

## **BACKGROUND**

Leighton-Linslade is the largest town in Central Bedfordshire with a current population of around 42,000 which will increase substantially in future years with housing development taking place to the east of the present settlement. One notable deficit in the facilities available to residents is the lack of a versatile central community facility. There are numerous individual facilities (some public, some private) such as the Library Theatre, the Astral Park sports facility (which can be used for moderate sized meetings and events with bar and limited catering facilities, on the outskirts of the town), church halls, school halls etc.

Council Members have identified various uses which are felt to be inadequately catered for at present and which a larger and central facility might meet to a greater extent than is possible at present, including a performing arts facility, start up and small business office space, a heritage and museum centre, community meetings, conference facility, a café, exhibition space etc.

There is now the opportunity to pursue the possibility of a facility which could meet at least some of these purposes as redevelopment takes place of a Town Centre site known as Land South of the High Street extending to some 2½ hectares. This will involve mixed uses including commercial, residential, leisure, and public space.

Clearly, any proposal will have to be realistic and practical taking into account likely capital cost, funding possibilities, likely income streams that would be generated, staffing requirements, overall running costs etc.