



Leighton-Linslade
Town Council



LEIGHTON LINSLADE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: 8 ~ for decision

Meeting date: 30 August 2012

TITLE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL FOR LEIGHTON LINSLADE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

1. Purpose

1.1 The LLPC wishes to consider options for engaging with its communities to ensure that interested groups, residents and partners have an opportunity to participate in discussion and influence decisions and outcomes for Leighton Linslade. The purpose of this report is therefore to put forward options for how the Leighton Linslade Partnership Committee (LLPC) could engage with its partners, stakeholder groups and residents.

2. Background

2.1 The Leighton Linslade Partnership Committee was formed in May 2011 with the merger of two previous Committees; the Town Centre Partnership Committee and the Town Development Committee. A new Terms of Reference was prepared and is included in the Central Bedfordshire Council constitution.

2.2 The primary purpose of the Committee is to serve as a partnership forum for all those involved in initiatives impacting on the Parish to consult with each other and co-ordinate their activities so as to realise their aspirations for the Parish and the town centre. In addition it exists to set the broad direction of the partnership, taking into account the needs of the town centre's customers, employees, residents, visitors, traders, property owners, businesses and developers.

2.3 The membership of the Committee is drawn from Central Bedfordshire Council (5) and Leighton-Linslade Town Council (5). Representatives of local businesses are invited to attend meetings as non-voting members. The Committee can also establish Sub-Committees and task groups and invite relevant representatives from the community to attend in order to progress/deliver specific proposals in town development strategies.

2.4 At the recent Annual meeting of the Town Council comments were received as to community involvement in town affairs and how this might be encouraged and extended. Comments specifically referred to the role of the LLPC. It is appropriate therefore to build on the efforts already made by the Committee to engage with partners and interested groups with a community engagement model that offers opportunities for wider engagement e.g. from local residents and groups keen to act in the interests of Leighton Linslade and its future. Above all it must be appropriate and bespoke to Leighton Linslade to ensure support and participation.



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3. Community Engagement – Why and with whom?

3.1 There is great value to the Partnership Committee in implementing a community engagement model that embraces a broad range of interests in the work of the Committee and what it is seeking to achieve.

3.2 Community engagement delivers:

- ◆ Better decisions informed by feedback from a wide group of stakeholders
- ◆ Support in the delivery of services / activities if supported by local interests
- ◆ Greater levels of understanding about service delivery (opportunities and constraints)
- ◆ Access to expertise and local knowledge
- ◆ Improved impact and outcomes.
- ◆ Feedback on proposed policy

3.3 There are several types of 'community' with whom LLPC might want to engage to help it decide priorities and make other decisions about the area.

- a) Partners – other organizations who are responsible for service delivery and achieving positive outcomes for the town and its residents e.g. Police / Fire / Chamber of Trade/local businesses.
- b) Community groups –voluntary and community groups with an involvement and interest in how services are delivered and are well placed to highlight shortcomings in service delivery and challenge accordingly. They are able to represent particular interests and provide expertise on particular issues and opportunities. e.g. the thirty – five groups who have already expressed an interest in involvement.
- c) Residents – people who reside in the area and feel the impact of committee decisions and service delivery.

3.4 The challenge is to construct a model that works for all these stakeholders and encourages and enables their participation. There must be a clear reason and benefit to them and their communities to getting involved.

4. Potential Engagement Models: Options

4.1 The recent review of Let's Talk Together meetings as an engagement model revealed the value and support for face to face community engagement and the Let's Talk Together brand. These principles can be incorporated into the options suggested below.

Option 1: A Leighton Linslade Forum

4.2 A Forum model involves all groups listed in 3.3. It is usually very interactive with a variety of ways and means on offer to enable people to engage and participate. This can include all or some of the below:



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- ◆ A speaker
- ◆ A chairman
- ◆ discussion groups based on a theme or local issue;
- ◆ boards and post it notes for comments, views and observations;
- ◆ market stalls and display boards
- ◆ road shows / meetings / events

4.3 A Forum would typically meet two or three times a year. It would be heavily marketed throughout the town at a suitable time and place. LLTC and CBC would organise it together. Each Forum meeting would decide the 'agenda' for the next meeting or event.

4.4 The main benefits of this model is that it can be made non-threatening and appealing to all stakeholder groups; residents, partners and community groups. The information and feedback generated at a forum meeting can be very helpful to decision making.

Option 2: A Leighton Linslade Assembly

4.5 An Assembly model typically involves representatives of groups and interests who contribute their knowledge and expertise, usually to particular issues and opportunities. Representatives are chosen to sit on the Partnership Committee and the emphasis is on ensuring they represent group views; It would have its own identity, Terms of Reference and governance arrangements such as a Chairman and Secretariat. Each meeting would perhaps have a specific theme or issue to discuss, delegates would work in discussion groups and output recommendations to the LLPC. The benefits of this model is the richness in knowledge, expertise and insight fed back into the LLPC by the appointed representatives from the Assembly

Option 3: A central (Partnership) committee / Board and sub groups

4.6 This model operates where sub-groups take the lead on individual activities / themes and the chair of each group feeds into the Partnership Committee / Board (but is not necessarily a member of it) The emphasis is on delivery where there is an overarching strategic direction and the role of the sub group is vital in ensuring progress against the relevant priorities and targets.

4.7 The Committee would meet quarterly and sub group meeting would be timed to feed into the main Committee meeting.

4.8 The potential strength of this model is that the current LLPC already has a sub group structure in place. A potential weakness however is that it doesn't necessarily reach out into the wider community and is only accessed by a selected number of community / voluntary groups.



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5. Conclusions and recommendations

- 5.1 The Committees' view on the purpose for and outcomes they are seeking from community engagement however is vital in choosing the model that best fits.
- 5.2 The recent review of the Let's Talk Together model revealed a lot of support for face to face engagement and for the LTT brand. The models described above can deliver these principles. The LTT review **also** emphasised that successful community engagement needs a purpose and an outcome.
- 5.3 Based on current information (including the experience of Let's Talk meetings in Leighton Linslade and role of the Partnership Committee), **Option 1, the Forum model**, has clear advantages and offers opportunities for wide stakeholder involvement. There are a number of proactive groups and individuals in Leighton Linslade who wish to contribute to the work of the Partnership Committee as well as current and future Leighton Linslade
- 5.4 The Leighton Linslade Forum could be chaired by the local MP Andrew Selous and meet three times a year. The diagram attached shows how local groups as the Leighton Forum would relate to the Partnership Committee.
- 5.5 Once the Committee has agreed the purpose and outcomes desired from community engagement and selected the most suitable model, it is recommended that the Town Clerk and CBC Partnerships and Community Engagement Team together plan a timetable for the implementation of the model.

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Central Bedfordshire Council on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Together.**



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