



**Date:** 11 February 2016

**Title:** Big Plan II Review

**Purpose of the Report:** To advise the Committee of the review of Big Plan II undertaken by the Town Council.

**Contact Officer:** Mark Saccoccio, Town Clerk  
Sarah Sandiford, Committee Officer

Corporate Objective/s	LLTC Three Year Plan – objective 17 – review of Big Plan II	
<b>Implications:</b>		
<b>Financial</b>	√	See 4.2, 4.3, 4.5.2
<b>Human Resources</b>	√	See 4.4, 4.5.2
<b>Operational/Service delivery</b>		

**1. RECOMMENDATION: to note the report.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Town Council adopted the Big Plan in 2007. It was created in order to address parish expectations as well as rapid expansion brought about by housing growth. The subject of rigorous public consultation, the Big Plan offers aspirational as well as realistic project outcomes which were to be funded by developer contributions, the Town Council as well as third parties.
- 2.2 Further consultation and evaluation took place during 2010-2011, resulting in an updated document “Big Plan II”. This document was adopted by the Town Council at its meeting on 18 April 2011 as the parish plan for 2011-2017.
- 2.3 At the time of endorsement, it was agreed that the plan should be reviewed in six year’s time, to allow a future Council the opportunity to publish a new or updated Parish Plan half way through its scheduled term of office, should it wish to do so.
- 2.4 In recognition of the significant demands of creating such a document, not least in terms of officer resources and time to undertake and analyse public consultation, it was deemed prudent to start undertaking a review of Big Plan II during 2015-2016. This would also help inform the development of a five-year financial plan for the Town Council.

### **3. UPDATE REGARDING POLICIES, PROPOSALS AND PROJECTS**

- 3.1 Following the creation of the Partnership Committee in 2011, a Big Plan II Projects Sub-Committee was established to evaluate the policies, proposals and aspirations contained within Big Plan II and to determine deliverable actions following assessment of the required costs and resources.
- 3.2 The Sub-Committee met on a total of nine occasions between February 2012 and May 2013. Representatives from local partner organisations and relevant interest groups were invited to attend meetings. Each topic contained within Big Plan II was assessed and a table compiled outlining the current status of each policy/proposal along with suggested deliverable actions.
- 3.3 Following its final meeting on 14 May 2013, a list of nine short-term objectives was presented to the Partnership Committee to consider allocating funding and resources.
- 3.4 Evaluation of the nine short-term objectives demonstrates that seven have been completed, with two deemed not currently deliverable (**see Appendix A on Page 5**).
- 3.5 Evaluation of the proposals, policies and aspirations outlined within Big Plan II demonstrates that:
  - 3.5.1 10 remain ongoing projects
  - 3.5.2 29 proposals have been completed\*
  - 3.5.3 41 aspirations, while supported by the Town Council and the Partnership Committee, cannot ultimately be delivered by either Council without the involvement, both financial and otherwise, of other parties\*.

*(\* a full report outlining all of the above has been provided to all Town Councillors and is available to others upon request or on the Town Council website)*

### **4. MOVING FORWARD**

- 4.1 In light of the need to review, the Town Council was asked to carefully consider the implications for both resources and budget moving forward.
- 4.2 In terms of the ongoing projects (**Appendix B on pages 6-7**), it was recommended that these should be incorporated into the Town Council's Three Year Plan and that provision continue to be made within the Town Council budget in support of these aspiration (within the relevant Committee budget).
- 4.3 Beyond allocation of funds for the ongoing projects as outlined above, it was anticipated that a budget heading specifically for Big Plan Projects was no longer required and recommended that this be removed from Town Council budgets with effect from the financial year 2016-2017.

- 4.4 Delivery of ongoing projects may have resources implications and this would be a matter for Town Council review through the Personnel Sub-Committee, as deemed appropriate by senior management.
- 4.5 The recommendation from Town Council officers was not to develop or publish another long-term plan to replace Big Plan II. This recommendation was based on many factors, including:
- 4.5.1 It is now significantly quicker to engage and consult with the public via electronic media such as websites and social media channels. Such consultation can be undertaken at a greatly reduced cost, compared with the need for public meetings or exhibitions. Fast turnaround means an idea can be endorsed and progressed much more quickly than in the past. The timescale involved in creating large scale documents means that they may quickly become outdated.
- 4.5.2 The creation of another long-term plan would, in addition to the cost for consultation activity and printing, necessitate a significant investment into additional staffing resources for a period of time likely to exceed one year and possibly extend to two years. Presently, the salaries budget does not include provision for such a growth item.
- 4.5.3 As has been discussed on many occasions, a suite of strategies, plans and documents now exist for many aspects of the town. These strategies and plans, created by both the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council, will inevitably support the direction of future projects within the parish. Examples of these plans include:
- Town Council Three Year Plan
  - Town Council Signage Strategy
  - Town Council emerging Sports and Physical Activities Development Plan
  - Central Bedfordshire Leisure Strategy
  - Masterplans for Linslade Wood & Tiddenfoot Waterside Park
  - Management plan for Parson's Close Recreation Ground
  - Development brief for land south of the High Street and Bridge Meadow
  - Central Bedfordshire Local Travel Plan and Parking Strategy
  - Central Bedfordshire East Leighton Linslade Framework Plan
- 4.6 In light of 4.5 above, it was recommended that public consultation be undertaken to assess support and demand for projects on an ad-hoc basis, as potential projects emerge, through mediums such as website and social media channels, community events and public interaction, for example through the

town market.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 Big Plan and Big Plan II have proven successful which, at the time of their development, were considered innovative and aspirational. The completion of 29 projects arising from Big Plan II alone demonstrates without doubt its value.
- 5.2 However, the original premise behind the Plan – the forthcoming housing development to the south of the town – has now largely taken place and the changing times in which we live now demand a revised approach, in which the cost (not only financial but in terms of time and resources) of creating such a strategic document should be weighed against the potential benefits.
- 5.3 A modern approach to public consultation through electronic media and other similar forums, as a means to assess potential projects for the parish, would not only facilitate much faster feedback from local residents but enable projects to be progressed at a significantly faster rate.
- 5.4 Council was therefore asked to consider a number of recommendations. The resolution below was made at the Town Council meeting held on 25 January 2016:
  - 5.4.1 **Ongoing projects (as outlined in Appendix B) be incorporated into the Town Council's Three Year Plan and that provision continue to be made in future Town Council budgets (within the appropriate committee budget).**
  - 5.4.2 **No specific budget allocation for Big Plan Projects be included in the Town Council budget from 2016-2017 onwards.**
  - 5.4.3 **The Big Plan document is not replaced after 2017 but that existing strategies and plans be utilised to guide future projects, with public consultation taking place via forums such as website, social media and open events as and when required.**

## **Appendix A: Big Plan II – short term projects as identified by May 2013**

	<b>Big Plan II Short Term Projects</b>	<b>Comments September 2015</b>
	<b>Culture, Heritage and Tourism</b>	
1.	Enhance four town gateway signs with addition of Fairtrade information (as endorsed in Signage Strategy)	<i>COMPLETED</i>
2.	Establish a town gateway sign at the Grovebury Road entrance to the parish (as endorsed in Signage Strategy)	<i>COMPLETED</i>
3.	Install a leaflet rack by the noticeboards in the multi-storey car park	<i>COMPLETED</i>
	<b>Greening and Green Infrastructure</b>	
4.	Re-assessment of the Green Wheel strategy	<i>COMPLETED – Green Infrastructure Plan created and adopted in 2014-15</i>
5.	Greening of Bideford Green area, possibly through tree planting	<i>COMPLETED – planting of fruit trees</i>
	<b>Children and Young People</b>	
6.	Support new schemes at TACTIC such as summer scheme/holiday project scheme/Duke of Edinburgh	<i>COMPLETED – holiday schemes run very successfully during 2014 and 2015. Further youth provision established at Mentmore Pavilion, Linslade IN 2014.</i>
7.	Consider resurfacing of outside tarmac play area at Vandyke Road youth club	<i>Investigations undertaken but project currently not deliverable. This project has been included in a list of potential spend for S106 monies by CBC from the expected new development site.</i>
	<b>Town Centre and Retail</b>	
8.	Development of the street market – further “how to be a trader” workshops and enhanced publicity	<i>COMPLETED and now ongoing through Market Sub-Committee (Policy and Finance Committee budget).</i>
9.	Undertake scoping work regarding possibility of creating a “performance area” (i.e. a covered area, similar to bandstand) based around the Stone Circle at the bottom of the High Street	<i>Investigations undertaken but project currently not deliverable.</i>



**APPENDIX B: CONTINUING PROJECTS**

	Category	Comment April 2012	Comment December 2015
	<b>Culture, Heritage and Tourism</b>		
1	Celebrate the heritage of the Parish. More information, interactive exhibits and educational resources are required. A Town Trail would be a useful means of information sharing with visitors. We also hope to continue to celebrate and publicise the town's connections with The Borrowers.	Children's literary trail to launch August 2012. Greensand Ridge Cycle Way being signposted New P3 Open Spaces leaflet produced. LB & District Archaeological and Historical Society willing to work with LLTC to update a historical trail leaflet for the town. A book on the history of the Bassett family recently published. Tourist information leaflet being prepared.	<i>The aspiration to establish a legacy heritage feature of the town is being progressed through the Economic Development service. It is anticipated that external grant funding will be sought during 2016-17. Tourism leaflet published and Tourism Strategy to be revisited by the Partnership Committee during 2015-2016 (pending completion of Central Bedfordshire Council's tourism strategy).</i>
	<b>Sport and Leisure</b>		
2	To establish and brand Leighton-Linslade as a sports town with a fit and active population, that can use locally available high quality sport and physical activity opportunities.	Ongoing.	<i>The creation of a Sports and Physical Activities Development Plan is currently in progress through the Leisure and Community Committee and will drive forward sporting provision and wellbeing themed activities within the town.</i>
3	The development of existing and new facilities throughout Leighton-Linslade and securing external funding to achieve this.	Ongoing.	
4	Secure the provision of additional adult and junior football pitches at Astral Park.	Pitches are now available for use and the process is ongoing for development of further sports facilities at this site.	<i>The provision of junior football pitches has been achieved. Negotiations continue in respect of adult football pitches on land currently owned by Central Bedfordshire Council.</i>
5	Support Linslade Tennis Club with its planned expansion to include a purpose built club house and additional courts.	Discussions continue with the Tennis Club and an application for funding is being made to the Sport England Inspired Facilities scheme.	<i>The 2014 refurbishment of Mentmore Pavilion undertaken by the Town Council has provided the Tennis Club with a dedicated space. Expansion of courts will be considered through the Leisure &amp; Community Committee.</i>

	<b>Greening Leighton-Linslade</b>			
6	Leighton-Linslade will be entering the 2011 Anglia in Bloom competition to build on the success of 2010.		A High Silver award was achieved in 2010 and a Silver Gilt in 2011. Judging for the 2012 campaign took place on 13 July 2012 and the result is awaited.	<i>The Town Council continues to support and invest in the "In Bloom" programme through the Leisure and Community Committee and with the support of the Town Council's Grounds and Environmental Services team.</i>
7	To organise community involvement and encourage local residents to take ownership of local projects.		A community orchard was planted in Billington Park in early 2012 in conjunction with various community groups. This was followed by the planting of several trees at Astral Park, to be watered by residents. A significant amount of community participation was key to the 2012 Anglia in Bloom campaign, including litter picking and removal of non-endemic species in Parson's Close, to encourage native flora and fauna.	<i>Ongoing through community projects such as the In Bloom campaign – progressed through the Leisure and Community Committee and with the support of the Town Council's Grounds and Environmental Services team.</i>
8	To develop more links with local businesses.		For the first time in 2012, local businesses were approached to support the Anglia in Bloom campaign via sponsorship of planting beds, troughs and baskets in the town centre. Councillors have attended meetings of local business groups and the Town Council is financially supporting local businesses through Central Bedfordshire Council.	<i>Ongoing through community projects such as the In Bloom campaign – progressed through the Leisure and Community Committee and with the support of the Town Council's Grounds and Environmental Services team.</i>
9	To encourage more involvement from local schools.		Schools were encouraged to grow sunflowers and create scarecrows as part of the 2012 Anglia in Bloom campaign.	<i>Ongoing through community projects such as the In Bloom campaign – progressed through the Leisure and Community Committee and with the support of the Town Council's Grounds and Environmental Services team.</i>
	<b>Transport and Traffic</b>			
10	Continue to improve walking routes to the town centre, railway station and local schools.		Ongoing.	<i>This remains an ongoing project for both Councils.</i>