

**LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL**

**LEIGHTON-LINSLADE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY 1 DECEMBER 2016 AT 1930 HOURS**

Present: Councillors            R Berry (substituting for Cllr D Bowater) – CBC  
   A Brandham – LLTC  
   C Palmer (substituting for K Ferguson) - LLTC  
   T Morris – LLTC– in the Chair  
   A Dodwell – CBC  
   G Perham - LLTC  
   B Spurr – CBC  
   E Wallace – LLTC

Also in attendance:            V Cannon (Head of Cultural & Economic Services)  
   T Moore (Partnership Officer – maternity cover)  
   J Martindale (Partnership Officer)  
   T Mabbott (interim Committee Officer)  
   Councillor F Kharawala (LLTC)  
   G Borrelli (Chair, LB First)  
   B Chandler (Chair, LB Connect)  
   T Humber (Spokesperson, Community Forum  
   Steering Group)  
   S Hughes (Community Engagement Manager,  
   Central Bedfordshire Council)  
   J Longhurst (Director of Business & Regeneration,  
   Central Bedfordshire Council)  
   T Quinn (TACTIC Manager, LLTC)  
   P Fraser (Head of Partnerships and Community  
   Engagement, Central Bedfordshire Council)  
   S Childerhouse (Head of Public Protection and  
   Passenger Transport, Central Bedfordshire  
   Council)

Members of the Public:        14  
Members of the Press:         0

**104/LLP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from the Town Clerk, Councillor Bowater (substituted by Councillor Berry), Councillor Ferguson (substituted by Councillor Palmer), Councillor Walker and Councillor Tubb.

**105/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.

**106/LLP PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

V Harvey from South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth expressed disappointment that the town maps and directories were two years out of date, and reprints would not be available before Christmas.

With regard to transport, V Harvey stated that Friends of the Earth were keen to work with the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council over making Leighton-Linslade into a low carbon town. There were, however, concerns that a partnership approach had not been followed over this, as with, for example, the development of the Dash Direct bus route.

The Chair agreed to respond to Friends of the Earth's queries outside of the meeting.

**107/LLP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 15 September 2016.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 15 September 2016 be approved as a correct record and be signed accordingly.**

**108/LLP SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Committee received a report from P Fraser of Central Bedfordshire Council and T Quinn of Leighton-Linslade Town Council regarding services for young people in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade.

Central Bedfordshire Council currently provided targeted youth work (through Groundwork), careers advice and guidance for young people (through 4YP), volunteering opportunities, training opportunities for those young people not currently in employment, education or training (NEETs) and those who would shortly be in that position (pre-NEETs), and the Youth Offending Team.

Central Bedfordshire Council have a duty to assess the individual needs of those using the youth service and to measure outcomes using a standard measure. Using this approach, 55% of young people in Leighton and Linslade using Groundwork had shown an improvement.

Central Bedfordshire Council also has a duty to track a cohort of young people into post-16 education and training, and this showed that 94.1% of young people currently had an offer. Further work would take place from September-January to follow up on the delivery of these offers. The youth service was in the process of developing partnerships with local schools to improve the retention of young people in the education system post-16.

In addition to the services offered to all young people, Central Bedfordshire Council also engaged with those young people with more complex needs.

TACTIC provides services to young people on behalf of Leighton-Linslade Town Council. These include a weekly work club for 16-21 year olds, accreditation opportunities, health and wellbeing advice and safeguarding support.

Although the main scope of TACTIC was 12-19 year olds, a play scheme for 8-11 year olds was also provided, as were holiday projects covering a wider age range.

Members thanked the officers for their presentation, and asked how performance compared with other authorities. It was reported that the national target for NEETs was 3% and that, at 2%, performance in Central Bedfordshire was in the top quartile nationally, and that performance in Leighton-Linslade was in line with the rest of Central Bedfordshire.

In response to a question about the Work Plan target to review joint committees, it was reported that some progress had been made and a consultation carried out. It was agreed to circulate the note of the consultation meeting to the Committee.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted**

#### **109/LLP ENABLING DELIVERY IN LEIGHTON-LINSLADE**

The Committee received a report from J Longhurst of Central Bedfordshire Council over current and potential developments in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade.

He reported that progress had been made regarding the opening of a site for Central Bedfordshire College in the town for those wishing to study engineering and construction. It had taken two years to reach this point, but the opening of the new site, with the first students likely to start in September 2017, was part of the overall review of skills provision across Central Bedfordshire.

Work was ongoing over the various initiatives to improve the High Street, particularly the area around the Market Square. The response to the first stage of the High Street Improvement Scheme was very good, and this was now moving to the second and third stages, with more money available for individual retailers to apply for.

The site of the Police Station in Hockliffe Road had been acquired by Central Bedfordshire Council, and regeneration opportunities for the site were being actively considered.

Since the last report to the Committee, talks had been ongoing with two potential anchor tenants for a possible development on land south of the High Street, Central Bedfordshire had been seeking to make other land acquisitions in the area to add value to the existing site, and a further GVA report had been commissioned. The executive summary of this report would be made publicly available later in the week, but had made a number of significant findings.

Overall, Leighton Buzzard town centre was deemed to be performing well, with a healthy share of the retail market and low vacancy levels. However, the experience of similarly sized towns, where leisure was a more effective way of locking in customers than retail and the trend towards larger retailers preferring out of town developments to town centre ones both had significant implications for the development of the High Street and land south of the High Street.

Representatives welcomed the Market Intelligence Study and the detailed updated to the Committee. Representatives expressed mixed views on the Market Intelligence findings. While there were comments that Leighton Buzzard had to change and adapt to market challenges, it was also felt that retaining traditional retailers in the high street was a priority. A representative suggested work was needed to ensure that young people felt the town had something to offer them in the face of competition from places like Milton Keynes and Dunstable. A representative commented that a new cinema and restaurants would attract younger people and young families to Leighton Buzzard..

J Longhurst stressed that Central Bedfordshire Council wished to see a viable and sustainable High Street, but that this depended in part upon what the market wanted, and there was little evidence that major retailers wanted to locate in town centres, especially given competition from the likes of Milton Keynes. There was, however, considerable mileage to be had in pursuing leisure and food options for the High Street and Southside. It was hoped that major developments would be locked into place by the end of 2017.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

## **110/LLP PASSENGER TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

The Committee received an update on the development of the Passenger Transport Strategy from S Childerhouse of Central Bedfordshire Council.

It was reported that, following consultation, Central Bedfordshire Council had decided not to go ahead with the proposal to change the operating hours of the concessionary travel scheme, which would continue to operate 24 hours of the day, seven days a week.

A new assessment process had been adopted for bus services, with the aim of establishing a network of core and secondary routes. Core routes would be those where there were at least 10 journeys a day, while secondary routes were generally those linking towns and villages with at least four journeys in each direction on weekdays. The least used routes were being assessed with a view to considering alternative provision for those using the service.

The Council continued to work with operators in order to maintain existing commercial routes.

Community transport, which was currently provided with a grant, would move to a tender process in order to avoid any potential conflict with EU competition rules.

New routes were being looked at from April 2017, with subsidies being a possibility where operators do not believe that any such routes are not commercially viable. The overall saving generated by the changes was in the region of £450,000.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

#### **111/LLP CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE UPDATE**

The Committee received a written report on CBC services delivered in Leighton Linslade.

It was reported that the town centre premises referred to at the previous meeting had been granted retrospective planning permission and that this had been communicated to ward councillors.

The Committee noted that there had been some parking enforcement issues due to unclear signage and line markings, and that this was being addressed.

Members believed that enforcement of parking around schools was a priority, particularly where there were safety issues. It was noted that Central Bedfordshire Council's enforcement team was working with schools to take effective action and that this issue would be addressed at the next community forum event in March 2017.

Concern was expressed at the number of vehicles parking on street corners and on the pavement, particularly on older residential roads where this blocks wheelchair or pushchair access to the footpath. It was reported that this was being looked into.

It was reported that retailers were pleased at the improved enforcement of 30 minute waiting limits in the town centre.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

#### **112/LLP COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN**

The Committee received the Objectives and Work Plan for 2016-2017 for consideration. There had been no changes since the previous meeting. It was noted that there would be a themed meeting on economic affairs in February, and members were invited to submit items for discussion.

**RESOLVED to note the Committee Objectives and Work Plan for 2016-2017**

#### **113/LLP BUSINESS GROUPS UPDATE**

(a) B Chandler of LB Connect advised the Committee that a business breakfast would be held at 7am on 16 December at the Hare in Linslade. Officers from Central Bedfordshire Council would be present to provide advice to businesses. It was also reported that monthly evening meetings were

continuing, with the next one being held at the Dukes in Heath and Reach on 19 January.

- (b) G Borelli of LB First advised the Committee that the Christmas weekend of activities planned for 24 December was on track, and thanked the Town Council and its staff for their continued support for this event.

**RESOLVED to note the information.**

#### **114/LLP COMMUNITY FORUM UPDATE**

The Committee received an update from T Humber of the Community Forum one year on from the Youth Forum event held in October 2015. It was noted that a great deal had been achieved for young people, much of it due to the efforts of TACTIC, though there was still a need to retain relationships developed during the year in order to prevent young people from becoming even more disengaged. The issue would need to be revisited in 2018 in order to take into account the needs of a new cohort of young people.

The next Community Forum would focus upon highways, including looking at safety, parking and enforcement. The aim was to educate and try and encourage the community to take on responsibility for these matters. Potential dates being considered were the 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> March, with the final agreed date to be confirmed.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

#### **115/LLP CHILDREN'S TRAIL UPDATE**

The Committee received a report regarding the Leighton Buzzard Children's Trail.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) **To note the report;**
- (ii) **To allocate £2,500 from the Earmark Reserves Fund to extend the work of the Children's Trail Guardian for another year.**

#### **116/LLP BEST BAR NONE UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from T Moore of Leighton-Linslade Town Council on progress with the Best Bar None Scheme in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade. At the scheme's annual awards, the Lancer had been named the overall winner, with the Swan and The Dukes runners up. The winners of the People's Vote Award was the Black Lion, with the Dukes and the Golden Bell runners up. 22 venues across Leighton-Linslade, Houghton Regis and Dunstable had now been accredited, and it was hoped that this would lead to an ongoing decrease in the number of crimes committed in the night time economy locally.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

**117/LLP GREENSAND RIDGE WALK MARKER**

The Committee received an update from T Moore of Leighton-Linslade Town Council on the Greensand Ridge Trail Marker project. It was noted that the most appropriate site for the location of the marker was considered to be by the seating circle at the West end of the High Street. It was hoped that project delivery was due to start in early 2017. The Council had been asked to nominate a member to sit on the project steering group.

**RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council that they appoint a member to the Greensand Ridge Walk Marker Steering Group.**

**118/LLP BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received a budget monitoring report. There had been few changes since the previous meeting, and there were no new recommendations.

There had been some investigation into the possibility of creating an electronic version of a business directory which may have resourcing implications. Work was ongoing into this, with the exploration of a plug-in or add-on to the existing Town Council website.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

The meeting closed at 21:52 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THIS IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2016.

Chair

16 FEBRUARY 2017