

County Council Update from County Cllr Anne Wight July 2019

Children's Services Update

Buckinghamshire County Council is making 'steady progress' to improve children's services, with most children "receiving helpful support when they are first referred to children's social care", according to Ofsted in its monitoring letter published on Monday, 17 June.

The letter outlines the results of a visit made to the council's children's services in May 2019. This was the third 'monitoring visit', following the outcome of the November 2017 inadequate judgement made by Ofsted.

Inspectors considered a range of evidence, including case records, discussions with social workers and managers, and reviewing other supporting documentation.

The report noted the senior leadership team is "steadfastly determined to improve the quality of services for children" and that "substantial improvements" have been made to areas of the service which had previously fallen short. It added that the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) systems are "efficient, leading to timely and decisive action for most children".

The report stated that management oversight of services had been strengthened and social work caseloads have reduced, leaving social workers better able to support children and families.

Areas needing further improvement were also highlighted – these included some inconsistencies in certain practices within the MASH and assessment teams. While responses to clients were deemed to be mostly effective, there can be unnecessary delays in some processes and some areas of work – while generally improving - can sometimes be of variable quality.

Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services said: "This is another encouraging report and confirms that our work to improve children's services in Buckinghamshire is proceeding well.

"There is no doubt we have more to do, however, to deliver the services that children in Buckinghamshire deserve. We are determined to continue our efforts to make the improvements highlighted in this report.

“We are grateful to all our staff for their hard work and dedication as we work to further strengthen our services.”

Fly Tipping in Bucks on Channel 5 Documentary

The exhaustive work carried out by County Council enforcement officers in the war against fly tippers in Buckinghamshire features in a brand new Channel 5 documentary series starting this week.

The six-part programme, 'Grime and Punishment' follows the hidden army of Council enforcement teams and inspectors up and down the country who work tirelessly to nail those who think nothing of blotting the country's towns and countryside with their mess and rubbish.

As one of a number of local authorities featured, Buckinghamshire was selected because of its zero-tolerance approach to fly tipping and continuing success in bringing perpetrators to justice.

Film crews followed the work of two enforcement officers, David Rounding and Matt Shutter as they hunted for clues and interviewed witnesses to help bring fly tippers to justice. On average, one fly tipper is successfully prosecuted in Buckinghamshire every week, one of the highest rates in the country.

Buckinghamshire County Council Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment, Bill Chapple OBE, praised the programme for spotlighting the tireless work by council officials to combat those intent on destroying the country's environment.

"As far as Buckinghamshire is concerned, our message is clear: fly tippers are not welcome and we will use the full force of the law to prosecute whenever possible. Through the hard work of people like David and Matt, we are now seeing a reduction in fly tipping across the county for the first time in six years, which is great news.

"We also do a lot of awareness raising and education particularly around people's legal responsibility to dispose of their waste correctly. The last thing we want to do is knock on someone's door having found their waste dumped by an unscrupulous trader they might have used in good faith.

"Programmes like Grime and Punishment help get those important messages across and we were delighted to have taken part," he added.

Commentating on their appearance, David and Matt said: "It's all in a day's work for us. Whether we're visiting fly tips, giving advice to local residents or preparing cases for court, our single aim is to rid Buckinghamshire of fly tipping for good. Everything we do that helps towards achieving this means a better, cleaner environment for our residents."

The first episode of Grime and Punishment started at 8pm Thursday, June 13 on Channel 5.

David and Matt's work in Buckinghamshire features in episode five, scheduled to air at 8pm on Thursday, July 11.

The series was filmed by multi-award winning Lambent Productions Ltd, based in Brighton.

For further information about preventing fly tipping in Buckinghamshire, please visit <https://www.recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk/scrap-fly-tipping/>

Illegal dumping can be reported at www.fixmystreet.buckscc.gov.uk

Planning applications CM/0017/19 and CM/0018/19

After a fairly robust debate, these planning applications were approved by the Development Control Committee at BCC on 1st July. I will keep my parishes informed as to any further developments or S106 conditions on these applications as and when such information becomes available.

Heathrow Expansion Consultation

The Airport Expansion Consultation runs from 18th June until 13th September 2019 and gives residents the opportunity to provide feedback on Heathrow's proposals for the future layout of the airport, including the new runway and other airport infrastructure such as terminals and road access.

Residents will also be able to have a say on plans to manage the environmental impacts of expansion, including a proposed Heathrow Ultra Low Emissions Zone, Heathrow Vehicle Access Charge and a proposed 6.5-hour ban on scheduled night flights.

The expansion at Heathrow may have knock-on effects for air traffic in our area coming into Luton airport, so please do have a look at the plans if you wish to express a view.

<https://www.heathrowconsultation.com>