



Cabinet Member report – Leader
Councillor Martin Tett

Role during COVID-19

We continue to hold regular cross party Covid update meetings each week at which members are kept abreast of developments and can help lead our response. In addition, we have held a number of meetings specifically for our BAME members to look in more detail at the impact of Covid on our BAME communities and what we can best do to mitigate the impact.

The Member Recovery Board meets weekly to review issues and provide a steer to officers following the all member meetings. We continue to consider the epidemiology reports, options of mass testing, impact on schools and the potential roll out of a vaccine programme.

As the situation is rapidly changing, I will update the latest position at the Council meeting.

Proud of Bucks Awards

We were delighted to inform both the winners and those highly commended; however, we have had to postpone the presentation of the awards to when lockdown has lifted. The virtual awards ceremony will be conducted shortly after with videos posted on social media.

Recovery and Growth Deal Proposition

At its meeting on 25th November, the Buckinghamshire Growth Board approved (subject to a few minor changes) an ambitious Recovery and Growth Deal. It is anticipated that this proposition, subject to my final approval, will be submitted to Government by early next year. The proposition builds upon the strengths, partnerships and opportunities within our area and enables Buckinghamshire and the Government to support key 'bounce back' objectives. The proposition is guided through three core ambitions and priorities: our Places, High-Tech Sectors and Skills and will help Buckinghamshire quickly recover, further increasing GVA.

Buckinghamshire Growth Board

Over the past few weeks, the Growth Board has met three times due to additional discussions needed to steer the Recovery and Growth Deal. Outside of the additional meetings, the usual six weekly meeting of the Board took place on the 27th October. The Board members discussed the value and role of the environment in Buckinghamshire and the Council and LEP responses to the Planning White Paper, including the withdrawal of the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan.

Support to Buckinghamshire Businesses

The Covid crisis has had a serious effect on our local economy. Supporting our Buckinghamshire businesses is a priority. Since the last Council, we have worked hard to structure and promote the

two main local Grants available to our Buckinghamshire businesses in response to the second lockdown. Applications for the Local Restrictions Support Grant opened on 16th November, which is a grant for businesses that have had to close due to the lockdown and is ring fenced to impacted sectors. The Additional Restrictions Grant was launched shortly afterwards and is for businesses whose turnover has been badly impacted by the restrictions but who aren't eligible for the other grant.

Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee

At the 26th November Committee meeting, I gave an update on local economic recovery and details of the support available for local businesses to access during the second national lockdown. We also briefed the Select Committee on the wide range of initiatives available for local organisations via BBF. The Council is also nearing the end of the EU Transition period and is working with partners to help ensure that we are informing businesses on how best to prepare for the change in situation, whether a deal is agreed or not.

Enterprise Zone Update

In October, the new £4m Innovation Centre opened at Westcott Venture Park by Greg Smith MP. This facility has been supported by £2m of Local Growth Funding and forms the latest stage of the site development as a hub for the UK Space Sector. Earlier in the month, I attended the opening of the new roundabout to the Venture Park on the A41, part funded by £800K of Enterprise Zone investment. This will not only improve site access but will also provide capacity for future developments at the Park. One such development which is due to commence early 2021 includes phase one of the Disruptive Space Innovation Centre (DISC) which is in receipt of £2m from the Governments' Getting Building Fund investment to boost economic growth and fuel local recovery and jobs.

At Silverstone Park, works near completion on the latest 270,000sq.ft of development in the Enterprise Zone. This comprises of 13 new units, with 10 already having been pre-let and in occupation by the beginning of 2021. The next phase of development on the Enterprise Zone site has also recently secured detailed planning approval.

Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)

It is anticipated that by the time of the December Council meeting, the Aylesbury Garden Town HIF contract for £172.3m, will be enabling the Council to start to draw down HIF funding in the New Year. Related projects are progressing, with the first Primary School on the Kingsbrook development already being built, and planning applications progressing for several others. The first meeting of the Member led HIF Investment Board is taking place in December.

England Economic Heartland (EEH)

The consultation on England's Economic Heartland's draft Transport Strategy closed on 6 October and attracted more than 200 responses, with 76% of survey responses indicating overall support. The EEH Business Unit is now revising the transport strategy to incorporate several key messages coming from the consultation, notably that EEH should go further and faster in the pursuit of net zero greenhouse gas emissions from the transport system. The final Transport Strategy is due to be published in February, so that it can take account of the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan, due to be published shortly.

In addition, the EEH Business Unit is developing a series of projects to better understand the pathway to freight decarbonisation in the region. Initial projects will look to capture better data on freight movements; an understanding of alternative fuels for freight; and a small scale piece of

work to model the additional freight demand generated by schemes such as East West Rail, HS2 and the construction of planned housing and employment sites across the region. In the longer term, EEH is exploring options to develop a larger project to consider the potential for a large scale “Road to Rail” programme for freight.

HS2

With the intensity of activity by HS2 Ltd increasing we continue to emphasise our continued opposition to the project alongside our on-going frustration at lack of information and engagement with local communities and parishes. Work with Members and officers, and HS2 Ltd officials continue to co-design an engagement programme.

East West Rail

As with HS2, EWR activity has increased over recent months and is causing (along with the HS2) massive disruption in the north of the County. The Council is exploring additional resource to ensure it can respond more swiftly to issues.

South East Aylesbury Link Road

The objection period for the CPO and Side Road Order is now complete. Discussions continue with landowners to purchase the land required for the scheme. The Council has now purchased the first of five main parts of land required to deliver the project. An update to the current planning application is due to be submitted by the end of the year which will lead to a statutory consultation of six weeks. The project continues to progress as expected with the aim of works beginning on site next year.

Stoke Mandeville Relief Road (delivered by HS2)

HS2 are continuing to progress the design of the Stoke Mandeville Relief Road. The aim is for delivery of the project by the end of 2023. The Council are working closely with EK (HS2 appointed contractors) to ensure a successful tie-in with the South East Aylesbury Link Road. A significant area of work is progressing on utilities with diversions of a water main and power lines required. The Council will continue to liaise with HS2 as they bring forward the HS2 Schedule 4 detailed application (for changes to the highway).

LGA's People and Places Board

I attended a meeting on 10 November, which included: a review of the Board’s Business Plan 2019-22; an update on devolution; strengthening rural and coastal resilience and further updates on the economic impact of COVID-19, in particular, what is needed for a jobs and skills recovery.

South East Strategic Leaders (SESL)

Since the last update, SESL – through close work with member authorities – responded to the Government’s consultations on “Changes to the current planning system” and “Planning for the future”. I wrote to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government setting out SESL’s views on the proposed introduction of mandatory housing targets and their implications for communities and services. SESL provided member authorities with data for use when informing local MPs of the effects of the Government’s proposals for changing the planning system. SESL also responded to the Government’s proposed changes to the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, something that SESL wants to discuss with the Minister for Immigration.

Strategic Finance

The financial implications of COVID-19 in the current financial year continue to be forecast based on the latest position around lockdowns and tiering. We continue to lobby central government to ensure that our additional costs and lost income are fully funded. We are also doing extensive work around setting the draft budget in these incredibly difficult and uncertain times. The strategy has been to concentrate on 2021/22 and try to avoid any further service cuts beyond those already agreed as part of the current MTFP. The draft budget will go to Cabinet on the 5th January and will then undergo the budget scrutiny process in the week commencing 11th January. This will involve the Cabinet Members being challenged on their proposals, including their robustness and how the financial risks are being managed.





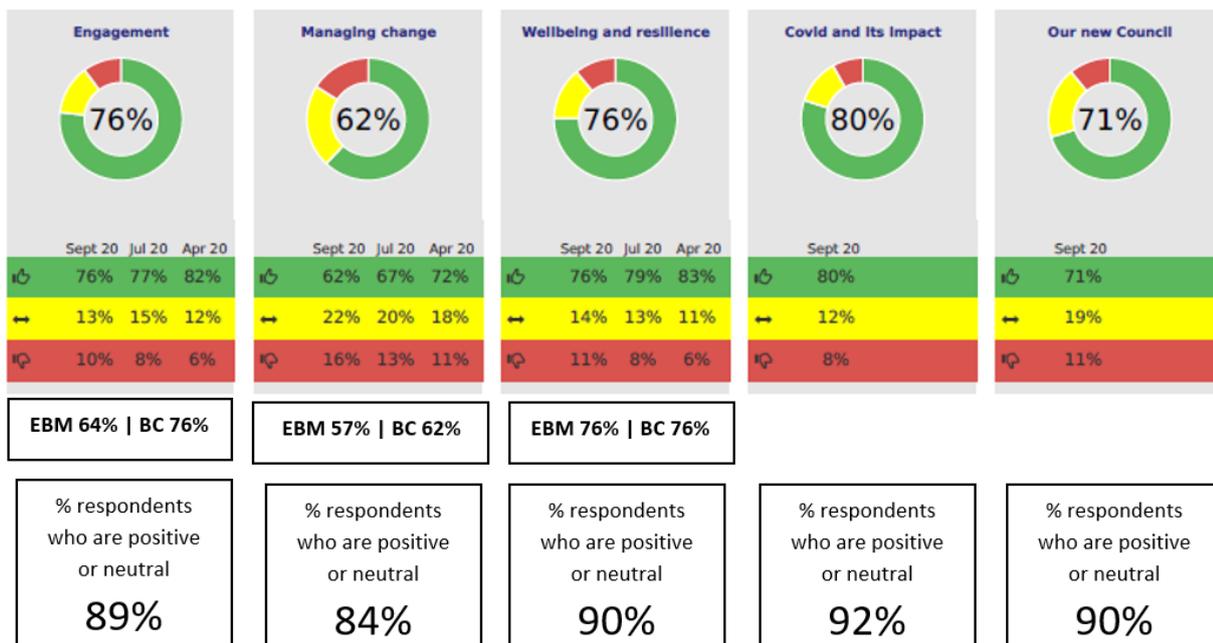
Cabinet Member report – Resources
Councillor Katrina Wood

Together Survey results September 2020

Each quarter we survey staff to measure sentiment. Our September Together Survey results on Engagement, Wellbeing and Resilience, and Covid all remain strong. Overall, 80% respondents said they are happy to work for Buckinghamshire Council. Our highest score still relates to how people feel the organisation has handled the Covid-19 response which is also at 80%.

2399 employees took part, which was an increase of six percent on the last survey, taking us to 60% of the employee population. Responses were again overwhelmingly positive and the organisation is still comfortably ahead or equal to most external benchmarking (EBM) scores. A breakdown by index is provided in the diagram below.

Index results:



(Please note - there is only external benchmarking data available for Engagement, Managing Change and Wellbeing and Resilience indices)

Respondents answered especially positively (with 80% or more agreeing) for example, in relation to their motivation levels; their working relationship with their manager; feeling trusted and enabled; feeling well informed about Covid-19; and that their manager is supportive of their individual circumstances.

National graduate programme



Buckinghamshire Council will take part in the National Graduate Development Programme and we aim to recruit three graduates to start in September 2021. The scheme is designed to develop the next generation of managers to lead critical projects and services that have tangible, everyday outcomes for people's lives. Graduates join us on a two year fixed term contract and placements are within corporate and service teams co-ordinated by the HR & OD team.

Helping hand free school meals

During the October half term the customer service centre stepped in to support anyone who would usually receive free school meals for their child and were struggling to feed them. In total we dealt with 27 families, three were sent a food box, six were given vouchers and the remainder guided to access assistance in the local community. This was a great example of cross team working involving customer services, local emergency support, the localities team and libraries and a testament to how quickly solutions can be put in place at pace. The decision to offer support was made on a Monday and by Tuesday morning the support was live.

Covid Business Grants

The Business Assurance Team is once again supporting the Revenues and Benefits service with administering these grants. All grant applications must meet certain criteria to be paid, and it is vital that the money goes as quickly as possible to eligible businesses that have been impacted by Covid-19. All applications are loaded onto the Government's Spotlight system which matches the applicant's details to a number of other data sets as a fraud prevention method. Where anomalies are identified then these are investigated by the Business Assurance Team. In a small number of cases, this could lead to potential prosecutions where the grants have been obtained fraudulently.

Eligible businesses can apply for funds from one of two grants on the Council website.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-business-support-hub/coronavirus-business-grants/>



Cabinet Member report – Adult Social Care

Councillor Angela Macpherson

Supporting Adult Social Care Clients

During the first national lockdown, the most isolated social care clients were supported with regular calls from social care and later from our partner, Connections Support. This Prevention Matters service continued to support 79 clients after the lockdown ended.

As national restrictions came in to play in early November, we recognised the need to reinstate this approach for those clients who may need it. To this end, we worked quickly with the sector to develop a voluntary and community sector Keep In Touch consortium. We were delighted that Connections Support agreed to coordinate this, working closely with Enrych, Age UK and Bucks Mind. In addition, Community Impact Bucks stepped forward to be the volunteer finding and matching part of the service.

A reviewed list of the most vulnerable clients was created and staff contacted over 1,000 people to see if they would need a 'keep in touch' service during the new period of national restrictions. As a result, just over 160 people have been referred to the consortium. The process was up and running with the first calls to clients made within three working days of the national restrictions being put in place.

Again during the first lockdown, the Council established a forum for befriending organisations in the county to explore how they could support our most vulnerable residents. The forum has enabled organisations to build networks and discuss best practice on a weekly basis.

For some clients and their families, continuing to access day opportunities has been a vital lifeline. Currently all community day opportunity providers across the county are continuing to deliver services throughout the national restrictions. Only three providers have moved to delivering services virtually with all others continuing to deliver face-to-face, Covid-19 secure services.

Hospital Discharges

Winter is always a period of extra demand for health and social care and this year Covid-19 will add to the challenges. The Council is working in partnership to support the NHS to discharge patients who are medically fit and need to leave hospital. The Integrated Commissioning Team has been working with local care providers to secure nursing and residential beds, for residents who need that level of support, and domiciliary care for residents who can be discharged home with support. For those who are able, discharge home offers benefits in terms of outcomes and wellbeing. The NHS and Council are implementing a 'Home First' approach, where discharge home is the default option, unless this cannot meet someone's needs. From March to November 2020, 770 people have been supported as they have been discharged from hospital using the discharge to assess pathway.

As part of its Adult Social Care Winter Plan, the Government committed to deliver a designated scheme with the Care Quality Commission, of premises for people leaving hospital who have tested positive for Covid-19 and are transferring to a care home. The Council is working hard to deliver a designated setting in Buckinghamshire and as a result of strong collaboration across the health and social care system, is expecting the setting to be opened in late November/early December.

Mental Health Support

Oxford Health Foundation Trust continues to support mental health service users and carers. Staff are encouraged to utilise remote means of contact where possible and appropriate, and have access to the correct level of PPE for necessary face-to-face contacts.

Some mental health day-services have re-opened and remain open at the current time. Telephone contact and face-to-face support continues to be provided to people deemed more isolated and vulnerable, where this is the most helpful and appropriate way of supporting them.

Mental health carer assessments continue to be delivered and the highly popular Carer Workshops have moved online. Online drop-in chat sessions and online support groups have been set up for carers and opportunities for carers to become involved in service development have just begun as an online forum.

The Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) service has continued to provide the same level of service throughout the pandemic with staff providing face-to-face assessments under the Mental Health Act in community and hospital settings using appropriate PPE.

Supporting Social Care Providers

As described in my last report to Council, services continue to work closely with social care providers, offering and signposting a wide range of resources at this difficult time. Our residents, families, social care clients and staff have faced extremely challenging circumstances over recent months and are likely to continue to do so over the forthcoming winter.

All commissioned providers receive regular “check in” phone calls and have a dedicated contact within the Council so that they can raise any concerns or seek support when required. All providers receive weekly communications highlighting any changes in guidance etc. and the Council’s Covid-19 Support Offer sets out a wealth of signposting information and advice. In addition, regular webinars and workshops are held for providers to share good practice, develop relationships and resolve challenges.

We are acutely aware of the importance of relatives visiting loved ones in care homes and the equal importance of ensuring homes are safe for residents and staff. The Council’s Director of Public Health is writing to care homes on a weekly basis on the guidance, providing additional advice in relation to the local Covid-19 situation. Care homes can raise site issues with the Council and these are answered individually with specific advice and support.

In relation to testing, all of Buckinghamshire’s care homes are signed up to weekly testing for staff and monthly testing for residents. All other commissioned care and support providers are able to access testing for those with symptoms via the national testing portal (attending a test site or requesting a home delivery testing kit). Health protection will also assess the need for and, where necessary, arrange additional swabbing in the case of an outbreak in any care setting.

A single round of whole setting testing is currently being rolled by Government for some supported living settings (those which have shared facilities and where most service users receive the type of care that is CQC regulated). It is not yet clear if this will become a regular testing programme.

Financial support available for the sector is likely to be a concern for all providers, as organisations struggle to maintain financial viability during an extended period of social distancing, shielding and increased staff costs.





Cabinet Member Report – Culture

Councillor Patrick Hogan

Buckinghamshire Archives

Although Buckinghamshire Archives has had to close its doors under the national restrictions, we have continued to provide an enquiry service by phone and email, and redeployed some staff to help with the Council's Covid-19 response. A new County Archivist, Daniel Williams, previously working in Northants, joined us on 12 November.

Buckinghamshire Virtual History Festival Fringe ran until mid-October. In addition to 1,200 visits to the website over the Festival weekend (12/13 September), traffic levels have remained high, with approximately 700 unique users a week since then.

The National Archives has extended Buckinghamshire Archives' provisional accreditation until July 2022, at which point a solution to meet future pressure on accommodation needs to have been identified. The Archives service continues to work with Property and Assets colleagues on this issue.

Cultural Recovery Fund

A total of just over £1.8m was granted to cultural and creative organisations across Buckinghamshire in October from the government's Cultural Recovery Fund, administered by Arts Council England. Some of our museums, theatres, art's centres and art's companies benefitted from the funds to support organisations in arts and culture at risk due to the Covid-19 crisis. In addition, many cultural organisations across the county have received emergency funding from local organisations The Rothschild Foundation and Heart of Bucks, as well as other national funders including Arts Council England, Artfund and National Lottery Heritage Fund. These essential funds have allowed our cultural organisations to maintain engagement with audiences and put structures in place to prepare for re-opening safely and efficiently.

Cultural Partnership

The new governance structure for the partnership was approved by the Development Board in November, meaning that Buckinghamshire Culture will set up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The official launch of the partnership and formal adoption of the Buckinghamshire Cultural Strategy are expected in early 2021. Together with Bucks New University, the partnership ran a competition to design a visual identity for Buckinghamshire Culture. The winning entry is now being developed into a logo and branding.

Buckinghamshire Culture has been successful in its application to The Rothschild Foundation to fund a multi-faceted programme designed to help the cultural sector hit hard by Covid-19 get back on its feet and re-engage with its audiences, as well as building sector leadership. This project also focuses on the wider role of culture in supporting recovery, by co-commissioning bespoke projects that address social issues, inequalities or Covid-19 challenges, using culture and creativity as tools

for positive change. The £50k majority funding from The Rothschild Foundation is supported with a small amount of match funding from Arts Council England and Buckinghamshire Council. This programme will take place from November 2020 to September 2021.

Communications

Work on a Comms plan to ensure that the cultural agenda and activities remain visible to Cabinet Members and other stakeholders has been postponed to free up resources for the Covid-19 response.

Following the success of the new Heritage Portal, discussions have taken place with the Digital team to explore the potential for a cultural portal, pulling together opportunities across Buckinghamshire to engage with cultural pursuits. It is noted that the Council's [online directory](#) already offers a lot of good information. Further work is needed to examine how to promote our cultural offering better to residents without duplication, in conjunction with relevant partners.

Heritage

Buckinghamshire Design Awards – The Heritage team are leading the project and have received 30 nominations of schemes representing good design, which will be considered by a judging panel later in November.

Heritage at Risk – The heritage and archaeology teams have been working with Historic England on their recently published Heritage at Risk Register 2020. We have been identifying those listed buildings and historic sites in Buckinghamshire that are most at risk of damage from neglect, decay or erosion, and we will be working with Historic England and landowners to improve the management of these sites.

Local Lists – The Heritage team have also submitted an Expression of Interest to MHCLG for funding from the Local List campaign, to allow us to produce a county-wide list of locally-significant heritage assets. This would be achieved through public engagement and volunteer survey work, led by a project team.





Cabinet Member report – Logistics

Councillor David Martin

Parking Services

Car park usage

We are monitoring our car parks to assess usage and understand new parking trends and driver behaviour since COVID. Across the County at the end of October, the average usage for all car parks was 46%, with a range of between 14% and 70%. The new pattern of usage seems to be influenced by factors such as location, whether the car park is short/long stay, and nearby offerings. Car parks that predominantly serve nearby train stations are showing a much slower recovery than those that mainly support local shops. Total parking income is slowly increasing, with off-street receipts at a lower rate of increase than on-street.

New parking machines

New parking payment machines have been installed in the Council car parks in High Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale. This is an ongoing project which brings a vast improvement to customer experience. Previously, older machines were regularly breaking down and in need of constant repair leading to inconvenience to the customer and cost to the council. All new machines accept credit/debit cards and are contactless.

Total contact free option

The RingGo mobile phone payment option is now operating in all Council car parks, except the Handy Cross Park and Ride site; and we aim to upgrade these in the near future. RingGo provides an alternative quick method to using payment machines and is contact free.

New electric charging points

Work has commenced on introducing new electric vehicle charging points in the Chiltern area; the latest sites are:

- Star Yard car park, Chesham
- Sycamore Road car park, Amersham,
- Amersham Old Town car park, Old Amersham

Each area will have two new points; one rapid charge and one fast charge. The rapid will charge a Nissan Leaf in approximately 20 minutes. The fast charge, which can charge two vehicles simultaneously, takes around 4 to 5 hours. Customers will be able use the points by registering with BP Chargemaster.

The Countywide TRO consultation

In order to ensure that all Traffic Regulation Orders are up to date, properly recorded and compliant with governing legislation, a review of the many thousands of existing on and off-street parking orders inherited from the five councils across the county has been undertaken. All

members have received a series of briefing notes on this process; and a statutory public consultation has commenced. Members should read the proposals and schedules that relate to roads, streets, car parks and country parks in their respective wards. Members should encourage their town and parish councils to comment on their own roads, etc. When in force early next year, the composite TRO will form a centralised database of accurate records of existing and new orders throughout Buckinghamshire; and will make enforcement in respect of on and off-street, country parks and certain moving traffic offences quicker and easier.

Progress to service unification

Following the establishment of the unitary Buckinghamshire Council, it is intended to create a single parking and enforcement service that brings together the three off-street parking teams, the on-street parking team and their respective management and supervision structures into one centrally managed organisation. The first step towards achieving this is to transfer the team in Ringway Jacobs who manage the on-street enforcement contract into Buckinghamshire Council; and the staff consultation process is underway. It is expected that this will be completed early in 2021. The on-street enforcement contract with NSL will end in September 2021 at which point it is proposed that the Civil Enforcement team delivering that service will also transfer into Buckinghamshire Council. When completed, the new arrangements should deliver significant operational savings and service efficiencies.

Home to School Transport

Return to school in September

Following the school term start in September, a lessons learned process including a workshop with Members and two reports to the Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee, has been undertaken to inform planning for next year and ensure that we continue to improve service delivery. This process has identified a number of areas that went well including: the vast majority of bus passes being issued on time with very few temporary passes; improved communications with customers via the website and with schools; clearer SEND application forms; improved turnaround time for all applications; and second choice discretionary transport being arranged pre-commencement of term. Whilst this was being achieved, the service managed the challenges posed by COVID, which included transporting key workers and key worker children; and increasing bus capacity by commissioning extra vehicles. Over the next year we will use this experience to ensure that we continue to improve for term start in September 2021. Some of the actions identified are already being delivered through the existing Client Transport Improvement Programme, which will also pick up new areas where services could be delivered more effectively. These will include process improvements in SEND transport and communications. In the meantime, all pupils for whom we have a statutory to take to and from school, plus those who travel on our paid for commissioned services and those who use commercially provided coaches continue to receive Home to School Transport - approximately 7,500 students. Additionally, we continue to provide Social Care transport for adults and children with additional needs - approximately 440 adults and 70 children. This is a complex operation during the best of times and with the challenges arising daily from COVID, I am pleased with the overall quality and safety of the services we provide.

Tendering Activity

Transport Services is preparing for the process of re-tendering all Home to School and social care transport contracts. This is a substantial piece of work which will take place over the next year with the aim that all new contracts will be in place for the beginning of the school term in September 2021. This activity will ensure that the Council is able to achieve best value for money and improve the passenger experience further through introducing a schools-based model to strengthen the

links between parents, transport operators, colleges and schools. Further information on the school bus routes that the Council will be running for September 2021 will be made available to members in Spring 2021.

Software Project

A project to improve both back office and customer facing software is underway, with the intention of a new system being in place by May 2021. The new software will improve accuracy and be more efficient for staff, as well as providing a portal for parents to make applications for their children's home to school transport and allowing greater accessibility to the information that they need. Data cleansing is continuing ahead of the first phase of data migration; and current processes have been mapped out to identify efficiencies going forward.

Public Transport

Public bus routes

There are 96 public bus routes in Buckinghamshire, and weekday timetables are running at near normal levels using extra financial support from the Department for Transport. Plans to increase some Saturday timetables have been delayed due to the second national lockdown. Passenger numbers had returned to 55% of pre-COVID levels but it is expected that the second lockdown arrangements will have had a dampening effect on this.

Additional buses

35 additional buses continue in operation, providing extra capacity for school pupils using public bus services, helping compliance with social distancing rules. These arrangements have been a success and we expect that government funding will be extended into the 2021 Spring Term. A project to update timetable information at bus stops following the high number of COVID related service changes has taken place through October and November, involving over 1,500 bus stops across the county.

Rural area transport



Our Fleet Management team has recently received delivery of a minibus for the Buckingham Area Rural Transport project. This is a new volunteer run community transport scheme for Buckingham and surrounding villages, instigated by Cllr Warren Whyte, accessing local developer contributions to fund the minibus. I wish the volunteers who will run the service every success; and thank Cllr Whyte for enabling it to happen.

Staff matters

I am very pleased to report that we have recruited three highly experienced officers to the remaining unfilled senior management posts in school transport. These latest appointments give me greater confidence that the proposed service improvements and the new commissioning arrangements will be successful. Ongoing issues from COVID across the teams has continued to present operational challenges; and all staff continue to rise to the occasion. My sincere thanks go to all of them.

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Cabinet Member report – Sports and Leisure

Councillor Clive Harriss

Leisure

Prior to the reintroduction of national Covid restrictions, we had seen a positive gradual return of customers across the Council's leisure centres, with our leisure operators continuing to introduce further activities as the guidance allowed. This recovery was obviously affected by the inclusion of sport and leisure in the second lockdown. However, the efficiency with which the centres were closed, and customers notified, reflects the planning and work put in by our leisure partners; more importantly, with all the staff training and required social distancing measures now in place, centres are in a position to reopen quickly when the national restrictions are lifted.

I had written to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, copying our local MPs, to express my concern about the detrimental impacts of prohibiting grassroots sports and requiring local leisure centres to close, with significant consequences for the physical and mental health of our local residents. All of us appreciate the need for stringent measures to control the virus and save lives, not least our local clubs and facilities, who have introduced comprehensive and robust measures to ensure they are operating a Covid-secure approach. Given this excellent track record on hygiene and safety, and the correspondingly extremely low incidence of transmission in such settings, it was disappointing that there were such severe limitations on opportunities for exercise. I was therefore very pleased to hear the announcement by the Prime Minister that when the national restrictions end on 2 December, outdoor grassroots sports will resume, and that gyms and leisure centres can open under the local restriction tier system. At the time of writing, we wait to hear which tier Buckinghamshire will be placed in from that date.

Chalfont and Chesham Leisure Centres

Refurbishment work has been taking place at both centres, with significant additions to the health and fitness offer, new group exercise studios and brand new fully equipped gyms. Subject to final checks, these centres are due to reopen in December (Chesham on 14 December and Chalfont on 19 December). Unfortunately, the swimming pool at Chalfont will not be able to reopen at this time, since works have identified significant issues with the pool structure; discussions with the operator are ongoing to inform the best way forward.

Farnham Park Playing Fields

Junior football returned to Farnham Park in late September, with the adult leagues starting up over the first weekend of October. In total there are now seven junior teams and ten adult teams playing at Farnham Park on a regular basis, with a small number of teams booking 'one off' games. Under the latest national restrictions, the Playing Fields had to be closed to all organised sport, including football, softball and baseball, however we are pleased that outdoor grassroots sports will be able to resume. The facility has remained open every day from 7am to 4pm to allow local residents to use the site for exercise and dog walking. The play area is also open every day.

South Bucks Golf Course

The golf course also had to close on 5 November but will reopen from 2 December. The green keeping team have been using the time to carry out winter works, which is made easier with no golfers on the course; this should ensure the course will be in good condition when we reopen, as we expect there to be a high demand. In the meantime, all other staff have been working every day, or taking holiday, with two members of staff helping out at Black Park on car park duties.

Country Parks

Country Parks continue to be inundated with visitors most weekends and this shows little sign of abating. This brings additional challenges for the ranger team, with routine maintenance not being possible due to high levels of visitor use and staff being required to manage/control/direct visitors instead of completing routine winter-time maintenance and conservation activities. Parking on the local roads has been well managed by the Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders, but irresponsible parking on the A412 dual carriageway continues to be a regular problem; officers are working with Thames Valley Police and Transport for Buckinghamshire colleagues to find a sustainable solution.

HS2/National Grid enabling works at Denham Country Park continue to be a call on resources, to monitor contractors on site. Protesters have made a number of claims and complaints about HS2/National Grid conduct on site to the Forestry Commission (alleged illegal tree felling) and to the Metropolitan Police (Country Park land east of the R. Colne is in Hillingdon) relating to wildlife crimes against protected species and habitats. The team continue to work to minimise the impact on the Country Park, protect local wildlife and to achieve maximum mitigation on site post completion of the enabling works.

Buckingham Skate Park

We are evaluating the tenders received for the design and build contract for the replacement skate park at Bridge Street in Buckingham. The winning bidder will be required to work with community groups to inform the final design. Contact has already been made with local Councillors, the Town Council and a Youth Action group, and the team are considering the best options to gather views from the users of the skate park while we are operating under Covid restrictions, to ensure that the project is not delayed.

Alfred Rose Park, Aylesbury

Consultation on the design and relocation of the existing toddler play area away from the cricket ground to a site adjacent to the other play equipment has been completed. The project remains on track and should be completed by late spring 2021.

Wycombe Rye

The new Boathouse Café is progressing well, with the prefabricated modular building now on site and the sedum 'green' roof installed. Construction continues at pace and is on target for handover in the new year.





Cabinet Member report – Children’s Services

Councillor Mark Shaw

2020 Christmas Present Appeal

I am very pleased to have been able to lead, alongside Cllr Paul Irwin and Cllr Ashley Waite, the 2020 Christmas Present Appeal to support local vulnerable children and young people. This is the sixth year that we have run an appeal, and it is the first as the new Buckinghamshire Council, forming part of the Council's wider 'Helping Hand' community support initiative.

The appeal has gathered donations which are being used to provide special gifts for children across Buckinghamshire who, due to their circumstances, might not otherwise receive much at Christmas. Following this particularly difficult year, these children and young people are more in need of festive cheer than ever.

For the first time this year, the appeal has utilised a Just Giving donation page to receive donations which have been used to purchase gifts for all those that need them, including older children and young people leaving the Council’s care.

The response has been nothing short of amazing, with thousands of pounds raised at the time of writing. We are very grateful to our Council staff, fellow members, local residents, community groups and charities who have come together with us to help make Christmas a bit brighter for our local disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people. It has been truly heartening to know that so many people care about and want to help other people less fortunate.

Thank you to everyone for your support.

Continued Response to COVID-19

Every team across the service has experienced significant increases in workload over the last few months. The last few weeks have seen both volumes and levels of complexity rise even more steeply. This is in the context of Covid-19 infection rates rising nationally and across Buckinghamshire. Remote working will continue for the majority of staff and we will continue to support them as we have been throughout this period. Keeping in regular contact with all of our teams and maintaining standards that ensure children and young people are safe remains a key priority.

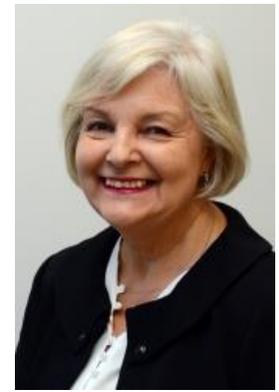
The senior management team in the service join team meetings and meet with their managers on a weekly basis in order to ensure staff are supported and updated guidance is devised to manage both the higher demand and the impact on staff of the nature of the work.

Overall, there is confidence across the service that standards can be maintained despite the pressures caused by increases in demand. We are aware of the uncertainties that the future holds but the service has managed the pressures Covid has imposed on all of us with success and determination.

Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) Focused Visits

Following the introduction of the second national lockdown, Ofsted has decided to pause their ILACS focused visits. As a result, the service will not receive a visit before the end of the calendar year as previously anticipated. We are still waiting for Ofsted to announce their plans; however, they will resume inspection activity in January 2021.





Cabinet Member report – Education & Skills

Councillor Anita Cranmer

School provision in Buckinghamshire

In order to support the full return of pupils to school after the October half term, there was significant work completed to provide schools with clarity and guidance. This included:

- Support for providers in early years.
- Specific guidance regarding the wearing of face coverings in schools.
- An Outbreak Guide from the Public Health Team, to provide an overview of the framework for the response to COVID-19 outbreaks that occur in schools and other early years settings within Buckinghamshire.
- Guidance from Public Health and Education to support schools with planning for 'bubbles', mixing pupil groups and providing wrap-around care.
- Updated Business Continuity Planning for School Transport.

So far, there have been 106 incidents where schools have had to close year groups or send pupils home due to pupils or staff testing positive for Covid-19. In each case, the issue has been addressed directly with the school and the service has worked closely with Public Health to support. The School improvement Team hold a central record of each case to support our understanding of the situation across Buckinghamshire.

The response from our community of schools across the county since their partial closure on 24 March 2020 continues to be excellent. It is remarkable how schools continue to open in the safest way possible, despite the challenges and issues they face every single day.

Our focus is now on the wellbeing and resilience of school leaders as we are very aware that there is an accumulation effect of the pandemic and that this is a long term challenge.

Buckinghamshire's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Service

I am pleased to report continued progress in relation to the service's compliance with the statutory 20 week deadline for issuing Education, Health and Care Plans. Between 1 January 2020 – 31 October 2020, 70% of final plans were issued within 20 weeks compared to only 40% in 2019. This year's improved performance also compares favourably to the 2019 national and south east region average of 60% and 47% respectively. In addition, since May 2020 performance has been consistently above 75%.

Buckinghamshire is due a Local Area SEND inspection from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. The inspection remit is not limited to the local authority but covers all services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities across Education, Health and Social Care. Due to current pandemic, inspections have been suspended, and Ofsted are

completing a series of interim visits to understand how local areas have responded during Covid. Buckinghamshire is not expecting to have an interim visit at this stage; however, preparations are continuing to ensure any future inspection runs smoothly and we are collectively able to showcase the support we provide to children, young people and their families. We expect inspections to resume in the Spring 2021.

Closing the Gap Conference

As part of the Council's work on addressing the attainment gap between children who are disadvantaged and their peers, the School Improvement Team ran an online conference on Friday 6 November 2020. The agenda was packed with speakers from schools, the Youth Offending Service and the Education Endowment Foundation. The content of the conference is still available online and can be accessed [here](#). Feedback from the conference was overwhelmingly positive and as a result, we are embarking on ambitious training programmes, workshops and a further conference during the remainder of the academic year to support school leaders in closing the attainment gap in our county.

Skills Update

The Council works actively with the Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Board which exists to coordinate the energies of all partners actively engaged in promoting and providing skills opportunities for young people and job restarters. This is an important coordinated effort since there is a need in Buckinghamshire to promote our skills growth and benefit our economy, particularly during these challenging times. The Skills Advisory Panel has asked for a single portal to be developed using funding from key partners which will be hosted on the new **Skills Hub** website which will operate as a "single front door" to access support, information and apprenticeship/employment opportunities that are currently available across Buckinghamshire. It is anticipated that this will be available in early 2021. In the meantime information is being hosted at <https://bbf.uk.com/business-support/category/redundancy-support>.

The Council, as large employer within Buckinghamshire, is putting in place a range of recruitment initiatives covering apprentice opportunities, a new adult social care cadet scheme and graduate trainee roles through the Local Government Association National Graduate Development Programme. Information about these opportunities will be made available on the Council's recruitment pages and this will be linked to the new **Skills Hub** website.

The Buckinghamshire **Skills Hub** also hosted the annual Skills Show between 9th and 13th November 2020. This year it was delivered online and incorporated a range of events for students across all year groups. The online timetable included employer-led careers in the curriculum lessons for Year 9 students and student/parent webinars. There were over 5,000 participants to the live sessions and evening webinars. To accommodate the challenges schools are currently facing the sessions were recorded so that they can be accessed at a time to suit the school. All schools will be receiving follow up information including the link to the resources and suggestions as to how the resources could be utilised as part of the curriculum timetable. In addition, to support students in years 11, 12 and 13 who need help in deciding what to do next, the "What's right for me?" initiative provides students with a free virtual advice session where they can discuss their options with a trained careers advice counsellor.



Cabinet Member report – Youth Provision

Councillor Tony Green

Following a number of queries, I thought it would be beneficial to clarify the Council's role in supporting youth provision within Buckinghamshire.

Firstly, our Family Support Service has youth practitioners as part of their integrated workforce and delivers a broad youth work offer which covers a number of different support options for young people across the County. This is on top of their individual family casework which provides longer term, targeted support for families containing young people. The team also offers targeted, weekly one to one sessions with a young person that are focused on addressing specific identified needs. The length of the intervention is 8 sessions on average dependent on the support required, but this can be extended dependent on engagement and level of need. In addition to the targeted one to one sessions, the Family Support Service also provides targeted, six to eight week, small group work programmes for young people on specific topics/needs. These topics include:

- Confidence and Self-esteem
- Stress, Anxiety and Low Mood
- Transitions (to secondary school)
- School Engagement
- Employability
- Risk Taking behaviours

Young people also have access to weekly 'drop ins' in each locality area (Wycombe, Aylesbury and Chiltern and South Bucks) where young people can access information, advice and guidance on a variety of issues. From here they can also be signposted to other organisations or access additional targeted support, if required. In addition, each secondary school also has a linked Youth Worker who attends the school every fortnight to offer information, guidance and signposting for young people and school staff.

Throughout the county, there are a variety of youth groups, forums and activities in the local community that are accessible to young people in Buckinghamshire. The majority of these services are not delivered by the Council and are predominantly run by charities or voluntary groups. Whilst the Council does not directly run most of these services, the Family Support Service does work in partnership with these groups to provide support. For example, there are 16 voluntary led youth clubs that are operating from Buckinghamshire Council owned buildings under lease terms and there is a Service Level Agreement in place between the Family Support Service and these groups to provide support, guidance and development activities to enhance the wider youth offer across the county. The Council does still operate and manage two youth centres through the Family Support Service to enable direct service provision through group work and also to provide a centre based youth offer in partnership with other voluntary led youth centres.

Finally, an education and training programme (traineeship) delivered by the Family Support Service provides young people with the skills and experience that employers are looking for and includes work experience for young people (aged 16 – 24) who are not currently in Education, Employment or Training.

Adoption Service

The joint work between our Adoption Service and the council's Digital and Technology Board has enabled a digital approach to attracting and recruiting prospective adopters to be set up. Our digital presence has been in place since the beginning of this financial year and is set to make a real impact on the number of people who come forward expressing a wish to adopt a child and also to those who are approved to do so.

Having a digital presence enables prospective adopters to access high quality information when they want to, at their pace and at times that are convenient to them. This approach is really paying dividends in terms of the number of people who are coming and also in those who are then approved to adopt. We are currently on track to increase the number of people who start an application to adopt by over 50% this financial year, from 29 last year to 40 in this year. In addition, and most pleasingly, we are on track to approve 30 adopters in this financial year compared with 18 the year before. This will have real benefits for our children who need an adoptive home.

Our Adoption Panel, which has the task of recommending individuals or couples to be ready to adopt, continues to work to a high standard. Some of those who have been through the adoption process this year have given their feedback as to what it was like and have commented on our adoption panel. They have told us:

"We found Panel to be a positive experience; friendly and put us at ease"

"Very thorough in their approach and questioning"

"Very positive, focusing on strengths; it has been an emotional journey for this couple so the Panel's sensitive approach was appreciated"

Despite the anticipated growth in adopters this year, there is still a need for more people to help provide safe and loving homes for children in need. For those interested in becoming an adoptive parent, we offer individual appointments to anyone considering adoption and those who want to know more about the process. Appointments are bookable by getting in touch with the adoption team on 01494 586 349 or by email at adoption@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.



Cabinet Member report – Environment & Climate Change
Councillor Bill Chapple OBE

Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy

Work continues at pace to develop our approach to responding to climate change and air quality. The COVID-19 pandemic changed how many of us live and work and has also had an impact on the council's finances. It is important that we have a strategy that is grounded in reality and deliverable in practice. With this in mind we are scrutinising our approach to ensure that it is sufficiently robust to make a real change in uncertain times and does not make grand gestures which cannot be followed through on.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot

Buckinghamshire Council is one of five local authorities across England to pilot the production of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). These strategies, which are included in the current Environment Bill, are a new system of spatial strategy for nature, which are designed to map, plan and help drive more coordinated, practical, focussed action and investment to help nature flourish, whilst delivering wider, nature-based solutions that have multiple environmental outcomes. A key feature of the LNRSs is that they will identify both areas that could become of importance for biodiversity and areas where the recovery or enhancement of biodiversity could contribute to other environmental benefits i.e. carbon storage, natural flood management etc.

The pilot has set up the steering group and is now in the process of finalising its baseline maps as well as a written description of the LNRS area including its key habitats and an assessment of the potential opportunities to create or improve them. In support of this we have just completed some mapping work to identify where are the best opportunities and locations for the planting of additional woodland within the County.

The key next step in January will be to bring stakeholders together across Buckinghamshire to identify a long list of outcomes which would help to achieve these improvements and then to prioritise these outcomes. We aim to be carrying out this step in January.

Ecology

The dormouse project at Silverstone was successfully carried out during September and October. The surveys are on hold during the hibernation period and will recommence in the spring when dormice emerge from hibernation. Next year's survey area will again be the ancient woodlands nearby to the Silverstone racetrack with an aim to find signs of this protected and rare species. We continue to work in partnership with the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust and Forestry England to deliver the project.

Plans continue to progress for the water vole project along the River Great Ouse within the Buckingham area. Mammal monitoring rafts to track the presence of otters, water vole and mink

along the river will be set up this November. We are working with the Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust and the River Wardens of Buckingham via The Conservation Volunteers. Rafts and volunteer training will be taking place throughout December, subject to Covid restrictions. Thereafter monitoring will be carried out through the winter months and into spring to help record the presence of the United Kingdom's fastest declining mammal.

Working in partnership with the Natural Environment Partnership, a second meeting was held in November to discuss how Buckinghamshire's roadside verges can be better managed for wildlife. Discussions are ongoing and we are working with the Council's transport team and contractor responsible for verge cutting. Pilot sites for the project are being explored. Relaxed mowing presents an opportunity for invertebrates such as butterflies to thrive within a more diverse range of native plants, as well as wider benefits such as carbon sequestration.

Household Recycling Centres

Household Recycling Centres have remained open throughout the second lockdown providing a vital service to thousands of residents every day. After Central Government clarified their position in May, that HRCs are an essential service, all sites reopened during the first lockdown, and we continue to serve local residents now in this lockdown.

Since reopening in May more than 650,000 visits have been made to the sites which is only around 15% fewer than the same period last year. Despite the slightly fewer visits the amount of waste brought to the sites since reopening has been higher than usual, up 10% on the previous year. All sites have social distancing measures on site, and fewer parking spaces available to reduce the amount of people on site, but visitors can still use all the services usually available and the overall experience should be welcoming.

The sites moved to Winter Opening hours in October as the nights draw in and all sites are now working from 9am-4pm on their usual working days. We still encourage all visitors to check the website before they visit to check the webcams, see when the site is quietest, and make sure they have all the up to date information.

The sites will continue to operate throughout the lockdown and will remain open as they are permitted in all three new Tiers of restrictions. Our only days off will be Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day, so if residents have lots of cardboard and festive waste, we will be here to help them recycle it.

Fly-Tipping Enforcement Team Update

Mohammed Afzal is a prolific fly-tipper, and between 11/02/19 and 14/06/20, he went on a fly-tipping spree. Although it's not been proved he was clearly collecting waste and dumping on a commercial basis. Afzal uses saloon cars or SUV's to commit his offences and during the period mentioned he had four vehicles seized. Afzal appeared at Aylesbury Crown Court on 16/06/20, and during that hearing he pleaded guilty to two Buckinghamshire offences of fly-tipping and was remanded in custody. At that time he was also charged with a further 11 offences, nine of which were fly-tipping offences in Buckinghamshire and Slough.

He was also charged with two other offences of using a false waste transfer note on 4 July 2019 and failing to produce a waste carrier licence when requested on 13 August 2019. The outstanding charges for Buckinghamshire were then joined with the outstanding Slough charges and the case was transferred to the Reading Crown Court. All the Advocacy in this case was done in house until the matters were joined with Slough and external counsel was then instructed.

On 5/11/20, Afzal appeared at Reading Crown Court via video link from prison and admitted all the above offences, of which the case was adjourned for sentencing on 21/12/20. Afzal is the Buckinghamshire Fly-Tipping Enforcement Teams' second custodial sentence of the year, which in itself is a phenomenal achievement.

Waste Collection and Disposal

Our waste collection teams across Buckinghamshire have continued to collect household waste, food waste, glass, garden waste and recyclables across Buckinghamshire through the second lockdown. 88,000 bins are emptied every day and each household produces over 1,000kgs of waste each year. In Buckinghamshire, we recycled 56.1% of waste last year compared to a national average of 44% and less than 0.1% of waste is sent to landfill. Our Energy from Waste facility handles 100,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste from Buckinghamshire homes and produces enough electricity to power 40,000 homes.





Cabinet Member report – Planning & Enforcement
Councillor Warren Whyte

Government White Paper

During August and October the government issued two consultations on planning. The consultations proposed to make radical changes to the planning system in an effort to simplify the planning process for all involved. The two consultations related to a) the standard methodology for calculating housing numbers and b) a 26 question White Paper on the overall planning system including the way in which Local Plans are prepared and assessed.

The Council responded to the first consultation on 1st October 2020 where we submitted a comprehensive objection to the proposal. The proposal to move to a system of being imposed housing targets would identify an increase in new dwellings by 2030 across the UK from 1.6m to 3.37m without any evidence. In Buckinghamshire, our current housing performance is around 1500 a year, with our tested evidence showing a need for around 2300 homes a year moving forward. The proposed methodology would almost double the 'moving forward' target and over triple our current position. This is without any evidence of need and would have huge impact on Buckinghamshire.

The Council's technical response also includes our opinion on the questions raised in relation to delivering First Homes, supporting small and medium sized developers and extending the current Permission in Principle to major development.

Our second consultation response, on 29th October, welcomed the government's intention to simplify the planning system and recognised that it could benefit all involved. However, the council remained concerns about some areas proposed including a lack of public involvement in Local Plan preparation. The proposed abolition of the duty to cooperate requirement appeared to leave the public outside of the local plan preparation until it was submitted to the inspector for assessment.

The council did however welcome the government proposal to review and strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions. Amongst other things the Council sought to have the council powers to pursue stronger enforcement actions and both in terms of mainstream breach of planning control but also to ensure that planning conditions are complied with.

We await the government's response to the consultation responses.

The Councils response to the consultation can be found at:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/news/planning-reform-response/>

Update on Local Plan

As a new Council, we are required to prepare a new local plan within five years. As mentioned above, the government's White Paper may have a dramatic effect on the way in which local plans are produced.

In the meantime, work on the Buckinghamshire local plan has started with some initial scoping work and identifying areas of work that are not 'under threat' as a result of the proposed white paper. The Council is required to publish a Local Development Scheme setting out what Local Plan the council intends to prepare, the scope and the timetable. The draft LDS is being considered at Cabinet on 15th December. In the meantime, the team is making a start on all work that is unlikely to be aborted as a result of the white paper response.

Planning Enforcement

I have written this month to the Secretary of State to appeal to him to address the inadequacies of the planning system and the planning inspectorate when it comes to enforcement timescales. Despite the Council taking swift action on many sites, we are finding applicants evading compliance because of the inherent delays in the system. Our frustration was outlined in the Council response to the Planning White Paper, but I have outlined in more detail and this time using examples from Buckinghamshire to ask the Secretary of State to take some action.

Despite these frustrations, during Quarter 2, we have seen a significant increase and a step change in the number of formal actions that the Council has taken to remedy breaches of planning control across the County. This includes securing two injunctions on sites which were under threat.

This month the Council also successfully secured a prosecution for breach of a Stop Notice at Soim Lounge in Denham. On convicting the owner, the Judge DJ Dodds said that "this was disgraceful conduct, the defendant knew what was going on and was sticking two fingers up at the Council."

This prosecution should serve as a warning to others that we take breaches of planning control very seriously and we will use the full complement of tools available to us to pursue compliance with planning regulations. Breaches of planning control such as this have a direct effect on our residents' lives which will not be tolerated and we will not hesitate to take legal action against contraveners.

Neighbourhood Plans

Stewkley Parish Council has recently submitted its Neighbourhood Plan to the Council, and this is now subject to a period of formal consultation so that the views of residents and people or organisations with an interest in the local area can be heard.

The plan proposes a range of detailed policies to shape new development in the parish and to provide appropriate protection to the local wildlife, landscape, heritage and green spaces. It sets out a vision for the future of the parish and proposes policies that will be used to determine local planning applications and which, if accepted, will shape local planning right through to 2033.

The consultation is open now on [Your Voice Bucks](#). Anyone wishing to comment must do so before midnight on 20 December 2020.

Agents and Developers Forum

Last month, along with the service management team, I held two meetings with planning agents and developers who are active in Buckinghamshire. It was an opportunity to share our plans for the new planning and enforcement service but also to receive feedback about how the service is performing along with suggestions and advice on how customers of our service can help us shape the future operation. I look forward to continuing with that engagement and I also have a further meeting with Town and Parish Council's planned for December to continue our engagement on the shaping of the new planning service.



Cabinet Member report – Property & Assets

Councillor John Chilver

Old Council Offices Update

There has been significant progress made with the design, and the Council submitted a planning application in July 2020. The scheme for 47 flats marks an important step in the regeneration of Aylesbury and will bring additional vitality to the town centre in a building that has been unoccupied for some time.

Covid Safe Work Space

Colleagues across the business have been working to ensure that our operational buildings, including our key Gateway, Walton Street, Wycombe and Amersham administration buildings are made Covid safe for our staff and members.

A track and trace system has been introduced using a ServiceNow software reporting platform, which is operable upon colleagues signing in and out locally at the administration buildings.

The following steps have been taken and documented as part of a Building Guide for all staff. These include:

- Undertaking risk assessments to help us determine how best to maintain social distancing and minimise the potential for cross contamination between building occupants
- Establishing and documenting protocols for staff and members using the buildings
- Supplying and installing sign and sanitiser dispensers throughout the buildings
- Enhancing the cleaning to common touch areas
- Undertaking building checks and maintenance where necessary to ensure that mechanical and electrical services are fully functional

In addition to this, given that a large part of the workforce are working from home and the occupancy of buildings is much reduced, floors have been closed to enable savings to be released from cleaning and energy contracts.

Marlow Library (Refurbishment)

Jet Construction completed the refurbishment works at Marlow Library on the 20th October 2020. The works comprised of internal alterations of the ground floor and first floor. The library has been remodelled as a community access point and now has a new meeting room and staff room with ancillary accommodation. The official opening is scheduled for the 5th December 2020.

Winslow Development

In October, Cabinet approved the next design stage for the exciting new development at the Winslow Centre. The plans will see the provision of a new, fit-for-purpose community facility which

will include a library that will allow us to offer essential local services through one front door. This will be alongside new Extra Care and residential housing.

The re-provision of sports pitches through a purpose built, state-of-the-art sports facility on the nearby Redfield Farm, including rugby, football and tennis facilities, will replace the outdated existing facilities at the Winslow Centre.

Chilterns Lifestyle Centre

The Chilterns Lifestyle centre is progressing well. Key milestone activities include the construction of the main swimming pool, the diving pool and the balancing tank that have been completed. Over 80% of the structural framing steel which forms the external wall of the building has been installed along with cement boards which enclose the building. Dry lined walls are being constructed in both the lower ground and the first floor. Mechanical and electrical installation has also progressed in a number of areas.

The contractor has issued a revised programme, but the completion date on the revised programme remains unchanged as 13 September 2021 and the overall project remains in budget. A Salix grant application has been made for heat recovery pumps and towards the cost of PV panels.





Cabinet Member report – Town Centre Regeneration

Councillor Steve Bowles

High Wycombe Regeneration Board

In November, Cabinet agreed to establish the High Wycombe Regeneration Board. I will chair this board as Cabinet Member for Town Centre Regeneration and look forward to continuing to work with Cabinet Members, local members and representatives from the local Community Board, Town Committee, Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Bucks Business First, HWBidCo and key private sector parties who will also be members of the Board.

There is a considerable programme of regeneration activity underway and planned for High Wycombe. The Eastern Quarter Regeneration Programme, which includes the Brunel Shed, sets out the potential for development around High Wycombe station with a total value of £880m. As well as this there is a significant programme of property projects and transport initiatives. The board will provide a strategic perspective and decision making for regeneration activity as well as a regular forum to discuss and manage regeneration activity. One of the first priorities for the Board will be to review the current regeneration plans and how they may need to change to take into account the effects of COVID.

Aylesbury Garden Town - Gardenway

On 25th November, the online engagement platform (www.aylesburygardenway.co) for the Gardenway went live. This forms the centre of engagement activities on the Gardenway which is one of the key projects in the Aylesbury Garden Town Programme and aims to provide a linear park around Aylesbury. COVID-19 has meant that most of the engagement activity has been web-based rather than holding physical meetings. There is however a phone hotline available for those who do not have access to the website, and the team have also reached out the local primary and secondary schools so that young people can engage meaningfully in the design process.

The website allows residents to view online exhibition materials; the timeline of the Gardenway project in the past, present and future; it will contain blogs and news posts about the project; and gives the option to 'sign up' for project updates. An online engagement map enables people to tell us how they feel about their area focused around various themes, and to upload text, images or videos on things they'd like to highlight.

Residents have also been able to sign up, via the website, to take part in community conversations which were held virtually between 7th and 9th December. These focused on three main themes: nature, climate change and history; health and community; and moving and connecting. Engagement on the Gardenway will continue with a number of co-design events in the new year until March 2021.

Markets

Markets in Buckinghamshire have remained open during the second lockdown for stalls selling essential products. Our markets have a variety of social distancing measures in place including stewards, sanitisation measures, barriers and social distancing stickers. Smaller local markets have been doing particularly well during the second lockdown, and we will continue to monitor this and ensure that our markets are safe for stall holders and customers. Markets have also proved to be an alternative way of trading for local businesses and have created new traders that have been impacted by the COVID pandemic.

- Winslow Market – Wednesday, 09.00 – 14.00
- Aylesbury Market – Wednesday and Friday, 09.00 – 14.00
- High Wycombe Market – Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, 08.00 – 16.00
- Chesham Market – Wednesday and Saturday, 09.00 – 15.00
- Amersham Market – Tuesday, 09.00 – 15.00





Cabinet Member report – Regulatory Services

Councillor Fred Wilson

Environmental Health

Since the last report the primary focus of the team continues to be related to Covid-19. Officers are responding to many requests for service either from businesses seeking clarification regarding the regularly changing legislation or members of the public reporting potential breaches.

Since Lockdown 2 the amount of work in this area has become more challenging as business restrictions are sometimes not clear and determining compliance is more difficult. In addition to this, officers have been working proactively by having a visible presence on the high streets and engaging with businesses especially in geographical areas where figures show high levels of Covid-19 cases. In conjunction with Trading Standards over 1000 checks were undertaken in the week commencing 2 November 2020. Generally, compliance appears to be high with approximately 95% of premises following guidance and legal requirements.

Officers have undertaken a number of proactive operations outside normal working hours to observe compliance, especially around the required closing of the hospitality sector at 10pm (takeaways can still operate under certain conditions).

Whilst the approach is to encourage and engage with businesses to secure compliance, it has been necessary to take enforcement action either by using Prohibition or Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). To date, two FPNs have been served with a fine of £1000 each, and one Prohibition Notice. Officers are working closely with Thames Valley Police who are also able to undertake enforcement for Covid related breaches.

In recent months all organised events have been asked to submit risk assessments to show how organisers will operate a Covid secure event. This has created a significant demand on the team and with regard to the larger events, a lot of pressure, especially where organisers have not fully engaged with officer advice. In one scenario a Direction Notice was issued by the Council to stop an event where insurmountable concerns were identified that had led officers to conclude that there could be an imminent risk to public health if the event went ahead.

In addition to the above, officers are still undertaking routine activities and responding to public complaints and enquiries. The Food Standards Agency has directed that Environmental Health departments focus on higher risk premises and therefore routine inspections and investigations in these businesses continue.

Licensing, Cemeteries & Crematoria

Licensing

The Licensing Service continues to progress the development and adoption of a new taxi and private hire licensing policy for Buckinghamshire Council in year one. On 2nd November 2020 the Licensing Committee approved a full public consultation on the draft policy which is currently live at <https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/communities/taxi-licensing-consultation/> and runs to the 21st December 2020. Responses will be considered by the Licensing Committee in February 2021 and following this the Policy will come to Full Council for approval and adoption.

In preparation for the delivery of the new taxi and private hire policy, work is underway to review the customer application process and experience to ensure that we are able to offer a consistent high quality service to our customers across the Buckinghamshire area. This includes reviewing the digital solutions that are already in place and identifying efficient and streamlined online processes for the future.

The Licensing Service continues to work with internal and external partners to support the Covid-19 response, offering advice and guidance to businesses and licensees on legislative changes and requirements. We are currently working with Public Health and the Client Transport Service to deliver targeted public health messages and information to some of our licensed businesses to help them respond to Covid-19. This work also includes working with TVP and Environmental Health to follow up non-compliance where this is required. Recently the team has worked closely with colleagues in Environmental Health to deal with a shisha bar in the South Buckinghamshire area following concerns and complaints from local residents, and investigations led by Buckinghamshire Council and Thames Valley Police. This resulted in a review of the premises licence by the Licensing Sub-Committee and a decision to revoke the licence. The Licensing Service works hard to support businesses that operate legally and responsibly but it is important that we take robust action where there is complete disregard for the law, as was the case here.

Cemeteries & Crematoria

Preparatory work has started on the £1.5 million (estimated cost) cremator replacement capital project which is due to be delivered in 2022/23. The cremators at The Chilterns Crematorium have been in situ for 22 years and are nearing the end of their viable lifespan. This project will be funded from the crematoria reserves where funding was set aside year on year by the Joint Committee prior to the formation of Buckinghamshire Council. It is a complex and significant piece of procurement and we will be working hard over the next two years to ensure that we get the right solution in place to enable the Crematorium to continue to deliver a high quality service for our residents and communities.

Bierton Crematorium has been shortlisted for a Civic Trust Award. The Civic Trust Awards scheme was established in 1959 to recognise outstanding architecture, planning and design in the built environment. The aim of the awards is to encourage the very best in architecture and environmental design, to improve the built environment for us all through design, sustainability, inclusiveness and accessibility, but also to reward projects that offer a positive cultural, social, economic or environmental benefit to their local communities. We await the outcome of the awards decision.

Staff within the cemeteries and crematoria services continue to work on site to ensure that we can meet the needs of our communities. Our offices and workplaces are Covid-19 secure and staff have risk assessments and protective measures in place. We continue to respond to changes in legislation on funeral services and visits to our sites and have been regularly reviewing and updating

the information we provide to the public and to our funeral directors. Currently we are only able to allow a maximum of 30 mourners at a funeral service at our cemeteries or in our crematoria chapels. However while funeral numbers are restricted we are providing remote webcasting of services in the crematoria chapels free of charge (by arrangement with the funeral director) to enable remote participation for those that cannot attend.

Business continuity planning and emergency preparedness continue to be a key priority for the services as we progress through the second peak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Registration Service

Weddings/civil partnerships

Lockdown 2 has seen wedding and civil partnership ceremonies suspended. Some 121 ceremonies were booked for the lockdown period which have been unable to go ahead. Of these, 88 were postponed, 11 were cancelled and 22 remain undecided on how to proceed.

There are 118 ceremonies due to take place in December if weddings and civil partnerships are able to go ahead. Of these, 82 are taking place in the Council's own ceremony rooms; there has been a c20% shift from approved venues into the Council.

Notice of marriage/civil partnership demand has dropped since Lockdown 2 due to the uncertainty of when ceremonies may resume. These continue to be available and have to be delivered face-to-face in the register office.

Births and Deaths

Under the Covid 19 Act easements, deaths continue to be registered by phone and staff are now able to register these at home should there be a requirement to self-isolate.

Deaths registered are currently in line with 2019 registrations and the number of death certificates with covid included somewhere is very low.

After Lockdown 1 there were 1200 babies born and required registering, in Buckinghamshire this backlog was recovered over a six week period and the Service now has the usual levels of babies to register.

Birth registrations have not been suspended during Lockdown 2 and parents are required to register these face-to-face with a Registrar; there is no easement for telephone birth registrations.

Citizenship ceremonies

Under Lockdown 2 citizenship ceremonies are able to take place. During November and December, the Service is providing individual virtual ceremonies which were introduced during the first lockdown. This allows the new British citizens to complete their final stage of their application.

The virtual ceremony offer will be reviewed during December, and if it is safe to do so, the Service will also recommence group ceremonies to assist with the throughput as the Home Office are increasing their output to local authorities over the next few weeks.



Cabinet Member report – Transport
Councillor Nick Naylor

Rights of Way Operations

The Rights of Way Operations team have recently carried out valuable improvement works on the network, including several capital projects replacing footbridges and bridleway bridges. Innovatively they are testing the suitability of plastic bridges, and have installed five new plastic and steel beam equestrian bridges on a bridleway in the Claydon's in north Bucks. Although slightly more expensive initially, the plastic structures have a considerably longer life than one made of wood presenting a significant long term cost saving.

Strategic Flood Management

The late summer and early autumn has been a very wet period over Buckinghamshire. So far this Summer through into Autumn, across Buckinghamshire, we have experienced four significant flooding/rainfall events in, June, July, August and October with the latter two being the most intense causing severe disruption and internal property flooding.

The August flooding event was caused by thunderstorms after a period of hot weather and there was localised heavy rainfall over a short period of time leading to surface water flooding reported in 20 locations with four locations (that we know of) where there was internal property flooding.

In the early October event there was prolonged heavy rainfall across Buckinghamshire over three days, (2-4 Oct) with Aylesbury and the central area of Bucks seeing the worst rainfall. The rainfall totals were equivalent to two months average rainfall within three days (which equate to between a one in 100-year and to one in 500-year rainfall event). Penn Road, Oliffe Close, Tofield Close and Pembroke Road waste depot, all in the Aylesbury area, were the worst affected areas and there were over 30 locations where internal property flooding occurred. Rivers overtopped, surface water and road drainage surcharged, and sewers became overwhelmed. Transport for Bucks attended 109 separate flooding incidents, closed 16 roads, and delivered 900 sandbags in total.

The Strategic Flood Management team are following up with questionnaires to local residents at the 30+ locations where internal property flooding was recorded to find out exactly what happened. At some of the more severely impacted locations (10 locations based on current information), a more formal flood investigation will be undertaken with a published report to understand and document what happened and any actions to be taken to mitigate future flooding.

Transport for Buckinghamshire

Despite this year's unique challenges TfB has continued to deliver a full programme of works:

- Carriageway Resurfacing: 27 of 44 schemes are complete with work continuing throughout winter.
- Carriageway Surface Treatments – the summer surface dressing and micro-surfacing of 47 schemes is complete. The joint sealing programme of 19 schemes is to be finalised by the end of November.
- Footway Resurfacing – All four phases of the programme will be completed by March, comprising 26 schemes in total.
- Carriageway Plane and Patch – 81 of 102 schemes have been completed as of the end of October.
- Drainage improvements, safety fencing upgrades, traffic signal upgrades, structure improvements and lighting upgrades all remain on programme for completion ahead of the financial year end.

The winter service season started on Saturday 5th October with all routes driven and COVID-19 measures in the depots tested. The salt barns are stocked, and the first gritting run was carried out on 3rd October when temperatures dropped to below +0.5C, with just two gritting runs to date. The salt bins are being refilled, and requests for new bins fulfilled.

A 20-mph speed limit report has been prepared and presented at Select Committee outlining the process for installing 20 mph speed limits/zones in accordance with Department of Transport advice. The focus for November, December and January social media campaigns will be winter driving, drink drive and speed.

An internal reorganisation has occurred to provide separate Design and Construction teams which will deliver improved programming for 2021 and into the future. The Local Area Technicians (LATs), Customer Compliance officers, Customer and Communications and on-street Parking teams will move to Buckinghamshire Council from 1st January. This will enhance customer focus and responsive local delivery.

The existing highways services contract finishes on 31st March 2023, and a re-procurement process has commenced. The emerging plans for the shape and delivery model for the service will be presented to an all member briefing session on 14th December 2020. Due to COVID19 restrictions, interaction with Members has been limited and meetings are being held virtually to enable discussion of local issues.

Emergency Active Travel

Buckinghamshire Council have been awarded £1,748,000.00 as part of phase two of the Active Travel Fund. This will allow us to implement a high-quality walking and cycling facilities in the Council area. Like Tranche 1, schemes will need to focus on creating quiet streets for walking and cycling or installing cycle lanes on busier roads. As part of the fund we are putting together an engagement plan and carrying out detailed analysis to identify the best location to invest this welcome funding. We continue to develop and implement Emergency Active Travel Schemes under Tranche 1 to support more local trips to be undertaken by bike and foot as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Trial schemes are currently live in Haddenham and Southcourt and further schemes are being developed in Buckingham, High Wycombe and Marlow in partnership with local councillors in these areas.

E-Scooter

The e-scooter trials launched in Aylesbury and High Wycombe on 16th November. The scheme was launched in a low key way in order to support those that need to travel in the lockdown with an

alternative to the car. The trials are approved by the Department of Transport. E-scooters are not allowed on pedestrian only pavements/pathways and we will use geo-fencing technology to enforce restrictions and create no-go zones and slow zones as required. Ridership has been good, and feedback received has mainly been requests to extend the scheme. Rob Butler MP is very supportive of the scheme.

High Wycombe Town Centre Maintenance Works

A programme of capital refurbishment works is presently underway in the High Street of Wycombe town centre which aims to address a backlog of maintenance issues and help ensure that the town centre remains attractive to shoppers and visitors. The works, which include lifting and relaying damaged and worn out areas, are progressing well and are approaching halfway complete. They will be suspended over the Christmas period and resume in the New Year. The works are being managed to enable continued access for the market, frontages, and services.

Impacts of COVID on Some Services

Taking advice from the Bikeability Trust, Bikeability cycle training can continue to take place in schools. All instructors must adhere to Covid-19 Guidance and "schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education and activity will be provided whilst following the measures in their system of controls, and are able to work with external coaches, clubs and organisations for curricular activities where they are satisfied that it is safe to do so."

With additional PPE and risk assessments in place, the School Crossing Patroller service is continuing with only one patroller unable to work. The school affected has been advised and parents and the school are making sure children are getting to school safely. Sadly, as a result of Covid-19 restrictions we have had to pause the Simply Walk scheme. The scheme has over 500 people attending on a weekly basis across a total of 38 walks.





Cabinet Member report – Housing & Homelessness

Councillor Isobel Darby

Service Transformation

Post vesting day transformation work is underway and progressing well and is on schedule to complete by the end of March 2021.

Business as usual under Covid

The housing team continues to support residents remotely and provide tailored assistance to assist applicants, including supported applications and remote verifications. The second lockdown does not appear to have impacted Registered Providers undertaking lettings and is operating as business as usual, with social distancing and virtual viewings.

The second lockdown has seen a partial re-introduction of the national eviction moratorium with some exceptions (e.g. evictions on grounds such as anti-social behaviour and excessive pre-Covid rent arrears can still proceed). Officers are continuing to monitor the ongoing Bucks-wide picture of possession cases. A further national moratorium on evictions is due to come into effect over the Christmas and New Year period.

The teams continue to monitor service demand, particularly with regards to Section 21 notice approaches (i.e. “no fault” evictions) and Domestic Violence, with the service working closely with Community Safety on the latter due to the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill.

Work is commencing in relation to the new Buckinghamshire Housing Allocations Policy and the Homelessness strategy, with the aim to complete and adopt both toward the end of 2021.

The annual rough sleeper count took place on 18/19th November. This is the formal annual count, or ‘snapshot’ of rough sleeping that is reported back to MHCLG. The count this year revealed that there were five rough sleepers across Buckinghamshire. At the same time in 2019, the snapshot indicated 36 rough sleepers in the county.

Successful bids to MHCLG

Following the recent award of £485,000 short term revenue funding from the first round of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme the Council has commenced utilising the grant to maintain the accommodation for the placed rough sleepers across the county. The team will also be applying for up to £90,000 from the Cold Weather Fund, to assist with the provision of accommodation to anyone who would otherwise be sleeping rough during the winter. This aligns to the current Next Steps and the Council’s Severe Weather Emergency Provision which safeguards anyone that finds themselves homeless over the winter months.

Cabinet has agreed to match fund MHCLG's capital grant award of £1.3m from the Next Steps Programme to progress partnerships with two housing associations to purchase 15 one bedroom units for former rough sleepers currently in supported housing and nine units of high needs supported housing in Aylesbury.

New affordable Homes

Development partners are back to business as usual with no impact to active sites during Lockdown 2 that we are aware of, and therefore the delivery of social housing should not be impacted.

The Council relaunched its Homeless Prevention forums following a harmonisation of approach, creating strong cross working links with the newly launched North and South area forums, creating a revised landscape.

Youth Concern are in the final stages of handover of a nine bed young persons shared house in Aylesbury which will offer supported housing for 18 to 25 year olds for up to one year. In Quarter two of this year, nine Social rent, 20 shared ownership and 127 affordable rented units were delivered in the County.

Thank you

I would like to thank everyone who supported me in the "Big Sleepout at Home" to support one of our partner agencies and to raise awareness of the issue of homelessness.





Cabinet Member report – Communities & Public Health

Councillor Gareth Williams

Voluntary and Community Sector

Buckinghamshire has a strong and diverse voluntary and community sector (VCS) that is highly valued and plays a vital role in delivering key services and building social connections. It is critical in strengthening and supporting the county, in delivering shared priorities, providing valuable insight and offering referral pathways as they signpost, and enabling prevention or early intervention. We are delighted to be working closely with the VCS Recovery Board who have for many months been meeting fortnightly to support us in a coordinated Covid response. They now move to meeting monthly with deep dives into some very complex thematic areas. The Board has also helped us start developing the new VCS Strategy which builds on our existing strong partner relationships with a common goal of working collectively to protect vulnerable residents and ensure Buckinghamshire is a great place to live, work and grown up in. The strategy is currently in development with a view to it being ready for a formal decision by the end of the year.

Community Boards

Now in the midst of their second formal meetings during November, community boards are beginning to take shape, bringing groups of local people together into smaller action groups to look at what the issues and opportunities are and funding local projects, groups and initiatives. The boards are embracing the use of virtual and online engagement tools to gather ideas and views from their communities including live polls and surveys. All boards have a good mix of councillors, town and parish councils, community groups, businesses and residents involved in the board and their action groups. Priorities and areas of focus are becoming a reality as the boards are all actively working with local people and groups on a variety of exciting projects and applications for funding including:

- Encouraging young people to get involved - as part of the board, action groups are exploring youth councils and youth reps for specific areas, asking young people to share what matters to them through QR code surveys (Buckingham) and working with schools on a local competition on the environment (Denham, Gerrards Cross and Chalfonts).
- Working with the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust and Chiltern Rangers on a fact sheet for residents on how to encourage wildlife and ideas for environmental projects.
- Funding environmental projects including working with schools and the disabled on saving the common butterfly through Chiltern Rangers.
- Funding outdoor security system to help prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour (Iver).
- Exploring options for making community buildings green (Wing and Ivinghoe working with Sustainable Cheddington).
- Supporting a new Dementia Friendly community project (Beaconsfield and Chepping Wye with the Parish Council).

- Town centre development and regeneration planning in the towns including shop local campaigns in Amersham and Christmas shop window trail initiatives to encourage people to visit town centres safely in the lead up to Christmas in Buckingham.
- Exploring partnership working with The Clare Foundation across multiple boards on tackling social isolation.
- Funding from multiple boards for counselling sessions for the Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes Sexual Assault and Abuse Support Service.
- And a strong focus on health and wellbeing activities including community growing and exercise projects.

Community boards have taken a supportive role during the second lockdown, working with the support hub to make sure vulnerable people, families and businesses know how to get support if they need it. They have been in touch with local Covid community support groups that are providing support in the community and making crisis funds available to those who need it. As we develop over the coming months we will continue to listen to feedback from members, services, partners and residents to design how we work together to ensure the boards are making a difference locally. We anticipate that future council meetings will have an agenda item on community boards to enable Chairs and Vice Chairs to keep all members updated.

Community Support Hubs

The Support Hub service stood back up on Thursday 5 November to support primarily those residents who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. Those residents (almost 20k in Buckinghamshire) received a detailed letter from central government providing advice on how to keep safe and stay at home as much as possible. The letter also provided the formal mechanism for being able to get statutory sick pay if the individual is unable to work from home. The letter urged residents to register online via a government portal so that support needs can be recorded including access to priority supermarket delivery slots with the main national supermarkets. Approximately 3% have registered online so far, a big reduction in the numbers registering during the first lockdown.

The Support Hub Team brought in officers from around the council to make outbound telephone calls to 890 residents who have been added to the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable list since 1 August (when the shielding programme was formally paused) and to 304 residents who received support from the service in the final few months of the first lockdown. The level of support required by residents during this lockdown is very low; most residents have support networks or regular food and medicine deliveries firmly in place. The service is supporting 50 people with regular 'keeping in touch' calls on a weekly basis for the 4 weeks of lockdown and are supporting a further 60 people with basic care needs like signposting to support, prescription collection and drop off etc. We expect the demand to stay low for the duration of this lockdown.

Libraries Update

The national restrictions in place meant that all Buckinghamshire Libraries closed on 5 November. The Government then agreed a set of exemptions for libraries to allow for contactless service and computer access for essential services. A contactless Home Library Service and Request and Collect service has been introduced and five of the largest county libraries re-opened from 10 November to offer essential computer services and act as collection points for the Request and Collect service. Four of our community libraries have also re-opened and offer these services.

County Libraries	Community Libraries
Aylesbury	Beacon Villages
Beaconsfield	Castlefield
Buckingham	Little Chalfont
Chesham	Stokenchurch
High Wycombe	

We have worked at pace to re-deploy library staff to support wider council efforts in responding to Covid. Library staff are currently making phone calls to clinically extremely vulnerable people and from 26 November they will be supporting contact tracing. Plans have been developed to re-open our libraries from 3 December (subject to latest guidance from the Government), apart from the refurbished Marlow library which will be re-launched on 5 December.

Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Recovery Plan

The Health and Wellbeing Board is responsible for overseeing the population Health and Wellbeing Recovery Plan. In recognition of the importance of the plan, the Board has agreed that the focus of the first year activity for the refreshed Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be aligned with the Recovery Plan.

The actions are centred on the restoration and adaptation of services to target those most in need and making sure that they are designed and delivered in a culturally competent way. The actions are underpinned by a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment (HIA), which draws on multiple sources of evidence including research, resident views, elected members and wider partners, survey results (5,349 responses) and a commissioned schools survey completed by 815 primary school and 2,678 secondary school pupils (June-July 2020). The Health and Wellbeing Board is also committed to supporting Community Boards to develop their own recovery action plans which will reflect the unique needs of their local communities.

The seven health and wellbeing recovery plan priorities are:

1. Keeping infection rates low and residents safe from COVID.
2. Promoting mental health and wellbeing including addressing social isolation.
3. Keeping residents healthy (supporting healthy behaviours)
4. Addressing the needs of key groups (e.g. Black Asian and minority ethnic groups, travellers, rough sleepers).
5. Community engagement and resilience.
6. Service redesign and recovery in the new normal.
7. Health in All Policies Approach (a wider determinants approach)

The HWB Recovery Plan and first year action plan of the Health and Wellbeing Board will be agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 10 December.

Local contact tracing

The Buckinghamshire local contact tracing service goes live on Monday 30 November. This is the new, 'local' part of the National Test & Trace service and is being run by Buckinghamshire Council.

A vital part of the fight against the virus is for people who have Covid-19 to isolate themselves from others to reduce the risk of spread and for their close contacts, who they may have inadvertently

infected to also isolate. The issue is that people are infectious and can spread the infection before they develop symptoms.

Where the National Test & Trace team is unable to make contact with a resident, Buckinghamshire Council Local Contact Tracing Team will call residents from its dedicated number 01296 585167. The team of trained staff will encourage and support people to self-isolate and obtain details of any close contacts who need to be advised to self-isolate themselves. Details of close contacts will be passed back to the National Test & Trace team for them to follow up. Where we have a mobile number we will send a text message to people letting them know that we will call them from the council phone number 01296 585167.

