



Community Boards Review – Recommendations from the C&L Select Committee review group

Chairman – Cllr Mimi Harker OBE

Response from Cabinet

Recommendation	Cabinet's Response – Y/N & comments	Lead Member/Officer & Timelines
1. A refreshed vision for Community Boards should be agreed and widely promoted to ensure a shared understanding for residents, key partners, elected members and council officers about the role of the Community Boards in enriching local communities.	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Agree it is important to have a shared understanding of the role of Community Boards as the local face of the Council, leading local place shaping in collaboration with partners and local organisations and groups. We need to move away from the perception that they are simply grant giving bodies.</p>	<p>Steve Bowles /Roger Goodes June 2022</p>
2. The unique skill set required to be an effective Community Board Chairman, as well as the necessary commitment in terms of energy and time, should be given due consideration when appointing Community Board Chairmen.	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The Community Board Chairmen play an important role and it is positive to see that the review has recognised their contribution. The appointment of Community Board Chairmen is made by the Leader, alongside other key council appointments.</p>	<p>Martin Tett June 2022</p>

<p>3. Cabinet should ensure that there is sufficient resource and resilience in the Community Board Co-ordinator team due to the pivotal role they play in delivering the Council's localism agenda.</p>	<p>In part.</p> <p>The Committee will be aware that the Council has agreed to deliver a saving from the service review of the localities team in the current financial year to support the overall budget position. Whilst there is a reduction in the total number of posts however, the intention is to deliver increased resilience through streamlined processes and a new support function. Greater emphasis will also be placed on clarifying the role of the coordinators which is primarily around supporting the Community Board with local engagement and facilitating solutions, rather than direct project delivery. The service review has also identified a single point of contact for Town and Parish Councils in the service to help these organisations know who to contact in future.</p>	<p>Steve Bowles/ Roger Goodes June 2022</p>
<p>4. Community Boards should be allowed full autonomy to identify and agree their own local priorities, in line with Buckinghamshire Council's priorities and to establish relevant sub-groups in order to tackle key issues in their area.</p>	<p>In part</p> <p>As an integral part of the Council, the role of Community Boards is to support Council priorities at a local level. Within that framework, however, the particular issues which they wish to focus on as a Board will of course reflect local need. I have recently advised Community Board Chairman that funding in 2022/23 will not be ringfenced and the use of sub-groups is entirely a matter for them to determine.</p>	<p>Steve Bowles/ Roger Goodes June 2022</p>

<p>5. A proactive communications strategy for Community Boards should be developed as a matter of urgency, to enable a ‘step change’ in community engagement, the promotion of Community Boards and the positive impacts they have had in their local area.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>A communications plan for the Community Boards will be developed, building on areas of good practice to date and ensuring that there is greater recognition of the work led by the Boards. In particular, the plan will focus on expanding opportunities for face-to-face engagement, and training will be provided as required.</p>	<p>Steve Bowles/ Roger Goodes August 2022</p>
<p>6. There must be greater clarity around the Community Board funding process and improved transparency around decision making. The process should be revised to deliver both the necessary governance and oversight and efficient processing of monies in a realistic and proportionate way.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>A review of the funding process has been undertaken and a series of changes are being introduced to streamline decision making and provide clear guidance, for example around the expectations about contributory funding.</p>	<p>Steve Bowles/ Roger Goodes May 2022</p>
<p>7. Consideration should be given to an alternative mechanism for the delivery of local Highways schemes.</p>	<p>In part</p> <p>There are no plans to reduce the scope of the Community Boards to invest in a range of different highways schemes, although we will draft a protocol which identified projects more suited to funding through Community Boards, and include example projects and indicative costs to help develop proposals.</p> <p>With the new contract for Highways services coming into operation in 2023, there is an opportunity to consider changes in process in order to address the concerns identified. We will revise the protocol for the relationship between the Community Boards and the Highways service which will provide a framework for the delivery of local schemes and seek to address issues with transparency.</p>	<p>Steve Bowles/Steven Broadbent</p> <p>Richard Barker/ Roger Goodes</p> <p>September 2022</p>

<p>8. Community Board Champions should be appointed in each service area of the Council, to demonstrate corporate commitment to the CBs as the local face of the Council and to act as a dedicated contact point for Community Boards Co-ordinators. In addition, guidance should be issued which sets out clear expectations for service officers in supporting Community Boards and manages expectations of the Community Boards, in terms of the resource that might be available, especially in smaller service areas.</p>	<p>In part.</p> <p>It would not be practical to identify single champions in each service area, due to the breadth of issues that community boards address. We do however recognise the need to improve engagement with services about the way in which they link in and support Community Boards. We will work with the key service areas to agree appropriate mechanisms for them to engage with Boards and to better manage expectations. We will also review the role of Service Directors assigned to Boards to ensure this is working positively in helping Boards and the engagement with the wider council.</p>	<p>Steve Bowles/ Roger Goodes</p> <p>December 2022</p>
<p>9. An overarching plan, we suggest a three year road map, for the development of the Community Boards should be drawn up, with clearly defined milestones to enable their progress to be evaluated.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Recognising the significant level of change we are experiencing both nationally and locally, we will produce a high level road map covering a three year period, with more detail for the next 12 months. We will then update this annually. This will recognise the evolving role of Community Boards and the reduced funding available.</p>	<p>Steve Bowles/Roger Goodes</p> <p>July 2022</p>

<p>10. The success of each Community Board and individual projects that receive funding should be evaluated in a simple and proportionate manner. (This could be as straightforward as each CB reflecting on the priorities they set at the beginning of each year and how well the projects they have supported have delivered on those priorities at year end)</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Agree that it is critical to introduce a way of evaluating projects supported by the Boards linked to outcomes. We will develop a simple and proportionate approach.</p>	<p>Steve Bowles/Roger Goodes July 2022</p>
<p>11. A mechanism should be established to enable greater sharing of best practice ideas across Community Board areas and to consider opportunities for working in partnership across Community Board boundaries.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Agree that we should ensure there are mechanisms to improve understanding and sharing of best practice. In addition to the existing meetings of Chairmen and Coordinators, we will seek to identify further opportunities for Community Boards to have better visibility of what others are doing and consider working together on similar issues.</p>	<p>Steve Bowles/ Roger Goodes July 2022</p>