The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire -
Draft vision and objectives

Our draft vision shows what we want the local plan to achieve by 2040.

It covers climate change, the natural environment, housing, infrastructure, jobs and how Buckinghamshire connects to other places.

To achieve the vision, we have created 8 draft objectives:

1) natural and built environment
2) mitigating / adapting to climate change
3) provision of homes
4) quality of place
5) community health and wellbeing
6) infrastructure
7) economy and jobs
8) transport, physical and digital connectivity

The objectives are equally important and cover all major aspects of the local plan. Each objective has an aim and a set of actions.

Draft local plan vision for 2040:

In 2040, we have sustained the essential rural character of Buckinghamshire, with its network of small towns and villages.

In particular, we have maintained the area covered by Green Belt, have protected the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and other valued local landscapes from harmful development, and enlarged both the AONB and the Green Belt where justified.

Buckinghamshire is mitigating and adapting to climate change through the enhancement of valued local landscapes, supporting local nature recovery, significant new tree planting and natural habitat creation.

Initiatives to reduce the need to travel, the provision of active and sustainable travel choices, and the delivery of new renewable energy schemes have reduced harmful emissions.

We have created sustainable new communities through the delivery of well-designed housing for all types of need, including key worker housing, together with the social, digital and physical infrastructure needed to support them.

Our new employment sites provide the right spaces for our businesses to grow and generate investment.

Together, these have been built to high environmental standards in carefully chosen locations best able to accommodate growth.

Buckinghamshire has cemented its reputation as a leader in creative industries, digital technologies, innovation and engineering, well connected to a network of businesses in the Midlands, London and the South East.

It is seen as a vibrant place to grow local skills and businesses.

High-quality mixed-use developments have revitalised our town centres e.g. those of Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Chesham, Buckingham and Princes Risborough, delivering public realm and local transport improvements.

The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire objectives

Objective 1: Natural and built environment

Aim: To conserve and enhance Buckinghamshire's valued natural, historic, and built environments, to ensure they are protected from inappropriate development.

To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

a. sustain the predominantly rural character of Buckinghamshire
b. protect valued landscapes including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Green Belt from inappropriate development
c. conserve and enhance special places for nature and create a connected county-wide network of green and blue infrastructure which maximises opportunities for biodiversity net gain with the creation of new priority habitats and green infrastructure
   - green infrastructure includes open spaces, parks, woods, footpaths and cycleways
   - blue infrastructure includes ponds, rivers, lakes and floodplains
d. improve water quality in our rivers and watercourses, prioritising our chalk streams
e. ensure that development respects historic assets and facilitates the enhancement of their setting

Objective 2: Mitigating / adapting to climate change

Aim: To ensure the delivery of sustainable development, mitigating climate change and adapting to the impacts on Buckinghamshire's environment.

To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

a. work towards achieving a carbon-neutral plan – this means reducing and offsetting carbon emissions across Buckinghamshire
b. direct growth to the most sustainable locations in terms of connections and services
c. design new development to be resilient to climate extremes and manage the risk of flooding
d. increase the supply of renewable / low-carbon energy and provide supporting infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging points and alternative fuels
e. require the highest standards of insulation and energy efficiency in new and refurbished buildings
f. enable locally liveable neighbourhoods in new development and regenerated areas
g. provide attractive and viable alternatives to the private car

Objective 3: Provision of homes

Aim: To meet housing needs, increase housing affordability and tenure choice throughout Buckinghamshire, prioritising brownfield land development.

To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

a. provide a range of housing to meet local needs for market, affordable, accessible and specialist needs (such as Lifetime homes so people can stay in their homes for longer) while recognising the diversity in the character and context of our urban, suburban and rural areas
b. enable the delivery of homes for key workers, people with local connections, and those seeking self- and custom-build opportunities
c. ensure new housing is of high-quality design, low-carbon and digitally-enabled and in keeping with its surroundings

Objective 4: Quality of place

Aim: Create great places to live and work that function well, and are welcoming, safe, and accessible to all.

To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

a. take inspiration from valued and unique characteristics of Buckinghamshire to deliver high quality design that reinforces Buckinghamshire's distinctiveness, while being innovative in design and construction
b. enable self-contained neighbourhoods that are supportive of healthy lifestyles, easy to move through and easy to understand
c. provide sufficient and well-integrated parking
d. ensure development is built to high standards of sustainability and energy efficiency
e. secure a robust network of spaces across Buckinghamshire for recreation, play, biodiversity, and water infrastructure, connecting into the rights of way network

Objective 5: Community health and wellbeing

Aim: To support sustainable communities throughout Buckinghamshire, by improving health care facilities and access to them – supporting physical and mental health, and social and cultural wellbeing for residents.

To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

    a. create places that support active lifestyles and good physical and mental health through people-friendly streets, open and green spaces, and play areas
    b. work with health providers to ensure appropriate local health facilities and access to them (and deliver new ones where they are needed)
    c. provide new or enhanced sport, leisure and cultural facilities where needed, (improve access to existing)
    d. improve air quality in Air Quality Management Areas – these are locations where the air pollution levels exceed safe levels

Objective 6: Infrastructure

Aim: To ensure the right infrastructure required to support communities is provided in the right place and at the right time, and make best use of existing facilities.

To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

    a. facilitate wider connectivity across Buckinghamshire and beyond
    b. ensure improved local connections within and between settlements
    c. provide appropriate social infrastructure including for health, education, skills training, sports, recreation and other community facilities
    d. provide and connect green and blue infrastructure to enhance the landscape and biodiversity
    e. create safe and vibrant public spaces in towns and villages
    f. provide flood risk mitigation and sustainable urban drainage solutions
    g. ensure the provision of energy, water and other utilities, and manage waste of all kinds

Objective 7: Economy and jobs

Aim: To diversify and expand the economy by delivering the right employment opportunities in the right places, supporting economic recovery, regenerating town centres and enabling delivery of education, training and skills to enhance the employability of Buckinghamshire residents.

To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

    a. enhance our economic assets by supporting Enterprise Zones, strategic and locally important employment areas

b. support and enhance Buckinghamshire's strengths in high tech, medical tech, space innovation and creative and digital, including through the provision of skills training centres
c. designate employment spaces that support a diverse range of commercial activity, from high quality offices to local workshops
d. seek opportunities to link residential and commercial development to encourage local living
e. locate new employment close to good transport connections where possible
f. support the regeneration of town centres for a diverse range of uses
g. support a sustainable rural economy including sustainable agriculture and farm diversification, and safeguard food security

Objective 8: Transport, physical and digital connectivity

Aim: To improve connectivity across and between Buckinghamshire towns and villages with regional and national centres beyond by securing new sustainable transport infrastructure, upgrading existing infrastructure and improving digital connectivity.

To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

a. maximise the connectivity opportunities presented by large-scale strategic transport schemes such as East West Rail to focus the location of growth and encourage inward investment in Buckinghamshire
b. create safe and attractive walking and cycling routes as the first choice for shorter journeys for those who are able
c. diversify, extend and enhance public transport provision including planning for low-carbon innovations, facilitating changes of mode to complete car-free journeys
d. facilitate effective transport solutions for those with mobility challenges
e. direct road freight to the most appropriate routes and plan for facilities that support sustainable freight activity (e.g. consolidation centres and community delivery hubs) and first mile / last mile solutions
f. support the provision of digital infrastructure to the most remote parts of Buckinghamshire
g. deliver low or zero carbon fuel infrastructure through new development