

Buckinghamshire Comprehensive Spending Review

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Buckinghamshire Growth Board – CSR Representation

This comprehensive spending review representation complements Buckinghamshire's emerging devolution proposal. The representation expresses the investment priorities of the Buckinghamshire Growth Board and will deliver on a number of government ambitions, which are detailed further below.

In summary:

The opportunity

- Bucks can add £10bn to the UK economy with the right investments in key strategic sectors and joined up placemaking leadership
- England's newest unitary, with uniquely integrated council, public service & business leadership
- Strong economy with key sectoral super strengths
- Identified list of investable projects which can realise ours and government's ambitions for the county

The regional context

- **Integral part of London economic ecosystem** – fully integrated with London tube & rail network as an extension of a global megacity.
- **Located within or close to major growth corridors** – knowledge intensive economy with strengths in high-tech sectors, science & R&D = potential to deliver transformational growth, create jobs & boost economy.
- **Strong partnership working through England's Economic Heartland** – focusing on sustainable growth opportunities, improved quality of life and harnessing globally renowned centres of innovation to unlock a world class, de-carbonised transport system.

Our investment objectives

- Support recovery of London & South East economy through repurposing our town centres & better digital connectivity
- Front-load affordable, low carbon housing delivery
- Overcome emerging barriers to productivity growth
- Invest in super growth sectors of the future
- Provide skills base to support economic recovery and growth

Key Investment Themes

1. Locally Controlled Flexible Investment Funds that will enable the Buckinghamshire partners to better prepare, develop and deliver infrastructure improvements.
Including a revenue pot for scheme and strategy development, a major single pot investment fund and designated housing investment fund.

2. Strong investment in **Places** to create resilient, greener and better connected places by way of local regeneration, innovative technology piloting, sustainable transport networks, road infrastructure and environmental initiatives. **Including the repurposing of public land for multi-use community benefit.**
3. Targeted Investment in Buckinghamshire's **Super Growth Sectors** to deliver the crucial infrastructure, property and opportunities that will support our local recovery and strengthen the UK's global position supporting residents and businesses with high-quality jobs, training and facilities. **Including major investment in a flagship health and social care campus integrating health care services with innovative hubs and key worker facilities.**

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The investment proposal

To achieve the ambitions outlined above Buckinghamshire is therefore requesting direct investment against the headline themes of:

- Locally Controlled Investment Funds
- Places
- Economic Recovery

Theme 1 – Locally Controlled Investment Funds

One of the most significant challenges limiting Buckinghamshire is a long-term infrastructure deficit. At present, infrastructure planning and delivery is regularly reliant on the progress of housing developments, often relying on the community infrastructure levy or s106 to deliver improvements.

This approach has not benefitted strategically Buckinghamshire and is not sustainable for the future. The development of strategic schemes or priorities can take a significant amount of time and resource impacting on the alignment with housing developments or funding opportunities that arise and resulting in missed opportunities or insufficient funding being secured.

A recent report for the Buckinghamshire Growth Board estimated an infrastructure funding gap of just under £2billion to deliver the infrastructure requirements of existing local plans and strategies, without taking into account new and emerging priorities.

To ensure Buckinghamshire bounces back from the covid crisis, it is seeking a series of strategic investment funds are that will deliver long-term certainty, and flexibility of implementation.

The first of these funds is a £10m rolling revenue fund that will facilitate the continued strategy development and feasibility work needed to progress infrastructure schemes from concept to being a shovel ready scheme. Through this rolling investment in scheme and strategy development, identified and prioritised through the collectively owned Buckinghamshire Strategic Infrastructure Tool, the county will be better able to set long term investment strategy whilst remaining flexible enough to respond to emerging opportunities.

The second fund that will support the acceleration of our recovery and enable the shovel ready schemes to be delivered is a Single Pot Capital Investment Fund. This would allow Buckinghamshire to deliver on its identified priorities efficiently and effectively, and the increased certainty would encourage longer term infrastructure planning horizons.

As evidenced through the place based and economic sector investment priorities outlined later in the document, Buckinghamshire is well placed to deliver significant value to the

objectives of the UK Government if given the freedom and flexibility of a single investment fund.

Buckinghamshire are seeking a £200m front-loading of this fund, which will be outlined further in our Devolution proposal, to support recovery and growth through a series of major projects.

The final fund would be is a £100m Housing Investment Fund that would help in delivering low carbon, affordable housing and associated infrastructure. This fund, accompanied with freedoms, flexibilities and powers further explained as part of the emerging Devolution proposal will play a central role in helping to front-load the delivery of the strategic housing planned in Buckinghamshire.

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Theme 2 – Places - Repurposing and creating quality, low carbon & connected communities

The second theme focusses on the priority investments in our places. For the places people live and work a swift recovery of the local economy can be achieved through imaginative investments in our existing towns; incentivising and enabling local resilience and shifts to greener living through new technology, and building the enabling infrastructure to unlock the next wave of sustainable local growth.

The packages have been broken down into four key investment packages:

- Regenerating Major Growth Towns
- Thriving Smaller Towns
- Countywide Enablers
- Addressing the Environmental Challenge

The following sub sections express the ambitions and areas of focus considered crucial to reinvigorating the places we live, work and shop, and delivering on the government's ambitions of stimulating local economic recovery, supporting levelling up, delivering net-zero and making the UK a scientific superpower.

The specific priorities outlined have been identified through local strategy development, and through the development and interrogation of the Buckinghamshire Strategic Infrastructure Tool. All are deliverable within the five year spending term.

2a) Regenerating Main Growth Towns

The county has identified the regeneration of its major towns as a priority. In Aylesbury, investment focusses on delivering on the aims of the Aylesbury Garden Town Master Plan, which sets out an ambition to create a diverse and distinct set of clean and inclusive communities. These principles are embodied in the hugely popular Aylesbury Gardenway concept, a fully connected corridor encircling the town, which will greatly enhance the connectivity and liveability of the neighbourhoods on the town's outer reaches, including a number of future housing development sites. The county is seeking £15m to deliver phase 3 of the project.

This should happen alongside further investments including a £453k scheme to retrofit the drainage of the town centre, improving the resilience and vitality of the public realm. Aylesbury also experiences significant congestion pressures reducing the quality of the town and limiting connectivity across and through the town centre for users. Around £47.5m investment is needed across four projects to help free up space and capacity by providing a high quality orbital link road system along with improved bus priorities and options that will take unnecessary traffic out of the town centre, enable housing development to come forward on the outer edges of the town, and unlock further opportunities for improving the town centre public realm.

In High Wycombe, the most populous of Buckinghamshire's towns, investment is identified to assist in delivering the regeneration of High Wycombe by creating a vibrant and lively public realm, and a diverse cultural offer. Investment in High Wycombe is focused on regenerating the town centre by initially repurposing public owned land to enhance economic opportunities through high quality facilities alongside improvements to the connectivity both on the road network and through sustainable modes such as walking and cycling.

Phase 1 of the Eastern Quarter regeneration programme, which is a comprehensive approach seeking to create a well-designed and integrated mixed use quarter in the centre of the town, requires a £50m investment to transform existing facilities that are in need of investment in to high-quality commercially viable spaces. Alongside the comprehensive town centre plan, £10.35m investment is sought to deliver a collection of measures from the emerging High Wycombe Transport Strategy including a new integrated transport hub and an e-bike hire scheme along with improvements to the coach service linking a key employment hub in Globe Park to Handy Cross interchange.

2b) Thriving Smaller Towns

Although significant growth is centred on Aylesbury and High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire contains a multipolar network of places, with no single town dominating the local economy. It is therefore imperative that significant investments are made in the smaller market towns and villages to ensure that they continue to contribute their entrepreneurial talent to the local and national economies and to retain the character and quality of life that makes the county an attractive and popular place to live.

A range of approaches are scoped and ready for roll out across these areas with a focus maintaining and enhancing local resilience in the face of recession, climate change, and other challenges.

This includes a £1m package of investments in wifi connectivity and digital literacy training in smaller town centres which will provide consumers and small traders with the technology and skills to trade digitally through recovery and renewal. We are also keen to roll out an innovative mesh network project to Chesham, capitalising on the advances made when piloting this unique project that seeks to embed technology in street furniture to benefit adult social care service delivery at an investment of £2.25m.

In addition to these smaller schemes, sites have been identified for the first round of investment in Community Hubs and joint public service facilities in the county at Buckingham, Iver, Chesham and Amersham. A £28.5m investment will deliver multifunctional sites which can provide a single joined up public service access point, for health, social care, libraries, and leisure. They will bring further benefits by freeing up land

and property from the public estate which can be repurposed towards exemplar low carbon and affordable housing developments.

Investment also needed in connectivity to, through, and around these smaller towns to enhance the opportunities on offer and remove the barriers that are limiting their potential. The local connectivity package includes a fully worked up set of investments in relief roads and local sustainable travel routes which will unlock, and mitigate adverse impacts of, planned housing growth.

Buckinghamshire has recently been successful in implementing a natural flood management pilot scheme, funded by DEFRA, in the north of county and there is an opportunity to roll out on a catchment wide scale; improving communities' resilience and reducing the risk of flooding. Smaller communities and properties are also at risk from flash flooding across Buckinghamshire but are restricted by viable defence solutions. An investment of £2m will allow the approach to be rolled out across Buckinghamshire.

Countywide Enablers

Many of the investments needed to regenerate and future proof the county's communities are geographically dispersed or impact on more than one location. These investments in new technologies focus mainly on the areas of physical and digital connectivity.

As made clear over the recent months, enhancing digital connectivity will be fundamental to the recovery and future of Buckinghamshire and the UK. Existing digital infrastructure has helped many UK businesses and public bodies to remain open and delivering key services but significant gaps remain in reach, connection speed, and reliability, and without significant further investment, will continue to constrain the shift to new ways of working, reduced commuting patterns, public smart technologies in the public realm, and digital public service pathways. To achieve full gigabit connectivity an investment of £56m is required.

Investing in improving our digital network also provides the opportunity to improve public service outcomes by enabling faster, more efficient, remote delivery through smart digital solutions and the implementation of a combined digital access point for residents and businesses interacting with Health and Social Care Services. The covid crisis has already brought about a change in the way people access primary health care and consultative services, and a £38m investment in health and public service connectivity will further embed this revolution through the delivery of jointly owned service access points, a digital service platform, and shared telephony.

Countywide transport innovations include the introduction of integrated smart ticketing systems for public transport, allowing full local integration of public transport journeys including Transport for London routes. This is essential in a multinodal county like Buckinghamshire, where more than one journey or mode may be needed to reach a destination.

The final countywide enabler of improved physical connectivity is the introduction of smart traffic management systems. An investment of £14m is needed to deliver significant reductions in traffic and congestion.

2d) Addressing the Environmental Challenge

Tackling the climate crisis is recognised as one of government's major priorities and Buckinghamshire is committed to incorporating net-zero thinking into all aspects of its operations and policy making. To accelerate this transition, we have identified an initial set of investments which will move the county forwards in this area.

Transport is now identified as the largest sector contributing to the UK's greenhouse gas emissions¹. To bring about the step change required, Buckinghamshire has identified around £11m in investment in Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure, rollout of electric buses on major routes, and zero-emissions delivery facilities.

Domestic energy efficiency also needs to dramatically improve to enable the net zero target to be met. Most of the houses which will be in use in 2050 are already built so it is vital the least efficient homes are improved. An investment of £3m would provide energy efficient deep retrofitting for 300 households. As well as helping to move the county towards net-zero targets, these investments will create local jobs in the green technology sector enabling Buckinghamshire's economy to recover and grow.

As demonstrated during the lockdown, people's health, and happiness can benefit from access to the local environment, air quality can improve as airborne pollutants are reduced, carbon sequestration helps to tackle the climate crisis, and increasing biodiversity is essential for maintaining a stable global biosphere. Bucks are seeking the committed investment of £10m to enable the development and delivery of projects that will protect and enhance key natural environments in support of these goals.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/679334/2016_Final_Emissions_Statistics_one_page_summary.pdf

Theme 3 - Leading the national economic recovery through major investments in Bucks Super Growth Sectors

Buckinghamshire has an existing competitive advantage in a number of sectors which form the basis of the local industrial strategy. Strategic investment in the complementary infrastructure, facilities and master-planning of these super-growth sectors will unlock a wave of innovation which has the potential to put the UK at the centre of the global marketplace for these sectors.

The following packages express the ambitions and investment that we consider as crucial to recovering and delivering a competitive Buckinghamshire and globally competitive United Kingdom.

3a) Health Sector Package

As the birthplace of the Paralympic Movement, Buckinghamshire has a rich heritage of healthcare excellence and innovation. The world-renowned Spinal injury unit at Stoke Mandeville is complemented by the presence of a number of global companies, including GE Healthcare & Johnson & Johnson. This legacy means Buckinghamshire is well placed to be a key region in the next wave of healthcare innovation.

Buckinghamshire is looking for direct investment in the development of flagship Health and Social Care Campus' and centre of excellence at Aylesbury Woodlands. Stoke Mandeville Hospital is the home of the UK's national spinal centre that plays a crucial role in world research but is consolidated into a site on the outskirts of Aylesbury challenged by increasing congestion. However, with targeted investment as part of the CSR there is a once in a generation opportunity to springboard the facilities into the future and to create a unique global and national centre for health and social care excellence through an innovation centre for the research and development of new medical technologies, and as a skills development campus, as part of the Aylesbury Garden Town project.

This campus would have the opportunity to provide high-quality integrated health and care services alongside world class educational facilities and community housing. By utilising a campus model, innovative and high-technology systems will support the addressing of the existing backlog at current facilities and improve efficiency whilst creating opportunities for new approaches to be pioneered through a co-located innovation hub. It is also envisioned that part of the existing facilities could be repurposed in a way that serves the needs of a thriving Buckinghamshire by delivering affordable housing for key workers.

Buckinghamshire is seeking a £500m investment for the delivery of this iconic campus to future proof the healthcare needs of the growing population of Buckinghamshire. The programme will be delivered in partnership through the One Public Estate programme and

provides a clear demonstration of the joined up thinking in Bucks enabled through strong partnerships and the coterminosity of local partner organisations.

3b) Space Tech Package

Westcott Business Park is at the forefront of the UKs space technology sector, where the ambition is to secure 10% of a global market that is worth over £400bn. It is well placed to expand significantly through targeted infrastructure investment and master-planning to remove known constraints and maximise its existing advantages.

Buckinghamshire estimates that the coordinated expansion of the park's activities through investment in connectivity, master-planning and facilities would create more than 2,000 highly skilled jobs in space sector and associated areas / supply chains.

This would build on the existing unique facilities at Westcott to make the site a world leading space propulsion test facilities, centre for small satellite manufacture and national innovation cluster supporting and growing the UK Space sector.

The innovation ecosystem at Westcott will provide collaboration and supply chain opportunities for space sector / innovation companies across the UK – the Westcott DISC model is being considered in different UK locations for various space / satellite applications; The centre will also attract inward investment from international companies operating in the space sector (discussions already held with a range of such companies by Satellite Application Catapult).

3c) High Tech Package

Silverstone is globally famous as the home of British Motorsport. The Enterprise Zone and associated business in the Silverstone area are home to world leading engineering facilities. Buckinghamshire is seeking funding to build on these existing strengths in sports and high tech engineering to stimulate the next wave of innovation in green technologies. Investment will develop an expanded innovation ecosystem with strengths in:

- Sports and automotive engineering
- Renewable fuel cell technologies e.g. Hydrogen
- Energy efficient manufacturing

It is estimated that up to 2000 jobs could be created through the expansion as well as creating training / educational opportunities. Additional development will provide opportunities to grow the innovation, R&D and manufacturing base at Silverstone and within the wider STC – providing opportunities in the supply chain across the surrounding regions and nationally. The provision of floorspace and other facilities (potentially including a new test track) will enable research into new technologies to be expanded into government priorities – eg green technologies such EVs / Battery applications, automated

vehicles etc. builds on existing unique facilities at Silverstone to make the site a world leading innovation facility. The Silverstone Sports Innovation Campus (SSIC) will also attract inward investment from international organisations operating in the sports sector as evidenced by a number of international cycling teams currently making use of SSIC Phase 1 facilities.

3d) Creative Package

Based in Southern Buckinghamshire, and encompassing internationally leading facilities such as Pinewood Studios and the National Film and Television School, the creative sector greatly enriches Buckinghamshire's economy as well as its cultural life. It provides many SME's in Buckinghamshire with direct links to the anchor industry institutions creating a comprehensive network of opportunities. This network of creative industry businesses benefits from high-quality strategic connectivity to Buckinghamshire, London, and the wider world via Heathrow.

The creative sector has been greatly affected by the recent restrictions forced upon residents and businesses by covid-19 but is one of the sectors that is recovering most swiftly. The creative sector was growing rapidly, contributing to the local and national economy supporting the network of freelance and independent workers that were amongst the most vulnerable in the early stages of the covid lockdown². We aim to support the industry to bounce back strongly and consider that there is a significant opportunity through investment in the Buckinghamshire's screen and film sectors and particularly in the application of virtual and augmented reality and in the development of new and specialist studio and educational facilities to enable this cluster can to be at the heart of the UK's recovery.

Investment in the expansion of the anchor institutions of Pinewood Studios and the National Film and TV School will lead this rebound and will be supported through additional investments in local transport and educational infrastructure.

3e) Enabling Growth - Skills and Business Support

Although greatly impacted by the pandemic and potential recession, Buckinghamshire is blessed with strong support networks among its major businesses and SMEs. These networks are underpinned by the hugely valued Growth Hub provided by Buckinghamshire Business First. Through strong partnership working with the LEP, and Bucks Council, BBF are well placed to provide a strategically oriented business support function needed to identify and develop the skills and recruitment gaps brought about by the pandemic.

² https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/sites/default/files/inline-images/20200716_OE_Slides_new%20ACE%20data%20-%20Clean%20-%20with%20NEMO%20caveat.pdf

Buckinghamshire are seeking investment to build on the successes of BBF to deliver a Growth Hub ++ business support programme at £950k per annum. This would offer align to the priority sectors and would include new programmes in Innovation support, Digital skills, Procurement and Supply Chain development, Inward Investment and international Trade, Leadership and management, and Meeting Net Zero.

In addition to the skills development through Growth Hub ++, long term proposals for the identified super-growth sectors include provisions for on-site training and development centres in the sectoral strengths, e.g. Digital Healthcare Academy at Woodlands, and the Apprentice School / Intergenerational Skills Centre at Westcott.

Buckinghamshire will continue to develop a long-term skills strategy to help direct support and focus to the appropriate areas alongside the ambitions outlined in the emerging Devolution proposal. Buckinghamshire is building from strong foundations with a high-quality local education system, the UK's leading private university, and strong local partnerships to providing joined up entry points into employment.