

Buckinghamshire Councillors' Report for the year. April 2022.

It is now almost 12 months since we were elected as your representatives at Buckinghamshire Council. As we were still within restrictions regarding public meetings, we had to continue holding these online which as I am sure you all know can be quite challenging. Our initial inductions were all done in these sessions and one of the drawbacks was not being able to physically meet with colleagues. We have now moved to a much more hybrid way of working and can choose Teams when and if appropriate and also get to know each other better.

Cllr Town has been appointed to North area Planning Committee, Growth Infrastructure and Housing select committee and the Licensing Committee. Cllr Brazier is on Transport and Environment Committee as well as the Luton Airport Consultative Committee together with me. I have been appointed to the Health and Adult Social Care Committee and the Growth Infrastructure and Housing select committee. Between us we cover a great many of the committees whereby we can directly hold to account the senior political team at Buckinghamshire Council. We all contribute to the Community Board and full council meetings.

At the election of 2021 we pledged to champion the environment, work towards the new Buckinghamshire local plan, improve roads, support rural business, and protect our communities. We also undertook to attend every Parish Council meeting between us as we recognise the important role you all have in your communities. The gully clearing program has had its finishing date extended due to weather, it is expected to be complete by the end of May 2022. So far, 66% of our area have been completed.

The financial challenges facing Buckinghamshire Council are well known. The government "Levelling up agenda" is diverting resources to areas of the Midlands and North and despite the best efforts of the leadership team, our protestations are so far not yet heard. There are other tranches of funding to be announced and Buckinghamshire will make its bid again. Whilst we may live in a prosperous area, there are still pockets of social deprivation within the county and petitioning goes on.

The Buckinghamshire development plan is due for completion in 2025 but I personally have reservations that this can be achieved. Primarily because central Government have not yet finalised all the necessary details required. Work goes on though and a dedicated team are working hard to achieve this. Consultations will come forward soon and I would encourage community participation whenever possible.

Planning has been challenging of late. With the dissolution of the Districts' many staff left, but I can assure you that there have been lots of new staff appointed in recent months. Due to the sheer number of applications though there is still quite a substantial backlog to work through.

Generally, Buckinghamshire Council have been very good at keeping Clerks' and residents informed. We often find that newsworthy items have already been shared and the Residents Newsletter email from the leader is very informative. I would encourage all to sign up for this.

Besides the aforementioned, we remain on hand to assist yourselves and local residents wherever and whenever they require.

This is a concise report for your annual council meeting and if you or any resident wish to discuss matters further, they are more than welcome to contact us in whichever way is most convenient.

Kind regards, Chris Poll.
Councillor for Ivinghoe ward.

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