

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF SOUTH SIDE WORKING PARTY
WEDNESDAY, 5 APRIL 2023 AT 2.00 PM

Present: Councillors R Goodchild
 V Harvey
 T Morris
 S Owen
 C Palmer (Chair)

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 S Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk
 Salmon, Head of Cultural & Economic Services

Members of the public: 0

56/SSWP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carberry and Dodwell and from P Brown of the Peppercorn Group.

57/SSWP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harvey declared a personal interest as a member of the South Beds Friends of the Earth.

58/SSWP QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 minutes per person; 15 minutes total)

There were no questions from members of the public.

59/SSWP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) The Committee received the minutes of the South Side Working Party meeting held on 13 March 2023.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the South Side Working Party meeting held on 13 March 2023 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

(b) Updates from the previous meeting: these would be covered during the rest of the agenda.

60/SSWP CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE

There were no representatives of Central Bedfordshire Council present.

It was noted that three councillors and two officers had had the opportunity

to attend an informal meeting with the Director of Place and Communities and the relevant Portfolio Holder on 23 March 2023, at which the Town Council's wish to work collaboratively in partnership with the local authority had been expressed. This had been followed up by an email sent by the Town Clerk.

61/SSWP CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE CONSULTATION REGARDING LAND SOUTH OF THE HIGH STREET

The working party had received copies of the Central Bedfordshire Council consultation document in respect of land south of the High Street, including both appendices and a copy of the feedback survey. The working party had also received a discussion document from Councillor Palmer for consideration.

The working party expressed positive views regarding collaborative working and increasing the vitality of the town centre, but also expressed concern about the format of the consultation which it was felt was confusing and included fairly closed questions.

It was agreed that the prospect of reduced town centre car parking was a concern and noted that a 2017 car parking report had recommended an additional 200 spaces be created – and that this had not taken into account the significant housing development inside and outside the parish.

It was agreed to ask the Town Clerk to draft a response to the consultation based on the points discussed, for further consideration by Policy & Finance Committee.

RECOMMENDED to the Policy & Finance Committee to consider recommending to Council approval of a formal response to the current Central Bedfordshire Council public consultation in respect of land south of the High Street.

62/SSWP ANY OTHER UPDATES & NEXT STEPS

The working party discussed the future of its work and agreed to make a recommendation in respect of the continuation of the working party.

RECOMMENDED to Council from May 2023 that the current South Side Working Party be continued and that non-councillor members with relevant knowledge and experience be co-opted to join, or to attend as guests when appropriate.

Councillor Goodchild introduced a report he had updated since the previous meeting regarding the process going forward and possible next steps. He advised he had some slides giving further detail which could be presented at a future meeting. Steps outlined included the formation by relevant parties of a development body, researching how to access

Government funding and sourcing information from local agents on the town's needs in respect of commercial, retail and residential development. Councillor Goodchild felt that a meeting should take place with landowners and noted that future costs might include valuation surveyor fees and development surveyor fees. Councillor Goodchild has offered to obtain fee proposals for a Valuation Surveyor and a Development Surveyor.

RESOLVED to delegate to the Town Clerk in conjunction with Councillor Goodchild authority to seek indicative fee proposals for a Valuation Surveyor and a Development Surveyor.

Councillor Harvey suggested asking Central Bedfordshire Council to clarify their requirements for social housing and supported/independent living accommodation and stressed that the group should not assume the proposed Peppercorn Centre would meet all the community needs. She suggested additional information such as a community needs assessment and MOSAIC profiling data could be useful to help access other potential funding sources.

A three-part proposal was put forward by Councillor Owen, which on voting was carried (Councillors Owen, Goodchild, Palmer and Morris in favour, Councillor Harvey against).

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee to authorise expenditure (amount to be confirmed) to undertake a public engagement exercise using consultants in respect of the two possible scenarios developed by Stephen George + Partners LLP for potential development on the land south of the High Street, to gather public opinion and comments.

RESOLVED that (subject to agreement by Council of the recommendation to continue the working party from May 2023), to plan a next meeting at which Councillor Goodchild would present a clearer sequence of processes for next steps.

RESOLVED to request the Town Clerk to seek from the Peppercorn Group trustees and to then circulate to the working party information on any potential sources of funding for the proposed Peppercorn Centre and any known restrictions or criteria on that funding.

Councillor Harvey proposed that in addition to this, a fourth part be added in respect of seeking information from Central Bedfordshire Council on its requirements for social housing and assisted/independent living accommodation in Leighton-Linslade. On being put to the vote this was carried (two in favour, three abstentions).

RESOLVED to request the Town Clerk to write to Central Bedfordshire Council seeking information on its requirements for social housing and assisted/independent living accommodation in Leighton-Linslade.

It was suggested that a high-level vision document would be needed for any public engagement exercise and that it would be important to reach all demographics including hard to reach groups.

A question was raised regarding residual land valuation but it was felt that this work could be done separately from, but concurrently with, the steps above.

The meeting closed at 2.54 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 5 APRIL 2023.

Chair

17 APRIL 2023