



## Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 14 February 2023 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 12.26 pm.

### Members present

M Tett, Cllr A Macpherson, S Bowles, S Broadbent, J Chilver, A Cranmer, C Harriss, P Strachan, M Winn and J Jordan

### Others in attendance

D King, P Martin and R Stuchbury

### Agenda Item

#### 1 Apologies

Apologies have been received from Cllr Gareth Williams and from Nick Graham. Cllr Jilly Jordan (Deputy Cabinet Member – Environment) attended in Cllr Williams's place.

#### 2 Minutes

**RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 January 2023 were agreed as a correct record.**

#### 3 Declarations of interest

Cllrs Broadbent, Cranmer, Strachan, Tett and Williams declared a personal interest at Members of the Buckinghamshire Growth Board

#### 4 Hot Topics

The following hot topics were discussed:-

##### Leader

The Leader made reference to the appeal to help people affected by earthquakes that hit Turkey and Syria. There was a link on the Buckinghamshire Council website where residents could donate to the UK's Disasters Emergency Committee. If residents wanted to make a financial contribution it was important to use an officially registered charity. The Leader commented that thoughts go out to all those affected and their families and friends.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/news/support-survivors-of-the-turkey-syria-earthquake/>

#### Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources

The Cabinet Member reported that to help residents different methods of payments were being offered to pay Council Tax. Usually Council Tax was paid in 10 instalments throughout the year, however residents could request to pay in 12 instalments instead. There was an online application form to do this on the website. There were changes for former Chiltern District Council area residents who paid by direct debit. From April 2023 the Council Tax Direct Debit would be collected monthly which would finish on 1 January with no payments in February and March. This was a change from making the first payment in May.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-payments/pay-your-council-tax/>

#### Cabinet Member for Transport

The Cabinet Member reported that Councils now have the power to issue fines for vehicles that break moving traffic restrictions such as driving in a bus lane, taking a restricted turn or stopping in a hatched box. ANPR would be used to enforce certain restrictions across Buckinghamshire, initially at 14 locations. These restrictions using enforcement cameras would be enforced from mid – February onwards with the first location commencing this week.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/moving-traffic-offences/>

#### Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills

The Cabinet Member reported that Opportunity Bucks’ aimed to help residents access the fantastic opportunities on offer in Buckinghamshire where education, skills, work, living standards and health were concerned. This work was focusing on ten wards where outcomes for residents were poorer than other parts of the county. The ten wards were in parts of Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham. Part of the multi-faceted programme including the Multiply Programme which aimed to upskill/reskill vulnerable residents with no qualifications. This Programme was being advertised through the Multiply Bus visiting the ten wards in Buckinghamshire.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/news/opportunity-bucks-levelling-up-in-buckinghamshire/>

#### Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

DLUHC’s Housing and Planning Minister Lucy Fraser visited Buckinghamshire Council on 26 January to learn more about Buckinghamshire’s experience of being part of the Open Digital Planning project (ODP), demo new user-centred Digital Planning Services and hear about the Council’s wider ideas for streamlining. Buckinghamshire was one of the first LPAs to [launch new live services to citizens in 2022](#). Two of the ODP products were demonstrated to Minister Frazer during the visit as part of the department’s Digital Planning Programme.

#### Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

The Cabinet Member referred to some of the exciting events being held during half term week.

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### **Question Time**

#### **Question from Councillor Robin Stuchbury to Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration**

##### **“Neighbourhood Plans**

Buckinghamshire Council has set up a Sub-Group which includes Area Planning Committee Chairmen, Cabinet members and senior officers looking at the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. Other Parish and Town Councils are drafting their own neighbourhood plans such as Chesham and Buckingham and will be going out to consultation on their plans with their constituents in the future. With the uncertainty, which still prevails on development housing numbers within Buckinghamshire and the questions around greenbelt protections, what work is being undertaken to engage and help guide and influence future local neighbourhood development plans for parish and town councils which will be funded through the town or parish precept, as well as guidance on the use and disparity between Section 106 agreements being used in the north of the Council area and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) being used in the south of the Council area to help facilitate infrastructure associated with growth?”

##### **RESPONSE from Councillor Strachan**

We are preparing the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire having regard to government planning policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This requires local plans to set out a housing requirement figure for each neighbourhood area that has been designated which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant housing allocations. Once these strategic policies have been adopted, these housing figures should then not need re-testing at a neighbourhood plan examination unless there has been a significant change in circumstances that affects the requirement.

We already provide significant advice and support to town and parish councils on the preparation of their neighbourhood plans and employ a dedicated Neighbourhood Planning Coordinator to assist with this. As work on the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire progresses, we shall engage with the relevant town and parish councils about what an appropriate housing requirement figure might be for their area.

In the meantime, where it is not possible to provide a housing requirement figure for a neighbourhood area, the NPPF advises the local planning authority to provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body. This figure should take into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority.

Under provisions in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, the government intends

to introduce a national Infrastructure Levy as a new mandatory charge on development to replace Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in England. Within this context, officers are considering whether to introduce CIL in the North and Central planning areas; whether to review the existing CIL charging schedules in operation in the South, East and West planning areas; and whether to commence work on a single CIL charging schedule for the whole of Buckinghamshire. A review of CIL processes and allocations would then take place once the process for introducing and reviewing CIL in the County has been concluded.

## **6 Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)**

The Leader introduced the Forward Plan and commended it to all Members of the Council and the public, as a document that gave forewarning of what reports would be discussing at forthcoming meetings.

**RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.**

## **7 Budget Scrutiny 2023 Report**

Cabinet were asked to consider the recommendations of the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Group which was formed to scrutinise the Draft Revenue Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme for 2023/24 – 2026/27 that Cabinet approved on 5 January 2023. As the Chairman, Cllr Ralph Bagge, had given his apologies, the Vice Chairman Cllr David Goss presented the report.

In January, the Finance and Resources Select Committee carried out its review of the draft budget. This involved three full days of questioning with each portfolio session attended by Cabinet Members and their deputies, the Section 151 officer, Corporate Directors and Heads of Finance. It was a cross-party constructive review on behalf of residents for Cabinet to consider. The report included 9 recommendations across the portfolios.

Overall, the Inquiry Group supported the budget proposals and increase in Council Tax and acknowledged the tough decisions proposed in a difficult financial climate and rising social care costs. It was clear that there was not much room to manoeuvre given increased cost pressures for the Council. In particular the Inquiry Group wanted to highlight three key areas of the budget:

1. The significant contribution to the budget of income from the Energy from Waste plant (although this was less than it might have been due to the impact of the green levy);
2. Increased costs in Adults and Children's Services due to case volume and complexity and;
3. The increasing costs for temporary accommodation.

The Vice-Chairman extended his thanks to all Members of Cabinet and officers for attending the sessions and their contributions as this helped the Inquiry Group gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities for the Council. He also thanked the review group, Cllrs Bagge, Anthony, Bracken, Fayyaz, Harris,

Macpherson, Newcombe, Walsh and Wilson, for all their hard work and Chris Ward, Senior Scrutiny Officer for his support in producing the report.

The Leader thanked the Vice-Chairman and the Review Group for the constructive cross party work that had been undertaken and then went through the Cabinet response to the recommendations in the report. A complete breakdown of the scrutiny recommendations and Cabinet's responses can be found [here](#).

During discussion the following points were made:-

Recommendation 2 – consideration of more capital investment projects to reduce revenue pressures

The Leader reported that this approach was already taken by Cabinet but invest to save schemes were scrutinised closely by Cabinet as sometimes these schemes did not generate as much savings as expected but still put pressure on the revenue budget.

Recommendation 3 – risk management

Key financial risks were identified as part of the routine risk management processes with mitigating actions being monitored by the Corporate Management Team. These processes were also monitored by Members through the Audit and Governance Committee and its Risk Management Group.

Recommendation 5 – development of a sustainable CCTV framework

The Leader reported that a strategic business case was currently being developed in conjunction with Thames Valley Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and other stakeholders. It was important to note however that given the financial pressures on the Council and that this was not a statutory responsibility of the Council, decisions about the future funding of CCTV would need to be taken in the context of the wider budget pressures on the capital and revenue programme.

Recommendation 6 – agency staffing costs

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing reported that the Council had robust mechanisms for monitoring agency staffing and detailed reporting already took place. An explanatory report would be brought to the Select Committee meeting in June 2023 about the Council's expenditure on Agency staff and the steps taken to mitigate this spend. Her Service Area had a robust Workforce Plan. The Leader reported that agency staff were usually employed due to their specialist skills, only being needed for a short period, or because there were a shortage of staff in that area, often being experienced nationally.

Recommendation 7 – finding a permanent home for Buckinghamshire Archives

The Leader reported that possible sites were being identified, however there was a substantial cost attached to this as documents needed to be kept in an environment where they would not deteriorate so specialist housing was required e.g. reinforced floors. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration also reported that it was not just documents that needed to be stored, but historical artefacts as well.

Recommendation 8 – development of alternative Temporary Accommodation solutions

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness reported that Property and Housing team have already begun a major programme to acquire additional units for Temporary Accommodation and there had also been a £3.6 million increase in budget. Prices had increased with the cost of living crisis and the pandemic had also impacted on residents with shortages in temporary accommodation. New temporary accommodation was being built such as Bridge Court in High Wycombe. The Service Area was working on the draft Housing Strategy, which would include recommendations in this area and also increased collaboration with Adults and Children's Services.

**RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Group, as well as the supporting Officers, be thanked for their work and subsequent recommendations.**
- (2) That Cabinet's responses to the Budget Scrutiny report 2023 and recommendations, as detailed at the meeting, be agreed.**

**8 Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27**

Cabinet received a report on the revenue budget for 2023/24 and on the capital programme for Buckinghamshire Council covering the period to 2026/27. These proposals were based on the latest known funding position, service budget pressures and the key financial risks facing the Council both now and in the future. They also took account of the findings from the recent budget scrutiny inquiry.

The Council Tax Resolution report would be presented as a separate report as part of the budget to Council in February and would contain the final information from the other precepting authorities leading to the total Council Tax for the area, which Full Council would be required to approve.

The Leader reported that the budget reflected the Council's desire to deliver its corporate objectives, maintain front-line services and support residents and businesses through the Cost of Living crisis. The budget had evolved and been updated during its development to reflect the changing economic environment, especially the exceptionally high levels of inflation and the increasing demand experienced within services. Feedback from the Residents Survey had also helped shape the budget.

Whilst the Provisional Local Government Settlement had provided additional funding to the Council it remained insufficient to fund the level of inflation and growth forecast for 2023/24. The Final Local Government Finance Settlement was expected to be announced in February 2023 (after the report deadline for the meeting). There were not expected to be any changes from the figures published in the Provisional Settlement which form part of these budget proposals. 93% of the

Council's income came from Council Tax and business rates.

Changes from the draft revenue budget were minimal and largely reflect additional Government Grant announcements. Overall, the final revenue budget proposals include unavoidable growth of **£33.3m**, Inflation of **£30.0m**, savings of **£10.1m**, and income changes of **£20.3m** in 2023/24. The proposed budget was built on the proposed Council Tax base and included increasing Council Tax by the Referendum threshold limits of a 2.99% increase in basic Council Tax and a 2% increase for the Adult Social Care Precept, giving a total increase of 4.99%. This was required to maintain levels of service as much as possible in the current economic climate.

The budget continued to include the use of £1.36m of General Fund in 2023/24, as originally approved as part of the Medium-Term Plan approved at Council in February 2022.

The Capital Programme was balanced across its 4 years, as many schemes spanned multiple financial years. The Council currently had borrowing headroom of £100m. It was proposed that Council delegate to Cabinet the addition of schemes to the Capital Programme which have a financially viable business case, subject to due diligence and final Cabinet approval. £143 million was being spent on school improvement, £20 million on housing and homelessness, £15 million on climate change and flooding, £20 million on waste and recycling.

The Section 151 Officer would be producing a report to Council on 22 February 2023 and was required to comment on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and also the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

The Leader referred to current and future risks with the budget as follows:-

- Inflation and national economic conditions which made forecasting very difficult
- Central Government funding being diverted
- Complexity and demand in social care and client transport
- Increased demand for temporary accommodation
- The sustainability of providers within the social care market and care reforms
- The impact of the covid-19 pandemic

Each Cabinet Member in turn acknowledged that they had read and understood the risks set out in the report and the Equality Impact Assessment.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- Reference was made to the EIA in that the draft budget proposals related to the early stages of projects and also changes to services. As individual projects were developed in detail to deliver the changes there would need to be an individual re-assessment of Equalities impacts. The Deputy Leader and

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing reported that if there were any negative impacts on vulnerable people the focus of the service area would be to mitigate those impacts and any transformational work would be closely monitored.

- The Cabinet Member for Transport reported that his service area had strong links with the Capital Programme which was being affected by high inflationary pressures. He also commented on the reactive repairs which had to be carried out mostly through the winter due to extreme weather.
- The Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources reported that he welcomed the £100 million investment in roads but it was important that the impact on the roads of external works in Buckinghamshire due to HS2 and East-West Rail traffic should be funded by those bodies not the Council. The Cabinet Member for Transport and the Leader reassured the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources that constant pressure was being applied to HS2 and East-West Rail to reinstate roads where damage had been caused by their works.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services Education and Skills reported that demand was outpacing supply in her area which was a budget risk if this continued in the long term.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council to –**

- (1) Approve the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme (Appendices 1-3).**
- (2) Approve the 'Special Expenses' budgets, precepts and associated services for Aylesbury Town, High Wycombe Town and West Wycombe Church Yard (Appendices 5 & 6).**
- (3) Support the proposal to delegate to Cabinet decisions to add up to £100m to the Capital Programme, to be funded by Prudential Borrowing, subject to a robust business case being approved.**
- (4) Approve the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy (Appendix 7).**
- (5) Note that a supplementary report, the formal Council Tax Resolution, will accompany the final budget to full Council.**

**9 Council Tax Support Fund**

Central Government had provided funds to the Council under S31 of the Local Government Act 2003 with the proviso that all monies were paid strictly in accordance with S13a (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and in line with guidance issued on 23 December 2022. The fund, named by Central Government as the 'Council Tax Support Fund' was designed to meet the immediate needs of all taxpayers who were currently claiming Council Tax Reduction (CTR). The mandatory element was to award all recipients of Council Tax Reduction (both working age and pension age) with a further reduction in their annual council tax bill of up to £25. This reduction would apply to all Council Tax Reduction recipients who have an outstanding liability for the 2023-24 financial year.

It was proposed after applying the mandatory reduction in liability above, that the Council would continue to make similar discretionary payments to all applicants who



became eligible for Council Tax Reduction for the first time after 1 April 2023.

The report proposed an additional policy framework that set out the Council's approach to the award of the mandatory and discretionary elements of the Council Tax Support Fund from 1 April 2023, which was a new policy in addition to the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy. There was no cost to the Council in respect of Council Tax Discretionary Discounts awards as Government had made a budget allocation of £634,939. There was discretion on how this funding could be used including transferring money into the Helping Hands Fund.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council –**

**To adopt the discretionary Council Tax Support Fund policy for Buckinghamshire local Council tax support claimants, as shown in Appendix A to the Cabinet report.**

**10 Care Leaver Council Tax Disregard**

Cabinet received a report proposing the introduction of a Discretionary Council Tax Discount scheme for Buckinghamshire Council Care Leavers. The scheme would work alongside the Local Offer to support young care leavers in taking on the responsibility of having their own property and being able to support themselves financially.

One of the key points of the Local Offer was for Buckinghamshire Council to meet the obligation of paying Council Tax for the Care Leaver up until the age of 21 where they continued to interact with the Leaving Care team.

The report proposed a policy framework that set out the Council's approach to the award of discretionary Council Tax discount for Care Leavers from April 2023. Rather than Children's Services having to pay these charges, this new policy would mean that it would be more efficient to apply the discount directly to the council tax account and removed the need for care leavers to forward bills to Children's Services for payment.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council –**

**To adopt the Discretionary Council Tax Discount Scheme for Buckinghamshire Council Care Leavers, as shown in Appendix A to the Cabinet report.**

**11 Council Tax Changes to the Second Home Discount**

The report highlighted that currently there were 753 homes receiving a 10% discount for a second home. Assuming a 4.99% Council Tax increase, this was equivalent to £157k to the Council in 2023/24 (and £37k to other preceptors). The change proposed was to help encourage the active occupation of properties as a primary residence in Buckinghamshire.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council:-**

**That they remove the 10% Council Tax discount on second homes from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.**

## **12 Capital and Investment Strategy**

The Council was required to approve its Capital & Investment Strategy on an annual basis. The Capital & Investment Strategy provided the framework within which to deliver its Corporate Plan objectives through the effective investment of its limited capital resources. As well as the Council's immediate statutory responsibilities, the strategy also reflected the important role that it had to play in the regeneration and growth, affordable housing and climate change agendas, especially in the context of a post-Covid recovery and the significant housing growth in the area. Section 7 of the Strategy outlined capital risk of which inflation was the greatest risk and Section 8 covered capital governance and processes. There were capital governance advisory boards but they were not decision making bodies.

An amendment was made to the Strategy relating to the Green Belt Estate owned by the Council. Alongside the Agricultural Estates Management Policy the Green Belt Estate owned by the Council under pre-war legislation needed to be considered as well. Where considering any proposals which involved or impacted upon the Agricultural Estate or Green Belt Estate, the Property Board would ensure that environmental policies and protection of the Green Belt were fully considered as part of any recommendations to Cabinet, and also that any recommendations have the agreement of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council :-**

**To approve the Capital and Investment Strategy attached at Appendix 1 of the report including reference to the amendment above.**

## **13 Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Model**

The Levelling Up White Paper and supporting draft legislation provided Buckinghamshire with the opportunity to take control and address levelling up, regeneration and innovation priorities. Ideally Buckinghamshire was seeking a case for a 'Level 2 plus' County Deal that could result in devolution of both capital funds and powers through the award of new local flexibilities and freedoms. However, whether or not the Government continued to proceed with county deals, or indeed allow Level 2 plus deals, the Council were collectively agreed that there was a need to synthesise current work in this space into a better aligned governance structure, even though no funding had been received. As mentioned under the Hot Topics item Buckinghamshire had the Opportunity Bucks Programme which was concentrating on 10 wards.

While national policy and government funding lay outside of the Council's control the Council have the opportunity to reorganise locally to ensure that the Council was making the best use of limited resource. The proposed new model of governance would ensure that the Council was all aligned to a place based common vision and plan and provide the broadest platform from which to address growth and cohesion

priorities. The new proposed Growth Board represented a place based approach where thematic activity included health, economy and physical environment which could be coordinated to best effect. Closer integration should allow the Council to retain the strength of organisations and coordinate activity through a common Place Based Growth Board framework. A Government review had also proposed a number of changes in order to strengthen Local Enterprise Partnerships to help deliver proposals outlined in the Industrial Strategy White Paper. Having a single body for economic development meant closer collaboration for the Growth Board and the LEP with a series of supporting boards including Enterprise and Investment, Skills Board, a Regeneration Board and the Opportunity Bucks Board. There would be a pooled investment fund to exclusively fund inclusive economic growth.

The Leader made a distinction between economic development and economic regeneration as opposed to housing and that it was important to focus on economic development as a separate issue. Therefore the terms of reference would be amended with reference to the Housing and Regeneration Board to focus on economic regeneration and not housing and regeneration. It was agreed that the Cabinet would delegate to the Leader authority to make minor changes to the terms of reference as required.

During discussion Cabinet Members welcomed the report and that having a single body would champion economic development for Buckinghamshire and promote the County as a great place to invest. A Cabinet Member commented that it was disappointing that no Government funding had been given to Buckinghamshire especially with its pockets of deprivation. Another Cabinet Member welcomed the changes including having one body to ensure no duplication and having good governance in one place to ensure good decision making.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1. That the Council will aim to transition to a 'No Deal' partnership model of strategic governance with effect from April 2023, as outlined in Appendix 1, and to establish a 'Pooled Investment Fund' to exclusively fund inclusive economic growth.**
- 2. That a new Place Based Growth Board be established to strengthen alignment, generate and focus funds, and oversee the effective allocation of resources to support agreed principles.**
- 3. That a further 4 Supporting Boards be established reporting into the Growth Board. The Supporting Boards will be responsible for the development and management of a number of strands of supporting work including an Enterprise and Investment Board; a Skills Board; a Place, Housing and Regeneration Board (with amendment referenced above to focus on economic regeneration); and an Opportunity Bucks Board. As above, the Cabinet delegated authority to the Leader to make minor changes to the terms of reference of the Supporting Boards as required.**

4. That it be agreed that the Buckinghamshire LEP will fulfil the Enterprise and Investment Board remit. As such, in this initial phase the Council will seek to integrate activity rather than incorporate the legal entity and will not pursue TUPE transfer and the dissolution of the LEP Company.
5. That Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) will lead on the business support and integrated skills programme support whilst maintaining its status as the primary Buckinghamshire business representation organisation. As such, BBF will manage both the Growth Hub and the Skills Hub, subject to the core funders (Buckinghamshire Council and the Buckinghamshire LEP) agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding with BBF, to include agreed metrics, to clarify expectations around the funding provided.
6. That the management of the Enterprise Zone programme (currently managed by the EZ Board (in line with the current approved MoU) and the Connected Counties Gainshare income) be transferred into the 'Pooled Investment Fund'. The gainshare from contracts 1 and 2 (as detailed in the Cabinet report) will be managed by the Enterprise and Investment Board who will assess business cases against criteria set by the Place Based Board in order to help catalyse investment linked to agreed priorities.
7. That as a condition of transferring resources into the proposed 'Pooled Investment Fund' the Council will require:
  - i. A majority on the Place Based Growth Board.
  - ii. that all 3 Cabinet Members on the Enterprise and Investment Board must agree to the release of any funding from the 'Pooled Investment Fund'.
  - iii. formal Council approval for any additional funding, in line with financial procedures.
8. That the objectives of place based growth will include:
  - i. better utilising and aligning existing support services including IT, HR and finance.
  - ii. improving relationship management with the most significant Buckinghamshire businesses.
  - iii. increasing the Inward Investment capacity in conjunction with the Department for International Trade (DIT).
  - iv. maximising external funding and grant bidding capacity.

#### **14 Q3 Performance Report 2022-23**

Cabinet received a performance report which detailed the key performance measures reported through the Corporate Performance Framework for 2022/23. Cabinet also received the performance scorecard, which provided information on four key elements of performance for the Council covering Finance, Customer Service, Performance and Human Resources indicators. Within the performance report and performance scorecard, outturns which were performing at or better than target were classified as Green, those which were within 5% of the target were

Amber and those which were more than 5% of the target were Red. At the end of Quarter 3, 98 indicators had outturns reported with a Red, Amber or Green status. Of these, 66 are Green (67%), 10 are Amber (10%) and 22 are Red (22%).

The following updates were given on red performance indicators:-

#### Leader

Buckinghamshire unemployment rate as a percentage of National unemployment rate

The Claimant Rate measured the percentage of working age population claiming 'out-of-work' benefits from the total working age population. The target was for the percentage unemployed in Buckinghamshire to be less than 55% of the percentage unemployed nationally – the current value was 73%. Bucks LEP continued to monitor, conduct analysis alongside partners, and develop reports and area profiles to target activity effectively through programmes such as Opportunity Bucks supporting the most deprived wards focusing particularly on central Wycombe, Aylesbury and Chesham, and also to help inform the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan with Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) as the employer representative body. It was important to identify reasons behind unemployment such as transport or language which could be causing difficulties.

#### Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources

Average webchat response time (target was 50 seconds but the current value was 59). As there was pressure on phone lines resources moved to answer phones. Training and further resource would be organised, including new starters to support the web chat service going forwards. There would be a rollout of webchat across the whole website, currently it was on the contact us page only. The good news was that the target for answering phones was being met and they were well within target.

#### Average time for processing new Housing Benefit claims (days)

#### Average time for processing Housing Benefit change claims (days)

These two indicators were impacted by the 11 week closure during the rollout of the new single county wide revenues and benefits system which has been successfully implemented. This was in two phases which impacted Q1 and Q3. Additional resources over and above the planned additional capacity has been brought in to clear the outstanding work back to normal service levels by the end of Q4 2022-23. The Leader referred to pressure on phones due to the problems being experienced with waste collection in South Buckinghamshire for which the Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment had apologised. This had been largely overcome and the Council were now only dealing with a few complaints. However, this previously had a big impact on the webchat and the customer service centre.

#### Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

% of waste collected for recycling, reuse, composting or anaerobic digestion from household sources (household collection and Household Recycling Centres)(target - 55%, current value 49.6%)

The dip in performance was due to unseasonably hot weather. There was less green

waste as a result and it would be difficult to meet the target because of this by the year end. Food waste recycling promotions were planned for Q4, which would be aimed at increasing the amount of food waste recycled.

#### % of Missed Bin Collections

This had improved and complaints relating to missed bins were infrequent. 330,000 bins were collected per week in the south; 157,000 in the north of the County (500,000 bins in total). The target was 80 per day to be missed which was small, although it was appreciated that having a bin missed was very frustrating for the householder. There were improvement actions in place.

#### Cabinet Member for Communities

Number of assets devolved to Town and Parish Councils, and Community Organisations

Q3 performance was one against a target of two and the delay in the devolution of Prestwood Recreation Ground was as a result of complex lease negotiations and the asset was now expected to be devolved by the end of Q4. There were 10 assets that he hoped to be devolved by the end of Q4 but this target may not be achieved. Future projects included the Green Street pilot which was at lease negotiation stage and the Aylesbury Special Expenses, where negotiations were being carried out with the Town Council. There were improvement actions being carried out; projects have a dedicated project group which met regularly to ensure progress and regular meetings were held with the organisations to which the assets were to be devolved. The Devolution Programme progress was being monitored frequently by a dedicated officer group and Members' Board.

#### Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

Number of library information enquiries (signposting and referral)

The Leader reported that libraries were being used as Council Access Points where enquiries could be made about Council Services and this was a log of how well they were being used. The Leader commented that libraries perform a very important function and referred to numbers dropping due to the cold weather experienced in December. The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture reported that a project with customer services was currently underway to review the CAP model and identify improvements to optimise this service.

#### Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Annual Reviews - % of CYP with an EHCP who have had an annual review within the last 12 months

% of re-referrals within 12 months

% of children with Initial Child Protection Conferences completed within 15 working days of the strategy discussion

% of Children in Need seen within 4 weeks

The Cabinet Member reported that there was a common theme running through the red indicators in that the Council was reliant on reports from partners for every assessment made such as schools, GPs, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and also were impacted by staff shortages.

#### Health and Wellbeing

Percentage of all clients attending GUM clinics seen or assessed by a healthcare professional within 48 hours (2 working days) of first contacting the service

The provider was Buckinghamshire Hospital Trust but some patients were refusing appointments which was their choice which could be also linked to the cost of living crisis and taking time off work to travel to the clinics which were in Aylesbury and Wycombe. The service had re-introduced 6 walk-in clinics per week across two locations (Aylesbury and Wycombe) from mid-September, allowing patients to be seen and assessed without needing to book an appointment. The online booking system was upgraded in November making it easier for patients to book an appointment at a time convenient to them. The service issues letters to patients to show their employers that they have a medical appointment which should help some people to be able to take paid time off work to attend appointments.

% of births that receive a face-to face New Birth Visit within 14 days by a health visitor in the quarter

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing reported that 20 children in the whole of Buckinghamshire had missed an appointment. Only 3 had not received a new birth visit. The resident may have refused the visit or moved away from the County itself. Visits were focused in areas of deprivation and areas of most need.

% of service users due an annual review that receive their review

Team Managers were allocating a larger number of reviews to social workers during Q4, to further increase the number of annual reviews being completed. The short-term project team would continue to complete the 300 reviews overdue from last year (2021/22), with additional resource agreed during Q4. A named social worker would continue to be allocated to service users to oversee their care, which would improve how annual reviews were completed.

Number of older people (65+) admitted to permanent residential or nursing care homes per 100,000 population

The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS) were in the process of developing a Transfer of Care Hub, which once implemented would help to reduce admissions to care homes from hospital settings.

% of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person that they care for.

Implementation of the 'Carers Transformation Project' had commenced as planned and would be delivering a strength-based approach to supporting carers achieve their personal outcomes. Further work engaging Carers on the Carers Passport would take place during Q4 and was seen as a crucial part of the Service.

#### Cabinet Member for Transport

NHT Public Satisfaction on the condition of road surfaces (HMBI 01).

Six out of eight increased and only two out of eight decreased so there was some improvement.

A communications strategy was being developed and would be included in the new contract model from April 2023 to help improve public satisfaction scores. It was particularly key with the new model and investment into roads to identify any improvement in customer satisfaction.

Highways capital programme % spend against forecast

All works were now programmed for delivery before the end of the financial year.

% Streetlights in light

Resourcing to the end of the contract was being reviewed to identify if further improvements can be made and an additional team was addressing this. Programmes of work were being pulled together for delivery by the new service provider from April onwards. It was unlikely for this target to be met by the year end.

Average daily cycling count per active cycle counter per day

This was a new KPI this year and in Q2 in the summer months there was a larger number of people cycling which has fallen over the winter months. £400,000 had been awarded to the Council to increase the capabilities of the cycle network which was good news and increasing coverage of cycling counters to increase data coverage would help. In terms of gully cleaning (amber indicator), 13,560 gullies had been cleaned which was 73%, however with a target of 73.5% this showed the difficulty of meeting a hard target.

**RESOLVED –**

**1) That the Council's performance for the Quarter 2 period 2022-23 be NOTED.**

**2) That the actions being taken to improve performance, where required, be NOTED.**

**15 Highways Service - Frameworks 1 & 2 Contract Award**

Cabinet agreed the new Highways service contracts operating model and the associated procurement strategy for the new contracts on 2nd March 2021. On 29th June 2021 Cabinet agreed the evaluation and quality criteria that would be used to determine the selection process and outcome of the procurement exercise as well as the criteria and process for determining any potential future extensions of the Term Maintenance and Term Consultancy contracts. These Framework Contracts would be for a maximum 4-year contract period. The procurement process was carried out in three parts for the Term Maintenance Contract, Term Consultancy Contract and finally Two Frameworks; the first framework comprising 3 lots, one for Conventional Surfacing, one for Surface Dressing and Micro Surfacing and one for Minor works up to £500k. The second framework was for larger projects and works in excess of £500k.

**RESOLVED:-**

**1. That the progress made to date on the procurement of the new Highways**



**Services Contracts be NOTED.**

- 3. That Framework 1, Lot 1, Lot 2 and Lot 3 and the Framework 2 Highways contract be awarded to the preferred bidders, as detailed within confidential Appendix 1.**
- 4. That the proposed management, use and commissioning of works via the Framework and the Term Maintenance and Consultancy contracts be NOTED.**

**18**     **Date of next meeting**  
21 March 2023 at 10am