

The Sub-Committee was advised that the application for Chamberlains Barn would be determined by the Development Management Committee on 20 June 2014. It was agreed that Central Bedfordshire officers should be invited to attend the next Partnership Committee on 7 August 2014 to provide an update on the Eastern expansion, including Section 106 negotiations.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Economic Development Sub-Committee meeting held on 6 February 2014 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

98/EC JOB CENTRE PLUS

By invitation, Pamela Brown of Job Centre Plus attended the meeting to discuss the local job situation and opportunities for partnership working. The Sub-Committee was advised that there were several initiatives in place to reduce unemployment, particularly for young people aged 18-24. These included the "Youth Contract", a Government initiative to provide young people with 2-8 weeks of work experience, with an incentive offered to employers.

Job Centre Plus provided support and coaching for job seekers, including an initial basic skills test and a "skills academy" to provide people with the relevant skills and the best chance of securing employment. There was a move towards further use of technology with job centres becoming more digital and the role of advisors becoming more of a coach, i.e. helping people take action themselves to seek and secure employment. A focus for young people was to teach internet awareness and the importance of using the internet and social media in a safe and appropriate manner.

In addition to strong links with Central Bedfordshire Council and other agencies and organisations, Job Centre Plus sought local support from employers. It was agreed that information would be sent out to the local business network via email.

RESOLVED to note the information.

99/EC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

(a) The Sub-Committee received an updated Work Plan from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding economic development activity. Eight visits to key local employers had taken place during 2013-14. There was potential growth in local business in both the short term and the longer term, but this would partly depend on the availability of suitable land and premises for expansion. The availability of commercial premises was monitored on an ongoing basis and a current summary document was circulated.

A Business Clinic had taken place in February 2014, resulting in positive feedback from attendees. Other initiatives included a footfall survey and taking part in endeavours such as the National Apprenticeship Week and Creative Bedfordshire.

The Sub-Committee raised concerns about the vacant units and general condition of Waterborne Walk in the town centre. Ownership of the land needed to be clarified.

RESOLVED to note the information and to invite Steve Lakin of Central Bedfordshire Council to attend the next Sub-Committee meeting, in reference to the footfall survey.

(b) The Sub-Committee received a draft proposal for economic development and business support projects in Leighton-Linslade for 2014-2015.

A query was raised regarding the proposal to visit 4 key employers during the year, when the target for 2013-14 had been 6 visits, with 8 actually achieved. A further query was raised regarding whether more support could be provided to small businesses.

The proposal indicated funding required of £9,600 for the year; however, it was noted that the Business Networking Event was already included in the budget as a specific item. It was proposed that the £2,000 allocated for this project be kept in the funding request, for use for other business initiatives, such as further key employer visits and support for smaller businesses.

RECOMMENDED to the Partnership Committee to endorse the proposed economic development activity for 2014-2015 (see Appendix A) and for funding of £9,600 to be allocated accordingly from the Economic Development Budget.

It was discussed that the Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee were currently very specific and reflected the goals and targets for the previous year. It was suggested that the Terms of Reference be amended to reflect the underlying aims of the sub-committee, but that detailed plans and targets should be set out in the Work Plan rather than in the Terms of Reference.

RECOMMENDED to the Partnership Committee that the Terms of Reference for the Economic Development Sub-Committee be amended as follows:

- i) To develop projects to support start-up businesses in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade.**
- ii) To support Central Bedfordshire Council's Economic Development Plan in relation to Leighton-Linslade**
- iii) To consider, propose and promote projects which encourage greater economic development in Leighton-Linslade**
- iv) To review and develop town centre strategies to encourage greater use of the town centre to maintain and enhance vitality and viability.**

100/EC LOCAL BUSINESS ECONOMY

(a) The Sub-Committee was advised that an officer meeting had taken place on 13 May 2014 to discuss the agreed local business/economy survey. It had been agreed that feedback from residents would be most valuable at this time. A brief was being prepared and then quotes would be obtained.

RESOLVED to note the information.

(b) The Sub-Committee was advised by LB Connect that members were currently reporting good business. A suggestion was made by LB Connect to consider another business networking event during the year, possibly with more of a family focus and to include town retailers. A late summer event such as a barbeque was a potential idea.

It was noted that the Chamber of Commerce already held a summer BBQ, with organisations paying for a stand at the event. It was agreed to contact the Chamber of Commerce to investigate further details including the purpose and aims of the event.

RESOLVED to note the information.**101/EC MARKET START-UP BURSARY SCHEME**

The Sub-Committee received a report regarding the Market Start-Up bursary scheme, which had been set up in May 2013. Five grants of up to £500 each would be available for the year. The existing procedure stated that applications should be reviewed initially by the Market and Town Centre Officer with the Chair of the Economic Development Sub-Committee, with a recommendation then made to the sub-committee for consideration.

As the Sub-Committee met only once per quarter, it was suggested that in order to avoid delays with approval of grants, authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to make a final decision.

RECOMMENDED to the Partnership Committee that an amendment be made to the procedure for the Market Bursary scheme, by delegating authority to the Town Clerk to make a final decision (following review of applications by the Market and Town Centre Officer with the Chair of the Economic Development Sub-Committee)

102/EC BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENT

The Sub-Committee received a brief interim report on the Business Networking Event held on Wednesday 30 April 2014 at the Leighton Buzzard Golf Club. There had been an excellent response from local business, with 102 companies (150 people) registering in advance. Of these, 73 companies (91 people) attended on the evening.

Comments at the event had been positive and feedback following the event was being sought. The majority of attendees had heard about the event directly from the Council or from LB Connect, with social media and word of mouth also proving effective means of publicising the event.

It was felt that the larger town employers had not been represented at the event but this was possibly due to an existing forum for larger businesses. It was also felt that a low number of town retailers had attended.

It was agreed that the 2013 and 2014 attendee lists should be compared and that those who attended the 2013 event but not the 2014 event should be contacted to try to determine why they had not attended the second event.

Thanks were expressed to all those involved in organising the event.

The meeting closed at 2105 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 MAY 2014.

Chair

21 AUGUST 2014

DRAFT

APPENDIX A**2014-2015 Draft proposal for Economic Development and Business Support projects in Leighton-Linslade.**

The following proposal from Central Bedfordshire Council to deliver economic development and business support projects in Leighton – Linslade is put forward for consideration to the Economic Development Sub committee.

The proposal is set out in 4 distinct categories:

1. Core service and ongoing delivery – **sub total £9,600**
2. New and additional delivery

All items are included in an annual workplan and progress is reported at each meeting of the sub committee.

Items	Cost	Lead partner	Target	Activity
1. Core/ ongoing delivery				
Let's Talk Business	500	CBC	Sign up 15 businesses	Marketing – News Central, website, network event, targeted e-mail campaign
Business TimeBank®	1,000	CBC	10 sessions	Facilitate 1:1 advice sessions with a service provider (ongoing)
Clinics / seminars	1,000	CBC	1 session	Run a business clinic session (1:1 advice)
Business Engagement	300	CBC	3 businesses	Work with SME's to provide guidance and support
Business Networks	2,000	CBC/LLTC	1 off (April 2014)	To plan/ market/ support and attend the Spring Network event

Key Employer visits	800	CBC	4 visits	Engage with key employers and report findings to the sub-committee.
Start up grants	2,500	CBC / LLTC	5	Provide grant assistance of £500 to new market traders to assist business development
Commercial Property analysis	£400	CBC	Quarterly	To prepare quarterly report identifying available commercial space.
Footfall survey	£1100	CBC	2 surveys/ annum	Establish average flow of pedestrians using the town centre.
Sub total	9,600			

Changes from 2013/14 are

Removal of Pilot 10
Reduction in LTB businesses
Reduce the number of key employer visits

Items	Cost	Lead Partner	Target	Activity
1. New delivery				
Business /Town Centre Economy survey	£10,000	LLTC supported by CBC	TBC	TBC
Sub total	£10,000			