



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025

Version refreshed March 2024



Introduction

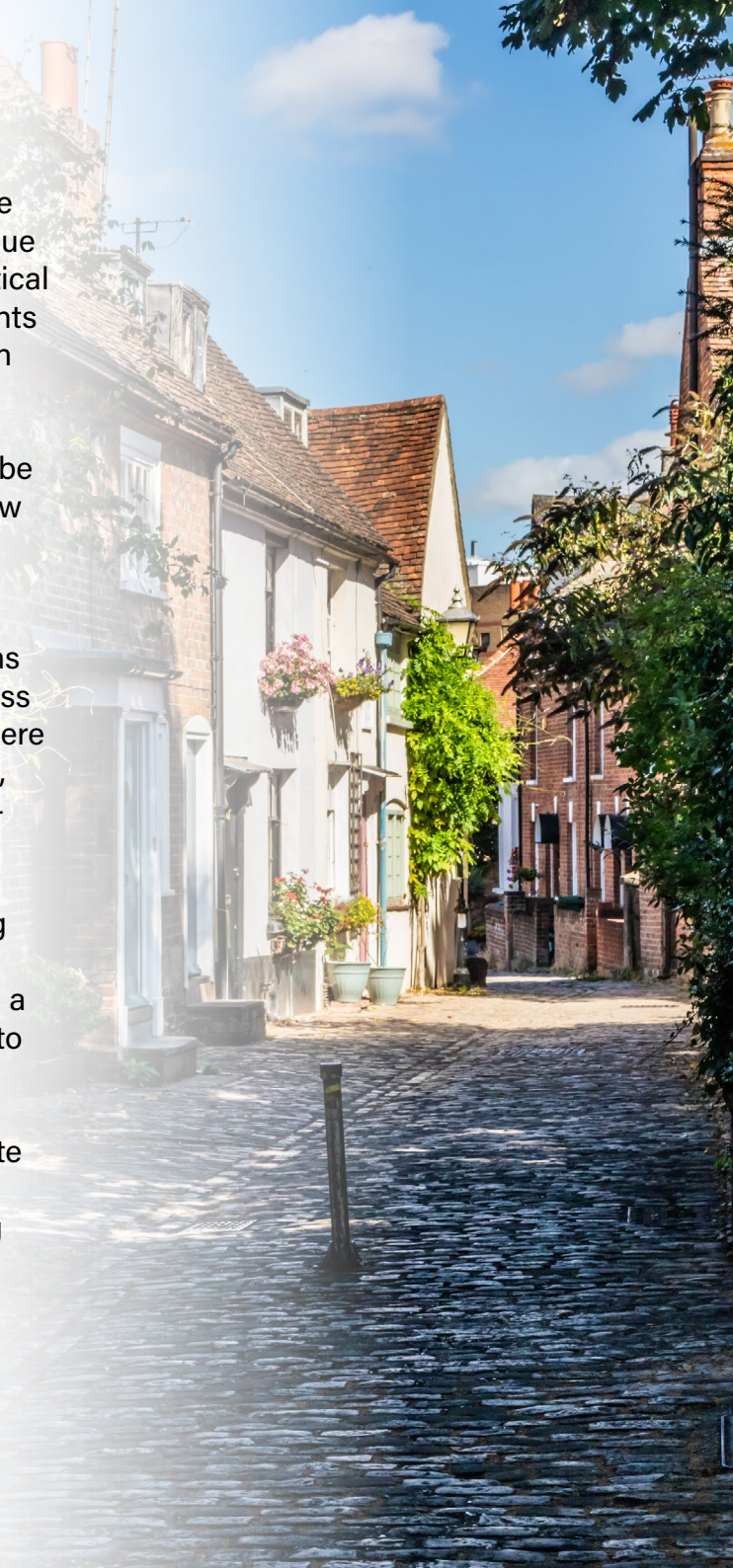
Our Corporate Plan outlines our ambitions and priorities for Buckinghamshire Council. Overall, our aim is to create positive changes for local people, communities, visitors, and businesses. This refresh builds on the original plan from when the Council was formed in April 2020 and reflects the ever-changing world around us. We remain committed to making Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work, and do business. We want our county to be a place everyone can be proud of, with excellent services, thriving businesses and outstanding public spaces for everyone. We want our residents, regardless of background, to live healthy, successful lives and age well with independence.

As I am sure you are aware, councils across the country are under acute financial pressure and Buckinghamshire is no different. The cost-of-living pressures and inflation following on from COVID-19 continues to present significant challenges to our residents and council services. This has been further compounded by the ongoing war in Ukraine. Demand for our services continues to rise each year due to factors such as population growth and increased pressure on services such as children's social care, adult social care, home to school transport and temporary accommodation. Our income in certain areas such as parking remains reduced compared to pre-pandemic levels.

However, we are committed to continuing to be a well-run, financially prudent, efficient and value for money council. The escalating costs for critical services that serve our most vulnerable residents have forced us to make difficult decisions when assessing our medium-term financial plans. We are taking steps to reduce our overhead costs and implement a savings programme that will be delivered over the next few years. This will allow us to continue building a strong foundation for Buckinghamshire's long-term future.

Our vision for Buckinghamshire is one that aims to allow all Buckinghamshire residents to access the opportunity to succeed and thrive. One where growth will be carefully planned and managed, so that all residents benefit. This includes well-designed, more affordable homes in thriving communities, providing excellent education opportunities for our young people, developing a skilled workforce with access to great job opportunities in highly productive sectors, and a world-class physical and digital infrastructure to support our businesses to flourish.

We also want to play our part in tackling climate change. Examples of how we plan to do this include planting over 500,000 trees, increasing recycling and improving our environment.



During the challenges of the recent years, we have seen how people from across the county have stepped up to help those in need and look out for their family, friends, and neighbours as well as help refugees temporarily settle in the county. The public sector and community services continue to work together to find ways to support those that rely on them, thinking innovatively through the challenges. Some of these new ways of doing things have worked well and have demonstrated how we can make improvements to the way we deliver our services.

We remain focused on the importance of a local approach and will continue to engage with our communities, offering opportunities for our residents, business, and partners to influence innovative approaches to their local places and services. There is no better example of this than our Opportunity Bucks initiative where we are targeting resources to ensure residents can access what they need to succeed.

[Buckinghamshire's Strategic Vision for 2050](#) will help us deliver a lot of these ambitions to benefit Buckinghamshire's residents and the local economy.

The refreshed Corporate Plan provides the building blocks to our success and sets out the Council's strategic priorities and how we can achieve these. It will be used to inform cabinet portfolio priorities, service, and team planning – setting out the challenges and vital opportunities we will focus on to support the county to build resilience and continue to grow.

A number of strategies and policies underpin this plan including details about how we evaluate our success and how we use benchmarking information to ensure we measure success and best practice. Buckinghamshire will continue to face challenges in the next few years, but we also have unique and exciting opportunities to improve our services and accelerate the county's success and prosperity, including through devolution from central government. We recognise that our staff are our greatest asset, and it is important that we acknowledge their ongoing hard work, dedication, and resilience during times of unprecedented demand.

By seizing opportunities available to us now and working on our ongoing commitments, such as our objective to achieve net carbon zero for Buckinghamshire by 2050, we can avoid over burdening future generations and ensure that current residents benefit from positive changes in the years to come.



Martin Tett
Leader



Rachael Shimmin
Chief Executive

Buckinghamshire in numbers

In 2024



553,300

population (as of mid-year 2021)



£453,000

average house price (March 2023)



£1,400 pcm

average rent for a three-bed property
(April 2022 - March 2023)



171

parish and town councils



32%

of the county is designated green belt
(England average 12.5%)



£18.485 billion

size of Buckinghamshire economy national output
(ONS 2023)



236

schools, including pupil referral units and local authority maintained nurseries



£38,600

median average annual gross pay in 2022
(full time workers)



2,100 miles

of carriageway were maintained



On the horizon...



564,300

population in 2030
(Source: ONS projections)



There are currently 304 state pension age residents per 1,000 working age residents, by 2040 this will rise to 371 state pension age residents per 1,000 working age residents

In the next decade (2023-2033):



44.3%

increase in 85+ year olds



20.8%

increase in 65+ year olds



0.3%

increase in adults (18-64)*



5.1%

decrease in children (0-17)*

** Construction of new dwellings in the county could lead to population changes/ increases beyond those currently predicted by the ONS.*

Moving forward together: valuing partnerships

Achieving the best outcomes for our communities requires joined-up thinking. Most of our public sector partners work across the same geography and serve the same population. Working collaboratively with partners to make the most of collective resources, skills, ideas, and talents will be critical to achieve our key priorities.

Buckinghamshire Council continues to build relationships at a regional, national, and international level, championing the county's voice and representing our residents, businesses and partners on a big stage. We will work creatively and collaboratively to strengthen the local economy, support businesses, and attract investment and funding into the county.

We are committed to partnership working, focusing on shared priorities, and encouraging collaboration, sharing intelligence, and driving change and tackling key issues in a more coordinated way.



Buckinghamshire Place-Based Growth Board

The Buckinghamshire Growth Board ensures all partners are aligned to a shared place-based vision and provides the broadest platform from which to address our growth and cohesion priorities. It is the overarching partnership board providing a single forum that works across the public and private sector in Buckinghamshire to meet the need for joined up thinking on the economy and growth. It approves the overall vision and strategy for Buckinghamshire to ensure ambitions are agreed, work is undertaken to realise them, and that future economic growth and development aligns with local priorities.

Following the successful integration of the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership into the Council in early 2024, we will continue to work with partners from the health sector, Buckinghamshire New University and business

representatives, all of whom have a shared ambition and work programme, to deliver innovative, sustainable, and appropriate growth at pace.

The Growth Board oversees the work of four sub-boards: the Enterprise and Investment Board, the Skills Strategy Board, the Regeneration Board and the Opportunity Bucks Board. Members of the Board ensure that our strategies and plans are aligned to support the growth ambitions of the county with a single narrative.

We want Buckinghamshire to remain a forward thinking and dynamic economy without sacrificing the assets which already make it a great place to live. This new model of governance also aligns Buckinghamshire to the path of national government policy. The model aims to further strengthen the work currently undertaken by partners including supporting and developing our key sectors, providing a strong and independent business voice, taking forward skills delivery and combining this with a wider focus on health and equality, education, place and regeneration.

We will work with our partners to:

- Invest in our places
- Mobilise our high-tech sector assets
- Create an accelerated skills delivery system
- Enhance physical and digital connectivity
- Deliver public service efficiency improvements, including a first-class integrated health and social care campus
- Increase our overall contribution to HM Treasury



Buckinghamshire Business First

Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) is the principal organisation delivering business support activity across Buckinghamshire and, as such, represents the voice of businesses of various size and type. BBF also continues to run both the Growth Hub and Skills Hub and is represented on the Buckinghamshire Growth Board.

Integrated Care System

Integrated Care Systems bring together the expertise of key health and care professionals to plan and deliver joined up services within Buckinghamshire to look after people's physical, social, and mental health needs as well as tackling health inequalities. By working in partnership across the Integrated Care System, including with the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Integrated Care Partnership (with the Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing as vice chair), the Buckinghamshire GP Provider Alliance, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS

Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, FedBucks, Medicas, and South-Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, we will achieve our vision of everyone living happier and healthier lives for longer.

Town and parish councils, and local MPs

There are 171 town councils, parish councils and parish meetings in Buckinghamshire, collectively known as local councils. There are currently five MPs for the area. We work closely with the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (BMKALC) who are an independent member organisation, providing support to these councils on procedures and statutory regulations. Buckinghamshire Council has adopted the 'Town and Parish Council Charter' which articulates our commitment to working effectively and collaboratively with town and parish councils and outlines some key areas

to help strengthen our relationships. As part of our commitment to the Town and Parish Charter we conducted a Town and Parish Survey in 2023 to help us understand what is working well and what is not. We have also established a Town and Parish Focus Group, whose role is to constructively discuss key issues and emerging themes concerning town and parish councils and provide a local forum to discuss and support approaches on key pieces of work.

Opportunity Bucks

Opportunity Bucks is a programme to improve outcomes for residents who are experiencing significant hardship, a local initiative, in line with the Government's national levelling up agenda. We want to ensure that all residents in the county have the opportunity to succeed, that nobody gets left behind and we reduce inequality within our communities – we recognise that this is not where we are today and that things will get worse if we don't act.

The programme is focused on 10 wards throughout Buckinghamshire, where residents are facing most challenges (these areas have been defined based on data including high unemployment and educational attainment, higher crime and worst health outcomes). We are working with councillors, partners and residents in these areas to identify challenges and deliver initiatives that will break the cycle of disadvantage, improve health outcomes and grow our economy.

Asylum, migration and resettlement

Buckinghamshire continues to welcome a number of individuals and families from both Afghanistan and Ukraine; many of whom were at very genuine risk to their lives fleeing violence and war.

Buckinghamshire is also seeing an increase in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children who are referred to us via the government mandated National Transfer Scheme.

Working with partners, residents and with valuable support from local community groups we continue to ensure these individuals and families are supported to resettle and integrated into Buckinghamshire life, ensuring they are supported to access education, health services and employment.

Voluntary and community sector

Buckinghamshire has an active not for profit sector with invaluable insight into the needs of our communities. The VCSE sector is vital in delivering key services, building relationships, and strengthening social connections. As we deliver our 'Opportunity Bucks' programme, the sector will continue to support our communities. Despite facing cost-of-living pressures, the sector has been an asset in providing support and advice to residents, asylum seekers, and refugees.

We continue to work with our partners in the voluntary and community sector to help them provide much-needed services, build resilience, and use voluntary capacity effectively and safely.

Buckinghamshire Cultural Partnership

The Buckinghamshire Cultural Partnership brings together senior leaders from key cultural organisations, Buckinghamshire Council and higher education organisations. It plays a strategic leadership and development role, positioning culture at the heart of strategic agendas throughout the county.



Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge to show our support to those who serve, or have served, in the armed forces, as well as their families. It recognises the sacrifices they have made and ensures they are treated fairly.

There are more than 3,300 serving personnel and over 15,000 ex-service people living in Buckinghamshire. Together with their families, they make up a significant proportion of the local population. We are committed to ensuring that the Armed Forces community does not face disadvantage in the provision of services compared to other residents. As an employer, we recognise the range of unique skills and experiences that reservists and veterans can bring to our organisation and are proud to have been recognised with a Gold Award from the MOD's Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

Buckinghamshire Swan Envoy Scheme

The Buckinghamshire Swan Envoy Scheme brings together leaders and champions from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, charity sectors, media and business industries who are keen to help inspire Buckinghamshire's communities and businesses to succeed and for younger generations to realise their potential.

Our Swan Envoys care passionately about the future success of Buckinghamshire as a place and support us to promote the county to local, regional, national and international audiences as a great place to live, visit, do business and nurture talent. Some of the ways our Swan Envoys make a difference include offering philanthropic support as a speaker or lending their skills and experience to motivate

others, supporting events and helping to raise awareness of initiatives and campaigns that provide support to residents and communities.

Since the launch of the Scheme, our Swan Envoys have helped highlight the importance of NHS Health Checks, supported the launch of our Opportunity Bucks programme - Succeeding for All initiative, celebrated community heroes who have made a positive impact in their areas, helped recognise excellence in Buckinghamshire's schools and lent their support to various campaigns.

We plan to review and expand the scheme in 2024 and welcome more Envoys who share our vision and values for Buckinghamshire.

Schools, colleges, universities and lifelong learning

The Buckinghamshire Skills Hub promotes and optimises links between the business community and education/training providers to enable young people and adults to develop the skills and qualifications they need to progress in the workplace, at whatever stage of their career they are in. Skills development is central to creating the conditions for sustained innovation, excellence, and growth for our Buckinghamshire businesses, particularly in priority sectors as described in our [Local Industrial Strategy](#).

Police, fire and rescue

The Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel examine and review how the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) carries out their responsibilities of ensuring that Thames Valley Police runs effectively. The panel also supports the PCC in their work and provides reports and recommendations on the Police and Crime Plan, Annual Report and some proposals made by the PCC.

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is a publicly accountable body managing Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service on behalf of the communities it serves. The Authority meets four times a year to discuss budgets, financial arrangements, insurance, and financial plans, and to make recommendations to the Fire Authority for decision. A new Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive Officer was appointed in November 2023. The Council have committed to working closely with her as the Fire and Rescue Service progresses delivery on their improvement plan.

Housing providers

There are approximately 70 Registered Providers with a total combined housing stock of over 29,500 properties across Buckinghamshire. This includes four main registered providers (Paradigm, L&Q, Fairhive and Red Kite) who took on the local housing stock across Buckinghamshire, which was previously owned by the former District Councils. The Council works closely with

Registered Providers on developing new-build affordable housing, either in partnership with private developers or by developing their own sites. These providers allocate social housing tenancies in accordance with the Council's Bucks Home Choice Allocations Scheme (advertising available tenancies on a central website). The Council will also work with Registered Providers to address and respond to any issues that arise within their social housing stock (e.g. poor housing conditions).



Natural Environment Partnership

The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (the 'NEP') brings together organisations from the private, health, education, conservation and public sectors to drive positive change in the local natural environment. The NEP works collaboratively to contribute to environmental strategy and objectives for the area and brings together its partners to align delivery of conservation interventions to help achieve collective goals. The NEP also works to ensure the environment is appropriately accounted for in local decision-making, such as planning, and to embed natural environment priorities and considerations in growth, economic and health strategies.

Our key priorities - a summary

We want to make Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work and do business.

Our key priorities are:

- Increasing prosperity
- Strengthening our communities
- Improving our environment
- Protecting the vulnerable

Our key priorities are for our residents, employees, businesses, service users and councillors. Great customer service is integral to each of the priorities.





Strengthening our communities

Life expectancy in Buckinghamshire

 **81.5**
years  **85.1**
years

(one of the highest in South East England)

People in Buckinghamshire live longer and healthier lives than the national average



Life expectancy gap

 **5.8**
years  **6.1**
years

life expectancy gap between most and least deprived residents



children and young people meeting recommended levels of physical activity



27,000 residents hold a Blue Badge, enabling the County to be more accessible for all of our residents

Strengthening our communities

Buckinghamshire is a healthy and inclusive place to live, work and visit, but we have several challenges. These include building more affordable homes now and for future generations, providing extra help and support for an increasingly older population and improving the health of people who live in the more deprived areas of Buckinghamshire. We also face the challenge of supporting our communities and residents to recover safely from the coronavirus pandemic.



We want:

- Our residents to live independent, fulfilling lives, within strong, healthy, inclusive, and resilient communities
- To support existing business communities, especially our small to medium enterprises (SMEs), to grow and flourish
- To improve health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on reducing any gap in health outcomes
- To work more with town and parish councils, giving them the responsibility for services and assets where it makes sense to do so, and helping communities to help themselves
- To improve educational outcomes for our children and young people, particularly focusing on those most vulnerable
- Ensure we are keeping our residents regularly informed
- Provide the affordable homes our growing communities need
- Continue our commitment to equality and inclusion, through engagement with ethnic minority communities, including regular engagement with faith leaders and partnership events, celebrating the diversity within our communities
- Maintain our commitment to the armed forces community by upholding the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, recognising Buckinghamshire's proud and historic military links
- Strengthen and ensure there is a more consistent approach across the partnership that supports the early identification of and response to emerging problems that children, young people and their families face
- Make every effort to find suitable placements for looked after children locally so they can remain within their own community and maintain their existing relationships and connections
- Enable and promote physical and mental health and healthier lifestyles, wellbeing and quality of life for people in Buckinghamshire including through our new Be Healthy Bucks service which supports people to make healthy changes like stopping smoking, or losing weight and reducing their alcohol consumption, Better Points initiative which rewards people getting active, and through our Healthy Libraries programme which supports people's mental and physical health through activities in their local library

Working with partners, we will:

- Continue to develop our Leisure Strategy and seek to invest in our facilities where appropriate
- Develop and deliver our strategy for Buckinghamshire Libraries to continue providing high-quality services which contribute to key local and national priorities
- Tackle health inequalities, including the longer term impact of Covid-19, through cultural, leisure and learning opportunities, by developing clear plans to reduce health inequalities
- Encourage localism through our Community Boards, the devolution programme and working with local councils and voluntary community groups



Protecting the vulnerable

509

children were looked after as at 31 March 2023 (500 as at 31 March 2022)



550

children had a Child Protection Plan on 31 March 2023 (752 as at 31 March 2022)



59.6 crimes

per **1,000** people for the period April 2021 – March 2022

(72.4 per 1,000 for Thames Valley)

89%



of adult social care clients were satisfied with the care and support they received - only 6% were unsatisfied

79% of people using Adult Social Care services saying that they had either adequate or as much social contact as they would like (2022/2023)



313 children are in foster care (March 2023)

4,975

homelessness approaches in 2022/23



Budget for adult social care has increased by

58.6%

since 2015



38,825

people contacted the council for adult social care (2023) - an increase of 2626 (7.25%) on the previous year

5,074

residents were receiving long-term adult social care commissioned by the council on 31 March 2023 - an increase of 264 (5%) since March 2022

Protecting the vulnerable

While most people in Buckinghamshire live independent and healthy lives, some need extra support and protection. We know that the number of children and adults who need this extra help is increasing. There are also rising numbers of people with mental health difficulties, special educational needs, disabilities, and complex needs.

We want to give everyone the best chances in life, so that – together with their families and carers - they are resilient and can identify their own solutions. We will continue to work with our partners, social care providers and communities to innovate and improve our offer of support to vulnerable residents, including helping people recover from illness sooner and achieve their maximum potential, and reducing social isolation and loneliness. In addition, we will be strengthening our recruitment campaign and support offer for foster carers which will enable more of our most vulnerable children to live in a safe, loving, and nurturing home when they cannot live with their birth families.

Our goal is to reduce inequalities and give everyone the support and skills they need to live independent, happy, and fulfilling lives.



We want:

- Children, adults, and families to feel safe and supported to live independent lives
- Our older, disabled, and vulnerable people to receive the right support, at the right time
- A strong housing offer that provides affordable, accessible, sustainable and suitable choices at all life stages

Working with partners, we will:

- Develop and deliver our offer of support for residents who need it most. This includes help with food, energy and essential household costs; support to stay warm; and coordination of community-based initiatives through our Helping Hand service
- Work with the police, PCC and partners to help prevent crime, reduce the fear of crime and understand the issues around women's safety and fear of violence and adopting a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse
- Provide care for all those who are unable to help themselves, working with the NHS to give residents the choice and support to stay in their own home where this is the best option
- Make sure children and adults, particularly those that are vulnerable, are healthy, safe and protected from harm and continue to improve the services we provide, including delivering the Buckinghamshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy: Happier, Healthier Lives strategy
- Work with residents, partners and stakeholders to virtually eliminate rough sleeping, and reduce homelessness, addressing the root causes of both
- Work in partnership with the NHS and voluntary groups to reduce problems such as misuse of drugs and alcohol, aligning services with the NHS where this makes sense
- Work with our partners across the Integrated Care System with a key focus on reducing avoidable admissions to hospital; and improving the hospital discharge experience for residents
- Encourage children in school to adopt healthy lifestyles and encourage them to exercise more, eat a healthy diet and spend more time with their friends and less on the internet
- Work with schools to encourage more cycling and walking to schools through the implementation of school travel plans and through working with the community to put in place measures to support children to travel to school safely and sustainably
- Develop and deliver robust licensing policies for taxi and private hire, alcohol and entertainment and gambling licensing that actively protect and promote public safety and protect children and the vulnerable from harm
- Provide a strategic and coordinated approach to community resilience activity that supports individuals, businesses, community networks and voluntary organisations to behave in a resilient way and act to support other members of the public including developing a resilience toolkit online and providing advice, support and training to community networks and volunteers in emergency management
- Ensure a more consistent approach across the partnership that supports the early identification of, and response to emerging problems that children, young people and their families face
- Increase the number of in-house foster carers by defining a new improved offer to improve recruitment and retention

- Deliver our children's services transformation programme which will redesign our services around the needs and strengths of children and families, ensuring that children receive a consistent, purposeful and child centred approach wherever they are on their journey of need from early help through to being in care
- Reduce the demand and costs of statutory interventions and promote the wellbeing and resilience of children and families in Buckinghamshire
- Be part of the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme through which 55 local areas are being supported to identify the highest impact changes that can be made to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and to optimise the use of resource
- Continue to work on the development of a suite of Edge of Care services for children and young people in order to prevent the need for them to enter care in the first place or to rapidly return them to their families if they do enter
- Increase the number of care leavers with their own tenancies which will reduce our reliance on more costly semi-independent placements





Improving our environment



46.83%
of waste is recycled
or reused

Aim to facilitate the delivery of

1,000 

public electric charging bays
across the county by 2027 as
part of our Electric Vehicle
Action Plan



73%

reduction in
Buckinghamshire Council's
CO2 emissions since 1990.
We are comfortably within
our carbon budgets

Around



2,100 miles

of publicly maintained carriageway
in Buckinghamshire



1.2 million

country park visitors in 2023/24



2,146 miles

of public Rights of Way



In partnership with operators, we have
used grant funding to support the
recovery of bus passenger numbers to

85 - 90%

of pre-Covid levels

Improving our environment

Buckinghamshire is a beautiful county, and our stunning natural and historic landscape is valued by all. Over a quarter of our county is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and approximately a third is covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt.

Protection of the county's beautiful countryside, including areas of outstanding natural beauty and green belt will be achieved through the 'Brown before Green' principle. We know we must deliver more homes and associated infrastructure for our growing population. By managing growth sensibly and responsibly; including identifying appropriate surplus public sector property and actively developing this for market and affordable housing, we can protect and enhance our natural environment and the benefits it brings. Aylesbury Garden Town is an exciting example: putting green spaces and natural environments at the heart of future development.



We want:

- To address climate change, improve our environment and create economic opportunities for clean growth
- To reduce our county's environmental impact by promoting sustainability, reducing waste and increasing recycling and reuse
- To improve air quality and people's health, by reducing emissions and encouraging green transport options

Working with partners, we will:

- Take action to reduce our carbon emissions including planting over 543,000 trees, including the completion of a new woodland close to Wing which will contain 132,000 trees and progression of a range of smaller sites under our contractor planting model
- Facilitate the increased use of electric vehicles (including within our own fleet) and support the delivery of 1000 electric charging points across the county as part of our Electric Vehicle Action Plan
- Continue to engage with operators to deliver outcomes consistent with our Bus Service Improvement Plan through our Bus Enhanced Partnership to develop and deliver initiatives aimed at increasing bus patronage and network viability and make best use of grant funding and existing budgets
- Promote the benefits and improve the attractiveness of walking, cycling and wheeling as a realistic alternative for short local trips through the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Buckinghamshire, continuing to deliver high quality active travel infrastructure, and encouraging and supporting schools with School Travel Plans

- Increase recycling and energy recovery rates and continue to deliver campaigns including the LitterLotto local project aimed at increasing recycling quality and a food recycling campaign
- Enhance and protect our green spaces and high-quality environment, through a zero-tolerance policy towards fly-tipping and litter, a no-nonsense approach to planning enforcement, and taking action on flood prevention
- Encourage 'green growth' by promoting well-designed homes and higher, more energy efficient standards for all new developments
- Continue to seek to mitigate the impact of HS2 and East West Rail on Buckinghamshire's residents, businesses and special environment by minimising the final landscape and visual impact of the projects and also supporting our communities with finding resolutions to their construction related issues
- Progress our ambition to be net carbon zero by 2050 (and potentially earlier) by delivering the key actions set out in our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy

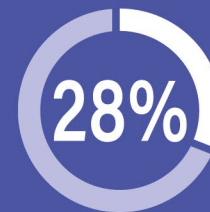


Increasing prosperity



47.8%

of residents aged 16-64 are educated to NVQ4+ (equivalent to Higher Education Certificate/BTEC)



of vacant jobs not filled due to lack of skills (25% national average)



value of exports in 2021 - £4.032 billion of services and £2.821 billion in goods (ONS 2023)

★ **90.6%** ★

of pupils attend good or outstanding schools in Buckinghamshire (compared to the South East 90.5% and England 88.3%)



81.5% of residents in employment (employment rate aged 16-64) compared to the South East average of 78.1% (APS, Jan 2022-Dec 2022)



4.8%

of those aged 16-64 have no qualifications compared to the South East average of 5.0% (APS, Jan 2021-Dec 2021)

Increasing prosperity

Buckinghamshire is a prosperous county and a successful place to do business, contributing £18.485 billion to the UK economy in 2021 (GDP in current prices).

The county has low unemployment, higher than average household incomes, and boasts world leading sectors. From Pinewood Studios in the south to Silverstone in the north, Buckinghamshire is a great success story. We are also well placed to take advantage of emerging opportunities because of our proximity to London and Heathrow, and our location in the middle of a leading economic area with global strengths in science, technology and high-value manufacturing.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted this and the national trend shows that high levels of productivity and growth are beginning to slow, and levels of unemployment are rising. Our high streets have been severely affected and are still facing challenges, including the change in retail habits with increased online demand and falling footfall in town centres. Action is needed now to ensure our economy remains fit for the future.

The Council continues to invest heavily in our highway network and the ongoing programme of local schemes and strategic road repairs/improvements. Inclement weather has this year further exacerbated where road surfaces are already damaged, and especially through extensive use by HGVs, such as we are seeing in many parts of Buckinghamshire, most notably associated with construction works for HS2 and East West Rail.



We want:

- To encourage sustainable economic growth, working with our partners to maximise opportunities and boost productivity
- To continue to attract high quality jobs and investment in skills, innovation, and connectivity, keeping Buckinghamshire one of the best places to do business
- Growth to benefit both new and existing communities, preserving the character of our environment while delivering everything we need to prosper

Working with partners, we will:

- Provide a clear and consistent vision for Buckinghamshire through longer term strategic planning and a new Buckinghamshire Local Plan and Local Transport Plan
- Continue our commitment to working proactively and in partnership to deliver regeneration plans for Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Chesham and other town centres
- Optimise capital and revenue opportunities in our property estate to support the economy and other council services
- Enable residents to be successful in their chosen career by encouraging skills development providing inclusive opportunities for levelling up and lifelong learning
- Support the business community, especially SMEs, to grow and flourish including through promotion of high streets and Enterprise Zones

- Deliver at least £105m investment in Buckinghamshire's roads and pavements; including gully emptying and investing £2m in our drainage programme in 23/24 and in alignment with the rigorous, data driven approach set out in our highways asset management policy
- Continue to seek mitigations from the impact of HS2 and East West Rail on Buckinghamshire's residents, businesses by securing the necessary road repairs and reinstatements
- Continue to deliver the infrastructure that Buckinghamshire needs where possible ahead of planned growth, including improving connectivity, and strategic Transport links, increasing sustainability, attracting investment in the economic prosperity of the county and tackling congestion
- Promote Buckinghamshire, its locations and reputation as a film friendly county and maximise the economic and social benefits of location filming in Buckinghamshire

Our people

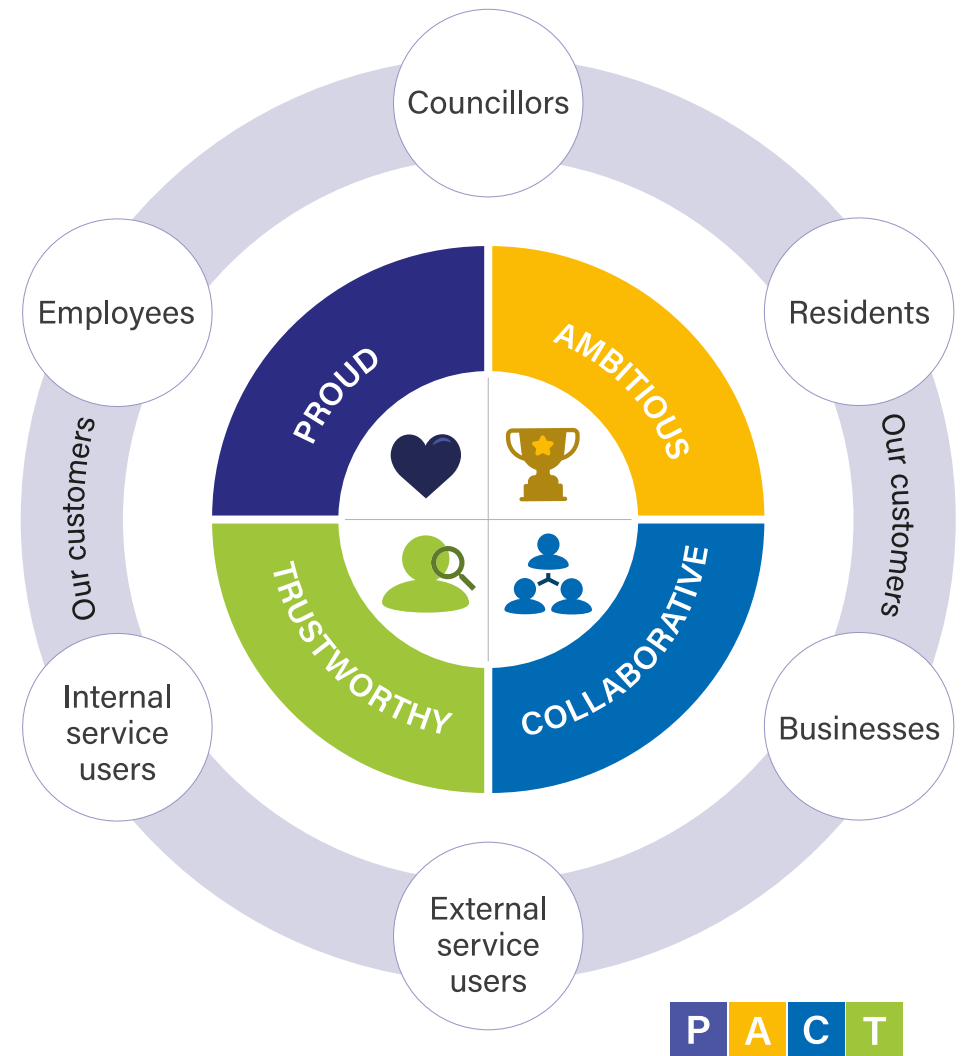
Everything we want to achieve for Buckinghamshire depends on having the right people in place and aligning our workforce changes with our overall approach to delivery of services. We have insourced the delivery of our key services and these changes have increased our headcount. However, we must also balance our budgets and as such have implemented vacancy control measures to ensure that before any post is filled that we challenge ourselves as to whether the work can be stopped or delivered in a different way.

To deliver the breadth of Council's services we must attract, retain and develop talented and motivated staff. By making the most of people's skills and experience, we can take full advantage of the opportunities created by the council. Everyone needs to be performing at their best to take the organisation on the the next stage of its journey.

To support this, Buckinghamshire Council works to a set of values which are: Proud, Ambitious, Collaborative, Trustworthy (PACT). These values underpin how we work and show our commitment – our PACT – to do our very best for our residents, service users and businesses. They are there to put customers at the heart of everything we do.

Similarly, we will work with our partners and external organisations to ensure that our values are upheld when they deliver services on our behalf.

We are a significant employer within Buckinghamshire and we want to provide opportunities for residents who might find it harder to gain employment. We have recently launched an employment scheme that offers supported roles within the Council, aimed at breaking down the barriers that prevent people from working. We are also working with local employers to expand this scheme into their businesses.



The financial challenge

The medium-term outlook for Buckinghamshire Council finances remains extremely challenging. Our 2024-25 to 2026-27 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan delivers a three-year balanced budget and demonstrates the financial sustainability of the Council at a time when a number of other local authorities are facing significant financial stress.

We will ensure that Buckinghamshire Council remains financially sound, efficient, and responsive to change. We will maintain robust financial planning, scrutinise budgets closely and be prudent in managing risks. We have already achieved significant savings over the last three years and will strive to achieve more but like all local authorities, we face challenging financial circumstances as more people turn to the Council for support, whilst the resources available to help them have not increased to match the demand.

We must be realistic and focus on greater efficiency and value for money and have developed an ambitious programme of savings planned for the forthcoming year.

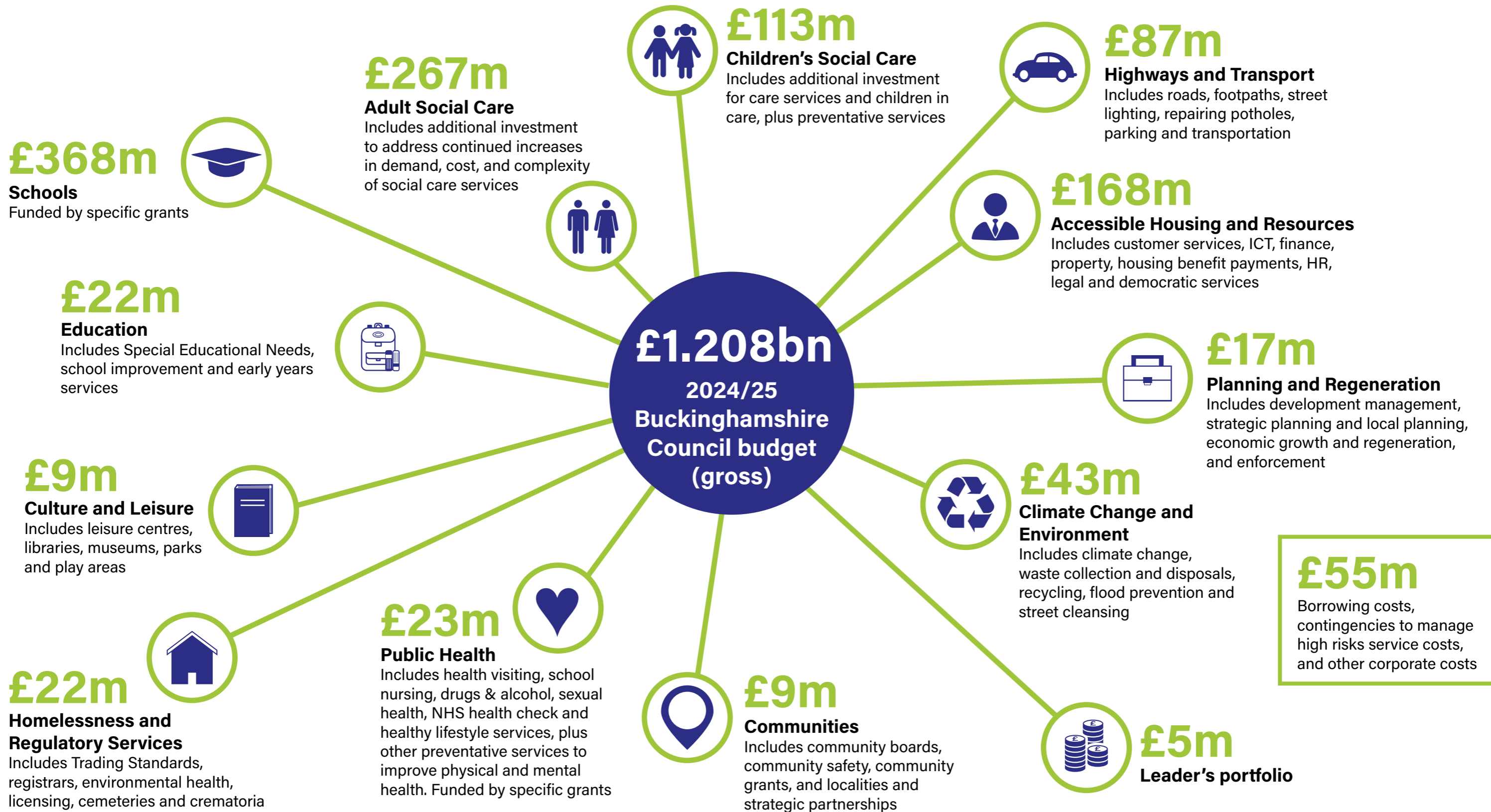
Despite the financial challenges, we remain committed to investing in our communities and sustaining the vital services on which our most vulnerable residents rely. We will manage our assets to create long term benefits and additional income, reducing our dependency on the taxpayer and protecting front line services.



How we will spend the 2024/25 budget

£666.3m spending on providing or improving buildings, roads and other infrastructure (capital budget)

£371m for planning and regeneration
 £179.7m for education and children's services
 £152.9m for transport
 £179.8m for strategic transport and infrastructure
 £8.5m for culture and leisure
 £26m for accessible housing and resources
 £28.3m for homelessness and regulatory services
 £48.7m for climate change and environment
 £4.3m for corporate
 £0.9m for communities



Your council, your way

Residents are at the very heart of what we do. There are lots of different ways for people to get involved, shaping the Council's knowledge, plans and policies and keeping up to date on news and views.

Councillors and committees

Being democratically accountable and having good governance is essential to any council. Buckinghamshire Council achieves this through rigorous scrutiny of its processes and decisions through a number of Committees, including its extensive Select Committee work.

In May 2023, the Boundary Commission for England concluded the Buckinghamshire Electoral Review and published its final recommendations. These were that with effect from May 2025 (the next Local Council Elections), the number of Councillors on Buckinghamshire Council will be 97 (50 fewer than currently). There will be 49 wards as currently, but these will be represented by a variable number of councillors rather than the current uniform three members per ward. There will be ten three-councillor wards, 28 two-councillor wards, and eleven single-councillor wards. A review of the existing Committee structure for the Council will be undertaken ahead of implementing these changes in May 2025.

Our website helps you find your local councillor and see which meetings are coming up and decisions that are being taken. To make sure the council is open and transparent, agendas and minutes of meetings are available online, with many meetings being webcast and in public.

Getting involved:

Community Boards

There are currently 16 Community Boards across the county that focus on bringing change and improvement to their local communities. They bring together councillors and local communities to engage with each other to decide how to help solve local issues, take local decisions, and influence local service design and delivery. This year will see a review of the boundaries of the 16 Boards to take account of the reduction in Members from May 2025; the review is likely to see a reduction in the number of Boards from the same date.

Neighbourhood plans

We continue to provide guidance to town and parish councils to support them to develop and deliver Neighbourhood Plans and produce regular local planning updates for local councils.

Our five local Planning Committees and Strategic Sites Committees continue to meet regularly.

Inform, consult, and involve

We believe engagement should be meaningful, timely, inclusive, and direct. We want local people to help shape any proposals that affect the services they use or the areas where they live and work. We want to hear the voices of those most affected. It is important to us that local people - including the young, community groups, businesses, partners, and staff - are involved, working together on developing and testing solutions and services. We are constantly looking to develop and improve on this.

Customer focused

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do, and we work hard to deliver excellent services to our residents. We understand the need to adapt to the changing digital landscape and ensure that our services are easy-to-access, efficient, and responsive to the needs of our customers. We offer multiple channels of communication, whether it be online, via telephone, or through in-person interactions at our Council Access Points.

We are enhancing our website content to make it more accessible and informative, with a focus on high demand services, such as Waste, Planning, School Admissions and Home to School Transport. We have also improved the way our customers can contact the Council online, ensuring that enquiries reach the right teams without delay.

We are planning to introduce a booking tool for appointments with professional officers for more complex service requests. We want those who need professional guidance or who are in vulnerable situations to be able to speak to the right person and get the assistance they need.

To support our customer focus, we have a Customer Experience Framework which we call 'Customer First.' This framework is based on three promises that we make to our customers about the experience they should expect:

1. **Easy:** We make it easy for you to get in touch with us and get what you need
2. **Helpful:** We aim to get things right first time and provide helpful solutions
3. **Fair and honest:** We are clear about what we can and can't offer, and the reasons why

As part of this framework, we regularly review our own services to assess how well we are delivering on our Customer First vision and ethos, and where we can make further improvements to enhance the customer experience.

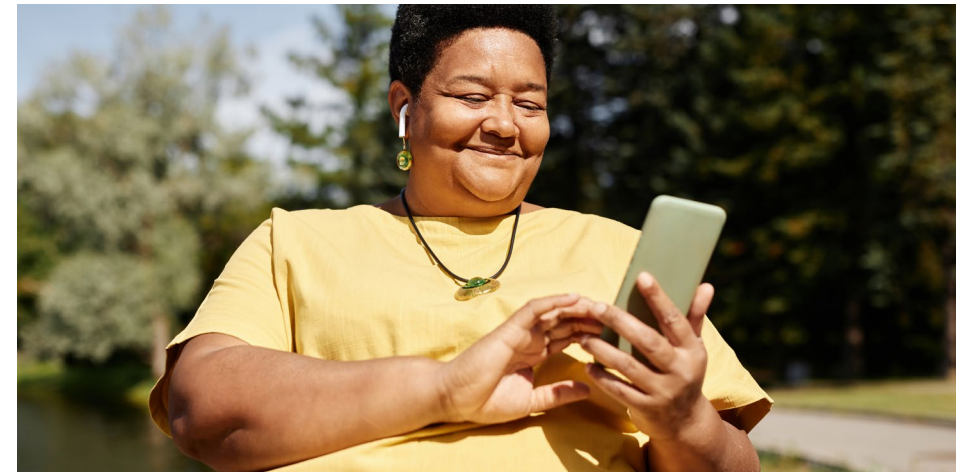
How to contact us:

- You can find most information about our services on our website
- Follow us on social media: @BucksCouncil
- Join our customer partnership panel and help us shape our services
- If you can't contact us online, call us on 0300 131 6000
- If you can't hear or speak on the phone we provide a text relay service: 18001 01296 395000

Our equalities commitment

Buckinghamshire Council is committed to equality of opportunity, fostering good relations, and eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

We recognise, respect, and celebrate the fact that our staff and the people we serve are diverse, whether this is our age, disability, ethnicity, family setting, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or belief. We will work with our partners to promote equality, celebrate diversity, improve social inclusion and mobility, and ensure fairness for everyone.



How to contact us

- Most information about our services can be found on this [website](#)
- To contact us about this plan, use our [online contact form](#)
- Follow us on social media: @BucksCouncil