



# Cabinet Member Priorities for 2021/22

Culture & Leisure Portfolio  
Councillor Clive Harriss



# Scope of the Portfolio

## Culture

As part of the county's Cultural Partnership ([Buckinghamshire Culture](#)), we support delivery of the Cultural Strategy, maximising investment and harnessing culture to support economic development, new housing and communities, health and wellbeing, education and skills. An example is Open Weekend (22-25 July), a new co-ordinated event which will see over 70 exciting activities and events in town centres and cultural venues across the county.



The Culture, Sport and Leisure service also delivers key events, such as the WhizzFizzFest family arts and literary festival, and manages relationships with the Wycombe Museum and the Discover Bucks Museum (formerly Bucks County Museum), which are operated using trust arrangements, and with our main theatre operators: Ambassador Theatre Group (Waterside Theatre) and HQ Theatres (Wycombe Swan Theatre).

## Buckinghamshire Archives

Buckinghamshire Archives provides a statutory archives service. The 3.5 miles of shelving hold collections of local and international importance, including records related to Stoke Mandeville's role in the development of the Paralympic Games. Staff also support volunteers, run outreach projects, work on digital preservation, conserve collections and undertake digitization.



# Scope of the Portfolio



## **Libraries**

Buckinghamshire Council has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. The public library service operates in over 29 locations through a network of 9 County Libraries, 8 Community Supported Libraries and 12 volunteer-led Community Libraries. We also provide online, school, home and prison library services.

The activities of our Libraries teams contribute to a wide range of council priorities, from early years outcomes to supporting people to live independently in their later years. A number of libraries are also Council Access Points, providing residents with local access to council services.

## **Country Parks, Parks & Play Areas**

The service operates four Country Parks (Black Park, Langley Park, Denham and Thorney), which in 2020/21 were visited by a record breaking 1.7 million visitors. Country Parks are self-financing; income generated from car parking and filming activities funds operations and maintenance, plus work to conserve the natural environment for future generations. A new Country Park in Stoke Poges is under development to be opened by summer 2023.

The Culture, Sport and Leisure and Neighbourhood Services teams work together to manage a number of local parks across the county. As well as capital projects to improve parks and play areas, this includes liaising with planning to make sure that alongside housing growth, we create facilities and green spaces that support the future health of our communities.



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## Sport & Leisure

Buckinghamshire Council has 10 main leisure facilities across the county, operated by three leisure operators (Everyone Active, Greenwich Leisure Limited and Places Leisure) under four separate contracts:

1. Aqua Vale Swimming & Fitness Centre – Aylesbury
2. Beacon Sports Centre & Theatre – Beaconsfield
3. Chalfont Leisure Centre – Chalfont St Peter
4. Chesham Leisure Centre – Chesham
5. Chiltern Pools – Amersham
6. Court Garden Leisure Complex – Marlow
7. Evreham Sports Centre – Iver
8. Risborough Springs Swim and Fitness Centre – Princes Risborough
9. Swan Pool & Leisure Centre – Buckingham
10. Wycombe Leisure Centre – High Wycombe



Other facilities include the South Buckinghamshire Golf Course (pictured above) and the Farnham Park Playing Fields, both located in Stoke Poges. The playing fields are an 80 acre site providing grassroots sports facilities for football and rugby, and purpose built baseball/softball fields operated by Baseball Softball UK Limited.

The current capital projects programme includes the new Chilterns Lifestyle Centre in Amersham (£36m), due for completion and opening in the Autumn, and works to replace the Chalfont Leisure Centre swimming pool. Recent investment has seen improvements to the Court Garden Leisure Complex, Chesham Leisure Centre and dry-side facilities at the Chalfont Leisure Centre, all well received by our residents and users.

The service also undertakes sports development and outreach to support people to become more physically active, working with a range of partners including Leap, our County Sport & Activity Partnership, which is hosted by the Council.

# Some areas of focus:

- Improvements to our parks and play areas
- Capital programme including the Chilterns Lifestyle Centre, developing new visitor facilities for Black Park Country Park and a new Country Park at Stoke Poges
- Promoting healthy lifestyles through partnership activities with Public Health, Leap, Active in the Community and others
- Development of a Leisure Facilities Strategy for Buckinghamshire
- Delivering against the Buckinghamshire Cultural Strategy action plan
- Coordinating cultural events such as WhizzFizzFest, Paralympic Heritage Flame Lighting and Buckinghamshire History Festival
- Rolling out new technology in libraries to enable more customers to self-serve
- Investigation of the feasibility and viability of a Bucks Card for residents