



Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

Date: 14th September 2020

Title: Central Bedfordshire Council Public Realm

Purpose of the Report: To provide Members with an overview of Central Bedfordshire Council's public realm position statement and consider making a recommendation to Council on which operating model the Town Council may wish to embrace.

Contact Officer: Ian Haynes – Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

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| Corporate Aim/s | | |
| Implications: | | |
| Financial | √ | Possible £100,000 worth of funding being made available for Town Council to use. |
| Human Resources | | None – Can be delivered within current staffing numbers. |
| Operational/Service delivery | | None |
| Procedural/Legal | | None |
| Risk/Health and Safety | | None |

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Should Members be minded, to support the proposal to:-**
- 1.2 To note the report.**
- 1.3 To endorse and recommend to Council - Option 2 – the devolved model and accept circa £100,000 for the purchase of the relevant and appropriate equipment. To deliver a town ranger / public realm service for Leighton-Linslade and to surrounding parishes namely Billington, Eggington, Stanbridge, Hockliffe, Heath and Reach, Battlesden, Potsgrove, Milton Bryan, Woburn, Aspley Heath, Aspley Guise, Husborne Crawley Parish Councils.**

1.4 To delegate authority to the Town Clerk as the Proper Officer to sign the Terms and Conditions of the arrangement as set out in a Memorandum of Understanding between Leighton-Linslade Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Town Council Officers have been working with Central Bedfordshire Council Officers and Elected Members since October 2019, on the co-design of a possible public realm scheme for Central Bedfordshire which builds on the example of the popular Town Ranger scheme in Dunstable, delivered by Dunstable Town Council. Town Council Officers have helped develop a requirement list and have helped to create/cost and advise on the day-to-day operational delivery of this scheme to benefit Leighton-Linslade first.

3. AIMS

3.1 Town and Parish Councils across Central Bedfordshire have enormous collective capacity, knowledge and expertise and varying levels of resources and in the case of Dunstable Town Council and Leighton-Linslade Town Council the Unitary Council often look to us for help, advice and guidance that helps the whole of Central Bedfordshire.

3.2 Collaboration between Central Bedfordshire Council, Town Councils and smaller parish councils could enable a joined up approach to tackling some relatively small scale local issues but which do make an enormous difference to the quality of the public realm , civic pride and resident experience.

3.3 By looking to develop a more collaborative approach it could be considered that enhancing our collective capacity by:

- Coming together on our common requirements
- Pooling our knowledge, skills and experience
- Increasing our impact and community benefit

3.4 Central Bedfordshire Council is looking to work together to create and equip a network of Hubs that would be hosted by one or more of the larger Town Councils who would host the equipment, share equipment or resources and develop new services that could be offered on a value for money basis to surrounding parishes.

3.5 Should Members be minded to support the recommendation as set out at paragraph 1.3; it should be noted that the £100,000 commitment to purchase equipment is a one-off payment. Maintenance and repair costs would rest with the parish thereafter. Notwithstanding the argument that the equipment is there to improve the public realm in the common interests of the community, the creation of a sinking fund together with embedding replacement costs within hire charges is a possibility.

- 3.6 The operation would sit within the Grounds and Environmental Services Team for which there is a “handy person role” that could take advantage of the equipment.

4. SUPPORTING LOCAL PARISHES

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Leighton Sub region will be solely operated by Leighton-Linslade Town Council and would help support the surrounding parishes of Billington, Eggington, Stanbridge, Hockliffe, Heath and Reach, Battlesden, Potsgrove, Milton Bryan, Woburn, Aspley Heath, Aspley Guise, Husborne Crawley.

- 4.2 It is envisaged that surrounding parishes would be charged for work undertaken by this service, therefore income generation could be reinvested in Leighton-Linslade.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The opportunity to fund the long awaited delivery of the Town Ranger service for the betterment of the Town, can now be done by accepting the external funding from Central Bedfordshire Council, the Town Council is best position to be the first region to improve the public realm.