

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 30 AUGUST 2012 AT 1930 HOURS

Present: Councillors D Hopkin – CBC (Chair)
 D Bowater – CBC
 S Cotter - LLTC
 A Dodwell - LLTC
 J M Freeman – LLTC (left at 2159 hours)
 G Rolfe – LLTC
 A Shadbolt - CBC
 K Sharer – LLTC (left at 2202 hours)
 B Spurr - CBC

Also in attendance: P Kingsnorth (Town Clerk)
 D Marsh (Corporate Governance Manager)
 S Sandiford (Committee Officer)
 S Hughes (Community Engagement Manager,
 CBC) – arrived 1956 hours
 A Rowland (Team Leader Sustainable Transport
 Team, CBC)
 B Chandler (LB Connect)
 G Borrelli (I♥LB)
 V Harvey (South Beds Friends of the Earth)
 Cllr A Brandham – left at 2210 hours
 Cllr G Perham – left at 2210 hours

Members of the Public: 4
Members of the Press: 1

88/LLP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor R Johnstone, H Shore (CBC) and S Lakin (CBC).

89/LLP DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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. No such declarations were made.

90/LLP PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Committee received and noted a written submission from Leighton-Linslade Opposes Unsustainable Development (L.O.U.D) dated 30 August 2012 regarding community engagement.

91/LLP MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Committee received the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 31 May 2012.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 31 May 2012 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

92/LLP MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND TASK GROUPS

The Committee received the minutes of the Big Plan II Projects Sub-Committee meeting held on 26 June 2012.

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Big Plan II Projects Sub-Committee meeting held on 26 June 2012.

93/LLP COMMITTEE WORK PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2012-2013

The Committee received the proposed Work Plan and Objectives for 2012-2013.

RESOLVED to note the information.

94/LLP CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE

The Committee received an update report from Central Bedfordshire Council on services provided to the parish, including adult social care and housing, waste services, highways and transportation, youth services, community safety, economic growth and regeneration, leisure and environment.

It was noted that the Luton-Dunstable Guided Busway was due to open in June 2013 rather than April 2013 and that proposals would be published in early September regarding the expansion of London Luton Airport.

The Committee discussed several items included in the report and it was noted that, following concerns about litter, a number of new waste bins had been installed. The Committee praised the opening of the new Children's Literary Trail and thanked Councillors J M Freeman and A Brandham for their contribution to the project.

RESOLVED to note the information and to ask for further detail from Central Bedfordshire Council on the following :

- (a) specific information regarding Inward Investment (report no. 6.1)**
- (b) clarification on shop vacancy levels (report no. 6.2) – whether this was only for the town centre and how up to date the figures were**
- (c) that information on crime (report no. 5.5) including clarification on whether the figures were showing a positive or negative trend**

(d) further detail on the take-up rate for the Let's Talk Business online advice service, specifically for Leighton Buzzard and Linslade (report no. 6.4)

(e) further detail on the enhancement schemes for Grovebury Road and Billington Road (report no.3).

95/LLP SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND

The Committee was addressed by A Rowland of Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the projects arising from the successful bid for funding through the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund. A total of £4.9m of funding would be received to support Travel Choices in Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton-Linslade.

A complex programme of initiatives was being established including supporting major infrastructure works, improvements to the national cycleway, improved access to the Guided Busway stops, promotional activity and setting up a "hub" in Dunstable town centre.

In Leighton Buzzard and Linslade, work would be done with residents and businesses on "personal journey planning" and, in addition to supporting the previous Cycle Town work, other forms of public transport would be reviewed.

RESOLVED to note the information.

The Committee raised concerns about the condition of the cycle routes in the town, particularly on-road cycle routes. It was felt that safety was a major factor in encouraging people to cycle more and that the poor condition of some roads, with potholes and sunken drains, would make this difficult.

The Committee also asked how businesses would be encouraged to move into the town and how access to Central Bedfordshire College and the new University Technical College at Houghton Regis by public transport would be facilitated for young people.

96/LLP COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Committee received a report regarding the proposed community engagement model for the Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee. Consideration was given to the existing structure and to the possibilities of either a Forum or Assembly. It was noted that the diagram within the report was for illustrative purposes only.

It was suggested that a local Forum could meet three times per year and be chaired by Andrew Selous MP.

It was agreed that a Forum was a positive idea as there would be no restriction on numbers and all residents, businesses and community groups would be able to attend to take part. It was expected that meetings would be minuted and reported back to the Partnership Committee.

Concerns were raised about community involvement in Partnership Committee meetings. It was agreed that representatives of local community groups would continue to be invited to participate in meetings of the Partnership Committee if the agenda to be discussed was of relevance to that group.

RESOLVED to implement a Forum model for community engagement, to be held two or three times per year and to be widely publicised to maximise attendance and to be organised jointly by the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. The Community Forum to be chaired by Andrew Selous M.P.

97/LLP PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Committee received a report for consideration regarding the structure of the Partnership Committee. It was proposed that Task and Finish groups which had completed their allotted tasks be formally disbanded and that the Economic Development Task and Finish group and the Market Task and Finish group be amalgamated into an Economic Development Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED to amalgamate the Economic Development Task and Finish group and the Market Task and Finish group into one Economic Development Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillors D Hopkin, D Bowater, A Shadbolt, A Dodwell, M Bishop, S Cotter and R Goodchild as members of the Economic Development Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED for the Economic Development Sub-Committee to set its own Terms of Reference at the first meeting in accordance with the Partnership Committee's Work Plan and Priorities.

It was hoped that the first meeting would take place in October 2012.

98/LLP CHRISTMAS WEEKEND AND LIGHTING

(a) The Committee received a report regarding arrangements for the Christmas Weekend taking place on 30 November, 1 December and 2 December 2012. It was hoped that approximately thirty craft/gift stalls would be present in the ,marquee in Church Square and that a further thirty stalls would be present in the High Street on the Sunday.

Bus service providers including Buzzer Bus, Dash Direct, Grant Palmer and Arriva had been approached regarding provision of free bus travel on Saturdays in December and on Sunday 2 December 2012.

A report detailing passenger numbers for bus services 32, 33, 34, 35, D1, 70 and 150 for Saturdays in December during 2011 indicated a total potential cost in the region of £1,800. The estimated cost from Grant Palmer was a further £1,000. The Committee was asked to consider funding the cost of free bus travel on the Saturdays in December 2012 as well as on one Sunday, 2 December 2012.

Discussion was held regarding the uncertainty of the final cost of providing free bus travel, as it would depend entirely on passenger numbers. It was agreed that the bus providers should be approached by Central Bedfordshire Council to request a flat fee for the provision of free travel on the dates in question. The costs would, therefore, be fixed regardless of the passenger numbers.

It was agreed that, due to the timescale, this information could not wait until the next Partnership Committee meeting on 25 October 2012.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Partnership Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, to decide whether to proceed with authorising free bus travel for the dates in question, once the “flat rate” fees had been negotiated by Central Bedfordshire Council with the bus providers.

- (b) The Committee received a report regarding the Christmas lighting in the town centre in 2012. All retailers, landlords and tenants had been contacted regarding permission to use brackets for new motifs. New column motifs would be in place in Church Square and Bridge Street and additional trees would be lit.

RESOLVED to note the information.

- (c) The Committee was asked to consider a request from the I♥LB group to re-invest receipts from the sale of market stalls at the Christmas Weekend into additional publicity for the event. The Committee also received a report regarding the production of a Christmas Gift Catalogue as a means of promoting the Christmas Weekend event, in collaboration with independent retailers trading in the town.

RESOLVED that the receipts from the sale of market stalls at the 2012 Christmas Weekend should be invested into funding the production of a Christmas Gift Catalogue, at an estimated cost of £1,600-£2,000 for 3,000 copies, as well as additional publicity or attractions for the event. Any surplus funds to be earmarked for the 2013 Christmas Weekend.

99/LLP TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM

The Committee received a report regarding the possibility of a Town Centre public address system. An estimated cost had been obtained and this fell within the allocated budget of £25,000. It was likely that ten speakers would need to be installed and permission would be needed from the relevant building owners in order to do this. Advice had been sought from the Conservation Officer at Central Bedfordshire Council and it seemed unlikely that the permanent installation of such speakers would be approved.

Concerns were raised about whether a permanent public address system was required for a relatively small number of events. It was agreed that a more specific scheme needed to be developed to contain specific information on exactly what was required. The Committee agreed that alternative options, such as the hiring in of equipment for specific events, should be investigated.

It was recognised that, due to staffing resourcing constraints, a period of time would be needed in order to research options further.

RESOLVED to investigate further the options available for use of a public address system in the town centre and for information to be presented to a future Committee meeting.

100/LLP BUSINESS GROUPS UPDATE

The Committee received information on the Leighton Buzzard Business Fair, to be held on 26 September 2012. There were 53 confirmed exhibitors and it was hoped that footfall would be high. Some excellent speakers would be presenting and everyone was welcome to attend. Any funds raised would be going to a local charity. Andrew Selous MP would be attending to open the event.

RESOLVED to note the information.

101/LLP BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a Budget Monitoring report for the first quarter, 1 April – 30 June 2012. It was noted that not all funds and projects were included in the report and that future reports should include Earmarked Reserves.

RESOLVED to note the report.

102/LLP TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION AND ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

(a) The Committee received a report regarding projects for regeneration and enhancement of the Town Centre. It was noted that the bid for Government funding through the "Portas Pilot" scheme had not been successful but a letter dated 24 July 2012 from Grant Shapps MP indicated that further support might be available by becoming a "Town Team Partner".

A meeting of the Bid Team had been held on 6 August 2012, at which priority projects had been discussed. It was suggested that development of the Street Market and organisation of "Winter Sundays" leading up to Christmas (to replace the original "Summer Sundays" concept) should be the priorities.

The Committee was asked to consider these ideas and to also consider refurbishment of the street furniture in and around the High Street.

Councillor J M Freeman left the meeting at 2159 hours.

Several concerns were raised about the concept of “Summer/Winter Sundays” and it was agreed that there was no available resource to drive this concept forward at the current time

RESOLVED not to proceed with the “Summer/Winter Sundays” concept at the present time.

Councillor K Sharer left the meeting at 2202 hours.

Improvements to the street furniture were discussed. Concerns were noted that such works should be part of a general maintenance programme, but the Town Clerk advised that the Partnership Committee had given no such instruction. It was recognised that improvements were needed and it was anticipated that this work could be undertaken with existing staff resources.

RESOLVED to fund from the budget of £6,000 the refurbishment of street furniture including the removal of broken fences, repainting of bollards and repair/refurbishment/replacement of benches.

The Committee discussed projects to expand the historic market, in particular the proposal to move stalls into the centre of the High Street. It was recognised that this was a major project requiring dedicated resource and that several factors needed further investigation, such as re-routing of the bus services on market days. It was proposed that a more detailed proposal with estimated costs should be developed.

RESOLVED to support, in principle, projects that expand and enhance our historic street market including moving stalls into the centre of the High Street. A more detailed proposal should be developed for further consideration at a future Committee meeting.

- (b) The Committee received an invoice in the amount of £2,000 for work undertaken in the production of the Portas Pilot bid document for consideration, as well as correspondence dated 3 August 2012 and 6 August 2012 in respect of this invoice.

The Committee agreed that this type of work undertaken on the Portas Pilot bid had been done on a voluntary goodwill gesture basis.

RESOLVED that the invoice dated 31 July 2012 in the amount of £2,000 should not be paid as no order for this work had been commissioned by the Town Council.

Councillors G Perham and A Brandham left the meeting at 2210 hours.

103/LLP STREET MARKET

The Committee received a report regarding the return of the Market Charter to the Town Council with immediate effect.

RESOLVED to accept the transfer of the asset of the Market Charter for Leighton-Linslade market with immediate effect in accordance with the stated terms and conditions.

RESOLVED that, in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders, in addition to the Town Clerk, two Councillors also sign the acceptance letter dated 23 August 2012 from Central Bedfordshire Council.

104/LLP SHOPPING DIRECTORY

The Committee received a request from South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth to fund the reprint of the town Shopping Directory at a cost of £1,339 for 10,000 copies.

RESOLVED to fund the reprint of the town Shopping Directory at a cost of £1,339, from the Publications budget.

108/LLP SHOPPING POSTER

The Committee received a request from South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth to fund the printing of several "shopping posters", based on the design of the existing Shopping Directory and map. One would be displayed in a poster case supplied by London Midland at the railway station and the others would be displayed in the town centre bus stops and notice boards. The cost for six posters (five to be laminated) was estimated at £425.

RESOLVED to fund the production of six shopping posters at an estimated cost of £425 from the Promotions budget.

109/LLP DEFERRAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Due to the lateness of the hour, it was proposed that the remaining items on the agenda be deferred until a future meeting.

RESOLVED to defer discussion of the remaining agenda items until a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 2220 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 AUGUST 2012.