



Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 13 June 2023 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 11.30 am.

Members present

M Tett, G Williams, S Broadbent, J Chilver, A Cranmer, C Harriss, A Hussain, P Strachan and M Winn

Others in attendance

D Barnes, P Martin and Z Mohammed

Apologies

Cllr A Macpherson

Agenda Item

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Angela Macpherson. Zahir Mohammed attended as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Health.

2 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 May 2023 were agreed as a correct record, subject to an amendment to the six monthly adult social care update (first bullet point) to say that “The Service area was currently getting 3,500 contacts per quarter with an increased ageing population and people with learning disabilities”.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Hot Topics

The following hot topics were discussed:

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

Buckinghamshire Council was one of the first Council's to upcycle one of their refuse trucks (7 year old diesel) and convert it to an electric vehicle which would help the air quality, carbon emissions and support local businesses. This was undertaken by

Silverstone Enterprise Zone.

Cabinet Member for Transport

Following heavy storms in the County, particularly affecting the North, the out of hours team had been working hard dealing with flash floods and fallen trees; 11 in the north of the County and two in the South. The Cabinet Member also provided an update on the ongoing maintenance programme with 3,750 defects being addressed since the start of April; there were 15 crews out undertaking works on a seven day a week basis. The Council had put in additional funding to help longer term treatment schemes; 29 schemes out of 200 had been completed this year and these schemes would make improvements across the whole County. 812 street lights had also been fixed. He also referred to the good weather and verge growth and the need for residents to report any concerns about visibility; cuts were being undertaken. The Leader also referred to the new piece of machinery being used, the Pothole Pro was a time-saving, three-in-one vehicle designed to make pothole repairs faster and jet patchers particularly helped with rural roads.

Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

The Council would be hosting the first Buckinghamshire School Awards celebrating teachers and school staff across the county. There would be 12 award categories with one award open to public nominations. The winning entry in each category would be announced at a celebration event, kindly hosted by Pinewood Studios, on Wednesday 21 June 2023.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Enforcement

Buckinghamshire Council's Planning and Environment Team has been voted Local Authority Planning Team of the Year at the national Planning Awards. The awards recognised excellence and best practice in all aspects of planning and environment, including being a high performing authority for planning enforcement. One of the many reasons for the win was how Buckinghamshire had reshaped the service from the previous separate legacy councils planning functions to deliver a fully integrated and customer-focussed planning service. They were currently working on a new single local plan and were at the forefront of digital innovation in planning, also taking part in a national pilot for the local nature recovery strategy. Cabinet Members passed on their personal congratulations.

Cabinet Member for Communities

On Monday 12 June, Buckinghamshire Council's Armed Forces Conference was held between 2pm and 6pm. There were a number of stalls and the event was also attended by businesses some of whom had signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

The Cabinet Member announced that the installation of a new play area in Higginson Park, Marlow, had been built in early June. The new play area would feature:

- a large multi-play ship unit with gliding track ride
- wheelchair accessible roundabout

- jumper trampoline
- 'Cocowave' giant rope swing
- swings including a 'you and me' seat and an inclusive 'Swingseat Mirage'

The new play area equipment included several items crafted from recycled materials.

5 Question Time

Question from Councillor Robin Stuchbury to Councillor Angela Macpherson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

“I have been made aware of a case of a Buckingham resident’s experience in a Milton Keynes Hospital who has not been discharged for five months as his care home said they could no longer cater for his needs. For Buckingham residents this seems to be the norm rather than the exception. There was also confusion about who was responsible for funding and for submitting necessary forms. Could the Cabinet Member please explain who is responsible for co-ordinating hospital discharges to facilitate a move from Milton Keynes to Buckinghamshire health and social care and for delivering good outcomes for these residents including communicating with relatives about their pathway. In particular how is Buckinghamshire Council collaborating with partners to resolve discharge issues with neighbouring Trusts to improve things for the future? “

RESPONSE from Councillor Z Mohammed (on behalf of A Macpherson)

I am sorry to hear of the reported experience of the Buckingham resident and thank you for drawing this case to my attention. Adult social care aims to ensure each and every person receives clear information about discharge and timely support through joint working with our partners. Whilst this individual’s experience is not the norm, I apologise for the service received and the learning from this case is feeding into our Health and Social Care Integration Programme.

For Buckinghamshire residents who need social care support when they are discharged from Milton Keynes University Hospital, the Council’s Adult Social Care service works closely with the Hospital to support and organise care, either in the resident’s own home or other long term care setting, such as a care home.

We have a social worker based at Milton Keynes University Hospital and daily communication with the hospital to support such discharges and to ensure there is effective liaison with the individual and their relatives. In addition to this Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust and Milton Keynes University Hospital work closely together to identify Buckinghamshire residents who may require rehabilitation and transfer to a community hospital (such as Buckingham Community Hospital).

Improving hospital discharge for our residents is the key focus of the health and care integration programme. With respect to social care, social workers will start speaking with patients and their families earlier in their hospital stay (working with

ward-based multidisciplinary teams) to start planning the patient's discharge. The key benefit of this will be reduced delays and a much better hospital discharge experience for our residents who will require social care. In Buckinghamshire, we are setting up a new "Transfer of Care Hub" to be operational by October. This new team is being designed to co-ordinate discharges efficiently, with case-managers for more complex cases, and a dedicated role co-ordinating out of county cases. This marks a significant change from current processes. We are also working with neighbouring areas, including Milton Keynes, on the development of their transfer of care services. Neighbouring systems are represented within the Buckinghamshire Executive Partnership which oversees the transformation of discharge services, and representatives regularly participate in the design of these new ways of working.

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 Monitoring - Outturn 2022-23

The report set out the Revenue and Capital outturn position for Buckinghamshire Council for the financial year 2022/23.

The Council was continuing to experience significant financial pressures due to high levels of inflation and continued increase in demand and complexity in key services, such as Adults Social Care and Children's Social Care, but however managed to have a balanced budget at year end due to robust financial management. Portfolio budgets had seen unavoidable pressures in areas such as energy inflation, in the cost of placements for looked after children, in Adult Social Care, Temporary Accommodation and provision of Home to School Transport, with an adverse variance of £9.8m across portfolio budgets at financial year end. Despite these pressures, the Council had managed to achieve a balanced revenue position overall, due to the effective processes in place for managing financial risk; pressures in portfolio budgets had been managed overall and mitigated by a favourable variance in corporate budgets due to contingencies set aside to manage risk, interest income and income from the energy from waste incinerator.

The biggest overspends by portfolio were £4.9 million in children's social care due to the lack of national placements, £4.7 million in homelessness and regulatory services from a significant increase in demand for temporary accommodation, £3.2 million in transport services due to increased contract costs in home to school transport, £2.4 million in health and wellbeing due to demand and fee uplifts, £2.1 million in accessible housing and resources mainly due to inflation on energy costs for council properties. On the other hand, there was a favourable variance of £7.2 million in climate change and environment from additional income from the sale of electricity from the energy to waste site. On savings the Council achieved 96% of the £19.2 million savings.

One of the recommendations proposed the following transfer to reserves:-
(paragraph 2.4 (b)(vii))

- a transfer of £0.5m to the Collection Fund reserve from additional grant income from Business Rates levy surplus;
- a transfer to the Highways Reserve of £0.5m to fund Highways lining;
- a transfer of £4.7m to the Mitigating Future Financial Risks reserve.

The final year end position on capital was spend of £107.5m against a budget of £151.9m, and against total released budget of £129.9m, equating to 17% variance against released budgets compared to the target of 10%. Capital projects which were successfully completed this year included Kingsbrook Secondary School, Brunel Shed in Wycombe (which had now been leased out), the £1.8m DEFRA-funded Rural Broadband installation programme, the Berryfields and Haydon Hill Cycleways, upgrades to the Southern Waste Depot, a roof replacement on Bedgrove Community Centre, 7 School toilet projects, and SEN placement projects in Shortenhills, Holmer Green Senior School, Westfield and Princes Risborough Upper School.

Many capital projects had been impacted by the current challenging economic situation, with high levels of construction inflation, pressures in the labour market, supply shortages and delays to acquisitions causing slippage in the programme. This was reflected in the relatively high levels of slippage, but low level of overspends. Where necessary, projects were being reviewed and re-scoped and funding implications were being considered.

The final outturn variance of £44.3m consisted of slippage into future years of £53.8m, accelerated spend ahead of profile of £16.3m, overspends of £4.0m, and underspends of £10.9m which would be released for other purposes. Cabinet was requested to approve the carry forward of slippage to future years and accelerated spend as detailed in the Cabinet report.

Projects and Programmes that have slipped included the Future High Streets project (£9.6m) as the core original project for this funding (the Curve) fell through this year and was in the process of being replaced by a proposal for the Tesco site at Eden Centre, plus slippage of contract and acquisition payments on approved projects and also a project delay for the Aylesbury HIF Grid Reinforcement (£7.9m) due to finding an alternative site as the original site had been allocated for housing.

In terms of unsecured debt over 90 days there has been an increase of £0.2m across quarter 4 rising from £9m to £9.2m but still within the £10 million KPI. In terms of payment performance the overall invoice payment performance was 95.8% paid on time up 1.9% from Q3.

The Leader welcomed the balanced budget commenting that many other Councils

were facing extreme financial difficulties. This Council had a reputation for its strong financial management despite the challenges that were being faced. Additional income from the energy to waste plant and income generated from an increase in interest rates helped balance portfolio pressures.

During questions the following points were noted:-

- A Cabinet Member welcomed the budget and returning money back to reserves of £4.7 million, almost 10% of the Council's reserves at the moment.
- Reference was made to sundry debt which was £22.3m, an increase of £2.7m from Q3 with £17.8 m unsecured. The Service Director of Finance commented that they were following normal processes in terms of chasing debt and there was nothing there currently which was of concern. This figure also took account of the historic position and bad debt positions would be tested. There was a good profile and good procedures in place to recover that money.
- A comment was made on the successful completion of capital projects such as the Kingsbrook Secondary School, Brunel Shed in Wycombe, the £1.8m DEFRA funded Rural Broadband installation programme, the Berryfields and Haydon Hill Cycleways, upgrades to the Southern Waste Depot and a roof replacement on Bedgrove Community Centre amongst other projects. The Council was delivering physical improvements to residents on infrastructure despite the cost-of-living crisis for example street lighting costs had gone up by £1.8 million due to increased energy costs and also inflationary pressures were impacting on a number of portfolios.
- The Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services reported on the £4.7m adverse variance in Housing which was mainly due to pressures of £4.5m from Temporary Accommodation demand and cost increases. The year ended with nearly 250 families in expensive hotel accommodation, some of whom were Ukrainian or Afghan refugees. To try and manage demand the Service Area had opened Bridge Court in High Wycombe and were looking at other alternative forms of accommodation.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education reported that her Service area was always in deficit because of the nature and demand of their work but the number and complexity of cases were increasing, which was a national problem, including shortage of placements. There was very careful financial management of this portfolio.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report and success in achieving an overall balanced revenue outturn position for 2022-23 be NOTED.**
- 2) That an increase to the Revenue Contribution to Capital Reserves (RCCR) of £0.6m be APPROVED to fund an update to the CCTV Control Room.**
- 3) That the transfer to reserves as set out in paragraph 2.4 (b)(vii) of the Cabinet report be APPROVED.**
- 4) That the overall Capital outturn position of £107.5m of investment in**

Council capital priorities be NOTED.

5) That the carry-forward of slippage and accelerated spend be APPROVED, as detailed in the Cabinet report.

8 Q4 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 4, 116 indicators had outturns reported with a Red, Amber or Green status. Of these, 63 were Green (54%), 11 were Amber (9%) and 26 were Red (22%)

The following areas were reported by each of the Cabinet Members on their performance measures :-

Leader

Buckinghamshire unemployment rate as a percentage of National unemployment rate – 68% as opposed to a target of 55%

The target was for the percentage unemployed in Buckinghamshire to be less than 55% of the percentage unemployed nationally. The Leader reported that this was due to the general downturn in the economy, but Buckinghamshire still had a fairly good claimant rate in terms of the national picture. One of the issues was that it was quite variable, and rates varied across the County, with the Wycombe Parliamentary Constituency area reporting a Claimant Count rate that exceeds the national average (4.0%). There were hotspots across the County which was one of the reasons the Opportunity Bucks Programme was introduced to target those areas. Work was ongoing with Bucks Business First and the Local Enterprise Partnership and other organisations to target improvement initiatives.

Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources

Average webchat response time – 1 13 seconds against a target of 50 s

The Cabinet Member reported that they had recently rolled this out across the majority of pages on the website to provide an alternative contact channel and the volumes of the webchat were increasing which was good news but staff were still in the process of being trained. Performance in the period had been impacted by the Revenues and Benefits recovery action being restarted following the system closure, this had meant that Customer Service resource had been diverted to assist with spikes in telephone contact as well as ongoing work to train additional resources. Improvement Actions were to explore opportunities to deploy AI at the beginning of live chats, to handle FAQs without human intervention required.

Average Call Wait Time - 4 39 seconds against a target of 3 s

The reduction in performance compared with Q3 was due to a significant increase in the number of calls received in Q4, with two spikes in call wait times across the quarter. These spikes in demand were driven by cyclical activity: council tax recovery action (22,000 letters issued) and annual billing cycle (270,000 bills issued). However, this could be compared to some of his green indicators where 94.5% of phone calls had been answered against a target of 90%. 72% of customers ringing customer support had commented that they were satisfied with the service received against a target of 60%. Despite pressures a good service was being delivered.

Percentage of total capital spend across Buckinghamshire Council (forecast) compared to Budget (performance measure) – 71% against a target of 90%

The Cabinet Member reported that this tended to go upwards towards the year end. However, the figures also included £10m underspend on completed Schools projects (which, if adjusted for, would take the variance against released budgets to the 90% target); Kingsbrook Primary and Secondary which had been returned to the capital budget. The overall spend on Capital was £107.5m against a total budget of £151.9m.

Average time for processing new Housing Benefit claims (days) – 37.2 days against a target of 20

Q1 performance was impacted by phase 1 of the single system project, council tax £150 energy rebate processing, and the annual uprating of benefit claims. Q2 was affected by resources working on the phase 2 single system project. The system closed for 11 weeks from August to November. The overall rolling performance at the end of March after annual billing was 37.2 days against a target of 20 days. Additional resources had been brought in to clear the outstanding backlog by the end of Q1 2023/24.

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) – 47.96% against a target of 55%

In Q1 and Q2 there had been known performance issues in the south of the county with missed bins. Q2 experienced extremely hot weather resulting in less green waste being received which lowered performance by approximately 4-6%. Performance was better than the same period last year (Q3 2021/22 – 44.12%). Actions would include improving waste disposal behaviours of residents by providing an enhanced behavioural change communications campaign focused on food waste separation, home composting and recycling improvements.

% of Missed Bin Collections – 0.21% against a target of 0.15%

This service was delivered by two teams, an inhouse team to the North, and the contractor Veolia to the South. Veolia conducted a round reorganisation which impacted heavily on performance measures. An action was taken for additional

Veolia management structure to be deployed to improve monitoring and performance on the ground. The contractual Service Level Agreement (SLA) of fewer than 60 missed bins per 100,000 collections was now being regularly reached - for example during March the SLA was achieved for 2 out of 4 weeks. The Service area were continuing to hold weekly performance meeting with Veolia Regional Manager and Contract Manager with continued close monitoring and management of Veolia through various meetings. Complaints and customer contact was now reduced to business as usual levels.

The Cabinet Member also referred to a green indicator on the need to minimise annual emissions tonnes and this was 6,095 against a target of 7,895 so the Council was well ahead in reducing carbon where the Council had direct control but did not include ancillary services such as contractors.

Cabinet Member for Communities

% of female victims supported by IDVAs who have their risk level reduced- 70.9% against a target of 75%

This indicator measured the percentage of Women's Aid female clients who receive support from an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) and as a result, see their domestic abuse risk-level reduce. Independent domestic violence advisors (IDVAs) were professionally qualified, specialist domestic abuse workers, who supported high-risk victims of domestic abuse. Fluctuations of risk occurred due to mitigating factors including changes to contact between the victim and perpetrator, and challenges with monitoring progress if victims stop engaging with the service. There was a continued focus on individual cases where there was a challenge in reducing the risk, however there were complicating factors including the current cost of living crisis and housing shortage which affected this measure. There were two new Triage Workers who were supplementing the work of the frontline services and providing additional capacity to deal with complex cases within Adults and Childrens Services. Work was also being done with Housing Providers to support them in safeguarding domestic abuse victims.

Number of assets devolved to Town and Parish Councils, and Community Organisations – 1 against a target of 10

The main reason was complex and lengthy lease negotiations with several pilot projects. Prestwood Recreation Ground was now expected to be devolved by the end of April 2023 but because of legalities would now be end of June 2023. Further projects identified for devolution in 2022/23 were Green Street Pilot and Aylesbury Special Expenses, both of which were at lease negotiation stage. Projects would now have a dedicated project group which met regularly to ensure progress. There would be regular meetings with the organisations to which the assets would be devolved. Finally a Devolution Programme progress was monitored frequently by a dedicated officer group and Members' Board.

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

Number of library information enquiries (signposting and referral) – 14,749 against a target of 17000

There were 15 Council Access Points (CAPs) situated around the county, 11 of which were libraries. There was an increase in enquiries in Q4 in comparison to Q3, with a noticeable increase in IT and e-Library enquiries indicating that IT issues experienced during the One Network migration in Q3 impacted the access to those services; libraries also experienced lower than usual footfall in Q3 due to the adverse weather experienced in December. The highest number of enquiries during Q4 were recorded in the most recent month of March (1,378), which correlated with annual Council Tax changes. Improvement actions were in place with staff members to improve the recording and monitoring processes.

The Cabinet Member also referenced an amber indicator relating to number of visitors to the Country Parks where numbers had fallen since the pandemic as they were undertaking other leisure pursuits now restrictions had ceased. New facilities were being put into Black Park to attract more visitors.

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 58% against a target of 75%

The Cabinet Member commented that there were 6,000 outstanding EHCP’s. Within the agreed growth funding to the iSEND Service from April 2023, the Service would be recruiting additional posts to support this target: 3 full-time equivalent (FTE) specialist EHC practitioners that would hold smaller caseload of the most vulnerable children and young people, 2.4 FTE Education Health and Care Coordinators and 1.8 FTE Assistant Education, Health and Care Coordinators. These posts would bring capacity to process 800 to 1000 annual reviews per year which would enable sustained improvement in performance. There have been problems with staffing, with agency staff and recruitment and retention.

% of re-referrals within 12 months – 37% against a target of 28%

This indicator measured the percentage of children who have been referred to Children’s Social Care in each quarter, that had a previous referral in the last 12 months (good to be low). During Q4, nearly 4 in 10 of all re-referrals related to concerns about domestic violence, neglect or physical abuse. In over half of cases, the previous referral was closed by the MASH team which meant that the child did not progress to a statutory intervention before being closed and they were subsequently re-referred at a later date. There were a number of contacts which previously progressed to referral so that contact information could be completed (where there was a lack of information from the referrer) as opposed to the threshold being met for a referral to children’s social care. This increased the number of referrals closed without progressing to a statutory intervention and some of these were re-referrals. A number of improvement actions had been identified.

Contacts to children's social care would only progress to a referral where the threshold was met for statutory intervention. Where the threshold was met for a referral to social care for statutory intervention and then further information was gathered which reduced the risk to the child or need for social care intervention, the MASH would consider community and voluntary resources or early help as alternatives to ensure that families receive support to reduce the likelihood of a further referral in the future.

% of children with Initial Child Protection Conferences completed within 15 working days of the strategy discussion 67% against a target of 82%

Of the 60 ICPCs that were over 15 days, 6 (10%) of these were delayed to ensure that the family could attend, and a further 16 (27%) were delayed so that the relevant reports could be shared with the family. The availability of partner agencies was a factor in 5 (8%) of the delays. Social worker vacancies were impacting the availability of staff within the service, as well as changes to management. ICPCs continued to be closely monitored but have been impacted due to a combination of two vacant posts within the service, increase in requests for ICPC and late ICPC referral forms being received. Although both posts have been filled, due to notice periods staff would not be at the Council until the end of June, in the interim the conference manager continued to cover conferences and additional slots were being made available where possible.

% children who became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years – 15% against a target of 10%

The Service Area has seen more children coming back onto plans where there were concerns of Neglect and Domestic Violence. Child Protection Advisors and managers continued to work together with schools, police and health organisations, to ensure that children were supported on a CP plan until there was sufficient evidence that they were no longer at risk of significant harm.

% of Children in Need seen within 4 weeks – 82% against a target of 90%

At the end of March, 82% of children were seen within 4 weeks. This is an increase of 7 percentage points compared to the position at the end of December. The number of children visited every 4 weeks in Q4 was impacted by staffing pressures including a significant number of leavers. Workloads for staff in the teams also remained high, despite the number of children with CIN plans decreasing during the second half of 2022/23. There had also been an increase in the complexity of CIN cases, including children with complex mental health needs and autism which had led to increased pressure in the service. Managers reviewed visits that were out of timescale, and where it had not been possible to visit children, measures were put in place to ensure that they remained safe. Additional support had been identified with Child and Family Workers supporting other non-statutory tasks, allowing social workers more time to focus on visiting their children. Newly qualified social workers would be deployed into teams once their training had been completed, to support the teams and help manage demand, including carrying out a proportion of home visits. A bespoke campaign continued to support recruitment of experienced social workers.

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

% of births that receive a face-to face New Birth Visit within 14 days by a health visitor in the quarter – 83% against a target of 90%

Performance in Q3 2022/23 (83%) was below the contractually targeted level (90%). This equated to 1,156 visits undertaken within 14 days out of a possible 1,394. This was a slight increase from the previous quarter (80%), and it remained an improvement in trend over the previous year. The children with no recorded visit have remained at less than 2%. Of the 30 children missing a reported visit, only 3 had not been seen for a NBV at any time (as it was declined), the rest had been seen at later dates, transferred out of Buckinghamshire, or were seen but data was not captured. Data was also captured for more deprived areas in Buckinghamshire, where the need for a visit to be conducted within 14 days could be greater. Within the Aylesbury area, 89% of NBVs were completed in 14 days and in High Wycombe, 93% of NBVs were completed in 14 days. Improvement Actions included ensuring all visits that took place were correctly reported and a review of the current action plan.

% of service users due an annual review that receive their review – 79.2% against a target of 90

This was a cumulative measure, so performance increased during the year along with the target. Between 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, 79.2% (2,970 people) of annual reviews have been completed which was 8.7 percentage points (405 people) below the stretching graduated target of 90%. Reviews are being completed by two teams. Permanent social work teams have completed three quarters of the reviews and a short-term project team, formed to support the pressures that resulted from the Covid-19 Pandemic, completed the additional quarter of reviews. Performance this year had improved with double the number of reviews completed compared to the previous year due to the additional resource. This was also expected to be above benchmarked areas for 2022/23. Both teams remained affected by staff capacity and vacancies. Social worker vacancies continued in the long-term. Improvement Actions included the Management Team closely monitoring annual review targets, continuing support and training to staff carrying out annual reviews, particularly to social worker assistants, to support quality and productivity and ongoing recruitment to fill vacancies to support staff capacity to carry out reviews.

Number of older people (65+) admitted to permanent residential or nursing care homes per 100,000 population – 516 against a target of 489

Between 1 April 2022 and 31st March 2023, 537 older adults (516 per 100,000 population) were permanently admitted to care homes. This was 28 people above the target of 509 people (489 per 100,000 population) which was set at the previous (2020/21) South East benchmark level. The rate of permanent admissions amongst older adults was higher than previous years because of the Hospital Discharge to Assess pathway that was put in place during the pandemic, which was now resulting in increased admissions and these account for one third of all permanent residential and nursing admissions. 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. There was also a deep dive being produced to further understand the reasons for the increase in admissions and the cohorts this was affecting in more detail.

% of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person that they care for – 61.2% against a target 70%

The outturn was calculated from the biennial statutory carers survey and was good to be high. In the 2021/22 survey, 101 of 165 carers responded very positively to this question (61.2%), which although being below the 70% target, was a 4.2% improvement since the previous survey in 2018/19. A further 47 Carers (28.5%) reported that they sometimes felt included or consulted in discussions, and 17 carers (10.3%) reported that they never felt involved or consulted in discussions about the person they care for. In total 9 out of 10 carers who responded to the survey felt they were consulted. The Carers Project activities have been realigned and the primary focus would be on refreshing the Carers Strategy, developing a Carers Charter to support the re-commissioning of carers support services from 2024. In addition, a 12-month improvement plan was in development to improve outcomes for Carers.

Cabinet Member for Homeless and Regulatory Services

There were no red indicators.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member reported that most of the red indicators related to external influences – all targets within the control of the Council were green.

Number of homes built against housing requirements – 2616 against a target of 2763

The figures represented a 32% increase on the number of homes completed during the previous municipal year (1,982). Local authorities did not have direct influence over new housebuilding rates. External factors such as the Covid pandemic, ability of home buyers to obtain mortgages, economic recession and labour supply shortages were significant determinants. The preparation of the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, which was a key corporate priority, would reset the annual housebuilding target and was likely to result in higher housing completion figures over the course of the next five years.

The Cabinet Member referred to the amber indicator relating to % of building control applications checked within 21 days and said that the service area was very close to the target – 86% as opposed to 90%. There has been a large increase in the number of applications due to a growing confidence in the market.

Cabinet Member for Transport

% of gullies cleaned against the cyclical gully programme – 89% against a target of

98%

This indicator measured the percentage of gullies cleaned against the cyclical gully programme (to clean all gullies within 1 year) with an annual target of 98%. This target had been pro-rata'd equally across each quarter to help show progress, although delivery may not have actually been evenly distributed. The final out-turn for gullies cleaned was 89%, which was below the 98% target. The crews worked through a period of extremely cold and wet weather which impacted performance against the work programme with gully cleaning not undertaken during continually frozen weather and crews being moved onto emergency pothole repairs in part of January. 75,761 gullies were cleaned and working. The Service area has seen a 16% reduction in average silt levels this year because of the enhanced programme in 2021/22. Those gullies not completed by the end of March 2023 would be visited early on in the programme next year.

NHT Public Satisfaction on the condition of road surfaces (HMBI 01) – 20% against a target of 25%

In 2022, Buckinghamshire scored a satisfaction score of 20% against a target (comparable cohort) of 25% (good to be high). Overall, in the NHT Survey, Buckinghamshire has had small improvements in the NHT score in 6 out of 8 categories versus last year, with minor decreases in the other two categories. Improving the next annual NHT score was a key aim of the new contract model from April 2023 and a communications strategy to include this was being developed. The Cabinet Member also referred to a green indicator on the % of the local network being classed as being in good condition which was ahead of target due to the additional funding being put in for plane and patch schemes.

Number of publicly accessible electric-vehicle charging bays on and off-street in Buckinghamshire – 229 against a target of 263

There were 64 bays on route through the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS), which have been delayed due to the Distribution Network Operator (DNOs - electrical infrastructure providers that install the cabling/meters) but these have now been installed.

% of Category 1 and 2H defects repaired in 2 and 5 working days respectively – 83% against a target of 94

Performance was impacted by the freezing temperatures experienced in January and February, combined with the extremely high levels of rainfall experienced in March which had led to an unprecedented level of defects. There were twice the normal number of grit runs last winter. Repair activities would be closely monitored (new contractor in place from 01 April 2023) and weekend works have been introduced to respond to the increase in reports. Additional resource had been brought in to help address the number of defects received

% Streetlights in light – 84% against a target of 95%

A night scouting exercise had recently been completed, which gave an updated total figure of the number of working lights (in previous quarters the percentage given was calculated using the number of defects that had been reported against the

street lighting asset). Maintenance activities would be closely monitored (new contractor in place from 01 April 2023). Night scouting reports would be used to produce a targeted programme of works to address all defects.

Average daily cycling count per active cycle counter per day - 67.3 against a target of 75

Q1 and Q2 counts were generally higher than Q3 and Q4 due to favourable weather conditions in Spring and Summer. The average actuals for the year-to-date (Q1 to Q3) were 75.9 counts per day, which was higher than the target of 75. However, projecting forward for the whole of 2022/23, the Service area was anticipating an average count of 73.7 per day. This projected dip in performance was due to typical observations of lower cycling counts during the winter months. Work was ongoing to improve visibility of cycling across the County with a new cycle counter added for Churchill Road Aylesbury in September 2022. 5 additional Vivacity AI-based sensors had come online in February 2023, and would be included for 2023/24 once the Council was satisfied with compatibility of the data. Improvement actions included plans to procure e-bikes to complement the existing e-scooter schemes in Aylesbury and High Wycombe, which was likely to increase counts in 2023/24. Following a successful bid, Buckinghamshire was being awarded £396k of Capability and Ambition funding. This Fund was focused on building local authority capabilities to deliver active travel infrastructure, carrying out evidence-based planning and delivering behaviour change initiatives.

RESOLVED -

- 1) That the Council's performance for the Quarter 4 period 2022-23 be NOTED.
- 2) That the actions being taken to improve future performance, where required, be NOTED.

9 Freehold Acquisition of the High Wycombe Social Club Building

The Cabinet received a report which sought approval to exercise an Option to Purchase the freehold of the High Wycombe Social Club building on Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe; lease back space to the Club and also for storage for the town's Chair Collection; refurbish and improve the building in the process, as part of the Future High Streets funded 'Southern Gateway' area improvement. The Future High Streets Programme aimed at helping regenerate High Wycombe town centre by acquiring and refurbishing properties in need of improvement and the list of acquisitions had been approved by Government. The capital released on the sale of the freehold would fund a refit of the facilities with a new riverside external sitting area overlooking the River Wye. Following discussion, Cabinet Members suggested that other options for development should be considered which would still meet the requirements of the Government funding.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the Council exercise the Option to Purchase the freehold interest in the

High Wycombe Social Club ('HWSC') on Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe
2) That authority be delegated to the Service Director – Property and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources, to agree the terms of the purchase and further to agree the terms of entering into a lease for HWSC; and to consider other development options as appropriate on condition that this would not have any adverse impact on the Future High Streets funding from Government.

10 Exclusion of the public (if required)

RESOLVED -

that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Paragraph 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

11 Confidential Appendix - Freehold Acquisition of the High Wycombe Social Club Building

Cabinet Members discussed the confidential appendices and made some amendments to the recommendations.

12 Date of next meeting

11 July 2023.