ambition for providing care closer to home and avoiding hospital admissions.

The Fuller report outlines 3 key enablers to help support the delivery of integrated primary care – Data, Workforce and Estates. During the evidence gathering meetings, we examined these areas in more detail to assess the current situation in Buckinghamshire.

### Data

*“Unlocking” the power of data across local authorities and the NHS will provide place-based leaders with the information to put in place new innovative services to tackle the problems facing their communities. A more joined-up approach will bring public health and NHS services much closer together to maximise the chances for health gain at every opportunity. Each ICS will implement a population health platform with care co-ordination functionality that uses joined-up data to support planning, pro-active population health management and precision public health by 2025.*

*Joining up care for people, places and populations,  
The Government’s proposals for health and care integration - published February 2022*

Whilst acknowledging that different data sets (both qualitative and quantitative) exist across the health and care system and data is interpreted in different ways depending on what is being looked at, there is still a fundamental need for accessible, good quality, meaningful data which can be used with confidence as part of key decision-making.

NHS Digital merged with NHS England on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023 and NHS Digital’s responsibilities for designing and operating national data infrastructure and digital systems now resides with NHS England. Aiming to reduce duplication and bring the NHS’ national data and technology expertise together into one organisation, the new configuration is now working to enable closer links between the collection and analysis of data and the delivery of service improvements as a result of that insight. However, during the evidence gathering, we were concerned to hear about gaps in existing data which directly impact on how services are currently delivered and future planning decisions, particularly around demand for services.

We understand that a new ICB Data and Digital Strategy was approved by the ICB Board in May 2023 with an ambitious implementation programme detailed within it. We look forward to seeing what the implications will be for Buckinghamshire and its residents.

### NHS Opt-Out

In terms of health data, we heard about patient record opt-out which, according to the NHS Digital website, the national data opt-out allows a patient to choose if they do not want their confidential patient information to be used for purposes beyond their individual care and treatment - for research and planning.

We heard that a local GP practice has chosen to opt-out all its patient records whilst in other cases, individual patients have chosen to opt out of national data collection. This means that the patient’s record is not available across the health and social care system and will not be included as part of any data sets which could be used to help with planning future demand. There is also another unknown factor which relates to the number of people

who have not registered with a GP. Both of these issues raise concerns about the unknown impact on demand and therefore the associated challenges in planning for the future.

Further clarity is needed from NHS England and the Department of Health to understand whether there will be changes to national legislation to facilitate the anonymised use of data for research and planning processes.

## **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy**

We heard from Public Health colleagues about the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS).

According to the Department of Health paper entitled “Statutory Guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies”, local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) – now the Integrated Care Board - have equal and joint duties to prepare JSNAs and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies, through the health and wellbeing board.

The paper goes on to say that the responsibility falls on the health and wellbeing board as a whole and so success will depend upon all members working together throughout the process. Success will not be achieved if a few members of the board assume ownership, or conversely do not bring their area of expertise and knowledge to the process.

Buckinghamshire Council’s website states that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is a continuous process to assess the current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of the local community to inform local decision making, using a variety of data sources. It also provides information on the population of Buckinghamshire and wider determinants of health. Wider determinants include a range of social, economic, and environmental factors – [JSNA Buckinghamshire Council](#)

From the evidence we heard and having reviewed the JSNA on the website, we have concerns about how the information is presented and identified some gaps. For example, the housing and homelessness section is coming soon.

We heard that the Clinical Commissioning Group (now the ICB) used to have in-house data analysts working on analysing and producing data sets which were used as part of the JSNA. We understand this function was outsourced but the ICB is now looking to bring some expertise back in-house. We welcome this decision as we feel there needs to be renewed effort by all organisations to work together to bring the JSNA up-to-date and to ensure it includes the evidence base as part of the new Local Plan so that it takes account of population changes associated with housing growth. We would like to see ownership and leadership by health colleagues and Public Health to drive forward data improvement.

We reviewed how other authorities have used the information contained within their JSNA to produce meaningful information and particularly liked Oxfordshire’s bitesize population digests showing housing growth by area. Whilst acknowledging the pressure on resources, but also recognising the need to produce robust and good quality data, we feel that Buckinghamshire should produce JSNA bitesize digests showing housing growth by area. An example of these digests can be found on Oxfordshire’s website - [JSNA Bitesize Population Mar23.pdf \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#).

### **Recommendation 5**

**The Health & Wellbeing Board, Director of Public Health and the ICB should benchmark against comparable authorities in order to assess development of the Buckinghamshire JSNA, identify gaps and improvements and improve the Buckinghamshire provision, and specifically explore the development of Buckinghamshire bitesize housing growth digests.**

## Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment

We also heard about the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) which is a comprehensive assessment of the current and future pharmaceutical needs of the local population and considers whether there are any gaps to service delivery in Buckinghamshire. Current national trends see major pharmacy groups including Boots and Lloyds rationalising sites and services with the potential loss of over 200 pharmacies by mid-2023. Live data relating to service provision needs to regularly inform the Buckinghamshire PNA.

Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) have a legal duty to produce, consult and publish a PNA for their area every three years. The latest Buckinghamshire PNA was approved by the HWB in September 2022 and it showed that Buckinghamshire is well served in relation to the number and location of pharmacists. During the evidence gathering, it became apparent that the PNA is not well known or used by other parts of the system and is not an evidence base which is used in the planning process.

### Recommendation 6

**Buckinghamshire Council and the ICB need to work together to update annually the quality and consistency of data which is used to inform service and estates planning, such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment. The JSNA should include the evidence base as a part of the new Local Plan and Public Health should work with Planning colleagues to produce bitesize summaries of housing growth across Buckinghamshire.**

### Recommendation 7

**Public Health, the ICB and the Planning Policy team should review how the data contained within the latest Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment can be used to inform the next Local Plan. This would include looking at examples from other authorities to demonstrate how it has been achieved.**

## Workforce

### GP workforce

Workforce challenges are well evidenced across the whole health and social care sector and the national shortage of GPs is well documented as part of these challenges. As mentioned earlier, one of the aims of creating Primary Care Networks (PCNs) was to enhance access to local primary care services, for example physiotherapists, pharmacists and social prescribers, to allow GPs to concentrate on patients with the most complex needs. Funding for these additional roles sits outside of the GP contract and funding is allocated on an annual basis, making it difficult to plan for the medium and longer term.

As mentioned earlier, the newly created GPPA is the united front for General Practice in Buckinghamshire. Whilst recognising that GPs core business is the provision of healthcare for their patients and estates planning is not part of their core business, we feel that more support needs to be given to GPs to help them with their estates planning and to work with the ICB and the council planners to align existing provision against planned future housing growth so that plans can be developed to meet the local population needs. We understand that there is a vacancy for a GPPA Enabler Lead (Estates) and would like the recruitment to this post to be given priority to ensure this important work can proceed at pace.

### Recommendation 8

**The GPPA Enabler Lead (Estates), once appointed, should be the key link to the ICB Primary Care Estates team and be included in all future discussions around Primary Care Estates in Buckinghamshire. This role should aim to convene a regular programme of estates assessment/future planning meetings of key stakeholders as an early priority, the first of which should take place within 3 months of their appointment.**



## **Integrated Care Board Primary Care Estates**

We heard that the current ICB Primary Care Estates “team” consists of one person who is covering the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICS. We understand that a town planner will soon be joining who will provide much needed additional resource but we remain concerned about the lack of resource within the primary care estates team. This team covers the whole of the BOB ICS area so we are concerned about capacity to deliver across this wide geographical area and secondly, without a clear delivery plan for primary care estates, we feel the team will continue to be working against a very challenging and difficult backdrop.

As referenced earlier, quality of data and consistency of data usage has been highlighted, so we welcome the plans to strengthen data analysts within the ICB. We would like to see closer working between Public Health colleagues and the ICB data analysts.

Increased collaboration between ICB staff and planning colleagues will help to drive this agenda forward whilst also supporting the newly developed ICB Primary Care Strategy and positively impacting the Buckinghamshire Local Plan, which will need to demonstrate that infrastructure, such as healthcare facilities, can be delivered alongside housing growth, as part of its sustainability assessment.

### **Recommendation 9**

**The ICB should formally assess the feasibility of increasing staffing levels in their Primary Care Estates team and consider including Data Analysts, in order to facilitate the development and delivery of a Primary Care Estates Plan at place as well as at the strategic level.**

### **Recommendation 10**

**Buckinghamshire Council should formally assess how key staff members from the Planning and Public Health teams might work collaboratively with the enhanced ICB team, mentioned above, in the short and medium term. This would support the development and delivery of the Primary Care Estates Plan for Buckinghamshire and ensure the sustainability of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan.**

## Estates

As detailed in the Fuller report, estates are much more than buildings and should be the catalyst for integration not a barrier. Creating the right environment needs to start with understanding what is currently available in terms of estates.

### GP practice estates profiles

As mentioned earlier in the report, we feel that there needs to be a renewed effort in understanding the current primary care estates infrastructure. A thorough understanding of the status quo in terms of estates will then provide a 'springboard' or strong foundation to think about future needs and plan how they can be best met in terms of expanding existing GP practices or the creation of brand-new ones.

We understand that a "toolkit" was prepared by an external organisation and sent to Primary Care Networks to complete. We were not supplied with a copy of the toolkit but ICB colleagues expressed concerns about the quality of the results, particularly the deficiency in the data and felt that more work was needed before the information could be used as part of a meaningful discussion about future estates planning. We also heard that a potential shortcoming is that the toolkit is directed at PCNs whereas estate ownership is at individual GP practice level. We are concerned that this exercise has not been undertaken satisfactorily in advance of the development of the ICB Primary Care Strategy.

#### Recommendation 11

**As a matter of urgency, further improvements need to be made to the toolkit to ensure the results can be used to inform future estates planning. The toolkit should be re-directed to individual GP practices for completion. This project needs to be prioritised and a formal progress report of findings be produced within six months and presented to the HASC Select Committee for scrutiny.**

### One Public Estate

During the evidence gathering, we heard about several factors which impact on current GP surgery space. The additional roles created within Primary Care Networks normally require longer patient consulting time than a GP (physiotherapists, for example), thereby creating more pressure on consulting room space. We also heard about the changes to training requirements for new GPs, which also impacts on consulting room space.

Buckinghamshire Council's corporate plan states that - "We are committed to partnership working, focusing on shared priorities, and encouraging collaboration, sharing intelligence, and driving change and tackling key issues in a more coordinated way".

We heard from the Council's property team about the One Public Estate (OPE). We are aware of a successful project which has been delivered in Milton Keynes, where a number of health partners now operate from one location, but we are not aware of any similar projects in Buckinghamshire that have been delivered or are currently in development. We understand the requirement for health partners to develop their estates plan first before opportunities can be identified within OPE.

We feel the Council needs to take a more pro-active approach in relation to its own property portfolio and should initiate discussions with health partners around opportunities for co-locating services. The HASC Select Committee is aware of a number of council property proposals that have been developed recently which could, potentially, have benefitted from a wider discussion with key partners to ensure opportunities were not lost. These have included sites at Tilehouse Lane in Denham and King George V House in Amersham.

We feel that the Council property team needs to work collaboratively with the ICB and work more closely with them to help align their primary care vision using appropriate existing property, whenever and wherever possible. We also recognise that there is increased pressure on public development and delivery funding and there is an increasing need to work with commercial partners to deliver new facilities.

Linked to this, the Council needs to be more ambitious in its approach to financially supporting the ICB. Whilst every effort should be made to influence national policy decisions to simplify and improve NHS estate ownership processes, the Council should actively investigate how they could act as a landlord for the ICB whilst they are unable to invest in property themselves.

Through the Buckinghamshire Executive Partnership there is an opportunity for senior leaders of all relevant stakeholders to work together to prioritise primary care estates planning and bring forward delivery plans for Buckinghamshire in order to ensure better facilities and health outcomes for its residents. Members would like to see the Buckinghamshire Executive Partnership commission a working group to drive this work forward as we have seen little evidence of successful projects being delivered by OPE.

### **Recommendation 12**

**The Buckinghamshire Executive Partnership should commission a working group drawn from the ICB and the Council's estates teams and the GPPA. The group should identify and highlight opportunities within all organisations existing property portfolios which could expediate the delivery of additional health facilities. The working group should report back to the Buckinghamshire Executive Partnership.**



## Conclusion

In bringing this report to its conclusion, the review group would like to reiterate a few overriding key messages which we heard during the evidence gathering meetings.

The current disconnect between planning and delivering future primary care estates and planned housing growth, through the Council's Local Plans, is leading to missed opportunities and real concerns about future proofing primary care estates to meet the needs of a growing population.

Complex models of GP estate ownership exist which create significant challenges when considering future estates planning. Estates planning is not a GPs core business, yet the onus is on individual surgeries to scope and provide a plan to the ICB for consideration of any investment in their future estate.

The role of the ICB is to commission primary care services, yet the ICB is not able to hold any funds to help and support estates delivery. A complicated and, at times, undeliverable funding mechanism exists, and developer contributions represent just one small part of this. Whilst acknowledging financial pressures, we feel strongly that there is not enough estates planning resource within the ICB to deliver across the wide geographical area of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

Additional pressure on primary care estates has been created by the development of additional roles within Primary Care Networks and recent changes to GP training, both of which have led to a requirement for more consulting space.

The District Valuer assessment is complicated, difficult to navigate and not in line with increased commercial property costs, thereby leading to projects not being deemed financially viable by the NHS and thus not being progressed.

The discussions around the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment highlighted the need for more ownership and leadership to drive improvements in data collection and analysis. This would lead to more robust data being used as an evidence base to help inform decision-making.

Without a vision for primary care and the subsequent primary care estates plan there could again be missed opportunities in the emerging Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, which could be used to help support and meet local healthcare needs. Prioritising primary care estates, as a local health and care system, and developing a joined-up approach to delivering care closer to home, will alleviate pressure on acute services and social care and ensure a more balanced approach to delivering healthcare for residents.

## Appendix 1 – Case Study – Bourne End and Wooburn

The Wycombe Local Plan (WLP), adopted in 2019, designated Bourne End and Wooburn as a settlement for up to 800 dwellings in its Spatial Strategy Policy CP3 – settlement strategy to meet its housing need assessment. To achieve the aims of the WLP, two major sites for development: in the Bourne End/Wooburn area were identified,

1. Policy BE1 : Slate Meadow indicative 150 dwellings
2. Policy BE2: Hollands Farm indicative 467 dwellings

Housing development is also taking place on small sites that are not identified in the plan but where housing development is acceptable in accordance with the general policies of the plan. Indeed, Policy CP3 of the local plan identifies Bourne End and Wooburn as a Tier 2 settlement (collectively called Market Towns and Other Major settlements).

Policy BE3 provides general support for proposals put forward by the local clinical commissioning Group or other promoters for a new health care centre that come forward subject to normal planning criteria.

### **POLICY BE3 – HEALTH FACILITIES IN BOURNE END AND WOOBURN**

- 1. Proposals put forward by the local Clinical Commissioning Group or other promoters for a new health centre in Bourne End and Wooburn will be supported subject to transport assessment, parking arrangements and other relevant planning considerations being satisfactory.**

Policy BE3 was informed by commentary that noted the increased demand pressure on primary care provision from planned development through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The WLP noted that the Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group had submitted practice plans to NHS England to develop a new build surgery to house both Hawthornden and Pound House practices (both part of Bourne End and Wooburn Green Medical Centre), including their branch surgeries in a modern, state of the art building with sufficient capacity to absorb expected population growth. It was acknowledged in the supporting text that a new health centre could be facilitated on the housing allocations at Slate Meadow (BE1) or Land at Hollands Farm (BE2) subject to agreement with landowners and consideration given to transport and parking matters. Existing employment sites in Bourne End may also be a suitable location.

Since the adoption of the local plan no formal submissions have been made which fall to be assessed under policy BE3.

The Local Planning Authority has granted planning permission for a housing development at Slate Meadow (Policy BE1), in considering this application no demonstrated justification was provided by the CCG (now ICB) or the local GP practice on health care grounds for mitigation measures whether in respect of health care facilities or financial contributions.

Policy BE2 at Hollands Farm is at outline planning consent stage (three applications). The developers who have promoted these applications have not identified any sites within their applications for health care facilities. The local plan does not require them to do so. Financial contributions towards health care building projects can be secured from such housing developments but subject to evidence being provided from the ICB that meets strict national planning rules. The ICB have submitted a representation for s106 funding to only one of the applications for increased demand amounting to £339,821 based on a formula agreed with the Local Planning



Authority. This ICB representation states that “BOB ICB would allocate resources gained to increase capacity within ARC BUCKS PCN and have identified a project opportunity for expansion of existing practice premises...Our project will be to [mitigate] the demand created by the new population. Additional capacity will be created by developing Bourne End and Wooburn Green Medical Centre (BEWGMC).” However, there is no project to expand develop the BEWGMC agreed with the practice nor is that feasible in the existing premises.

Elsewhere in its submission, the ICB states that it inherited a Primary Care Estates Strategy for 2020 -2025 from Buckinghamshire CCG that considered the areas where there are particular pressures which the CCG should prioritise in terms of Estates Development being Aylesbury (excluding Berryfields), Buckingham, Wycombe Town and Winslow. Clearly, this is inconsistent with the WLP Infrastructure Delivery Plan and policies which recognised additional pressures in Bourne End and Wooburn.

Separately, BEWGMC had been pursuing a plan to develop new state of the art healthcare facilities on a local employment site. This had progressed to an advanced stage but was rejected by the ICB in 2023 based on its priorities stated above, the perceived lack of demand growth and lack of developer contributions. Working independently, BEWGMC had only used housing growth from BE1 and BE2 in its calculations and had no engagement with the local planning authority or developers on potential funding to support the business case.

The actual housing growth for Bourne End and Wooburn will be in excess of 1000 dwellings with windfall from in-fill and substantial office to residential conversions. The employment site has subsequently been lost. Policy BE1 has made no provision for additional healthcare facilities as no demonstrated justification was provided by the CCG (now ICB) or the local GP practice. There is considerable risk that financial provision from the remaining Policy BE2 will be inadequate to deliver the aspirations for wider health care facilities which are supported in principle by Policy BE3.

## Appendix 2 - Glossary of Terms

5YHLS	Five-Year Housing Land Supply
ARRS	Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme
BEP	Buckinghamshire Executive Partnership
BHT	Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust
BOB	Bedfordshire Oxfordshire & Berkshire West
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
DVS	District Valuer Service
ETTF	Estates and Technology Transformation Fund
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GPPA	General Practice Providers Alliance
HASC	Health & Adult Social Care select committee
HEDNA	Housing & Economic Development Needs Assessment
HWB	Health and Wellbeing Boards
ICB	Integrated Care Board
ICP	Integrated Care Partnership
ICS	Integrated Care System
JHWS	Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LMC	Local Medical Committee
LTP	Long-Term Plan
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OPE	One Public Estate
PCN	Primary Care Network
PNA	Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment
POD	Pharmacy Optometry & Dentistry
S106	Funding from developers towards the cost of community and social infrastructure
STP	Sustainability and Transformation Plan
VALP	Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description &amp; Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Contributors</b>
18 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	NPPF Update	To update the committee on changes made to the National Planning Policy Framework	Eric Owens/Darran Eggleton	Peter Strachan
	Planning Committee performance	Numbers of applications, type of applications, over-turns, appeals and cost awards	Christine Urry	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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