



# Report to Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	12 July 2022
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Town and Parish Charter</b>
<b>Relevant councillor(s):</b>	Cllr Steve Bowles, Communities Portfolio
<b>Author and/or contact officer:</b>	Hannah Thynne, Head of Policy & Partnerships / Simon Garwood, Senior Policy Officer (Town & Parish Council lead)
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	None specific
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>To adopt the proposed charter that outlines Buckinghamshire Council's commitment to working with Town and Parish Councils across the county and to note the action plan that supports the delivery of our commitments in the charter.</b>
<b>Reason for decision:</b>	To demonstrate and embed our commitment to effective working with Town and Parish Councils across the Council.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Town and Parish Councils (T&PC's) are the grass roots of local government in Buckinghamshire. Following the establishment of the new Buckinghamshire Council Members wanted to take the opportunity to strengthen the relationship between all tiers of local government.
- 1.2 Since the new council there has been an ongoing programme of work to create a document that outlines this commitment and articulates some key areas to help cement a strengthened relationship.
- 1.3 This work has involved extensive engagement with local councils, members and has been supported by an independent consultant.

- 1.4 Following this work the recommendation was for Buckinghamshire Council to produce a document which sets out a framework for how Buckinghamshire Council will work with local councils going forward.
- 1.5 The document is titled the Town and Parish Charter and is attached at appendix A. This sets out assurances on the relationship between Buckinghamshire Council and the 171 town and parish councils in Buckinghamshire and aims to help articulate a commitment and ambition to work collaboratively. It is an important document which helps define the relationship and will need to be embedded across the organisation as part of our commitment to working together.
- 1.6 Underpinning the Charter is an action plan that is detailed in Appendix B.
- 1.7 This action plan will establish mechanisms for accountability and how the charter will become embedded within the council and in the ongoing relationship with local councils.
- 1.8 It also addresses a number of areas for improvement which came out of the development of the Charter.
- 1.9 Within the Deputy Chief Executives directorate, the Partnerships, Policy and Communications team will act as the lead service in implementing the action plan and building on the existing relationship to ensure effective partnership and joint working between the two tiers of local government.
- 1.10 This won't however replace existing relationships and arrangements for engagement and consultation with local councils on specific service issues.

## **2. Legal and financial implications**

- 2.1 There are no legal and financial implications as a direct result of implementing the Charter. However, the action plan includes actions for individual services which may have small budgetary implications which will be picked up within existing budgets as appropriate.

## **3. Corporate implications**

- 3.1 All directorates will be expected to follow the principles of the Charter.

## **4. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views**

- 4.1 During the development of the Charter, all Buckinghamshire councillors were consulted and given the opportunity to comment. Further views of local members were also sought by the independent consultant during their review, including cabinet members and community board chairmen.



## **5. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

- 5.1 Once the Charter is agreed the details of this will be shared widely across the council, with elected members and to all local councils.

## **6. Next steps and review**

- 6.1 Following agreement, the Town and Parish Charter will be published on our website and shared as detailed above.
- 6.2 Officers will also monitor the progress of the action plan and review the Charter on an annual basis ensuring consultation with Buckinghamshire councillors and town and parish councils. Any key changes to the Charter itself will be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

## **Your questions and views (for key decisions)**

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone [01296 382343] or email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk]

