



COUNCIL

Date: 29 November 2021

Title: Partnership Project List review

Purpose of the Report:

To provide background context in respect of the development of the Partnership Project List and its review.

Contact Officer:

Mark Saccoccio, Town Clerk

Sarah Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk

Corporate Objective/s	LLTC Five Year Plan – Aim 2: To recognise and embrace the growth of our community and to seek to influence the local authority and partners to ensure adequate infrastructure provision.	
Implications:		
Financial	No	LLTC has no financial resources in respect of the PPL aspirations.
Human Resources	No	
Operational/Service delivery	No	PPL aspirations fall outside the Town Council's core responsibilities and functions.
Procedural/Legal	No	LLTC as a parish council has few legal powers in respect of PPL aspirations.
Risk/Health and Safety	No	
Environmental Aims	Yes	Some aspirations on the PPL list are linked to environmental and sustainability agendas.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Should members be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 To consider amendments to the adopted Partnership Project List (attached as Appendix A) in accordance with the review terms set out at 2.12 below and with consideration to the recommendations set out at 3.2 and 3.4.**

2 CONTEXT

- 2.1 In 2007, the Town Council published its Big Plan for the town following months of extensive public consultation. The Big Plan was intended as “a comprehensive statement of improvements local people would like to see in the town over the next twenty years”. The Plan was divided into 14 areas including planning, green infrastructure, traffic and transport, health and social care, town centre, sport and leisure, culture, children and young people. It summarised existing infrastructure, issues in the town, planned developments and outlined 300 proposals (42 in respect of traffic and 48 in respect of greening), including examples such as:

“improve access between the town and surrounding parishes”

“provide safe drop zones close to local schools”

“promote the provision of a local child development centre”

“secure a reduction in the incidence of vandalism”

Some 2,500 local people took part in the development of the Big Plan.

- 2.2 An updated Big Plan II was published in 2011 as the town plan for 2011-2017. The 14 areas became 13, with education and jobs merged into one category. Big Plan II carried forward 80 proposals including many from Big Plan, which were considered in greater depth by a sub-committee during 2012-2013.
- 2.3 Towards the end of the designated lifespan of Big Plan II, the Town Council began to consider next steps. A report to Council on 11 January 2016 summarised that 29 Big Plan II proposals had been completed, 10 remained ongoing and 41, while supported, could not ultimately be delivered without the involvement of other parties.
- 2.4 As a result of this analysis, the Council resolved to change its approach by creating its own Three Year Plan for 2015-2018, focusing on 41 projects and objectives which it could deliver within its own finances, resources and legal powers. To underpin a delivery focused agenda, a 5 Year Financial Plan was created; its purpose to provide clarity in the way projects were to be funded. In doing so, to forecast with greater accuracy the impact capital spend projects would have on council funds.
- 2.5 This change in approach led to the successful delivery of a number of goals over the relatively short three-year period, with examples including:
- Expanding the reach and scope of the TACTIC centre through a hub and spoke model

- Establishing a thriving Best Bar None scheme to support the night time economy
- Implementing a range of cemetery service improvements including a fully self-funded mausoleum
- Supporting organisations providing services to young people in the town with the £150k Youth Promise grant
- Moving towards largely paperless meetings through investment in technology

2.6 The success of the Plan for 2015-2018, with many objectives achieved, led to the development of the next Town Council Plan for 2019-2024. This was intended to be a living document but one which provided a framework for the next Council administration. Having scoped out the overarching principles of the plan, resident feedback was sought through a face-to-face survey conducted in the autumn of 2018.

2.7 Following approval by the public of the four areas of focus, the Plan for 2019-2024 was adopted in January 2019. Despite the impact of the pandemic over the last eighteen months, some 11 of the 49 projects have been completed with several others underway. Examples include:

- the creation of a town ranger service
- town centre wi-fi (including footfall monitoring)
- creation of the living history trail
- on-going investment in the street market
- investment in outdoor gym equipment within our parks
- addressing the older persons agenda through a dedicated officer resource
- refurbishment of Pages Park pavilion
- expansion of the memorialisation services
- changing pod facility in Parson's Close
- on-going investment in the way we communicate with our community
- customer services strategy
- upgrade of cctv to our parks
- renewed the Council's Gold accreditation status as an exemplar council within the parish council sector
- the declaration of a climate emergency

2.8 In recognition that more strategic, larger scale projects and aspirations could not be delivered by the Town Council alone, the Partnership Project List (based on the previous evidence from Big Plan and the later 2018 survey) was later developed in 2019 and endorsed by the Town Council in September 2020.

2.9 The naming of the document referred to the fact that the aspirations contained in the List could only be achieved by partnership working with other parties, including but not limited to, the local authority. Given the lack of direct control

the Town Council has in the delivery of many of those projects found on the partnership list, it was considered pragmatic to separate them out. In doing this, the Town Council could not be held to account (by its parishioners) over projects which it had little to no control in their delivery. In essence, the Partnership Project list was considered a lobbying list to be drawn to the attention of key partners.

Sharing the Partnership Project list

- 2.10 The List was presented to the Partnership (Joint) Committee at its meeting on 10 December 2020 and was endorsed thereafter. The hope being that Central Bedfordshire Council can use the project list to understand and influence the timely delivery of said projects either within the principal authority or when discussing project priorities with third party providers. In particular leveraging monies from those developments where the principal authority had entered a legal agreement with developers.
- 2.11 At its meeting held on 15 April 2021, discussions surrounding the future provision of open space leisure facilities to serve southern Leighton Buzzard was considered by the Partnership Committee. Based on the outcomes of the discussions, Members believed the Partnership Project List was not up to date and therefore requested that officers bring forward proposals for its review.
- 2.12 In June 2021, Partnership Committee received a report outlining a proposed review process through the Town Council standing committees and resolved the following:
- The review will focus on removal of outdated objectives and aim to provide direction in terms of priority projects. Any additions to the list will only be permitted further to an endorsement by either Leighton Linslade Town Council or Central Bedfordshire Council and/or where clear evidence of public consultation can be demonstrated.*
- 2.13 It was further agreed to seek information from officers at Central Bedfordshire Council to better understand the scope of S106 legal agreements and whether any S106 monies might be available to help progress any of the aspirations contained within the Partnership Project List (“PPL”).

3. UPDATE

- 3.1 Whilst the PPL review was an agenda item for all standing committees during the September meeting cycle, it proved to be the case that insufficient time was available during those meetings to allow for adequate discussion and debate.
- 3.2 At its meeting held 6 September 2021, the Grounds and Environmental Committee made the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDED to Council to remove numbers 24 (Provision of a clubhouse and launching site for Canoe Club) and 26 (a woodland cemetery, adventure play area, campsite and parking at Rushmere Country Park) from the Partnership Project List.

- 3.3 Subsequently, meetings of the three further standing committees put forward a recommendation that the List be reviewed by Council on 29 November 2021.
- 3.4 One additional recommendation has come forward from the Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group meeting held on 2 September 2021: **that the actions identified in the Tiddenfoot Waterside Park Masterplan (2013) be included in the Partnership Project List.**
This is in accordance with the review terms outlined in 2.6 as an endorsed document by Central Bedfordshire Council.
- 3.5 In terms of S106 monies, limited information has been received to date. S106 agreements for the development to the east of the town are primarily relating to highways (provision of eastern relief road) and education (provision of new schools). Whilst S106 legal agreements and a town/parish summary can be found on the Central Bedfordshire Council website, it is anticipated that further information will be brought to the Partnership Committee meeting on 2 December in terms of how the town council can gain more detailed understanding and involvement in the S106 process.

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 The Town Council's Five Year Plan and the Partnership Project List have been developed by building on many years of good work in engaging with the local community. Recent informal and anecdotal feedback suggests many residents' aspirations remain the same as in the development of the 2007 Big Plan (for example, securing cycling improvements, a heritage centre, a community hospital or a multi-purpose centre suitable for a range of performing arts).
- 4.2 The most recent parish wide survey conducted in 2018 found that on-going improvements in our parks and open spaces was a priority. Thereafter, a vibrant market considered important. Objectives already embedded within the Town Council's 5 Year Plan.
- 4.3 The survey reinforced those aspirations found on the Partnership Project list namely police resources, more activities for young people, vibrant town centre and road improvements were high priorities. Projects over which the Town Council has little influence.

- 4.4 The creation of two plans provides clarity in terms of those projects for which the Town Council is responsible and otherwise. The 5 Year Plan is underpinned by the Town Council's 5 Year Financial Plan which provides financial certainty that the projects can be delivered.
- 4.5 In contrast, the Partnership List is presently considered a lobbying list only given the fact that the Town Council cannot deliver any of the projects in isolation. Given the uncertainties around delivery timescales and the considerable financial costs, no budget has been allocated by the Town Council for this purpose.

End.