



High Wycombe Community Board Action Plan

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Introduction

The High Wycombe Community Board covers the unparished area of High Wycombe. The unparished area can be viewed on this [map](#). The aim of the Board is to improve outcomes for residents through ensuring strong connections between Buckinghamshire Council and the local community. This will be achieved by ensuring that Board members are able to make recommendations on local issues, and that they can influence the Council's service design and delivery in the local area. The Board will work in partnership with a range of local stakeholders to find solutions to local concerns.

Funding

The 16 Community Boards across Buckinghamshire have been given a collective budget of £3.9 million. The budget is split into three funding streams:

- Community Area Priorities Fund
- Health and Wellbeing Fund
- Local Infrastructure Fund

The Community Area Priorities Fund will support local projects that will help improve outcomes for residents and that address the area priorities determined by each community board, as well as support the delivery of Buckinghamshire Council's Corporate Plan. The overall budget is split between the 16 Boards with a top-up based on population. Each Community Board can allocate a maximum of 50% of its Community Area Priorities Fund towards transport / highways projects.

The Health and Wellbeing Fund is to be used to support local projects which will help improve the health and wellbeing of residents. The overall budget is split between the 16 Boards with a top-up based on deprivation. It should be noted that due to the Covid-19 pandemic £250,000 (50%) of the total Health and Wellbeing Fund was allocated to the new Coronavirus Councillor Crisis Fund, which provided a source of funding for organisations and groups responding urgently to the pandemic. An additional £50,000 which included £7,250 for the High Wycombe area was generously donated to the Coronavirus Councillor Crisis Fund by The Rothschild Foundation providing a further source of funding. Applications for funding were submitted and supported by three local Councillors and were required to meet eligibility criteria. The total amount of this funding for High Wycombe was allocated to local organisations and groups and a report documenting the impact and outcomes for residents will be produced at the end of the financial year 2020/21.

The Local Infrastructure Fund is to support community infrastructure needs. It can be used to support the upgrading of existing and/or new physical and/or social infrastructure. Physical Infrastructure would include buildings and social Infrastructure would include services, e.g. youth services, older people's groups, health and education services / projects,

Community transport, recreational activities / equipment and cycle paths could be classed as either physical or social infrastructure or both.




The overall budget is allocated based on the number of new homes proposed for each Board area according to the draft or published Local Plans. Applications would be expected to demonstrate the impact of growth on the relevant area and show the need or community desire for the proposed investment.

Further information about Community Boards and how to apply for funding is on our [website](#)

For the High Wycombe Community Board, the levels of funding for 2020/21 are as follows:

Community Area Priorities Fund	Health & Wellbeing Fund	Infrastructure Fund	Total
£132,759 (Up to a maximum of £66,379.50 available to allocate to Highway schemes)	£72,503 before Councillor Coronavirus Crisis Fund allocation £36,252 remaining	£146,000	£351,262

High Wycombe Community Board progress and local priorities

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The Community Board has identified some initial broad priority areas which will form part of the criteria for assessing applications. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Board has not been able to consult with a wide range of partners and members of the public in setting its local



priorities. The priorities can be reviewed by the Board at any time and it is expected that a review of these initial priorities, including engagement with stakeholders, community groups and residents, will take place during 2020/21.

The chair and vice-chair of the board and the community board coordinator have met with a number of partners to understand the local issues and needs and to establish the opportunity to work together. These include Action4Youth, HWBIDCo and Buckinghamshire Council’s Economic Development Officer, Thames Valley Police, Chiltern Rangers, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, Feedback and Community Youth Ventures, One Can Trust, Wycombe Food Hub, Wycombe Wanderers Sports and Education Trust and Buckinghamshire Council’s Family Support Service. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with more partners to continue creating partnerships and sharing knowledge.

Further information about the High Wycombe Community Board is on our [website](#)

Sub groups for local priorities

Covid-19 recovery, resilience and regeneration

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The Board has identified Covid-19 recovery, resilience and regeneration as a key priority for the local area. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the needs of the vulnerable in the community and those who have not previously experienced a need to engage with support services. It is clear that ongoing community support will be required whilst the recovery from Covid-19 is underway and beyond.

Following feedback from local Covid-19 community support groups the sub group agrees that there is an opportunity to discuss experience and best practice at a lessons learnt meeting with Covid-19 community support groups and have initiated discussions with Buckinghamshire Local Support Hubs. The aim is to form a plan which will enable a coordinated approach to Covid-19 support for residents in the event of a second spike or local lockdown. A wider discussion is also required around addressing issues such as food

poverty and insecurity, debt and financial insecurity, employment support, training and skills, social isolation and mental and physical health.

Local businesses, artists and performers have been severely affected during and after the lockdown with decreased footfall and income, social distancing and required safety measures. Encouraging, supporting and enabling artists and performers, cultural groups and organisations to deliver activities and events in the town centre along with artisan markets could create a more vibrant atmosphere and increase footfall for local businesses. Supporting local small businesses and food producers to trial selling in the town centre and build a local customer base could be explored as part of the local market.

Local infrastructure and transport



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The Board has identified Local infrastructure and transport as a key priority for the local area. This includes the provision of infrastructure to support increased development and the maintenance and improvement of the highway network. It also includes road safety and improvements of footpaths and pedestrian accesses.

Feedback from local residents results in a variety of highway schemes which are submitted by Councillors and highlight speeding and parking as recurring issues. Working with Thames Valley Police Community Speedwatch and residents would enable communities to start to address the issue of speeding. Maintaining accessible footpaths would encourage and support residents to walk and cycle safely as lower impact and healthier alternative modes of transport.

Although major infrastructure projects and highways schemes are out of scope as the Board can only spend up to 50% of its Community Area Priorities Fund (£66,379.50 for 2020/21) on highway schemes, the Board can still play a major role in influencing decisions in these areas. Current infrastructure projects include the Emergency Active Travel Plan, upgrades to create safer routes for cyclists travelling east-west through High Wycombe and E-Scooter trials a new way to enable people to travel safely using rental e-scooters.

Community cohesion

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The Board has identified Community cohesion as a key priority for the local area. This includes raising awareness about Covid-19 and how to stay safe for the community as a whole and in particular for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities which have been adversely affected by the pandemic. A leaflet has been produced by Buckinghamshire Council which can be circulated to raise awareness.

Support for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) would improve access to support services, in particular health services resulting in improved health outcomes. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-for-speakers-of-other-languages-access-and-progression>

Celebrating and promoting High Wycombe's diverse communities and culture would increase understanding and awareness. Working with partners this has the potential to build on existing activities starting with Black History Month in October and continuing throughout the year. Raising awareness around unconscious bias and racism would help to foster inclusivity and community cohesion.

Younger people (aged 25 and below) have been adversely effected by Covid-19 due to reduced school attendance, an increase in social isolation and internet and online use. Employment and debt are also likely to be issues affecting this group, as a larger percentage of young people work in industries which are more adversely affected by Covid-19 such as the hospitality sector. Increasing youth provision would provide support and skills for young people and their families while raising awareness of accessible support services and building a support network.

Mental health and community

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The Board has identified mental health and community as a key priority for the local area. Due to the impact of Covid-19, there has been an increase in anxiety, depression and suicide and the number of young men involved is steadily rising. This could increase further in response to the news of job losses, unemployment and bereavement. There are more self-employed in High Wycombe than any other area in the country and this group could be hit hardest. Raising awareness about suicide prevention and access to local and national support services would support those living with mental health issues and their families. The Board delivered a promotional morning in the High Street raising awareness about mental health services and support and the Community Board as part of Suicide Prevention day on 10th September.

Promotion of and signposting to existing mental health support services and the creation of new consistent support groups would support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents and their families. Black African Caribbean males are more likely to be arrested by police under Section 106 and are more likely than average to encounter mental health services. Local representatives are aiming to work together on an idea for a festival of wellbeing with a team who can reach out to black residents.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/b/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-communities>



Carers of older people have experienced difficulties in coping during lockdown and provision for respite has reduced e.g. support groups, day centres due to Covid-19. Older people in care homes have also been negatively affected due to Covid-19. Communal areas and activities are restricted which has exacerbated social isolation. Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service have reported an increase in fires in older people's homes due to a lack of visitors and build-up of waste or clutter.

The eviction ban put in place as lockdown began has been extended until the 20th September with new 6 month notice periods put in place until at least 31st March 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jenrick-extends-ban-on-evictions-and-notice-periods>

With the impact of Covid-19 and the changes to the furlough scheme resulting in an increase in debt and unemployment hundreds of households in Buckinghamshire are finding that their income doesn't cover their outgoings and the worry that they could be facing homelessness is building. Ensuring clear pathways and signposting to support services for adults and young people could improve outcomes for residents.

Environment and climate change

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The Board has identified environment and climate change as a key priority for the local area. Reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 are a priority in the Council's corporate plan and Climate Change Strategy. The council is seeking to glean the views of organisations and information regarding activities to address climate change via a survey which will be launched on 25th September. This will be promoted as widely as possible by the boards.

Climate, carbon and biodiversity are co-dependent and the board aims to work with residents, community groups and organisations to increase awareness and understanding and highlights the opportunities to get involved and positively impact conservation, community litter picks, fly tipping and recycling. Chiltern Conservation Society is hosting The Chilterns Champions Conference online which naturalist Chris Packham will headline on 24th October. Promotion through the community boards' network would increase attendance awareness and understanding and could pave the way for a High Wycombe focused online festival of a similar nature.

A local resident has initiated the [11th Hour Strike for the Climate.pdf](#) an idea inspired by Clap for Carers and Greta Thunberg's School Strike for Climate. This could provide the opportunity for regular discussion, positive action and activities with local groups e.g. [Chiltern Rangers](#)

Environment and climate change policy report from Shadow Executive meeting 7th Feb 2020
<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=1875>

Climate motion from 15th July council meeting, see item 9

<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=336&MID=322#A126>

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Actions for 2020/21

In order to address the priorities identified above and achieve the aims of the Board, the following actions will be undertaken:

- Sub groups have been established for each of the priority areas, and have had an initial meeting to identify potential key areas of work and which residents, community groups and organisations to invite to the sub-group meetings. Local residents, community groups and organisations are invited to attend the sub group meetings. Please contact the sub group chair and community board coordinator to book your place and receive the meeting details. At each meeting sub-groups will discuss the issues relating to each priority area in greater detail and report back to the wider Community Board membership. Sub groups may also consider and discuss applications for funding, and make recommendations to the Board on which applications should be supported. They may also discuss more strategic issues relating to their priority area in order to influence decisions which affect the local community, and they may work with groups from other Board areas where appropriate.
- Build and develop connections with stakeholders and partners in the High Wycombe area. This can be through the Community Board Coordinator or any of the Board members. Local stakeholders and partners should be invited to relevant sub-group meetings.
- Advertise the available Community Board funding through local channels and encourage applications. Work with applicants to ensure that bids are strong and look for alternative sources of funding where possible to facilitate match funding.
- Assess applications and agree recommendations for funding allocation.
- Support applicants to get projects up and running, and promote them within the local community.