

Press Release from Buckinghamshire Council

08 September 2020

Get involved in shaping your local community

Buckinghamshire's 16 new Community Boards officially launch this week as the first public-facing meetings with local communities take place.

The community boards have been created to bring the new council and communities together, giving people the opportunity to speak up and get actively involved in improving their local area. They now have a key role in helping local areas to recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The aim of the boards is to:

- Influence how decisions are made and how services are delivered
- Represent the voice of local people
- Capture thoughts, ideas and suggestions
- Bring together key community partners and residents
- Identify local needs and work to produce creative solutions

Back in July, local councillors, town and parish councils and some community groups in each of the board areas held their introduction meetings to begin looking at how to develop these partnerships, consider the local data and information about their local areas and start the conversation about their key areas of focus.

Behind the scenes, dedicated coordinators for each board are working hard in their local communities, making connections and encouraging residents, groups and organisations to contribute to conversations about their local area, including understanding the impact that Covid-19 has had.

There are many ways local people, groups and organisations can get involved in their board, taking part in exploring their area's issues, through action groups and projects, or just by sharing views.

Community boards are backed by £3.9m to fund local projects and initiatives within their communities. From September, applications can be made by community groups and organisations to their local board for financial support for local projects. To find out how to get involved, to see the criteria for applying for funds or to put in an application visit www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-boards

Each board decides its own funding priorities. The type of projects which could be eligible for funding include:

- Providing support for older people
- Creating opportunities for children and young people

- Improving community facilities
- Tackling crime
- Addressing environmental issues

Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health said: “We are very excited to get our Community Boards off the ground. They form a vital part of the new council and our commitment to listening to and working with local communities.

“These forums are a place for everyone interested in helping to improve and enhance their local area to get involved. Our vision is that they will very much be community-led partnerships that are action focused to make a real difference. Communities really came together to help each other during the covid lockdown – we hope that these forums will build on this sense of community, and take the opportunity to use funding to tackle local issues as a key part of our Covid-19 recovery.”

Community boards will each meet formally five times a year with smaller action-groups will be created, focusing on specific issues and themes.

Cllr Williams continued: “We want these community boards to be vibrant and creative bodies. As a council we are committed to making a difference locally. We want to develop thriving and empowered local communities. Working together we can address the issues that matter most to local people.”

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