

YOUR Buckinghamshire

SPRING
2024
edition

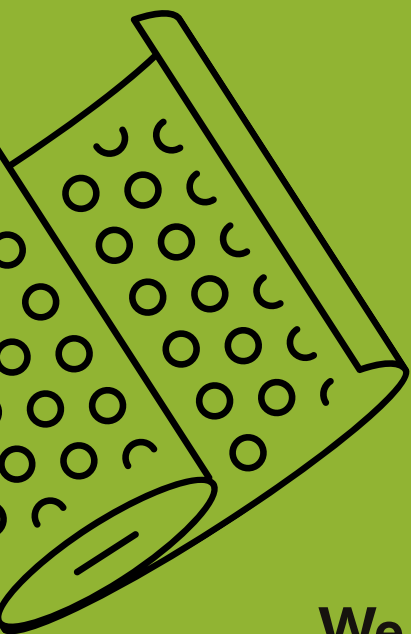
Get out and about in Bucks
THIS SPRING

WIN tickets
for family days out

Easter bin
collection info



All the latest news, information and features from your council



**Bubbly bottles?
Yes.**

**Bubble wrap?
No.**



We all get recycling. Now let's get it right.

Scan the QR code to check what you can
(and can't) recycle using our Waste Wizard.
Or visit recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk



Spring into composting

Spring is a great time to start composting at home. There are many types of composter and with up to 50% discount* for Buckinghamshire residents, now is an ideal time to get started!

Did you know you can now buy Community Compost at all 10 Household Recycling Centres. This compost has been made from recycled matter including garden waste from Buckinghamshire.



Find out more at recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk

*Buckinghamshire residents only, delivery charges may apply



Welcome

to the spring edition of 'Your Buckinghamshire' magazine

Our main focus this time is to let you know how residents wanted us to prioritise this year's budget and how your money is being spent in Buckinghamshire this coming year.

Many councils are facing severe financial pressures and we're no different, but we have been able to balance the books until 2027. This isn't without making difficult choices though. Also, we will only produce one more edition of Your Buckinghamshire magazine this coming year to save some money. It was great to see many responses to our survey in the last Your Buckinghamshire and I know many of you really value this magazine as a way of finding out about the council and our services without being able to contact us online.

From the article about our budgets you'll be able to see we're still committing £110 million to fixing our roads; you can read in detail our plans for the road network and fixing potholes on pages 12-13.

We're blessed with some stunning countryside and many brilliant attractions here in Bucks so don't miss our feature on getting out and about this spring too!

Martin Tett

Leader, Buckinghamshire Council

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Have you signed up to our eNewsletter yet?

This is your way to find out about the latest news as well as updates on our services such as road improvement works, bin collection changes and other important local information.

Sign up to receive our regular updates
[buckinghamshire.gov.uk/signup](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/signup)



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We make every effort to ensure that all information within is correct and accurate at the time of going to press.

✉ The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF

📍 [buckinghamshire.gov.uk](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk) 📧 @BucksCouncil



Higher penalties for fly-tipping

Anyone fly-tipping in Buckinghamshire now faces a fixed penalty of £1,000.

'Fly-tipping' is the name given to illegal waste dumping. Some cases go to court but with smaller incidents, the council can issue a fixed penalty notice to the culprit. Previously the charge was £400, but now it is £1,000.

Even if you haven't dumped the waste yourself, you can still face a penalty of £600. If you pay someone else to take your waste away, you have a legal duty to check that they are authorised to remove it (registered with the

Environment Agency). If your waste is dumped illegally, and you failed in your duty of care responsibilities, you could face this £600 charge.

A top tip to avoid this happening is never to pay cash for waste removal. Instead pay online (or by cheque!) as this creates a traceable record making it easier for investigators tracking down a rogue trader. All reputable waste carriers are registered with the Environment Agency so always check before you commit.



buckinghamshire.gov.uk/fly-tipping

New e-permit for free disposal of DIY waste

Did you know you can now dispose of small amounts of DIY waste for free at Household Recycling Centres (HRCs)?

This includes waste from home DIY projects such as re-tiling, renovating a bathroom or digging a pond.

You will need to download a digital e-permit before you visit the HRC. You can print it or have it displayed on a phone or tablet for staff to check when you arrive.

The e-permit allows disposal of one small load of DIY waste each week for free. This is no more than 100 litres of loose DIY waste, or one large item no bigger than a bathtub, door or kitchen unit.

Once the e-permit is scanned it will expire. It can be renewed after seven days to allow free disposal of another load of DIY waste. Disposal of more than one load of DIY waste in a week will incur a charge.

The e-permit is only for household DIY waste. Disposal of other items remains unchanged.



buckinghamshire.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling



Coming soon to the Aylesbury area - buses on demand!

A new 'demand responsive' bus service is coming soon to some villages around Aylesbury.

Buckinghamshire Council is partnering with WeMove on the three-year trial, funded by the Government's Rural Mobility Fund. It follows the successful introduction of a similar scheme in Wycombe last year, which has already proved popular.

How does the service work?

Passengers simply request a pick-up from one of the fully accessible minibuses at a convenient nearby 'virtual bus stop' as the buses travel through their area.

The service will drop off passengers anywhere within the coverage area, which includes Stoke Mandeville Hospital, railway stations, employment areas and Aylesbury town centre.

We're looking forward to sharing more details about this new service soon!



Win a family ticket to a fun-tastic spring day out!

Win FREE tickets to either Buckinghamshire Railway Centre or Bekonscot Model Village and Railway in our spring competition!

At Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, you can hop on a full-size steam train and ride up and down a beautiful heritage railway track located on the outskirts of picturesque Quinton. The 25-acre site also includes a glass-roofed Visitor Centre and a large railway museum.

At Bekonscot Model Village and Railway, you can have a blast in the past! At the world's oldest original model village, you can jump back in time to see England in the 1930s and visit little miniature towns built full of small details and big history. You can also spot a model railway and 1.5 acres of gorgeous gardens. Don't shrink away from a good day out!

For your chance to win tickets for two adults and two children for a spring day out at Bekonscot Model Village and Railway or to win Special Event tickets* to Buckinghamshire Railway, simply tell us how many daffodils are hidden in this magazine.



Email your answer and your name, email address and preferred day out, to: magazine@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or post your answer to: Spring Day Out Competition, Communications Team, Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF

CLOSING DATE: Monday 29 April.

*Special Event tickets are valid for Steaming Days, visits from special TV characters, heritage vehicle rallies and much more. The tickets are not valid for Day Out With Thomas or Christmas.

Easter bin collection dates

Usual collection day	Revised collection day
Friday 29 March (Good Friday)	Saturday 30 March
Monday 1 April (Easter Monday)	Tuesday 2 April
Tuesday 2 April	Wednesday 3 April
Wednesday 3 April	Thursday 4 April
Thursday 4 April	Friday 5 April
Friday 5 April	Saturday 6 April

Summer hours at Household Recycling Centres (HRCs)

From Monday 1 April all Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) across the county will move to summer opening hours of 9am to 6pm.

Please check your local site to find out which days they are open as this varies according to each site.

HRCs are open to all Buckinghamshire residents. Remember to bring proof of your address when you visit.

 [buckinghamshire.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling)

Community compost

Did you know that you can now buy compost at all of our recycling centres?

Buckinghamshire Community Compost is peat-free compost that has been made locally from recycled organic matter, including garden waste from Buckinghamshire.

The compost is PAS 100 certified and costs only £5.50 per 40-litre bag or £15.50 for three bags.

Purchases can be made by card payment only. Proceeds from the sale of this compost go to local good causes.

Spring cleaning

Spring is the perfect time to have a clear out. If you have household items or furniture to get rid of that are still in decent condition, why not take them along to one of our Recycling Centres where they can be donated for sale at one of our re-use shops?

Donations of good quality items including furniture, small working electrical appliances, toys, soft furnishings, books and bicycles are all welcome.

The shops at High Wycombe and Aston Clinton recycling centres are run by South Bucks Hospice and the proceeds support their charity work.



Save Money With Cloudy2Clear. Your Local Glazing Experts!

As the foremost domestic glass replacement company in the UK for more than 18 years, Cloudy2Clear Windows are the leading name in the industry. You can join over 340,000 happy customers and replace your glass ethically and affordably. If you have a failed glazing unit it may not provide you with the protection you need, or be as energy-efficient as it once was. Why not take a minute to check your home to see if any double glazing has failed? Taking action now can prevent future financial problems.

When talking to the Manager of Cloudy2Clear Northampton & Oxford Trevor Skidmore it became evident that the value of saving their customers money has been held dear for a number of years. Since buying the franchise in 2006, Trevor & Wendy now have their 2 sons Lloyd & Ross and daughter in law Lori involved along with Dan, Tom & Jo and have committed to supporting the local community by providing a service that saves the public both time and money.

The Cloudy2Clear service only requires the glass to be replaced and not the whole window once the unit has failed. Trevor commented "By doing this we make the customer considerable savings and there is much less upheaval in the family home. Also, whether communities find themselves in a financial crisis or not, saving money when you don't need to waste it is always the sensible option, and our truly family service does just that"

For a free quotation please call 0800 61 21 118 or visit www.cloudy2clear.co.uk.

“
Ask me
about our
fantastic
Energy
Saving
Glass.”



Have Your Windows Steamed Up?

Replace the pane, not the frame!

All glazing backed by our
25
YEAR
GUARANTEE

"I really liked the fact
that they were a local
family run business"
Janet Beard



Your trusted local expert

Faulty locks, handles or hinges?



Priority freephone
0800 61 21 118
www.cloudy2clear.co.uk

Glass, it's better when it's clear!



**Royal Star
& Garter**
Care with courage

Care with love

Nursing | Dementia | Short breaks | Day Care



Our loving, compassionate care helps our family of veterans and their partners to live life to the full. Our spacious, vibrant and award-winning Home offers exceptional food and wonderful company, creating vital social connections.

Living well is at the centre of everything we do. We've created a Wellbeing Programme that brings joy and magical moments to every day. Our wide range of activities includes live entertainment, crafts, quizzes, exercise, outings, military visits and much more.

Everyone who visits is treated as one of the family. You can join in the fun daily activities or alternatively catch up with your loved one over a coffee in our beautiful café-bar or gorgeous garden and outside spaces.

We welcome anyone who has served in the UK Armed Forces, including Reservists and those who completed National Service.

We also offer a Lunch Club and a FREE Telephone Friendship Service for people who may not be ready for specialist residential care.

Call us today on 01494 927 555 to come in for a cuppa, a chat and a slice of cake.

Alternatively, you can find out more by:

- Emailing us at hw.enquiries@starandgarter.org
- Visiting us online at starandgarter.org/hw
- Dropping by at Hughenden Avenue, High Wycombe, HP13 5GG



Registered Charity No. 210119.

Caring for foster carers

With over 500 children in Buckinghamshire needing caring and supportive homes, we are looking for more local foster carers so that children don't have to move far away from their family and friends. Foster carers provide a safe haven where children can thrive, regardless of their experiences or background.

Foster care means looking after a child as part of your family in your home. You could foster for a single night, several weeks or years, even until adulthood. You can foster a child regardless of your sexual orientation, relationship status, faith or ethnicity - and whether you work full or part-time. Our foster carers are everyday people from diverse backgrounds who share a passion for helping others.

Being a foster carer is a big commitment, but it can be incredibly rewarding. No one comes to fostering ready-made. We will support you throughout your fostering journey and can help you develop the skills to succeed.



Financial support

While money is not the main reason most people choose to foster, we believe you should never be out of pocket.

Our allowance rates are highly competitive and are regularly reviewed. The amount our carers receive will depend on the foster child's age and any additional needs they might have; our allowances increase as our carers complete training and develop their skills. If you foster with Bucks, your training and travel expenses are paid for on top of your allowance, along with supporting you with buying essential items such as a bed or a car seat.

Community support

Support networks and community are key to success in fostering. We offer regular support groups to meet other carers and share experiences - across the county, daytime and evening, face-to-face and online.

Our foster carers can also access:

- A buddy system, pairing new foster parents with more experienced people, who can act as a guide during those first 12 months.
- A 'Sons and Daughters' group offering activities and support for foster carers' own children.



Support from the council for our foster carers

We provide regular, high-quality training – from child protection to paediatric first aid and from understanding trauma to parenting and caring for teens.

Foster carers are assigned an experienced fostering social worker, who will work in partnership and help build their skills and confidence. Plus, as a local authority, we know our children best and can quickly access information and assistance if required.

We also provide:

- The opportunity to meet with a designated Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) worker for consultations.
- Groups to support the sons and daughters of our foster carers.
- Mental health training and services.
- 24/7 emergency support.
- Regular newsletter updates.
- An annual awards evening to celebrate our foster carers.
- Five different support groups which are divided into locality, evenings and specialised groups.
- Highly skilled child and family workers who offer direct work with children.

Mockingbird Programme

The Mockingbird Programme is an initiative run by The Fostering Network which offers extra support for foster carers, inviting them to be part of a wider network or 'constellation'. The programme links fostering households together, nurturing the relationships between children, young people and foster families, and building resilient and caring fostering communities.

A 'hub home' carer (experienced foster carer) and a dedicated liaison fostering social worker offer fostering families peer support and guidance as well as social activities and sleepovers. Mockingbird is highly regarded within the fostering community, with two 'constellations' already set up here in Buckinghamshire.



"Fostering children through Buckinghamshire Council is one of the most rewarding, challenging, and worthwhile experiences you can have. You become part of a friendly, passionate, and hugely supportive community that works together to build a bright future for children in care. My household is part of The Fostering Network's Mockingbird programme - it's been such a pleasure to be there for the children and adults in our group, it feels like one big family.

"You might feel worried or daunted about the process of becoming a foster carer – but please don't worry. Get in touch with Buckinghamshire Council, they'll answer any questions you have and put you in contact with foster carers like me who can share their experiences with you."

Debbie, foster carer and Mockingbird hub home carer



To learn more about fostering, visit:
buckinghamshire.gov.uk/foster-caring or scan the QR code.



Enjoy springtime in Bucks

Spring is here and it's the perfect time to explore the great outdoors in Buckinghamshire. With days getting longer and the weather starting to warm up, you can enjoy many outdoor activities right on your doorstep and even better, most of them are absolutely free.



Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Chiltern Hills is dedicated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) meaning it is recognised and protected for its unique and picturesque landscape and wildlife. With an abundance of rolling hills, chalk ridges, ancient hedgerows and thriving farmland, you can see why. It is also one of the easiest and accessible AONBs to explore.



Simply Walk

If you like the idea of walking as part of a group, why not try Simply Walk? This free, volunteer-led scheme offers 60 walks of varying levels of difficulty around the county. The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly and everyone is welcome. It's a great way to get out and about, meet new people and improve your health and wellbeing.

 buckinghamshire.gov.uk/simply-walk

Tracks and trails

Whether it's taking in the stunning views from the top of a hill, spotting red kites swooping across the skies or watching nature come alive in the spring sunshine, it is easy to find a walk to suit all abilities.

 For a map of walks around the county visit: buckinghamshire.gov.uk/walking

On your bike

For those who prefer getting on their bike, there are many off-road cycling routes within Buckinghamshire. From flat, family-friendly trails to more challenging rough terrain or hill climbs, the choices are plentiful.

 buckinghamshire.gov.uk/walking

Investing in green routes

In recent years we have invested in many local greenways across the county to improve access to more sustainable ways of travelling. Upgrades have included lengthening the Waddesdon Greenway and expanding the former Emerald Way to form the new Platinum Way. Improvements have also been made to St Peter's Greenway and Wendover Cycleway.

Explore a country park

Buckinghamshire's country parks, are a great place to visit in the spring. With plenty of parking and a variety of accessible paved pathways, they are suitable for all. Café facilities and play areas make them the perfect place to meet with friends and your four-legged friends are also welcome.

 buckinghamshire.gov.uk/country-parks



Enjoy some outdoor play

We have recently upgraded a number of play areas across the county, including Higginson Park in Marlow and Bedgrove Park in Aylesbury. The skatepark in Buckingham has also received a £250,000 revamp and improvement works are nearing completion at the popular Ropes on the Rye play area in High Wycombe.

Six parks in Buckinghamshire hold Green Flag awards reflecting their status as some of the best parks in the country.

 buckinghamshire.gov.uk/parks



Go on a virtual adventure

Have you discovered our free LoveExploring app? Take part in fun, interactive and family-friendly games and activities, including trails and treasure hunts in local parks and green spaces. Find out more:

 healthandwellbeingbucks.org/loveexploringbucks

Become a volunteer


There are many outdoor volunteering opportunities for those who have the time to spare. From conservation projects to community planting schemes and litter-picks, whether you can offer regular help or a one-off afternoon or weekend, all offers of assistance are welcomed.

 buckinghamshire.gov.uk/volunteering

Keep active, keep healthy

However you choose to spend your time outdoors this spring, getting out and being active has huge benefits for your health and wellbeing. Increasing your movement in even the smallest of ways is good for both your physical and mental health.

Did you know that by taking part in physical activity you can also earn points to put towards money-off vouchers or donate to a charity of your choice using the free BetterPointBucks app?

 [Find out more: bucks.betterpoints.uk](https://bucks.betterpoints.uk)

Keeping Buckinghamshire moving...

From pothole repairs to upgrading streetlighting, gully cleansing and answering emergencies for flooding and fallen trees, we are working every day and night to keep Buckinghamshire's highways safe and moving.

We have committed **£110m** over four years to maintaining and improving our network of:



By the end of March 2024 we will have:

- Filled more than **30,000 potholes** across the county.
- Attended and **cleansed gullies** throughout the network for the third year running.
- Upgraded 98% of streetlights** to new energy-efficient LED bulbs.
- When required, day and night, **gritted 870 miles** of priority routes, and **maintained 1,200 grit bins** for use by local residents at locations not on these routes.

Fixing potholes and road surface improvements

Working with our Buckinghamshire Highways partners, Balfour Beatty Living Places and AtkinsRéalis, we have worked extensively to address the large number of road defects that occurred in winter 2022/23. In the past year we have fixed double the number of defects compared to the previous year.

Winter weather always has an adverse impact on our roads and defects that have sprung up in the past few months will be dealt with as part of this season's programme of permanent repairs.

We always seek a 'right first time' repair but this is challenging in adverse weather so when a permanent repair is not possible we make temporary repairs before returning later.



Before and after images from around the county



Tyrells Gardens, Stoke Hammond



New Street, Aylesbury



A40 Oxford Road, High Wycombe



Copthall Lane, Chalfont St. Peter



Denham Avenue, Denham



If you see a problem on one of our roads that needs fixing, please report it to us:
[buckinghamshire.gov.uk/fix-my-street](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/fix-my-street)



Through our capital programme this year alone we are investing almost £40m in our highways, including over £2m on footways and £29m on resurfacing roads and £9m on other highways assets such as bridges, streetlighting and drainage.

Steven Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport with residents of the Fremantle Care Home using the new footpath that now provides a continuous connection in the local area (pictured left)

In the coming year we will also:

- Continue our rollout of EV chargers, installing 128 new points in car parks across the county and using a further £2 million to add many more, particularly in areas where people don't have access to private charging.
- Continue work on Berry Hill footbridge in Taplow – we have removed the central section of the bridge and will install a replacement.
- Start a new round of gully cleaning, helping to ensure excess water on roads can drain away as quickly as possible.
- Target anti-social parking hotspots.
- Begin planned improvements to Marlow Bridge, including re-instating the bollards and repainting the parapets – longer term the bearings and lights will be renewed and we'll also carry out works to the towers, bridge deck and footways.

Responding to emergencies

Not all our work can be pre-planned and sometimes our crews have to be ready to face any eventuality. A series of winter storms earlier this year brought a succession of high winds and heavy rain. With trees and branches falling onto roads and flood water running off already saturated land onto highways blocking large numbers of routes, our crews were out around the clock to deal with it, dealing with nearly 600 emergency calls.



Investing in our network

We have an ongoing programme of improvement projects ranging from large resurfacing schemes to upgrading structures and multi-million pound new roads.

One of the biggest projects we are progressing this year is the multi-million pound South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR). Once completed, the entire link road will create 1.1 miles of new dual carriageway, including three new roundabouts to ease congestion in Aylesbury town centre. The new link road will join the A413 Wendover Road with the Stoke Mandeville Relief Road, which is being constructed by HS2. The B4443 Lower Road will connect to a new roundabout junction with the Stoke Mandeville Relief Road and a future South West Aylesbury Link Road.

Managing utilities works

Water, gas, electricity and broadband providers often need to dig up roads to carry out works and in fact have legal powers to do this. Without careful management, this can cause disruption for drivers and residents so our dedicated roadworks permits team coordinates the timing and carries out regular checks. Our zero-tolerance approach means that if companies break the terms of their permit by over-running or working outside of agreed hours we can - and do - fine them. We will also work up proposals to adopt greater powers over roadworks on our most sensitive roads.



Keep up to date with all the latest information on our roads on our website:
buckinghamshire.gov.uk/highways

Stay one step ahead of scammers!

Scammers are everywhere, and they're always looking for ways to trick you into giving away your money or personal information. Our Trading Standards Team wants to remind you to stay vigilant and protect yourself from fraudsters.

It's always better to be safe than sorry

Scammers use all sorts of tricks to con you, and they're always coming up with new schemes. For example, scams may arrive by:

- Post.
- Phone call or text.
- Email or social media.
- Someone calling at your home.

We can all potentially fall for a scam, so it's best to always stop, take five, and think before responding to anything suspicious.

Common scams to look out for include...

Rogue traders pretending to be professionals offering cheap deals or pointing out urgent repairs need with your property. Postal, email and text scams can include bogus lotteries, miracle cures, fake clairvoyant services, missed deliveries or payment/refund messages that take you to a fake website.

Telephone scams often involve apparent financial opportunities. The current changes to pensions have created an opportunity for scammers, as has the cost of living. Other recent scams have been from bogus police officers claiming your bank account has been compromised or from those who claim your computer has been infected and they need remote access.

REMEMBER: If something seems too good to be true – it probably is.

If you're unsure about an offer or think you might have been targeted by a scammer, talk to your family and friends or contact Citizens Advice for support and advice.

Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards encourages you to sign up to their newsletter via: surreycc.gov.uk/tradingstandards. They can also offer support, including a free call blocker device (to eligible residents) and no cold calling stickers. Call their partners at Citizens Advice on 0808 223 1133 to find out more.

Finally, if you think you've been a victim of fraud, it's important to act quickly. Report it to your bank and Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or online at: actionfraud.police.uk





Making decisions for the future

Our medium-term financial plan, which sets out how we will balance our budget for the next three years, was agreed by Full Council in February.

You'll be very familiar with many of your council services, such as emptying your bins, fixing potholes and providing leisure centres, libraries and parks.

But did you know we provide around 750 services covering 1,300 statutory duties in total? This includes everything from adult and children's social care to planning and building control, running elections and tackling fly-tipping.

We are legally required to provide statutory duties, and the bulk of our budget goes on these. With costs rising faster than income, this has led to huge challenges for councils countrywide. While we are financially robust, there have been difficult choices to make to ensure we continue to balance the budget.

Over the next four pages we set out where Buckinghamshire Council's budget comes from and where the money is being spent.

As council tax bills land on doormats, we hope this will help explain just how essential your money is.



71% of our budget goes towards funding for people we are supporting

Paying for social care services, homelessness services (including temporary accommodation costs) and home to school transport for children with additional needs.

Supporting those in need

There's been a rise in the number of people needing support since the Covid pandemic.

Protecting the vulnerable is a priority, and some of our critical statutory support services account for 71% of our total spend. These are essential services such as home care visits for older people, caring for children and young people who need our help and helping families who are at risk of or who have become homeless. We also provide support for adults with health needs or other challenges.

The costs of running these essential support services have risen sharply, well above the already high inflation rate – meaning our overall budgets have become very pressured.

We have already made considerable savings from becoming a single unitary authority in 2020, and forecast that by 2027 we will have saved a total of nearly £171 million from both savings and additional income. However, the budgetary pressures from the increased costs and demands on our services come on top of that.

Our spending plans for the year ahead

Our budget for the next financial year (2024/25) and our medium-term financial plan for the next three years were agreed by Council following a thorough process over many months, including input and feedback from residents.

The reality of our budget pressures mean we have to reshape our services and priorities. As we prioritise those in need this does mean a reduction in some of our other services that people may notice and feel.

However, the medium-term financial plan shows how we can maintain core, frontline services and still put some further investment into those areas residents have asked us to prioritise, within the threshold of current council tax rate rises that are allowed without holding a referendum to increase council tax further.

Take look at these two pages for illustrations of where our money comes from and where it has been allocated, and over the page for some examples of how we have listened and acted on your comments.

How the council is funded

The council raises the money needed to pay for projects and services through grants and income streams. The biggest of these is council tax, which covers nearly 80% of our net budget.

Because the cost of providing services has risen so significantly due to added demand and high inflation, the council can only balance the budget by raising council tax for 2024/25.

We have approved a 2.99% rise in the base rate of council tax, with a further 2% rise to be spent on adult social care, meaning a total rise of 4.99%. This is an extra £1.69 per week for the average Band D property.



How the council is funded



Council tax
£426.9m



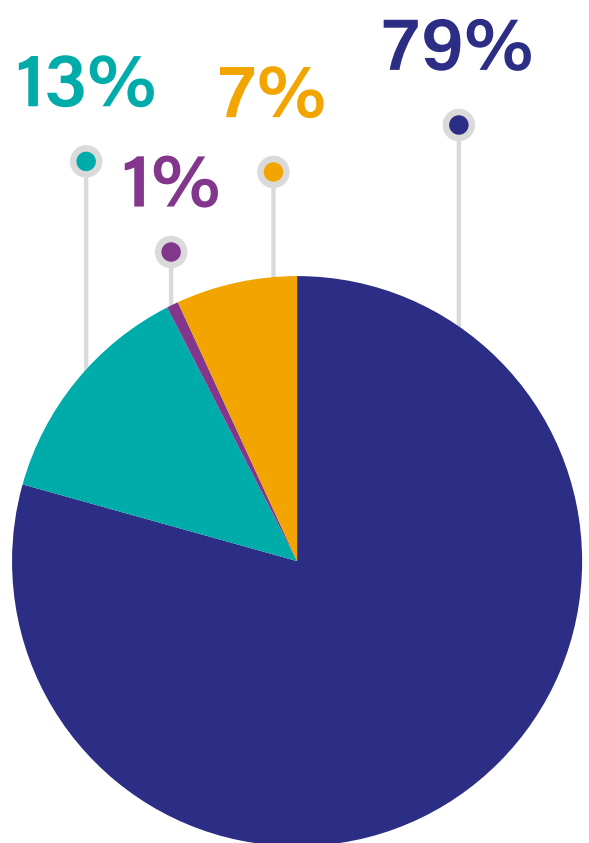
Business rates
£70.7m



Other grants
£37m

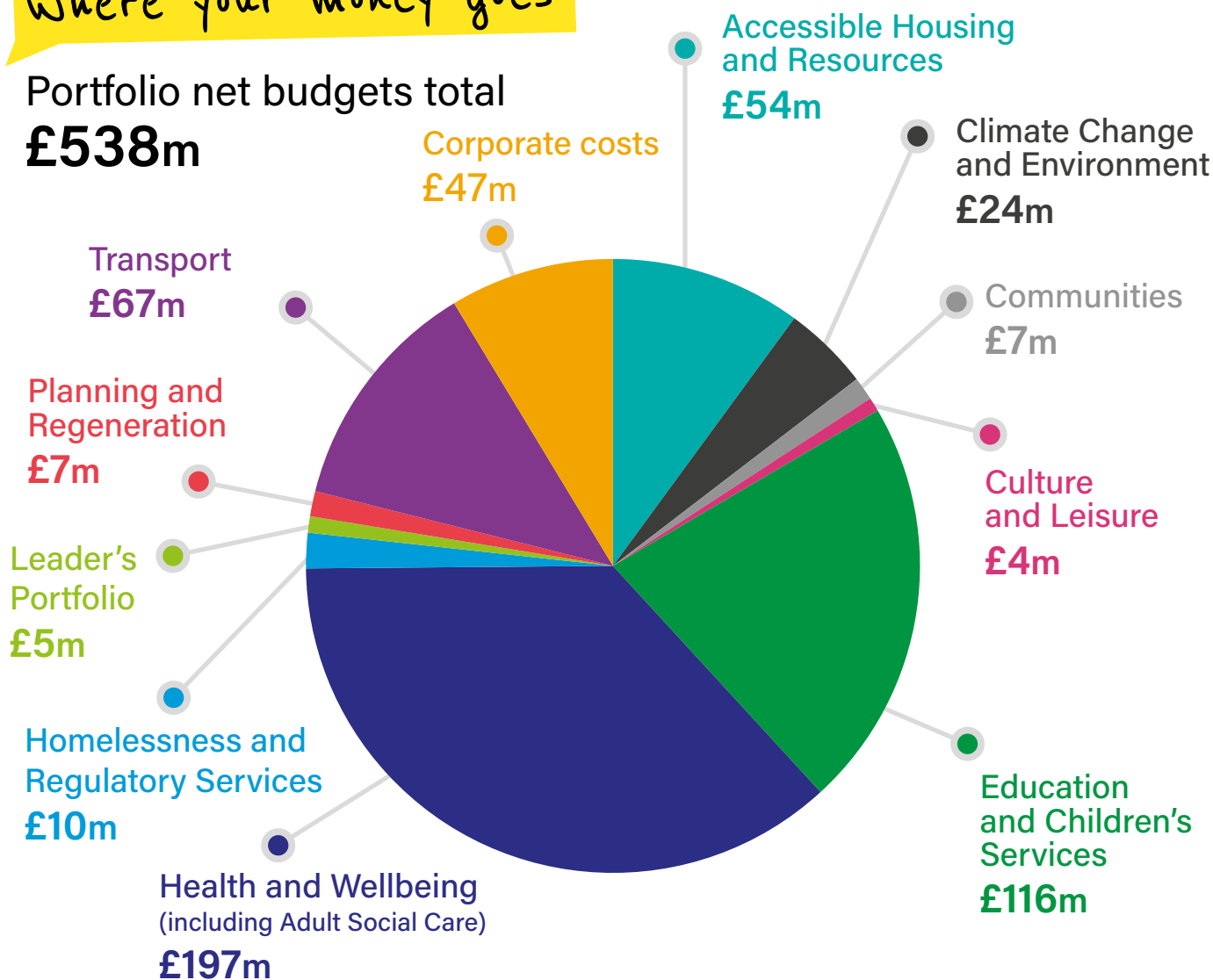


New homes bonus
£3.5m



Where your money goes

Portfolio net budgets total
£538m



Support with council tax bills

If you are struggling to pay your council tax, talk to us. We can discuss your circumstances and explain the options available to you, for example:

- Set up a direct debit – this helps spread out the payments to ensure you don't miss a payment.
- Choose to pay over 12 months – moving from 10 instalments decreases monthly payments.
- If you are unemployed or on a low income, you may be eligible for council tax reduction, and if you live alone or have a disability you may qualify for a discount.



For further information on council tax support visit:

➡ buckinghamshire.gov.uk/ct-help

The quickest way to contact us about general council tax queries is:

➡ buckinghamshire.gov.uk/council-tax-query


You said...we listened

This budget is shaped by our residents themselves, and what you told us about where you want your money to be spent.











This feedback was given through our Money Matters consultation last year – and again when residents had a further opportunity to feed in their views during a scrutiny process in January once the budget proposals were published.

Below are the services you told us are important and what we are investing in them over the next three years.

Further information about the consultation can be found at:

 yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com

Top 10 budget consultation priorities spend

 £248m Care and support services for older people and vulnerable adults was a high priority for the highest proportion of respondents	
 £110m Roads	 £527m Educational services such as childcare, pre-schools and school admissions
 £4m Community safety	
 £5m Protecting the environment	 £37m Housing and homelessness
 £69m Waste collection and disposal	 £110m Services and support for children and young people
 £9m Pavement maintenance	 £8m Maintaining parks, open spaces, playing fields and the countryside



Is your child moving up to a new school this year?

It's the time of year where children moving up to secondary school will just have had their school place offers – and for those little ones starting their exciting school journey into Reception in September, those families will be offered a school place on 16 April.


Moving up to a new school is an exciting time for young people and their families but there's also a lot of information to take in. You can view our admissions process, timelines and advice on next steps on our website.

 [buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools)



Moving up!
Are you ready?

To help families get ready for the transition, Buckinghamshire Family Information Service also has a range of resources to help young people adjust to their new school year. To find useful resources visit:

 familyinfo.buckinghamshire.gov.uk
and search 'supporting your child's school journey'.

Do you want to make a difference? Becoming a school governor could be for you!

A school governing board is made up of a diverse group of people who bring a range of skills and expertise from their own lives. School governors support the smooth running of a school and are involved in the wider school community, playing the role of a critical friend to the headteacher and other senior leaders.

Governing bodies rely on a variety of experiences and perspectives. Becoming a school governor is a great personal and professional development opportunity. You will have the opportunity to enhance your project management, budgeting, leadership and negotiation skills, whilst making a real difference to your local community.

No prior knowledge or qualifications are required, just a genuine interest in education, commitment and time.

If you are interested in becoming a school governor, please contact your local school directly for vacancies.

For more information on school governors, email:
schoolgovernance@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Scan the QR code below to find your local school.





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Discover over **300 career-focused courses** across a range of subject areas, from Nursing and Engineering to Hospitality, Business, Psychology and Cyber Security.

VISIT

BNU.AC.UK



Support for adults

Any adult resident in Buckinghamshire may find themselves wanting information, advice and guidance on a whole host of topics. Whether it's health, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, care and support or something else, if you have a concern or query a great starting point is the Bucks Online Directory.

The Bucks Online Directory is for residents aged from 18 to 108 and offers a range of activities across Buckinghamshire. You can find information on local charities, foodbanks, faith settings and community groups that can offer local support and advice.

The Bucks Online Directory can also filter by age, autism friendly activities, mental health support and a range of access needs so you'll be sure to find something suitable for you. Take a look at the Bucks Online Directory: directory.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Also, our Care Advice Bucks website provides guidance and information for adults aged 18 and over with care and support needs and their families or carers. You can find a wide range of topics, from the different types of support adult social care can offer and how to request this, to general information about keeping safe, happy and healthy: careadvice.buckinghamshire.gov.uk



Jackie is unlocking her potential with Skills for Life x Multiply...

Jackie was first introduced to the range of courses from Buckinghamshire Adult Learning by her granddaughter. She started with an introductory four-week course 'Get Digitally Ready' and is now attending an 11-week Foundation Digital Skills course to further develop and improve her skills, which she hopes will lead her to finding a new job.



"Alongside the digital courses I have attended two courses offered as part of the Multiply programme, which focus on improving confidence with numbers in daily life: 'Cooking Healthy Meals on a budget using an Airfryer' and 'Winter Warmers on a budget'."

I am thoroughly enjoying all the courses. It is a great social place where you can go and learn new skills. Everyone is friendly and helpful, and I would recommend everyone to see if there is a course for them."



**Buckinghamshire
Adult Learning**

adultlearningbc.ac.uk/multiply
studentenquiries@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
01296 382403



Funded by
UK Government

Save money on your energy bills with the Energy Doctors

Our team of Energy Doctors at Buckinghamshire Council can help you stay warm and save money by improving the energy efficiency of your home for free.

We can:

- visit your home and advise how you can reduce your energy use and costs.
- install suitable low-cost energy efficiency and water saving measures such as draught proofing for windows, LED bulbs, portable solar generators, aerating shower heads and more.



Eligibility

To qualify for a visit your home must meet all of the following criteria:

- you rent the property through a private rental agreement, or own and live in the property
- your household has an income of £30,000 or less (before tax), is in receipt of means tested benefits such as Universal Credit and Council Tax Support, or a member of your household is disabled
- the domestic property you live in has an energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of D, E, F or G, or does not legally require an EPC



For more information scan the QR code or visit
[buckinghamshire.gov.uk/energy-dr](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/energy-dr)

Or request a visit by phoning Better Housing Better Health
on **0800 107 0044**



**Buckinghamshire
Council**

**LEVELLING
— UP —**

This project is funded by the UK
government through the UK
Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Your story matters

and so does the care you receive.

At Abbots Care our home care services go beyond personal care to support the everyday and important moments in your life. We'll be there especially when family can't, making sure every moment is filled with care, support and joy.

Contact our friendly team today to find out more about our **live-in, visiting and overnight** home care services.

T 0333 034 9007
E info@abbotscare.com
W abbotscare.com



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE RAILWAY CENTRE

2024 Special Events

For more details and booking visit:

www.bucksrailcentre.org

Station Road
Quanton HP22 4BY

Could you help these children shine?

We are seeking people from all kinds of backgrounds who may be considering adoption to come forward and offer a safe, loving home for a child (or children) in care.

Adoption provides a long-term, stable home for children who cannot live with their birth family. The children in our care are all waiting to be part of a family that will help them grow and flourish, even though they may have had a difficult start in life.

Due to their circumstances, some of our children have to wait longer to find the right family.

This is often because:

- They are a little older.
- They are brothers and sisters who need to stay together.
- They have additional needs.
- They have non-white ethnic heritage.

You can adopt regardless of your sexual orientation, relationship status, faith or ethnicity. If you have ever thought that adoption might be for you, please do get in touch to find out more: bucksinghamshire.gov.uk/adoption



Get ready to vote

One of the council's many roles is to run elections, including General Elections, the next of which is due to take place by this time next year.

There will be an election for the Police and Crime Commissioner on Thursday 2 May this year, and there are local by-elections and neighbourhood plan referendums throughout the year.

To be able to vote, you need to be on the electoral register. If you're not already registered to vote, you can apply online at gov.uk/register-to-vote

Whenever you vote in person at a polling station, you need to show a valid form of photo ID.

To find out more, visit buckinghamshire.gov.uk/how-to-vote or contact Electoral Services on **01296 798141** or via elections@buckinghamshire.gov.uk



* We are also seeking polling and count staff to work on upcoming polls.
For more information, please visit buckinghamshire.gov.uk/work-at-elections

Conservatories by POG



Replace your old conservatory roof with a Guardian Warm Roof and enjoy your new garden room all summer (and winter!)

We supply and install: Conservatories, Orangeries, Garden Rooms, Windows, Doors, Home Extensions and Conservatory Repairs

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4 - 5 YEARS | 10:00 - 11:30 & 14:15 - 15:45

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Make our home your home

At every one of our homes and services you will find a welcoming environment, companionship and freedom from worry, together with great care and friendly faces everyday.

Residential Care Homes | Nursing Homes | Dedicated Dementia Care
Respite Care | Services for Adults Living with Learning Disabilities

To discuss your care needs and arrange a visit

0333 005 8735 enquiries@fremantletrust.org

www.fremantletrust.org

Creating energy from your waste

Did you know that the waste you can't recycle at home is helping to create green energy to power homes and buildings across the county and beyond?

Greatmoor, the council's Energy from Waste (EfW) facility which it operates in partnership with FCC Environment, takes non-recyclable waste and transforms it into electricity.



What are the benefits?

There are three key benefits:

- **No waste to landfill** – By sending the waste we can't recycle to Greatmoor, we avoid landfill. It also means we produce 85% less CO₂ equivalent than if we sent the waste to landfill.
- **Green energy** – Because Greatmoor burns waste, not coal or gas, it is classed as green energy. The facility now produces enough green energy to power 60,000 homes.
- **Saving money** – The council owns the facility and so can make bigger savings. Since it opened in 2016, it has saved well over £5m from waste budgets every year, money which can be spent on other important local services.

How does it work?

Non-recyclable waste from across the county is brought to the EfW site which is north of Aylesbury. The waste is emptied into a bunker. From there it is transferred into a giant incinerator which burns at a temperature of around 850 degrees Celsius, reducing everything, apart from metals containing iron, to ash.

Above the incinerator is a boiler which contains water. This water is heated by the gases that are generated from burning the waste. The steam produced is pressurised and turns a turbine which creates the electricity.



Is it environmentally friendly?

We would much rather more waste was recycled or composted but the left over non-recyclable waste needs to be managed. The process is closely monitored and gases produced are treated and filtered to remove toxins. Only clean gases that meet the required safe limits are allowed to be released back into the air.



Want to find out more? You can find videos online or even take part in a site visit:
greatmoor.co.uk

**Want to
reassure
yourself that
you are still
safe to drive?**



Why not consider a Mature Driver Assessment?

In your own car and on roads familiar to you, the assessment will last about 90 minutes and aims to:

- refresh your driving skills
- maintain your independence
- restore your confidence
- help you to drive safer for longer

For more information or to book an assessment, visit:
buckinghamshire.gov.uk and search 'older driver'



Caremark (Aylesbury and Wycombe)



Multi-award-winning doctor-led home care for **all ages** throughout **Buckinghamshire** that provides:

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- Long visits
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- Learning Disability Care
- Physical Disability Care
- Dementia Care

Supporting you for:

- Personal Care
- Medication Support
- Nutrition and Hydration
- Meal Preparation
- Mobility
- Companionship
- Shopping
- Transport
- Social Activities

t: 01296 641 662 e: aylesbury@caremark.co.uk
www.caremark.co.uk/aylesbury-and-wycombe

Be a LitterLotto winner!

LitterLotto is a free initiative that gives people the chance to win thousands of instant cash prizes each month, simply by binning litter.

Council teams empty more than 4,000 litter bins across the county every week, working hard to keep streets clean but litter is still a problem.

You can help us keep our streets cleaner by signing up to LitterLotto. Simply download the free app, then take a picture through it as you bin the litter. Each time you bin a new piece of litter you get another entry into the LitterLotto and could win £250 in the local monthly prize draw. Participants also have a chance of winning the national weekly jackpot of £1,000, alongside a range of spot prizes. To date one lucky local resident has won £1,000 and 14 others have won £250 each. The real winner of course is your local area. Since the initiative began, more than 250,000 pieces of litter have been binned via LitterLotto!



All litter counts, from a single cigarette butt to a takeaway meal box!



recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk/litterlotto

B Discover Bucks Museum
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Aylesbury HP20 2QP



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Visit www.coam.org.uk for full details

Chiltern Open Air Museum, Newland Park, Gorelands Lane,
Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire, HP8 4AB



Supporting our residents

Life can feel like it's dragging on during the winter months and with energy and food costs still high, supporting our residents remains a key priority. If you're finding things difficult, there are lots of ways to get help and support all year round.

A great starting point is the dedicated cost of living advice on our website. Here you can get information on a range of topics, from how to save money on your energy bills, to free courses about cooking healthy meals on a budget. You can also find out about the support available if you are facing significant financial hardship.

 [buckinghamshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living)


Reducing your energy bills

You can reduce your household bills by saving energy and making your home more energy efficient. We're supporting schemes to help people in Buckinghamshire do this.

- Better Housing Better Health (self-referrals)
0800 107 0044

 [bhbm.org.uk](https://www.bhbm.org.uk)

- Request a visit from Energy Doctor*

 [buckinghamshire.gov.uk/energy-doctor](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/energy-doctor)
*eligibility criteria apply

- If you are struggling to pay your energy bills speak to your supplier in the first instance. For more information visit:

 [buckinghamshire.gov.uk/energy-support](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/energy-support)

Building a better future

Adult Learning

Take a free course to learn about saving money, low-cost cooking, and how to shop smart. With these new skills you can make your money go further and feel confident managing your household budget.

Call **07977 155 937**, email:
multiply@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or visit:

 adultlearningbc.ac.uk/multiply

Opportunity Bucks

Through our Opportunity Bucks programme we have set up ward partnerships in ten key wards in the county where residents experience poorer outcomes. Through these partnerships we've introduced a number of projects, courses and other activities to bring about improvements in their local areas.

- We're designing a new road safety scheme in Castlefield to lower incidents of anti-social and dangerous driving.
- We've put on free Maths and English courses to equip people who want to improve their numeracy and literacy skills.
- We've hosted jobs and skills fairs to enhance work and career opportunities for people by matching them directly with employers.
- We've held Community Action Days with local activities that lift the local area, from litter picking to looking at ways to tackle anti-social behaviour.

YOUR Buckinghamshire

What you told us about this magazine!

Thank you to everyone who fed back their thoughts about Your Buckinghamshire magazine in the survey we put in the last edition.

We had **221 responses** overall.

We're really pleased that most people who took part like the magazine and want to keep receiving it. It was great to see that more than **90% of respondents** always read their Your Buckinghamshire.

82% of respondents

told us Your Buckinghamshire keeps them well informed about Buckinghamshire Council's activities.

37% of respondents

told us if there was no magazine, they would prefer to find out about Buckinghamshire Council from emails and e-newsletters, and **28%** said through our website.

Your favourite topics in Your Buckinghamshire include:

- Bin collection information.
- Local 'what's on' information and events.
- Roads and repairs.
- Parking.
- Environmental issues.



“

There's a good spread of informative articles that keep residents updated. Particularly helpful are date-sensitive pieces, such as refuse collection dates.”

Buckinghamshire resident

A few people also told us that they do not like the magazine and would rather not receive it.

As you'll have seen from the budget article in this edition of Your Buckinghamshire, the council is having to make savings to keep paying for the critical services we provide. It means we'll be producing only one magazine in the next financial year to save some money, although the magazine costs are partly offset by the advertising we carry in each edition.

We do know from the survey that this direct communications does matter to our readers so please do look out for our next edition later this year or early next year.

If you have an email address, make sure you sign up to our regular email updates from Leader Martin Tett
[buckinghamshire.gov.uk/signup](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/signup)

Grants to support our community

Our Thriving Communities Fund aims to **provide financial support for our residents** and also voluntary and community organisations that operate within the areas where our residents live.



We invest up to £250,000 per year to support local groups and enrich the lives of people living in our community. The fund supports a wide variety of cultural, environmental, and social activities, as well as supporting and equipping services for those most in need.

There are three types of grant available:

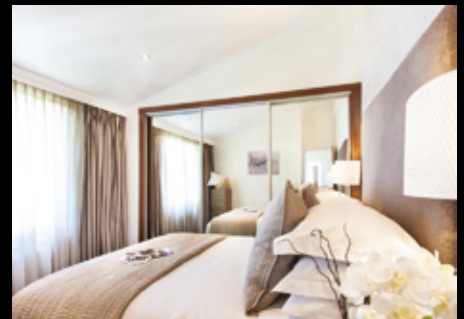
- Micro Grants for community or voluntary groups of up to £3,000 for small projects such as the purchase of equipment or venue hire.
- Project Grants for community or voluntary groups of up to £10,000 for larger initiatives such as the purchase of more substantial equipment or on-going running costs.
- Springboard Grants of up to £300 to support our residents with opportunities for wellbeing, education, training or employment.

If you want more information about any of our grants and guidance on how to apply, please visit fairhive.co.uk/thrive or scan the QR code



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