

# Community Board Terms of Reference

## 1. Aims & Objectives

- 1.1 The vision for community boards is to improve outcomes for residents through ensuring strong connections between Buckinghamshire Council with its diverse communities. The objectives below set out the different elements of the work of community boards, as well as updated to provide clarity on the legal status of community boards:
- a) *Local Issues*: Enabling Buckinghamshire Council councillors to make recommendations on local issues, alongside community organisations, such as town and parish councils.
  - b) *Influence*: Empowering Buckinghamshire Council Councillors and communities to influence service design and delivery on local issues.
  - c) *Partnership*: Facilitating communities to come together with Buckinghamshire Council Councillors and partners to find solutions to local issues.

## 2. Approach

- 2.1 To achieve these aims and objectives each community board will be expected to:
- Agree Community Area Priorities, based on evidence of local needs, and an action plan to address these with targets.
  - Agree a tailored communications & engagement plan for actively involving residents and community organisations.
  - Set-up action groups to support the delivery of the Community Action Plan.
  - Provide opportunities to ensure that the local community is able to respond to consultations and influence service commissioning decisions in a timely manner.
  - Provide opportunities to ensure good communications and information from Buckinghamshire Council, and partners, on local issues.
  - Make recommendations to Buckinghamshire Council on funding local projects.
  - Make recommendations to Buckinghamshire Council, and partners, on key local issues.
  - Produce an annual report with a self-assessment of success in relation to the aims and objectives for community boards, and action plan delivery.
  - Hold at least one annual community event to enable residents and community groups to set area priorities and address issues.

### **3. Remit**

- 3.1 Community boards will be empowered to discuss any issues that are relevant to enable them to achieve their objectives.
- 3.2 Agenda items are expected to be of relevance and significance for the community board as a whole.
- 3.3 Operational issues will be encouraged to be dealt with outside of formal community board meetings through relevant channels. For example, written requests for potholes to be fixed should be made via 'fix my street', and/or flagged with the relevant councillor outside of formal meetings.
- 3.4 No service complaints or complaints about councillors will be considered. These will be considered under Buckinghamshire Council's complaints policy. All Buckinghamshire Council Councillors are bound by the Buckinghamshire Council code of conduct. Members are also bound by the other procedures and protocols applicable to members of the Buckinghamshire Council.
- 3.5 Planning matters that fall under the remit of the area planning committees of Buckinghamshire Council will be out of scope to avoid duplication.
- 3.6 Effective liaison between community boards and strategic committee business will be facilitated via liaison meetings for the community board chairmen. Common themes and issues will be discussed with the Cabinet Portfolio holder, senior officers and relevant scrutiny chairmen.
- 3.7 Community boards may consider petitions to Buckinghamshire Council they relate to a local issue and are best resolved locally. The handling of petitions will be in accordance with the Council's constitution and petitions protocol.

### **4. Legal Status**

- 4.1 Community boards are informal meetings convened by Buckinghamshire Council.
- 4.2 They are advisory only with no decision-making powers. They are able to make recommendations.
- 4.3 Meetings will be conducted informally but where it is necessary for the Chairman to rule on any point then rulings will follow the procedures set out in the Buckinghamshire Council Constitution.

### **5. Community board membership & participation**

- 5.1 The formal and core membership of each community board will comprise all Buckinghamshire Council councillors from the respective area.
- 5.2 No substitutes are permitted.

- 5.3 Standing invitations to attend meetings will be provided to the following key partners:
- All town and parish councils in the area (1 representative each)
  - Thames Valley Police
  - Primary Care Networks (1 representative from the lead PCN aligned)
- 5.4 Each community board chairman has the discretion to invite any additional attendees. For example this could include:
- Youth Council representative
  - Key not-for-profit organisations
  - Local businesses
  - Other statutory bodies such as the Fire Service, Ambulance Service or CCG.
- 5.5 Regardless, of the above, all formal community board meetings will be open to the public to attend, and the public will be encouraged to attend and participate in these meetings and other events.

## **6. Community board decision-making**

- 6.1 For community boards to be successful they will need to work in co-operation with the local community and it is envisaged that on the whole this will be by consensus.
- 6.2 Upon some occasions, a vote might be needed, for example in regard to a recommendation from the board on funding local projects.
- 6.3 Where a vote is required then this will be by a show of hands of formal board members present.
- 6.4 Prior to such a vote, the Chairman may upon his/her discretion take an indicative vote of representatives from local organisations, including town and parish councils, who are present. Each organisation, will have one indicative vote. This will enable Buckinghamshire Council councillors to have a clear understanding of the official views of local partners.
- 6.5 The Chairman will also normally ensure that the public have had the opportunity to express their views prior to a vote, in accordance with the provisions on public participation, as set out in the section below.

## **7. Chairmanship**

- 7.1 The chairman of each community board will be appointed by the Cabinet Portfolio holder for localism.
- 7.2 The chairman of each community board must be a member of Buckinghamshire Council and the respective community board.

- 7.3 The vice-chairman shall be nominated by the relevant Community board Chairman and confirmed by the Cabinet portfolio holder for localism. They must be a member of Buckinghamshire Council and the respective community board.
- 7.4 The normal term of office shall be for two years.
- 7.5 The portfolio holder for Localism may rescind appointments within this period at any time.
- 7.6 The vice chairman will preside in the absence of the chairman and if neither is present, the community board will appoint a chairman from among its membership for that respective meeting.
- 7.7 The role of the Chairman will include:
- Providing leadership to ensure that the objectives of community boards are met.
  - Ensuring that the voices of residents are at the heart of the work of community boards.
  - Representing the community board at chairmen's liaison meetings and presenting the annual report of the community board to full council.
  - Attending mandatory annual training to support them to be effective in their key community leadership role.

## **8. Meeting Frequency**

- 8.1 Each community board is expected to hold:
- At least five but no more than six formal community board meetings per year.
  - At least one annual resident's forum event to encourage participation in the area priority setting process.
  - Events locally to encourage resident participation in regard the area priorities agreed and as required in for example consultations and or participatory budgeting.

## **9. Public Participation**

- 9.1 All normal community board meetings will be open to the public and press.
- 9.2 The format of community board meetings will be at the discretion of the chairman and designed to maximise public participation.
- 9.3 For example, the meetings may be structured to enable the standing item business of community board meetings to be conducted at the end of the meeting, with items of public interest to be placed at the start of the agenda to enable residents to have their say without staying for the whole meeting.
- 9.4 Members of the public will be able to ask questions and speak in regard to an agenda item, and considered under the relevant agenda item. The length of

time for speaking will be at the discretion of the chairman and normally limited to one issue per speaker, with an overall maximum public speaking slot of 10 minutes per agenda item.

- 9.5 In addition, written questions to Chairmen are invited at any time from residents in regard to the work of community boards.
- 9.6 A published online response log will be made available and an updates provided at each community board meeting as a standing item. Responses will be provided within 20 working days.
- 9.7 Residents who have questions to individual councillors on specific local electoral division issues are encouraged to contact them directly.

## **10. Agendas**

- 10.1 The Chairman will be responsible for the content of community board agendas. All members of the community board may submit agenda items which will be included at the discretion of the Chairman.
- 10.2 Community board agendas will be published online via Buckinghamshire Council's website giving normally at least five clear working days before the meeting.
- 10.3 An action log, rather than formal minutes, will be published on Buckinghamshire Council's website normally within 15 working days of the meeting.

## **11. Officer Support**

- 11.1 Buckinghamshire Council will provide administrative, policy and project support for community boards.