

The Bucks Strategic Partnership Fit for Purpose Governance Framework

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Executive Summary

This paper sets out the arrangements for the development of the Bucks Strategic Partnership (BSP) partnership framework, building on our local experience as well as best practice emerging nationally. The headlines are as follows:

- An overarching BSP Conference that brings together all the interests of Buckinghamshire to help inform and advise on Buckinghamshire issues and priorities;
- A BSP Board (replacing the BSP Steering Group and the Principal Funders Group) that will take a strategic view for Buckinghamshire and bring the necessary partners together to inform and drive this strategic view;
- A BSP Implementation Group (replacing the LAA Programme Board) that brings together agencies to progress the delivery required to fulfil the strategic view of the BSP;
- Five thematic partnerships to the BSP that focus on
 - Children & Young People (statutory partnership),
 - Public Health & Wellbeing
 - Adults
 - Safer and Stronger Buckinghamshire (statutory partnership),
 - Economy & Environment
- Links with the four District Local Strategic Partnerships
- Processes to support the partnership and its structures

1 Principles for developing a way forward

In Buckinghamshire, we are starting from a basis of successful partnership working and an excellent track record on the Local Area Agreement (LAA). We want to build on what works and streamline our partnership arrangements to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The design principles for our future partnership arrangements are as follows:

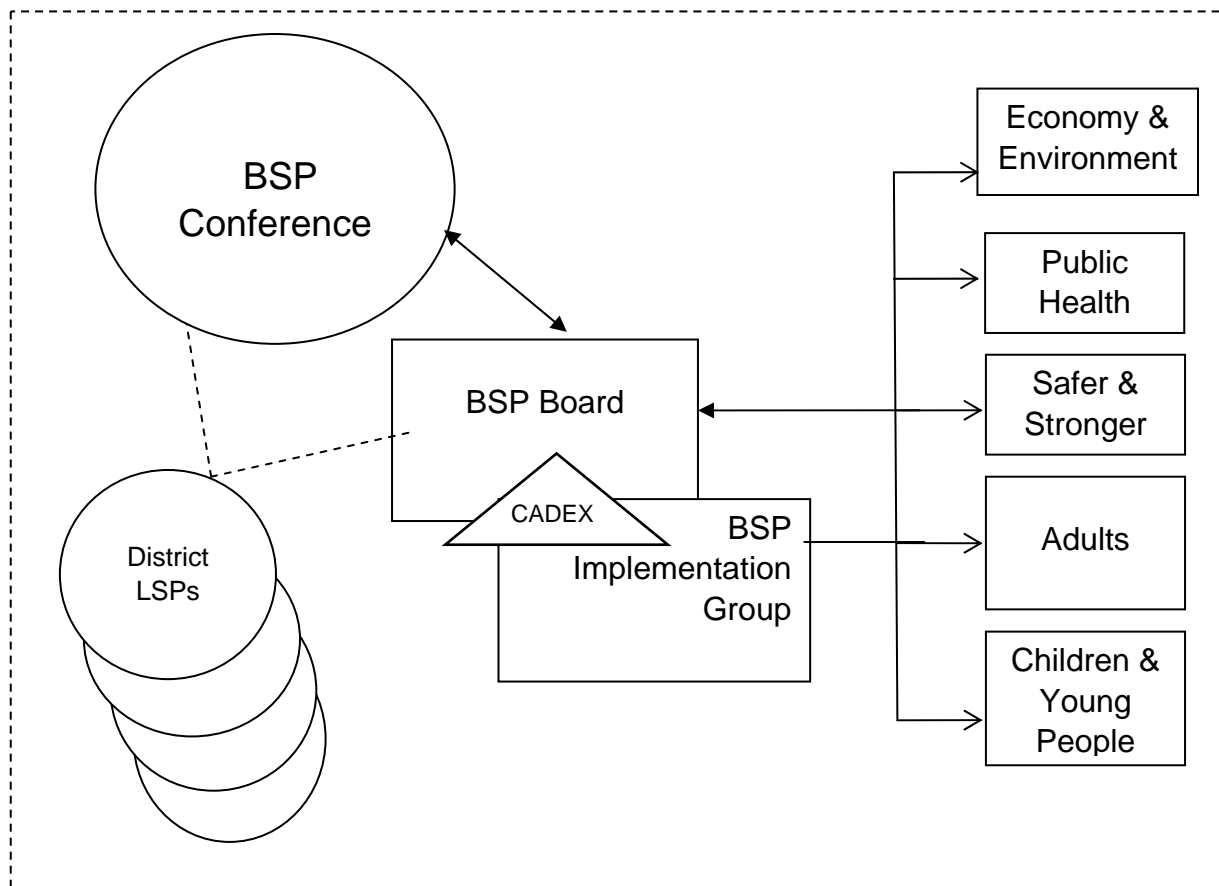
- Clear governance/accountability arrangements that are streamlined and transparent
- An overall framework that builds engagement and involvement on a wide basis to help understand problems and needs, with delivery driven by a single, small, business-like group of key partners
- The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sets out the big strategic picture in Bucks
- LAA must be driven by the vision and priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy (not the other way around)
- The SCS vision should draw on concerns from Districts, Parishes and localities – all the layers should be linked together by the golden thread
- Recognise differences in communities, and consider different targets and plans tailored to the needs of localities - addressing local priorities within a whole strategic framework
- Genuine ownership by all sectors and all partners of clear demonstrable outcomes and outputs
- Clarity (and evidence) of the added value of working together
- All partners contribute to the successes of each other
- Equal partners within a non-hierarchical framework

2 Roles, Responsibilities and Structures

The Bucks Strategic Partnership (BSP) is a way of coordinating and linking together partnerships that lead on delivery. The BSP needs to be fit for the purpose of both governing and delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement (LAA). The report sets out the following framework which is discussed in detail below:

- BSP Conference
- BSP Board
- BSP Implementation Group
- Thematic Partnerships
- District LSPs

Proposed partnership structures: overview



The BSP Conference

The purpose of the Conference is to ensure that all the main interest groups in Buckinghamshire have a voice in the partnership and can exert an influence on issues important to them.

Role

- To connect strategic interests and local interests
- To inform (but not decide) priorities of the SCS and as a part of that the LAA, and other partnership plans within the scope of the whole partnership system
- Take a whole Buckinghamshire view of future possible opportunities and threats for communities, and of the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the county, over a ten to twenty year horizon.
- To act as a channel of communication with communities of place and interest
- Where appropriate, to inform and consult members of the Conference on key issues being considered by the BSP.
- To hold the BSP Board to account for delivery of the SCS and LAA

Operation

- Meet annually
- A facilitated discussion on the state of the county, involving all parties with a Buckinghamshire interest and contribution
- To consider evidence for the priorities of the SCS
- To include a report back on the previous period's impact, outputs and actions and a summary of proposed impact for the two/three years ahead
- Should be supported by and link to the arrangements developed by each individual District LSP

Membership

- To help build accountability there should be a specific membership that is broad enough to cover the range of communities of place, interest and identity that reflect the county. This would include:
- All members of the main partnership, thematic partnerships and their sub-partnerships;
- Members of the political, business, and the voluntary & community networks active in Buckinghamshire
- The Conference will be chaired by the Chairman of the BSP Board or his nominee.

The Bucks Strategic Partnership Board

This is the overarching partnership of partnerships for Buckinghamshire. Its focus will be on setting strategy and charting the long-term future of the County. A draft Partnership Agreement for this Board is at Appendix A.

Role

- To provide a voice to promote Buckinghamshire at regional and national level
- To clarify the strategic issues and priorities for Buckinghamshire and its residents in light of the deliberations of the Conference; to secure a shared strategic view and establish the longer term vision for Buckinghamshire
- To oversee the development of the SCS and the refresh of the LAA, and to influence the operational plans of partners to support the achievement of both
- To receive summary reports on the performance of the LAA and SCS so as to allow it to hold to account the Implementation Group, Thematic partnerships and partner agencies in relation to the delivery of shared objectives.
- To maintain an overview of partnership activity, ensuring that relevant links are made between the District LSPs and other thematic and geographically-based partnerships and that cross cutting issues are reflected in their work,
- To advise Buckinghamshire County Council on the distribution of any centrally pooled Government funding and Reward Grant monies, allocated to the County Council as Accountable Body for the LAA/LPSA
- while recognising organisational autonomy, to encourage partner agencies to deploy resources in the most cost effective way to achieve the LAA outcomes and associated targets.
- To actively discuss and resolve conflicts between priorities, issues and between partners

Operation

- Meet every three months
- Agenda to include a regular report from the Implementation Group, minutes of the Implementation Group and summary performance management information for the outcomes expressed in the SCS
- Agenda developed by CADEX

- A role description will be developed for the Chairmanship, including arrangements for the appointment and term of office.

Membership

In determining the membership we need to balance inclusivity with effectiveness. It is particularly difficult to provide coherent representation of the voluntary and community and business sectors at BSP level. The diversity of these sectors needs to be reflected in the membership of the structures and sub structures of the relevant thematic partnerships.

The membership is made up of the main deliverers and commissioners of services in the county, the political leaders of local authorities and representatives of wider stakeholders:

- Leaders of the five local authorities
- District LSPs
- Chairmen of Thematic Partnerships
- The Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils
- Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust Board
- Bucks Hospitals NHS Trust
- Oxon and Bucks Mental Health Trust
- The Ridgeway Partnership
- Thames Valley Police Authority
- Bucks Fire Authority
- Voluntary Impact
- Encompass (specialist voluntary and community sector infrastructure)
- A representative of the Business community
- South East England Development Agency
- Learning + Skills Council

The Chief Executives of the five Councils, the Chief Executive of the PCT and Hospitals NHS Trust attend as advisers to the BSP Board. A representative from the Government Office for the South East is invited to attend meetings as an observer.

BSP Implementation Group

Role

- To coordinate the development and delivery of the SCS and the LAA on behalf of the BSP Board
- To performance manage the SCS, LAA and National Indicator set, on an exceptions basis, looking for opportunities to support agencies & resolve issues where necessary
- To report to the BSP Board on the achievements towards the delivery of the SCS and LAA
- To review and challenge delivery plans in light of the shared strategic understanding
- To promote communication between agencies
- To take operational decisions particularly about issues spanning more than one theme
- To commission thinking and research to feed into strategy formulation
- To make links between countywide priorities and the work of the thematic partnerships
- To make sure partnership working is effective and propose changes where problems occur

Operation

Meet every two months

Membership

The Chief Executive of Buckinghamshire County Council (as accountable body)

Leads for the LAA themes - currently as follows:

- Director of Childrens Services (BCC)
- Divisional Director, Business Improvement & Commissioning (BCC)
- Director of Adult Social Services (BCC)
- Director of Public Health (PCT/BCC)
- Strategic Director, Economy & Environment (BCC)
- Chief Executive, Bucks Economic and Learning Partnership (BELP)
- Director of Planning & Environment (Chiltern District Council)

- Strategic Director, Safer and Stronger Communities (BCC)
- Buckinghamshire BCU Commander (Thames Valley Police)

Representative of each District Council

Director of System Reform, Bucks PCT

Head of Community Safety, Fire Service

Representative of Voluntary Impact

Representative of Encompass

Representative of the Government Office South East

Thematic partnerships

These partnerships are the driving force for partnership working within the policy and service areas for which they are responsible. They coordinate activity, commission services, set policy and make decisions. It is at this level that much of the work is taken forward.

The following thematic partnerships have been developed:

- The Children and Young People's Trust (statutory partnership)
- The Adult Commissioners partnership
- The Public Health Strategy Group
- The Safer & Stronger Bucks partnership (statutory partnership)
- The Economy & Environment Coordination Group

Sub partnerships will take on the specific delivery tasks that relate to this overarching theme – for example, the housing group.

Role

Each partnership will need to assess over time the effectiveness of patterns of service and investment in services to ensure they deliver the necessary (and agreed) outcomes for the theme. Responsibilities will include:

- Analysis of the needs in the context of the theme
- Strategy development and prioritisation in light of these needs
- Planning of delivery to meet these needs and priorities
- Joint commissioning of services and/or negotiation with partner agencies for bending of mainstream services to meet agreed outcomes (i.e. to impact upon these needs)
- Co-ordinate delivery of the relevant elements of the SCS, and LAA
- Monitoring and performance management against the theme plans, holding sub groups and partners to account
- Ensuring clear lines of communication between theme agencies
- Making sure partnership working is effective and proposing changes where problems occur

Operation

Each Thematic Partnership to develop its own substructure that reflects the challenges that the theme is seeking to address and the geographical links or presence that partners agree need to be in place to support this.

Delivery Partnerships

Beyond the thematic partnerships there are a wide range of delivery partnerships. Some of these report directly to Thematic Partnerships; others tackle cross cutting issues and interact with some or all of the Thematic Partnerships.

The following list is not exhaustive but includes some of the countywide partnerships which are key members of the BSP partnership framework:

- Bucks & Milton Keynes Sports Partnership
- Supporting People Partnership

The District LSPs

The interface between the BSP (and its sub-partnerships) and the district LSPs is a key element of the whole partnership system. This is not a hierarchical relationship, but one in which both strategic and local partnerships add value in their distinct ways.

This interface will operate in a number of ways:

- A dialogue between the BSP and the chairmen of the district LSPs - with the latter being members of the BSP Board;
- Collaborative working on the development of the Buckinghamshire SCS and LAA and district level SCSs;
- Collaborative working on the LAA refresh, with District and locality based performance information and targets
- The District LSPs liaising with the BSP thematic partnerships, making linkages between thematic locality groups and ensuring cross-theme working at local level.

CADEX

Role

The role of CADEX is to:

- Contribute to the development of the strategic agenda for the public sector in Buckinghamshire
- Support the political process
- Manage the partnership arena (including shared services)
- Network and share information and good practice
- Represent Buckinghamshire local authorities in local, regional and national networks

CADEX will carry out an agenda management role on behalf of the BSP Board.

Membership

- Chief Executives of the County and District Councils
- Chief Executive, Primary Care Trust
- BCU Commander, Thames Valley Police
- Chief Fire Officer, Bucks Fire and Rescue

3 Implementing the Arrangements

First meeting of the new BSP Board

The first will take the form of a facilitated session, covering the following:

- The role and responsibilities of the Board and individual Members
- The relationships between it, the BSP Conference and the Operational Group
- Identifying and agreeing common principles for effective partnership working and how to develop capacity to do it
- Agree the best approach to developing the relationships between the BSP and District LSPs and their respective responsibilities
- Communication between partnerships and their members
- Clarity of responsibilities regarding the SCS and the LAA (e.g. how to be reported, when in what form etc)
- Forward Plan for the Board
- Arrangements for the BSP Conference

Review Process

The governance arrangements will be reviewed after the first 12 months.

4 Areas for Development to achieve Excellence in Partnership Working

1. Leadership Development - continuing to build trust, ways of working
2. Building Member engagement and ownership
3. Developing the engagement of VCS, Parishes, Business - get the right people round the table and establishing the rules of engagement
4. Connect agendas of different partners - alignment rather than integration allows possibility of difference
5. Engagement of communities in the partnership framework and in shaping the vision – building on and developing existing community engagement mechanisms to gather feedback from localities
6. Preparing for the Future – developing the capacity for innovation and forward thinking
7. Communications, the promotion of the partnerships and their successes illustrating the actual differences to people's lives, awareness of who's involved with which partnerships, regular and clear mechanisms – newsletters, web, open minutes, report back from meetings etc,
8. Consideration should be given to sharing our collective support for partnership working, including for example the development of multi agency teams.
9. Development of multi area working, including links with partnerships in areas surrounding Buckinghamshire.

Appendix A

BSP BOARD DRAFT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

1. Purpose

The Bucks Strategic Partnership Board will be the overarching partnership of partnerships for Buckinghamshire. Its focus will be on setting strategy and charting the long-term future of the County.

2. Terms of Reference

- To provide a voice to promote Buckinghamshire at regional and national level
- To clarify the strategic issues and priorities for Buckinghamshire and its residents in light of the deliberations of the Conference; to secure a shared strategic view and establish the longer term vision for Buckinghamshire
- To oversee the development of the Buckinghamshire Sustainable Community Strategy and the refresh of the Local Area Agreement, and to influence the operational plans of partners to support the achievement of both
- To receive summary reports on the performance of the LAA and SCS so as to allow it to hold to account the Implementation Group, Thematic partnerships and partner agencies in relation to the delivery of shared objectives.
- To maintain an overview of partnership activity, ensuring that relevant links are made between the District LSPs and other thematic and geographically-based partnerships and that cross cutting issues are reflected in their work,
- To advise Buckinghamshire County Council on the distribution of any centrally pooled Government funding and Reward Grant monies, allocated to the County Council as Accountable Body for the LAA/LPSA
- while recognising organisational autonomy, to encourage partner agencies to deploy resources in the most cost effective way to achieve the LAA outcomes and associated targets.
- To actively discuss and resolve conflicts between priorities, issues and between partners

The Board will not discharge the functions of any of the Partners and nor will the power to do so be delegated.

3. Membership

The membership is made up of the main deliverers and commissioners of services in the county, the political leaders of local authorities and representatives of wider stakeholders:

- Leaders of the five local authorities
- Representatives of each of the District LSPs
- Chairmen of Thematic Partnerships
- The Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils
- Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust Board representative
- Thames Valley Police Authority representative
- Bucks Fire Authority representative
- A representative of Voluntary Impact
- A representative of Encompass (specialist voluntary and community sector infrastructure)
- A representative of the Business community as a whole, including both large and small businesses
- South East England Development Agency
- Learning + Skills Council

The Chief Executives of the five Councils attend as advisers to the BSP Board. A representative from the Government Office for the South East is invited to attend meetings as an observer.

4. Meeting Arrangements

Meeting Frequency

- The Board will meet every three months. The Chairman shall be responsible for agreeing meeting dates.

Chairmanship

- A role description will be developed for the Chairmanship, including arrangements for the appointment and term of office.

Papers

- The draft agenda shall be developed by CADEX and will normally include a regular report from the Implementation Group, minutes of the Implementation Group and summary performance management information for the outcomes expressed in the SCS
- The Chairman shall be responsible for agreeing meeting agendas and draft minutes for circulation.
- The meeting papers will be published on the Bucks Strategic Partnership website.

Access

- Members who are unable to attend meetings are able to send named substitutes to represent them.
- Otherwise, the Chairman is responsible for agreeing attendance by any one who is not a member of the Board.

Secretariat Support

- The County Council shall provide support to the Chairman in setting dates for the meeting, preparing the agenda, and minuting the meeting.

Decision Making Processes

- It is expected that decisions will be reached by consensus.
- It is expected that Members of the Board will have delegated authority from their organisations to take decisions within the terms of reference
- Decisions within the terms of reference will be taken at meetings and will not normally be subject to ratification or a formal decision process by partner organisations (provided that at least 10 days notice of forthcoming decisions had been given)
- Where decisions are not within the delegated authority of the Board members, these will be subject to ratification by constituent bodies.
- No voting arrangements are in place. This will be kept under review.

Accountability

As Accountable Body for the LAA, Buckinghamshire County Council will be responsible for managing negotiation on the LAA with GOSE and Central Government on behalf of the BSP.

As Accountable Body for the countywide Area Based Grant (ABG), Buckinghamshire County Council will be responsible for receiving and accounting for the ABG, acting on the advice of the BSP Board in respect of any partnership funding contained within the ABG.

Resolving Disagreement

The starting point for the Board is one of assumed collaboration. The aim is that issues should be explored through the Thematic Partnerships so that recommendations to the BSP Board are underpinned by a broad consensus amongst partner agencies.

The Chairman of the BSP Board will take a role in resolving conflict. Where the issue cannot be resolved, the Board will establish a separate panel of officers to provide recommendations for resolution (this may be a bespoke group depending on the issue to be resolved) and/or seek independent advice from a 'critical friend' organisation who will respect confidentiality.

Appendix B

CADEX Terms of Reference (June 2006)

Role

The role of CADEX is to:

- Contribute to the development of the strategic agenda for the public sector in Buckinghamshire
- Support the political process
- Manage the partnership arena (including shared services)
- Network and share information and good practice
- Represent Buckinghamshire local authorities in local, regional and national networks

Membership

Local Authority Group

Chief Executives of the County and District Councils

Partnership Group

Chief Executives of the County and District Councils

Chief Executive, Primary Care Trust (on behalf of all PCTs)

BCU Commander, Thames Valley Police

Chief Fire Officer, Bucks Fire and Rescue

Other partners will be invited to attend individual meetings as appropriate.

Meeting Arrangements

Frequency

Meetings will take place on a monthly basis and will alternate between the local authority group and the partnership group.

Chairmanship

The Chairmanship rotates between the local authority Chief Executives, with each Chief Executive chairing and hosting three consecutive meetings.

Papers

The Chairman shall be responsible for agreeing meeting agendas and draft minutes for circulation. Agendas shall be circulated one week in advance of the meeting.

Secretariat Support

The County Council shall provide support to the Chairman of the meeting in setting dates for the meetings, preparing the agenda and minuting the meeting.

Appendix C

Voluntary Impact

Role

Voluntary Impact is the prime third sector contributor to the Bucks Strategic Partnership. The role of Voluntary Impact in the BSP is to:

- Contribute third sector plans, priorities, ideas and comments to the strategic agenda for the County. The input will be consistent with the Buckinghamshire Infrastructure Development Plan
- Support front-line organisations and encourage their engagement with the process
- Ensure information and best practice is shared throughout the third sector and by the wider community.
- Represent Buckinghamshire in appropriate third sector local, regional and national networks.

Membership

Chairmen and Chief Officers of:

- The Priory Centre
- Volunteer Focus
- Vale Volunteers
- Voluntary Action (Chiltern & South Bucks)