

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF SOUTH SIDE WORKING PARTY
MONDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2022 AT 10.30 AM

Present: Councillors R Goodchild
 V Harvey
 T Morris
 S Owen
 C Palmer (Chair)
 S Jones (substituting for A Dodwell)

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 S Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk
 M Jahn, Committee Officer
 Cllr A Gray (left at 11.55 hours)
 P Brown (Peppercorn Group)
 N Carnell (Arts Forum)

Joining remotely: Ian Haynes, Head of Grounds and
 Environmental Services
 Stuart Hancox, Consultant, Steven George and
 Partners

Members of the public: 1
Members of the press 0

34/SSWP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dodwell (substituted by Councillor Jones).

35/SSWP APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Palmer be appointed Chair of the working party. There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor C Palmer Chair of the South Side Working Party.

36/SSWP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Palmer declared a personal interest as a member of the Leighton Buzzard Society and the Leighton Buzzard Archeological and Historical Society and Councillor Harvey also declared a personal interest as a member of the South Beds Friends of the Earth.

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

There were no questions from members of the public.

38/SSWP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- (a) The Committee received the minutes of the South Side Working Party held on 23 May 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the South Side Working Party held on 23 May 2022 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

- (b) Updates from the previous meeting:

Minute reference 32/SSWP (Central Bedfordshire Council Updates): it was noted that although invited to attend today's meeting, no representative from Central Bedfordshire Council was present. Members agreed it was regrettable that no-one had attended the meeting and that a follow up letter should be sent to the Portfolio Holder with an invitation to the next meeting to encourage collaborative working regarding Land South of the High Street. No response had been received from previous letters to the Portfolio Holder at Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the strategic objectives for the Land South of the High Street, the timescale envisaged to achieve these objectives and what financial resources had been allocated to that work and no clarification had been received on whether any supplementary planning advice would be issued given that the review of the Local Plan was at least two years away.

Minute reference 33/SSWP (Stakeholder Updates): a question was raised regarding whose responsibility it was to commission a social infrastructure needs analysis of the town. It was confirmed this should be completed by Central Bedfordshire Council and Members agreed a letter should be sent from the Town Council to find out the intentions of CBC before continuing with our enquiries. It was also agreed a follow-up meeting should be pursued with Councillor Dalgarno as promised following the last meeting with him.

39/SSWP MASTERPLANNING UPDATE

Stuart Hancox from Steven George & Partners gave an update on the masterplanning exercise on Land South of the High Street to date. It was previously agreed at the meeting of Policy and Finance held on 25th July 2022 that a number of options were to be prepared by the consultant for consideration by the Working Party. The first option presented to this meeting was a mixed use residential and commercial scheme including an east-west spine road, car parking, pedestrian access and public spaces.

The powerpoint presentation would be forwarded to the Town Clerk to distribute to members of the group.

Discussion thereafter took place around uses to be included in further master plan options as agreed at previous working party meetings. The importance of a community use led masterplan to include leisure, cultural, arts, civic and possibly Health and Police functions (for example, by taking into account the Peppercorn Group's feasibility study) remained a primary objective for the working party which the master planner confirmed would be reflected in future options. A further question was raised around the future of the High Street and would the new spine road within land South of the High Street be wide enough for buses and delivery vehicles to use.

Concerns were raised regarding the number of suggested residential properties although it was understood there needed to be a balance to be able to cover costs of development and to aim to produce a favourable viability forecast via for example the Residual Land Value index. There was also a need to update the Plans to include the community spaces referred to above.

The option presented was primarily based on the Central Bedfordshire 2012 development brief for the site. The Plans would be revised by the consultant and re-presented. It was agreed to provide the consultant with further information on recent discussions about potential uses for the site as well as providing indicative space requirements. In the interests of expediting matters, this further information could be relayed by email rather than an additional meeting taking place.

The Group was advised that following a review of Land Registry land ownership, a number of restrictive covenants and rights of access were in place across the site and these would need further consideration. For example, an existing electricity substation might need to be relocated within the site. It was recognised that complications of this sort were bound to be met in such a town centre redevelopment.

Following the recent resolution made by Council on 10 October 2022 in respect of the future of the High Street (Mintue reference 369), the potential to expand the current brief to include the High Street was discussed and could be explored further.

Members agreed the masterplan was an excellent starting point which could now be revised and formulated into a plan which included all relevant needs of the community. Mr Hancox was thanked for his presentation and work to date on the scheme.

RESOLVED to note the information and to provide further detail to the masterplanning consultants to help inform additional proposals for land south of the High Street, to be presented as soon as possible.

40/SSWP CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE

No Central Bedfordshire updates had been received or relayed to the Town Council.

41/SSWP ANY OTHER UPDATES

All updates had been covered in the previous agenda items.

The meeting closed at 12:34 hours

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2022.

Chair