



Report to Communities & Localities Select Committee

Date: Wednesday, 4 October 2023

Title: 12 month update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Community Board review

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Recommendations: To note the report.

1. Background

1.1 A Communities & Localism Select Committee review on the Community Boards was undertaken in Spring 2022. The review made 11 recommendations and responses to the recommendations were made to Select Committee on 22 June 2022 with a further update on progress in January 2023. This report provides a final update.

2. Main content of report

2.1 Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 11 were completed before January 2023 when previously updating the Select Committee.

2.2 In terms of the outstanding recommendations:

2.3 **Recommendation 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. This is now complete.**

Following development of a communications strategy, training has now been provided on social media and all Boards have seen a significant increase in followers between January – August 2023 with c1000 new followers now registered.

The strategy for increased promotion of the Boards using the ‘Humans of Buckinghamshire’ theme is underway with promotional videos to be published shortly and ongoing.

A monthly collation of Facebook posts is now posted on the corporate channels to increase awareness to a far higher number of followers.

In relation to ensuring projects funded by the Boards receive the relevant recognition, applicants now have to detail on the application form how the Board will be credited, and this is followed up to ensure it has happened or is in place when the project is evaluated. A recent evaluation for a Community Warm Hub funded by Haddenham & Waddesdon Community Board identified positive outcomes including the Community Payback team using the facilities when in Waddesdon, residents using the Play & Stage child provision and 'allotmenters' donating excess fresh produce to the community store/fridge.

The Community Board has been recognised as supporting the project with the Board logo on posters and on the door notice. It is also recognised on Facebook posts and there is a poster inside the store with the logo too.

2.4 Recommendation 7 - Consideration should be given to an alternative mechanism for the delivery of local Highways schemes. This recommendation is complete.

Following the start of the new highways contract and formation of Buckinghamshire Highways, working processes between Highways and Community Boards has been established, with a 6-step process in place which considers root cause of issues raise and non-financial solutions before applying financial solutions. A highways handbook has been created for Community Boards which provides details of the process together with outline costs for the most common requested and low level solutions such a dragon's teeth, speed limit roundels.

A total of 51 schemes were awaiting progress under the new highways contact. These have now all been reviewed and proposed actions shared with the Community Boards for decisions. 36 schemes are now progressing, 8 seeking further information and 7 have been withdrawn after review by the Boards.

2.5 Recommendation 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. This recommendation is now superseded.

The Cabinet Member is shortly to lead a review to consider the ward boundary changes due to take effect in 2025 and how these may affect the Board boundaries. The review will also consider future management arrangements and any opportunities to deliver more efficiencies in the management of the Boards. This work will inform future Board activity.

- 2.6 **Recommendation 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).** This recommendation is complete.

An evaluation form has now been introduced for all funded projects. The form is completed jointly by both the applicant and Community Board Manager, and includes the original project objectives, Board priority/priorities and details how the project has met the identified priority and project aims. It also confirms the Community Board branding/promotion undertaken. A summary of evaluation is provided to the Cabinet Member and Chairmen on a quarterly basis.

Individual Board annual reports for 2022/23 were produced which detailed their work across the year and the impact they had in their area.

The annual Community Board report for 2022/23 was presented to Council in May 2023. This report provided a summary of the work undertaken during the year including engagement work and the value this is now bringing to local communities.

- 2.7 At Appendix 1 is an updated table showing the status for all 11 recommendations.

3. Next steps and review

- 3.1 The recommendations are now complete, no further review is required.

