

Cornwall Gateway Community Network Area Report to STC March 2023

Cllr. Hilary Frank

Chair, Cornwall Gateway CNA

Members of Cornwall Council's Cabinet at their meeting on 8th February resolved that the 19 Community Networks would be replaced with 12 Community Area Partnerships.

I attended Cabinet meeting in person to highlight the disparity in size (our new CAP will have 29 parishes whereas the Clay Country CAP will have just six), and together with other CNA Chairs expressed concern that the larger CAPs would be difficult to manage and inefficient.

We also expressed disappointment that the Cabinet had peremptorily decided that there was no longer any need for proposals for the new CAPs to be presented to the Constitution and Governance Committee or Full Council, as had been their stated intention, but Cabinet members were content with the legal advice that the decision was an executive function that they were constitutionally able to take.

We were clear that the CAPs would only function if resources were adequately and fairly allocated, and sought reassurance that there would be a minimum of one Community Link Officer plus a support officer for each CAP, with extra resourcing for the larger CAPs. The response was that adequate resourcing had been taken into account when considering the number of CAPs and it was felt that resourcing of the proposed CAPs was in line with the staffing budget that had been allocated. It was stated that future resourcing of CAPs would match the capacity of the Localism Team with the demands of the CAPs as they arose and that the proposal set out the intention to have a Community Link Officer assigned to each CAP, but that there are currently just 10.8 full time equivalent Community Link Officers.

The Cabinet has given the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods the authority to shape the plans, and the Portfolio Holder has said she would like to 'co-design' the governance arrangements with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the current areas. It looks like the first meeting for that will be on 29th March.

So, our current network area will be merged with the Liskeard Looe area, making an area with 29 parishes covering a population of 65,832. The CAPs will include the Cornwall Councillors and Town and Parish Councils located within each area, who will work alongside other partners, including the Police, Voluntary Sector Forum and health partners. Each CAP will be required to agree a Good Growth Delivery Framework and a Community Action Plan, based on the top priorities for their area. The priorities and Plan will be shared with Cornwall Council and its strategic partners so that the Council can reflect them in plans and strategies going forward.

Funding for local highways schemes is already allocated by the Network Areas. Going forward the new CAPS will have additional powers to allocate funding from the Community Levelling Up Fund and the Community Capacity Fund.

Since the Cabinet meeting, I have attended an initial meeting together with the Vice Chair of our network area (Councillor Gary Davies of Torpoint Town Council) and the Chair of the Liskeard Looe network area (Cornwall Councillor Jane Pascoe, representing Liskeard) to meet with Cornwall Council officers and start work developing the Good Growth Delivery Framework for our new area. A meeting has been set up for 8th March with the 12 Cornwall Councillors in our new area to continue that work.