

12th October 2023

To:	Town Mayor and all Members of the Biggleswade Joint Committee	
Town Councillors:	Cllr M Russell (Vice Chairman) Cllr M North Cllr S Patel Cllr C Thomas	
BTC Substitutes:	Cllr D Albone Cllr D Strachan	
BTC Officers:	Karim Hosseini (Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships) Funda Gumush (Meetings Administrator)	
Central Bedfordshire Councillors:	Cllr Gareth Tranter (Chairman) Cllr Grant Fage Cllr Steven Watkins Cllr Hayley Whitaker	
CBC Substitutes:	Cllr Paul Daniels Cllr Paul How	
CBC Officers:	Sarah Hughes (Community Engagement Manager)	
	(Copies to other Town Councillors for information)	

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Biggleswade Joint Committee** to be held on **12th October 2023**, commencing at **7.00 pm** at **The Orchard Centre, Kings Reach, Biggleswade**. Central Bedfordshire Council Officers will attend the meeting via Zoom in line with current Central Bedfordshire corporate practice.



Peter Tarrant
Town Clerk & Chief Executive

**THIS MEETING MAY BE
RECORDED***

AGENDA

PART A – ADMINISTRATION

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a record be kept of the Members present and that this record form part of the minutes of the meeting. Members who cannot attend a meeting should tender apologies to the Town Clerk.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (i) Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the Member's Register of Interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.
- (ii) Should any Member have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in an item on the agenda, the Member may not participate in consideration of that item unless a Dispensation has first been requested (in writing) and granted by the Council (see Dispensation Procedure).

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (3 minutes per person; maximum 15 minutes)

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 will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each speaker will be allowed (one) **three-minute** slot.

Members of the public who wish to join this meeting should register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_tXNpKvLRQi7An09nNE74Q



4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee meeting held on **13th July 2023 (attached)**.

5. MATTERS ARISING

From the Minutes of the **Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting** held on **13th July 2023**.

6. CO-OPTION PROCESS

Sarah Hughes and Karim Hosseini to introduce a short report regarding the process and objectives of co-option.

7. BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE - STRATEGIC IMPACT

- a. CBC to provide an overview of Joint Committees in Central Bedfordshire
- b. BJC discussion on embracing a future strategic role

8. PART B - TOWN CENTRE AND MARKET SQUARE VISION

- c. BTC to present on the Market Square Vision and Urban Design Plan.
- d. Cllr Grant Fage to present a proposal on brown "Town Centre" directional signage.

9. PART C – FORWARD LOOK UPDATES FROM COUNCILLORS

- a. CBC Councillors
- b. BTC Councillors

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting is scheduled for:

- 18th January 2024

**Committee Members receive all documentation.
Papers available to other Councillors upon request.**

**Phones and other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting by an individual Council member, officer or member of the public. No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming unless the meeting resolves to go into exempt session. The use of images or recordings arising from this is not within the Council's control.*

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE
HELD IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING AT
BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, THE OLD COURT HOUSE
4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL
ON THURSDAY 13th JULY at 14:30 PM**

Present:	BTC: Cllr M Russell, Cllr M North, Cllr C Thomas, Cllr D Albone CBC: Cllr G Tranter, Cllr G Fage, Cllr Dr. H Whitaker, Cllr P Daniels BTC Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships: Karim Hosseini BTC Place Shaping Manager: Isaac Lord BTC Meetings Administrator: Funda Gumush
In Attendance:	CBC Community Engagement Manager: Sarah Hughes (via zoom) CBC Sustainability Team: Charlotte Secker (via zoom) CBC Sustainability Team: Lauren Chimes (via zoom)
Members of the public:	1

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

PART A – ADMINISTRATION

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr S Watkins, Mr. P Tarrant, Mr N Shaw.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. 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.

No member of the public wished to speak.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Cllr Gareth Tranter (CBC) was elected as Chairman of the Committee for 2023-2024.

5. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

Cllr M Russell (BTC) was elected as Vice Chair of the Committee for 2023-2024.

6. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Members reviewed and **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting of 19th January 2023.

7. **MATTERS ARISING**

Cllr Fage inquired about an update regarding the Market Square Trees and pointed out that the trees had been removed for safety reasons.

Cllr Fage indicated that the matter could be brought to the agenda of the next Joint Committee meeting.

Cllr Russell noted that the matter was being looked at by the Town Council which would be presented to CBC and then onto the Joint Committee.

Cllr Whitaker commented that the replanting of trees had been deferred at the Town Council's request since the future of the Market Square was also being discussed but added that the funding was still available for the replanting.

8. **JOINT COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS GOING FORWARD**

a. **An overview of the Joint Committee Terms of Reference**

CBC Community Engagement Manager Sarah Hughes presented an overview of the Joint Terms of Reference.

Ms Hughes indicated that there were four Joint Committees in Central Bedfordshire which adhered to the same Terms of Reference. She explained the purpose of the Committees and values they held for delivering for communities.

Ms Hughes noted that the review of the terms of reference in 2017 introduced the facility to allow either a CBC Member or a Town Council Members to chair the committee; however, both chair and vice chair could not be held by the same organisation.

Ms Hughes also explained that the Terms of Reference includes provision for up to 15 co-opted members which would give the opportunity to include other views, voices and expertise. She also added that it would be helpful if the Committee set out what they hoped to achieve in the new financial year.

Cllr North inquired whether any of the other Councils had co-opted Members to which Ms Hughes responded that Houghton Regis, Dunstable and Leighton Linlade had done so.

Cllr Whitaker suggested that the Committee could invite members from the BRCC, Community Safety and even engage with the local schools to have a younger perspective present.

Based off this idea, Cllr Whitaker also proposed that the Committee look at the days and times the meeting was held to enable more community participation especially if the Committee was hoping students would attend.

With regards to the change of timing for the BJC Committee, Cllr Fage proposed:

1. That the BJC Committee meetings are held in the evening,
2. That the next meeting is held at The Orchard Centre.

Members discussed several options of how community groups could be invited to the meetings, and it was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair are consulted by Officers before putting an announcement in the public domain.

With regards to the venue of the meetings, Cllr Whitaker proposed that the meeting is alternated between the Town Council building and the Orchard Centre.

Members **AGREED** to have the next meeting in October at the Orchard Centre at 7pm.

Cllr Whitaker proposed to have a more strategic approach to the agenda in which one item was focused on which would help with co-opted members who could be brought in for specific topics.

Members **AGREED** to a strategic agenda going forward.

It was **AGREED** that Chair and Vice Chair would meet to discuss possible ways of moving forward with the co-option of varying groups with a view to this being agreed by BTC.

b. Confirm Secretariat arrangements for 2023/24

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships confirmed that the Town Council would continue to be the secretariat for the BJC.

Cllr Whitaker proposed that this is held for one year and that it can be determined further next year.

Members **AGREED** to the arrangements.

9. PART B – ECONOMY AND TOWN CENTRE

None.

10. PART C – KEY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT UPDATES

a. Transport Interchange project

Cllr North commented on the interchange project report and asked if there were any updates as to the timings of operation.

Cllr Whitaker responded that CBC are still testing the interchange as it stands and tweaks were being made in collaboration with the bus companies.

Cllr Albone asked whether the bus companies would be including the Market Square on their bus routes.

Cllr Whitaker responded that discussions with bus companies were ongoing, but the Market Square would continue to be on the routes.

Cllr Russell reiterated that the matter of buses in the Market Square had been discussed in Council and a proposal had been put to Highways for bus stops to be moved to the High Street rather than in the Square.

Cllr Russell also touched on the matter of signage and noted there was no signage from the Train Station or Bus Interchange to show direction to the Town Centre. Cllr Russell suggested that this could be an item for the agenda next time.

b. **Play Areas Project**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships noted that the main area of Franklins Recreation Ground and completed and that the Public Realm team hoped to complete the work by the end of August.

He added that the Town Council has been deliberating which play areas should next be regenerated and Kitelands has been selected as the most appropriate given its geographical location.

Cllr Fage urged the Town Council to make sure they sought out any funding available from Section 106 where possible for the regeneration of play areas.

The Chairman indicated that he had spoken with Alun Isaac of Isaac Mercer regarding the play areas on Kings Reach and informed that a review was taking place of all the play area equipment on the estate. He noted that they were now awaiting the outcome of the review.

Cllr Russell commented that the Town Council was in negotiation to take over the play areas in Kings Reach and hoped that soon the Council would have a positive update.

c. **Drove Road Chapel**

The Place Shaping Manager noted that phase one of the three-part project was completed in March, which consisted of high-level repointing works, stone repairs, roof repairs and work to the ventilators on the central tower.

He explained that Council have recently agreed for phase two to commence as soon as possible and after speaking to the external project manager, this is likely to be the beginning of August.

11. **PART D – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

a. **App-Bike: Biggleswade's new cycle hire scheme**

Ms Secker thanked everyone for their participation in helping to get the 12-month pilot project up and running.

The project so far covers 12 bikes initially and can be found at the Dan Albone Car Park, Biggleswade Train Station, Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre, Kings Reach Shops and Grasmere Road.

As the project had only begun less than a week ahead of the BJC committee meeting, Ms Secker was unable to provide an update to their success. She indicated however that App-Bikes would be providing a monitoring report and that the team would be meeting with them monthly.

The Chairman raised issues with privacy relating to personal email addresses being used to obtain IDs for PAYG usage. It was understood to be sub-optimal and under review.

b. **Play Streets**

Ms Chimes who is the new active streets engagement officer at CBC presented the report and explained the pros of the project as below:

- Play Street creates a safe space for children to play freely,
- Close to home so no cars or extra travel are needed,
- Low pressure way to learn new skills outside of organised groups and PE lessons,
- Smooth tarmac is perfect for children to learn how to ride a bike, roller skate, scoot and skateboard,
- Helps build natural bonds and friendships with likeminded children of a similar age,
- Enables parents to re-engage with neighbour's post Covid.

Cllr Russell commenting on the matter noted that the Town Council had discussed the item several months earlier and strongly objected to the project and would not currently be supporting it.

12. ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

None.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 12th October at 7.00pm at The Orchard Centre.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 3.34pm

Biggleswade Joint Committee (BJC) Co-option Process

Context:

The Biggleswade Joint Committee was established in 2012 and is one of four Joint / Partnership Committee arrangements that Central Bedfordshire Council has with Town Councils.

It is a 'formal' committee meeting, open to the public and the membership comprises CBC Ward and Town Cllrs.

The Committees work to common terms of reference, enshrined in the CBC constitution [Communications - Part 3D - Delegations to Joint Committees.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

The purpose of the Joint / Partnership Committee is set out in the Terms of Reference is:

- To influence decisions and help shape initiatives and their delivery for the benefit of the whole town taking into account the needs of the town, customers, employees, residents, visitors, traders, property owners and developers.
- To develop and encourage public participation and engagement and take into consideration the resident voice in the work of the Town Joint Committee

The BJC meeting on 13th July discussed governance arrangements for future meetings, including exploring new terms of reference with a view to further reinforce the Committee's strategic status and also discussed co-option for new members.

The Committee agreed that Chair and Vice Chair would meet to discuss possible ways of moving forward with the co-option of individuals who provide representation from varying groups within the town.

The Chair and Vice Chair have met and this note provides a proposed direction of travel.

Proposed Process:

The existing BJC Terms of Reference includes provision to co-opt up to 15 Members which would give the Joint Committee the opportunity to include other views, voices and expertise across a range of topics, alongside the elected Members appointed to the Joint Committee by Central Bedfordshire Council and Biggleswade Town Council. Co-opted Members are full Members of the BJC except that they do not have voting rights.

Previously when the Joint Committee had co-opted Members, the Committee co-opted individuals whom the Committee felt would make a substantial contribution to discussions, often representing organisations within Biggleswade. While the Committee can co-opt up to 15 people this can be done gradually. It is important that co-optees are supported and inducted appropriately.

The BJC will seek to co-opt representation from local business groups and businesses for their expertise. Youth organisations including local secondary / upper schools would increase the youth perspective and engagement in discussion and decision making. Officers will ensure that those standing for co-option understand the role. Co-opted members will add value to BJC and its deliberations by providing specific insight, expertise and experience.

An area which is of particular importance to Biggleswade residents is access to green spaces and both Central Bedfordshire Council and Biggleswade Town Council have worked closely with Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity to produce the Biggleswade Green Infrastructure Plan, implement and maintain the Biggleswade Green Wheel and to identify and protect 15 Local Green Spaces through the Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan. The Deputy Chief Executive of BRCC, Cliff Andrews, has indicated his willingness to join BJC as a co-optee.

There are two other residents who have come forward with interest in joining BJC. They will be considered at our next meeting.

The new 7pm evening timing for the BJC is intended to make the meeting accessible to the public including students.

Recommendations:

- BJC is invited to discuss co-option and indicate any particular areas of expertise which the Committee should try to draw on.
- BJC is invited to formally co-opt Cliff Andrews, Deputy Chief Executive, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity.
- That two further expressions of interest be taken forward before the January meeting of BJC.

APPLICATION & AGREEMENT FOR CO-OPTED MEMBERS

The Biggleswade Joint Committee (BJC) is supported by Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council staff with a team of elected Councillors.

In relation to certain business of the BJC, there are advantages for the Committee to formally appoint Co-optees to Committees for the skills and experience they are able to offer that strategic Committee.

Co-optees to the Committee are required to work under the Councils' Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct and Officer & Member Protocol and other relevant policy of the Council. This important material can be found on the Town Council website and by following this link: [Biggleswade Town Council](#)

Of particular note is the requirement of Co-opted Members to follow the principals of the Council's Code of Conduct, as attached, so as to maintain the standards of the Council in the work undertaken.

Upon appointment training will be provided by the Town Council covering Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct and Officer & Member Protocol.

The term of office for a Co-opted Member is ideally May to April each year, although invitations with applications can be considered part way through a year.

The Council will keep you informed of the progress of your application.

If you would like to become a Co-opted Member please provide the following information and sign the agreement:

Co-optee Application	
Name	
Address	
Contact number	
Contact email address	
Why you would like to become a co-optee?	
What skills and experience do you feel you can bring to the Biggleswade Joint Committee?	

Agreement	
Co-optees are required to agree to the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To abide by the Councils Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct and Officer & Member Protocol. These can be found at: Biggleswade Town Council 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To attend meetings as required or to offer apologies if you are not available. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To attend and support events (if appropriate) as required. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work with the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council to secure the best outcomes for the community. 	
*the Council reserves the right to remove this position should the agreement not be upheld.	
* the Co-optee may at any time withdraw from their position.	
Name	
Date	
Signature	

*Under UK Data Protection legislation, I give consent for the personal data supplied above to be retained by BTC so that I can be contacted regarding the Joint Committee. The data processors for the event detailed above, are **the Information Manager, Biggleswade Town Council** and the details will be retained on file until **May 2024** for administration purposes.*

You can find out more about how we use your data from our "Privacy Notice" which is available from the council office or from our website at [Biggleswade Town Council](#). You can withdraw or change your consent at any time by contacting the Council office. The Town Council's Data Protection Officer is Helen Calvert.