

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE
HELD VIA ZOOM ONLINE WEBINAR, ON THURSDAY,
15TH OCTOBER 2020**

Present: **BTC:** Cllr M North, Cllr H Ramsay, Cllr M Russell (Deputy Chairman), Cllr R Pullinger
CBC: Cllr M Foster (Chairman), Cllr I Bond, Cllr T Stock, Cllr F Firth, Cllr H Whitaker
BTC Town Clerk & Chief Executive: Peter Tarrant
BTC Administrator: Sian van der Merwe

In Attendance: **CBC Community Engagement:** Sarah Hughes
CBC Play Sites Officer: Naomi Henry
CBC Highways Asset Manager: Paul Middleton
CBC Head of Place Delivery: Stephen Mooring
CBC Head of Partnerships and Performance at Social Care, Health and Housing: Patricia Coker

Members of the public: **None**

Following a reminder to meeting attendees that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed to be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Chairman advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of the individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr S. Watkins (CBC).

2. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item – None declared.
- (b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – None declared.

3. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Members received the Minutes of the BJC meeting held on **9th July 2020**. The following amendments were ordered:

- Item 12: 3G pitch: change “will be added” to “could be added”.
- Item 14: Neighbourhood Plan:
 - Change “Committee” to “Group” and amend “the main concern relates to” to “Group is focused on”.
 - “The Group is waiting for a report from BRCC” – Cllr Russell asked Members to note that this report is not overdue, it will be coming in due course.
- Item 11: Transportation Interchange:
 - Add “The report is prepared by David Edwards as evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan”.
 - Under Town Centre Regeneration: We are not putting anything in place, change this to “we are looking at a design guide for shop fronts”.
 - Change “The Town Council feel” to “The Group feels that further design guides need to include...”.
 - remove “revisions for” and add “the planning of housing extensions, road widths and off-street parking”.
- Amend:

“The formal stage of the Neighbourhood Plan is a referendum where all electors in the Town can participate. Current government guidelines state that this can only happen in May 2021 because of the COVID-19 response. The Neighbourhood Planning Consultant has challenged Members of the NPC to have the draft Neighbourhood Plan in place by November 2020 in order to be in a position to hold the referendum in the New Year.”

To:

“The formal stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process is a referendum where all electors in the Town can participate. Current government guidelines state that this can not happen until May 2021. The Neighbourhood Planning Consultant has challenged NPG to have the draft Neighbourhood Plan ready to begin the formal process in the New Year.”

Subject to these amendments, Members **APPROVED** the Minutes of **9th July 2020**.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Matters arising from the Minutes of the BJC meeting held **9th July 2020**:

None.

5. SKATE PARK

CBC’s Play Sites Officer confirmed this was opened on 3rd July 2020 and a lot of positive feedback was received from users. There were issues with litter following the opening, one incident of graffiti was caught on the live CCTV and one complaint regarding late night usage was received. Subsequent regular police patrols have not highlighted any further issues. CBC have had a query over whether this will be enlarged in future, but there are no further plans for this.

Cllr H Whitaker asked for an update on Lilac Grove where it joins Chambers Way and improving the double yellow lines and parking nearby. CBC Highways Asset Manager agreed to ask for an update from The Highways Traffic Management Team Leader.

6. HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND UPDATE / TRANSPORTATION INTERCHANGE

CBC's Head of Place Delivery updated Members that significant work has been put into satisfying conditions of the Grant Determination Agreement, which then triggers the provision of funding for the project. The Agreement documents are currently with solicitors for signing and the next phase will be delivery of the 4 projects included in the works: Lindsell's Crossing, Schools Provision, Transportation Interchange and the Super Grid.

CBC are aware of discussions regarding the need to involve Town Council and BTC Councillors in the design process of the project and will be putting forward proposals for a working group to deliver timely notice to the Town Council and Councillors on key dates, briefing Members on progress and involvement in design elements. BTC Councillors requested a copy of the most recent plan of the Interchange. CBC are scheduled to present a full update to Councillors at a future Town Council Meeting.

Cllr Bond asked CBC's Head of Place Delivery to contact Network Rail relating to their ownership of the land and possibilities of use or an agreement of use of the land and to update him. CBC's Head of Place Delivery advised there has been a lot of work on this project over the years and clarity around why changes have been made and what is no longer feasible would help to inform Members on what is included in the current drawings and plans.

CBC's Head of Place Delivery confirmed that the power supply will be with UKPN and National Grid.

7. GARDEN COMMUNITY PROJECT

An update from CBC on this matter was deferred to the meeting of 21 January 2021.

Cllr Russell advised Members that Caroline Danby, CBC's Head of Strategic Growth, has oversight of this project. The Developers of the site, UK Regeneration, are involved in the Project Board, as is the new Town Clerk & Chief Executive of Biggleswade Town Council Peter Tarrant, who is now a Member of the Board.

8. HIGHWAYS UPDATES

CBC's Highways Asset Manager updated Members on various works:

- The Town Centre decluttering project is underway.
- Active Travel Fund (DfT): London Road – Provision to create a cycle link from Town Centre to the retail park and back will be installed together with localised patching works to improve the road and work is scheduled for late October 2020. Cllr H Whitaker asked for clarification of what effect this will have on designated parking spots along that road. CBC's Highways Asset Manager confirmed the first phase is temporary to assess feasibility and logistics, before proceeding to final implementation where decisions will be made on effects on the parking.
- The 2020/2021 annual work plan has been delivered and CBC are planning 2021/2022 works. There is a survey underway for footways across the whole of Bedfordshire and Members were invited to inform him of any localised footways issues, which will then be considered in conjunction with survey results.
- Kings Reach: Cllr Foster and CBC's Highways Asset Manager are in ongoing discussions with the Consortium on various issues raised by members of the Public and the Town Council. Vehicle activated speed signs have been installed on Baden Powell Way, along with intermittent police presence, which has resulted in noticeable slower speeds along that stretch of the road.

- Parking issues at Shortmead Street: CBC's Highways Asset Manager will look into this on behalf of CBC's Traffic Management (Highways Community Services) Team Leader's.
- Traffic signals: CBC's contracts team are investigating the maintenance works provision for these and funding for future traffic signal purchase has been built into the MTFP funding.
- Footway Scheme: Cedar Avenue scheduled works will be completed in the next few months by Ringways Jacob.
- Public Right of Way works near Edward Peake: Pathways around the school are being replaced with 2.5m wide asphalt paths. During construction some of the soil near the cemetery was found to be contaminated which necessitated additional works. The pathway can not continue all the way to Baden Powell Way at the present time as a result of close board fencing placed by Taylor Wimpey. The pathway at the front of Edward Peake will be done during half term so as to minimise disruption to the school.

Members requested information on matters:

- Pedestrian Crossing at Edward Peake: Cllr Bond advised CBC's Highways Asset Manager that the site for the proposed crossing is liable to flooding. CBC's Highways Asset Manager confirmed he is liaising with Lisa Wright in CBC's Traffic Management (Highways Community Services) Team Leader's absence and will update Members with his progress.
- Lawrence Road: Cllr Russell advised there is a significant parking issue on this road and asked if CBC's Highways Asset Manager could investigate if this could be turned into a one-way street or whether there are other ideas that could be implemented. Members will receive an update from CBC's Traffic Management (Highways Community Services) Team Leader.
- Cllr Foster has been in touch with the developer of Kings Reach about desire lines and has had responses from the developer which may not be in the best interests of the public. He asked for CBC's assistance to resolve this.

Additionally, some of the pathways on the recent part of the development have dropped kerbs which are inconsistent in height, making this a safety issue for residents, wheelchair and buggy users. He has provided the developer with this feedback but consideration by CBC would be welcome to resolve this. CBC's Highways Asset Manager advised that planning permission for Kings Reach was given about 12 years ago and CBC has undergone a number of changes both in personnel and their approach to planning issues and it is clear that some desire lines were not included in the plans. He is planning a walk around and will be liaising with the developer on these.

- Zebra crossing beacon - North of Edward Peake: Cllr Knight advised CBC's Highways Asset Manager this beacon, together with an adjacent street lamp, are out of order. Cllr Whitaker confirmed this is a UK Power Networks issue that has been pending for over a year and Tracey Harris, CBC's Assistant Director Environmental Services, has been dealing with them.

CBC's Highways Asset Manager updated Members on the following projects:

- CBC is procuring a Central Management System (CMS) for LED street lighting assets and lit signs which should be in place by the end of March 2021. This will automatically flag service and fault issues and allow for greater control and management of street lighting.
- CBC are rolling out a new fault reporting portal for the public for gullies and streetlights over the next 6 weeks. Customers will be able to see the progress and outcome of their report.

9. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE HUB

CBC's Head of Partnerships and Performance at Social Care, Health and Housing advised CBC have commissioned a Health Planner to progress work on this project. CBC and the CCG have reached an agreement with NHS Property Services regarding the lease for this hub.

Following questions from Members, CBC's Head of Partnerships and Performance at Social Care, Health and Housing gave an indicative opening time of around 2023 for this facility and clarified that this will be an integrated health, mental health and care hub that will allow the delivery of some types of out-of-hospital services to the local community to reduce the need to attend hospitals. This project requires involvement from Bedford and Lister hospitals, but this will be a primary-led and local service for the community.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Russell updated Members on current Neighbourhood Plan Group priorities:

- The first priority is a second round of public engagement for Autumn 2020.
- A project plan is being put in place and time scales indicate the referendum will not be held in May, but rather in October 2021.
- Items previously reported to Town Council and this Committee are still ongoing.
- The Group are looking to design a Transport Design Code (working with Central Bedfordshire Council), which will help to inform design code standards for roads and highways on future developments in Biggleswade to make them workable for residents.

11. COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

Members requested the following items be added to the Agenda for the January 2021 meeting:

- **CBC Biggleswade Asset Review:** Cllr Russell updated Members that CBC is doing a review of its assets in Biggleswade and felt the Joint Committee would benefit from an update from CBC at the January meeting as to how it sees its assets as being used in the future. The Town Council is trying to put a plan together for the Town Centre and its development towards being a Town Centre fit for purpose in a modern world and being able to identify CBC assets and what value they bring to the plan would be useful.
- **Stratton Business Park:** Cllr Whitaker would like to hear from CBC about the current and planned retail and business premises strategy in Biggleswade and CBC's wider business development plan including surrounding villages and what impact this will have on Biggleswade.
- **Schools for the Future:** Cllr Foster advised Members that the planned October consultation on Schools at the Executive Committee has been delayed to December 2020. This will need to come back to this Committee for discussion based on what is decided and will be on the agenda for the January meeting.
- **Parking Strategy**
- **Town Centre Regeneration**
- **Community Grant Scheme**

12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following resolution will be **moved** that it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are **excluded** whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

No Exempt Items

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Committee **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

Schedule of future meetings:

21 January 2021

22 April 2021

15 July 2021

14 October 2021

20 January 2022