

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Plan 2016 to 2020



Basingstoke
and Deane

Leader's introduction

The following pages lay out our vision for Basingstoke and Deane for the coming years. The borough is already a marvellous place to live, but we want to make it even better. We are committed to continuing to provide first class services and facilities and to protecting our most vulnerable residents, while ensuring that future growth is well planned and well managed.

The last Council Plan laid out the themes that we intended to follow to prepare the borough for the period up to 2050 to ensure that all of us enjoy a high quality of life, good jobs and a prosperous future and everyone has the opportunity to realise their aspirations.

Working in partnership we have made excellent progress developing shared ambitions for Basingstoke and Deane and a common vision of the place we want our borough to be. It is now appropriate to plan how we are going to bring that vision to reality and to lay the foundations for future growth.

As we all live longer and will work longer we need to plan for the places where people will want to live, with improved facilities, more local jobs and increased personal prosperity.

Our borough is a great place with 96% of our residents telling us they are happy with where they live. This is because the borough has a history of embracing growth and the benefits it brings. Basingstoke has become a regional centre enjoying excellent shopping, sports, leisure and health facilities set in some of the most beautiful countryside in England. We have a high rate of business start-ups and the highest GVA* in the Hampshire and Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership economic area. Despite a prolonged recession our unemployment rate has stayed below that of the South East.

Continued growth is fundamental to meeting the challenges of our increasing population. We aim to ensure our resident and future generations continue to enjoy an excellent quality of life and environment, which has been improved through well planned growth



Cllr Clive Sanders,
Leader of Basingstoke and
Deane Borough Council

whilst avoiding expansion without the necessary infrastructure.

Already we have started to deliver on some aspects. Recent successes have seen Waitrose, John Lewis at Home and Network Rail locate to the town and housing in Oakridge and Popley has been renewed. Much needed road improvements are being provided at junction 6 of the M3, with more long-sought road improvements in the pipeline. Our Local plan is nearing adoption and during this plan period we will see the first houses delivered on Manydown.

Our focus over the period of this plan is to lay those strong foundations that will shape the way our borough grows over the next 25 to 30 years and deliver opportunities for all our communities. We must be innovative and turn our challenges into new opportunities that will grow a robust economy. But we must also recognise that we still have people in our community who, for whatever reason, do not share in the general wellbeing of the borough. We must ensure that growth benefits all and that those who are most vulnerable are given the support they need.



Our priorities are:

- preparing for controlled and sustainable growth
- improving residents' quality of life
- supporting those who need it.

The Council Plan 2016 to 2020 sits alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy/budget strategy. Together they set out how we will establish the basis for successful future growth and deliver on our key priorities which are intended to maintain Basingstoke and Deane as an exceptional borough providing opportunities for all that live and work here.

Underpinning our priorities is a commitment to creating an organisation capable of delivering change.

This is a cross cutting theme to ensure we remain a low tax council; drive efficiency; use technology to improve customer access, speed up processes, transactions and decisions; and to enter into partnerships and service delivery arrangements that improve service and reduce cost.

Combining effectiveness with ambition is a challenge but we have the team, the opportunity and the resources to do it. This plan restates our determination and commitment to succeed and to deliver a borough fit for the 21st century, with places where everyone will want to live, with facilities all can enjoy, and prosperity that all can share, for this generation and the next. ■

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Preparing for controlled and sustainable growth

The council cannot stand still and must have creative plans for Basingstoke and Deane to ensure that local people have access to employment and housing, which are essential if they are to enjoy healthy lives and thrive. Whilst our plans for growth are vital in providing for identified needs now and in the future, these must be achieved whilst preserving and protecting local character and distinctiveness in a well-planned and lasting way.

Create jobs and opportunities by supporting new and existing business

Work to revitalise the 65 acre Basing View business area has attracted new companies, securing significant new investment and is making a real difference to the look and feel of the area. The SETsquared Partnership, which operates an incubation hub for high-tech start-ups based at the Innovation Centre in Basing View, is expected to bring £20 million of investment to Basingstoke, as well as support 20 new high growth companies over the next five years.

We are actively promoting the town and work continues to support new and existing business which help create quality jobs and add to the value of our economy at Basing View, Top of the Town and elsewhere in the town.

Parts of Basing View regeneration have been designated an Enterprise Zone paving the way for millions of pounds of private investment and thousands of new jobs. The council will be proactively working to make the most of the opportunities this brings to attract new companies and invest in improving the business area.

Ensure a work ready workforce by linking employers and education providers

Basingstoke has a highly skilled workforce; however employers tell us there are some skills gaps. We are working with business and education partners to help address this and to connect those seeking work to potential employers.

Education and improving skills is vital for success. Enterprise M3 funding for a Juniversity and work by Basingstoke College of Technology to enhance degree level apprenticeships are welcomed.

Support the provision of quality homes affordable to all through growth and regeneration

Our plan is to build places of which people can be proud, and where they want to live; Manydown is a significant opportunity to bring much needed

homes through a well-planned approach, delivering infrastructure and facilities that meet local community needs. The site has the potential to accommodate 8,000 homes over the next 30 years, with the initial phase providing 3,400. As landowners, the borough and county councils are focused on delivering high quality new homes in an attractive well designed environment. We are committed to a programme of consultation and engagement with residents of our existing communities. It is vital that they are able to see real benefits to their neighbourhoods from any growth on their doorsteps.

Working with housing association partners we have already achieved significant regeneration and revitalised housing in older parts of the town. We aim to support further renewal and, through engaging with partners, bring forward Buckskin, South Ham and Winklebury for regeneration.

The revised Housing Strategy, to be prepared in 2016 will provide the strategic guidance in how local housing need should be addressed.

Invest in our infrastructure

Our plans for development have already helped attract £23 million of government funding through the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership to carry out major road schemes.

Recently secured government funding of £850,000 has ensured that essential studies such as housing mix, roads and education will be undertaken and plans developed well in advance of future development schemes to enable the necessary resources to be put in place.

The Local Plan provides the policies and framework that shape development. This and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that sits alongside the Local Plan, will be adopted in 2016. In conjunction with S106 and external funding, CIL provides a mechanism to fund infrastructure from developer contributions and will give local level communities which have had development, a say in how some of this funding is allocated.

We will also be looking at innovative ways of delivering our strategic development goals.



What difference will this make?

By 2020 we want to see:

- Increased take up of new or significantly refurbished office accommodation
- New investment attracted into the Top of the Town enabling a thriving and sustainable retail, business and residential area that safeguards local character and complements neighbouring parts of the town
- Existing companies retained and new companies attracted that provide increased and quality job opportunities
- Improved knowledge and skills that meet business needs and allow people to achieve their potential
- A high level of GVA maintained in the borough
- New and affordable homes being delivered each year, that meet local needs, in line with Local Plan policy and the revised Housing Strategy
- High quality development starting to be delivered at Manydown
- Residents ability to improve their quality of life such as increasing job prospects are made possible through regeneration schemes



Improving residents' quality of life

Basingstoke and Deane is fortunate to boast regional level leisure and cultural facilities that include the Leisure Park and The Anvil concert hall. We have a predominantly green borough with less than 10% of the area developed. Crime rates are low and people feel safe where they live. We know that these are all important factors in making somewhere a good place to live and are valued by our communities, as is the need to provide services in an effective and accessible way that meets local need.

Enhance leisure and culture facilities

Basingstoke Leisure Park has a range of facilities that attract both local and regional visitors with the recent £6 million Airkix skydiving centre adding significant visitor numbers in the last two years. Our plan to regenerate the Leisure Park aims to attract investment and new high profile attractions that secures a 21st century offer.

Work to revitalise the Top of the Town has seen the introduction of an annual events programme which staged some of the 2015 Basingstoke Festival. This historic part of town which is home to the Haymarket Theatre and Willis Museum will continue to be a focal point for 'feel-good' events as the Basingstoke Town Centre Programme is rolled forward to create a lively area attracting residents and visitors alike.

Maintain and enhance our built and natural environment

Protecting and enhancing the attractive environment we enjoy is important; the council manages 80,000 trees growing within our streets and parks and over 100 hectares of woodland across the borough, and we are committed to increase biodiversity in the land we manage. We are improving council owned green spaces in key areas to create a network of appropriately managed spaces and launching a community managed green spaces pilot. The work of volunteers and the need to foster awareness and understanding of the natural environment in future generations is recognised.

Initiatives to reduce energy use and introduce renewable energy for both our own premises and in the borough include: investment in the provision of solar panels on six council owned buildings and the provision of low cost loans to householders and community groups for energy efficiency improvements.

In April 2015 we introduced new initiatives in a concerted effort to increase the boroughs recycling rate. The effectiveness of this new approach will be closely monitored, and opportunities to enhance the 'green' outcome reviewed, when new contract arrangements are considered.

We are investing in local communities through a revised Local Infrastructure Fund, making it clearer and easier to access grant support for infrastructure people feel is important for their local area.

Support a borough where all feel safe

Following County Council withdrawal, the council stepped in to retain community safety patrols (CSPOs) in Basingstoke and Deane, a programme of targeted CSPO campaigns are being introduced to tackle anti-social behaviour and support provided for the Strategic Community Safety Partnership to deliver on priority activity.



What difference will this make?

By 2020 we want to see:

- Healthcare needs are addressed, with initiatives improving lifestyles and physical and mental wellbeing for people of all ages
- A reduction of antisocial behaviour recorded in targeted areas of the borough
- Energy costs reducing and better investment returns delivered through council energy projects
- Continued support for the Top of the Town as a venue for exciting events and activities
- A programme in place to regenerate the Leisure Park with a wider range of modern attractions
- Continued protection and enhancement of our environment in line with the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Living Landscapes



Supporting those who need it

The majority of our population enjoy a high standard of wellbeing, healthy lives and are able to influence decisions and access help when they may need it. We recognise that this is not the case for everyone and people's circumstances can change. With an increasing ageing population, as well as some areas of relative disadvantage, we are committed to reducing inequality of opportunity and ensuring people get support when they need it. We are committed to providing a range of affordable housing for our residents. With Government and housing providers we are exploring new and innovative models for delivering starter homes and helping local people take that first step on to the housing ladder.

Promote strong communities

We want local communities to have a say in what matters to them, which is why we are supporting community planning, and neighbourhood plans. We are developing a framework to help communities affected by renewal plans, to help shape changes, providing opportunities to share proposals and listen to what local people have to say and through community ownership of facilities and services.

Recent review of public transport provision with local providers and funders has secured investment in rural transport and subsidised bus services around key routes in the borough. These pilot initiatives will be monitored to identify opportunities for future improvements.

Support wellbeing initiatives that improve life chances

As a partner in the Health and Wellbeing Partnership we support a number of wellbeing initiatives that address local health priorities. We have signed up to the Hampshire Dementia Group to improve staff skills, and have worked with local retailers to make The Malls a dementia friendly high street. As part of this

initiative Basingstoke station has trained local staff to be 'dementia friends' and this training will also be rolled out in the Top of the Town.

Increased demand for disabled facilities grants, partly brought on by an increasingly aging population has resulted in significant costs to this service. We are reviewing the way mandatory and discretionary grants are provided to establish a new framework that will ensure the right kind of support is available to those in need, delivered in the most effective way.

Support homeless and vulnerable groups

In response to proposed changes in Hampshire County Council funding for housing support services, and working with key providers in the town, a new approach to supporting people has been introduced to secure better provision for homeless people in the borough.

We are working with local partners to support vulnerable residents in accessing training and services to help them prepare for employment.

Work to support people affected by Welfare Reform changes has included close working with a range of partners to ensure that advice is correct and consistent. With the introduction of Universal Credit in Basingstoke and Deane from March 2016, there is more focus on providing practical support through partners to advise and enable local people to adapt to the new arrangements.



What difference will this make?

By 2020 we want to see:

- Increased opportunities for people living in housing areas due for renewal to understand and influence plans for change
- Transport services facilitated that respond to identified needs
- Inequalities of opportunity addressed in areas of relative deprivation and aspirations raised
- Use of Bed and Breakfast minimised as alternative accommodation options are improved
- The number of rough sleepers reduced and life chances improved for those who are vulnerably housed.



Creating an organisation capable of delivering change

Creating an organisation capable of delivering change is a cross-cutting theme that runs through everything that we do.

Growth will not happen and our quality of life will not be maintained unless we ensure that the council is capable of working with partners to deliver our objectives. It is important that we build in the knowledge, skills and resources to bring about the major initiatives planned over the coming years whilst maintaining the standards of day to day service that our residents have come to expect.

We will remain a low tax council

We have the sixth lowest council tax in the country and the sixth highest spend per head of all districts in the country. Council tax has not increased for the last five years and we will continue to keep council tax as low as possible in the future.

We will continue to drive efficiency

Since 2006 we made over £12.5 million of savings, reducing the cost of running the council by more than 20% whilst improving services at the same time. We will continue to look at what we do to ensure the right services are being provided in the most effective way at the right cost.

We will take advantage of new technology

Speeding up processes, transactions and decisions and improving customer access to services will be a key part of making our council as open and helpful to the residents we serve as possible. Using the latest technology will be an important element in becoming more efficient and effective as a council.

We will make the most of partnership working opportunities

It is not essential that the council does everything itself. Already by combining our waste collection with Hart District Council we have saved £1.2 million and been able to improve service with the introduction of kerbside glass collection. We also provide services to other councils so that we can share costs and reinvest in other activities. We will continue to explore further opportunities to work together with other public sector authorities.

We will create a vehicle for delivering long-term growth.

The council alone has neither the resources nor the expertise to fund and deliver the long-term growth that we need to see. We will therefore examine different ways in which we can access the necessary skills and funding through working with private and public sector partners, giving consistency and continuity for the future, whilst ensuring that the council retains a strong position of influence to keep the best interests of our residents at the heart of the borough's development.

Our plans at a glance



Preparing for controlled and sustainable growth

We will:

- create jobs and opportunities by supporting new and existing business
- ensure a work ready workforce by linking employers and education providers
- support the provision of quality homes affordable to all through growth and regeneration
- invest in our infrastructure.



Improving residents' quality of life

We will:

- enhance leisure and culture facilities
- maintain and enhance our built and natural environment
- support a borough where all feel safe.



Supporting those who need it

We will:

- promote strong communities
- support wellbeing initiatives that improve life chances
- support homeless and vulnerable groups.

Creating an organisation capable of delivering change

We will:

- remain a low tax council
- continue to drive efficiency
- take advantage of new technology
- make the most of partnership working opportunities
- create a vehicle for delivering long-term growth.

How do I find out more?



www.basingstoke.gov.uk/councilplan



01256 844844



If you need this information in a different format, for example large print, CD or braille, please contact the council.

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