



## Partnership Committee

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 September 2019</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Community Forum Review</b>
<b>Purpose of the Report:</b>	<b>Review of the Community Forum for future delivery activity</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Vivien Cannon, Head of Cultural and Economic Services</b>

<b>Corporate Objective/s</b>	<b>LLTC Five Year Plan – Aim: Growth, Community Cohesion and Infrastructure</b> 1. To continue to lobby Central Bedfordshire Council for improved and timely infrastructure 16. To continue to liaise with the local authority on matters for which it is responsible, and which affect residents of the parish.
<b>Implications:</b>	
<b>Financial</b>	√ Continue allocation of annual budget and associated earmarked reserves
<b>Human Resources</b>	
<b>Operational/Service delivery</b>	√ Operational review of the Community Forum
<b>Procedural/Legal</b>	
<b>Risk/Health and Safety</b>	

### 1. RECOMMENDATION/S

Should members be minded, the proposals are;

- 1.1 To endorse the Community Forum Operational Framework.
- 1.2 To continue to allocate £500 per annum and to secure unused funds into an earmarked reserves fund to facilitate work activity.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Committee is fortunate in having a Community Forum (CF) associated with this Partnership Committee in that it has local community representation and attendance at meetings contributing to discussion, thus providing a non-council perspective on local issues.
- 2.2 Committee endorsed a proposal in August 2012 for a community engagement model for Leighton-Linslade. The Community Forum Steering Group was created and opened to residents, community groups and businesses.

- 2.3 It was agreed that community engagement would take place through Community Forum events to gather local views in order to influence future priorities and decisions regarding the local area. The original Terms of Reference promoted two to three such events a year with the information generated being fed back to the Partnership Committee.
- 2.3 It has proven too ambitious to secure two to three CF events per year with four events having been successfully delivered over the 6 years of its existence. Event themes have been self-determined arising from the CF's own membership and from feedback received during event delivery, those being:
- You and Your Town Centre, February 2013,
  - Healthy, Wealthy & Wise, March 2014,
  - Youth Forum, October 2015,
  - CRAVE (Congestion, Roads, Access, Vehicles, Enforcement & Safety), May 2018.
- 2.4 Information gleaned to date has provided a valuable insight into the views and interests of the community. For example, the Town Councils TACTIC service broadened delivery of activities as a response to the Youth Forum event. It must be acknowledged however that the process has proven somewhat cumbersome with, on occasions, the timing of events not coinciding well with service provider's timetables for service reviews, budget setting timescales, etc. Likewise, some remits fall outside of Committee's direct influence and whilst being able to lobby and raise concerns, ultimately, there has been frustration with how responsive Committee can be.
- 2.5 More recently, maintaining an active CF steering group has been a challenge. People's personal circumstances have changed, group's priorities have changed, and council circumstances have also changed. Convening a regular steering group to meet in order to decide and deliver a future event has proved difficult since 2015. Likewise, Committee's original intent has also suffered from the gap between event delivery. The original format of the CF and its Terms of Reference were appropriate for the time yet may no longer be the best way to proceed the work and Committee's support for the CF.
- 2.6 The need to maintain regular opportunity to receive community-based views and perspectives remains important to inform Committee's priorities. In more recent meetings, officers and the CF Chairperson, have stated the need to better align the event themes to the work of Committee so that greater value and ability to respond can be achieved.

### **3. PROPOSED FUTURE APPROACH**

In August, the Chair of the CF met with officers from both councils to review the CF working approach. Discussion concluded that the CF remains able to support Committee by providing local intelligence with or without an event taking place, via agenda item, "Community Forum Updates". Having 'an ear to

the ground', was considered an asset that enables Committee to undertake preventative action for example, if intelligence brought an emerging issue to light, Committee could respond at an early stage. A 'call to action' could be given, e.g. calling specific people to attend Committee to inform, or deliver a physical event, or use online applications, could be led by the CF to learn more about the issue.

- 3.1 Similarly, the CF can help Committee by undertaking activities that help Committee explore an issue proactively and gain views before confirming work delivery or responding to an opportunity. For this to be successful, Committee would need to be more directive with the CF, forward planning activity that links in with anticipated work themes.
- 3.2 The original Terms of Reference (2012) are presented at **Appendix A**. It is proposed to reframe these into an operational framework thus acknowledging that the CF needs flexibility with its structure, whilst also requiring a framework to work by. A proposed draft Operational Framework can be viewed at **Appendix B**.

### **3 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The activity of the CF would greatly benefit from being closely aligned with the workplan of Committee.

**END**