

Planning

Context:-

The Parish of Leighton-Linslade has been the subject of rapid growth over the last decade and this is expected to continue. Over the past 13 years, at least 4,000 new homes have been delivered with a further 3,000 the subject of detailed planning applications and now starting to be delivered and occupied. In addition, 2 key commercial sites within the town centre have been the subject of master planning exercises culminating in the creation of development briefs to help guide future development. Parish population has now risen to over 40,000.

Identifying and Representing Community Views on Planning Matters:-

As a standing committee, the Planning and Transport Committee has a membership of 9 councillors. It is serviced by the Deputy Town Clerk and the Town Clerk who is a Chartered Town Planner with over 20 years of experience within both the public and private sectors. Meeting on a 3 week cycle, its primary purpose is to provide the parish with the opportunity to engage in and respond to planning and transport matters. The Committee welcomes public participation. Standing Agenda Item 4 – Questions and Statements provides opportunity to address the committee directly or if preferred otherwise, community views can be made in writing.

In the last 12 month period, the Planning Authority (Central Bedfordshire Council) has received 257 planning applications pertinent to this parish and of those, representations were made by committee on 48 of them. Periodically the committee reviews the decisions made by the planning authority compared with the recommendations put forward by the committee on behalf of the Town Council.

When invited to do so, the Town Clerk and/or the Chair or another member of the Committee has made verbal representations to the Development Management Committee on behalf of the committee. Formal consultation responses have also been made on emerging policy issues pertinent to the planning authority area that include the emerging Local Plan. Furthermore, representations were also made to neighbouring authorities (Aylesbury Vale) with councillor attendance at various meetings and hearings.

At its disposal, the committee has earmarked reserves which may be used toward delivery of highway projects including resident parking schemes.

Planning For Real and Neighbourhood Planning:-

Adopted in 2007, the parish created the “Big Plan”; a document setting out a vision and projects for the town over the coming decade. The subject of extensive public consultation, this was reviewed with the creation of a second generation Big Plan II which was adopted as the parish plan for 2011-2016. Of those projects not realised, these have been subsumed into the Town Council’s Five Year Plan or Partnership Project list.

Whilst the parish welcomes the principle of Neighbourhood Planning (Localism Act 2011), the power to invoke has not been taken yet given the level of growth taking place within and adjoining the parish (this position will be reviewed periodically).. The Town Council continues to lobby for the inclusion of new housing development to the east of the town to be included

within the parish boundary, for reasons of community cohesion. The Council continues to seek to work with the planning authority on the delivery of projects funded by Section 106 developer contributions. We anticipate that commuted sums as well as land will be transferred directly to the parish in respects of future community and formal play provision (derived from land east development 2,500 houses). By doing this, we can deliver what the parish wants rather than what it is believed to want.

In September 2019 the Town Council gave consideration to the potential of Neighbourhood Planning as a means to drive forward the long-anticipated development of land south of the High Street. Central Bedfordshire Council as the authority responsible for planning and business/regeneration is leading on this project, with progress reported back through the Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee (joint committee between LLTC and CBC).

The Town Council continues to consider how best the infrastructure deficit in the town could be addressed and seeks to work with the local authority to address the need for additional cemetery land, additional allotment land, additional health facilities and additional leisure facilities. The Town Council is aware of further needs and wishes identified by the community such as a cultural and arts centre, museum or heritage centre and athletics track and is committed to working in partnership with the local authority and other bodies towards further investigation of these potential projects.

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