

Central Bedfordshire Council Briefing Note Leighton Buzzard Town Centre Regeneration: Key project status report

Bridge Meadow.

Supply : There are at least 5 landowners involved. None of the land is in CBC control. CBC Regeneration and Business is working with landowner representatives, Highways and Planning to determine and progress aspirations for the site as outlined in the 2012 development brief and encourage a comprehensive and co-ordinated redevelopment scheme.

Demand : Retailer/developer interest in the site is significant. Discussions between landowner representatives and interested parties are underway.

Risk: Landowner timescale, market conditions re sale of land, raising substantial funds.

Land south of the High Street (LSHS)

Supply : CBC owns approx. 80% of the LSHS site. CBC is not planning on acquiring any further land at this point.

Demand : CBC is promoting the site to the wider retail/developer market. Discussions with major retailers who have expressed an interest in Leighton Buzzard are underway / ongoing.

High Street improvement, Buses and Taxis

Amey has prepared drawings showing a redesign of the High Street, relocating the existing taxi rank and bus terminus with the aim of providing a central space to accommodate a range of community uses and a revised market footprint.

Further work is underway on costings and modelling the impact on the bus network. This involves traffic modelling of junctions along the town's inner ring road and a redesign of bus stops on West Street to assess congestion impacts on services on event and market days when the High Street would be closed to bus traffic. Once feasibility and impact of the designs are understood then consultation on the proposals can commence.

Costing of the High Street works will be completed during September in advance of the October partnership committee at which Steve Lakin will be updating on the project.

Current focus Funds are required to progress the scheme, the market town fund is a possibility for part funding the works required but additional and significant funding from other sources may also be required. There will be substantial costs in making improvements to the High Street involved in upgrading / providing new stops and implementing other measures to minimise disruption to bus schedules consequent from re-routing services off the High Street.

Alleyways and Mews pilot:

Several options for improvements have been considered and rejected by the Town Council/CBC on basis of deliverability, e.g. some alleyways require permission for

works to proceed from landowners. Delivery is however now ready to go on a pilot scheme that will provide new lighting in Peacock Alley. The new lighting will be installed during September.

Cattle market site clearance and parking works:

All work complete and site being utilised for Market trader car parking which has freed up a significant amount of public car parking elsewhere.

Market Town Fund

The market town fund is worth £4m of capital funding. The purpose is to revitalise our Market Towns to fulfil their potential. It is aimed at capital projects to improve the local infrastructure, public realm and fabric of the Market Towns. Match funding is required so Town Councils should consider this as part of their budget planning. A Market Town Specification is currently under development with the aim of launching the programme in Autumn 2015. A presentation will be made to the October 2015 meeting of the Partnership Committee to formally launch the scheme in Leighton Linslade. The Partnership Committee could provide the governance for the development and implementation of the programme scheme.

Promotional video – impact

The video has been viewed 5,689 times on U tube
Leighton Buzzard is not scheduled to have a further video at this time.

Business rate reduction

CBC applies the national Small business rate relief (SBRR) scheme. This applies to properties with a rateable value below £18,000, which are occupied by a small business. These businesses can benefit from:

- a **percentage of relief** from their business rates
- a **lower multiplier** when business rates are calculated (48p in the £)

If a property has a rateable value of £6,000 or less, there is 100% relief.

If its rateable value is between £6,001 and £12,000, there will be a percentage of relief falling off at 1% per additional £120 ratable value.

Retail business in Leighton with a ratable value of less than £50,000 may also be eligible for a specific retail relief. Here up to £1,500 to retail uses (note there is a definition of allowable uses in the CBC policy)

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/local-business/business-rates/default.aspx>

The Council will consider applications for discretionary rate relief from non profit making organisations based on their own merits, on a case by case basis. From January to June 2015 there were 149 new accounts registered in Leighton Linslade. This is almost identical to the same period last year (148)