



Budget Scrutiny

Planning & Regeneration

10 January 2023



Agenda

- Overview of the Portfolio
- Portfolio priorities
- Revenue Budget 2022/23
- Revenue forecast Q2 Cabinet
- Revenue budget savings since April 2020
- Proposed changes to the Revenue budget
- Overall Proposed Revenue Budget
- Challenges, risks and opportunities
- Top 5 contracts
- Fees & Charges
- Capital Budget and forecast 2022/23
- Proposed Capital Programme
- Questions

Overview of the Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: [Councillor Peter Strachan](#), Deputy Portfolio Holder: [Councillor Rachael Matthews](#)

- The Planning and Regeneration Portfolio is responsible for the delivery of a number of statutory and regulatory functions, including Planning and Building Control.
- The portfolio also has significant income targets related to discretionary services, aiming to reduce dependency on the taxpayer.
- A key activity for this portfolio in the years ahead will be the development of the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan for adoption by 2025.
- Around 13,000 planning applications are received every year. Developments, once approved, are monitored and, where required, enforced against to ensure they are built within Local Plans.
- Town centre regeneration is of particular importance post-COVID. We are working to regenerate and champion our places, ensuring sustainable growth meets the needs of communities; helps deliver jobs, skills, homes and amenities; and ultimately produce economic growth.

Overview of the Portfolio

2nd Largest Planning Authority in England, by application numbers

13,000 Planning applications received each year



£6.6m annual income from Development Management Planning Applications & Pre-App Advice.

90% of Planning Fees are statutory, and generate less than £189 per application.

5th Highest performing LA on Planning Enforcement;
Highest outside London by number of enforcement notices issued.



75 Planning Enforcement notices served so far this year. £200k additional funding p.a. put into Planning Enforcement this year to support this extra activity.



21,000 Building Control Inspections made last year. Building Control Service is self-funding trading account.



83%

Target >80%

Majors
determined on time



78%

Target >65%

Minors
determined on time



86%

Target >80%

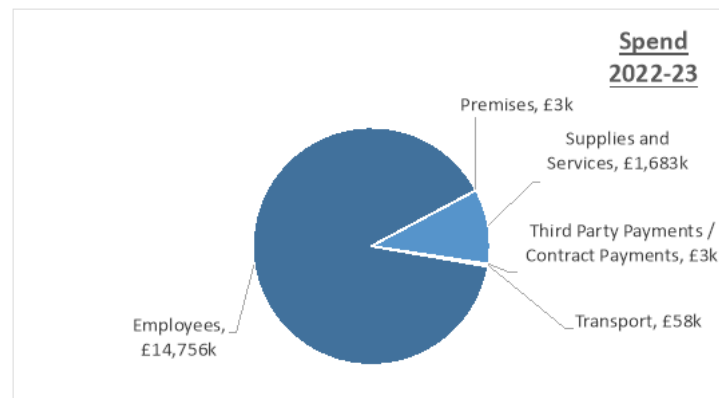
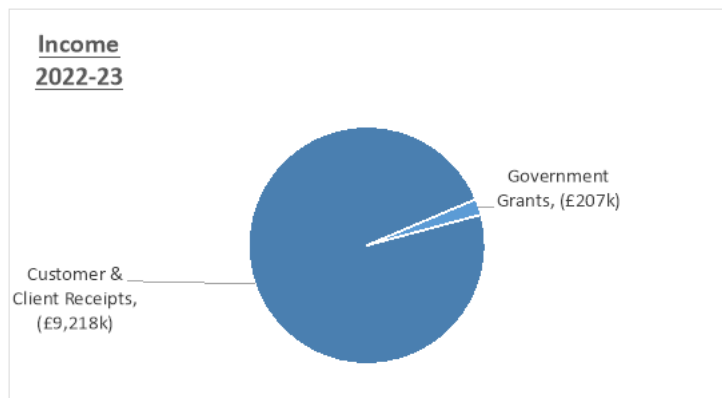
Others
determined on time

Portfolio Priorities

- **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - A clear Statement of Community Involvement has been adopted for local planning and development management decisions.
- **Improve Member engagement with planning**
- **Buckinghamshire Local Plan** - Significantly progress delivery of the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan
- **Manage development within Buckinghamshire**
- **Keep planning decisions local – with five planning committees**
- **Neighbourhood Plans** - Supporting the continued development of Neighbourhood Plans across the county
- **Building regulations** - Ensuring that buildings are designed and constructed in accordance with the Building Regulations and associated legislation.
- **A tough approach to planning enforcement**
- **Green growth**
- **Energy efficiency standards for new developments**
- **Planning Improvement Board** - Leading the Planning Improvement Board to deliver lasting and consistent improvements to the planning service.
- **Garden Towns and town centre regeneration** - Continuing our commitment to Aylesbury Garden Town and focus on the regeneration of Aylesbury, High Wycombe and other town centres.
- **Design Awards** - implement a two-yearly Design Awards scheme. Undertake a programme of Conservation Area Appraisal work.
- **Develop a Market strategy**

Revenue Budget 2022-23

		2022-23		
		Income £000	Expense £000	Net Budget
Economic Growth & Regeneration	Economic Growth & Regeneration	(167)	1,036	870
Economic Growth & Regeneration Total		(167)	1,036	870
Planning	Building Control	(2,285)	2,423	138
	Development Management	(6,591)	8,090	1,499
	Planning Enforcement	(60)	1,199	1,139
	Strategic Planning Policy & Management	(322)	3,763	3,441
Planning Total		(9,258)	15,476	6,218
Grand Total		(9,425)	16,512	7,087



Revenue forecast at Q2

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q1 Cab)
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure	17,440	18,090	650	
Income	(10,910)	(11,560)	(650)	
Planning	6,530	6,530	0	0
Planning & Regeneration	6,530	6,530	0	0

Planning & Regeneration Revenue: Budget £6.5m, Outturn £6.5m, Var £0.0m

Planning & Regeneration are reporting a break-even position. Income from planning applications is favourable by £0.65m compared to budget due to continued high numbers of applications; that income is being used to fund additional staffing and associated costs to process the increased application numbers.

Revenue budget savings from April 2020

Description	£k
Better Buckinghamshire - Planning Management Tier Review	(300)

In addition, £130k of savings have been delivered in the Economic Growth & Regeneration Service, which is split between this Portfolio and Leader. These savings are listed in Leader portfolio report.

Proposed changes to the Revenue Budget

<u>Planning & Regeneration</u>		Change 2023-24 £000's
Planning		
Income	Review of fees and charges in planning services	(67)
Savings	Efficiency savings from implementing new planning systems (Better Buckinghamshire programme)	(70)

- Additional income of £67k will be achieved by increasing discretionary Planning fees by 9% for inflation (see Fees and Charges slide for details). These fee increases will relate mainly to major development applications, and therefore will fall to developers rather than residents.
- Savings of £70k will be made from efficiencies from the implementation of a single Planning IT System (Uniform). A portion of this saving (£20k) has already been delivered from reductions in number of IT licenses. The remainder of the savings will come from staffing efficiencies, and will be deliverable without a reduction in service quality.
- These minimal budget changes will ensure the continuation of the current staffing levels in Planning & Regeneration, allowing for the continued delivery of the Council Priorities of improvements across the planning service and the development regeneration plans for Buckinghamshire's main towns.
- Inflation: the majority of the budgets in this portfolio are for staffing or people-based consultancy services; staffing pay awards are funded corporately, and any inflation on consultancy services is expected to be minimal and therefore manageable within existing budgets. If inflation does increase on consultancy services, then services will either be retendered to ensure a competitive price, or the scope of the commission reduced.

Overall Revenue Budget 2023-24

		2023-24		
		Income £000	Expense £000	Net Budget
Economic Growth & Regeneration	Economic Growth & Regeneration	(167)	1,036	870
Economic Growth & Regeneration Total		(167)	1,036	870
Planning	Building Control	(2,285)	2,423	138
	Development Management	(6,658)	8,090	1,432
	Planning Enforcement	(60)	1,199	1,139
	Strategic Planning Policy & Management	(322)	3,693	3,371
Planning Total		(9,325)	15,406	6,081
Grand Total		(9,492)	16,442	6,950

Change Type	Total £000
Income	(67)
Savings	(70)
Grand Total	(137)

Challenges, Risks and Opportunities

- **Changes to national planning legislation** - the Planning White Paper proposed significant changes to the planning system which are likely to impact on service delivery. Changes to Building Regulations through the Building Safety Bill are also being closely monitored. No additional budget has been allocated for this.
- **Impact of recession on planning income** – the Planning income target is not proposed to be reduced or increased in anticipation of changes to application numbers. If application numbers and income reduce due to the recession, mitigations will include reducing staffing costs (interim and agency).
- **Meeting demand for planning applications** - Retaining staff to process the significant volume of planning applications received by this Planning Authority every year, in the region of 13,000, is a challenge. The planning service is proactively recruiting to fill key positions. Additional income from increased applications is currently being used to fund additional posts and agency staffing.
- **Increasing numbers of Planning Appeals** – numbers have increased over the past year, and with it an increase in legal costs and staff time dedicated to appeals. Currently managed within existing budgets and reserves, however if appeal numbers and costs continue on the existing trend, additional budget will be needed in future MTFPs.
- **Funding Investment in Town Centre Regeneration** – delivery of our ambitions for Town Centre regeneration will require co-investment from partners; some aspects are likely to require subsidy to ensure viability. Sources of investment are being identified, and may be impacted by the wider economic situation.
- **Delivering improvements and savings** - Following unitary and the Planning and Environment service review, there is a significant improvement programme to be delivered over the coming years including delivery of £300k of savings and £150k of additional income, which will be reliant on the implementation of one Uniform IT system for managing planning applications.

Top 5 contracts

Supplier Name	Description of Service	Annual Value of Contract	End Date
Unboxed Consulting	A user-centred Back-office Planning System (BoPS) for local authorities. Funded by Govt Grant as Bucks leading Pilot Project.	£1,000,000	06/01/2023
Origin Transport Consultants Limited	Highways DM Consultancy Support - framework call on contract, used as needed.	£350,000	01/03/2024
IDOX Software Ltd	Wycombe Idox	£100,000	01/12/2021
David Lock Associates	Contract for the provision of planning consultancy services	£120,019	31/12/2024
Montagu Evans LLP	Aylesbury Station Quarter Regeneration Framework and Delivery Plan - funded from Pipeline Fund	£120,478	31/07/2022

Fees & Charges

Each year as part of the MTFP we review the schedule of Fees and Charges.

Many Planning fees are statutory, and the value amended by Government on an ad-hoc basis. The last review was in 2017, where an increase in 20% was applied to take into account inflationary increases since 2012. If the Govt announces an increase in statutory fees these will be applied at the point of announcement (as an indication, every 10% increase in fees would generate additional income of c£0.4m).

Due to inflationary pressures across the Council, the discretionary planning fees are proposed to be increased by 9% this year. These include;

- Pre application advice
- Flood Management Sustainable Drainage fees
- Environmental Specialist Fees
- Street naming and numbering
- Enforcement/ Compliance

These increases will generate net additional income of £67k assuming the level of activity does not reduce; this has been included in the proposed MTFP budget changes.

Highways Development Management Section 278 and 38 Agreements fees are bespoke fees and are based on a percentage cost of the works.

Building Control fees, which are reviewed under Local Authority (Building Regulation) Charges in accordance with CIPFA guidance, have not been uplifted.

Capital Budget and Forecast Q2

Service / Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000's	Unreleased Budget £000's	Total Budget £000's	Forecast Outturn Released £000's	Forecast Unreleased £000's	Forecast Outturn £000's	Forecast Variance £000's
LEP 3rd Party Schemes	552	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LEP 3rd Party Schemes Total	552	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aylesbury Town Centre	55	-176	2,300	2,124	150	150	300	-1,824
CIL Funded Regeneration	0	113	260	373	113	260	373	0
Employment & Regeneration Led Opportunit	193	1,495	0	1,495	1,495	0	1,495	0
Environment Led Opportunities	10	349	0	349	349	0	349	0
Former WDC Third Party CIL Projects	0	265	0	265	265	0	265	0
Future High Street Funds	213	9,700	1,600	11,299	9,700	1,600	11,299	0
High Wycombe Town Centre	58	176	-3	173	176	-3	173	0
Retasking of Winslow Centre	130	326	483	809	296	0	296	-513
Waterside North Development	30	81	100	181	81	100	181	0
Ashwells	68	100	0	100	100	0	100	0
Wycombe Air Park	15	-31	0	-31	0	0	0	31
Amersham Regeneration (St John's Build)	0	0	50	50	0	50	50	0
Wycombe District Centres	0	25	0	25	25	0	25	0
Regeneration Total	773	12,423	4,790	17,212	12,751	2,157	14,907	-2,305
Grand Total	1,324	12,423	4,790	17,212	12,751	2,157	14,907	-2,305

Planning & Regeneration Capital: Budget £12.8m, Forecast £14.9m Var **£2.3m**

- £1.8m of slippage on Kingsbury & Market Square, as the detailed specification for the project continues to be worked through ahead of a formal Cabinet Decision to progress the scheme.
- £0.5m slippage on Winslow regeneration (re-tasking), as the specification and scope of the project is being reviewed.
- LEP 3rd party schemes are Getting Building Fund projects, managed by the LEP and administered through the Council's SAP finance system.

Proposed Capital Programme 2023-24 to 2026-27

Project Group / Project	2023/24 £000's	2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's	2026/27 £000's	MTFP Total £000's
Amersham Regeneration <i>Funding originally allocated to further develop the site next to the new Leisure Centre. Currently uncommitted, funding has been retained pending the Council Accommodation Review requirements in Amersham.</i>	150	1,000	-	-	1,150
Ashwells <i>Investment funding to unlock capital receipt on Ashwells site. Ashwells deal nearly completed, funding may not therefore be required, to be confirmed for 24-25 MTFP.</i>	803	-	-	-	803
Aylesbury Town Centre <i>Development of Kingsbury & Market Sq</i>	2,000	200	-	-	2,200
Wycombe Employment & Regeneration Led Opportunities <i>Cressex Island development, will generate Property revenue income which is budgeted as new income; some retained funding for Crest Road signalisation in event that review is required.</i>	3,609	-	-	-	3,609
Wycombe Environment Led Opportunities <i>Little Marlow Country Park Visitor Facilities</i>	89	-	-	-	89
Future High Street Funds <i>Final year of Govt grant allocation for Future High Streets projects in High Wycombe</i>	2,688	-	-	-	2,688
High Wycombe Town Centre <i>Public Realm improvement works, including White Hart St.</i>	1,455	1,456	-	-	2,911
Retasking of Winslow Centre <i>For development plans in Winslow; currently under review. Funded from borrowing, therefore proposals will need to generate income to cover borrowing costs to be viable.</i>	1,483	2,000	5,700	-	9,183
Waterside North Development <i>Originally intended for the development of Old County Offices and the Council-Owned area in Waterside North. Funded from borrowing; increases in projected costs and borrowing costs have reduced viability, currently under review.</i>	6,114	3,000	-	-	9,114
Wycombe Air Park <i>Funding set aside for works on Wycombe Air Park site to realise Capital Receipt; may no longer be needed, pending a deal on the site. To be reviewed in 24/25 MTFP.</i>	470	-	-	-	470
Wycombe District Centres	100	-	-	-	100
Total Expenditure	18,962	7,656	5,700	-	32,318

There are no new additions proposed to the Capital Programme; the Regeneration projects listed have been approved in previous years. Future Pipeline for Regeneration: Detailed Regeneration Strategies are in development for investment in Aylesbury, Wycombe, Chesham, and the other main towns. Projects will be brought forward for inclusion in the Capital Programme as they are developed, alongside the funding identified to deliver them. Potential funding sources identified include a County Deal, new Govt Grants (inc. Levelling Up), new Capital Receipts and Developer investment.



Questions

