

Buckinghamshire November 2020 Council Report

Provided by Cllr Anne Wight

Buckinghamshire Council Response to Planning Reforms

In response to concerns we local members have received from parish councils and residents regarding the proposed changes to planning laws by the national government, Buckinghamshire Council has responded to the government's "[Planning for the Future](#)" consultation and have asked government to think again on changes that could have a negative impact on Buckinghamshire residents.

Whilst welcoming some of the proposed changes we believe the planning reforms would:

- **Reduce local democratic accountability** - the proposals in the White Paper seek to over-centralise and standardise decision making at the expense of local accountability and democracy.
- **Reduce engagement in Local Plans** - the proposals would reduce the opportunity for public engagement in the drafting of policies and it will only become clear what has been permitted later on in the process when their involvement will be too late.
- **Impose inflated housing targets** - the council has expressed grave concerns about how the Government's methodology is derived, again raising significant issues of reducing local democratic accountability in the planning process.
- **Reduce properly funded affordable housing** - the government proposes that local authorities borrow money in order to forward fund affordable housing. The council believes this to be an ill-considered solution. Tax payers would effectively be subsidising loans to developers and landowners. The Council would also not support reducing the number of development sites that are required to provide for affordable housing – particularly as small developments play such an important role in Buckinghamshire's rural areas.
- **Put a burden on council resources - developers should fund the full cost of development** - the council opposes the proposed delay in payment of the infrastructure levy as set out in the White Paper. Upfront payment is essential if the infrastructure to support development is to be in place prior to occupation.
- **Improve design, planning enforcement and local authority cooperation with other public bodies** - the council welcomes the emphasis on design, greater penalties for people who break planning rules and the abolition of the ludicrous 'duty to cooperate'.

Councillor Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Planning and Enforcement said: "The Council meticulously scrutinised the government's consultation paper and our response not only raises some very important points with the government but also provides alternative suggestions that we feel would benefit our residents and the planning process overall. We hope our response highlights our areas of concern and will assist the government to develop a planning system for the future that is democratic, fair and simple to use and encourages good quality, sustainable development that enhances our area."

To read our full response, download the

[Buckinghamshire Council response to the Planning for the Future consultation](#)

which can be found on the Buckinghamshire Council website.

Government Parking Consultation

Please see below for details of a nationwide consultation on pavement parking, which runs until 22 November.

Parking: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking/pavement-parking-options-for-change>

Buckinghamshire Economic Proposals for Growth

An ambitious, compelling and collective offer to Government to drive post-covid economic recovery and growth across Buckinghamshire, and generate £10 billion more for the UK economy by 2050, has been given the green light by Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet today (10 November).

The far reaching proposals outline the huge potential on offer to turbocharge the local economy, particularly in the County's hi-tech sectors; deliver additional infrastructure and opportunities for new carbon neutral and affordable housing; seek further investment in digital infrastructure to fully connect the county and bring in new programmes to reduce health inequalities, boost skills and develop apprenticeships.

The 35-page offer document, '*Succeeding as a place, Succeeding as a Country*' is the brainchild of the public, private and community sectors across the county who have come together under the umbrella of the new Buckinghamshire Growth Board, one of four established across the south east. Over the summer, the partners, have been working hard on the details of the proposals which provide a blueprint for the future development of the county as well as delivering a huge payback to the UK economy as a whole.

Buckinghamshire Council Leader, Martin Tett said that given the effects of the pandemic and the knock-on effects on the national and global economies, securing a 'high return, low risk' devolution deal with Government for Buckinghamshire had never been more important.

"As local leaders we're all too aware of the additional potential that could be released from Buckinghamshire's existing £14.8 billion economy. We are uniquely placed due to our location, previous strong track record and our four key 'super strength' sectors - creative and digital, high performance engineering, space technology at Westcott and medical technology.

"What we need from Government now are the tools to unlock that clear potential. We're not looking for straightforward hand-outs, what we really need is firm

Government commitment backed up by a robust package of freedoms, flexibilities and investment so we can get on with the job.

"We believe our proposals will firmly align with the Government's forthcoming Devolution White Paper, which will pave the way for devolution bids across the country. But why wait if we are ready to step up to the plate now? As a new unitary council, we are already securing new devolution deals with our own local communities, so we now need to see this commitment replicated by Government."

Martin added, "Given the fact that we are now a unitary council, ourselves and our partners can really benefit from being one of the most integrated and coterminous county structures in the country. This relationship, based on strong shared values and commitment mean we're ready to

do business like never before to bring long-term benefits not only to Buckinghamshire but to the UK economy as a whole."

To read more about the proposals, click on item 9 of the Cabinet agenda papers for 10th November

<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=337&MId=334&Ver=4>

Community Board update

We are pleased to say that the Wing and Ivinghoe Community Board now has a Facebook page. This page is council officer monitored and is open to all residents to share their views on potential projects which the board might be able to help progress as well as opportunities for improving our local area together.

Here is the link: <https://www.facebook.com/Wing-and-Ivinghoe-Community-Board-104964671378244>

Please share it widely among your networks and on your local parish websites, and encourage residents to like, follow and comment on the page, since we hope it will gain a wide following and become a vehicle for change and local area improvement.

The Community Board will also be playing a major role in the council's response to the newly announced Covid lockdown situation. We will be accepting application requests for funding from volunteer organisations who meet the criteria as was the case in the spring via the Community Board. Further details will be sent to parish councils on this process shortly. In the meantime, please continue to refer to the Buckinghamshire Council website for more details regarding the Covid situation over the next few weeks.

The next Community Board meeting is scheduled for 19 November at 7 pm and all are welcome to attend. Residents are also welcome to attend and can contact Democratic Services for an email invitation at the email address below.

democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

To join any of the subcommittees which are up and running in the areas of Transport, the Environment, Electric Car Charging Infrastructure, and many other areas, please contact Localities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk