

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors	C Palmer T Morris (Chair) S Hemmings S Owen F Kharawala R D Berry A L Dodwell V Harvey E Wallace K Ferguson – CBC (substituting for B Spurr)
Also in attendance:	M Saccoccio, Town Clerk V Cannon, Head of Cultural and Economic Services M Jahn, Committee Officer S Sandiford, Head of Democratic and Central Services S Hughes (Community Engagement Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council) G Borelli (Chair, LB First) B Chandler (LB Connect) S Mooring (Central Bedfordshire Council) S Childerhouse (Central Bedfordshire Council) Cllr K Collins, (Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration, Central Bedfordshire Council) Cllr A Ryan (Central Bedfordshire Council) Cllr T Stock (Central Bedfordshire Council) Cllr G Perham Cllr C Hegley (Central Bedfordshire Council)
Members of the public:	3
Members of the press	0

The Town Clerk welcomed everyone to this first remote meeting of the Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee and first meeting of the 2020-21 municipal year.

53/LLP **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B Spurr and Tricia Humber, Community Forum Group.

54/LLP **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor T Morris be appointed Chair of the Committee for 2020-2021. There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor T Morris Chair of the Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee for 2020-2021.

Councillor Morris took the Chair.

55/LLP **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor B Spurr be appointed Vice Chair of the Committee for 2020-2021. There were no further nominations. In his absence Councillor E Wallace was nominated to act as Vice-Chair for this meeting.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor B Spurr Vice Chair of the Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee for 2020-2021.

56/LLP **APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARIAT FOR 2020 - 2021, MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Members unanimously agreed that Leighton Linslade Town Council be appointed secretariat for the 2020-2021 municipal year, in accordance with the committee Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED that Leighton Linslade Town Council be appointed secretariat for the 2020-2021 municipal year.

57/LLP **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests, including the nature of those interests, which they had in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

Councillor C Palmer declared a personal interest as a member of Leighton-Linslade in Bloom. Councillor V Harvey declared an interest as a member of South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth.

58/LLP **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 minutes per person; maximum 15 minutes)**

Two questions were raised by members of the public. The first question was about the land south of the High Street and the need within Leighton Buzzard for an Arts Centre where artists and members of the public could hire rooms

for rehearsals, workshops, community classes such as yoga or toddler groups, education classes and live theatre or music events. There was a need within the town for this type of multi-purpose building with rentable spaces for community use. Further information on the research undertaken would be circulated to committee members by Councillor V Harvey.

The second question came from a member of Leighton Buzzard and District Archaeological and Historical Society raising concerns that there was no provision made within the town to celebrate the rich history of the area - no tourist information or heritage centre to encourage visitors into the town and for the community to use to learn about the history of the area. A building or large room within a building was needed to allow the Society to meet as an organisation and to house and display historical artefacts for schools and the public to visit and learn about the local history. The Society had previously undertaken a survey of buildings and confirmed this had been shared with Cllr Harvey who agreed to circulate to committee members.

Councillor Palmer declared an interest as a member of the Leighton Buzzard and District Archaeological and Historical Society.

Both members of the public were thanked for attending the meeting.

59/LLP **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 6 February 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 6 February 2020 be approved as a correct record and would be signed at a later date, when safe to do so.

60/LLP **CO-OPTION ONTO COMMITTEE**

Nominations were requested and received for co-opted representatives onto the Committee. Councillor Morris proposed that a member of Community Action Bedfordshire be asked to join the Committee on a permanent basis. After consideration a vote was taken, and members agreed to invite a member of Community Action Beds to join the Committee.

RESOLVED to invite a member of Community Action Beds to be co-opted onto the Partnership Committee.

61/LLP **ENABLING DELIVERY IN L-L (LAND SOUTH OF THE HIGH STREET)**

By invitation, Mr S Mooring, Head of Place Delivery at Central Bedfordshire Council, attended the meeting to give an update in respect of the High Street Improvement Scheme and land south of the High Street. Mr Mooring reported that the drop-in session held at the White House on the 12 February 2020 was well attended and proved a useful exercise and gave an insight into understanding key issues within the town. A report would be circulated

to committee members.

The consultation regarding day care facilities had been paused because of COVID-19 and as the provision of a care home was linked to development of land south of the High Street, it was anticipated that the date would move from early 2022 to late 2022.

A question was raised as to what interest had been shown in the land south of the High Street. It was confirmed interest had been shown by a hotel chain, for housing and office facilities but none of these interests had progressed. It was recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic had had a further adverse impact on the retail sector, with an additional increase in the already existing trend towards internet shopping. It was suggested the land could be used as a multi-functional community hub with a balance between commercial business and community use. The social needs and issues within the town should be addressed when building on this land with a robust business case to move it forward to fruition.

The Committee agreed that as the town was increasing in population more facilities were needed for young people to combat boredom and anti-social behaviour. Other suggestions included a hireable studio facility and community facilities suitable for evening classes such as pottery or photography. A suggestion was made for Central Bedfordshire Officers and Councillors to view multi-use facilities in other towns, to gain information and ideas on what could be built here.

It was suggested that a holistic view needed to be taken of the whole centre, reviewing existing facilities such as the Library/Theatre as well as considering whether vacant town centre premises could be repurposed for community uses. A suggestion was made regarding whether Central Bedfordshire Council could undertake an “audit of need”. Mr Mooring would talk to colleagues in the Leisure team on this.

It was recognised that development on land south of the High Street would need to be commercially viable. The question was asked regarding Central Bedfordshire Council capacity to pull together a vision for the whole site and whether external consultants or developers could assist with this exercise.

Ms S Childerhouse also spoke to inform members of licensing arrangements and other support offered to high street traders during the pandemic. Guidance could be provided on COVID-19 regulations, but businesses had to provide details of what they required before advice could be given. An on-line form was now available where details could be completed, and photographs or plans given of what a business wanted. For example, if chairs and tables were required outside a café a photograph could be submitted with the on-line form showing exactly how this would look.

Ms Childerhouse invited feedback and suggestions where the gaps in information and help for retailers were. A suggestion was made for Gennaro Borelli, LB First and Bob Chandler, LB Connect to circulate this information to

their contacts to ascertain what advice would be helpful and then pass this on to Ms Childerhouse. It was felt that the change in use of the High Street had been accelerated by the pandemic and any ideas or help to combat vacant units would be welcomed.

Central Bedfordshire officers were thanked for attending the meeting to share information with the committee.

RESOLVED to note the information.

62/LLP **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee received an update report from Central Bedfordshire Council on matters relating to the parish, including information in respect of social care, health and housing, crime figures, antisocial behaviour, business rates, car parking, transport matters, community services waste, schools, public health and services to young people.

A request was made for clarification of parking enforcement numbers and also parking issues around the town causing blocked roads and pavements. The Committee was informed that the Parking Strategy was on the work plan to be discussed at the next meeting on the 10 December 2020.

A concern was raised regarding the field of vision for some of the CCTV cameras being obstructed by trees and whether this could be addressed during the upgrade process for the CCTV cameras and infrastructure.

Sarah Hughes, Central Bedfordshire Council, welcomed feedback regarding the update report provided for this Committee to ensure the information provided was useful to the Councillors. Comments and feedback would be sought outside the meeting.

The Committee thanked Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Officer, CBC, for her full and clear report.

RESOLVED to note the report.

63/LLP **STANDING ITEMS**

(a) Market Town Regeneration Fund (MTRF)

The Architectural Lighting Project was moving forward and discussion with third parties was progressing with tentative delivery timescales of Autumn/Winter.

(b) Antisocial behaviour and homelessness - this item had been deferred to the 10th December 2020 meeting.

(c) Taxis – nothing further to report since last meeting due to delay from COVID-19 and pedestrianisation of High Street.

64/LLP **BUSINESS GROUPS UPDATES**

(a) Gennaro Borelli, Chair of LB First thanked the Town Council for its support during this difficult time. A new logo “Keeping it Local” and the introduction of reusable shopping bags had been very well received by members of the public, with the launch of the voucher scheme this week and promotion on social media which encouraged shoppers into the town for a safe shopping experience.

Future events were being organised, the next being Living History in October and it was hoped to provide a trail in the town highlighting historical facts on various shops. The Christmas period would look different this year but activities were still being planned with the Events Team at the Town Council.

Bob Chandler, LB Connect spoke to say some of the businesses had struggled during the past months depending on their product and profession. Service providers like IT and financial companies had little disruption but other trades had found it difficult to get supplies and carry out work. Conditions were slowly improving now but some local businesses have had to trade with the threat of redundancies.

RESOLVED to note the information.

(b) Gennaro Borelli, Chair of LB First gave a verbal presentation on a Town Centre Promotion Activity which could provide a website to pull together all local business information. This had been introduced during the COVID-19 lockdown period to provide a platform for local businesses to provide goods and sell on-line. If a second wave of the virus occurred, all the information would be accessible in one place and it would enable town centre businesses to provide goods for local customers.

The Committee agreed this would be a great idea and a suggestion was made to use the current town centre map and directory as a starting point to this going on-line. It was confirmed this Mr Borelli’s proposal would be on the agenda of the Cultural and Economic Services Committee meeting on 7 September 2020 for discussion.

RESOLVED to note the information.

65/LLP **COMMUNITY FORUM UPDATE**

The Head of Cultural and Economic Services confirmed services and support from the Community Forum had been diverted to helping the community during the past months. This meant that the intended youth survey has been delayed however TACTIC had continued outreach to young people and are gathering feedback on various issues which would be shared with the Forum.

RESOLVED to note the information.

66/LLP COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

The Committee received and considered the objectives and work plan for the municipal year 2020-2021 and were advised items would be added to the February and April meetings on the plan. Anti-social behaviour and Homelessness would be moved to the December meeting.

A request was made to discuss how the S106 money was being spent.

RESOLVED to note the information.

67/LLP BUDGET REPORT

The Committee received a brief report regarding the current year budget to date.

RESOLVED to note the report.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2020.

Chair

10 DECEMBER 2020