



Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee Agenda

Date: Thursday 22 June 2023

Time: 10.00 am

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

Membership:

B Chapple OBE (Chairman), R Carington, P Brazier, M Caffrey, M Collins, C Cornell, E Culverhouse, E Gemmell, S Guy, N Naylor, A Poland-Goodyer, M Rand, L Sullivan, D Watson and A Wood

Webcasting notice

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the council's website. At the start of the meeting the chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the council is a data controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the council's published policy.

Therefore, by entering the meeting room you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should ask the committee clerk, who will advise where to sit.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the monitoring officer at monitoringofficer@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Agenda Item	Time	Page No
1 Appointment of Vice-Chairman		
2 Apologies for Absence & Changes to Membership		
3 Declarations of Interest		

Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams review which was presented to Cabinet on 15 November 2022.

Contributors:

Councillor Robert Carington, Working Group Chairman

Chris Ward, Senior Scrutiny Officer

- | | | | |
|----------|---|--------------|----------------|
| 9 | Work Programme | 11:30 | 53 - 54 |
| | For the Select Committee to consider and agree the draft work programme for the year ahead. | | |

Contributors:

All Members

Chris Ward, Senior Scrutiny Officer

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 10 | Date of Next Meeting |
| | 14 September 2023 at 10am. |

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: Chris Ward democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
01296 585807

This page is intentionally left blank



Agenda Item 4
Buckinghamshire Council
**Transport, Environment &
Climate Change Select Committee**

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 30 MARCH 2023 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 1.00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

B Chapple OBE, R Carington, P Brazier, M Caffrey, C Cornell, E Gemmell, M Rand, G Smith, D Watson, W Whyte and A Wood

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

S Broadbent, D King, P Martin, R Newcombe, R Stuchbury, G Williams, S Bambrick, R Barker, R Black, S Browning, B Coakley, K Goad, C Ward and C Williams

Agenda Item

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors M Collins, E Culverhouse, S Guy, A Poland-Goodyer and L Sullivan. Councillor S Guy had been substituted for Councillor G Smith.

Apologies had also been received from Daniel Clancy (EA), Gary Moreira (HS2), Ian Thompson and Dr Laura Leech (Buckinghamshire Council).

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record.

Councillor S Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport, provided an update to the Committee on Public Transport. Since the last meeting, a trial would commence from 1 April – 1 August 2023 whereby concessionary travel fares would now be applicable before 9am.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

One public question was considered at the meeting as attached to the agenda and a verbal response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment. The question and answer are appended to the minutes.

5 HS2

The Chairman welcomed representatives from HS2 Ltd and Matthew Wales from the Environment Agency to the meeting and invited the Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor S Broadbent, and the Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor P Martin to introduce the officer report. The HS2 project continued to have a significant impact in Buckinghamshire and the Council worked to mitigate the project's impact by holding HS2 Ltd to account on its activities. In the last 12 months, there had been a significant increase in works as the project entered the first of its envisaged three-year peak. The Cabinet Member highlighted the project's effect on the Highways asset, notably through diversionary routes and HGV movements which had caused deterioration of roads. The Council had been able to access an annual HS2 pothole fund of £93,000 however it was felt this value was insufficient. Additionally, the Council was required to bid for extra funds for road repairs which had been a protracted process; one example being King's Lane which was unresolved one-year after the Council's bid. Nonetheless, dialogue had improved recently which the Cabinet Member welcomed.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the importance of preventative works to ensure that roads did not deteriorate so that road closures caused by safety concerns could be avoided; a recent example was the five-week closure of Station Road, Quainton, around Christmas 2022. The Cabinet Member was optimistic through his upcoming attendance at a roundtable discussion with Ministers and the Department for Transport in Parliament on 24 April and would continue to reiterate the project's impacts on Buckinghamshire residents and businesses.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the importance of collaborative and open working on issues such as flooding which required information from HS2 e.g. works to woodlands and hedgerows and flooding impacts. It was acknowledged that positive steps had been taken to reduce HGV movements through the use of rail access and the A413 conveyor which was welcomed.

The Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor P Martin, underpinned the importance of collaborative working and planning applications. The Council found it challenging to make timely decisions on planning applications due to a lack of supporting information. Monthly meetings on forthcoming applications had been helpful however these were now three-monthly. The last planning application was received on 6 January and Deputy Cabinet Member was concerned that the planning service would receive an influx of applications for urgent decisions.

The Chairman invited David Emms, Aaron Heer and Alasdair Hassan to give their presentation to the Committee. Prior to the presentation, David Emms acknowledged the importance of the A413 to Buckinghamshire residents and that whilst there was collaborative working with the Council, elements of it could be improved. The following points were noted during HS2 Ltd's presentation:

- Align was responsible for the Colne Valley Viaduct and the Western Valley Slopes, HS2's Chiltern Tunnel, five shafts along the route of the tunnel and the north portal of the tunnel (located near Great Missenden). EKFB was responsible for HS2 between Great Missenden and Turweston which included key design features such as Wendover Green Tunnel and Small Dean/Wendover Dean viaducts, interfacing with EWR and the Stoke Mandeville Relief Road.
- All shafts had been excavated to their full depth with earthworks and concreting completed. The Little Missenden shaft was currently being waterproofed. At Amersham, Schedule 17 was now in place for the headhouse which would feature a flint wall.
- The 10km-deep tunnel boring machines had now passed Amersham. Access for materials in and out was through the portal located inside the M25.

- A 600m section of the Colne Valley viaduct had now been completed which passed over the A412. This had involved two months of night closures which had been well coordinated with the Local Authority.
- Around 70km of internal site access roads had been completed in Buckinghamshire and utility diversions were underway.
- The cumulative effect of the HS2 and EWR projects on communities was recognised. HS2 Ltd had developed tools to help communicate following feedback from community engagement activities. Examples included detailed lorry movement figures, video route mapping with annotations, road closures and diversions, and the mobile visitor centre.
- The primary remit of the Traffic Team was to facilitate construction with the least possible impact to the Highways network. Under Schedule 4 Part 2 Consents, which referred to temporary Highway interference, there were currently 206 live and planned consents on the county's network with only around 50% impacting the roads.
- The Traffic Liaison Group (TLG) met monthly with Council officers, emergency services and neighbouring Local Authorities. Teams were embedded to engage with community groups and forums regularly.
- EWR shared their programme of works with HS2 weekly which HS2 imported into their mapping system for clash detection and forward planning.
- The Road Safety Fund had allocated Buckinghamshire £3.95m which would be allocated by tranches up to 2026; 17 road safety schemes had been approved for delivery since the first tranche launched in 2021.
- The pothole fund of around £98,000 was designed to be quick access for the Council to drawdown funds for repairs related to HS2 construction traffic. Under a Highway Damage Claim the Council could apply for contributions towards specific maintenance treatment due to HGV traffic which was assessed in-part by the vehicle management system that analysed traffic data. Examples of contribution to schemes included 31% contribution for the reconstruction of A40/A412 junction in Denham and 100% of £280,000 resurfacing scheme of Quainton Road. Other schemes included Moorfield Road (circa £180,000 from Align) and Station Road (circa £160,000 from EKFB).
- Fortnightly meetings with Council officers took place to specifically consider damage to Highways. A pilot scheme was under discussion to consider preventative maintenance, which would be a first for the project, following instances of road failures.
- HS2 monitored its baseline traffic count along the A41 and A413, noting that it was a small percentage of total traffic.
- The Quainton Railhead gave the ability to deliver 3m tonnes of aggregate into site by rail which would have been equivalent to 300,000 HGV movements up to 2025. In the past two years, over 800 trains delivered 1.4m tonnes of which prevented an estimated 13,100 tonnes of CO₂ in Buckinghamshire.
- The Engineering and Environment Team held designers and contractors to account on the quality of submitted designs towards the project's sustainability vision.
- HS2 had a Net Zero Carbon Plan which aimed to be net zero carbon by 2035 and carbon-free construction by 2029. In 2022, the project had:
 - Achieved Carbon Literacy Project silver accreditation
 - Adopted science-based targets
 - Had the first diesel-free HS2 construction site (19 across the project)
 - Integrated carbon performance into supplier relationship management scorecards
- EKFB's carbon footprint was estimated to be 2,216,111 tCO₂e which was a 23% decrease compared to the baseline. Key carbon hotspots included materials (42%), construction activities (23%) and transport (22%).
- Designs of tunnels and pre-cast segments had been optimised to reduce the volume of materials required. Action towards carbon reduction on sites included use of renewable

- energy, switching from diesel to HVO biofuel and railhead transport.
- Calcareous grasslands were planned on the south portal construction site in future with the planting of 65,000 trees and around 3.5km of hedgerows. It was estimated this would provide a localised biodiversity net gain and carbon sequestration of 52,000 tonnes of CO₂.
 - Across Phase 1, 845,000 trees had been planted and 15ha of ancient woodland had been translocated. Grassland translocation had been carried out at Grendon and Doddershall Meadows Local Wildlife site.
 - 32 wildlife sites had been created in Buckinghamshire and 66 new ponds were planned in the county. A Sheephouse Wood Bat structure was being introduced near Calvert to protect the Bechstein bat and flight lines around Bernwood Forest. Construction had also commenced on multiple green overbridges.
 - The majority of tree removals had taken place in Buckinghamshire. Enabling Works Contractors had planted 230,000 trees in mitigation sites, Align would plant 85,000 trees and plants and EKFB planned to plant 2.25m trees and plants.
 - The HS2 Woodland Fund had provided grant funding to help landowners restore Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and create new native woodland.
 - Flood risk received early consideration through specialist input at all stages of design development. HS2 continued engaging with the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authorities for consents.

Following the presentation, Mathew Wales, Environment Agency, outlined his team's role in relation to HS2 consents and compliance in Phase 1 (Schedule 33). Flood risks were considered along main rivers water courses, groundwater impacts and water quality. Meetings took place with the Council monthly to ensure collaborative working and ensure no cross-over on responsibilities.

The following points were noted during the Committee's discussion:

- One non-Committee Member attended to question HS2 regarding the impact of the construction of the Wendover Green Tunnel and associated works on the Chiltern aquifer. There were a number of concerns in the Wendover area on consequential impacts such as increased water flow in Stoke Brook, drying up of Hampden Pond and decreased water flow to the Weston Turville Reservoir and the Wendover arm of the Grand Union Canal. In response, HS2 advised that:
 - Planning applications had been made under Section 17 and further approvals were necessary under Schedule 33 of the HS2 Act to address impacts on waterbodies. Groundwater around Wendover and its flow towards Aylesbury was complex and the EA had been engaged in an updated groundwater model of the green tunnel and the north cutting in the Special Scientific Interest (SSI) area.
 - The EA had been consulted during the development of a water framework directive assessment and was now being reviewed by the EA. The assessment found that flow to Stoke Brook would be minimal and would be mitigated through SuDS, and that the flow impact to the Wendover arm would also be minimal.
 - Hampden Pond had been investigated three years ago by HS2 with the Parish Council and found there was little impact caused by the works as the pond was fed by a spring from groundwater.
 - Monitoring would ensure that the assessment was adhered to which was part of the EA's role. Subject to EA's consent, excavations were planned this year and HS2 were confident in the model.
 - An engagement plan was developed around stakeholders interested in

groundwater around Wendover, including residents, Members and community groups, who would be informed as works progressed. Stakeholders would also be updated on groundwater monitoring.

- A more detail answer would be circulated and appended to the minutes.

Action: Simon Matthews - EKFB

- Numerous Members had experienced the increase in HGV movements on Buckinghamshire Highways and noted instances of poor driver behaviour (e.g. extended engine idling in laybys, ignoring compound access turn instructions, not following correct routes or displaying HS2 signage in the cabin when on non-HS2 business). HS2 outlined its expectations of driver behaviour and being a 'good neighbour' and worked closely with Tier 1 and 2 contractors to ensure compliance. Cascading the expectations to Tier 3, 4 and 5 contractors had taken longer and there had been instances of drivers and contractors being removed from the project based on their behaviour. All instances of poor driver behaviour, including engine idling and parking in laybys, should be reported to the [HS2 helpdesk](#) for further investigation.
- Members noted the intentions outlined by the senior leadership team on contractor and driver behaviour but felt there may be a disconnect between this intention and the day-to-day reality in and around site compounds. HS2 felt this had improved and did inspect compounds for compliance but appreciated there was more to be done.
- A number of Members felt that the £98,000 pothole fund was not enough, with one Member noting his ward alone had a pothole top-up amount of £60,000. Additionally, the pothole fund should be re-adjusted to account for inflation and increased cost of materials given its value was set 1.5-2 years ago. Members also noted a disparity of figures reported on the pothole fund (£93,000 vs £98,000) and suggested this be clarified between the Council and HS2 as soon as possible. HS2 acknowledged that while the fund may seem small, it was designed for swift interventions caused by HGV traffic and that a separate process was in place to access more extensive funds for resurfacing.
- Members commented that it would have been beneficial to receive a copy of the presentation in advance due to the amount of information it contained. This would be taken into account for next year's meeting.
- Extensive repairs to the A41 heading into the county near Westcott had been required. One Member attributed this to the loaded HS2 HGVs as the opposite carriageway had not needed repairs. The A41 may be suitable for the proposed preventive pilot and the independent HS2 road network had helped alleviate pressure.
- Figures on tree survival and re-planting would be investigated. The dry summers had caused some dieback and re-planting activity in the spring, and HS2 reiterated their commitment to returning the environment post-construction.

Action: Alasdair Hassan - HS2

- An updated figure on trees removed since last year would be circulated to the Committee.

Action: Simon Matthews - EKFB

- Of the trees left to be removed, opportunities would be considered in their relocation rather than felling however a commitment could not be provided on this.
- There was an example of four road closure permits on Quanton Road that had all subsequently been cancelled and Members reiterated the importance of traffic management to residents. HS2 had been disappointed in these cancellations and explained this had been caused by non-contestable utility works by the Statutory Undertaker. The Chairman suggested HS2 advise local Members on road closures and cancellations so that accurate information could be circulated to local communities. Another Member suggested HS2 expand their communication of road closures to neighbouring wards and parishes. Communication beyond the line of routes was raised at the Communities & Localism Select Committee in January 2023, and one of the actions

was to work with the Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport to improve this.

- HS2 had a significant network of temporary drainage and water management systems on site which can be seen in aerial footage: <https://vimeo.com/747836661/7836b9194d> Further information specific to the River Great Ouse catchment would be provided outside the meeting.

Action: Simon Matthews - EKFB

- The Calvert Infrastructure Maintenance Depot (IMD) Schedule 17 had been submitted last year and was under discussion with the Council's Planning service. One Member requested a more detailed update on the Calvert IMD.

Action: Simon Matthews - EKFB

- The Council decided on allocation of the £4m road safety fund through submissions to HS2 for review; it was noted that all submissions to date had been approved. HS2 would investigate and advise on funds spent on their site access roads but did note this was an investment to alleviate pressure on Council highways.

Action: Aaron Heer – HS2

- Spoil from the tunnel was designed to be deposited around the north portal valley slopes to achieve biodiversity gain. Material re-use was planned in situ across the length of the route via cutting arisings, forming embankments and earth bunding. One of the current challenges was ensuring material was moved once only. Additionally, discussions were ongoing on the use of some materials from HS2 being utilised by Council contractors during construction of the South East Aylesbury Link Road.
- EWR attended the monthly TLG meetings which included information on forthcoming works and forward plans.
- A number of examples were given on use of the HS2 Woodland Fund to support ancient woodland sites and combined sites.
- Recent announcements about re-phasing of works meant HS2 needed to look at delivering the project with its budget however the impact within Buckinghamshire was expected to be minimal.
- In response to safety concerns raised by the Chiltern Society, HS2 advised that the Chiltern Tunnel would have two bores with cross-passages every 500m as well as intervention shafts along the length of the route. The use of a third bore was for tunnels without surface access (e.g. under mountains or seas).

The Chairman reiterated the great concern and interest that all Members and residents have in the HS2 project and its impact in Buckinghamshire, and hoped that the issues raised would be noted by HS2 Ltd. As this was the principal Select Committee where HS2 attended annually, consideration would be given to the March 2024 meeting being a single item on the project. The Chairman thanked all representatives from HS2 for attending and advised that a follow-up letter would be drafted in due course.

6 NEW HIGHWAYS MODEL

The Cabinet Member for Transport introduced the report and highlighted a number of key points:

- There were a number of organisations involved in the new model which allowed the Council greater control of programmes. Residents should see the benefits of improved works and service response as the alliance format intended to work together to deliver 'right first time'. The Cabinet Member was confident that the service was ready to be launched.
- A schedule of rates also ensured value for money for residents.
- Project Teams and Project Boards had overseen the transition to the new arrangements.

Leaders from the main contractors had been involved in the Board.

- Performance levels were graded which included Acceptable and Desirable. Funds would be withheld for non-acceptable performance until a fix reached the required standard.
- Parish and Town Councils were being engaged on the upcoming arrangements.
- The Atkins Design Team would ensure the new programme would be delivered from the model's commencement on 1 April.
- Work was underway to shift the staff culture.
- An informal review of the contract would take place after three months. Cabinet would receive an update report after 6 and 12 months which the TECC Committee may also want to consider.

The following points were noted during the Committee's discussion:

- A number of Members commended the new arrangement and the communication to Councillors during the contract's progression. Members recommended that should any performance issues be identified, all Councillors be advised so that resident queries could be answered.
- The Local Area Technicians (LAT) were vital in identifying local needs and ensuring a service response particularly during post-winter pressures. Members would receive an updated list of LATs.
- Balfour Beatty offered local social value by attending local job fairs and offering apprenticeship schemes.
- Works scheduled to be carried out by Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB) that had not been completed would not be paid for. Instead, these works would be identified and carried out under the new model e.g. painting white lines in Market Hill, Buckingham. It was hoped that most of the outstanding works would be completed within six months.
- Communications would be improved to ensure accuracy e.g. temporary repairs would be identified as such on Fix My Street rather than being marked 'completed'.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for the report.

7 AIR QUALITY MONITORING IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The Chairman invited the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment, Councillor G Williams to introduce the report. The Cabinet Member noted the following points:-

- Local Authorities had a legal obligation to review and assess air quality. All the nine AQMA sites in Buckinghamshire were currently reporting below the annual mean nitrogen dioxide national objective of 40 µg/m³.
- Introducing further AQMAs required engagement with DEFRA and air quality improvement action.
- Around 40% of poor air quality in Buckinghamshire was due to vehicles so the Council focused activities in this area e.g. promoting electric vehicles (EVs) and Euro 6 engine upgrades.

The following was noted during the Committee's discussion:-

- One non-Committee Member attended to query the lack of air quality monitoring in Buckingham West particularly given the amount of current and upcoming developments along the A421. The Cabinet Member advised that DEFRA provides guidance on AQMA monitoring and parameters and that assessments were undertaken on a risk basis as to where pollution levels are expected to be at their highest. Consideration had been given

previously to installing a monitoring point along the A421 at Buckingham however after assessment the A421 did not meet concern criteria as it was a relatively open space with extensive vegetation. By comparison, Buckingham town centre had been monitored, due to airflow being more constricted by narrow streets with high walls, and found no exceedances of air quality standards. Each Community Board would soon receive DEFRA-funded monitoring equipment which could be utilised to monitor specific areas.

- Members noted the reduction of pollutants over time, particularly during the Covid lockdowns.
- One Member was concerned by East West Rail's planned use of diesel rolling stock which would impact air quality. Consideration would be given on whether air quality data in the line's vicinity could be monitored.
- Members considered the benefit EV expansion would have on Buckinghamshire's air quality. One Member noted that Char.gy was seeking to install fast EV chargers in Hazlemere, whilst another Member noted that Gerrards Cross wanted to expand its public EV infrastructure. The Cabinet Member advised that Hannah Joyce, Head of Transport Strategy & Funding, was leading a working group on EVs which was considering EV expansion (e.g. EV car-pooling and appropriate charger type and location). Challenges included Distribution Network Operator (DNO) costs.
- On-road EV charging solutions were still in development with one gully trial to commence in Wendover. The process for using lamp posts and bollards for EV charging would be investigated and circulated to the Committee.

Action: C Ward

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for the report.

8 SCOPING DOCUMENT FOR RAPID REVIEW - STREETWORKS AND STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The Committee received a scoping document to carry out a rapid review on streetworks and statutory undertakers. It was felt that this was topic was of great interest to the public due to works being carried out on the Highway asset.

The Chairman advised that he would lead the review group and asked Members to write to him if they were interested in being on the group.

RESOLVED –

That the rapid review scope document be agreed.

9 WORK PROGRAMME

A work programme for the next municipal year would be drafted in due course. Members were asked to advise the Chairman and scrutiny officer of items they wish to be considered for the future work programme.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date was to be confirmed.



Buckinghamshire Council

Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 MAY 2023 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 5.50 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 6.00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

B Chapple OBE, R Carington, P Brazier, M Caffrey, M Collins, C Cornell, E Culverhouse, E Gemmell, S Guy, N Naylor, A Poland-Goodyer, M Rand, L Sullivan, D Watson and A Wood

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

P Birchley

Agenda Item

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN RESOLVED –

That Councillor B Chapple OBE be elected Chairman of the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee for the ensuing year.

This page is intentionally left blank

Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee – 22 June 2023

Agenda Item 5 – Public Questions

1. Given that street trees have been proven to:
 - Have a dramatic cooling effect in high temperatures;
 - Reduce surface water run-off even when not in leaf;
 - Remove pollutants from the air;
 - Boost biodiversity;

And their presence has even been shown to:

- Reduce prescriptions for anti-depressants;
- Reduce crime levels;
- Reduce speeding;

Will the council build on the excellent work done so far in its tree planting programme with a specific programme to plant street trees in our towns and villages, with a measurable target in terms of numbers planted and/or coverage?

- Alan Thawley

2. Connectivity of habitats is important for increasing diversity and ensuring the long-term viability of the flora and fauna they support. For Buckinghamshire Council to take the leadership role that it should we need a comprehensive map showing:
 - Firstly, where all the Council's present and proposed tree planting sites are;
 - Secondly all the planting by other land holders;
 - Thirdly identifying gaps in wildlife corridors where particularly on low grade farmland natural regeneration could be encouraged which is very effective environmentally and in terms of cost.

Anecdotally I was unable to locate the Bury Farm site until seeing the map in today's update showed it was in fact an extension to Roger's Wood, not an area of planting I had seen 5km to the west alongside the A404. Will Buckinghamshire Council be implementing such a map so we can all understand and be involved in this important work which is being done for all of our futures?

- Andrew Douglas

3. It is good to see that Buckinghamshire Council have responded to declining tree cover in the county by road-side and larger scale tree planting. In the Princes Risborough – Thame area new planting can be found in town and on the A412 verge east of Kinsey.

As everyone is aware, we have recently had a period of high temperatures and low rain fall and there is no forecast at present for significant rain. In line with good tree planting practices, Buckinghamshire Council have included mulching and a watering system for each tree planted to help the tree cope with dry conditions. Sadly however, the trees on the Kingsey Rd are showing die back. On examination it appears that the mulch is of ineffective depth and the watering systems dry.

To thrive new planting requires mulch to a depth of 75mm and regular watering in dry periods. Can the Council confirm that it will be carrying out remedial mulching and watering immediately to all newly planted trees, including those on the Kingsey Rd, ensuring that all new trees in the County will thrive, grow, and be of benefit to people and the environment?

- Frances Wrigley



Tree Planting Update

22/06/2023

Transport, Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Gareth Williams



Contents

1. The Bucks Tree Mission
2. Tree Planting in the Community
3. Council Land Tree Planting – Update
4. Green Spaces, Parks & Highways
5. Natural Capital
6. Funding Received to Date
7. Conclusion

1. The Bucks Tree Mission

In 2021 Buckinghamshire Council passed a motion to plant 543,000 trees, one for every resident, within a decade.

[Large-scale planting in Buckinghamshire | Buckinghamshire Council](#)



Page 19

The Bucks Tree Mission: A local response to a global issue

1.2 The Right Tree in the Right Place

The England Trees Action Plan (2021-24) sets out a target of **30,000ha woodland** being planted per annum. [England Trees Action Plan 2021 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101212/England_Trees_Action_Plan_2021_to_2024_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

The Council takes great care when creating new woodland to select appropriate tree species for planting.

Some of the many considerations are listed below:

Page 20

1. Soil type and suitability
2. Proximity of natural water features
3. Biodiversity and ecology of the area proposed for planting (e.g. chalk grassland?; local tree species)
4. Landscape
5. Historic environment (e.g. statutory designations)
6. Presence of utility services
7. Climate (e.g. rainfall, wind)
8. Protection against weeds and pests (e.g. mulch mats, and rabbit netting)
9. Stakeholder access
10. Maintenance, security, and safety
11. Property ownership, rights and covenants
12. Biosecurity
13. Purpose (e.g. for fruit; roadside tree)
14. Conformance (e.g. UK Forestry Standard)
15. Cost

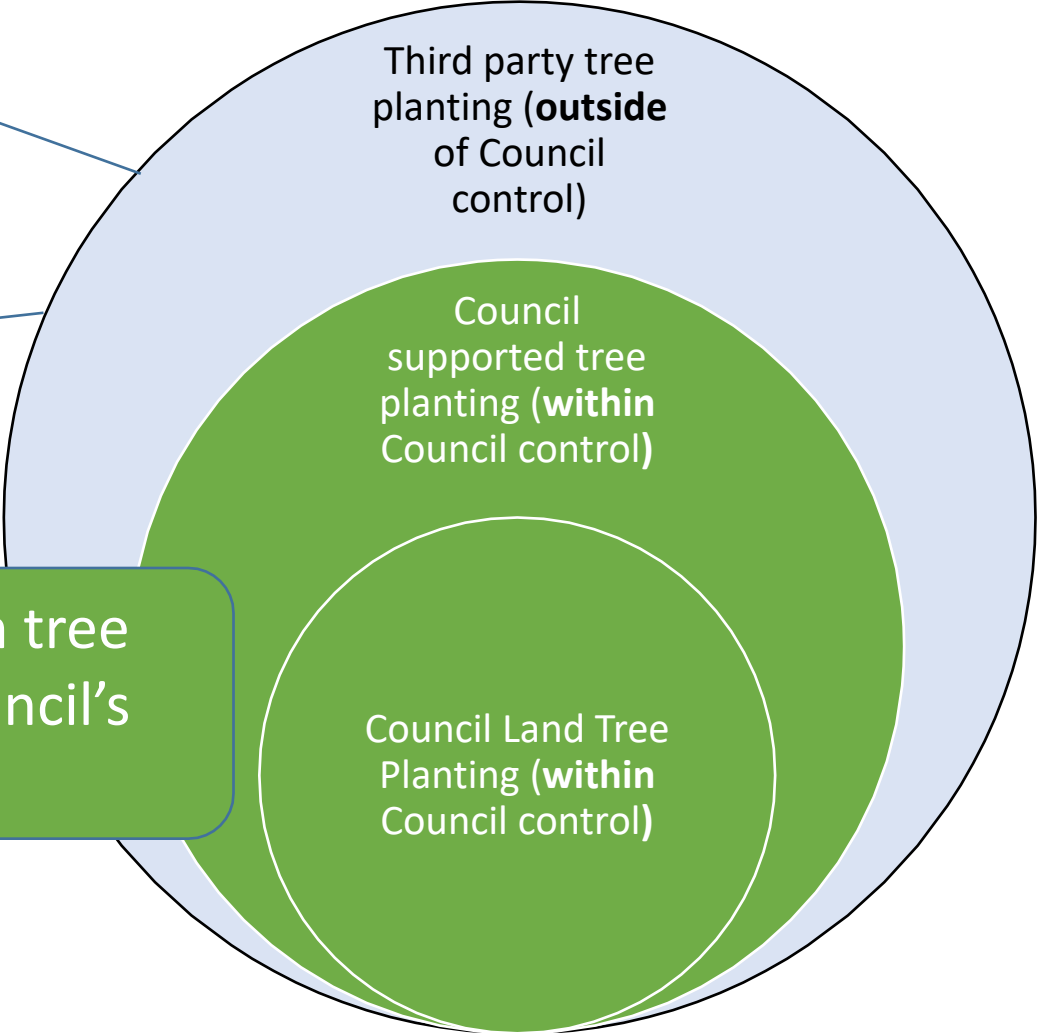
1.3 Tree Planting Update

HS2 contractors have planted 230,000 trees to date

Trees on housing development

Page 21

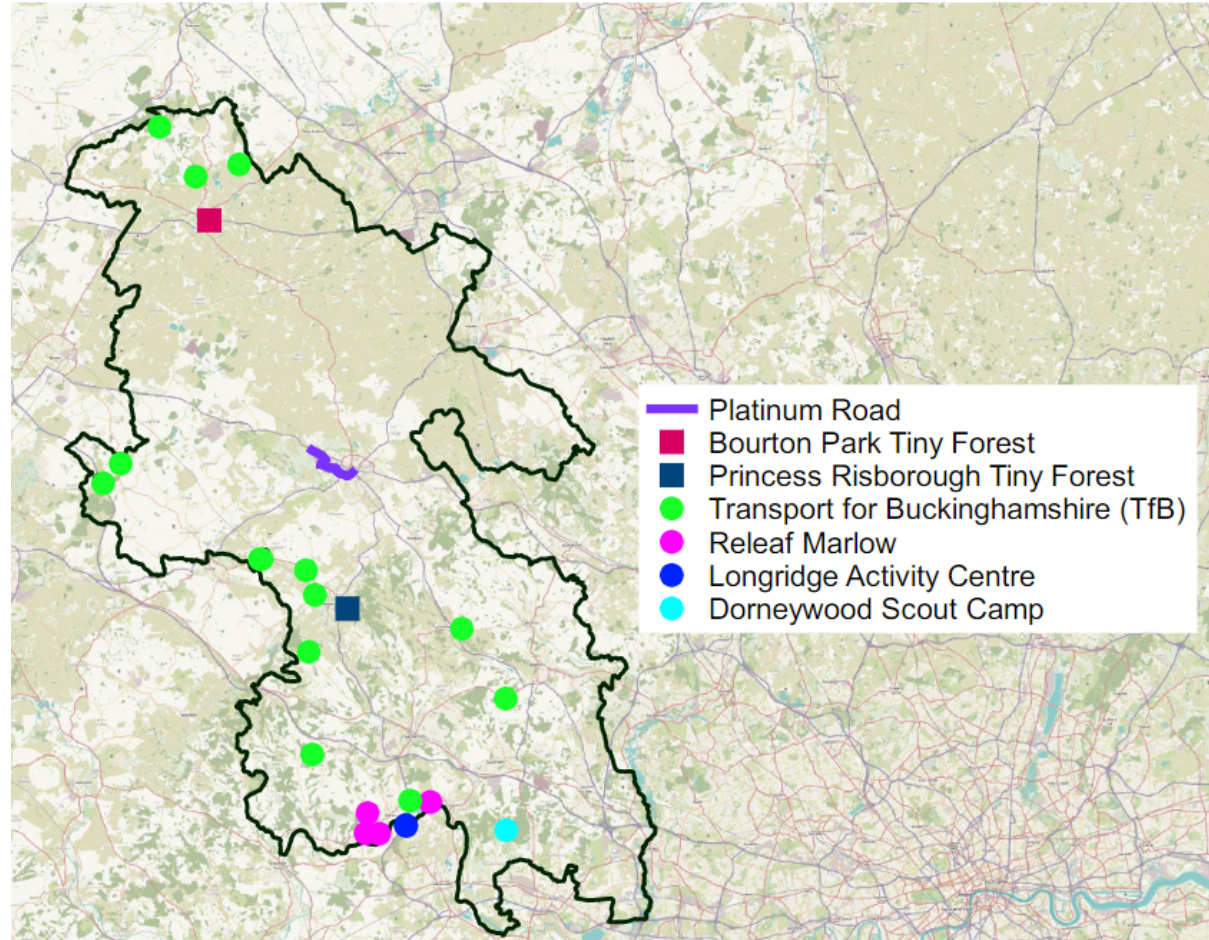
This update focusses on tree planting **within** the Council's control



2. Tree Planting in the Community

Community Tree Planting 2022-2023

We have supported community based tree planting across Buckinghamshire over the last 12 months



2.1 LATF Round 2: Dorneywood Scout Camp



Page 23

We have successfully applied to the LATF for the **second** year in a row

Buckinghamshire Council secured £184k from the 2022/23 **Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) Round 2.**

One example project was:

- Dorneywood Scout Camp were awarded just over £1,600
- 686 whips and 22 feathers were planted
- Volunteers contributed 125 volunteer hours to plant the trees



2.1 LATF Round 2: Releaf Marlow

Releaf Marlow planted 62 whips, 39 feathers and 14 standards across four locations including:

- Two planting sites on farmland near Marlow
- Spade Oak Nature Reserve, Little Marlow
- Harleyford Golf Course, Marlow

“LATF funded ... planting in several countryside locations close to Marlow in winter 22/23. Buckinghamshire Council hugely assisted each year by coordinating our bid alongside those from other local groups in the county” **Nick Rowcliffe, Releaf Marlow**

2.1 LATF Round 2: Miyawaki “Tiny” Forests

Developed in the 1970’s by Dr Akira Miyawaki:

- Planting a small, dense woodland using fast growing native species
- 600 trees on a tennis court sized plot
- Encourages accelerated forest development and **bio-diversity**
- An accessible and rich green space for people to **connect with nature**
- Developed by Earthwatch LLP in the UK
- Follow up with the community/school to gather evidence and monitor the forest development
- Pictures (right) taken over 8 months

Page 25



2.1 Miyawaki “Tiny” Forests: Princes Risborough School

- 600 trees planted at PRS
- 150 students aged 4 to 16 involved
- Attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire
- Part of the Queen’s Green Canopy
- The first biodiversity survey was conducted in May (see right)

Page 26



PRS
@PrincesRisbSch

Today, Miss Walters and the Geography Eco Ambassadors carried out the first biodiversity survey on the PRS [#TinyForest](#). Our tiny trees are flourishing on the top field! @earthwatcheurope



2.1 Miyawaki “Tiny” Forests: Bourton Park, Buckingham

A new Tiny Forest with 600 trees was planted at Bourton Park, supported by:

- Buckingham Parish Council
- Earthwatch
- 65 Volunteers from the local community
- Part of the Queen’s Green Canopy



2.2 Platinum Park Way

The Council worked with **Chiltern Rangers** to organise two weeks of volunteering

- 4,000 trees and shrubs were planted along **Platinum Park Way**
- Organised in partnership with **Chiltern Ranges**
- The Platinum Way was completed in May [Platinum Way Opening](#)

Page 28



Council officers planting alongside Cllr Jilly Jordan and Rob Butler MP

2.3 HS21K Tree Giveaway Day

Buckinghamshire Council & Chiltern Rangers arranged a tree giveaway day.

1,000 trees, gifted by HS2 Ltd, were given away to over 30 groups including:

- Parish Councils
- Lindengate Charity
- Hogshaw Farm



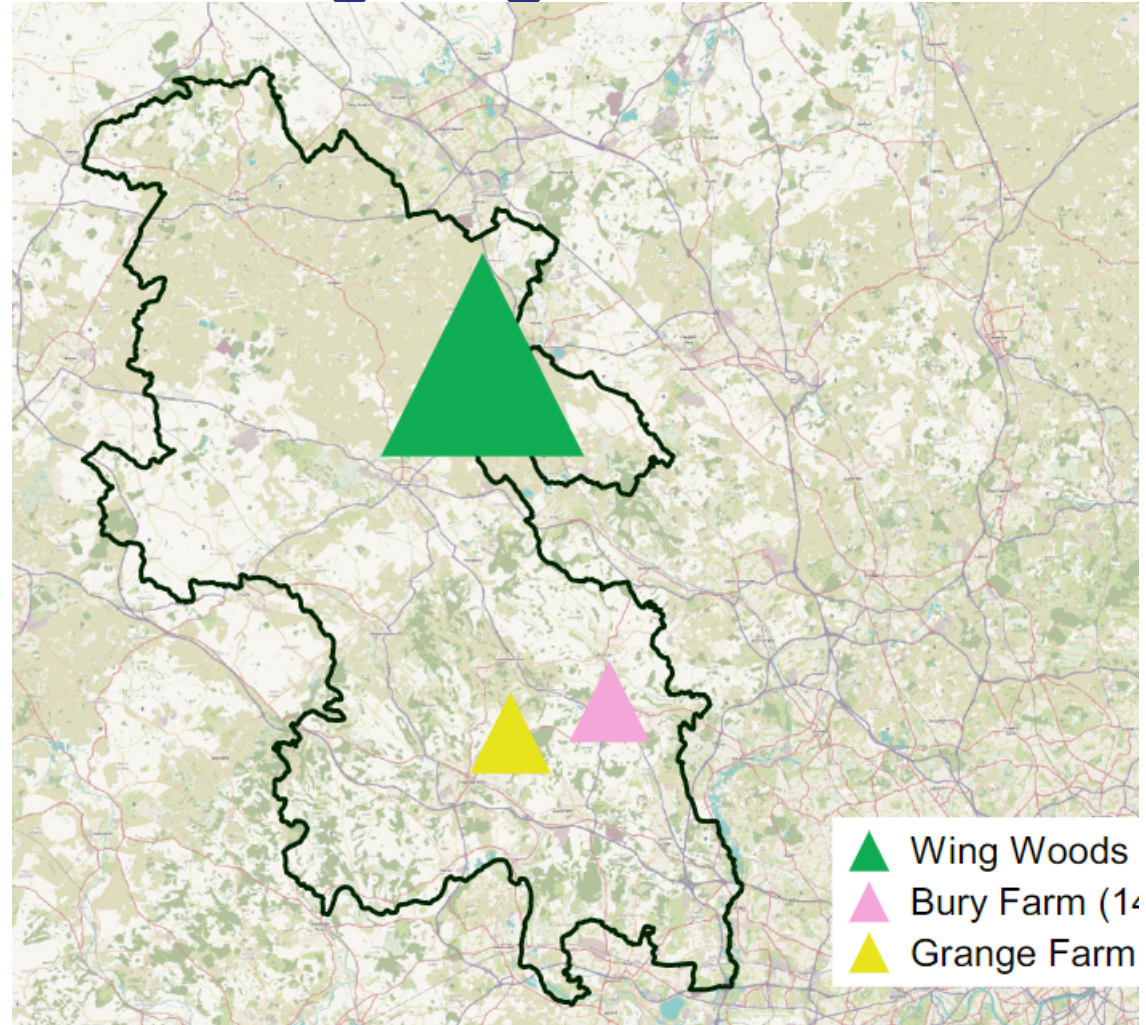
Cllr Gareth Williams, Cllr Nabeela Rana and Council officers

3 Council Land Tree Planting Programme

The Council have continued to progress our tree planting programme across our estate.

Page 30

The last 12 months have been a bumper year with over **145,000 trees planted across Bucks.**



3.1 Bury Farm, Amersham

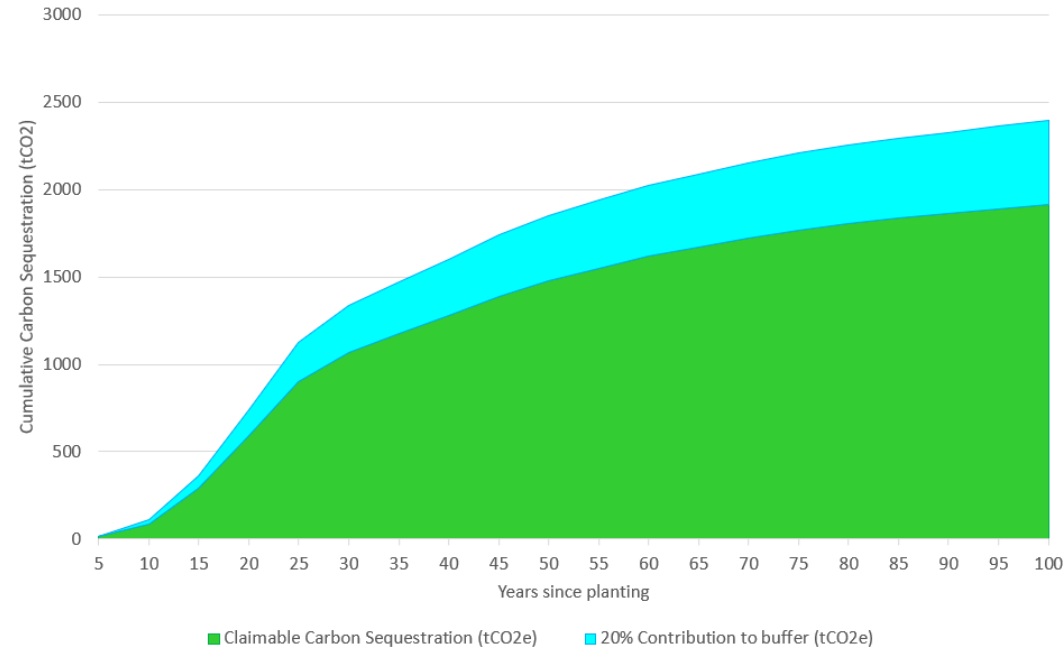
Under our contractor planting model, a new woodland was established at Bury Farm, Amersham

- New 14,300 tree woodland
- Planting area of 5.7 Ha
- Woodland Carbon Code predicts sequestration of over 1,900 tCO₂e over the coming century
- Secured over £105k of grant funding through the England Woodland Creation Offer

Page 31



Cumulative Sequestration
- Divided into claimable/to project and buffer contribution

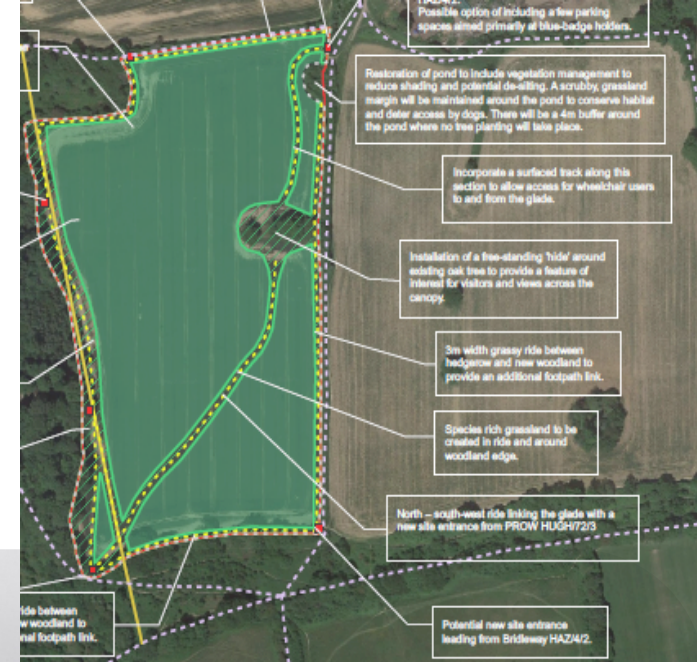


3.2 Grange Farm, Hazlemere

A new 14,700 tree woodland has been planted Grange Farm, Hazlemere.

- Planting area of 5.9 Ha
- Woodland Carbon Code predicts sequestration of over 1,900 tCO₂eq over the coming century
- Secured over £110k of grant funding through the England Woodland Creation Offer
- Volunteer planting day attended by local school

Page 32



3.3 Wing Woods, Wing

A new 51Ha woodland will be created near Wing:

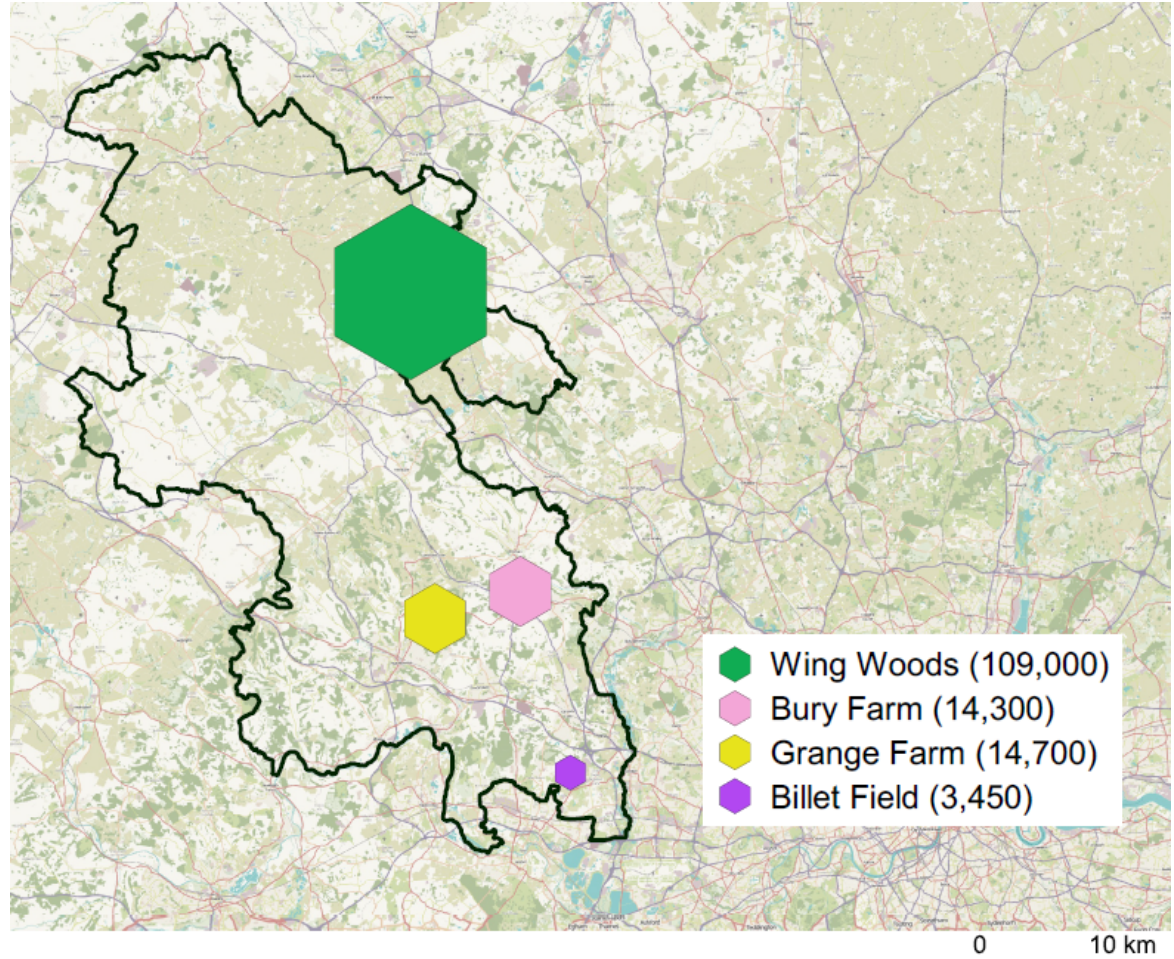
- Under the Forestry England Woodland Partnership Scheme, the Council have leased 51Ha to FE for 100 years
- By 23/24, 132,000 trees will be planted at the site
- Public consultation undertaken in 2022 [Public Consultation Response](#)
- Over 109,000 trees already in the ground



3.4 CLTPP: All sites planted to date

To date **four** new woodland have been created through the CLTPP, shown on the map (right)*:

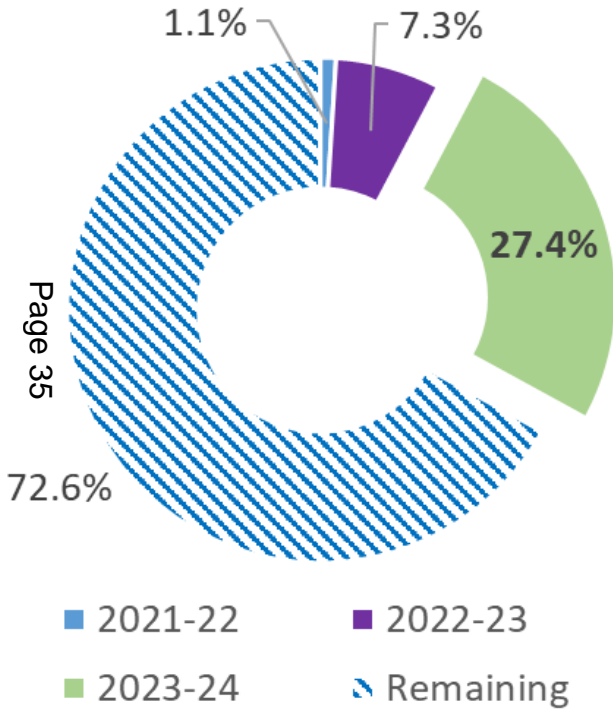
- Wing Wood, Wing
- Bury Farm, Amersham
- Grange Farm, Hazlemere
- Billet Field, Wexham (21/22 planting season)



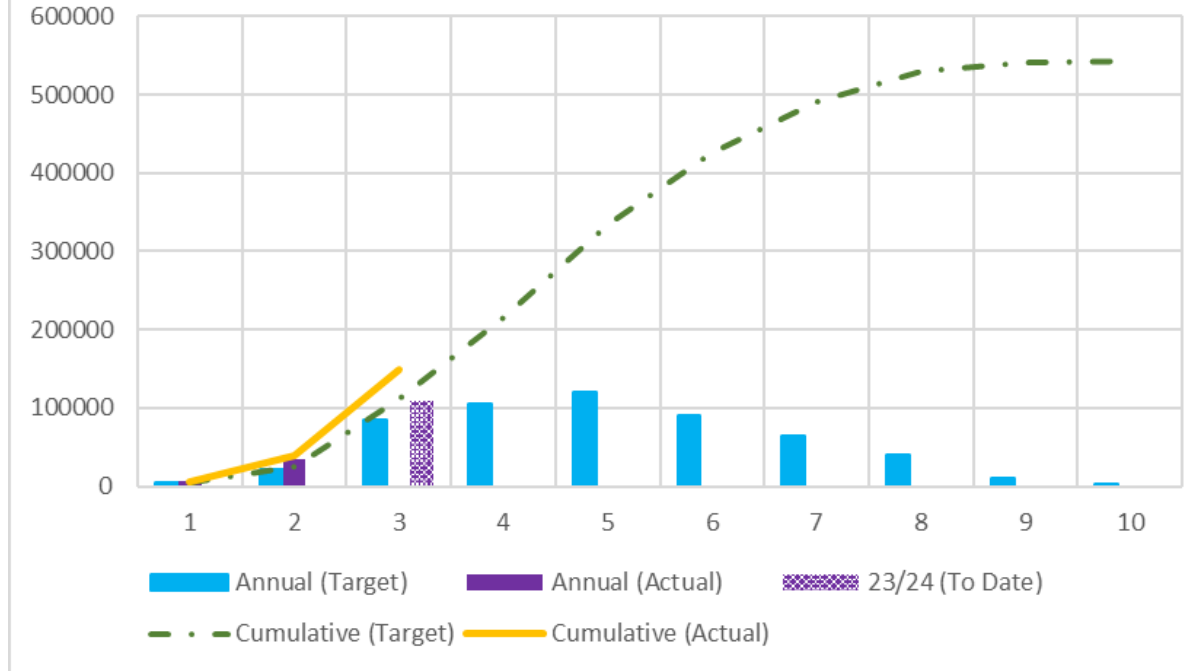
**Size of marker proportional to trees planted*

3.5 CLTPP: Rate of planting to date

Annual Planting (% of Target)



Tree Planting: Actual v Targets



35.8% of the 543,000 target met



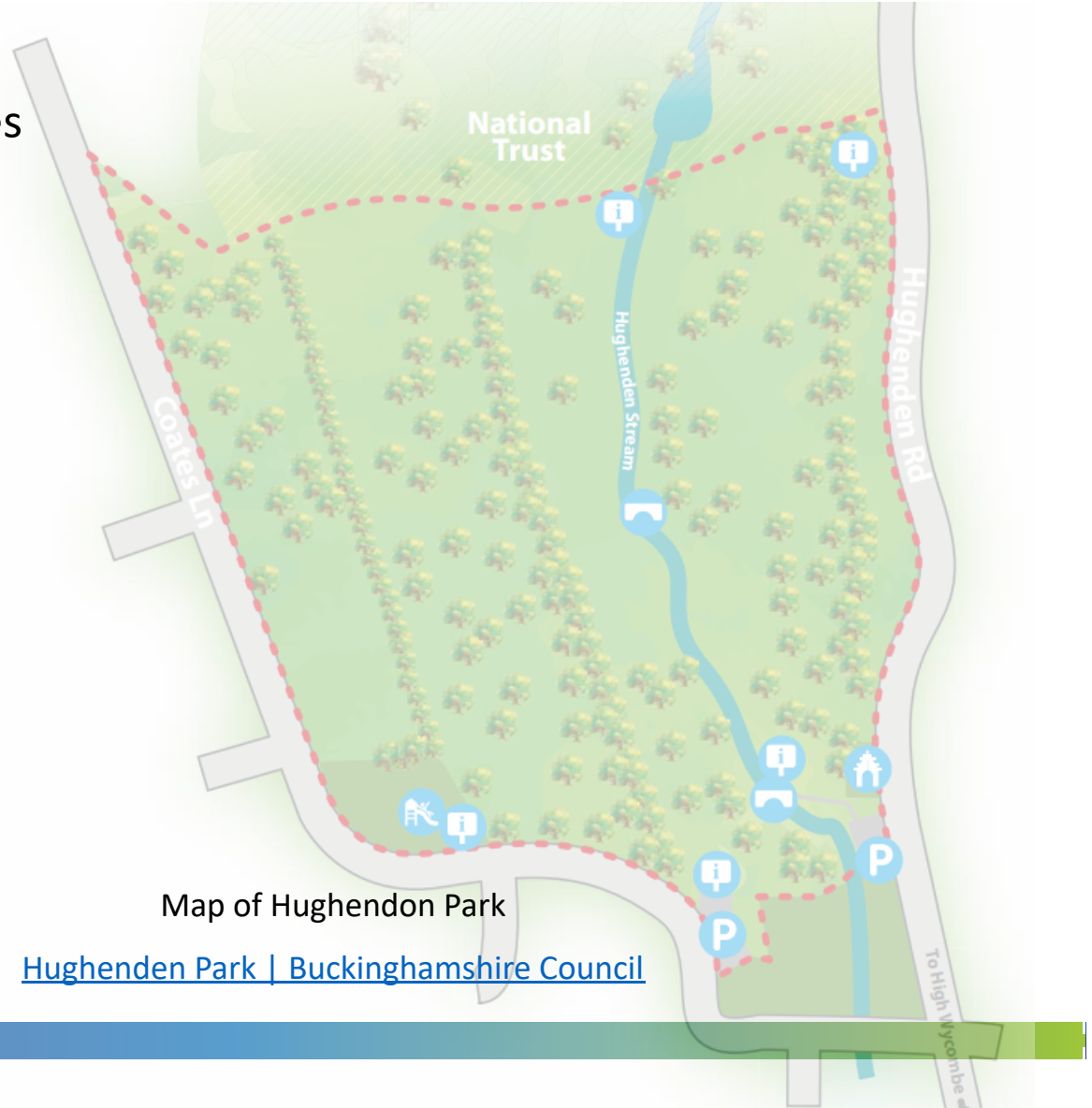
4 Parks, Green Spaces & Street Trees

108 trees planted across
Country Parks & Green spaces
including:

- Hughendon Park
- Cherry Tree Way
- The Rye
- Higginson Park
- Legacy AVDC land

Page 36

We have also replaced or
planted ~ **400 street trees**



Map of Hughendon Park

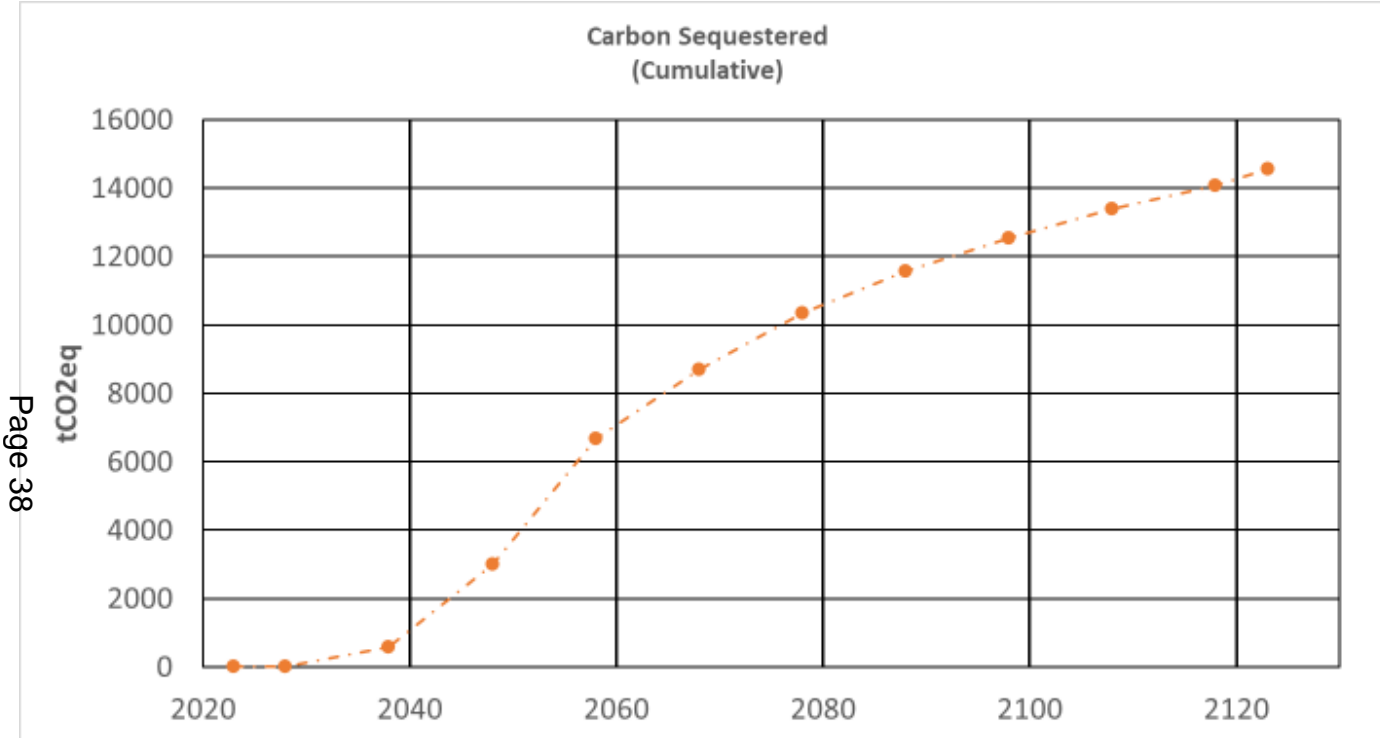
[Hughendon Park | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

5 Natural Capital – The Woodland Carbon Code

All of our Council Land Tree Planting sites are registered with the **Woodland Carbon Code**

- Accounts for carbon sequestration for new woodland creation
- Sits on the UK Land Carbon Registry (contributes to UK's national targets for reducing GHG emissions)
- Verification after 5 years and then every decade until final verification 100 years after planting
- Woodland Carbon Units accrued after verification
- Units will be used to offset the Council's own emissions
- [Home - UK Woodland Carbon Code](#)

5.1 Natural Capital – Carbon Sequestration



Graph (left) shows forecast carbon sequestration from Wing Wood, Bury Farm & Grange Farm

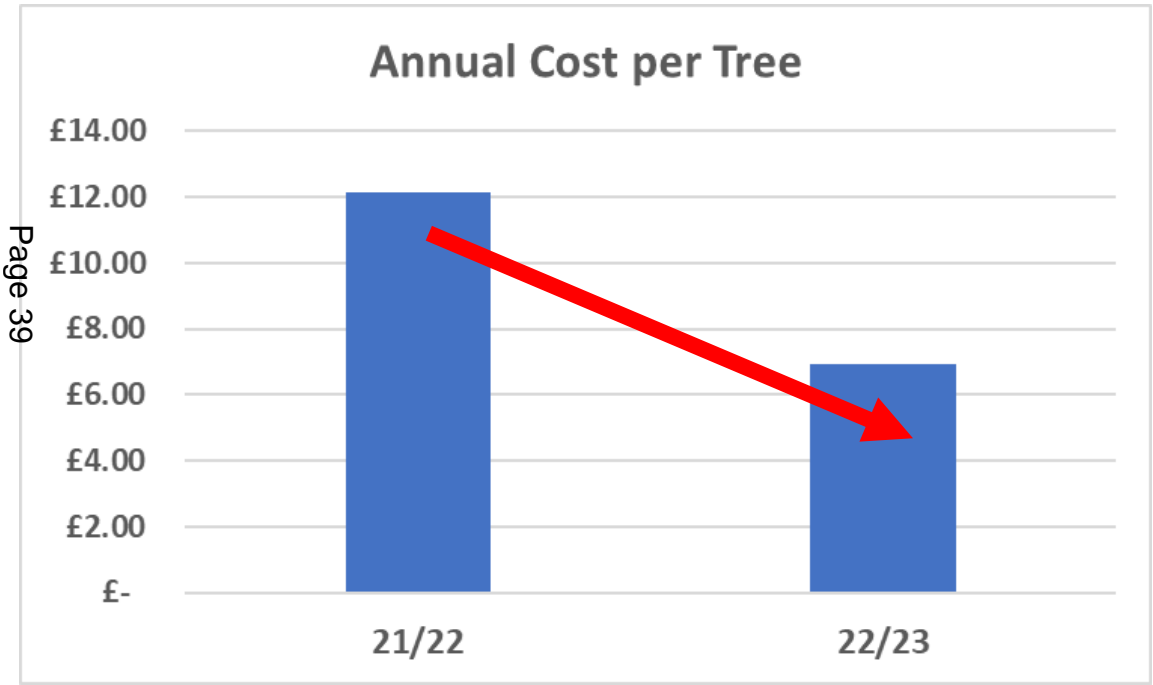
Over **14,800 metric tons of CO₂eq** is estimated to be sequestered by 2124. This is equivalent to the average emissions per year of ~9,800 new homes*

*Source: ONS data for 2019

6 Council Investment in Woodland Creation

Capital works spend on **woodland creation** under the contractor model (Billet Field, Bury Farm & Grange Farm) of **£242,350**.

Annual Cost per Tree



21/22 **average** cost/tree: **£12.13**

22/23 **average** cost/tree: **£6.91**

Total allocation to tree planting from the Climate Change Fund: **£3.29m**

Spend to date: **£318,642**

Page 39

43% reduction in cost/tree in year 2 of the programme

6.1 Funding Awarded to Date

Funding	Amount (£)	Site
EWCO	28,380	Billet Field
EWCO	105,693	Bury Farm
EWCO	110,186	Grange Farm
EPREC	1,765	Billet Field
LATF 21/22	203,000	Various
LATF 22/23	184,000	Various
Total	633,024	

Page 40

We have secured over £633,000 in funding to support tree planting in Bucks

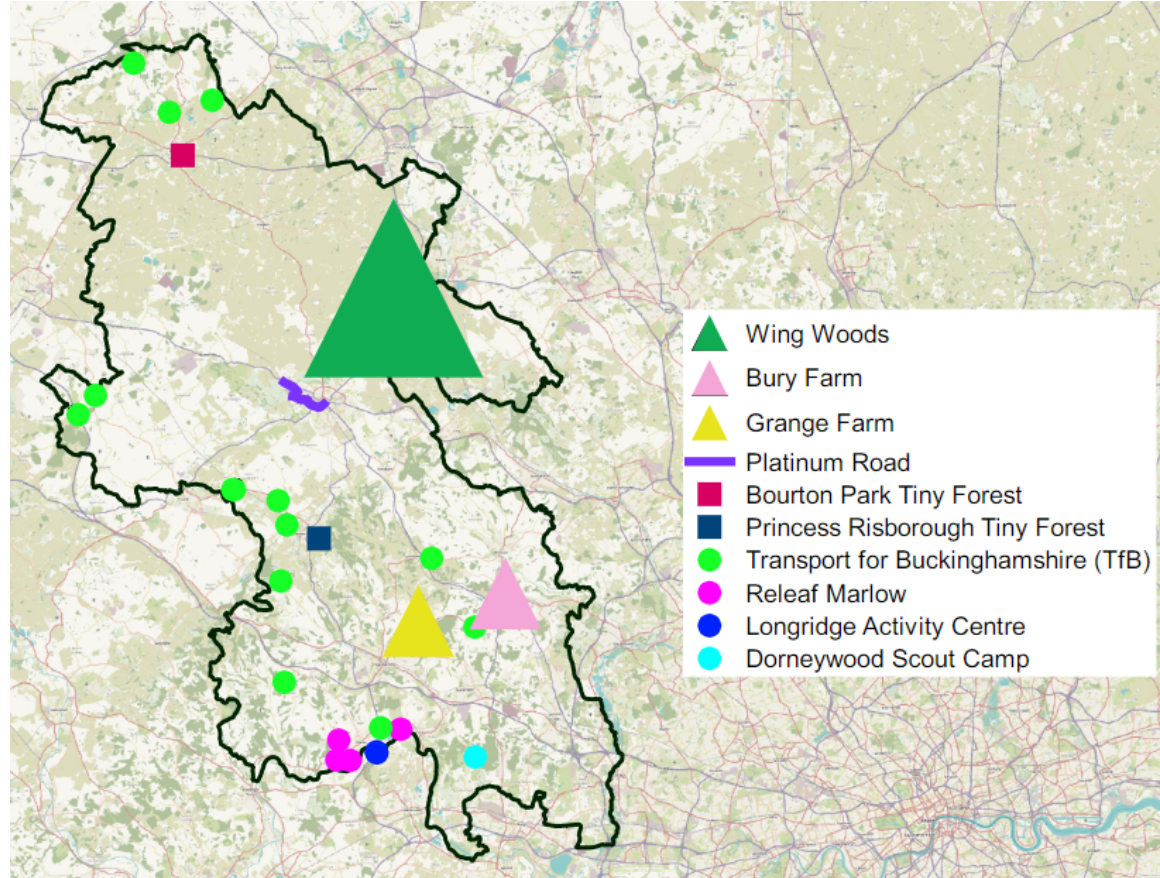
INFO:
We have also received £144,000 of **capacity funding** from the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund

8. Conclusion

The last 12 months have seen tree planting across Buckinghamshire:

- Across all scales
- With extensive community involvement
- Hundreds of volunteers
- Many, varied stakeholder groups
- Over 145,000 trees planted
- Forecast to sequester over 14,800 tCO₂eq by 2124

Page 11



This page is intentionally left blank



Pollution in Buckinghamshire’s Rivers and Chalk Streams Rapid Review – Recommendations from the TECC Select Committee Review Group

Chairman – Cllr Robert Carington

Response from Cabinet

Recommendation	Cabinet’s Response – Y/N & comments	Six Month Update	Lead Member/Officer & Timelines
<p>1. The Cabinet Member for Transport should investigate the use of new and practical gully technology with the intention of reducing harmful chemicals from the highways entering the watercourse.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>We will continue to look at innovative and practical ways when updating and maintaining our gully systems, working with our current and future Highways Maintenance Contractors, to reduce the extent and impact of highways related pollutants entering water course.</p>	<p>New Term Maintenance Contract now in place alongside our new Term Consultancy Contract and this new technology will be considered as part of the emerging innovation workstream.</p>	<p>Steve Broadbent</p> <p>Kevin Goad Dave Roberts Sian Thomas</p>

<p>2. The Cabinet Member for Transport should consider pollution contribution as a category that impacts the frequency of gully cleaning in the future programme of maintenance.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Maintaining optimum silt levels in gullies and soakaways through a data lead approach to cleansing is important. A certain level of silt helps to filter pollutants, that are then disposed of appropriately in cleansing. Not allowing them to be overly full will automatically reduce the amount of harmful pollutants that would otherwise enter watercourses as a result of overflowing gullies and/or saturated silt levels that no longer act as filters.</p>	<p>The planned gully emptying programme is underway and on target with the aim to ensure all 85,000 of the County's gullies are inspected and maintained appropriately.</p>	<p>Steve Broadbent</p> <p>Kevin Goad Dave Roberts Sian Thomas</p>
<p>3. The Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Homelessness & Regulatory Services should liaise to implement an update on the council website to include a page on water quality. This page should contain signposting for residents on who to contact regarding issues such as pollution incidents, spillages on highways and misconnections.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>We would support this recommendation. This page can be created with input from both the Flood Risk team, Environmental Health team and Highways to signpost to the relevant organisations with responsibilities in this area</p> <p>Page likely to be to be owned by Planning & Environment. The situation will be monitored to determine that amount of</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>New web page is live: Link to page</p>	<p>Gareth Williams / Mark Winn</p> <p>Karen Fisher</p>

	<p>“enquiry” traffic to Buckinghamshire Council which is generated by having a page for water quality and any increase in staff resources that may be required as a result</p>		
<p>4. The Environment Agency should assign a dedicated, single point of contact that is of suitable seniority that can signpost queries from Local Authorities to the relevant EA Team or contact.</p>	<p>EA In part</p> <p>The Council can continue to use Helen Smith as the Area Environment Manager that covers the Buckinghamshire area. Liz Robinson can also be used as a more local contact that covers pollution incidents and regulates the water companies and other water users (discharge consents and water resources permits) in Buckinghamshire area.</p> <p>Bucks Council The Strategic Flood Management Team already have a point of</p>	n/a	EA

	<p>contact within Environment Agency for flooding matters. There also is currently a method of escalating matters to more senior people within the Environment Agency but this is more related to flooding matters. To be included in letter for recommendation 5</p>		
<p>5. The Leader writes to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding the council's concern with engagement from the EA on this particular inquiry and other concerns reported to the Council regarding the EA's discharge of its statutory functions and its conduct.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Letter being drafted and will be sent in near future.</p>	<p>Letter was sent by Martin Tett and Peter Strachan to the Secretary of State regarding these concerns.</p> <p>The letter and response are included as appendices.</p>	<p>Martin Tett / Gareth Williams</p> <p>Steve Bambrick</p>
<p>6. The Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change to lobby Anglian</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Lobbying being done through relevant groups and Thames Water and Anglian Water keen to pursue more</p>	<p>Gareth Williams</p> <p>Karen Fisher</p>

<p>Water and Thames Water to invest in further catchment programmes in the county that emulate the benefits of the River Chess Smarter Water Catchment programme.</p>	<p>Thames Water have an ambition to roll this project out to other catchment partnerships. This will be dependent upon OFWAT's decision, regarding future funding, following the completion of the Smarter Water Catchment projects. Lobbying should therefore also include OFWAT.</p> <p>Lobbying of Thames Water and Anglian Water can be through existing partnership channels.</p>	<p>opportunities through Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans with more details being worked on.</p>	
<p>7. Anglian Water and Thames Water submit annual reports to the TECC Select Committee on the progress towards reducing the amount and duration of storm overflows and discharge events in the county, as well as improving their infrastructure in Buckinghamshire.</p>	<p>Anglian Water Yes</p> <p>Anglian Water is currently increasing understanding of storm overflow operation across the region through the delivery of investigations in our Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP). We recognised the imperative of this work and have accelerated the programme to deliver 100% coverage of storm overflows by December 2023, with 73% already delivered. This has included ecological modelling of</p>	<p>Anglian Water Position remains the same as 6 months ago.</p> <p>Thames Water We will be happy to provide an annual update on an agreed date each year. We have set out our plans for reducing harm to rivers and communities in a document which can be downloaded from our website: https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/performance/river-health/river-health-report.pdf This includes a commitment to reduce the total annual duration of discharges by 50% by 2030, and within that a commitment to</p>	<p>Anglian Water Thames Water</p>

	<p>storm overflows in targeted river catchments.</p> <p>The storm overflow investigation programme includes approximately ten (10) assets within Buckinghamshire and is helping to inform our storm overflow strategy for 2025-2030 (AMP8) and beyond.</p> <p>Our AMP8 target is to understand the ecological impact across all of our 1552 overflows, with 38% of the high-priority overflows achieving 10 or fewer spills per year. We are currently assessing options to achieve this objective through our business planning process, and hope to be able to outperform this target through a combination of tradition and nature-based solutions.</p> <p>Thames Water Response was not received.</p>	<p>achieve at least 80% in sensitive catchments. This will see us progressing further and faster than the targets set in the Government's Storm Overflow Reduction Plan.</p>	
<p>8. The Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change should engage with the incoming new CEO of the</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Collaboration with River Trusts is essential to the delivery of water</p>	<p>Initial meeting held with officers and the River Thames Conservation Trust and a meeting date has been set up to meet with Deputy Cabinet member.</p>	<p>Gareth Williams</p> <p>Karen Fisher</p>

<p>River Thame Catchment Trust and support the Trust's expansion into the Upper Great Ouse catchment area.</p>	<p>quality improvements in Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire Council would be well positioned to engage with the River Thame Conservation Trust to understand and support, where appropriate and feasible, their ambitions.</p> <p>The proposed expansion has potential benefit to the northern catchments in Buckinghamshire which currently lack an active rivers trust.</p>	<p>Trust advised that they are no longer looking to expand into the Ouse – a new nascent organisation will cover this area.</p>	
<p>9. The Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment lobbies further regarding the enactment of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 with further support from the Council if necessary.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>This decision on the enactment currently sits with Defra with a possible announcement this Autumn 2022. Lobbying has already taken place through the consultation process. Any further lobbying should be directed at both the Minister for Environment and Defra officers.</p> <p>The impact of Schedule 3 on the Council and resource requirements will need careful assessment.</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>An announcement was made in January 2023 that Schedule 3 will be enacted with DEFRA working with Lead Local Flood Authorities on further detail and a consultation through the summer. Enactment likely will be in 2024</p>	<p>Gareth Williams / Jilly Jordan</p> <p>Karen Fisher</p>

<p>10.A communications campaign be promoted through existing channels (e.g. newsletters and planning informatives) to encourage residents to ensure that their builders/contractors connect the right drain to the right place on works that are exempt from checks by Building Control.</p>	<p>Partial agreement.</p> <p>The Water Companies and Environment Agency have regular communication out to the public on these and other flooding issues. It would be useful to have forewarning of these communications so that Buckinghamshire can share re-tweet these messages and reinforce the message going out to local residents. Any comms campaign by the Council would duplicate the efforts made by the other agencies identified above and it would not be value for money for Buckinghamshire Council to embark upon a communication campaign.</p>	<p>Publication of messages retweeted and shared by comms team where appropriate</p>	<p>Gareth Williams / Peter Strachan</p> <p>Steve Bambrick</p>
---	--	---	---

**Leader of the Council**

Martin Tett
Buckinghamshire Council
The Gateway
Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury
HP19 8FF

martin.tett@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
01296 382302
www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Rt Hon Dr Thérèse Coffey MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

25 January 2023

Dear Thérèse

Concerns Regarding the Environment Agency and Foul Water Connections

I am writing to raise a number of related issues of significant concern to Buckinghamshire Council and our residents and which we request you attend to. These relate to the regulation and control of new connections to the sewage network and the ability for the Government's agencies to effectively discharge their responsibilities.

Foul Water Connections

As you will be aware, all water companies have a legal obligation under S94 of the Water Industry Act 1991 to provide developers with the right to connect to a public sewer regardless of capacity issues. Furthermore, Section 91(1) of the Act in effect makes it impossible for water companies to object or for the Council to refuse the grant of planning permission for development on the grounds that no improvement works are planned for a particular area.

If there is a lack of capacity, then the planning authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker can take steps to ensure that there is no commencement and/or occupation of development until the capacity of the existing sewerage systems is demonstrated to be sufficient to accommodate the proposed development. We are however reliant on the specialist advice of the relevant sewerage undertaker and if they raise no objections at the planning application, then as Planning Authority we would struggle to justify the necessity of imposing such a Grampian condition.

The practical outcome of the above is that there is a lack of transparency and a growing lack of public confidence in a system that may be allowing new developments to connect to sewage systems in the knowledge this will exceed, or further exceed, designed capacity – even if that is for a relatively short period of time

We are concerned that this situation will result in enhanced pollution incidents, when applicable sewage treatment works discharge untreated effluent to water courses. We fully appreciate that the scale and frequency of such pollution incidents are affected by other factors as well; however, at a time when the existing infrastructure is already regularly overwhelmed, it is indefensible to allow the system to work in a way which knowingly worsens the situation.

We ask that, through the relevant agencies, you urgently update the regulatory regime so that new developments cannot connect to sewage infrastructure until it is known to be able to receive additional sewage discharge without exceeding its capacity.

Environment Agency

It is also with some regret that I write to draw your attention to the serious misgivings my Council has with the performance of the Environment Agency. The Council has a range of interactions with the Environment Agency in the delivery of our core functions, in particular the Environment Agency's role as a statutory consultee within the planning process. Our experience of their performance is that it continually falls short of what is reasonably expected.

The performance issues focus on the recurrent delays in providing consultation responses to planning applications within Buckinghamshire. These delays not only increase the cost of operating the planning system for the Council, but delay the delivery of development which supports sustainable economic growth which is central to the local and nationally economy.

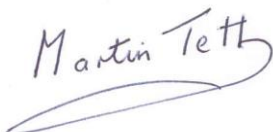
Furthermore, we find the Environment Agency's ability to engage positively with Buckinghamshire Council on areas of mutual interest is considerably lacking. During 2022, the Council (through its Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee) conducted a review into Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams. Whilst we did receive written evidence, we were disappointed that the Environment Agency chose not to attend and engage in the meetings.

Similarly, we have engaged the Environment Agency in issues on a specific sewage treatment works (via the Little Marlow Sewage Liaison Committee) and whilst we have received updates, there is little clear progress in completing an investigation into the March 2021 pollution incident.

The conclusion we draw is that the Environment Agency is not currently fit for purpose and in need of significant intervention to improve its performance. Following repeated attempts to resolve these issues directly with the Environment Agency, we have little confidence that the scale of the problem is either understood or necessary action to address them underway.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these issues and the Government's plans to resolve them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martin Tett". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Martin Tett
Leader, Buckinghamshire Council



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Rebecca Pow MP
Minister for Environmental Quality and Resilience

2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

T: +44 (0) 3459 335577
E: correspondence.section@defra.gov.uk
W: gov.uk/defra

Appendix

Cllr Martin Tett
Leader
Buckinghamshire Council
The Gateway, Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury, HP19 8FF
martin.tett@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Our ref: PO2023/02206/RL

27 February 2023

Dear Cllr Tett,

Thank you for your letter of 25 January to the Secretary of State about the Environment Agency (EA) and foul water connections. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

I can confirm that the EA is carrying out an investigation into the Category 2 (significant) incident that occurred at Little Marlow sewage treatment works (STW) in March 2021 and is continuing to progress. In addition to the incident itself, the investigation also encompasses further permit non-compliance in relation to a numeric sample failure following a formal sample taken in May 2021 in response to a further reported incident.

The EA has been unable to progress the investigation more rapidly due to the complexity of such investigations and significant response to further Category 1 and 2 incidents in the Thames Area since the March 2021 incident. Many of these investigations are complex criminal investigations, which the EA is unable to discuss with third parties.

The EA has a proven track record of holding responsible parties to account for causing pollution. It has prosecuted Thames Water Utilities Limited, in relation to sewage pollution offences over 30 times in the past 10 years. The various legal actions that have been taken has driven multiple improvements and helped to protect the environment in the Thames Area and continues to do so.

You are no doubt aware of the previous enforcement action taken specifically in relation to pollution arising from Little Marlow STW, including during the period 2012-2013, resulting in operational improvements and an £8 million fine handed down at Aylesbury Crown Court in March 2017. The EA has ongoing concerns about the operation of site and are continuing to simultaneously regulate and investigate, with a view to reducing risk to the environment and ensuring the River Thames is well protected in the long-term.

Once the investigation into the incident and permit non-compliance in question is fully complete the EA will then consider the enforcement response in accordance with its Enforcement and Sanctions Policy which can be found [here](#). The EA cannot comment further on the details of this investigation at this time because doing so could prejudice any potential future legal proceedings.

The EA has extended its apologies for the delay in its planning responses to Buckinghamshire Council. Its local Planning Team has been experiencing a high volume of planning consultations and enquiries alongside facing resource pressures. This has resulted in delays to both planning advisory agreements and statutory consultation response timeframes for the EA's 26 Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and other customers across the Thames area.

To mitigate this, the EA has and continues to recruit new staff into its Sustainable Places team and implemented temporary measures to prioritise the highest risk applications and focus on formal statutory consultations from LPAs.

Unfortunately, due to heavy diary commitments, I am unable to meet with you at this time but the department and the EA will continue to engage with you, and I am very much looking forward to working with you on these important issues in future.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me about this important issue.



REBECCA POW MP

Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee (Chairman: Bill Chapple OBE, Scrutiny officer: Chris Ward)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
22 June 2023	Tree Planting	To consider a report updating on the Council's tree planting activity following the tree planting season.	Steve Bambrick Ed Barlow Alexander Beckett David Johnson	Gareth Williams
	Update on School Transport Allocations for New Academic Year	The Cabinet Member will provide a verbal update on activities part way through the summer period.	Lindsey Vallis	Steve Broadbent
	Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams: 6-month progress update	The Select Committee will review the progress of work on implementation of the 10 recommendations made in the Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams review which was presented to Cabinet on 15 November 2022.	Chris Ward	Robert Carington
	Work Programme	To consider the work programme for 2023/24	Chris Ward	Bill Chapple OBE
14 September 2023	Local Transport Plan 5	The Committee will receive a report outlining the early stages of the LTP5 development including its outline and objectives as well cross-portfolio working.	Steve Bambrick Hannah Joyce Angela Bond	Steve Broadbent
	Local Nature Recovery Strategy	For members to receive an update on the LNRS following the publication of secondary regulations and guidance.	Ed Barlow David Sutherland	Gareth Williams
9 November 2023	Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy: Annual Review	The Committee will annually review the strategy following its adoption on 19 October 2021.	Steve Bambrick Ed Barlow Alexander Beckett David Johnson	Gareth Williams

	Parking and Parking Policy	To consider the review of parking policy including approach to fees and charges	Kevin Goad Julie Rushton	Steve Broadbent
	School Transport	To receive an update on the service including SEND transport and personal transport budgets (PTBs).	Richard Barker Lindsey Vallis	Steve Broadbent
	Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams: 12-month progress update	The Select Committee will review the progress of work on implementing the 10 recommendations made in the Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams review which was presented to Cabinet on 15 November 2022.	Chris Ward	Robert Carington
1 February 2024	East West Rail	To receive an update on the project	Dr Laura Leech Susan Browning	Steve Broadbent Peter Martin EWR Reps
	Local Nature Recovery Strategy	The Committee will receive a report on Council activity following the publication of secondary regulations and guidance.	Ed Barlow David Sutherland	Gareth Williams
	Buckinghamshire Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan	The Buckinghamshire LCWIP will identify and develop a strategic network for walking, wheeling and cycling (active travel) between and through settlements across the County. Active Travel will also be featured in the report.	Steve Bambrick Hannah Joyce Jonathan Fuller	Steve Broadbent
28 March 2024	HS2	To receive an update on the project	Dr Laura Leech	Steve Broadbent Peter Martin HS2 Reps

Items to schedule

- Highways contract update