

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 1930 HOURS

Present: Councillors D Bowater - CBC
 K Cursons – LLTC (substituting for A Brandham)
 S Cotter – LLTC
 F Kharawala - LLTC
 C Palmer – LLTC
 T Morris – LLTC
 G Perham – CBC
 B Spurr – CBC – in the Chair
 G Tubb – CBC

Also in attendance: V Cannon (Head of Economic Development)
 J Martindale (Partnership Officer)
 T Moore (Partnership Officer – maternity cover)
 S Sandiford (Committee Officer)
 G Borrelli (Chair, LB First) – arrived 1940 hours
 B Chandler (Chair, LB Connect)
 Rev. P Niemiec (Community Forum Steering Group)

Members of the Public: 1
Members of the Press: 0

060/LLP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor A Brandham (substituted by Councillor K Cursons), the Town Clerk and from S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager at Central Bedfordshire Council.

061/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 were made and no dispensations had been requested.

062/LLP PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A member of the public spoke in respect of agenda item 11 (Market Towns Regeneration Fund). A view was expressed that a public survey or meeting could have been held to discuss potential bid projects, as other ideas could have been considered. Views were expressed on the value or otherwise of the proposed bid projects.

The member of the public was thanked for attending the meeting and the Committee was reminded that the bid projects discussed had arisen through

previous public consultation (for example, the survey of 600 residents undertaken in September 2014).

063/LLP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 17 December 2015.

Minute reference 056/LLP: a question was raised about the interest in the pop-up market. It was noted that promotion of the pop-up market had slowed while the bursary scheme was being reviewed, but would now recommence).

Minute reference 054/LLP: Councillor T Morris provided an update regarding the e-twinning initiative and advised that he had recently visited the German twin town of Titisee-Neustadt to speak to groups of young people. The TACTIC centre was currently aiming towards a visit for 8 young people to Titisee in the summer of 2016.

Minute reference 051/LLP: it was noted that no new information had been received from Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of the proposed development south of the High Street, but the last report had been re-circulated to committee members by email. Jason Longhurst, Director of Regeneration and Business, was expected to come and speak at the next committee meeting.

Minute reference 051/LLP: it was noted that the damaged pavement at Waterborne Walk was clearly in the ownership of the receivers and as the site presented no danger to the public, no action could be taken by Central Bedfordshire Council.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 17 December 2015 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

064/LLP COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

The Committee received the Committee objectives and work plan for 2015-2016. Draft amendments had been incorporated into the Committee work plan as a result of Central Bedfordshire Council's five-year plan.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed amendments to the Partnership Committee objectives and work plan.

The Committee was advised that the Town Council's Leisure and Community Committee had met on 8 February 2016 and had endorsed a beacon lighting ceremony to take place in Parson's Close Recreation Ground on the evening of Thursday, 21 April 2016, in celebration of the 90th birthday of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II. As a meeting of the Partnership Committee was due to be held on the same evening, the Committee was asked whether it wished to change the meeting date. Officers proposed a change to Wednesday 27 April, as Jason Longhurst of Central Bedfordshire Council had confirmed he could attend a meeting on that date.

RESOLVED to change the date of the Partnership Committee meeting to be held in April 2016 from Thursday 21 April to Wednesday 27 April.

065/LLP CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received an update report from Central Bedfordshire Council on matters including community safety, leisure, libraries, countryside, highways, youth services, partnerships and community engagement. A number of points were raised:

- (a) CCTV report – it was noted that the same information had been presented to the Town Council’s Police Liaison Sub-Committee and that this group had also received an update from Bedfordshire Police on the incidents.
- (b) Highways – an issue regarding overgrown vegetation on a service strip at Bideford Green was raised by Councillor C Palmer. It was agreed that Councillor Palmer would provide further details to the Chair outside the meeting.
- (c) Community Engagement – it was noted that both councils were taking part in the national “Clean for the Queen” initiative over the weekend of 4/5/6 March. Committee members were asked to help support and promote the litter picking events.
- (d) Highways performance – a request was made for figures to be supplied for a quarterly period rather than just one month, to set context.
- (e) Youth services – a question was raised as to what action was being taken to improve the number of those not in education, employment or training. It was suggested that someone from Youth Services be invited to attend a future committee meeting, alongside representation from TACTIC).
- (f) Dogs – a view was expressed that many residents seemed unhappy with the amount of dog mess in public spaces. It was noted that the Town Council would shortly be installing new signage on its own land promoting responsible dog ownership.

RESOLVED to note the report.

The Committee received a verbal update on the national “Best Bar None” scheme, which was supported by the Home Office and had been successfully set up in Houghton Regis and Dunstable. The scheme aimed to promote responsible management and operation of alcohol licensed premises and to improve standards in the night time economy. Central Bedfordshire Council was offering to make funding available to the Town Council for one year, to provide officer support in maintaining the two existing schemes and setting up a new scheme for Leighton-Linslade. This collaborative approach would allow time for further funding options to be investigated during the initial twelve month period.

Support for the initiative was expressed by LB First and, in principle, by the committee. However, it was agreed that measurable key performance indicators would be necessary in order to evaluate return on investment and justify any further funding beyond the initial twelve months.

It was noted that any resourcing implications would need approval by the relevant Town Council committee.

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee to consider supporting and implementing the Best Bar None initiative, subject to receiving funding from Central Bedfordshire Council for the first twelve months of the project.

066/LLP BUSINESS GROUPS UPDATE

G Borelli of LB First spoke to the Committee regarding proposals by Central Bedfordshire Council to increase car parking charges and to implement charges on Sundays. While the council's financial challenges were recognised, it was felt that the proposed charges directly contradicted all other activities aimed at promoting the vitality of the town centre and could, in fact, result in a reduction in income from car parks. LB First welcomed the coming change to pay on exit car parking and had suggested that Central Bedfordshire Council consider a "free after three" scheme, to encourage use of the town centre after 3pm and into the early evening.

Committee members queried what testing had been undertaken by Central Bedfordshire Council in order to determine the potential impact of car parking increases and whether this information could be shared. It was also expressed that the existing car parking regulations needed stricter enforcement.

LB First continued to work with the Town Council on ongoing projects including "In Bloom", the "Big Lunch" food festival and the Christmas festival.

B Chandler of LB Connect advised the Committee that LB Connect was holding a charity curry and quiz night on 19 February and invited all to attend.

RESOLVED to note the information.

067/LLP COMMUNITY FORUM

The Committee received a report regarding the Community Forum, following the Youth Forum event held on 21 October 2015. A number of key themes had been identified as of particular interest and concern to young people. The report outlined actions undertaken to date in respect of these key areas.

A number of queries were raised regarding how best to help young people access sources of help and support, including self-help options. It was suggested that a representative from Children's Services be asked to attend a future meeting to provide further information on the local and national plans in place to support young people.

RESOLVED to:

- (i) Note the feedback and projects currently being undertaken and proposed, following the Youth Forum event held October 2015.**
- (ii) Note that the new Chair of the Community Forum Steering Group and spokesperson to the Partnership Committee was T Humber.**
- (iii) Note that the preferred option for the future of the Community Forum: a small steering group to remain in place and to organise a**

- maximum of one event per year, in response to a local need or opportunity.
- (iv) **Endorse the allocation of £1,800 from Earmarked Reserves (970/9018) towards a Youth Music event in 2016, to be organised by TACTIC.**

068/LLP BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENT

The Committee received a report in respect of the Business Networking Event. This event had been held annually for the last three years and provided an opportunity for local businesspeople to network, seek advice, develop local contacts and promote their own businesses. Event details for 2016 were proposed. It was further recommended that a three year plan for the event be endorsed.

Committee members gave support to the event in principle, but raised queries on whether it represented the best value for money in terms of supporting local businesses, particularly given the resources required to plan and organise the event. It was noted that the event provided an opportunity to all local businesses, not just those in the town centre and also that the workload was shared between all parties involved in organising the event.

It was proposed that the current year's event be supported, but not to commit to a three year plan at present. Further information was required from the relevant team at Central Bedfordshire Council in terms of what other support was available to local businesses.

RESOLVED to approve the date, venue and times for the 2016 Spring Networking Event.

069/LLP PURPLE FLAG SCHEME

The Committee received a report in respect of the Purple Flag award scheme, which aimed to recognise a standard of excellence in managing the evening and night-time economy in cities and larger towns. Aspiring to achieve the award would require partnership working as many of the services involved were not within the remit or control of the Town Council.

While supportive of the initiative, the Committee noted that most recipients of the award were cities or larger towns with a much greater leisure offer, a better public transport network and often with a university. It was agreed that Leighton-Linslade was not currently in a position to seek a Purple Flag award, however some elements of the scheme could be further investigated and progressed.

RESOLVED to note the report and to consider the merits or otherwise of the Purple Flag scheme again in a further twelve months' time.

070/LLP MARKET TOWNS REGENERATION FUND

The Committee received a copy of the draft minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 25 January 2016, at which proposals for a bid to the Central Bedfordshire Market Towns Regeneration Fund had been discussed.

Following a review of resident feedback received through various mediums including the Big Plan, Big Plan II, the telephone and face to face survey undertaken by MEL Ltd in September 2014 and feedback from the community forums, it was proposed to develop a bid incorporating a number of projects: electronic signage, rebranding of the street market, up-lighting in the town centre to bring the town alive in the evening, town centre WiFi, pigeon management and taxi management.

It was noted that a monthly meeting with the market trader representatives had been set up and that this forum would be used to discuss potential improvements to the market.

A bid for funding through the scheme was now being developed and would be considered by the Town Council's Policy and Finance Committee on 22 February.

RESOLVED to note the information and endorse the submission of a bid to the Market Towns Regeneration Fund, based on the projects outlined.

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee to endorse the proposed bid to the Market Towns Regeneration Fund.

071/LLP BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a report outlining existing budget and ongoing committed Partnership projects. It was noted that expenditure in some areas had slowed, in order to focus on developing the bid to the Market Towns Regeneration Fund. A number of recommendations were proposed to ensure the commitment to ongoing projects.

RESOLVED to:

(i) Note the budget monitoring report.

(ii) Approve the carrying forward of £15,000 from 2015-16 Town Centre Management budget (503/4505) and £10,000 CBC Business Support (504/4573) into Earmarked Reserves.

(iii) Approve the carrying forward of existing, unspent Economic Development Earmarked Reserve monies from 2015-16 (970/9018) to fund ongoing commitment to projects as highlighted in the report, including restoration of the Children's Trail artwork at £1500.

(iv) Note and agree the confirmed ongoing committed Partnership projects for 2016-17 as set out in table 4.2 (a) of the report (pending confirmation of match funding for the Market Towns Regeneration Fund projects).

(v) Vire £2,820 from 2016-17 Economic Development budget (504) Partnership Contribution (4555) within the same budget area, to support agreed additional funds for the Children's Trail (4509).

072/LLP BIG PLAN II

The Committee received a report following a review of Big Plan II undertaken by Town Council officers and presented to the Town Council on 25 January 2016. It was noted that a number of projects within Big Plan II had been achieved and that ongoing projects would now be incorporated into the Town Council's Three Year Plan. It had been agreed not to replace Big Plan II with a similar document, but to consult with residents on an ad-hoc basis as needed, to assess support and demand for projects, using more immediate methods such as websites, social media, community events and public interaction.

RESOLVED to note the information.

The meeting closed at 2156 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2016.

Chair

27 APRIL 2016