

**LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.30 PM**

Present: Councillors            C Palmer (LLTC) (Chair)  
   S Hemmings (LLTC)  
   S Owen (LLTC)  
   V Harvey (CBC)  
   E Wallace (CBC) - joined 2020  
   K Ferguson (CBC)

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

Joining remotely:                S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager,  
   Central Bedfordshire Council  
   Cllr A Dodwell (CBC)  
   G Borelli, LB First  
   T Humber, Community Forum

Members of the public:        1  
Members of the press         0

**185/LLP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bowater, T Morris and F Kharawala.

**186/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.

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

There were no questions from members of the public.

## **188/LLP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- (a) The Committee received the draft minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 1 September 2022.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 1 September 2022 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.**

- (b) Updates from the previous meeting:

176/LLP: it was understood that recruitment was currently underway in the place delivery team at Central Bedfordshire Council.

176/LLP: there was no update regarding the UK Shared Prosperity fund. It was hoped there would be an update by the following meeting of the committee.

178/LLP: it was noted that the Town Council's Community Agent scheme and tablet device loan scheme had now launched as part of the 55UP project. In addition, the Central Bedfordshire Development and Commissioning Manager had attended a recent meeting to give an update in respect of day centre services for older people and the Marigold House care home project. An open invitation was issued to Central Bedfordshire officers to give input into the work of the Town Council's Older Persons Sub-Committee going forward.

180/LLP: a view was expressed that a clearer mechanism for liaison between officers of both councils could lead to greater progress on some projects

## **189/LLP TOWN COUNCIL REPORT**

The Town Clerk introduced a report summarising Town Council core services and projects and giving updates since the previous report in June 2022. Going forward, it was anticipated that the report would be provided every six months, alternating with the Central Bedfordshire update report.

Recent projects of note included the completion of an inclusive adventure play facility in Parson's Close Recreation Ground, the development of baseline carbon footprint data for town council operations, a celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Children's Trail which had included a temporary "trail in the trees" in Linslade Recreation Ground, the full return of the community events programme post-Covid and the continued success of both the 55UP projects as well as the Teenage Advice and Information Centre (TACTIC).

The Committee expressed thanks for a comprehensive report and a number of questions were asked, including the status of the Town Council

application for Rural Match Fund monies towards the widening of the diagonal footpath/cycle path in Parson's Close Recreation Ground and a request for help from the principal authority to source additional burial land given the limited supply remaining within the parish.

## **190/LLP COST OF LIVING**

A joint presentation was given by officers in respect of the response from both councils to the Cost of Living pressures being experienced by residents.

Data held by Central Bedfordshire Council suggested that 15% of households within the administrative area were considered deprived and likely to be struggling already, with over a third of households likely to start experiencing significant challenges as a result of the cost of living crisis.

Central Bedfordshire Council had received three rounds of Household Support Fund monies since October 2021 which had been used to support residents with food, energy and water bills and vouchers for families with children eligible for free school meals every school holiday. Vulnerable households eligible for support included carers, care leavers, those eligible for free school meals and those claiming council tax/housing benefit support. In addition, significant funding had been made available to third party organisations including food banks and Citizens Advice.

Additional sources of support included the Holiday Activity Fund, a Home Improvements Fund and a Crisis Fund which was being administered by the nine children's centres in the area.

All Central Bedfordshire libraries and leisure centres had been designated warm spaces.

Both Councils were sharing information with dedicated web pages for cost of living and keeping warm, provision of posters/leaflets, networking with the voluntary/community sector organisations and use of social media.

The Town Council had agreed an additional £10,000 Cost of Living grant fund in October 2022 and this was being used to support organisations providing additional services to residents over the winter. Schemes approved to date included two warm spaces and the provision of free food to families in need.

The Community Agent operating for 14 hours per week, funded by the town council and working through Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, was a key local contact to signpost people to relevant sources of help and advice. 13 residents had been helped with 17 issues during the first few weeks of the scheme, which was now becoming more widely publicised and recognised.

The slides would be circulated and a request was made for contextual

information, such as the percentage Central Bedfordshire families being helped.

T Humber advised that the Diocese of St Albans was also making some funding available for provision of warm spaces.

The Committee expressed thanks for the presentation and acknowledged the importance of the work being done to support residents at this difficult time.

## **191/LLP COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN**

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

It was noted that the Committee had requested an update on the Partnership Project List (document last updated November 2021). Progress had been made in several areas, which had been documented in different update reports and therefore work would be done to amalgamate this information.

It was proposed that the meetings currently scheduled for February and April 2023 be replaced with a single meeting in March 2023, to allow time for this work to be undertaken as well as avoiding the pre-election “purdah” period.

**RESOLVED to note the information and to endorse that meetings currently scheduled for February 2023 and April 2023 be replaced by a meeting to be held in March 2023.**

## **192/LLP BUDGET**

The Committee noted its £500 Community Forum budget for 2022-23 remained unspent as Central Bedfordshire Council had taken on the youth survey work.

The Committee noted that the proposed budget for 2023-24 from the Town Council remained the same at £500.

## **193/LLP STANDING ITEMS**

(a) Taxis

Concerns were raised regarding the number of taxis idling in the town centre, use of the bus lane by taxis and the question of relocation of the taxi rank, following identification of a possible alternative location by the multi-

storey car park earlier in the year. It was suggested that this be a specific agenda item during 2023-24 and that a letter be written to Central Bedfordshire Council outlining concerns.

(b) Future of the High Street

A query was raised regarding when the current ETRO for the High Street would expire, noting that it was important discussions about the future of the High Street should take place as soon as possible.

(c) Land south of the High Street

A next meeting of the Town Council's South Side Working Party was pending confirmation of a date from the masterplanning consultant, but a tentative date of 9 January 2023 was included in the calendar of meetings.

(d) Updates from Councillors

Councillors advised that the recent engagement exercise on the Leighton-Linslade Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan had been well attended and that a meeting was due to take place between various parties to discuss the difficulties caused in the operation of the charter market by cars parking overnight in the High Street.

Councillor Harvey also advised she had been raising the question of winter gritting at Central Bedfordshire Council and understood the Chief Executive would be in touch with the Town Clerk about this.

(e) Updates from co-opted members

G Borelli of LB First spoke to thank the Town Council for its support with the recent Christmas Festival Weekend, which had been a tremendous success. He felt the standard of community events continued to improve and were both well organised and a testament to partnership working.

The recent Small Business Saturday event had been preceded by a visit from the national Small Business Saturday tour, due to Leighton-Linslade businesses being included in their top 100 small businesses. The team had visited several independent small businesses and been impressed by the positivity expressed by local business owners.

(f) Community Forum

T Humber of the Community Forum advised that there was little to update but that she would share the cost of living information with others.

**194/LLP ITEMS FOR REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

The Committee was reminded of the purpose of this item, which was to

provide a mechanism for escalation to Central Bedfordshire standing committees as and when appropriate, as provided for in the local authority's constitution.

Discussion took place regarding the Committee's purpose and terms of reference, with the suggestion that a review take place regarding its effectiveness and how this could potentially be improved. It was suggested that committee members be surveyed to provide meaningful feedback to inform further discussion.

It was noted that all the Central Bedfordshire joint committees shared terms of reference and therefore consideration would need to be given to how to take forward any review.

#### **195/LLP MEETINGS 2023-2024**

The Committee was advised of proposed meeting dates for municipal year 2023-24: Thursday 15 June 2023, Thursday 7 September 2023, Thursday 7 December 2023 and Thursday 21 March 2024.

**RESOLVED to note the proposed meeting dates for 2023-24.**

The meeting closed at 9.12 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2022.

Chair

9 MARCH 2023