

Report to MPC meeting 17th November 2022

Review of CNAs consultation

Introduction

Arising from the previous discussions on how the Parish engage and communicate with Cornwall Council the Working Group members were reminded that the Liskeard and Looe Community Area Network (CAN) Panel exist as the principal link between parish councils and the County Council to identify common issues or problems and the means of conveying our views and influence priorities.

Formal CNA meetings are held every 3/4 months and attended by CCC members representing the area and representatives from each parish. MPC Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk regularly attend. Notes are prepared by the CC link officer appointed to service the meetings and available on line. Other attendees are by invitation and often include Police or other Public service organisations. From looking at the notes of recent meetings whilst issues are raised the panel as no powers and can only pass the comments to CC. In essence the panel has no function other than CC able to say they have a mechanism of engagement to seek views and input.

The structure and outcomes of the Panels is being reviewed as they were not considered effective and consultation is now underway and members are urged to study the papers circulated on the 20th October by our Clerk.

The purpose of this paper is to look at the proposal made for changes in role, in particular A4, B11 and B12 and suggesting in our response ways that would better, in light of our Engagement discussions, enable Menheniot Parish Council Members to be heard and able to influence CC on behalf of residents.

Background to CNAs

In response to the Localism Act 2011 and the move towards more devolvement of powers from Central Government, 19 CNAs were created in Cornwall to

- Identify, agree and drive forward local priorities for their community network area
- Have their say on local service delivery and on strategies that affect their communities
- Work together to promote the wellbeing of their local areas and bring communities together

- Build relationships between the people and organisations working in their communities

For the Parish Councils, to be an effective first tier, the CNA is the principal way in which the needs and views of residents can be input into Cornwall Council when formulating priorities and policy. The CAN is critical in establishing through devolvement and mutual support, the essential cohesion between tiers of local government.

Are these needs met by the current Panels?

The Local Government Association in 2021 commissioned a project to consider what was needed to enable closer working between tiers and devolvement of services and funding by Principal Councils (County , Unitary etc) to Town and Parish Councils.

On the 28th September 2022 Cllrs Cole and Berg attended an on line seminar. The seminar was addressed by Tony Blake (the consultant who led a project to develop a framework to aid devolution and engagement) and Phillip Clifford of the LGA. The object of the seminar was to reintroduce the report from the project and encourage delegates to consider what would a framework would operate in practice. Since the report was published no further action had been taken. The seminar was driven by the need to respond to the now published invitation to Principal Councils to accept devolution of functions and funding including the ability to elect a mayor.

There were no conclusions as to what a framework would look like or contain other than the emphasis it was for Town and Parish Councils to seek devolved powers if they wanted to meet their area needs.

The seminar was not helpful or very informative as to options and what could be practically adopted other than in conclusion drawing attention to that under the general power of competence councils already have powers to take on additional functions.