



Mark Saccoccio

Town Clerk

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11 March 2021

To: Members of the South Side Task and Finish Group (Councillors V Harvey, S Hemmings, T Morris, S Owen, C Palmer and B Spurr)
(Copies to all Town Councillors for information)

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of **South Side Task and Finish Group** to be held on **Monday, 22 March 2021** commencing at **10.00 am**. This will be a remote meeting held via Microsoft Teams in accordance with The Local Authorities and Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Meetings)(England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

**THIS MEETING MAY
BE RECORDED ***

<https://tinyurl.com/1awpikid> or by tel: +44 20 3795 5672 (Conf.ID: 130 250 247#)

M Saccoccio
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a record be kept of the Members present and that this record form part of the minutes of the meeting. Members who cannot attend a meeting should tender apologies to the Town Clerk.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (i) Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the Member's Register of Interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.
- (ii) Should any Member have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in an item on the agenda, the Member may not participate in consideration of that item unless a Dispensation has first been requested (in writing) and granted by the Council (see Dispensation Procedure).

3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

To receive questions and statements from members of the public in respect of any item of business included in the agenda, as provided for in Standing Order No.s 3(f) and 3(g).

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 1 - 6)

(a) To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the South Side Task and Finish Group meeting held on 15 February 2021 **(attached)** in accordance with Standing Order 12.

(b) To receive information updates on matters arising from the previous meeting (if appropriate).

5. SUMMARY PAPER - LEARNING AND OPTIONS (Pages 7 - 14)

To receive a working draft summary paper that captures the Group's learning and options being explored to date. **(attached)**

6. UPDATE ON OPTIONS ANALYSIS - SOUTHSIDE DEVELOPMENT

To receive headline data from the commissioned Options Analysis research yet to be formally signed off by CBC. **(verbal)**

7. UK LEVELLING UP FUND

To receive an update on current Government funding **(verbal)**

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee may consider it appropriate to consider the following resolution should they consider that any discussion would be prejudicial to the public interests: that, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded on the grounds of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. The public and press to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of detailed discussion regarding: Unadopted 2016 Development Study.

9. DOCUMENTATION FOR LAND SOUTH OF THE HIGH STREET

To consider information received on 15/02/21, minute ref: 14/SS, on work pertaining to plans for the area of land south of the High Street.

* Phones and other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting by an individual Council member, officer or member of the public. No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming unless the meeting resolves to go into exempt session. The use of images or recordings arising from this is not within the Council's control.

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

SOUTH SIDE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

MONDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 1000 HOURS

Present: Councillors V Harvey
S Owen (Vice Chair)
T Morris
C Palmer (Chair)
S Hemmings

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
V Cannon Head of Cultural & Economic Services
M Jahn, Committee Officer
S Caldbeck, Central Bedfordshire Council
J Barkat, Business & Facilities Manager Rufus Centre, Flitwick
M Kirby, Director of Community Services, Chippenham TC
Julie Hook, Head of Venues, Chippenham TC
M Barnett, Head of Museum and Heritage Chippenham
Ingrid Hooley, Programming Enabling Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council

Members of the Public: 0

07/SS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

08/SS 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.

Councillor Palmer declared an interest as a member of LB Society and LB Archeological and History Society. Councillor Harvey declared an interest as a Member of LB Society and LB Friends of the Earth.

09/SS QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

10/SS VENUE EXAMPLES

By invitation, guests from the Rufus Centre in Flitwick and The Neeld and The History Museum at Chippenham gave an overview of how the venues delivered their services, what groups used the facilities, governance of the venues and the annual running costs and practices involved.

Rufus Centre, Flitwick Town Council

Jonathan Barkat informed Members the centre had 30 fully serviced offices, conference and meetings rooms and the main hall which could seat approximately 250 people. There was also a bar/café which opened Monday to Saturday between the hours of 0800 to 1600 hours and opened for events on a Friday evening. The Town Council, which owned the building, was based in the centre and community events were regularly held there. The centre was run as a community facility with a room set aside for charitable and community groups free of charge. In normal times the centre operated 6 days a week with tenants having 24 hour and 7 days a week access.

A question was raised as to which type of hiring proved the most profitable and it was confirmed the regular meeting room hirers provided a regular income in 'normal times'. Weddings could also be held in the centre and these generated a large income when bookings were received. A virtual office had been introduced within the last few months and also hot desking was being reviewed for the near future.

The vision for the future would be expansion and the possibility of creating a hotel on site, extend the car park and increase tenant's office space. It was confirmed that the centre would make approximately £50,000 profit per annum but in the present climate a true reflection was not possible with reduced hiring income because of COVID with the aim being to keep the business side separate from the Council element. A more accurate picture would be known by next year.

The Neeld, Chippenham Town Council

Matt Kirby informed members that both venues were located in the town centre.

Julie Hook informed members about The Neeld. It could be used for weddings, dances, concerts and themed fairs as the retractable seating allowed the space needed to be adapted to what purpose was required. Primarily the centre was run at cost to the Council for the benefit of the community and not for profit. Community groups used the facilities for dance and theatre groups and are charged community rates with a corporate rate for businesses. The size of the venue offers versatility of use and provides a great community hub for meeting up.

A question about available parking was raised and Julie commented that town centre parking was used but the limit of two hour parking in one car park did not facilitate attendance of matinee shows. This impacted on the amount of

matinee shows programmed and income. Free parking after 6.00pm worked well for evening shows.

Chippenham Museum

Melissa Barnett informed members that the museum was created by Chippenham Town Council with the support of the community, Wiltshire Council and other local charities.

There are 30,000 users of the museum annually being mainly local people with some tourists visiting. The building was located in the centre of the town with free entry. It was run and supported by Chippenham Town Council and had 70 volunteers and 100 Friends of the Museum.

Members were informed that a museum was an expensive option with many insurance and legal requirements but offered educational opportunities to local schools and visitors to the town. A Heritage Centre would be an easier option initially to encourage visitors whilst also offering hidden values to volunteers with a sense of belonging celebrating the history of a town.

It was suggested that Emma Carver of the Arts Council England, Museums, be a point of contact to offer advice and information if this option was pursued. Members agreed that Leighton Buzzard had a proactive history society who would be interested in this project and they had a wealth of artefacts which were scattered around different premises in the town at present and could benefit from being catalogued and displayed in one place.

A question was raised as to whether the residents of Chippenham valued the museum and it was confirmed they were one hundred percent behind it and it gave a sense of pride to celebrate their own history in this way. The cost of running the museum was £250,000 a year and costs for The Neeld were £300,000 with income of £150,000. The Neeld running costs included costs incurred for running the Council offices as the buildings were cojoined and venues were run as community projects. Marketing and promotion would be planned to improve income potential in the future.

Thanks were given to all the guests for attending the meeting and giving their presentations and advice, it was helpful to hear how the facilities worked whilst giving consideration to the land south of the High Street in Leighton Buzzard.

RESOLVED to note the information.

11/SS MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) The Committee received the minutes of the South Side Task and Finish Group of 11 January 2021. Two minor changes were requested in minute reference 06/SS, second paragraph on the first line to change “would” to “could” and in paragraph 3 the Development Brief of 2016 be changed to 2017.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the South Side Task and Finish Group meeting held on 11 January 2021 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

(b) A suggestion was made for a preliminary paper to be put together giving the options suggested from these meetings. These options could then be looked at in more detail and either discarded or reviewed as necessary. Members agreed a vision document giving the options discussed would be a good idea however it might be better to wait until the Options Analysis had been completed by Cornerstone. This was due to be completed by the end of March 2021. After discussion, it was suggested that a summary document be prepared by Vivien Cannon with the assistance of Sam Caldbeck from CBC.

12/SS FUTURE MEETING DATE

The date for the next meeting was set for Monday 22 March 2021, at 10.00 am

13/SS EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded on the grounds of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. The public and press to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of detailed discussion regarding: documentation for Land South of the High Street.

14/SS DOCUMENTATION FOR LAND SOUTH OF THE HIGH STREET

Members received an update and documentation on work pertaining to plans for the area land south of the High Street. It was confirmed that a new Development Study would not be required to progress the planning applications for a new development on land south of the High Street. The 2012 document would be used with consideration given to current needs and how High Street retail had changed and what would be required and needed now in this environment.

Consideration would be given to the initial overview of feedback from the Options Analysis Document being prepared by Cornerstone at the next meeting of the group. Sam Caldbeck explained the final document is unlikely to be ready for sharing by the next meeting date yet he would be able to offer an overview.

It was suggested that other venue organisations be invited to give presentations to the group. No invitations would be extended immediately. In the meantime the venue questions along with the background introduction would be circulated for group members to use.

The meeting closed at 1202 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2021.

Chair

22 MARCH 2021

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SOUTH SIDE COMMUNITY FACILITY – SUMMARY OF LEARNING AND IDEAS (WORKING DRAFT)**15/02/21. Minute ref. 11/SS**

- (a) A suggestion was made for a preliminary paper to be put together giving the options suggested from these meetings. These options could then be looked at in more detail and either discarded or reviewed as necessary. Members agreed a vision document giving the options discussed would be a good idea however it might be better to wait until the Options Analysis had been completed by Cornerstone. This was due to be completed by the end of March 2021. After discussion, it was suggested that a [summary document](#) be prepared by Vivien Cannon with the assistance of Sam Caldbeck from CBC.

Being clear on the ‘drivers’ for the facility will aid the process of research and decision-making needed.**What comes first (listed in no specific order):**

- a) Culture – does culture combine the arts and the history/heritage themes or are they separate? Specific art forms?
- b) Generalist - multi-usage, community/business meeting space, functions – somewhere for large/small scale gatherings.
- c) Competition – what is happening (physical examples/provision), elsewhere.
- d) Business incubator - general or specialist, e.g., creative industries.
- e) What available research is there – have ideas been tested.

Do we work from a starting point of:

- a) Agreed use/ purpose.
- b) Agreed financial package – where is money coming from / which of the desire list could be separately and commercially funded given the demand
- c) Agreed building footprint (available land space).

What will determine our starting point:

- a) Documented need – what people are asking for.
- b) Wish list – the desires of who.

- c) Gap analysis – what is lacking in the area/ does this automatically assume the gaps will be used if plugged.
- d) Opportunist approaches – external bodies.

What is the expectation for addressing the cultural needs of the Town – if the cultural offer is the theme:

- a) One large cultural venue.
- b) Hub and spoke – linking existing venues under one umbrella of culture and ensuring each specialism, (want or need), is covered by one of the venues within the Town. (Cultural Strategy)

Who will own / run the facility?

- a) CBC or LLTC ownership.
- b) Outsourced management or in-house.

Research – substantial:

- a) What do we have.
- b) What information is missing.
- c) Feasibility studies – on one or several options.

Public Consultation:

- a) When.
- b) Who leads.
- c) What on – how many stages.

Considerations:

Functions	Specifications	Comments
Facility basics/ essentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access – Disability standards to all areas – ramps, hearing loops, lifts to other floors, changing places facility. • Environmental standards – incorporate renewable energy use, 	<p>Core infrastructure and services needed regardless of agreed final use.</p> <p>To what extent do we want it to be ‘green’ – a statement building or happy to compromise?</p>

	<p>e.g., solar panels, heating systems, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications – internet enabled / public access to Wi-Fi • Storage - general. • Security systems – CCTV, alarms. 	
Journey access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus routes – evening/ weekend timetables • Parking 	<p>Will public transport need to be invested in to assist access? Will more parking be needed? Establish links with rail provider.</p>
Utilities / services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric • Water • Gas? • Waste • Personal hygiene waste • Cleaning • Maintenance • WiFi – broadband • Phone lines • Security systems/ call out services. • IT / Photocopy – kit and maintenance. 	<p>All contracts or in house, e.g., cleaner/ maintenance? Green energy suppliers/ systems?</p>
Specialist needs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprung floor – dance hall / practice studio. • Natural light sources - fine arts. • Sound proofing – rehearsal / music activities. • Catering facilities. • Bar facility. 	<p>These will be determined once the key usage themes are agreed. Understanding what each specialism entails will determine the space required. In turn, this starts to focus us on the footprint of the building and what the overall financial package is or needs to be.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage. • Stage / no stage – changing/ ‘green’ rooms. • Motorised tiered seating. • Gallery / Exhibition space. • Business hub – business tools access to broadband, IT kit, photocopying, etc. • Meeting room facilities- presentation equipment, wite boards, etc. 	<p>e.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access to natural light will strongly impact on use as fine arts a studio space. - Storage – always an underestimated need. - Stage – and all the stage kit of lighting, sound, that entails. - Sprung floor will determine whether it is used for rehearsal space / dance classes. - catering - serviceable area for users or café?
Capacity verses versatility of space		<p>No straightforward like-for-like yet to provide a comparison -</p> <p>e.g. theatre style / banquet / standing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needl: 217 / 170 / 350 - Rufus: 200 / 120 / 250 - LB Library: 160 / - / - - Astral Park: - / 140 / -
Staffing considerations -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre Manager • General Admin • In-house technician/s • Marketing/Promotions • Security • Ushers • ? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A split between a core of professionals and volunteers. - Option to buy-in services, e.g., box office/ticketing, marketing, TBC - Depends on the ;’specialism’ needed.
IDEAS / OPTIONS – more detailed thoughts		
Meeting / breakout rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of sizes or all one size? 	Wide variety of clubs, societies etc have indicated such facilities would be useful and

		there is a demand. Would allow workshops, some other activities (parties?) etc. A central location for mother/toddler groups could also be considered
Conference facility		There is an absence of a significant central facility – would a hotel on the site provide instead? Social functions, dinners, receptions, product launches and events like weddings could also be catered for though this may be possible with something less formal than a conference facility (eg larger meeting room above).
Exhibition Space		Could be used also for other activities but organisations like the LB Historical Society or Arts Society would welcome central facility
Museum or Heritage Centre or Arts		There is a notable lack of such a facility in the town and many artefacts etc in garages, lofts etc as well as an active Historical Society. A visitor centre would be an attraction.
Café/bar		Ancillary and complementary to other uses as well as providing income
Arts and Performance Space		There is evidence of a void in a suitable reasonably sized facility in the town for the performing arts with numerous individuals/organisations in the town who have expressed their interest in using one if it were available. Retractable seating would enable a multi use space (cf Chippenham). Would need to be complementary to what the Library Theatre is able to offer. Rehearsal space and a dance area are also relevant in this context, though there could be an overlap with meeting rooms above.

Small business facilities		The Rufus Centre at Flitwick profitably houses a number of small businesses, and business start up/hot desk facilities could also be considered. At present Leighton-Linslade start up businesses have to look to Dunstable etc for an office facility.
OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSIDERATION		
Town Council Offices	Previous development brief.	The possible relocation of the Town Council from the White House has also been suggested. This is a very significant item were it to be considered but could be linked e.g. with any Central Bedfordshire Council presence in the town. Consideration could also be given to relocation of the TACTIC children's centre.
Soft Play Facility	LLTC corporate objective. Added to Partnership List (LLTC/CBC)	This has been mentioned as a candidate for a central location (though it could be argued given size of premises required, parking etc that a less central position is preferable).
Police Hub		If even more of a long shot, there is considerable lobbying at present to get a publicly accessible police hub in the centre of town as part of an enhanced police presence rather than the current small facility (not accessible by the public) shared with the fire service.
TACTIC Youth Facility	LLTC corporate plan to seek alternative venue for TACTIC youth services.	House the TACTIC in a new venue releases the building in Hockliffe St – sell to contribute to a new venue or it can house a museum/heritage venue. This incorporates increasing access to positive activities for young people depending what

		facilities are included / audience development for future participation in the arts.
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