

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 12 DECEMBER 2013 AT 1930 HOURS

Present : Councillors D Bowater – CBC
 S Cotter - LLTC
 D Hopkin – CBC - in the Chair
 A Brandham – LLTC (substituting for G Rolfe)
 R Berry – CBC (substituting for A Shadbolt)
 G Perham – LLTC (substituting for A Dodwell)
 P Snelling – LLTC
 B Spurr - CBC
 N Warren - CBC

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio (Acting Town Clerk)
 J Martindale (Partnership Officer)
 S Sandiford (Committee Officer)
 S Caldbeck (Major Projects Officer, Central
 Bedfordshire Council)
 G Borrelli (LB First)
 B Chandler (LB Connect)
 J Bradley (Stockton Bradley)
 Rev. P. Niemiec (Spokesperson – Community
 Forum Steering Group)
 D Sosnowski (Central Bedfordshire College)

Members of the Public: 2
Members of the Press: 0

229/LLP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor A Dodwell (substituted by Councillor G Perham), Councillor G Rolfe (substituted by Councillor A Brandham), Councillor A Shadbolt (substituted by Councillor R Berry) and Sarah Hughes (Central Bedfordshire Council).

230LLP 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 declarations of interest were made.

231/LLP DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensations had been received.

232/LLP PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

233/LLP MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Committee received the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 31 October 2013.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 31 October 2013 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

234/LLP MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND TASK GROUPS

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Economic Development Sub-Committee meeting held on 14 November 2013.

Minute reference 80/EC (Local Business Economy): officers were requested to follow up with the Federation of Small Business regarding access to data on the local business economy.

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Economic Development Sub-Committee meeting held on 14 November 2013.

235/LLP TOWN CENTRE DELIVERY PLAN

By invitation, Sam Caldbeck of Central Bedfordshire Council attended the meeting to present the proposed Town Centre Delivery Plan. The purpose of the Delivery Plan was to act as a tool to enable delivery of specific priority projects by identifying potential funding sources available both now and in the future. The Delivery Plan would be updated continuously and any updates or changes would be approved by the Committee.

Priority projects detailed in the Plan included: environment improvements to the High Street and Mews/Alleyways, street lighting improvements, signage and town gateway improvements. Discussions and works were already underway on several projects including lighting, mews and signage. Further detail was needed on the proposals to enhance the town gateways and a site visit would be scheduled to determine requirements.

RESOLVED to endorse the Town Centre Delivery Plan.

The Committee also received a report detailing proposed sources of budget funding to support the projects included in the Town Centre Delivery Plan.

RESOLVED to approve initial funding of £55,000 for projects detailed in the Town Centre Delivery Plan as follows:-

- (i) High Street Environmental Improvements - £15,000 – budget 965/9027 (Earmarked Reserves – Town Centre Management)
- (ii) Signage projects - £10,000 – budget 965/9018 (Earmarked Reserves – Economic Development)
- (iii) Town Centre Lighting - £10,000 - £6,000 from budget 503/4505 (Town Centre Management – Street Lighting) and £4,000 from

- budget 965/9027 (Earmarked Reserves – Town Centre Management)**
- (iv) Mews & Alleys Environmental Improvements – up to £20,000 – budget code 965/9018 (Earmarked Reserves – Economic Development).**

It was noted that the funds in Earmarked Reserves – Economic Development were unspent monies from 2012-2013 which had been earmarked, with approval from Central Bedfordshire Council, for projects in the Signage Strategy including improved Mews signage. Approval would be sought for use of this budget for not only Signage projects but also for the proposed environmental improvements to the Mews and Alleys.

236/LLP PARKING STUDY

The Committee received a report regarding a study and management review of car parking in Leighton Buzzard town centre, covering both on and off street car parking, to be commissioned by Central Bedfordshire Council. It was anticipated that this would be undertaken by April 2014. Central Bedfordshire Council would provide £20,000 towards the delivery of the review and the Committee was asked to make a contribution of a further £5,000.

RESOLVED to note the information regarding a Parking Study and to approve the contribution of £5,000 from Town Centre Management earmarked reserves (965/9027).

237/LLP SIGNAGE UPDATE

The Committee received a report regarding the Signage Strategy which had been endorsed on 31 May 2012 and the status of various projects included in the Strategy. Several aspects of the Strategy were underway and it was anticipated that further works would continue in 2014-2015.

The Committee was asked to approve the use of funds from the Town Centre Management – Signage budget for new noticeboards and town centre maps to be located in the Duncombe Drive and Library car parks.

RESOLVED to support the use of funds from the Town Centre Management – Signage budget (503-4507) for new noticeboards and town centre maps in the Duncombe Drive and Library car parks.

The Committee was asked to consider the size and format for proposed brown tourist information signs indicating “Historic Market Town”, to be located on the A505 by-pass. It was agreed to opt for the largest size sign (1755 x 1300).

238/LLP RIVERSIDE CENTRE

Papers were tabled at the meeting relating to the Riverside Centre on Bridge Street, including flexible outline plans and project budget for building improvements from retained surveyor Stockton Bradley and a proposed

business plan for use of the building as a creative hub from Central Bedfordshire College.

By invitation, D Sosnowski of Central Bedfordshire College gave a presentation outlining the College's vision for the building. The aspiration was to establish a "creative hub" containing arts and crafts studios, a café gallery, a kiln and a media suite. Courses aimed at young people would be run by the College, with an estimated 150 learners per year initially. In addition, the facilities could be hired out by local schools, groups, organisations or artists. There were no other similar facilities within the local area and research indicated proof of demand for such courses and facilities.

By invitation, J Bradley of Stockton Bradley gave a brief overview regarding how the potential of the building could be maximised, with proposed improvements to the ground and first floors which would provide flexible space and address the concerns previously reported to Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the condition and safety of the building. Outline plans were based on the vision for the Centre but details would need to be ironed out.

Views were expressed in support of the concept, which it was felt could be a flagship venture and a significant benefit to the local community. However, concerns were raised regarding the suitability of the building for such a project, particularly given the lack of parking facilities and restricted access to the first floor. A question was raised regarding why the Town Council was involved in proposals, rather than Central Bedfordshire College dealing directly with Central Bedfordshire Council. It was noted that the documents provided did not set out clear terms regarding the ownership of the building, arrangements for building maintenance, responsibility for utilities, the term of any agreement with the College and costs for equipping the building. The Committee agreed that more detailed information was required.

It was acknowledged that Members had not had the opportunity to review proposals in advance of the meeting and suggested that an extraordinary one-item meeting be convened in the New Year to discuss the proposed project further.

RESOLVED to note the information and to hold an extraordinary meeting of the Partnership Committee in early 2014 to discuss proposals for the Riverside Centre further.

239/LLP BUSINESS UPDATE

B Chandler, Chair of the LB Connect group, advised that members were reporting positive business, which was welcome in the current economic climate. LB Connect had recently presented a cheque to local charity Kids Out and had agreed that in the next year they would be supporting local charity PTSD Resolution (aimed at assisting ex-Forces members and families).

Councillor B Spurr left the meeting at 2110 hours.

G Borrelli, Chair of the LB First group, expressed thanks to the Committee, the Town Council and officers for their help and support in organising the Christmas Shopping Weekend. Feedback was in the process of being collated with the intention of meeting with officers in January 2014 to review the 2013 event and start discussing the 2014 event. It was felt that the weekend was a great opportunity to showcase the town centre and always acted as a springboard to kick off the peak retail period leading up to Christmas.

The 2013 event had been the largest held so far and it was understood that several exhibitors from the Christmas craft market had expressed an interest in trading on the regular street market.

The Committee expressed positive feedback regarding the event, particularly the food court which had been held in Church Square. The question was raised as to whether the funfair (particularly the dodgems) presented a barrier to Church Square and whether the loud music played was in keeping with the festive atmosphere of the event.

RESOLVED to note the information.

240/LLP COMMUNITY FORUM

The Committee received a report following a recent meeting of the Community Forum steering group. The steering group proposed that a second Forum event be held in March 2014 in the town centre, to take place on a Saturday morning and to hopefully again be chaired by Andrew Selous MP. The suggested topic was "Healthy, Wealthy and Wise".

The Committee was asked to support the principle of a second Community Forum event and to agree funding (proposed £200 remaining in the Community Forum budget). A further £1,000 would be provided through Central Bedfordshire Council's Community budget.

RESOLVED to support the event in principle and to approve expenditure of the £200 remaining in the 2013-2014 Community Forum budget.

Concerns were voiced as to whether expectations would be raised by the proposed theme, particularly regarding "Health", when the Town Council and Partnership Committee had limited powers to address these issues. It was agreed that the remit of the committee would be to take any information/feedback from the event to the relevant parties and to exert influence where possible.

It was felt that the positive outcomes from the previous Community Forum event in February 2013 should be demonstrated, perhaps by use of display boards.

Rev. Niemiec was thanked for attending the meeting.

241/LLP CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE

The Committee received an update report from Central Bedfordshire Council including information on community safety, leisure services, highways and transport, youth and community services. It was suggested that Members contact the Community Engagement Officer at Central Bedfordshire Council directly with any queries arising from the report.

RESOLVED to note the report.

242/LLP COMMITTEE WORK PLAN, OBJECTIVES AND BUDGET

The Committee received a report detailing current projects, expenditure and comments on project status.

RESOLVED to note the report.

243/LLP BIG PLAN II PROJECTS: SPORTS FACILITIES

The Committee received a report regarding a proposal to refurbish the tennis and basketball courts at Pages Park. The proposal and costs had been presented to the Leisure and Community Committee on 4 November 2013 as a project arising from the Masterplanning consultation undertaken in 2011-2012 for Pages Park and recommendations had been made to the Policy and Finance Committee and the Partnership Committee to support the funding.

The Policy and Finance Committee had agreed on 25 November 2013 to support funding of up to £6,000 from the Capital Projects budget for play area refurbishment. The Partnership Committee was asked to consider allocating the remaining £10,000 of funding from the Big Plan II Projects earmarked reserve.

RESOLVED to allocate funding of up to £10,000 from the Big Plan II Projects earmarked reserve (budget code 965/9028).

244/LLP TEMPORARY BEACH

The Committee received a report regarding the proposal to establish a temporary beach feature in Parson's Close Recreation Ground in summer 2014. Quotations had been sought from three specialist suppliers and an initial meeting had taken place between officers and representatives of Beach Events Ltd to discuss the principles and raise preliminary questions.

It was proposed that a temporary beach would attract both residents and those from further afield into the town centre and that the beach would also provide a platform for activities such as beach volleyball, zumba, yoga as well as being used by local playgroups, schools and organisations. A longer term event would potentially offer better value for money and be of further benefit to the town centre than a one-day event which could be compromised by inclement weather or other external factors.

Many details needed to be discussed further, in particular any potential impact on the water filtration system of the Splash & Play facility and impact on the grass of the park itself. The Committee was asked to consider support for the idea in principle, for officers to then continue further investigations and to bring more detailed information to the next meeting.

Concerns were raised regarding potential impact on events taking place in the park, keeping the sand clean and manpower required for the project, however support was given to further investigation of the concept.

RESOLVED to support, in principle, the concept of a temporary beach in Parson's Close Recreation Ground in summer 2014, to be funded from the Economic Development budget and for further information to be brought to the next meeting for consideration.

245/LLP TOURISM LEAFLET

The Committee received a report requesting support for the creation and printing of a tourism leaflet for the town, in accordance with the Tourism Strategy and the aspirations contained within Big Plan II. Various options for content and design were currently under consideration.

RESOLVED to support the creation and printing of a tourism leaflet from budget code 965-9022 (Earmarked reserves – Town Centre Management and Big Plan – Tourism), up to a maximum amount of £3,421.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Acting Town Clerk to make decisions on the final content and design of the leaflet.

246/LLP 2014-2015 BUDGET

The Committee received a report outlining potential projects for inclusion in the 2014-15 budget. It was suggested that recommendations be made to the Policy and Finance Committee regarding budget for themed markets and the pop-up market (which had already been included in the draft 2014-2015 budget prepared by officers).

RESOLVED to note the report.

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee to:

- (i) allocate funding of £5,000 to run monthly themed market events during 2014-2015 (10 months x £500 per month; December and January excluded)**
- (ii) allocate funding of £2,000 to run the monthly pop-up market during 2014-2015**

The meeting closed at 2200 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2013.

Chair

13 FEBRUARY 2014