

Buckinghamshire Councillors Report for Marsworth PC Meeting 11th March 2024

A new vision A for parking across Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire Council has unveiled its vision and ambition for parking across the county as part of a new Parking Strategy which sets out how the service will develop in coming years.

From embracing new technology to providing customers with greater choice and flexibility and from streamlining parking charges to promoting greater safety and reducing congestion, the document, which was agreed by Cabinet yesterday (Thursday 22 February), starts to align the different on and off-street parking arrangements from the previous legacy councils into one strategy which covers the whole county.

Key aims within the strategy include:

- A commitment to maintaining the upkeep of quality parking provision across the county.
- Working to ensure the council's parking operations are fully self-funded as is required legally.
- Exploring ways to give people flexibility in parking options across the county.
- Intelligent use of parking enforcement to ensure effective enforcement locally and county-wide.
- A gradual transition to online/digital payments for all parking, reflecting trends in payment preferences which have accelerated in recent years, whilst maintaining cash payments for as long as economically possible in existing locations.
- Ensuring residents and customers are kept fully informed of changes.

The strategy has been informed by a previous review of current parking arrangements and starts to address inconsistencies across the county and identify where changes are needed to provide a better service for residents.

One of the first actions the council is taking is signing up to the National Parking Platform (NPP), a Department for Transport pilot scheme which aims to provide greater flexibility in paying for parking while providing value for money. The scheme will be piloted in council car parks in Wycombe and will allow customers to choose which supplier they purchase their parking time through.

Council pledges an extra £5 million investment in fixing roads

Buckinghamshire Council has pledged an extra £5 million of funding this coming year to boost investment in repairs to roads across the county, adding to the £105 million already committed to the road network over the next four years.

The money will be used to fund much needed repairs across the county caused by long periods of very wet weather this winter, and councillors agreed to 'deploy the funding as quickly as possible'.

In total Buckinghamshire Council has committed £110m to highway repairs and improvements over the next four years. The overall investment will go towards maintaining and improving the road network across the county, including a range of works and schemes, from the so-called 'Plane and Patch' programme, where whole sections of roads are resurfaced, to one-off large scale projects like Station Road Cheddington and cleansing our 85,000 gullies

As we move into warmer weather in the spring months the temporary repairs reduce in number so longer-lasting improvement works and bigger resurfacing projects can be undertaken.

This is the second year in a row that Buckinghamshire Councillors have committed an additional £5 million of funding for the county's roads, recognising the impact of two wet winters and what residents have asked for their money to be spent on.

Money down the drain for company prosecuted for fly-tipping in Bucks

A drainage company has paid a hefty price for making the error of paying a rogue trader to dispose of their commercial waste after it was found fly-tipped in Buckinghamshire.

Drainiac Ltd, pleaded guilty to the offence of failing in their duty of care when transferring waste to a waste remover when the case was heard at High Wycombe Magistrates Court on Wednesday 21 February 2024.

The court heard that on Wednesday 21 June 2023, mixed building waste was found dumped at Gravelly Way, Penn, in Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire Council's waste enforcement team carries out regular searches of the area, due to it being heavily blighted with fly-tipping.

On this occasion, an enforcement officer found evidence amongst the waste linking it to an address in Eastern Dene, High Wycombe. The details were later traced back to a company called Drainiac Ltd who explained they were approached by a man with a van asking for scrap metal. Drainiac Ltd had no scrap metal but explained they had some waste. The man with the van accepted £50 cash and removed the waste from the property.

Magistrates at High Wycombe Magistrates' Court fined Drainiac Ltd £4,000 and ordered them to pay a contribution of £1,049.89 towards the council's clean up and investigation costs - making a total to pay of £5,049.89.

Roofing company pays high price in court

A roofing and building company who failed to carry out proper checks on a 'man with a van' who offered to dispose of trade waste for them has paid a high price for its error after being prosecuted in court.

Highlife Roofing and Builders Ltd pleaded guilty to the offence of failing in its duty of care when transferring waste to a waste remover when appearing at High Wycombe Magistrates Court on Wednesday 21 February 2024.

The court heard that on Tuesday 18 July 2023, mixed building waste, including black sacks and wooden material, was found dumped at Holtspur Lane, Wooburn Green in Buckinghamshire. An officer from Buckinghamshire Council's waste enforcement team investigated and found evidence amongst the dumped waste, giving an address in The Green, Wooburn Green, High Wycombe.

The details were later traced back to a company called Highlife Roofing and Builders Ltd, who explained they were approached by a man with a van who offered to remove waste from a property. The man took the waste which was later found dumped just down the road from where it had been collected. Highlife Roofing and Builders Ltd workers admitted they saw the waste dumped the next day but explained they didn't pick it back up as it was 'no longer their problem'.

Magistrates at High Wycombe Magistrates' Court fined Highlife Roofing and Builders Ltd £6,000 and ordered the company to pay a contribution of £1,289.71 towards the council's clean up and investigation costs – making a total to pay of £7289.71.

New library collections will provide invaluable resource for families with children

A new range of books covering topics around parenting, childhood and childcare are now available for loan at two libraries in Buckinghamshire.

Parenting and Childcare Topics (PACT) is a unique collection of 170 different books designed to help parents and carers of children and young people to navigate a variety of topics from pregnancy, to dealing with complex emotions and situations, right up to approaching university. The books cover everything from general parenting tips to specific situations such as being separated parents or caring for a child with special educational needs and disabilities.

Many of the books are written directly for adults, but a number are also written for the children and young people, including books around bullying and puberty.

A variety of books on the topics of parenting and childcare are already available across all libraries in Buckinghamshire but the enhanced PACT series has been introduced in two of the biggest libraries as an additional resource, with the support of local business, Limitless Tutoring, who have sponsored the collections.

Creating an age friendly Buckinghamshire for all

Buckinghamshire Council has outlined its commitment to helping older people in Buckinghamshire live healthy, active and independent lives as set out in its Healthy Ageing Strategy which has been formally approved by the council this week.

The document sets out the vision for how Buckinghamshire aspires to be a place for all residents to enjoy growing older in an age friendly community. The strategy also includes an action plan of how the vision will be achieved.

Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing explained: "Healthy ageing means living a healthy and fulfilling life, being able to participate in activities and contribute to your community. It also encompasses having financial security and living in a suitable home in a safe and thriving community. With the right policies, environments and support, people can age well and live independent and meaningful lives."

To become an age friendly community, the strategy focuses on eight interconnecting areas outlined by the World Health Organisation (WHO):

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transport
- Housing
- Participation in society
- Volunteering and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support for health and wellbeing
- Respect and social inclusion

In the first year, the focus for Buckinghamshire will be on two priorities - outdoor spaces and buildings, and participating in society.

To oversee the implementation of the strategy a multi-agency Age Friendly Bucks Partnership has been set up with external partners including the NHS and voluntary sector organisations. The views and ideas of residents and community groups have shaped the aims of the strategy and will continue to inform the implementation.

To further support the success of the strategy Buckinghamshire Council has joined the UK Network of Age Friendly Communities which is run by the Centre for Ageing Better and affiliated to the WHO's Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities. Being a member of this network provides access a range of additional resources including good practice guidance and advice. In addition, the council has partnered locally with Age UK Buckinghamshire to ensure a local focus in maintained.

Councillor Derek Town