



## Cabinet agenda

Date: Tuesday 7 May 2024

Time: 10.00 am

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

### Membership:

M Tett (Leader), S Broadbent (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transport), A Macpherson (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing), T Broom (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment), J Chilver (Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources), A Cranmer (Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services), C Harriss (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure), A Hussain (Cabinet Member for Communities), P Strachan (Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration) and M Winn (Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services)

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<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Page No</b>
<b>1 Apologies</b>	
<b>2 Minutes</b>	<b>5 - 10</b>

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2024

**3 Declarations of interest**

**4 Hot Topics**

**5 Question Time**

**Written Question from Councillor Stuchbury to Councillor Winn, Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services**

“Buckinghamshire Council recently agreed its Housing Strategy for the period 2025 to 2029. There are a large number of people who are receiving Section 21 Notices which is placing increased pressure on Officers and the Cabinet Member.

Could the Cabinet Member please explain what resources the Council has and the work that is being done within his portfolio to support people with housing vulnerabilities and suggest how support or advice can be given to constituents and elected Members to ensure this supports the work of the Officer team and the Cabinet Member?”

<b>6</b>	<b>Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)</b>	<b>11 - 28</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Planning for future primary healthcare in Buckinghamshire - Joint Select Committee Review</b>	<b>29 - 64</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Cost of Living Support for Buckinghamshire Residents</b>	<b>65 - 88</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee Annual Report 2023-24</b>	<b>89 - 102</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Aylesbury Town Centre Public Realm Scheme</b>	<b>103 - 122</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Old County Offices Aylesbury – Proposed disposal and future re development</b>	<b>123 - 142</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Exclusion of the public (if required)</b> To resolve that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.  Paragraph 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	
<b>13</b>	<b>Confidential Minutes</b>	<b>143 - 146</b>

<b>14</b>	<b>Confidential Appendix Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee Annual Report 2023-24</b>	<b>147 - 150</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Confidential appendices Aylesbury Town Centre Public Realm Scheme</b>	<b>151 - 160</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Confidential appendices Old County Offices Aylesbury – Proposed disposal and future re development</b>	<b>161 - 180</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b> 18 June 2024 at 10am	

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## Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday 25 March 2024 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 1.00 pm and concluding at 1.45 pm.

### Members present

M Tett, S Broadbent, A Macpherson, T Broom, J Chilver, C Harriss, A Hussain and P Strachan

### Others in attendance

J Baum, P Brazier and R Stuchbury

### Apologies

A Cranmer and M Winn

### Agenda Item

#### **1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Cranmer and M Winn. Deputy Cabinet Member for Skills Councillor Joe Baum attended in Councillor Cranmer's place.

#### **2 Minutes**

**RESOLVED –**

**That the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 5 March 2024 be approved as a correct record.**

#### **3 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

#### **4 Hot Topics**

The Leader referred to his recent resident newsletter which had provided an update on the state of the roads and recent flooding. Over 80,000 residents had now signed up for this newsletter and any residents who did not receive it could sign up via the following link:-

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/press-and-media/sign-up-for-our-e-newsletter/>

The **Cabinet Member for Transport** reported that multiple gangs were working on the roads seven days a week to help repair them. He also referred to the consultation on Your Voice Bucks on having a say on where electric vehicle chargepoints should be installed across Buckinghamshire. In January 2024 the Council was successful in securing £1.9m from the UK Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure capital fund to install these charging points across the County.

<https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/>

The **Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment** reported that information was provided on the website on flooding and flood risk management. He and his Deputy Cabinet Member Jilly Jordan worked hard addressing flooding issues and liaising with organisations such as Thames Water to help address any issues where possible. Thames Water dealt with any foul water and sewage issues. An example was given of flooding issues in Chalfont St Peter but there were flooding issues all over the County.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/environment/flooding-and-flood-risk-management/>

The **Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure** reported on the new accessible changing facility at Black Park. He also expressed concern that some people had broken into a construction site at The Rye in High Wycombe where they were building a new playground. He commented that they would make the site secure again and to warn people from entering the site until it was fully opened and safe to use.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/news/new-accessible-changing-places-toilet-facilities-now-open-at-black-park/>

## 5 **Question Time**

### **Question from Councillor Robin Stuchbury to Councillor Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services**

"As part of a discussion at the Children's and Education Select Committee on 7 March 2024 on school attendance, Members heard about the increased emphasis on school attendance within inspections of local authorities' children's services and the importance of good attendance for our pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in particular. We were told that high levels of support can be provided for pupils with SEND whether or not they have an EHC plan through advice, specialist teacher involvement and where appropriate high needs funding to the school to support specific work.

Can the Cabinet Member comment on whether this support is sufficient to mitigate not having an EHCP and also whether it adequately addresses the issues set out in the OFSTED report on the Joint Area SEND Inspection in Buckinghamshire in 2022?

<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50182612> "

**Response from  
Councillor Baum, Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Skills (for**

**Councillor Cranmer)**

“Thank you for your question Councillor Stuchbury and highlighting the importance of early identification and intervention in supporting children and young people with SEND.

For many children and young people with SEND their needs will be met without requiring an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) through what is commonly known as SEN Support. SEN Support is the system by which schools assess the needs of children, and then provide appropriate support. This support is tailored to a child’s individual needs to ensure they receive the specific help they need to succeed in their education. This may or may not directly link to the child’s attendance.

This graduated approach of support will mitigate the need for an EHCP for some children and young people but not all. The priority, however, is meeting needs early and improving outcomes for children and young people by ensuring they receive the support at the level appropriate to their needs.

Identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people, at the earliest opportunity is crucial to achieving a strong SEND system and an important area of focus in the Local Area SEND Inspection framework.”

**6 Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)**

The Leader introduced the Forward Plan and commended it to all Members of the Council and the public, as a document that gave forewarning of what reports would be discussing at forthcoming meetings.

**RESOLVED –**

**That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.**

**7 South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) Phase 1**

Cabinet received a report on the South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) project, that involved the construction of approximately 1.1 miles of dual carriageway that would join the A413 Wendover Road with the B4443 Lower Road and the Stoke Mandeville Relief Road (SMRR). The project was being delivered as one project but in two phases. SEALR was part of the Aylesbury Orbital Link Road, which was a key infrastructure requirement to support the planned growth of Aylesbury and mitigate the impact of HS2.

The project had secured planning permission and external funding from various sources, including the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), HS2, and the Department for Transport (DfT). The project had completed early works and started the construction of the roundabout junctions on Wendover Road (A413) and Lower Road (B4443). The main construction works were expected to commence in July 2024 and complete by Summer 2026.

The project costs for SEALR Phase 1 and Phase 2 had increased significantly due to inflation and other factors. The report proposed to address the funding gap by reallocating savings from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Aylesbury Grid Reinforcements project and reducing the available HIF funding for the Woodlands development and the Eastern Link Road South. The report also recommended forward funding and underwriting the Department for Transport (DfT) contribution to mitigate the financial and programme risks of any delay in funding approval.

Approval was sought from Cabinet to adjust the capital budgets and release funding for SEALR Phase 1 and SEALR Phase 2. In addition, the report sought the necessary delegations to enable the Corporate Director for Communities and the Corporate Director for Planning Growth and Sustainability, in consultation with the Leader to proceed with the delivery of the main works for SEALR Phase 1.

This would enable the phased delivery of the South East Aylesbury Link Road, within required timeframes to achieve the intended programme and to give effect to the Previous Council Decisions.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- The Council was taking a lead role in delivering the link roads in Aylesbury to unlock housing delivery. Aylesbury was a key area of growth with just over 16,000 homes planned. The SEALR was a key development and land use requirement under policy D-AGT1 required to mitigate the impact of development. The supporting evidence for the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, in the form of the Aylesbury Transport Strategy (ATS), set out a comprehensive strategy to address current and future issues. The SEALR was a fundamental part of this long-term vision to deliver a partial orbital route around Aylesbury to deliver growth as well as removing traffic and congestion from key arterial routes and mitigating the impact of the HS2 Stoke Mandeville Relief Road. This would not only improve connectivity around Aylesbury, but also mitigate the impact associated with the realignment of the A4010 by HS2Ltd under the Hybrid Act. The SEALR link road was a key infrastructure requirement in the AGT1 Supplementary Planning Document
- Land for SEALR Phase 1 was being secured through permanent land acquisition, both by negotiation and compulsory powers, as well as temporary access to land parcels via licences/leases, where necessary
- SEALR Phase 1 was predominantly funded through external funding from Homes England, HS2, Department for Transport (DfT) and S106 contributions from developments. One of the conditions of funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) was that a Full Business Case (FBC) must be produced and approved by the DfT. Design consultants were producing the FBC on behalf of the Council. This was expected to be submitted to the DfT for approval at the beginning of April 2024. If the approval from the Department for Transport was later than July 2024 this would delay commencement of the

main works in August 2024, which would impact on the overall construction programme and would add further inflationary costs to the scheme. The risk of a late approval was high due to the need for sign off by the Secretary of State for Transport and Treasury.

- The Council was in continuing negotiations with HS2 Ltd in relation to the Funding Agreement, which would allow the Council to claim actual costs associated with bridge structure at set milestones throughout the project.
- There were concerns about the cost of the project for a short piece of road. However this was due to the complexity of the project including the need to cross a railway line and relocating a water mains. There had been a delay due to the CPO Inquiry and the pandemic and since then there had been huge inflationary costs. There was therefore a funding gap of £12 million.
- The map on page 41 of the report provided a clear picture of the overall project. SEALR was outlined in yellow which showed that it was a short stretch of road. However it was essential to the whole development of Aylesbury.

As part of their deliberations, Cabinet also considered in confidential session the confidential information and appendices that were part of the agenda.

**RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the following increases in the SEALR budget be APPROVED, as set out in the confidential Appendix B and Appendix D**
  - (a) SEALR Phase 1 from £97,933,819 to £122,715,890.**
  - (b) SEALR Phase 2 from £16,788,869 to £25,225,052**
- (2) That the release of the revised budget for SEALR Phase 2 of £25.2m be APPROVED, as set out in Confidential Appendix B and Appendix D.**
- (3) That the release of the revised budget for SEALR Phase 1 of £122.7m be APPROVED, as set out in Confidential Appendix B and Appendix D, subject to Homes England approval and HS2 Funding Agreements.**
- (4) That the following reductions in the Woodlands/Eastern Link Road South budget be APPROVED, as set out in Confidential Appendix B and subject to Homes England approval:**
  - (a) The permanent reduction of £11,727,127 of the available HIF funding.**
  - (b) The reduction of £13,472,000 of the available HIF funding to forward fund and underwrite SEALR Phase 1, pending the final approval of the business case by the Department for Transport.**
- (5) That the previous decisions to acquire the land, rights, and interests for SEALR Phase 1 be RATIFIED, noting the increased risks set out in Confidential Appendix A and the revised budget in Confidential Appendix B.**
- (6) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director for Communities and**

the Corporate Director for Planning, Growth and Sustainability, in consultation with the Leader:

- (a) To proceed with the delivery of the main works for SEALR Phase 1, noting the risks set out in the Confidential Appendix B.
- (b) To take all necessary steps including to enter into any associated agreements, contracts or licenses required associated with the delivery and funding of SEALR Phase 1.

**8 Exclusion of the public (if required)**  
**RESOLVED –**

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**Confidential appendices - South East Aylesbury Link Road Phase 1**

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972) (The need to maintain the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure, because disclosure could prejudice the Council's position in any future process or negotiations).

**9 Confidential Minutes**  
**RESOLVED –**

That the confidential Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 5 March 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**10 Confidential appendices - South East Aylesbury Link Road Phase 1**  
The confidential appendices were discussed.

**11 Date of next meeting**  
Tuesday 9 April 2024 at 10.00am



## Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet/Leader forward plan

### The local authorities (executive arrangements) (meetings and access to information) (England) regulations 2012

This is a notice of an intention to make a key decision on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council (regulation 9) and an intention to meet in private to consider those items marked as 'private reports' (regulation 5).

A further notice (the 'agenda') will be published no less than five working days before the date of the decision meeting and will be available via the Buckinghamshire Council website ([Cabinet agendas](#) / [Leader decisions](#)).

All reports will be open unless specified otherwise.

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<b>Cabinet 7 May 2024</b>				
<b>Aylesbury Public Realm</b> A report on potential town centre regeneration options in relation to Aylesbury public realm	Aylesbury North	Councillor Peter Strachan Richard Harrington	Part exempt ( <i>para 3</i> )	8/4/24

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<b>Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee Annual Report 2023-24</b> To consider and note the Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee's annual report for the period 2023/24.		Councillor John Chilver  Richard Ambrose		23/2/24
<b>Future of Old County Offices, Aylesbury</b> Options for the future of the building known as Old County Offices	Aylesbury North	Councillor John Chilver  John Reed	Part exempt (para 3)	10/11/23
<b>Planning for future primary healthcare in Buckinghamshire - Joint Rapid Review</b> For Cabinet to discuss the recommendations from the rapid review into planning for future primary healthcare, undertaken jointly between the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee and the Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee.		Councillor Isobel Darby, Councillor Chris Poll  Tom Fowler, Liz Wheaton		28/2/24
<b>Cabinet 18 June 2024</b>				
<b>Buckinghamshire Libraries - service development</b> To explore the scope for increasing access and delivering efficiencies through greater community involvement and increased use of new technologies.		Councillor Clive Harriss  Sophie Payne		14/3/24
<b>Budget Monitoring - Outturn 2023-24</b> For information		Councillor John Chilver  Dave Skinner		25/3/24



Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2024-27</b></p> <p>A 3 year strategy to support partners to tackle domestic abuse and violence against women and girls in Buckinghamshire; continuing a focus on supporting victims and survivors, tackling perpetrators through early intervention &amp; prevention</p>		<p>Councillor Arif Hussain</p> <p>Gideon Springer</p>		<p>31/1/24</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>On-street &amp; Off-street parking in Buckinghamshire</b>  Review of the hours of control, charges and conditions for parking across all council public car parks and four location on-street (Whielden Street, Old Amersham, King George V Road, Amersham, Station Approach, Little Chalfont and Quoting Square, Marlow).</p>	Abbey; Amersham & Chesham Bois; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Beaconsfield; Booker, Cressex & Castlefield; Buckingham East; Buckingham West; Chalfont St Giles; Chalfont St Peter; Chess Valley; Chiltern Villages; Cliveden; Denham; Downley; Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches; Gerrards Cross; Great Missenden; Hazlemere; Little Chalfont & Amersham Common; Marlow; Penn Wood & Old Amersham; Stoke Poges & Wexham; Terriers & Amersham Hill; The Risboroughs; The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor; Tylers Green & Loudwater; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville; West Wycombe; Winslow	Councillor Steve Broadbent  Ian Thomas		24/4/24

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<b>Q4 Performance Report 2023-24</b> For information		Councillor John Chilver  Matthew Everitt		25/3/24
<b>Superfast Charging Hubs</b> In order to help facilitate the delivery of Ultra-rapid Electric Vehicle charging hubs in Buckinghamshire, Cabinet agrees in principle to the marketing of Council owned assets along the Strategic and Major Road Network in Buckinghamshire.	Abbey; Aston Clinton & Bierton; Winslow	Councillor Steve Broadbent  Hannah Joyce	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	8/4/24
<b>Cabinet 9 July 2024</b>				
<b>Chilterns Beechwoods Mitigation Strategy</b> Report to consider the recreational disturbance mitigation strategy for Ashridge Commons and Woods	Amersham & Chesham Bois; Aylesbury South East; Chesham; Chess Valley; Chiltern Ridges; Great Missenden; Ivinghoe; Little Chalfont & Amersham Common; Penn Wood & Old Amersham	Councillor Peter Strachan  Charlotte Morris		27/3/24

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Community Boards Boundary Review</b> To make recommendations on the future geography of Community Boards wef May 2025, following the outcome of the Boundary Review.</p>		<p>Councillor Arif Hussain Gail Hudson</p>		24/4/24
<p><b>Corporate Performance Indicators 2024-25</b> This report will set out the proposed corporate performance indicators for 2024-25, highlighting the suggested targets and any changes for the year ahead.</p>		<p>Councillor John Chilver Matthew Everitt</p>		8/4/24
<p><b>Household Recycling Centres DIY Charging Performance Review</b> Household Recycling Centres DIY 6 month post implementation performance review. To: 1.Streamline the permits which require a policy change. 2.Provide a performance review and any tweaks needed for charging incl. extending permit durations.</p>		<p>Councillor Thomas Broom Martin Dickman</p>		24/4/24
<p><b>Leisure Strategy</b> To provide an assessment of indoor sports and leisure facilities, considering future opportunities and demand around this provision.</p>		<p>Councillor Clive Harriss Sophie Payne</p>		26/1/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<b>Littering Enforcement Strategy - Options</b> Strategy on how to take litter enforcement forward - options paper.		Councillor Thomas Broom Martin Dickman	Part exempt ( <i>para 3</i> )	7/9/23
<b>Q1 Budget Monitoring Report 2024-25</b> Quarterly report		Councillor John Chilver Dave Skinner		8/4/24
<b>Q1 Capital Budget Adjustments and Reprofileing</b> Quarterly report		Councillor John Chilver Dave Skinner		8/4/24
<b>RAF Halton Supplementary Planning Document</b> Adoption of the RAF Halton Supplementary Planning Document	Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville	Councillor Peter Strachan Charlotte Morris		24/4/24
<b>April 2024 Leader Decisions</b>				
<b>Fleet Trading Account Budget (2024/25)</b> To confirm details of the 2024/25 Fleet Trading Account budget, which is a zero balanced budget and therefore can't be included in the full council decision taken in February for other revenue budgets.		Councillor Steve Broadbent Lindsey Vallis		31/1/24
<b>Hackney carriage fare review</b> Review of current maximum hackney carriage fares.		Councillor Mark Winn Lindsey Vallis		17/10/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Review of the Council's Highway Safety Inspection Policy</b> To recommend approval of Buckinghamshire Councils Highways Safety Inspection Policy, updated to improve the efficiency, quantity and quality of highways works and general safety on the highways network</p>		<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent  Richard Barker</p>		13/2/24
<b>May 2024 Leader Decisions</b>				
<p><b>Appropriation of Land to Facilitate the Relocation of Furze Down Sixth Form to the Short Breaks Day Service Building in Buckingham</b> Appropriation of Land to Facilitate the Relocation of Furze Down Sixth Form to the Short Breaks Day Service Building in Buckingham</p>	Buckingham East	<p>Councillor Anita Cranmer  Paula Campbell-Balcombe</p>		7/3/24
<p><b>Archive Service Policies</b> All encompassing overview statement to include sub-policies that cover all aspects of service delivery for the Archives Service.</p>		<p>Councillor Clive Harriss  Sophie Payne</p>		27/11/23
<p><b>Aylesbury cycleway north of Bedgrove Park</b> Early investigative works for a new cycleway linking the Hampden Fields development and the existing Aylesbury cycle network</p>	Aylesbury East; Aylesbury South East	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent  Rebecca Dengler-Jones, Robin Smith</p>		11/10/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Aylesbury Road, Aston Clinton Waiting Restrictions</b> Yellow lines to control parking and waiting on London Road and Aylesbury Road, Aston Clinton and at side road junctions to support the Highway Code.</p>	Aston Clinton & Bierton	Councillor Steve Broadbent  John Pateman		27/11/23
<p><b>Buckinghamshire Adult Learning Accountability Agreement 2024/25</b> In order to access DfE grant funding to deliver adult learning, larger providers such as Buckinghamshire Adult Learning are required to produce an Accountability Agreement which details the scope and ambition of its delivery.</p>		Councillor Anita Cranmer  Jacqueline Wilson		27/3/24
<p><b>Buckinghamshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)</b> Request for agreement to conduct public consultation on the draft Buckinghamshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).</p>	All Wards	Councillor Steve Broadbent  Jonathan Fuller		14/3/24
<p><b>Buckinghamshire Tobacco Control Strategy 2024-29</b> To approve the Councils Buckinghamshire Tobacco Control Strategy 2024-29, which sets out how the Council and its partners aim to save lives and improve the health of thousands of people in Buckinghamshire by minimising their exposure to tobacco.</p>		Councillor Angela Macpherson  Dr Jane O'Grady		6/7/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Capital Gateway – adjustments to the Capital Programme</b> Paper for Decision to release 2 Schools Programme capital budgets via the Capital Gateway process, to enable projects to proceed to delivery. Also to add a new project into the Capital Programme</p>	Abbey; Buckingham East; Buckingham West	Councillor John Chilver  Dave Skinner		13/2/24
<p><b>Castlefield Traffic Calming Measures</b> To enable the implementation of the Castlefield Traffic Calming scheme, High Wycombe.</p>	Booker, Cressex & Castlefield	Councillor Steve Broadbent  Kevin Goad		4/1/24
<p><b>Former Tilehouse Day Opportunity Centre - disposal</b> Disposal of the former Day Opps Centre in Denham which was declared surplus by Adult Social Care in 2015.</p>	Denham	Councillor John Chilver  Jo West	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	14/3/24
<p><b>Harmonisation of Pest Control Fees</b> The harmonisation of policy and fees regarding which residents are able to access subsidised pest control treatment.</p>		Councillor Mark Winn  Jacqui Bromilow		30/8/22
<p><b>Junction Improvement A41 Aylesbury</b> Early investigation works to improve the A41 / King Edwards Avenue junction, funded by the Housing Infrastructure Fund.</p>	Aylesbury East; Aylesbury South East	Councillor Steve Broadbent  Rebecca Dengler-Jones, Robin Smith		11/10/23



Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Local Flood Risk Management Strategy</b> An update to the local flood risk management strategy.</p>		<p>Councillor Thomas Broom  Colin Walker</p>		27/11/23
<p><b>Proposed approach to Equalities objectives and Policy</b> To re-publish equalities objectives and update the Equality policy – the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 requires public authorities to publish equality objectives at least every four years.</p>		<p>Councillor Martin Tett  Natalie Donhou Morley, Erika Murigi</p>		25/3/24
<p><b>Reapportionment of Aylesbury Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Project savings</b> Options for the use of savings following re-apportionment of the Aylesbury Housing Infrastructure Fund</p>	<p>Aylesbury East; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury South East; Aylesbury South West; Aylesbury West</p>	<p>Councillor Martin Tett  Steve Bambrick</p>	<p>Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i></p>	13/12/23
<p><b>Rosefield Solar Farm Development Consent Order (DCO)</b> This report seeks approval to obtain delegated powers for the Service Director of Planning &amp; Environment to engage in the Development Consent Order process for the Rosefield Solar Farm. The delegation will also include consultation with relevant Cabinet Member(s) on certain key documents submitted to the Council for a formal response.</p>	<p>Buckingham West; Great Brickhill; Grendon Underwood; Stone &amp; Waddesdon; Wing; Winslow</p>	<p>Councillor Peter Strachan  Christine Urry</p>		11/10/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Sale of surplus land known as The Courtyard, Cressex, High Wycombe</b></p> <p>A decision is required on accepting one of the offers received as a result of an open market disposal process. The site has been declared surplus to requirements and the decision to sell with result in capital receipt and appropriate levels of affordable housing provision. The site will have been marketed for 4 weeks with the results of the process being presented in a full report to the Leader.</p>	Abbey	Councillor John Chilver  John Reed	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	10/11/22
<p><b>School Transport Policy - consultation findings and recommendations 2024/2025</b></p> <p>Post-consultation findings and recommendations on proposed changes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home to School Transport Policy, and</li> <li>- Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2024/25</li> </ul> <p>for adoption from 2024/25</p>		Councillor Steve Broadbent  Lindsey Vallis		2/2/24

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan - Affordable Housing - Supplementary Planning Document</b></p> <p>This Supplementary Planning Document provides affordable housing guidance to the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Policies H1, H2, H6a, H6c, BE2.</p>	<p>Aston Clinton &amp; Bierton;  Aylesbury East;  Aylesbury North;  Aylesbury North West;  Aylesbury South East;  Aylesbury South West;  Aylesbury West;  Bernwood;  Buckingham East;  Buckingham West;  Great Brickhill;  Grendon Underwood;  Ivinghoe;  Stone &amp; Waddesdon;  Wendover,  Halton &amp; Stoke Mandeville;  Wing;  Winslow</p>	<p>Councillor Peter Strachan</p> <p>Charlotte Morris</p>		<p>15/2/23</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<b>July 2024 Leader Decisions</b>				
<p><b>A41 Gatehouse Way Sainsbury's Parking Restrictions</b> Parking restrictions around the new Sainsburys as agreed with developer</p>	Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West	Councillor Steve Broadbent  Leigh Brown		8/4/24
<p><b>B474 Speed limit into Beaconsfield from Clay Street (Knotty Green)</b> Extension of 30mph B474 into Beaconsfield from Clay Street (Knotty Green)</p>	Beaconsfield; Penn Wood & Old Amersham	Councillor Steve Broadbent  Leigh Brown		8/4/24
<p><b>Medmenham Parish Council – extend 40mph Speed Limit up to Danesfield hotel</b> extension to the 40 mph speed limit on A4155 Henley Road, Medmenham to include the entire section between Danesfield and Medmenham and Statutory Consultation as set out in this report.</p>	Chiltern Villages	Councillor Steve Broadbent  Leigh Brown		8/4/24
<p><b>MK18 4AB, Main Street, Radclive cum Chackmore HGV ban</b> Proposed 7.5t weight limit (except for access) restriction to be implemented on MK18 4AB, Main Street – the whole length through Radclive between its junction with the A422(in the north) and the A421(in the South) and the side road to the church has been requested by the Radclive cum Chackmore Parish Council, based on reports/ complaints from residents using Radclive as an unofficial bypass for Buckingham.</p>	Buckingham West	Councillor Steve Broadbent  Leigh Brown		8/4/24

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p><b>Slapton Speed Limit Proposed 40 mph Speed Limit – B488 Horton Road, Horton</b></p> <p>The proposed change of speed limit to 40 mph onto Horton Road exit is based on speed survey and speed limit assessment, initially conducted by Transport for Buckinghamshire. Speed limit is adjusted between the village name sign and the existing 30 mph sign, located on the bend as one enters the main body of Horton Village. This adjustment would cover the distance of approximately 350 m and address the current speed limit discrepancies.</p>	Ivinghoe	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent</p> <p>Leigh Brown</p>		8/4/24

Individual Leader decisions (in consultation with the Cabinet Member) are not discussed at meetings – a report is presented to the Cabinet Member and the Leader will decide whether to sign the decision.

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this forward plan, please get in touch with the contact officer. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team in good time ahead of the decision deadline date. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk). You can view decisions to be made and decisions taken on the council's website.

The council's definition of a 'key decision' can be seen in part 1 of the council's [constitution](#).

Each item considered will have a report; appendices will be included (as appropriate). Regulation 9(1g) allows that other documents relevant to the item may be submitted to the decision maker. Subject to prohibition or restriction on their disclosure, this information will be published on the website usually five working days before the date of the meeting. Paper copies may be requested using the contact details below.

\*The public can be excluded for an item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt (private) information as defined in part I of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972. The relevant paragraph numbers and descriptions are as follows:

Paragraph 1 - Information relating to any individual

Paragraph 2 - Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual

Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Paragraph 4 - Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority

Paragraph 5 - Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings

Paragraph 6 - Information which reveals that the authority proposes:

(a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or

(b) to make an order or direction under any enactment

Paragraph 7 - Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

Part II of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that information falling into paragraphs 1 - 7 above is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Nothing in the regulations authorises or requires a local authority to disclose to the public or make available for public inspection any document or part of a document if, in the opinion of the proper officer, that document or part of a document contains or may contain confidential information. Should you wish to make any representations in relation to any of the items being considered in private, you can do so – in writing – using the contact details below.

Democratic services, Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP19 8FF 01296 382343  
[democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

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## Report to Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Joint Select Committee Review into Planning for Future Primary Healthcare in Buckinghamshire</b>
<b>Relevant councillor(s):</b>	Cllrs Isobel Darby and Chris Poll, Joint Chairmen of the Review Group
<b>Author and/or contact officer:</b>	Kelly Sutherland, Scrutiny Manager
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All wards

### **Recommendations:**

Recommendations made by the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee and the Growth Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee to Cabinet and the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board are as follows.

#### **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.

**Reason for decision:** For Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee and the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee.

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee and the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee agreed to set up a joint review into planning for future primary healthcare in Buckinghamshire. The scoping document was agreed at the respective Select Committee meetings in July 2023.

- 1.2 A small group of councillors from each Select Committee volunteered to participate in the review and two full days of evidence gathering took place on 29<sup>th</sup> September and 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The review group was jointly chaired by Cllr Isobel Darby and Cllr Chris Poll and comprised of Cllrs Qaser Chaudry, Robin Stuchbury, Nathan Thomas, Alan Turner and Stuart Wilson. Following the evidence gathering meetings the review group then met to discuss and agree its key findings and recommendations, which are presented in the report found at Appendix 1.

## **2. Content of the report**

- 2.1 Primary Care in Buckinghamshire is one of the most important pathways for 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 predicted housing growth to ensure that the population's health needs are met.
- 2.2 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 significant concerns about future proofing primary care estates to meet the needs of a growing population.
- 2.3 The Integrated Care Board is responsible for commissioning primary care services to meet the needs of the local population.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 provides further context to the Select Committee's recommendations. Cabinet and representatives from the Integrated Care Board are asked to consider these recommendations and provide a response to the recommendations.

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

- 3.1 These will be considered as part of the responses.

## **4. Corporate implications**

- 4.1 These will be considered as part of the responses.

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

- 5.1 The report and recommendations were produced by a cross-party review group of Members from the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee and the Growth Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee.

## **6. Next steps and review**

- 6.1 Cabinet will provide a response to the recommendations aimed at the Council and Integrated Care Board representatives will provide a response to those aimed at the ICB. The Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee and the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee will then receive an update after 6 months and 12 months to monitor the implementation of all the recommendations.

## **7. Background papers**

- 7.1 None.

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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:**

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- **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.**

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**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

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#### **Recommendation 7**

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#### **Recommendation 8**

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**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.**

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**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.

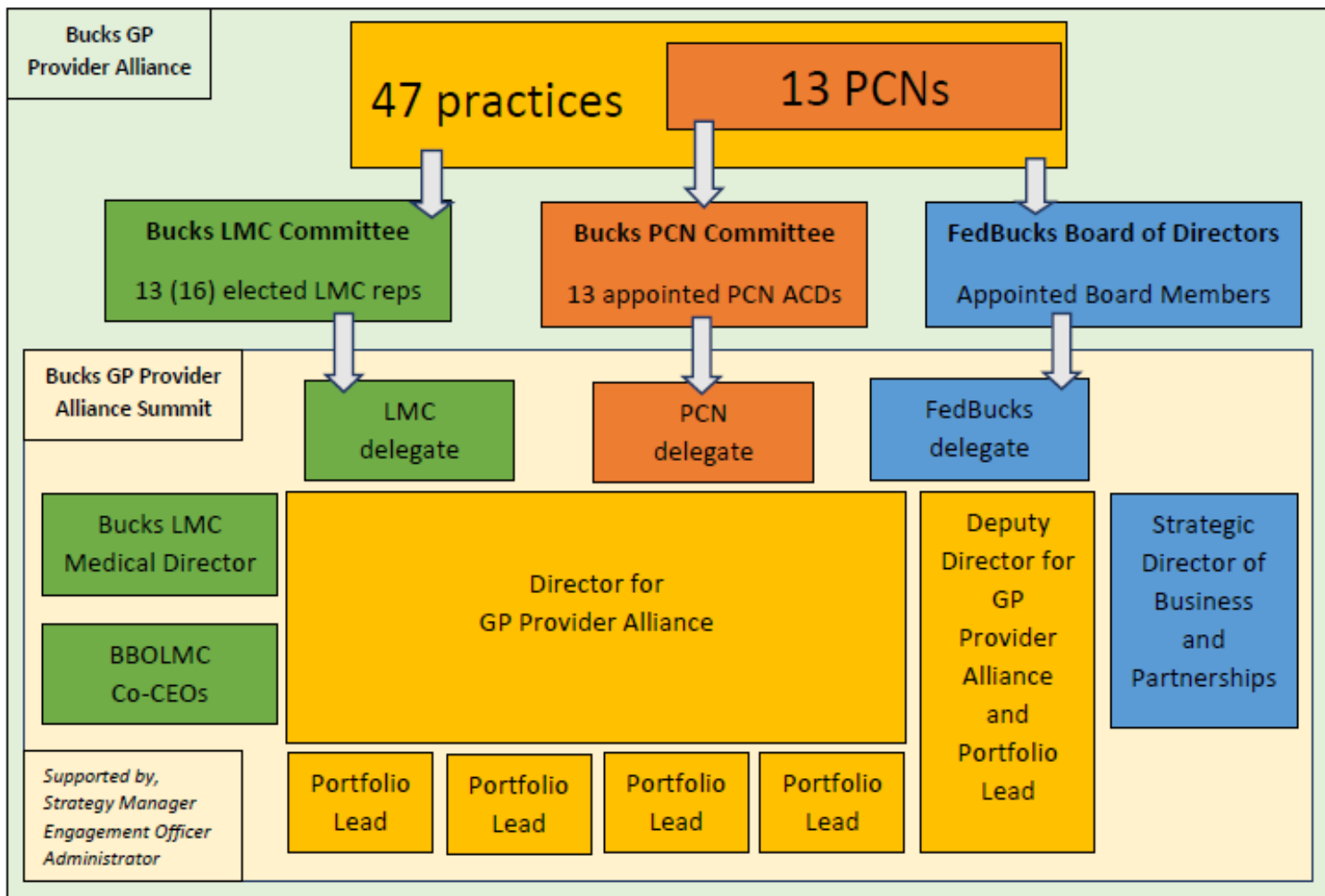
The Review Group was struck by a mismatch between the aspirations of the ICB and PCNs to deliver ‘primary care at scale’ and the fact that the starting point for any new GP estates development would be at the individual GP practice level. An individual GP practice would be asked to identify a need to 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



## Report to Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Cost of Living Support for Buckinghamshire Residents</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Arif Hussain – Cabinet Member for Communities
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Matt Everitt – Service Director, Business Intelligence and Community Support
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	None specific
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>To note the range of support provided by the Council for individuals experiencing hardship across the county.</b> <b>To approve the arrangements for deploying the new Household Support Fund allocation from the Department for Work and Pensions.</b>
<b>Reason for recommendation:</b>	The Government confirmed allocations for the Household Support Fund on 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2024. This report sets out proposals for use of the funding to provide support for Buckinghamshire residents between April and September 2024 in line with Government guidance.

This item was taken under the General Exception rule as the grant received was for use between April and September 2024 and therefore time critical.

### 1. Executive Summary

1.1 As a Council, we recognise the ongoing challenges our residents are experiencing due

to cost of living pressures. To help mitigate this and provide support to residents, we have continued to develop and deliver a range of initiatives to support residents; and have continued to provide support to residents who are most in need through our Helping Hand service.

- 1.2 We are pleased to receive confirmation of the fifth tranche of Household Support Fund grant from the Department for Work and Pensions. This new allocation will cover the period from April to September 2024, and will be used to continue to provide essential support to residents across Buckinghamshire.
- 1.3 This new allocation builds on the funding we have received from Government since 2020, initially through the Winter Grant and Local Support Grant, and subsequently through the Household Support Fund.
- 1.4 Previous allocations of the Household Support Fund have been used to provide support for residents in need of help with food, fuel and other essential household costs. For the period April 2023 to March 2024, Buckinghamshire was allocated £4.8m of the Household Support Fund.
- 1.5 This paper outlines the support we have provided, and continue to provide, to support residents with cost-of-living pressures. This paper also details how the previous Household Support Fund allocation was used and sets out a proposed use of the new allocation between 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, ensuring that this is targeted to residents in need of support and in line with the Government guidance.
- 1.6 Further information about usage of previous Household Support Fund allocations can be viewed in previous reports:

<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=36173&PlanId=269&RPID=0>



**helping  
hand**

## Helping Hand 2023/2024

**Applications and support provided**  
1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024



**9,851**  
Total applications



**12,104**  
Total provisions



**4,186**  
Individuals  
receiving provisions

### Provisions

1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

**12,104**

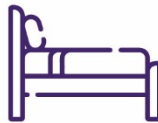
Total provisions



**1,566**  
Referrals



**1,394**  
White goods



**677**  
Essential goods



**7,802**  
Food and fuel



**655**  
Grants

## Community Support – School Holiday Vouchers: 2023/2024

### School Holidays



May Half-Term  
**14,843**



Feb Half-Term  
**14,795**



Summer Holiday  
**14,538**



Easter Holiday  
**14,929**



October Half-Term  
**14,163**



Christmas Holiday  
**14,624**

**Total Vouchers Delivered**  
**87,892**



## 2. Cost of Living Initiatives

2.1 Buckinghamshire Council has continued to work closely with organisations and partners across the county, particularly with the voluntary and community sector, to reduce gaps in provision and ensure there is a comprehensive offer for residents who are most in need.

2.2 Key initiatives have included:

2.2.1 Developing our communications strategy to ensure that residents who need support are aware of what is available and how to access this. The Buckinghamshire Council website includes a detailed 'Cost of Living' section which is regularly updated with new information, frequent posts are made on social media platforms to reach residents and a printed Resident Support Leaflet has been distributed across the County (predominantly focusing on Opportunity Bucks wards) to reach residents who may not be accessing content online.

2.2.2 Continuing to develop and support 'Welcoming Spaces' where people can come together in a warm, safe and supportive environment across the County, primarily in our Libraries and also through 17 additional community venues for residents to access. We've also distributed 640 warm packs during the winter of 2023/24, through Welcoming Spaces and through key partners across the county who helped to ensure that residents who needed these most were able to receive them.

2.2.3 Our Food Champions Network, which is made up of residents who take the lead on coordinating food collections for their local area and ensuring these are received by local food banks, has expanded and there are currently 47 food champions across the county.

2.2.4 Launching our Energy Doctor scheme, providing support to eligible households to reduce fuel costs and increase energy efficiency through the implementation of energy saving measures such as insulation jackets for hot water cylinders, energy saving lightbulbs and draft proofing. Over 400 properties were visited by the Energy Doctor team in 2023/24.

2.2.5 Our Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) team has been working with a small cohort of residents from Opportunity Bucks wards who have contacted Helping Hand for support a high number of times, helping to connect them with other services that can support and address underlying challenges.

2.3 Further information about the range of support available can be found on our website, which has been updated as a comprehensive source of information for people who need support with the cost of living:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living/>

2.4 In partnership with Red Kite Housing through our Opportunity Bucks programme, we have implemented a policy change to support tenants by leaving in place good condition carpets when tenants in Red Kite properties change over. Previously carpets were removed at this stage. This change was introduced in August 2023 following positive reception of this, additional Housing Associations are now also offering this to their tenants.



- 2.5 In partnership with Fairhive Housing, we continue to support the weekly Community Hub at the Vineyard in Aylesbury which is attended by Fairhive and by Buckinghamshire Council's Helping Hand service. This Hub offers a one-stop shop service that is free to access by any resident and provides support & advice on housing, employment, financial challenges, training and well-being.
- 2.6 The Buckinghamshire Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme is funded by the Department for Education and provides free, high-quality holiday activity clubs with a healthy hot meal for children from low-income families. The programme runs in the longer school holiday periods (Easter, summer and Christmas) for children in Reception to Year 11 inclusive who receive benefits-related free school meals. The HAF programme will continue until March 2025.
- 2.6.1 Throughout 2023 the HAF programme enabled over 5,500 individual children and young people across the county to enjoy over 21,436 holiday activity club sessions and hot meals during the school holidays. The range of activities on offer throughout 2023 increased with the inclusion of 'added value' providers who offered one off activities such as mobile farms, roller discos and beatbox workshops. HAF also welcomed Bikeability sessions to HAF this year; allowing 280 children aged 4-7 to learn the basics for using a balance bike. This, alongside the inclusion of family events, take home activity packs and HAF activity booklets, strengthened the offer in Buckinghamshire. With over 6,500 holiday activity club sessions planned for Easter 2024, the number of children accessing HAF is expected to grow during the 24/25 financial year with additional organisations getting involved and offering an increasing number of holiday sessions.
- 2.6.2 The Council can also offer HAF holiday club places to certain groups of children and young people who are not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals, but who could benefit from HAF provision. This means that we will be able to reach and support more vulnerable children and young people in Buckinghamshire to have a more enjoyable holiday experience. Across 2023, over 400 individual children and young people in this category have benefited from HAF provision.
- 2.7 In addition to the support we are providing locally, the Government has also provided support including:
- 2.7.1 Cost of Living payments delivered by DWP were made in Spring 23 (£301), Autumn 23 (£300) and in Spring 2024 (£299).
- 2.7.2 This includes all households receiving: Universal Credit, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Pension credit.

### Case Study 1

- Single, 59-year-old male with a disability reducing his ability to work.
- All white goods broken over previous years and no funds to replace them.
- Debts with gas/ electric suppliers.
- Struggling to complete the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) forms to receive additional benefits

#### Outcomes:

- White goods purchased and installed
- Heart of Bucks grant to clear gas and electric arrears
- Referral to Citizens Advice Bucks to support with PIP application and benefit maximisation

I cannot begin to thank you enough for your help with this. The last few years have been absolute hell for me, from a standpoint of health, ability to work, rising food and energy prices and low income. This is a huge weight being lifted from me, giving me breathing space once again

## 3. Household Support Fund 4 - April 2023 to March 2024

3.1 Funding allocated from the Department for Work and Pensions' Household Support Fund during this period totalled £4.8m.

3.2 In line with previous allocations of funding, this fund was intended to provide crisis support to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with significantly rising living costs.

3.3 Local Authorities had flexibility within the fund to identify which vulnerable households were in most need of support and apply discretion when identifying eligibility, ensuring that residents who were not receiving other means of Government support had access to this fund and using a wide range of data and sources of information to ensure support was provided to vulnerable households most in need.

3.4 Local Authorities were required to operate an application-based service for support to ensure those in need had a route to crisis support throughout the duration of the fund.

3.5 Within the parameters set out in 3.2, the Household Support Fund could be used to cover:

3.5.1 Energy bills relating to heating, cooking or lighting; and water bills.

3.5.2 Support with food costs either through vouchers or cash.

3.5.3 Other household essentials – this may include those linked to energy and water, for example sanitary products, boiler repair or servicing, warm clothing, purchase of fridge/freezers; or for wider essentials, for example broadband costs, phone costs, clothing, transport-related costs such as car repairs.

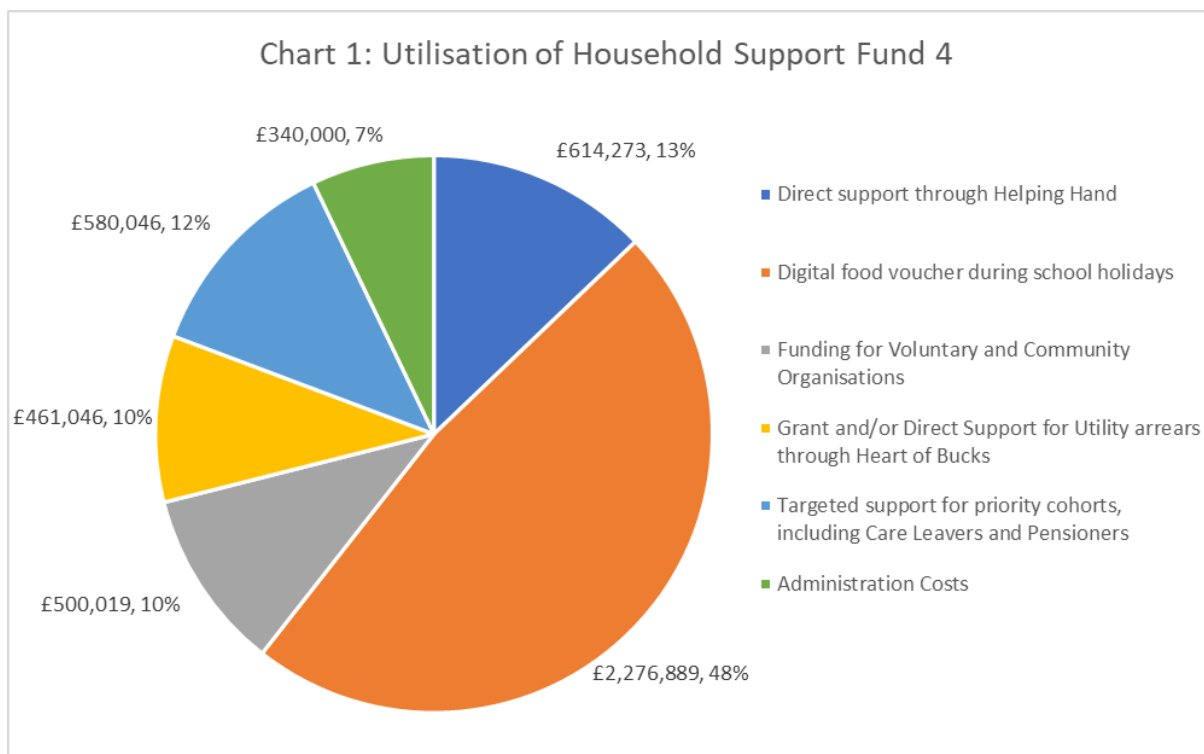
3.5.4 Housing costs could be covered in exceptional circumstances and where existing housing schemes did not meet this exceptional need. For example,

the fund could not be used to provide mortgage support but could be used to cover historic rent arrears that had built up prior to receipt of other benefits. The fund could not be used to cover mortgage costs.

3.5.5 The fund could also be used to cover reasonable administration costs, including staff costs, web page design, IT system costs and promotional activity and content to raise the profile of the scheme.

3.5.6 A change from previous funds was that this fund could be used to provide supplementary advice services to award recipients, including debt and benefit advice, where Local Authorities considered this appropriate and this complemented practical support being provided.

3.6 Use of this funding is detailed in Chart 1:



3.7 Between April 2023 and March 2024, this fund provided:

3.7.1 More than 87,892 digital food vouchers issued to, on average, 14,500 young people during all school holidays. Eligible young people are those in receipt of Free School Meals/Early Years' Pupil Premium/2-year-old funded free education places.

3.7.2 Funding has been provided to support over 95 Voluntary and Community Sector initiatives/schemes for residents across Buckinghamshire ranging from cookery courses to lunch clubs benefitting a total of 27,000 households including 12,800 households with children.

3.7.3 Funding for 15 emergency food support organisations including food banks across Buckinghamshire, who have supported approximately 10,291

households between April 2023 and March 2024.

- 3.7.4 Supermarket vouchers enabling over 480 Care Leavers to purchase food and household essentials.
- 3.7.5 Vouchers to 8,400 pensioners who were also receiving Council Tax Reduction, to help mitigate cost of living pressures.
- 3.7.6 Supported Citizens Advice and Christians Against Poverty (Wycombe and Chesham offices) with the costs of Debt Relief Orders for 11 residents experiencing significant financial challenges, and Bankruptcy costs for 3 residents.
- 3.7.7 Over £95,000 awarded to support 89 households, via a Heart of Bucks grant, with housing costs and arrears, without which these households would have been at serious risk of homelessness and may have required temporary accommodation.
- 3.7.8 The Helping Hand team directly delivered over £610,000 of support to residents through purchasing essential white goods and essentials to keep them warm including clothing and other essential items.

#### Case Study 2

- Single mum with two children (one with a registered disability)
- Survivor of Economic Abuse during her marriage (all bills were put into her name without her knowing)
- Works full-time
- Struggling emotionally after the divorce and unable to open any debt related letters
- Received a court summons for Council tax

#### Outcomes:

- Heart of Bucks grant of £2,000 awarded to clear the Council tax arrears
- Engagement with Women's Aid for counselling and support.

I want to express my gratitude to you and the Helping Hand team for your help with the grant towards my council tax bill. As well as the way I was treated with dignity and compassion when I came to you for help. The help with the bill was a great relief to me

## 4. Helping Hand

- 4.1 The Helping Hand team has continued to lead and coordinate use of these funds across Buckinghamshire for the Council, including the delivery of an application-based service for residents who need to support, in line with the requirements set out by Government.
- 4.2 The Helping Hand delivery model accepts direct applications from residents, ensuring that the right support can be provided quickly to those who are in most need.

4.3 This team works collaboratively with internal Council departments to develop our offer, identify residents who are in need of support and engage with these residents to ensure they receive the support they need.

4.4 Helping Hand have also developed and maintained excellent relationships with partners, local groups and across the voluntary and community sector to identify need, support the development of provision and to raise awareness of services and support that is available to residents. We actively work with community groups to develop bespoke provision that is relevant to, and accessible by, residents in these areas who may be less likely to reach out for support.

4.5 This approach has also resulted in better insight and intelligence to enable better understanding of our residents and communities, which can then be used to inform activity and interventions delivered by the Council, by the voluntary and community sector, and by our strategic partners including housing associations and the Department for Work and Pensions.

4.6 The number of direct applications received by the Helping Hand team since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and the number of services provided is detailed in the tables below:

<b>Table 1: 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024</b>	
Total direct applications:	9,851
Total services delivered:	12,104
Unique people receiving services:	4,186

4.7 Table 2 shows a breakdown of the type of services being delivered following direct application into the Helping Hand team:

<b>Table 2: 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024</b>		
<b>Service</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>%</b>
Referrals	1,566	12.94%
White Goods	1,394	11.52%
Wider Essential Goods	677	5.59%
Food & Fuel	7,802	64.46%
Grants	665	5.49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,104</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **5. Household Support Fund 5 – April to September 2024**

5.1 In the Government’s Spring Statement, it was confirmed that the Department for Work and Pensions’ Household Support Fund is being extended from April to September 2024.

In line with previous allocations, Buckinghamshire has been allocated £2.4m for this period.

- 5.2 The fifth tranche of the Household Support Fund is intended to provide crisis support to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with the cost of essential items.
- 5.3 Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out by the Department for Work and Pensions. The fund must be used to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford household essentials including energy and water bills, food, and wider essentials; and Local Authorities should prioritise support which offers an immediate impact to those in need.
- 5.4 Local Authorities can also use funding to support households with housing costs where existing housing support does not meet this need, and to supplement support with signposting and advice.
- 5.5 Authorities must operate an application-based service for support to ensure those in need have a route to crisis support throughout the duration of the fund, either continuously over the majority of the fund period or in regular intervals throughout the scheme.
- 5.6 Individual awards can be whatever type and amount is deemed appropriate by Local Authorities for the receiving household.
- 5.7 Whilst immediate needs should be prioritised, Local Authorities are encouraged to use the fund to provide support that has a long-term sustainable impact, for example household items which would reduce bills in the long-term.
- 5.8 The guidance states that Local Authorities should use their local insight and intelligence to determine the beneficiaries of the fund. Local Authorities have the flexibility within the fund to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and apply their own discretion when identifying eligibility.
- 5.9 There is a requirement to provide quarterly returns during the Household Support Fund 5 grant period with the final return to cover the whole period due by 25 October 2024.
- 5.10 Within the parameters set out in 5.3, the fund can be used to cover:
  - 5.10.1 Energy bills relating to heating, cooking or lighting; and water bills.
  - 5.10.2 Support with food costs either through vouchers, cash or in kind.
  - 5.10.3 Other household essentials linked to energy, food and water. For example, the fund can be used to cover insulation costs, provide white goods or slow cookers; which would help to develop sustainable solutions through the reduction in energy costs.
  - 5.10.4 Wider essentials – including broadband, phone and clothing costs, or support with sanitary and hygiene products.

- 5.10.5 To provide supplementary advice services to award recipients, including debt and benefit advice, where Authorities consider this appropriate however it is clearly stated that this Fund is to provide crisis support for households, and that any advice services would be to complement this practical support.
- 5.10.6 Housing costs can be covered in exceptional circumstances and where existing housing schemes do not meet this exceptional need. For example, the fund can exceptionally and in genuine emergency be used to provide support for historic rent arrears built up prior to an existing benefit claim for households already in receipt of Universal Credit and Housing Benefit; however these should not be the primary focus of the fund. Mortgage costs cannot be supported through the fund.
- 5.10.7 The fund can also be used to cover reasonable administration costs, including staff costs, web page design, IT system costs and promotional activity and content to raise the profile of the scheme. Administration costs for each Local Authority will be published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) along with details of how the fund has been spent within each area.

### Case Study 3

- Married couple with three young children. Wife works full-time, husband has been made redundant and applying for multiple jobs
- Husband is struggling with his mental health
- Requested support with food

### Outcomes:

- Foodbank referral made
- Supermarket vouchers issued
- Signposted to his GP and Healthy Minds
- Referral made to The Getaway Foundation for a well needed holiday for the family
- Christmas hamper and presents provided

Can I say a massive thank you please. Once again you have gone above and beyond. I had literally just told the girls we couldn't afford a proper Christmas dinner this year and then you called with that news! You will never know how grateful I am and they had such an amazing day! The food, the chocolate, all the toys - I was in literal tears at your generosity.

## 6. Proposed allocation of the Household Support Fund April to September 2024

- 6.1 Local Authorities are required to complete a delivery plan to outline their intentions for The Fund, clearly setting out their priorities and approach for use of the Fund, and to demonstrate the ways in which they intend to allocate their funding. The delivery plan will be sent to the Department for Work and Pensions by 10 May 2024.
- 6.2 Table 3 sets out the proposed allocation of the £2.4m that Buckinghamshire will receive from the new Household Support Fund.
- 6.3 These proposals are in line with Government guidance and are modelled around local



understanding of need across different categories, informed by local intelligence and previous delivery of support through the Helping Hand service.

6.4 Funding will only be used for schemes that are free to residents.

6.5 In addition to the allocations listed in Table 3, approximately £167,943 will be used to cover overhead costs in line with the government guidance.

6.6 Residents may be eligible for support across multiple categories listed in Table 3, and may be eligible to receive support on multiple occasions during the period.

**Table 3: Proposed Allocation of Household Support Fund April 2024 – September 2024**

Indicative Allocation	% of fund	Target group	Type of Support	Delivery mechanism
£230,000	10%	Covering all target groups	All types of support	Application-based service through the Helping Hand team
£955,500	40%	Children/young people: Free School Meals / Early Years Support / Schools / Colleges inc. Afghan/Ukraine refugees	Food Support	Digital food voucher during school holiday periods - May half-term - £15 Summer Holiday - £50 for full holiday
£200,000	8%	Covering all target groups	All types of support	Voluntary and Community organisations providing free support to residents, including Foodbanks
£250,000	10%	Covering all target groups	All types of support	Grant and/or Direct Support for Utility arrears through different schemes including Helping Hand Fund administered by Heart of Bucks.
£595,747	25%	Targeted support for priority cohorts, including those in Opportunity Bucks wards	All types of support	Digital Voucher or other appropriate support; expected to include approximately £200k to support Discretionary Housing Payments following reduction in funding from Department for Work & Pensions
£167,943	7%	Covering all target groups	Other costs	Administration costs, including staff costs, web page design, IT system costs and promotional activity and content to raise the profile of the scheme
£2,399,190	100%	Total grant funding allocation for Buckinghamshire		

Please note that allocations above are indicative. Actual spend will vary in line with resident need and emerging pressures during the period covered by the fund.



## **7. Summary**

- 7.1 Buckinghamshire Council is committed to ensuring that vulnerable residents who are most in need receive support via our Helping Hand service.
- 7.2 The support and intervention we have provided has benefitted many thousands of residents across the County and ensured that families and vulnerable people have had access to food, water, clothing, warmth and other essential items; and we have established a strong partnership across the county to ensure support is getting to people who need it most.
- 7.3 The proposals detailed in this paper aim to ensure that the new allocation of the Household Support Fund is utilised in a targeted and effective manner between now and the end of September, to reduce the impact of cost of living pressures for Buckinghamshire residents.

## **8. Legal and financial implications**

- 8.1 The Secretary of State determines the authorities to which grant is to be paid and the amount of grant to be paid.
- 8.2 The Household Support Fund Grant indicative funding allocation for Buckinghamshire Council for the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 is £2,399,190. Pursuant to section 31(3) and 31(4) of the Local Government Act 2003, the Secretary of State determines that the grant will be paid in respect of this period.
- 8.3 The grant is paid to the Authority to support eligible expenditure only, in line with guidance from the Department for Work and Pensions; and on the basis overall that the provision of grant funding remains subject to the Secretary of State's ongoing satisfaction that all grant usage by the Authority complies fully with the relevant conditions.
- 8.4 Funding is paid in arrears and following completion of a data return to the Department for Work and Pensions. The amount of grant funding Buckinghamshire receives from the allocation listed in 8.2 will be in line with the evidence provided in the data return. This approach is in line with previous grants and the Helping Hand, Business Intelligence and Finance teams will work together to complete the required returns.
- 8.5 County Councils and Unitary Authorities have a statutory duty regarding children and are generally responsible for Local Welfare Assistance. The Department for Work and Pensions is providing funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities (including Metropolitan Councils and London Boroughs), under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, to administer the scheme and provide assistance to households most in need.

8.6 Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out in guidance documentation provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. The expectation is that it should primarily be used to support households in the most need particularly those including children and pensioners who would otherwise struggle with energy bills, food, water bills, other essential household costs and housing costs in exceptional circumstances.

8.7 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and identified no negative impact from the proposals in this report.

## **9. Director of Legal & Democratic Services Comment**

9.1 The Director of Legal & Democratic Service has read and noted this report.

## **10. Section 151 Officer Comment**

10.1 The Section 151 Officer has read and noted this report.

## **11. Corporate Implications**

11.1 The provision of support to residents who are experiencing financial insecurity is aligned with the Corporate Plan priority to protect the vulnerable.

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

12.1 Not applicable – Portfolio Holder consulted.

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

13.1 Following this decision, a communications plan will be developed to continue to promote the Helping Hand service and raise awareness of support available to residents who are most in need.

## **14. Next steps and review**

14.1 Following this decision, the Helping Hand service will coordinate use of the Household Support Fund in line with the allocations set out in Table 4.

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

15.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) by 2 May 2024.



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination in the workplace, in the provision of services and in wider society.

The duty requires all public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people

Public bodies demonstrate this due regard in different ways, including producing robust equality impact assessments when considering changes to policies and services.

An EqIA enables us to check the potential impacts on residents and employees of our policies, services and projects. It's an opportunity to challenge how we currently do things.

Carrying out an EqIA should not create extra work; it should be part of your normal service planning process. Most of the information required should already be available to you through other work already undertaken e.g. service user monitoring, analysis of complaints and national research.

The purpose of an EqIA is to *take account* of equality as plans develop, to promote and assist the consideration of equalities issues arising in plans and proposals and to ensure that where possible adverse or disproportionate impacts are minimised and positive impacts are maximised. As such where possible an EqIA should be started at the outset of a project/proposal and continually be developed and reviewed until a final proposal is adopted. An EqIA should be used to ensure decision makers have all the information they need regarding potential impacts to ensure they have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making judgements.

Carrying out EqIAs should be an integral part of policy or service development/change and larger projects may need more than one EqIA if different areas are impacted by the change.

Any project that requires consultation will automatically require an EqIA.

All approved and signed EqIAs are recorded in a central register. Please email your completed draft EqIA to [equalities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk). Previous EqIAs can be made available for information upon request. For any questions or if you require support in completing your EqIA please contact Maria Damigos and Natalie Donhou Morley directly.



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

## Part A (Initial assessment) - Section 1 - Background

Proposal/Brief Title: **Government funding supporting Buckinghamshire Residents** – proposal for allocation of Household Support Fund grant

OneDrive link to report/policy:

Related policies:

Date: 18/04/24

Type of strategy, policy, project or service: Proposal for use of Government funding to support Buckinghamshire residents who are most in need

Please tick one of the following:

- Existing**
- New or proposed
- Changing, update or revision
- Other (please explain)

This assessment was created by:

Name: Katie Galvin

Job Title: Strategic Lead – Financial Insecurity

Email address: [katie.galvin@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:katie.galvin@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

To provide support to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with significantly rising living costs

As per Government guidance, the Household Support Fund can be used to cover:

- Energy bills relating to heating, cooking or lighting; and water bills
- Support with food costs either through vouchers or cash.
- Other household essentials – this may include those linked to energy and water, for example sanitary products, boiler repair or servicing, warm clothing, purchase of fridge/freezers; or for wider essentials, for example broadband costs, phone costs, clothing, transport-related costs such as car repairs.
- Housing costs can be covered in exceptional circumstances and where existing housing schemes do not meet this exceptional need. For example, the fund cannot be used to provide mortgage support but can be used to cover historic rent arrears that have been built up prior to receipt of other benefits.



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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- To cover reasonable administration costs, including staff costs, web page design, IT system costs and promotional activity and content to raise the profile of the scheme.
- Provide supplementary advice services to award recipients, including debt and benefit advice, where considered appropriate. Guidance indicates that there needs to be a connection between the funding provided for advice services and the practical support provided under the Household Support Fund.
- As before, the fund cannot be used to provide mortgage support.. Our proposals are in line with Government Guidance and are modelled around local understanding of need across different categories, informed by local intelligence and previous delivery of the funds. Funding will only be used for schemes that are free of charge for residents.

## **What outcomes do we want to achieve?**

To provide appropriate support and assistance to vulnerable households as per the guidance from central government.

## **Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence? No**

**Please explain your answer:** This is a further grant fund made available from Government to provide support to Buckinghamshire residents who are most in need.

## **Does this proposal plan to reduce a service, activity or presence? No**

**Please explain your answer:** as above

## **Does this proposal plan to introduce, review or change a policy, strategy or procedure? No**

**Please explain your answer:** No expected impact

## **Does this proposal affect service users and/or customers, or the wider community? Yes**

**Please explain your answer:** Full details are set out in associated reports. The proposed allocation of this funding is in line with Government guidance and local intelligence. Applications are open to all and promoted through a variety of avenues.

## **Does this proposal affect employees? No**



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**Please explain your answer:** No expected impact

**Will employees require training to deliver this proposal?** No

**Please explain your answer:** No expected impact as already in place to deal with previous funding

**Has any engagement /consultation been carried out, or is planned in the future?** No, although there is information gathering and consideration of information which we may receive and which helps to inform provision.

**Please explain your answer:** Delivery is in line with Government guidance, no requirement to consult on this proposal. However, schools are regular consultees and sharer of information and in addition we work closely with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) who are engaged in frontline delivery. A proportion of the funds are recommended to be used for VCS schemes and activities.

## Section 2 - Impacts

Please highlight potential impacts (including unintended impacts or consequences) for each protected characteristic\*/equality groups below. Where there are negative or positive impacts please give more details of the impact. Where the impacts are unclear please explain why. Age\*

<b>Positive</b>	Negative	Unclear	None
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Internal knowledge indicates that age is not a significant factor in impact on finances. However where age is relevant this will be part of the decision/application process.

Where age can be utilised to indicate need within a household, assistance is being provided without application, for example families with children receiving free school meal support will be provided with specific support (see associated reports).

The funding process has been made as accessible as possible for all applicants. Older applicants may have difficulty with technology and there are a variety of application options to address this (direct online application, telephone call applications, representative application).

Disability\*

<b>Positive</b>	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: Government information has confirmed that those with disabilities are more likely to be affected by the current crisis and guidance is that this cohort should be



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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targeted for support under the fund. We are also aware that residents with disabilities are more likely to be unable to increase their income through work, to be within a low income household or in receipt of benefits and therefore may be more likely to be eligible to benefit from the fund, in line with Government guidance. We note this as a positive impact in this assessment. Accessibility for those with disabilities has also been considered and variable options for take up have been provided (see above).

## Pregnancy & maternity\*

**Positive**                      Negative                      Unclear                      None

Details: Parents of very young children or those who are pregnant may be in low income households that cannot increase their income through work and support can therefore be a positive impact in this assessment

## Race & Ethnicity\*

Positive                      Negative                      **Unclear**                      None

Details: The scheme is targeted at providing support to individuals who are financially vulnerable and most in need across the County. There is no expectation that the funding available will be used disproportionately dependent on race or ethnicity. There may however be issues with the knowledge, opportunity and ability to apply/access the funding due to language or cultural barriers. We actively engage with the Voluntary and Community Sector to support different communities and use their knowledge to improve our offers and also support those organisations. This may include extra positive support for some communities to ensure equality where there are localised disproportionate effects.

It is known from local analysis that the highest proportions of individuals who are financially vulnerable, and/or experiencing poverty, are located in parts of Wycombe, Aylesbury and Chesham (Opportunity Bucks wards). Ethnicity monitoring data is available and analysis can be undertaken if required.

If any disproportionate effects or under representation appears, measures will be introduced to mitigate.

In relation to refugees or migrants experiencing extra financial hardships, there are targeted sources of assistance available however they may still be eligible for this funding and ongoing monitoring is expected to assist in recognising this.

Data relating to this will be cross referenced when analysis is conducted.

## Marriage & Civil Partnership\*

Positive                      Negative                      Unclear                      **None**

Details:



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## Religion & Belief\*

Positive	Negative	<b>Unclear</b>	None
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Details: The scheme is targeted at providing support to individuals who are financially vulnerable and most in need across the County. There is no expectation that the funding available will be used disproportionately dependent on religion or belief however the comments above regarding access may be relevant and this will be kept under review. We are therefore positively engaging with faith based Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to reach such cohorts as we are aware from internal experience that these can have a positive effect where there may be a barrier to access from this cohort.

## Sex\*

Positive	Negative	<b>Unclear</b>	None
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Details:

It is recognised that men are more likely to be homeless than women and are more likely to result in financial hardship regardless of the underlying reasons. Whilst there are other supportive schemes for homelessness, all applications under this scheme will be considered on an individual basis taking into account circumstances whilst having regard to the parameters and criteria set by government.

## Sexual Orientation\*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b>None</b>
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Details:

## Gender Reassignment\*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b>None</b>
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Details:

## Gender identity

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b>None</b>
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Details:

## Carers

<b>Positive</b>	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: Guidance requires carers to be positively considered within this scheme. It is expected that there will be a positive impact on carers and especially unpaid carers. Carers will include those looking after others with different protected characteristics and





# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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this scheme will be of overall benefit. We are engaging with, and will target, specific cohorts and carer support organisations.

## Rural isolation

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b>None</b>
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Details: Residents in rural areas may experience higher fuel poverty, although this alone will not always drive a requirement to access support from the Household Support Fund and will be related to a number of factors including income, fuel type, etc. As all circumstances will be taken into account it is not expected that there will be any specific disproportionate effect on this group. Geographic data will be collected and monitored for residents accessing support from the service.

## Single parent families

<b>Positive</b>	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: This cohort is expected to have intersectionality with other protected characteristics but as all circumstances, including childcare responsibilities, will be taken into account it is therefore expected that there will be a positive effect on this group. Please see above/associated reports regarding support for families in receipt of free school meal support.

## Poverty (social & economic deprivation)

<b>Positive</b>	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: The scheme is targeted at providing support to individuals and households suffering financial issues for whatever reason and therefore overall this is considered to be a positive impact.

## Military families / veterans

Positive	Negative	<b>Unclear</b>	None
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Details: it is recognised that those leaving the military are more likely to be male and may be more likely to suffer financial hardship, possibly in conjunction with other protected characteristics. We will take account of all circumstances when considering funding allocation. We currently do not collect specific statistics in this regard but will endeavour to keep this under review and utilise any general intelligence gathered to help inform.

### Section 3 – Is a full assessment required?

If you have answered yes to any of the initial assessment questions in section 1 of this EqIA, or have indicated a negative or unclear impact in section 2, it is likely you will need



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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**to complete part B of the EqIA form. Should you need guidance as to whether a full EqIA is needed at this time please contact Maria Damigos or Natalie Donhou Morley before continuing.**

Following completion of part A, is part B completion required?

Yes

No

Explain your answer:

Utilisation of the Household Support Fund will be monitored and a full assessment will be completed if required at a later date.

The application and funding process has always been on the basis set out in the overall fund requirements from the Government and applications and individual circumstances, which include relevant protected characteristics. These are carefully considered to establish individual need. It is recognised that those households which are made up of individuals or individual applicants with protected characteristics are more likely to come within the cohort we are seeking to assist. In equalities terms it is considered that there is a positive benefit for those groups as outlined above. Previously, funding criteria was more prescriptive and now the Council has more flexibility to target those most in need without restriction.

Any barriers relating to accessing support from the fund are being considered as part of the communications for the scheme and work is being carried out to ensure that there is widespread reach and take up to ensure equal opportunity in this regard. This is supported by professionals such as probation officers and third sector organisations who we are working with, as well as the voluntary and community sector, and a number of ways to access including from other organisations on our behalf.

The consideration of merit and taking into account any relevant equalities matters during the application/funding/support process ensures there is no unlawful discrimination and encourages good relations among the whole community. To assist with this, equality monitoring has been introduced. This will be kept under review to allow measures to mitigate any equalities issues which are identified to be considered and introduced where appropriate.

Communications have developed a robust communications plan to target particular communities and those with protected characteristics where there may be barriers to engagement. This is being done to ensure early knowledge and access rather than exacerbating issues and hardship.

In addition, we will make deadlines clear on the website to ensure people not leaving applications too late – should deadlines be missed by applicants other funding to support should be utilised where possible.



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The scheme will be delivered in line with the strict criteria set by Government, and support through the scheme will be provided to residents who are in need. We will monitor our approach in line with the reporting requirements back to DWP, as well as local monitoring to ensure we are aware of which cohorts are accessing this support.

**Have you completed an DPIA for this project/change?** Whilst personal data, including some special category data, is required in order to ensure correct processing and allocation of funding, this is being done in compliance with the data protection legislation and using current technology with appropriate safeguards both in terms of process and storage.

(As you are completing an EqIA, you may also require a DPIA - for more information please contact [dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk))

## **Section 4 – Sign off (Only complete when NOT completing Part B)**

Officer completing this assessment: Katie Galvin Date: 22/04/24

Equality advice sought from: Natalie Donhou Morely and Maria Damigos Date: 23/04/2024

Service Director sign off: Matt Everitt Date: 24/04/2024

Next review Date: 01/04/2025

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## Report to Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	7 May 2024
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee Annual Report 2023-24</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	John Chilver, Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Richard Ambrose – <a href="mailto:Richard.ambrose@buckinghamshire.gov.uk">Richard.ambrose@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	Not ward specific
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Cabinet are asked to note the Annual Report of the Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee.</b>
<b>Reason for recommendation:</b>	It is considered good practice for the Shareholder Committee to report annually to Cabinet on the work it has undertaken over the previous municipal year.

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The role of the Shareholder Committee is to ensure that the Council's companies and limited liability partnerships act in the interests of the Council as shareholder and that best practice is being adhered to in delivering statutory arrangements. In doing so, the Committee contributes to the proper governance of the Council's subsidiaries. This added level of governance continues to be vitally important in the context of the financial challenges many local authorities and local authority companies have faced over recent years and continue to face. Understanding the risks and performance associated with wholly or jointly owned companies is a key task of the Committee.
- 1.2 This is the second year of operation of the Shareholder Committee and producing an annual report to reflect the work and outcomes achieved by the Committee throughout 2023-24 is considered good practice.
- 1.3 It should be noted that Members of the Shareholder Committee are not directors, and do not have any direct involvement, in any of the subsidiary bodies.

## **2. Shareholder Committee – Background and Annual Report 2023/24**

- 2.1 The creation of the Shareholder Committee was agreed by Cabinet in March 2022 to carry out the delegated shareholder responsibilities of the Council. The Shareholder Committee forms part of the overall governance arrangements for Buckinghamshire Council in relation to companies and other legal entities which are wholly or partly owned or controlled by the Council (including where such control comes about indirectly, such as via a loan agreement). Buckinghamshire Council has a number of mainly property based subsidiary companies and limited liability partnerships in place which were inherited from legacy Councils.
- 2.2 The Committee has met four times during the 2023-24 period. The Committee has focused on and undertaken a number of key pieces of work. This includes reviewing business plans and the financial positions of each company/joint venture as well as reviewing best practice regularly at each meeting and undertaking annual reviews of company articles of association and the Committee Terms of Reference.
- 2.3 During the year the Committee has recommended the creation of a pool of trained potential future directors of companies, all of whom have attended training with an external provider. The Committee has also agreed the scope and considered findings of an internal audit as well as strengthening risk management arrangements of the companies.
- 2.4 In addition to maintaining an oversight of key risks and governance issues, the Committee's priorities for 2024-25 include a focus on the future operations of the companies, to assess the benefits the companies bring to the Council and whether there are additional financial savings which could be achieved. The Committee will also continuously review best practice / learning from other local authority companies and review progress against its action plan which takes in to account the findings from the internal audit undertaken.
- 2.5 The 2023-24 Annual report is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.6 A confidential appendix, outlining each of the entity's key risks and issues is attached at **Appendix 2**.

## **3. Other options considered**

- 3.1 Not applicable

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

- 4.1 None specific, although understanding the financial position of each company has been a key part of the Committee's focus. Any decision around the winding up of any

of the entities would have significant financial implications and legal issues to consider. These would be fully considered and reported to Cabinet in any such instance. The Committee has followed best practice guidance throughout the year.

## **5. Corporate implications**

- 5.1 None. The formation of the Shareholder Committee was consistent with guidance issued by recognised bodies such as CIPFA and the best practice advice in the Local Authorities Companies Review Guidance led by Max Caller, Strategic Adviser and Former Lead Inspector for HM Government.

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

- 6.1 The annual report was presented to the Shareholder Committee in its draft form on 13 March 2024. Comments and feedback from the Shareholder Committee have been incorporated into the final version of the annual report.

## **7. Next steps and review**

- 7.1 The Forward Plan of work for 2024-25 is currently being formalised, this work will include, amongst other things, the future aims and purposes of each entity, the six-monthly review of company risk registers, receiving 2023-24 financial statements, developing measures to help assess the performance and financial standing of the entities, regularly reviewing best practice and reviewing 2025-26 Business Plans.
- 7.2 The Committee has a minimum of four meetings planned for the ensuing Municipal Year and will produce a further Annual Report for Cabinet in May 2025, escalating anything as appropriate in the meantime.

## **8. Background papers**

[Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee Papers](#)

[Local authority company review guidance 2023](#)

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# **Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee Annual Report 2023/24**

Date: 7 May 2024

## Foreword

As Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee, I am pleased to present our second annual report to Cabinet. I would like to record my thanks to fellow Cabinet colleagues, who are Members of the Committee, for their valuable input and effective questioning of our subsidiary bodies as well as to the supporting officers and those representatives from the respective companies/joint ventures who have attended meetings and answered our many challenging questions and requests for information.

On behalf of the Cabinet, the Committee carries out the shareholder responsibilities of the Council. In doing so it strengthens the proper governance of the Council's subsidiaries, an area ever more important in the economic climate local authorities currently find themselves in. Amongst a range of responsibilities, the Committee safeguards the Council's interests by providing effective oversight of each subsidiary, particularly in respect of their business plans, finances and other high-risk areas; the Committee ensures that policies and boundaries established by the Council are adhered to; and that whilst the Committee has no direct operational input, due diligence is undertaken on each company to ensure liabilities are known and accounted for.

This report summarises the main areas which have been reviewed and challenged throughout the year. During the year, the work of the Committee has included reviewing best practice in relation to company governance, agreeing the scope of an internal audit and considering the resulting recommendations, ensuring entities have established risk registers, approving the creation of a now established pool of potential future company Directors, and undertaking annual reviews of company Articles of Association and the Committee's Terms of Reference. The Committee has also reviewed each subsidiary's Business Plans for the forthcoming year along with their respective financial positions, with a focus on the future direction of the subsidiaries to ensure that each has a clear purpose and can deliver benefits to the Council, and ultimately Buckinghamshire's residents.

**Councillor John Chilver**  
**Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Shareholder Committee**



**Councillor John Chilver,**  
Chairman of the  
Shareholder Committee  
& Cabinet Member for  
Accessible Housing and  
Resources

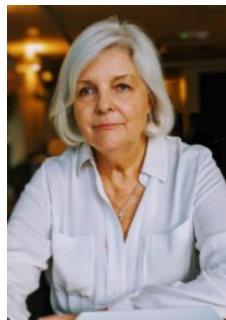
## Committee Members



**Councillor John Chilver**,  
Chairman of the  
Shareholder Committee  
& Cabinet Member for  
Accessible Housing and  
Resources



**Councillor Steve  
Broadbent**, Deputy  
Leader and Cabinet  
Member for Transport



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



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

## Introduction and Background

The Shareholder Committee has a formal delegation from Cabinet to fulfil the Council's responsibilities as the shareholder in relation to companies and other legal entities which are wholly or partly owned or controlled by the Council (including where such control comes about indirectly, such as via a loan agreement). In doing so, the Committee forms part of the overall company governance arrangements for Buckinghamshire Council. The Council has a number of mainly property based subsidiary companies and limited liability partnerships in place. The Committee focuses on Aylesbury Vale Estates, a joint venture with Akeman Asset Management, Consilio Property Limited, and Buckinghamshire Advantage, which was originally the operational arm of the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The Committee also has oversight of London Road Business Park Management Ltd. Each of the subsidiary companies were established by legacy Councils prior to the unitary authority coming into effect in April 2020.

Members of the Shareholder Committee are not directors, and do not have any direct involvement, in any of the subsidiary bodies. The Committee aims to ensure that the Council's companies and limited liability partnerships act in the interests of the Council as shareholder, receive assurance that best practice is being adhered to in delivering statutory arrangements and that investment returns and/or what the businesses offer will help to ensure that the Council continues to deliver quality services to our residents.

Audit reports coming out of other local authority arrangements relating to wholly or partly owned companies stress the need to ensure that sufficient checks and balances are in place and in particular that risks are appropriately managed, that there is an effective scrutiny function and that challenge of political priorities by both members and officers is seen as a positive. This provides an important message that all councils who have established commercial entities should be alive to what is referred to as “institutional blindness”. The Council also recognised that external auditors had issued public interest reports where local authority companies had performed poorly and governance arrangements were found to be inadequate.

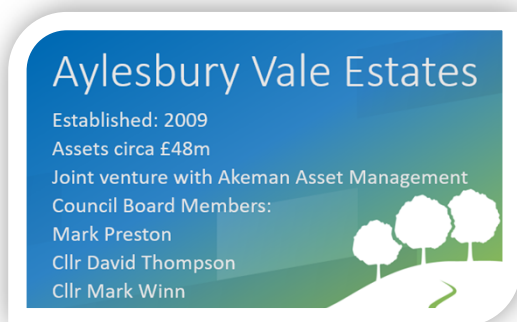
The creation of the Shareholder Committee in March 2022 was consistent with guidance issued by recognised bodies such as CIPFA and the best practice advice in the Local Authorities Company Review Guidance led by Max Caller, Strategic Adviser and Former Lead Inspector for HM Government.



## Areas the Committee has focused on in 2023-24

The Shareholder Committee met four times during the 2023-24 period. With this being the second year that the Committee has operated, the Committee was able to plan its work programme effectively to review key areas identified throughout its inaugural year.

The Committee has again reviewed the annual business plans and financial positions of each of the subsidiary companies, including loan structures. In addition, the Committee has focused on best practice in terms of company governance, ensuring companies have established risk registers, and that there is resilience through having a pool of potential future company directors. The potential pool of directors have since attended a training session covering the role of directors and how successful companies should operate. The Committee has also undertaken an annual review of articles of association and the Committee’s terms of reference.



**Aylesbury Vale Estates**  
 Established: 2009  
 Assets circa £48m  
 Joint venture with Akeman Asset Management  
 Council Board Members:  
 Mark Preston  
 Cllr David Thompson  
 Cllr Mark Winn



**Consilio Property Ltd.**  
 Established: 2017  
 Assets circa £30m  
 Wholly owned by Buckinghamshire Council  
 Directors:  
 Nigel Dicker  
 David Pearce



**Buckinghamshire Advantage**  
 Established 2013  
 Wholly owned by Buckinghamshire Council  
 Assets circa £360k  
 Directors:  
 Cllr Steve Bowles  
 Richard Harrington  
 Lisa Michelson

**Best Practice Review and Action Plan – Governance**

Since 2021, a body of best practice has been developed for local authority company governance. This followed Government inspections at some local authorities. A resulting toolkit, *Local Authority Company Review Guidance* sets out a checklist for evidencing good governance for councils’ commercial entities. During the year the Committee has assessed the Council’s entity arrangements against this checklist highlighting compliance and areas for further action.

The creation and conduct of the Shareholder Committee since 2022 has greatly improved the Council’s governance of its entities. The extent of current compliance with best practice has been clear and can be viewed within Committee agendas and minutes. This includes areas such as proactively reviewing company business plans, developing conflicts of interest guidance, arranging core training, and establishing processes for the appointment of directors. Each of the 17 areas identified in the checklist have been RAG rated (Red, Amber, Green), with the Amber and Red areas indicating where the Committee can usefully target further work. The Committee undertakes a review of the Amber and Red items as part of the Committee’s Action Plan and reviews progress updates against actions at each meeting. As part of the assessment, an internal audit was arranged covering both the entities operations and the Council’s responsibilities in terms of ensuring good oversight and assurance of the entities.

**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE****1) Council Governance Arrangements**

Evidence	What should you be able to find?	What evidence have you found?	RAG Rating	Actions Recommended	Responsible person/ body
<b>Governance aims</b>					
<b>C1</b> There should be evidence that the council and senior management recognise the importance of establishing appropriate and proportionate governance arrangements for the oversight of entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The council has sufficient control to ensure that its investment can be obtained and that the activities of the entity are aligned with the values and strategic objectives of the council</li> <li>“Teckal” companies demonstrate compliance with relevant exemption requirements under EU procurement law</li> </ul>	<p>Established specific governance structure in March 2022, as recommended by Max Caller: a Shareholder Committee of the Cabinet to represent the Council’s interests and to effect clear oversight of the entities (meets quarterly).</p> <p>The committee approves the annual business plans of the entities.</p> <p>Leadership Team and Cabinet responded to ‘best practice’ reports arising from the experience of other authorities.</p>	G	None	CMT, Cabinet
<b>C2</b> There should be evidence of a culture of challenge and clarity relating to the purpose, efficiency,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a culture of challenge</li> <li>There is a clarity of purpose</li> <li>The entity has clear objectives</li> <li>The entity has sufficient freedoms to achieve its objectives</li> </ul>	<p>Terms of reference of the Shareholder Committee specifically envisage a check and challenge role.</p> <p>Borne out in the action plan of the Committee and the challenge sessions with company</p>	G	None	Shareholder Committee

*Example page above of the Shareholder Committee’s Evidence checklist*

## Internal Audit of Subsidiary Bodies

Closely linked to the Best Practice review, the Committee agreed the scope of an internal audit. This audit aligned to what was deemed best practice and covered both the entities operations and the Council’s responsibilities in terms of ensuring good oversight and assurance of the entities. The internal audit resulted in a ‘reasonable’ assurance opinion with the recommendations and findings being added to the Committee’s action plan. These findings included the importance of companies holding up to date articles of association which must be fit for purpose, competent and enforceable; the need for entities to have a clear set of Key Performance Indicators that come out of the business planning process and can be monitored by the Council within the context of the governance framework; a lack of purpose and vision for each entity, particularly in relation to Consilio and Buckinghamshire Advantage; and no register of interests being held for either Buckinghamshire Advantage or Aylesbury Vale Estates. These findings will inform the areas of focus for the Committee moving into the next municipal year.

## Business Plans and Statements of Accounts

In addition to challenging each company/joint venture on performance against their existing Business Plans, the Committee has dedicated time in its final meeting of the 2023-24 year to review the Business Plans for the upcoming financial year and challenged Directors/Board

Members on the respective companies' intentions for the forthcoming year(s). Discussions have been held with Directors/Board Members of Aylesbury Vale Estates and Buckinghamshire Advantage, whilst Consilio Property Limited's business plan will be reviewed in June 2024.



Through discussions and reports provided, the Committee has a solid understanding of the loan structures, terms and repayments for each company/joint venture, having open discussions around ways each respective company's leadership could approach their open loans. The Committee has also ensured it has knowledge of occupancy levels and tenancy issues of different sites owned by the respective companies.

Whilst it is for the Board and Directors to set the path they wish the businesses to take, the Committee has provided input and feedback on future plans to ensure that they align to Council priorities. Throughout the year, the Committee also reviewed each of the companies' financial accounts for 2022/23.

**Members' report and financial statements**

For the year ended 31 March 2023

### Training and Pool of Directors

Following on from recommendations made by the Committee in the previous municipal year, a pool of potential Directors has been established during 2023/24, along with the principles and outline approach to be used to appoint Directors to subsidiary bodies. Having this pool means that as vacancies arise there is a ready source of potential new Directors who can be quickly appointed. The identified pool of future appropriate Directors attended a training session in October 2023, this session covered the role of Directors and how successful companies should operate.

Many failings within other authorities have been as a direct result of failings of their wholly owned companies so it is critical that directors have the right skills and experience to fulfil their duties, that they fully understand their role and that the governance arrangements for overseeing companies are appropriate. As such, in establishing the pool, the Committee was clear that Directors should possess skills relevant to the companies aims and purpose; that there should not be any obvious or direct conflicts with the persons role at the council; and that there should be a mix of elected Members and Senior Officers.



Director appointments are reviewed annually by the Committee to ensure that their skillsets are appropriate for the companies aims and objectives, and that there are no conflicts with their day-to-day roles as officers and elected members. All Members of the Committee and Directors will attend refresher training in 2024/25.

## Risk Registers

An area the Committee has been cogniscent of is the importance of respective companies risks being identified, monitored and managed appropriately. When formulating the work programme for the year, Risk Registers were identified as a key area to review – primarily, to ensure that the subsidiary companies held their own risk registers and then, to ensure that risks were being identified, rated appropriately, had the applicable internal controls and were being monitored regularly by Directors.



The Committee has reviewed each of the companies newly established risk registers during 2023/24, at which point the quality and relevance to the activities undertaken by each entity was mixed. As a result of the Committee’s scrutiny, these have been improved and will be reviewed half yearly moving forward.

## Annual Reviews – Articles of Association and Terms of Reference

Another aspect of best practice guidance is that each local authority company/entity “should have articles of association, documenting its constitution and addressing purpose, conduct of meetings and appointment of directors” or ‘member’s agreement’ with the Council as shareholder making clear the respective roles. A review has been undertaken which considered whether the documents, in each case, meet this requirement, having appropriate coverage for:

- a. The purpose of the entity
- b. The conduct of meetings
- c. The appointment of directors

The existing documents have been reviewed by the Committee for Aylesbury Vale Estates, Buckinghamshire Advantage, Consilio, and London Road Business Park Management Ltd. and the Committee has considered how the best practice criteria was met and identified where improvements can be made. The articles vary in format and are reflective of the circumstances of their origin under the legacy councils, establishing the purpose of the company is important to be articulated clearly as this enables the Committee – and the Cabinet – to fulfil its periodic responsibility to verify that the purpose of the companies aligns



with the Council’s objectives. Similarly, the Committee recognises that each can be updated explicitly to reflect that ‘Buckinghamshire Council’ has succeeded the legacy council as the local authority ‘member’ of the company. Work is now underway with the Directors of each entity to identify the necessary changes to the Articles such as reflecting the purpose of the body and to bring the documents up to date. This was an area also picked up through the internal audit of companies’ governance.

A review of the Committee’s Terms of Reference has also been undertaken and overall the view was taken that these remain fit for purpose, with only minor amendments made to add clarity to what was effectively already happening in practice. This included areas such as tightening the wording around supporting officers attending meetings in terms of avoiding conflicts of interests and the winding up of a company being deemed a significant decision which should be reported through to the Leader and Cabinet following consideration by the Shareholder Committee. The Committee also recommended the addition of reference to company insolvency and the relevant responsibilities around informing the Shareholder Committee at the earliest opportunity when this is foreseen.

<b>BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE</b>	
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	
<b>1. OVERVIEW</b>	
1.1	The Shareholder Committee forms part of the overall governance arrangements for Buckinghamshire Council (“the Council”) in relation to companies and other legal entities which are wholly or partly owned or controlled by the Council (including where such control comes about indirectly, such as via a loan agreement) (each a “Subsidiary” and together the “Subsidiaries”).
<b>2. CONSTITUTION</b>	
2.1	The members of the Shareholder Committee will be set to 4 Cabinet Members consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1.1 Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources (as Chair);</li> <li>2.1.2 Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration</li> <li>2.1.3 Two other Cabinet Members to be determined by Cabinet</li> </ul>
2.2	Each Shareholder Committee member may nominate an alternate Cabinet Member to attend a meeting in their place provided that said Member is not a Board Member of any of the subsidiaries and thus does not have a conflict of interest.
2.3	The Shareholder Committee will be supported by Council officers as advisors primarily consisting of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.3.1 Section 151 officer</li> <li>2.3.2 Director of Property and Assets</li> <li>2.3.3 Director of Major Projects</li> <li>2.3.4 Chief Legal Officer or representative</li> <li>2.3.5 Other such officers as may be required including an officer/Member from the service the company or JV is supporting or suitably experienced non-Executive Director.</li> </ul>
2.4	Committee advisory officer may nominate an alternate officer to attend a meeting in their place <u>provided that said officer is not a Board Member of any of the subsidiaries and thus does not have a conflict of interest.</u>
2.5	The Shareholder Committee will appoint the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources as Chair of the Shareholder Committee. If the Chair is not present at the start of a meeting of the Shareholder Committee, those members present will appoint one of the members present to chair that meeting.
2.6	Additional advisors, who do not need to be officers or members of the Council, may be invited to attend the Shareholder Committee as required.
2.7	The Committee will need to follow and have regard to the rules set out in the Constitution including the finance procedure rules.

## The year to come and 2024-25 priorities

The Shareholder Committee has undertaken vitally important work over the past year, with governance and oversight of local authority companies in the current economic climate continuing to be a critical area of focus. This work will continue in to 2024-25, with the Committee continuing to ensure that each entity has satisfactory governance arrangements, performance, and effective risk management. Each entity will face its own challenges, and understanding the future of each and their future role and purpose will be a key focus of the Committee. The Committee acknowledges that the respective companies need to offer benefits to the Council, which the Council itself is unable to deliver on its own. Buckinghamshire Advantage is centred on the Woodlands project, and once this project is completed will need to make important decisions around its future.

The Committee’s priorities for 2024-25, which are captured within the Committee’s action plan include a continuous review of governance best practice; strengthening risk management arrangements of the companies through risk register reviews; assessing performance against business plans; considering the future direction of entities; developing

measures for the Council to assess company performance; entities development of their key performance indicators for the Committee to review and challenge; and performing its annual reviews in respect of Director appointments and Articles of Association.

The Committee, acting as Shareholders, will continue to ensure that the Council's interests are safeguarded, and ultimately best value is achieved for residents and businesses of Buckinghamshire.



## Report for Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Aylesbury Town Centre Public Realm Scheme</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Cllr Martin Tett (Leader), Cllr Peter Strachan Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, Cllr Rachael Matthews Deputy Portfolio Holder for Town Centre Regeneration, Cllr Steve Broadbent Cabinet Member for Transport, Cllr John Chilver Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing & Resources
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Richard Harrington, Service Director: Economy & Skills
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	Aylesbury North
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p><b>To note the progress of the improvement works for Market Square, Kingsbury (TRO) and Cambridge Street.</b></p> <p><b>To agree the transfer of the remaining capital budget of £4.772m (former Kingsbury and Market Public Realm scheme) to the Aylesbury Public Realm scheme (Gala Bingo Hall and the northern end of Exchange Street Car Park).</b></p> <p><b>To agree the recommended preferred option (5) meanwhile use and public realm at the northern end of Exchange Street car park together with long term mixed use development situated on the footprint of the former Gala Bingo Hall.</b></p> <p><b>To release the budget of £1,382,400 to fund the demolition of Gala Bingo Hall and professional fees associated with the demolition and the scheme development of the meanwhile use, public realm, walkway and temporary car parking.</b></p>

**To note a future decision will come back to Cabinet once a full business case and design work has been undertaken.**

**To provide delegated authority to the Service Director for Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration for the following:**

**To procure and undertake all relevant workstreams that facilitate the advanced demolition works and scheme development as set out in the report.**

**To undertake a procurement exercise for a demolition contractor and to then subsequently enter into a demolition contract to advance the demolition works with the preferred contractor and to enter into any necessary agreements with adjoining landowners to facilitate the demolition works of Gala Bingo Hall.**

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides a progress update on the improvement works for Market Square, Kingsbury and Cambridge Street and seeks authority to transfer the capital funding from the Kingsbury & Market Square public realm scheme to the new Aylesbury Public Realm scheme which progresses the ambitions of the Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy.
- 1.2 In addition, authority is sought to advance the demolition of the former Gala Bingo Hall situated on the High Street and progress with the scheme development of a meanwhile use and public realm on the northern end of Exchange street car park as set out in this report.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 With the adoption of the Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy in Autumn 2023, a key priority for regeneration is the redevelopment of the former Gala Bingo Hall situated on the High Street. This is aimed at regenerating the High Street and enabling better connectivity with the successful Exchange area and improving footfall in this part of the town centre.
- 2.2 In 2023, a design and cost review of the former Kingsbury and Market Square public realm scheme was undertaken. The review concluded that the scheme no longer offered value for money. This project seeks to maximise impact of the funding available following the improvement works on Market Square, Cambridge Street and

Kingsbury (TRO) to an alternative Public Realm scheme which includes the regeneration of the former Gala Bingo Hall.

- 2.3 This new scheme has the potential to have a greater impact on the town centre.
- 2.4 It should be noted that, within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP), Exchange Street and Waterside North car parks are highlighted as sites designated for long term regeneration.

### **3. Progress to Date – Aylesbury Town Centre Public Realm (Improvement Works)**

#### **Market Square & Cambridge Street – Improvement Works**

- 3.1 Following the design and cost review of the Kingsbury and Market Square public realm scheme it was concluded that Market Square and Cambridge Street would benefit from some critical and visible improvement works. These works are integral to the delivery of the wider Aylesbury Public Realm proposals and will improve the environment in these areas.
- 3.2 The proposed improvement works to Market Square and Cambridge Street have been approved by Leader Key Decision and the Traffic Regulation Orders for Kingsbury are also subject to a Leader Key Decision. These works are a series of improvements in Aylesbury town centre and form part of the wider Aylesbury Public Realm scheme.:
- **Power Upgrade (Market Square)** - increasing power availability to many more market stalls, allowing for more traders and variety with a new layout. Greater power capacity will also provide scope for more varied and bespoke public events, attracting more residents and visitors to the area.
  - **Lighting enhancements (Market Square)** - including a newly designed lighting scheme to celebrate and illuminate the historic features of the square, also restoring power to historic lanterns and lighting the clock face on Market Tower.
  - **Cleaning and repair works** - to the statues and monuments in Market Square.
  - **Public realm improvements to Cambridge Street** - to introduce a permanent pedestrianised section with brand new street surface and lighting.
  - **Making permanent the Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders in Aylesbury Town Centre** - to make the temporary traffic orders in Market Street, George Street, Cambridge Street and Kingsbury permanent. The statutory consultation period for the Traffic Regulation Orders took place in February 2024. The feedback from the consultation will be presented in a Leader Key Decision Report to agree and implement the new Traffic Regulation Orders.

#### **4. Gala Bingo & Exchange Street Car Park**

- 4.1 Following a cost and design review exercise on the former Kingsbury and Market Square public realm scheme, it was determined that the scheme was no longer viable in the current financial climate and did not offer value for money. This new scheme has been developed to regenerate the high street and drive increased footfall to the town centre by creating an exciting new provision whilst addressing the deteriorating former Gala Bingo Hall. It will create a seamless connection with the Exchange area development which has been hugely successful.
- 4.2 The strategic positioning of the Exchange Street car park next to the Gala Bingo Hall Site offers the opportunity to deliver a wider regeneration project which includes a new walkway connection to the High Street, enhanced public realm and meanwhile use (new business spaces). The proposed new walkway link to the High Street will greatly improve walking and connectivity around the town centre which in turn would enhance economic activity.

##### **Meanwhile Use**

- 4.3 Purchased for regeneration purposes some years ago, the Gala Bingo Hall has remained empty with no viable uses identified. Given the poor condition of the building it was identified as a priority for action in the Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy. As part of a wider site including the Exchange Street car park an opportunity area was identified as a location for development in the long term with scope in the medium term to make use of the space for the benefit of community cohesion, placemaking and enterprise in what is known as meanwhile use activity.
- 4.4 Meanwhile use opportunities enhance the town centre by offering affordable and flexible easy access space for startup businesses and community enterprises.
- 4.5 The implementation of meanwhile use with high quality public realm can also create a multipurpose space, allowing for the provision of pop-up events which, if surrounded by independent retailers and food & beverage, would make the town centre attractive and popular to visit helping tackling issues of low footfall in the evenings and Sundays.
- 4.6 In November 2023, a meanwhile use viability study gave a high-level assessment of whether a potential meanwhile use in the town centre would be appropriate. It concluded that a mixed-use scheme in the heart of the town centre would be greatly received.
- 4.7 Following this work a specialised Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) was undertaken to understand the benefits of the various delivery options ranging from a do nothing option (option 1) to a meanwhile use together with long term development on the Gala Bingo site (option 5). These options are shown in confidential appendix B,

each option was tested against key criteria including the number of jobs created, value for money, benefits to society and added social value.

4.8 Below are examples of meanwhile business units elsewhere in the Southeast for illustrative purposes.



### Options

4.9 Each of the options has been appraised to establish the number of direct and indirect jobs created. This was informed by the consultants specialised knowledge of employment numbers produced on schemes of a similar nature in the Southeast. They were also able to estimate the potential impact that the improved amenity would likely have on the overall economic health of the town centre.

4.10 The Socio Economic Impact Assessment considered many contributing factors such as value for money, demand, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and deliverability. These key criteria enabled a more refined set of delivery options; these options are demonstrated in the table below. The assessment of options 1-4 are contained within confidential appendix B with the report focused on the preferred option 5.

1	Do Minimum Option: Clear site and make safe
2	Public Realm Scheme with Pop-Up uses
3	Public Realm with full meanwhile use offer
4	Permanent Development only (Gala Bingo site only)
5 <b>Preferred option</b>	Meanwhile use plus permanent development (situated on Gala Bingo site)

**\*It is to be noted that all the options are based on the full demolition of the Gala Bingo Hall.**



### **Preferred Option 5 – Phase 1 Meanwhile Use Plus Phase 2 Permanent Mixed-Use Development**

- 4.11 The scheme will be delivered in two phases with phase 1 being the demolition of Gala Bingo and the delivery of a new walkway, meanwhile use and public realm.
- 4.12 Phase 2 is the long-term development of the former gala bingo site. This would be funded and delivered by a third-party developer with the ground floor unit potentially retained by the Council and the upper floors as residential.
- 4.13 For the purposes of the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment, the assumptions made are based upon the land value being cost neutral (i.e. that any costs incurred by the Council would be neutralised by the Council's receipt for the land from a developer); development viability will need to be investigated further once the Council has determined its preferred housing solution.
- 4.14 The SEIA assumes that the mixed-use development will be built in five years' time as a second phase of delivery, allowing time for the meanwhile use to establish this part of the town centre as a key destination for footfall – potentially boosting the commercial viability of a mixed-use development.
- 4.15 With the intention to construct a mixed-use development on the Gala site, the meanwhile element would be concentrated on the northern end of Exchange Street car park. Until long term development is achieved, the Gala site would be cleared and made safe.
- 4.16 Given that the SEIA assumes that the long-term redevelopment of the Gala Bingo site will be delivered at a later date, the temporary installation of circa 43 parking spaces as detailed above on the Gala Bingo site as a part of phase 1 will minimise the overall loss of car parking spaces at the Exchange Street to 34.
- 4.17 Should the Council wish to pursue phase 2 - the long-term regeneration of the Gala Bingo site for mixed use residential lead scheme - it would result in the overall loss of 77 car parking spaces from year five. However, this loss will be displaced over other Council owned car parks, therefore, resulting in no loss of income for the Council.
- 4.18 The preferred option will enable the Council to deliver not only much needed housing in the town centre but also small business spaces that will help to grow new businesses, where there is no provision for them in the town centre.
- 4.19 The tangible benefits are demonstrated in confidential appendix C, which is attached to this report, an indicative layout of the preferred option is contained within Appendix A.

### **Socio-Economic Appraisal**



- 4.20 The 'Theory of Change model', which is attached in confidential appendix B, illustrates, and summarises the linkage to each option and demonstrates the tangible outcomes and impacts each option will achieve, this shows that the **preferred option (5) produces the highest level of benefits to Aylesbury Town Centre.**
- 4.21 It is important to note that the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment does not address the development viability but seeks to understand the wider benefits that can be achieved.
- 4.22 With the establishment of each of the options (confidential appendix B), a Socio-Economic Impact Assessment was undertaken. The table below is a snapshot of the key take aways that demonstrate the value of each option both financially and socially to the Council.

	Option 1 Demolish and clear site up only	Option 2 Demolish Public realm + pop ups	Option 3 Demolish, public realm + meanwhile	Option 4 Demolish with permanent development on Gala only	Option 5 Demolish with meanwhile use, public realm on Gala & future permanent development
Present Value Socio-Economic Benefits	£1.23m	£3.64m	£20.50m	£10.40m	£29.40m
Net Present Social Value	£0.04m	£0.97m	£15.14m	£9.31m	£24.03m
Direct Jobs	0	0	70	30	100
Indirect and induced Jobs	2	5	14	9	18
Total number of Jobs	2	5	84	39	118

- 4.23 The conclusion of the SEIA states that the preferred option creates the most tangible benefits for the Council and the town of Aylesbury. It creates the highest number of jobs as well as the largest level of growth for the local economy. In addition, option five will create new housing in the town centre.

#### **Demolition & Current Costs for former Gala Bingo Potential Advance Works –**

- 4.24 The property was purchased for the purposes of regeneration. The building is in poor condition and has increasingly suffered from vandalism and is now internally in a poor state of repair.

- 4.25 A structural engineering report was commissioned to understand the methodology for demolition and whether the façade of the Gala Bingo Hall could be retained. The report concluded that retaining the façade would become very costly and not add any additional benefit to the long-term development of the Gala Bingo site. The full demolition including façade was estimated to be deliverable in the current budget envelope .
- 4.26 It is important to note that from a heritage perspective the retention of the façade would be preferable. However, as discussed above the level of costs associated with the retention has deemed that option not viable.
- 4.27 Demolition is proposed to take place as soon as possible in order to signal the commencement of regeneration of the area and minimise ongoing costs of managing the building. Officers will work with a framework construction manager to prepare and submit a Section 80 notice required for the advancement of the demolition this will enable the Council to accelerate the demolition. A planning consultant will be procured to assist with the preparation and submission of a planning application for the installation of the proposed walkway, temporary car parking, meanwhile use and public realm, these steps are discussed in the next steps section of the report.
- 4.28 The current costs of managing and maintaining the Gala Bingo Hall are shown in the table below. In late 2023, the building was broken into and severely vandalised, therefore additional measures have been put into place above the expected normal operating costs.

Ongoing Costs for Gala Bingo	Costs Per Annum (2023)
Business Rates	£14,000
Managing Agents Fee	£500 (vacant property charge)
Insurance Premium	£1,456 (it is expected that the annual premium will significantly increase due to vandalism)
Security Costs	£9,100 (N.B this does not include additional requests for entry to the building for example surveys required)
<b>Additional Costs incurred</b>	
Additional costs incurred within 2023 to combat the vandalism incurred including asbestos removal due to vandalism	£11,398
<b>Total</b>	<b>£36,454 per annum</b>

	<p>(N.B it should be noted that given the building has been vandalised, the Asset Management team are expecting the insurance premiums to increase for 2024/25)</p>
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4.29 Below are some images of the former Bingo Hall



## 5. Parking Study – Exchange Square

5.1 In November 2023 a parking study was commissioned to look at the potential displacement of car parking spaces at Exchange Street car park (87 car parking spaces in total) should the Council wish to pursue the option to regenerate this section of the car park.

5.2 The study considered the following:

- Any revenue impact on the potential loss of parking/displacement.
- The displacement of car parking spaces vs net loss.
- Proposed mitigation against any negative impact or loss of parking spaces.
- Any improvements that can be taken in council owned car parks in the immediate area and, in particular, Exchange Street car park

5.3 Having taken the key considerations into account, the study concluded that the footprint of the former Gala Bingo site once demolished would be able to accommodate 43 additional spaces, with a further 5 car parking spaces on Exchange Street car park. There is also the ability to accommodate an additional 5 spaces on the High Street.

5.4 This would result in a displacement of 34 car parking spaces which would be absorbed into nearby Council owned car parks such as Waterside North, Upper Hundreds and

Friars Square Multi Storey. Therefore, the proposals for meanwhile use (business spaces) and public realm at the northern end of the car park would not adversely impact on the ability of the Council to retain and grow parking income.

- 5.5 The study also noted that the installation of the meanwhile use provision at the northern end of Exchange Street car park would be an attractor to the town centre and could see the Council car parks achieving a higher demand / income across the day and week.

## 6. Regeneration Strategy

- 6.1 The Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy was adopted in 2023 as part of the overall Regenerating Buckinghamshire Framework. That document outlines how regeneration will be spearheaded by creating vibrant and attractive town centres that celebrate Buckinghamshire's heritage and provide an attractive offer to residents, visitors and businesses alike.

- 6.2 A number of key sites and development opportunities were identified in the strategy including the former Bingo Hall.

- 6.3 This project represents a significant first step forward in that ambition and builds on the successful regeneration project of the Exchange to create a lively new quarter to attract the growing Aylesbury population into the town centre.

- 6.4 The project will deliver against a number of the ambitions in the strategy including,
- creating a multi-purpose hub of activity and experiences to create a vibrant environment and distinct independent offer
  - foster the town centre opportunities for a business hub offering spaces to meet modern needs including start ups
  - creating attractive streets and spaces that are well connected and accessible

- 6.5 Alongside this project the council will also be bringing forward another important site in the vicinity, the Old County Offices. That project will see an important heritage building preserved and developed for residential living which will also contribute to the vibrancy of the town centre. The council has been successful in bidding for £690k Brownfield Land Release funding from government to facilitate delivery of this project.

## 7. Legal & Financial Implications

- 7.1 **Capital Budget Implications:** The total budget for Aylesbury Town Centre Regeneration is £5.362m, however after the town centre improvement works at £590k approved by a Leader Key Decision, the total available budget is £4.772m.

- 7.2 **The current available capital budget of £4.772m covers the demolition of Gala Bingo Hall, meanwhile use installation, public realm, new walkway and temporary parking only. The budget does not cover the long-term development of the Gala Bingo site and it has been assumed that the long-term development will be completely funded and delivered by a third-party developer.**
- 7.3 **The full business case for the meanwhile use will be subject to future review and Cabinet approval. It is important to note that should the current proposals for meanwhile use exceed the final available budget then there is an opportunity to scale down the proposals in order to remain within the capital budget envelope.**
- 7.4 To progress the recommended option (option 5 – demolition of Gala, meanwhile use, public realm and permanent mixed-use development) officers will work with a meanwhile use operator and specialist architect to produce the required next design stages these are discussed in section 12 - Next Steps & Review.
- 7.5 To advance the delivery of the meanwhile use, walkaway, temporary car parking, public realm and demolition of the Gala Bingo Hall, Officers are seeking a Cabinet Decision to transfer the remaining capital budget of £4.772m from the former Kingsbury and Market Square public realm scheme to the new Aylesbury Public Realm scheme.
- 7.6 Contained within confidential appendix D is a detailed breakdown of the projected costs of delivering this scheme. It is to be noted that the Council has commissioned a structural engineering survey to provide the costs for demolition. In addition, the Council through the Socio-Economic Assessment has been provided the costs for the construction of the meanwhile units.
- 7.7 At this stage we are seeking release of £1.385m of the overall budget, to fund the demolition and professional fees. The scheme development will be subject to governance gateways, this will ensure that at every key stage of development the project continues to be viable within the allocated budget and remains in full alignment with the agreed objectives.
- 7.8 It is to be noted that the sum of £590,000 has been allocated from the Kingsbury and Market Square budget to the agreed improvement works to Market Square and Cambridge Street.
- 7.9 **Revenue Budget Implications:**
- a) Car Park Income – no expected overall impact. There is a potential impact on car park revenue income of £73,000 (potential loss of revenue at the Exchange Street location for 77 car parking spaces at year five). However, it has been demonstrated that this is likely to be mitigated by displacement to spaces re-provided on the Gala Bingo Hall site and other Council owned car parks.

- b) Property Running Costs – saving of £36k. As set out in section 4.29, the Gala Bingo site currently costs us £36k per year to run, mainly in business rates and security costs. The demolition of Gala Bingo would realise savings of £36k which could help Property to meet its existing MTFP target (of delivering savings/new income of £0.5m on strategic assets by 2026).
- c) It is anticipated that the maintenance of the meanwhile use units and public realm will be managed by the preferred meanwhile use operator over the proposed 10-year period. It should be noted that the Council will however need to renegotiate terms with the meanwhile use operator should the Council wish to continue with the scheme beyond the proposed 10-year period.

#### 7.10 **Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment**

The Director has read and approved the report.

#### 7.11 **Section 151 Officer Comment**

The Section 151 Officer has read and commented on the report.

### **8. Corporate Implications**

- 8.1 The Aylesbury Public Realm scheme is in line with the corporate aspirations to deliver successful regeneration within Buckinghamshire and aspirations of the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan.
- 8.2 **Property** – The Council has significant assets and land ownership in Aylesbury. The project will help set the scene for future regeneration in the town centre. The Gala Bingo site is currently in a poor condition and suffering regular anti-social behaviour. It is a priority to bring forward plans to regenerate it.
- 8.3 **HR** - There are no direct implications.
- 8.4 **Climate change and sustainability** – The regeneration of Gala Bingo and minor improvements of Market Square, Kingsbury, TRO's and Cambridge Street will transform the town centre; it will seek to mitigate climate change through elements of the design such as sustainable drainage where possible.
- 8.5 **Equalities** – The regeneration proposals will help create and enable inclusive and diverse spaces. It will not have any disproportionate impact upon people with protected characteristics. An initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared and will be refined through the design progression and the consultation and engagement activities will enable all users to participate.
- 8.6 **Data** – A Data Protection Impact Assessment may be required; it will be prepared at the appropriate time.

8.7 **Value for money** – officers are in the process of procuring principal designers for the Cambridge Street minor public realm scheme and Aylesbury Public Realm (walkway and enhanced public realm).

8.8 It is anticipated that the construction manager role for the demolition, walkway and temporary car parking will be undertaken by the Highways term contractor. In addition, the appointed Highways term contractor will support the procurement of the main works contractor for Cambridge Street and Market Square improvement works. It is anticipated that an open procurement exercise will be undertaken for the demolition of the former Gala Bingo Hall.

## 9. Local Councillors & Community Boards Consultation & Views

9.1 Local Members have been engaged in relation to the improvement works proposed for Market Square, Kingsbury, TRO's and Cambridge Street. Officers will continue to engage with local members as the works progress and the meanwhile scheme in the Gala/Exchange site is developed.

## 10. Communication, Engagement & Further Consultation

10.1 Initial communications have focused on the delivery of the improvement works to Market Square, Kingsbury, TRO's and Cambridge Street. The future focus will be the wider regeneration of the former Gala Bingo Hall and the northern end of the Exchange Street car park. The Communications Strategy will ensure that all stakeholders will be engaged at the appropriate points including around the development of the meanwhile provision and public realm.

10.2 In relation to the minor improvement works for Market Square and Cambridge Street, officers will continue to keep local ward Councillors and key stakeholders informed throughout the delivery process.

## 11. Next Steps & Review

11.1 To progress the development of the Aylesbury Public Realm scheme the following workstreams will be undertaken. It is to be noted that Cabinet authority to proceed with a meanwhile use operator via a lease arrangement and the construction of the public realm and meanwhile use business units will be sought once all necessary due diligence has been undertaken through the design and early development stages.

Activity	
Stage 1	<b>Advanced works - demolition of Gala Bingo and design of the proposed new walkway and temporary car parking</b>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement of a Construction Manager (management of the demolition works and installation of the new walkway and temporary car parking)</li> <li>• Preliminary and detailed design of walkway and temporary car parking</li> <li>• Procurement of a Party wall surveyor to provide all necessary agreements with adjoining landowners</li> <li>• Procurement of a heritage consultant to support the Section 80 notice for the demolition of Gala Bingo</li> <li>• Undertake all necessary surveys and workstreams to facilitate the demolition of Gala Bingo and design of the new walkway and temporary car parking</li> <li>• Preparation and submission of a Section 80 notice for the full demolition of Gala Bingo</li> <li>• Commence the advance demolition works for Gala Bingo Hall</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2A</b>	<p><b>Meanwhile use and public realm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement of Meanwhile Spaces CIC in a consultant capacity</li> <li>• Procurement of a specialist architect for public and meanwhile space</li> <li>• Procurement of a planning consultant to prepare and submit a planning application for the installation of the new walkway, public and meanwhile use (it is to be noted that a separate planning application may be required for the walkway and temporary car parking should the Council wish to advance the installation of these key components ahead of the meanwhile use and public realm)</li> <li>• Preliminary design of meanwhile business spaces</li> <li>• Engagement with key stakeholders and local businesses</li> <li>• Soft market testing of tenants and potential operators</li> <li>• Outline business and potential operational models for consideration by the Council</li> <li>• Surveys: Topographical, Buried Services (utilities), Ground Penetration Rader (GPR) to inform the preliminary and detailed design for the meanwhile use and public realm</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2B</b>	<p><b>Detailed design and refined operating model for meanwhile use and public realm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalise business model based upon the Council's preferred operating model</li> <li>• Detailed engagement and tenant mix/offer defined</li> <li>• Marketing materials production</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agree fitout budget</li><li>• Preparation and submission of planning application for meanwhile use, walkway and public realm</li><li>• Social value programme setup</li><li>• Preparation of a full planning application for meanwhile use and public realm</li></ul>
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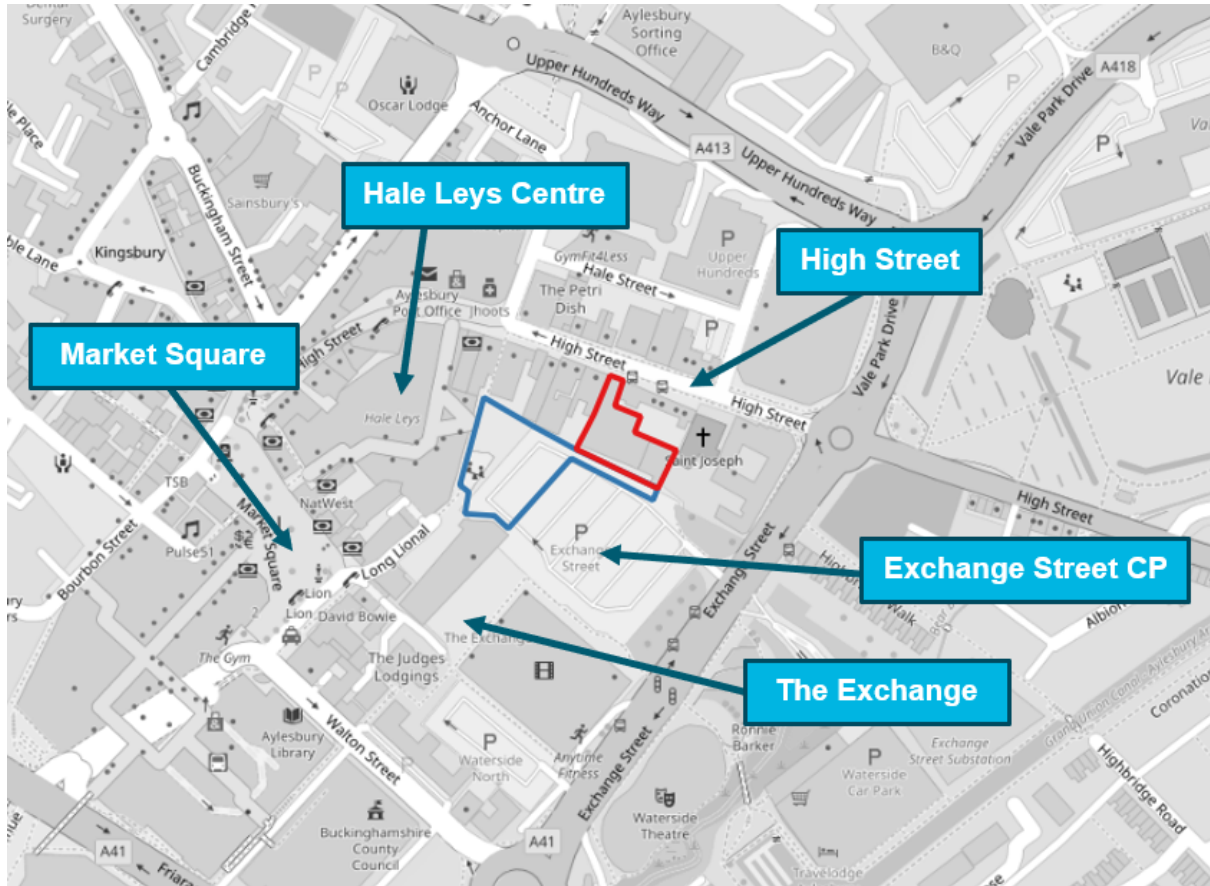
### **Your questions and views (for key decisions)**

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please contact the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team by 5pm on 2 May 2024. This can be done by email to [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).

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# Appendix A

## 1. Existing site layout for Exchange Street Car Park and Gala Bingo Hall



## 2. Indicative Option Layouts

### 2.1 Option 1: Do Minimum – Clear Site Only



### 2.2 Option 2: Public Realm Scheme with Potential Pop-Up Uses



### 2.3 Option 3: Public Realm Scheme with Full Meanwhile Uses



**2.4 Option 4: Permanent Mixed-Use Development**



**2.5 Option 5: Meanwhile Uses Plus Permanent Mixed-Use Development**







## Report for Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	<b>7 May 2024</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Old County Offices Aylesbury – Proposed disposal and future re development</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Member for Accessible Housing and Resources
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Jo West – <a href="mailto:jo.west@buckinghamshire.gov.uk">jo.west@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>Aylesbury North – Councillors T Dixon, R Khan, S Morgan</b>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Subject to receipt of a satisfactory Best Value Consideration Report as approved by the S151 Officer, to approve delegation to the Service Director of Property and Assets in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing to finalise terms and pursue disposal of the site to a residential developer pursuant to terms contained in the confidential appendices by granting a long leasehold to convert the building into flats in line with the current detailed planning permission (20/02431/APP). Subsequently to agree contracts, undertake required due diligence and exchange and complete on the transaction.</b>
<b>Reasons for recommendation:</b>	The Old County Offices were vacated by the County Council in 2014. Since then, there have been a number of attempts to repurpose the building but there have been complications with asbestos. The Council obtained planning consent for a scheme to convert the Old County Offices in Aylesbury into housing under application number 20/02431/APP and which was approved on 10 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 and provides for a mix of 46 flats. Recent inflationary pressures have impacted viability on the intended in-house development scheme and therefore

Officers have undertaken an initial marketing exercise which realised no offers. However, a further round of marketing supported by a successful application for Brownfield Land Release Funding (BLRF) via the One Public Estate (OPE) programme, has attracted a private developer on terms set out in the Confidential Appendix.

The report recommends working collaboratively with the Developer to secure a legally binding contract that secures delivery of OCO which has been dormant for a number of years and contains protections for the Council in terms of delivery and potential capital receipt. The sale will see the development of a heritage asset in the town centre around a Planning consent secured by the Council. As set out in this report, OCO is a major regeneration project for Aylesbury Town Centre. The granted planning application expires in August 2024. The Council has received grant funding to facilitate the release of this site for housing. We have approached several private and affordable housing developers and only secured 1 offer for the site. This is considered in the Confidential Appendix.

As part of this transaction, the developer will be contractually prevented from carrying out any development that diverges from the current detailed planning permission and if the developer does not commence and complete the development within the agreed timescales, the Council will be able to step in to take back ownership of the site at nil cost. The contract will also provide for overage provisions for the Council as part of the negotiated contract.

This option is recommended rather than the alternative options, (i.e., to refurbish the offices for occupation by the Council or another commercial occupier or to comprehensively redevelop the site for a larger residential scheme) for the reasons set out in this report or to dispose subject to Planning.



## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 There has been limited interest in the open market for a third party to take on the building due to viability issues. A developer has been identified who is prepared to work collaboratively with the Council to agree a contract with suitable safeguards for the Council to implement the consented planning permission to convert the building to 46 private apartments, the terms of the transaction are considered in the confidential appendices. A decision on whether to accept this offer is required. If the Council does not take this option, the building will continue to remain empty until the wider Aylesbury Town Centre regeneration schemes are enacted.

## **2. Content of report**

### **Background:**

- 2.1 Detailed planning permission has been granted to convert the currently unused Old County Offices building into 46 private flats - viability issues at the time planning was granted resulted in there being no requirement for affordable housing to be provided within the scheme. Viability has worsened since the granting of planning permission because of the softening in the housing market and inflationary pressures on construction and finance costs in particular, which have been widely reported. However, the Council has committed to bringing back into active use a building which has historical and architectural merit.
- 2.2 The Council has undertaken a development appraisal and cost plan assessment based on independent Quantity Surveyors and a Preliminary Cost Planning by a Contractor. The conclusion of that exercise is that it is not viable for the Council to bring forward the scheme without significant subsidy. The appraisal has been updated and is discussed in the Confidential Appendix.
- 2.3 In January and February 2023, a soft marketing exercise was undertaken to identify external developer appetite. Marketing would have commenced earlier but efforts were being made to refine designs to make the residential scheme viable. This demonstrated that there was very limited interest in the open market because of the development costs of implementing the consented planning scheme. The only interest (not confirmed by a firm offer) was for a subject to planning deal based on a new build scheme i.e., demolishing the existing building. This was not supported by the planning team who consider the building to be a “non-designated heritage asset and....a building of note”. However, the viability of a demolished and new scheme appraisal is considered in the Confidential Appendix.
- 2.4 An application was made via the One Public Estate Programme for Brownfield Land Release Funding (BLRF) to improve project viability. The application was successful resulting in a grant of £690,000 being awarded.

- 2.5 Since the Q1 2023 marketing exercise, a specialist developer has been identified through an agent that Officers are working with on another scheme. The developer is prepared to undertake the development in line with the consented planning permission based on the heads of terms contained in the confidential appendices. The terms will be refined and developed including suitable protection to ensure delivery of the redevelopment of this asset. The terms state a transfer of a long leasehold interest in the land subject to the consented scheme being brought forward.
- 2.6 Concurrently with the discussions for the residential development, an office scheme was also designed and costed for consideration. The costings for this are included in the Confidential Appendix but this is not the recommended option.

**The residential option (recommended)**

- 2.7 In January and February 2023, a soft marketing exercise was undertaken to ascertain external market interest in carrying out the conversion to 46 flats in line with the planning permission which was granted in August 2021, and which must be implemented by August 2024.
- 2.8 As part of the exercise, a panel of developers (8 from the Homes England DPS Framework and 8 companies who were known to The Agent/The Council and have worked on similar schemes to this) were asked:
- a) What would they offer for the site?
  - b) Do they have any concerns or observations on the current planning consent?
  - c) Would the availability of grant funding affect their decision to bid/not bid?
- 2.9 The report in summary concluded:
- a) There was no current market interest to carry out the consented scheme. The primary reason for this lack of interest in the residential conversion scheme was build cost inflation, anticipated falls in capital values during 2023/24, funding costs, and sales risk. The unknown risks that a building of this age could present was also an identified risk item. Whilst grant funding towards delivery of the consented scheme would naturally assist, the funding gap remained significant.
  - b) Market feedback suggested that a revised planning consent for a refurbishment scheme would not necessarily resolve the issue, the inference being that only a demolition and rebuild option would be appealing to developers. Whilst the soft marketing exercise did identify some demand to

acquire the site on a subject to planning basis for a new build scheme, even this option only generated caveated and lukewarm interest along with a low site value.

- 2.10 When approached about demolition of the site, the Planning Team advised that the building is a non-designated heritage asset and a building of note. It was concluded that Planning Officers, and the Planning Committee may not support an application for the complete demolition of the building. This coincides with the general sentiment that the building should be restored and brought back to use and to retain it for its character as part of regeneration activity in the town centre.
- 2.11 In August 2023 the Council was advised of our successful application to OPE programme for BLRF for £690,000 to cover some of the preparatory capital works (asbestos removal, groundworks, demolition). The terms of the grant funding stipulate that the money should be committed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, and we have been recently advised that release of the site via the proposed long-term lease would amount to being committed. This money is, however, only available if the building is converted to residential use. If the office option is pursued, this grant will need to be returned – it is currently held in the OPE reserve fund pending a decision on the building.
- 2.12 In June 2023, a specialist developer was found who was prepared to complete the development in line with the current planning permission. The terms of their offer include a transfer of a long leasehold interest on the terms set out in confidential appendix 1 and include availability of the BLRF award. The BLRF award will be spent by the Council prior to completion of contracts to comply with Subsidy Control regime. The works will be completed by the developer under contract to Buckinghamshire Council, but direct award of this contract will require a waiver under the Council’s contract procedure rules.
- 2.13 The developer is prepared to start on site as soon as practically possible and to undertake qualifying works under the BLRF funding agreement on behalf of the Council. They have conditioned the offer that they must be able to implement the planning application before it expires i.e., achieve completion of contracts with sufficient time to engage contractors before August 2024.
- 2.14 It should be noted that within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) Exchange Street and Waterside North car parks are highlighted as sites designated for long term regeneration, therefore any part of the scheme that encroaches on the adjacent carpark should be considered displacement rather than loss of spaces.
- 2.15 A “best value consideration report” will follow if this option is pursued. This will confirm that in the circumstances, despite the low value purchase price, this offer could be considered best reasonably obtained value.

### **3. Regeneration Strategy**

- 3.1 The Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy was adopted in 2023 as part of the overall Regenerating Buckinghamshire Framework. That document outlines how regeneration will be spearheaded by creating vibrant and attractive town centres that celebrate Buckinghamshire's heritage and provide an attractive offer to residents, visitors and businesses alike.
- 3.2 A number of key sites and development opportunities were identified in the strategy including the former Old County Offices.
- 3.3 This project, along with other planned projects therefore represents a step forward in realising the Regeneration Strategy and builds on the successful regeneration project of the Exchange to create a lively new quarter to attract the growing Aylesbury population into the town centre.
- 3.4 The project will deliver against a number of the ambitions in the strategy including and will act as a key residential development in the town centre bringing increased footfall to the town centre to support both the day and night time economies.
- 3.5 Alongside this project the council will also be bringing forward another important site in the vicinity, the former Gala Bingo Hall. That project will provide an important link between the OCO site, the Exchange and the High Street and contribute to the vibrancy of the town centre.

### **4. Other options considered.**

#### **Sale of site:**

- 4.1 Selling freehold/long leasehold interest of the building on an unconditional or conditional basis – an unconditional sale would allow a purchaser the opportunity to make a new application for planning, most likely based on the demolition of the existing building. This would potentially recognise a higher capital receipt (see Part 2 report for development appraisal and estimated land value). However, this option would limit our ability to have a say in the future of the site, is not guaranteed to gain planning approval and could see continued inactivity on this site leading to negative public opinion. There is also a risk that this option would not receive any bids in the market. This option would provide uncertain regeneration outcomes as it is unclear what the future of the site would be.
- 4.2 There is a high risk that the current interested developer would withdraw their offer if the property was formally marketed. It is likely that the current planning approval would expire leading to more time and expense to get it renewed. This option is therefore not recommended.

#### **Office conversion:**

- 4.3 The office scheme shown at appendix 1 has been costed and analysed. This figure includes professional fees and could reduce with further design and engineering knowledge mitigating some of the risk factors included in the initial costing. If the office conversion was to be pursued and funded through borrowing, there will be an interest charge which is discussed in the Confidential Appendix. As stated in the Council's Accommodation Strategy, this borrowing could be offset from the proceeds from other office disposals and savings on void costs on other buildings vacated as part of this relocation strategy, but timing and certainty of these receipts are not yet certain.
- 4.4 Whilst this option would free up the Walton Street Office site (formerly known as New County Offices) for redevelopment and would avoid the requirement to acquire/update alternative town centre space as part of the Work Smart strategy, the project requires significant capex.
- 4.5 Furthermore, the investment, value and occupational need for offices is significantly reduced post covid and as such there is limited demand for office accommodation from the open market, increasing the risk of a third party letting if the Council found it did not require all or some of the space in the future. It is therefore the recommendation of this report that an office refurbishment is not pursued.
- 4.6 Less extensive (and more economic) designs have been completed and costed for the office scheme; however, these do not offer enough desk and meeting room space for the current council requirement, so these alternative design proposals are not recommended either.

**Self-development:**

- 4.7 The Council develops the residential scheme – Appraisals discussed in the Confidential Appendix show a significant negative return on investment in the current market and there would be significant capital expenditure, this option is not recommended.

**Do nothing now and await market improvement:**

- 4.8 Mothball the building until the market improves – this is a high-risk strategy as there is no guarantee that the market will improve. The condition of the building will deteriorate the longer it is left un-used therefore the costs to recommission it will be higher. The BLRF funding could also be lost. This option negatively impacts regeneration plans for Aylesbury Town Centre and the desire to deliver this project in the first phase of activity. This option is not recommended.

## **5. Legal and financial implications**

### **5.1 Legal**

- 5.2 Local authorities are given powers under the Local Government Act 1972 to dispose of land in any manner they wish. The main constraint is that the disposal must be for the best consideration reasonably obtainable pursuant to section 123(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 5.3 It is recognised that there may be circumstances where an authority considers it appropriate to dispose of land at an undervalue. Section 128(1) of the 1972 Act confers on the Secretary of State power to grant a general Consent for the purposes of land disposals in certain circumstances. The terms of the consent mean that specific consent is not required for the disposal of any interest in land which the authority considers will help to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. Authorities can also rely on the well-being criteria when considering disposals at less than best consideration.
- 5.4 Additionally, the difference between the unrestricted value of the land to be disposed of and the consideration of the disposal does not exceed £2,000,000. The “best value consideration report” will confirm this.
- 5.5 A copy of the current Heads of Terms is included at confidential appendix 1 and will be further developed if permission to dispose of the site is agreed.
- 5.6 The developers offer includes the requirement for the BLRF funding to form part of the deal. A transfer by BC to the developer of the BLRF grant is likely to amount to a subsidy for the purposes of the Subsidy Control regime. Instead, BC should enter into a "works" contract for the carrying out of the preparatory capital works. The direct award of such a contract will require a waiver under BC's contract procedure rules but should be below the applicable financial threshold under the Procurement Regulations.
- 5.7 **Financial**
- 5.8 This option will cost the Council £1.137m due to the need to write off costs the Council has spent to date on the developing the site. This will be managed within the capital reserves. For the full financial implications, please see the Confidential Appendix.
- 5.9 Covenant status of the developer and source of funding for the delivery of the scheme will require finance sign off.
- 5.10 A “best value consideration report” can be obtained with three-weeks' notice. This would be prepared by an independent valuer and will form confidential appendix 2 if the recommendation is followed and the paper proceeds to Cabinet. The valuation advice will be prepared in accordance with S123 Local Government Act 1972 provisions and will confirm that the offer detailed in the appendices can be relied upon provide best value for the site in the circumstances.
- 5.11

## **5. Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment**

5.1 The Director has read and approved the report.

## **5b Section 151 Officer comment**

5.2 The S151 has read and noted the report.

## **6. Corporate implications**

6.1 Regeneration – both the office and residential options support the regeneration of this building as a key heritage asset and support wider regeneration of the town centre as set out in the Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy; the residential option maintains potential for the Council office to be built in Friars Square.

6.2 Climate change – any option (other than do nothing) would have a positive effect on improving the efficiency of the current building.

6.3 Property – these options would bring an used building back into use.

6.4 HR – None

6.5 Finance/Value for money – As detailed above.

6.6 Equality – any refurbishment would be completed in line with current building regulation requirements to make it accessible.

6.7 Health and Safety – the building is deteriorating so bringing it back into use will solve the current H&S risks.

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

7.1 The Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing & Resources is supportive of the proposal.

7.2 Local Councillors were consulted on the proposal in April 2024 but have offered no comments.

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

8.1 Public consultation was undertaken as part of the planning application for the residential option.

8.2 Advice will be taken on the necessity for consultation if the office option is deemed a potential way forward.

8.3 Communication implications - TBC.

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

- 8.1 Finalise negotiations with the developer, but they will not proceed if we must return the grant funding or if the planning consent runs out. Discussions with the planning team on work required to trigger the consent will be conducted early on if this is the preferred option.

## **9. Background papers**

- 9.1 None

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

- 10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please contact the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team by 2 May 2024. This can be done by email to [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).





# OCO – Appendix One

Office refurbishment drawings



# OCO – Office Option (concept images)

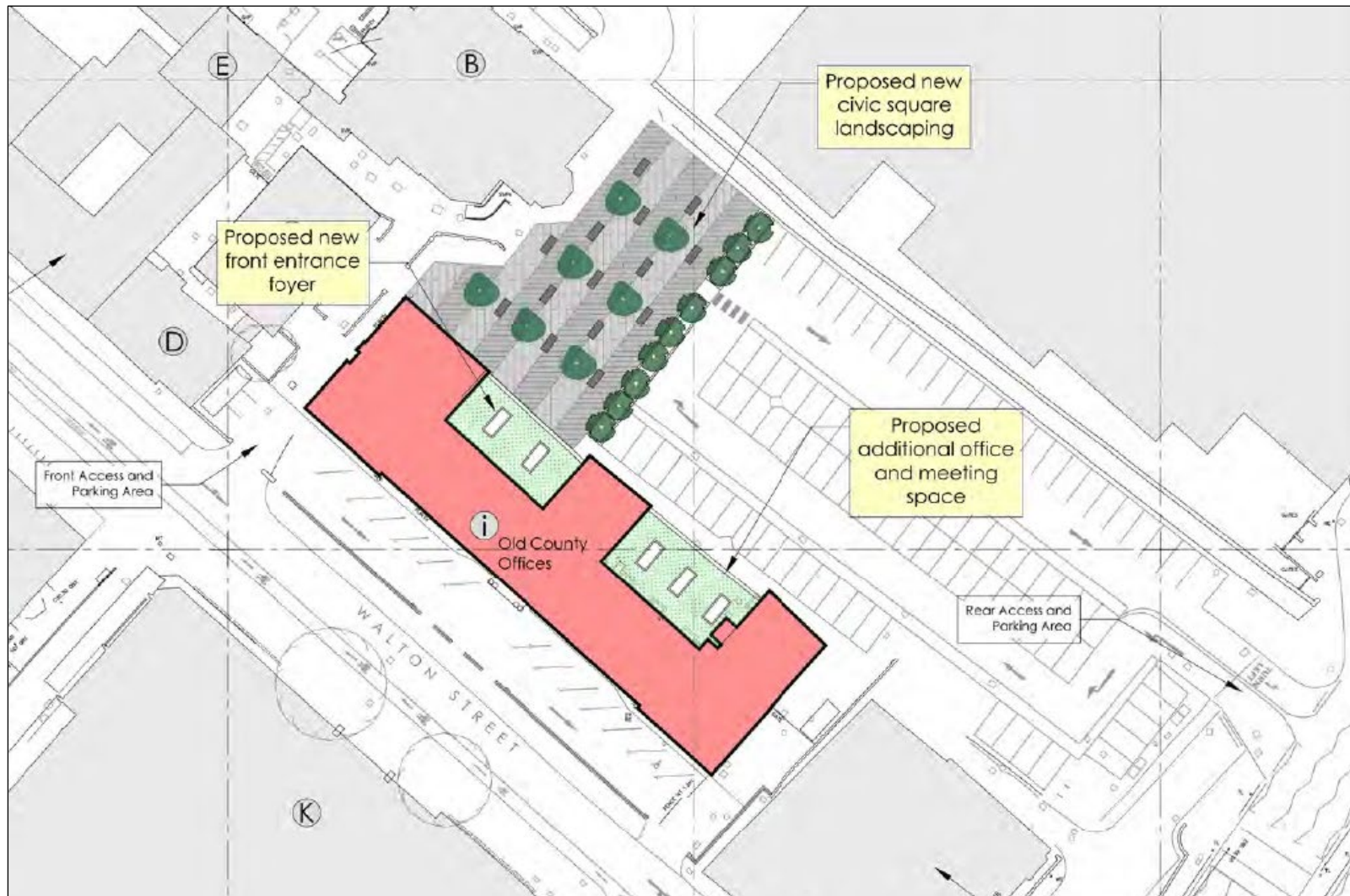


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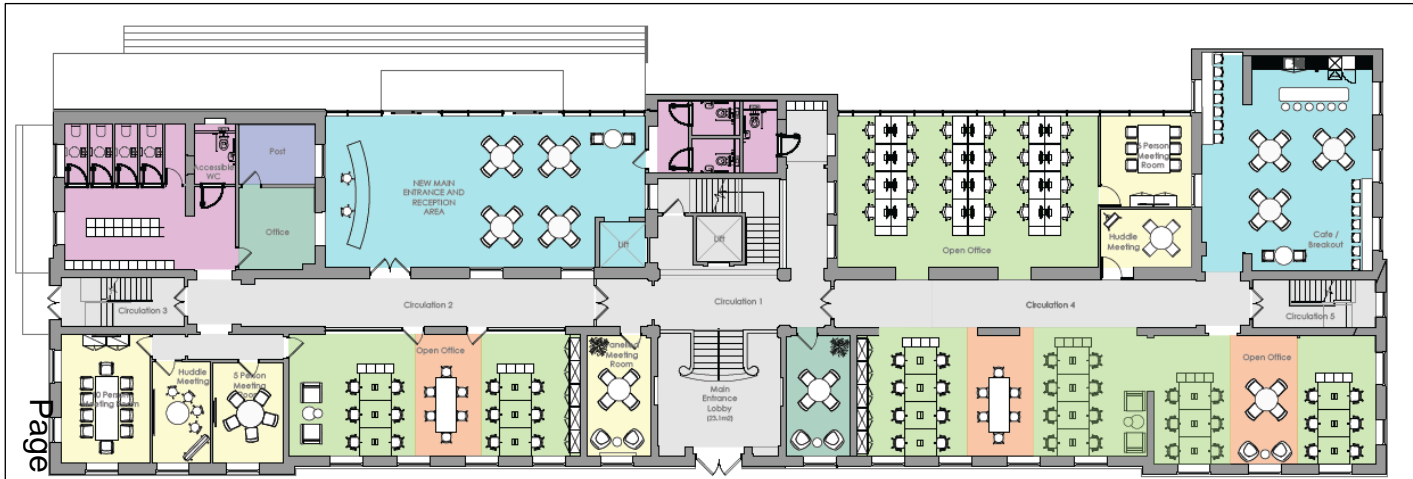




# OCO – Office Option (links to public realm)



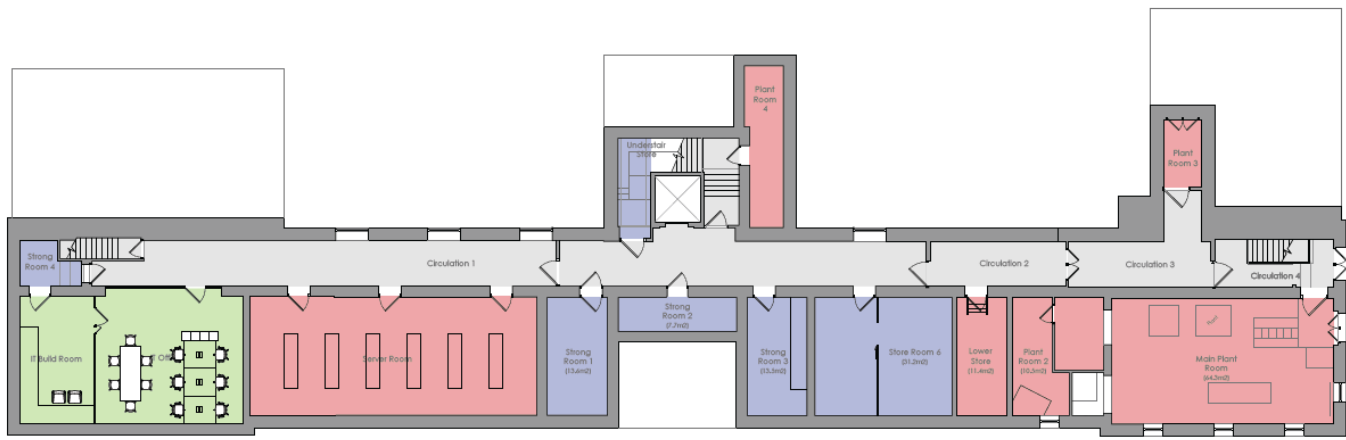
# OCO – Office Option (floorplans)



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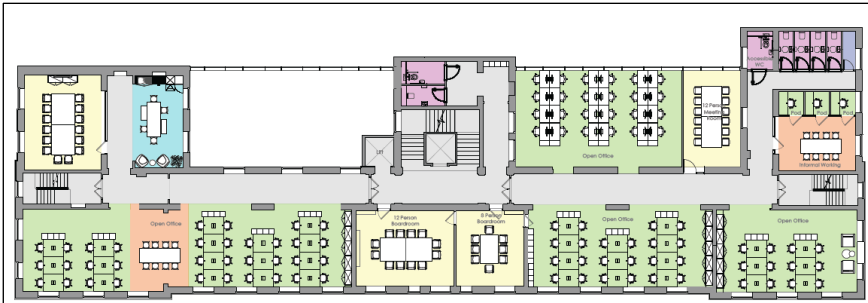
Proposed Ground Floor Plan

	Reception		Learning / Flexible Meeting
	Circulation		Socialise / Breakout
	Collaborative Working		Wellbeing
	Focused Working		Plant / Servers
	Meeting Rooms		Storage
	Refreshment Services		Fitness

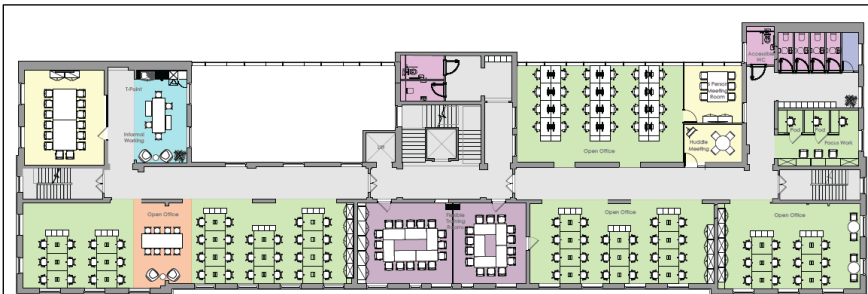


Proposed Basement Plan

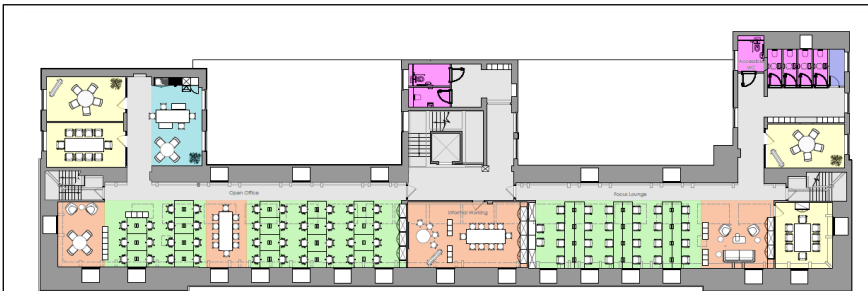
# OCO – Office Option (floorplans)



Proposed First Floor Plan



Proposed Second Floor Plan



Proposed Loft Plan



# OCO – Office Option (elevation drawings)

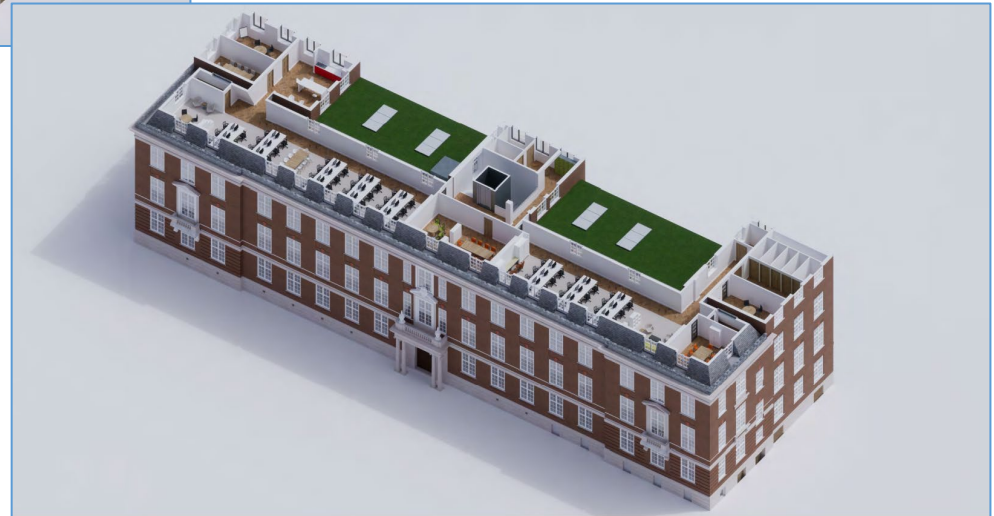




# Axonometric plans – Ground & First Floor views



# Axonometric plans – Second & Third Floor views





# Office conversion space options - headcounts

## Bronze

Overall Totals	Quantity
Desks	212
Informal Work Spaces*	83
Meeting Rooms Totals	
14 Person	2
12 Person	1
10 Person	2
8 Person	3
6 Person	0
5 Person	3
4 Person	1
4 Person Huddle Room	1
4 Person Soft Room	1
Multifaith Room	1
30 Person Flexible Training	1

\* excluding breakout areas

## Silver

Overall Totals	Quantity
Desks	244
Informal Work Spaces*	89
Meeting Rooms Totals	
14 Person	2
12 Person	1
10 Person	2
8 Person	2
6 Person	0
5 Person	3
4 Person	2
4 Person Huddle Room	1
4 Person Soft Room	0
Multifaith Room	0
30 Person Flexible Training	1

\* excluding breakout areas

## Gold

Overall Totals	Quantity
Desks	248
Informal Work Spaces*	89
Meeting Rooms Totals	
14 Person	2
12 Person	1
10 Person	2
8 Person	2
6 Person	0
5 Person	3
4 Person	2
4 Person Huddle Room	1
4 Person Soft Room	0
Multifaith Room	0
30 Person Flexible Training	1

\* excluding breakout areas

## Platinum

Overall Totals	Quantity
Desks	316
Informal Work Spaces*	89
Meeting Rooms Totals	
14 Person	2
12 Person	2
10 Person	2
8 Person	2
6 Person	2
5 Person	3
4 Person	2
4 Person Huddle Room	3
4 Person Soft Room	0
Multifaith Room	0
30 Person Flexible Training	1

\* excluding breakout areas

The tables above show the total space available in the alternative design options. The Platinum option is the only option that could offer adequate space to accommodate current staff levels in Aylesbury.

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