



Report for Leader Decision

(Education & Children's Services portfolio)

Decision Date:	17 November 2022
Reference number:	EC05.22
Title:	Buckinghamshire Accessibility Strategy 2022 to 2025
Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services
Contact officer:	Simon James Service Director Education Nichola.Beagle@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	That the Leader approves the publication of the updated Buckinghamshire Accessibility Strategy.
Reason for decision:	The Council has a duty to publish an Accessibility Strategy which outlines responsibilities for enabling all students to access education, which should be reviewed every three to five years. This is a routine revision to an existing strategy.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 All Local Authorities have a legal duty to prepare an accessibility strategy for schools for which they are responsible, which must be reviewed every three to five years.
- 1.2 Following public consultation and routine review of the Accessibility Strategy, Councillor Cranmer is asked to approve the publication of the updated Accessibility Strategy 2022 to 2025.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 Background:

- a) Authorities have a legal duty to prepare an accessibility strategy for schools for which they are responsible. This strategy provides detail on how the Council will work with maintained schools to help increase accessibility, to enable all students to access education.
- b) Every three to five years, the Local Authority reviews the strategy in consultation with key stakeholders.
- c) Feedback received during consultation, supports the review of the strategy.

2.2 Strategy Review and Stakeholder Engagement

- a) Review of the existing Accessibility Strategy was undertaken with stakeholder input from Specialist Teacher's within iSEND, School's Commissioning, Parents Representative Group FACT Bucks and Legal Services.
- b) An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken.
- c) The revised draft strategy was shared with Children's Services Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, prior to consultation launch.
- d) A targeted consultation was conducted in the Summer Term 2022 to secure feedback from maintained mainstream schools, maintained special schools, Health Services, Early Years Service's and FACT Bucks Parents Representative Group.
- e) An online survey was published on the Council's consultation portal, Your Voice Bucks, throughout the consultation period.
- f) Communications were circulated to encourage participation via Schools Bulletin, Schools Web, SENDIAS webpage, FACT Bucks Parent's Representative Group, Buckinghamshire Family Information Service webpage and targeted email.
- g) Following the close of consultation period, responses were analysed, and an evaluation report was completed.
- h) Consultation feedback was reviewed and incorporated into the revised strategy.

2.3 Main Changes to the Strategy



- a) Strategy layout was revised, to reflect clear separation of responsibilities of maintained schools and other education providers vs Local Authority.
- b) Language in the strategy was reviewed and adapted where possible to ensure intentions of the strategy were clear. A glossary has also been included.
- c) Information was updated regarding support available from Specialist Teacher's and the iSEND Service.
- d) Links to additional support resources were added.

2.4 Appendices attached to this report include

- a) Buckinghamshire Accessibility Strategy 2022 to 2025

3. Other options considered

3.1 N/A

4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to publish an Accessibility Strategy. This strategy review has been supported by advice from Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring officer.

5. Corporate implications

- a) Property – no implication.
- b) HR – no implication
- c) Climate change – no implication.
- d) Sustainability – no implication.
- e) Equality – an equality impact assessment has been completed.
- f) Data - a data protection impact assessment is not required.
- g) Value for money – no implication.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

6.1 The Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services has been consulted throughout the revision process of the Accessibility Strategy. The draft strategy was

shared with the Cabinet Member on 6th June 2022 during a Cabinet Member briefing, where it was agreed that the strategy should proceed to public consultation. The revised strategy and consultation evaluation report is then shared with CMT and the Cabinet Member will be briefed further, prior to agreeing the decision to publish the strategy.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 A targeted consultation was conducted in the Summer Term 2022 and feedback has been incorporated into the revised strategy.
- 7.2 The updated strategy will be published on the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service webpage, as part of the SEND Local Offer.

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 The Buckinghamshire Accessibility Strategy 2022 to 2025 will be published within the SEND Local Offer.
- 8.2 The Buckinghamshire Accessibility Strategy will need to be reviewed in 2025.

9. Background papers

- 9.1 Buckinghamshire Accessibility Strategy 2022 to 2025

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.