



Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee agenda

Date: Thursday 26 November 2020

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: MS Teams virtual conference

Membership:

Z Ahmed, D Barnes, D Carroll (Chairman), S Chapple, M Knight, D Knights, N Marshall, L Monger, G Moore, R Newcombe, C Poll, R Raja, B Roberts, C Rouse and M Winn (Vice-Chairman)

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Agenda Item	Time	Page No
1 Apologies for absence	10am	
2 Declarations of interest		
3 Minutes		5 - 8

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2020 as correct record.

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|----------|--|----------------|----------------|
| 4 | Covid-19 and local economic recovery
To receive an update from cabinet members on Covid-19 and local economic recovery in Buckinghamshire. | 10.05am | 9 - 14 |
| | Contributors:
Martin Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire Council | | |
| | Steve Bowles, Cabinet Member for Town Centre Regeneration | | |
| | Lisa Michelson, Service Director Economic Growth and Regeneration | | |
| 5 | Long term plan for rough sleepers
To receive an update from the cabinet member on the long term plan for rough sleepers. | 10.35am | 15 - 20 |
| | Contributors:
Isobel Darby, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness | | |
| | Nigel Dicker, Service Director Housing and Regulatory Services | | |
| 6 | Local plan for Buckinghamshire
To receive an update from the cabinet member on the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. | 11.35pm | 21 - 26 |
| | Contributors:
Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Planning and Enforcement | | |
| | Steve Bambrick, Service Director Planning and Environment | | |
| 7 | Work programme | 12.35pm | 27 - 28 |
| 8 | Date of next meeting
28 January 2021 | | |

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Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee held on Thursday 1 October 2020 [via MS Teams](#), commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 12.34 pm.

Members present

Z Ahmed, D Barnes, D Carroll (chairman), S Chapple, M Knight, L Monger, G Moore, R Newcombe, C Poll, R Raja, B Roberts, C Rouse and M Winn (vice-chairman).

Apologies

D Knights and N Marshall.

Agenda Item

1 Declarations of interest

None.

2 Minutes

Councillor R Newcombe informed members that the planning guidance appended to the minutes of the meeting 25 June did not specify the time limits for councillors to call-in a planning application to committee and as the document was not a whole guide it could be misleading to parish councils.

The minutes of the meeting 25 June were agreed as correct record.

3 Covid-19 and local economic recovery

Members received an update presentation on covid-19 and local economic recovery from the Leader of the Council and guest presenters Ian Barham, Partnership Manager at Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Bucks LEP) and Philippa Batting, Managing Director at Buckinghamshire Business First (BFF). The following key points were highlighted:

- The Buckinghamshire economy was predominantly made up of small – medium enterprises (SMEs) and key sectors included the creative industries and sports.
- Buckinghamshire Council and key partners had worked hard throughout the

pandemic to provide support to businesses, including financial support and advice.

- Business grant funding amounting to £92m was made available to businesses in Buckinghamshire and £85m had been allocated by end of August 2020. In addition, discretionary grant awards totalled £4.45m.
- Whilst some town centres were struggling, with fewer residents commuting into London some towns had experienced improved vibrancy. This had been supported by the licensing of pavements to enable businesses to provide outdoor hospitality services.
- A local economic recovery plan would be delivered by the strong partnerships in Buckinghamshire. There were three phases of delivery to the plan: react, renew and rebound. It was estimated that the Bucks economy was in the latter half of the react phase.
- The Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy was to be reviewed due to changing context. Green growth had also been incorporated into the strategy.
- New opportunities were arising in digital as people were adapting to new ways of working. Healthcare and education services have been able to be provided remotely.
- Trade mark applications had increased which could be a sign of economic recovery.
- An Innovation Centre was due to be opened at Westcott Venture Park.
- A project was being piloted to support the reskilling of residents who had previously worked in the aviation industry.
- BBF were the listening ears and helping hands for Bucks businesses, supporting all businesses including the self-employed who were especially at risk of unemployment at this time.
- When the pandemic hit, Buckinghamshire Council employees temporarily moved over to work in BBF to help support businesses.
- There had been incredible support from the Bucks business community when the pandemic hit, with businesses offering to make PPE.
- Businesses had spent large amounts of money making their businesses covid-19 safe, which proved difficult against government guidelines that were constantly changing.
- Some accommodation providers had experienced the best August they had ever had owing to UK holidaymaker 'staycations'.
- There were more start-ups registered in the county this year than previously, but it was unknown as to whether the figures included existing businesses that had changed their operating model.
- Cabinet member for town centre regeneration, Councillor Steve Bowles, provided an update on town centre recovery and expressed thanks to officers for their hard work during the pandemic and transition to a unitary council.

A number of key questions were raised:

- In response to a question raised as to the progress of implementing the High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy, members were advised that work was progressing and that the strategy was being reviewed in light of covid-19.
- In response to a question as to what support was being provided to young people experiencing unemployment, it was noted that BBF have enterprise advisors supporting young people with their careers options. Further, BBF run a programme to let young people know what jobs are available in Bucks.
- It was queried whether the £61,426 awarded in Resilience Fund grants safeguarding 10 jobs had been good value for money, and members were advised that the jobs supported four key sectors and would create a further significant number of jobs.
- A question was raised as to what support would be available to parents that had paid school transport costs in the event a another lockdown. Members noted that during the previous national lockdown period, the council credited parents funds paid for school transport, and that this could apply again in the event of another full lockdown. It was also noted that government policy going forward was that schools remain open.
- It was asked as to how broadband could be improved in certain areas. Members were informed that superfast broadband currently covered 96% of premises in Buckinghamshire, and that the Connected Counties programme (Bucks and Herts) was working to further improve connectivity. A £5bn central government programme 'Outside In' to improve connectivity had been announced but the detail for how the money would be spent in Bucks was unclear.

Note 1: Councillor C Rouse left the meeting at 11.00.

Note 2: Councillor Matt Knight left the meeting at 11.33.

4 Housing allocations

Julie Porter, Executive Director of Development at the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust (VAHT) gave a presentation to committee on the work of the Aylesbury Vale Housing Trust. The following key points were highlighted:

- The trust was formed in 2006 and is a charity currently managing 7,661 homes.
- VAHT has various grant schemes including a coronavirus support fund with grants of up to £4000 for community group and voluntary organisations; £67,899 has been awarded to 26 applicants to date.
- VAHT's development programme expects to deliver 100 homes this year.
- The target was to provide 20% social rent for all new homes.
- Staff inspect the quality of homes and developments, and VAHT were looking to bring older homes to higher standards.

In response to questions, a number of key points were raised:

- In relation to the affordable rented tenure, it was noted that all rents were capped at the local housing allowance.
- VAHT would like to increase investment in social rent.
- Staff were assessing energy ratings of homes, and what heating provision could be provided in the future. VAHT were increasing the use of air source heat pumps in properties to reduce their carbon footprint.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness, Councillor Isobel Darby, provided an update to members on housing allocations. In response to questions, a number of key points were raised:

- The cabinet member would be looking at all models to provide affordable housing in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Property and Assets.
- Work had commenced to review the existing Bucks Home Choice Allocations Scheme and to develop and adopt a new Buckinghamshire Council Allocations Scheme. Existing processes support residents without internet access and these processes would be taken forward into the new scheme.
- Town and parish councils would be consulted on the new scheme.
- The cabinet member was committed to look at ways to provide key worker housing.

Note 2: Councillor C Rouse re-joined the meeting at 11.54.

Note 3: Councillor D Barnes left the meeting at 12.27.

5 Work programme

Resolved:

- To approve the draft growth, infrastructure and housing select committee work programme 2020 – 2021 at appendix 1.
- To note that the chairman, in consultation with the growth, infrastructure and housing select committee, may amend the work programme from time to time to account for any changes in the work and/ or priorities of the council 2020 - 2021.

6 Date of next meeting

26 November 2020.



Report to Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee

Date: 26 November 2020

Title: COVID-19 and Local Economic Recovery Update

Relevant councillor(s): Martin Tett – Leader; Steve Bowles – Cabinet Member for Town Centre Regeneration

Author and/or contact officer: Lisa Michelson, Service Director Economic Growth and Regeneration

Recommendations: For the Select Committee to note the response to the second national Covid-19 lockdown and the update on activity on economic recovery, programmes and EU Transition within the Leader’s and Cabinet Member for Town Centre Regeneration portfolios.

Economic Development

Local economic impact and response to second national Covid-19 lockdown

1. Buckinghamshire Council’s partnership with Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) and Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (BLEP) has enabled us to work closely with the local business community and provide guidance, support and funding for those whose business has been affected by COVID-19. The Select Committee have been provided with information on that response and economic recovery progress at the meetings held on 25 June 2020 and 1 Oct 2020. The mechanisms used to deliver this response under the first wave of lockdown are still in place along with the benefit of learnt lessons, and therefore, the Council is in a strong position with its partners to deliver an effective response in the second wave of lockdown which started on 5th November 2020 and extends to 2nd December 2020.
2. This new lockdown period has important differences to the previous lockdown in the spring/early summer. Schools and universities remain open as will many businesses in the manufacturing and construction sectors and many businesses have taken steps to adapt operating models to enable them to better weather disruption. People can attend work if it is deemed that they cannot work from home. The lockdown does require pubs, restaurants, and most retail (except essential retail and which now includes garden centres and hardware stores) to cease trading (exceptions are being made for takeaway/delivery services).

3. Despite these differences, it is anticipated that the second national lockdown will lead to a shrinking of the local economic output for the second time in 2020, and is expected to push back recovery by up to a year. Nationally, Capital Economic estimate that the second lockdown will result in GDP falling by 8% in November with knock-on implications for unemployment.
4. It is estimated that approximately 3,445 Buckinghamshire businesses will be required to close (or only offer click and collect/takeaway services) during the second wave lockdown (11% of all registered businesses). These businesses employ around 30,455 employees (13% of the Bucks workforce versus 15% of the workforce nationally).
5. In response to the new lockdown, a new business support package was announced including the extension of furloughing and the extension of other support schemes such as the Bounce Back Loans Scheme. The government also offered further financial support for businesses to compensate them for loss of business from the emergency and the resulting second lockdown.

Additional Support Initiatives for Business

6. The Council is responsible for administering the **Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG)**, a fund of £7m which has been received by Buckinghamshire to distribute and which will be allocated as soon as possible. This grant provides financial support for those businesses which are not able to continue to trade during the new lockdown. To receive funding those businesses will need to meet a number of eligibility criteria including:
 - Properties with a rateable value of £15,000, or less will receive a grant of £1,334 per four weeks
 - Properties with a rateable value of more than £15,000 and up to £51,000, will receive a grant of £2,000 per four weeks
 - Properties with a rateable value of more than £51,000, will receive a grant of £3,000 per four weeks
7. As before, there will be some businesses who 'slip through the net' such as those who do not pay rates or have no rateable premises and there is also concern from those businesses who are allowed to open and therefore not eligible for support but who expect greatly reduced customer numbers which will negatively impact the viability of their business.
8. These businesses may be able to benefit from the support offered by the **Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)**. This provides funding to the equivalent of £20 per head of population, to be used for one off discretionary payments to support businesses that are affected by the lockdown but not legally required to close. For Buckinghamshire, this amounts to £10.9million. The ARG is open to businesses which have been adversely impacted by the latest lockdown restrictions but are not eligible for other government support schemes. For qualifying businesses, the ARG offers a one-time grant allocation based on the number of employees.

9. As before, the Council will look for ways to communicate to businesses that are eligible to encourage them to apply. This includes through BBF, social media and local radio stations.

Update on local economic recovery and programmes

ERDF Reopening High Street Safely Fund and activity

10. The Council submitted a spend proposal for the £461K grant allocation to Government in July in line with the criteria to focus on reopening high streets safely and which includes signage, pavement stickers and temporary interventions to enable social distancing. Earlier this month, we were contacted by our ERDF link to review and agree the content of this plan. One of the strands includes monitoring and review and so work is underway to collect base position data for our towns and includes what help or support businesses may need looking forward including being able to trade on line and which will be used to help maximise the efficiency of the spend of the Additional Restrictions Grant outlined above.
11. Our Town Centre Partnership in Aylesbury and the Business Improvement District (HWBIDCo) in High Wycombe have also been proactively providing on the ground support to our town centre businesses: ensuring information is provided about Covid compliant trading and ongoing support is in place. Both towns have introduced Covid-safe activities and animations to bring some life back into our high streets and build confidence that they are a safe place to return to. We have also been working to keep our local markets trading in a Covid-secure way.

Local Economic Recovery Plan

12. The Select Committee received a detailed update on the content of the economic recovery plan at the last meeting. The current phase of the plan is primarily focusing on developing the insight and research indicators to assess the changing impact on the Buckinghamshire economy and the shape and speed of local economic recovery.
13. The economic recovery plan is also being used to support investment propositions for Buckinghamshire through the emerging Devolution proposals but also on individual projects and investments. Buckinghamshire secured £7.7m in July 2020 from the Government Getting Building Fund on four important strategic projects;
- National Film and Television School Expansion £2.99m
 - AI Centre and iHub University of Buckingham £2m
 - Disruptive Space Innovation Centre (DISC) Westcott – Phase 1 £2m
 - Rural Broadband – Phase 3 Extension £710K
14. Work is well underway in the development of the projects; construction work will commence at the beginning of 2021 on the University of Buckingham facilities and on the new DISC facility at Westcott.

Skills to Screen: Aviation programme

15. This new initiative by Bucks LEP, ScreenSkills, Pinewood Studios and Enterprise M3 LEP aims to support a thousand jobseekers previously employed in the aviation industry at Heathrow airport to transfer their skills into the world-class screen industries based at Pinewood Studios. The programme will provide an opportunity for individuals to participate in an online introduction to the screen industries and receive support to identify their transferable skills. Those interested in pursuing a new career in screen will then apply for a series of online training events and 25 will also get work shadowing placements at Pinewood with the aim of filling vacancies in this rapidly growing sector of the economy across Buckinghamshire. The scheme has £85K of funding from the Department for Work and Pensions and was launched at the end of October 2020. As part of the Redundancy Task Force work, a second brokerage programme supported by People First is being developed to support the transition of people from the retail sector into the health and social care sector.

Expansion of Broadband

16. More than 750 rural homes and businesses will get gigabit-capable broadband by December 2021 as part of a £2.1 million scheme, supported by Buckinghamshire Council, Bucks LEP and Openreach, to extend the fibre-optic network further into Buckinghamshire's countryside. This further expansion of this programme aims to provide better connectivity to poor served businesses and will also aid the changes to the workplace we are seeing in the post-Covid 19 world.

The Kickstart Scheme

17. The Kickstart Scheme provides funding to create new job placements for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long term unemployment. BBF has identified 180 job openings in smaller Bucks businesses providing 1 or 2 placements rather than the minimum of 30 requested for the Kickstart programme application. BBF has passed the details to DWP but it would appear that larger businesses with 30+ placements are currently being prioritised.

Silverstone Technology Cluster

18. Buckinghamshire Council inherited from AVDC, the legacy of being one of the founding members of the Silverstone Technology Cluster (STC). The STC organisation exists to help the 4,500 businesses which are clustered within 1 hours drive of Silverstone Circuit within the high performance and technology sector. Help is focused on three key areas of; promotion, to raise the profile of STC members and their capabilities; support, focusing on business growth and encouraging businesses to scale up and; thought leadership, through Special Interest Groups which have been formed to bring like-minded companies together to seek out new commercial activities.

19. STC have been active in supporting businesses through Covid-19 with various strands of activity including; round table events held with MPs to give local businesses a chance to express their ideas, experiences and concerns relating to Covid-19, Brexit and the new Trade Bill (which Bucks LEP also attended); regular webinars on topics such as apprenticeships,

market opportunities in USA, business support and signposting to government advice. STC are also acting as broker for the Kickstart scheme bringing together businesses committing to providing 39 apprenticeship places. This activity is culminating in the STC Annual Conference being held in November to celebrate the continued growth and successes of the cluster and which is one of the economic strengths of Buckinghamshire.

EU Transition update

20. The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 but the end of the EU transition period on 31 December 2020 is fast approaching. The Government communications campaign to encourage businesses and citizens to prepare; “The UK’s new start: let’s get going” and “Check, Change, Go” is underway but many businesses are still dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic as the more immediate concern.
21. The Government’s approach is for a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement and separate agreements on fisheries, law enforcement and judicial cooperation, aviation and energy. If negotiations are unsuccessful, the default position is a no-deal end to the transition period so various scenarios need to be planned for as thorough and complete preparation is impossible until the outcomes of negotiations are known.
22. Potential issues for the economy include that low income groups will be disproportionately affected by any price rises in food and fuel, compounded by Covid and the wider economy issues. World Trade Organisation tariffs and border checks may present supply chain, availability and cost issues regarding food, medicine, fuel and construction materials and there could be risks of stockpiling. There may also be disruption in the food supply chain.
23. BBF have set up the UK and EU Transition Hub which provides a range of detailed resources to support business with;
 - The latest advice on import and export rules
 - Information and tools surrounding immigration and employment changes, including sponsorship guidelines
 - Government advice including funding, labelling, safety requirements, haulage and more
24. A series of free trade-focused webinars are also available from November 2020 through to February 2021.
25. A Buckinghamshire EU Transition Task and Finish Group has been formed to, amongst other things, help to inform business (including suppliers) to prepare for the change in trade in goods, services, change in labour markets and revised regulations. This group will be meeting fortnightly to make sure that the Council has done what we can to prepare for the situation.

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Report to Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee

Date: 26th November 2020

Title: Update on the long term plan for rough sleepers.

Relevant councillor(s): Isobel Darby – Housing & Homelessness

Author and/or contact officer: Nigel Dicker – Service Director, Housing & Regulatory

Recommendations: For the Select Committee to note the update of the long term plan for rough sleepers in the Buckinghamshire Council area.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The long term plan for rough sleepers is working well at present, with only a small number of people currently sleeping rough in the County.
- 1.2 Officers are currently working with providers and partners to enable this small group to access accommodation for the winter period whilst longer term plans are enacted.
- 1.3 The Council recently received notification of grant funding awards totalling over £1.8m following proposals submitted by officers to continue to 'keep everyone in' and to enable those who have returned to rough sleeping to access accommodation in the short and long term.
- 1.4 These funding awards follow a successful funding award of £576,500 announced in January, resulting from officer proposals to enable the Council to continue its work in helping rough sleepers obtain accommodation and support.
- 1.5 We have provided accommodation to over 170 single people and couples since lock down and have had long periods where no one was sleeping rough in the County.
- 1.6 Further funding opportunities have recently been announced, including a repeat of previous years Cold Weather Fund, which officers will look to utilise.

2. Background

- 2.1 In August 2018, the Government published its national Rough Sleeping Strategy which sets out its vision to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it all together by 2027.
- 2.2 The legacy Councils have been working together, in partnership with a large number of agencies for a number of years with the aim of reducing incidences of rough sleeping and to eradicate the need for anyone to do so altogether.
- 2.3 As a result of this partnership working, various grants have been awarded by MHCLG for this purpose, including £576,000 announced in January 2020, with further awards under the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, totalling over £1.8m in October 2020.
- 2.4 The introduction of a national lockdown came with a directive to “get everyone in” which meant local authorities were required to accommodate anyone rough sleeping in their area.
- 2.5 This directive was met in March and will continue to be met until at least the end of March 2021 with over 170 persons accommodated in this period, many of whom have moved on successfully.

3. Long Term Plan for Rough Sleepers

- 3.1 The long term aim of the Council’s housing service is to eliminate the need for anyone to have to sleep rough in the County as per the Government’s strategy.
- 3.2 The housing service has previously met this aim in large areas of the County pre and post the first lock down, with periods in which no one was sleeping rough. This is as a result of partnership working. Officers continue to work with partners to ensure no one is left outside during the current lockdown and during the winter period.
- 3.3 The housing service has successfully applied for a number of funding opportunities from MHCLG, with awards of £576,500 from the rough sleeper initiative (RSI3) and a further £1.8m from the next steps accommodation programme (NSAP) in this financial year alone.
- 3.4 These two funding streams provide an overview of the Council’s short and long term plans for rough sleepers.
- 3.5 The initiatives contained a number of actions and initiatives which are shown below.

RSI3

- 3.6 RSI3 is the third year of funding from MHCLG, with awards made to the former districts in the two previous years. RSI3 includes an extension of a number of

initiatives that have been funded in RSI1 and RSI2, as well as others that have been ongoing since at least 2012.

3.7 RSI3 comprised of the following:

- 1) A Rough Sleeping Coordinator, one full time post – officer to help coordinate the rough sleeper projects across Buckinghamshire
- 2) Substance Misuse Outreach Workers - Continuation through partners, of an RSI funded post to provide substance misuse support to those sleeping rough, and/or in rough sleeper accommodation.
- 3) Mental Health Outreach Officers provided through partners, in the north and south of the County, continuing a RSI funded post in Aylesbury and creating a new post in south of county.
- 4) 19 Emergency beds across Bucks, increasing the previously funded 8 emergency beds for rough sleepers enabling outreach officers to offer placements to anyone found to be sleeping rough in a short time period.
- 5) Five full time supported lettings officers through Connection Support, (increased from 3 officers) to provide tenancy sustainment support to former rough sleepers to help them to manage, and sustain accommodation when placed.
- 6) One full time homeless prevention officer with Aylesbury Homeless Action Group (AHAG). This post is for homeless prevention and low intensive support in the Aylesbury area.
- 7) A small fund through Connection Support (£30,000) to provide personal budgets to rough sleepers/former rough sleepers to assist them when moving to, or attempting to move to accommodation. Examples include, mobile phones to access internet based services, rent in advance and personal items.

NSAP

3.8 The next steps accommodation programme (NSAP) award follows a successful bid for funding by the housing service for a number of initiatives outlined below:

Short term Funding- £485,000

- i) £400,438 for emergency accommodation for those sleeping rough (the application was for £504,000)
- ii) £60,037 to assist and prevent the cohort of EEA/EU nationals and those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), from returning to the streets.
- iii) £25,000 for the payment of rent deposits for former rough sleepers to assist them obtain private rented accommodation.

3.9 Work has commenced on assisting the EEA/EU and NRPF individuals, with accommodation continuing to be provided to the remainder.

- 3.10 Officers are continuing to work with this cohort, building on successes made so far, with at least 60 persons successfully 'moved on' to date. The aim is to continue to reduce the need for emergency accommodation by identifying a suitable option for each individual, in partnership with the voluntary sector.

Long Term Funding £1.3m Capital and £362,360 (all to be paid directly to our partner Registered Providers in these projects).

- 3.11 The two successful proposals are described below:

Move on units

- 3.12 The housing service, in partnership with Harrow Churches Housing Association (HCHA), successfully submitted a proposal to MHCLG for the purchase of 15 x one bedroom units for use as 'move on' from the supported housing units in the County. Seven of the units will be delivered in the Wycombe area, with 8 in the Aylesbury area.

- 3.13 HCHA have confirmed that they can acquire these units and will provide nomination rights to the Council in perpetuity, for a total grant of £1.3m (£650,000 agreed by, and from MHCLG, £650,000 match funded by Buckinghamshire Council). HCHA will provide up to a further £2.2m of their own funds to enable these acquisitions.

- 3.14 The model will provide the Council with the ability to nominate former rough sleepers from supported housing units in Buckinghamshire to these properties for assured short hold tenancies, for 2 years. This will enable a pathway from rough sleeping through supported housing eventually to fully independent living, so creating space in the supported housing units for new clients to access.

- 3.15 The units will be owned and managed by HCHA at no further cost to the Council in perpetuity. MHCLG have advised that, subject to contract, they are minded to approve this proposal.

Ardenham House, Aylesbury.

- 3.16 This is a block of 10 self-contained flats in a central location. The block is currently privately owned and has been offered to Hightown Housing Association for use as a high support needs unit. Hightown Housing Association will provide support to 9 high needs former rough sleepers in this unit. (One flat is to be used as an office space.)

- 3.17 The agreed proposal is for MHCLG to match fund with the Council, and for Hightown to make a freehold purchase of the building from the private owners. The proposal is based on a price that has been discussed between the owners and the Council's Estates team, although a final figure has yet to be confirmed". Subject to Cabinet approval, any funding will be require a formal funding, and a nomination agreement for nomination rights in perpetuity.

- 3.18 Hightown will provide supported housing for 9 former high needs rough sleepers in return for revenue grant funding from MHCLG for 4 years, totalling £362,360. There are therefore no direct revenue implications for the Council. MHCLG have advised that they are 'minded to' approve this scheme subject to contract.
- 3.19 The purpose of these two schemes, is to provide access to high needs supported housing in Aylesbury to cover a lack of current provision, as well as the provision of additional 'move on' units to enable the flow of rough sleepers to continue.

4. Other Actions

- 4.1 The Council is not relying on the NSAP and RS13 funding alone to assist and prevent the need for anyone to sleep rough in the County.
- 4.2 Each legacy Council had strategies and plans in place for single homeless people and rough sleepers, most in partnership across Bucks and with our wider partners.
- 4.3 Connection Support's Rough Sleeper Outreach Service; the Council has continued to fund a county wide assertive outreach service for rough sleepers, since at least 2012. This service includes access to emergency beds in order for the outreach workers to be able to offer accommodation to someone sleeping rough as quickly as possible, ideally on the same night as they have been assessed.
- 4.4 Forums; a forum of agencies and services working with homeless people and rough sleepers meet regularly across the County to review the Council's actions and strategies towards homelessness and rough sleeping as well as providing a solution based approach to any issues arising.
- 4.5 Informal Partnership working; this extends beyond formal meetings with regular discussions between all partners, including the coordinating of actions when needed, for example when the first lock down was introduced, all agencies pulled together, ensuring no one was left on the street.
- 4.6 Severe Weather Provision; for at least the past 10 years, the Council has provided an annual Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) service to ensure anyone sleeping rough is provided with accommodation when the threshold is met (forecast temperature below freezing for 3 consecutive nights).
- 4.7 Protocols; we have a number of protocols and partnerships in place with statutory agencies to prevent people having to sleep rough, having left remand, prison, or hospital as well as with social care for care leavers.
- 4.8 Partnerships; we work closely with Wycombe Homeless Connection, Aylesbury Housing Action Group, Wycombe Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme, Connection Support, One Recovery Bucks, Wycombe Women's Aid, Aylesbury Women's Aid, Thames Valley Probation, Thames Valley Police and numerous other agencies to ensure anyone sleeping rough is identified and provided with support.

- 4.9 Bucks Home Choice; we provide access to housing through Bucks Home Choice for any eligible persons including provision for verified rough sleepers.

Summary

- 4.10 The housing service has successfully managed to practically eliminate the need for anyone to sleep rough in the Buckinghamshire Council area, and will continue to maintain this success through the winter and beyond.
- 4.11 The service will continue to try and meet the needs of anyone who is currently rough sleeping in the area, and to work with partners to seek long term, sustainable options for those currently accommodated.
- 4.12 The successes achieved in the “everyone in” initiative would not been possible in isolation and is a testament to the excellent partnerships established across the County.



Report to Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee

Date: 26th November 2020

Title: Local Plan Update

Relevant councillor(s): Cllr Warren Whyte

Author and/or contact officer: Ian Manktelow

Ward(s) affected: All

Recommendations:

- 1. To note the position with regard to current Local Plans in Buckinghamshire and the broad approach to preparing the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan***

Reason for decision:

To update the Committee on the position with regard to current and future Local Plans in Buckinghamshire.

Executive summary

- 1.1 This report updates the committee on the progress with completing the current round of local plans in Buckinghamshire that were commenced by the legacy authorities. It also sets out the position with the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan, particularly in the light of the changes to the local plans system set out in the recent Government Planning White Paper.

Content of Report

Update on Current Local Plans

- 1.2 The existing adopted local plans covering the Buckinghamshire area were automatically transferred to Buckinghamshire Council on vesting day and remain extant for decision making until such time as they are replaced. In addition the

Council has taken forward the work of the legacy councils on the current local plans in preparation. The position in relation to each of them is set out below:

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)

- 1.3 The VALP is currently being examined by the independent planning inspector. In November – December 2019 consultation was undertaken on proposed main modifications to the Plan. These are changes that the Inspector considers necessary to make the Plan ‘sound’ and hence capable of being adopted. Around 800 representations were received to these proposed main modifications. The Council was asked by the Inspector to respond to those representations and the Council has submitted the vast majority of its responses to the Inspector and these will be put on the website when he has received all the responses. The Inspector is currently considering the representations on the proposed main modifications and the Council’s responses so far.
- 1.4 As a result of considering the representations, some further proposed main modifications to the Plan are due to be consulted on as soon as practicable. The Inspector will then need to consider representations on those further main modifications and will then decide whether to hold any further hearing sessions before finalising his report and recommendations. A link to the latest note from the Inspector on the next steps for the VALP examination is included in the Background Papers section below. To adopt the Plan, the Council will have to accept any main modifications recommended by the Inspector in his report. Subject to the Inspector’s report, the Plan should proceed to adoption during 2021.

Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 1.5 The Plan was adopted in July 2019.

Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan

- 1.6 The Plan was withdrawn by the Council at its meeting on 21st October 2020 and the formal notice of withdrawal has been published on the Council’s website. The current plans in force for the area are the separate Core Strategies for Chiltern and South Bucks and the older Local Plans for the two areas.

Wycombe District Local Plan

- 1.7 The Plan was adopted in August 2019. It was then the subject of two legal challenges to the adoption of the Plan. The first of these did not progress to a High Court hearing, but the challenge by residents group Keep Bourne End Green (KBEG) was considered at a two day virtual hearing in the High Court in June 2020. The judgment issued towards the end of July 2020 dismissed the claim on all grounds. KBEG

subsequently sought permission for the case to be heard in the Court of Appeal, but permission for this was refused at the beginning of November.

Buckinghamshire Local Plan

- 1.8 Buckinghamshire Council is required under the transitional regulations to have a new local plan covering the whole of the authority area adopted within 5 years of vesting day.
- 1.9 In August, the Government published the Planning White Paper (PWP) and also a consultation on changes to the current planning system. The latter included a consultation on a revised standard methodology for determining “local housing need”. The Council has responded to both those consultations.
- 1.10 The PWP will change the scope of the new Local Plan from the more “strategic” plan envisaged in a report on the new plan to Cabinet in July this year, to a map based plan that identifies in detail Growth Areas, Renewal Areas and Areas for Protection. This new style of plan would need to be prepared in a shorter timescale, between 30 and 42 months from when any new legislation comes into force.
- 1.11 The Planning White Paper has far reaching implications for the content of local plans, the way they are prepared and the timing of what may be done and when. Given the uncertainty over what will appear in the final legislation and associated new national policy and guidance, there are significant risks to the process, notably the risk of undertaking abortive and costly work that needs to be re-done when there is greater clarity.
- 1.12 As such, a view has to be taken on what can be progressed now, and what should be delayed to gain greater clarity. It’s not yet clear when we can expect further guidance.
- 1.13 In terms of the broad programme going forward, it seems likely that the earliest that primary and secondary legislation could be in place might be the end of 2021 or perhaps more realistically early 2022, although this is no more than speculation at this stage. As such a statutory timetable of 30-42 months would suggest completion of the Plan towards the end of 2024 or early 2025.
- 1.14 The PWP sets out the following main stages for preparing a local plan:

- Stage 1 – a call for suggestions for Growth Areas, Renewal Areas and Area for Protection
- Stage 2 – Plan proposals are drawn up
- Stage 3 – Plan is submitted for examination by an Inspector and consulted on at the same time
- Stage 4 – Examination by Inspector
- Stage 5 – Plan Finalised

1.15 In the shorter term, work areas are being identified that we can start soon, at relatively low risk, whilst others will need to wait for new national policy and guidance before we can be confident that we are able to start substantive work without risking having to re-do that work.

1.16 A member working party has been established to help guide the preparation of the Plan. In addition, all member briefing sessions are programmed for 10th December to update members on current plans and the new Local Plan. This Select Committee will be able to scrutinise the preparation of the Local Plan at important stages in its preparation.

1.17 The Council has to publish a Local Development Scheme setting out what plans it intends to prepare in the coming 3 years, their scope and the timetable for their preparation. It will also need to set out an anticipated timetable for the completion of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. The Buckinghamshire Local Development Scheme will be considered by Cabinet shortly.

Other options considered

1.19 Not applicable.

Legal and financial implications

1.20 Legal – the legislation and associated policy and guidance for preparing local plans is highly likely to change within the next 12-18 months. This creates significant uncertainty and risk at present in the preparation of the new Local Plan. The Council will need to be prepared to respond to and adjust its approach, as greater clarity emerges. Members will be updated as soon as practicable once further legislation and/or government guidance is received.

1.21 Finance - The development of the new Local Plan will incur costs of technical work from consultants as part of the evidence base for the plan, public consultation and engagement, legal advice and the cost of the planning inspector for the examination

process. The more detailed project planning work will consider these costs in more detail. £750k per annum, for 4 years, has been set aside in the MTFP for 2021/22 to 2024/25, a total of £3m, for the development of the local plan. Any costs needing to be incurred in 20/21 will be initially met from reserves, and then 'paid back' in future years from the £3m budget (i.e. we will use existing reserves to help smooth timing/profile differences). Although an indicative phasing of that budget has been provided as part of the MTFP process, this will need to be kept under review in the light of the emerging national picture.

- 1.22 The report outlines that there are risks of proceeding with some areas of work in advance of there being greater clarity from Government. There would be a substantial impact on the budget if work was proceeded at significant risk and then had to be re-done to accord with new legislation, policy or guidance.

Corporate implications

- 1.23 The Buckinghamshire Local Plan will be an important Council strategy helping to deliver all of the four priorities of the Corporate Plan, but particularly Strengthening our Communities, Improving our Environment and Increasing Prosperity.

Consultation and communication

- 1.24 At this stage no consultation has been undertaken.

Next steps and review

- 1.25 This report is for information at this stage. Further reports will be brought to this Select Committee at important stages in the preparation of the Plan.

Background papers

Planning White Paper (August 2020)

Report to Cabinet 28th July 2020, re Buckinghamshire Local Plan

Link to the latest correspondence from the Inspector on the next steps for the VALP examination (29th October 2020)

<https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/examination-aylesbury-vale-local-plan-2013-%E2%80%93-2033>

Link to Buckinghamshire Council's response to the Government's consultation on the Planning White Paper

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/news/buckinghamshire-council-asks-government-think-again-planning-reforms/>

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Growth, infrastructure and housing select committee work programme

Meeting date	Topic	Description and purpose	Contributors	Lead officer	External presentation (Y/N)
01-Oct	Covid-19 and local economic recovery	To receive an update on the local economic recovery process, including: - What support can we offer to local businesses, including how we are working with partners to support economic recovery. - Unemployment levels in Buckinghamshire. - Vibrancy of town centres - Aylesbury Garden Town.	Martin Tett Steve Bowles	Ian Thompson	Joint presentation from Philippa Batting Managing Director (BBF) Ian Barham Partnership Manager (LEP)
	Housing allocations	To receive an update on housing allocations in Buckinghamshire, including: - Housing providers and affordable housing (including use of CIL/ s106 monies). - The housing waiting list. - Housing audit and equal opportunities in housing allocations. - Key worker housing provision.	Isobel Darby	Nigel Dicker	Julie Porter Executive Director of Development Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust (VAHT)
26-Nov	Covid-19 and local economic recovery	To receive an update on the local economic recovery process.	Martin Tett	Ian Thompson Lisa Michelson	
	Long term strategy for rough sleepers	To receive an update on the long term plan for rough sleepers.	Isobel Darby	Nigel Dicker	
	Local plan for Buckinghamshire	To receive an update on the local plan for Buckinghamshire, including: - An update on the current district local plans. - An update on the local plan for Buckinghamshire including broad timeline.	Warren Whyte	Steve Bambrick	
28-Jan	Covid-19 and local economic recovery	To receive an update on the local economic recovery process, including: - What continuing support can we provide to local businesses. - Unemployment levels in Buckinghamshire.	Martin Tett	Ian Thompson Lisa Michelson	Tbc
	Opportunities for cyclists and pedestrians	What opportunities are there for cyclists and pedestrians, including: - An update on new/ planned and implemented schemes. - Opportunities in town centres. - Long term strategic opportunities (local plan process).	Steve Bowles Warren Whyte	Joan Hancox	
25-Mar	Covid-19 and local economic recovery	To receive an update on the local economic recovery process.	Martin Tett	Ian Thompson Lisa Michelson	
	The local authority planning process and the Local Enforcement Plan	To receive an update on planning and enforcement.	Warren Whyte	Steve Bambrick	
	Temporary accommodation	To receive an update on use of temporary accommodation in Buckinghamshire, including: - Domestic violence and temporary accommodation.	Isobel Darby	Nigel Dicker	

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