

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors

C Palmer
T Morris (Chair)
S Hemmings
S Owen
F Kharawala
A L Dodwell
V Harvey
B J Spurr (Vice-Chair)
K Ferguson
G Perham

Also in attendance:

M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
V Cannon, Head of Cultural and Economic Services
S Sandiford, Head of Democratic and Central Services
M Jahn, Committee Officer
G Borelli, LB First
T Humber, Community Forum, part meeting
J Balaam, The Greensand Trust, part meeting
Ms E Clarke, Buzz Cycles, part meeting
S Lakin, Strategic Transport Manager, CBC
Sarah Ferguson, Deputy Director Children's Services
Stephen Mooring, Central Beds Council
Sarah Hughes, Central Bedfordshire Council
John Gelder, Community Action Bedfordshire
Cllr P Snelling

Members of the public: 4

68/LLP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wallace substituted by

Councillor Perham and Councillor Berry substituted by Councillor Ferguson.

69/LLP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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 V Harvey declared an interest as a member of South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth.

70/LLP QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 minutes per person; maximum 15 minutes)

A member of the public spoke regarding agenda item 8 and the development of Land South of the High Street and gave his support to the inclusion of Community Facility. This would enable local people and businesses the opportunity to keep creative potential within the town and support the community in Leighton Buzzard.

The Committee gave their support to this idea and thanked the member of the public for his input.

A question was also raised by Councillor Owen regarding concerns raised by residents on the lack of mask wearing by some people and the risks this caused other residents and businesses and how to report these incidences. It was confirmed Central Bedfordshire Council had information on their website and a secure link to report these concerns.

Congratulations were given by a business owner to the Town Council on the Christmas tree and decorations in the town this year being the best ever display.

71/LLP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 3 September 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 3 September 2020 be approved as a correct record and would be signed at a later date, when safe to do so.

72/LLP GREEN WHEEL AND CYCLING STRATEGIES UPDATE

(a) The Committee received a presentation and report from Mr J Balaam from the Greensand Trust regarding the Leighton-Linslade Green Wheel and Cycling Strategies.

Since February 2020 when the plan was adopted by the Town Council the government had published Gear Change – a bold vision for cycling and walking policy document. Within the Green Wheel plan most cycle routes were for both walking and cycling but this would no longer be acceptable under the Gear Change policy meaning the master plan would need to be updated and the action plan reviewed with some plans no longer feasible. It may be necessary to consider a phased approach with a ‘walking wheel’ created before cycling opportunities are created.

Members suggested that ideally cycling and walking routes should be looked at together but with the change in policy funding would not be received if this plan continued. The main and most important objective was the creation of safer routes to schools, work or for leisure with a continued maintenance programme to keep them accessible.

RESOLVED to note the report.

- (b) A verbal presentation was given by Ms E Clarke of Buzz Cycles on The New Cycling Strategy for Leighton-Linslade. The government vision was for half of all journeys in towns to be walked or cycled by 2030. Plans need to be made for safer better routes for cyclists which are direct, attractive, coherent, comfortable and safe. This could be achieved by low traffic neighbourhood streets or dedicated cycle routes and the possibility of separating walking and cycling. Dual paths especially near schools were a cause of concern as cyclists were using the same paths as younger children and families without due care for fellow users.

It was a disappointment that no funding had been achieved for the Clipstone Brook corridor which would provide safe routes into the town from the Eastern Development. More avenues for funding would be pursued to achieve this aim.

RESOLVED to note the information.

- (c) The Committee received the draft minutes of the Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group held on 9 November 2020.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group held on 9 November 2020.

73/LLP PARKING STRATEGY UPDATE

Mr S Lakin gave a verbal update on proposals to regulate parking in various streets within West/East Leighton Buzzard Parking Study areas. The demands on parking across the whole of the area had increased with most households having two or three cars and the need for enforcement to stop inconsiderate and unlawful parking was urgent.

RESOLVED to note the information.

74/LLP SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

The Committee received from Sarah Ferguson, Deputy Director of Children's Services a verbal update on how Central Bedfordshire Council was progressing its Schools for the Future Programme. Discussions were taking place with the schools to ascertain what schools in Leighton Buzzard would look like in the future and how to expand schools to meet housing growth in the town. Collaboration with schools was the key to forming a plan to move forward before consultation could take place.

Questions were raised regarding sustainability options for school development, provision of a specialist SEND facility nearer to Leighton Buzzard, continuous parental preference and the issues with congestion and travel arrangements if schools are amalgamated or new schools built. It was confirmed a detailed highways assessment was being undertaken to look at parking and travel around schools and different ways of solving the congestion problems.

The Committee agreed that the move from 3 tier to 2 tier would need careful consideration and consultation with schools should be encouraged with a clear message for parents being crucial.

Thanks were given to Sarah Ferguson for her update and the Committee look forward to her returning once a plan has been formulated and presented to the Executive.

RESOLVED to note the report.

75/LLP INFORMAL TOWN CENTRE MEMBERS' GROUP INTRODUCTION AND UPDATE

- (a) An update was given to the Committee by the Informal Members' Group whose focus was Land South of the High Street. There was a frustration at the length of time being taken for the development to get underway and it should be progressed as a high priority for the town by both the town council and Central Bedfordshire Council. Two areas of discussion were developed at the working party one of timeframe and the other about the inclusion of a community facility. Members agreed this work should continue and a Task and Finish Group be formed.
- (b) After discussion, the Committee agreed to the formation of a Task and Finish Group to work with relevant CBC officers to help drive forward the South Side development reporting back to the Partnership Committee.

RESOLVED to form a Task and Finish Group to work with the relevant CBC Officers to drive forward the South Side development by

interchange of views and further research particularly the Community Facility and report back to the Partnership Committee. The members of this group would be Councillors Morris, Harvey, Owen, Palmer and Spurr with Stephen Mooring and Sam Caldbeck from Central Bedfordshire Council.

It was proposed and seconded that in order to continue the meeting past 2200 hours, Standing Order 3(x) be suspended for a maximum of thirty minutes.

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 3(x) for a maximum of thirty minutes.

76/LLP **PARTNERSHIP PROJECT LIST**

The Committee received a report to seek the support of the Partnership Committee to lobby on behalf of the Parish in raising the profile of any projects as set out within the Leighton-Linslade Partnership Project List.

RESOLVED

(a) That where considered relevant and appropriate, to seek the support of the Partnership Committee to lobby on behalf of the Parish in raising the profile of any project(s) as set out within the Leighton-Linslade Partnership Project List.

77/LLP **INTERIM CBC UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee received an interim update report from Central Bedfordshire Council on matters relating to pedestrianisation of the High Street, Taxi relocation and COVID-19 Business Support relief and grants.

A concern was raised regarding taxis in the town centre. The idling needs enforcement and the number of taxis queueing should be monitored. Also the cleanliness and condition of the interior of the vehicles was below par. Members all agreed that the idling needed to be controlled by enforcement as without it nothing would change.

A question was raised regarding the pedestrianisation of the High Street for a trial period of 18 months. Is this a temporary trial or an experimental order and what is the plan for a consultation? There was frustration that the benches promised for the High Street had not been installed as promised in July and the entry bollard at the end of the High Street not put in place with keys available for emergency services to access if needed.

Steve Lakin advised the Committee the ETRO was for 18 months and any feedback during this time should go to the Traffic Management team then a decision would be made on whether to make the order permanent or revert to how it was previously.

RESOLVED to note the report

78/LLP COMMUNITY FORUM UPDATE

The Committee were informed that the Youth Consultation had been put on hold since the beginning of lockdown and would not be restarted until the middle of next year once restrictions had eased.

RESOLVED to note the information.

79/LLP UPDATES FROM CO-OPTED COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(a) The Committee received a report giving Committee guidelines for co-opted members and confirmed existing co-opted members had been contacted in mid-November to advise of the intent to propose removal of the agenda item and offer some guidance.

RESOLVED to endorse Committee guidelines for co-opted members.

(b) Gennaro Borelli LB First informed the Committee his organisation with support from the Town Council had launched the Business Directory Website with a hundred businesses listed and moving forward to add more and e-commerce platform. Also the Small Business Saturday event had received good feedback and created a great atmosphere in the town.

RESOLVED to note the information.

80/LLP STANDING ITEMS

The Committee were given an update on the Architectural Lighting Scheme. The planning process was continuing for Waterbourne Walk and it was hoped to implement the scheme early next year. However, the up lighting for the church spire would not go ahead as bats are active in the area and they are protected species.

The National Market Trader Federation representatives had attended the Cultural and Economic Services Meeting on 7 December and stated how impressed they were with Leighton Buzzard Market and how it has managed to trade over the last months.

Thanks were given particularly to Vivien Cannon, Head of Cultural and Economic Services and the Markets Team for their hard work enabling the market to trade and the complimentary praise received from the NMTF representatives.

RESOLVED to note the information.

81/LLP COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

- (a) The Committee received and considered the objectives and work plan for the municipal year 2020-2021.

RESOLVED to note the information.

- (b) The Committee received and considered a recommendation from the Leighton-Linslade Town Council Extraordinary Meeting held 23 November 2020 that S106 developer contributions be a standing agenda item at meetings of the Partnership Committee. Sarah Hughes, CBC requested that questions on S106 need to be more specific and asked in advance of a meeting to enable information to be gathered in time.

RESOLVED that S106 developer contributions be a standing agenda item at meetings of the Partnership Committee.

82/LLP **BUDGET REPORT**

The Committee received a brief report regarding the current year budget to date.

The members agreed that any unused money be put into earmarked reserves to assist with future Community Forum activities as needed.

RECOMMENDED to the Town Council:

- (a) **the retaining of an annual budget for the Community Forum activities at £500 per annum for the financial year 2021/2022.**
- (b) **to carry forward unused funds from budget year 2020/2021 into the earmarked reserves code (960/9034) to assist in the delivery of future Community Forum activities.**

The meeting closed at 10.20 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2020.

Chair

4 FEBRUARY 2021