

Have your say on the vision and objectives for development and transport in Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire Council wants to hear your views on its draft vision and objectives to guide future development and transport in Buckinghamshire.

The council is creating two long-term plans for what Buckinghamshire should be like in 2040 and how this can be achieved:

- The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire – to shape and manage future development across Buckinghamshire.
- Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP 5) – to set out the priorities for all types of transport across Buckinghamshire.

The draft vision and objectives have been developed from what people who work and live in Buckinghamshire have already told the council during a survey that ran from November 2021 to February 2022.

Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, said:

“Our new local plan will identify areas suitable for development, whilst safeguarding those that require careful management.

“The plan will set out key requirements for new developments, encompassing an appropriate mix of housing, land allocation for employment opportunities, and the creation of vibrant living spaces, complete with shops and public areas.

“Furthermore, the plan will emphasise the importance of environmental protection by supporting wildlife, conserving scenic landscapes and historical sites, addressing flood risks and protecting the Green Belt.”

Steven Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport, added:

“Planning and transport are closely connected, as the availability of accessible and reliable transportation plays a crucial role in the success of any new development. When planning new homes, shops, and places to work, it's essential to ensure that they are well-connected to the existing road and public transport networks.

"In urban planning, creating communities that are designed for walking, cycling and wheeling are becoming increasingly important. This approach not only promotes physical activity and healthier lifestyles, but also reduces traffic congestion and air pollution."

“By prioritising the integration of transportation planning with development planning, we can create vibrant and sustainable communities that meet the needs of both current and future generations.”

Find out more about [The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire](#).

To have your say on the plans:

- Complete the [online survey](#)
- Complete and return a printed version of the survey (can be downloaded from the online survey page)
- Email: planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- Write to: Vision and objectives consultation, Planning Policy, Buckinghamshire Council, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1BB

If you have any questions about this consultation, please email planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or call 0300 131 6000.

Submissions need to be received by midnight on Sunday 4 June 2023.

To keep up to date with the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, please [register online](#).

Are you entitled to childcare support for your two-year-old?

Buckinghamshire Council is reminding parents of two-year-old children to check whether they are entitled up to 15 hours a week funded childcare.

Any parent or carer who currently claims some benefits may qualify for this support, which is worth over £3,000. Full details of who is eligible can be found on the [Buckinghamshire Council website](#).

The funded childcare can be used with participating childminders, day nurseries, pre-schools and nursery schools across Buckinghamshire.

Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Anita Cranmer, said:

"I'd really urge parents of two-year-olds to check whether they are eligible for this support with their childcare providers – this is a considerable extra help, especially with the rising cost of living we are going through. Likewise, if you know someone who might be eligible, do let them know about this important opportunity."

To find out more and to apply, [visit our website](#) or call 01296 387000.

In the budget on 15 March 2023, the government announced there will be some [changes to funded childcare](#), however, this does not take effect until April 2024.



98% of Bucks families get one of their primary school preferences

Figures published today, Monday 17 April, show that overall, 98% of children in both Reception and Junior schools were offered one of their preference schools this year.

90% of children starting Reception received their top choice allocation, with 96% of families getting their first choice of Junior school. All children who expressed preferences in the Reception and Junior allocation rounds have been offered a school place in Buckinghamshire.

Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Children's Services said:

"I am pleased to see so many children being offered a place at their first choice of school this year. Starting or changing schools can be intimidating for many families, and we believe that every parent and carer knows what is best for their child. I am proud to say that we have been able to offer most children their preferred schools, where they can continue their education and reach their full potential."

In total 6912 children were allocated places in Reception classes and 1750 children have been allocated places in Junior schools.

5.88% of children got their second-choice Reception preference and 1.33% received their third preference. In Junior school allocations, 1.68% got their second-choice placement and 0.06% were given their third choice. Further allocations will be made in the summer term when late applications will be processed.

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Council has a new tool in the fight against potholes

As part of its new contract, which started on 1 April, Buckinghamshire Highways has taken delivery of a different type of vehicle to help in the fight against potholes.

Used by many councils across the country, the Pothole Pro is a time-saving, three-in-one vehicle designed to make pothole repairs faster. First it cuts into the road surface where a pothole has appeared, it crops the perimeter of the hole neatly to allow a watertight repair, and then it brushes away and collects the debris afterwards. Highways teams just need to lay and compact asphalt into the prepared hole to complete the repair.

The benefits of using such a vehicle are speed but also that operators are safely in their cab, with no risk of the use of vibrating hand tools affecting their hands or fingers.

Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Steven Broadbent said: "I joined the crew training on the Pothole Pro last week and was impressed with the potential of the machine and the speed the crew picked up the skills to operate the machine safely. This is just one of a number of tools we will be using to invest in and improve our roads. Whilst the machine won't be able to access everywhere or fix all types of defects it has great potential as another option we can use on our road network."

Although potholes can occur at any time of the year, it is late winter and early spring where the weather can have a massive impact on the number of potholes forming and there is an increase in the number of potholes on the county's roads after heavy rain followed by freezing temperatures.

Buckinghamshire Highways carries out regular inspections of the highway network by dedicated staff to ensure potholes and other defects are identified and repaired in a timely manner, keeping the highway safe. Problems on the roads and footways of Buckinghamshire should also continue to be reported using [Fix My Street](#).

Buckinghamshire Council awarded £576k to provide energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades to low-income households in the county

Buckinghamshire Council has been awarded £576,000 from the government's Home Upgrade Grant to provide energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades to owner occupied and private rented properties in the county. The upgrades are aimed at tackling fuel poverty and reducing carbon emissions.

The scheme enables eligible households to benefit from a range of energy and cost saving upgrades, depending on the specific circumstances such as the fuel source, energy

efficiency and EPC rating of the home. The majority of the funding will be made available for the least efficient homes heated by the most polluting fuel sources

“This new funding from the Home Upgrade Grant will help us continue to improve Buckinghamshire’s most energy inefficient homes. The funding is aimed at low-income households, helping them save money and reduce fuel poverty. The home improvements will also cut carbon emissions and support our progress towards making Buckinghamshire net zero by 2050.

“With fuel costs at an all-time high, the second phase of this scheme is an important chance for local residents to improve their homes, save money on their energy bills and reduce their carbon emissions.”

Buckinghamshire Council will shortly be contacting residents who they believe are likely to be eligible for the scheme. Further information will also be made available soon on the council’s website.

Any Buckinghamshire residents who are struggling to afford basic necessities such as food, fuel and other household costs should call the council’s Helping Hand team on 01296 531151 or complete the [online contact form](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-upgrade-grant-phase-2>

Be part of the Community Food Chain and help people in need

Buckinghamshire Council is encouraging residents to be part of the [Community Food Chain](#) and lend a helping hand to ensure food gets to those in need of support. If you enjoy helping others, or have excess food, green fingers or free time you could donate, there are a wide range of ways you can help your community.

As the cost of living pressures continue, 33% more food parcels have been provided to residents by foodbanks in January and February this year compared to the same time last year. In addition to support available through foodbanks, the council’s Helping Hand service

provides support for residents who are struggling to pay for food, utility bills and other household essentials.

The Community Food Chain represents how residents and support services work together giving and collecting donations that are then distributed to those in the community who are in need. Part of this is the council's [Food Champion](#) scheme, which works in partnership with Street Associations and local communities to increase much needed donations to local foodbanks. Food Champions are encouraged to coordinate regular food donations in their street, area or place of work to collect dry and tinned food items and to deliver them to the foodbanks.

Anyone wishing to be part of the Community Food Chain and lend a helping hand can now join the 46 amazing volunteers that have already signed up as Food Champions around the county by contacting their nearest foodbank to set up a collection point.

If you have green fingers, you can also participate in our [Grow to Give scheme](#), where we encourage people to grow food in their garden or allotment and donate the excess to community fridges. Each Grow to Give allotment site has a donation point, making it effortless for residents to join the food chain and donate their fresh produce.

Alternatively, anyone can offer their time and volunteer at [a foodbank](#) or a community fridge - or even set up their own community fridge. Community fridges are a great way of supporting your community and reducing food waste. They enable local people and businesses to donate fresh food and produce that might otherwise be wasted. All food donated to the fridges will be available for residents to collect and enjoy. [You can find your local community fridge here or find out more about setting one up.](#)

"If you are able, please consider getting involved and give a helping hand. We know that so many of our residents and local businesses are incredibly generous and welcoming when called on to help others.

To find out more or to set up a scheme in your street please visit our [Food Champions](#) page.

- Residents struggling to buy food can find out about the food support available from [Helping Hand](#) or use the [Buckinghamshire Online Directory](#) to find local organisations who can provide emergency food support.
- Anyone interested in further opportunities such as volunteering during the King's Coronation, can register with [Community Impact Bucks](#), who provide a free and confidential service to help match your skills and interests to local opportunities.
- A total of 15,427 adults and children in Buckinghamshire were supported by food banks during January and February this year.
- This is an increase of 37% compared to the same time last year, with council referrals increasing by 23%.
- Alongside food bank support, the council's Helping Hand service issued 808 Supermarket Vouchers in January and February to assist residents with food crisis support, clothing and essential household items.

