

Buckinghamshire Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Partnership Board Terms of Reference – July 2023

1. Context and Purpose

- 1.1 The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) Partnership Board (previously Recovery Board) is a high-level strategic board bringing together some of the leading VCSE organisations in Buckinghamshire, who duly represent their respective sectors.
- 1.2 The Board was instrumental in providing a swift and collaborative response to Buckinghamshire's most vulnerable residents during the Covid-19 pandemic. It continues this sense of mutuality and shared purpose, joining together collaboratively to provide high-level, strategic leadership and expertise.
- 1.3 The Partnership Board has no formal delegated powers from the organisations in the Partnership, it works collaboratively with strategic partners, Buckinghamshire Council and other VCSE partners to drive action around a shared direction of travel.

2. Role

- 2.1 The Partnership Board will promote the evolution of a whole-system approach, delivering services in local communities, striving for social and economic results that will make Buckinghamshire a safe and productive place to live and work.
- 2.2 The Board aims to provide high-level, strategic leadership and expertise seeking to guide the VCSE acting as a springboard for discussions around the needs of our communities.
- 2.3 The Board along with subgroups and Buckinghamshire Council provides invaluable insight and constructive challenge, and coordinated funding, resulting in more organised deployment of resources in times of emergencies and/or emerging crisis.
- 2.4 The Buckinghamshire Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Partnership Board has 5 key roles:
 1. Provide senior representation of key Bucks VCSE organisations for strategic and tactical 'call to action' with a solution focused approach for those at greater risk of disadvantage, detriment or harm.
 2. To have shared accountability for the effective delivery of the VCSE Strategic Framework (2021-24) and related Action Plans.
 3. Help create and embed collaborative relationships between VCSE organisations, Buckinghamshire Council, Community Boards and Buckinghamshire Strategic Partners.
 4. Focus on maximising resources, including identifying opportunities for codesign and efficiency, mobilising volunteers and targeting investment through whole system collaboration.
 5. Plan, enable and facilitate more joined-up thinking to address emerging priority needs in a more coordinated manner.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. At a strategic level, the VCSE Partnership Board will be responsible for:

- 3.2 Co-producing, co-owning and jointly delivering an action plan, developing a strong and resilient VCSE sector, which underpins the VCSE Strategic Framework.
- 3.3 Understand and be able to articulate the VCSE landscape – for example, the impact on service delivery, operational viability, and organisational fragility.
- 3.4 The Board shares a collective responsibility for monitoring and protecting the wellbeing and resilience of colleagues within the sector, providing support and guidance where necessary. It can provide a representative voice for smaller organisations who may not be represented in other forums or working groups.
- 3.5 Independently, and through the Buckinghamshire Strategic Funders Group, continue to explore and disseminate national funding opportunities, promote and champion collaborative bids, supporting both the sector and vulnerable residents.
- 3.6 Co-ordinate engagement to the wider sector through [time-limited] themed sub-groups and other channels; highlighting partnership ambition and enabling easy access for others to provide insight or support the outcomes of the Strategic Framework.
- 3.7 Members are expected to commit to sharing the work of the Board, following up on actions agreed at meetings, and flagging if tasks become untenable.
- 3.8 Share intelligence, insight and data, predominantly through the Bucks Data Exchange helping inform the wider sector and aiding planning, growth and inward investment.
- 3.9 Behaviours and values:
 1. Board members will take personal responsibility for their actions and decisions.
 2. Interact with others and make decisions with integrity and honesty.
 3. Value the opinions and expertise of other members.
 4. Display attitudes that are helpful, productive and constructive.
 5. Always demonstrate discretion, confidentiality, unity and responsibility.
 6. Think sector, not organisation.
 7. Promote the notion of '*no wrong front door.*'

4. Membership

- 4.1. The membership of the board will represent the varied and diverse elements within the sector and will include Chairs of the relevant thematic sub-groups and forums aligned to the Partnership Board.
- 4.2 The Board will consist predominantly of strategic organisations working countywide, with smaller organisations being instrumental in guiding discussion and delivery within the Boards sub-structure/framework.
- 4.3 The core membership will comprise of:
 - Chair (to be elected every 2 years)
 - Vice Chair
 - Elected member of Communities at Buckinghamshire Council
 - Head of Service – Partnerships and Communities
 - VCSE Strategic lead and support officer (who provide secretariat for the Board)
 - Chairs of sub-groups and VCSE nominated representatives on external boards:

- o Health and Wellbeing Board
 - o BOB VCSE Health Alliance
 - o Bucks Strategic Funders Group
 - o Bucks Data Exchange partnership
 - o Financial Insecurity and Welfare
 - o Healthy Ageing Collaborative
 - o Levelling Up Board
 - o Children's Partnership Board
 - o Youth Consortium
 - o VCSE Grant Review Working Group
- Thematic Area representative leads for:
 - o Finance and financial inclusion
 - o Health and Wellbeing
 - o Culture and Leisure
 - o Volunteering
 - o Social Isolation and Inclusion
 - o Vulnerable Groups, e.g., disability groups
 - o Faith groups
 - o Wider minority communities
 - o Other Boards and Working Groups as agreed.
- 4.4 Substitutes will be accepted, with prior agreement by the Chair, however they should be of seniority in the organisation and feel comfortable being part of decision-making discussions.
- 4.5 Other officers and partners will be invited according to the agenda items or be involved in offline discussions and subgroups.
- 4.6 New members can be appointed through nomination from within the Board's membership and agree by majority vote at a Board meeting.

5. Appointment of Chair, Deputy Chair and terms of office

- 5.1 The Chair and Deputy Chair will be appointed from within the Group's membership, for a term of 2 years.
- 5.2 The Chair is responsible for leadership of the Board, ensuring its effectiveness on all aspects of its role and for setting its agenda and is pivotal in creating the conditions for overall Board and individual Board member effectiveness.
- 5.3 The Chair will represent the Board on the Buckinghamshire Strategic Partners Board and any other Board/Committees as called upon to represent the VCSE sector, as well as effectively and inclusively hearing the voice of the sector and to appropriately reflect these views through the membership of those other Boards.

6. Quorum

- 6.1. There will be at least three representatives, one of whom will be the Chairman or Deputy Chair.

7. Conduct and Operation

- 7.1. The Partnership Board will meet at least four times each year. An annual schedule of meetings will be published by the secretariat.
- 7.2. Extraordinary meetings may be called for a specific purpose at the discretion of the Chair. A minimum of seven working days' notice will be given when calling an extraordinary meeting.
- 7.3. An agenda and papers will normally be circulated 3 working days before the meeting.
- 7.4. Conflicts of interest must be declared by any member of the group.
- 7.5. Draft minutes will be issued within 10 working days of each meeting.
- 7.6. The terms of reference will be reviewed annually.