

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE  
HELD IN PERSON AT THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE, THE OLD  
COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL ON THURSDAY,  
14<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 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 S Dixon  
**BTC Chief Executive & Town Clerk:** Peter Tarrant  
**BTC Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships:** Karim Hosseini  
**BTC Head of Place Shaping & Town Centre Management:** Philip Truppin  
**BTC Professional Assistant:** Sian van der Merwe

In Attendance: **CBC Community Engagement Manager:** Sarah Hughes  
**CBC Head of Place Delivery:** Ingrid Hooley  
**CBC Head of Partnerships & Performance:** Patricia Coker  
**CBC Highways Asset Manager:** Mark Eaton  
**CBC Communications & Customer Engagement Manager:** Jack Bowers  
**CBC Programme Enabling Manager – Delivery:** Sarah Morgan  
**CBC Principal Project Manager - Infrastructure Delivery:** Nick Shaw

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 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**

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Stephen Mooring.

#### **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**

None.

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

Members received the Minutes of the BJC Meeting held on **15<sup>th</sup> July 2021**. The following amendments were requested:

- Cllr T Stock should be listed as a CBC Ward Councillor;
- Cllr S Dixon was in attendance;
- Page 3 – “Cllr Russell stated that...” to be changed to read “The current proposed site has potential archaeological importance....”;
- Change “Aecom’s government funded design plans” to “Aecom’s government funded design guide”;
- Change “Cllr Russell stated that the Town Council has little control over planning applications because of permitted development rights.” to “Cllr Russell stated that the Town Council will have little control over residential planning applications because of new permitted development rights.”;
- Remove “adding a Charter Market to the Town Centre offer” since the charter Market is already in existence.

Subject to these amendments being made, the Minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021 were **APPROVED**.

### **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021:

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

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

#### **The HIF Project:**

- **Power Infrastructure:**

The consultation has now concluded and feedback shows that residents welcomed the investment into the power infrastructure for the area. All the feedback is being collated and this project will now proceed to the Planning Application stage.

- **Schools for the Future:**

The consultation has now concluded and the feasibility study is being done on the proposed site for the new school in Biggleswade. This project is running to time and to budget.

- **Transport Interchange:**

Nick Shaw, CBC's Principal Project Manager for Infrastructure Delivery, updated the Committee.

The following issues were raised at the Planning Stage:

- Placement of the Zebra crossing: this has been placed as close to the forecourt of the Interchange as possible in line with regulatory standards set down by the Department for Transport;
- The planned parking bay set out for pickup and drop off or coach layover has been amended. There is layover capacity created by Govia Thameslink for its planned rail replacement services. Mr Shaw will advertise, as part of the statutory consultation orders, the bay adjacent to the Church and add that as a pickup/drop off point only for 15 minutes with no return for 1 hr.

Cllr Bond stated that this application went to the DMC and because the zebra crossing was outside the Red Lion, DMC was unable to agree the zebra crossing issue as part of the Transportation Interchange Planning Application. Cllr Bond asked if Mr Shaw intended including advertising the provision of the zebra crossing in the consultation. Mr Shaw confirmed the Traffic Regulations Orders Consultations and Statutory Notices dictate the advertisement of any changes to speed restrictions, parking amendments and other actions as a means of formalising any changes to traffic rules in line with the Highways Act 1980. Mr Shaw advised that the Traffic Regulation Order Consultations for this application will be for speed restrictions to 20mph, zebra crossing, waiting restrictions for pickup/drop off, no waiting at any time on double yellow lines, no vehicles except buses on the Interchange, right turn only from Palace Street and bus stop clearways on Church Street and Hitchin Street. There are ongoing discussions relating to potential parking changes around Century House and whether to close off the return area.

Cllr Knight stated that the Local Plan calls for high quality bus shelters. The Town Council had requested different bus shelters to incorporate weather proofing, seats, heating and illumination. Mr Shaw confirmed that the chosen bus shelters conformed to design guidelines, however, Cllr Foster requested that Central Bedfordshire Council select different bus shelters to enhance the weather protection aspect.

Cllr Russell stated that she had previously spoken with Mr Shaw about potentially using any leftover funds from the Transport Interchange to create new parking at the site of the St. Andrew's traffic island to replace some of the spaces lost in the creation of the new Transport Interchange. She asked whether any S106 funds are available to use for this cause. Ms Hooley confirmed CBC's Regeneration Programme Manager is creating a spend plan for S106 funds held by Central Bedfordshire Council, which will be used in the regeneration project. Ms. Hooley offered to include this in the regeneration project.

Cllr Russell asked CBC's Officers to arrange the transport workshop with engineers and investigate trial schemes for the bus exit lane and other significant traffic concerns for the Town in light of new and proposed housing developments. Cllr Bond commented that where CBC will be issuing a TRO for the bus layby on Church Street, CBC may wish to consider adding some additional parking spaces because this already is a one-way street.

Cllr Whitaker feels a review of the current parking provision in the town needs to be carried out, potentially to add more cycle parking or more sustainable long-term measures that encourage alternative transport (other than cars).

Mr Shaw also advised the Committee that he has been in discussions with Govia Thameslink about potentially having the accessible toilets accessible by the public.

- **Lindsell's Crossing Bridge:**

CBC are working through the design processes. There will be some minor rights of way modifications in the near future, the planning application has been approved, with construction to commence April 2022 and be completed by June 2023.

- **Garden Communities:**

Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design Ltd is the new consultant on this project and are currently undertaking consultations focusing on: a) the sustainable transport corridor and the Stratton employment sites, b) community engagement and consultation on energy efficiency and biodiversity. Current plans are for January 2023 consultations and Central Bedfordshire Council will bring this to the 22 January 2022 Biggleswade Joint Committee meeting for engagement.

- **Assets Management Group:**

The Assets team will seek permission from the Executive to consult on proposed changes to the Library and the Registrar's Office to incorporate the administration offices.

The Registrar's Office will become a temporary COVID vaccination site over the winter period, starting in the next week.

- **Integrated Health and Care Hub**

Patricia Coker, CBC Head of Partnerships & Performance updated the Committee on current progress on the Hub.

CBC have reconvened discussions with NHS Property Services regarding purchase of the land and with Bedfordshire Hospital Trusts. They are also planning to reconvene the service model for the Hub to increase the number and type of services the Hub will offer, over and above the core services. This requires engagement with GP's, residents and key local stakeholders, along with Bedford and Stevenage medical provision personnel.

A project manager has been identified to support the building of a business case. The programme plan needs to be altered due to the lack of progress of this project as a result of COVID. The timeline needs to be re-programmed and the amended timeline, once re-profiled, will be sent to the Committee.

CBC are also increasing collaborative working across the primary care team, community, mental health and social care teams to provide a more cohesive service to the Community. CBC want to be profiling the work and delivering this service now and then lift that pattern of work into the new Hub once the facilities are ready so that they hit the ground running.

Cllr Hayley Whitaker asked whether the London Road site should be used as the site for a medical hub instead of waiting for negotiations to conclude with NHS Property Services. This site is over 5 hectares and wasn't available at the time the original study was conducted for suitable sites but is available now. Ms Coker commented she would need to go back to colleagues in the Council and agreed that given the time lag in the commencement of the project it would be good practice to undertake another off-site options appraisal. However, previous consultations showed that Biggleswade Hospital was a key resource, given the time lag and in view of housing expansion, it would be in the Community's interests to re-investigate other site options.

Cllr Russell advised Ms Coker that the lack of medical services and GP's in Biggleswade is at a critical level, with the Council receiving significant from the Community during the

Neighbourhood Plan process and consultation about the lack of medical services and GP's - those people have been asking the Town Council why there are no new GP's. Ms Coker advised that CBC colleagues are working with the NHS and investigating new roles within primary care to help support people so that they don't necessarily have to wait to see the GP, such as social prescribers, paramedics, physiotherapists, pharmacists on site, etc.

Cllr Whitaker explained that residents are unable to even contact the GP surgeries at all over the past 10 days. She contacted the CCG and spoke with them to give them the feedback – the Head of the CCG advised her they have no control over the GP Surgery practices and cannot dictate what phone service they provide. Cllr Foster advised the Committee that the Town Council are inviting the Office Manager and the Practice Manager from both GP practices to a Town Council meeting and asked for CBC's support around the telephone response.

- **Sustainability Plan and Projects**

Stephen Mooring, Head of Sustainability was unable to attend the meeting and Cllr Dixon agreed to circulate an update via email.

- **Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan**

Karim Hosseini, BTC Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships updated Members. The Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation opened on 27 September 2021 for 6 weeks and will close on 9 November 2021. Leaflets were sent to a distributor for distribution to residents and businesses in Biggleswade, banners and posters advertising the Neighbourhood Plan have been put up in locations around Biggleswade. Biggleswade Town Council's website has a section on the Neighbourhood Plan and residents can leave feedback. There are sessions being hosted by Councillors and Officers for people to attend and fill in the form either on-site via a laptop on site, or by accessing the live feedback form.

Cllr Whitaker suggested having special interest reports that highlighted what the Neighbourhood Plan would mean for individual people or businesses to generate engagement. The Chief Executive & Town Clerk added that the Town Council is reaching out to Community interest groups, charities, church groups and engagement groups to prompt engagement, and asked Members of the Committee to respond.

Ms Hooley suggested asking Richard Fuller MP the Member of Parliament for North-East Bedfordshire, to share the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation on his social media page. He had recently done this for CBC's Power Infrastructure Consultation and they had a number of responses following his post.

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

- **Welcome Back Fund - Projects**

Philip Truppin, BTC's Head of Place Shaping & Town Centre Events Management updated Members on the progress of the Welcome Back Fund project.

BTC's Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships confirmed that a significant amount of work has gone into preparation of a projects list at the Town Council that could be funded by the Welcome Back Fund.

As a result of a fire alarm, the meeting was ended early and will be reconvened with the remaining agenda items on 18 November 2021.