



Report to Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee

Date:	14 th October 2021
Title:	Buckinghamshire Strategic Vision, Succeeding as a Place: Achieving our shared Vision for Buckinghamshire to 2050
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Recommendations:	Seeking the views of the Select Committee on the draft Strategic Vision and whether the right strengths and opportunities have been identified.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The establishment of the Buckinghamshire Growth Board (a partnership forum bringing together key public and private local partners) has presented a unique opportunity for the strategic leadership of Buckinghamshire to collectively produce an integrated long-term Strategic Vision for Buckinghamshire. This opportunity provides Buckinghamshire with the chance to harness the strength of the aligned and coterminous partner organisations to outline the ambitions for Buckinghamshire to all audiences including residents, businesses, and central government.
- 1.2 The draft Strategic Vision document sets out a vision for Buckinghamshire and how this could be delivered through three overarching ambitions that have been developed through the Buckinghamshire Growth Board. The draft also outlines the role that the Strategic Vision will play as a non-statutory strategic document building upon the existing area specific plans and strategies alongside the strengths, challenges, and opportunities for Buckinghamshire.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 This report sets out the current stage in the process of the draft Buckinghamshire Strategic Vision 2050 which aims to set out the ambitions and priorities for Buckinghamshire through its partners. The development of the document is being led by the Buckinghamshire Growth Board ('the Board'). The Board's membership includes representation from Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Buckinghamshire Business First, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel, and two economic sector specialists.
- 2.2 The Board has a unique opportunity to use its strategic leadership to help define a long-term strategic vision that will help to shape the future of Buckinghamshire. The Strategic Vision can help to achieve a truly integrated and co-ordinated programme of investment in infrastructure, skills, services, and the environment and assist in creating the conditions for people to flourish and achieve their potential. This sits alongside helping to facilitate Buckinghamshire's communities to reflect the wider determinants of health and promote wellbeing for all.
- 2.3 The document is not statutory and sets out a strategic vision for Buckinghamshire to achieve sustainable and clean growth and regeneration. The Growth Board will own the document and act as the overarching delivery vehicle for the Strategic Vision.
- 2.4 The Strategic Vision intends to be a multi-purpose document for all that will facilitate discussions between the Growth Board, central government, and neighbouring authorities. It is intended to provide a clear framework for the Growth Board partner organisations programme of work. Furthermore, it will articulate to residents and businesses the vision for achieving a thriving, resilient, and successful Buckinghamshire. The Strategic Vision will be influential in guiding emerging strategies and play core function in the deliverables of the Growth Board partners.
- 2.5 The content of the draft Strategic Vision builds upon Buckinghamshire's Recovery and Growth Proposal '*Succeeding as a place, succeeding as a country: A scalable Buckinghamshire proposition to accelerate UK recovery*', looking closely at how the objectives align in delivering a Buckinghamshire that facilitates placemaking and economic growth.

Why a Strategic Vision is needed and its purpose

2.6 It is considered that a Strategic Vision for Buckinghamshire is needed to:

- **Express our shared ambition and focus** by setting the commitment and direction to improve the economic, environmental, and social health of Buckinghamshire
- **Tell the compelling narrative for Buckinghamshire** by using our single voice to make clear our willingness to engage and deliver sustainable and ambitious clean growth. Setting out what our priorities are and where we wish to go.
- **Set the strategic direction and overarching guidance** that has previously been absent to enable the shared 2050 goal to be achieved in all future plans, strategies, and frameworks.
- **Establish our identity** nationally and in the context of the wider South East region by bringing together our successes, future opportunities, and challenges.

Establishing a draft Strategic Vision

2.7 The Vision has been developed through review, analysis and discussion of existing plans across the council and its key strategic partners. Its development included understanding the existing growth proposals for Buckinghamshire and other influencing factors such as COVID-19, Climate Change, the demographics, and policy drivers from central government.

2.8 Following the review and evaluation of key topic areas set out above; there was engagement and discussion with different technical leads from within Buckinghamshire Council, our health partners, and the Local Enterprise Partnership. These topic discussions have provided a significant amount of input and steer on the development of the draft strategic vision and ambitions.



Strategic Vision and Ambitions

- 2.9 Whilst the ambitions are high level they are specific to Buckinghamshire and seek to be measurable. The ambitions are based on three themes; *Successful businesses and careers, Vibrant and Connected Places, and Thriving Culture, Heritage and Natural Environment*. The aim is to ensure that Buckinghamshire is providing the best experiences, jobs, and quality of life for its residents and businesses.
- 2.10 The inclusion of the strategic road map (pg. 25-27) provides overview on how the Strategic Vision is expected to deliver its ambitions, whilst considering emerging and future strategies.

Successful Business and Careers

- 2.11 With a large proportion of small and medium sized enterprises and national and internationally significant industries it is important to ensure we have a thriving economy that creates opportunities and choice. The impacts of COVID-19 and the uncertainty of Brexit, as well as local issues such as poor digital connectivity are important factors we need to consider for our long-term prosperity. The Strategic Vision seeks to improve productivity, become a test bed for new ideas, and generate new skills and training opportunities. It also includes enablers such as improving digital connectivity and regeneration of the high streets and town centres.

Thriving Culture, Heritage and Natural Environment

- 2.12 Buckinghamshire benefits from a unique character and identity and it is important to protect and enhance our culture, heritage, and natural environment. However, our natural environment is highly fragmented, biodiversity is in decline and cultural events and attractions have been impacted by COVID-19. The Strategic Vision looks to tackling the causes and impacts of climate change by encouraging sustainable growth and enabling inclusive, accessible, and sustainable access to culture and heritage assets. The natural environment is an important asset in supporting active lifestyles and good physical and mental health.

Vibrant and Connected Places

- 2.13 Buckinghamshire is an attractive place to live with well connected larger towns as well as smaller towns and villages all with their own heritage, character, and connections to outdoor spaces. However, COVID-19 has accelerated the uncertainty facing the high streets and town centres, and housing prices mean many cannot afford to live in Buckinghamshire. The Strategic Vision looks to attract investment in and repurposing of local town centres to diversify their offer and ensure places, services, and communities are well designed. The Strategic Vision

also promotes ensuring homes are high-quality, accessible, affordable, low-carbon and digitally enabled.

3. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 3.1 Councillors involved in the Growth Board have influenced development of the Vision over the course of 2021.
- 3.2 The Growth Board is keen to have the input and views of partners including councillors on the Vision. Targeted engagement with the Growth Board partners, Community Boards, and key business stakeholders is currently being undertaken. Engagement is currently underway with the Community Boards to seek their views on the following points:
 - Have any fundamental challenges and opportunities been missed from the draft Strategic Vision?
 - Whether the Strategic Vision identifies the right ambitions for Buckinghamshire?
 - Have the right enablers been identified?

4. Next steps and review

- 4.1 The next steps are to consider feedback received from the targeted engagement and make amendments to the draft. This will then go back to the Growth Board for consideration and endorsement.
- 4.2 After Growth Board endorsement, it is planned for the final document to go through Growth Board partner organisations internal approvals processes for formal endorsement.

5. Background papers

- 5.1 The draft Strategic Vision [Succeeding as a place: achieving our shared vision for Buckinghamshire to 2050](#) is available to view online. Also available to view is the Recovery and Growth Proposal [Succeeding as a place, succeeding as a country: A scalable Buckinghamshire proposition to accelerate UK recovery](#)