



Cllr Jilly Jordan

Soulbury AGM 15th May 2023

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to give a short update on some the past year's activities and achievements for Buckinghamshire Council. I just wanted to take a few moments to highlight some of the achievements which reflect our four key corporate priorities, strengthening our communities, protecting the vulnerable, improving our environment and increasing prosperity.

Of course, given the current audience, it would be remiss of me not to mention that one of the key achievements of the last year was the adoption a Town and Parish Charter for Buckinghamshire which was formally adopted last July.

As Councils within Buckinghamshire we have a common purpose to improve the economic, environmental, health and social wellbeing of Buckinghamshire, its residents, businesses and visitors. We understand that as independent democratically elected bodies you work within your own financial constraints and represent communities at a truly local level and we recognise that parish and town councils are a key connection between the unitary council and their community who can help us improve services and foster greater community empowerment.

The purpose of the charter is to articulate and demonstrate our commitment to work together with all local councils in Buckinghamshire and we have developed an action plan alongside it to help embed the charter and its aims across the council.

Achievements

The following provides some key Buckinghamshire Council achievements from the year 2022-23. The full Buckinghamshire Council Annual Report 2022-23 will be available after full Council sign off on the 17 May 2023.

STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES

- Our 16 Community Boards have continued to move forward in bringing together local communities to discuss and agree priorities to tackle local issues. In the year 2021/22, they delivered 415 projects totalling some £3.2m. Since their launch in 2020, 841 projects have been delivered totalling £4.9m.
- We helped thousands of customers inc. 367,300 calls handled, 5,815,584 visits to our website, 29,334 webchats and 23,740 face-to-face visits.
- Launched our Buckinghamshire Swan Envoy Scheme, a network of ambassadors who help to inspire, encourage others and promote Buckinghamshire.
- Trained 20 volunteer cooking tutors to deliver targeted 5-week cookery courses to key community groups across Bucks.
- Through our Buckinghamshire Active Communities (piloted in priority wards in Aylesbury and Wycombe), supported residents to reduce their sedentary behaviour by helping everyone to make small daily changes to increase their movement. By working with over 60 partners to implement changes to encourage more movement, we engaged with 4,826 residents including 1200 children through schools.
- 9,569 baby and young child checks by Health Visitors in Buckinghamshire between April and September 2022
- 6,736 free NHS Health Checks have been delivered to those aged 40-74, which identifies early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia.

- As of 21 March, around 3.5m visits to our leisure centres in 2022/23, and lots of new activities to help people stay healthy.
- An additional 555 affordable homes were delivered via Registered Provider partners during the 12 months from October 2021 to September 2022.
- Joined the Making Every Adult Matter network to work intensively with people who are facing multiple disadvantages.

PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

- Nearly 14,000 children and young people eligible for free school meals, early years pupil premium or 2-year-old funded early education are receiving additional support through the Household Support Grant in the form of supermarket vouchers for the school holidays.
- Under the Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme and in addition our own Helping Hand Scheme, we have paid out £19.2m to over 137,254 Buckinghamshire households so far. £18.8m was given out under the mandatory scheme and £444k under the discretionary scheme (12,071 households).
- Increase in in-house fostering capacity resulting in 1670 in house placements as at end of November 2022, compared to 130 in April 2018.
- There has been an increase in the number of adoptive families, up from four between April and September 2021 to 11 between April and September 2022.
- In November 2022, 70% of the percentage of 19–21-year-olds who have left care were in education, employment or training, compared to 57% across the South East.
- From April 2022 to end November 2022 Live Well Stay Well (LWSW) received 8259 referrals compared to 6,231 for the same period in 2021. During the same period, 1542 adults accessed a weight management service through LWSW programme compared to 1047 for the same period in 2021. 72% of adults completing the weight management programme achieving a 3% weight loss and 57% achieving 5% weight loss.
- 7,200 Home to School Transport passengers transported to school every day with over 458 families taking up personal transport budgets
- Community Safety Officers, Street Wardens and Neighbourhood Policing teams carried out 55 visits throughout November and December to encourage premises to sign up to the Ask for Angela scheme.
- As part of White Ribbon Day (WRD) we, with Thames Valley Police, held 16 days of action.
- Recruited a further 186 Domestic Abuse Champions.
- Increased satisfaction survey results show the proportion of people who are satisfied with their care and support still above average at 66%

- Public Health have supported the NHS to see over 180,000 people receive a covid autumn booster vaccine within Buckinghamshire. This is over 70% of over 50's and over 85% of over 75's
- Buckinghamshire has welcomed families fleeing warzones. We have accommodated 15 families from Afghanistan and have welcomed 1500+ Ukrainian guests into the County.
- We've set up an innovative local crisis fund with local charity partner Heart of Bucks to provide further help to residents experiencing cost-of-living hardship. This has raised a further £180,000 to date, giving us an extra pot of money through which to help residents in need.

IMPROVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

- Five Green Flag awards for our parks: Heartlands in Buckingham, Vale Park and Bedgrove Park in Aylesbury, Higginson Park in Marlow and Hughenden Park in High Wycombe.
- We have completed 31 prosecutions, 20 fixed penalty notices and 18 simple cautions for fly tipping offences.
- Completed 17,484 pothole repairs.
- Continue to deliver against our commitment to spend over £100m making improvements to our highways network.
- As of 20 March a total of 18,900 trees have been planted with an additional 14,900 by the end of the financial year.
- Launched a demand responsive transport pilot in High Wycombe delivering 25,000 trips since the launch and is now exceeding 250 passengers a day.
- Secured Government grants in excess of £10.3m to progress climate change projects.

INCREASING PROSPERITY

- Agreed the Buckinghamshire Strategic Vision for 2050 setting out the current strengths and opportunities present within our county and setting out our aims and ambitions to achieve a thriving, resilient, and successful Buckinghamshire
- Secured £5.8m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which will support a range of local priorities including support local business, communities and place and people and skills.
- Allocated £1.8m of funding through the Rural England Prosperity Fund for grants to rural businesses
- The Council spent £22.8m of s106 funds on infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of new.

- The Council has continued to support local businesses negatively impacted by Covid and has paid £3.5m to 126 businesses of COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF). The fund was available to support those businesses affected by the pandemic but that were ineligible for existing support linked to business rates.
- The Council paid £3.4 million to 917 businesses under the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant (OHLG). The main benefactors of this grant are restaurants, cafes and public houses.
- Buckinghamshire Council recruited 45 young people on six-month contracts as part of the Government Kickstart scheme. 17 Kickstarters have secured a permanent role within the Council.
- 89.3% of schools are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted compared to 88.5% nationally (November 2022), and 98% of early years providers are also rated good or outstanding, compared to 97% nationally.
- Key Stage 4 (GCSE and equivalent) results continue to be above national. In 2022, the Attainment 8 score in Buckinghamshire was 57.3 compared to the national figure of 48.8.