

Buckinghamshire Council
Via email: planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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To whom it may concern,

RE: Buckinghamshire draft Local Plan

Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. As the main provider of acute, community, and specialist healthcare services across the county, we are committed to ensuring that future growth is supported by appropriate health and care infrastructure to continue to support the Buckinghamshire population to live healthy, more independent lives.

Our key feedback is as follows:

Anticipated Population Growth and Health Impact

We recognise the need to meet Buckinghamshire's future housing and employment requirements but feel that greater consideration needs to be taken of the significant implications of population increases on health service provision: modelling for 2.5 people per household, the Local Plan could represent an increase of c.250,000 people. An increase in the local population (depending on the types of increase) could mean:

- Overall increase in need for healthcare services across the board, including emergency, maternity and all other planned and unplanned care
- Higher incidence of long-term conditions and cancer diagnoses
- Increased demand for family, and children and young people's services
- Greater demand for elderly and frailty services, including community rehabilitation and palliative care

We do not receive greater infrastructure funding from the Department of Health & Social Care when local population increases, and the scale of development proposed must therefore be matched by strategic investment in health and care infrastructure, ensuring access to high-quality, sustainable services for all residents, particularly with respect to a potentially changing spread of care needs across the geography of the county. We would also emphasise the need for housing to meet the needs of an aging population, including provision for care homes and/or supporting housing.



Strengthening Neighbourhood and Community Care

We strongly support a neighbourhood-based model of care as set out in the recently approved Joint Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing strategy aiming to provide integrated care with primary care, council and VCSE services. We believe the Local Plan presents an important opportunity to:

- Embed local health and wellbeing services within new communities to enable early intervention and self-care.
- Ensure co-location of health, social care, and voluntary services to deliver joined-up support close to where people live.
- Design developments that facilitate care closer to home.
- Co-design integrated neighbourhood care with newly established communities.

To achieve this, health partners should be involved early in planning developer contributions for local healthcare facilities. In particular, we should be considering collective planning for health infrastructure in an integrated way with all partners rather than looking at different forms of provision (primary, secondary care, etc.) in isolation. Additionally, we would strongly encourage the Council to consider timing for developer contributions and whether funds could be held by the Council. Developer contributions are needed upfront to ensure that the healthcare provision and infrastructure is in place in advance of the additional demand and to mitigate the likelihood of new facilities and infrastructure being unaffordable by the time the money flows.

As part of this we are keen to continue working with council and other partners to as part of One Public Estate to provide maximum value for our residents.

Supporting the Wider Determinants of Health

We welcome the Local Plan's emphasis on creating healthy, sustainable places. It is vital that health and wellbeing considerations are embedded across all policy areas, particularly in relation to:

- Active travel infrastructure (safe walking and cycling routes to schools, workplaces, and healthcare facilities).
- High-quality, energy-efficient housing that supports physical and mental wellbeing – indeed, this presents opportunity to improve the living conditions for those currently occupying poor housing which may be having a detrimental effect on their health.
- Access to green and open spaces that promote physical activity and community cohesion.

These elements are not ancillary, but core to reducing future health inequalities and demand on health and care services. We would urge the Council to include clear mechanisms for accountability within the planning process—such as Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) and ongoing monitoring of health outcomes—to ensure these ambitions are delivered in practice.

Affordable and Key Worker Accommodation

The increasing demand for healthcare services that will accompany population growth will bring about a challenge in recruiting and retaining colleagues within BHT.

We therefore urge the Council to include specific provision for affordable key worker housing within the Local Plan, ensuring NHS and social care staff can live within reasonable proximity to their workplaces. This will help sustain service capacity, reduce commuting pressures, and strengthen

community links. In support of this, we would also encourage the Council to consider the possibility of employers bringing forward sites to deliver 100% employee linked affordable housing. This has mutual benefit of supporting the unmet demand in provision and recruitment and retention of colleagues. There are examples of this having been successful in Oxford City Council.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Local Plan and look forward to working collaboratively with the Council to ensure the health needs of current and future residents, many of whom are our colleagues, are fully addressed.

We would welcome continued engagement on how the Local Plan can:

- Secure developer contributions for health infrastructure,
- Embed the principles of healthy place-making, and
- Establish a clear framework for ongoing monitoring and accountability.

Yours sincerely,



Raghuv Bhasin
Interim Chief Executive
Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust