

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE  
HELD VIA ZOOM ONLINE WEBINAR, ON THURSDAY,  
15<sup>th</sup> JULY 2021**

Present: **BTC:** Cllr M North, Cllr H Ramsay, Cllr M Russell (Deputy Chairman), Cllr M Knight  
**CBC:** Cllr M Foster (Chairman), Cllr I Bond, Cllr H Whitaker, Cllr T Stock, Cllr S Dixon  
**BTC Town Clerk & Chief Executive:** Peter Tarrant  
**BTC Professional Assistant:** Sian van der Merwe

In Attendance: **CBC Community Engagement Manager:** Sarah Hughes  
**CBC Head of Place Delivery:** Ingrid Hooley  
**CBC Highways Asset Manager:** Mark Eaton  
**CBC Communications Manager for Place Delivery:** Charlie Thomasson

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.

**PART A: ADMINISTRATION**

**ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Cllr M Foster was re-elected as Chairman of the Committee.

**ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Cllr Russell was re-elected as Vice Chairman of the Committee.

**WELCOME NEW COUNCILLORS**

The Chairman welcomed all Committee Members to the meeting.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

## **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Committee, through the Chairman, pertaining to items listed on the Agenda. Each speaker to be allocated a 3-minute speaking slot.

None.

## **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**The Schools for the Future consultation:** This consultation has had 128 responses from Biggleswade and is open between 23<sup>rd</sup> June and 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Members were asked to encourage participation in this consultation. Cllr Russell informed the Committee that a Schools for the Future presentation is being made to the Town Council on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

**Stratton Business Park Local Development Order:** This is a pre consultation for businesses already in situ on the Business Park to get feedback on how it has been used. The Local Development Order makes it easier for businesses to grow and expand by relaxing some planning restrictions so that they can do certain works without needing to apply for planning permission, the aim being to help businesses save time and money and support economic growth in the area.

Engagement in this pre-consultation has been limited to date and the Chairman asked Members to encourage businesses on the Park to contribute.

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

Members received the Minutes of the BJC Meeting held on **22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021**. The following amendments were requested:

- Cllr Dixon should be added to the attendee list.

Subject to this amendment being made, the Minutes of the BJC Meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 were **APPROVED**.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

From the Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021:

**Page 9: Highways Update on the Cycle Scheme:** Cllr M Knight stated the Highways Asset Manager at the last meeting had agreed to share information at this Committee meeting relating to why the only option on the cycle link scheme was narrowing the road, rather than being on the verge. The Chairman asked for this matter to be addressed by the current Highways Asset Manager.

## **PART B: PLACE – KEY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT UPDATES**

Ingrid Hooley, Head of Place Delivery updated the Committee on the following:

### **The HIF Project:**

- **HIF Grant Funding:**

Following the Grant Determination Agreement signed with Homes England in October 2020, seven grant claims were submitted totalling £1.9 million.

Two quarterly Monitoring Returns were submitted in January and April 2021 and Central Bedfordshire Council has had positive feedback from Homes England.

- **Transport Interchange:**

Planning for this proposed project has been approved. The Place Delivery Team at CBC will be hosting a workshop to look more widely how the interchange will affect transport and traffic movement in and around Biggleswade, as well as examining the transport links with new developments planned for Biggleswade in line with the Garden Communities Project.

- **Lindsell's Crossing Bridge:**

The Planning application for the bridge was submitted 6<sup>th</sup> May and concluded on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Objections received for this planning application appear to relate mainly to positioning of landscaping, which Central Bedfordshire Council feels can be addressed. The target date to submit this to the Development Management Committee is 30<sup>th</sup> July.

- **Schools for the Future:**

There was an Executive Paper approved on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The Consultation document was also approved by Homes England, and the Consultation was subsequently launched, with a completion date of 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

- **Biggleswade Sub-Station**

There is now a dedicated website for this consultation at <https://biggleswadesubstation.co.uk/> and Members have the option to up to the mailing list for direct updates on this project.

- **Home Building**

58 homes have been completed to date, 8 are affordable housing and 3 are affordable sale.

### **Garden communities / strategic housing sites**

- Additional funding of £150 000 has been secured for this project, to allow additional focus on:
  - Community Engagement for a sustainable transport corridor;
  - Energy Strategy;
  - Green infrastructure / biodiversity strategy.

Cllr Knight attended a recent informal meeting with other Town Councillors and Town Council Officers with UK Power Networks. Concerns were raised over burying of power lines leading to the substation UK Power Networks informed the meeting that the costs of burying those cables was not in the scope of that project. Cllr Knight's concern relates to how the project can proceed effectively without due consideration being given to how those cables will be buried. The Head of Place Shaping

confirmed that discussions were held around the pylons early on in the project, however the quotation for the burying and other necessary works to nearby pylons would not be funded through the Grant. The Developer was encouraged by CBC to approach the National Grid.

The current proposed site has potential archaeological importance and there needs to be considerable consultation between CBC and the Town Council before this goes to the Development Management Committee.

### **Health Hub**

Cllr Foster advised the Committee that the Heads of Terms will be agreed by December 2021, with a target date to present this to the Executive Committee in February 2022. There have been some delays in negotiations with NHS Properties Services as a result of the pandemic.

Members expressed the importance of knowing what services will be included in the hub, with the relevant Consultation with members of the public being given the opportunity to give feedback as a matter of priority. This feedback would then be submitted to the CBC Social Health and Housing Committee.

Cllr Stock clarified that once there is a better idea of what services will be included in the hub there will be a clearer sense of the funding needed, which will generally come from Central Bedfordshire's Medium Term Financial Plan. Cllr Russell reiterated the critical lack of medical facilities within Biggleswade.

### **Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan**

Peter Tarrant, Town Clerk & Chief Executive updated Members on progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. He extended thanks on behalf of the Town Council to Dave Chetwyn from Urban Vision Enterprise CIC and Jon Baldwin from Parrot Planning & Regeneration Ltd for their hard work and for getting the Neighbourhood Plan into the current form. The draft Plan was presented to the Strategy Group on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and this has now been presented to Central Bedfordshire Council for screening.

Aecom's government funded design guide has been sent to the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Group. The current draft plan will be presented to Council on 24 August 2021. Consultation with the public will open in September for a 6-week period.

It is estimated that the finalised Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council in November 2021, with Independent Examination to follow in January 2022 and a referendum to follow on or around May 2022.

The Town Clerk asked the Committee for clarity on when the Local Plan is likely to be adopted. Cllr Dixon informed the Committee that there is a Special Executive Committee review scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021 in anticipation of the Local Plan being signed off by the Secretary of State.

Cllr Russell stated that the Town Council will have little control over residential planning applications because of new permitted development rights. The Kings Reach layout has highlighted a number of development faults in terms of roads widths and layout and the Neighbourhood Plan is unable to deal effectively with these based on the fact that Central Bedfordshire Council's current design codes are what needs to be followed. The Aecom design guide will underpin the Neighbourhood Plan when it goes to the Independent Examination.

## **PART C: ECONOMY AND TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS**

### **Welcome Back Fund**

Simon Newton, Biggleswade Town Council's Place Shaping Manager advised the Town Council applied to the Welcome Back Fund and was granted £32,000. This funding will be invested in leaflet drops to businesses and housing, establishing a loyalty scheme, supporting the "Buy Biggleswade" scheme and hosting events within the Town Centre. The first event scheduled is "Sunday on the Square" on 15<sup>th</sup> August in a village fete style.

A number of gazebo's have been purchased through the Welcome Back Fund, which will be used for local business owners to market their products on the market.

Footfall records taken from a number of recent Saturday markets show a greater attendance at those markets, but long-term plans include additional lighting for evening events to stimulate attending evening events.

### **Mark Eaton, Highways Manager updated Members on Highways projects in Biggleswade:**

There are 40 plans in the Annual Highways Projects Future works to be carried out, including:

- Drove Road: Carriageway resurfacing from London Road to Auckland's Road in Q2;
- Swanbourne Road: Carriageway resurfacing the whole length of the road in Q1;
- Sun Street: Carriageway resurfacing from St. John's Road to Gladstone Close in Q3;
- Potton Road: Carriageway resurfacing works in Q2, the exact extent of which is yet to be confirmed.
- Biggleswade Road: Carriageway Retexturing: From Cross Roads to the Garden Centre in Q3.
- Broadmead: Footway Resurfacing – extent to be confirmed in Q3;
- Nursery Close: Footway Resurfacing – extent to be confirmed in Q3;
- Integrated transport schemes on Potton Road, High Street, London Road and Back Street;

Cllr Whitaker asked for an update on the Cycle Way Scheme and the Highways Manager agreed to update Members at the next meeting.

## **PART D – COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

### **Community Grants**

Sarah Hughes, CBC Community Engagement Manager updated the Committee on the progress of the Community Assets Grant Scheme. There was £200,000 available for this financial year and up to £25,000 was available for any local Community Infrastructure projects. Applications received to date totalled £430,000 and Biggleswade submitted two applications. All applications have been eligibility checked, those that are eligible will be scored before being sent to the Director of Finance for a final decision.

### **Terms of Reference and Co-option**

Sarah Hughes reminded the Committee that there is the facility to co-opt other members of the Community or other organisations within the Terms of Reference.

### **Work Plan**

Members were provided with a Work Plan in the agenda setting out matters covered in previous meetings and asked the Committee for their recommendations of other projects to be included in the

work plan for the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021 meeting. Cllr Whitaker suggested the plans for the sub-station. Cllr M Foster suggested Schools for the Future as well as the items list from this meeting.

## **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:**

14 October 2021

20 January 2022