

Pride in our Place – a Sustainable Community Strategy for Basingstoke and Deane

I Introduction

- 1.1 *Basingstoke and Deane is a place to be proud of. That is the view of the many organisations from the public, private and voluntary sector that work together through the Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership to make Basingstoke and Deane a better place for living, working, studying, and visiting¹.*
- 1.2 We can already be proud that:
- residents tell us they are happy with their local area
 - crime and anti social behaviour is relatively low and reducing
 - we have delivered above our target of affordable homes
 - there is a strong tradition of working with our communities, and vibrant community and voluntary sectors.
- 1.3 We want to ensure that our borough continues to be a place where people, communities, and businesses will flourish - enjoying an excellent quality of life and environment.
- 1.4 This document sets out the shared vision for Basingstoke and Deane and highlights the main challenges we face and how the Partnership aims to deal with them by working more collaboratively.
- 1.5 Organisations and groups working together in partnership can achieve far more within the same resources by ensuring there is no wasted effort or duplication, and that they are all planning and providing services in a complementary way. To do this it is vital that there is shared understanding and consensus on the strategic direction for the borough and key priorities for joint action.
- 1.6 This document acts as a guide – it does not set out the background evidence or detail of all the individual plans that will help improve our economy, our community and our environment. It does however provide a reference to inform them all as they are reviewed, reflecting a shared understanding of local need and local ambition.
- 1.7 The shared vision recognises that the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the borough are interdependent, and that we need to continue to jointly promote all our strengths. The vision provides a common sense of purpose and acts as the

¹ For more information on the Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership see:

<http://basp.basingstoke.gov.uk>

central and connecting element across all our work – a guide against which we can test proposals.

- 1.8 Shared priorities have been identified to help us ‘make the connections’ between organisations’ core areas of work and where, by thinking and working differently, we can make a wider contribution to the quality of life in the borough.

2 Our Vision

- 2.1 A vision for the borough has been developed and agreed through wide engagement with the public and local organisations².

Our Shared Vision for Basingstoke and Deane to 2026

In 2026 Basingstoke and Deane’s people, communities and businesses will be flourishing - enjoying an excellent quality of life and environment which has been improved through well planned growth that draws on our strengths and secures vital improvements.

Regenerating our towns and estates, and enriching the character and vitality of our villages and outstanding countryside will support Basingstoke as a major vibrant centre, leading north Hampshire and fulfilling an influential role in the region.

We will be:

prosperous and thriving - where

- a regenerated state of the art Basing View, along with easy transport connections attract a range of new business to the town
- links with higher education stimulate innovative business growth
- a strong learning culture encourages young people to aim high and achieve more
- residents can readily improve their skills and play their part in and benefit from the area’s prosperity.

connected and vibrant - where

- we create inviting places and communities where people want to live, feel they belong, and it is easy to meet everyday needs
- we feel and are safe, active, and healthy, and we look out for the needs of the most vulnerable, so that no-one is left isolated
- people can connect, enjoy their lives, and get involved, creating a strong community spirit
- new homes meet local needs, and bring improved and new local facilities.

environmentally responsible and distinctive – where

- we live and work in harmony with the natural elements and systems on which we

² For the development of the vision and how residents and local organisations were involved see:

<http://basp.basingstoke.gov.uk>

- depend, and are responding to the challenge of climate change
- the local built and natural environments are in tune and continue to provide opportunities for the economy and people's enjoyment; they are well managed to provide for the future
 - we enrich the different characters of and links between towns, villages and the countryside, in the way we plan, such as the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the River Loddon area
 - we insist on the highest quality design and environmental standards to demonstrate pride in our place.

2.2 In developing the shared vision the Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership considered the borough's strengths and where improvements are needed³.

3 Strengths

3.1 The Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership considers that the borough has many strengths.

3.1.1 Basingstoke and Deane has a unique opportunity to draw on its regional role as a hub for business and transport, and its town based economic and cultural vibrancy *alongside* its rich natural environment and rural character. It is essential to simultaneously maintain and improve those strengths by masterplanning the links between them.

3.1.2 There is a range of excellent public services, enterprises and voluntary organisations that are proud to serve and contribute to successful communities of the future. Ongoing dialogue and support structures will be needed to maintain that social capital across the sectors; such as encouraging small businesses at the heart of the community, attracting the best teachers and hospital consultants, valuing and encouraging enterprise, whether for profit or for community gain, and ensuring we have the skills and collaborative culture to fulfil our ambitions.

3.1.3 Basingstoke and Deane is a great place for families, with a widespread sense of community. However that should be extended and enhanced so that *all our communities* feel safe, and at ease, with no-one left isolated.

3.1.4 We need to continue to jointly promote all our strengths and recognise they are interdependent.

³ A full version can be viewed at:
<http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/CommitteeDocs/Committees/Cabinet/20100323/A%20Vision%20for%20the%20Borough%20-%20Appendix%201.doc>

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4 Future prosperity

- 4.1 To secure a prosperous long term future requires inward investment and retention. The Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership considers that economic growth is needed to sustain the current levels of service and quality of life in the borough, and that:
- 4.1.1 Basingstoke should work with neighbouring and regional partners to develop and harness a strong role in the regional economy, and support existing local business and incubation. We want business to locate and to stay here.
- 4.1.2 Sufficient housing should be provided to ensure economic prosperity, offering variety and flexibility of housing options, matched with key facilities for both existing and new communities.
- 4.1.3 A flourishing natural environment should be nurtured; it provides a social and economic asset and will only continue to provide the natural services, green infrastructure and local distinctiveness that is valued as a competitive draw, if the most important elements are protected and well managed.
- 4.1.4 Planning for the future should secure 'easy liveability' for those living, working, studying and visiting. It must secure timely infrastructure investment that provides for our ambitions, such as health, education and transport, and helps communities interact; connectivity is needed at different scales – neighbourhood, borough, and beyond. We should aim to knit together new and existing communities. Growth should enable more sustainable rural communities at an appropriate scale to meet local needs.

5 Current challenges where improvements are sought:

- 5.1 The Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership considers that it is vital to secure improvements in:
- 5.1.1 **Community safety** - this is consistently raised by residents as the primary issue in making somewhere a good place to live. While crime levels are relatively low it is important to continue the downward trend, and help people feel safe.
- 5.1.2 **Accessibility** - of arterial road and rail links to major hubs, access from rural areas to service centres, and connections across Basingstoke town. These are essential to ensure business competitiveness and support communities. However we need to start to develop realistic alternatives to the car.
- 5.1.3 **Communication** - both physical and virtual infrastructure such as broadband is needed to ensure the vibrancy of enterprise and social interaction. We should be flexible to harness future technologies.
- 5.1.4 **Educational attainment and skills development** – from early years and throughout adulthood, we should be fostering a learning culture to support

individuals and the local economy. We should strengthen the links between education and business.

5.1.5 **Health** – should be promoted through active healthy lifestyles, and top health services, and creating a place where people want to be and can enjoy, including quality open space and community and cultural activities.

5.1.6 **Reducing inequalities and safeguarding the vulnerable** – we should ensure individuals and communities are not isolated or live in fear, and foster community spirit. Regeneration should focus on the areas of disadvantage.

5.1.7 **Developing a vibrant town centre;** that provides easy access to economic, cultural and social amenities, and creates a distinctive sense of place.

6 Future challenges

6.1 The Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership also identified three key challenges for the longer term that will be heightened in the future and will require a joined up response to secure our prosperity.

6.1.1 **Climate change** – reducing our contribution to the causes of climate change and adapting to the local impacts.

6.1.2 **More diverse communities** – ensuring we are considering the needs of all, and planning for welcoming communities.

6.1.3 **More people living longer** – providing for healthy active lives.

7 Responsibilities

7.1 Planning for a positive future is as much about mindset and behaviours as designing facilities and services. We should continue to share information to help us plan together and we should foster a strong culture of getting people involved in planning for their futures, through personal, corporate and community responsibility.

7.2 At the forefront of this we should:

7.2.1 **Consider the needs of all**, ensuring the principles of equality and inclusion, fighting discrimination, safeguarding the vulnerable and reducing inequalities.

7.2.2 **Take on, with pride, our environmental responsibilities**, as stewards of our area, and as global citizens. This means protecting the local environmental assets, and reducing our use of resources. We will safeguard what we need to provide for the future.

7.2.3 **Act smart** – making the most of opportunities, reducing negative impact, whether social, economic or environmental, and taking a holistic view; we will help to ‘make the connections’ and work towards early intervention to support successful communities.

7.2.4 **Be bold** in our ambition, in our design and in our expectations and insistence for excellence. This must include regenerating what we have as well as developing the new. High quality design coupled with accessible, connected services should create places where people want to be.

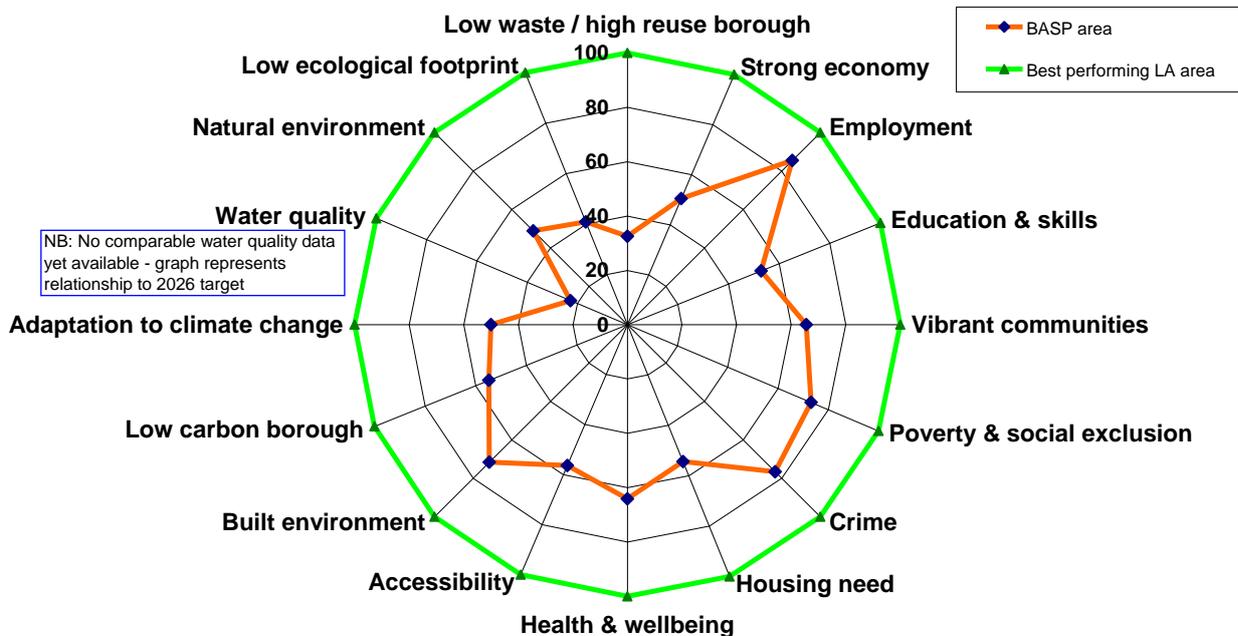
8 First steps

8.1 The vision and challenges above should inform local organisations and groups in planning their activities and how they allocate resources.

8.2 To help us move towards our vision we considered our starting point, our current position using statistics that look in the round at our social, economic and environmental performance. A unique Sustainable Communities Footprint has been generated that illustrates different components of a sustainable community and uses comparable data to inform of the borough's relative position against the national picture.

8.3 The footprint provides a holistic overview of how Basingstoke and Deane compares with a notional best performing local authority area. Each component, or spoke of the wheel, is a composite of a number of indicators.

Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership
Sustainable Communities Footprint in relation to other L A Areas



8.4 This footprint work, though still evolving, reminds us of our collective responsibilities and informed our priorities for *joint* action – recognising we can individually play a role beyond our core remit in improving local quality of life, towards our vision. The footprint will be reviewed periodically.

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9 Our shared priorities for joint action

9.1 Individually, partners are committed to delivering our own priorities in a way that supports the vision, and the principles of sustainable development, equality and inclusion. In addition key shared priorities for the medium term have been agreed for action planning across the Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership. **These, deliberately, cut across existing strategies and action plans for thematic issues, but should inform them as they are reviewed.**

9.2 Over the next three years our priorities for joint action are:

- Focussing on young people
- Focussing on older people and ageing population
- Raising educational aspiration and attainment
- Encouraging involvement and potential
- Ensuring good design
- Fostering environmental responsibility

These are set out in more detail, with proposed outcome measures for each in Appendix A.

9.3 Each year particular areas of focus will be chosen as cross-cutting priorities, informed by resident feedback on priorities, shared intelligence across partners, and identified performance issues.

10 Delivering our shared vision - Our main supporting strategies and action plans

The Local Development Framework delivers the spatial objectives of our vision and contributes to all three themes below, as does the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Plan. In addition, the three elements will be delivered through many strategies and action plans, such as:

Prosperous and thriving:

- Economic Strategy
- A Vision for central Basingstoke and action plan,
- Working with the Local Enterprise Partnership

Connected and vibrant:

- Community Safety Partnership Plan
- The Shared Plan for Health and Wellbeing
- Multi-Agency Diversity Forum Action Plan
- BASP Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council - Housing Homelessness and Benefits Strategy

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- Basingstoke Area Strategic Children's Partnership and work of the Local Children's Partnerships
- Community Planning Protocol

Environmentally responsible and distinctive

- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council – Living Landscapes and
- Climate Change Strategy