



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

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'I believe we are helping to lead the future of public services and in five years' time they will look very different from today!'

Martin Tett, Leader of the Council



Shaken and stirred in Bond country

To many people Buckinghamshire is the epitome of the leafy, prosperous shires, a rural idyll of long drives, country lanes and chocolate box villages.

Like all stereotypes it is only partly true. Buckinghamshire does indeed have lovely countryside, villages that have featured in *Midsomer Murders* and perhaps the occasional long gravel drive, but it also has deprivation and spending challenges.

The front cover of this supplement spotlights two of the historic connections to Buckinghamshire. Firstly, the world famous Pinewood Studios in Iver Heath, home to the James Bond films for more than 50 years. Secondly, and perhaps not so well known, is that the transport of choice for the world's most famous spy, his Aston Martin can also trace its roots back to Buckinghamshire. Exactly 100 years ago, back in 1914, racer Lionel Martin competed in hill climb competitions at Aston Hill just outside Aylesbury. The rest, as they say, is history.

To mix metaphors, and drawing on the county's film studio connection with James Bond, the county – unlike Bond's martinis – has been both shaken and stirred by a combination of recession and funding cuts.

As Buckinghamshire County Council leader Martin Tett says: "Everyone thinks of 'leafy Bucks' but there are significant pockets of deprivation. Yes, there are affluent areas but there are many parts of some towns such as High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Chesham which have more in common with some inner cities. There are parts of the county with a 14-year health gap in life expectancy. Some wards are close to the bottom 20% of deprivation. The stereotype of long drives and leafy lanes isn't true."

Martin, who has worked with big names such as British Airways and BT as well as international joint ventures, and was elected to the county in 2005, says: "Buckinghamshire is the 'Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain'. We have more business start-ups than anywhere else and one of the best educated workforces in the country. We're strong supporters of the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP which did, Government told us, one of the most professional bids for local growth funds based round the 'M40 Growth Corridor' and Aylesbury.

The county has the highest proportion of very high value added companies in Britain with 76% employing fewer than five staff. It also has the highest qualified residents in the country, while business start-ups are 33% above the national

level. However the county is careful to seek to attract the 'right kind of jobs'. Martin adds: "We have major areas of Green Belt and a national Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These constrain us. So we are predominantly a small company, high value added economy. We don't have room for many big sheds."



The first of Team GB's gold medals won on the water in Buckinghamshire

Perhaps surprisingly, considering that its rural charms might make the county resistant to new housing, the county has more new housing than any of the core cities except Leeds. Much of this is based around the central town of Aylesbury. Its proximity to London – under an hour by train – makes the county attractive to commuters. Martin however complains that incentives to build homes are insufficient compensation for counties, saying: "We have to provide the infrastructure for growth but the New Homes Bonus is weighted towards districts. The government has to address this. It can't keep expecting growth when there is insufficient funding for infrastructure and new school places."

One piece of infrastructure the county is dead against is High Speed 2 which passes diagonally through en route to the Midlands and beyond. As Martin says: "The government has fundamentally under-estimated the impact of constructing HS2. Is it a priority to spend £50bn on reducing journey times? The priority should be to link up the great northern cities and reduce commuter congestion. HS2 will just suck business into London."

If HS2 does go ahead he sees the county's role as trying to minimise its impact. "I want to see the maximum mitigation. This is a good example of the county sticking

up for our residents. We can legitimately speak on behalf of them."

The County Council, which celebrates its 125th anniversary this year, has been Conservative since its inception. It is also one of the few local authorities to retain a full grammar school system which has Martin's full support. He explains: "I'm a grammar school pupil myself. My parents were working class Tories from a big Council estate. Grammar schools gave so many of my generation an opportunity for real social mobility and I want them to do the same for this generation and beyond. I don't want a hothouse for only middle class kids."

Financially the county, like all local authorities, has seen government funding sharply cut over the past four years. To reduce costs it shares some of its services with neighbours, like Trading Standards with Surrey CC and the Gypsy and Traveller service with Oxfordshire CC. Its highways maintenance is outsourced, while half its children's centres are run by a third sector organisation. Community groups run many of its libraries, youth clubs and day centres. A trading company sells its services to adult social care clients who have individual budgets along with other self-funders in the county while a new charity-based Buckinghamshire Learning Trust provides high quality support for early years and schools. The county's legal services team has just become the very first to be authorised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority to sell services to the public sector. We are seeing the concept of a more commercial Council, where services are provided outside the county's direct control but over which it still retains responsibility for their quality and performance.

These changes mean a different future role for the county council and its elected members. Rather than a provider it becomes increasingly a commissioner, retaining direct control over high profile services like children's safeguarding, public health and community safety but presiding as a client manager of contracts over a multitude of different providers for other services.

The glue that holds them together will be the county council's brand, its values and the role of the elected members as champions of their communities. Martin's ultimate ambition is to see the county move towards financial self-sufficiency, reducing the current quarter of its net revenue budget which comes from government grant down to near zero.

“The Future Shape programme brands us as the ‘commercially-minded’ Council. We take the best of our public sector ethos and the best of the private sector’s customer focus. We’ve even been to Tesco and Aldi to get lessons.’

Chris M Williams, Chief Executive



Future Shape programme defines the ‘new look’ county council

While managing its external challenges, Buckinghamshire County Council has also had to deal with the impact of budget cuts over the past four years.

Chief Executive Chris Williams explains some of the stark figures: ‘We anticipated the downturn in public finances and in the last four years have taken £85m out of the budget. Our revenue non-schools budget is £320m a year. Our grant is down by 44% over four years and 30% over the next four years when we will take out another £55m-£60m.’

Inevitably staff numbers have dropped. He adds: ‘We’ve delayed management and reduced our non-schools staff from 4500 to 2100. But we’ve managed to protect frontline services. We’ve reduced our property from 20 buildings down to two. We’ve transferred 14 smaller libraries to community groups and youth clubs are run by the voluntary sector. We’re relying much more on the voluntary sector and have driven savings out of our contracts.’

The council’s current change programme, Future Shape, aims to save £50m with all staff encouraged to act as if the council’s budget is their ‘own money.’ The organisation is being divided into four business units. Chris explains: ‘The Future Shape programme brands



us as the ‘commercially-minded’ council. We take the best of our public sector ethos and the best of the private sector’s customer focus. We’ve even been to Tesco and Aldi to get lessons.’

‘There are three main ways of reducing costs. The first is to reduce layers of management down to no more than five decision-making tiers between myself as chief executive and the frontline.

The second is to drive customer traffic online, moving

towards digital self-service. The third is to move away from direct service delivery. Managing demand is also at the centre of every major decision-making process.

Chris continues: ‘At the last count we had 14 different ways of delivery from outsourcing and trust arrangements to the voluntary sector. It’s this mixed market

‘Members are champions of the community inside the council and champions of the county inside the community.’

approach that’s proving so successful and you can read more about some of the trading units we’ve established in the centre spread of this supplement.

In future the HQ set up for the Council could be as little as 150 staff looking after the county’s central strategy, policy, communications, democratic services and assurance functions. It will be a very different shaped council in the future but still at its heart will beat a strong democratic mandate.



Taking a 'commercial approach' from



Buckinghamshire Care

Launched in October 2013, this unit delivers services designed to offer choice, inclusion, independence and support opportunities for both individuals and their communities across Buckinghamshire and beyond.

The organisation helps and supports thousands of adults across three key areas – ‘at home’, through its reablement and laundry services, ‘in the community’ – via day opportunities centres and a respite service, as well as ‘specialist services’ such as a supported employment scheme.

Buckinghamshire Care’s services support many people, including those with a learning disability and/or those requiring mental health and well-being support.

They also support adults living with autism, people with sensory, physical and cognitive impairments and older adults including those with dementia and other long-term complex conditions.

Contact details for more information
Tel: 0333 121 0201
E-mail: info@buckinghamshirecare.co.uk
www.buckinghamshirecare.co.uk

Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB)

Established in 2009, TfB is an alliance between Ringway Jacobs and the County Council. The contract includes routine road and footway maintenance, street lighting, transport services and systems, rights of way, casualty reduction, parking, asset management and capital works. The contract makes year on year efficiency savings by continually reviewing and improving its delivery. TfB has a flexible approach to service provision and is governed by a small County Council client team. With emphasis on working in the community, local area technicians work closely with county councillors and parishes to manage works. The County is currently considering devolving some TfB services, particularly grass cutting, to the local communities and TfB will once again transform its service to accommodate this. TfB remains a flexible organisation able to adjust its service provision to suit the needs of the County Council as its client.

Contact details for more information
Tel: 0845 2302882 or 01296 382416
E-mail: tfb@buckscc.gov.uk
www.transportforbucks.net
Twitter @tfbalerts
www.buckscc.gov.uk/transport



The Roald Dahl Festival is now an annual fixture of Aylesbury life in the first weekend of July each year



The main museum premises offers potential for new events and refurbished galleries under trust leadership

Buckinghamshire County Museum Trust

The Trust took over operation of the County Museum in August 2014, following 18 months of detailed negotiations about staffing, legal and support agreements. This ran in parallel with the preparation of a transformative bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for development of the Museum Resource Centre into a more public facing facility. Staff, including the new Director, were appointed from April and transferred under TUPE arrangements. Other benefits include access to the gift aid scheme for paid admissions to the Roald Dahl Gallery, fully repaired lease on premises, lower employer costs due to the different age structure of staff and large business rate savings for the charity.

Contact details for more information
Tel: 01296 382119
E-mail: rdepeyer@buckscountymuseum.org
www.buckscc.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/county-museum/

Buckinghamshire is a rapidly changing Council, re-engineering itself to go 'further, faster and cheaper' than ever before. At the heart of this direction is a drive to be more commercially minded, and this will see a small headquarters 'core' with services delivered through business units and a series of tailored delivery units. In essence, the best of the private sector infusing with change at the cutting edge of public service provision. A range of new delivery units are already up and running, each tailored and organised to achieve the best possible service outcomes for local residents and with the ability to trade and generate income.

concept to reality...



Adventure Learning Foundation

In 2013, the Council entered into an agreement with the Adventure Learning Foundation (ALF), a charitable trust developed to run the County Council's two outdoor education centres, Green Park at Aston Clinton and Shortenills at Chalfont St Giles, in partnership with Marlow-based Longridge Activity Centre. Green Park, an ex-Rothschild estate, provides an extensive range of adventurous outdoor and indoor activities, as well as comprehensive conferencing services, and accommodation. Shortenills nestles within a stunning collection of wooded meadows in Chalfont St Giles and has a small but passionate team dedicated to teaching a variety of environmental studies to young people.

Contact details for more information:

Tel: 0330 303 0101

Green Park

Email – bookings@alfcharity.org

www.green-park.org.uk



Shortenills

E-mail: Shortenills@alfcharity.org

www.shortenills.org.uk



Buckinghamshire Learning Trust

The Trust is a new, independent charity focused on improving educational outcomes for children and young people. Now into its second year, it is achieving exceptional results by working closely with the County Council and Buckinghamshire schools and early years settings. More Buckinghamshire children than ever before now attend schools that Ofsted consider to be Good or Outstanding, and Buckinghamshire is "closing the gap" in achievement faster than any comparable authority.

Led by a visionary new leadership team under former private equity CEO, Raza Khan, the Trust is driven by a commitment to "high standards and outstanding outcomes, with no excuses".

This year, BLT will be launching the country's biggest programme of school reviews, whilst continuing to ensure that children with Special Educational Needs are effectively supported in school, and to raise standards across the County, including in its most disadvantaged wards.

Schools considered by Ofsted to be Inadequate or to Require Improvement are moving out of these categories faster than ever before, and the Trust is supporting Buckinghamshire schools with a revitalised programme of teacher training, governor support, specialist teaching and curriculum advice. For the taxpayer, the Trust is also doing "more for less" with public money.

Contact details for more information:

Tel: 01296 383342

E-mail: enquiries@learningtrust.net

www.learningtrust.net

Buckinghamshire Law Plus

The Council has recently become the first local authority in the country to be granted a licence by the Solicitors Regulation Authority to transform its legal team into an independent legal practice. The ground-breaking decision, announced in August, means that the Council's in-house solicitors will be able to operate as a private limited company called 'Buckinghamshire Law Plus'.

The new company will combine the legal expertise of the Council's team with that of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority to provide legal services to local authorities and the public, voluntary and charitable sectors. Customers will reap the benefit of having a trusted, and extremely competitively-priced, law firm at their disposal.

Buckinghamshire Law Plus has access to experienced solicitors in all areas of the law, while the income generation will bring in revenue for the Council.

Contact details for more information:

Tel: 01296 383689

E-mail: mcaprio@buckscc.gov.uk



Buckinghamshire Law Plus

Quality. Affordability. Excellence.

Bucks sets the trend

Building on the county's enterprising spirit



We are creating a dynamic business environment in the 'Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain,' says Philippa Batting, managing director of Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF). This is not an idle boast. It is a statement of fact evidenced by an impressive raft of statistics that show the county is exceeding national levels of achievement. Bucks is not so much bucking the trend as leading it.

The county outstrips national averages for productivity, enterprise, employment and growth while, at the opposite end of the scale, recording low levels of joblessness.

In statistical terms; Buckinghamshire has the fourth highest productivity in the UK, bettered only by the two halves of London (west and east) and Berkshire. More than 75% of Buckinghamshire's businesses have fewer than five employees, the highest percentage in the country; the local economy grew 3.8% in 2011 – the second highest rate of growth in the UK; unemployment figures, conversely, show just 1.1% of the population claiming job seekers allowance.

'The role of Buckinghamshire Business First,' says the organisation's head of economic research, Rupert Waters, 'is to make it as easy as possible to open a successful business here.' This aim builds on a long-standing tradition of entrepreneurship. BBF, which Government has recognised as Buckinghamshire's growth hub, began work two years ago backed by Buckinghamshire County Council and a six-figure sum contributed by local businesses. This has been augmented by £2.4 million from UK and European agencies to deliver programmes of business support, creating up to 900 local jobs. The County Council's Director of Growth & Strategy, Stephen Walford, is keen to highlight how successful this genuine partnership with the private sector continues to be, 'as a platform for our shared economic ambition and future success.' More than 5,000 companies have become BBF members. BBF works closely with the LEP – Buckinghamshire Thames Valley – and nominates the five business members to its board.

The most prominent industry sectors in Buckinghamshire's economy are the life sciences, with

such internationally renowned names as GE Healthcare and Johnson and Johnson but also Stoke Mandeville Hospital with its world-beating spinal injuries expertise that gave birth to the paralympic movement.

Creative industries are ably represented by Pinewood Studios, whose blockbuster film credits include a host of James Bond movies, Superman, Pirates of the Caribbean and, currently, the latest instalment of Star Wars. The studios also support a further 200 companies. Technical creativity in the county is further enhanced by the presence of internet security and anti-virus software supplier McAfee. Professional services are represented by a range of companies that include the leading experts in risk management solutions Dun & Bradstreet and the

Share Centre. Major sports-related industries include Formula One's presence at Silverstone and Wycombe Wanderers Football Club in High Wycombe. All of which underlines the diverse, yet highly skilled, nature of the county workforce, a factor clearly not lost on the 700-plus international companies which have made Buckinghamshire their European base.

There are, of course, challenges to be faced, explains Rupert. 'Local schools are high quality but 19 out of 20 university graduates who originate from Buckinghamshire do not return to the county to pursue their careers.' Efforts are being made, working with schools and colleges, for businesses to encourage more young people setting out on their careers, to recognise what their home county has to offer. 'They will be showcasing the opportunities, particularly emphasising the benefits to be had from working in small businesses,' says Philippa.

A further challenge arises from Buckinghamshire's principal asset, its natural beauty. Much of the county is rural with small market towns and picturesque villages. Not surprisingly, rural based industries are plentiful. In the past year rural areas increased their share of total employment in Buckinghamshire to 27.8%, the highest level on record. Some 15% of the workforce works from home. But continued growth relies on efficient broadband connectivity so BBF is involved in two partnerships, teaming up with Hertfordshire through Connected Counties and also working with Oxfordshire Business First to create Digital Business First, bringing pressure to bear on government and on BT to push for total broadband coverage throughout the UK.

New developments underway in the County currently include Handy Cross, near junction 4 of the M40 where new leisure, retail, office and hotel facilities will create jobs close to High Wycombe. Construction of the first phase began this spring. And while central London is only a short train journey away, one task for the future is to persuade those commuters heading into the metropolis of the advantages of setting up business locally, or indeed encouraging Londoners to commute out of the city for work, rest and relaxation in beautiful Buckinghamshire.

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Balancing act

Promoting growth while protecting beauty

Two main towns – Aylesbury and High Wycombe, many market towns and hundreds of villages are dotted around spectacular countryside, one third of which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with another third as Green Belt. That amounts to considerable levels of protection in an area that is also a growing South East county required to accommodate new housing, promote new business, and enhance leisure and tourism. ‘The economy stimulates the environment and the environment stimulates the economy,’ says Neil Gibson, Buckinghamshire County Council’s managing director for transport, economy and environment, and that phrase underscores the potential and the challenges confronting the Council.

One such trade-off is the project, now well-advanced, to build an energy from waste (EfW) plant at Greatmoor in the north of the county. Having overcome widespread opposition the plant is now under construction and will begin operations in February 2016. Built at an existing landfill site, and serviced by rail as well as new roads that by-pass local villages, the plant will take 252,500 tonnes of waste each year generating sufficient electricity to power 36,000 homes. It will enable the county council to reduce the £11m annual landfill costs, saving the council over £150m over the life of the contract.

The rail link to the plant has led the county council to think laterally about the potential for boosting the environment. Cllr Lesley Clarke OBE, Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment outlines the Bernwood Opportunity Zone which will encompass a large swathe of land which incorporates the EfW plant site. The area

is founded on a 12th century royal hunting forest and still features some ancient woodland as well as farmland and large private estates. ‘We can mitigate the effect of major infrastructure developments like EfW by planting new woodland and bringing leisure use to the lakes in the area with sustainable tourism,’ she says. Added to this is the East-West rail project which will be extended and developed as part of a £500m project that will link Bedford, Aylesbury, Milton Keynes, Bicester and Oxford. The line will be electrified permitting speeds of up to 100 mph and will be operational by 2019. This improvement in rail transport over road building will provide an environmentally friendly boost to the economy of north Buckinghamshire.

Mrs Clarke also points to plans for increased leisure opportunities in the south of the county alongside the River Thames near Marlow, where gravel extraction over many years has created lakes that can be developed into a new country park. There are also two existing parks nearby, Langley Park, famed nationally for its rhododendrons, and Black Park, which is regularly used by Pinewood Studios for filming scenes for blockbuster movies. This generates welcome income that supports the self-financing of the Parks. All such developments that encourage greater use of the outdoor environment also feed into the authority’s policies to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, so critical to its public health responsibilities.

The county council also has an emerging energy strategy to take advantage of its abundant natural resources. Some 70% of the local woodland is not managed and

the authority has a biomass action plan looking at ways of developing such opportunities. By increasing the use of biomass across the county and the Chiltern Hills the authority is seeking to promote a local green economy that would benefit woodland owners by providing a market for their timber while helping to cut fuel costs. Bringing woodland into management would also help strengthen biodiversity. ‘The National Trust at Hughenden Manor – Disraeli’s former home – has been replacing oil-fired heating with woodchips from their own woodland,’ says Mrs Clarke, adding, ‘We have just awarded a contract for nine biomass boilers in our schools and other buildings which will generate income of £6m over 20 years via the Government’s Renewable Heat Incentive and heat sales.’

Such plans go hand in hand with the fact that, since 2009, the authority has also operated a ring-fenced £2m energy efficiency loan fund to finance measures such as cavity wall and loft insulation and efficient lighting. Projects completed using the fund are calculated to have generated over £8m in savings.

Buckinghamshire’s attractions certainly have worldwide appeal. The 2012 Olympics and Paralympic rowing competition was held at Eton Dorney, Stoke Mandeville Hospital is the birthplace of the Paralympic movement, Formula One races at Silverstone, the expertise of Pinewood Studios entrails a global audience. And wherever you are in Buckinghamshire the unspoilt acres of protected countryside are never far away. Keeping these competing pressures in balance is one of the county council’s outstanding achievements.



Changing the course of Paralympic history

Stoke Mandeville fully deserves its recognition for the part it played in helping develop the Paralympic movement. Ever since Dr Ludwig Guttman organised the first sporting event for disabled people in the grounds of the hospital in July 1948, the movement has gone from strength to strength. In March this year, the first ever Heritage Flame Lighting changed the course of Paralympic history forever, as all future winter and summer Paralympic Torch Relays will feature a flame that has been lit at Stoke Mandeville, the rightful birthplace of the Paralympic movement.

After its humble beginnings in 1948, Stoke Mandeville went on to host the first international sporting event for disabled people in 1952 and these continued annually up to and beyond the first Paralympic Games in Rome in 1960. In 1984, it even stepped in at late notice to co-host the Paralympic Games with New York. In recent years, Stoke Mandeville Stadium has hosted numerous international sporting competitions; international training camps and the ever growing programme of development camps. Many of these have been hosted by WheelPower the owners of Stoke Mandeville Stadium and the national charity for Wheelchair Sport.

Stoke Mandeville's connection with the Paralympic movement was firmly cemented at the London 2012 Games. The Paralympic mascot was named 'Mandeville', the Mandeville Legacy programme was established as a major strand of the Cultural Olympiad and the Stadium at Stoke Mandeville was selected as the starting point for the Paralympic Torch Relay.

To keep the momentum going after London, a new Buckinghamshire Legacy Board was established to use the status as the birthplace of the Paralympic movement as the catalyst to help deliver more opportunities for inward investment, healthcare, sport, tourism, culture and education. The board brought together top level representatives



from across the public and private sector to help raise aspirations and deliver a programme of activity befitting the unique status of the county.

One of the fundamental challenges for the new board was to ensure that Stoke Mandeville played a direct role in all future Paralympic Games. Following discussions between the Legacy Board, the International Paralympic Committee and the British Paralympic Association it was agreed in 2013 that Stoke Mandeville and Great Britain will always stage one leg of the Paralympic Torch Relay starting with the Sochi 2014 winter games.

On the evening of March 1st 2014, the Stadium hosted a spectacular celebration based around a nine metre high 'sphere' powered by Paralympic Champion Hannah Cockroft to create the spark for the Paralympic Heritage Flame. The ceremony was broadcast live on Channel 4 and was showcased in a fantastic film documentary narrated by Sir Ian McKellen that was featured as part of the opening ceremony in Sochi.

The event was delivered by a multi-organisational team led by the County Council and Aylesbury Vale District

Council, together with Aylesbury Town Council and WheelPower amongst other supporters as part of the Legacy Board. The creative programme for the celebrations was devised by Bradley Hemmings and his team from the Greenwich International Festival and was supported by a grant from Arts Council England.

International Paralympic Committee President, Sir Philip Craven described the "enthusiasm, skill and passion shown within the celebrations as chiming perfectly with the Paralympic Spirit." Work is now well underway on planning for the Rio summer games in 2016 and in seeing how the international event can be used to drive new opportunities for Buckinghamshire.



For many of the Legacy Board partners, the most significant opportunity centres around further economic investment, particularly through the development of healthcare technologies to help independent living. On the sporting front, Leap, the County Sport and Activity Partnership, have identified the development of a new coach development programme looking directly at the needs of disability sport as one of its core priorities.

To find out more details, [please visit www.buckslegacy.org](http://www.buckslegacy.org)