

Note to Communities and Localism Select Committee – Community Governance Review

This note updates members of the Select Committee on the Wycombe area Community Governance Review.

On 13 July, the Standards & General Purposes Committee will be asked to determine a way forward for the review and for community governance reviews generally.

The Council was unable to deal with community governance reviews while the Buckinghamshire Electoral Review took place. As this has now concluded, the Wycombe review can be revisited.

During 2019, the former Wycombe District Council undertook a Community Governance Review of the High Wycombe area. High Wycombe remains unparished. The review assessed whether there was any support for establishing a council for the town of High Wycombe and parish councils for the communities of Micklefield, Sands or Totteridge. In January 2020, the final report was produced.

The report was mindful of two imminent events: firstly, that local government reorganisation was about to occur with the abolition of the district council and the establishment of Buckinghamshire Council; and secondly that an electoral review of Buckinghamshire Council would follow shortly after reorganisation. Both would have implications for local governance.

In the event, it was agreed that no decision be taken whilst the electoral review took place.

The Standards & General Purposes Committee will be asked on 13 July to determine if and how to proceed.

The outcome of any community governance review must reflect community identities, the interests of the area and must reflect effective and convenient local government. Therefore any decision on how to proceed must be taken with these factors in mind, which may need to be revisited.

The Committee will also be asked to determine an approach to handling community governance reviews from parishes generally.

The Select Committee will be updated once the Standards & General Purposes Committee has met.

Note to Communities and Localism Select Committee on updates to Fix My Street

The Customer Improvement / Customer Experience Team have recently been nominated for an LGC award based on the work that they have done on the Fixmystreet system. This is part of a long term plan to bring about scalable impact and behaviour change.

Phase one has provided the ability to report directly to town and parish councils where Buckinghamshire Council services / assets are devolved. Feedback from one local council who have taken on devolved services is that the improvements have resulted in a 75% decrease in admin time.

Phase two of the plan includes non-devolved services with crossover of responsibility e.g. street lighting and phase 3 includes non-Buckinghamshire Council responsibility assets. Throughout the process the team will continue to work with town and parish councils and nurture those relationships.

It is proposed that we revisit the question at a later date, as the work progresses through the next phases, when the impact and outcomes will be a little clearer.