



APPENDIX A

Buckinghamshire Council Annual Report 2020/21

Foreword

On 1 April 2020, we became a new organisation, establishing the new Buckinghamshire Council, providing all council services to all of our Buckinghamshire residents as one team.

This change came at an incredibly testing time but I am so proud of how our teams have risen to the challenge. We have been working exceptionally hard to support our residents through the coronavirus crisis as well as delivering our usual services. This annual report reflects the achievements of Buckinghamshire Council against our Corporate Plan priorities in its very first year, outside of our coronavirus response. (A separate report will consider the work that the Council has done with its partners to support Buckinghamshire during the pandemic). As a Council, all Members have played a key role in the delivery of our achievements for our residents, communities, and businesses over the last year. Whilst we can look back and be proud of what we have achieved, the challenges of the pandemic will certainly remain with us over the coming months and beyond. We will have to make some difficult decisions in the short-term to balance our budget to make sure we continue to protect and support our residents who are vulnerable and in need.

However, as a newly formed Council, we have a unique opportunity to improve the services we provide and accelerate the county's success and prosperity in the future. The next twelve months offer much hope for the future and we will spend it building on the positive changes we have already made this year as well as focussing on recovery, growth and increasing our resilience and agility.



Our vision for Buckinghamshire has not changed and we remain dedicated to making **Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work and do business.**

I'm pleased to be able to reflect in this report how we have made a flying start to our journey as a new Council and how in the next twelve months, we will build on these excellent foundations.

Martin Tett
Leader, Buckinghamshire Council

Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet Members



Martin Tett
Leader



Angela Macpherson
Deputy Leader and
Adult Social Care



Katrina Wood
Deputy Leader
and Resources



Steve Bowles
Town Centre
Regeneration



Bill Chapple OBE
Environment and
Climate Change



John Chilver
Property and Assets



Anita Cranmer
Education and Skills



Isobel Darby
Housing and
Homelessness



Tony Green
Youth Provision



Clive Harriss
Sports and Leisure



Patrick Hogan
Culture



David Martin
Logistics



Nick Naylor
Transportation



Mark Shaw
Children's Services



Warren Whyte
Planning &
Enforcement



Gareth Williams
Communities &
Public Health



Fred Wilson
Regulatory Services

Our Key Priorities

Buckinghamshire Council's Corporate Plan for 2020-23 set out the key activities the Council planned to undertake over that three year period in order to achieve its strategic objectives and vision.

This annual report shows what was achieved during 2020/21 under the following priority headings:

1. Strengthening our communities
2. Protecting the vulnerable
3. Improving our environment
4. Increasing prosperity

We have also included information around our achievements as a new organisation with regards to our people and internal developments.





Strengthening our communities

People in Buckinghamshire are living longer and healthier lives than ever before, with health outcomes better than the national average. We have strong communities and a thriving, dedicated not for profit sector.

Buckinghamshire is a healthy and inclusive place to live, work and visit but we have a number of 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.





Strengthening our communities

Our achievements this year

A total of **£3.9m** made available for communities with the launch of **16 community boards**

Delivered 16 individual Community Board profiles to support Community Boards to improve the health and wellbeing of their local communities



Developed and consulted on a **Town and Parish Charter**

Brought together a single **Buckinghamshire lottery**



Harmonised Assets of Community Value and created single Buckinghamshire Register

Identified **14** Devolution Pilots, through which services could in the future be run by local councils or voluntary organisations

Arranged a successful partnership domestic homicide learning event with insightful speakers



Established a strategic funding group that has brought in appx **£2m of external funding** to support the community sector



Agreed a new parish council for **Kingsbrook**



Launched Buckinghamshire Heritage Portal which contains 35,000 records as well as teaching resources for KS2&3

Delivered the **Buckinghamshire Virtual History Festival** from 1st September to end of November, the website had **15,538 views for 4,862 unique users**

Hosted **Black History Month** exhibitions in four main libraries, as well as a successful artist in residence programme

Collaborated

with Buckinghamshire Culture to deliver key projects such as Bucks in 100 Objects and the Bucks Cultural Leaders Programme



Welcomed **12,800** views of the new Buckinghamshire Culture web page

Enabled 496,573 archive items to be viewed by the public (online and in person)



Successfully bid for funding to support the Local Heritage List campaign

Six Community Food Growing Projects in locations around Aylesbury delivered



Published the Safer Buckinghamshire Plan, Youth justice strategic plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-24

Delivered the **Waterside Festival** online



Appointed councillors to **124 outside bodies**

Established a **Strategic Partners Board** and a **Voluntary Sector Board**



Strengthened our established partnerships with the Thames Valley Police and other key partners to tackle anti-social behaviour

Delivered improvement works at the Court Garden Leisure Complex in Marlow, Chesham Leisure Centre, Chalfont Leisure Centre and Marlow Library

Undertook various consultations to ensure residents have the opportunity to inform policy developments, often using innovative methods



Commenced a number of engagement methods to improve liaison with town and parish councils and our communities

Designated **61** neighbourhood areas across Buckinghamshire

Recorded a **50% increase** in people using our e-book and other online libraries resources, with **406,000 downloads** between April and December 2020



Continued good progress on construction of the new Chilterns Lifestyle Centre development in Amersham





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 and communities to innovate and improve our offer, helping people recover from illness sooner, promoting fostering, reducing social isolation and loneliness, and supporting our most vulnerable residents.

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





Protecting the vulnerable

Our achievements this year

Demonstrated an improvement

in Adult Social Care services through audits, in line with our quality assurance framework.

The proportion of cases rated good or above increased by **21%**



Launched first Social Work Apprenticeship Programme with a further cohort planned for next year



Completed 2,668 annual reviews of adult social care packages (April 2020-Jan 2021)

Issued over 75% of education, health and care plans within 20 weeks between 1 Jan & 31 Oct (compared to 40% in 2019)



Provision for **11,500 children** with special educational needs in Buckinghamshire



Developed and published a Corporate Parenting strategy setting out our commitment to and ambitions for children in care and care leavers

Supported 78% of families referred through Family Support Service to achieve their identified outcomes

Implemented a new Alcohol Abstinence Programme in a partnership between GPs and One Recovery Bucks



Offered **754** people smoking cessation services, **444** weight management help and **861** have been referred to diabetes education programme by Live Well Stay Well

Launched a new Digital Sexual Health service to improve access to sexual health services, resulting in a 23% increase in service users who had not previously attended a sexual health clinic



Commissioned a new human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) pre-exposure prophylaxis service, making HIV prevention drugs available for free on the NHS for eligible patients who are at high risk of contracting HIV

Commissioned **9** courses of **Mental Health First Aid** for 144 multi agency staff & delivered **4** courses of **Suicide First Aid Training**

Commissioned a pilot of the **innovative Active Communities** programme to create a community movement in two priority areas of Bucks to reduce sedentary behaviour.



Ensured
96% of new parents
received a face to face New Birth Visit
(NBV) within 14 days by a Health Visitor

Approved **26** new foster
carers and **24** new adopters



Recommissioned the
**community
meals service**



Developed and implementing the
Concerns / Serious Concerns
Procedure as part of a wider
strengthening of quality assurance
for adult social care providers



Supported partners to deliver
276 new affordable homes
including **105** new shared
ownership properties for low
income families and **four** ground floor flats
to a wheelchair adaptable specification



Received grant funding awards totalling over
£1.8m to 'keep everyone in'
- providing immediate help for all rough
sleepers and also longer term
accommodation solutions to prevent people
from returning to rough sleeping and to
prepare them to sustain their own tenancies

Worked in partnership with a housing
provider to secure grant aid and also
part fund purchase of nine
supported units solely for rough
sleepers. In addition,
commenced the construction of
58 units for use as temporary
accommodation



Provided transport to school and
social care settings for around
8,000 children & adults a day



Providing security to residents via
Trading Standards who have
saved those in Bucks and Surrey
over **£1.2m since April 2020**



Ensured 72,000 older or
disabled residents received
free bus passes, extended to before 09:00
to enable residents with early vaccination
appointments to travel for free



**Subsidised
55 bus routes**
which cannot run at a profit but
are necessary for rural communities



Protected over
**11 miles of
residential roads**
under emergency clearways



Implemented parking restrictions
at 6 locations at the request of
residents, town and parish councils
to reducing antisocial parking

Maintained our outreach
partnership service supporting
sex workers in High Wycombe
throughout the whole of lockdown



Created a **NEW** support service
with Women's Aid for victims fleeing
domestic violence who cannot use
refuge accommodation



Celebrated recognition from
LARAC as a winner in the
'Best New Idea' category at
their 2020 Celebration awards for
our innovative approach to improving
customer experience at household
recycling centres



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 a further third is covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt.

We know we have to deliver more homes and associated infrastructure for our growing population. By managing growth sensibly and responsibly, 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.





Improving our environment

Our achievements this year



Appointed a new waste provider in south of county for around 115,000 households resulting in an **86% reduction in missed bins** since the contract began



Emptied

88,000

bins every day across Buckinghamshire, recycling around **50%** of our waste

Produced enough electricity to power

40,000

Buckinghamshire homes via our Greatmoor Energy from Waste facility



An ambitious, deliverable and costed **Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy**, which includes a target to achieve net zero carbon emissions for Buckinghamshire as a whole by 2050, has been developed and agreed by Cabinet for further targeted engagement



Agreed an ambition to plant over

500,000 new trees

on Buckinghamshire Council's own landholdings over the next 10 years – one tree for every citizen of Buckinghamshire, contributing to our wider ambition in addressing climate change and improving biodiversity

Launched a new permit scheme for managing street works for all roads with over **20,000**

applications received from May to end September



Completed a Carbon Audit and are using the results to inform a new climate change strategy



Implemented a new Fly-Tipping Enforcement Policy resulting in

32 Fly tipping convictions and 35 fixed penalty notices

served since 1st August



Implemented the Pednormead End Flood Management Scheme




Investigating over 70 confirmed or suspected flooding incidents following heavy rainfall events in August, October and December 2020

Won the Great British September Clean award at the Keep Britain Tidy Network Awards 2020



Installed 6 new plastic and steel beam bridges on Public Rights of Way in addition to multiple wooden structure replacements


 Completed 13,169 category 1 and 2 defect repairs on our roads between April and December 2020, and 25,883 Highways Inspections during the same period of time


Achieved **6 green flag awards** for our town parks 


 Selected to take part in a national pilot as part of the government's Environment Bill regarding the development of a **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**


Published a new **Local Planning Enforcement & Monitoring Plan** 


 Celebrated 50 Years of Black Park and Langley Park on 1st July. There were 1.2 million visitors to the Country Parks between April and December 2020


 We have built a new skate park in Amersham and new play areas in Amersham, Dunsham Park and Rustics Close in Aylesbury

New outdoor gyms have been installed at Vale Park and Cottesloe Green and a new café on the Rye in Wycombe has been constructed and is due to open soon 

 Introduced **17 Council Access Points** in council offices and libraries around Buckinghamshire to expand the number of ways people can interact with Council services

Delivered the **Buckinghamshire Design Awards**, showcased good quality design across the county 

 Successfully rolled out our environmental records data service, reducing response times from ten days to a couple of hours, and generating vital income, which in turn goes towards supporting wildlife projects

Commenced a review of the **Buckinghamshire Council Agricultural Estate Policy** so that it addresses new and emerging national environment policies 

 Celebrated winning the **Great British September Clean Award** at the Keep Britain Tidy Network Awards 2021



Increasing prosperity

Buckinghamshire is a prosperous county and a successful place to do business, contributing £14.8 billion to the UK economy and ranked as the fourth most productive area in England.

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 the Oxford to Cambridge Arc (a leading economic area with global strengths in science, technology and high-value manufacturing).

However, the national trend shows that high levels of productivity and growth are beginning to slow, and action is needed now to ensure our economy remains fit for the future.





Increasing prosperity

Our achievements this year



Formed the
**Buckinghamshire
Growth Board**

Developed a Buckinghamshire wide
**Recovery & Growth
proposal**



Developed and consulted on
a new Taxi and Private Hire
Licensing Policy for
Buckinghamshire

Reviewed and refreshed the governance
for the **Aylesbury Garden Town**
programme and established the
High Wycombe Regeneration Board
and **Chesham Regeneration Group**

Adopted the Aylesbury Garden
Town Masterplan and engaged
with the public on the
Aylesbury Gardenway



Consulted on and issued a response
to the Government's planning white
paper and **Comprehensive
Spending Review**

Progressed a number of property
& regeneration schemes including
**Brunel Shed, The Winslow Development,
Old Wycombe Library, Old Council
Offices & White Hart Street**



Consulted on a draft
Statement of Community Involvement,
which will set out our policy towards
engaging local communities and other
interested parties in planning matters

Agreed the Local Development Scheme
December, setting out the scope and
timetable for the development of Vale of
Aylesbury Local Plan and the
Buckinghamshire Local Plan



Signed the contract for Aylesbury
Housing Infrastructure Fund
bringing **£172.3m of investment**
to the County



Progressed the design of
the HIF funded Princes
Risborough Southern Road
Link and Abbey Barn Lane
improvements (High Wycombe)



Responded to **614** Schedule 4 Applications from HS2 this year, which is an **171% increase** on the number received in 19/20

Ensured overall standards for pupils in Buckinghamshire schools are in line with or above national comparators with a higher percentage of schools **rated good or better** by Ofsted than schools nationally



Agreed to support the delivery of digital infrastructure alongside the construction of the East West Rail Western Section with

funding of £484k to deliver digital connectivity along the route

Agreed a funding package to ensure the future allocation of up to **£700k** of the DfT Walking & Cycling Fund



to the **HS2 cycling interfaces**, in order to future-proof a Buckinghamshire Greenway active travel route

Successfully leveraged funding for infrastructure and projects in Buckinghamshire by successfully bidding into schemes including:

Rural Mobility Fund – **£1.85m** to provide Demand Responsive Travel Services in Aylesbury and High Wycombe



Emergency Active Travel Fund (Tranche 1 & 2) - **£513k and £1.748m** to provide cycling and walking infrastructure

OLEV Funding - £105,520 to provide a minimum of **16 new electric vehicle charging bays** across four sites



An additional £10k to provide training for instructors of Bikeability so that the training to gain cycle confidence can be extended to SEN children and adults

Future High Streets Fund – provisionally successful for **£11.8m**, which will support the recovery and regeneration of High Wycombe town centre





Building, leading and managing the new organisation

Our achievements this year

Launched our **Better Buckinghamshire** service review programme and commenced **30 reviews** to deliver unitary benefits over the next two years



Developed and launched **'Being a Buckinghamshire Manager'** development programme in October 2020 and introduced our new performance management framework (Coaching for Performance)

Launched recruitment social media presence for new Council, gaining **4,618 new followers**

4,618

Launched our staff equality, diversity and inclusion steering group and staff networks and agreed an Action Plan for future delivery



Successful TUPE transfer of all **12,000 staff** (including Schools based staff) to new Council completed

Delivered a **single recruitment process** for new Council and successfully launched a **new careers website**

Answered almost **240,000** calls in our customer service centre, responded to approx. **24,500** webchats and over **97,000** emails/contact us forms



Succeeding in implementing an accessible website well above the industry benchmark, gaining a rating of **96.5% for accessibility**

Procurement of new Buckinghamshire IT Network, new single bank account & new Revenues and Benefits system to create savings for the organisation



Launched virtual Child Protection conferences, virtual Fostering and Adoption conferences and virtual School education appeals

Agreed a Capital and Investment Strategy for the new Council



Delivered pilots for customer video conferencing via MS teams to **improving our accessibility** of services for our customers



Improved our translation services across our Council Access Points, Customer Service Centres and online platforms

Successfully prosecuted **61 blue badge misuse cases**



Agreed a one year balanced budget for **Buckinghamshire Council**



Celebrated being shortlisted for an LGC Business Transformation Award 2020

Highlighted ranking **4th in the country for highest performing council website for 2021** with regards to Web Accessibility, Content Quality Assurance, Response Time, and Search Engine Optimization



The next chapter

The COVID-19 pandemic is a pivotal event for our generation; a time when the nation has relied on public services like never before. Moving forward, we have an opportunity to reshape our services around people and communities as we continue to evolve as an organisation. The response to the pandemic has shown us the power of collaboration; what public services, businesses and local people can achieve together and as the peak of the crisis passes, it is now time to think about what comes next and what could look different.

We are already reflecting on the lessons learned from the pandemic, and are seeking to maintain the positive experiences, as well as learn from the challenges, as part of our recovery planning. Our recovery and growth proposition to central government is pivotal to this and we look forward to continuing our discussions with the government about this in the coming months.

This year will see Buckinghamshire Council meet a key post-unitary milestone as we go through elections that were previously delayed. This will bring changes to our democratic organisation as we elect the 147 members who will help us to deliver the strategic ambitions of the authority.

As we continue to work towards realisation of the Bucks vision we will maximise the benefits of uniterisation and we will maintain collaboration with our partners to make sure Buckinghamshire grows as a thriving, resilient and successful county. By listening to local voices, offering local choices and delivering local action, Buckinghamshire Council will continue to deliver on its ambitions and priorities to make **Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work and do business.**

