

**LEIGHTON LINSLADE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

**12 February 2015**

**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE**

**Purpose of report: - for information**

**1 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**1.1 Leighton Linslade**

Between January 2014–December 2014 there were 1932 crimes recorded in Leighton Linslade. This is an increase of 11% on the same time period in the previous 12 months.

Between January 2014–December 2014 there were 390 SAC crimes recorded in Leighton Linslade. This is a decrease of 8% on the same time period in the previous 12 months.

Between January 2014 – December 2014 there were 119 domestic burglaries recorded in Leighton Linslade. This is a decrease of 32% on the same time period in the previous 12 months.

**1.2 Reported Cases in Leighton/Linslade from 1/10/2014 – 31/12/2014**

Littering – 4  
Dog barking – 1  
Fly – tipping – 10  
Pollution Noise – 21  
Waste accumulation – 1  
Dog fouling – 1  
Graffiti – 1  
Nuisance neighbours – 4  
Rowdy/inconsiderate behaviour – 2  
Side waste offences – 2

1 x FPN served – littering  
0 – Notices  
0 – Prosecutions

## **2**      **LEISURE**

### **2.1**    **Leighton Buzzard Library**

New activities are always being added to the already busy library schedule. A Lego Club for children was launched on November 15, International Games Day. The bricks and other components were provided free by Lego to all Central Bedfordshire Libraries.

Regular Health Walks from the library have been set up with the help of colleagues from Leisure Services. The health walks aim to support people who would like to discover local areas of interest in safety or want to take first steps towards enjoying a healthier lifestyle.

On the 1 November the Library took part in the Human Library. Local residents of Bedfordshire, who had a story to tell about a prejudice they had experienced, were invited to become a human book and tell their story to a wider public within a library.

### **2.2**    **Theatre**

Online booking for the Leighton Buzzard Library Theatre was introduced successfully and saw an increase in ticket sales of 8% during the first month of operation. Online ticket sales are continuing to do well and there have been more sell-out shows as a result - I've Seen Santa, Sing-along Frozen, The Imitation Game and Mr Turner.

In September, Townsend Productions presented the show *United We Stand*. The Theatre is developing a closer working relationship with Townsend and is currently collaborating with them on a project based on the Chartist movement in the area.

The Theatre will be closed from the 1-10 February to install new theatre lighting, refurbish the bar and box office areas and carry out improvements to theatre spaces. This is part of Central Bedfordshire Council's £850K capital investment in libraries.

Theatre-goers are being invited to have their say about what they would like to watch at Leighton Buzzard Library Theatre. A consultation has been launched about programming and promotion. It will look at what people want in terms of children's and family events, with the results helping to develop what the theatre offers to visitors, and helping to promote it in the best way possible.

Relaxed screenings have been introduced once again. These are designed to welcome those on the autism spectrum or anyone who would benefit from a relaxed cinema environment. At a relaxed screening, seating is unreserved, the sound volume is reduced and low lights are left on. It's fine to make noise, move around or leave the cinema.

A trio of live productions from professional theatre companies are coming this spring: Above Bored (6th March, a psychological drama with a wide streak of dark comedy); My Father and Other Superheroes (17th March, one man's tale of learning how to be a father); Miss Caledonia (12th May, the story of a girl from a farm's quest to win a beauty pageant).

### **2.3 Community Physical Activity**

Along with the health walks mentioned above, the team runs a regular exercise session at Tudor Court every Thursday. The exercises use the treadmill or exercise bike and promote strengthening and balance to help prevent falls. These sessions are open to all members of the public, contact [robin.osborn@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:robin.osborn@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) for further details.

A new fit4life 50+ Activity Programme leaflet for January to March has been published, please visit [Fit4life brochure](#). Hard copies of the booklet can be requested from Loren Barnard [physical.activity@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:physical.activity@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk).

### **2.4 Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre**

Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre continues to go from strength to strength. Increased membership numbers in all areas show that local residents are enjoying the various facilities on offer. The fitness class programme has recently been reviewed to allow more people to enjoy the classes and swimming pool. Swimming lessons are particularly strong at the moment resulting in a waiting list.

Central Bedfordshire Council continue to invest in Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre with the new Sauna and Steam room opening in February. This high quality facility will provide members with the opportunity to relax and enjoy the benefits that saunas and steam rooms can provide.

### **2.5 Strategy & Policy**

Leisure is working with the new Head of Grounds and Environmental Services, Ian Haynes at LLTC on releasing s106 contributions, including helping to fund site preparation for the new play area at Vandyke recreation ground. In addition, CBC and LLTC are jointly working on the issue of cemetery provision and how the Leisure Strategy reflects and can help deliver this for the Town Council.

## **3 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION**

The adoption of sewers under the highways is crucial to speeding up the adoption of highways as CBC would not usually adopt highways above un-adopted sewers. We are therefore in discussion with Anglian Water to get some of the sewers adopted and push the adoption process forward.

## **4 SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING**

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire are working in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council, Aragon Housing and their residents group (ROAR) together with the Older Peoples Reference Group (OPRG) to host this year's Just Ask Events.

Just Ask travels across Central Bedfordshire in various locations and offers the opportunity to receive information, advice and guidance from Central Bedfordshire Council, Healthwatch and our partner organisations along with a wealth of local voluntary organisations on social care, health & housing and many additional services.

Information and advice will be on display from many organisations offering services to in the local community. The Rave Bus will be staffed by Healthwatch as well as various CBC officers and partner organisations throughout the day to distribute information and advice, to the general public all working together to engage the community and promote their well-being.

The proposed date for a Just Ask visit to L-L is Tuesday 25 August 9-1.30pm in the Market Square.

## **5 YOUTH SERVICES**

### **5.1 Update on NEETs – Leighton Buzzard**

The levels of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) continue to be low across Central Bedfordshire (3.9% from year 12 -14 cohorts in December 14). The proportion of young people In Learning is 81.4%. The Youth Support Service is nearing completion of the annual Activity Survey and young people no longer continuing in education, employment or training have been identified.

### **5.2 NEET Overview**

In December there were 80 young people (Years 12-14) in Leighton Buzzard who were NEET, which is an increase from 66 young people who were NEET in July.

There were 65 young people (Years 12-14) living in the Dunstable area who were NEET. This is an increase from 63 young people who were NEET in July.

There were 50 young people (Years 12-14) in Houghton Regis who were NEET, which is an increase from 48 young people who were NEET in July.

### **5.3 Characteristics of the NEET Group in Leighton Buzzard**

The following information provides an overview of the characteristics of the current NEET group in relation to the:

- spread of young people across the Leighton Buzzard wards;
- gender and age breakdown;
- NEET status of young people in relation to whether they are currently available to the labour market (actively seeking EET) or if they are currently unavailable for EET due to their personal circumstances;
- length of time young people have been NEET;
- previous destinations in relation to what young people were doing immediately prior to becoming NEET.

The overview also includes Houghton Regis and Dunstable figures to help provide context.

<b>Leighton Buzzard Ward Breakdown for December 2014</b>	
Leighton Buzzard North	41
Leighton Buzzard South	23
Linslade	16

<b>Breakdown of NEET Characteristics for December 2014 for Leighton Buzzard, Houghton Regis and Dunstable</b>			
	Leighton Buzzard	Houghton Regis	Dunstable
<b>Total NEETs</b>	80	50	65

<b>Gender</b>			
Male	39	22	39
Female	41	28	26

<b>Age</b>			
16	9	5	6
17	19	10	14
18	29	17	31
19	23	18	14

<b>NEET: Available to Labour Market</b>			
NEET - seeking empl. or training	46	30	43
NEET – Awaiting Level 2 training	0	0	1
NEET – Not Yet Ready for EET	0	2	3
Working not for reward	2	1	2

<b>NEET: Unavailable to Labour Market</b>			
Illness	11	6	3
Pregnancy	2	1	2
Teenage Parent	16	9	10
Young Carer	0	1	1
Not Available - Other	3	0	0

<b>Length of time NEET</b>			
Less than 3 months	44	22	25
3-6 months	11	10	18
6+ months	25	18	22

Previous Destination			
Employment	8	4	5
Foundation Learning/Training	2	2	5
Maint. School/Sixth Form College	20	13	16
College	26	11	20
Educated at Home	1	0	1
Work Based Learning	0	0	1
Pregnancy/Teenage Parent	9	8	9
Apprenticeship	3	3	1
Re-engagement Programme	0	1	3
NEET – seeking employment or training	4	4	0
NEET – Illness	0	0	1
NEET – Not Available Other	0	1	0
NEET – Not Yet Ready for EET	1	0	0
Working Not for Reward	1	0	0
Unknown/Cannot be Contacted	5	3	3

## 6 **SCHOOLS**

### 6.1 **School Organisation**

Due to the growth in population within the town and the resulting demand upon school places, in addition to the general 'Starting School' leaflet that is produced and distributed every year by the Council's School Admissions Team, a leaflet was produced for the parents and carers who would be applying for a reception year school place for those children due to start school in south Leighton Buzzard in September 2015. This leaflet was designed to encourage all parents to consider both their preferred school and also other local schools in case a space could not be offered at their school of first preference.

The leaflet was delivered with the Sandhills Community House's October edition of their newsletter 'House 2 House' to all Sandhills and Billington Grove households. Copies of this leaflet were also supplied to the lower schools in the area.

Four drop-in sessions were held by the School Admissions Team at the Community House where parents could pick up an application form, make an on-line application and ask any questions.

The closing date for 'on-time' applications was 15 January. Parents will be advised of the school place offered on 16 April 2015, which is the 'National Offer Day'.

In order to meet the demand for places for those children due to start school in September 2015 in south Leighton Buzzard, the Governing Bodies of both Leeton Lower and Clipstone Brook Lower Schools have each consulted on a proposal to expand their schools by 150 places. If the proposed expansions are approved by the Council's Executive in March we will be working towards providing the first of these additional places by September 2015.

## **7 PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**7.1 Central Bedfordshire Together Stakeholder Conference** – On 30 September 2014 an event was held with over 120 stakeholder representing a range of organisations. It looked at 3 key themes:

- Improving Health and Wellbeing in Central Bedfordshire
- Future Policing Strategy for Bedfordshire Police; What it means for our communities
- Enabling Sustainable Economic Growth

A full Conference report can be found [here](#).

### **7.1 Town and Parish Council Conference**

The Town and Parish Council Conference held on 20 January was attended by over 110 delegates.

The agenda covered the Highways Contract, Combined Parliamentary and Local Government Elections 7 May 2015, Dog Control Orders, and the Budget 2015. Presentations can be viewed on the CBC website and a post-conference report will be available shortly. Please see [link](#).

### **7.2 Volunteer Awards and Celebration event**

Planning is underway to organise an event to recognise and celebrate volunteering throughout Central Bedfordshire. It will include an Award scheme across 6-7 categories and be held on 2 June at the Grove Theatre, Dunstable.

### **7.3 Advice Services**

A new leaflet signposting people to sources of advice is being prepared and will be circulated shortly. Advice Central a lottery funded project led by the Advice sector will go live in February and will significantly help those unsure where to go for help and advice. Residents will be able to access it on line or by phone on 0300 303 6666.

### **7.4 Budget Consultation 2015/16**

The consultation closed on 3 February. Feedback from this consultation and Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be considered by the Executive and full council later in February.

## **8 WASTE**

### **8.1 Looking back**

#### **We achieved:**

The town centre has been cleansed, and initiatives to decrease chewing gum litter are being investigated.

3 new recycle on the go bins have been installed on the High Street, and one on Billington Estate, off Stanbridge Road.

Educational letters and leaflets have been distributed to properties on the Sandhills development with the aim of introducing any new residents to the recycling scheme and decreasing the contamination of recycling bins.

### **8.2 Looking forward**

#### **8.2.1 We are planning:**

More litter bins are to be installed in the town; appropriate locations are being considered.

#### **8.2.2 Key Priorities over the next 3 months:**

Educating residents about the recycling scheme is to continue on the Sandhills estate.

There are plans to address dog fouling in certain areas of concern. Locations for increased signage and new dog waste bins are being considered.

## **9 TOWN CENTRE DELIVERY PLAN**

Regeneration and Business Directorate are leading a project group involving Assets, Highways and other parts of the Council to drive forward the delivery of a number of town centre development projects, overcome blockages and make progress. Every effort is being made to manage the inevitable complexities and push forward on delivery especially with regards to the temporary car park on the Cattle market; East Leighton Buzzard where employment site development could start as early as 2016; a meeting is planned with Network Rail and London Midland to resolve range of issues and to progress an Interchange scheme at the rail station; High Street bus relocation and improvement project for which Amey are delivering a feasibility project to identify an alternative location for bus stops, three initial priority alleyways being considered for lighting improvements with an options report expected to be finalised shortly with a target for completion of installation during April.