

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 18 JUNE 2015 AT 1930 HOURS

Present: Councillors R Berry – CBC (substituting for D Bowater)
 S Cotter – LLTC
 A Dodwell – LLTC (substituting for A Brandham)
 F Kharawala - LLTC
 T Morris - LLTC
 C Palmer - LLTC
 G Perham - CBC
 B Spurr – CBC
 G Tubb – CBC
 B Walker – CBC (from 1950 hours)

Also in attendance: D Marsh (Corporate Governance Manager)
 J Martindale (Partnership Officer)
 S Sandiford (Committee Officer)
 G Borelli (LB First)
 B Chandler (LB Connect)
 S Hughes (Community Engagement Manager,
 Central Bedfordshire Council)

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

001/LLP APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor R Berry and seconded by Councillor S Cotter that Councillor B Spurr be appointed Chair of the Partnership Committee for the municipal year 2015-2016. There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor B Spurr Chair of the Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee for the municipal year 2015-2016.

Councillor Spurr took the Chair. New Members were welcomed to the Committee and thanks were expressed to the outgoing Chair David Hopkin.

002/LLP APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor G Perham and seconded by Councillor C Palmer that Councillor S Cotter be appointed Vice Chair of the Partnership Committee for the municipal year 2015-2016. There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor S Cotter Vice Chair of the Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee for the municipal year 2015-2016.

003/LLP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor A Brandham (substituted by Councillor A Dodwell) and from Councillor D Bowater (substituted by Councillor R Berry). Apologies for absence had also been received from the Town Clerk, the Head of Economic Development and Rev. P. Niemiec of the Community Forum Steering Group.

004/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.

Councillor F Kharawala declared a personal interest in the Big Lunch as a business owner having participated in the event.

Councillor B Spurr declared a personal interest in the proposed Christmas Tree lighting as a member of the Rotary Club of Leighton-Linslade.

005/LLP PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from members of the public.

006/LLP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee received the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 16 April 2015.

Minute reference 366/LLP (Enabling Delivery in Leighton-Linslade): a query was raised regarding whether all the land at the South side of the High Street was now under one ownership and if not, whether this would delay the development of the site. A further query was raised as to whether it would be possible for the Committee Members to receive a succinct, one page summary outlining timescales in respect of the High Street enhancement programme. It was suggested that perhaps a press release containing this information would be appropriate in order to provide residents with clear information on the timescales for town centre projects.

It was agreed that S Hughes would seek clarification from the Regeneration and Business team at Central Bedfordshire Council on these queries.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 12 February 2015 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

007/LLP COMMITTEE WORK PLAN AND OBJECTIVES

The Committee received a copy of the Committee Objectives and Work Plan for 2015-2016. This was based on work previously agreed during the last Council term and on the Town Council's Three Year Plan for 2015-2018, as well as input from Central Bedfordshire Council.

Community Engagement – it was noted that a Central Bedfordshire contractor had, in error, cut grass at the community garden on land at Regent Street/Miles Avenue. A letter of apology had been received and discussions were taking place regarding potential recompense.

Market Towns Strategy and Town Centre Delivery Plan – Committee Members sought further clarification on the details of both schemes and in particular, the relative responsibilities of each Council and how updates would be provided.

2014 Residents' Survey – clarification was sought as to the status of this work. Following the analysis of the survey results by a task group, the Partnership Committee had endorsed a number of proposed actions at its last meeting on 16 April 2015. £5,000 had been allocated within the current year budget. Progress in respect of actions within the remit of the Committee would be reported back to the Committee at a future meeting.

Proposed actions in respect of community events and the town market had been endorsed by the Town Council's Leisure and Community Committee and Policy and Finance Committee respectively and would be progressed through the work plans of those committees. Timescales would be dependent on the identification of budget and resources. It was agreed that a progress report on these matters could be presented back to the Partnership Committee at a later stage during the year.

RESOLVED to note the Committee Objectives and Work Plan for 2015-2016.

Councillor B Walker joined the meeting at 1950 hours.

008/LLP SUB-COMMITTEES AND TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Committee received a report regarding the previous structure of Sub-Committees and Task and Finish groups reporting to the Partnership Committee. It was proposed that the existing Sub-Committee and Task and Finish group be disbanded and that matters relating to economic development and town centre environment enhancements be reported directly back to the Partnership Committee.

It was noted that the Committee could establish further Sub-Committees and/or Task groups at any future meeting, should this be deemed appropriate.

RESOLVED to disband the Economic Development Sub-Committee and the Operation Swan Task and Finish group and for matters relating to economic development and town centre environment enhancements be reported directly back to the Partnership Committee.

009/LLP BUSINESS GROUPS UPDATE

(a) Mr B Chandler of LB Connect extended an invitation to Committee members to attend a charity fundraising barbeque event the following evening. This was in aid of Kids in Action, the group's chosen charity for the year.

RESOLVED to note the information.

(b) Mr G Borelli of LB First provided the Committee with information regarding the forthcoming "Independents Day" event on Saturday 4 July, aimed at raising awareness of the independent businesses in the town. This would include promotions from local beer, wine and cider manufacturers, as well as the launch of the new micropub "The Bald Buzzard". Queries were raised regarding the rules in respect of alcohol in the town centre.

The Committee was also advised that LB First was participating for the first year in the annual "Leighton-Linslade in Bloom" initiative.

RESOLVED to note the information.

010/LLP CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE

The Committee received an overview report from Central Bedfordshire Council officers. This included key highlights relevant to Leighton-Linslade across many service areas, such as community safety, leisure, youth services, waste, business support and community engagement. The summary report would be presented to each alternate meeting of the Committee.

A number of positive elements were highlighted, including new initiatives at the library, improvements to the Library Theatre, increased leisure centre membership, the expansion of two lower schools and a reduction in the number of 16-19 year olds who were not in education, employment or training.

Community safety: it was noted that the statistics indicated an increase in recorded crimes and that information was awaited from Bedfordshire Police regarding its future plans. The effectiveness of CCTV footage to facilitate arrests was questioned and it was suggested that a visit to the CCTV control room would be of interest to Councillors.

Biodiversity: it was noted that Central Bedfordshire Council was giving consideration to a reduction in cutting of the verges in order to encourage wildflowers.

Graffiti: concerns were raised regarding an increase in town centre graffiti. This was an ongoing area of concern for residents. The Town Council was active in ensuring action was taken to remove graffiti from areas for which it was responsible, but noted that this was a very low priority for organisations such as the utility companies. Clarification would be sought from the Waste team at Central Bedfordshire regarding the areas for which it was responsible and service levels. It was suggested that information on specific areas of concern should be passed on to Councillor Budge Wells at Central Bedfordshire Council.

Business support: it was noted that there was an increase in available commercial, retail and industrial space within the parish. A query was raised regarding the impact of the business support schemes and the promotional video developed a couple of years ago. Specific information was requested on the number of new businesses moving to or starting up in the town. It was questioned whether a limited-term reduction in business rates could be offered as an incentive to move to the town.

It was suggested that the Director of Regeneration and Business at Central Bedfordshire Council be invited to attend the committee to provide specific information on these queries, as well as the emerging Market Towns programme. A potential option was to hold an additional meeting to focus solely on these matters.

Parking: a parking survey had been undertaken early in 2015 to identify current and future issues concerning parking capacity and management, up to 2026. Central Bedfordshire Council would be reviewing the potential courses of action, as well as the question of parking enforcement. One option might be the devolvement of powers to parish councils to manage parking enforcement, but this required further consideration.

Taxis and buses: a number of options for the potential relocation of the taxi rank and rerouting of the buses to avoid the High Street had been given consideration by Central Bedfordshire Council.

RESOLVED to note the Central Bedfordshire Council update report.

011/LLP CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Committee received a report in respect of the Christmas period. A three year plan for the annual Christmas Festival was being drafted and quotes had been invited for a three year festive lighting contract. The quote specification was circulated for information. An informal approach had also been made by the Rotary Club of Leighton-Linslade in respect of sponsoring the decorations/lights on the town centre Christmas tree.

The Committee raised concerns regarding the electricity supply and the need to ensure a quick response by contractors to any issues experienced during the festive period. It was requested that contractors define "rapid response". It was noted that problems with the electricity supply had an impact not only on the festive lights but also the street market and the potential installation of a speaker system.

The Committee was advised that an extraordinary meeting would be required to appoint a lighting contractor. It was requested that the content of the meeting be expanded to include the electricity supply and the potential to install some kind of sound system for the Christmas Festival weekend.

RESOLVED:

- (i) **To hold an extraordinary meeting of the Partnership Committee in the second week of July 2015 in order to appoint the preferred contractor to provide Christmas Lights for the period 2015-2018.**
- (ii) **To accept the approach from the Rotary Club of Leighton-Linslade to sponsor the Christmas tree lights for 2015-16.**

012/LLP BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a budget report updating Members on the 2014-2015 budget and the 2015-2016 budget.

Clarification was sought regarding funds allocated for improvement works to town centre mews and alleys. The Committee was advised that during the previous term, a resolution had been made in support of a Town Centre Delivery Plan, with a total of £55,000 allocated from the Town Council's Partnership budget for this project. Central Bedfordshire officers were leading on the delivery of this project and an update would be provided to a future meeting.

RESOLVED to note the information.

013/LLP THE BIG LUNCH POST-EVENT REPORT

The Committee received a report regarding the Big Lunch event held on Sunday 7 June 2015 with the theme of a Food Festival, including details of background, staffing, budget and other considerations. This was the third annual Big Lunch event, aimed at attracting both residents and visitors into the town centre on a Sunday and linked to the national Big Lunch initiative.

It was estimated that several thousand people had attended the event and agreed that it had been very successful, with a wide appeal to people of all ages. In addition to a broad range of food providers, the event had included numerous free activities, craft stalls, a vintage bus bar, an English Tea tent and the Great Leighton Bake-Off, run in conjunction with the local Women's Institute.

The Committee expressed thanks to all those involved with the event.

RESOLVED to note the report and agree a Food Festival theme for future Big Lunch events.

The meeting closed at 2128 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2015.