



Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029 consultation

Open date: 8 November 2023

Close date: 18 January 2024

Name: Planning, Growth and Sustainability

Email: housingconsulteecomments@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Overview

We want to hear your views on our draft Housing Strategy for Buckinghamshire.

We want everyone to have a suitable, secure and affordable place to live – our Housing Strategy shows what we will do to make this happen.

The strategy sets out:

- the housing challenges and opportunities in Buckinghamshire
- our approach to tackling housing needs
- how we will work together with all the partners involved in delivering housing in Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire Council is not itself a housing landlord – we do not let or manage any affordable housing. Instead, we play a role in enabling new affordable housing development and ensuring that Registered Providers and private landlords provide an affordable and well maintained housing stock.

This will be Buckinghamshire's first countywide Housing Strategy.

We want to hear your views on our draft priorities and actions.

Priorities and actions

To achieve the strategy, we have created 3 equally important draft priorities:

- **responding to the needs of our diverse population**

- **better homes:** good quality, sustainable and matched to need
- **new homes:** affordable, accessible and appropriate

Each priority includes:

- what we will do to achieve it
- the challenges Buckinghamshire faces
- actions we are doing now
- proposed actions for up to 2029

How the strategy has been developed

The strategy has been developed with a wide range of partners and we will continue working together to deliver it.

We have:

- built on the work of the Buckinghamshire Affordable Housing Statement adopted in May 2022.
- worked with housing and voluntary organisations to better understand key housing issues in Buckinghamshire
- reviewed population information and housing information to understand demand, conditions and affordability.

Other strategies supporting housing in Buckinghamshire

The Housing Strategy is one of our plans to make sure everyone has a suitable, secure and affordable place to live.

Our other plans and policies include:

- Allocations Policy – by which we let affordable housing in Buckinghamshire.
- Buckinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2025 – which sets out priorities for both preventing and tackling homelessness.
- Buckinghamshire Tenancy Strategy – which sets out what we expect from our registered housing providers for the tenancies and rent levels of affordable housing.

Related documents and links

Before you respond to this activity, please have a look at the following documents and links at <https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/>

- Draft Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029 – Executive summary
- Draft Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029 – Full strategy

How to have your say

You can tell us your views in one of the following ways:

- complete the online survey at <https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/>
- complete, and return, a printed version of the survey below
- email us at housingconsulteecomments@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- write to us at Housing Strategy Consultation, Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF.

If you have any questions about this consultation, please email us at housingconsulteecomments@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Please tell us your views by midnight on Thursday 18 January 2024.

What happens next

We will review all the responses we receive and use this feedback to update the Housing Strategy. The strategy will then be presented to Buckinghamshire Council's Council for approval. The feedback will also be used to guide and inform the annual Housing Strategy action plans.

Privacy

We will use the information you provide here only for this activity. We will store the information securely in line with data protection laws and will not share or publish any personal details. For more information about data and privacy, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

If you have questions about data and privacy, please email us on dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk. Or write to our Data Protection Officer at Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF.

Printed consultation survey

Responding to the needs of our diverse population

We will:

- understand and respond to the housing issues and needs
- enable the fair, consistent, and effective allocation of tenancies for affordable housing via Bucks Home Choice Register
- adopt an effective and proactive approach to address Temporary Accommodation (TA) and Homelessness increases in number of placements and costs
- identify, specify, and deliver housing options for groups with particular needs, including:
 - care leavers
 - key workers
 - persons leaving the Armed Forces
 - older people
 - persons with a physical and/or learning disability or mental health needs

1. Do you agree or disagree that 'responding to the needs of our diverse population' should be a priority for the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

What we are already doing to respond to the needs of our diverse population:

- managing the social housing allocations process through Bucks Home Choice
- providing a homelessness and housing advice service under Part VII of the Housing Act
- providing temporary accommodation to homeless households

- producing an updated Allocations Policy for Buckinghamshire – this will ensure robust processes are in place for delivery of the Bucks Home Choice scheme and allocations process, including clear workflows and regular monitoring and cross checking of applications to ensure consistency of approach and fairness
- meeting with Registered Providers on a regular basis and as part of the Buckinghamshire Housing Management Forum
- working with registered partners and private developers to deliver suitable adapted/adaptable dwellings through planning obligations and other opportunities

Other actions we will take to respond to the needs of our diverse population:

- produce a new Tenancy Strategy including guidelines for Registered Providers on Affordable Rent levels
- develop a Supported Housing Strategy which will include prospective housing delivery for older persons, persons with physical disabilities, and other types of supported housing
- achieve the targets for developing affordable housing options as set out in the Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care Accommodation Market Analysis November 2022
- work with Registered Providers and other housing developers to understand role played by sheltered housing and other accommodation for older people in the area and whether some housing schemes should be remodelled to better meet current needs
 - Consider innovative new options for specialist housing (for example: extra-care villages with a dementia inclusive design)
- with our partners, produce a housing options guide for younger people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); ensure appropriate advice and signposting is available to make good choices
- explore ways of increasing the number of one bed properties available in the private and social rented sectors which would be suitable for young people, including care leavers under the agreed Pathways Protocol

2. Do you think these are the right actions to achieve this priority?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

3. Please tell us the reasons for your answers:

If you think there are any other actions to achieve this priority, please tell us here.

Better homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need

We will:

- ensure that Registered Providers are actively maintaining and improving the quality of their homes
- ensure that the private rented sector maintains and improves the quality of rental properties
- work to ensure that best use is made of existing housing
- improve the accessibility of new and existing homes

4. Do you agree or disagree that ‘better homes: good quality, sustainable and matched to need’ should be a priority for the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

What we are already doing to achieve better homes:

- supporting the Buckinghamshire Council Energy Doctor scheme (funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund)
- supporting sustainable warmth upgrade grant programmes, such as Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2), Solar Together, which are being carried out by Buckinghamshire Council

- through our work with houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), we are delivering increased levels of safe and secure accommodation for single people
- the Buckinghamshire Disabilities Facilities Grants and Housing Improvement and Adaptations Policy is being updated to ensure that it continues to achieve the following:
 - improve and promote the physical and mental health of residents
 - prevent accidents
 - enable residents to live safely at home, as independently as possible, for longer
 - reduce hospital admissions and enable speedy discharge from hospital
 - make best use of adapted and adaptable accommodation

Other actions we will take to achieve better homes:

- work with Registered Providers and other care/support agencies to agree best ways to tackle under-occupation, including incentives where appropriate in order to generate more turnover in family-sized accommodation

5. Do you think these are the right actions to achieve this priority?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

6. Please tell us the reasons for your answers:

If you think there are any other actions to achieve this priority, please tell us here.

New homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate

We will:

- support and enable Registered Providers in delivering new affordable homes, including for those with special needs
- explore the use of local authority assets and resources for the purposes of delivering additional new housing
- ensure that residential development (including Affordable Housing) is considered in regeneration strategies, brownfield and redevelopment proposals for mixed use developments where appropriate

7. Do you agree or disagree that 'New homes: affordable, accessible and appropriate' should be a priority for the Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

What we are already doing to achieve new homes:

- working with Registered Providers to facilitate delivery of new schemes, helping to identify sites and secure funding as appropriate
- supporting Registered Providers with funding for garage-site developments
- ensuring that housing (including affordable housing) is included in regeneration plans by the Council and partners

Other actions we will take to achieve new homes:

- work proactively to ensure that the planning process accelerates delivery of affordable housing applications in acceptable locations
- explore opportunities for 'build to rent' schemes, including the use of institutional investment.
- explore opportunities for the Council to deliver more housing utilising its land, property and financial assets, including any potential role for Consilio, the council's property company

- Consilio was set up by South Bucks Council in 2017 as a wholly owned local authority trading company to allow the council to facilitate income generation
 - it has now transferred to Buckinghamshire Council
 - it owns a limited number of property assets
- identify three council-owned sites to bring forward for new development and complete these developments by 2027 – three new developments completed and let by December 2027
- agree priorities for capital funding (including commuted sums) and implement a list of priorities for section 106 monies to be developed

8. Do you think these are the right actions to achieve this priority?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

9. Please tell us the reasons for your answers:

If you think there are any other actions to achieve this priority, please tell us here.

How we developed the draft Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029

In May 2022, we adopted an affordable housing position statement. This set out our approach to support and increase the delivery of affordable housing. We have built on the work of the affordable housing statement in our draft Housing Strategy.

We have worked with housing and voluntary organisations to better understand key housing issues in Buckinghamshire.

We have also reviewed key housing data, including:

- an overview of Buckinghamshire, including the results of the Census 2021 and the indices of multiple deprivation 2019
- housing demand, including homeless statistics, housing register and allocations data, research into housing needs among special needs groups in Buckinghamshire
- housing conditions, including information from registered providers on stock condition and government data on Energy Performance Certificates and fuel poverty
- housing affordability, including earnings data and house price/rental data

More information on how we have developed the draft Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029 is included in the full draft Strategy.

10.If you think there is anything else we should consider when developing the Housing Strategy, please tell us here:

Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029

11.How easy was the draft Housing Strategy to understand?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Very easy
- Somewhat easy
- Not very easy
- Not at all easy
- I don't know

If you think we could make the Housing Strategy easier to understand, please tell us how:

12.If you have any other comments about the draft Buckinghamshire Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029, that you have not already mentioned, please tell us here:

About you

We will use the information you provide here only for the purpose of this activity. We will store the information securely in line with data protection laws and will not share or publish any personal details.

13.Which of the following describe you?

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- I live in Buckinghamshire
- I work in Buckinghamshire
- I study in Buckinghamshire
- I represent a Tenants' or Residents' association in Buckinghamshire
- I represent a registered housing provider in Buckinghamshire
- I represent a private landlord organisation
- I represent or own a business in Buckinghamshire
- I represent a community or voluntary group in Buckinghamshire
- I am an elected representative in Buckinghamshire

- I represent a Parish / Town Council or Town Committee in Buckinghamshire
- I work for Buckinghamshire Council
- Other (please give details below):

14. How did you find out about this consultation?

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- Local media (newspaper, radio or TV)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Nextdoor
- Buckinghamshire Council website or Your Voice Bucks website
- Buckinghamshire Council newsletter
- From Buckinghamshire Council staff
- Through working at Buckinghamshire Council
- Poster
- Word of mouth
- Local Community Board
- Local Councillor
- Local Parish / Town Council
- Other (please give details below):

15. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation (e.g. a business or a voluntary group)?

Please tick (✓) one option

- As an individual (go to question 17)
- On behalf of an organisation

On behalf of an organisation

16. Please provide the following details:

Name of organisation:

Your job title:

End of survey if responding on behalf of an organisation

More about you

We want to hear from as many people as possible to understand the views and needs across Buckinghamshire. The following questions help us see if the communities we serve have had the opportunity to be heard through this activity.

All questions are optional. You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer.

17. What is your postcode?

We want to understand the views of people living in different areas. You don't have to provide your postcode, but it helps us plan and make considered decisions.

18. What is your age?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of different age groups.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Under 16
- 16 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 to 84
- Over 85
- Prefer not to say

19. Do you consider yourself to have a disability / disabilities, impairment(s) or long term health condition(s)?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of disabled people, people with impairments and people with long term health conditions.

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- Disability / disabilities
- Impairment(s)
- Long term health condition(s)
- No
- Prefer not to say

20. Are you:

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of different sexes.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

21. How would you describe your ethnicity?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of different ethnicities.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Asian - British
- Asian - Bangladeshi
- Asian - Chinese
- Asian - Indian
- Asian - Pakistani
- Any other Asian background - Please give details below
- Black - African
- Black - British
- Black - Caribbean

- Any other Black, African or Caribbean background - Please give details below
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black British
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - Mixed or Multiple Ethnic backgrounds British
- Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background - Please give details below
- White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- White - Irish
- White - Gypsy or English traveller
- White - Irish Traveller
- White - European
- Any other White background - Please give details below
- Other ethnic group - Arab
- Other ethnic group - Arab British
- Other ethnic group - Please give details below
- Prefer not to say

Please give other details here:

22. Which of the following describes your home?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of people living in different homes.

What we mean by affordability scheme: These are affordable housing options to help people own a home, including Help to Buy, Right to Buy and First Homes.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Own my home (without a mortgage)
- Own my home (with a mortgage)

- Own my home through an affordability scheme (without a mortgage)
- Own my home through an affordability scheme (with a mortgage)
- Shared ownership (buy a share of your home and pay rent on the rest)
- Rent from a private landlord
- Rent from a housing association
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please give details below):

23. Which of the following describe your household?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of people living in different households.

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- I live on my own
- I live with my partner
- I live with friends / flatmates / housemates
- I live with a house/flat/bungalow in which more than household is living (a house/flat in multiple occupation)
- I live with children under 18
- I live with children over 18
- I live with my parents
- Other (please give details below):

24. What is your employment status?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of people with different employment statuses.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-employed full-time or part-time
- Unemployed

- Retired
- Carer
- Student
- Looking after the family or home
- Long-term illness or condition that prevents you from working
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please give details below):

End of the survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please return your completed survey by midnight on 18 January 2024. You can:

- email it to: housingconsulteecomments@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- post it to: Housing Strategy Consultation, Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF.