



Mark Saccoccio

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15 July 2021.

To: Members of the South Side Task and Finish Group (Councillors V Harvey, T Morris, S Owen, C Palmer, B Spurr and S Hemmings)
(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, 26 July 2021** commencing at **10.00 am** in the Council Chamber, The White House, Hockliffe Street, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 1HD (It may be possible to join this meeting virtually upon request; please contact the Council)..

**THIS MEETING MAY
BE RECORDED ***

M Saccoccio
Town Clerk

Please do not attend this meeting if:

- You, anyone you live with or anyone in your support bubble has tested positive for Covid-19 or has symptoms of Covid-19.
- You have been advised to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, the NHS app or for any other reason.
- You are within the required quarantine period having returned to the UK from a non-exempt country.

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).

Members of the public may attend the meeting to ask questions or make statements but are asked to note that attendance numbers are limited. Please contact us to advise if you wish to attend by 4pm on Friday, 23 July. Written representations may also be submitted before 4pm on 23 July.

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

(a) To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the South Side Task and Finish Group meeting held on 6 May 2021 (attached) in accordance with Standing Order 12.

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

5. FORMULATION OF COMMUNITY NEEDS FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF LSSHS (Pages 5 - 10)

To review documentation created through the Group's discussions and consider amendments and next stages for developing work.

6. FUTURE MEETING DATE

To consider a date for the next meeting.

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Task & Finish Group may consider it appropriate to consider the following resolution should they consider that any discussion would be prejudicial to the public interest: 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: CBC Research Findings

8. CBC RESEARCH FINDINGS

To receive and consider the findings from CBC's commissioned research pertaining to 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.

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LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

SOUTH SIDE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

THURSDAY 6 MAY 2021 AT 1300 HOURS

Present: Councillors V Harvey
S Owen (Vice Chair)
T Morris
C Palmer (Chair)
A Dodwell (substituting for S Hemmings)
E Wallace (substituting for B Spurr)

Also in attendance: V Cannon Head of Cultural & Economic Services
M Jahn, Committee Officer
S Caldbeck, Central Bedfordshire Council
R Dua, Leighton Library and Theatre Facility
D Waller Leighton Library and Theatre Facility

Members of the Public: 5

24/SS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Spurr substituted by Councillor E Wallace and Councillor S Hemmings substituted by Councillor A Dodwell.

25/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 South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth.

26/SS QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public from the Arts and Heritage Projects Group spoke to emphasise the need by residents and families for a centrally located cultural facility in the town. The population continued to grow, and a space was needed for artists and designers to teach and provide workshops to nurture the local talent in Leighton Buzzard. The provision of a café or restaurant in this facility would be crucial and would encourage residents to use it especially if it offered good quality locally sourced produce. The library building would not be big enough to allow for these activities although it is very important to the community.

A further member from this group spoke to request whether the group could have a more collaborative role in discussions and engage in presentations of plans clearly linked to the Arts, working with local government and the library to meet

the needs of the community. Sam Caldbeck, Central Bedfordshire Council, confirmed he had met with the Arts and Heritage Projects Group and agreed all parties were working towards the same aim of wanting the best for the town and community.

One of the landowners spoke to give his support to the development of the land and a social hub facility within walking distance of the High Street to encourage people into the town.

It was agreed that all comments would be fed back to Central Bedfordshire Council for their information and consideration.

27/SS MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) The group received the draft minutes of the South Side Task & Finish Group held on the 22 March 2021.

Minute ref 20/SS Update On Options Analysis – Southside Development – it was confirmed the Options Analysis was in the final stages of completion and once this was received the options would be discussed internally with Central Bedfordshire Officers and then reported back to this group.

Sam Caldbeck wanted to inform members that in the current market conditions a fully viable scheme would not be likely. It would be unlikely a community facility would provide sufficient revenue to cover costs and external funding would have to be secured. The Options Analysis was the first stepping stone and would provide what potential projects could be viable and following this there would need to be talks with landowners and a consultation which in current financial circumstances could take a few years to come to fruition.

A question was raised regarding whether CBC would be likely to sell the land or build and rent out the building. It was confirmed this was not known at present and would depend on circumstances at the time.

A further question was asked whether the Fire Station site would be included in the development area. It was confirmed the Fire Station site was not included in the Options Analysis brief and it would be difficult to relocate as costs would be very high.

Minute ref 23/SS Documentation for Land South of the High Street – a request was made for a title to be given for the document referred to which would assist readers in the future to identify the document.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the South Side Task & Finish Group held on 22 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and would be signed at a later date when safe to do so.

(b) No updates were made as they would be covered in the remainder of the agenda.

28/SS VENUE EXAMPLES

Members welcomed Rechelle Dua and Daniel Weller from the Leighton Library and Theatre Facility and thanked them for attending the meeting.

It was confirmed the vision of the Library and Theatre Facility was to ensure a vibrant cultural offer in Leighton-Linslade and across all of Central Bedfordshire. They had no issues with a proposed facility on Land South of the High Street and would be happy to be part of discussions and not just be informed of the end result.

A concern was raised regarding the suitability of the Library Building and whether it could offer space and had the availability to accommodate more groups. Rechelle Dua confirmed building works had been completed in the last 12 months and most parts of the building were hired out with some regular bookings. Particular nights and times were not fully used and the pricing was being reviewed with the aim to develop and cover wider community needs. They were willing to see what would be needed and would be willing to talk to groups about their needs especially music groups if the acoustics were proving unsuitable.

A request was made for Rechelle Dua to send an email with the availability of the different parts of the building to clarify the usage and revenue costs. It was confirmed the Theatre was usually within profit.

RESOLVED to note the information.

29/SS FORMULATION OF COMMUNITY NEEDS FOR LSHS

(a) The Task and Finish Group received a discussion paper to consider a process for a proposed consultation for the facility on LSHS.

Councillor Owen was thanked for compiling this report but until the Options Analysis conclusions had been received this could not be taken forward. It would be needed to know what would be achievable, what size community space would be needed and where the funding would come from to determine what could be built.

Members all agreed this would be a fantastic plan but advised not to go into too much detail as no sound options or solutions had been provided yet. Capital and revenue would pose the biggest problem and in the present climate it would probably be 4 to 5 years before this could commence.

The document should be a 'travelling draft' which would set out what types of facilities could be provided and how the development could proceed. All members could have access to include ideas on the document. A phased development would be the most likely approach when the project was finally agreed. A request was made to share the document with the Partnership Committee at their next meeting with the results of the Options Analysis report.

(b) Members decided the Summary Paper V2 would no longer be required and the first document would now be used.

RESOLVED to note the information.

30/SS FUTURE MEETING DATE

The next meeting date tbc.

The meeting closed at 1450 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 MAY 2021.

Chair

26 JULY 2021

DRAFT

LAND SOUTH SIDE OF THE HIGH STREET (“LSSHS”) T & F GROUP

FORMULATION OF COMMUNITY NEEDS FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF LSSHS**1. Introduction and purpose**

The aim of this paper is to generate a discussion first within the T&F Group and then with other significant parties. The goal is to develop those discussions into a draft paper that will identify local community needs and aspirations for the LSSHS redevelopment, lead to public consultation so that the document gains a wide measure of public support, produce a positive influence on the dynamic planning process, and embrace the planning strategy of Central Bedfordshire Council (“CBC”) which the T & F Group recognises is a major influencer and participant. The paper draws on the previous 12.9.2020 paper from Cllr Clive Palmer.

2. Timescale

The aim will be to move as quickly as possible to develop a document that can exert an influence over the planning process and the infrastructure discussions that accompany it. This is because the T & F Group recognise that the ball is already rolling insofar as there is a current application (from Mayfair 500) for development of part of the site. Starting with the intention in early April 2021 to aim for a better-developed version of this paper by the summer of 2021, it is planned that iterations of this paper will contain updated timescales that ensure the Group maintains a good momentum to achieve real progress.

3. Which Strategy?

The LSSHS occupies a swathe of land behind the South side of the High Street stretching between the Post Office in Church Square to the Duncombe Drive car park. (CBC have a good map of this area that will be needed for the public consultation paper). The development of this area represents a major strategic opportunity for the centre of Leighton Buzzard. The land is currently in multiple ownership; a key issue will be whether the most realistic redevelopment strategy is one that covers a comprehensive redevelopment of the whole of LSSHS, or whether a step-by-step approach could produce earlier progress without sacrificing the strategic potential of the whole. Current CBC planners’ advice is that the step by step approach should be able to produce this earlier progress without sacrificing the overall strategic opportunity.

4. Development Scope

In no special order, the more obvious candidate elements of the redevelopment strategy appear to be

	Use of space	Comments (CBC paper suggests a total area of around 2.5 hectares)	Possible Space Allocation (indicative)	Generating footfall when during day?	Possible phasing (Early/mid/late)	Possible finance
1	Retail	Discussion needed to review the current retail offer in the town alongside the implications of the move towards on-line shopping and click and collect outlets for inline orders, pushed by the current pandemic. Smaller specialist shops?	16%	9-5		
2	Residential	Accepted that residential development will be a key driver for developers wanting to make things happen – and a key producer of infrastructure yield to fund other elements.	40%			
Page 6	3	Hospitality E.g. hotel: coffee-shop(s); café(s): “pub”/bar(s). :-Possibly an early project, i.e. the current Mayfair 500 Travelodge application.	8%	8 till late		
	4	Public/community E.g. performance space with accompanying facilities: meeting rooms: museum: tourism office: etc. This element is expanded below.	14%	9 till late		
5	Essential or “social” services	Candidates are e.g. Policing Hub; re-located Town Council offices: relocated TACTIC Centre outreaching for young people: daytime meeting spaces for older people particularly living alone: a Mens’s Shed facility: Central Bedfordshire Council office(s) and information hub , etc.	4%	9 -5 mostly		
6	Business / Commercial Office spaces	a) Start-up business units, incubator, Creative Industries. b) If evidence suggests shortage of space in the town centre, e.g. for “hot-desk” rented office space for meetings and meet-up space for business sectors. c) Ordinary business space, Creative Industries. Depends on demand in current and foreseeable economic climate, 10% of the area?	3% 2%			
7	Health	The Leighton Buzzard Health Hub? A permanent vaccination centre?	2%	9-4		
8	Education	A local college outpost?				

9	Facilities targeting youth, children.	Commercial led ? Children's play (indoor/outdoor), Cinema, Bowling Alley (the latter is relevant for adults too)	2%	9-4		Commercial finance
10	Indoor market	A permanent crafts-oriented market.	1%			
11	Restaurant(s)	Say, an 8 till 6 affordable hot-food operator and a 7 till 11 higher-price facility. – depends partly on the Mayfair 500 application.	3%			
12	Car parking	Probably multi-storey – 500 cars	8%			
13	Heritage display	For example, a narrow-gauge engine with sand cars on rails – or a replica Vickers Vimy plane.				
14	Conference centre	Separated out from the public/community item (or listed under Hospitality, tbc.)				
15	Public open outside space	Outside seating areas, performance area, in landscaped/green areas, 4% of the overall area?				s106 / CBC land ?

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This list will be incomplete; discussion will improve it. The suggested space allocations are simply intended to generate discussion and to ensure that the discussions over public/community use are anchored financially and therefore space-wise to the whole development. The Town Council may need to be tenacious in pressing for adequate non-residential space allocations.

The footfall column looks at whether the development can be kept “active” for as many hours as possible rather than closing down at 5.30 pm.

The “Phasing” column will be important insofar as the funds for building a public/community use facility will need to flow from somewhere: it won't be realistic to plan that facility to reach completion several years before any residential development is completed.

5. Public/Community space

Some of the candidate uses that have already been suggested are, in no special order, but we will need to get some sort of priority order:

	Use	Comment	What current provision exists in the town, and where is the unmet need?	Priority for T & F Group	Space allocation	Any visible running costs?
1	A partitionable performance space, with spaces for rehearsals, dressing-rooms, admin office, bar, community cafe, toilets – acting as a daytime drop-	The aim is for multi-functionality.	Need to define this clearly w.r.t the Library Theatre. The suggested capacity compares		60% in total	Admin / Marketing manager: bar staff; cleaners; ushers,

	in centre as well as a performance event space. Suggested capacity 500. Capable of live music performance, theatre events, film shows. With retractable seating. Income-generating.		with the Library Theatre's 170-200 capacity.			lighting, stage and audio staff
2	Large meeting room e.g. one able to hold 350 seated people for a single meeting. Capable of flexible seating; rows facing one-way for performances but more flexible for meetings. Income-generating.	Possibly using the same spaces as above in order to make most intensive use of the spaces.	Ditto. Which types/size of meetings are least well provided for at present in the town centre?		Part of the same 60%	Admin staff
3	Small meeting rooms, perhaps six. Capacity 30 seated. Hire-able separately. Income-generating.	Ditto			10%	Ditto
4	Museum/tourism/heritage centre with space for art and other exhibitions as well as permanent displays. Small shop for related items. Sufficient space to accommodate school visits. Some income generation.	Paul Brown of the LB Archaeological and Historical Society has done work on this possibility.	No current provision in the town.		20% (sharing space with 1)	Part-time curator. Part-time shop staff.
Page	Supervision of space and management					

Items 1-4 in the table above capture the fair ([keenly interested/invested](#)) volume of representations that have been received by Group members from members of the arts, cultural and other sections of the public in recent months. They also capture many of the aspirations voiced by members of the public attending the drop-in event held in the White House in February 2020. This paper deliberately avoids going into the detail of many of the representations received; doing so now might divert our focus from the need to establish our preferred direction and strategy.

6. [Supervision and management of space / facility](#)

[Pending understanding of who would manage the facility \(an independent Trust, Town or CBC Council, private business, etc.\).](#)

[Staff team needed – posts to be determined once purpose is known, e.g. an overall centre manager, Volunteer coordinator \(Volunteers could help with running of a heritage centre\), specialist technicians, heritage curator, etc.](#)

7. Finance

Starting with the obvious: this will be an expensive part of an expensive re-development. Some hard thought will be needed to identify the likely sources of funds. There may not be room/finance for some worthy candidate uses. It will be important to harness and energise the undoubted enthusiasm of many of the public for improved town centre facilities whilst promoting a sense of realism.

- a) Possible sources: Negotiated infrastructure grants. Other Arts/Heritage grants including possible Arts/Heritage partners. Capital borrowing. Lottery funding. Town Centre Government funding.
- b) Operating model: need to look at options, e.g. directly run by Town Council, or by a Charitable Trust, or through partnership with CBC or with a private Arts/Heritage funder. Would a Charitable Trust confer funding advantages?

8. Next Steps (suggested)

- a) To discuss and develop a revised version of the table at 4. Above that lists suggested elements of the overall development listed at 4. above, that gains consensus support, especially regarding the preferred allocations of space.
- b) To discuss and seek to achieve a consensus view on the table at 5. above listing suggested elements of the Public/Community use, including generating some estimates of square footage requirements and what our priorities are. We also need to identify areas where we need more input from our own TC officers or others.
- c) To discuss how to tackle item 5 in the table at 4. above, i.e the “Essential or Social Services”.
- d) To agree what help is needed from officers regarding funding (7. above).
- e) To identify a timescale for next steps, including at what stage public consultation might begin.

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Steve Owen
(Town councillor)
7 April 2021

Purple – CP

Blue - VC

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