



An update for Community Boards from Buckinghamshire Council (Issue 2 2023 – May 2023)

Community Board and Highways Projects

Following the start of the new highways contract, the Community Boards will be following a new process when highways issues are raised to them.

The Community Boards will focus on right first-time solutions and explore community-based opportunities with collaboration from Community Board Managers, Local Community Liaison Team and the wider Buckinghamshire Council services to look for the most appropriate solution.

Relevant issues are to be raised to the Community Board predominantly via Town & Parish Councils using current ways of working where boards have a highways priority/where there is an action group in place.

Where the issue is appropriate to be dealt with through the Community Board, in the first instance the requestor will be signposted to a toolkit of non-engineered options which should be explored and implemented as a first opportunity for problem solving. This is an opportunity for the Community Board Managers, Chairmen, Community Board members and the Highways Community Liaison Team to work collaboratively, along with other council services, to explore the root cause of a problem holistically. Community Board funding may be requested to deliver these solutions (subject to meeting funding criteria and priorities). Signposting to other funding sources will also be shared where available. This process can take place at any time during the year.

Once all non-engineered solutions have been explored and evaluated, if it is agreed that an engineered solution is appropriate a brochure providing 'off the shelf' solutions will be available for review. The brochure will include options such as entry gates, dragon's teeth, signage, VAS and bollards. The Highways Community Liaison team will be able to provide advice around which options would be most appropriate for the location knowing the historic highways background, as well as engineering expertise regarding correct identification of the right option for the area. Community Board funding and budget availability should be considered at this point, in addition to other funding options.

Quotes (PIDs) will continue to be produced but these will be a lighter touch to take into account the individual factors for the proposed site and passed back to the requestor directly. Community Boards may consider applications to their small grants for the production of quotes. Following discussion of the quote with the Community Board to ascertain their support for the project, an application will need to be submitted to the Community Board in the same way as a community project; the funding limit for all projects remains at £15,000.

The new way of working will provide for a collaborative approach between those with local knowledge and highways expertise to provide the best value for money solution to the matter.

Projects which are partially complete due to the change in contractor, along with projects where PIDs have already been produced, will be reviewed and re-costed by the end of May 2023. Updated information will be passed back to the Community Board to confirm next steps. All legacy schemes will be completed by 31 March 2024.

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Action on potholes

We are still focused on tackling the increased number of potholes and road defects this year, caused by the very wet and cold winter. In April our new maintenance contractor BBLP increased crew numbers and fixed 929 potholes, and crews continue to work seven days a week.

We fix the most urgent repairs first and with the warmer spring weather arriving we'll be able to fix more potholes permanently first time, instead of needing to make temporary repairs and return later. Added to this, a new time-saving three-in-one Pothole Pro machine is enabling crews to make more efficient reactive repairs across the county.

Our extended plane and patch programme has begun in earnest, along with planning for the surface dressing, micro-surfacing and major re-surfacing programmes that begin in June.

The annual planned wider maintenance and improvements programme is well under way too – and in fact we are accelerating this work to address the condition of our roads sooner. We have also fixed nearly 100 streetlights, we continue cleaning and fixing Buckinghamshire's 85,000 gullies and we are starting the grass cutting programme.

Please continue to [report any issues through buckinghamshire.gov.uk/FixMyStreet](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/FixMyStreet)

A new vision for Buckinghamshire Libraries

On 21 March, Cabinet approved a new vision and strategy for Buckinghamshire libraries. Libraries have transformed over recent years to offer a range of services and activities that promote wellbeing, inclusion, and community cohesion.

The vision is for a service that provides welcoming and safe spaces for everyone to access reading, culture and the information and services they need to learn, discover, imagine, and thrive. The priorities for Buckinghamshire libraries are:

- Encouraging culture, reading and learning
- Building stronger communities
- Enabling access, information and inclusion
- Promoting health and wellbeing

More information about the new vision is available on the libraries' membership area of the council website.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/libraries/library-membership/library-policies/our-vision-and-strategy-for-buckinghamshire-libraries/>

Cost of Living funding and focus

The council's Cost of Living and Helping Hand programmes are aimed at reducing the impact of increased financial hardship that Buckinghamshire residents may be experiencing.

On 9 May Cabinet agreed the proposals for how we use the next allocation of the Household Support Fund. This fund is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, and Buckinghamshire has been allocated £4.8million for this financial year.

Although we are now enjoying the warmer weather, we continue to recognise that times may be hard for some residents. The agreed proposals see a continuation of direct support to those in need through the Helping Hand service, including children during the school holiday periods and providing targeted support to cohorts of individuals who may be finding things difficult. The key aims are to:

- help residents pay for bills, food and other essentials
- provide digital food vouchers for eligible children during school holidays
- support voluntary and community groups in their efforts to help local residents
- provide assistance to other vulnerable groups including pensioners, those with disabilities and care leavers.

Going forwards we will be using this quarterly corporate update to keep you informed of highlights and things you need to know. If you have any questions relating to Cost of Living, Dorota Leclerc remains the person to contact.

View the full report at [Cost of Living Support for Buckinghamshire Residents - HSF4 cabinet report - v3.2 Final.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Applications for support can be made at <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living/>

Local Plan and Local Transport Plan

The council is creating two long-term plans for what Buckinghamshire should be like in 2040 and how this can be achieved:

- The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire – to shape and manage future development across Buckinghamshire
- Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP 5) – to set out the priorities for all types of transport across Buckinghamshire

The council wants to hear views on its draft vision and objectives for these plans which will guide future development and transport in Buckinghamshire in the future.

The new local plan will identify areas suitable for development, while safeguarding those that require careful management. As well as protecting nature and the Green Belt, it will set out key requirements for new developments, encompassing an appropriate mix of housing, land allocation for employment opportunities, and the creation of vibrant living spaces, complete with shops and public areas.

When planning new homes, shops, and places to work, it's essential to ensure that they are well connected to the existing road and public transport networks which is why the council is developing a county-wide local transport plan in parallel with the new local plan.

To have your say on the council's vision and objectives for these plans:

- Complete the [online survey](#)
- Complete and return a printed version of the survey (can be downloaded from the online survey page)
- Email: planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- Write to: Vision and objectives consultation, Planning Policy, Buckinghamshire Council, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1BB

If you have any questions about this consultation, please email planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or call 0300 131 6000.

Submissions need to be received by midnight on Sunday 4 June 2023.

To keep up to date with the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, please [register online](#).

Ward boundaries consultation

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is due to publish its recommendations for the new Buckinghamshire Council ward boundaries at the end of this month.

This is currently expected to include a reduction in the number of councillors from 98 to 97, following the further consultation in the south of the county.

The new boundaries will come into effect at the local elections in May 2025. Find out more at <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/buckinghamshire>

Buckinghamshire Council consultations

Other current consultations and surveys from Buckinghamshire Council are available to view on our website <https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/>