

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 16 APRIL 2015 AT 1930 HOURS

Present: Councillors

- D Bowater - CBC
- S Cotter – LLTC
- A Dodwell - LLTC
- D Hopkin – CBC - in the Chair
- P Snelling – LLTC
- G Rolfe – LLTC
- G Perham – LLTC (substituting for K Sharer)
- B Spurr – CBC
- N Warren - CBC

Also in attendance:

- M Saccoccio (Town Clerk)
- V Cannon (Head of Economic Development)
- J Martindale (Partnership Officer)
- S Sandiford (Committee Officer)
- G Borrelli (LB First)
- B Chandler (LB Connect)
- S Hughes (Community Engagement Officer, Central Bedfordshire Council)
- J Longhurst (Director of Regeneration and Business, Central Bedfordshire Council)
- A Davie (Development Infrastructure Group Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Cllr A Brandham
- Cllr J Bone

Members of the Public: 2

Members of the Press: 0

The Chair opened the meeting with a minute's silence in remembrance of Councillor Alan Shadbolt.

362/LLP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors K Sharer (substituted by Councillor G Perham) and Councillor Tony Brown. It was noted that Councillor Spurr would arrive late.

363/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. No declarations of interest were made.

364/LLP PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A member of the public spoke regarding the planned development of the south side of the High Street, stressing that action needed to be taken quickly to improve not only the retail offer but all aspects of the town centre (food & drink, entertainment, lighting, transport). It was felt that the south side development had been under discussion for long enough and that local people wanted to see the project come forward as soon as possible.

A question was raised regarding progress with the car park extension at Duncombe Drive.

A comment was made that it was hoped that the change of parish and local authority councils would not delay or curtail any Partnership aims for the town.

Councillor B Spurr joined the meeting at 1935 hours.

365/LLP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee received the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 12 February 2015.

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

366/LLP ENABLING DELIVERY IN LEIGHTON-LINSLADE

By invitation, Jason Longhurst, Director of Regeneration and Business at Central Bedfordshire Council, attended the meeting to update the Committee on Town Centre projects including the Market Towns initiative, the plans for development of South side of the High Street and Bridge Meadow, commercial developments and the Town Centre Delivery Plan.

A report had been circulated to the Committee regarding project information on the Town Centre Delivery Plan schemes: High Street enhancement/bus stop relocation, alleys and mews, taxi relocation and car parking, including the extension of the Duncombe Drive car park to incorporate the former cattle market site.

RESOLVED to note the information.

Mr Longhurst spoke to the Committee about the work undertaken by the new directorate over the last year and the challenges inherent in seeing delivery on the ground of the proposed developments for Leighton-Linslade. In comparison with national statistics, Leighton-Linslade remained a strong and vibrant market town. Initial discussions about the Market Town programme had taken place with the Town Council, the key principles being to seek to work in partnership, gain momentum and sustainability. The detail about the programme was now being worked up. An overview of the key projects was given:

- (a) Duncombe Drive car park extension – efforts had been made to accelerate the scheme which would come forward within the next two months.
- (b) South side of the High Street – this must be market driven but a key factor was to ensure that any potential impact on the remainder of the town centre was very clearly understood. It was hoped that the project would commence within two years but this would be dependent upon market interest. With a very high proportion of small and family-run businesses in the local area, careful consideration needed to be given to the potential impact of the south side development.
- (c) Bridge Meadow – discussions were underway and barriers such as complicated land ownership were slowly being addressed. Further investigation with key partners would take place to determine what the private sector would like to explore further for this area. If no progress had been made within the next 2-3 years, the reasons why would need to be established – had the market changed and was the development brief still sound.
- (d) High Street enhancement, including car parking, bus stop and taxi relocation – proposed options would be presented to the Committee in June 2015, after which CBC would seek to align budget resources, obtain commitment and establish timeframes for delivery.

The Chair thanked Mr Longhurst for attending the meeting and making Central Bedfordshire's direction of travel clearer to the Committee.

367/LLP COMMITTEE WORK PLAN AND OBJECTIVES

The Committee received a copy of the Objectives and Work Plan for 2014-2015. Thanks were expressed to officers of both councils for the progress made.

RESOLVED to note the Committee Objectives and Work Plan for 2014-2015.

The Committee received a copy of the draft Committee Objectives and Work Plan for 2015-2016, based on work already agreed and on the Town Council's emerging Three Year Plan for 2015-2018. It was noted that further detail would be added to incorporate Central Bedfordshire Council partnership objectives.

A query was raised regarding the Christmas lighting contract. Councillors were invited to attend an informal workshop session on Wednesday 29 April from 6pm-7pm to discuss this further. The discussion would help inform the tender process for the contract.

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

368/LLP RESIDENT SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee received a report regarding recommendations for projects arising from the town centre survey undertaken during 2014 by M-E-L Ltd. Five

priority areas had been identified: markets, car parking, lighting, entertainment and communications. A first draft action sheet had been drawn up to identify officers and organisational leads to be responsible for project delivery.

RESOLVED to endorse the five priority work themes and associated actions and build them into future work programmes across all Committees, with allocation of delivery budgets: 1) markets 2) car parking 3) lighting 4) entertainment 5) communications.

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee integration of Market-related projects including relevant events.

RECOMMENDED to the Leisure and Community Committee integration of Events-related projects.

369/LLP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

(a) The Committee received a report from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding business support projects delivered in 2014-2015. It was noted that the report contained lots of positive messages, with people engaging in training and support to get back to work. Seven local businesses had been awarded grant funding by Grants4Growth since September 2014. Further information would follow later from CBC in respect of delivery of business support activity during 2015-2016 as part of the Market Town programme

RESOLVED to note the information.

A query was raised regarding whether the footfall surveys would continue and be funded by the Committee. This would depend on the value of the surveys and the cost. It was proposed that the Committee write a formal request to the Director of Regeneration and Business at Central Bedfordshire Council asking him to continue to the footfall surveys.

RESOLVED to write with a formal request to the Director of Regeneration and Business at Central Bedfordshire Council to continue the Leighton-Linslade town centre footfall surveys.

(b) The Chair of LB Connect reminded the Committee of the Business Networking Event taking place at the Astral Park Sports and Community Centre on Thursday 23 April and invited all to attend. The Committee was advised that 96 businesses had signed up to attend the event so far.

The Chair of LB First thanked everyone involved in the recent defibrillator project. Following a launch event on 18 April, the focus now was to sign up residents to the training course on 13 May on use of the defibrillators. The project had been a great achievement in a relatively short space of time and a clear example of partnership working. LB First was proud to have taken part in the initiative.

LB First had also been involved in the development of a tourism leaflet, been promoting forthcoming events including the Business Networking Event and

the Big Lunch and had started work on this year's Christmas Festival. The Committee was advised of three businesses closing down in the town centre.

Rev. P Niemiec spoke on behalf of the Community Forum Steering Group and advised the Committee that a date of Wednesday 21 October had been set for three youth forum events to take place – one at each of the Upper Schools and an evening event to be held at the Teenage Advice and Information Centre. An electronic survey would be circulated to young people in advance, to gather information and inform discussion at the event. Feedback from the events would be presented back to the Committee. It was planned to hold a further Community Forum on the subject of Health in 2016.

RESOLVED to note the information.

370/LLP GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Committee received a summary document in relation to the Green Infrastructure Plan. This was subject to some minor format tweaking but would, if approved by Committee, be presented to the Town Council for endorsement on 27 April 2015. The document was in a revised format in line with other Town Council documents. A supporting technical document was available on request to provide a greater level of background detail. The Committee was advised that the document had been endorsed by the Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group at its last meeting.

RESOLVED to endorse the Green Infrastructure Plan.

RECOMMENDED to the Town Council to endorse and adopt the Green Infrastructure Plan.

371/LLP PARSON'S CLOSE RECREATION GROUND

The Committee received an update report in respect of the provision of a temporary beach in Parson's Close Recreation Ground.

RESOLVED to note the report.

372/LLP BUDGET

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

RESOLVED to note the information.

RECOMMENDED to the Town Council to carry forward any unspent budgets from 2014-2015 into 2015-2016.

(b) The Committee received a report regarding the production and distribution of a new Tourism Leaflet. The Committee was asked to consider funding for printing and distribution of the leaflet, by a distribution company.

Discussion took place regarding the necessity for a paper copy of a leaflet and whether it would be more effective to use funding for promotion of the leaflet online (e.g. search engine optimisation). It was suggested that in the first instance, the leaflet should be uploaded to the Town Council website and the number of hits to be monitored for six months. After this time, the statistics could be reviewed and further actions considered.

RESOLVED to upload the Tourism Leaflet to the Town Council website and to report back to the Committee in six months regarding statistics for accessing the leaflet online.

373/LLP CHILDREN'S LITERARY TRAIL

The Committee received a report regarding the Children's Literary Trail. Three years on from its launch, it was proposed to update the map and artwork, to incorporate new Town Council branding and to make the map clearer to follow and more appropriate for the key user group of primary school aged children.

RESOLVED to approve the new designs for the Children's Literary Trail and to take forward new artwork for the Trail into 2015-2016.

The meeting closed at 2121 hours, following a formal vote of thanks to the Chair for his excellent work and dedication in Chairing the Committee and driving forward projects over the last four years.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 APRIL 2015.

Chair

18 JUNE 2015