

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors C Palmer (Chair)
 T Morris
 S Owen
 E Wallace
 G Perham (CBC) – substituting for D Bowater
 V Harvey (CBC)

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 S Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk

Joining remotely S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager,
 Central Bedfordshire Council
 A Perry, Central Bedfordshire council
 G Borelli LB First

Members of the public: 0
Members of the press 0

173/LLP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Dodwell, F Kharawala, S Hemmings, K Ferguson and D Bowater (substituted by Councillor G Perham) and from Councillor T Stock (Central Bedfordshire Council).

174/LLP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harvey declared a personal interest as a member of South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth and Councillor Palmer as a member of the Friends of Leighton Linslade in Bloom.

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

There were no questions from the public.

176/LLP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) The Committee received the draft minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 16 June 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 16 June 2022 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

(b) The following updates were given and noted from the previous meeting.

164/LLP: it was noted that officer S Caldbeck had now changed roles at Central Bedfordshire Council. The Committee requested an update on his replacement on the place delivery team as this would have an impact on some work streams including the land south of the High Street.

A verbal update was given following the question raised previously about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Central Bedfordshire Council would need to submit a high level investment plan in order to access the Government funding. The plan was designed to reflect the themes of the local authority vision and strategy, i.e.: communities and place, local business support and people and skills. Funding would be allocated over three years. Once Government had approved the investment plan, a local partnership group would be set up to lead administration of the fund. The first draw down of funds was anticipated in October 2022.

177/LLP CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL YOUTH SURVEY

By invitation, A Perry of Central Bedfordshire Council gave an overview of the young people's survey from Autumn 2021, which had focussed on how young people accessed information on activities and support and whether there were any potential barriers.

Although young people generally said they found it difficult to find out about activities, this was a lesser issue in Leighton-Linslade, possibly reflective of the work of the Teenage Advice and Information Centre. Barriers included confidence in meeting new people and cost. In some areas transport was an issue but this was less so in Leighton-Linslade. Most young people accessed information through their schools. Mental health services were in high demand.

Young people expressed a wish to engage in both face to face and virtual activities and interests were expressed in sports, arts and gaming.

As next steps, Central Bedfordshire Council was sharing findings with partners and commissioned providers and developing a business case to develop a virtual youth hub, which if progressed might include partner

involvement. Support for the 16+ age group was also a priority and the declining number of available apprenticeships was a concern.

The committee suggested further face to face engagement with young people by way of small focus groups or going into schools. It was important to reach not only the “hard to reach” but also the average young people.

It was confirmed that Central Bedfordshire Council was using a range of tools to reach out to young people including outreach such as visiting traveller homes. The aim was to collate information and evidence to help access funding for appropriate schemes as it became available.

178/LLP TOWN COUNCIL 55UP PROJECT

Town Council officers gave a verbal presentation on the “55UP” project in Leighton-Linslade, which included a range of schemes designed to alleviate isolation and loneliness in older people. The town council was maximising resources by supporting existing providers to enhance the overall offer for older people and would continue to investigate synergies between projects.

The 55UP project to date had included two tranches of grant funding to appropriate organisations, a specific grant to the Helping Hands group to create a website so help raise awareness of their services, the funding of a 4,000 print run of an Information Booklet for older people (created by volunteers) and the implementation of a digital support helpline. The helpline aimed to target digital isolation, with volunteer “digital champions” able to provide help either by telephone or face to face in a public setting. This might for example include teaching someone to make a virtual call or set them up to shop for groceries online. The project was slowly gaining momentum with increasing numbers of both volunteers and beneficiaries.

A new scheme launching on 1 September would see a “Community Agent” operating part time to help vulnerable or isolated residents by signposting to existing sources of support. This might be directing someone to another agency or helping them to access services such as a disabled parking badge. An existing scheme in Biggleswade had demonstrated positive results with people citing increased independence and increased connection with the community.

Future work included investigation about the potential for lending tablet devices and looking at day services offered to older people. It was suggested that Central Bedfordshire Council might be able to share relevant data/evidence and that the town council might wish to give a presentation on the project to a wider audience.

179/LLP CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received the six-monthly update report from Central Bedfordshire Council on a range of services provided in the town.

Information regarding community safety, employment and skills, commercial property enquiries, leisure facilities, green spaces, highways, schools, environmental concerns and sustainability was provided.

It was noted that A-level results in Central Bedfordshire had improved since 2019 and that in respect of the Schools for the Future programme, although population statistics were under constant review, no further feasibility work was likely before 2023 for the Leighton-Linslade cluster.

The construction of Marigold House care facility was well underway and due to open in Spring 2023. The contractor had been providing some social values projects over the summer period including visits to schools and the building of compost bays for a local volunteer group.

A concern was raised regarding the recent issue of radios to local shops, linking to the police and CCTV control room, as it appeared reception was poor, possibly linked to the digital signal.

The committee was advised that lots of work was being undertaken regarding the cost of living crisis and the potential impact on the council and communities. An extension to the ward councillor grant scheme had been agreed. A question was asked as to whether information could be provided to businesses to help them mitigate against rising costs, particularly for energy.

A question was asked about availability of community spaces and in particular, premises for the Leighton-Linslade Homeless Service and Leighton Boxing Club.

180/LLP COLLABORATION WITH TOWN COUNCIL

The Committee received a report with commentary from Central Bedfordshire Council officers regarding areas requested for greater collaboration by Leighton-Linslade Town Council (as discussed at the previous meeting of the committee).

It was felt that the report included some complex issues and queried how these could be progressed in a careful, considered manner. It was suggested that there were additional matters not included in the report (such as High Street cleaning and maintenance of town centre planters) and questioned whether a more formal mechanism was needed to enable greater liaison between officers of both councils.

RESOLVED:

- To seek assurance from Central Bedfordshire Council Directors that their officers were in communication with the Town Council on the matters outlined in the report as well as any other areas of collaboration.
- To keep the report under review and to receive an update in six

months' time.

181/LLP STANDING ITEMS

There were no updates from town councillors or the community forum.

Taxis: Central Bedfordshire Council was encouraging the reporting of any issues so that these could be further investigated.

High Street: an informal meeting was due to take place with Councillor I Dalgarno later in the month regarding the High Street. The need for greater speed on town centre matters was expressed.

Land south of the High Street: the Town Council had commissioned some work which was underway and a next meeting of the working party was tentatively scheduled for October. A request was made as to whether relevant data/evidence held by Central Bedfordshire Council could be shared. It was agreed that joint understanding our communities was key for both councils and noted that CBC would be undertaking a residents' survey later in the year.

Central Bedfordshire Councillors: Councillor Harvey advised that several highways policies, information on moving traffic offences and information on highways customer reporting was due to be considered by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 September.

Co-opted members: G Borelli of LB First advised that the group had been supporting local businesses with updating their details and product offer on the website: www.shoplocallb.co.uk

182/LLP COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

The Committee received and considered the objectives and work plan for the municipal year 2022-2023.

RESOLVED to note the information.

183/LLP ITEMS FOR REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

None.

184/LLP FIRST QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING

The Committee noted the £500 Community Forum budget for 2022-23 was as yet unspent.

RESOLVED to note the budget monitoring report for the first quarter.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2022.

Chair

8 DECEMBER 2022