Report for:	**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SHADOW EXECUTIVE**
Meeting Date:	**8 October 2019**

Title of Report:	**Council & Community Access Points**
Responsible Officer:	Sara Turnbull, Localism Workstream Officer Co-Lead
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Recommendations:	1. **To agree the vision for Council & Community Access Points as set out in Appendix 1.**
	
	2. **To note the phased approach to implementation as detailed in Appendix 1.**
	   • **Phase 1—Council Access Points for 1 April 2020 focused on providing access for residents to <u>council services.</u>**
	   • **Phase 2—Community Access Points focused on providing access for residents to <u>community facilities and council & partner services.</u>**
	
	3. **To agree to establish Council Access Points for 1 April 2020 in accordance with the design principles as set out below:**
	   • **Use of the existing county and district buildings.**
	   • **Open to all (drop-in access via advertised opening hours).**
	   • **Self-service access to all council services.**
	   • **Existing staff or volunteers available to help residents to self-serve and answer common enquiries.**
	   • **Potential for the site to be used for individual support (e.g. planning, housing advice, councillor surgeries).**
	
	4. **To agree to set up the 18 Council Access Points for 1 April 2020 in the locations set out in Appendix 1, with the option to add a further Council Access Point subject to the successful conclusion of discussions with a partner organisation.**
	
	5. **To agree to work with partners to enable residents to get information and advice about Buckinghamshire Council services.**
	
	6. **To agree to give delegated authority to the Chief**

	Executive of Buckinghamshire Council to vary the locations of the Council Access Points, following consultation with Shadow Executive members, if for any operational reasons there is a need for such a change. 7. **To note that the operation of Council Access Points will be reviewed after 1 year, with an expectation that advertised sites may change in future years as part of the Council's phase 2 development of Community Access Points.**
Corporate Implications:	Council Access Points will provide a facility for the delivery of council services to residents, and therefore will have potential benefits for a variety of service areas who may wish to use the sites for drop-in sessions and appointments. During phase 1 all services, and particularly property, marketing, customer services and the library service will be involved in a co-ordinated plan to ensure their successful set-up. The longer term vision for Community Access Points (phase 2) will provide the opportunity to significantly enhance community facilities to meet local needs. A cross-cutting programme will be established to engage internal services, as well as residents, and members in their design and development. The financial implications of this proposal are set out in Appendix 1. The further financial implications of phase 2, including value for money, will be assessed as part of a business case for phase 2 Community Access Points, post-vesting day. The costs for implementation can be met from within the corporate contingency budget fund and will be requested to be approved by CIG. In 2019/20 this will cost £45,000, and for 2020/21 this will cost £75,632. Total cost £121,132.
Options: (If any)	Appendix 1 sets out the options considered for Council Access Points how and where these might be best delivered for day 1 of the new Council. Consideration was given to having no advertised access points, as there has been an increase in customer preference for accessing services online. However, this approach is not recommended as not all residents are able to use or access online services, and there will always be a need for face-to-face service delivery. Subsequent consideration was then also given to different delivery approaches, such as using the five main existing council buildings only, use of the wider council estate or new/partner buildings for day 1.
Reason: (Executive only)	The recommended approach reflects a desire for the new Council to be ambitious in improving community facilities and service access for the benefit of all residents across the county.

	A phased approach is recommended to achieve this ambition. Phase 1 is proposed to focus on the delivery of access to council services for residents. Phase 2 is proposed to focus on the delivery of wider community facilities, and access to council and partner services through multi-purpose buildings.

1. Purpose of Report

This report sets out a vision, approach and options appraisal for establishing Council and Community Access Points across Buckinghamshire. A decision is sought from the Shadow Executive to ensure that they are set-up and in place for 1 April 2020. Their set-up will ensure enhanced resident access to council services in local communities.

This is proposed as a first step towards the delivery of a longer term vision of Council and Community Access Points that provide enhanced resident access to a wider-range of community and public services.

2. Content of Report

On 1 April 2020 there will be a new single council for Buckinghamshire, replacing the County Council and the four district councils.

The new Buckinghamshire Council needs strong connections with its diverse communities to be successful. A physical presence in localities across Buckinghamshire will be vital to ensure that all of our residents can access council services.

Appendix 1 sets out a vision and practical recommendations on setting up Council & Community Access Points.

The vision for Council & Community Access Points is that they will be a place in a local area where residents can go to access information about a wide range of topics, a social space that they can enjoy, and a place where they can get support from different services.

They will be multi-purpose buildings at the heart of local community life. Residents and communities will help co-design these facilities to meet local needs. It is anticipated that whilst there will be a core offer at all access points, these facilities will provide different services to meet the diverse needs of communities, and adapt flexibility to changing needs.

The vision for Council & Community Access Points long term is ambitious and our strategy for delivery pragmatic. It is recommended that there is a phased approach to the development and roll out of Council and Community Access Points:

	Description	Timescales
Phase 1	**Council Access Points** —Resident access to <u>council services</u> locally.	October 19-March 2020
Phase 2	**Community Access Points** —Resident access to <u>community, council and partner services</u> locally.	April 2020-March 2022

A set of core design principles have been identified for Council Access Points for day 1 of the new council:

- Open to all (drop-in access via advertised opening hours).
- Self-service access to all new council services (e.g. not county or district only).
- Existing staff or volunteers available to help residents to self-serve (e.g. use computer/tablet), signpost and answer common council enquiries.
- Potential for site to be used for individual support (e.g. private space for individual support e.g. housing or adult social care advice delivery or councillor surgeries).

This paper considers the high-level options for the delivery of CAPs on day 1 and their location. Based on this location assessment, 18 existing buildings are identified as CAPs for day 1, with five as 'CAP Plus' sites at the main existing council offices where residents will be able to get additional support for complex circumstances and specific services.

3. Consultation

All buildings proposed for day 1 use as Council Access Points are established buildings already used for delivery of services to the public, and this proposal represents an enhancement of existing support provided, with no reductions in access to services at any locations. All other buildings open to the public, such as libraries, will continue to provide services as normal.

Engagement with members and town and parish councillors through the localism workstream has indicated strong support for closer working with town and parish councils to ensure that residents are able to access services and gain support as easily as possible.

As a result of this feedback, the in-house customer training programme for frontline staff at CAPs will be extended to be offered to town and parish council staff to help signpost effectively.

Phase 1 is an interim solution for day 1 of the new Council and those locations may change depending upon demand and need in the area. In the medium term there is potential for consideration of town and parish council offices for CAP sites and this will be explored further post-vesting day.

Initial engagement has taken place with all of the relevant parties externally (community libraries and Iver Parish Council) to confirm that they would be happy to continue to support

residents to access Buckinghamshire Council services as Council Access Points. Further discussions will be scheduled

In phase 2, the development of Community Access Points, an engagement strategy will be developed to involve communities in co-designing facilities to meet local needs. Community Boards, if set-up, will be a key stakeholder to support their design and delivery.

4. Next Steps

An implementation plan has been developed to ensure the delivery of Council Access Points for vesting day. This plan will coordinate training for staff, branding and property works, as well as informing an external communications plan so that residents know where to go to get help and support in accessing council services.

Background Papers	None.