The Bucks Strategic Partnership draws together the work of all the key public sector, business and voluntary partners in the area to deliver the agreed priorities for the county. It is responsible for directing resources and coordinating the work of partners to deliver improved outcomes for residents.

The Bucks Strategic Partnership is the over-arching partnership for the area. It complements and links with the work of the four district-level Local Strategic Partnerships in Buckinghamshire.
Foreword

We know that Buckinghamshire is a great place to live – 86 per cent of local people tell us so. Yet we face many challenges to ensure that a future Buckinghamshire is not only prosperous, enterprising and environmentally sustainable but also a place where all our communities can enjoy a high quality of life.

This Sustainable Community Strategy sets out a shared partnership vision for Buckinghamshire in 2026. Based on extensive consultation, it is part of a family of Community Strategies at County and District level which clearly set out a joint, collaborative approach to community planning across the County.

Public sector organisations, in collaboration with the private and voluntary sectors, have a key role to play in delivering this strategy. However, current economic conditions are difficult and government funding is likely to reduce substantially. Despite this challenge, we remain committed to making the best use of our partners’ collective resources, skills and experience to achieve the best possible outcomes for all those who live and work in Buckinghamshire.

Of course, we cannot deliver this vision alone. Each and every Buckinghamshire resident or employee has an important contribution to make to our quality of life. This may be through adopting a more active lifestyle, taking part in local community activities or taking steps to reduce your carbon footprint - there are many ways you can make a real difference.

We hope that you recognise the Buckinghamshire 2009 described here - and agree with the vision for the area. The Bucks Strategic Partnership, as the over-arching partnership in the County, will work for you and with you to deliver this bold and ambitious - but deliverable - Sustainable Community Strategy.

David Shakespeare, OBE
Chairman, Bucks Strategic Partnership

“Economically prosperous and enterprising, in 2026 all Buckinghamshire communities enjoy a high quality of life in a valued and enhanced environment.”
Buckinghamshire has 490,000 residents and is affluent, highly-skilled, healthy and well-educated compared to the UK as a whole. Unemployment is low, the economy is still strong, transport links are generally good and the quality of the environment is highly prized. There is a vibrant voluntary and community sector and widely available cultural, sporting and learning opportunities.

However, the demographic make-up of Buckinghamshire is rapidly changing with intensive growth in the north alongside an increasingly ageing population in the south of the County. It has been successful in encouraging the growth of businesses and good quality job opportunities as well as maintaining high employment levels. Yet the current economic climate puts this at risk and exacerbates the existing shortage of affordable homes, the skills gap and pressure on the infrastructure.

There are major differences between the most and least disadvantaged communities in Buckinghamshire. Some residents experience higher levels of unemployment and crime, and poorer levels of education, housing and health. Some children live in low income families. In these less advantaged communities, it is often those who need services most who use them least and health outcomes are poorer than for other similar communities elsewhere in the UK. Pockets of negative health due to alcohol misuse, under-age drinking, growing obesity and low levels of physical activity are leading to poorer health. Those with mental health problems, including dementia and depression, may need more support. Access to services for those living in rural areas can also be difficult.

Residents have consistently rated crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour as their most important issues. Recent national concerns over violent extremism have particular local resonance.

Traffic congestion and road conditions are also concerns for residents. Road deaths and injuries, while decreasing, are still a local focus for further reduction.

Waste and air quality are high priorities for local people, as are light and noise pollution. We have relatively high rates of recycling and composting but also one of the highest carbon footprints in the region.

Sixteen per cent of the population are 65 or over. Helping people stay independent and providing increased support services for those over 80 are both high priorities.

Many of the challenges facing us are being addressed with the help of the community itself and residents tend to be active, articulate and engaged with local issues. They generally have high expectations of public services.
Our vision for Buckinghamshire in 2026...

“Economically prosperous and enterprising, in 2026 all Buckinghamshire communities enjoy a high quality of life in a valued and enhanced environment.”

If we successfully address the challenges for Buckinghamshire 2009 and set ambitious but deliverable partnership goals, this is how residents might describe the County in 2026:

Buckinghamshire has weathered economic storms and remained economically successful. It has developed into a recognised centre of excellence for small and medium sized enterprises and start-ups. The County is one of the best in the country for developing and preserving local entrepreneurial talent. The local workforce has the skills to meet local business needs. Businesses are also taking advantage of excellent IT and broadband facilities.

A total of 530,000 people now live here, but despite this increase the County is thriving. Town and village centres are distinctive, vibrant and attractive. New housing is of a consistently high quality and includes affordable homes. Rural communities are flourishing with improved transport links, better access to services and a healthy rural economy.

Residents are enjoying the benefits of a long and healthy life. After concentrated efforts by both local agencies and local communities, the gaps between the most and least disadvantaged have been reduced. Opportunities for local people to get involved enable many more residents to feel confident and comfortable in their local communities. Different communities get on well together. There are plenty of opportunities for children and young people to take part in suitable and enjoyable activities. Residents are involved in helping to shape the services they need and finding local solutions to meet local concerns. The voluntary and community sector is highly valued and plays a full part across the County.

The proportion of people aged 65 or over has risen to 21 per cent. Public, private and third sector agencies work together to provide a range of services to support older people who wish to stay in their own homes without feeling isolated. The support needs of those aged over 80 are also being met.

In Buckinghamshire 2026, economic growth is better balanced against environmental considerations. Improved efficiency and management of the transport network has eased traffic concerns, helped by a reduced need to travel for some. There are ongoing improvements to road maintenance. Roads are now even safer and public transport is well used.

Agencies and communities are working much better together and as a result local people have a lower fear of crime. Actual crime rates have also been reduced. People living and working here benefit from a preserved and enhanced environment. Residents are recycling more. Waste has been cut to a minimum and is dealt with efficiently. The individual’s carbon footprint is an accepted personal responsibility and further reducing carbon emissions is a key priority.
Summary of Key challenges

- Make a success of the planned growth in the north of the County and ensure the necessary supporting infrastructure is in place.
- Respond positively to changing demographics, including an increasingly ageing population in the south.
- Protect and enhance our environment.
- Tackle areas of disadvantage among our communities.
- Close the education gap for children and young people, while maintaining the existing high quality of overall educational provision.
- Sustain a thriving voluntary and community sector.
- Provide affordable housing for those who need it.
- Reduce homelessness.
- Create accessible job opportunities for the growing population, and the skills base to match job growth.
Promote Buckinghamshire as a centre of excellence for business, develop world-class business clusters and attract inward investment.

Foster entrepreneurship.

Improve the connectivity and efficiency of our transport network while also reducing the need to travel.

Make Buckinghamshire even safer and a place residents perceive as safe.

Promote active lifestyles to create a healthier population.

Provide more choice and support for older people to remain independent.

Ensure access to local facilities.

Promote and enhance our town centres as thriving destinations.
Delivering the Vision for 2026

This Sustainable Community Strategy is the over-arching long-term plan for Buckinghamshire. It is not a detailed action plan, but a framework to help partner organisations take collective responsibility, work together and make the best use of resources to deliver the outcomes set out here.

Delivering the vision to 2026 will require determined action by a range of public, private and voluntary sector bodies working in partnership at neighbourhood, District and County level.

We will review this strategy every year to make sure that it continues to reflect local people’s views and addresses new challenges as they emerge. As the area’s priorities develop and change, the action plans of the partnership and individual partners will change to reflect this.

These action plans are set out in a variety of documents, including:
- Children and Young People’s Plan
- Local Development Framework
- Community Cohesion and Inequalities Strategy
- Housing and Homelessness Strategies
- Community Safety Partnership Plans
- Healthy Communities Strategy.

In addition, a number of specific projects and activities will target geographic areas and/or groups of people. These projects and activities will be monitored to ensure they are making a positive difference to people’s lives.

The outcomes are widely supported by national indicators and local measures, including those already agreed in the Buckinghamshire Local Area Agreement. This will help us compare our performance against other areas in the country.

For more information about the delivery of the vision, visit our website at www.buckslsp.org.uk.

Buckinghamshire Local Area Agreement

The Buckinghamshire Local Area Agreement is central to the delivery of the family of Sustainable Community Strategies.

The Local Area Agreement is led and coordinated by the Bucks Strategic Partnership. It is a contract between partners in Buckinghamshire and the government to deliver measurable improvements to the quality of life and services for residents over a three year period. The agreement consists of an agreed framework of improvement targets which reflect the priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategies.
Links to spatial planning
The ambitions in this strategy cannot be achieved without a direct link to the spatial plans for the area. This is done through ‘Local Development Frameworks’ at District level. Local Development Frameworks are a new kind of planning framework and set out planning policy for each District, and for the County overall to 2026. They are closely aligned with the family of Sustainable Community Strategies and these will work together to achieve our vision.

The diagram shows the key development issues affecting Buckinghamshire to 2026.
This Sustainable Community Strategy has five broad themes. These reflect the issues that you have told us matter most:

For each theme we have identified key outcomes that will improve the quality of life in our County.

Outcomes shown under each theme are shared aspirations across Buckinghamshire and will be found in the Sustainable Community Strategy for each District area and the County – making a ‘family’ of plans.

The five themes link and overlap. Therefore, taking action in relation to one theme will often have a positive effect on another theme. For example, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour (Safe Communities) makes the area safer and more attractive for business to invest in (Thriving Economy). This is illustrated through the ‘wheel’ showing links between the themes.
There are also three cross-cutting themes which are central to the Sustainable Community Strategy. These are:

– Responding to demographic change
– Addressing inequalities
– Personal responsibility

To meet the vision for 2026, these cross-cutting themes must be fully considered when developing action plans.

Responding to demographic change
The population of Buckinghamshire will increase due to the substantial growth in the north of the County and, at the same time, the demographics of the County will alter significantly. We must recognise and plan for the needs of our changing population, including the growing proportion of older people in the south of the County.

Addressing inequalities
Tackling disadvantage is crucial if we are to achieve the outcomes set out in the strategy. Our approach must include targeted actions and ways of working which best address the inequalities experienced by different groups and communities.

Personal responsibility
This is a strategy for the community and cannot be effectively delivered without the support and active involvement of residents. Important examples include improving health through active lifestyles, and creating a sustainable environment through reduced waste and carbon emissions. Please look at page 22 to see how you can help.
Buckinghamshire’s ambition is to further strengthen its existing prosperity and become an acknowledged global centre for enterprise and entrepreneurship, even in difficult economic conditions.

This means we need to:
– provide support for existing businesses;
– encourage inward investment;
– develop world class business clusters;
– exploit new technology, particularly IT and broadband;
– create job opportunities to match the substantial planned population growth;
– ensure the right workforce is available at the right time to match local business need;
– develop tourism in the area; and
– capitalise on the opportunities that London 2012 and the Paralympics provide.

Crucial to this step-change in our economic base is appropriate workforce skills development. We must focus on improving opportunities for those with few qualifications and those who need to retrain. We must also provide more support for disabled people to reach their potential in the workplace.

Our plans for a thriving economy will falter unless growth is managed through a careful balance of housing development, new jobs and the skills base to match them. It means making the best use of our existing infrastructure and maximising the benefit of any new infrastructure, including employment land (land used by business and industry for offices, warehousing and technology parks etc). This needs to be achieved without threatening the character, distinctiveness and vibrancy of our towns and villages.

New housing needs to focus mainly on the growth area in the north, but we also need the right mix of housing across the County to provide affordable homes for those who need them.

The voluntary and community sector, and the individual contributions of its volunteers, are a highly valued aspect of Buckinghamshire’s prosperity and increasingly important to its future economic development.
We aim to:

- Build business, enterprise and innovation and promote global competitiveness
- Develop skills and employment for the future
- Increase affordable housing
- Support strategic infrastructure requirements
- Promote investment in Buckinghamshire

What difference will it make?

- By 2011
  - 1356 more affordable homes are available (since 2008).
- By 2026
  - Businesses tell us that Buckinghamshire is one of the best places in the country to do business.
  - Businesses tell us that they can find locally the workforce with the skills and qualifications they need.
Buckinghamshire’s environment is a high priority for residents and it is clear that we need to protect and enhance our surroundings. This includes not just the valued green spaces in our rural areas and market towns, but the urban landscape which provides the daily backdrop to a third of residents’ lives.

The challenge is to preserve and strengthen the quality of the environment in the face of considerable pressures on the County, so that it can provide optimum support for the health and well-being of the population.

As the County has a high carbon footprint, a clear focus is to reduce carbon emissions and ensure a sustainable approach to environment issues. This would include, for example, encouraging the development of zero carbon buildings.

Making the best use of resources and energy and reducing and recycling domestic and commercial waste, will bring benefits both locally and globally.

Growth in the north and the strategic importance of our two main centres of Aylesbury and High Wycombe means we need to improve north-south transport links. Also, improvements to the rail network across the north of the County, as part of the East West Rail project, will improve access within and beyond our borders. Across the County, connectivity will be improved through a careful balance of measures. These include public transport improvements (including in rural areas), reducing the need to travel and ongoing improvements to road maintenance.
"Protecting our heritage, protecting our future."

We aim to:
- Tackle climate change
- Enhance and protect the local environment
- Reduce waste, re-use resources and recycle
- Efficiently manage and maintain the transport network

What difference will it make?
- By 2011
  - Carbon emissions from local authority buildings are reduced by 4 per cent.
- By 2026
  - Buckinghamshire is recognised as among the top performers nationally in reducing carbon emissions and conserving energy.
  - Sixty per cent of our waste is recycled.
Buckinghamshire is a safe place to live and work, but our ambition is to improve further so that we are among the safest areas in the country.

Residents have consistently ranked crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour as the most important issues for them and their quality of life. Our key priorities are to:
– reduce crime levels to the minimum possible.
– address the underlying reasons why residents’ fear of crime is greater than actual levels of crime.

We will work to reduce the crime issues that affect residents. We recognise that not all crimes have the same impact across the County. For example, serious acquisitive crime is a more significant problem in the south of the County, while anti-social behaviour is more concentrated around town centres. We will take into account these differences as well as addressing any cross-border issues affecting the safety of residents. The impact of alcohol and drugs misuse will be a priority.

We will also address those aspects of our environment which impact on crime and the fear of crime. For example, we will aim to ‘design out’ crime in residential and business developments.

We will further improve our fire safety record as well as the safety of young people and vulnerable communities. We will press for even further reductions in the numbers injured or killed in road collisions.

Finally, the national concerns over violent extremism will be considered in a local context and we will work with all our communities to resist extremist activity.
“Being safe, feeling safe”

We aim to:
- Reduce crime (including anti-social behaviour)
- Reduce fear of crime
- Reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs
- Improve the safety of local people
- Promote safe development
- Sustain local resilience to violent extremism

What difference will it make?
- By 2026
  - Buckinghamshire is in the top 25 per cent of safest counties.
  - Buckinghamshire’s record on the number of people killed or seriously injured in road collisions is among the best nationally.
  - Most residents agree that anti-social behaviour and crime in their local area are successfully dealt with.
Health and Wellbeing

Overall, Buckinghamshire residents enjoy good health and a high quality of life. However, there are health inequalities across the County. We want all residents, irrespective of their background or where they live, to enjoy good health. We aim to do this by promoting active lifestyles, focusing on prevention and intervening early to prevent future problems.

We will continue to focus on closing the education gap between children and young people across the County. We will support children and young people at significant times of change in their lives, and will look at their needs in the context of their families. This includes considering the needs of those children living in poverty.

Vulnerable people are a high priority. We need to:
- Provide more support for people with mental health issues.
- Address the unmet needs of those with dementia or depression.
- Reduce homelessness.
- Ensure the needs of disabled residents have a higher profile so they can access the services they need.

By 2026, a quarter of residents in Chiltern and South Bucks will be over 65. In the rest of the County, this figure will be nearer one fifth. Overall, there will be an additional 31,000 people aged over 65 across the County. We need to ensure that older people have increased choice, affordable warmth and access to services so they can remain independent. By 2026, we will have nearly 10,000 more residents aged over 80 who will need more intensive support services for their specific needs.

The well-being of all our residents needs to be supported by top quality public services. As the pressure on public finances increases over the next few years, it is crucial that partners across Buckinghamshire continue to develop new ways of working together. This will recognise the varying needs of different communities while delivering better services at lower cost. The aim is to ensure that all residents enjoy equal access to quality services, including those who live in rural areas.
We aim to:

- Promote healthy lifestyles
- Reduce health inequalities
- Improve the quality of life for an ageing population
- Improve the quality of life for children and young people
- Reduce homelessness
- Create well-connected communities

What difference will it make?

- **By 2026**
  - The health of our least healthy communities has improved, and we have maintained Buckinghamshire’s position as one of the healthiest places to live nationally.
  - Childhood poverty is eradicated.
  - The vast majority of older or vulnerable people who wish to remain in their own homes for longer are supported to do so.
  - Buckinghamshire residents tell us it’s a great place to live.
Buckinghamshire residents already play a very active part in their communities and report high levels of satisfaction with community well-being. The challenge is to sustain and build on this community spirit at a time of great change in the County’s population and demographic profile.

We will continue to value and support the work of the voluntary and community sector so that it can play an even more prominent role in helping to connect people and build stronger communities. This includes social enterprises and the important role businesses can play in promoting social responsibility.

Understanding between different age groups, communities, faiths and cultures will be promoted so that there is a bedrock of mutual respect. This will be achieved in part through improved provision of activities for young people, local facilities and support to prevent social isolation for older people and those living in rural areas.

Communities will be encouraged to work with partnerships to identify and provide local solutions for local issues. This will help local people become involved in preventing anti-social behaviour, which we know affects residents’ satisfaction with their area. The aim is to give residents as much say as possible in the decisions that affect them, so that the area is shaped and developed to reflect their views. Parish, town, district and county councillors have an important role to play here in supporting and guiding their local communities.

For communities to get on as well as possible together there needs to be equality of access to services and opportunities. We have some specific geographic areas as well as groups of people across our area who are disproportionately disadvantaged compared to the population as a whole. We will tackle disadvantage wherever it occurs and raise up those communities who currently cannot reach their potential.
“Strong, confident and active communities”

We aim to:
- Sustain and grow a thriving voluntary and community sector
- Increase the confidence of communities
- Help all communities get on well together
- Reduce levels of disadvantage

What difference will it make?
- By 2026
  - We have no communities in the lowest 30% of deprivation nationally.
  - A third of our population is actively involved in the community through volunteering.
  - At least nine out of ten residents tell us that in their local area people from different backgrounds get on well together.
What each one of us can do to make our area a better place

We all have a part to play in making Buckinghamshire a place we identify with and feel proud of.

We recognise that people have rights and responsibilities. Our Partnerships will respect and promote those rights, while at the same time encouraging personal responsibility. It is essential for individuals and communities to take positive action if our shared vision is to become a reality, as many improvements will require a combination of partnership work and individual lifestyle changes.

All the Buckinghamshire Local Strategic Partnerships are actively encouraging everyone in their areas to do something to help themselves and their local community, as this will directly help to achieve the outcomes in our Community Strategies. The following examples of individual actions would, if carried out by many people, make a significant contribution.

Could you do at least one

- Take simple crime and fire prevention measures by locking doors and windows, fitting alarms, removing valuables from cars and security marking property.

- Join Neighbourhood Watch or other local watch schemes.

- Fit smoke alarms and regularly check the batteries to make sure the alarms are working.
new activity from the list to help?

- Adopt healthy lifestyle by eating healthily, reducing smoking and drinking sensibly to improve physical and mental wellbeing.
- Try to get at least half an hour of moderate exercise five times a week.
- Recycle as much household waste as possible and try to save energy around your home.
- Look out for neighbours, especially if they are elderly or frail.

- Join a local group or charity as a volunteer (ask a local volunteer centre for more information).
- Vote in elections and take part in local democracy.
- Support local shops, producers and businesses.
- Learn a new skill for work or pleasure.
- Walk, cycle or take public transport wherever possible.
- Help to keep your community clean and tidy.

This list is not comprehensive and we encourage individuals and communities to add their own ideas to suit their particular needs.
For more information on the Bucks Strategic Partnership:
Please see the BSP website, www.buckslsp.org.uk for regular updates on our progress and to track the difference we are making to the lives of all who live and work here.

For regular news on issues affecting the partnership, subscribe to our electronic magazine, 'Buckinghamshire Together' on www.buckinghamshiretogether.org.uk

For general queries:
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or write to
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Buckinghamshire County Council,
People, Policy and Communications,
County Hall,
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Buckinghamshire, HP20 1UA.

The Bucks Strategic Partnership includes representatives from:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Buckinghamshire Economic and Learning Partnership
- Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust
- Bucks Hospital NHS Trust
- Chiltern District Council
- Encompass
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Oxon and Bucks Mental Health Trust
- South Bucks District Council
- South East England Development Agency
- Thames Valley Police
- Thames Valley Probation
- The Ridgeway Partnership
- Voluntary Impact
- Wycombe District Council
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